T.R.

ÇANAKKALE ONSEKİZ MART UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

MAKING SENSE OF MULTICULTURALISM AND CULTURAL RACISM IN CONTEMPORARY FICTIONAL WORKS BY WRITERS OF MUSLIM ORIGIN

MASTER'S THESIS

ÜZEYİR HOŞGÖR

ADVISOR

ASSOC. PROF. DR. SERCAN HAMZA BAĞLAMA

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Her zaman ve her koşulda bana destek olan canım aileme ve arkadaşlarıma,

Sonsuz teşekkür eder ve saygılarımı sunarım.

Üzeyir HOŞGÖR

Çanakkale, Haziran 2024

ÖZET

MÜSLÜMAN KÖKENLİ YAZARLAR TARAFINDAN KALEME ALINAN ÇAĞDAŞ KURGULARDA ÇOKKÜLTÜRLÜLÜĞÜN VE KÜLTÜREL IRKÇILIN ANLAMLANDIRILMASI

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Geçtiğimiz yüzyıl boyunca tarihsel, ekonomik ve sosyopolitik olgular ırkçılık kavramına önemli ölçüde yön vermiş, koşullu kapsayıcılığı iddia eden çelişkili bir ırkçılık biçimine yol açmıştır. Çokkültürlüğü benimseyen postmodern toplumlar her ne kadar farklı kültürel geçmişlerden gelen bireyleri desteklese de bu destek sık sık yetersiz kalmaktadır. Batı'da yaşayan çoğu göçmen kabul edilebilmek için 'Batılı' koşullara ve standartlara uygun biçimde kimliklerini yeniden inşa etme zorunluluğu hissetmektedir. Bu anlamda, sosyoloji, dil ve kültürel araştırmalarının yanı sıra çağdaş edebiyat çalışmaları da kültürel ırkçılık olarak tanımlanan bu yeni ırkçılık formuna ve bu ırkçılığın bireylerin günlük sosyal, politik ve ekonomik etkileşimleri üzerindeki etkisine yoğunlaşmıştır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma İslamofobi olgusunu da güçlendiren kültürel ırkçılığın çokkültürlü toplumlarda ayrımcılığı nasıl devam ettirdiğini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, Fadia Faqir'in *My Name is Salma* (2007) ve Mohsin Hamid'in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) başlıklı eserlerini eleştirel ırk teorisi ve postkolonyal kuram çerçevesinde inceleyecektir. Bu çalışma kültürel ırkçılık, koşullu katılım, iyi göçmen, İslamofobi ve kimlik inşası gibi terimlere yoğunlaşıp çokkültürlülüğün pratikteki işlevsizliğini eleştirel bir şekilde inceleyecek ve kapsayıcılık iddialarına karşın ayrımcılığın nasıl devam ettiğini vurgulayacaktır. Bu da çalışma kapsamında incelenecek olan iki romandaki göçmen karakterlerin deneyimleri aracılığıyla çokkültürlü toplumlarda yaşayan göçmenlerin devam etmekte olan sorunlarının edebiyat aracılığıyla derinlemesine incelenmesine katkı sağlayacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngilizce Çağdaş Edebiyat, Fadia Faqir, Mohsin Hamid, Kültürel ırkçılık, Çokkültürlülük, İslamofobi

ABSTRACT

MAKING SENSE OF MULTICULTURALISM AND CULTURAL RACISM IN CONTEMPORARY FICTIONAL WORKS BY WRITERS OF MUSLIM ORIGIN

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Historical, sociopolitical, and economic events have significantly shaped the concept of racism over the past century, leading to a paradoxical form of racism that claims inclusivity yet is conditional. Although postmodern multicultural societies profess support for individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, this support often proves inadequate. Many immigrants in Western societies feel compelled to reconstruct their identities to meet Western standards and conditions for acceptance. Contemporary literary studies, alongside research in sociology, language, and cultural studies, have concentrated on this new form of racism – cultural racism – and its impact on individuals' daily social, political, and economic interactions. This study, in this context, aims to examine how cultural racism perpetuates discrimination within multicultural societies that also foster Islamophobia. It will analyse *My Name is Salma* (2007) by Fadia Faqir and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsin Hamid, employing critical race theory and postcolonial studies. By focusing on concepts such as cultural racism, conditional inclusion, the 'good immigrant', Islamophobia, and identity construction, this study will also critically investigate the limitations of multiculturalism, highlight the ways in which discrimination persists despite claims of inclusivity, and contribute to a deeper understanding of the ongoing challenges faced by immigrants in 'multicultural' societies through the represented experiences of the immigrant characters in the two novels.

Keywords: Contemporary Literature in English, Fadia Faqir, Mohsin Hamid, Cultural racism, Multiculturalism, Islamophobia

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world, although racism is no longer perpetuated through physical determinants, it still operates through various mechanisms to discriminate against and otherise groups from outside the Western world. Considering the rising popularity of promoting cultural diversity, a variety of challenges rooted in prejudices and racism emerge in contemporary societies, which raises the question of whether individuals with diverse religious, social, and cultural backgrounds might face marginalisation if they do not assimilate to Western ways of living. This contemporary form of racism significantly affects individuals' daily social, political, and economic relationships, and often compels them to voluntarily reconstruct their identities.

In contemporary societies, the notion of multiculturalism has been the focal point in supporting diverse ethnic and cultural groups; however, it barely unites diverse groups since contemporary forms of racism focuses on immigrants' capability to shape themselves and fit into the mainstream 'white' society. The claim, here, points to the argument that immigrants from the East are, most of the time, otherised by various discriminatory factors that lead immigrants to remould their identities based on the expectations of the dominant society. Such various discriminatory factors are often found in sociopolitical occurrences in recent years. For instance, the ramifications of Syria's civil war have been the focus of Europe's attention for the past decade, resulting in the problems of multiculturalism and immigration. Increasing migration movement from Syria to the West has shaped the countries' political agendas, and those fleeing to the West have been subjected to harsh and disastrous treatment. In practical terms, it may be argued that Middle Eastern immigrants fundamentally suffer from racism not because of their skin colour, but rather because of significant differences in their cultural and social norms which differ considerably from those of the West. This is when multiculturalism issues come into play, with theory and practice contradicting one another. Another instance that demonstrates the inconsistencies of multicultural societies is the Ukraine-Russia war and its aftermath. The attitude towards immigrants who have migrated from Ukraine to Europe following the conflict actually mirrors Europe's attitude towards immigrants. Former Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov, for example, normalised cultural racism by pointing out that Ukrainians are not typical immigrants because they are white and Christian, as opposed to Middle Eastern immigrants. Petkov's

perspective, which focuses on religion, language, and culture, is affiliated with the idea of 'look like us' about the inclusion of immigrants in Europe (The Limitations of Humanity: Differential Refugee Treatment in the EU, 2022).

In this framework, this study seeks to expose and link literature with the present-day reality of cultural racism, which is centred on Europe's biased attitude toward immigrants. It therefore necessitates making a literature review based on the relationship between new forms of racism and its appearance in contemporary fictional works. Contemporary fictional works are helpful to exemplify how theories of racism shape contemporary societies and reveals how the problematisation of individual differences in multicultural settings intensifies the arguments surrounding cultural racism. Contemporary fictional works, particularly those by writers of Muslim origin, usually portray the immigrant experience in the diaspora, where individuals are typically excluded due to their cultural backgrounds. This supports the argument that multiculturalism and its practical implementation often fall short of their ideals. The failure in the practical implementation of embracing diverse cultures is often seen in Western sociopolitical occasions. To be clear, many contemporary fictional works reflect the current political climate of the present day by providing a fictional insight into reality, where immigrants frequently encounter discrimination and racist behaviour. Contemporary fictional works thus serve as an illustration of a sort of apparatus for identifying and evaluating racist arguments in the agenda.

Many contemporary authors, including Fadia Faqir, Mohsin Hamid, Leila Aboulela, Tabish Khair, Kamila Shamsie, fictionalise the experiences of immigrants living in the diaspora and give an insight into the reality of challenges faced by immigrants. These fictional works serve as a manifestation of the various means through which cultural racism is generated in this particular context. By drawing on critical arguments about racism, contemporary fictional works by writers of Muslim origin provides a valuable framework for exemplifying and analysing cultural racism and its operation through culture and language. This study will thus examine two pivotal works of contemporary English literature: Fadia Faqir's *My Name is Salma* and Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. The novels have been studied in relation to migration, gender, identity, and colour-based racism, and have been explored from different yet intersectional perspectives such as race-class and race-gender relationships (Haider, 2012). Those studies have mostly addressed how immigrants formulate their identities based on white supremacy and

epistemologies of Orientalism (Tshomo et al., 2022; Abu-Shomar, 2022). However, this study aims to explore and conceptualise the novels through the arguments of cultural racism and its relation to other disciplines including postcolonial theory and refugee studies. In other words, this study addresses how immigrants reconstruct their identities following the notion of multiculturalism and the current prevalence of Orientalism which is reshaped by 'new' racism and discrimination based on culture.

Both novels offer rich perspectives on the immigrant experience, and mediate the painful process of identity formation and the pervasive influence of cultural racism. These novels are also exemplary in their exploration of the identity crises faced by immigrants and their struggles to voluntarily assimilate into dominant societies. By employing the frameworks of critical race theory and postcolonial studies, this study will critically analyse how factors such as racism, identity, class, culture, and religion intersect and interact within these narratives, elucidate the dynamics of cultural racism, and provide a deeper understanding of its impact on immigrant identities and experiences. This approach will help reveal the way various forms of discrimination and privilege overlap, shaping the lived realities of immigrants and their attempts to negotiate their identities in a culturally racist environment.

The first chapter of this study will focus on what racism is and how racism have shaped European socio-political spheres since the beginning of colonialism. The ways in which racism and discrimination are perpetrated towards individuals, the underlying justifications for racism, and the viewpoints from which the term 'racism' has been used over time will be explored. Admitting that racism is a social construction deriving from particular social, economic, and political events in the historical development of different nations is the fundamental argument in this study. Accordingly, racism is not a monolithic structure; rather, it consists of complex and deep structures in which the interconnection of diverse notions, including gender, class, culture, and religion, are included in the construction of race arguments. In light of this assertion, this study aims to articulate the arguments of cultural racism and encapsulate how racism is transformed into a softer yet structural form in contemporary societies. The second chapter will address *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid and explain how cultural and religious differences sustain racism. The idea of conditional acceptance is introduced, whereby immigrants' recognition and acceptance are dependent upon their qualifications and usefulness. For instance,

Changez, an ‘unusual’ immigrant in the novel, has appealing characteristics that convince the dominant society to assume that he is a ‘good and proper immigrant’. However, after 9/11, the perspective of the dominant society towards Changez takes a quite different turn due to Changez’s religious background ‘recalling’ his fanatic and extremist status. In this regard, this chapter manifests the challenges in multicultural societies linked to religious and cultural differences as well as illustrating how Islamophobia functions as an extension of neo-racism. The third chapter will address on *My Name is Salma* by Fadia Faqir and attempt to unearth how the identity formation of immigrants is reconstructed through the concept of mimicry and voluntary inclusion. In the novel, Salma or Sally, after settling in the UK, strives to adapt to the customs and traditions of the society and often voluntarily imitates the ‘other’. Also, Salma remoulds her identity and voluntarily detaches from her own roots with the intent of visibility. However, this process of creating her new identity to be recognised is not only affiliated with her own desire but also associated with ‘invisible’ mechanisms regarding the conditional inclusion of immigrants with proper qualities. The novel thus provides a framework to analyse the underlying reasons why immigrants tend to normalise their sociocultural practices.

CHAPTER TWO
CONCEPTUALISING ISLAMOPHOBIA AND CULTURAL RACISM

Within the historical and social development of racism, there has been a great number of studies analysing what racism is and how it has developed throughout history socially, politically, culturally, economically and ideologically. Racism, which is a long-standing subject and one of the major concepts in the field of humanities and social sciences, has always been on the agenda. In contemporary studies, scholars focus on racism through different disciplines in order to articulate new forms of racism in postmodern societies. Unlike traditional racism, which legitimises the superiority of one race over another, new forms of racism focus on cultural factors which categorise individuals based on their origins. Drawing on the arguments of Etienne Balibar about the evolution of racism into a postmodern concept, cultural racism is a new form of racism in multicultural societies in which differences are included or excluded in relation to whether individuals conform to what is presented as the proper in the West. In other words, immigrants from different backgrounds are expected to civilise themselves in accordance with Western cultures; otherwise, they would be otherised and excluded from the society. On the other hand, with the proliferation of racism in different forms, distinctions between a good and bad immigrant have become the basic concepts of cultural racism. The inclusion and integration of individuals into societies are bound to the requirements of the dominant society, such as being moderate in religious faith, using proper English, internalising Western values and traditions as well as being useful citizens (Abbas, 2011; Dabashi; 2011, Bağlama 2020; Hackl. 2022).

From a theoretical and critical perspective, a multicultural society rejects the superiority of one culture over another, and argues that differences will benefit the society, and that discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and so on will be eliminated by welcoming differences. However, this is not the case in practice. For examples, Muslims living in the USA and the UK are primarily associated with their religious identities and are considered strangers, whose religions are a central part of their identities, and therefore positioned as secondary or inferior to non-Muslim individuals (Lean, 2012). Positioning Muslims as secondary is related to cultural racism and Islamophobia in which the representations of Muslims are reduced into a single category: uneducated, religious, and

dirty Arabs. Such misrepresentations, which attempt to reproduce the arguments of neo-colonial discourse, play a major role in the process of otherising Muslims.

This chapter will, in this context, provide a theoretical framework regarding cultural racism and Islamophobia, investigate the evolution of traditional racism into cultural racism in relation to Islamophobia with an attempt to critically account for the Western logic of racism in postmodern capitalism, and lay out the negative portrayal of Muslims on different platforms, as represented in contemporary Muslim fiction.

2.1. Defining Racism

In the field of humanities and social sciences, there is a degree of ambiguity in defining the concept of race, which has been commonly used to refer to the hierarchy of certain groups based on culture, ethnicity, common physical traits and skin colour. The definitions of the term, racism, differ according to different periods in history, and the concept of race is formed according to political, economic, and social formations. From a linguistic point of view, despite the ambiguity in lexical studies, the term race has arguably no old history which dates back to the sixteenth century. Drawing on lexical studies, the term has similar meanings in Spanish, Italian and French; however, the semantic association of the term varies in accordance with different periods in history. Until the seventeenth century, the term meant to refer to "genus, species, and variety" without referring to human species (Reisigl, 1999: 176). During the seventeenth century, the connotation of the term was more related to classes in society, emphasising the social ranking between individuals. The turning point at which the term addressed human species occurred in the eighteenth century, during which Western nations, in order to legitimise colonialism, embraced pseudoscientific studies and categorised human beings by their colour. Western nations, which stressed racial superiority based on skin colour and supported it with so-called scientific arguments, incorporated the doctrine, namely Social Darwinism, in the nineteenth century, benefiting from the works of Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin (Reisigl, 1999). In this regard, the concept of race has undergone linguistic and cultural alterations throughout the centuries, forming the basis of the ideology of racism in relation to colonialism.

To define, racism means any verbal, physical and psychological attack against an individual or groups in which a structure of oppression and prejudice based on races are

carried out through the social, political, and institutional operations of the society. Individuals often, whether deliberately or not, racialise others because of their differences such as language, skin colour, and culture. Such differences and motives lead to segregation rooted in "the valuation of biological differences, real or imaginary" (Memmi, 1982: 101). In other words, biological factors are involved in the advancement of racist discourses and ideology. Considering the definition of racism as a set of ideas, beliefs, and values that lead the way for individuals to constitute racial prejudices against certain groups, racism develops a social structure, creating a benefit and hierarchy over other groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). It stands for a belief that an individual or certain groups have analogous traits based on their 'ethnicities and races' and categorises individuals or these groups by allocating value to their biological, physical traits, cultures, and languages, therefore creating a "hierarchical classification of racial groups" and superiority of one race over another (Benoist, 1999: 14). Such a form of superiority is motivated by biological determinants in defining and dividing races and is affiliated with pseudoscientific arguments in different historical eras (Grosfoguel, 2016).

The concepts of race and *racisms* have undergone continuous conceptual transformation through scientific and anthropological findings. Considering this fluid nature of the concept of racism, colour-based Western discourses[1] in the colonial period and racial ideologies in the post-war period are completely different historical and periodical racial constructions. In the contemporary period, while the term 'race' is considered as a social construction, in previous periods, especially in the nineteenth century, the concept of race was assumed to be more about biological determinants; for example, the definition of racism legitimised the superiority of whites over blacks during the colonial period and justified the enslavement of black people since the major determinant in categorising and dehumanising individuals were their skin colour. During the colonial period, skin colour was the leading particularity of racism; having black/brown skin colour was more about the racial inferiority of individuals who were believed to be uncivilised, animal-like, primitive, and less intelligent. In the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, the term race was applied to the biological categorisation of societies by Europeans during their colonial practices in Asia and Africa. To make it clear, during Western colonialism, European civilisations specified

[1] The term, Western discourses, refers to the Orientalist arguments which take on the perpetuation of racialised representations of the East, dehumanisation of the East, and overgeneralisation based on biased and simplified stereotypical images of the Orient.

other societies based on physical distinctions, particularly skin colour; however, physical distinctions between Europeans and non-Europeans strategically turned into a justification which signalled the inferiority of non-Europeans and legitimated slavery. Through this structural inclination that otherised the colonised, Western societies constructed narratives and discourses based on scientific arguments in order to justify colonial practices and perpetuate the hegemony of Europeans. Considering these points, the idea that human beings should be classified into distinct races was first proposed by scientists in the nineteenth century, mostly in Britain and France. This idea served as the foundation for racism as an ideology (Drescher, 1990). Such a historical development in defining and analysing the term, racism, leads to the conclusion that the concept of racism, which was grounded on the practices of colonialism, was later supported by scientific arguments and strengthened the hegemony of Western civilisations.

2.2. Racism, Colonialism and Social Darwinism

The fundamental meaning of racism might generally be associated with discrimination, segregation, and marginalisation of one race over another through a set of individualistic, institutional, and political operations; however, racism also draws a frame based on "social and economic forces" (Doane, 2006: 256). Considering its relation to early economic operations of the West, racism might be said to form a basis through colonial practices and "the global expansion of capitalism since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries" (Rich, 2008: 31). The pursuit of economic growth in the West, which dates to the advancement of geographical discoveries, resulted in the colonisation and exploitation of 'remote' lands. Such an economic pursuit of the West paved the way for other nations, cultures, languages, and religions to be categorised by color-coded formulations, such as blacks and browns. This also brings up a view about the relationship between racism and colonialism by Fanon. For Fanon, the practices of colonialism are more about economic structures, which therefore leads to legitimisation of Western hegemony since the West is white and thus rich. In other words, the governing race, whites, establish an argument based on their cultural and economic power which leads to the division of human beings into different races. This consequently forms a basis for the arguments that non-whites are inferior, less-than-humans, and poor, and that cultural superiority becomes an instrument to justify colonial practices of the West (Singh, 2007).

To exemplify, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which began in the fifteenth century and lasted for 400 years, legitimised the enslavement of those people living in African lands due to their skin colour and physical characteristics measured by the West, and led to the rise of plantation slavery in which thousands of black people were, in order to provide labour force, transferred to the 'West' by Western nations. Considering the basic tenets of colonialism, which are motivated by economic interests, there exists a strong linkage between racism and colonialism in terms of the re-organization of the capitalist system and racial discourses. In fact, Western colonialism brought about certain types of structural discourses in legitimising exploitation. Colonial powers, in order to sustain political and economic stability in colonised countries, constructed narratives based on such structural discourses. To demonstrate, in the late seventeenth century, thousands of indigenous people in the Atlantic, taken as prisoners, were sold as slaves because Western colonisers considered themselves to be the superior civilising and domesticating savages. Such narratives were linked to the physical representation of the colonised who were described as less intelligent, inferior, barbaric, and savage. This is, in fact, more about the enslavement of indigenous and non-white people in order to provide "exploitable labour" (Feagin and Ducey, 2019: 36). In this context, it is necessary to address the economic motivation of Western colonialism in terms of colonisers' desire to manage the market for cheap labour and raw materials because it is what actually formulates the roots of racism:

> In the process of English colonialism and the African slave trade some of the world's lightest-skinned people had come into contact with some of the world's darkest-skinned people. Gradually, colour and other physical characteristics became central to a dominant racial framing that tenaciously rationalized and sustained this intensive exploitation and oppression. (Feagin and Ducey, 2019: 64)

European colonialism paved the way for the development of racial discourses mainly on colour, which became a hallmark in categorising groups. It should be posited that the establishment of colour-based classification and the enslavement process coexisted and supported one another, that colonialism not only emphasised the negative characteristics of black people but also highlighted the distinctive characteristics of whites, and that having white skin was associated with civilisation, superiority, properness and intellectuality, while having black/brown skin was identified with primitiveness, backwardness and savageness. Thus, such segregation based on skin colour created the 'them and us' dichotomy, in which 'them' stands for the colonised and 'us' refers to the coloniser. In a similar way, Edward Said (1979) postulates that the socio-political and cultural depiction of the East was the exact

opposite of the West, that a dichotomy (them versus us, civilised versus uncivilised, and intellectual versus illiterate) always existed in the representation of individuals in the East, and that through the narratives and discourses of the West, the epistemological construction of the Orient was shaped in accordance with "a structure lies or of myths", rather than a consistent and analytic unity (Said, 1979: 6). The discursive hegemony of the West led the way for the Orient to be otherised, and such otherisation, unsurprisingly resulting in racism, had its roots in colonialism and its practices.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, biological arguments and studies regarding races facilitated the formulation of racism, and were embraced by European countries since scientific studies promoted the superiority of the white; in other words, scientific findings, emphasising racial hierarchies, were formulated, validated, and welcomed by European countries as a means consolidating racists discourses:

> Although such an environment is a 'fallacy' based on the construction of the hierarchy of races, people with pale skin is the powerful compared to coloured people. In its relation to Western colonialism and racism, social Darwinism provided a framework to legitimize "doctrines of racist imperialism" as well as rationalized the colonial operations of the West and subjugation of different groups. (Crook, 1996: 270)

The scientific analysis and discussions about evolution and natural selection as well as races were, in the early nineteenth century, centred around scholars and scientists from the West, including Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin. Darwin's scientific theories based on the evolution and natural selection of the species were adapted to social sciences in which the biological evolution of the animal species was superseded by the social evolution of races, therefore providing a hierarchy and superiority of one race over another (Dennis, 1995: 244). To make it clear, social Darwinism relies strongly on the communal development of social organisms in which the development and capacity of human beings work in a similar way to biological organisms, leading to the elimination of individuals and groups least fit for existence (Taylor, 1981). Accordingly, it facilitated the way for Western nations to legitimise colonial practices and provided a further insight into the ways of constructing racial discourses based on scientific arguments.

However, social Darwinism was not just limited to biological studies. Along with the growing interest in the eugenics movement, especially in the USA, social and psychological disciplines also negatively contributed to the relationship between social Darwinism and racism. Along with France, the USA and particularly Germany espoused "the principle of

assertion of the fittest and the subjection" as well as the elimination of the weak, developing further discourses about the racialisation of human-beings, such as antisemitism and anti-blackness (Marten, 1999: 23). Such discourses developing around different ideologies are, of course, interrelated with each other; however, each discourse develops around different dimensions, including philosophical, economic, social, and political backgrounds. To exemplify, antisemitism, which dates to the eighteenth century, was, during Nazi Germany, nourished by the arguments of social Darwinism as well as the Nuremberg Race Laws (1935) which racialised and categorised individuals as Aryan and non-Aryan. George M. Fredrickson (2015) put forwards that the antisemitism and racial discourses of the Nazi Party otherised, victimised and eradicated the Jews in order to perpetuate the cultural and religious unity of the Germans and sustain the purity of one single race. In this context, the effect of social Darwinism on the development of racism was combined with so-called scientific arguments, in which political laws were also involved.

Another useful example that reveals how social Darwinism runs together with science is the Tuskegee experiments. The roots of the Tuskegee experiment, which lasted nearly 40 years, were grounded on the arguments of social Darwinism. The study was, without their consent, conducted on African Americans, and some of them were given real medicine while some of them were given a placebo in order to figure out the effect of penicillin against syphilis and to reveal how the disease worked on black individuals in discordance with whites. The main purpose was to scientifically reveal the biological superiority of the white race, which is, of course, an extension of the narratives of social Darwinism. Such an experiment conducted in the USA reveals that scientific findings, as a way of organising racial boundaries, are controlled by the government and institutions, and that biological and social arguments regarding races precipitate engagement with the construction of racial discourses and narratives on "whites' genetic, moral, social, and certainly legal difference and superiority over blacks" (Hughey, 2016). The findings lead to the conclusion that racism, as an ideology, strengthened its arguments with the practices of colonialism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and supported pseudo-scientific findings in the following centuries in order to create racial boundaries between the black and the white, emphasising the superiority of the white over the black.

2.3. Race and Class Relations

As discussed in the previous section, from the standpoint of Marxist scholars' arguments on race relations, class and race cannot be considered to be different from each other. Racism and racial discourses cannot be decoupled from the operation of the capitalistic mode of production since racism is predicated on social and economic forces by means of economic competition and racial antagonisms (Bağlama, 2018). It is necessary here to clarify that race and class relations, within the historical development and transformation of racism, have grown into a particular exploitative structure. Drawing on the arguments in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* (1982), it is necessary to consider the economic factors and consequences of race and racisms within the historical development and reorganisation of the capitalist system in Western societies, including Britain:

> The reproduction of racial and ethnic divisions has been a central feature of accumulation in the post-war period precisely because of the requirement that labour from the colonies and other peripheral economies be used to reorganize the main industrial sectors of the advanced industrial economies. (Gilroy et al., 1982: 10)

On basis of the economic/class formulation of racism, approaching the concept of race from a class-based perspective reveals that capitalism and racism have been intertwined with each other for centuries, and that the concept of race is a product of capitalism. The West's expansion of its territories, establishment of colonies, and legitimation of the slave trade are entirely based on economic interests. In *Cast, Class, and Race* (1948), O. Cromwell Cox also describes the notion of race as an outcome of Western colonialism, which prepares the ground for human labour and the exploitation of raw materials:

> The socioeconomic matrix of racial antagonism involved the commercialization of human labour in the West Indies, the East Indies, and in America, the intense competition among businessmen of different western European cities for the capitalist exploitation of the resources of this area. (330)

Such a perspective signals that racial categories were functional in terms of forming the economic structures of colonial nations; in other words, European countries aiming to manage the market for cheap labour and raw materials formulated racial categories. Another view on the relationship between racism and capitalism encapsulates the bourgeoisie's division of the working class within itself. Capitalism fractures the unity of the proletariat, including individuals from different backgrounds, and consequently allows "the capital to more effectively exploit most majority group workers" (Szymanski, 1983: 402). Pointing out that the ruling class attempts to create segregation and tension among workers regardless of

their colour, racial antagonism is produced within the capitalist system and the ruling class perpetuates the exploitation of labour by setting the working class against each other. This suggests a need to understand the 'divide and rule' strategy that exists between race and class relations. Michael Parenti (1994) argues that racism divides the working class regardless of their race, gender, and ethnicity, leaving the proletariat unable to unite for better conditions in the workplace, and that the money-oriented system always leads to the existence of a worker who willingly accepts low-paid jobs, such as immigrants. In other words, the ruling class produces a mechanism to divide workers within themselves by replacing them with lower-paid immigrants in order to make more profit and perpetuate the class division:

> Their principal historical function was to split the working class on the international level, and to motivate one section to help exploit another in the interests of the ruling class. Today such ideologies help to deepen the split within the working class in West Europe. Many indigenous workers do not perceive that they share a common class position and class interests with immigrant workers. The basic fact of having the same relationship to the means of production is obscured by the local workers' marginal advantages with regard to material conditions and status. The immigrants are regarded not as class comrades, but as alien intruders who pose an economic and social thread. (Castles and Kosack, 1972: 34-35)

The strategy of the ruling class to divide the working class 'within' leads the way for deepening the relationship between race and class since it creates racial antagonisms as well as racial boundaries, therefore preventing the working class from uniting against the capitalist system. At the socio-economic level, such a strategy of the ruling class, not only exploits black workers; at the same time, white workers are, without noticing, included in this process. To make it clear, white workers, because of their colour, assume that they belong to the ruling class, and that they are politically and economically superior to black workers although they all belong to the working class. Racial groups are re-constructed by means of "the social organization of production and reproduction of the ideological-political order" since race and class relations cannot be separately analysed from each other because racism, within its historical and social development, is affiliated with capitalism and has been formed in accordance with the changing capitalist system in the contemporary era (Juan, 2007; 35).

2.4. Defining Cultural Racism

Societies, like individuals, constantly change and are exposed to cultural transformations. Such transformations have been strengthened by structural changes in societies since the era of decolonisation. Étienne Balibar, a Marxist philosopher and political theorist in cultural studies, focuses on the changing nature of racism in which ethnocultural diversity in Europe has been reformulated into "the recognition of the diversity and equality of cultures" (Babilar, 1991: 21). For Balibar, the existence of different cultures in a society reproduces a new form of racism – cultural racism or neo-racism – which fixates on cultural differences:

> It is a racism whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences, a racism which, at first sight, does not postulate the superiority of certain groups or peoples in relation to others but 'only' the harmfulness of abolishing frontiers, the incompatibility of life-styles and traditions. (Balibar, 1991: 21)

According to Balibar, the coexistence of different cultures creates a new concept of racism, and the continuation of an Eastern culture in the West produces a sort of cultural hegemony by imposing negative connotations on the cultures of immigrants. This brings up a new form of racism, which refers to the indirect operation of racial practices perpetuating Westcentric cultural hegemony for 'others or immigrants' to behave in proper ways following Western customs and traditions. This new form of racism focuses on cultural differences, that is, the cultures of immigrants, and Western cultures are always compared in which the former is, most of the time, otherised in a negative way. The prefix 'neo' stands for a new and different form of racism in the postmodern era since traditional racism, which encapsulates the biological superiority of one race over another through pseudoscientific arguments, is superseded by the notion of differentiating differences through language, culture, and ethnicity:

> Neoracism (also known as alternative cultural racism, difference racism, or cultural fundamentalism) is a racism that can be analyzed as a process of inclusion and exclusion the dominant theme of which is not moral and intellectual superiority, but the incompatibility of cultural differences, arising from the abolition of borders … (Hervik, 2011: 35)

Cultural racism is a strategic ideology of Western nations in which racism is no longer about biological arguments, but prejudices and discrimination towards any culture, race, and ethnicity, leading to both inclusion and exclusion of immigrants in different forms. To

exemplify, the way individuals get dressed based on their ethnic and cultural backgrounds or the way they actualise their cultural and religious practices might be welcomed or seen eccentric; however, this gradually leads to the process of the otherisation and marginalisation of non-Western individuals. Cultural racism functions to dominate and discipline minorities as a way of perpetuating white hegemony and culture, which 'threatens' Western civilisations and cultural purity due to immigration waves since the era of decolonisation. It is in question whether individuals of different ethnic origins and cultures coming from colonial countries might keep up with Western modernity and civilisation or not. The fact that the acceptance of immigrants depends on their ability to integrate themselves into the mainstream culture is indirectly related to Western nations' attempt to make use of immigrants as a subject in politics and economy.

Racism is more about individuals' ability to adopt the common 'culture'; in other words, multicultural Western societies welcome individuals from different backgrounds as long as they follow Western customs and traditions. For instance, black individuals are no longer racialised because of their light/dark skin colours but are differentiated and excluded from society due to their inability to adopt and internalise the civilisation-related discourses of the West. This should not mean that neo-racism – also cultural racism – is different from the arguments of traditional racism; on the contrary, this new form of racism signals an "attempt to theoretically underline the evolution of racism", which leads to racism without colour (Bağlama, 2020: 1644). To put it another way, immigrants from different backgrounds are marginalised not because of their skin colour, but because of their failure to interiorise 'modern, civilised, and proper' codifications essential for recognition, which is based on the requirements constructed by the West. Immigrants are, in this regard, expected to adopt certain "concrete actions" as a symbol and marker of their recognition (Hackl, 2022: 994).

In fact, the word recognition lays the groundwork for two terms – which are '*conditional inclusion*' and '*performativity*' – to be discussed in order to make sense of cultural racism. Guðjónsdóttir and Loftsdóttir (2017) posit that Western discourses regarding the recognition status of immigrants determine the political existence of immigrants related to whether they are 'proper' and 'preferable' or not. Such discourses in designating individuals as 'proper' also indicate the cultural superiority of Western nations since it leads non-white immigrants to internalise the culture, values and traditions of the West while

underestimating their origins. The fact that Western nations attempt to crystalise the cultural superiority of the West plays a vital role in perpetuating racialised discourses since it generates definite requirements about 'being aptly integrated' into the Empire. Being aptly integrated into the social, political, and economic unities of the West reveals the Empire's conditional inclusion for immigrants "to fulfil the underlying criteria" so that they would be accepted and included into the society (Hackl, 2022: 990). To put it another way, Western nations indirectly generate some criteria which function to include and exclude immigrants, and these criteria, which are, of course, a product of the invisible forms of soft power, indirectly result in the 'civilisation' of immigrants, gradually pointing the way for adopting and internalising Western values and cultures.

In this context, considering narratives in relation to neo-racism or cultural racism, there exists a political and economic shift in categorising 'subjects', namely immigrants, mostly from former colonies. This political and economic shift signals the evolution of traditional racism in the postmodern era and manifests that racial discrimination toward individuals has shifted into another form, which is "racism without race" in postmodern societies (Balibar, 1991: 21). This shift might arguably be said to have started in the decolonisation period, during which individuals from colonised countries immigrated to the West, particularly Britain. Especially after the Second World War, the rise of immigration mobility from colonised countries formulated the sociocultural and economic reestablishment of British society since immigration mobility expanded ethnic and cultural diversity and offered economic recovery for Western nations (Hansen, 1999).

During the period between the 1940s and 1970s, hundreds of immigrants entered the UK through legal channels, and were issued legal rights under the supervision of the government. Such legal permissions of the government toward immigrants were directly affiliated with economic factors of the time, during which the economy of the UK was characterised by labour shortage due to the Second World War. Considering the labour shortage in post-war Britain, the Labour government introduced several policies in order to reduce the level of unemployment and inflation and, therefore, legalised the entrance of immigrants to the UK to solve labour shortage and facilitated the way for the inclusion of immigrants as a low-cost labour force into the British economy. The specific policy regarding the issue of immigrants and the reconstruction of the British economy was the enactment of the British Nationality Act in 1948. According to the Act, individuals from the

Commonwealth nations and the colonies were granted citizenship by Britain, and their entrance to the UK was legalised by the government. Such enactment by the government designated the economic structure of Britain in manufacturing cheap labour force through immigrants. The Act also brought about the problem of who would be granted citizenship as well as creating the distinction between skilled and unskilled workers among immigrants (Halper and Green, 1996). The British Nationality Act of 1948, in this context, points to the conclusion that the influx of immigrants empowered Britain to resolve labour shortage through the new political subject, immigrants, and that ethnic and cultural diversity facilitated the way for Britain to employ multiculturalism, which also poses a problem because of the challenges between cultural diversity and the Western monocultural sublime (Bağlama, 2020).

2.5. Unity Within Diversity: Multiculturalism

Over nearly 40 years, most countries, particularly the UK, the USA, and Canada, have carried out a policy with an objective to encourage tolerance and respect for individuals and groups coming from different ethnic backgrounds. These policies have been directed at immigrants along with ethnic and religious minorities to perpetuate ethnic, religious, and cultural differences within a community and to support cultural plurality and employ multiculturalism (Hall, 2000; Vertovec, 2010). To define, multiculturalism refers to a general notion which encapsulates the recognition of diversity in terms of culture, religion, and language, and aims to prevent assimilation and the dominant culture's hegemony by respecting differences as well as enabling the inclusion of the 'new' members of the society. In a social context, it lays under the principles of multiculturalism that cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity is beneficial for society and provides an opportunity for newcomers as well as attempting to reduce racism and discrimination towards others. In a political and economic context, multiculturalism signals a set of issues such as the recognition of minority groups, the control of state borders, integration programs for immigrants, and the political representations of diverse identities (Colombo, 2015).

The increase in ethno-cultural diversity in the West has increased especially after the 1950s. The policies of Western nations that support cultural diversity and the global impact of capitalism have led to the gradual growth of multicultural societies. After the Second

World War, the decline in the level of economic and social welfare in most European countries led to the mobility which changed European demography in terms of ethnic groups, and this was a result of the policies of governments supporting ethnic diversity and the influx of immigrants to the West. It was already stated that governments, especially Britain, used immigrants as cheap labour force in a politically correct way, granting citizenship and rights. Although such population mobility from outside the Nation was conducted in a more controlled and restrictive way, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, it could arguably be said to have posed problems. To address the potential socio-economic and political issues arising from increasing ethnic diversity, such as negative representations of immigrants and cultural prejudices, the British government introduced the Race Relations Acts in 1966, 1968, and 1976. On the other hand, it was in question whether immigrants, because of their colonial background and differences, would be integrated into the society or not. Since the era of decolonisation, migration mobilities have not only provided ethnic and cultural diversity but also caused problems based on this ethnocultural diversity.

In this regard, immigrants from different backgrounds are allowed to perpetuate their language, culture, and religion in multicultural Western societies on the condition that they carry out performative actions, which are the rules set by the West, such as using a hegemonic language – the 'proper' one. To put it another way, ethnic and religious minorities are included in the society if they carve their personalities in accordance with the dominant society. By its definition, although multiculturalism supports diversities in order to promote positive social correlation, it often neglects the underlying mechanisms regarding the evolution of traditional racism, which is directed toward cultures rather than races in contemporary society (Zizek, 1997; Berman and Paradies, 2010).

The belief that multiculturalism functions to preserve diverse cultures is rejected by Slavoj Žižek, a Slovenian-born scholar in cultural studies. For Žižek, the notion of multiculturalism is a direct operation of global capitalism, and the coexistence of different cultures reproduces hierarchical relationships between cultures through the notion of respect for the other, which helps to reassert the superiority of specific cultures. On the socio-cultural level, Žižek considers that multiculturalism is not an equal collaboration of cultures, but a phenomenon that ensures the perpetuation of the existing order in a cultural hierarchy, sustaining the operations of global capitalism and "offer[ing] a protection of Euro-centric distance" (Žižek, 1997: 44). In this respect, although multiculturalism ideologically produces

policies to support a multicultural society, it at the same time poses a problem since it emphasises the differences between cultures, rather than promoting solidarity.

Multiculturalism becomes a problem since it indirectly provides an alternative racialised discourse as well as new political subjects. To exemplify, migration waves to the UK from the Caribbean islands, India, Pakistan, and South Asia during the 1940s and 1980s did not only produce an effect on the economy but also on politics and social life. To exemplify, immigrants from diverse backgrounds were funded by the government and were provided with different social spheres including history and theatre classes, and job-oriented courses. These facilities provided by the government were, of course, provided in a Westcentric manner, following Western logic and curriculum. One of these social spheres was about teaching and assisting in learning and improving the English language for immigrants, which seems quite similar to the colonial practices of the West:

> It was during this time that immigrant Muslim children, predominantly of Pakistani ('East and West') origin, first had an impact on the British education system. The 1960s was a time of assimilationist government policy in education, with 'different' cultures assumed to be 'deprived' cultures needing to be internalised into the dominant English culture. (Abbas, 2011: 66)

The issue here was not the language assistance provided by the government; rather, it was more about the intention of the government, which was to educate immigrants in accordance with the 'proper' language, an extension of the 'us-like' mechanism while implicitly delegitimising their languages (Erbil et al., 2023). This seems to problematise cultural differences since the operations of multiculturalism, as seen in the British education system, cause individuals to be both included and excluded from "heteronormative narrative that still dominates Western national formations" (Lentin and Titlet, 2009: 224).

Supporting ethnocultural diversity, therefore, indirectly reveals the underlying principles of multiculturalism such as assimilation, European acculturation, and invisible enemy – them vs. us. The policies of governments in supporting multicultural society are, in this regard, grounded on the notion of elaborating differences and rejecting the presence of racism, which reinforces new ways to promote racism by the agency of assimilation through differences (Berman and Paradies, 2010). As already pointed out, cultural racism is a mechanism in which differences, whether ethnic or cultural, are highlighted by the dominant society as a way of inclusion and exclusion of immigrants. Accordingly, a possible explanation for this argument is related to immigrants' identity in the neo-colonial centre in

which they, in order to live in harmony within ethnocultural diversity, adopt the proper identity:

> Such ambiguity [identity politics] has a significant impact on racial minorities as they move from identities of culture and self-determination to the realities of social practice and dominant structures. They may seek to compensate by trying to look white or conform to white expectations… (Betancur, 2013: 26-27)

This is, in fact, the very reason why immigrants are coerced to construct new identities based on the requirements of the nation. In this respect, immigrants are required to shape themselves into a certain identity, which serves the socio-political and economic interests of Western nations; if not accepted, they would be excluded and marginalised (Abbas, 2011). In "Cosmopolitan Promises, Multicultural Realities" (2006), Stuart Hall draws on the reality of multiculturalism in which the ethnocultural diversity in the 'cosmopolitan' West has increased because of globalisation and immigration (Hall, 2006). For Hall, differences are not just a consequence of ethnocultural diversity; differences also necessitate a further intersectional analysis, including race, ethnicity, gender, and class, since differences represent and define the construction of identities in a multicultural environment. Based on the complex relations of different cultures, Hall addresses the logic of cultural relations between the insider and the outsider, and claims that outsiders, namely immigrants, are unable to preserve their "organic … self-sustaining, self-sufficient entities" because of globalisation, and therefore turn into hybrid individuals with cultural hybridity (Hall, 2006; Weedon, 2016). On the notion of globalisation and multiculturalism, Hall puts forward that multiculturalism attempts to reduce cultural diversity through the proliferation of differences.

In "The Multicultural Question" (2000), Hall addresses different forms of multiculturalism such as a) conservative multiculturalism, which attempts to assimilate the differences of minority groups into the traditions of the mainstream society, b) liberal multiculturalism, which promotes the subordination and integration of differences into the claims of universal citizenship and political principles, and c) corporate multiculturalism, which designates differences on behalf of the nation. Each form indirectly functions to preserve the culture, customs, and traditions of the majority, which leads to the homogenisation of differences. In other words, multiculturalism supports the idea of the coexistence of different cultures, and promotes the prolongation of differences, yet simultaneously providing a ground to shape and evolve cultural differences into the culture

and traditions of the mainstream society. Another aspect of multiculturalism, which problematises "the subaltern proliferation of difference", is the globalisation of local differences (Hall, 2000: 102). The tendency in homogenising differences is similar to the process of Americanisation in which local differences are domesticated and reproduced in a 'universal' context (Hall, 2000). Considering the arguments of Hall, multiculturalism in contemporary societies is a new politico-cultural practice of peacefully managing differences in postmodern capitalism in a politically correct way.

Taken together with multiculturalism, identity also plays a vital role for immigrants since it constructs the distinction between their origin and the imposed self. Multiculturalism seems to protect and support the political rights of minorities; however, it poses a problem for minorities when it comes to perpetuate their own cultural rituals, traditions, and values since Western nations assume that there exists a cultural incompatibility between local citizens and foreigners, and that cultural differences threaten national unity. Damir Skenderovic (2007) draws on the political debate in Switzerland in the 1960s regarding immigration-oriented exclusionary issues, and reveals the racialised policy of the government, which supported the idea that the cultural gap between Swiss and immigrants cannot be bridged due to the differences:

> As the parties embraced essentialist notions of culture, values and ways of life, they emphasized the cultural incompatibility between Swiss and foreign residents. Consequently, they argued that immigrants would never really be assimilated in Switzerland due to their alleged national pride and deeply rooted traditions. (Skenderovic, 2007: 169)

Such an essentialist belief towards immigrants unveils the idea that the identities of immigrants are fixed and single, rather than fluid and dynamic, and that those who do not have proper qualities are considered to be a threat. Drawing on the article of Skenderovic, another important critical implication is that immigrant's adherence to tradition and culture is seen as a threat or at least a negative feature, which is quite ironic for nations supporting ethnic diversity. It can be, therefore, hypothesised that such indirect operations of cultural racism within multiculturalism lead to two possible arguments; first, individuals from different backgrounds are expected to act in a particular manner and construct identities, which, of course, coincides with socio-cultural and economic expectations of Western nations; second, as a result of immigrants' adoption of Western narratives due to their desire to be recognised and accepted, the concepts of *conditional inclusion* and *performativity* emerge. Another critical point in multiculturalism is that Western nations, as a result of the

colonialist mentality, tend to reduce the multiple identities of immigrants into a single category in terms of their socio-cultural characteristics and tendencies.

There are, for instance, multiple Muslim identities, rather than a fixed and single identity; however, Western nations homogenise Muslim identities into a single category. For instance, the Arabs are, especially after 9/11, represented as extremist religious groups, posing a threat to society. The identities of Arabs are linked to their religious beliefs, independent of their social, economic, or ethnic backgrounds. As a result, The 'West' normalises the anti-Muslim sentiment. Such a representation of the Arabs functions in two ways in multicultural societies; firstly, it creates a fixity and biased insight regarding immigrants away from the reality; secondly, it also paves the way for Orientalist discourses to perpetuate postmodern racism within ethnocultural diversity (Amin, 2002). It is apparent that through the political operations of Western nations in promoting racism without race, multiculturalism or ethnocultural diversity becomes a problem since identities of immigrants are reduced into a single category, and that the inclusion of immigrants into the dominant society is just a myth since their acceptance is dependent on the conditions determined by the West, such as whether they properly perform Western culture(s) or not.

2.6. Conditional Inclusion and Performativity

Recently, humanities and social sciences have shown an increased concern for studying the contextualisation of immigrants or the colonial subject in neo-colonial centres since the growing immigration wave has affected metropolitan cities in terms of social, economic, and political developments. There has been strong conjunction between the changing socio-cultural structure of Western nations and the influx of immigrants since the decolonisation period, and this conjuction has caused Western states to support multiculturalism and embrace differences. This might, in fact, mean that ethnic and cultural diversity in multicultural societies seems to be an anti-racist policy; however, it generates new forms of racial discourses through the conditions determined and produced by the mainstream society. Western nations strategically generate politically correct control mechanisms instead of promoting racial discourses, which are based on old forms of racism. Herein, both the inclusion and exclusion of immigrants are attached to the pre-determined conditions constructed by the 'West' in which belonging to the nation, its culture and

tradition, and not posing a threat to the society are obliged for immigrants. (Bağlama, 2020; Hackl, 2022).

As already outlined, conditional inclusion signifies racialised Western discourses regarding immigrants' acceptability into the dominant society in which they are required to espouse certain expectations, such as being proper and useful citizens. To make it clear, in multicultural societies, including the UK and the USA, individuals from different backgrounds might be welcomed and offered several facilities if they, either voluntarily or not, acknowledge Western narratives on proper and useful citizenship:

> When a citizenship regime foreshadows the possibility of inclusion or membership for immigrants if certain conditions are met, it promotes a set of qualities that individuals can feel pressured to strive for. These qualities of "goodness" include contributing economically, being civic-minded, being law abiding, and being loyal while maintaining a politically or religiously moderate position. (Hackl, 2022: 99)

The fact that the inclusion of immigrants into the mainstream society is bound up with having good qualities might signal the process of performing the ideal personality which is characterised by a set of concerns for conforming to the society. The logic of this conditional citizenship has its root in the arguments of Orientalism, which categorises individuals as good and bad in accordance with their ability to conform to the Empire. In cultural racism, immigrants, as new subjects, are separated into groups through the process by which the inclusion and exclusion of immigrants are affiliated with their performativity: performing the requirements of the ideal and proper citizen as a member of the state. The most recent instance of such conditional inclusion might be found within Western nations' political curricula. To be clear, the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (2022-2024) Rishi Sunak would be a case example supporting the arguments of *the proper immigrant* based on the conditional inclusion of immigrants. Sunak was born in the United Kingdom to Indian immigrants who migrated to the country in the 1960s from East Africa. As a second-generation immigrant who engaged in politics after acquiring the appropriate education, Sunak has established a name for himself by performing as an example of a proper immigrant in both social and political spheres. Similarly, from a family of first-generation Pakistani immigrants, Humza Yousaf was born in 1985, in Glasgow, Scotland. Following his graduation, Yousaf performed several political duties until becoming the first Muslim Minister of Scotland in the years between 2023-2024. Such occurrences raise deeper issues regarding diversity and what it means to be a "proper" immigrant in a country with an ethnically diverse population. Western countries – particularly the United Kingdom – have

built their social and political structures over hundreds of years on the basis of colonialism and imperialism. However, in the contemporary era, the West has reconstructed its socio-political agenda, giving rise to new kinds of colonialism and racial discourses, which is indeed cultural racism. On the other hand, such exclusion and inclusion can be exemplified through minorities, particularly Muslims. For instance, after 9/11, racist speeches and prejudices against Muslim communities have grown and produced misrepresentations of Islam as a consequence of far-right anti-Islamic policies as well as Islamophobia. This should not, of course, mean that Islam and Islamic culture(s) are better or worse than other religions and cultures. In this context, the anti-racist policies that Muslims have been exposed to in the UK and the USA for the last two decades indicate the effects of cultural racism on Muslims very well. To make it clear, in multicultural societies, the religious and cultural practices of immigrants are supported and accepted; however, they are expected to be 'proper and moderate' Muslims who contribute to capitalism, which entails adapting to elements of the dominant culture and moderating/domesticating their religious rituals and cultural practices accordingly (Bağlama, 2020: 1645-1647). A proper Muslim is usually the one who endeavours to mimic Western cultures in the sense of traditions, clothing, speaking, and so on.

This mimicry is, then, a process, and can be contextualised through the theory of performativity, which is originally attributed to the social construction of gender roles by Judith Butler. According to J. Butler, it is necessary to interrogate the naturality of gendered behaviours since characteristics of being a woman and man have nothing to do with inheritance and biological determinants; on the contrary, gender identity is a performative process in which individuals repeatedly perform 'proper' gender roles based on the cultural environment where they grow up. That is, gender identity is not what individuals are but become (Butler, 1988). It is therefore useful that the notion of performativity can be, within the framework of postcolonial studies, articulated into the argument that immigrants, as new political and economic subjects in Western nations, build identities by performing the ideal qualifications of how immigrants should be in a Western episteme.

2.7. What is Islamophobia?

In 2017, during an event held at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre in Australia, a Muslim girl was asked to leave the exhibition because she wore a hijab. The organising committee put it clearly that her hijab threatened other students because of the recent attack in Manchester by an extremist suicide bomber in 2017, and did not therefore allow the student to participate in the event since her Muslim background was believed to become a threat to the society. Another incident related to anti-Islamism has been ongoing in France for a couple of years. Local authorities in France have been trying to ban 'burkinis', which is a swimsuit generally preferred by Muslim women, on the grounds that such swimsuits negatively stand for the symbol of Islam as a dress-code and are against French values and secularism. The fact that there are many 'attacks' towards Muslims because of their appearance indicates very well that differences, especially those regarding Muslims, are not still 'tolerated' by Western societies. Such anti-Muslim beliefs and policies, which have been the subject of debates for more than thirty years, can generally be conceptualised as Islamophobia.

Questioned by the fields of humanities and social sciences for decades, there is still a lack of agreement and awareness about what Islamophobia is, where it originates and evolves, and how it is related to cultural racism. Although many scholars from the UK and France have, especially since the early 1990s, conducted research on Islamophobia, the concept can be theoretically said to rely on the arguments of E. Said's *Orientalism* (1978), which is derived from the colonial discourses and operations of the Empire during the colonial period. In other words, Islamophobia is a relatively new and considerably growing concept; however, ideas and theories encompassing Islamophobia are not novel because anti-Muslim narratives and discourses have been periodically produced by the West since the colonial period. Considering Islamophobia as merely a kind of racism can be reductionist since it is a multi-layered and interdisciplinary subject, grounded on sociology, race, religion, and culture. This, therefore, necessitates the examination of the concept of Islamophobia in its historical development in order to comprehend the present-day arguments.

Islamophobia is etymologically formed with the combination of the Greek word 'phobos' and Islam, referring to the fear of Islam. With its broad definition, Islamophobia is a phenomenon driven by fear and terror, as well as prejudice, hatred, and hostility towards Islam and Muslims (Kundnani, 2017). Islamophobia, which is a very common facet of

racism in postmodern societies, directly causes the radicalisation, devaluation, and otherisation of Muslim groups in terms of their cultural and religious backgrounds (Massoumi, et al., 2017). That is, individuals who associate themselves with Islam or come from an Islamic background are treated as 'the other' and racialised by non-Muslim individuals and groups. This type of racism is related to the marginalisation of individuals through religion and culture in cultural/neo/postmodern racism. Through the West's domination of media, laws, and popular culture, Islamophobia turns into a race, which targets Islam and Muslims as a "cultural process of othering" (Meer and Modood, 2019; Massoumi, et al., 2017). The present-day images and representations of Muslims, which are characterised as uncivilised, inherently violent, and fanatical, coincide with the colonial discourse of the West in depicting the Orient as the other:

> Therefore, 'Orientals' and Muslims are thought to be primitive and backward and … [t]he main traits of the stereotype of the Orient are its irrationality, violence and cruelty such that it symbolises 'terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians'. (Abbas, 2011: 94)

Since the beginning of the European colonial domination, the Western logic of categorising the unfamiliar is in a parallel way to the otherisation of Muslim individuals in which negative images and stereotypes are constructed to point Muslims as a target, reproducing distorted representations of Islam and Muslims in the post-modern world. (Said, 1978; Semati, 2010). Halliday (1999), in the article entitled "'Islamophobia' reconsidered", argues that the growing structure of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment is comprised of two ideas: a) 'Western stereotypes of Muslims', in which certain common characteristics of Muslims are universally represented and accepted, such as assuming that all Muslims are Arab, through different mediums of Western media and b) a monolithic and single identity, in which all Muslims are, irrespective of different social, political, and cultural backgrounds, are identically believed to be the same in their understanding and practicing of Islam. Such a racialisation of Muslim individuals is based on stereotyping, and the Eurocentric judgments of the West form the basic tenets of Islamophobia as racism. It is, in fact, a matter of turning society against a group or individual through the representations of Muslims, which are often overgeneralised, far from reality, and even through imaginary misrepresentations. Such a strategic way of othering Muslims, especially in France, Britain, and the USA, ironically unearths that ideals related to multiculturalism and ethnocultural diversity have failed to provide social justice among different ethnic and religious minorities (Ogan et al., 2013).

In a similar way to the arguments of neo-orientalism in terms of racialisation and

discrimination of minorities, the process of otherising Muslims can be said to have begun during the era of decolonisation in Europe and increased rapidly after the 1990s. During the years between the 1960s and 1980s, a great number of immigrants from 'former' colonies arrived in European countries to provide themselves with better social and economic opportunities. While the USA allowed many immigrants to be granted citizenship through laws and policies, namely the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, most countries in Europe, especially Britain, also granted citizenship to many immigrants in order to solve out the labour shortage, as examined in the previous sections. These migration mobilities have, thus, led to the increase of many ethnic and religious groups and the change in demographic structure in Europe (Garner and Selod, 2014). During this period, there was already racial hatred and fear towards Muslims because it was assumed that all Muslims were from an Arabic background and were backward, dogmatic, and fanatic. However, on September 11, 2011, anti-Muslim beliefs and prejudices towards Muslims were taken a step further, paving the way for producing new discourses against Muslims in which hatred, hostility, and discrimination towards Muslims have structurally been constructed.

2.8. Islamophobia After 9/11

In "Islamophobia as Ideology of US Empire", Arun Kundnani (2017) acknowledges that there are two approaches to the analysis of Islamophobia as a form of racism: structural and personal. The structural level of Islamophobia is more about the policies of the government in which a cultural distinction is generated through laws and social interests of certain parties. Kundnani, for example, argues that structural Islamophobia is affiliated with "securing power on the part of particular groups" and that cultural and religious characteristics of Islam lead to discrimination and hostility towards Muslims as a result of the political project of the elites (Kundnani, 2017: 37). The latter is related to individuals' mindset in which Islamophobia is driven by fear, hatred, and hostility against Muslims because of social issues such as the attacks, including 7/7 and 9/11. In other words, Kundnani posits that Islamophobia manifests at a personal level through individuals expressing negative feelings toward the culture and religion of Islam. These sentiments are often provoked by events such as the 7 July 2005 London bombings and the 9/11 attacks, where Muslims were targeted and victimised because the perpetrators were militants from a Muslim

background. Consequently, these events have reinforced negative perceptions and hostility towards the entire Muslim community, associating all Muslims with extremism and militancy, and resulting in widespread hatred and insecurity towards anyone from an Islamic background (Abbas, 2011). In fact, xenophobia, discrimination, and hostility towards Muslims were already existent in the pre-9/11 period around Europe and the US since Muslim individuals' primary identity was associated with their religion:

> Thus, these types of xenophobia were not anything new and were distinctly pre- 9/11 phenomena. However, through the overlapping of Muslimness and the previously racialized or ethnicized "Otherness" that such enemies previously had, those existing fears and attributes were subsequently reinforced and, transitionally, found an increased resonance through a seeming confirmation of those previous fears and beliefs… (Allen, 2010: 106)

The racialisation of Muslim individuals did not start after the 9/11 attacks; rather, it had already existed in different forms and mediums such as policies, laws, media, and everyday life. Through social and political issues, the image of Muslims, which was constructed on the arguments of Orientalism, was always reproduced in a negative way for the exclusion of Muslims within Western societies. However, due to media distortions and reductionist portrayals, Muslims have been the focus of anti-Muslim legislation, particularly since 9/11. By ignoring the diverse identities of Muslims coming from different geographies, cultures, and ethnicities, a single type of Muslim image has been created to differentiate 'the enemy within' (Sheridan, 2006,). Through the popular media, Muslims are also characterised and associated with representations such as men with long beards, women wearing hijabs, fanatical and savage-looking Arabs, as well as closed-minded and uneducated 'subjects'. Such unrealistic misrepresentations of Muslims consequently polarise and racialise Muslims:

> The association of Islam with terrorism has come to be accepted as part of the discourse on security and terrorism, to the extent that terms such as "Muslim" and "terrorist" have become almost synonymous. the tendency to label Muslims as terrorists is a trend that has emerged over the last three decades. Themes of extremism, violence, and militancy are commonly associated with Muslims in Western media that portray Muslims as villainous assassins, kidnappers, hostages, and/or terrorists. (Eid, 2014: 105)

Associating Islam with terrorism and negative characteristics is, from a different perspective, a deliberate attempt to justify the superiority of Western religions and cultures while demeaning and otherising Islam. In this regard, in the years following the 9/11 attacks, the unrealistic portrayals of Muslims in literary works and different channels of the media have

provoked non-Muslim groups to take a stand against Islam. Within the context of 'creating an enemy within', the racist attitudes and policies of the West towards the religion and cultures of Islam have led to the rise of Islamophobia in the USA and the UK. However, the changing structure of racism in the post-modern era has brought about multiple forms of racism, which leads to the need for new political subjects. To put it another way, European projects of racism towards Muslims have been rearticulated because of recent social, political, and economic circumstances in the West, in which social integration policies about immigrants have become a major concern for the question of multiculturalism (Abbas, 2011).

2.9. The Evolution of Politics of Islamophobia: 'Good Muslims'

The social and political framing of Muslims has become a subject matter in multicultural societies. It should be noted that in multicultural societies, although the rights of minorities from different ethnic backgrounds are protected and guaranteed, immigrants are still racialised because of their religion, language, and ethnic origins. The major concern about immigrants, especially Muslims, is whether they can perform adaptation and integration into the mainstream society. This necessitates contextualising the notion of conditional acceptance in which immigrants are selectively accepted if they have the following tendencies: performing moderate religious positions, adapting to the dominant culture, being proper in terms of language and clothing, and contributing to the economy (Abbas, 2011; Hackl, 2022). The fact that performing moderate religious positions, especially for Muslims, signals an attempt to control and assimilate Muslims has become a new trend in the West, addressing the discourses of cultural racism on Islamophobia:

> Clearly, in the wake of 9/11 and the terror attacks in Western Europe, questions in relation to loyalty have come to dominate discussions on Muslim minorities in Western Europe. The policies of assimilation have re-emerged, with citizenship laws developed according to security concerns, creating a fresh climate of Islamophobia in Western Europe. (Abbas, 143: 2011)

Turning into assimilation policies, the West has reshaped the formulation of Islamophobia and produced 'moderate, soft, and proper' discourses to socioculturally and ideologically dominate Muslims. To put it another way, the dichotomy of them vs. us has been taken a step further in which Muslims are, through politically correct ways, categorised as good and bad by their ability to adapt to Western cultures. Good Muslims are, regardless of the

religion, culture, and ethnicity they belong to, those who work for the benefit of the society and adapt themselves to the culture of the society:

> [W]hale securitizing narratives place caveats on Muslim claims of citizenship = based on 'good character', good behaviour and adherence to 'British values' = they can be set against alternative models of belonging ...The neoliberal ideology advanced by New Labour constructs the 'good Muslim', as it constructs other 'good citizens', primarily through meritocratic materialism. In this sense the 'normal Muslim' is the one we can 'do business' with, in a quite literal way. (Brown, 2010: 178)

Considering the arguments of cultural racism on Islamophobia, certain characteristics of Muslims, such as following the 'proper' culture, being 'proper' in terms of language and clothing, and integrating themselves into society, become major markers of categorising Muslims as good citizens. This should not mean that the West discontinues racialising Muslims based on their religious backgrounds; rather, the racialisation of Muslims has evolved into a mechanism in which Muslim individuals are expected to display a modernised, civilised, and proper mindset in accordance with Western cultures. Wearing hijab, for example, does not pose a problem anymore; however, cultural differences are ignored; that is, if women perform the ideal and proper citizenship's requirements, hijab or scarf is welcomed. As long as individuals contribute to the interest of the dominant society, they are, regardless of their ethnic and religious backgrounds, integrated into society. Such a conditional acceptance reveals the dichotomy of good and bad Muslims. Good Muslims, as put earlier, are 'modernised' and 'civilised' in terms of language, religion, and culture. They are those who associate themselves with Western cultures and act in a proper way in order not to be excluded by the mainstream society.

Malcolm X's ideas serve as the foundation for Hamid Dabashi's conceptualisation of the house Muslim (2011), which could help explain the definition of the "good" Muslim. Drawing on the concepts of the house Negro and the field Negro, Malcolm X argues that the house Negro, who perform domestic labour and live in the house of the slave-owner, feel to be in a superior position compared to the field Negro, who work on plantations, since the former identify themselves with the master, while the latter are otherised by both the master and the house Negro. Dabashi, in this regard, suggests that the house Muslim – like the house Negro – tend to reshape themselves in accordance with Western values, which leads to a sense of superiority, as they put on the characteristics of the ideal Muslim. Thus, while fulfilling the requirements of being a 'good Muslim' in order to be accepted into the West,

the house Muslim indirectly delegitimise their own religious and cultural backgrounds. In *Brown Skin, White Masks* (2011), Dabashi also focuses on the critical analysis of how misrepresentations and false images of Islam are produced by native informers, who internalise the narratives of neo-colonial discourses. In the book, Dabashi examines the vilification and unrealistic representations of Islamic religious and cultural practices produced by a Muslim-origin writer, Ibn Warraq, and claims that the anti-Muslim prejudice is sustained through native informers, who dehumanise Muslims and help disseminate neo-orientalist arguments, paving the way for the native informer to be accepted and welcomed by the West since he/she internalises the civilisational superiority of the 'West' (Dabashi, 2011).

Considering the evolution of Islamophobia in the twenty-first century, Islamophobia emerges as a phenomenon that is constantly reproduced. Through different forms, policies, and strategies, which are based on the sociocultural circumstances of contemporary societies, anti-Muslim ideologies target Muslims to homogenise their cultural practices by means of voluntary assimilation. It is also clear that Muslims continue to be challenged by misrepresentations and negative characteristics; however, their social, cultural, and political integration into the mainstream society is now affiliated with their tendencies to "perform the real Muslim identity", and Muslims, therefore, are expected to adapt to, and internalise, the real, yet constructed, Muslim identity (Bağlama, 2020: 1642).

CHAPTER THREE

DECODING CULTURAL RACISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA IN *THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST* BY MOHSIN HAMID

Mohsin Hamid, a British Pakistani writer, novelist, and journalist, is one of the most praised novelists of the contemporary era in literature. With numerous literary awards to his credit, Hamid explores the experiences of immigrants, ethnic and racial minorities, and class divisions in his novels, including *Moth Smoke* (2000) and *Exit West* (2017). Through his works, Hamid not only provides a theoretical framework for various literary theories such as postcolonialism and critical refugee studies but also sheds light on the complexities of these issues. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), which won various major awards, including the Ambassador Book Award and the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, and was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize (2007), similarly has drawn attention to the socio-political reality of immigrants and has been appraised by many critics and reviewers. Hamid's exceptional ability to craft plots and utilise rhetorical language enables him to explore the immigrant experience in a profound way, revealing the marginalisation often rooted in social biases and prejudices. With the narrative structure and the author's writing technique as well as the ability in delivering socio-political messages, the novel has recently brought up debates about racism in which racism after 9/11 has evolved into new dimensions and led to religious and cultural discrimination (Anthony, 2012).

Translated into many languages, sold millions of copies, and adapted into a movie, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* has also become quite popular immediately after its publication, and many universities have offered students a free copy of the novel in order to raise awareness and encourage students for intellectual debates. The novel unearths the modern-day condition of racism and Islamophobia in the USA since it gives a realistic snapshot into the reality of immigrants living in the colonial centre in the wake of 9/11, and keeps readers involved by means of its literary techniques such as dramatic monologue, suspense, and unanswered questions (Olsson, 2007). Regarding the novel, Hamid acknowledges that immigrants, who are classified as 'outsiders', are excluded from society because of their 'otherness' although they attempt to integrate themselves into the mainstream society. In view of this, the novel fictionalises contemporary debates on racism, challenges the American Dream, and helps immigrants realise that they exist only if they are useful and proper. The fact that Mohsin Hamid is a Pakistani-born novelist paves the way

for the novel to set the narration in Pakistan and provides an insight into the culture and traditions of Pakistan; therefore, the book has, since the day it was published, provided a literary framework to many discussions, and laid the groundwork for many interdisciplinary discussions.

The novel tells the story of an immigrant character, Changez, who talks to an anonymous American stranger in a café in Lahore, Pakistan. The Pakistani character, Changez, recounts his life story in a detailed way and narrates the happenings when he is in the USA. Offering tea and traditional cuisine to the American stranger, Changez begins to detail his memories. As an immigrant individual, Changez comes to the USA for education where he studies at Princeton College and considers himself to be an excellent student with high grades. After graduating from the university, Changez works for a company, Underwood Samson, as an analyst in which his hard work and usefulness are, most of the time, appreciated by the company. Along with the self-confidence of working in a prestigious job after suffering from financial hardships during his college years, he often reminds himself of how proud it is to wear good clothes and go to grand parties and restaurants. In Changez's professional career, his peers and his supervisor Jim are highly impressed by his performance and appreciates his hard work, foresight, and perfect English. Supporting the good course of his career, the company sends Changez to the Philippines, which affects the rest of his life in the USA. While managing works in Manila, in the Philippines, Changez witnesses the attacks of 9/11, during which he takes pleasure in watching the news and seeing the USA getting weaker. On his return to New York, Changez is detained and interrogated by the airport security because of his 'Middle Eastern appearance', which signals the misguided notion of fixedness assuming that individuals coming from the Middle East poses a threat. Changez gradually notices the discrimination and racist attitudes towards him by his colleagues and society although he is not totally offended and abused by such attitudes because of his privileged position within the society. Then, Changez decides to visit his family in Pakistan, and notices the dilemma that he considers himself neither a Pakistani nor an American citizen since his dream country, the USA, supports the military attack of India towards Pakistan, and feels detached and alienated from the culture and tradition of Pakistan, his home country. Later, the company sends Changez to Chile where he meets Juan-Batista who likens Changez to 'a janissary', indicating that Changez is taken away from his original background and educated by the USA in order to fight against his origins. In the final chapter, Changez grows a beard as a symbol of the solidary for his country and is fired by Jim. In the

meantime, Changez realises that the stranger feels uncomfortable and hides something under his jacket, conceivably a gun. On the way to the hotel, the stranger attempts to reach under his jacket, and the story ends without disclosing what happens next.

That Mohsin Hamid fictionalises the lives of immigrants in the USA actually reveals the socio-political reality of contemporary multicultural societies in terms of reproducing racialised attitudes towards immigrants and supports the arguments of inclusive racism regarding that immigrants are welcomed as long as they are able to contribute to the mainstream society and 'civilise' themselves. Changez, for instance, voluntarily interiorises the cultural and social narratives of orientalist epistemological formations and is consequently recognised and accepted since he symbolises the ideal, proper, and civilised immigrant (Hartnell, 2010; Morey, 2011). Drawing on the arguments of the 'good Muslim', Changez's association with positive qualities, such as studying in a respected college, getting high grades, being part of a prestigious company, and adopting "an Anglicized accent", unearths the inclusion of the 'proper' immigrant in the neo-colonial centre (Hamid 22).

Drawing on the theoretical background in Chapter I about cultural racism and Islamophobia, this chapter takes on the critical analysis of the novel. The aim of the chapter is to cast light on cultural racism and Islamophobia through an examination of the novel and its protagonist, Changez, and to explore the way immigrants, because of their ethnic and religious backgrounds, are indirectly forced to shape themselves in accordance with the requirements of the neo-colonial centre in order not to be excluded. In the novel, Changez stands for 'an ideal immigrant' who aptly integrates himself into the mainstream society in different ways and voluntarily delegitimises his own cultural background. In this context, this chapter also seeks to develop an understanding of Islamophobia in relation to cultural racism in which Muslims are, because of their cultural and religious values, still subjected to verbal and psychological violence in Western multicultural societies.

3.1. 'The Good Immigrant' In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

The Reluctant Fundamentalist provides an authentic voice to the experiences of immigrants, manifests the mechanisms that indirectly sustain the evolution of racism, and focuses on the cultural and religious backgrounds of immigrants, namely outsiders. As for the narrative technique, Hamid uses dramatic monologue and a fragmented storyline. The

fact that the narrative structure of the novel takes on the use of dramatic monologue, which functions as a strategy "for the reader-as-judge", constructs a space for the reader to criticise and judge the characters (Ilott, 2014: 573). The use of dramatic monologue therefore paves the way for the reader to unearth the underlying micro/macro racial discourses about the characters as well as multicultural societies. Another important implication of the dramatic monologue is that Hamid deconstructs the political hierarchy in the neo-colonial era. To put it another way, in the novel, Changez is the speaker and the active subject, while the American stranger is the listener and the passive subject. Although readers do not hear the voice of the American stranger, Changez hears and captures it, which signals "a dialogue (strategically) disguised as a monologue" (Madiou, 2021). Through the use of dramatic monologue, the author employs a postcolonial resistance that reconstructs colonial hierarchies and creates a third space for the reader to better understand the reality of the narrative. This space allows the reader to make judgments about the characters and, in the case of Changez, gain insight into the construction of political identities (Singh, 2012; Shirazi, 2018). In this regard, such a literary technique reveals how Changez copes with social and political oppression as well as racist discourses during the construction of a 'proper identity' as a 'good immigrant'.

In the novel, Changez, a Pakistani-born immigrant living in the USA, works for a prestigious company, Underwood Samson, and considers himself to be an upper-class immigrant, who sits "one of the most expensive districts" in Lahore and has "several servants, including a driver and a gardener" (Hamid 8). However, Changez's illusion of his 'upper class' position later turns into disillusion and estrangement because of the 9/11 attacks which give rise to racial attitudes and discrimination towards immigrants. Changez's political identity can be divided into two – before 9/11 and after 9/11 – since his identity is reshaped by the common sense of racial discourses in the wake of 9/11. Changez, as a Pakistani immigrant, develops complex and diverse identities, which sets him apart from other immigrants. Unlike other immigrants, who are either compelled to move or are in exile, Changez willingly chooses to pursue his education and career in the United States (Shirazi, 2018). In the course of migration from formerly colonised countries to the colonial centre, it is inevitable for immigrants to develop a hybrid identity, resulting in a complex and profound process of building 'self' since they experience a cultural transformation and evolution in reproducing their identities. The hybrid and complex identities of many immigrants, similar to the case of Changes, result in dislocation and ambivalence, which gradually leads to the

state of alienated and marginalised individuals (Bhabha, 1984). Individuals, therefore, seek identity as well as belonging, and either embrace their original culture or adopt the culture of the dominant society they live in. In fact, it is recognised in multicultural societies that individuals claim their own culture and present their differences in the process of creating identities; however, the ideology of multiculturalism might arguably be said to fail in reality because embracing the differences can only occur if the culture of the majority is, to a greater extent, adopted and the culture of the minority does not pose a threat to society (Alghamdi, 2013). On the other hand, the process of integration into society becomes much easier for individuals who detach themselves from their own culture and internalise the culture and values of the neo-colonial centre.

In the novel, while Changez, most of the time, considers himself as "a New Yorker", he does not forget the fact that he is a Pakistani (18). In fact, the factors that make Changez take on a hybrid character are related to factors such as being a successful student, working in a prestigious company, and integrating himself into society. In other words, the acceptance of Changez by the multicultural American society can be related to the fact that he is a proper immigrant, acting in accordance with the values and culture of the society while reflecting his own cultural background, which might be an example of how multiculturalism works in practice (Zizek, 1997; Chandio and Sangi, 2021).

One of the key aspects in the correct detection of Changez' identity before 9/11 underlies, firstly, much of his voluntary integration into American society and secondly his ability to perform the necessities of 'a good immigrant'. Unlike other immigrants, Changez's social and economic inclusion in American society can be attributed to the fallacy – based on the arguments of Orientalism – that the society's values and culture are superior to the original culture (Jajja, 2013). In other words, in terms of cultural hierarchy, a Pakistani individual is described as an 'inferior and exotic foreigner' having "some serious problems with fundamentalism" (8). In such an environment, immigrants internalise and mimic the values and culture of American society to be visible and gain acceptance. Cultural racism proposes that Western societies assign a specific role to immigrants, expecting them to conform to, and emulate, certain shared traits of the society as a means to civilise and modernise themselves. This is akin to the practice of classifying immigrants based on their ability to exemplify model citizenship. To put it another way, one of the major discourses of a good immigrant debate is related to an immigrant's degree of intellectuality, education,

and ability to integration since immigrants who are educated and prone to adapt to cultural values and traditions of the dominant society are more likely to not be marginalised by the dominant society (Guðjónsdóttir and Loftsdóttir, 2017). In the novel, thinking that being a Pakistani is enough for his marginalisation, Changez adopts the values of the mainstream society in order not to be marginalised and excluded by the society and acts as if he is modern and American at every turn. To exemplify, Changez applies for a position as a financial evaluator, and Jim, the supervisor, expresses his first impression during the interview with Changez:

> Jim leaned back in his chair and crossed his legs at the knee, just as you are doing now. Then he said, "You're polished, well-dressed. You have this sophisticated accent. Most people probably assume you're rich where you come from." It was not a question, so I made no reply. (Hamid 8)

While conducting the job interview, Jim, who is the vice president at Underwood Samson, places significant emphasis on Changez's proficiency in English and attire, which reflects the notion that immigrants from diverse backgrounds are accepted only if they adhere to certain standards with regards to language, appearance, and attitude. Changez is also aware of the fact that dressing in presentable clothes and speaking proper English would be helpful for him to take the job, making a positive impression on the job interviewer. To theorise such a case, multicultural Western societies embrace diverse cultural and religious differences of immigrants; however, such differences are only accepted if immigrants could properly integrate themselves into the dominant society and perform good qualities such as being Westernised in culture and values. These qualities or qualifications that immigrants should possess are, in fact, grounded on the arguments of cultural racism. The act of dressing stylishly, speaking the language of the powerful, and conforming to the customs of the predominant white society is also akin to the idea of postcolonial performativity. This is because immigrants are anticipated to meet specific standards and expectations in their behaviour and demeanour. In reality, it is primarily about immigrants endeavouring to emulate the dominant group by adopting the norms of the mainstream society, so that their distinct ethnic or religious identities are not accentuated. (Bhabha, 1984; Pandya and Mohammadi, 2022). Mimicking and embracing the culture of the centre, Changez undergoes a process of an illusion in which he considers himself an American citizen and "a veritable James Bond – only younger, darker, and possibly better paid" (Hamid 31). This illusion also prompts Changez to frequently contrast his own culture with American culture, frequently displaying contempt for his own:

> Now our cities were largely unplanned, unsanitary affairs, and America had universities with individual endowments greater than our national budget for education. To be reminded of this vast disparity was, for me, to be ashamed. But not on that day. On that day, I did not think of myself as a Pakistani, but as an Underwood Samson trainee, and my firm's impressive offices made me proud. (Hamid 19)

Although Changez, as an immigrant in a state of in-betweenness, does not completely disassociate himself from his own culture, he primarily identifies as an American citizen prior to 9/11. Changez also acknowledges that his original culture and society are inferior to the USA and that his socio-economic level is quite good for an immigrant character, and therefore describes himself as a first-class citizen, not a second-class citizen. The fact that he works in a prestigious company, makes good money, and has a 'white' girlfriend in the USA – the 'land of opportunity' – presupposes that immigrants from different ethnic and religious backgrounds can be included in multicultural societies. Within a multicultural American society, which "recognizes differences rather than appropriating them into the logic of the same", Changez experiences a feeling of acknowledgement and prominence as his identity is constructed based on the attributes of an ideal immigrant. (Hartnell, 2010). Changez is also aware that his proficient English, high socio-economic status, and courteous behaviour are all advantageous for his visibility, and that his ethnic and religious identity can be stereotyped if he fails to act appropriately. For instance, prior to the 9/11 attacks, Changez – the sole non-American member of the group – often regards himself as "unnoticeable" despite his stylish attire, substantial bank balance, and American acquaintances (35). On the other hand, Changez acknowledges that unlike him, other immigrants with lower-level jobs are considered insignificant and unrecognised since they do not meet the requirements of a good immigrant (Khan, 2015). Changez discerns the presence of discrimination against immigrants struggling to integrate into the mainstream society, particularly in terms of economic and social aspects. This epiphany serves as an indicator that the ideal of embracing differences in the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of immigrant populations in a multicultural society fails to translate into practical implementation. This is due to the unfortunate reality that not only Western citizens but also established immigrant communities engage in acts of exclusion and disdain towards those who fail to conform to mainstream social values, perpetuating a cycle of discrimination and hindering the integration of immigrants. To exemplify, while riding in a limousine and experiencing a delay in traffic, Changez becomes aware of the gaze of a Filipino taxi driver:

> There was an undisguised hostility in his expression; I had no idea why. … But his dislike was so obvious, so intimate, that it got under my skin. I stared back at him, getting angry myself ... Afterwards, I tried to understand why he acted as he did. Perhaps, I thought, his wife has just left him; perhaps he resents me for the privileges implied by my suit and expensive car; perhaps he simply does not like Americans. I remained preoccupied with this matter far longer than I should have, pursuing several possibilities that all assumed – as their unconscious starting point – that he and I shared a sort of Third World sensibility. (33)

The hostility of the Filipino driver towards Changez might be grounded in discrimination based on intra-group conflict. In other words, not only race and ethnicity but also class determine social relations and discourses among immigrants. Changez's fashionable attire, significant financial resources, and esteemed occupation allow for his classification as a member of the upper class, while the Filipino taxi driver, due to his occupation in a lower-level job, can be classified as a member of the working class. From this perspective, although both Changez and the driver are immigrants, the hatred of one for the other is the result of the class distinction and American capitalism, which leads to the conflict within immigrants. Such a conflict between groups prompts a discourse on the categorisation of immigrants into the classifications of 'good' and 'bad', based on their respective class differences. The former is commonly attributed to individuals who possess social and economic power, while the latter is associated with those who occupy a lower socioeconomic status (Khan, 2015; White, 2019). Another implication here is that Changez's illusion of a sense of belonging to American society functions as a paradox in which he, because of his qualified social and economic aspects, considers himself an American who shares "a Third World sensibility" (33). Such an established identity paradox of Changez results in "solidarity with the Filipino driver in his admiration and resentment" towards American culture since Changez, as an upper-class immigrant, consumes every single bit of American culture and becomes an American while realising the detachment from his own roots.

The fact that multiculturalism allows diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds to involve in social and economic activities falls through when a good immigrant speaks another language different from that of the neo-colonial centre. The reason why multiculturalism fails to act in accordance with the principles of pluralism is related to Eurocentrism, which delegitimises the language of the colonised. However, it is common for immigrants to speak more than two languages: the language of the centre and the mother tongue. Most of the time, Western societies expect immigrants to speak the language of the centre in order to secure the purity of culture and language (Aumeerally, 2017). To make it

clear, contemporary multicultural societies continue to perpetuate Eurocentric and Orientalist arguments in their representation of immigrant cultures and languages, and these depictions draw heavily from the Orientalist discourses of the Western colonial period, which essentialised and exoticised non-Western cultures to reinforce the hierarchical notion of Western cultural superiority. For example, Western societies still consider speaking Arabic to be a sign of unsafety, extremism, and violence because Arab individuals have often been represented as uncivilised people with a tendency to violence and crime (Lau and Mendes 2018). In a similar way, from a Eurocentric perspective, speaking 'exotic' languages might signal individuals' ethnic and cultural background, leading to a perception of inferiority and being labelled as a third-world citizen (11). In such an environment, where racism and discriminatory attitudes are displayed, immigrants generally prefer not to use their mother tongue in order not to be excluded from the society. In a similar case, in the novel, Changez, while riding to a party with his American girlfriend, Erica, catches some Punjabi words uttered by the taxi driver:

> Afterwards Erica and I shared a taxi down to Chelsea, where a friend of hers … had invited her to a party to celebrate the opening of a show. I could hear our driver chatting on his mobile in Punjabi and knew from his accent that he was Pakistani. Normally I would have said hello, but on that particular night I did not. (28)

In this part of the novel, while Changez and Erica take a taxi to the party, Changez realises that the taxi driver speaks in Punjabi, and prefers to remain silent although he can also speak the language. The basis of this preference is Changez's desire to hide his foreign acquaintance when she is with Erica. In other words, the reason for immigrants, who are well-integrated into American society, to hide their languages and cultures is affiliated with their desire to be accepted by the society as an American individual, not as the exotic other. The continuation of orientalist viewpoints in the contemporary era operates within the framework of cultural racism. The portrayal of the East, or any other non-Western society, is characterised by Eurocentrism, insisting on "the status quo of the original orientalist dichotomy, reinforcing the centrality of the West" (Lau and Mendes, 2018). The current prevalence of Orientalism challenges the legitimacy of multiculturalism, as differences still 'present' a critical and prejudicial risk to Western communities. This leads to fixity and homogenisation where people from similar backgrounds have uniform religious, cultural, and behavioural practices, creating a singular identity and representation (Bağlama, 2020; Hackl 2022).

In the novel, when invited to a dinner by Erica's family, Changez is clearly treated as 'the other', whose ethnic and religious background is highlighted and reduced to a single identity – an example of the operation of fixity. Erica's father assumes that Changez might not prefer to drink alcohol since he is Pakistani and a Muslim. The concept of fixedness here emerges from a) the father's previous experience with another Pakistani immigrant, who does not drink, and b) Changez's ethnic and traditional origins. On the other hand, Erica's mother assumes that Changez speaks English fluently and looks proper, leading her to speak for him and declare that he surely drinks (27). Another implication here is that Erica's mother does not consider Changez's cultural and religious background and simply categorises him as a 'typical' immigrant, erasing his unique cultural identity and assimilating it into Western culture:

> As we took our seats for the meal, he lifted a bottle of red wine and said to me, "You drink?" "He's twenty-two," Erica's mother said on my behalf, in a tone that suggested, So of course he drinks. "I had a Pakistani working for me once," Erica's father said. "Never drank." "I do, sir," I assured him. "Thank you." (Hamid 27)

Western societies tend to overlook the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of immigrants, and still rely on Orientalist narratives that perpetuate stereotypes and fixed notions, such as assuming that all immigrants from countries like Pakistan are Muslim and do not consume alcohol (Shirazi, 2018; Akhtar et al., 2021). Another problematic tendency is that based on Erica's mother's thoughts, it is assumed that immigrants who have adapted to the culture of the West and met the characteristics of good immigrants are indifferent to their own culture and religion and, therefore, are expected to follow the values and traditions of the Western society.

Drawing on the arguments of Orientalism and cultural racism about the concept of fixedness and stereotypes, Western societies have still a tendency to judge immigrants based on their physical appearances. The fact that physical appearances of individuals might, to some extent, give an impression and clue about the background; however, such inferences, most of the time, are either misinterpreted or misrepresented (Dhobi, 2022). To exemplify, in the wake of 9/11, Changez grows a beard as a reaction to discrimination and prejudices displayed by American society. The fact that he admires and consumes every bit of American culture and that he turns into a respected immigrant indicates his admiration for American society, culture, and values. However, after 9/11, people in the subway and even Changez's colleagues begin to view his beard as a potential indicator that he may be a terrorist:

> It is remarkable, given its physical insignificance—it is only a hairstyle, after all—the impact a beard worn by a man of my complexion has on your fellow countrymen. More than once, traveling on the subway—where I had always had the feeling of seamlessly blending in—I was subjected to verbal abuse by complete strangers, and at Underwood Samson I seemed to become overnight a subject of whispers and stares. (59)

Since the events of 9/11, there has been a notable increase in discrimination against immigrants with dark skin, which has led to prejudices based on stereotypes. Essentially, immigrants who do not conform to Western physical standards are marginalised due to their non-Western or non-Eurocentric appearance and style. It is already stated that the inclusion of immigrants in society is possible if they meet certain conditions and criteria, and that the differences of immigrants who do not comply with these conditions begin to be emphasised. In the case of Changez, although the mainstream society and Underwood Samson employees consider him a good immigrant, Changez admits that he is, in fact, a modern-day janissary, a servant of the American Empire. Changez can emblematically be compared to the Christian servants of the Ottoman Empire, who were taken and converted to Islam, and subjected to military training to incorporate into the army, which gradually led them to detach from their own native cultures. Such a juxtaposition paves the way for shaping Changez's diasporic identity and reminds him that Changez, as an immigrant, is a "servitude to culturally hegemonic demands of America's corporate system" (Shirazi, 2018; 27). However, Changez's beard becomes a "symbolic commitment to his original identity" in which the prevailing attitude towards immigrants, particularly those with darker skin, perpetuates racialised and discriminatory beliefs (Chandio, 2017: 77). From this perspective, the social changes in the wake of the 9/11 attacks cause Changez to question his primary identity, either American or Muslim. Such incidents from the novel inform that immigrant, who do not perform the roles expected by the society, are excluded and otherised. From this perspective, it can be argued that multicultural societies welcome immigrants who significantly contribute to the benefits and interests of society, and that the discourse surrounding 'good' and 'proper' immigrants, however, can significantly shape and alter the identity and integration of these individuals.

3.2. Exploring the Interplay Between Islamophobia and Cultural Racism in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Islamophobia can manifest itself in several ways, such as the portrayal of negative stereotypes, hatred, and hostility towards Muslims through social, economic, and political institutions. In recent decades, Islamophobia has been regarded as a political doctrine, hatred, and hostility towards Muslims and Islam. In the wake of 9/11, many Muslim immigrants have become a political subject and enemy since the discrimination towards Muslims is not only grounded on ethnicity, but also on religion (Abbas, 2011). The 9/11 attacks have brought significant changes to various aspects of society, prompting discussions on Islamophobia and the experiences of Muslim immigrants residing in the neo-colonial centre. Islam is often viewed not merely as a religion, but as a race, resulting in individuals from Islamic regions, regardless of their faith, being subjected to prejudice and animosity based on their religious background. This is partly due to a Western perception that all Muslims are homogenous in terms of intelligence, culture, and language, and that non-Western cultures are inferior to Western histories and cultures, which is conjectured on white supremacy and epistemologies of Orientalism (Abbas 2011; Lean 2012). To make sense of Islamophobia in the contemporary era, it needs to be clarified that Islamophobia or anti-Islam policies of Western nations did not emerge right after the 9/11 attacks. Rather, Islam as religion and Muslims as members have been the target of non-Western societies through diverse policies, laws, and social exclusion that classify Muslims as the new Other (Cainkar, 2019). The delusion that Muslims are, because of their cultural and religious background, unable to integrate into society provides a justification for Muslims to be targeted and marginalised by society.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist fictionally manifest the experience of a Pakistani immigrant, Changez, suffering from identity fluctuation that leads to a religious and cultural conflict in the post-9/11 era. Being respected as a symbolically good immigrant, Changez is discriminated by the society after the 9/11 attacks and is considered a potential terrorist because of his religious background. Before the 9/11, Changez's religious and cultural identity does not pose a problem because of his good qualifications as an immigrant; however, in the post-9/11 era, Changez's identity is marked by his cultural and religious background, which leads to "a perception of Muslims as a threat" through ideological and

strategic discourses of the West (Meer and Modood, 2019: 29). To exemplify, in the novel Changez's religious and cultural background is, because of his social and economic success, ignored in the pre-9/11 in American society; however, in the wake of 9/11, on his way back to New York from Manila, Changez is kept under investigation by the officials at the airport:

> When we arrived, I was separated from my team at immigration. They joined the queue for American citizens; I joined the one for foreigners. The officer who inspected my passport was a solidly built woman with a pistol at her hip and a mastery of English inferior to mine; I attempted to disarm her with a smile. "What is the purpose of your trip to the United States?" she asked me. "I live here," I replied. "That is not what I asked you, sir," she said. "What is the purpose of your trip to the United States?" (37)

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, American and Western media have contributed to the association of Islam with terrorism, perpetuating hostility, and the development of new discourses of Otherness. The terms, such as Muslims, Arabs, and terrorism, have developed side by side, referring to the same conceptual meaning and being synonymous among Americans (Haider, 2012). Immediately after the attacks, many immigrants have been seen as probable criminals. In the case of Changez, American society, which "once provided him with the sense of being home, no more functions as home", points to him as a symbolic target and an approved criminal (Çelikel, 2020). It has already been stated that the inclusion of immigrants, especially those from an Islamic background, is bound to conditions regarding the qualifications of a good immigrant. In this regard, multiculturalism operates as a selective ideology in which the distinction between a good and bad immigrant is determined by Western-oriented qualities and values. To exemplify, Changez is "educated and produced by the American system and culture", and welcomed as a model immigrant, who distances himself from his original culture and religion until 9/11 (Çelikel, 2020). However, the attacks on the twin towers have deepened the selective inclusion of immigrants and led to the racialisation and redefinition of Islam, a religion of 'fundamentalists and jihadists'. Such animosity and hostility towards immigrants from an Islamic background cast light on the evolution of cultural racism as well as the interplay between Islamophobia and cultural racism (Semati, 2010).

In the postmodern era, Islamophobia has emerged as a form of cultural racism that utilises religion as a marker and ideological tool to racialise individuals of Muslim origin. This strategic and systematic construction of Islamophobia perpetuates surveillance directed at Muslims and operates within the framework of postmodern capitalism. In other words,

postmodern capitalism reproduces traditional arguments of Orientalism and categorises Muslims as whether they are proper for "internalising and adopting the 'realities' of the neo-colonial centre" (Bağlama, 2020: 1646). Cainkar (2019) acknowledges that Islamophobia has gained strength through various discursive strategies, which are, as postmodern version, grounded on the arguments of Orientalism. To demonstrate, one of the ideological and discursive strategies of Islamophobia is the portrayal of Muslims in Western media. The portrayal of Muslims in the USA and especially in British media is characterised by monolithic and reductionist representations, which homogenises all Muslims regardless of different cultures and languages (Abbas, 2011; Cainkar, 2019; De Rooij, 2020). The utilisation of negative representations of Islam and Muslims by the 'West' serves to undermine and devalue the religion and its followers. This phenomenon has far-reaching consequences, not only affecting Western individuals but also influencing Muslims to behave submissively. The negative representations of Muslims instil fear in both Muslims and non-Muslims, resulting in the former being consistently subjected to exclusion and racism, while the latter harbour anxieties and prejudices towards Muslims due to the distorted images of Islam propagated in the media. To give an example, in the novel Changez's mother warns Changez to shave his beard before returning to New York:

> When the time came for me to return to New York … "Do not forget to shave before you go," my mother said to me. "Why?" I asked, indicating my father and brother. "They have beards." "They," she replied, "have them only because they wish to hide the fact that they are bald. Besides, you are still a boy." (58)

The warning given to Changez by his mother indicates that growing a beard serves as a signifier of an individual's cultural and traditional background, thus engendering the processes of othering and racism based on homogenising categorisations. Western ideologies perpetuate negative stereotypes and representations of immigrants, which promotes the belief that all Muslims, for instance, pose a threat and cause anxiety solely due to their physical appearance (Abbas, 2014). It is also hypocritical that growing a beard is considered normal in Western societies while a Middle Easterner with a beard is identified as a threat. In this context, Muslims are expected to shave their beards; otherwise, those who grow beard would be excluded.

Drawing on the negative representations of Muslims about 'the beard issue', another example of what is meant by the interplay between Islamophobia and cultural racism can be Wainwright's persistent insistent that Changez shave his beard. Wainwright, a non-white

employee and a model immigrant akin to Changez, similarly shares his desire and eagerness to adopt American values and traditions. After 9/11, Wainwright warns Changez to shave his beard because growing a beard is against both the corporate image and society's values:

> Wainwright tried to offer me some friendly advice. "Look, man," he said, "I don't know what's up with the beard, but I don't think it's making you Mister Popular around here." "They are common where I come from," I told him. "Jerk chicken is common where I come from," he replied, "but I don't smear it all over my face. You need to be careful. This whole corporate collegiality veneer only goes so deep. Believe me." (59)

Here, Wainwright warns Changez to shave his beard because he acknowledges that physical features can be the marker of one's cultural and religious orientation. The main problem is that Wainwright accepts the requirements that American culture and society expect from immigrants. Wainwright, who works in the USA as a non-white immigrant and is included in a society that supports cultural diversity, embraces the arguments of the mainstream society, and believes that differences, which indicate one's cultural and religious background, have an adverse effect on immigrants. As in the case of Wainwright suggesting Changez to shave his beard, the arguments of cultural racism are reiterated and reproduced by both the West and immigrants, therefore leading to the proliferation of Islamophobia and Western logic of cultural racism. Second, Wainwright argues for being a good immigrant rather than supporting differences, and indirectly thinks that the appearance of Changez might affect the corporate image. This is, in fact, more about the desire to look like 'them' and the tendency to detach from the native culture – as a result of the negative representations of Muslims during the Bush administration. The good Muslims are those who are "anxious to clear their names and consciences of this horrible crime and would undoubtedly support "us" in a war against "them"', while bad Muslims are those who follow cultural and religious habits, traditions, and values (Mamdani, 2015: 19). To put it another way, cultural racism operates by classifying immigrants according to their capacity to conform to Western cultural and traditional norms. Immigrants who internalise Western lifestyles are considered as belonging to the in-group, while those who maintain their cultural and native ways of living are relegated to the out-group. In this regard, Wainwright adheres to the mainstream social narratives and discourses regarding the ideal characteristics of a model immigrant, and thus behaves in a manner that conceals his third-world identity. Changez comprehends the evolving social and political framework of American society, prompting him to reconfigure his identity. As a result of being ensnared in a milieu that promotes both physical and

emotional alienation, Changez gradually recognises his changing standing from a respected and successful immigrant to a potentially evil and terrorist fundamentalist vis-à-vis his colleagues and the wider American society:

> Once I was walking to my rental car in the parking lot of the cable company when I was approached by a man I did not know. He made a series of unintelligible noises—"akhala-malakhala," perhaps, or "khalapal-khalapala"—and pressed his face alarmingly close to mine. I shifted my stance, presenting him with my side and raising my hands to shoulder height; I thought he might be mad, or drunk; I thought also that he might be a mugger, and I prepared to defend myself or to strike. Just then another man appeared; he, too, glared at me, but he took his friend by the arm and tugged at him, saying it was not worth it. Reluctantly, the first allowed himself to be led away. "Fucking Arab," he said. (54)

In this excerpt, Changez is subjected to verbal racialisation when he is identified as an Arab, ostensibly due to his beard and skin colour, both of which are indicative of his third-world identity. Two American strangers resort to "a series of unintelligible noises", presuming that Changez is likely an Arab owing to his physical characteristics (54). In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, American society has sided against Muslims by marginalising and blaming them for these incidents. Despite their varied cultural and religious backgrounds, all Muslims have been reduced to a monolithic category and perceived as an undifferentiated entity. Although not all Arabs are Muslims, and not all Muslims are Arabs, Westerners have frequently resorted to the conventional arguments for stereotyping immigrants based on their external appearances (Shihada, 2015). Negative representations of immigrants have often been associated with racialised ethnic and religious markers such as dress codes, language, and physical attributes like hijab and beards, perpetuating discriminatory attitudes and animosity towards Muslims, as well as reproducing the 'us vs. them' dichotomy. This has created a culture of mistrust and anxiety, which is based on ethnic and religious markers for distinguishing American citizens from non-citizens. The growing hostility towards Muslims following the 9/11 attacks has further deepened this dichotomy and reinforced homogeneous depictions and representations of Muslims in the US.

Changez, as a product and follower of American culture, develops a complex identity in which he is unable to maintain two identities: being a Muslim and an American at the same time. This is due to the evolution of the arguments of traditional racism into a new and postmodern form of racism in which differences are, to some extent, tolerated and welcomed if the Other display the requirements of being a good subject. To exemplify such a postmodern articulation of racism in contemporary societies, non-Western immigrants are

often expected to possess certain qualifications, such as the ability to integrate into the mainstream culture and speak the language of the neo-colonial centre. Immigrants who are either unable or unwilling to perform such qualities are often excluded and otherised by the dominant society, while those who acknowledge the narratives, ideologies, and cultures of the West are welcomed. In the case of Changez, the multicultural American society recognises immigrants who exhibit social, economic, and cultural integration as proper and ideal. This dichotomy of inclusion and exclusion of immigrants reveals the underlying mechanism of cultural racism, which categorises immigrants as good or bad based on their contributions to society and their adherence to the narratives of the neo-colonial centre. President Bush's support of this theoretical framework after 9/11 has, in a similar way, perpetuated the distinction between good and bad Muslims, with bad Muslims being labelled as fundamentalists and terrorists, and good Muslims needing to prove their loyalty to the USA. Such ideologies of cultural racism and Islamophobia function to perpetuate racism and discrimination in multicultural societies that claim to embrace differences. Negative, reductionist, and homogenised representations of Muslims have been produced and articulated in different ways from colonial times to the present day. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid, therefore, presents a fictional narrative that portrays how Changez, as a Pakistani immigrant in American society, navigates the complexities of constructing multiple identities and facing issues of inclusion, exclusion, and Islamophobia, despite his status as a model immigrant and a good Muslim.

CHAPTER FOUR
EXPLORING CULTURAL RACISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA IN *MY NAME IS SALMA* BY FADIA FAQIR

Fadia Faqir, a Jordanian-British author, journalist, and scholar, is one of the most celebrated novelists in contemporary Muslim Arab literature. With numerous literary awards, Faqir takes on gender studies, feminism, Islam, and the experience of Arab individuals, especially women, living in the West. In her writing, Faqir draws upon her personal experiences as well as the culture, traditions, and values of Jordan to explore the cultural clashes that occur between the West and the East, and her works highlight the challenges faced by immigrants, who often encounter racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and patriarchal hegemony. Faqir's debut novel *Nisanit* (1985) has had a significant impact on postcolonial studies by bringing attention to the often-overlooked Arab literature and challenging the stereotypical depictions of the East that prevail in the field. Through the use of socio-political criticisms, the novels, including *Pillars of Salt* (1996) and *Willow Trees Don't Weep* (2014), for instance, give a realistic insight into the political reality of the Arabian Peninsula in the postcolonial era.

Along with various awards for short fiction and poetic proses, Faqir has been awarded a runner-up for the ALOA Literary Prize for her third novel, *My Name is Salma* (2007). Faqir's recent and highly acclaimed novel, *My Name is Salma* (2007), has garnered attention from critics and scholars worldwide, having been published in 16 countries and translated into 13 languages. The novel's narrative structure and plot, which explore the diasporic identity of a Muslim woman navigating two distinct cultures, have made it a focal point of many disciplines. Considered to be "free of migrant-fiction clichés", the novel reveals that Faqir's ability to utilise personal experiences and employ stylistic language enables her to delve into the immigrant experience in a more realistic sense, exploring the marginalisation grounded in cultural and religious prejudices (Tonkin, 2008). The novel has sparked lively discussions about its cover and material appearances in different countries, with some arguing that such marketing choices can detract from the book's authenticity and perpetuate Orientalist stereotypes through exoticised and clichéd representations, which signals the need for a reconceptualisation of these issues.

The novel has been marketed in different national contexts across its 16-country publication history, resulting in varying cover designs; notably, many editions depict the protagonist Salma wearing a veil, though exceptions exist in Indonesia, France, and Italy. In 2010, Rachel Bower, a poet and scholar, interviewed Fadia Faqir, and addressed a question to her about the marketing strategy of the publishers on the cover of the book, which reproduced the monolithic and overgeneralised representations of Muslim immigrants:

> I am sure that national contexts impose their own dynamics on marketing. But preconceived ideas about the Arab world and Arab women also come to the surface. There is certainly a discrepancy between the content of my novel and its covers. On the cover of most editions Salma has a veil, except in Indonesia, France and Italy, even though in the book she takes it off. The novel was published with the title The Cry of the Dove in the United States, and this edition has a totally covered woman on the cover in the courtyard of a mosque. Totally Orientalist. If you look at the cover of Leila Aboulela's *Minaret* (2005), a serious text, regardless of my reservations about the Islamic world vision it propagates, you will see that the novel was reduced, exoticized, clichéd. I have little control over covers and most of the time I do not approve them before they get printed. (Faqir, 2010)

Across various editions of the novel, editors have depicted the cover with stereotypical and exoticised portrayals of Arab women that draw on the protagonist's Arab heritage and the story's themes. Despite Salma (or Sally) taking off her veil and attempting to integrate into the 'West' by assuming a new identity, the cover depictions of the character in various editions of the novel still use Islamic religious and cultural motifs, including the veil and a mosque. Such ideological changes put forward in the marketing strategy of the novel both deepen the level of understanding of different cultures between the East and the West and enable the proliferation of Orientalist arguments in the postmodern era. In the interview, Faqir expresses her dissatisfaction with the way Western editors perpetuate Orientalist arguments by using stereotypical depictions of Arab cultures and religion(s) in their cover designs.

My Name is Salma (2007) by Fadia Faqir gives a realistic sense of the experience of an immigrant woman, fictionalising the complexities of politics, religion, tradition, and love in the Levant and British society. The story follows the life of Salma, or Sally, a young Bedouin woman living in a conservative and traditional Muslim community in the Levant. Salma's life takes a dramatic turn when her father and brother learn that she gets pregnant out of wedlock. As pregnancy out of wedlock is a crime of honour in that society, her brother threatens to kill Salma in order to protect the honour of the family. Salma finds refuge with her teacher, who places her in protective custody to shield her from social threats and provide

a safe space for her to give birth to her baby. After giving birth to her daughter, Salma is adopted by Miss Asher, who arranges documents and papers for her to be taken away to the UK, where she is given a new name, Sally. In the UK, Salma begins to construct a new identity and a name, which enable her to detach from the Levant society. Yet, Sally's cultural and religious background, coupled with the language barrier, poses a set of challenges for her as a 'third-world' citizen residing in the UK.

Here, Faqir not only offers insight into the experiences of immigrant women but also provides a realistic snapshot of the socio-political realities in the UK, exposing the racialised and discriminatory attitudes held by many in the Western world. Struggling to find shelter and construct an identity based on Western values, Sally often faces racism and xenophobia because of her 'broken English' and cultural markers such as wearing veil or hijab. In her quest to forge a fresh identity and carve out a place for herself in the UK, Sally embarks on a journey of adaptation. She immerses herself in mastering the predominant language, pursues educational opportunities by applying to college, and diligently takes on a multitude of jobs. However, despite her perseverance, Sally frequently finds herself grappling with the harsh realities of exploitation and low wages, stemming from her immigrant status. While residing in the UK, Salma removes her veil and endeavours to adjust herself into the 'West' by altering her mannerisms and language. This voluntary integration into the mainstream society reflects Western ideals of inclusion, as Sally, an Arabic immigrant woman, often conceals her true identity to gain recognition and acceptance. In the years that follow, Salma marries an English lecturer and chooses to return to her village in search of her daughter, only to discover that she has been murdered as a victim of "honour killing" by Salma's own brother.

Drawing from the experiences of an Arab woman living in the UK, the novel exposes the ways in which immigrants construct fluid and hybrid identities, shaped by the Western logic of cultural racism and formed through a process of organised experience (Ghasemi and Peyma and Shooshtari, 2021: 189). In the case of Salma, who is haunted by traumatic experiences in the Levant and decides to seek asylum in the UK, her identity construction begins before she resides in the UK where she adopts a new name, Sally. It is, indeed, one of the racialised ideologies of the Western nations that immigrants are expected to adopt a new identity centred on Western values, tradition, and culture (Baaqeel, 2021). However, such a process of 'soft mandatory identity formation' leads the way for another form of

discrimination and racism, namely cultural racism, since adopting a new name and internalising Western narratives would not be enough to be included in society. To put it differently, Muslims residing in the West are often subjected to a dichotomy of 'good' and 'bad', whereby the former are expected to conform to Western cultural norms while the latter are those who fail to recognise and internalise Western discourses. This binary thinking leads to different forms of discrimination and racism for immigrants, especially those of Muslim origins, who are expected to conform to the expectation of 'moderate' behaviours in their cultural and religious practices (Aziz, 2019). To clarify, Sally's identity construction is not solely a result of external pressure from the mainstream society but is also shaped by her internalisation of Western narratives and discourses. She believes that adopting Western culture and manners can help conceal her Arab background and lead to her inclusion in society. This means that Sally willingly embraces the socio-cultural narratives of orientalist epistemological formations, which in turn results in her recognition and acceptance by the West.

Fadia Faqir uses her personal experiences as an Arab immigrant in the UK to fictionalise the process of identity formation in the neo-colonial centre. By highlighting the West's attempts to re-create the Orientalist discourse in new ways, which perpetuates negative, racialised, and stereotypical portrayals of Islam and Muslims, Faqir uncovers how cultural racism works within a supposedly multicultural society and reinforces Islamophobia (Alqahtani, 2017). In the novel, Salma, later Sally, constantly faces discrimination and marginalisation, often emanating from her physical appearance that connotates her Arabic background. This, of course, does not mean that the physical features of individuals signal a specific religious, ethnic, and cultural background; however, this is more about the proliferation of Orientalist arguments about 'the other', whose physical appearance as well as personality is judged by Eurocentric ideals. In this regard, immigrants of Arab origin are not only marginalised by their 'third-world' identities but also by the Orientalist belief that considers individuals living in the East to be inferior, uneducated, and fanatical.

This chapter, in this context, explores the process of immigrants' identity formation in the neo-colonial centre, with a particular focus on the mechanisms that sustain cultural racism and Islamophobia in the contemporary era. Drawing on the theoretical framework established in Chapter I, which elucidates the intersections between cultural racism and Islamophobia, this chapter argues that the inclusion of immigrants in the mainstream society

operates within the framework of Western logic, which imposes certain qualifications on immigrants to be considered as 'good' or 'proper'. Consequently, immigrants, whether voluntarily or not, develop different identities that centre on Western culture and values, while those who resist internalising Western ways of living face exclusion from the mainstream society. The analysis of Salma's experience in the novel, as an example of this process, reveals how new forms of racism construct the necessary qualifications of good and proper immigrants, which in turn informs the development and adoption of a complex identity that acknowledges the superiority of the West. Salma, for instance, often distances herself from her original background and pretends to be from Spain in order to be accepted into the mainstream society. The chapter also aims to provide a critical examination of the arguments of cultural racism and its selective inclusion of immigrants, which reproduces discrimination and racism based on immigrants' ability to conform to Western cultural norms and values.

4.1. Sally or Salma: The Journey of a Modest Immigrant in *My Name is Salma*

My Name is Salma by Faqir has made a great impact on postcolonial and trauma studies as well as race theories, and established the relationship between identity formation and personal traumas. In the novel, the protagonist, Salma, or Sally, creates a complex, disoriented, and performative identity based on her cultural and religious background, and navigates two distinct cultures by developing different identities (Baaqeel, 2021). The novel fictionally reveals that immigrants pretend to develop an identity away from their original background and imitate the cultural values of the West. In other words, immigrants, in order to hide their original background, employ certain strategies which lead to the construction of a new identity based on Western values and cultures.

John J. Betancur (2003) observes that immigrants, with their consent, attempt to resemble the white and "conform to white expectations", and that such identity formation based on voluntary integration is related to the operations of cultural racism and the social practices of the dominant society (27). Drawing on the concept of a good Muslim within the conditional acceptance of immigrants, Salma can be a case in which she voluntarily shapes her identity in accordance with 'white' expectations. The identity formation process, which is the most common situation that immigrants encounter in the neo-colonial centre, is a result

of cultural racism. The fact that many scholars, including E. Said, H. Bhabha, and E. Balibar, focus on the identity construction of 'the other' is because immigrants can neither fully maintain their own culture in the neo-colonial centre nor adapt to the mainstream culture, often resulting in constructing a hybrid identity. However, hybrid identity is not simply a space constructed within the intersection of two different cultures; it is rather a transitional process that leads immigrants to gradually assimilate into the mainstream culture.

That most immigrants often experience dynamic and shifting identities is a result of failure in multicultural arguments. The term failure, here, stands for the practices and arguments away from multiculturalism which reconceptualises new arguments of social inclusion and assimilation through cultural mechanisms. Immigrants, therefore, undergo a process of identity negotiation often entailing hybrid identities. Such an identity process not only reveals the cultural expectations of the target society but also raises an issue about immigrants' desire for acceptance and recognition. The dilemma is affiliated with the degree of voluntary acts in which immigrants perform mimicries to be recognised (Ward et al., 2018). In other words, immigrants are, at a micro-level, expected to perform some cultural and social practices to adapt to a new environment; however, such practices might also be a desire and indication of constructing a new identity based on the expectations of the target society for immigrants to feel more Westerner. To exemplify it from the novel, Salma, or Sally, serves as a 'typical' example of an immigrant who suffers from identity crisis. The construction of such an identity by Sally reveals a divided personality, and results in a clash in which Sally could neither be a British citizen nor could detach from her roots: "I became neither Salina, nor Sal nor Sally, neither Arab nor English" (Faqir, 141). During the process of constructing a new identity in the UK, Salma also realises that she does not feel like she belongs anywhere. In fact, she is not legally a British citizen, but she is eager to learn both the language and culture to actualise herself as 'an English rose'. However, Salma's longing for her past manifests in frequent comparisons between the religious practices, urban lifestyles, foods, and traditions of her hometown and those in the UK, which reveals her deep-rooted nostalgia and sense of displacement:

> Rough, dirty hands, I had. That was before I ran to freedom. Now I stood shaking my head and rubbing the big fake yellow stone on my ring with my smooth hands, which were always covered with cocoa butter, and sighed. Gone were the days when I was a farmer, a shepherdess, a peasant girl. I am now a seamstress, an assistant tailor in a shop in Exeter, which a few years ago was voted the most beautiful city in Britain.

> Now Salina the dark black iris of Hima must try to turn into a Sally, an English rose, white, confident, with an elegant English accent, and a pony. (Faqir, 8)

Throughout the whole novel, Salma swings around her past and present, stuck in a third space with a new identity "characterised by a dualistic perception" (Guermit et al., 2017, 236). Salma's cultural displacement emerges from her introspection and engagement with both her memories and present experiences. This displacement is multifaceted, involving not only her representation of self as Salma and Sally but also her sense of belonging to a place. As she navigates this complex process, Salma finds that her religious practices and thoughts undergo transformation, contributing to the emergence of a dynamic identity characterised by duality. This duality reflects "the coexistence of cultural practices" within her, which embodies the ongoing negotiation between her past and present selves, ultimately shaping her journey of self-discovery in the midst of cultural transition (Guermit et al., 2017: 236).

4.2. Mimicry in *My Name is Salma*

In the initial chapters of the novel, Salma is depicted as an asylum seeker, as she conforms to the expectations of her new society. As the narrative progresses, she evolves into Sally, and adopts and actively embraces British norms and values. This transformation, however, offers a perspective on the concept of mimicry, which diverges from Homi Bhabha's traditional arguments related to mimicry within postcolonial studies. Bhabha's analysis primarily focuses on mimicry as an unconscious endeavour to replicate Western cultures (Bhabha, 1984). Contrarily, the novel explores a form of mimicry that coincides with Lacanian theory, and emphasises conscious and strategic efforts to assimilate and blend into society through a process likened to 'camouflage'. For Lacan, camouflage plays a crucial role in forming one's identity since it takes on not "harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled", and therefore leads to visibility and invisibility at the same time (Lacan, 1998:99) To make it clear, the novel's depiction of Salma's adjustment to the UK strikingly evokes the Lacanian theory of mimicry and reveal her strategic attempt to be visually noticeable yet culturally veiled within the Western context (Santesso, 2013). In the novel, Salma takes off her veil in favour of modern and secular attire in order to camouflage her physical visibility as well as to conceal her traditional Muslim background, and drinks apple juice since "the colour of the apple juice looked like beer",

therefore leading others to assume that she is secular, open-minded, and "not an inflexible Muslim immigrant" (47). Salma's first participation in mimicking begins with her adoption of the new name, Sally, and later follows a complex process of self-assimilation. This process teaches Salma that it is not her skin colour that marks her identity but rather her cultural identity and codes that define her. To camouflage such traits, Salma begins to construct different strategies, including physical transformation and cultural assimilation of the self:

> I had my hair cut, straightened, dyed blonde and bought some crimson-red lipstick. If I wear a sleeveless low-cut top, a short skirt and sunglasses they would never think I belonged to their tribe, they would see only a shameless foreign woman, whose body, treasures, were on offer for nothing. (234)

Salma's request to look like 'them' resonates with a desire to detach herself from her origins and get closer to the hostile culture, imitating all aspects of the dominant society. In her pre-immigration life, Salma's identity is strictly confined within the boundaries of her physical body and gender, as dictated by her original cultural norms. However, upon entering the diaspora and adopting the name Sally, she embarks on a quest to redefine her gender identity. By embracing and even fetishising her body, and seeking to liberate her sexuality, Sally introduces herself to a new dimension of liminality. Sally, or Salma realises that her body turns into "an object of social capital" and leads a hand to her social and political mobility within British society (Adam, 2017: 8). Her friend Parvin tells Salma "Lighten up! Groom yourself! Sell yourself!", which converges to the process by which immigrant women 'domesticate' and adapt their feminine identities to Western cultures, enhancing their sense of belonging and acceptance in society (37). After settling in the UK, engaging deeply with the language and culture of her new environment becomes Sally's most effective strategy for inclusion. By assimilating Western norms and etiquette, she strives to demonstrate her adaptability, modernised religious practices, and liberated sexual behaviours, aiming to validate her transformed identity in the eyes of her adoptive society. Given that the novel reveals the Lacanian theory of mimicry as a means to camouflage, Salma does not only attempt to conceal her cultural background but also disguise her gender performativity at home. The fact that Salma is already aware of camouflaging her roots, race, and culture is not sufficient to be included in the dominant society; therefore, Salma needs another formation to actualise herself, which is the fetishisation of the body. In other words, the novel appears to indicate that Salma might camouflage her cultural background and become much more visible if her sexuality and femininity are projected. Indeed, the limited gender

performativity of Salma at home and in the diaspora takes a different turn, leading Salma to adopt a “strategy to divert attention from her dark complexion” (Canpolat, 2016: 224).

The theory of mimicry and camouflage also alternates into a different form in which Salma needs to follow 'Western ways of femininity' to the extent of participation in social, political, and especially financial unities. To clarify, for Knox (1991), another inclination of immigrants’ desire to learn the language and mimic the dominant culture is also affiliated with recruitment and participation in labour market: In many ways, for refugees, employment is the key to successful integration because it results in interaction with British people, the chance to learn English, and the ability to support oneself and rebuild a future, as well as a chance to regain self-esteem and confidence. In the novel, while looking for jobs in the newspaper, she comes across a must quality for job seekers, which is presentability. As a result, she becomes more conscious of how she should look and learns that ‘presentable’ means embracing an eye-catching look that draws attention and is also seductive without being noticeable rather than simply fitting in. In her second job, as a waiter, Allan, the boss, gives Salma instructions to put on her seductiveness and womanly charm and seem “presentable” while working at the bar. Ultimately, his clientele desires to be surrounded by attractive ladies like “those Bacardi girls” (131). Therefore, Salma adopts another method to camouflage her ‘tribal’ fashion and transforms into an “air hostess” with “tight skirts and full red lips” (131).

4.3. Salma’s Quest for Gendered Selfhood

Being subject to Western norms and traditions also constructs a new gender identity for Salma. In Western societies Muslim women are often conceptualised as a sexual object and inferior kind due to the Western image of the Oriental woman. However, Salma constructs a new gender identity for Sally to actualise and internalise sexuality by getting rid of her former physical appearance. In other words, Salma detaches herself from racialisation of sexuality and the stereotypical ‘Muslim immigrant woman’ image by fetishising her body. One of the possible implications regarding Salma’s sexual internalisation is her resistance to Western hegemony which endeavours to dominate the female body. Salma attempts to sexualise her body as a way of liberating and constructing a new gender identity away from that of Lebanon. She does not allow her sexuality to be exploited due to her ‘other, alien,

Muslim, Orient identity'; on the contrary, since she assumes she lives in the "modern liberating zone", she normalises sexuality to keep up with Western culture(s) (Sarnou, 2017: 1). In the novel, Salma even herself realises that she is not full Sally or English rose, and that she is torn between dualistic gender-based identity regarding the self in Lebanon and the other in Exeter:

> I went back home, had a bath, shaved my legs, washed my hair, rubbed my body with cream, sprayed myself with deodorant and powdered myself with perfume. I … on black tights, a short black skirt, black high-heeled shoes, a sleeveless frilly white shirt and painted a rainbow around my eyes. I looked at the mirror and saw a clown looking back at me. I might be attacked tonight. I might be gang-raped then killed. … When Elizabeth saw me, she said, 'Sally, you are hustling these days, aren't you?" (Faqir, 131).

In the above lines, Salma constantly refers to her Orientalist self by senses, smell and flavour, which signals her state of in-betweens in home and diaspora. Realising that she considers herself as "a clown" reveals Salma's in-betweenness and points out her new identity is simply grotesque. Another issue raised here is that Sally's new gender identity is based on her personal and voluntary preference rather than Western patriarchal hegemony that takes on her 'exotic background' as a typical immigrant woman. However, such an identity brings about the notion of 'liminality', which is the "state of being limited by and in a particular marginal zone" (Sarnou, 2017: 1). Liminality, here, refers to the state of inbetweeners who are located both inside and outside the centre. Drawing on margins and boundaries, liminality is associated with cultural, ethnic, religious, and gender studies. To clarify, the term signals the state of "being on the threshold of the host culture and its mainstream people"; therefore, immigrants experience alienation and lack of belonging (Sarnou, 2017: 6). In the novel, such liminality is narrated through Salma's transformation into Sally amid the construction of a new gender-based identity: "Was it possible to walk out of my skin, my past, my name? Was it possible to open a new page, start afresh with those young awkward Goths?" (Faqir, 30). The preceding text reveals how Salma, living in the diaspora, confronts her heritage, recognising the potential challenges and discrimination she faces within a hostile culture, not just as an immigrant but also as a woman. It is at this juncture that the notion of liminality emerges, characterised by both gender and cultural dimensions. To clarify, an Arab woman immigrant living in the diaspora experiences self-imposed and social marginalisation, undergoing a transformative journey of liminality. Arriving in the UK as an asylum seeker, she adopts the name Sally, yet she remains unrecognised and unaccepted by the mainstream society. Back in her Bedouin village, Salma's femininity is both liminalised and devalued

by patriarchal traditions, where the overt expression of femininity in women is equated with sin. Even Salma's father, Haj Ibrahim, blames Salma since her "breasts are like melons" and dictates Salma to "cover them up" (9).

Despite her efforts to adopt a new gender identity, Salma never fully transitions into Sally, as her newfound identity clashes with her pre-immigration self, ultimately constraining her. The process of liberating her sexuality in the UK triggers a conflict with her Arab heritage. Residing in a liminal space – a threshold or third zone – Salma is unable to fully satisfy her sexual desires and embrace her femininity. This is because she remains tethered to aspects of her pre-immigrant identity:

> You say goodbye tight-lipped. ... You stay in bed next to him all night pretending to be content, asleep and all you wanted to do was to jump up and wash your body with soap and water including your insides, do your ablutions then pray for forgiveness. You would smile because it was supposed to be the morning after the beautiful night before. (58)

In this specific part, Salma, after spending a night with Jim, cannot resist her pre-immigrant self as a conservative Muslim woman. She keeps securing her cultural and religious background, stuck in a liminal space. Sexual intercourse, here, is itself a liminal space since Salma fancies and liberates her femininity, however; the thoughts on Salma's mind regarding religious practices after committing 'sin' – an extramarital affair – haunts and signals her conservative Muslim identity in Bedouin, such as "wash(ing) [your] body with soap and water including [your] insides, do your ablutions then pray for forgiveness" (58). Such Islamic references point out the reality that however much Salma attempts to turn into an English rose, Sally, who liberates her sexuality, she fails to go beyond the two zones: "a modern liberating zone, and a traditional subjugating zone" (Sarnou, 2017: 2).

Another dimension of liminality of Salma is related to her hybrid identity. Being obsessed with her name, Salma is the case example of a hybrid character, who constantly struggles with the past. With a desire to interpellate into the mainstream society, Salma attempts to adopt Western ideals, but fails in camouflaging her pre-immigrant self. To exemplify, Jack, the postman, delivers letters every day, and sometimes he mispronounces Salma's name, but Salma corrects it: "Despite correcting him several times, 'Salma, Jack. Salina, please', he would forget the next day and call me 'girl' again" (27). The dilemma Salma faces centres on her fixation with her name, which serves as a barrier to her acceptance as a British citizen and continuously reminds her of her past. On one side, her aspiration to

be acknowledged as a British citizen is at odds with her authentic identity, which persistently haunts her. In essence, despite Salma's proactive steps towards social and political integration within the mainstream society – such as mastering the Queen's English, pursuing a bachelor's degree, altering her dress code, and marrying a White individual – she finds it impossible to sever ties with her pre-immigrant identity. Salma's struggle extends to her internalisation of the racist perceptions held by some Westerners towards immigrants, prompting her to question her true identity amidst these external pressures:

> But sometimes I wanted Jack to shout abuse at me the way the skinheads did at the White Hare. 'Hey, alien! You, freak! Why don't you go back to the jungle? Go climb some coconut trees! Fuck off! Go home!' I did not deserve to be here, I did not deserve to be alive. I let her down. (27)

The enduring influence of Orientalist narratives on immigrants emphasises a significant contemporary issue. Caught in a bind of dual identity formation, Salma finds herself denigrating and othering her own origins, while simultaneously recognising the perceived superiority of the West. This results in the 'them and us' dichotomy, traditionally voiced by the West, now being echoed by individuals from the East themselves within multicultural societies. This shift highlights a complex internalisation of Orientalist perspectives by those it seeks to describe, which suggests a layer of self-othering among immigrants as they navigate their identities in a new cultural landscape. Salma is aware of her cultural and religion-based liminality and dehumanises her roots and current state – as an immigrant living in the diaspora – with words such as 'alien, freak, and jungle'.

4.4. Cultural Racism in *My Name is Salma*

After the 9/11 attacks, there has been an increase in negative behaviours and attitudes towards Muslim women, particularly those who wear hijab or other conventional forms of Islamic clothing. Some of these negative behaviours include verbal and physical harassment, discrimination, and hate crimes in the workplace. One of the potential explanations for such hate crimes is the association of Islam with terrorism and extremism in the Western media and popular discourse, which has led to the stigmatisation and stereotyping of Muslim communities. In fact, the hijab has been the subject of much controversy and debate in Western societies for decades. Some view it as a symbol of oppression and an affront to women's rights, while others consider it a form of religious expression and a matter of

personal choice. Especially after 9/11, the media and popular discourse have produced specific attentions that support "the dominance of particular groups and ideas in society" which leads to a set of organised discourses and narratives towards Muslims, especially women wearing hijab (Rooij, 2020, 11). In the years following the attacks, Western discourses towards Muslims have regenerated Orientalist arguments through media and different mediums. Accordingly, Muslim identity is reduced into a single category, and Islam is considered a monolithic religion in which all individuals coming from an Islamic background are labelled as extremists. To exemplify, a Muslim woman with a hijab or headscarf is discriminated and racialised because of her choice of clothing, which signals that Islamic culture is against Western ideals (Hussein and Bloul and Poynting, 2019). The negative attitudes towards Muslim women who wear hijab can be, thus, attributed to Islamophobia, which is a fear or hatred of Islam and Muslims. However, the re-articulation of Orientalist discourses into postmodern societies brings about new discourses on the construction of Muslim identity. In a similar way to the arguments of 'a good Muslim', who works for the benefit of the dominant society and attempts to integrate into the mainstream society in terms of language, culture, and tradition, Western discourses produce new forms of assimilation and racism towards immigrants from a diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. These arguments remain valid and are presented in new and different forms, which are directed especially against Muslim immigrants living in multicultural societies. In other words, Western logic of cultural racism does not directly target Muslims and Islamic culture; rather, cultural racism operates through the discourses in which Muslims are categorised into two: good Muslim vs. bad Muslim. Such a discursive operation of categorising individuals of Islamic background collaborates with the mechanism of selective inclusion, which indirectly dictates Muslims about how to act, behave and speak in the neo-colonial centre. To illustrate it from the novel, on the way to the UK Salma meets a woman, Rebecca, and her two daughters. They bump into each other while they are having dinner, and Rebecca immediately realises that Salma is an immigrant and unfamiliar with British culture and etiquette. Before Salma begins her meal, Rebecca notices that Salma's table manners could benefit from a bit of refinement, particularly in the British tradition, and attempt to help Salma improve her dining etiquette:

> She said, 'I hope you don't mind me saying this, but why do you eat cheese and bread all the time? 'I don't know how', I said, moving my hands as if they were carrying a knife and fork. 'I will teach you,' she said. From then on she started teaching me table manners and English while her daughters giggled in the background. (98)

Despite that dictating British culture and manners to an immigrant is not a fundamentally racist behaviour, it might still stand for cultural hegemony and superiority, often regarded as 'British pride'. To make it clear, given that a British person uses their position of superiority to belittle or denigrate the immigrant's culture or ethnicity, or if they insist that the immigrant should abandon their own cultural practices in order to conform to a narrow definition of what it means to be "British", such behaviour could then be considered a form of cultural racism, as in the case of Salma. A proper immigrant is thus expected to master British culture and etiquette, which creates modernity and properness in terms of social status and recognition. Salma, in her role as a newcomer under the tutelage of the neo-colonial state, personified by Rebecca, embarks on a journey to assimilate into British society, and becomes a student of the expectations and cultural norms that British citizens hold for immigrants, drawing a parallel with the experiences of Friday in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

The issue at hand pertains to the application of multiculturalism in Western societies. While Western nations often promote and endorse multiculturalism and ethnic diversity as values, there is a disconnect between these principles and their actual implementation. In practice, the full realisation of multiculturalism in the West remains a challenge, with discrepancies between the rhetoric of diversity and the reality of its integration (Evkuran, 2014). Despite that Western societies claim to support ethnic diversity and inclusion of immigrants regardless of their ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds, this does not necessarily stand for complete understanding and embracing of different cultures. One potential explanation intended for the superiority of Western cultures is the historical legacy of colonialism, which established a dominant Western cultural and political hegemony that view non-Western cultures as inferior and in need of 'civilisation and modernisation'. This legacy of othering and marginalisation is still present in contemporary Western societies, which persist on viewing non-Western cultures through a lens of exoticism and difference, rather than recognising their inherent value and complexity. This can manifest in various ways, such as the portrayal of non-Western cultures as "primitive" and "barbaric" in media and popular culture, or the tendency to view immigrant communities as homogeneous and monolithic. As in the case of Salma, providing language assistance and table manners justify the arguments about how a modern and proper immigrant should look and act in accordance with the dominant society in the British context:

> Under the critical gaze of Miss Asher I received Rebecca's gentle instructions about table manners and the English language. This was the small bread plate, this was the main

> course knife and fork, this was the soup spoon and this was the dessert spoon. I had learnt how to corner the green lettuce, cut it into pieces, shove it in my mouth and eat it unwillingly as if I were full. I had learnt how to butter a piece of bread, hold it with two fingers and eat it with the soup. I had learnt how to be patient and wait for others to start eating and then start after them. I had learnt how to wait for others to stop speaking before I started talking. I had learnt how to start each conversation with a comment about the weather. (100)

In this part, Sally is aware that making herself acquainted with British manners and etiquette could be useful for recognition, and social identity as a kind of 'investment'. In other words, Sally's integration into the language of the powerful might benefit in two ways. First, adopting the cultural practices and language of the West enhances "social relations of powers" between speakers, therefore leading to undemanding recognition (Norton, 1994: 9). Second, such a voluntary integration brings about the conception of a 'good Muslim or immigrant' who is eager to adapt to Western culture. Drawing on the argument of a good Muslim, Sally stands for a modest, modern, and proper immigrant endeavouring to establish social and political recognition. On the other hand, not to mention the problem of multiculturalism, which does not ratify immigrants to speak their own language and apply cultural practices, the dichotomy of them vs. us still functions to perpetuate cultural boundaries and contribute to the notion of Eurocentrism. To make it clear, Sally acknowledges the superiority of British culture and etiquette and adopts 'them' to detach herself from her original background and to pave the way for political and social identity. Therefore, accepting the culture and language of the target nation provides relationship based on mutual interest: a) the Empire's desire to form immigrants based on customs and traditions, b) immigrants' desire for recognition and acceptance by internalising the Empire's customs and traditions. To give an instance from the novel, Sally assumes that having been acquainted with British traditions and customs is not only enough for recognition, and that she needs a proper education based on the English language and culture:

> She [Parvin] looked me in the eye and said, 'why literature?' 'Because I need to know English. The English language.' 'You can study language without reading literature.' 'No, stories good. Teach you language and how to act like English Miss.' She blew some air up at her fringe and said, 'But, Salina, this BA is not in English Language. It does not teach you English. It is about Yeats, Joyce, feminism, Shakespeare, for Christ's sake!' I sipped some coffee. 'I want know about Shakeesbeer. I want know things," I said and pulled my earlobe down. (146)

One of the 'typical' illusions in multicultural societies is that the use of the target culture's language should be at a 'proper and perfect' level. However, multicultural societies are the expression of differences, therefore ignores differences. In the novel, Sally, who has the

illusion of being like "English roses", would like to learn not only the language but also English history and literature (44). The underlying reason for such an illusion is affiliated with embracing British culture in every sense to get recognition and acceptance. It is, in fact, an urge for European countries to civilise and modernise immigrants, which principally takes on language and culture. Not particularly in English-speaking countries, such as the UK and the USA, most European countries attach importance to language and culture in the process of including and excluding immigrants from diverse backgrounds (Leeuw and Wichelen, 2012). Drawing on multiculturalism and cultural studies in the Netherlands, policies and citizenship requirements follow strict laws and programs based on assessments regarding cultural knowledge and language skills. To exemplify this, The Integration Abroad Act of 2016 in the Netherlands was concerned about the acceptability and integration of immigrants and assessed immigrants' level of knowledge based on language and general knowledge, therefore legislating certain criteria and requirements as a measure to minimise sociocultural diversity in society. In a similar way, policies and acts enacted in the UK since the 1960s regarding the citizenship and political recognition of immigrants has operated to noncoercively control and modernise immigrants regarding the nation's principles. Considering these arguments about the recognition and acceptance of immigrants based on cultural knowledge and language skills, it is revealed that cultural and religious differences are seen as the powerful source for exclusion, and that cultural racism is not contrary to the arguments of Orientalism but must be seen as an extension of Orientalist arguments, which takes on a combination of culture, language, and religion in contemporary societies (Shova, 2020). To exemplify from the novel, Salma meets her roommate Parvin, who also comes from the Orient, and is subjected to direct racism by a Pakistani immigrant:

> 'Where does she come from?' 'Somewhere in the Middle East. Fucking A-rabic! She rode a camel all the way from Arabia to this dump in Exeter,' she said and laughed. 'I am not going to share the room with an Arab,' she spat. I pretended that I was asleep and that I could not hear a word. 'She is also covered with sores. It could be contagious! (11)

In this excerpt, based on British cultural racism, Parvin stands for the embodiment of the successful assimilation of the immigrant, and could be the exemplification of 'a good immigrant' in a multicultural society. Despite that both characters, Salma and Parvin, come from an Oriental background, Parvin accomplishedly manages the requirements of immigrants living in the UK, thus having a superiority over Salma using "proper" language, way of dressing, and adopting a non-Muslim manner. Assuming herself a British citizen,

Parvin constantly criticises and advises Salma to take off her veil and become much modernised.

The novel creates a unique storytelling, narrative, and characterisation to convey the immigrant experience in the diaspora, fictionalises the complicacy of gender, identity, religion as well as socio-cultural realities of an immigrant character, Salla, or Salma, and gives a realistic snapshot into the reality of an immigrant who could potentially come up against challenges and alienation, identity crisis, and cultural racism in a hostile culture. In the novel, Salma's journey to the UK becomes an emblematic milestone in which she is transformed into a different social, political, and gender identity. In other words, Salma, in her effort to align with prevailing white norms, adopts a new name, Sally, amidst the scrutiny of an unwelcoming culture, which compels her to navigate between her authentic pre-immigrant identity and a persona she adopts as a camouflage. However, different from other migrant-fiction clichés which take on racism, xenophobia, rootlessness as well as hostility, *My Name is Salma*, at that point, provides an authentic perspective on the perception of an immigrant, addressing the issues of in-betweenness, mimicry, and racism from a different perspective. The novel highlights how Salma crafts her political and gender identity, and reveals her deliberate choices to blend into the dominant society. The adoption of a new name, her aspiration to mirror 'them', and her efforts to assimilate into British customs and traditions emphasises that social status and acceptance are tied to immigrants' ability to embody modernity and propriety. Salma's journey of identity construction places her in a liminal space, where the gender and political facets of her pre-immigrant existence and her new persona grapple within the dichotomy of an Arab immigrant and an English rose. Salma's journey of identity construction is paralleled with Lacan's 'camouflage' theory, which marks a departure from Bhabha's concept of mimicry. The novel helps explore Lacanian mimicry, as it highlights how Salma attempts to blend in and homogenise differences within a diverse society by adopting a form of camouflage. To achieve this, she aligns with white expectations and runs through the prerequisites of being deemed a 'proper' immigrant. Her endeavours to master fluent English, shape her gender identity around notions of 'white' femininity, and assimilate into British culture can be seen as aligning with the tenets of cultural racism. The more Salma distances herself from her origins and conceals them, the more she becomes visible and recognised within the society.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

Extensive research has been conducted on the historical and social development of racism, with a focus on its definition and cultural evolution. In contemporary societies, racism – one of the primary concepts in the humanities and social sciences – has evolved in multiple manifestations, and many academics have offered unique theories regarding the origins of racism in the framework of contemporary studies of racism, which also collaborate with many other disciplines, including linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and postcolonial studies. Within the realms of sociology, politics, and literature, debates on the nature of racism have evolved into discussions on how racism persists in multicultural societies. Notable scholars, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, J. S. Mill, and Edward Said, emphasised racial relations and ethnicity in their early writings on the theory of racism, particularly concerning scientific and colour racism. Early race theories primarily focused on the binary of superiority versus inferiority among different races, linking racism to the biological characteristics of humans.

Acknowledging that racism has long permeated European culture and has taken on various forms based on historical contexts throughout the centuries raises concerns about the nature of racial ideology and its constructability concerning different nations' economic and social demands (Fernando, 1993). In other words, numerous concepts are interconnected with, and exist within, the concept of racism. For example, advocating for the social Darwinist argument that Whites are superior to Blacks stems from the idea of biological racism, which, in turn, gives rise to the notion of a hierarchy of cultures and races. Similarly, to justify and defend antisemitism, the Nazis employed the same arguments, based on their social, cultural, and economic interests, applying the same mechanism to Jews. In the 1960s and 1970s, racism and discrimination became centred on the cultural and economic divide between Europeans and non-Europeans due to the rising number of immigrants into Europe, particularly the UK. Class competition between labour immigrants and natives exacerbated racism. Anti-immigrant groups argued that immigrants could not adapt to society and disrupted the purity of culture due to their 'lower cultural and linguistic qualities' (Semati, 2010).

However, since the 1970s, scholars have focused on exploring the intersections between sociology, politics, economics, and racial ideology. Acknowledging that racism is not a monolithic phenomenon has allowed for the development of diverse perspectives regarding racism and its connections to class, gender, and race. It has also given academics a framework in order to consider intersectionality in studying racism. Most contemporary studies now accept that racism is a social construction in which the ideology of racism is determined by various factors and that racial ideologies transform into a hierarchy of cultures which "revives old racism, albeit in new clothes" (Bratt, 2022: 209). From this perspective, racism becomes a fluid term where language, culture, and religion play a key role in creating new forms of racial prejudice in a multicultural society. As an instance, the racism promoted in Westcentric contexts places non-Western cultures in an inferior cultural hierarchy, otherising the customs and cultures of the minority populations residing in the West. Furthermore, in the 'West', religion serves as a reifying mechanism for racism, which has already been an integral part of race relations and discrimination for centuries. However, since the last 30 years, Western societies has supposedly begun to acknowledge the variety of different cultures and support the arguments of multiculturalism in which the level of tolerance and acceptance of diverse cultures would reduce racial conflicts. Such an acknowledgment is not, of course, in line with reality itself. To make clear, multiculturalism and ethnic diversity are the values that Western countries support and promote, but there is a disparity between these ideals and their actual implementation, and there are still breaks between the ideology of variety and the reality of its integration, making it difficult for multiculturalism to be fully implemented in the West. Although Western societies promote ethnic variety and inclusion of immigrants regardless of their origins, religion, or culture, this does not equate to fully accepting and integrating other cultures (Abbas, 2011; Bağlama, 2020; Hackl, 2022).

At this point, the mechanisms behind acceptability and inclusion become apparent. There are particular requirements associated with the acceptance of immigrants into Western societies, which brings about the concepts of 'conditional inclusion' and 'good immigrant'. The argument made in response to the principles of multiculturalism here calls into question the practicableness of acceptance regardless of immigrants' social, economic, and religious background. As previously mentioned, Western countries promote diversity in terms of ethnicity, culture, and religion; however, it is evident that these multicultural societies impose certain expectations on immigrants, which manifests a degree of inconsistency in

their practices. For example, the rise of Islamophobia as a form of prejudice against Muslim immigrants, particularly following the events of 9/11, raises important questions about inclusivity in multicultural societies. This issue challenges the notion that immigrants from various regions are treated equally by Western countries regardless of their religious beliefs. Consequently, Western nations may adopt a strategy where Muslims are conditionally included in society, provided they conform to certain cultural norms and behaviours, and this dynamic gives rise to the concept of the 'good immigrant' or 'good Muslim' (Bağlama, 2020; Dabashi, 2011).

Based on these arguments, this thesis suggests that immigrants – especially those with Islamic backgrounds – are either gently coerced into adopting particular characteristics that help them integrate in with the mottled environment or are expected to participate voluntarily in Western cultures and customs. Socio-political integration into the target society is just one aspect of these characteristics. The acceptance of immigrants into society also depends on their economic involvement and class relations. In other words, as long as immigrants undergo individual transformations and become 'proper' members of society, multicultural nations in the West will tolerate their diverse cultural practices.

Based on two novels, *My Name is Salma* (2011) by Fadia Faqir and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsin Hamid, which represent and mediate sociocultural and political circumstances in the twenty-first century, this thesis suggests that racism is now associated with the intersectionality of religion, culture, language, and class, in contrast to the traditional arguments centred around 'colour'. It also aims to contribute to the literature and discussions concerning the politics of race. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Changez is an immigrant descended of Pakistani origin, who considers himself a New Yorker and "a veritable James Bond – only younger, darker, and possibly better paid" (Hamid, 31). Changez's educational and intellectual background sets him apart from other typical immigrants, which also lets him build an identity based on American ideals and explore the realm of the imaginary in a multicultural American culture. In the first chapter of the thesis, it has been mentioned that immigrants either willingly or involuntarily perform the requirements set by the West to be included in the dominant society. The voluntary integration of immigrants into the discourses and ideologies of Western nations indicates their desire to disassociate themselves from their culture of origin in order to be acknowledged and welcomed. Such voluntary inclusion is indeed related to the immigrant's

ability to adapt to the target culture in different ways such as learning etiquette and norms, polishing the English language, and devaluing their own culture. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, immigrants coming from different geographies, including the Philippines and India, avoid using their language even when they encounter their fellow citizens. Similarly, Changez recognises that the taxi driver speaks Punjabi and chooses to say nothing even though he is fluent. Changez's wish to keep his foreign acquaintance a secret when she is with Erica is related to the devaluation of his background. Or, to put it another way, the desire to be accepted as an American citizen rather than as an exotic other is the reason why well-integrated immigrants hide their backgrounds and customs.

In the novel, Changez consistently exhibits minor racist actions despite that he ignores them. As an illustration, Changez's presentable, proper, and modern appearance leads Westerners to believe that Changez is a drinker. Addressing this, it is believed that immigrants who have successfully assimilated into the 'West' and who possess the qualities of a good immigrant are apathetic towards their own culture and religion and, as a result, are expected to adhere to Western norms and values. Building his identity on proper immigrant arguments, Changez benefits from opportunities in social and economic spheres due to his intelligence and fluency in language. Here, it is reiterated that the dominant society accepts and includes immigrants who behave following Western norms and expectations. Nevertheless, despite their proper behaviour, immigrants from the East experience racism and Islamophobia on a regular basis in the novel following the 9/11 events. For instance, Changez grows a beard at work before the events of 9/11, which does not bother or distract any colleagues. However, following 9/11, Changez's black skin with a growing beard leads him to be identified with potential fundamentalism and terrorism. This viewpoint suggests that, in multicultural countries, prejudice against Muslims has evolved into a different form of racism, and that, consequently, the degree of tolerance and acceptance of immigrants with Islamic backgrounds is located to that of 'phobia' (Abbas, 2011).

The thesis posits that the question of multiculturalism in contemporary societies emerges through different mechanisms, including Islamophobia and cultural racism, and that immigrants construct flexible identities to camouflage themselves and become mottled in a mottled society**.** The fact that immigrants often voluntarily mimic Western societies deepen the process of constructing identities. In other words, immigrants also need to establish a new gender identity apart from their native culture along with the adaptation to the host

society's language and customs to be accepted. As an example, Salma, also known as Sally, takes on a new name, identifies herself as a British rose, and becomes familiar with British customs and traditions in *My Name is Salma*. However, Salma is also expected to possess seductiveness and womanly charm, and proper qualities, and therefore consequently begins to fetishise her body in an effort to distance herself from the racialisation of sexuality and the conventional image of the 'Muslim immigrant woman'. Assuming that she lives in the 'modern liberating zone', she normalises sexuality to keep up with Western cultures rather than allowing her sexuality to be exploited because of her otherised Muslim identity (Sarnou, 2017: 1). This compels us to converge that immigrants do not only construct social and political identities but also create a new gender identity, which conflicts with Salma's Arab heritage, therefore resulting in being stuck in a liminal space. In this regard, the newfound identities of immigrants, despite their proper qualifications, are further racialised by various aspects, including culture, religion, language, ethnicity, and gender. Given this, racism is an umbrella term used to describe a variety of intertwined factors in contemporary society, and cultural racism is rooted in the micro and macro racist actions that immigrants face in multicultural cultures, as well as the actions they engage in to avoid experiencing racism of any kind.

The persistence of various forms of racism based on culture, language, and religion in contemporary societies highlights the ongoing influence of Westcentric perspectives, such as xenophobia, discrimination, and the misrepresentation of immigrants from the East. In a broader context, racism in the contemporary world often manifests through cultural differences, attempting to eliminate these differences by pressuring immigrants to conform to the norms and customs of the host nation. This pressure can arise either voluntarily or due to fear of exclusion from society if they do not integrate into the local-but-universal culture. Cultural racism, in this regard, undermines social structures and sustains systemic injustices, resulting in a more prejudiced and hypocritical society. Understanding cultural racism thus provides a framework for reconstructing an unbiased and equitable society where individuals – regardless of their background – can freely participate in social, political, and economic life in multicultural settings. Additionally, this research can help identify barriers that hinder the full effectiveness of multiculturalism, paving the way for different groups to coexist harmoniously, contribute to one another, and promote social harmony for an equal society and a more dynamic and flourishing economy without segregation. In conclusion, through the integration of various strategies at both individual and institutional levels, awareness of

contemporary forms of racism can be significantly reduced, though not entirely eliminated. Over time, immigrants would be more readily accepted as individuals rather than subjects, fostering a more genuinely inclusive society.

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