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**The Struggle of Adapting and Being Rejected as a Female Palestinian-American in  
Sahar Mustafah's The Beauty of Your Face**

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**Abstract**

*This research aims to reveal how the female character in *The Beauty of Your Face* novel written by Sahar Mustafah struggles with adapting to the west and the rejection she experienced due to the effect of her diaspora identity as a second-generation immigrant. This research uses the descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data in the form of quotations which are obtained from the novel and is supported by the Cultural Identity and Diaspora theory by Stuart Hall. *The Beauty of Your Face* is a novel that explores the life of a Palestinian-American family and the identity problems faced by the members of the family as a diaspora in the US with kinds of threat and oppressions that they need to go through, particularly after the 9/11 attacks. As the main focus of the research, the character Afaf, as a daughter of immigrants, fights the struggle of having multiple identities as both Palestinian and American and how she overcomes the rejections received by the West as a result of accepting her Muslim and Palestinian side of herself after she decided to wear a hijab. This research focuses on the development of Afaf's character, especially on her diaspora experience.*

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**Keywords:** Diaspora, Palestinian, Immigrant, Adapting, Rejection

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## INTRODUCTION

Palestinian immigrants form one of the world's largest diaspora populations, inhabiting nations across the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and America. This migration, spurred by economic and political pressures during and after the Arab-Israeli conflict, has led to significant challenges in cultural identity for Palestinians adapting to new environments. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2010, more than 5.5 million Palestinians lived abroad, including approximately 250,000 in the United States (Cohen, 1994). The struggle to maintain cultural identity while adapting to Western society—and often facing rejection—remains a central issue for Palestinian diasporic communities.

Stuart Hall's theory of cultural identity emphasizes the fluid and dynamic nature of identity formation, shaped by interactions and societal contexts (Hall, 2015). For diasporic individuals, identity becomes a journey of continuous negotiation influenced by overlapping factors such as gender, class, and religion (Peteet, 2007). Palestinian-Americans, particularly Muslim women, face heightened challenges in this regard, navigating environments shaped by anti-Islamic sentiments and racialization, especially post-9/11. Experiences of hostility, surveillance, and Islamophobia have further complicated their identities as both Muslims and Americans (Hammer, 2005). These struggles intensified during the Trump administration, marked by policies like the "Muslim Ban," which underscored anti-immigrant and Islamophobic sentiments (Brocket, 2018).

In this context, Sahar Mustafah's novel *The Beauty of Your Face* provides a poignant exploration of identity, belonging, and resilience. The protagonist, Afaf Rahman, a Palestinian-American Muslim and principal of a Muslim school in Chicago, confronts both personal and societal challenges. The novel delves into her experiences with familial disintegration, cultural alienation, and racism while also celebrating moments of joy and strength. Central to the narrative is Afaf's navigation of her dual identity as both a diasporic individual and a minority within a post-9/11 American society.

This study examines Afaf Rahman as a second-generation immigrant and a Muslim woman navigating the intersections of identity, culture, and faith. It investigates her struggles to adapt to Western cultural norms and the rejection she faces due to her Palestinian and Muslim heritage. By comparing these experiences with those of characters in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017), which portrays Muslim women grappling with stereotypes and Islamophobia in the UK, this study highlights commonalities and divergences in the depiction of Muslim diasporic identities. While Shamsie's work challenges dominant discourses about Islamophobia, Mustafah's novel focuses on the personal and familial impacts of displacement and racism.

Through this analysis, the study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on cultural identity, diasporic struggles, and the representation of Muslim women in literature. It underscores the importance of understanding how Palestinian-American Muslims like Afaf Rahman navigate the complex realities of belonging and rejection in the shadow of 9/11 and beyond.

## METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method, using Sahar Mustafah's novel *The Beauty of Your Face* as its primary corpus. Mustafah, the daughter of Palestinian immigrants, often draws upon her heritage in her works, providing an authentic lens into the Palestinian experience. The research focuses specifically on the character of Afaf Rahman, a Muslim woman navigating her identity as a member of the diaspora. The analysis explores Afaf's adaptation to Western culture and the rejection she faces as a Palestinian-American Muslim in the post-9/11 context.

Data collection began with an intensive process of reading, observing, interpreting, and analyzing the novel. Stuart Hall's theories on cultural identity and diaspora provide the primary theoretical framework for this study. The researchers began by reading the novel closely, identifying key themes and moments that reflect Afaf's struggles. To deepen their analysis, the researchers conducted focus group discussions, facilitating a collaborative examination of the issues raised in the text.

Throughout the study, findings were continuously evaluated within the group, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the data. Supporting evidence from the novel was meticulously collected and analyzed. This approach allowed the researchers to integrate textual evidence with interpretative insights, forming the basis for a critical analysis of Afaf's experiences as a diasporic character.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section explains the struggle of having multiple identities as a diaspora. In the end, the female character, Afaf, is finally accepting her multiple identities in Sahar Mustafah's novel, *The Beauty of Your Face*. Furthermore, it uncovers the difficulties a female diaspora character faced due to her owning her identity by practicing her culture as a Palestinian Muslim.

Sahar Mustafah reveals that cultural identity is complex for individuals who experience conflicting cultures. In the novel, Mustafah demonstrates Afaf's character as a second-generation immigrant living with her Palestinian family in America. Even though her parents immigrated as a voluntary displacement, her experiences in engaging in cultural interaction place her struggling to identify and own her overlapping cultural identities. In truth, she overcame the struggle as she grew up by maintaining her homeland culture, even though she needed to face many kinds of rejection by the West for years under the shadow of the 9/11 event. The struggle that Afaf faced occurs in structured stages by adapting to the West and then being rejected by the West.

### Adapting to the West

Living in America, both first and second-generation immigrants tend to adapt themselves to the Western culture. Undeniably, immigrants are inclined to adjust how they live amongst the Western community, which may have different or contradicting cultures from their homeland. Afaf Rahman's character is described as a second-generation immigrant who was born in America. The portrayal of Afaf's journey from such a young age in identifying her multiple identities as a diaspora can be seen in how she attempts to adapt to American culture.

In *The Beauty of Your Face*, Mustafah depicted Afaf as a kid familiar with many cultural events in western countries, one of which is Halloween. This represents the way Afaf explores her identity as an American by adapting to the culture.

Halloween is cold and rainy. Khalti Nesreen agrees to take them trick-or-treating for one hour. She wraps herself in a shiny white trench coat, holding her collar closed with one hand, the other clutching an umbrella. She waits on the sidewalk each time Afaf and Majeed run up to a house and ring the doorbell. (Mustafah, 2020, p. 39)

The quote above illustrates that Afaf, a Palestinian-American Muslim, celebrates the Halloween party, accompanied by her aunt, Khalti Nareen. It indicates that Afaf has adapted to Western culture even though she is a Muslim and originally from the East. Halloween is not allowed due to Islamic culture because it began as a pagan and Christian ritual on Samhain night and has since grown and spread to North America. People usually dress up as ghosts or iconic film characters for Halloween celebrations in modern western cultures. They will tell spooky horror stories, play games, carve jack-o-lantern pumpkins, and go trick-or-treating, which is very popular among kids. They approach each home while dressed as ghosts, bringing baskets that will later be filled with candy or chocolate. They will bang on the door and shout, "Trick or Treat!". The kids will get candy if the owner of the house opens the door and says, "treat!". However, if the homeowner is not willing, the kids will play a trick on them.

Mustafah also portrays how immigrants that moved to the West attempt to adapt to the culture, namely by celebrating Thanksgiving, as a way to show the Western people that they are permitted to be a part of the community. It can be seen in the quotation below.

That is all Baba has told them: they will be spending Thanksgiving with their aunt. It is the first time they have been to her house. (Mustafah, 2020, p. 46)

Thanksgiving is a national holiday in the United States and is commonly celebrated by Western culture. The above quotation shows Baba, Afaf, and Majeed, diaspora characters, will celebrate Thanksgiving. Even in Eastern culture, celebrating Thanksgiving is not common; some people would like to celebrate. Baba, Afaf, and Majeed, diaspora characters, in this case, have adapted to the western culture and treat Americans alike. They believe that if they celebrate it, Americans will not see them as enemies; because they come from the East.

Another quotation that shows how the East is adapting to the West's culture is shown in the quotation below.

Though the turkey looks rather pathetic—its skin is still pale, not at all golden like the magazine photograph—there are platters of Middle Eastern dishes to steer attention away from her aunt's failed assimilation: *mahshi koosa* simmered in yogurt sauce. (Mustafah, 2020, p. 52)

From the quotation, Afaf and her family, Palestinians living in America, are trying to adapt to western culture by celebrating Thanksgiving. As previously stated, Thanksgiving is a holiday celebrated in America every last Thursday in November to show gratitude for the autumn harvest for Americans. In the quote, it is said that Afaf's aunt seems to have failed to cook turkey for the first time. Meanwhile, her aunt is said to be proficient in cooking *mahshi koosa*, a traditional Palestinian dish. This shows that they are trying to familiarize themselves with the new culture to fit in with the western people by celebrating Thanksgiving.

This novel also shows how western culture affects Afaf thought and her behavior. We can see the quotation below.

Afaf is in his bedroom, his parents gone for the evening. Michael strips to his underwear, then sits behind her on his bed. He pulls off her shirt, unclasped her bra. Afaf lets the white boys touch her only over her clothes. (Mustafah, 2020, p. 61)

The quotation above shows that Afaf adapts to western culture. Afaf did not protest when Michael touched her and took off her clothes. She enjoyed it and let Michael, the white boy, do it. In eastern cultures, things like this are not allowed. Moreover, Afaf is a Muslim and has a strict family. In Islam, this is also not allowed. However, because Afaf grew up in western culture and was surrounded by westerners, Afaf did not reject him.

The depiction of Afaf adapting to the western culture in an attempt to be accepted by the community can be seen in the quotation below.

Tim drove Afaf to Marquette Park and kept his eyes closed the whole time he kissed her neck and face and touched her breasts over her shirt. She'd listened hard to Simple Minds on the radio, drowning out his soft grunts: "Don't you forget about me . . ." Afterward they drank strawberry-flavored wine coolers that Tim's older brother had bought for him. (Mustafah, 2020, p. 73)

The quotation above showed when Tim did something usual in western culture, but it is prohibited in Muslim women. Tim kissed Afaf's neck and touched her breast once their relationship was not legal or married. In Muslim culture, when a male and a female are not married but do an unlawful sexual relationship it is called Zina. Then, Afaf does that thing; perhaps she needs to figure out how it feels. Still, in western culture, kissing and touching those with no legal relationship is allowed and might be common. Thus, Afaf tries to adapt to that pleasure and lets Tim do it to her.

Another portrayal presented by Mustafah in the novel of how Afaf adapted herself to the West culture to be accepted by the Western community is shown in the last quotation below.

Afaf recognizes it as a sheet taken from her stationery pad, the one bordered with circus animals. She won it at the Valentine's Day party last year in the third grade for throwing five ping-pong balls in a row of buckets, like on The Bozo Show. (Mustafah, 2020, p. 22)

The quotation shows how Afaf, as a Palestinian-American girl, participated in celebrating Valentine's Day, indicating that she had attempted to adapt to Western culture. It is stated that she participated in the party's games, celebrating Valentine's Day, which she attended when she was a kid. Valentine's Day is a part of western culture, which originated as a Christian feast day honoring Christian martyrs and has become a significant cultural and religious celebration of romance worldwide. Being a Muslim, even though it contradicts her religion and homeland culture, Afaf still made an effort to habituate herself to the American culture by attending the party to be accepted by the community she lived in.

### **Being Rejected by the West**

Besides Afaf's attempts to adapt to the western culture in order to be accepted by the community, she also struggles to face the rejections that she received from the West. Afaf is still rejected by the West despite the fact that she already attempted to adapt to western culture. The rejections got even worse particularly due to her wearing hijab which represents her Muslim identity. However, in the end, Afaf still accepted both sides of her cultural identity since she is a Muslim immigrant. Below is the first quotation of *The Beauty of Your Face* which portrays Afaf being rejected by the West.

People around the neighborhood tossed M-80s over the school fence on a regular basis. It was a message booming loud and clear: You don't belong here. (Mustafah, 2020, p. 14)

Afaf has been rejected by her school neighbor, and people are tossed at her school by firecrackers M-80. M-80 is a firecracker created for the American military. People around her school tossed firecrackers to give a warning to her school. Afaf's school is an Islamic school but is surrounded by a majority of non-Muslims. The neighborhood does not accept it because Americans see them as enemies and threats. Americans have a desire for their neighborhood to be placed by Americans as well. In fact, Americans do not feel safe because of Muslim existence. Eventually, Americans give Afaf's school a warning, saying, 'You don't belong here,' which means they want Afaf's school to disappear and be burnt by a firecracker.

Mustafah also portrays the relationship between Afaf and her friends at school, it also shows us the rejection she got from them. It can be seen in the quotation below.

Still, it hadn't impressed Julie McNulty or Amber Reeves, the two most beautiful girls in her class. They would never invite Afaf to their birthday parties. That day, Afaf had proudly held her prize and Julie sidled up to her. "You didn't give Amber a chance to win it. Don't be stingy, A-faf. You don't really want it, do you?" (Mustafah, 2020, p. 22)

In the quotation above Afaf gets bad treatment from her two friends, Amber and Julie. The two white girls were rated as the two most popular and pretty girls in their class. Their existence also represents that white girls are superior. Their rejection towards Afaf was due to the differences of their social status. Afaf is not a popular girl and not a white girl.

Furthermore, the rejection towards the East comes up in the way of the West people underrepresenting the East by mocking the East culture, according to what they believe is true. It is shown in the quotation below.

“Nada does not have boyfriend.”

“Maybe not one you’re aware of, sir.” The female officer jots something down on her notepad. “Her friends might be of help on that point,” she says to her partner. The officer nods, smacking his gum. “Gainst your religion, sir?”

“Well, it’s . . .” Baba falters. Afaf cringes. Her parents’ humiliation and fear shrink the apartment. The police officers loom over them, exchanging disapproving smirks. (Mustafah, 2020, p. 28-29)

The quotation above shows a rejection by the West, which is presented by the police officers, towards Afaf's family. Within the quote, the officers asked Afaf's father whether or not Afaf's sister has a boyfriend to investigate her further disappearance. To western people, having a relationship with the opposite sex is common, even for teenagers. However, it is prohibited in Palestinian culture, which is mostly in line with Muslim culture.

The officers were described as sneering at one another after they talked to Afaf's father, asking for approval of their prejudice against Afaf's family, in which having an opposite-sex partner outside marriage is forbidden in their religion. This follows what Karim & Eid (2011) stated, that Islam is imagined in Western societies as a rigid entity, thanks to the western media that has portrayed Muslims with their negative stereotypes of Islam. Therefore, the act of the police officers implies one of the examples of Westerners that refuse the existence of Muslim culture to be a part of their community.

Another rejection that Afaf received also shows how Afaf was mocked through words related to his religious culture, the quotation can be seen below.

“You need your diploma, young lady. Wouldn’t want your father selling you to a harem, would you?” Coach Phillips chuckles, scratches the bridge of his nose with a meaty finger. She fights hard to control the flush of red across her cheeks. She wants to grab one of his trophies and smash his face.” (Mustafah, 2020, p. 67)

This quotation above shows that Afaf is being mocked by Coach Philip with the word Harem. The word ‘harem’ means a separate part of a Muslim household that is reserved for wives, concubines, and female servants. These words were addressed to Afaf as a form of rejection of Muslim households which allow a person to have more than one wife. In specific, it means the area of the home that is exclusively used by women, in a society where men and women are often kept apart. A harem is basically a place for women to live. However, when we use the term, we frequently refer to a room full of women who work someone in a sexual way.

Hijab is a part of Muslim diasporic women's identity. It not only defines their homeland's cultural identity but also presents Muslim women as bound by religious traditions hindering their ability to function normally in society. In the Western view, the veil may easily provoke hatred towards the East, as seen in the quotation below.

““Raghead.” Afaf turns around, her heart thumping. Who said it?  
A group of teenagers snicker near the Slurpee machine. A man in a suit fastens his eyes on the newspaper he's purchasing, and refuses to look Afaf's way. The cashier gives her a wicked grin” (Mustafah, 2020, p. 73)

The quotation shows the hatred of the West towards Afaf as an Eastern. The decision that Afaf took to wear her hijab in public indeed positioned her to be seen differently as 'Other' in Western eyes. This follows the idea that the West perceives women who veiled their heads as being brainwashed by the patriarchal value of Islam (Jiwani, 2004). Furthermore, wearing a hijab has come to be seen as a symbol of the oppressed, constrained, patriarchal, and victimized Islamic woman in the Western media. The mockery of 'raghead' by the West towards Afaf indicates that they do not accept her to be in an equal position with them. This emphasized that it is undeniable that the West's hatred may lead to the rejection of the East.

Another experience of rejection by the West towards Afaf is also depicted in a proper place, such as school. It is described that there is a terrorist who hated Muslims so much that he attacked a Muslim school which can be seen in the following quotation.

“My daughter attends here.” She paused. “She's a senior. Her name's Az—” “Shut up. You think I'll feel sorry for you if you tell me their names? You're ruining this country. Your people, your evil religion.” (Mustafah, 2020, p. 56)

Mustafah illustrates that the West, which the terrorist man presents, oppressed the East by his action to attack the Muslim school where Afaf worked as a principal. Not only through the attacks the portrayal of rejection by the West is seen through the verbal abuses. Within the quotation, it is clearly stated that the terrorist had a great hatred towards the East, mainly the Muslim people. Using the words, 'you're ruining this country' and 'your evil religion' indicates that the West rejects the existence of the East to be a part of their community. It uncovers that the West only positioned them as 'Others,' not equal to the majority position. In the same context, another rejection is also portrayed by the same person, as seen in the quotation below.

Other rejections by the west are also shown in the quotation below.

“What do you know about it?” he sneered. “You don't care a goddamn bit about me or this country. You don't belong here.” “I was born in this country—just like you,” she said, leaning forward, her hands fluttering like birds in her lap. “Yeah? You sure don't fucking act like it.” He shook his head vehemently. “Naw, lady, you don't belong here at all.” (Mustafah, 2020, p. 158)



In the quotation above the shooter said that Afaf can't stay in his country, he doesn't like the idea about her as an immigrant and its existence in his country. From this we can see that racism is growing in western countries. The rejection occurred because the idea of anti-immigrant, anti-Arab and anti-Muslim was growing rapidly in society. Usually this rejection is carried out with sometimes horrific actions, one of which is the shooting at a Muslim school that occurs in this novel.

Another experience of Afaf being rejected by the west. Since Afaf is a Palestinian who moved to America, she has been rejected by the west. Possibly Americans have a conflict between America and Palestine.

Last month Afaf had gone into a Victoria's Secret at the mall to purchase a bridal shower gift for one of the younger women. A middle-aged white woman and her friend had sneered at her as she carried a lacy negligee to the salesclerk: *Isn't it a sin for them to shop here?* As if muslimat were incapable of being sensuous beings. (Mustafah, 2020, p. 164)

Since her appearance is not similar to Americans, she is being rejected by the west. Perhaps some Americans assume that they are a developed country and they will underestimate Eastern countries. American white people have high social status then they haughtily underestimate anyone who has not white skin. Indeed, Afaf must be annoyed with that action because Afaf just wants to buy something for her relative. Americans assume that Victoria's Secret is not a Muslim woman's place. They believe Muslim women are supposed to stay in their homes and should not go anywhere. Since she is an Easter Muslim woman, it does not mean that Afaf lives with their argument. Thus, Afaf just silently heard any insult to her and lived life on her own. Afaf struggling to be accepted in western culture is being patient and silent to all of the criticism that she gets.

There is another depiction of how White Americans confront the diaspora character, particularly the Muslim woman who veils her head and wears body-covered clothing. Mustafah described this as a way to under-represent the East, as seen below.

Bilal steps forward. "Miss, this is ridiculous." "It's TSA policy. If you refuse to remove these articles of clothing, we'll need to search you in private, ma'am."  
"Do you think she is concealing something under her scarf?" Bilal says in a loud voice. (Mustafah, 2020, p. 173)

The quotation reveals the East being oppressed by the law made by the West government after the 9/11 incident. Afaf and her husband, Bilal, must go through airport security to make a pilgrimage. However, the staff required Afaf to open the scarf she wore as they assumed that Muslims like Afaf might bring anything dangerous. As an Eastern, Bilal attempts to deliver complaints to the West because he is sure they do not harm the airport. Nevertheless, in the end, Afaf needs to go through another security procedure to check her entire body based on the policy made by the West just because Afaf wears a headscarf. This shows how the West has such a controlling role towards the East. The phrase 'It's TSA policy' depicts that they do not need

efforts to show their domination to the East as they are already powerful enough behind the policy made by the government.

Another rejection portrayed when Afaf was at the airport. He was forced to accept the fairly bad treatment against her.

“I’m going to be sick,” Afaf tells the officer. The vomit heaves from her throat and she retches into a wastebasket someone quickly hands her. “No reason to be nervous, ma’am. Unless you’ve got something to hide,” the officer says with a sneer. (Mustafah, 2020, p. 173)

In the quotation above, Afaf was stopped by the airport officials because she was wearing a hijab on her head. In the west, women who wear the hijab are often discriminated against and labeled as dangerous people. At that time Afaf was refused and forced to follow the rules that required her to be examined by removing his clothes. Because of this she felt very embarrassed and vomited because she could not hold back her emotions anymore. But the officer ignored her and instead mocked her.

Next, another Afaf experienced being rejected by the west. Where Americans are not fully open to immigrants especially from the East. Since the East has a significant difference from them. Usually people would like to judge people by their appearance.

When she passes behind Afaf, the woman flicks water at her headscarf. “Shame on you,” Afaf snaps back. “What have I done to you?” What has she done to any of them? Is she not a citizen of this country like them? How naïve to believe she’s ever really belonged— with and without her hijab. Before and after a terrorist attack. “You’re all evil, bitch.” (Mustafah, 2020, p. 174)

In this case, Americans hate when Muslim women show their hijab to the public. Hijab reminded Americans of the terrorist attack. When Muslim people dress by using hijab for women and gown for men, Americans assume that they are part of terrorists. Americans do not accept Muslim people living in their country. Afaf wonders how American still do not accept her as a human being. Afaf lives as usual and does not disturb any other life. Americans assume that someone who is similar to Afaf does not belong in America and is supposed to be in their original place.

Next, there is another portrayal of how the West openly shows its hatred toward the East. Being a part of the majority, the West blatantly rejects the existence of the East within the community. It is shown in the quotation below.

He flicked his jacket back, revealing the butt of his pistol pressed between his belt and stomach. “This is my country. You don't belong here. Do you understand me?” (Mustafah, 2020, p. 206)

The fact that the man threatens the diaspora character, namely Afaf, indicates that the East does not get any chance to be accepted by the West. The action of this West character clearly shows

Islamophobia. Islamophobia is defined as a hatred or fear of Islam and its believers. Individual, ideological, and structural forms of prejudice and injustice result from it (Watt, 2008). This is mainly due to the numerous Western media stories since 9/11, which have shown direct connections between terrorism and "Islamic" fundamentalism (Caidi & MacDonald, 2008). As a result, with this kind of rejection, the diaspora characters may be triggered to start questioning and attempting to re-identify their cultural identity.

The other portrayal of rejection by the West that Afaf experiences as a diaspora character can be seen in the quotation below.

"My daughter attends here." She paused. "She's a senior. Her name's Az—" "Shut up. You think I'll feel sorry for you if you tell me their names? You're ruining this country. Your people, your evil religion." (Mustafah, 2020, p. 156)

The quotation above again shows the depiction of a diaspora character, Afaf, whom the West does not accept. Following the 9/11 attacks, such negative attitudes against immigration in some Western societies have changed significantly, which may also have intensified Muslims' fear and anxiety (Eid & Karim, 2011). The hatred that the man shows in the quote clearly indicates the little possibility of the East being accepted as a part of the community. The phrase 'You're ruining this country' reveals enough how the East receives a total rejection by the West.

Another Afaf's experience of being rejected by the West is also portrayed within the quotation below.

In her daily life, white women silently look down on her as though she is a threat to their existence. Men sneer at her, a noiseless storm of violence in their eyes when she passes them in airports, in parking lots. (Mustafah, 2020, p. 213)

Racism against Muslims from the East has happened a lot in the West and has raised many pros and cons. Many people assume that they are a real threat. This is because there are many incidents involving or acting in the name of Islam, such as acts of terrorism. The white woman in the quotation thinks that Afaf is a threat that might hurt her.

## CONCLUSION

The research shows that Afaf finally accepts her multiple identities as a diaspora character. There are stages that Afaf needs to face in order to accept both of her cultural identities. Firstly, the analysis of how Afaf adapts to the West is taken from the beginning story of Afaf's childhood into a teenager. This indicates that at the beginning of Afaf's journey as a diaspora character, Afaf wanted to fit in with American culture. Moreover, it was even apparent that she was attempting to put aside her identity as a Palestinian Muslim in hopes that she could be accepted to be a part of the community in which she lives. It can be emphasized that Afaf, as a Muslim Palestinian-American, had adapted herself to the West. The tendency of Afaf to practice the American culture, even when the practice contradicts her homeland cultural identity, which is a Palestinian, shows that she attempted so hard to be part of the American community.

Additionally, the analysis moved to the stage in which Afaf overcame the struggle of being rejected by the West, specifically after she began to own and accept both of her cultural identities as a diaspora. The rejections experienced by Afaf became worse, particularly after the 9/11 accident. She constantly faced many rejections by the West, which emphasized that as an Eastern, she is seen as 'Others' by the West. Moreover, the community does not accept her existence because of her homeland identity and the religion that she believes in. Besides, after she decided to wear hijab publicly and began to practice her Muslim culture, she was triggered to re-questioning her identity due to the endless oppression and hatred by the West towards her. Nevertheless, Afaf is unshaken by the rejections and still proudly owns both of her identities. This came to the conclusion that Mustafah as an author, illustrates a second-generation immigrant character who struggles to identify and own her multiple identities by adapting to the West and overcoming the rejection by the West.

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