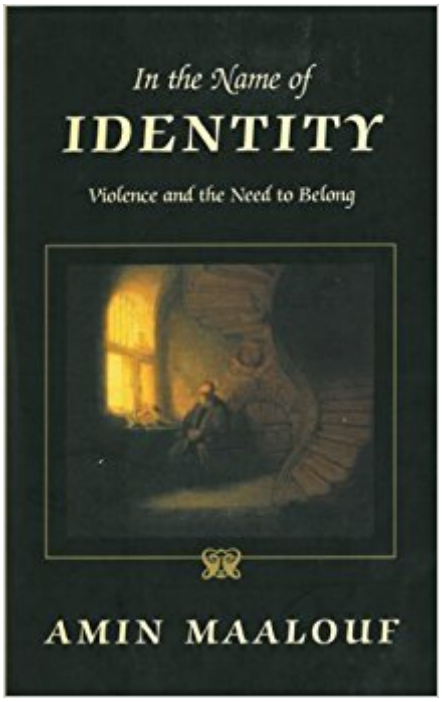
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In The Name Of Identity: Violence And The Need To Belong



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Synopsis

I want to try and understand why so many people commit crimes in the name of identity,Ã¢â ¬Â• writes Amin Maalouf. Identity is the crucible out of which we come: our background, our race, our gender, our tribal affiliations, our religion (or lack thereof), all go into making up who we are. All too often, however, the notion of identity—personal, religious, ethnic, or national—has given rise to heated passions and even massive crimes. Moving across the worldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s history, faiths, and politics, he argues against an oversimplified and hostile interpretation of the concept. He cogently and persuasively examines identity in the context of the modern world, where it can be viewed as both glory and poison. Evident here are the dangers of using identity as a protective—and therefore aggressive—mechanism, the root of racial, geographical, and colonialist subjugation throughout history.Maalouf contends that many of us would reject our inherited conceptions of identity, to which we cling through habit, if only we examined them more closely. The future of society depends on accepting all identities, while recognizing our individualism.

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Customer Reviews

In the Name of Identity is as close to summer reading as philosophy gets. It is a personal, sometimes even intimate, account of identity-in-the-world, not a treatise on the thorny metaphysics of identity. A novelist by trade, Amin Maalouf is a fluid writer, and he is aided by Barbara Bray’s award-winning translation. His aim is to illuminate the roots of violence and hatred, which he sees in

tribalistic forms of identity. He argues that our convictions and notions of identity--whether cultural, religious, national, or ethnic--are socially habituated and frequently dangerous. We'd give them up, he argues, if we thought more closely about them. Though the book has been heralded as radical and surprising, Maalouf essentially espouses an Enlightenment sensibility, a faith in the brotherhood of man. He is a believer in progress, arguing that "the wind of globalisation, while it could lead us to disaster, could also lead us to success." In fact, he envisions a globalized world in which our local identities are subordinated to a broader "allegiance to the human community itself." Maalouf wants us to retain our distinctiveness, but he wants it subsumed under the nave of common understanding. --Eric de Place --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"A life spent writing has taught me to be wary of words. Those that seem clearest are often the most treacherous. `Identity' is one of those false friends," begins this compelling, provocative and persuasive study of the dangers of personal, religious, ethnic and national identities. Arguing that these identities allow and often encourage people to engage in horrific acts of violence upon those with different identities, Maalouf offers a philosophical exploration of what a culture without entrenched identities would be like. Lebanese by birth, Maalouf is a journalist and award-winning novelist (Rock of Tanious) who has lived in France for 25 years. Writing from a position of multiple identities ("I am posed between two countries, two or three languages, and several cultural traditions"), he asserts that many people are in similar situations. With intelligence, wit and moral fortitude, Maalouf accessibly and eloquently addresses such complicated issues as how we judge religious traditions that have embraced violence and brutality; modern manifestations of "otherness

How does globalization change our perspective of who we are and what we want? In the words of Amin MaaloufÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“In fact, we are all infinitely closer to our contemporaries than to our ancestors... I have a lot more in common with a passerby picked from the streets of Prague, Seoul or San Francisco, than I do with my own great-grandfather...in my moral framework, my styles of thinking.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•This is but one of many short paragraphs in a book that forcefully challenges our thinking about how we decide who we are as individuals and groups and why we behave toward each other as we do. What is the relationship of our cultural specialness to what we have in common? The book is full of cultural street sense which foster embracing diversity, engendering respect and helping us face our fears about it, for example, Maalouf points out that, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The more an immigrant feels his culture of origin respected, the more he will open himself to the culture that has received him.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•How

do we respect our cultures and their legitimate aspirations and find the balance between culturally diverse richness that is spread by todayÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s mobility and globalization and the banal sameness that our media and thin thinking seem to engender instead? There is not an easy answer, but In the Name of Identity makes it possible for us to see and work with the dilemma in ourselves and in our society.Amin Maalouf is certainly a seer. After 9/11 it is hard to believe that this book was written before those events. The author asserts that, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“In each of us there exists a Mr Hyde, and our most important task is to prevent those conditions from coming together that bring the monster out.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• Unfortunately they have come together and we are now faced with its terror on a day-to-day basis. Mr Hyde is now on the loose like never before. This authorÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s wisdom about how we use our identities to define ourselves against each other in deadly ways may lead us to insights to help contain the monster of our own reactions to the unfamiliar in each other as well as make wise choices about diversity in our organizations and public policies.I would have to rank In the Name of Identity in the top five books that I have read in the last decade. It is also available as:Les IdentitÃƒÂ©s meurtriÃƒÂ¨res , Le livre de poche, ParisMÃƒÂ¶rderische IdentitÃƒÂ¤ten, Taschenbuch, Suhrkamp.Les identitats que maten. Per una mundialitzaciÃƒÂ que respecti la diversitat. Barcelona: Edicions La CampanaIdentitades asesinas. Alianza Editorial, MadridAs identidades assassinas, Lisboa, Ed. Difel, 2000L'identitÃƒÂ , Ed. Bompiani, Cortina (Torino)

.This pre-9/11 book remains fresh and important today. Maalouf, who is Lebanese by birth and French by citizenship, examines the importance of how both individuals and groups identify themselves in the modern world. Maalouf is both Arab and Christian, and his family was Christian long before Christianity made its way to the Western world.To pin people in boxes based on their ethnicity or on their religion is both foolish and dangerous. Maalouf captures this thought succinctly, stating: "...it is often the way we look at other people that imprisons them within their own narrower allegiances. And it is also the way we look at them that may set the, free." [pg 22] "People often see themselves in terms of whichever one of their allegiances is most under attack." [pg 26]One of the most fascinating points Maalouf makes is that in this world of rapid global communication we are living in an age of both harmony and dissonance. As the peoples of the world become more and more alike, it is a natural human reaction to cling to, and insist upon, those elements of our culture that make us special and unique. "Mistrust," he says, "is undoubtedly one of the keywords of our age."He reminds us that "the future is not written down anywhere. The future will be what we make it." [pg 98] His hope for the world, and for his family, is that someday his grandson will marvel that

"in his grandfather’s day such things still needed to be said." [pg 164].This a thoughtful and well-written book that should be required reading in every sociology and World History course, and a top choice among thinking people everywhere.Kim BurdickStanton, DE

A clear and well laid out examination of the human need to establish a group identity, the problems it creates (using real life modern examples like Yugoslavia and Rwanda), along with encouragement for overcoming the poisonous atmosphere created by "us vs. them" thinking. Very timely all the time, unfortunately, but especially timely as I compose this, the day after the Charleston church massacre.

This book was interesting because it delves into how identity plays a critical role in shaping religious, ethnic and sectarian violence in conflicts in the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans.This book is a must for people to reconcile their ethnic and religious differences.Amin Maalouf having a diverse background linguistically and religiously shows how it affect him as a person.Good book that delves into a interesting topic.

In The Name Of Identity is a great short book for you if you are interested in learning about ethnocentrism and are into social studies and social psychology. Amim Maalouf writes in a simple and clear way and shares his personal experiences on how ethnocentrism has affected his life. Origins, culture, traditions, and religious believes are part of our identity. In this modern world of ours, these are very often subject to challenge from others. Here is a first hand account on how to understand those challenges, how to feel about them and, moreover, what an appropriate response one can give.

This book is a MUST READ for anyone who is wondering what has brought the world into the violent, chaotic mess it is in now. Mr. Maalouf’ s remarkably insightful analysis pinpoints the cause of universal unrest and hostility so clearly and simply, you’ ll wonder why you were ever confused in the first place.

It is an essential book for understanding and hopefully preventing today’s conflicts

great

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