

In the name of identity: Nick M.

SYMBOLS

I REJECT NATIONALIST SYMBOLS



SYMBOLS FOR CERTAIN BRANDS



SELF & OTHERS

Others have impacted on my understanding of who I am

I don't identify myself in relation to my enemies

I avoid clans, tribes, national groups

Tribes

If I have to:

Wolverhampton Wanderers

British

Politically Liberal

It's easier to identify the tribes that

I DO NOT belong to

IDENTITY AND ALLEGIANCES

- Elements of my Identity: genes, socialisation by my parents, work, social class, environment, education, economic circumstances of my life
- who I am depends on the context
- I am not the same person I was 3 years ago
- I value loyalty
- **My strongest allegiance is towards "fairness"**
- I will fight for fairness even through political violence and would be prepared to make meaningful sacrifices to achieve it

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Interview questions:*

1. Amin Maalouf maintains that “each individual’s identity is made up of a number of elements, and these are clearly not restricted to the particulars set down in official records” (10). I’d like to know which “elements” make up your own identity
2. Could you list those “elements” of your identity to which you feel the strongest “allegiance”?
3. To what extent, and in what manner would you be prepared to defend these allegiances if you felt they were threatened?
4. Amin Maalouf claims that “the identity a person lays claim to is often based, in reverse, on that of his enemy” (14). Do you agree? Can you explain your position with some detail?
5. You are an English speaker. To what extent does this position you within a group?
6. When someone asks: “who are you?” How do you answer?
7. Maalouf tells us that “identity isn’t given once and for all: it is built up and changes throughout a person’s lifetime” (23) he explains that “what determines a person’s affiliation to a given group is essentially the influence of others ... who try to make him one of them; together with the influence of those on the other side, who do their best to exclude him” (25). In what ways does this quote apply to you?
8. What “tribes” do you feel you belong to? (local, national, global)
9. Maalouf argues that “everything in history is expressed in symbols ... and above all identity” (73). What symbols represent your identity?
10. “mistrust is one of the keywords of our age”. Do you agree?

*(I offer these as an example of how to use Maalouf’s text to generate questions that reveal the components of an identity. PLEASE feel free to devise your own.)