

T.C.
DOKUZ EYLÜL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
AMERİKAN KÜLTÜRÜ VE EDEBİYATI PROGRAMI
YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

**LOSS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN ANNE TYLER'S
*DIGGING TO AMERICA***

Mehtap AKGÜL

Danışman

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Bülent UĞRASIZ

2009

Yemin Metni

Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak sunduđum “Loss of Cultural Identity in Anne Tyler’s *Digging to America*” adlı alıřmanın, tarafımdan, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı dıřecek bir yardıma bařvurmaksızın yazıldıđını ve yararlandıđım eserlerin kaynakada gsterilenlerden oluřtuđunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanılmıř olduđunu belirtir ve bunu onurumla dođrularım.

22/07/2009

Mehtap AKGÜL

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZ SINAV TUTANAĞI

Öğrencinin

Adı ve Soyadı :Mehtap Akgül
Anabilim Dalı :Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı
Programı :Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı
Tez Konusu :Loss of Cultural Identity in Anne Tyler's *Digging to America*
Sınav Tarihi ve Saati :

Yukarıda kimlik bilgileri belirtilen öğrenci Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü'nün tarih ve sayılı toplantısında oluşturulan jürimiz tarafından Lisansüstü Yönetmeliği'nin 18. maddesi gereğince yüksek lisans tez sınavına alınmıştır.

Adayın kişisel çalışmaya dayanan tezini dakikalık süre içinde savunmasından sonra jüri üyelerince gerek tez konusu gerekse tezin dayanağı olan Anabilim dallarından sorulan sorulara verdiği cevaplar değerlendirilerek tezin,

BAŞARILI OLDUĞUNA O OY BİRLİĞİ O
DÜZELTİLMESİNE O* OY ÇOKLUĞU O
REDDİNE O**
ile karar verilmiştir.

Jüri teşkil edilmediği için sınav yapılamamıştır. O***
Öğrenci sınava gelmemiştir. O**

* Bu halde adaya 3 ay süre verilir.
** Bu halde adayın kaydı silinir.
*** Bu halde sınav için yeni bir tarih belirlenir.

Tez burs, ödül veya teşvik programlarına (Tüba, Fulbright vb.) aday olabilir. Evet
Tez mevcut hali ile basılabilir. O
Tez gözden geçirildikten sonra basılabilir. O
Tezin basımı gerekliliği yoktur. O

JÜRİ ÜYELERİ

İMZA

..... Başarılı Düzeltme Red

..... Başarılı Düzeltme Red

..... Başarılı Düzeltme Red

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my thesis advisor Ass. Prof. Dr. Bülent Uğrasız, for his invaluable support and constructive comments regarding my thesis, “Loss of Cultural Identity in Anne Tyler’s *Digging to America*”. Without his contribution, this thesis would not have been completed.

To Ass. Prof. Dr. Füsün Çoban Döşkaya, who has informed me of Anne Tyler and her novel, *Digging to America*. I am particularly grateful to her for her guidance in my thesis.

To Ass. Prof. Dr. Feryal Çubukçu, who has helped me with her invaluable suggestions.

To my father for his patience, unceasing support and understanding throughout my thesis.

To Alison Kademoğlu for her proofreading of my thesis.

And finally to Ruziye Hüsrevoğlu for her suggestions in the making of this thesis.

ÖZET

Tezli Tüksek Lisans

Anne Tyler’ın Digging to America Romanında Kültürel Kimlik Kaybı

Mehtap Akgül

Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü
Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı
Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Programı

Amerika birçok farklı ulusu bünyesinde bulunduran bir devlettir. Farklı uluslardan olan insanlar Amerika’ya çeşitli sebeplerle göç etmişlerdir. İranlılar da bu göç eden grubun içindedir. Ancak Amerika ve İran arasında yaşanan siyasi olaylar: İran Devrimi, İran rehine krizi ve son olarak 11 Eylül saldırıları bu iki ülke arasındaki ilişkileri oldukça germiştir. Özellikle 11 Eylül saldırılarından sonra ortaya çıkan gelişmeler sonucunda Amerika, Müslüman bir ülke olan İran’ı zan altında bırakmıştır. Amerika’nın İran’ı “şer eksenine”ne dahil etmesinden dolayı, İranlılar önyargılı bir tutum ile karşı karşıya kalmıştır. Yapılan araştırmalar, bu olumsuz tutum sebebiyle zor durumda kalan İranlıların sosyal hayatlarında sıkıntı çektiklerini ve kendi kimliklerinden uzaklaşıp, kültürlerine yabancılaşmaktıklarını göstermektedir.

Bu tezin amacı; Anne Tyler’ın *Digging to America* adlı romanında, ortaya çıkan olumsuz İran imajı sebebiyle İranlıların kendi kültürlerinden uzaklaşıp, nasıl Amerikalı kimliğine sahip olmaya çalıştıklarını incelemektir. Anne Tyler’ın bu eseri, Batılı önyargısı sonucunda meydana gelen kimlik krizini dile getirmesi açısından önemlidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: 1- Kültürel Kimlik, 2- 11 Eylül Saldırıları, 3- Amerikan Karakteri, 4- Öteki, 5- İranlılar

ABSTRACT

Master of Arts Degree

Loss of Cultural Identity in Anne Tyler's *Digging to America*

Mehtap Akgül

Dokuz Eylül University
Graduate Institute of Social Sciences
Department of Western Languages and Literature
American Culture and Literature Program

America is a country which shelters people of different origins. People from different countries, including Iranians too, immigrated to America for various reasons. Only the political developments between America and Iran, such as the Iranian Revolution, the Iranian hostage crisis and finally September 11th attacks strained the relations between these countries. As a result of the developments, especially after the September 11th attacks, America incriminated Iran, an Islamic country. Owing to America's inclusion of Iran in the "axis of evil", Iranians have been treated with prejudice. Research shows that, Iranians, who are in a difficult position on account of this negative attitude, experience hardships in their social lives, feel estranged from their identity and alienated from their own culture.

The objective of this thesis is to study how Iranians distanced themselves from their own cultural identity, on account of the emerging negative Iranian image, and tried to adopt American identity in Anne Tyler's novel, *Digging to America*. This novel of Anne Tyler's is important in that it addresses the identity crisis resulting from the impact of Western prejudice.

Key Words: 1- Cultural Identity, 2- September 11th Attacks, 3- The American Character, 4- Other, 5- Iranians

LOSS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN ANNE TYLER'S *DIGGING TO AMERICA*

YEMİN METNİ	i
TUTANAK	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ÖZET	iv
ABSTRACT	v
CONTENTS	vi
INTRODUCTION	viii

CHAPTER ONE

IRAN AT THE CROSSROADS

1.1. Shah Reza Pahlavi Period	1
1.2. The Iranian Revolution	3
1.3. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini Period	11

CHAPTER TWO

HARD TIMES OF AMERICA

2.1. Jimmy Carter Period	14
2.2. The Iranian Hostage Crisis	17
2.3. Iran-Iraq War	21
2.4. Irangate (Iran Contra Scandal)	24
2.5. Milestone for America: September 11 th Attacks	27

CHAPTER THREE

IDEOLOGICAL TOOLS

3.1. A Necessary Evil: Neoconservatism	33
3.2. The Clash of Civilizations by Samuel P. Huntington	40
3.3. Western Perceptions of the East: Orientalism	47

CHAPTER FOUR

LOSS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN ANNE TYLER'S *DIGGING TO AMERICA*

4.1. ANNE TYLER AS A CONTEMPORARY WOMAN WRITER	
4.1.1. A Short Biography of Anne Tyler	51
4.1.2. Anne Tyler's Style in Writing	54
4.1.3. General Information about Tyler's <i>Digging to America</i>	57
4.2. WHO IS AN AMERICAN?	
4.2.1. "Promised Land" and "City upon a Hill"	63
4.2.2. "Melting Pot"	66
4.2.3. A Hyphenated Identity: Iranian-Americans	70
4.3. IRANIAN CHARACTERS IN <i>DIGGING TO AMERICA</i>	
4.3.1. Ziba: The Hyphenated Iranian Daughter-in-Law	72
4.3.2. Sami: The Hyphenated Iranian Son	77
4.3.3. Maryam: The Unhyphenated Iranian Mother-in-Law	81
CONCLUSION	87
WORKS CITED AND CONSULTED	91
APPENDIX	101

INTRODUCTION

Anne Tyler's novel, *Digging to America* addresses Iranian family's loss of cultural identity in America, based on the differences between an Iranian and an American family. In my thesis entitled "Loss of Cultural Identity in Anne Tyler's *Digging to America*", I aim to study the alienation of one's cultural identity, which is represented as "the other" by Eastern individuals, as a result of the prejudice especially after September 11th attacks.

References will be made to the incidents in the political history of Iran and America not only because they are also mentioned in Tyler's novel as the Shah era, the Iranian hostage crisis and September 11th incidents but also they catalyzed the animosity between the two countries. The first of the four chapters in my thesis presents the incidents described as crossroads in Iranian history. These are, the overthrow of the pro-American Shah and the introduction of an entirely anti-American leader, Khomeini. This made history as the Iranian Revolution. Thus, the foundations of America-Iran hostility are presented, beginning from the Shah period, in the first chapter entitled "Iran at the Crossroads".

In the second chapter, however, the hard times of America are presented, including Carter period, the Iranian hostage crisis, Irangate, Iran-Iraq war, and finally September 11th attacks, which are the milestone of the American history. Thus, how the political incidents in Iran and America contributed to the increase of tension will be studied. Carter's wrong policies and his inability to establish favorable relations with Iran initiated the Iranian hostage crisis. During this incident, Iranian leader, Khomeini intensified this crisis which stigmatized Iranians in the eyes of Americans. This gave rise to the creation of an aggressive Iran image in Westerners especially Americans. As for Irangate, it caused America to lose prestige. America sold weapons to Iran secretly, and when this was discovered, American authorities were in a difficult situation. Another incident which triggered the tension between the two countries is Iran-Iraq war. By taking in Iraq's side, America displayed an anti-Iranian

stand in this war. Finally September 11th attacks initiated a difficult period for Eastern Islamic countries. George W. Bush, in one of his speeches, included many Islamic countries, among which was also Iran, in the “axis of evil”. As a result of this, a large number of Muslim Easterners had difficult times and therefore had to conceal their cultural identities.

After providing the historical background in the first two chapters, in the third chapter reference will be made to ideological tools. These are used to designate Iranians as “the other”. These ideological tools are “neoconservatism”, “The Clash of Civilizations”, and “Orientalism”. First, it will be studied to what extent “neoconservatism” is effective in American foreign policy. Neoconservatism requires America’s incessant search for an enemy. How America created enemies, qualified them as “the other” to stigmatize them, by virtue of neoconservatism will be studied with reference to Reagan’s war on Communism and September 11th attacks. Also, in this chapter Samuel Huntington’s thesis of “The Clash of Civilizations” will be studied. In his thesis, Huntington argues that future wars will occur between civilizations. America drawing strength from this thesis, qualifies other countries as “the other”. Discriminatory descriptions such as Western or Eastern civilization are no different from Bush’s divisive remarks such as “Either with us or against us”. Thus, the concept of “the other” is consolidated. At the end of this chapter, “Orientalism”, the interpretation of the East with the perception of Westerners, will be studied. This concept which means to understand the East acquired a different meaning with Edward Said. According to Said, Orientalism, with its new meaning, serves the interests of the West, notably America. The West has put forward the concept of “the other”, with the insufficient information in its possession. The West, especially America accentuates its superiority by regarding other states as inferior.

The fourth chapter is allocated to a study of what an American character is and how the Iranian-American family experience identity crisis, as it was presented in Tyler’s novel. It would be remiss not to write about the life and style of the novelist. So after briefly mentioning Tyler’s life and style, the plot of *Digging to*

America will be given in order to understand the identity crisis better. Furthermore, the major factors in the making of American character i.e. “Promised Land”, “City upon a Hill”, and “Melting Pot” will be explained with reference to Tyler’s novel. These concepts have been effective on the American character since it was first founded. One must be familiar with these concepts to answer the question of what an American is in Tyler’s novel. In addition, Iranian-Americans, as a hyphenated identity will be studied for a better understanding of the Iranian family in Tyler’s novel. How these people came to the U.S and the hardships they experienced because of discrimination and prejudice in America will also be included in this section. Finally, two major characters’ loss of identity: Ziba and Sami and one character’s (called Maryam) resistance to the American culture and her clinging to her original roots will be studied. In this section, where the characters named Ziba and Sami will be explained respectively, these Iranians’ alienation to their culture and their desire to adopt the American identity will be studied. Maryam as an unhyphenated identity, is also studied in this section. Maryam is an exception as she tries to hold onto her original identity and struggles in this foreign society. Maryam is examined as an unhyphenated identity in this thesis, as she adopts her own cultural identity. She does not want to have an American identity. In fact, she is aware of the importance of her cultural background. On knowing this, Maryam claims her own identity, unlike Ziba and Sami. Tyler’s this novel is important, in that it shows Ziba and Sami Yazdan’s search for identity in a foreign country.

As a result of this thesis, I have aimed to show the loss of cultural identity of the Iranian characters by examining the background of the prejudice and discrimination towards Iranians. On examining these, it can be said that both the historical developments, among which are the Iranian hostage crisis and September 11th attacks, and the ideological tools are effective in the animosity towards Iranians. So, the Iranians facing prejudice and discrimination, except Maryam, start to feel alienated to their cultural identity and try to obtain other identities.

CHAPTER ONE

IRAN AT THE CROSSROADS

1.1. Shah Reza Pahlavi Period

America has long been in conflict with a large number of countries. Iran is only one of these countries. In order to have a clear picture of the disagreements between America and Iran, one should primarily take a look at the political history of both countries, beginning with the Shah period in Iran. Below will be examined the dissatisfaction of Iranian people with the Shah and how Iranian and American relationships became so tense.

The Shah was in power in Iran during the period before the Revolution. But people were not pleased at all with this administration and they thought the Shah in power should be replaced. “Mohammed Reza Pahlavi was the king of Iran, known as the Shah, between 1941 and 1979 [...]. He was backed all the way by the British and American government. But many Iranians were angered by his autocratic rule and the spectacle of rampant corruption throughout his government” (Leigh and Evans, 2007) In the 1970s, the gap between the rich and the poor was increasingly becoming larger. Land reform, at the expense of impoverishing poor landless peasants, eventually served agriculture and landowners in the sectors which turned even more capitalistic. In addition to farm hands, factory hands who were working in difficult conditions without any social security were also victimized. The economy of the country was deteriorating day by day. The Shah, on the other hand, was trying to strengthen the social and economic relations with America, which made Islamists extremely angry. These Islamists, followed by Khomeini, believed that such modernization movements would hamper public’s religious beliefs. “Khomeini sensed that the Shah’s alliance with—and dependence on—the United States was a weakness he could use to unify disparate Iranian groups, both secular and religious, against the Shah’s regime. The American military immunity agreement was the stick he would use to beat the Shah” (Farber, 2004: 65). General public, on the other hand, believed at the beginning that Shah, this new leader, would be different but beneficial

to his country. So, a new group of people emerged against the Shah as a result of his oppressive administration, corruption in the government, uneven distribution of oil revenues and the secret police organization SAVAK. Opposition movements turned into hostility and uprising. The members of the opposition gathered around religious cleric Khomeini. Disturbed by Khomeini's presence, the Shah persuaded Iraq to deport Khomeini. Following the deportation, Khomeini settled in Paris, which contrary to expectations enabled him to influence public opinion worldwide more effectively.

Khomeini on the other hand was beginning to get angrier and angrier because interference in Iran by other countries was totally unacceptable. In his view, the efforts of modernization and submission to foreign countries were against Islamic values. He said: "Mr. Shah, dear Mr. Shah, abandon these improper acts. I don't want people to offer thanks should your masters decide that you must leave... Listen to my advice, listen to the clergy's advice, not to that of Israel. That would not help you. You wretched, miserable man" (Farber, 2005: 64). American officials, on the other hand, thought that Iran's strategic location would gain considerable importance in their relations with Iran. America and USSR were in hostile terms during the Cold War. For America, who was very concerned about the worldwide spread of Communism, Iran's attitude was very important because Iran could prevent Communism from spreading to the other Middle East countries. The Shah, who was in power in Iran during the Cold War, supported America in this respect. For, the Shah's own interests were in question. The Shah thought that if he effected intimate relationships with America, he would invest in the army, which was his biggest support. As Pollack explains: "The Shah decided that the only way to convince Washington to give him what he wanted was to make himself a key ally of the United States in the Cold War with Russia" (Pollack, 2004: 76). As a matter of fact, what was expected came true and aid came from the U.S for Iran to enhance her military power. "Between 1953 and 1961, the United States provided Iran with approximately \$500 million in military assistance that allowed the Shah to expand his armed forces from 120,000 to 200,000 men. By 1956, Iran hosted the largest U.S. military aid mission in the world" (Pollack, 2004: 76-77). However, The Shah's

acceptance of the American aid angered pious circles, for to these circles American values served only to corrupt Iran. In addition, Iranians, who wanted expenditure on their social lives rather than on the military, blamed American officials. “[These] people also didn’t like the way that U.S. aid contributed to corruption in their government [...] they blamed Washington for Tehran’s heavy emphasis on spending on the military rather than on education, social progress, and economic reform” (Pollack, 2004: 77-78). It was therefore time that Khomeini had acted. Unlike the Shah, Khomeini carried out a campaign of returning to conventional religious values in a way to appeal to public sentiments.

While the case was so in Iran during the Shah’s administration, the hitherto smooth relations began to deteriorate owing to Carter’s anti-Iran policy. Yet Iran had played an important role for Western countries in history before Carter. For this reason, the U.S. tried to maintain friendly relations with Iran until Carter’s presidential term. Carter, however, rather than preserving hitherto well maintained relations, angered and offended Iranians. This attitude of America turned Iranians against America but moving them even closer to Khomeini. Carter was reiterating his humiliating remarks at every opportunity.

Towards the end of the 1970s, extensive acts of violence throughout the country were staged against the Shah Reza Pahlavi’s regime. Political and social instability brought on a large number of general strikes. Now, the Shah had to leave the country with his wife for good. After the Shah’s leaving the country, Khomeini’s supporters went as far as to knock down the Shah’s statues throughout the country. Now, in the following, the details of the Iranian Revolution and the hostility of Khomeini towards America will be explained.

1.2. The Iranian Revolution

The Iranian Revolution is one of the most significant historical events that have left their marks on Iranian history and the 20th century. With this revolution all balances have changed and a religious leader entirely different from the Shah has

come to power. Iranian Islamic Revolution materialized in 1979 with the collapse of the Shah Reza Pahlavi monarchy and the establishment of an Islamic Republic in Iran under Khomeini's leadership. Following are the accounts of the Iranian Revolution and concurrent events in Iran.

A reference to some events is primarily necessary for a better understanding of the revolutionary process given the fact that it was realized against the Shah and the Shah monarchy in particular. As mentioned earlier, disquiet and dissatisfaction prevailed in the Shah period. "Between 1953 and 1963 much poverty remained among the Iranian people, and the gap between the rich and poor grew" (Smitha, 2007). While the Shah family was getting richer through bribery, the grass roots were becoming increasingly impoverished. While shielding and watching his own family and supporters, the Shah was subjecting his opponents to countless gruesome tortures. During the infliction of these oppression. The Shah's secret police was SAVAK. "[...], the Shah was increasingly forced to rely on repression to maintain control over Iranian society. SAVAK began to spread deeper and deeper throughout Iranian society, and its methods became more and more brutal" (Pollack, 2004: 88). The members of this secret police organization insidiously penetrated all levels of the society and either tortured or killed those who were against the Shah. Thus, SAVAK became people's nightmare. One of the reasons for people's uprising against the Shah is undoubtedly SAVAK. The Shah was not aware that so big a crowd turned against him when he established this organization to silence his foes. While SAVAK members were perpetrating their oppression, people were getting angrier. The Shah thought that he would be able to retain his monarchy by using violence. Among the factors to displease people, apart from SAVAK, was the efforts of modernization the Shah was trying to introduce. However, when the Shah was mentioning such practices of his, he had great confidence in himself and believed that he would move his people to an advanced level in every way. "Your income should be such that you and your family are full. That you will have smart clothes. That you will have a nice house. 'Before long', the Shah pointed out, 'our country will stand out as a rock of stability and security in this rough and stormy sea'" (Ansari, 2003: 158). Also, America's role in the Shah's reassurance being so high was undoubtedly great.

Flattered by the praise from America the Shah kept on addressing meetings with his people assertively. “In the words of Time magazine, the Shah had become ‘The Emperor of Oil’. The very real power the Shah exerted on Western economies through his control of oil prompted Associate Editor of Time, Spencer Davidson, to argue that ‘The Shah’s power is exploding and Americans would be wise to pay attention to his dreams’” (Ansari, 2003: 183). The Shah would make continual promises and claim that Iran would soon be among developed countries. The economic power of the country had been considerably improved by virtue of oil. The most important foundation of the Shah’s argument was undoubtedly oil but the grass roots were by no means able to benefit from this. As Ansari states: “The last ten years of Mohammed Reza Shah’s reign witnessed the consolidation, growth and extension of the Pahlavi state and the apogee of the Shah’s personal power. The political and economic power of the state, exaggerated by a dramatic increase in oil revenues in the 1970s, masked the weakness of its oil foundations” (Ansari, 2003: 166). The Shah, on the other hand, disregarding his subjects in poverty desired to be remembered as an intellectual. In his speeches he voiced his aim as to raise the level of his subjects’ well-being. “[...] he increasingly attempted to associate himself with Iran’s liberal intellectuals. Rather than a despot propped up by a powerful army and a traditional, landed autocracy, he wanted to be seen as a leader of the vanguard of Iranian society, forging a path toward enlightenment and greatness for his people” (Pollack, 2004: 86). In addition, the Shah would underline that Iran should not depend on her imports and that importance should be attached to industry for his country to make a favourable image. “The Shah also began a major campaign to industrialize the Iranian economy. Like his father, the Shah was obsessed with building a modern industrial base for the prestige, to diversify Iran’s economy, and to reduce its dependence on imported manufactured goods” (Pollack, 2004: 87). Apart from this, the Shah would listen to Jimmy Carter of the U.S. to the annoyance of the circles of pious people. He would act, so to speak, as if he had been the mouthpiece of America.

In early 1977, Jimmy Carter became President of the United States, and he put human rights into his foreign policy agenda. The Carter administration suggested that if Iran did not improve its human rights record, aid, including military assistance, might be terminated. The

Shah acted on Carter's wishes. Some would view this pressure on the Shah and Carter's reluctance regarding the Shah crushing opponents as responsible for the Shah's fall (Smitha, 2007).

The Shah would say he would introduce reforms to modernize his country. Only these reforms were peremptory and inappropriate to the cultural and religious constitution of Iran and therefore unacceptable to the public. The general name for these reforms were 'White Revolution'.

The 'White Revolution', as it came to be known, was primarily an act of political rather than economic necessity, intended to serve and sustain 'a particular conception of relations of domination' centered around the Shah. It was a revolutionary strategy aimed at sustaining a traditional system of authority (Ansari, 2003: 148).

This revolution comprised land reform and the rights granted to women. The Shah was in favour of women being educated, seen in the society, their suffrage being granted and their refusal to wear veil. "The peasantry were enthusiastic supporters of the White Revolution when it was first unveiled. They wanted land reform to continue and also saw advantages in [this system]. Many women were pleased to finally have a political voice, and the idea of profit sharing did appeal to the small but growing cadre of industrial workers" (Pollack, 2004: 87). The rights intended to be given to women enraged conservative Iranians since these rights were against Sharia. "In 1967 new laws gave women the right to apply for divorce without the husband's permission, a man had to secure his wife's consent before taking a second wife, and legal matters involving families were transferred from religious to secular courts" (Smitha, 2007).

The White Revolution included land reform also. The land reform meant further impoverishment of the poor landless peasants. With industrialization and urbanization people moved in large numbers to cities to the weakening of agriculture and the gradual multiplication of the jobless masses. "The group that opposed the White Revolution most vigorously, however, was members of the clergy. Land reform cut into the wealth of religious establishments and hurt the village landlords, who were often the mullahs' most important patrons" (Pollack, 2004: 88). The mullahs whose interests had been damaged, took place in their side claiming that

those reforms were against Islam. Thus, opposition to the Shah grew even stronger. “[...] By making clear their animosity to the White Revolution and insinuating that it was somehow against “Islam”, the mullahs reversed the sentiments of many peasants who had initially seen land reform as beneficial” (Pollack, 2004: 88). People no longer trusted in the Shah, for he would not move out of America’s control. In the eyes of the public, the Shah disowned his country’s values and drifted Iran to a catastrophe.

Khomeini, too, would exacerbate the clash. Vilifying the White Revolution, Khomeini would say that he deemed those reforms an extremely grave menace to Islam, and trying to get the power gradually, by appealing to mullahs’ religious sentiments. “Beginning in March 1963 with a written statement, Khomeini blasted the White Revolution. He called it “a serious threat to Islam”. He claimed that it was the product of a Jewish, Baha’i, and American conspiracy to humiliate and subvert Islam” (Pollack, 2004: 88). In addition, according to a research, Iranians opposed to the Shah would accuse America, and the aid from America would only harm Iran, since Western countries had their eyes set on Iran.

A 1983 poll of young Iranians by a West German public opinion group found that 95 percent thought that American aid to Iran “worked to make rich richer” and only 8 percent thought it “improves the standard of living of the many.” Half of those polls said that the United States “is too much on the side of having things as they are.” Finally 33 percent saw America as “aggressive,” compared to 19 percent who thought the same of the USSR (Pollack, 2004: 89-90).

In the end, the Shah’s “White Revolution” ended in fiasco. The grass roots believed that the revolution would be successful. However, it did not turn out as they had expected it to be. On the contrary, it only served to worsen their lot. “Overall, [...], the White Revolution failed to deliver on its promises. Many of its failures would not manifest themselves until well into the 1970s, but some were apparent within just a few years of the start” (Pollack, 2004: 91). Thus, pious Iranians refused to adopt the efforts of modernization, because they perceived these efforts as imitating the West, particularly America. That was precisely what the Shah was

doing. In other words, he delivered the faith of the country to the hands of the Western powers. This was not something acceptable to the religious circles. “The Shah increased Iran's tie with the United States. His agreement with a Western oil consortium annoyed many, and some were annoyed by the presence of many Americans. Some Iranians saw the United States as having taken the place of the British” (Smitha, 2007). This behaviour of the Shah was causing the mullahs to come closer to Khomeini and paving the way for the Shah’s downfall. Khomeini, on the other hand was voicing his opposition to America and condemning the Shah’s reforms. “Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa (religious edict) against his reforms. The government-owned radio station responded with a ridicule. The Shah announced that his reforms would take Iran into the jet age while the mullahs wanted to remain ‘in the age of the donkies’” (Smitha, 2007).

The most propenderant groups of people to direct anti-Shah movements were leftists and mullahs. In addition, university students were also supporting this opposition. Since the Shah did not consider people’s wishes and suppressed them, the slogan of this segment of the public was “democracy and freedom”. Furthermore, the Shah’s opulence was based on oil revenues. Iran was an oil-rich country but the grass roots were by no means able to get rich and pull through. “Programs of agricultural and economic modernization were pursued, but the Shah's Plan Organization took charge of economic development, leaving very few benefits to reach the ordinary citizen” (Leigh and Evans, 2007). Again people blamed the Shah on this account since the Shah would buy weapons from the U.S. with the revenues from the oil, which, to people, was unnecessary and served only to enrich America. Therefore, by going on strike the people reduced oil production with the purpose of diminishing the Shah’s political power. The greatest opposition to the Shah was put up by Khomeini. On realizing that, the Shah sent Khomeini into exile first to Turkey then to Iraq and finally to France.

However, Khomeini was moving forward slowly but sure of himself. Khomeini was in favor of Sharia and definitely an enemy to the West. Propagandazing through the media in Paris, Khomeini was calling for democracy.

Castigating the Shah and his partisanship for America, Khomeini succeeded in taking a great majority of the people, particularly pious circles, in his side.

Despite growing prosperity, opposition to the Shah was widespread, fanned mainly by conservative Shiite Muslims, who wanted the nation governed by Islamic law. They were directed, from France, by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (Ruhollah ibn Mustafa Musawi Khomeini Hindi), a Muslim clergyman who had been exiled in 1963 (Leigh and Evans, 2007).

Now Iran began to be shaken by successive executions. The terror acts perpetrated by mullahs knew no boundaries; they were shooting to kill the Shah's supporters. With the massacre perpetrated previously by SAVAK and the subsequent terror acts perpetrated by the revolutionaries Iran became almost a battle field. As Pollack says: "[Khomeini's] words were so powerful that they inflamed a number of his most zealous followers to create street disturbances" (Pollack, 2004: 88). At the chaos, the Shah declared martial law in the country but still protestors gathered in Tehran. Upon this, war was waged on the protestors and many people were killed. This incident made history as "Black Friday".

On the first day that martial law returned, troops and tanks attacked crowds of protesters and others on the south side of the capital. The troops had been ordered to shoot to kill. They attacked, and assisted by helicopter gunships they drove people down narrow streets radiating out from the city square. Barricades went up around the city, and people armed themselves with Molotov cocktails. The day became known as Black Friday. The government claimed there were 168 casualties; organizers of the demonstration claimed 2,000 or 3,000 (Smitha, 2007).

In addition to this, appealing to the religious sentiments of the people, Khomeini turned the Karbala incident to his advantage. While depicting himself as Husayn killed, he depicted the Shah as Yazid, Husayn's enemy. Khomeini incited people making use of Shiitism. Aware of the import of this incident, in his speeches Khomeini referred to Karbala incident.

Generations had grown old wishing they could have been beside Husayn at Karbala—the Iranian Revolution gave them the opportunity. Keeping the memory of the martyrs of Karbala and Husayn alive is seen as an act of Shi'a piety. Khomeini was well

aware of the importance of Husayn, thus he continued to emphasize the imagery of Karbala in his speeches (Struempfler, 2004).

Inspired by Khomeini's speeches, people became even more enthusiastic. The approach of the month Moharram, in particular, meant the conflict would be intensified since in this month Shiites remembered the Karbala incident in which Husayn had been killed. Now, it was impossible to stop millions of people.

The month of Moharram was approaching, the month in which Shi'ites traditionally celebrate the martyrdom of Husayn. It is a passionate and highly religious month, and since the protests against the Shah were largely religious in nature, everyone knew that the country was on the verge of exploding. Moharram began on December 2 with demonstrations, and these demonstrations would continue all throughout the month (Hooker, 1996).

The Shah was gradually losing power, anti-demonstrations were going on and thousands of people were being killed. His downfall was approaching and Khomeini was coming closer to victory step by step. "The Shah had been diminishing in power by his method of trying to retain it. He declared martial law and moved against the demonstrators [...] It was too late. Too many of those who had at least tolerated the Shah's rule had been lost. Demonstrations continued" (Smitha, 2007). The Shah had to abandon his country realizing that he could no longer tolerate what had been happening. But before his departure he set up a temporary government in the leadership of Shahpour Bakhtiar. As soon as coming to power, Bakhtiar did many things such as, abolishment of SAVAK and modernization of Iran.

The Shah agreed to go abroad for a vacation. He accepted a new government led by an old opponent, the head of the dissident National Front, Shahpour Bakhtiar. On January 6, 1979, Bakhtiar pledged to launch "a genuine social democracy" and to end the corruption and abuses of the past. On January 16, 1979, the Shah and his family left for Egypt (Smitha, 2007).

The Shah's departure from and Khomeini's return to the country was celebrated exuberantly. Many people participated in the revolution and held anti-Shah demonstrations. After the appointment of Bakhtiar by the Shah, Khomeini appointed Mehdi Bazargan prime minister and asked people to obey him.

Furthermore, Khomeini said that Bazargan's government was based on Shiitism and therefore had to be obeyed. Khomeini appointed his own competing interim prime minister Mehdi Bazargan on February 4, with the support of the nation and commanded Iranians to obey Bazargan as a religious duty. While the Bazargan government was in the process of being formed, Khomeini did not waste time and began to blaken the Bakhtiar government. Khomeini going much too farther and making political capital out of the religious values was criticizing the Bakhtiar government so that his own government could survive. While the chaotic situation was going on, the Revolutionaries were destroying everything connected with the Shah, and raiding the government buildings to vandalize them.

Khomeini asked America to expatriate the Shah which initiated the Iranian hostage crisis. The American Embassy in Tehran was raided and 53 American diplomats there were taken hostage. "Khomeini called the United States the "Great Satan" and the U.S. Embassy a "den of spies." His followers seized the Embassy and held 53 Americans there hostage, demanding that the U.S. deliver to Iran the Shah as an exchange" (Smitha, 2007). The 444-day captivity of the American diplomats came to an end when the crisis was settled, and the Shah, who was cancerous, died in Egypt. Following the hostage crisis, the Bazargan government resigned. Now, Khomeini had the political arena all for himself. Iranians preferred an Islamic Republic to monarchy at the end of a referendum. Gaining support from the public, Khomeini founded a state based on Islam.

1.3. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini Period

It would be appropriate to learn who Khomeini was to study this period in Iranian history. Kohmeyn born Khomeini, an Iranian religious political leader, who in 1979 made Iran the first Islamic Republic, became a religious scholar and in the early 1920s rose to become an 'ayatollah' a term for a leading Shia scholar. Khomeini had been in exile in Iraq since 1963 an account of his opposition to the Shah. At that time, there were anti-Shah protests. Among the reasons for the Shah's authority being shaken were the effects of Khomeini's propaganda combined with the Shah's political wrongs. Khomeini, using the means provided by European

countries, set about conducting a propaganda campaign directed to terminating the Shah administration in Iran and to establishing a state based on Shiite beliefs. Khomeini left Iraq for Paris to set up his headquarters and follow the uprisings from there. Unable to contain the situation, the Shah decided to leave the country. In the end, on January 16th 1979 the Shah and his spouse Farah left Tehran for good and thus monarchy in Iran virtually ended. An administration without Shah began in Iran. The Shah's departure from Iran and Khomeini's return from the exile were celebrated victoriously.

After establishing a Shiite based republic in Iran, Khomeini eliminated his opponents in turn and had thousands of people killed or sent to prison. While Khomeini was trying to consolidate his own regime in Iran, his relations with some countries began to deteriorate day by day. This new regime of Khomeini gave rise to several problems. One of these is the deterioration of Iran's relations with her neighbors especially those which are predominantly Sunni Arabs. Having deteriorated relations with Iraq, Khomeini led Iran had been fighting with this close neighbor of hers for eight years, and had caused many losses of lives. Khomeini refused to seek solution for a long time during this war and declared that the war would continue until Saddam was overthrown. As the factor of religion has always been dominant in Iran, Khomeini supported the Shiite militants living in various Middle East countries, causing the terror in the region to escalate. Mullahs and ayatollahs have always made their importance felt in the society and thus increased terrorism using the factor of religion.

Khomeini, who was trying to materialize his dreams of Sharia, began to suppress people in Iran. Khomeini started with the social life and obliged women to wear the veil. He was trying to do the diametrically opposite of what the Shah was trying to do in behalf of modernization. Therefore, he was not different from the Shah as they both tried to suppress the public. In the following, Smitha summarizes Khomeini's "reforms".

On March 3, Khomeini announced that no judge was to be female. On March 6, he announced that women were to wear the *hejab* head covering. Khomeini declared that all non-Islamic forces were to be

removed from the government, the military, judiciary, public and private enterprises and educational institutions. Corrupt behavior and customs were to be ended. Alcohol and gambling were to be banned and so too were nightclubs and mixed bathing (Smitha, 2007).

Now Khomeini was stressing that his country would not be humiliated by foreign powers. In his opinion, people should not have yielded to American oppression now that the Shah had gone. Khomeini kept introducing his innovations in every field of life. He was to impose restrictions on everything: from public transformation to schools, radio and television, and newspapers.

Men and women were to be publicly segregated, women to enter busses through one door, men through another, each with a separate seating section. In school classrooms prayers were to become mandatory. Khomeini spoke of music corrupting youth, and he banned all music on radio and television and closed twenty-two opposition newspapers (Smitha, 2007).

However, some people of middle and upper class did not welcome these restrictive innovations and therefore thought that their rescue would be to flee Iran. In their opinion, Iran had become a country governed entirely by the laws of Sharia where people (especially women) were suppressed.

Tens of thousands of Iran's middle class had found it best to flee Iran. Stoning to death for adultery was in the offing, and death for homosexuality. Many films, Iranian and foreign, were banned or heavily censored. Movie theaters were denounced as channels for Western propaganda, and hundreds of theaters were burned to the ground. Patrols were formed to confront violations such as women showing their hair or wearing lipstick (Smitha, 2007).

Khomeini now established Iran Islamic Republic and was proclaimed political and religious leader of the country for life. Thus Khomeini period in Iran started. After the Islamic Revolution, Iran went through these developments. A completely different future lay in store for Iran now. Their leader was different from his predecessor. The inevitable was that both SAVAK during the reign of the Shah and the conflicts during Khomeini's administration had cost many lives. With the Islamic Revolution a new chapter began in the relations between America and Iran and undoubtedly the Iranian Revolution dealt a heavy blow to the relations between America and Iran. As Gerges points out: "The fall of the Shah" stated former

Assistant for National Security Affairs Brezinski, “was disastrous strategically for the United States and politically for Carter himself” (qtd. in Gerges, 1990: 60). Towards the end of the Shah period, American emulation which lasted until Carter’s presidency came to an end. Iran was now an Islamic even hostile country before America. Thus the tensions in the bilateral relations culminated. Iran’s relations with America were not running at all smoothly. In this period while anti-American sentiments increased with the Khomeini’s support, anti-Iranian sentiments in America gained impetus. In fact, Iran was designated by American authorities as the supporter of terrorism because she started the crisis of hostages on November 4th 1979, as an indication of this animosity which left Americans in a difficult situation. Hence the Iranian hostage crisis left its marks on Khomeini period. Also, in the following years, Iran would be declared in the ‘axis of evil’ by George W. Bush on September 11th attacks.

In conclusion, Khomeini dealt a serious blow to America-Iran relations. As Jenkins states: “In exchange for a dictatorship friendly to U.S interests, the administration had obtained a far more ruthless despotism thoroughly hostile to the West” (Jenkins, 2006: 154). Manifesting American antagonism at every opportunity, Khomeini declared America arch-enemy. America did the same for Iran. So, it can be said that the foundations of the hostility, which led to September 11th attacks, were laid by Khomeini.

CHAPTER TWO

HARD TIMES OF AMERICA

2.1. Jimmy Carter Period

Jimmy Carter was elected the 39th president of the U.S. in 1977 and served as the 39th President of the United States from 1977 to 1981 Carter was a democratic and he came to power with high expectations. “Jimmy Carter was the apotheosis of all the good will and liberal thinking that had made the Democratic party of the United States the majority party for forty years” (White, 1982: 196). He wanted to make his country a full-grown one in the world. So he tried to implement new reforms. Giving

priority to human rights, Carter said the following when he took office: “Human rights is a central concern of my Administration. Because we are free, we can never be indifferent to the fate of freedom elsewhere. You may rest assured that the American people and our government will continue our firm commitment to promote respect for human rights not only in our own country but also abroad” (*The Annals of America*, 1987: 17-18). Only Carter’s agenda was dominated by the tensions with Iran rather than human rights. Carter encountered many problems during his presidency both in domestic and foreign policy. Throughout his presidency, America’s relationship with Iran remained on the agenda for a long time. Following is the study of Jimmy Carter’s diplomatic relations with Iran and the Iranian hostage crisis caused by these strained relations.

When Carter took the head, he immediately dealt with Iran. He visited the country but faced anger from those who opposed to Westernization.

Carter began directly meddling with Iranian Affairs after he took office in 1977. On New Years Eve of that year, President Carter toasted the Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, at a state dinner in Tehran, calling him “an island of stability” in the troubled Middle East. What the president also knew, but chose to ignore, was that the Shah was in serious trouble and his trip to Iran created anger toward the United States amongst the Iranian people (Miller, 2007).

There occurred two important developments during Carter’s presidency: Firstly, the Shah Reza Pahlavi administration was replaced by the Islamic Republic in Iran and secondly the U.S Embassy in Tehran was raided by a group of Iranian students, and Embassy staff members were taken hostage to be held precisely 444 days. The hostage crisis continued until Carter’s last day in office, which had undoubtedly had a negative impact on his not being elected president for a second term in 1980. The hostage crisis served Reagan’s being elected president in 1980. This is because Iran was deemed to be a terrorist country even then and Reagan won the elections by fighting against terrorism. Ronald Reagan probably became president of the United States because of events he and his political opponents called “terrorism”. The Iranian hostage crisis soon became a political catastrophe for the administration of President Jimmy Carter.

However, in the period before Carter, relations with Iran were running smoothly since the Shah was in favor of America and was trying to Westernize his country. Only Carter failed to sustain these relations. Shah had had support from America for years: He had demanded lots of weaponry from the U.S. There was no problem between the two. Saying at every opportunity that Iran was dangerous, Carter had difficulty deciding whether to support the Shah and thus suppress the revolution or remain indifferent. In the end, he did nothing. Now it was a case of a *fait accompli*: Revolution was realized in Iran and Khomeini came to power. A large number of Americans still condemn that Carter did not support the Shah but rather let Khomeini come to power and regard this as miscalculation. Iran, regarded as a strong country in the Middle East, was now lost, since Iran had a completely anti-American leader, called Khomeini. With the overthrow of the Shah, not only the balances in America-Iran relations but also in the world changed. When the Shah was overthrown, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and Iraq tried to invade Iran, which led to a long war called Iran-Iraq war. In addition to this, a man called Alan Peters believed that Carter was wrong when he let the Shah fall. Because it gave rise to several important wars in the world like Iran-Iraq war.

If the Shah had remained in power, it isn't likely the Iraq-Iran War, with upward of a million casualties on both sides, a war that saw Saddam Hussein first use mass-murder weapons, would have taken place. Iraq had tried once before, in the time of the Shah, to invade Iran over the dispute of the Shatt-Al Arab river between the two countries. This lasted all of four days before Saddam Hussein's forces were driven out with their tails between their legs. Nothing like the eight years under Carter's Khomeini (Peters, 2009).

After the Vietnam war, Carter did his best to keep pace with the new world. “The first post-Vietnam president, Jimmy Carter, made deliberate efforts to adjust to the new world conditions. To restore a moral component to U.S foreign policy, he vowed to support human rights across the world” (Carrol and Herring, 1986: 223). Carter’s main concern was human rights but some people argued that he made his biggest mistake in his presidency by letting Khomeini overthrow Shah. “In the name of human rights, Jimmy Carter gave rise to one of the worst rights violators in history—the Ayatollah Khomeini. And now Khomeini's successor is preparing for nuclear war with Israel and the West” (Peters, 2009). Carter tried to improve the conditions

of people in the world by launching a war on violation of human rights. Carter talked to the Shah about the importance of human rights and the Shah took that into consideration immediately and he tried to keep warm relations with the U.S. As Miller states: “When Carter became president he created a special Office of Human Rights which sent a letter to the Shah of Iran as a “polite reminder” of the importance of political rights and freedom. In response the Shah released over 350 Islamic fundamentalist prisoners who would play roles in the Islamic Revolution and Iran Hostage Crisis” (Miller, 2007). However Carter had come into power with the hope that things about human rights would be better and he believed that this new movement would change the world for good.

In conclusion, even in our time America-Iran relations have not been restored. Iran is regarded as America’s arch-enemy and Americans even think that Iran is trying to destroy America. Now these two countries accuse one another of recent political events in the world. Thus, the strained relations have led to some problems between these countries like the Iranian hostage crisis. The atmosphere in which the Iranian hostage crisis happened was like that. America with the leadership of Carter viewed Iran as an unprogressive nation. Now Carter and Khomeini were face to face. Much more difficult times had begun for Carter: He both had to save the prestige of his country and the lives of American citizens. In order to understand the situation Jimmy Carter was in, the Iranian hostage crisis will be explained in the following.

2.2. The Iranian Hostage Crisis

It’s quite an important political event for Khomeini in the history of Iran on the one hand, and Jimmy Carter in American history on the other hand. Especially after World War II, America stressed Iran’s strategic, political and economic importance in foreign policy. Every American president before Carter had wished to effect good relations with Iran and to protect America’s interests in the Middle East. Following the World War II, America aided Iran financially and militarily. Furthermore, America allowed many Iranian students to have education in the U.S. But, such friendly relations broke down when Khomeini took office as a result of the Shah’s oppressive regime and Westernization efforts. In addition to these, Carter’s

failure to sustain the previously good relations paved the way for the Iranian hostage crisis. With the Iranian hostage crisis, the two countries' relations were frayed to breaking point. The relations with Iran from then on were not to be favorable since America declared Iran a terrorist country.

The Iranian hostage crisis was the most difficult test for Carter's presidency. The event is Iranian students raiding the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and taking hostage diplomats present. "On 4 November 1979 several hundred Iranian students managed to storm the American Embassy in Tehran and take the Embassy staff hostage, thus precipitating one of the longest and most diplomatically damaging crises in both American and Iranian history" (Houghton, 2001: 5). Basically Iran asked that the overthrown Iranian Shah, who is under treatment for cancer in America at that time, be extradited. "[...] the former Shah's health was deteriorating and that he would require diagnosis and treatment of a kind available only in the United States and in a few other countries that were not willing to admit him" (*The Annals of America*, 1987: 177). Despite the initial moderate reaction by American public, the already anti-American leader of Iran, Khomeini, did not stomach his archenemy's being welcomed by America. "Gradually, Iranian leaders, including the Ayatollah Khomeini, sharpened their criticism of the United States for having admitted the Shah" (*The Annals of America*, 1987: 178).

So what was the problem between the Shah and Khomeini? Why did Khomeini and his supporters hate the overthrown Shah? The oppression and the Westernization policy put up by the Shah in Iran angered Iranians, especially Khomeini supporters. In addition, the Shah's military spending amounting to millions of dollars, his failure to secure economic recovery, and his restrictions on personal liberties turned the public against the Shah. As for Carter, instead of supporting pro-American Shah, he thought Khomeini would be better for Iran. "Carter preferred to believe that the Ayatollah, in some strange way, represented the will of his people and that the Islamic republic's revolution would lead to an Iranian expression of democracy and human rights in its own tradition" (Carroll and Herring, 1982: 224). However, Carter was mistaken because now he was faced an entirely

anti-American enemy. Khomeini, who had just returned from exile, expressed his anti-American sentiments explicitly. For him westernization meant distancing oneself from religious values and those who were responsible for this had to be punished immediately. Thus, Khomeini had to get back the Shah who had been a refugee in America and receiving treatment.

America had two prioritized objectives in settling this crisis, e.i. to preserve the country's prestige, and to recover the hostages safe and sound. For Carter, it was a hard period. America, superpower was obliged not to make concession to Iran and could not stomach defeat. Besides, the lives of her citizens were in question. He was on the horns of a dilemma: on the one hand, he had to submit the Shah to Iran on the other hand; there were American citizens held hostage. That was why America had to make a difficult decision. Americans, who were following the events closely, thanks to media, began to feel uneasy and lose their confidence in the president. Carter however was trying to convince people that he was doing his best despite everything. But, the prolongation of this captivity and Carter's inability to settle this crisis angered the public.

Carter stopped the import of Iranian oil, broke his diplomatic relations, asked the United Nations to intercede and finally sent arbitrators to Tehran, all in vain. Also, Carter made a lot of attempts, one of which was commando raid on 24 April 1980, to get out of this crisis. However, his attempts failing, he shook the prestige of his own and of his country. Americans, who were following the events closely, thanks to media, began to feel uneasy and lose their confidence in the president.

Carter ordered a commando raid to free the hostages. The operation was a fiasco. Helicopters flying to the capital city of Tehran malfunctioned, killing eight American soldiers and wounding five. The hostage crisis dragged on for more than a year. Many Americans felt humiliated by this defeat and the blame fell squarely on Jimmy Carter (Kallen, 1999: 9).

This unsuccessful rescue attempt was a disaster in a real sense for Americans. The other precaution taken by Carter administration was freezing the Iranian assets, in addition to his commando raid. Despite these precautions Iran didn't give in, upon

which Carter realized a rescue attempt resulting in fiasco and affecting his prestige with the public and the world. Apparently Iran was resolute in her desire and wouldn't release hostages until the onset of Iran-Iraq war. Iran, attacked by Iraq, ruled on the termination of the 444-day captivity under the influence of Shah's death.

On the other hand, people's perceptions of the events were different. Americans, hostage takers, hostages and even the Shah perceived this political issue differently. In the eyes of American politicians, Iran was completely at fault and wrong in her case because Iran was the evil one. "Labeling the seizure an act of kidnapping, blackmail, and extortion, Carter maintained the embassy takeover constituted "a criminal act", "an illegal incarceration", and an "illegal and outrageous holding of the innocent hostages" (Winkler, 2006: 48). But from the perspective of the hostage takers, this event was much more different, in their opinion, America made a mistake and had to be punished because she harbored a traitor like the Shah. For the Americans, in this event, American hostages were the victims. In addition to this, captivity was even more difficult for the senior which had entailed health problems. The uncertainty of their eventuality is also another psychological torment. So, in the eyes of the American public, the hostages had been victimized and those who had done this were religious fanatics. Again in the opinion of public, this was premeditated and therefore unforgivable. Upon the situation being tense, there were rumours that the Shah, while ill, would leave America for Mexico.

The Iranian hostage crisis finally ended with the onset of Iran-Iraq war which was to continue for eight years. In conclusion, American-Iranian relationships had been frayed. Thus the hostage crisis which stamped Khomeini reign, happened to have triggered America-Iran hostility. For this reason, in the opinions of Americans, Iran was in the "axis of evil", and therefore was one supporter of terrorism. As a matter of fact, the hostage crisis was also a terrorist attack in nature. Especially with the Iranian Revolution beginning and Khomeini as the ruler, bilateral relations were not to be as they had been in the Shah's period. The effects of the Iranian hostage crisis would long be felt. Iran was now a terrorist country and in the ensuing years,

she would take her place among the countries declared evil in America's enemy search policy especially after September 11th.

2.3. Iran-Iraq War

Iran-Iraq relations did not run smoothly throughout the Cold War. There were some problems between the two countries so one of the largest wars of the 20th century, Iran-Iraq war, began in 1980 to continue for 8 years. With Khomeini in power, the Iran-Iraq relations deteriorated substantially. In addition to Khomeini administration, the factor of religion also played a role in declining Iran-Iraq relations.

Iran and Iraq, two important countries in the Middle East, entered war with each other over Shatt al-Arab waterway and because of religious factors. The war resulted in the loss of lives in thousands. In 1979 Saddam Hussein demanded that the 1975 Algiers Agreement, which put an end to waterway dispute years earlier, be reviewed. However, Saddam Hussein annulled this agreement and attacked Iran, arguing that this waterway belonged to Iraq. "When Saddam Hussein tore up the treaty on September 17, 1979, he justified his action by claiming to be the defender of the Arab lands: "We have taken the decision to recover all our territories. The waters of Shatt al-Arab must return to their former Iraqi and Arab rule and be placed entirely under Iraqi sovereignty" (Rajaei, 1993: 3).

The religious factor in the war is also important. Although they have the same religion, their sects are different. Unlike Iraq, which enjoyed a Sunni majority, Iran was dominated by Shiite majority. Saddam Hussein in Baghdad had fears that the Shia government in Iran would incite the Shia majority in Iraq against Sunni government in Iraq. So, Iraq had some reservations about Iran: owing to the Shiite elements inherent in the country, a powerful and effective Iran would not be welcomed by Iraq. Saddam feared that religious propaganda would be imported to Iraq and uprisals would occur. However, there were tensions between the two countries even before the Iranian Revolution. Only the change of regime in Iran had

accentuated the factor of religion. While Saddam had these fears, Khomeini also felt great hatred towards Iraq. To instigate uprisals in each other's country was the target of both countries.

Anyway it was the right time for Iraq to act because there had been a revolution in Iran and the situation had been unsettled with the country thrown into internal turmoil and a rather harsh opposition to the new regime. This was an invaluable opportunity for Iraq with Saddam Hussein in power. Iraq was planning to catch Iran unawares. Khomeini, however, aimed to disseminate his religious regime in the Middle East.

With this war on Iran, Iraq aimed firstly to demolish the Iranian regime, secondly to prevent this regime from affecting the Shiites in Iraq, thirdly to solve the long-lasting border disagreement over Shatt-al-Arab waterway in her favour, and finally to urge the Sunni Arabs in the Khuzestan region of Iran and thus to annex these territories to her. Iraq thought that this war would come to an end in a short time with awards to be reaped. Although initially Iraq had the edge, subsequently the situation was reversed. In the end, however, the war ended benefiting neither country. Iraq could not conquer territories which he targeted prior to the war, the war she waged in Khuzestan came to nothing, and Khomeini administration survived. Contrary to exportations, Iran achieved internal security and under the influence of the war, had the opportunity to secure the Islamic Revolution she previously had established. In Iraq, however, the war caused the economy to recede and oil production to decrease, which caused Iraq to incur a substantial debt.

When looked at the war from American perspective, America was never pleased with the religious regime that overthrew American ally, the Shah, and came to power. Iran's emergence from the war as a victorious country would not be welcomed by America, which did not know what to do. Therefore, America regarded Iran as a stronger enemy than Iraq and hence took side with Iraq. "Interestingly enough, Saddam's policy converged with a tendency gradually taking shape in the West: to contain the revolution within Iranian boundaries. Washington viewed the

revolutionary Iran as the bigger threat to U.S. interests in the region” (Rajee, 1993: 4). Therefore, America began to reshare its diplomatic relations with Iraq which they broke off in 1967. It provided Iraq with arms and financial aid. A powerful Iran under the leadership of Khomeini was not compatible any longer with American interests. For this reason, in 1986 the U.S. and Britain prevented the UN Security Council from making resolutions that would condemn Iraq for using weapons of mass destruction (chemical and biological) against Iran. Thus, America preferred Iraq under Saddam’s relationship to Iran and sided with Iraq in the war. “Politics do make strange bedfellows, and gradually the interests of Saddam’s Iraq and those of the West—at least their short-term interests—coincided” (Rajee, 1993: 4). According to Israel, one ally of America, there was no pronounced difference between Iran and Iraq. Both were barbaric, savage and undemocratic countries. In fact, the only desire of Isreal and America was to turn these two countries i.e. Iran and Iraq against each other. Only, unlike Israel, America wished Iran in the first place to be contained and to lose strength. Their wish for Iran to lose strength was increased by Khomeini’s coming to power and the occurance of the Iranian hostage crisis. In that case, America’s supporting Iraq was a more sensible thing to do. “When Iran cast the United States as “the great Satan” and seized its Embassy in Tehran a new element was introduced, a less rational factor, and everyone forgot the real intention of Saddam Hussein and his anti-Western postures and sentiments during the preceding decade” (Rajee, 1993: 4). Therefore it would not be wrong to say that this was qualified an America-Iran war. America-Iran hostility manifested itself once more. This time, unlike the crisis of hostages, large number of people lost their lives. This massacre was realized not with conventional but chemical and biological weapons, and approximately a million people lost their lives

All in all, warring parties run out of their economic resources. The war did not change the Iran-Iraq border. But the effects of the war were to be felt for years to come. As a result of the war, oil productions in both countries were reduced while the oil prices increased. Iran’s oil industry received a major blow and not even today was she able to return to its prewar mark. Iraq, on the other hand, was left with the loan which she received from the U.S. through Kuwait, which can be mentioned

among the reasons for Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. The only winners of the war were the U.S. and Israel, which sided Iraq and Iran, respectively. The winners became richer by selling arms and happier because the economy of the warring parties, regarded as the greatest threats in the region, deteriorated.

2.4. Irangate (Iran-Contra Scandal)

Ronald Reagan succeeded Jimmy Carter as American president in 1981. Americans believed that their confidence shaken by Jimmy Carter would be restored by Reagan. But they were wrong. Undoubtedly, one of the most important events for Reagan was the developments in the U.S.-Iran relationships: On January 20, 1981, when Reagan swore in, the Iranian hostage crisis was solved which gave rise to complete tension between the U.S. and Iran. Only the difficult period awaiting Reagan, was again the relationships with Iran with the suffering of illegal American arm sales to Iran which went down in history as "Irangate Scandal". This term derives from Watergate Scandal which stamped Nixon administration.

Iran-Iraq war, which started immediately after the Iranian Islamic Revolution and continued from 1980 to 1988, long occupied Reagan's foreign policy agenda. As a result of the Iranian Islamic Revolution and hostage crisis, the relations between Iran and the U.S. deteriorated to the point of breaking diplomatic ties. In Iran-Iraq war, America sided with Iraq since "[t]he U.S. wanted the war to end, but in a way that would not topple the Baghdad regime and destabilize the Arab oil sheikhdoms. The U.S. wished to see Iran contained first" (Fayazmanesh, 2008: 56). However, in contradistinction to this, it surfaced in November 1986 that America acted contrary to the decision taken by the Congress and sold arms underhandedly during Reagan's presidency. Also the hostility of America towards Iran was so obvious that upon Khomeini's Islamic Revolution, America imposed an arms embargo for Iran. Here was the most confusing point in this scandal. Why had America during Reagan's administration, despite this embargo, helped Iran purchase arms? Because there occurred an important development during the war between Iran and Iraq—some Iranians raided the American Embassy in Lebanon taking some of the diplomats

hostage. As Shitrit states: “[The Iranian Revolutionaries], succeeded in kidnapping American diplomats from the United States Embassy in Lebanon. The world was amazed. The Americans tried very hard to figure out how to release the hostages” (Shitrit, 2004) To rescue these hostages was on Reagan’s agenda. People’s confidence was shaken especially after the Watergate scandal, which surfaced during Nixon’s administration. Reagan, aware of this, wanted to get back people’s confidence in the administration. “As president, Reagan felt that "he had the duty to bring those Americans home," and he convinced himself that he was not negotiating with terrorists” (Wolf, 1999). In the meantime, what could be done was being discussed to rescue the hostages. Iran was going through a hard time. She had been frayed by the war she fought against Iraq. Pollack describes the situation Iran was in with these words: “By late 1985, Iran had real problems. Its economy was straining under the pressure of the war. Shortages of food produced hunger and malnutrition, and housing shortages caused Iran’s shanty towns to flourish again” (Pollack, 2004: 211). Upon this, America aimed to rescue the hostages by helping, more precisely by selling weapons underhand to Iran, which was going through a difficult period. To prevent its surfacing, America sold weapons through Israel. “The Reagan administration, prompted by Israel, determined it was time to build bridges toward the government in Iran. The escalation of hostage-taking, the state of the Iran-Iraq war and concerns about Soviet influence in the region seem to have been the important catalysts, [...] so it was agreed to sell arms to Iran” (Williams, 1998: 38).

However, the stand taken by the Congress on Iran was firm. In no way, were arms to be sold to Iran nor was she to be aided. America was obliged not to submit to Iran in her face of Iran’s terror attacks. When Reagan came to power, he declared that he would never bow to terrorist attacks and never have an agreement with terrorists. However, Reagan neither kept his promise nor resisted terrorists. He sold weapons to Iran and thus violated the resolution taken by the Congress. To this end, John Poindexter (The National Security Advisor) and his assistant, Oliver North wanted to give President Reagan some advice. Later, they began to make secret contacts in order to release the hostages in return for selling U.S. produced weapons to Iran. Oliver North was to be effective in rescuing the hostages; he continued to

make deals with the Iranians regarding weapons and spare parts. “These sales were arranged by an exiled Iranian businessman and, in order to cover America’s involvement, funneled through Israel” (Patterson, 2005: 209). But America’s prestige was to be shaken in the eyes of the world, since there was news in the press that American government had bargained on arms sale. That was a very important item of news because the U.S, maintaining that Iran is one of the chief supporters of international terrorism, was following a resolute policy opposed to the support being offered to Iran, fighting long with her nearest neighbor, Iraq. In addition President Reagan had invited America’s allies to refrain from selling arms to Iran. Thus, learning that America sold arms to Iran, America’s allies and American citizens were surprised and furious.

Apart from this, this scandal aimed to obtain proceeds from arm sales to be used to support the Contras fighting with the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. As Williams states: “In 1981, the administration authorized CIA support and training for the Contras, Nicaraguan exiles engaged in a guerilla war against the Nicaraguan army” (Williams, 1998: 38). Later it was understood that millions of dollars obtained from the secret sale of arms to Iran had been given to American backed contra guerillas trying to overthrow the leftist government in Nicaragua. John Poindexter and Oliver North were responsible for this incident. “Poindexter took over responsibility for supervising North’s involvement in arm sales to Iran and in finding funds to support the Contras in Nacaragua. The sale of arms was organized by a variety of means and through a number of different organizations and intermediaries” (Williams, 1998; 39). This greatly angered the Congress people, who had banned direct or indirect arms sales. In the eyes of America, the Sandinista government was a supporter of Communism, unlike contras who were freedom fighters. As Patterson states:

Reagan was eager to do all he could to help the contras in order to avert the spread of Communism in Central America. In mid-1985, Reagan proclaimed that the contras were the moral equivalent of the Founding Fathers. [...] the Soviets, Cubans, and “other elements of international terrorism,” he exclaimed, were directing vast Communist activities in Central America that would ultimately undermine Mexico and threaten the United States (Patterson, 2005: 209).

Israel's part in the incident also surfaced later. Israel served as a bridge in selling arms to Iran. "To conceal American involvement, arms were initially shipped to Iran by Israel using its own stocks of American-made weapons on the understanding that the Americans would replenish those Israeli stocks" (Williams, 1994: 39). Upon this, the Congress and the Senate launched an investigation to gather evidence. By the same token, a committee was established in Israel as well. Uri Shitrit explains this situation with these words: "Israel's name was brought into the affair also [...]. In Israel a team was established to collect materials and testimonies, and it prepared a detailed report. Israel formally confirmed its involvement in the weaponry transactions, but denied its connection to the contras' rebels" (Shitrit, 2004).

In the end, Iran-Contra affair left a lot of question marks behind. This scandal is still full of the unknown. Reagan denied his relationship with this scandal only to shake his authority. Also "polls indicated that only 14 percent of Americans thought Reagan was telling the truth about Iran-Contra, and his approval rating had sunk from 60 to less than 40 percent" (Liebovich, 2001: 141). It can be said that with this scandal Reagan yielded to terrorist blackmail. Also after this scandal the White House chief of staff, Donald Reagan and his National Security Adviser, John Poindexter, were forced to resign. Was Reagan aware of what happened? If not, how come so?

In conclusion, this is an abysmal period in American foreign policy as a fundamentalist regime came to power in Iran and the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua was successful. Thus, America failed to destabilize the Middle East. With this incident America's worldwide credibility was shaken. Also, this incident is important in that it made American-Iranian enmity obvious.

2.5. Milestone for America: September 11th Attacks

America suffered the greatest attack of her history on September 11th 2001. These events made history as the most important terrorist act in which America's defense and political centers are targeted. This event was a major blow, in the eyes of

both authorities and ordinary citizens, to superpower America which had only been attacked only once in her history (Pearl Harbor). On September 11th 2001, of four passenger planes in America, two hit the World Trade Center in New York, one the Pentagon in Washington and the last one crashed into Pennsylvania. “They had killed about 3,000 people—mostly civilians—and toppled one of the most famous structures in the world. The World Trade Center was a towering symbol of American pride and influence” (Langley, 2006: 22). In order to understand the strained relations between the U.S. and the Middle-Eastern countries, we need to look at September 11th attacks. So below will be examined September 11th attacks and America’s attitude towards other countries (especially Iran) in the aftermath of the attacks.

According to the investigation by America and a report by September 11th commission, the passenger planes had been hijacked by 19 members of al-Qaeda, terror organization led by Osama Bin Laden. It was corroborated through this report that this was a terrorist attack and those who perpetrated the attacks were Islamist fundamentalists. Then, who were those people? As Fletcher describes: “These militants consider everyone who does not follow their strict interpretation of the Koran—the Muslim holy book written more than 1,300 years ago—as the enemy. They feel the Koran instructs them to kill the enemy in God’s name” (Haulley, 2005: 6). After the attacks, everybody wondered where the attacks came from and why. To Bush, who perpetrated these was certain but for what reason? To American officials, the reason for this was very simple. America’s sense of democracy and human rights, as well as her being a superpower in the world, angered “uncivilized” countries. Apart from this, Middle East countries were being ruled by undemocratic governments. In such governments, oppressive regime was in question and America was supporting these countries with such regimes because of her strategic ve economic interests. “When the people of these countries see that they have no basic rights and are often desperately poor while their leaders live like kings, they look for someone to blame” (Haulley, 2005: 6). In addition to these, there were also those who argue that the attacks could be ascribed to religion factor. In their opinion, there were differences between three popular religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

It was this difference that triggered those attacks. It was therefore that some Islamic countries attacked America, a Christian country.

Then how did Americans, that is the victims of September 11th attacks, interpret these attacks? In their opinion, the attacks perpetrated by the terrorists, would never be acceptable and these attacks meant evil. Also, to American public what mattered was not the magnitude of the events but how people reacted to these attacks. The more you let your reaction be known, the more the perpetrators achieve their aims. This is exactly what happened. ‘War on Terrorism’ declared by the president Bush after September 11th attacks is one of the greatest indicators of the increase in terrorist acts. Furthermore, September 11th attacks have incriminated a large number of Islamic countries including Iran and Iraq. After these terrorist acts, the Muslim minority in America was unjustly incriminated and the attacks on them were on the rise. People perceived to be Middle Eastern were as likely to be victims of hate crimes as followers of Islam in America. The Muslims living in the United States have found themselves in such a difficult situation that they now began to regard themselves “the other group”. One of these other groups is Iranians. Now, Bush administration desires, after warring with Afghanistan and Iraq designated as terrorist countries, to wage war on Iran, on a stranger terrorist country. Only Iran’s being a powerful country troubles America. As Dollan states:

[...] now the Bush administration wants to fight Iran despite the obviousness of one overriding fact: America has neither the troops nor the dollars to occupy that nation. After five years: it still hasn’t pacified Iraq, a much smaller nation. So what will the plan be against Iran? Bomb them back into the 10th century and just walk away? (Dollan, 40).

Iran hasn’t been occupied by America yet, but Iranians living in the United States have undoubtedly suffered. Iranian-Americans had to make a greater effort to be adapted to American society. However much Iran tried to show that she was not in favor of terrorism but was against it, she failed in her efforts. Iran’s being an Islamic country, which opposes America, caused her to be included in the “axis of evil” in Bush’s words after September 11th. “As a response to September 11, the

U.S. President George W. Bush promised on epoch of Terror War, expanding the Bush doctrine to not only go after terrorists and those who harbor terrorist groups but to include those countries which are making weapons of mass destruction.” (Tepe and Karatay, 2005: 5). Consequently, Iran has been deemed a great threat, and blacklisted by America. Therefore Iranians living in the U.S. are seriously concerned about their civic rights and security. George W. Bush in a speech he made said: “Three countries, North Korea, Iran, and, in particular, Iraq, which has something to hide from the civilized world, posed just such a threat. States like these and their terrorist allies, he held, ‘constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world’” (Fraser and Murray, 2002: 299). These words also offended Middle Eastern countries.

Now Bush had to protect his people from certain threats. Bush’s policy of neoconservatism served him exactly at this point: ‘to protect people against unprecedented threats’. In order to realize this, however, he had to free the world of terrorism. Being a superpower determined not to yield to terrorist acts, America now had to assume the duty of policing the world. “His two ‘great objectives’ were, he explained, to ‘shut down terrorist camps, disrupt terrorist plans, and bring terrorists to justice’, and to prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world” (Fraser and Murray, 2002: 299). Today, nearly all wars are fought because of terrorism. Well then, where did the concept of “terrorism” come from? Bush used the phrase “War on Terror” quite often and thus it has become very common in our time. “War on Terror” is a term for the military, political, legal and ideological conflict against Islamic terrorism and Muslim militants, and specifically used in reference to operations by the United States, since the September 11, 2001 attacks. Was there such a thing as “terrorism” before September 11th? There were terrorist attacks even before September 11th, which means that this is not a new concept and will continue to be a problem in the future as well. As Hoffman states: “The bombings of the American Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998 demonstrate that terrorism is—and will remain—a central threat to international security as we approach the 21st century” (Hoffman, 1999: 7). Long existence of this concept

indicates that we will witness many more wars. So, in order to get rid of terrorism, Western countries primarily the U.S, will combine their military forces.

Terrorism as a political tool came into fashion in the midst of the Cold War and the advent of modern media telecommunications. However, in recent years, predominantly due to the religiously inspired advent of Al Qaeda and its extreme animus toward the United States and Western culture, terrorism is growing in lethality and destructiveness as time progresses and the world emerges into the post-Cold War era (Cetron, 2000).

On the other hand, following the attacks, some people in and out of the United States speculated that American government itself designed and perpetrated these events to initiate the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. Also after this theory of conspiracy was heard of, it is known that Americans largely lost their confidence in their government and thus demanded that the events of September 11th be investigated anew. Furthermore, a large number of films and documentaries have been made regarding these events in which the American government is accused clearly. Among these films and documentaries are ‘Loose Change’ and ‘Fahrenheit 9/11’. These films are still watched by millions of people. On the other hand, there are also films intended to exonerate America and to highlight American nationalism and heroism among which are ‘Screw the Loose Change’, ‘United 93’ and ‘World Trade Center’.

After September 11th attacks, America occupied Iraq and Afghanistan using these events as pretext. However it has been claimed that America occupied these countries with the purpose of “bringing democracy” to these countries and taking revenge of September 11th. It’s known that some circles maintain that America had her eyes on the countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Iran. According to American authorities, these countries and they were fostering terrorism. As known, George W. Bush declared “War on Terror” on these countries. Then, what were among the aims of “War on Terror” and what kind of promise did Bush make for his people? Bush, would, in the first place, impose economic and military sanctions on the countries that foster terrorism. Thus, their first target would be to eliminate Taliban in Afghanistan. Also, Bush promised to protect his people, with the

metaphor “War on Terror”, from threats and to punish the terror perpetrators without fail. Bush, who made a special reference to the existence of a terror organization called al-Qaeda, promised to eradicate al-Qaeda from the face of the earth, for it was that organization which was responsible for these attacks and the perpetrators had to be punished.

President George W. Bush did not adopt a careful, strategic approach to terrorism following the 9/11 attacks. Understandably at first, though less so as time passed, he and his administration overreacted to terrorism and clung stubbornly to the “war on terror” metaphor, even as his administration pursued al Qaeda by both military and nonmilitary means (Preble, 2006: 490).

Bush, while braving al-Qaeda on the one hand, tried to keep under control the countries which were capable to produce weapons of mass destruction on the other hand. To Bush, the countries which produced these weapons were those which had the potential to annihilate America and the whole world. “Controlling access to weapons of mass destruction and their precursors is also vital. Taking reasonable precautions to secure against likely vectors of attack on infrastructure is also important, as is preparing for attacks and their aftermaths” (Preble, 2006: 490). In addition to these measures, the U.S. passed a law, USA PATRIOT Act which aimed to prosecute terrorism. The full form of this acronym was Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism. Thus, America wanted to bring her victimization to the attention of international community since, after all, she had been attacked and had to take some measures in this regard. By virtue of this, world countries would acknowledge the U.S. and condemn terrorist acts. In other words, whoever was not in the side of America was called terrorist. Thus, Bush won the support of the world. That is what he wanted to do: To intervene the countries which were not in her side and to legitimize the use of military force.

‘Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.’ The Bush administration adopted a multifaceted approach to fighting terrorism, combining intelligence analysis; traditional law enforcement; and, at times, the use of the U.S.

military, including the high-profile missions in Afghanistan and Iraq” (Preble, 2006: 491).

In conclusion, the U.S. has been seriously weakened as a result of these attacks. America is no longer a country which cannot be touched or attacked. “The critical lesson for Americans of September 11th attacks was that they were ‘no longer protected by vast oceans.’ It was not reassuring, nor, in the circumstances, could it have been” (Fraser and Murray, 2002: 299). September 11th attacks have changed global balance: It is for this reason that Afghanistan and Iraq were occupied. Things for Muslim minorities in the U.S. have become more and more difficult. There is a harder life awaiting them. 9/11 is still full of mysteries, and theories of conspiracy are still being produced targeting Bush administration.

CHAPTER THREE

IDEOLOGICAL TOOLS

3.1. A Necessary Evil: Neoconservatism

Previously, mention was made of September 11th events and the concept of “War on Terror”. Some people claim that 9/11 attacks were organized by the American government itself. To understand this claim better, it is necessary to understand the underlying ideology. This ideology is called neoconservatism. It is necessary to be familiar with this ideology and the views it advocates in order to be able to understand and interpret the American foreign policy. To put it simply, neoconservatism is a continual search of enemy for survival. Who this enemy is does not matter. What matters is the permanent presence of this enemy and that it evokes sufficient fear. Therefore, how neoconservatism plays a significant part in American policy and how it drifts the world to a catastrophe are worth mentioning.

Then what exactly is neoconservatism and how effective it is in America? Neoconservatism basically aims to spread American values and to make the U.S. the

only dominant power in the world. To be able to do that neoconservatism declares America the world police and assigns it the mission to destroy the enemies which, in fact, do not exist. This ideology is one of the things that have shaped current American foreign policy. In order to understand this better, one should learn how this ideology came out in American history. It coincides with Reagan's presidency, from 1970s to 1980s with the biggest factor being the Vietnam War, which ended during Nixon's administration. In the eight-year war, from 1965 to 1973, America received a serious blow. America, which did not want Communism to spread during the Cold War, set its eyes on South Vietnam. In this war, China and the USSR, which were Communist countries, sided with North Vietnam, while America with South Vietnam. Only America obtained nothing from this war. The Vietnam War cost America not only material loss but also loss of lives and prestige. This loss of prestige did Reagan a service, and he lost no time to search for an enemy: Communism. Now, Reagan's duty was to extirpate Communism from the face of the earth. Reagan, who believed that America will recover the prestige it lost in the Vietnam War, convinced people that this was so. As seen, just as enemy is the sine qua non for the war, so is war for neoconservatism. Absence of enemy means absence of war and absence of war, in turn, means absence of the ground for spreading American imperialism.

Also in Reagan period, this ideology designated former USSR and Communism as an enemy during the Cold War. Reagan, in turn, could survive since he assumed the mission of eliminating this enemy. After all, American president had to protect his people against threats. America, which "defeated" USSR, now had a transition to a unipolar period.

With the fall of the Soviet Union, America became the world's sole superpower; the U.S. had entered its "unipolar moment." The neocons believed that this historical development had to be greeted with enthusiasm by American politicians. Following the Cold War, the goal of American diplomacy should have been to turn this "unipolar moment" into a "unipolar era"(Ayyash, 2007).

After the elimination of the fear of USSR, America needed a fresh enemy and that period coincided with the period of George W. Bush. Bush had to protect his

people against threats, just as Reagan did. Just at this point, September 11th events reinforced the philosophy of neoconservatism. Now America had a fresh enemy. That fresh enemy was “global terror”. For neocons, who are in the habit of excluding “the other” (Islamic states), paving the way for the war was important. Now it was much easier to wage war by virtue of this new enemy. After all, the U.S. was a superpower which had been attacked on September 11th and had to take revenge of this attack. That was because in the eyes of the world, the U.S. had been victimized and now vulnerable. Now, she had to convince American public of this victimization to delude them. The “white lies” she used to delude people are called “noble lies”. These lies can be summarized as production of weapons of mass destruction by some Islamic countries, their effort to annihilate America, the organization and staging of September 11th events by some terrorist countries having connections with al- Qaeda, and finally a “democratic” country such as America being envied by some countries devoid of democracy. At this point, Bush had an important task: “Extirpation of terrorism from the world especially from the Middle East”. Bush wanted to create division of “friend and foe” using the slogan “You are either with us or against us”. This is the rhetoric which belongs to neoconservatism. To neocons, there is no such thing as policy without enemy. In addition, an aggressive foreign policy is always legitimate and it should be so. Neocons, who are effective in foreign policy in particular, self-appointedly assumed the mission of spreading supposedly moral values (democracy) to the world, establishing American hegemony and changing regimes in some countries. In order to achieve these objectives, neocons creating a compelling enemy, was trying to legitimize in the eyes of the public, the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. Their so-called aim in invading these countries is to erase al- Qaeda, terror organization and to introduce “democracy” to these undemocratic states. The enemy here is actually Islamic countries since Islam is not compatible with democracy and it is even hostile to the West. Therefore, as a superpower, America wished to show these countries what “democracy” was by killing the millions in wars. In a statement, America pointed out that they invaded Iraq with the purpose of introducing liberal democracy and liberal economy. In fact, they did this by using September 11th events and their victimization as a pretext. Naturally, in this invasion a large number of people from both America and Iraq were killed. In

Afghanistan, too, similar things occurred and millions of Afghani were killed. It is clear that this ideology did not beget anything good. Now, America became a belligerent country which can invade any country in a discretionary way any time they wished. As seen clearly, the cause of the events endangered world peace. Iran is also included, in addition to Afghanistan and Iraq, in the “axis of evil”. As is known, Bush used the phrase of “axis of evil” following the September 11th events in order to divide the world into “evil and good”. After Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. now targeted to bring about disorder in Iran. After all, Iran is an Islamic country capable of producing nuclear weapons. This project of Bush’s targeting these countries is called “Great Middle East Project”. As it is clear, neoconservatism now became a new form of imperialism. So, neoconservatism became a mask for imperialism.

On the other hand, Adam Curtis, aiming to raise consciousness of neoconservatism, made a series called “The Power of Nightmares” shown on BBC. It was argued in this series that America had been in search of enemy and in fact there had been no such thing as al-Qaeda organization.

The Power of Nightmares [...] is a 2004 documentary series by Adam Curtis, which seeks to overturn much of what is widely believed about Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda. The latter, it argues, is not an organized international network. It does not have members or a leader. It does not have "sleeper cells". It does not have an overall strategy. In fact, it barely exists at all, except as an idea about cleansing a corrupt world through religious violence (Beckett, 2004).

This series which based the story on the presence of two groups: the American neo-conservatives and the radical Islamists, attempted to explain, by providing historical references, how the world changed. According to these series, America’s previous enemy was the USSR which had been defeated by America. Now it was necessary to look for a new enemy and “terrorism” was a perfect enemy. America had targeted Osama Bin Laden and they had to fight against him. After finding the scapegoat, the U.S. and Britain came together and spent a long time locating the hideout. According to these series, al-Qaeda, terror organization, was just a figment of their imagination. Nevertheless, it was necessary to frighten people. This series underlines how seriously politicians fight to stay in power and how they

take advantage of these nightmares. According to these series, which makes reference to September 11th attacks, the leader who creates fear becomes the most powerful. Thus, Curtis completed the series in chronological order presenting concrete evidence. Underlining that neoconservatism is extremely dangerous, Curtis feels that the world is deteriorating under the influence of this ideology.

Then who are those people who are in favor of this ideology and who are called neocons? Neocons are mostly those Jewish who want to have a say in foreign policy in particular. They try to create a permanent perception of the presence of an enemy in American community. The godfather of this ideology is Leo Strauss, a Jew. “Leo Strauss (1899-1973) was a Jewish-German émigré from the Nazi regime who eventually landed at the University of Chicago where he developed a following that has achieved enormous prominence in American politics” (Walsh, 2005). He is an American political philosopher who classified men into three groups: philosophers, leaders and masses. Philosophers are supposed to create ideas that will protect the state. Leaders, on the other hand, are supposed to apply them to masses. As Lobe states: “While professing deep respect for American democracy, Strauss believed that societies should be hierarchical—divided between an elite who should lead, and the masses who should follow” (Lobe, 2003). In addition, to Strauss deception is one of the most important tools of politics, in fact a necessity. It is because only in this way can masses be deceived and convinced of the presence of imaginary enemies.

[...] Strauss's idea of hidden meaning, "alerts one to the possibility that political life may be closely linked to deception. Indeed, it suggests that deception is the norm in political life, and the hope, to say nothing of the expectation, of establishing politics that can dispense with it is the exception. [...] Not only did Strauss have few qualms about using deception in politics, he saw it as a necessity (Lobe, 2003).

In addition to this, Strauss gave the name of “noble lies” to the lies which he used to deceive people. For him, what is done (wars) could be justified only by virtue of “noble lies”. Strauss borrowed the term of “noble lies” from Plato, but he distorted it. To him, if these lies are not told to the people and they are not convinced, the

foreign policy followed cannot be justified in the eyes of the people and international community.

[F]or Strauss, these lies are necessary for the smooth function of society and triumph of one's own nation in war. Hence for Strauss, the lie becomes "noble." But in Strauss's hands the "noble lie" becomes a way of deceiving the herd. Strauss's "noble lies are far from "noble". They are intended to "dupe the multitude and secure power for a special elite" (Walsh, 2005).

Strauss also distorted the ideas of a prominent philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, and adapted them to his own worldview. Strauss while advocating, like Hobbes, that human nature is evil also advocated that people should fight each other. In other words, it is to favor and legalize war.

Like Thomas Hobbes, Strauss believed that the inherently aggressive nature of human beings could only be restrained by a powerful nationalistic state. "Because mankind is intrinsically wicked, he has to be governed," he once wrote. "Such governance can only be established, however, when men are United—and they can only be united against other people (Lobe, 2003).

As is seen, in addition to deception, perpetual war is also very important since only then can America be a superpower and the world be managed by America. It is one of the most dangerous aspects of neoconservatism since in other words this ideology legitimizes America's aggressive foreign policy. "Perpetual war, not perpetual peace, is what Straussians believe in". The idea easily translates into an 'aggressive, belligerent foreign policy', of the kind that has been advocated by neocon groups" (Lobe, 2003). As is understood, Straussians believe their ideas so firmly that they do not refrain from distorting the thoughts of prominent philosophers like Plato and Hobbes.

Straussians are also interested in the religion factor. In their opinion, to spread religious values and to encourage people to die for their country are very important. At this point, religion has become an important tool that serves neoconservatism. "The combination of religion and nationalism is the elixir that Strauss advocates as the way to turn natural, relaxed, hedonistic men into devout nationalists willing to fight and die for their God and country" (Nimmo, 2008). Thus, for Straussians the

following picture unfolds: These people encourage masses to fight wars using religion and foreign policy. This totalitarian regime plans to make America the only dominant force in the world and it deceives people with “noble lies” to achieve this. The deceived people consider fighting wars justifiable since they think they are in danger. As Steinberg points out:

The hallmark of Strauss' approach to philosophy was his hatred of the modern world, his belief in a totalitarian system, run by "philosophers," who rejected all universal principles of natural law, but saw their mission as absolute rulers, who lied and deceived a foolish "populist" mass, and used both religion and politics as a means of disseminating myths that kept the general population in clueless servitude (Steinberg, 2003).

But Strauss' death did not cause this ideology to come to an end. To the contrary, it became more effective in American foreign policy since the authorized people in foreign policy were Strauss' former students.

The leading "Straussian" in the Bush Administration is Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, who was trained by Strauss' alter-ego and fellow University of Chicago professor Allan Bloom. Wolfowitz leads the "war party" within the civilian bureaucracy at the Pentagon, and his own protégé, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, is Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff and chief national security aide, directing a super-hawkish "shadow national security council" out of the Old Executive Office Building, adjacent to the White House (Steinberg, 2003).

These people always justified America's intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan. As Strauss said, “philosophers” like him generated ideas and the leaders like Wolfowitz put these ideas into practice. Apart from this, there are some important people who were effective in the emergence of Second World War. “Earlier Strauss allies and protégés in launching the post-World War II neo-conservative movement were Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, Samuel Huntington, Seymour Martin Lipset, Daniel Bell, Jeane Kirkpatrick, and James Q. Wilson” (Steinberg, 2003). Samuel Huntington among these people came to the fore with his article entitled “The Clash of Civilizations” and Jeane Kirkpatrick gained importance with her activities during Reagan's administration. Another important person is Irving Kristol, who is one of the people remembered when neoconservatism is

mentioned. Kristol, one Straussian, dwelt upon the factor of religion considerably since religion is the greatest tool that enables the implementation of moral values and only by means of religion can the masses be kept under control.

Among other neoconservatives, Irving Kristol has long argued for a much greater role for religion in the public sphere, even suggesting that the Founding Fathers of the American Republic made a major mistake by insisting on the separation of church and state. And why? Because Strauss viewed religion as absolutely essential in order to impose moral law on the masses who otherwise would be out of control (Lobe, 2003). Kristol, like Strauss, has been a strong proponent of the idea that lies should be tailored according to different people since for him there is no truth acceptable to everyone.

All in all, neoconservatism, which arose during Reagan's administration and peaked with September 11th attacks during Bush's administration, is, as seen, pernicious as far as world peace is concerned. Despite Strauss' death, even in our time neoconservatism has a wide currency. Neoconservatism, which has effects on foreign policy and military interventions, has been spread by the elite. Neocons operate to spread imperialism under the cover of introducing democracy to the Middle East. Unless neoconservatism weakens, apparently there will occur many more wars and many more people will lose their lives. Despite so many wars and so many loss of lives she caused, the U.S. desiring to be a superpower, should follow a more prestigious foreign policy not based on lies, and must heal its prestige injured by neoconservatism.

3.2. The Clash of Civilizations by Samuel P. Huntington

Neoconservatism is only one of the methods the U.S. resorts to be the leader in foreign policy. Following the September 11th attacks, the U.S. made use of, in addition of neoconservatism, the article "The Clash of Civilizations" by Samuel P. Huntington in 1993 to create the concept of "the other". In this article, Huntington argued wars may arise owing to the differences of civilizations. To him, the greatest contrast would be between Islam and the West. Using this concept of "otherness" for her own advantage, the U.S. waged war on Islam following the September 11th

attacks. In the first place, it is necessary to study Huntington's arguments in order to understand how the U.S. adapted this article to her "victimization". Therefore, Huntington's arguments and how America took advantage of them will be presented below.

Samuel P. Huntington of the U.S. is a political scientist. He came to the limelight with his article "The Clash of Civilizations" which was first published in the "Foreign Affairs" magazine and it became one of the most debated articles of the last decade. This article of Huntington's has been controversial since its publication. In the aftermath of Cold War, people were interested in this article because they had been anxious to learn what kind of a world was lying in store for them. This article was presenting predictions about the new world order. People in the press and politics needed a thesis like this to be able to make interpretations about politics. That is why people took great interest in this article. In his opinion, ideological war was fought during the Cold War: Capitalism v.s Communism. The U.S. emerged triumphant from the Cold War. Then, in what direction will the world politics go after switching over to a monopolar world order? Huntington answers the question saying that it will be a "clash of civilizations". He says: "It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural" (Huntington, 120). According to Huntington, who defines civilization at the beginning of the article, the differences such as language, religion, ethnicity, and history will be the causes of the wars to come. "[Civilization] is defined both by common objective elements such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people" (Huntington, 122). Huntington mentions the presence of seven or eight major civilizations in his article. These include Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic- Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African civilization. According to Huntington, the consciousness of civilization between communities will increase gradually. In this consciousness-raising the West will assume the greatest role. It is natural that the West should be envied, for it has the greatest power. Non-Westerners also will envy and fight against the West trying to shape the world as

they wish. “A West at the peak of its power confronts non-Wests that increasingly have the desire, the will and the resources to shape the world in non-Western ways” (Huntington, 124). Through this rhetoric, world people are being polarized: “For us or against us”, “good or evil”. As people define their identity in ethnic and religious terms, they are likely to see an “us” versus “them” relation existing between themselves and people of different ethnicity or religion. This polarity and tendency of the West to spread to the world its own values make wars inevitable. The most recent example of this is September 11th attacks. The U.S, after being attacked, presented her own values as if they were universally acceptable and waged war. “[...] the efforts of the West to promote its values of democracy and liberalism as universal values, to maintain its military predominance and to advance its economic interests engender countering responses from other civilizations” (Huntington, 127). Thus according to Huntington, the clash of civilizations consists of two levels. The first is the clash closely bound cultural groups are involved in, with the purpose of gaining territory. The second, however, is the power struggle of different cultural groups in international arena.

The clash of civilizations thus occurs at two levels. At the micro-level, adjacent groups along the fault lines between civilizations struggle, often violently, over the control of territory and each other. At the macro-level, states from different civilizations compete for relative military and economic power, struggle over the control of international institutions and third parties, and competitively promote their particular political and religious values (Huntington, 127).

In this article Huntington tries to reinforce his argument through examples, after explaining why civilizations clash. According to Huntington, the termination of Cold War also means the termination of ideological war. Now that ideological war is over, cultural war will start. “As the ideological division of Europe has disappeared, the cultural division of Europe between Western Christianity, on the one hand, and Orthodox Christianity and Islam, on the other, has reemerged” (Huntington, 127). To him, the greatest war will take place between the Western and the Islamic civilizations because the basis of this polarity has roots in remote past. For instance while Arabs supported Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War, the Western countries were against him. According to Huntington, the countries with the same religion

support one another, while those with different religions are against each other. Again to Huntington, concept of Western democracy angers non-Western countries and reinforces the idea of opposing the West. “In the Arab world, in short, Western democracy strengthens anti-Western political forces. This may be a passing phenomenon, but it surely complicates relations between Islamic countries and the West” (Huntington, 130). Continuing his exemplification, Huntington now refers to a detail concerning Iran. According to an Iranian religious leader, Islam has waged a holy war called “jihad” on the West. This war is fought for American imperialism and Iran, an Islamic country, wanted to put an end to this greed. “[...] Ayatollah Ali Khamanei, called for a holy war against the West: “The struggle against American aggression, greed, plans and policies will be counted as a jihad, and anybody who is killed on that path is a martyr” (Huntington, 133). Furthermore, Muslims did not ignore the massacre of Bosnians by Serbs. According to Muslims, Israel did not comply with the U.N resolutions. That is why Islamic countries decided to cooperate to help Bosnia. This approach, in Huntington’s opinion, is what it should be, for these countries belong to the same civilization or religion.

Islamic governments and groups, on the other hand, castigated the West for not coming to the defense of the Bosnians. Iranian leaders urged Muslims from all countries to provide help to Bosnia; in violation of the U.N. arms embargo, Iran supplied weapons and men for the Bosnians; Iranian-supported Lebanese groups sent guerillas to train and organize the Bosnian forces (Huntington, 135).

It was of great importance for Muslims to save the lives of those who were in their side in this war. According to a Saudi editor “[t]hose who died [were] regarded as martyrs who tried to save their fellow Muslims” (Huntington, 135).

Furthermore, what the West did was being presented as if it were the wishes of all the other people in the world. This is exactly the West’s efforts to impose their own values on the rest of the world. “Decisions made at the U.N. Security Council or in the International Monetary Fund that reflect the interests of the West are presented to the world as reflecting the desires of the world community” (Huntington, 137). America is trying to impose her economic policies not only through the U.N Security Council but also the IMF. As is seen, the West, using the most effective means

available, is trying to to apply Western values to the rest of the world as if they were what should be. According to Huntington, this effort of the West will anger non-Western countries and wars will arise from this difference of civilization. “The West in effect is using international institutions, military power and economic resources to run the world in ways that will maintain Western predominance, protect Western interests and promote Western political and economic values” (Huntington, 137-138).

However, Huntington does not mention the existence of a civilization, appropriate for everyone. Those who argue about the existence of such a universal civilization are the U.S. and the other Western powers. Naturally non-Western Muslim countries cannot keep silent in the face of such an argument since what is tried to be achieved by the Western countries is to appropriate and Westernize the values of non-Westerners. This is unacceptable to the Islamic countries which are closely attached to their values. Therefore, these countries would like to make their voice heard through wars. “A top Iranian official has declared that all Muslim states should acquire nuclear weapons, and in 1988 the president of Iran reportedly issued a directive calling for development of “offensive and defensive chemical, biological and radiological weapons” (Huntington, 144).

When September 11th is studied, in the light of these arguments of Huntington’s, we see that Western powers blame Muslims. According to Westerners, Islamic countries do not know anything about humanity and they do not forbear from killing people. “Islam fundi’s are better organized than previously thought, which is one of the conclusions of the September 11th attacks. Islam fundi’s do not accept the general codes of conduct as embodied in international humanitarian law, such as the principle that civilians may never be the object of an attack” (Cogen, 2005). Similarly, Muslims also blame Westerners for changing and exploiting the world relentlessly through imperialism, which is hardly tolerable for Muslim countries. According to Westerners, to be a Westerner is a privilege, and Islam can never agree with modernization since it is based on Sharia laws.

Women are not allowed to drive a car in Saudi Arabia; they have to wear a scarf and may not participate in public life. A strict separation of men and women is obliged in all public places, such as schools and universities. Political objectives are central in the Islam ideology: the restoration of the caliphate, a theocracy and oppression of non-Muslims. Let us not forget that Islam is the most proselyte religion of our time (Cogen, 2005).

This contrast seems to support Huntington's arguments, i.e. the U.S. is quite successful in turning these arguments to her own advantage. Thus, we understand why Huntington's arguments became so important after September 11th. To sum up, it served American officials' purpose after September 11th to say "Islamic countries are against us". After all, there were different civilizations in the world, and now that wars would happen between these different civilizations, why would these attacks not be an example of this clash? Bush, was supporting the argument of this article by saying "This is the war of good and evil".

On more than one occasion, President George W. Bush has described the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, as fostering "a monumental battle of good versus evil." In this battle, there has been no doubt in his mind (or in ours) regarding who is on the side of good and who is on the side of evil (Naugle, 2002).

In addition to the difference of civilizations, Huntington also mentions "bloody borders" of Islam. What this phrase means is that there have been wars between Islamic countries. This view supports Westerners' argument that Muslims are tyrant. "Violence also occurs between Muslims, on the hand, and Orthodox Serbs in the Balkans, Jews in Israel, Hindus in India, Buddhists in Burma and Catholics in the Philippines. Islam has bloody borders" (Huntington, 132). This argument came in handy for America which was looking for a scapegoat after September 11th. As Dunn points out: "What is more important is the fact that, after 9/11, many of Huntington's concepts and definitions—such as his depiction of Islam's "bloody borders"—gained new standing" (Dunn, 2006). Thus, America declared war on terror. After all, Islam and Westernization were totally different from each other and this difference was sufficient to start a war. "It is the way in which others have taken Huntington's theory and used it to justify or support the 'war on terror' that are most important" (Dunn, 2006).

Apart from the knowledge of Islam, Huntington's definition of civilization also served America's aims since through this America was able to make her own definitions of "civilized" and "uncivilized" country. In addition, Bush's phrase "War on Terror" was a carefully prepared cover. He would not be expected to turn the Muslim world against himself by saying "War on Islam". Therefore, Bush, who had made right choice by saying the word "terror", declared war on a civilization, which does not know what it is, i.e. Islam. "Bush outlined his vision for the 'war on terror' stating, "[t]his is civilization's fight". Whilst the U.S. government may have seemingly sought to avoid the notion of a clash between 'Islam' and 'the West', the rhetoric of 'civilizations' still crept into its dialogue" (Dunn, 2006). The use of such a rhetoric was suitable for the U.S. made use of Huntington's argument, that there were different civilizations and thus wars could arise. The clash is not between two distinct 'civilizations', but between two powerful structures for which such language is beneficial. According to Dunn, it is not fair that America should divide the world for her own case by using Huntington's argument and one should not be forced to choose between lining up "with us or against us".

In a world where wars are inevitable, Huntington suggests that the West reconcile with other civilizations and preserve its power. "West will increasingly have to accommodate these non-Western modern civilizations whose power approaches that of the West but whose values and interests differ significantly from those of the West" (Huntington, 146-147). After this suggestion, Huntington underlines again that there is no such thing as a universal civilization but that the world comprises of different civilizations. He also suggests that these civilizations should learn how to live in peace together.

In conclusion, this article also like neoconservatism seems to create the notion of "the other": "Either with us or against us", "Either good or evil", "Either Western or not". This article was written before September 11th. However, it is clear that it gained importance; thereafter, since, to the U.S. 9/11 is a war between the West and Islam. Huntington's arguments serve American interests at this point.

Thus, in the eyes of the West, the clash of civilizations has become declaration of war by “uncivilized” countries on the West, particularly the U.S.

3.3. Western Perceptions of the East: Orientalism

In Scott Foresman’s dictionary, Orientalism is defined as knowledge or study of Oriental languages, literature, etc. However, this word has recently assumed a negative meaning. Edward Said played an important role in Orientalism assuming a negative meaning. His book entitled *Orientalism*, which he wrote in 1978, assigned a negative meaning to this word. “A good many scholars of Islam or the Middle East rejected [Orientalism] outright and lamented the fact that “Orientalist” had come to be widely used in a pejorative sense” (Turner, 1994: 215). Since its publication, this book had strong reverberations worldwide and made people rethink about the Orient. It is necessary to understand what Orientalism is in reality if we are to understand how it has served the interests of the West and how it has alienated individuals from their own identities.

According to Said, Orientalism is the prejudiced perception of the Orient by the West. It is prejudiced because the Westerners are not adequately informed of the Orient. Only with the knowledge available to them, do they try to assign a meaning to the Orient. Predictably, assigning meaning to Orientalism is not positive. The Orient, in the eyes of the West is cruel, undemocratic, and uncivilized. In contrast to the Orient, the West is modern, democratic, and superior to other civilizations. This contrast according to Said, begets the concept of otherness and is unrealistic.

In his book, Said asks: but where is this sly, devious, despotic, mystical Oriental? Has anyone ever met anyone who meets this description in all particulars? In fact, this idea of the Oriental is a particular kind of myth produced by European thought, especially in and after the 18th century. In some sense his book *Orientalism* aims to dismantle this myth, but more than that Said's goal is to identify Orientalism as a discourse (Singh, 2004).

Again according to Said, the Orient is mysterious and arouses curiosity. What arouses curiosity triggers the West’s passion for imperialism. This imperialism is to dominate the Orient and the Oriental alike in every field—from its land to its culture

and even to its women. According to the West, the Oriental woman is weak and needs to be protected. Now that the Orient is inferior, then it can be exploited. Defining the Orient as weak, the West finds in itself the power to dominate and exploit it. Thus, the Orient is discovered by the West as different as it really is. Said states that Orientalism is not merely some “airy European fantasy about the Orient”. It is, rather, a “system of knowledge about the Orient” (Said, 1979: 133). As the negative images of the Orient are produced, the animosity of the West also increases.

In order to corroborate his arguments, Said included in his book the opinions of many prominent philosophers including Michel Foucault and Derrida as well. “Said based his approach on the work of a number of European scholars and intellectuals, including Jacques Derrida (deconstruction), Antonio Gramsci (cultural hegemony), and Michel Foucault (discourse, power/knowledge and epistemic field)” (Macfie, 2002: 6). Said treats Orientalism as discourse. From this discourse, come out the concepts of foreignness and otherness and thus it becomes easier for imperialist forces to achieve their goals. “The analysis of knowledge/power in the work of Michel Foucault provides the basis for Edward Said’s influential study of *Orientalism* (1978) as a discourse of difference in which the apparently neutral Occident/Orient contrast is an expression of power relationships” (Turner, 1994: 21). Said tells about the existence of the term Occidentalism as the antonym of Orientalism and gives their definitions. “[H]e identifies the origins of the principal features of the Orientalist myth – that Orientalists, unlike Occidentals, are by nature mysterious, menacing, irrational, demonic and sexually corrupt” (Macfie, 2002: 86-87).

Said’s arguments come under the spotlight again after the September 11th attacks. Now that the Orientals are qualified as barbaric and savage, then they must be responsible for these attacks. America, a Western country, managed to adapt the new meaning of Orientalism to itself and declared the Orientals her enemy. America occupied Iraq and Afghanistan in revenge for the September 11th attacks. That is, in Edward Said’s words, the West exploited the Orient. America supposedly introduced democracy to Iraq and Afghanistan, which are devoid of it. In fact, America exploited these countries. This is what Said meant: Establishment of the ground for

the West's exploitation with the Oriental image formed by the West. The most recent example of this exploitation in history is the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. It is not a coincidence that Afghanistan and Iraq are Oriental, Islamic countries. We have a totally different image of the Orient that has emerged under the influence of Orientalism and we are being affected by it consciously or unconsciously. It is not only Westerners who are affected by this prejudice. The Orientals now look at themselves through the eyes of the Westerners. In other words, they have forgotten their own identity and they felt ashamed of their Oriental identity. It is because of this shame that they want to get rid of their identity. Thus, the Oriental feels that his own identity is inferior and tries to belong to a "superior" culture. This is a kind of exploitation of the Orient by the West.

While Said mentions this prejudiced and exploitative attitude of the West, some Western academicians raise criticism of Said. The most important of these critics is Bernard Lewis. Lewis claims that Said's arguments are not tenable. According to Lewis, the Orient mentioned by Said is a very limited area and cannot verify the truth of the argument. "Mr. Said makes a number of very arbitrary decisions. His Orient is reduced to the Middle East, and his Middle East to a part of the Arab world. By eliminating Turkish and Persian studies on the one hand and Semitic studies on the other, he isolates Arabic studies from both their historical and philological contexts" (Lewis, 2000: 3). Lewis feels that Orientalism is misunderstood on account of Said and explains the true meaning of Orientalism before Said's interpretation of it.

In the past, Orientalism was used mainly in two senses. One is a school of painting—that of a group of artists, mostly from Western Europe, who visited the Middle East and North Africa and depicted what they saw or imagined, sometimes in a rather romantic and extravagant manner. The second and more common meaning, unconnected with the first, has been a branch of scholarship (Lewis, 2000: 6).

One of the proponents of Lewis's argument is Bryan S. Turner, who, like Lewis, argues that Orientalism does not cover the whole world and therefore it is not credible. "[...] Said was a significant critic of French Orientalism, but he was particularly weak in terms of German and British Orientalism" (Turner, 1994: 5).

However, according to Turner, Said's explanation of Orientalism has caused great reverberations and had worldwide acceptance. Now Orientalism has become a means of the West for imperialism. Having explained the real face of Orientalism, Said opposes Huntington's thesis of "The Clash of Civilizations" and says that this is a mere myth. Said also says that Huntington is affected by Bernard Lewis. According to Said, Huntington's this thesis, like Orientalism, is fraught with prejudices and certainly serves the exploitation of the Orient by the West. This thesis is qualified as myth by Said since it does not reflect the culture of the Orient.

Said thought that Huntington supported his argument with tendentious sources, Bernard Lewis among them (along with neocon journalist Charles Krauthammer). Indeed, Said revealed that Huntington's clarion title, "The Clash of Civilizations," came straight from a 1990 essay by Lewis in *The Atlantic Monthly* titled "The Roots of Muslim Rage" (Richter, 2004).

Understandably, while Said was trying to explain the real ambitions of the West, he met with great oppositions from a large number of Western academicians. However, he strongly defended his argument, and the real meaning of Orientalism was widely accepted. A. L Macfie, who clearly explains Said's views, says the following: "Philosophically speaking, Said concludes, the Orientalism thus created should be seen as a form of radical realism, which attempts to identify the East as fixed and unchangeable. Rhetorically speaking, it should be seen as an attempt to anomize and enumerate the East; and psychologically speaking, as a form of paranoia" (Macfie, 2002: 89).

In conclusion, Orientalism, just like "The Clash of Civilizations" and neoconservatism, begets the concept of "otherness". Thus, the Oriental, restructured by the West, forgets who he is in reality and tries to divest himself of his original identity. In order to achieve this, he is engaged in search of a new cultural identity. Thus, he is deceived by the Western exploitative forces. The Oriental has now completely lost his own identity and is vulnerable to all kinds of exploitation. Leading the Western exploitative forces, America skillfully uses the following situation as her ideological tools. First, she has found her enemy in virtue of neoconservatism after September 11th. Secondly, she legitimized the East-West

contrast based on Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations". Finally, she declared the Orient barbaric, aggressive and undemocratic in virtue of Orientalism. Thus, America can easily exploit the Orient both politically (through wars) and ideologically (loss of cultural identity).

CHAPTER FOUR

LOSS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN ANNE TYLER'S *DIGGING TO AMERICA*

4.1. ANNE TYLER AS A CONTEMPORARY WOMAN WRITER

4.1.1. A Short Biography of Anne Tyler

Anne Tyler was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on October 25, 1941. Her Quaker activist parents, Lloyd Parry Tyler, a chemist and Phylis Mahon Tyler, a social worker moved around the Midwest for several years (Croft, 1995: 1). Anne Tyler was their first child, to be followed by three sons (Bail, 1998: 1). In 1948, they moved to a cooperative community in the mountains of North Carolina called Celso.

In this small community, Anne and her younger brother Israel were taught at home but attended the local school for one year. The isolation of the community developed in Tyler both a sense of distance and the habit of observing the world objectively as an outsider (Croft, 1995: 1). Her family lived in a succession of communes, or experimental Quaker communities, seeking like Thoreau a "simpler life"—an alternative to the competitive, materialistic lifestyle they saw all around them (Bail, 1998: 1). Anne Tyler says "I think the fact that I had a fairly isolated childhood influenced me considerably. I learned to be alone and to entertain myself by imagining, and when I left the commune I looked at the regular world from an unusually distant vantage point" (qtd. in. Bail, 1998: 1).

When Lloyd Tyler's income proved insufficient to support his growing family, they moved to Raleigh, North Carolina in 1953 (Croft, 1995: 1). In Raleigh, Anne's

teacher encouraged her writing talent. During this period, Anne also discovered her greatest literary influence, Eudora Welty, whose stories taught her the importance of carefully chosen details and showed her the possibilities of writing about ordinary life (Croft, 1995: 1). Upon graduating high school at the age of 16, Anne continued her stories at nearby Duke University. She encountered teachers who organized and encouraged her writing talent (Croft, 1995: 1). At Duke, Anne's major was Russian. After Duke, Anne headed North to New York City, where she attended graduate school at Columbia University to pursue a master's degree in Russia. A year later she returned home to work as a bibliographer in Duke's library, having left Columbia without finishing her master's thesis. During this time, Anne met Taghi Modaresi, an Iranian medical student who was specializing in child psychiatry. Then they got married. (Croft, 1995: 2). They had two daughters, Tezh, who is an artist, and Mitra, who is a children's-book author and illustrator (Patrick, 2004). Besides being a doctor, Taghi was also a writer who published an award-winning novel in Persian (Bail, 1998: 6). Because Taghi's visa was expiring, the couple moved to Montreal, Canada, where Taghi had obtained a residency in child psychiatry. At first Anne could not find a job herself, so she worked on completing her first novel, *If Morning Ever Comes* (1964). When this novel was released in 1964, the not-yet-23-year-old writer had already been recognized as a budding literary star by her Duke University English professor and novelist Reynolds Price (Patrick, 2004).

Then, she completed her second novel, *The Tin Can Tree* (1965). When Taghi finished his residency, he received a job offer from the University of Maryland Medical School in Baltimore. Thus, the Modaresi family moved to Baltimore, where they have lived ever since (Croft, 1995: 2). Later she wrote her shortest novel, *A Slipping Down Life* and *The Clock Winder* (1972). Tyler's first novel set in Baltimore. It seemed that Tyler had finally become familiar with her adopted city to set her novels there. In 1974 she wrote *Celestial Navigation*. A year later Tyler produced *Searching For Caleb*, the novel in which she tackles the longest timeframe of any of her novels-nearly a hundred years. It was 1976's *Searching for Caleb* that won her fame following John Updike's New York Times Book Review piece that concluded, "This writer is not merely good, she is wickedly good" (Patrick, 2004).

Then in 1977 she published *Earthly Possessions*, the closest work to a feminist novel that Tyler has written (Croft, 1995: 3).

None of her novels sold more than about 10.000 copies. This period in the late 1970s was difficult for her. She and her family felt many of the pressures related to the Iranian Revolution. Consequently, Tyler's next novel, *Pantaleo*, was a disappointment, which, to the credit of her artistic integrity, she declined to publish. Her next novel, *Morgan's Passing* (1980), although expected to be her breakthrough novel, again proved a commercial disappointment (Croft, 1995: 4).

Then in 1982 she wrote *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*. For the first time an Anne Tyler novel sold well. The novel gathered critical praise, as well as, a nomination as a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. *The Accidental Tourist* received another nomination as a finalist for the Pulitzer and won the coveted National Book Critics Circle Award. In 1988, it was made into a motion picture starring William Hurt, Kathleen Turner, and Geena Davis, who won an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actress for her portrayal of Muriel Pritchett. The year 1988 also brought the publication of Tyler's most honored novel, *Breathing Lessons*, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction the following year (Croft, 1995: 4). Sticking to her Baltimore home, Tyler then wrote *Saint Maybe* (1991). Later in 1995 came *Ladder of Years*, Tyler's latest exploration of the circular nature of the time (Croft, 1995: 4). Three years later, *A Patchwork Planet* (1998) was written. Tyler did not stop writing: she wrote *Back When We Were Grownup* (2001), *The Amateur Marriage* (2004), *Digging to America* (2006), which was the Best Novel Nominee in Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction and finally *Noah's Compass* (2009). In addition to writing novels, Anne Tyler has produced a number of short stories and book reviews and has written a few essays and book introductions (Bail, 1998: 22).

Anne Tyler is a novelist with a tragicomic vision, someone who sees the sadness of life and yet can still find something to laugh about. Or perhaps, like her characters, she has simply learned that that is the best way to get through life (Croft, 1995: 5).

4.1.2. Anne Tyler's Style in Writing

Anne Tyler is one of the most important contemporary women writers in American literature. Tyler's literary style received criticism from a multitude of literary critics. However, she can hardly be classified since she is not a genre writer. Still, it is possible to find common themes when examine novels. Therefore we should examine her themes if we are to familiarize us with her style.

The first thing to strike us in her novels is that she uses the theme of family. This is how she recounts the contradictory vision in life through the institution of family, the most basic unit of society. People feel close to the characters in the novels which address familial relationships. In other words, the characters in Tyler's world are in our life.

Only these characters experience some problems within their family. Believing that no family is perfect, Tyler presents fairly realistic family models as she did in her novel, *Digging to America*. Maryam and Sami, who are mother and son, have arguments throughout the novel, which is, in Tyler's view, what it should be since no family is perfect.

Tyler also presents the hardships of life using the family contexts. Tyler's world that she presents in her novels is not a simple one without any difficulties. On the contrary, it is a world that challenges the individual and obliges him or her to struggle, as was the case in the Yazdans family in *Digging to America*.

Tyler mentions cultural identity as well in addition to the theme of family in her novel, *Digging to America*. Developments after September 11th led Tyler to address cultural identities in her novels. In the novel, we see that the Iranian family is defined from American perspective, and the American family from Iranian perspective. This is how they establish mutual cultural stereotyping. As Medvesky explains in the following:

Cultural stereotypes are abundant in this novel. The members of both the Yazdan and Donaldson families observe each other and judge how everyone should act based upon their locations of birth. The stereotyping is not one-sided, though. In fact, assaults are thrown and thwarted from all angles. The Yazdans initially represent Iran while the Donaldsons initially represent America (Medvesky, 2008: 142).

In her novels before *Digging to America*, Tyler mentioned American families in her novels. In this novel, however, she violated this tradition and referred to different cultural identities such as Iranian, Korean, and Chinese. “It is only with her [*Digging to America*] that we see a shift in Tyler’s writing. [...] It is clear that although Tyler’s plot revolves around the structure of the family, her writing has evolved beyond the structure of the white American family. In fact, her analysis of the family has expanded to include different cultures” (Medvesky, 2008: 184).

But, some critics criticized Tyler for being apolitical. According to these critics, Tyler mentions everyday life skipping political events. However, *Digging to America* shows that Tyler is not aloof from political events, in that she mentions September 11th in it. As Medvesky states: “Iranian-American identity conflict has been exacerbated since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Since then, Iranian-Americans have, without just cause, become the focus of racial stereotyping” (Medvesky, 2008: 12). As one can understand, Tyler did not skip this important issue as a writer, and wrote about the developments on a hyphenated identity, Iranian-Americans, after these events.

Tyler is also realistic in her novels in that she presents both tragic and comical sides of life, as is the case in our real life. Tyler skillfully presents the combination of the two in her novels. “Tyler's own description of her writing as a "blend of laughter and tears" seems especially appropriate, as tragedy and comedy are indisputably linked in her stories. She also comments: "I can't think of any tragic situation in real life that hasn't shown a glimmer of comedy too" [...]” (Bennett, 1995: 58). It is possible to come across elements of humor frequently in *Digging to America*. Tyler, who humorously takes up the question of “Who is an American?”, not only makes us laugh but also think. There are even moments which move us—homesickness and hardships they experience as Iranians. “[...] Tyler manages to

infuse her novels with a unique sense of humor. Her humor has often been praised, but rarely understood for its complexity. Tyler's humor encompasses a unique blend of the comic and the tragic. She cannot seem to make up her mind whether life is essentially a comic farce or a tragedy that we must laugh at to endure" (Croft, 1998: 12). However, Barbara Bennett, a writer, is of the opinion that Tyler's humorous approach has only recently been understood by literary critics and that this subject has not been sufficiently studied before.

Anne Tyler says that what she recounts in her novels has nothing to do with her real life whatsoever and adds that it is boring to experience the same things twice. The thing that she takes most pleasure as a writer is to create a new world. She believes that this created world should be realistic. In an interview on her novel, *Digging to America*, Tyler says that her husband's being an Iranian was effective in writing this novel but it had nothing to do with her real life. "[...] the tone, at least, of the conversations in *Digging to America* comes directly from my observations of my late husband's very large, very talkative Iranian family" (Memmott, 2006).

In addition to these, when we look at Tyler's female characters we can see a common point: these are powerful women, who try to stand on their own feet. In Medvesky's words: "Tyler's women desire to be recognized not as movie stars or famous authors but, rather, as individuals. These women prevail as the strongest characters in many of her novels. Often, women see in ways that men cannot" (Medvesky, 2008: 16).

When we look at the literary influences on Tyler, we see Eudora Welty, who uses humorous elements like Tyler does. Tyler says, "I have always meant to send Eudora Welty a thank-you note, but I imagine she would find it a little strange." Welty, told of this passage, said, "It'd be a great honor. Of course, Anne doesn't need any kind of influence. That's one thing I admire so about her" (Patrick, 2004).

Furthermore, Tyler's origin of a Quaker family is reflected on her works. This can be studied in two ways. First, the simplicity of her works and the second is democracy and egalitarianism. Tyler is not an omniscient writer but she gives right to

everybody to express what they think. It is not a coincidence that the style of Tyler, who comes from a peaceful and egalitarian society, should be so.

Judging from all the themes in her novels, most of her novels are set in Baltimore. Except for the first three novels, which were set in California, the other novels are set in Baltimore because this is where Tyler lives and she is quite familiar with this place. This tradition is followed in *Digging to America* as well. However, the Baltimore where Tyler lives is somewhat different from the Baltimore where her novels are set because she adds her imaginations to it. As Anne Tyler says: "A Baltimorean once wrote to protest my mention of burying someone on Cow Hill. "Cow Hill does not have a graveyard," she said. I wrote back and said, "No, but my Cow Hill does" (Patrick, 2004).

In conclusion, Tyler is a prolific and significant woman writer with eighteen novels she has written. She tells us about life in every way through the families she creates.

4.1.3. General Information about Tyler's *Digging to America*

Digging to America is Anne Tyler's 17th novel. Written in 2006 this novel is about two families residing in America, one Iranian one American. Tyler's interest in Iranian culture comes from her husband, who is also an Iranian. Tyler makes use of the information she has obtained from her husband and his family. "Tyler was married to Iranian-born psychiatrist Taghi Mohammad Modarressi from 1963 until his death in 1997. Although she keeps her personal life closely guarded, her exposure to Iranian culture through him must have animated the spirit of this novel" (Charles, 2006). The story is set in Baltimore, Maryland and begins with the families meeting with their adopted Korean children at Baltimore airport. That is how the Donaldsons and the Yazdans meet one another. It is necessary to have a general idea about the main characters in the novel for a better understanding of how Ziba and Sami living in America have lost their own identity. Therefore the plot of the novel will be given briefly.

In general, mention is made in the novel of the two families raising their children differently. An Iranian couple, Sami and Ziba are totally different from Brad and Bitsy, an American family. This difference is effective in raising their children. Sami and Ziba change the name of the baby, Sooki, adopted from Korea, into Susan so that she can easily be adapted to the society. As Tyler writes: "Susan, they called her. They chose a name that resembled the name she had come with, Sooki, and also it was a comfortable sound for Iranians to pronounce" (10). Brad and Bitsy on the other hand want their child, Jin-Ho to adopt her own Korean culture, without her name being changed. Upon Bitsy's browsing the telephone book and coming across the surname Yazdan, the two families start to meet frequently. "I hope you don't mind my tracking you down," she'd said. "You're the only Yazdans in the book and I just couldn't resist calling you to find out how things were going" (11). Thus, they organize annual parties to mark their daughters' arrival. In the meantime, children grow up. As they grow up, their differences become more pronounced. While Jin-Ho wears traditional Korean clothes, Susan wears jeans and T-shirts with an American flag on. From their dialogues during their meetings, the differences in raising their children are revealed. Whereas Brad and Bitsy choose not to Americanize their daughter, Jin-Ho, Sami and Ziba decide to raise their daughter like other American children. In other words, Sami and Ziba all along try to give Susan an American identity. This Iranian couple go even further and get moved to the neighbourhood of the American family, Brad and Bitsy to be able to feel more "American". As Tyler writes: "The general atmosphere of Mount Washington seemed more Donaldsonian, Maryam thought. Better not say it, though. "Well, still you'll be very close," she said. "Five or ten minutes away! I'm delighted" (132). In the meantime, tensions accumulate between the two families. For instance, while Ziba works as an interior decorator, Bitsy is a housewife and therefore able to take care of her daughter, Jin-Ho. Susan is taken care of by Maryam Yazdan, the grandmother. This situation seems quite odd to Bitsy.

Bitsy: "You work?" Bitsy asked her.

Ziba: "I'm an interior decorator."

Bitsy: "I couldn't bear to work! How could you leave your baby?" (30).

In addition to this, when Bitsy learns that Susan is playing in the playpen, Bitsy thinks this is entirely wrong. “Bitsy was still studying Susan. For a moment it seemed she couldn’t think of anything more to say, but then she turned to Ziba. “You put your daughter in a *playpen*?” she asked” (31-32). Giving many similar examples, Tyler aims to draw attention to intercultural differences. As it is seen, while ethnicity matters to an Iranian, to an American it is obviously a necessary diversity rather than a problem in American society. Tyler is very successful to reflect this.

The Iranian immigrants must wrestle with when to assimilate, when to resist, while their white-bread friends carry on about how much they love ethnicity. [Tyler] is particularly good at conveying the wry humor these Iranian-Americans use to endure numerous little slights from their well-intentioned but condescending white neighbors (Charles, 2006).

Furthermore, Tyler stresses the importance of the theme “sense of belonging”. However much Sami and Ziba try to fit in America, it is not that easy, for they are in fact not American but Iranians. “Tyler utilizes [the] loss of self theme in all of her works, but in *Digging to America*, the loss of self is in direct relation to ethnic identity” (Medvesky, 2008: 142). Therefore, their Iranian origin prevents them from becoming “real” American citizens. “In [...] *Digging to America*, belonging is a question not only of family but of being an American too: whether an immigrant can ever feel completely at home in the States, or whether he or she will always feel like an outsider; whether identity is a matter of will and choice or inherited culture and history” (Kakutani, 2006). The Yazdans’ life in America becomes difficult especially after 9/11 and Tyler makes a reference to this in her novel. Maryam states that she feels more foreign after September 11th and that American public is hostile to them. The same assertion is made by Maryam’s son, Sami. “Ever since September eleventh, every Middle Eastern-looking person is a suspect. They took [Mahmad] away; they searched him; they asked him a million questions. . . . Well, end of story: he missed his flight. ‘Sorry, sir,’ they said. ‘You can catch the next flight, if we’ve finished by then” (169).

Similarly, Westernization, or more precisely Americanization is dwelt upon in the novel in great detail. The efforts of Ziba and Sami to fit in the American

community is one of the greatest themes in the novel. At this point, that people forget their own identity to Americanize themselves gains importance. To what extent the Yazdans have succeeded in becoming American is disputable. But as a Yazdan, Maryam's attitude to Americanization is completely different from that of Ziba and Sami. In fact, Maryam does not want to be American, she wants to hold on to her own identity. Furthermore, she does not believe that America is a perfect country, either. In fact, Maryam is an educated, social woman capable of standing on her own feet. Maryam is married to an Iranian doctor. After her husband's death, she constantly pines for her former life in Tehran. Maybe the only thing that she does not want to remember is the Shah period in Iran. It should be made clear that Maryam is involved in conspiracy against the Shah and in one case she is arrested. That is, Maryam is not the kind of person who is submissive and easy to defeat.

She attended the university of Tehran but she hardly had time for her classes because of her political activities. This was when the Shah was still very much in power-the Shah and his dreaded secret police. [...] She was thinking she might join the Communist Party. Then she was arrested, along with two young men, while the three of them were distributing leaflets around campus (155).

Sami, however, is completely different from his mother. He does not like Iran at all. He refuses to speak Farsi in favor of English and he even has an accent. Sami, who always silences her mother when Iran is in question is quite accustomed to live in America like his wife Ziba, who is quite successful in adopting American lifestyle but fails to be a complete "American".

[Ziba] had a noticeable accent, having immigrated with her whole family when she was already in high school, but she had so immediately and enthusiastically adapted-listening non-stop to 98 Rock, hanging out at the mall, draping her small, bony, un-American frame in blue jeans and baggy T-shirts with writing printed across them-that now she seemed native-born, almost (13).

Moreover, she always speaks English to her daughter, Susan to make her accustomed to English. Ziba forbids her parents, Mr. And Mrs. Hakimi to speak Farsi before American people. Opposition to American lifestyle would mean difficulty after 9/11 in surviving in this "foreign" land. Therefore everyone but Maryam is pleased with this "new identity".

In the meantime, the grandparents in both families occupy an important place in arrival parties and in the life of these two couples. Maryam, Sami's mother; Ziba's parents, Mr. And Mrs. Hakimi; Brad's parents Pat and Lou; and finally Bitsy's parents; Dave and Connie appear frequently in the novel. Bitsy's mother, Connie, is a cancerous patient and dies after a short while. Finding himself in a void after his wife's death, Dave begins to feel closer to Maryam. Their coming closer to each other helps us better understand the differences between the two cultures. Dave, as an American is fairly at ease and asks her hand in marriage in the presence of all the family members. "Maryam," Dave said "Will you marry me?" (208). Maryam, on the other hand, is attached to her traditions as an Iranian and is sad since she is no longer an Iranian citizen. Furthermore, Maryam sees herself as a foreigner in America. As for Dave he is unable to understand the situation Maryam is in.

Maryam, Sami's mother, is a slight, elegant, reticent woman with the steely emotional core that comes from a certain experience of adversity—displacement from her native land, early widowhood, single motherhood and the well-managed but profound loneliness that accompanies those states. Maryam's passport says she is American, but she still feels, almost wilfully, an outsider in her adopted country (Shilling, 2006).

Maryam accepts Dave's marriage proposal at the beginning but later she regrets doing so and explains to Dave and other people around her that such a marriage would not keep. Thus, Tyler tells us by means of Maryam how difficult it is to be a foreigner in America. "As the novel's reigning consciousness, she reveals what it feels like to be viewed as 'exotic' or 'foreign' in America before and after 9/11, and how one can become detrimentally attached to the role of outsider" (Seaman, 2006).

Furthermore, in the novel answers to such questions as "Who is American?" and "What does it mean to be American?" can be found. Tyler explains this in an amusing and spirited way. To her, Americans are people who are relaxed and comfortable at voicing all their problems, incapable of keeping their private matters secret, fond of giving lavish parties and going to places all together. This is reflected by what Sami says about Americans.

So instantaneously chummy they are, so ‘Hello, I love you.’ So ‘How do you do, let me tell you my marital problems,’ and yet, have any of them ever really, trully let you into their lives? Think about it! Think! Or their claim to be so tolerant. They say they’re a culture without restrictions. An unconfined culture. But all that means is, they keep their restrictions as a secret. They wait until you violate one and then they get all faraway and chilly and unreadable, and you have no idea why (82).

As the novel progresses, the Donaldsons adopt another baby after Jin-Ho. This is a Chinese baby girl named Xiu-Mei. The Donaldsons who bring up this baby in the same way as Jin-Ho, do not shy away from exhibiting even the least important things related with the baby. After making public Jin-Ho’s toilet training, this time they throw a party with the Yazdan family to announce Xiu-Mei’s quitting pacifier sucking. “Guess what, Xiu-Mei! Next Saturday we’ll have a huge party and the Binky Fairy will fly in to take away all your binkies and leave you a wonderful present instead” (216). This celebration of the Donaldsons’ verifies what Sami says about Americans. Thus, Americans are people who like ostentation and sharing their most private things. To them, this is quite normal. Although there are cultural clashes of this kind in the novel, the couples and their children seem to have friendly relations throughout the novel.

In summary, the novel becomes colorful thanks to Tyler’s subtleties and her witticism and pleasurable from the beginning to the end. The novel, which treats the effort to belong to America and thus to forget one’s own identity (Ziba and Sami) has gained importance because it was written after 9/11. Now, it is time to examine how Ziba and Sami, two main characters in the novel, are alienated from their original identity under the influence of America and Maryam’s clinging to her own identity, as a way of survival, in this foreign land.

4.2. WHO IS AN AMERICAN?

4.2.1. “Promised Land” and “City upon a Hill”

When Anne Tyler describes who an American is in her novel *Digging to America*, we see that an American is a person who sees himself superior to others. Tyler writes: “Americans are know-it-all: These people believe that American values should be important to everybody in the world” (272). Since the foundation of America, Americans have always been confident that their economic and political system was better than those of most other countries, and that theirs was an exceptional country. On seeing this, it is necessary to know some beliefs, which developed when America was being founded to be able to understand the “superiority” of the American character and the “inferiority” of other nations in Tyler’s novel, *Digging to America*. These beliefs are “Promised Land” and “City upon a Hill”. Although these beliefs are old, they still affect America and the American character in our time.

When the European settlers came to America for the first time, they considered this country to be “Promised Land” sent by God. It was possible to find all kinds of material riches in these lands. Moreover, these lands had “almost” been uninhabited. Although Native Americans were living in these lands, this was not a difficult problem to solve. These lands had to be taken from them and inhabited immediately. The European settlers resorted to violence to achieve this. “Most land was taken violently. First of all, Europeans brought diseases that killed several million Native Americans within a few years. These great killings left land “vacant” and “available” to the colonists. Then there was war. When the 1600s ended, most Native Americans in New England had been killed or driven away” (May, 2009). Before the arrival of the European settlers, Natives had a lifestyle and rules of their own, which they did not even deign to understand. That was because all they thought was to settle in these lands. After all, it had been “Promised Land” and given to them by God.

Since the Europeans arrived in North America, Indigenous Peoples have lost millions of acres of land. Theft, murder and warfare, forced removal, deception, and official government land programs have deprived them of their territories. Land rights of Native Americans were never taken seriously. Rather, they were seen as obstacles to the colonists' need for land (May, 2009).

In addition to these, we had better familiarize ourselves with the concept of “City upon a Hill” in order to understand “Promised Land” better. John Winthrop, the Puritan founder believed that America should be a perfect country, then everybody should be aware of this fact. It is this belief that has led Americans, since the beginning of their history, to believe that they have been superior. This belief is part of their culture. “We shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.” the Puritan John Winthrop wrote. The Puritans who disembarked in Massachusetts in 1620 believed they were establishing the New Israel. Indeed, the whole colonial enterprise was believed to have been guided by God” (May, 2009).

When we look at American history, it is clearly seen that “City upon a Hill” and the idea behind it have echoed down through the ages, always finding resonance within the American sense of exceptionalism. John F. Kennedy referred to this concept in some of his speeches. “Today the eyes of all people are truly upon us—and our governments, in every branch, at every level, national, state and local, must be as a city upon a hill—constructed and inhabited by men aware of their great trust and their great responsibilities” (Weaver and Mendelson, 2008: 11). Similarly, Ronald Reagan also mentioned “City upon a Hill” in his farewell address. He said these:

[I]t was a tall proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, wind-swept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace, a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity, and if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here (Weaver and Mendelson, 2008: 2).

Clearly, religious sermons have been considerably effective in the creation of American culture. These sermons are among the most effective means of keeping Americans together. “[I]t was often the sermon that inspired and helped define

American history. Between the colonization of America and the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the sermon has both shaped America's self-understanding and reflected both sides of its most important social, political, military, and philosophical debates” (Witham, 2008: 16).

When we look at *Digging to America*, we can see the mention of “Promised Land” as it is one of the components of American character. In addition to “City upon a Hill”, “Promised Land” is also important. Tyler mentions “Promised Land” in her novel like that:

Doesn't it strike you all as quintessentially American that the Donaldsons think the day their daughter came to this country was more important than the day she was born? but for the day she came to America it's a full-fledged Arrival Party, a major extravaganza with both extended families and a ceremony of song and a video presentation. Behold! You've reached the Promised Land! The pinnacle of all glories (88).

As is seen, America is viewed as a “Promised Land” by the Americans and the arrival of the Donaldsons’ baby is celebrated as it is much more important than their baby’s birthday. But as an Iranian, Maryam does not believe that America is a “Promised Land”. In fact, she thinks that, America is a disappointment. “She had not been one of those Iranians who viewed America as the Promised Land. To her and her university friends, the U.S. was the great disappointment—the democracy that had, to their mystification, worked to shore up monarchy back when the Shah was in trouble” (159). As Maryam explains in the novel: “Oh, those Donaldsons, with their blithe assumption that their way was the only way! Feed your daughter this and not that; let her watch these programs and not those; live here and not there. So American, they were” (132). As stated, America is viewed as a “City upon a Hill”. But Tyler states in her novel: “They say they’re a culture without restrictions. An unconfined culture, a laissez-faire culture, a do-your-own-thing kind of culture. But all that means is, they keep their restrictions a secret. They wait until you violate one and then they get all faraway and chilly and unreadable, and you have no idea why” (82). Also, Americans do not believe in bad luck. They think they are perfect and lucky. In Tyler’s words: “They have been lucky all their lives and they can’t imagine that any misfortune should have the right to befall them. There must be

some mistake! They say. They've always been so careful! They've paid the closest attention to every safety instruction [...]” (81). So, we can understand why Americans have the tendency to see themselves as “superior” to others.

In conclusion, it can be said that the American character has been created by means of these beliefs. The American in our time has been one who likes ostentation, considers himself superior to others and adopts imperialism as a policy. His belief that he is superior to others automatically causes him to consider other nationalities inferior and designate them as “the other”.

4.2.2. “Melting Pot”

It has always been a problem that the people from different countries live together in America, since these people have brought their cultures to America with them. This gave rise to the emergence of a concept called “melting pot”. This concept has been effective in the making of American character. When examine *Digging to America*, the effects of “melting pot” can be seen on the Iranian couple, Ziba and Sami. In the following “melting pot” will be explained by giving examples from the novel.

America has been receiving immigrants from various parts of the world since its foundation. The reasons for their coming to the U.S. are different. Some believed that they could find new opportunities and the others fled the oppression in their countries, still some others came to the U.S for religious purposes. They thought they could practice their religion better. Then, the problem is not their coming to the U.S. but their living together there because immigrants are regarded people who upset the unity of the country.

Immigrants often represent an ambiguous, polynational, multicultural and sometimes paradox and contradicting attitude way of living. They have cultural, familial, religious, economic and political bonds to their native society and ethnic groups, as well as ties to their new home country connected with the adaptation to the values and habits of the American society (Kolb, 2009: 93).

There has been a need for a common culture to get rid of these different cultures which involves assimilation. This is what they call “melting pot”. This means anybody coming to the U.S. has to forget about their own culture and adopt Americans’. When we look at *Digging to America*, we can see that Ziba and Sami (the Iranian couple) forget about their own culture and be assimilated into the American culture. Tyler writes about Sami: “He had never been to Iran himself. The one time since his birth that Maryam had gone back, Sami was already grown and married and working for Peacock Homes, and he had claimed he couldn’t get away. He had no interest, was the real reason” (38). So, Sami can be said to be happy in America (not Iran) since he does not want to go back Iran. This is exactly what “melting pot” requires. Therefore, one unique blend is created by virtue of this idea. As Elshoff describes: “The melting pot theory is based on the belief that America is one large pot of soup. Anyone who comes to the United States assimilates himself or herself to all American belief systems. All cultural aspects are blended together to form a new race or culture of people where each ingredient has sacrificed its original identity” (Elshoff, 2003). This phrase was first suggested in 1907 by Israel Zangwill as the name of his play. The following is what Zangwill says:

America is God’s crucible, the great Melting Pot where all races of Europe are melting and re-forming! ... At Ellis Island, here you stand in your fifty groups, with your fifty languages and histories, and your fifty blood hatreds and rivalries. But you won’t long be like that. Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians—into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American (Zangwill, 1909: 37-38).

Here he underlines that by no means can a nation be brought back to its original state in a melting pot. Thus, they are all reduced into one single culture, eliminating all the differences. Also, Crèvecoeur, a French-American writer, who described the concept of melting pot very well said: “They are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes. From this promiscuous breed, that new race now called Americans have arisen” (qtd. in. Vought, 2004: 2). Thus, the American character came out with the mixture of different cultures. Crèvecoeur congratulated America on its success in keeping people from different cultures together. As Crèvecoeur says, is America successful in keeping different cultures together? As for

Ziba and Sami, America is successful in doing this, because this couple seem to be blended into a new culture called America culture. As this culture requires, they try to act like Americans: they speak English with an accent and try to get dressed like Americans.

Only this concept has become a serious problem for those who do not want to abandon their own culture, like Maryam. As a mainstream culture has come out “melting pot” has become a kind of assimilation, which requires all ethnic immigrants be Americanized. Some critics of immigration have realized that some immigrants’ refusal to be melted poses a serious problem. When Maryam is examined in the novel, it can be seen that, she tries to maintain her own culture by speaking her own language (Farsi), cooking her traditional food and meeting her own “foreign” friends like herself. This situation is not desired as it is completely opposite what “melting pot” requires. This is exactly what some sociologists worry about. However, some sociologists agree that this is not a worrying issue since what makes America is that it can keep different people together and this, in turn, is something to be proud of. As Torres states: “[...] Part of America’s uniqueness is its capacity to accommodate a multiplicity of heritages. What binds disparate people together is the democratic ideal and freedom of opportunity” (Torres, 1995: 1).

In our time, apart from this phrase, “salad bowl” is also spoken of. What is meant by salad bowl is that every culture is part of America without being assimilated and their own culture remaining intact. “The salad bowl idea gives the perspective that immigrants bring different tastes into one whole, but each ingredient maintains its original shape and characteristics [...] The salad bowl theory prides itself on stating that each culture is part of an American system (the salad), but that each culture (the peas, carrots or tomatoes, etc.) retains its own identity” (Elshoff, 2003). But this is not a condition as desirable as the “melting pot”. Some immigrants would rather establish their own community, speak their own language in America than abandon their own culture. So, it can be asserted that, immigrants have difficulty in whether assimilating to this culture or not. While some immediately adopt American culture, like Ziba and Sami, some cannot forgo their origins like

Maryam. When we study *Digging to America*, we see that while Ziba and Sami try to be Americanized as “melting pot” requires, Maryam is attached to her origins. In fact, she does not forget about her cultural identity.

On the other hand, while Ziba and Sami are assimilated, it can be said that they do not quite manage to fit in this society. That is, America is celebrated for its success in sheltering different cultures, but apparently these “foreign” people never manage to fit in this society. As Tyler says:

Maryam: “I remember once when you were in high school, I heard you phoning a girl and you said, ‘This is Sami Yaz-dun.’ It came as such a shock: my-oh-so-American son. Partly I felt pleased and partly I felt sad.” **Sami:** “Well I wanted to fit in!” he said. “I wasn’t so American! Not to them, at least. Not to the kids in my school” (93).

Even little Susan (Ziba and Sami’s adopted daughter) is aware how much foreign she is. Susan tells Maryam she no longer wants to be “different”, which extremely hurts Maryam. “A lot of work and effort, and still we never quite manage to fit in. Susan said this past Christmas, she rode home with me after school one day and she said, ‘I wish we could celebrate Christmas the way other people do. I don’t like being different,’ she said. It broke my heart to hear that” (179). Understandably, despite her age, even Susan can understand what a big problem her cultural identity is. As Medvesky points out: “In *Digging to America*, Tyler not only addresses Iranian-American identity, but she also addresses Korean-American and Chinese-American identity. The adopted children of both the Donaldsons and the Yazdans see that a lot is expected from them due to their hybrid identities” (Medvesky, 2008: 12).

In addition to these, ethnic minorities’ desire to be Americanized results partly from scapegoating. This tendency which gathered momentum after September 11th forced some ethnic minorities to distance themselves from their own cultural identity, like the Yazdans (Ziba and Sami). “Ethnic minorities are still perceived by many people as a threat: to their job, their safety and the ‘national culture’. The scapegoating of ethnic minorities is a persistent tendency. Ethnic minorities in most

countries face a future of continued discrimination, in a social climate characterized by tension and anxiety” (Giddens, 2006: 498).

In conclusion, “melting pot” is a concept used to explain the making of American character. It is obvious that “melting pot” is a desired goal in America. By means of “melting pot”, ethnic minorities are alienated to their own culture to be “American”. This is, in turn, what America desired from the outset. But, apparently these “foreign” people never manage to fit in this society. However much they try, they never belong to America completely although they are assimilated. As Vought says: “Americans would only celebrate their nation as an asylum as long as they were confident that the refugees who came could successfully be assimilated” (Vought, 2004: 4).

4.2.3. A Hyphenated Identity: Iranian-Americans

As stated above, America is made up of a lot of different immigrant groups. One of these groups is Iranian-Americans. In order to understand the situation of the Yazdans (the Iranian-American family) in Anne Tyler’s novel, we need to have brief information about Iranian-Americans. Who are these Iranian-Americans? Why did they immigrate to America? Do they adopt the American identity? And do they face any discrimination or prejudice among the Americans? Answers to these questions will be given below.

First of all, the number of Iranian-Americans, a hyphenated identity, are outnumbered by the other immigrant groups. However, their number is on the increase as a result of immigration to America. One of the most important factors in increasing population is 1979 Iranian Revolution. Middle and upper class Iranians, who are dissatisfied with the new regime (Khomeini), fled to America as a remedy. But even before the Revolution, there were Iranians, rather Iranian students, in American universities, who trust in the quality of education there. In fact, the number of the Iranian students among the immigrant groups in American universities are the greatest. So much so that, one in every four Iranian students have completed either a

master's or Phd degree. So in America, successful Iranian-Americans can either find jobs as academicians or be self-employed.

The immigration of Iranians to America can be taken up in two waves. The first are those who came to America with the first wave of immigration, who were mostly students. As for the second, they were those who came to America with the second wave, mostly for political reasons. The establishment of the conservative regime in Iran and the Iranian-American community beginning to emerge in America encouraged Iranians to immigrate. Another cause of immigration is some people's desire to avoid their military service during Iran-Iraq War.

However, following the 1979 Iranian Revolution there occurred something to affect Iranian-Americans' life. That is, the Iranian hostage crisis. That event initiated a difficult period in their lives. After the settlement of hostage crisis, Iranian Embassy in Tehran was closed and thus Iranians who intended to go to the U.S. began to experience problems obtaining visa. Later in 1993, a bomb attack to World Trade Center was realized, to the incrimination of Iranians. Finally 9/11 attacks caused the discrimination against Iranians to increase. As a result of all these events, Iranians, who came to America especially with the second wave, experienced problems regarding their cultural identity, like Ziba and Sami (the Iranian couple). These people were subjected to more discrimination and prejudice than other immigrant groups were as a result of these political events. According to an investigation 20 percent of Iranian-Americans were subjected to discrimination as regards employment and promotion and the degree of prejudice Iranian-Americans are treated with, is as high as 50 percent.

In addition to political events, the films made by Westerners also have triggered this discrimination and prejudice. In these films Iranian-Americans are represented as barbaric and stereotyped. Thus, generalizations have been made, elevated status of Iranian-Americans and their success have been ignored, and a negative image has been created.

Even in our time Iran is regarded as an outlaw. America has been doing everything possible to isolate Iran. America has imposed trade sanctions on Iranian firms to prevent business from being done with them. Later on, America got the United Nations to denounce Iran's nuclear program. Moreover, America threatens Iran through military means.

All in all, those who immigrated to America with the first wave, like Maryam, do not want to abandon their cultural identity. In fact, these people claim it as this is the only way to survive in this country. But, Iranians, especially those who immigrated to America with the second wave, have been trying to abandon their cultural identity in favor of American identity in order to liberate themselves from the prejudice and discrimination, like Ziba and Sami in *Digging to America*. So it can be said that, even today, Iranian-Americans are unable to free themselves from this stigma. Neither does it seem to be likely that they will in the future.

4.2.4. IRANIAN CHARACTERS IN *DIGGING TO AMERICA*

4.2.4.1. Ziba: The Hyphenated Iranian Daughter-in-Law

As mentioned earlier, Orientalism is how the West perceives the East i.e. the West forms an image of the East from its own perspective. This image, is as known, not a favorable one. In fact, the East is pictured in an entirely different form. This viewpoint belongs to the Westerners. However, there are also Easterners who acknowledge this. One of them is the Iranian bride, Ziba, one of the main characters in Tyler's novel. Thus, how Ziba adopted Western perception of the East and lost her original identity will be examined below with excerpts from the novel.

An architecture of Iranian origin, Ziba, has been living in America as an interior decorator for a long time. Ziba, realizing how difficult it is to live in America as an Iranian, forgets her own identity and adopts American lifestyle. That is, she accepts the truth of the image created for her by the West and chooses the supposedly "right" path. This is absolutely what the West wants to achieve: to emphasize the inferiority and backwardness of the Eastern culture and stress the superiority of the

West. Believing the inferiority of the Eastern culture, Ziba begins to live virtually like an American. She starts to make changes related with her new life first in her house. Ziba who has spacious house, like Americans, does not want to keep anything associated with Iranian culture. “This house was as big as the neighboring houses, with a room for every purpose. It had not only a family room but an exercise room and a computer room, each one carpeted wall to wall in solid off-white. There wasn’t a Persian rug anywhere [...]” (17). Furthermore, Ziba cannot have a baby on account of her husband. She wants to have a baby because she needs something to attach herself to her new life. In line with this necessity, she adopts a baby from Korea. Thus, she finds the element to tie herself to life. “While in fact, she had wanted a baby right away—something to anchor her, she had envisioned, to her new country” (17). Ziba is like an American not only in terms of her house but also the way she is dressed. It is as if Ziba is one more step closer to being an American woman thanks to these clothes. Throughout the novel, we never see Ziba in her traditional Iranian clothes. On the contrary, we see her as a woman more Westernized than Bitsy, an American woman. “[H]er clothes [were] chosen for their Westernness, stylish sheaths in electric prints of hot pink and lime green and purple; her hair lacquered into a towering beehive; her feet encased in needle-toed, stiletto-heeled pumps. She winced” (17-18). That Ziba invariably speaks English with her daughter, Susan, is an indication of the extent to which she is alienated from her own culture. The mother-in-law, Maryam, who does not want to be alienated from her Iranian ethnic background, is astonished at this situation. It sounds very odd to Maryam that her daughter-in-law adopts English so much.

“Did you think your mommy would stay away forever?” Always she spoke English to Susan; she said she didn’t want to confuse her. Maryam had expected her to lapse her into Farsi from time to time, but Ziba plowed heroically through the most difficult words—“think,” with its sticky *th* sound, and “stay,” which came out “es-stay” (19).

The first meeting takes place at the Donaldsons’. Now these meetings are to follow to celebrate annually the arrival of their babies in America. The Yazdans, invited by Bitsy on the phone to the Donaldsons, do everything in order not to feel small before the Donaldsons. Especially Ziba feels the necessity of behaving that

way and does whatever is necessary. Upon this, a dialogue occurs between Ziba and Maryam, who is still unfamiliar to American culture.

Maryam said, “Early?” She checked her watch. It was 3:55. They’d been invited for four o’clock, and the drive would take roughly five minutes. “We’re not early!” she said. But Ziba was already extricating Susan from her car seat. Sami, stepping out from behind the wheel, said, “Ziba claims that four o’clock means ten past four, in Baltimore” (19).

In addition, in the Orientalist discourse there is an image of the Eastern women created by Western men. To them, Eastern women are mystic and exotic. For the Westerners, who enjoy discovering what is not previously touched, Eastern women arouse curiosity and are always attractive. In this novel, Brad, an American man who knows the woman he faces with is an Iranian, is attracted by Ziba at first sight, to Maryam’s enjoyment. “*Zee-buh*,” he said, almost “zebra,” and he slid her a look. American men always found Ziba mesmerizing. Maryam was amused to see that Brad—despite choosing such a homespun wife himself—was no exception.” (23).

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, it is very important for Ziba to fit in this society. To Ziba, to be an American means, in part, to have a white complexion. When Ziba compares Susan and Jin-Ho, the Donaldsons’ adopted daughter, she realizes that Susan is whiter than Jin-Ho, and does not neglect to mention this.

“See how Jin-Ho looks so tan-skinned next to Susan,” Ziba pointed out. “We think Susan’s father maybe was white.” “Yes, you’re just a little white tooth a thing,” Dave told Susan, but Bitsy jumped in with, “Oh! Well! But actually that’s not something we would *notice* really!”(25).

Ziba frequently phones this American family in order not to lose touch with them. After all, to have American friends is important in reinforcing the ties with this community. Now that she has forgotten her own identity, now she has to establish friendship with not Iranians but Americans.

[Maryam] did hear about the Donaldsons almost daily, through Ziba. She heard now Bitsy believed in cloth diapers, how Brad worried vaccinations were dangerous, how both of them read Korean folktales to Jin-Ho. Ziba switched to cloth diapers too [...]. She telephoned her pediatrician about the vaccinations. She plowed dutifully through *The Wormwood Rice Cake* while Susan, who had not yet got the hang of books, tried her best to crumple the pages (32).

For Ziba, who has reinforced her ties with this American family, it is important to speak English well. She wants her mother to speak not Farsi but English at least in the company of Brad and Bitsy. “Ziba cried, “Mummy, *please*; you promised you’d speak English for this” (42). As Medvesky states: “Although Ziba is excited about showing off her American culture, she is simultaneously ashamed of her mother’s inability to separate herself from her Iranian identity. Her mother has not adopted the accepted hyphenated version of Iranian and American” (Medvesky, 2008: 162). Ziba also wants to apply to her daughter Susan the changes she has made—to have her wear jeans and have her hair cut in an American way. The American observer Bitsy, who notices this, tells Ziba flatly and makes her conscious of what she is trying to do. Ziba, however, denies this emphasizing that she is not trying to Americanize her daughter.

Bitsy: I guess we just don’t feel we should Americanize her.

Ziba: “Americanize!” Ziba said. “We’re not Americanizing!”

(As if anything really could Americanize a person, Maryam thought, having watched too many foreigners try to look natural in blue jeans.) It must be that Ziba still felt insecure around the Donaldsons, because ordinarily she would not have bristled like that (46-47).

As Maryam says, is it that easy to be an American? That is, does one become a “complete” American when one wears jeans and a T-shirt with an American flag on it? Definitely not. Maryam is obviously aware of this fact but it is impossible to say the same for Ziba. While Ziba is perturbed by her own identity, the same thing cannot be said for Brad and Bitsy’s daughter, Jin-Ho. As Tyler states:

It is important to Bitsy that the girls maintain their Korean culture, while Westernizing the children is a priority for others. Ziba’s Iranian-American family is concerned about Susan’s Eastern appearance: “In L.A. we have plastic surgeons that make Chinese people’s eyes look

just as good as Western, [Maryam] heard Ali's wife tell Ziba that morning. I can get you names if you like" (33).

In contrast to Ziba, this American couple does not see any harm in their daughter's adopting Korean culture and say the following, **Brad**: "Well. . . and the girls can wear Korean outfits. Shall we offer to lend Susan a *sagusam*? You can be sure she doesn't own one" (53). Also Ziba is very uneasy in the company of the Donaldsons. She does not want any conversation to take place related with Iran and her official language, Farsi and therefore immediately warns her mother. "Mrs. Hakimi said, "I do not ever buy the. . . ," and then she gazed helplessly at Ziba and dissolved in a stream of Farsi" (67). Mr. And Mrs. Hakimi, Ziba's parents, speak their own language and they are in favor of the Shah before he is overthrown. We already know that the Shah is a pro-American leader. That is, Ziba in contrast to Maryam, is the daughter of a family who support the Shah and therefore it is natural that she should be affected by America. As Tyler points out: "Ziba's parents all but genuflected whenever the Shah is mentioned" (84). As the novel progresses, Sami and Ziba decide to move to Donaldsons' neighbourhood. It is because the closer they are to the whereabouts, the easier it is for them to be mixed with them. Getting moved to her new house, Ziba furnishes it, as she did earlier, in American style.

Ziba said that her long-range goal was to outfit the house entirely in American Colonial and she pointed out lace-canopied four-poster beds, velour-lined "life chests" for memorabilia, revolving stools on barley-twist pedestals, and scallop-trimmed entertainment centers, all in a high-gloss, cocoa-colored wood that seemed not quite real (133).

From then on, arrival parties will be held in Ziba's new place. Ziba, knowing that the Donaldsons are a crowded family, wants to have a similar family at least during the reception. **Ziba**: "I wish we had more guests from our side," she said. "I wish Sami had brothers and sisters. There are always so many Donaldsons! Could you invite Farah [Maryam's cousin], maybe?" (161). Thus, we understand that Ziba does not want to be in the minority but to compete socially with the Americans. Maryam's dialogue with Dave confirms Ziba's thoughts about being the minority group. **Maryam**: "Remember the night the girls arrived?" she had once asked Dave. "Your family filled the whole airport! Ours was squeezed into a corner" (272).

In addition, Maryam's acceptance of Dave's marriage proposal at the beginning and her refusal of it afterwards annoys Ziba. Ziba does not want her relations with Bitsy and Brad to deteriorate. In fact, what matters to Ziba is not that Maryam should be happy but the relations with the Donaldsons should not be broken.

Maryam: "It will cause an awkwardness in your friendship with Brad and Bitsy."

Sami: "Oh, don't worry about that" although Ziba herself was worrying about exactly that (213).

In conclusion, we understand from Ziba's dialogues with the other characters that she has long forgotten her identity. Ziba, in contrast to Maryam, wants to be an American not Iranian since now she looks at the world from an American's perspective. We understand that from this perspective, the image, created by the Westerners, of the East is effective on the Easterners.

4.2.4.2. Sami: The Hyphenated Iranian Son

Previously, it was mentioned how much Ziba adopted American identity while forgetting her own. It is not only Ziba who is affected by this American culture. Ziba's Iranian husband, Sami also thinks like Ziba does i.e. to forget about one's own culture for the sake of fitting into Americans'. As Alexander points out: "Tyler invites the reader to wrestle with what it means to belong—in family, in friendship, in community. She explores ties of blood and duty and also ties of affection and choice. Her characters struggle with the difficulties of life in a less-than-perfect world, with less-than-perfect companions" (Alexander, 2007). Now it will be presented, through Sami's dialogues with the other characters, how much he has been alienated from his own identity.

In the novel, Sami is Maryam's son and Ziba's husband. Sami, while criticizing Americans and their culture at times, he cannot help being affected by them. When compared with his wife Ziba, Sami can be said to have criticized

Americans and resisted the effects of this culture more than his wife has. However, Sami accepts and submits to the image of the East created by the West. Frequent dialogues occur about Iranians and belonging to America between Sami and Maryam, who refuses to belong to America. The following remarks, Tyler has made about Sami, is an indication of the extent to which he has accepted this culture. “Her son belonged. Her son didn’t have an accent; he had refused to speak Farsi from the time he was four years old, although he could understand it” (13). Another example of Sami’s efforts to be Americanized is that he has bought a car with the same make as Brad’s. Now that the American family possesses a Honda Civic, Sami feels that he has to own one also. “By then Bitsy’s brothers had spotted Sami’s new car in the driveway. “Say!” Abe said. “A Honda Civic!” (96). Furthermore, while talking to Maryam about Iranians, Sami shows how much he has been alienated from Iranian culture. Sami also ridicules, in the presence of the Donaldsons, the arranged marriage through which his mother married. Sami claims that this kind of marriage is not romantic whatsoever. If one heard Sami make the following remarks to his mother, one would think that he is not Iranian but American, for he exposes people’s private lives, making ridiculous allusions to them.

“Is that true?” Pat asked her. “You had a wedding without the groom? But how did that work?” [...] “But how did you court at such long distance?” Pat asked Maryam. “Court!” Sami said. He laughed. “They didn’t. The marriage was arranged [...]”. “So you see,” Sami told Bitsy, “it wasn’t as romantic as you think” (48-49).

Thus, Sami would like to belong to a place considered important by the Americans, at the expense of hurting her mother’s feelings. As Ghahremani stresses: “Her son, Sami, a born and raised American, fails to fully grasp his cultural heritage” (Ghahremani, 2006). By making fun of his mother’s marriage, he disregards his own culture. However, if he were an Iranian attached to his background, he would think such marriages are commonplace in Iran and he would not make unpleasant remarks about his mother’s marriage in the company of others. But rather than behave like an Iranian, Sami prefers to lampoon his own culture under the guise of an American.

In the grocery store, where she and Sami had to struggle through a crowd of other Iranians shopping for their New Year’s parties, [Maryam] couldn’t help asking, “Who *are* these people?” The

children were using the familiar “you” when speaking to their parents; they were loud and unruly and disrespectful. The teenage girls were showing bare midriffs. The customers nearest the counter were pushing and shoving. “This is just. . . distressing!” she told Sami but he surprised her by snapping, “Oh, Mom, get off your high horse!”. “Excuse me? she said, truly not sure she had heard right. “Why should they act any better than Americans? He demanded. “They’re only behaving like everyone else, Mom; so quit *judging*” (39).

However, according to Maryam it is impossible for Sami to be adjusted to the society so quickly. Again according to Maryam, even if Sami thinks he belongs to the society, Americans would not let it happen. Therefore, Maryam sees no point in Brad, Bitsy, Sami and Ziba’s gathering so often, for, in her opinion, this American couple can never like this Iranian couple.

Why was it that Bitsy loved Sami and Ziba so? The two couples had little in common, other than their daughters [...]. Sami had that very young habit of taking himself too seriously, although that could have been just his foreignness showing. (Even though his accent was dyed-in-the-wool Baltimore, something studiously, effortfully casual in his manner marked him as non-American) (62).

Sami while criticizing American logic on the one hand, he cannot give up his desire of being an American on the other hand. Sami is on the horn of a dilemma. “Sami too, we learn, has mixed feelings about America and his heritage” (Kakutani, 2006). But obviously his desire to be American outweighs. Sami, who criticizes American logic so harshly, continues to disparage his own culture, which naturally annoys Maryam, who is unwilling to forget about her Iranian identity.

“American born, American raised, never been anywhere else: how can you say these things? You’re American yourself! You’re poking fun at your own people!”. [...] When you were growing up, you were more American than the Americans. [...] “In high school you never dated anyone but blondes.” “I don’t know why not,” [Sami] said. This wasn’t entirely truthful, because in his heart he too had always thought his wife would be American (82-83).

Ziba wants to have a baby to belong to this community, Sami also wants an American wife for the same purpose i.e. to belong to American community but he marries an Iranian woman. Apparently, this couple want to appear as Americans. Also, Sami’s alienation from his own culture begins from the years of his high school

education. That is, even in those years Sami adopts American values and tries to speak English like an American. But, no matter how hard he tries, it is not so easy to be American. Ziba does not manage to be American by wearing jeans and T-shirt. Similarly, Sami does not manage it by speaking English with an accent in the eyes of the Americans.

Sami stresses that they had hardships especially after September 11th. That is why, it is important for him to get rid of this identity. He does not want to be treated like a dog nor does he want to be told off by the American police.

Sami: When the girls arrived, we were all at the gate, but this time we'll be, I don't know, milling around outside, being shouted by the police."

Jin-Ho: "Police! Police are going to shout at us?"

Ziba: "No, no, of course not". "Hush, Sami. Talk about something else" (169-170).

While trying to adopt the American culture Sami, like his wife Ziba, feels insecure among Americans. No matter how much he tries to adopt this culture, he encounters obstacles. While talking to Brad, who is an American, Sami feels lack of confidence.

"Sunday mornings, Jin-Ho and I go out for croissants and the *New York Times*," Brad said. "It's my favourite thing of the week. I love it! Just me and my kid together. You ever do that with Susan? Go off on your own jaunt?" So far Sami lacked the confidence to do that, Maryam knew. But he didn't admit it [...] "Well, I've been thinking of buying a jogging stroller." (24).

Another example to Sami's lack of confidence is that Sami has the tendency like his wife to compare his daughter, Susan with Jin-Ho. Whenever he meets Jin-Ho, Sami feels uneasy. Is it perhaps that something is going wrong? As Tyler states herself: "It always worried Sami a little that Jin-Ho was taller than Susan, and heavier. He felt a competitive uneasiness every time he saw her" (95).

In conclusion, Sami, despite his Iranian origin would like to attach himself to American culture and be like an American. What is important for him is to ingradiate himself with Americans. As he was not born American, it is very difficult to be

accepted an American. Although he denies his Iranian origin, he cannot change the fact that he is an Iranian.

4.2.4.3. Maryam: The Unhyphenated Iranian Mother-in-Law

In addition to Ziba and Sami, the Iranian-mother-in-law, Maryam has an important place in the novel. It is even possible to say that Maryam is the most important character in the novel. Unlike Ziba and Sami, Maryam is attached to her Iranian cultural background. She mentions throughout the novel that she lives in America as a foreigner. As Medvesky points out: “Tyler’s latest novel looks at Iranian-American identity. The protagonist, Maryam, finds difficulty reconciling her two identities: Iranian and American. Although she has been living in the United States for over twenty years, she is still singled out as someone exotic” (Medvesky, 2008: 12). So, how Maryam grasps her own Iranian identity in America and how it feels to be a foreigner on American land will be dwelt upon below.

We are informed of Maryam from the very beginning of the novel. Maryam copes with a lot of hardships throughout her life but she cannot get rid of the feeling that she is a foreigner.

She had had to forsake her family before she was twenty; she’d been widowed before she was forty; she had raised her son by herself in a country where she would never feel like anything but a foreigner. Basically, though, she believed she was a happy person. She was confident that if things went wrong—as they very well might—she could manage (12-13).

Although her passport registers that she is American, Maryam is aware of this symbolic citizenship and shares this feeling with her son, Sami. However, Sami is not as realistic as her mother, and sees everything as he likes to. As Tyler states herself: “Not American! Check your passport,” Sami always told her. She said, “You understand what I mean.” She was a guest, was what she meant. Still and forever a guest, on her very best behaviour (15).

Maryam, who constantly misses her country, compares her house in Baltimore with her house in Iran. We understand from the following lines that she likes her house in Baltimore more than the other house. “There were no sidewalks here. Maryam found that amazing. How could they have constructed an entire neighborhood—long curving roads of gigantic, raw new houses with two-story arched windows and double-wide front doors and three-car garages—and failed to realize that people might want to walk around it?” (16).

Furthermore, Maryam is tired and sick of answering such questions as “How long have you been in America?” and “Do you like it?”, for these questions remind her that she is a foreigner in this country. As Tyler states herself: “Maryam hated being asked such questions, partly because she had answered them so many times before but also because she preferred to imagine (unreasonable though it was) that maybe she didn’t always, instantly, come across as a foreigner” (26). Nobody understands Maryam’s sensitivity regarding her homesickness and she is overwhelmed by the Donaldsons’ questions in this respect. “Then Pat wanted to know if the Yazdans had run into any unpleasantness during the Iranian hostage crisis, and Ziba said, “Well, I had just barely arrived here then; I wasn’t very aware. But Maryam, I believe, *she* had some trouble...” and everyone looked expectantly toward Maryam. She said, “Oh, perhaps a little, [...]” (28). Maryam who is aware that she is foreign to American culture, pays careful attention not to see much of the Donaldsons. While her son and daughter-in-law are always in touch with this family, Maryam comes together with her friends who are foreigners, like herself, and she feels comfortable to be with and talk to. “Why would she want to share a young couple’s social life? She had friends of her own, mostly women, mostly her own age and nearly always foreigners, although no Iranians, as it happened. They would eat together at restaurants or at one another’s houses. They would go to movies or concerts” (32). Of course not everybody has chosen to remain in America as Maryam has; there were also people who have returned “home”. We understand from Maryam’s account that she was formerly very happy with her friends. “In those days, all of their friends had been Iranian, all more or less in the same situation as Maryam

and Kiyam [Maryam's ex-husband]. Where were those people now? Well, many had gone back home, of course. Others had moved on to other American cities" (37).

As the novel progresses, Maryam entertains the Donaldsons in her house for the sake of Ziba and Sami. Only, Maryam's house is not large and furnished in American style. For a moment, Maryam thinks that Ziba, supposedly American, compares Maryam's house with hers. "Probably she was comparing [her house to Maryam's]—Maryam's too-small living room and traditional, rather dowdy furniture overlaid with paisley scarves and little Iranian trinkets—and finding it lacking" (42). During this gathering, there occur dialogues between the Donaldsons and Maryam. These dialogues show to what extent Maryam is on tenterhooks. Maryam maintains that she has to satisfy the others even while she is expressing her feelings. To her, such feelings are not her real feelings but make those people happy who listen to her.

Maryam: "Our family is not very good at saying what we want. Sometimes we end up doing what *none* of us wants, I suspect, just because we think it would satisfy the others."

Dave: "Be rude, like us," Dave suggested, and he draped an arm around Connie's shoulders and winked at Maryam. She had to laugh" (50).

On the other hand, Maryam is quite different from other Iranians. She does not believe that America is a democratic country as everybody fancies. At least, she has not come to this country with such imaginations. She has arguments with her son, Sami on account of her ideas. On one occasion, he buys her a T-shirt printed with "foreigner" on it. This indicates that Sami does not understand her mother's feelings. Just as Sami does not understand her mother, Dave, who is an American, does not understand what is meant by "foreigner" in the eyes of an immigrant. Instead, he deems it to be a singing group.

[Dave] assumed the shirt had been Sami's.

Sami: "Oh no that was Mom's."

Dave: "You used to be a Foreigner fan?" asked him

Dave: "*You* were a Foreigner fan?" he said to Maryam.

Maryam: "It's not the singing group," she told him. "It's just the word. Sami had that shirt printed for me as a joke when I got my citizenship" (168).

In fact, unlike Ziba and Sami, Maryam is not anxious to be an American citizen-so much so that she is unhappy to lose her Iranian citizenship.

Maryam: “It was hard for me to give up being a citizen of Iran. In fact I kept postponing it. I didn’t get my final papers till some time after the Revolution.”

Dave: “Why, I’d have thought you’d be happy,” Dave told her.

Maryam: “Oh, well, certainly! I was very happy. But still. . . you know. I was as sad as well. I went back and forth about it [...]” (169).

Dave, however does not understand why Maryam is unhappy. Dave asks himself how come an American citizen is unhappy? Maryam is an American citizen but she cannot “exactly” belong to that place since she is from the East. As Maryam states herself: “You can start to believe that your life is *defined* by your foreignness. You think everything would be different if only you belonged. ‘If only I were back home,’ you say, and you forget that you wouldn’t belong there either, after all these years. It wouldn’t be home at all anymore” (181). On the other hand, despite his being an American, Dave tries to console Maryam because of his love for her. “You belong,” he told her. “You belong just as much as I do, or, who, or Bitsy or. . . It’s just like Christmas. We *all* think the others belong more” (181). While doing so, occasionally he annoys her. Dave’s “efforts to understand” the Iranian culture angers Maryam. According to Maryam, Dave’s efforts are meant to appropriate Iranian culture and adjust it to his own. “He’s taking us over,” she said, unhearing. “Moving in on us. He’s making me feel I don’t have my own separate self. What was that sugar ceremony but stealing? Because he borrowed it and then he changed it, switched it about to suit his purposes” (212-213). Maryam, seeing Dave’s attitude, breaks her promise to marry him, to the anger of Bitsy, Dave’s daughter. Bitsy is anxious that her father’s feelings might be hurt. From the dialogue between Bitsy and her father, we can understand how Bitsy sees Maryam, an Iranian woman.

Bitsy: “From the start I felt she was a very cold person. I can say that now that it’s over. Very cold and aloof,” she said.

Dave: “She’s just a woman with boundaries, hon.”

Bitsy: “If she’s so fond of her boundaries, what did she ever immigrate for?”

Dave: “Bitsy, for goodness’ sake! Next you’ll be telling me she ought to love this country or leave it!”

Bitsy: “I’m not talking about countries; I’m talking about a basic. . . character flaw.” (223).

In fact, this is entirely what Bitsy means: “Love this country or leave it”. Now that Maryam has cultural boundaries which do not allow her to flirt with or marry a man after her husband’s death, why is it then she is here? If her Iranian culture does not permit that kind of things, why did she ever immigrate to America? She might as well have lived in Iran. Bitsy, who cannot express these feelings to her father, ascribes the reason for Maryam’s refusal to marry Dave to a flaw in Maryam’s character. While Dave maintains that Maryam’s negligence to use articles in English stems from her own unfamiliarity with English, Bitsy says: “It’s nothing to do with language, [...]. It’s her. She has this attitude that she knows better than us. I wouldn’t be the least bit surprised if she claimed there wasn’t *supposed* to be an article in those sentences” (228). In Bitsy’s opinion, it is impossible for Maryam to be superior to them—Americans. What angers Bitsy is that, Maryam maintains she is right, while she is not. While Bitsy is talking like that, Dave treats Maryam much more moderately. Dave ascribes his problem with Maryam to her desire not to give up her own culture. “Some reluctance to leave her own culture. I suspect that that’s what went wrong between the two of us” (227). Dave does not forsake Maryam. Bitsy believes that her father can do without her. However, Dave wants no one but Maryam. **Bitsy:** “Never mind, Dad. Someone else will come along.” **Dave:** “I don’t want anyone else,” he said (228).

Although Maryam has established “favourable” relations with the Donaldsons, she cannot help criticizing their lifestyle as American lifestyle is diametrically opposite Iranian culture she is used to. To Maryam, Americans are know-it-all: These people believe that American values should be important to everybody in the world. It is this point Maryam disagrees with. “They seemed to feel that *their* occasions—their anniversaries, birthdays, even their leaf-rakings—had such cataclysmic importance that naturally the entire world was longing to celebrate with them. Yes, that was what she objected to: their assumption that they had the right to an unfair share of the universe” (272).

All in all, Maryam appears to be quite different from Ziba and Sami in terms of being adapted to American culture. As for Ziba and Sami, they consider their culture inferior, precisely America wants them to, and desire to get rid of it, rather than to claim it. Maryam also differs from Ziba and Sami, in that she knows that she can never belong to American culture. Even if Ziba and Sami are aware that they can never belong to that culture, they would rather live in a world of imagination. In Maryam's opinion, the only way of surviving in this country is to lay claim to one's own cultural identity, for this is now the only thing one can hold onto. In terms of this issue, everyone must respect Maryam's attitude as an Iranian since she sees the significance of her original identity and claims it. But her son and daughter-in-law fail to grasp their original identity as they both think the negative image created by the Americans makes their life harder in America.

CONCLUSION

By studying the novel, *Digging to America* by Anne Tyler, one of the contemporary writers in American literature, I have tried, in this thesis, to present the identity crisis experienced by Iranian-Americans, a Muslim minority, following September 11th attacks. Political and historical events have had profound impacts on and almost indelible memories in Iranians. In this novel, which she wrote in 2006, Tyler presents to us the cultural dimension of the events in America following the September 11th attacks. In the novel, the stereotyped Iranians are stigmatized on account of the Iranian hostage crisis and September 11th attacks, and therefore they lose their Iranian identity.

The studies conducted in America demonstrate that individuals from the Middle East countries, including a hyphenated identity Iranian-Americans, have been subjected to hate crimes after September 11th, and had difficulty even in obtaining employment in America, not to mention that they have had to forego their identity for survival. As Pulera points out: “Since 9/11, anecdotal evidence suggests that many Americans from Arab, Middle Eastern, and Muslim backgrounds now feel less welcome here than they did before the terror attacks” (Pulera, 2006: 36). Also, when they were asked about their identity, they prefer saying “American” instead of “Iranian”. The historical events between Iran and America, such as the Iranian hostage crisis in Tehran and September 11th attacks, must have played an important role in such people’s hiding their identity. In these incidents, America declared Iran a terrorist country.

The problem is that taking people hostage and killing them is not justifiable, nor is it right to declare “evil” a country altogether. That is, one needs to separate the wheat from the chaff. “Middle Eastern Americans, by virtue of their construction as others, were not seen as victims but only as potentially dangerous outsiders” (Marvasti and McKinney, 2004: 75). Statistics show that Iranians living in the United States have important positions in universities and are successful. By stereotyping all

Iranians, including those in American universities, America incriminates all Iranians discriminately. Despite the thirty years since the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979, most Americans today remember the images of American diplomats, who were blindfolded and whose hands were tied together in the Iranian hostage crisis, even at the mention of Iran. As Pulera states:

Throughout American history, numerous negative stereotypes about Arabs and Arab-Americans—and Muslims and Muslim-Americans—have existed in mainstream American media and entertainment. The most pernicious stereotype about Arab Americans and Muslim Americans is that they aid and abet anti-American terrorists. This stereotype developed over the years as a result of such events as the Iranian hostage crisis from 1979 to 1981 and the various terrorist acts perpetrated by Middle Eastern bad guys during the 1980s and 1990s (Pulera, 2006: 36).

Following these incidents, America has designated the Iranians as “the other”. In other words, the dichotomy of “us versus them” has been created to show Middle Easterners in America as outsiders. “The strict us-them dichotomy sets up the Middle Eastern other as the victimizer; placing him (or her) firmly on the side of “the enemy”. After September 11, this created a double burden for Middle Eastern Americans” (Marvasti and McKinney, 2004: 74). To achieve this, there are certain tools such as neoconservatism, “The Clash of Civilizations” put forward by Samuel P. Huntington, and Orientalism. Even in our time, the Middle Easterners in the U.S. have been stereotyped by ideological tools in addition to hardships in their social lives. “Many Arab Americans and Muslim Americans contend that stereotyping adversely affects their life chances in various ways, including hate crimes, public harassment, employment discrimination, disparaging looks and remarks, and profiling by airlines and law-enforcement authorities” (Pulera, 2006: 26). America has been looking for enemy through neoconservatism and making a definition of civilization based on “The Clash of Civilizations”, emphasizing its superiority. Thus, the states other than America are referred to as “the other”. Moreover, the West interprets the East from the Western perspective and generalizes the already unfavorable images for all Middle Easterners, considering them all evil.

We can understand why these ideological tools have been used by defining who an American is. An American regards his country as a “Promised Land” on account of the fact that it received immigrants from a wide range of places. Also, the American thinks that he is superior to other people. The concepts such as “Promised Land”, “City upon a Hill”, and “Melting Pot” dating back to colonial period, enable us, at this point, to understand the American better. To understand the American character is to understand America and its policy. It is for this reason that the American character and the process by which this character has been created have been studied in this thesis. When we study Bitsy, a Donaldson, in Tyler’s novel in the light of this knowledge we can understand that she fits into this character perfectly. Also, the comment in the Minneapolis Star Tribune on *Digging to America* supports this argument as follows: “An utterly delightful. . . and richly wise tale about what it means to be an ‘American’ and what it means to be part of a family”. As Tyler states herself about Bitsy: “Oh, well, Bitsy! She’s always going to say that her way is the best way, and so of course that means it’s part of some Grand plan” (286).

For the presentation of cultural identity crisis, Anne Tyler uses the family as a tool. Although the American and Iranian families in the novel seem to establish friendly relationships, Ziba, Sami, and Maryam, who are Iranians, are outsiders and it is obvious that Ziba and Sami are alienated to their identity. As Anne Tyler states herself in an interview at the end of her novel, *Digging to America*:

To me, the Donaldsons’ and the Yazdans’ relationship is a romance with the “Other”. It’s composed in equal parts of an attraction toward differentness, a concern that the differentness may be *betterness*, and the subtle resentment that such a concern calls forth. The families love each other, in their varying ways, but it’s a complicated and ambivalent love—as Brad’s and Sami’s half slugfest, half embrace suggests (283).

Ziba, who has long forgotten that she is an Iranian, is no more different from her husband Sami. Perhaps the only difference lies in Sami’s criticism of American values. Despite these criticisms, Sami also has foregone his identity to be an American. Apart from these two characters, there is also Maryam. Maryam is a

woman who has foregone her Iranian citizenship, and now is an “American”. Only Maryam, despite being an American citizen, cannot feel like one. Rather than trying to be like an “American” Maryam, unlike her son and daughter-in-law, tries to preserve her own identity as a way of survival in this foreign land. Tyler states that : “Much of [Maryam’s] uneasiness with Dave is simply on his being so American” (287). As Dave is so American, Maryam has difficulty in having a relationship with him. For Maryam, her Iranian identity is her only thing, that’s why she rejects Dave’s marriage proposal and tries to maintain her own cultural identity.

Furthermore, in order to present the identity crisis, Ziba and Sami experience, Tyler refers to historical events, also responding to those who argue that she is apolitical. Unlike her other novels, in her *Digging to America*, Tyler makes references to political events.

In conclusion, Tyler’s novel deals with identity crisis, sense of belonging, and trying to fit in. The novel, which has become colorful with Tyler’s witticisms, makes us think while presenting the sufferings of the Iranian family. While criticizing the American, Tyler says that it is difficult, even nearly impossible to belong to America. She states that: “[...] I don’t think a single one of these characters will ever reach the point where he or she would say, “I’ve succeeded; I’m in. I can sit back and breathe easy now”” (286). That means in the eyes of Tyler, who is an American, it is very difficult for a foreigner to fit into this country. This can be said to have become more difficult after September 11th. Furthermore, when we consider that the negative images created are difficult to clear of, it seems that many more families like the Yazdans will experience identity crises.

WORKS CITED AND CONSULTED

- Agnew, Jean-Christophe. Roy Rosenzweig (eds) (2006). *A Companion to Post-1945 America*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Alexander, Bunny. (2007). "Digging to America: A Novel".
<http://www.pres-outlook.com/reviews/book-reviews/4997.html>
(11 March 2009).
- Ambrosek, Renee. (2007). *America Debates United States Policy on Immigration*. USA: The Rosen Publishing.
- Ansari, Ali M. (2003). *Modern Iran Since 1921: The Pahlavis and After*. London: Pearson.
- "Ayatollah Khomeini". (21 July 2009).
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/khomeini_ayatollah.shtml
(15 March 2009).
- Ayyash, Mark. (2007). "The Appearance of War in Discourse: The Neoconservatives on Iraq".
<http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=4&hid=102&sid=5d5f8336-c2ae-4c62-aaa7-4de31136f6cb%40sessionmgr111&bdata=JmFtcDtsYW5nPXRYJnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d> (25 May 2009).
- Bashiriyeh, Hossein. (1984). *The State and Revolution in Iran 1962-1982*. USA: Taylor&Francis.
- Beckett, Andy. (15 October 2004). "The Making of the Terror Myth".
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2004/oct/15/broadcasting.bbc>
(25 May 2009).
- Bennett, Barbara. A. (1995). "Attempting to Connect: Verbal Humor in the Novels of Anne Tyler". (pp 57-75) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/320071> (12 March

2009).

Bennett, Milton J. (ed). (1998). *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication*.

USA: Intercultural Press.

Butterworth, Douglas. John K. Chance. (1981). *Latin American Urbanization*. USA:

CUP Archive.

Carroll, John M. George C. Herring (eds). (1986). *Modern American Diplomacy*.

USA: Scholarly Resources Inc.

Cetron, Marvin. (2000). "Things are Going to Get Worse".

http://www.regent.edu/acad/schgov/pdf_files/fa06syllabi/gov677fa06.pdf

(10 March 2009).

Charles, Ron. (30 April 2006). "The Roads to Home".

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2006/04/27/AR2006042701954.html> (13 March 2009).

Cogen, Mark. (2005). "The Clash of Civilizations: The West and the Islam".

<http://www.ieru.ugent.be/clash%20of%20civilizations.pdf> (26 May 2009).

Croft, Robert W. (1998). *An Anne Tyler Companion*. USA: Greenwood Publishing

Group.

Croft, Robert W. (1995). *Anne Tyler: A Bio-Bibliography*. USA: Greenwood

Publishing Group.

Dicker, Susan J. (2003). *Languages in America: A Pluralist View*. USA: Multilingual

Matters.

Dollan, Richard M. (2008). "Orwellian America: 9/11 and the Road to Iran".

<http://keyholepublishing.com/Orwellian%20America.html> (10 March 2009).

Dunn, Michael. (2006). "The 'Clash of Civilizations' and the 'War on Terror'".

<http://www.49thparallel.bham.ac.uk/back/issue20/Dunn.pdf> (25 May 2009).

Elshoff, Jennifer. (7 November 2003) "America isn't a 'melting pot' or a 'salad bowl'"

<http://www.iowastatedaily.com/articles/2003/11/07/opinion/20031107-archive2.txt> (20 June 2009).

Farber, David. (2005). *Taken Hostage*. New Jersey: Princetown University.

Farnam, Julie. (2005). *US Immigration Laws Under the Threat of Terrorism*. USA: Algora Publishing.

Fayazmanesh, Sasan. (2008). *The United States and Iran: Sanctions, Wars and the Policy of Dual Containment*. USA: Routledge.

Huntington, Samuel P. (1994). "The Clash of Civilizations?". *Foreign Affairs Agenda 1994: Critical Issues in Foreign Policy*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, Inc.

Fraser, T.G. Donette Murray. (2002). *America and the World Since 1945*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gerges, Fawaz A. (1999). *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?* USA: Cambridge University Press.

Ghahremani, Zohreh Khazai. (2006). "Profound Message of Peace".

<http://www.iranian.com/Ghahremani/2006/May/Digging/index.html>

(11 March 2009).

Ghorashi, Halleh. (2002). *Ways to Survive, Battles to Win*. USA: Nova Publishers.

Giddens, Anthony. (2006). *Sociology*. USA: Polity.

Gillis, Mary. "Iranian Americans". (2008).

<http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Ha-La/Iranian-Americans.html>

(16 June 2009).

Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck. Jane I. Smith (eds). (2002). *Muslim Minorities in the West*. England: Altamira Press.

- Haines, David W. (ed). (1996). *Refugees in America in the 1990s: A Reference Handbook*. USA: Greenwood.
- Haulley, Fletcher (ed). (2005). *Critical Perspectives on 9/11*. New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc.
- Hoffman, Bruce. (1999). "Terrorism Trends and Prospects" (pp 7-38).
http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR989/MR989.chap2.pdf
(16 March 2009).
- Hooker, Richard. (1996). "The Iranian Revolution".
<http://wsu.edu/~dee/SHIA/REV.HTM> (24 May 2009).
- Houghton, David Patrick. (2001). *US Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- January, Brendan. (2007). *The Iranian Revolution*. USA: Twenty First Century Books.
- Jenkins, Philip. (2006). *Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kakutani, Michiko. (19 May 2006). "Belonging to a Family, Belonging in America."
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/19/books/19book.html> (13 March 2009).
- Kallen, Stuart A. (1999). *A Cultural History of the United States: The 1980s*.
California: Lucent Books, Inc.
- Kamalipour, Yahya R. (1997). *The U.S Media and the Middle East: Image and Perception*. USA: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Kleg, Milton. (1993). *Hate, Prejudice and Racism*. USA: SUNY Press.

- Kolb, Eva. (2009). *The Evolution of New York City's Multiculturalism: Melting Pot or Salad Bowl*. USA: BoD—Books on Demand.
- Langley, Andrew. (2004). *September 11: Attack on America*. Minneapolis: Compass Point Books.
- Leigh, David. Evans, Rob. (8 June 2007). "Shah of Iran".
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/jun/08/bae44>. (21 May 2009).
- Lewis, Bernard. (2000). "The Question of Orientalism." (pp 2-10)
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~rel8/Dpndtdocs/General/Orientalism1.pdf>.
 (14 June 2009).
- Liebovich, Louis W. (2001). *The Press and the Modern Presidency: Myths and Mindsets from Kennedy to Election 2000*. USA: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Lobe, Jim. (19 May 2003). "Leo Strauss' Philosophy of Deception".
<http://www.alternet.org/story/15935> (24 May 2009).
- Macfie, A.L. (2002). *Orientalism*. Great Britain: Longman.
- Marvasti, Amir B. Karyn D. McKinney. (2004). *Middle Eastern Lives in America*. USA: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- May, Roy H. (2009). "Manifest Destiny".
<http://gbgm-umc.org/UMW/joshua/manifest.html>. (12 June 2009).
- Medvesky, Angelique Hobbs. (2008). "Faulty Vision and Hearing in the Novels of AnneTyler".
http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?SQ=Faulty+Vision+and+Hearing+in+the+Novels+of+Anne+Tyler&DBId=G647&date=ALL&onDate=&beforeDate=&afterDate=&fromDate=&toDate=&TITLE=&author=&SCH=&subject=&FT=0&LA=any&MTYPE=all&sortby=REVERSE_CHRON&RQT=305&querySyntax=PQ&searchInterface=1&moreOptState=CLOSED&TS=1248171754&h_pubtitle=&h_pmid=&clientId=42977&JSEnabled=1 (14 March 2009).

Memcott, Carol. (2006). "Anne Tyler Digs Writing, Puttering".

http://www.usatoday.com/life/books/news/2006-05-01-tyler_x.htm.

(13 Mar.2009).

Miller, Paul. (25 May 2007). "Jimmy Carter Can Only Blame Himself".

http://www.americanthinker.com/2007/05/jimmy_carter_can_only_blame_hi.html. (10 March 2009).

Naugle, David. (2002). "The Clash of Civilizations: A Theological Perspective".

<http://www.dbu.edu/naugle/pdf/The%20Clash%20of%20Civilizations.pdf>.

(25. May. 2009).

Nimmo, Kurt. (20 June 2008). "Neocon 'Scholars' Target Iran's Oil Infrastructure".

<http://www.infowars.com/neocon-scholars-target-irans-oil-infrastructure/>

(24 May 2009).

Patterson, James T. (2005). *Restless Giant: The United States from Watergate to Bush v. Gore*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Patrick, Bethanne Kelly. (2004) "Writing is no accident for ANNE TYLER". (pp 24-

27). <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=4&hid=104&sid=7d4657fb-3b96-499d-a234-505a46a39ad3%40sessionmgr107&bdata=JmFtcDtsYW5nPXRYJnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=a9h&AN=12602247#db=a9h&AN=12602247>. (16 May 2009).

Paul, Bail. (1998). *Anne Tyler: A Critical Companion*. USA: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Peters, Alan. (14 May 2009). "Anti-Mullah".

<http://noiri.blogspot.com/2009/05/crash-burn-of-royal-iran-part-two.html>.

(10 March 2009).

- Pollack, M. Kenneth. (2004). *The Persian Puzzle*. New York: Random House.
- Preble, Christopher. (2006). "Countering Terrorism." (pp 489-986).
<http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-46.pdf>. (10 March 2009).
- Pulera, Dominic J. (2006). *Sharing the Dream: White Males in America*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.
- Rajaei, Farhang (ed). (1993). *The Iran-Iraq War*. USA: University Press of Florida.
- Richter, Richard P. (2004). "Edward W. Said slammed the views on Islam expressed by Bernard Lewis and V. S. Naipaul".
http://www.islamawareness.net/AntiMusWriters/Naipaul/naipaul_article002.html. (14 June 2009).
- Rieder, Jonathan. Stephen Steinlight (eds). (2003). *The Fractious Nation? Unity and Division in Contemporary American Life*. USA: University of California Press.
- Rubin, Judith Colp. (2002). *Anti-American Terrorism and the Middle East*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Said, Edward W. (1997). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.
- Sauter, Gerhard. (2007). *Protestant Theology at the Crossroads*. USA: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Seaman, Donna. (2006). "Digging to America."
http://www.booklistonline.com/default.aspx?page=show_product&pid=1579970. (11 March 2009).
- Senghaas, Dieter. (1998). *The Clash Within Civilizations: Coming to Terms with Cultural Conflicts*. New York: Routledge.
- Shilling, Jane. (2006). "Longing Woven into Comedy".
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/3652175/Longing-woven-into-comedy.html>. (13 March 2009).

- Shitrit, Uri. (2004). "The Irangate Affair".
<http://www.mypi.co.il/articles/the-irangate-affair/>. (12 March 2009).
- Singh, Amardeep. (24 September 2004). "An Introduction to Edward Said, Orientalism, and Postcolonial Literary Studies".
<http://www.lehigh.edu/~amsp/2004/09/introduction-to-edward-said.html>
(14 June 2009).
- Skoll, Geoffrey R. (2006). "Meanings of Terrorism".
<http://www.springerlink.com/content/t0426h5php283770/fulltext.pdf>.
(10 March 2009).
- Smitha, E. Frank. (15 Jun. 2007). "The Iranian Revolution".
<http://www.fsmitha.com/h2/ch29ir.html>. (24 May 2009).
- Steinberg, Jeffrey. (2003). "Profile: Leo Strauss, Fascist Godfather of the Neo-Cons" http://www.larouchepub.com/other/2003/3011profile_strauss.html
(24 May 2009).
- Stephens, C. Ralph (ed). (1990). *The Fiction of Anne Tyler*. USA: University Press of Mississippi.
- Stowasser, Barbara Freyer (ed). (1987). *The Islamic Impulse*. Great Britain: Taylor & Francis.
- Struempf, Michael. (2004). "A Stoic Khomeini and How Poetry Incited the Iranian Revolution". http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p83951_index.html.
(24 May 2009).
- Tehrani, John. (2008). *Whitewashed: America's Invisible Middle Eastern Minority*. USA: New York University Press.
- Tepe, F. Fulya. Abdullah Karatay. (2005). "September 11, Globalization and World Peace." <http://www.iticu.edu.tr/kutuphane/dergi/s7/M00090.pdf>.

(22 May 2009).

The Annals of America. (1987). USA: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.

“The Power of Nightmares: Baby It's Cold Outside”. (2005).

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/3755686.stm>. (24 May 2009).

“The Power of Nightmares: The Shadows in the Cave” . (2005).

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/3970901.stm>. (05 May 2009).

Torres, Andrés. (1995). *Between Melting Pot and Mosaic*. USA: Temple University Press.

Turner, Bryan S. (1994). *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*. London and New York: Routledge.

Tyler, Anne. (2006). *Digging to America*. New York: Random House.

Vought, Hans P. (2004). *The Bully Pulpit and the Melting Pot*. USA: Mercer University Press.

Walsh, John. (2005). “Lies of the Neocons: from Leo Strauss to Scooter Libby/ The Philosophy of Mendacity”.

<http://www.assassinationscience.com/LiesOfTheNeocons.pdf>.

(24 March 2009).

Walt, Stephen M. (1996). *Revolution and War*. USA: Cornell University Press.

Waters, Mary C, Reed Ueda, and Helen B Marrow. (2007). *The New Americans: A Guide To Immigration Since 1965*. USA: Harvard University Press.

Weaver Gary R. Adam Mendelson. (2008). *America's Mid Life Crisis*. USA: Intercultural Press.

White, Theodore H. (1982). *America in Search of Itself*. New York: Harper&Row Publishers.

Williams, Robert. (1998). *Political Scandals in the U.S.A*. The United Kingdom:

Keele University Press.

Winkler, Carol K. (2006). *In the Name of Terrorism: Presidents on Political*

Violence in the Post-World War II Era. New York: SUNY Press.

Witham, Larry. (2008). *A City upon a Hill: How the Sermon Change the Course of*

American History. USA: Harper One.

Wolf, Julie. (1999). "The Iran-Contra Affair".

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reagan/peopleevents/pande08.html>.

(12 March 2009).

Woods, Randall Bennett. (2005). *Quest for Identity: America since 1945*. USA:

Cambridge University Press.

Zangwill, Israel. (1909). *The Melting Pot*. USA: New York.

APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGY OF ANNE TYLER'S LIFE

1941: Anne Phyllis Tyler is born October 25 in Minneapolis, MN.

1948: Tyler family moves to Celo Community in mountains of North Carolina.

1953: Tyler family moves to Raleigh, NC, where Anne attends Broughton High School.

1958-1961: Tyler attends Duke University in Durham, NC, majors in Russian, and publishes her first short stories in the campus literary magazine, *Archive*.

1961-1962: Tyler pursues a master's degree in Russian at Columbia University but returns home to North Carolina without completing her thesis.

1963: Tyler marries Taghi Modaressi, an Iranian medical student specializing in child psychiatry; after a trip to Iran to visit relatives, the couple moves to Montreal, where Taghi completes his residency.

1964: *If Morning Ever Comes* is published by Knopf.

1965: *The Tin Can Tree* is published by Knopf; first daughter, Tezh, is born.

1967: Second daughter, Mitra, is born; family moves to Baltimore.

1970: *A Slipping Down Life* is published by Knopf.

1972: *The Clock Winder* is published by Knopf; Tyler's first book review appears in the *National Observer*.

1974: *Celestial Navigation* is published by Knopf; Gail Godwin's highly favorable review of the novel appears in the *New York Times Book Review*.

1975: *Searching for Caleb* is published by Knopf; John Updike's review of the novel in the *New Yorker* calls Tyler "not merely good, . . . [but] wickedly good".

1976: Tyler's first book reviews in the *New York Times Book Review* appear.

1977: *Earthly Possessions* is published by Knopf; Tyler receives citation of merit from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

1980: *Morgan's Passing* is published by Knopf; Tyler is awarded the Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize.

1982: *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* is published by Knopf; Tyler wins Pen/Faulkner Award for Fiction.

1983: Tyler is elected a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters; *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* is a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

1985: *The Accidental Tourist* is published by Knopf; the novel wins the National Book Critics Circle Award.

1986: *The Accidental Tourist* is a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

1988: *Breathing Lessons* is published by Knopf; film version of *The Accidental Tourist*, starring William Hurt and Kathleen Turner, premieres; film nominated for an Academy Award the next year.

1989: *Breathing Lessons* wins the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

1991: *Saint Maybe* is published by Knopf.

1995: *Ladder of Years* is published by Knopf.

1998: *A Patchwork Planet* is published by Knopf.

2001: *Back When We Were Grownups* is published by Knopf.

2004: *The Amateur Marriage* is published by Knopf.

2006: *Digging to America* is published by Knopf.

2009: *Noah's Compass* is published by Knopf.

