



# University of HUDDERSFIELD

## University of Huddersfield Repository

Hanaee, Somaiyeh

Homed exile: external, internal and intrinsic exilic identities in Iranian cultural products

### Original Citation

Hanaee, Somaiyeh (2013) Homed exile: external, internal and intrinsic exilic identities in Iranian cultural products. Doctoral thesis, University of Huddersfield.

This version is available at <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/23391/>

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: [E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk](mailto:E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk).

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/>

**HOMED EXILE:  
EXTERNAL, INTERNAL AND INTRINSIC EXILIC  
IDENTITIES IN IRANIAN CULTURAL PRODUCTS**

SOMAIYEH HANAEE

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2013

## Abstract

This dissertation offers an analysis of the dimensions of exile and considers how they are reflected in cultural products that emerge in the Iranian context. Exile has generally been understood to mean enforced displacement from a homeland. As a result, the cultural products of exile, for the most part, focus on the dimensions of exile in its physical, expatriated sense: what I refer to as external exile. Exile, however, is a complex phenomenon and it has a variety of dimensions. Exploring, analysing and exposing varieties of exile and exilic identities are important. Because, in the Iranian context, exile and the cultural products generated in exilic conditions play a key role in socio-political make ups of the country. The cultural products of exile, for the most part, aim to expose and through it resist oppression. Studying the dimensions of exile reflected in the selected cultural products show that even though the narratives of exile set out to resist enforced displacement they can instead perpetuate exile.

This dissertation looks at three various dimensions of exile: external, internal and intrinsic exile. It begins by considering the cultural products of external exile, using *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi and *The Complete Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi. It suggests that the understanding of exile is too simplistic and proposes two other ways in which exile can be understood. The first of these is internal exile, which is the exilic condition of people still inside their homeland, using Ahmad Shamlou's poetry and a film by Granaz Moussavi, *My Tehran For Sale*. The second is intrinsic exile, which is an exilic condition of people wherever they reside. The selected cultural products for understanding intrinsic exile are *Prisoner of Tehran* by Marina Nemat and *Azadeh Kanom and Her Writer or Dr. Sharifie's Private Auschwitz*, by Reza Baraheni.

# Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been completed if it was not for the moral and material support I received from the kind people around me. It is possible to give particular mention to only some of them. I would like to express my gratitude to the school of Music, Humanities and Media at the University of Huddersfield for offering the financial assistance that enabled me to embark on this research study and to Professor Lesley Jeffries and Professor Paul Ward for their decisions to support my application. I am also eternally grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Cath Ellis. Without her generous times of discussion, patient advice, compassion and understanding this study would not have been possible. I am deeply indebted to my second supervisor, Dr. David Rudrum for his invaluable and enriching academic advice, insightful analysis and his ability to suggest additional secondary readings. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my fellow postgraduate Dr. Parviz Partovi for his encouragement and his help with finding valuable and difficult-to-get references. I also wish to express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Siamak Noviri, a friend and more, whose unstinting supports, intelligent humour, eye opening insights and unfaltering belief in me gave meaning to the moments of despair and joy during my research study.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family, particularly my beautiful, loving and truly generous Mum, Ziba Babazadeh Asbagh, my hard working and kind Dad, Professor Jalal Hanaee, my beautiful, full of grace and supportive sister, Sara Hanaei, and my light-hearted brother, Yasin Hanaee, whose unconditional love, encouragement and help to provide a home environment served as a secure anchor during the hard and easy times. Thank you.

# Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
Acknowledgements.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Table of Figures.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	6
CHAPTER I: Theoretical Framework.....	16
Exile: External, Internal And Its Liminality.....	17
Practising Power And Resistance.....	23
The Function Of o/Other And Othering In The Cultural Products Of Exile.....	26
Canonization, Fascination And Prejudice.....	31
CHAPTER II: External Exile and External Exilic Identity In <i>Reading Lolita In Tehran</i> And <i>Persepolis</i> .....	36
The External Exilic Sense of Self in the Self-Narratives of <i>Reading Lolita in Tehran</i> and <i>Persepolis</i> .....	36
Adopted Duality, Practising Power and Persisting Resistance.....	49
CHAPTER III: Internal Exile and Internal Exilic Identity in Ahmad Shamlou’s Poetry and <i>My Tehran For Sale</i> .....	58
Shamlou: ‘Poet Of Liberty’.....	59
Techniques Applied In Canonized Texts Of The Internal Exile.....	67
The Curse of Canonization.....	74
<i>My Tehran For Sale</i> .....	80
Film, Society, and History.....	82
Iranian Political and Cultural Movements.....	85
Iranian New Wave Cinema and Italian Neorealism.....	88
Censorship and Iranian Post Revolutionary Cinema.....	91
<i>My Tehran For Sale: Analysis</i> .....	96

Underground and Aboveground Homes, Identities and Cultures .....	96
CHAPTER IV: Intrinsic Exile and Intrinsic Exilic Identity in <i>Prisoner of Tehran</i> and <i>Azadeh Kanom and Her Writer or Dr. Sharifie's Private Auschwitz</i> .....	104
The History Of Racism and its Contribution to Iranian Internal Racial Thinking.....	107
The Roots of Iranian Racism.....	110
Islamization .....	117
Intrinsic Exile .....	126
Some Aspects of the Intrinsic Exile in <i>Prisoner of Tehran</i> .....	137
Reflections of Intrinsic Exilic Elements in <i>Azadeh Kanom and Her Writer or Dr. Sharifie's Private Auschwitz</i> .....	154
Conclusion .....	173
Bibliography .....	176
Online References .....	183

# Table of Figures

Figure 1: The Veil.....	40
Figure 2: Disparity .....	40
Figure 3: Drawing Project.....	44
Figure 4: The Contrast .....	45
Figure 5: Martyr. Not.....	47
Figure 6: Martyr .....	48
Figure 7: Job Interview .....	56

# INTRODUCTION

The concept of ‘home’ is complex and generates strong personal and emotional responses. The idea of what constitutes ‘home’ is not just bound to its traditional definition of native land, a place where one is born and brought up. It also brings connotations of intimate feelings and memories, which, as Margaret Morse argues, in essence offer a “personal and culturally specific link to the imaginary”.<sup>1</sup> The concept of ‘home’, therefore, ideally refers to a place or an environment where or in which an individual feels safe and secure; it is an environment where they can live, grow, explore and express themselves without the fear of any forms of oppression, – mental or physical – and stagnation. As the phrase puts it: “home is where the heart is”. Alternatively, the concept of ‘home’ has been the source of many wars, conflicts, mass killings and secessions. People die and kill in the name of or for their homes, lands and countries if convinced that their home is under the threat of destruction, invasion or colonization by another external force. Also, troubled situations within home countries, either internal issues or imposed external situations, make some people leave their home voluntarily or by force, temporarily or forever. That has led George Lipsitz to quip: “home is where the hatred is”.<sup>2</sup>

The concept of ‘home’ cannot be perceived in the absence of banishment from home since it, like all other matters, needs to be compared and contrasted with the opposite of itself to be fully comprehended and valued. For example, in general, we breathe all the time without thinking about air. We concentrate and think about air when we are faced with breathing problems or a shortage of oxygen in our system. The same goes with home. Home can be perceived through exile, which arguably is banishment from home and is generally understood to be characterised by “dislocation, alienation, and dispossession”.<sup>3</sup> In other words, home is generally taken for granted unless it is positioned under the threat of recession or loss; at the moment of loss home becomes more meaningful and acute.

The concept of ‘exile’, similarly, is interdependent and interrelated with the concept of ‘home’ since exile, in its essence, denotes displacement and dispossession of home or, as

---

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Morse, ‘Home: Smell, Taste, Posture, Gleam’, in *Home, Exile, Homeland Film, Media, And The Politics Of Place*, ed. by Hamid Naficy (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 63–74., p.63.

<sup>2</sup> George Lipsitz, “‘Home Is Where the Hatred Is’ Work, Music, and the Transnational Economy”, in *Home, Exile, Homeland Film, Media, And The Politics Of Place*, ed. by Hamid Naficy (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 193–212., p.193.

<sup>3</sup> Hallvard Dahlie, *Varieties of Exile: The Canadian Experience* (UBC Press, 2011) , p.4.



Hallvard Dahlie puts it, is “the centre of one’s world towards its edges”.<sup>4</sup> The concept of ‘home’ has various important aspects. These include it being one’s country of birth and/or growth. Alternatively it can be a safe space, where, what Ken Robinson refers to as one’s Element, or “the meeting point between natural aptitude and personal passion”<sup>5</sup> flourishes. Considering the variety of aspects of the concept of ‘home’ one can come to the conclusion that in pretty much every single society people are faced with the conditions of exile or forced displacement from home, whether it to be in an overt (extreme) form of forced and violent physical banishment from their native lands or through covert (insidious) industrialised/politicised forms of education, socio-economic and political systems in which people become displaced from their "whole beings". For example, in the field of education, Robinson in his thought-provoking book, *The Element*, argues that:

[S]chool systems everywhere inculcate us with a very narrow view of intelligence and capacity and overvalue particular sorts of talent and ability. In doing so, they neglect others that are just as important, and they disregard the relationships between them in sustaining the vitality of our lives and communities. This stratified, one-size-fits-all approach to education marginalizes all of those who do not take naturally to learning this way.<sup>6</sup>

In a very extreme form, this dominant outlook as it is manifest in the field of education is reminiscent of totalitarian cultures and attitudes which set certain values and rules and marginalise anyone who thinks differently. Hallvard Dahlie applies the description of the article entitled ‘The Exile as Uncreator’ and explains that the exile, within the Christian analogy of the community as a whole body, was seen as a “sick and infectious member who poses a menace to the body and the ideological system that holds it together”.<sup>7</sup> For this the individual exile needs to be cut off from the society or amputated from the system. It shows that “infectious” members who are not in accordance with the whole system offer new and different ways of thinking; this difference consequently brings anxiety and threatens the prevailing or hegemonic systems of power.

In this thesis, I show that exile is a complicated condition and exilic identities are multiple and diverse. Furthermore, I argue that they need to be better understood. Understanding the

---

<sup>4</sup> Dahlie, p.2.

<sup>5</sup> Ken Robinson and Lou Aronica, *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* (London: Penguin Books, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Robinson and Aronica, p.13-14.

<sup>7</sup> Dahlie, p.3.

concept of exile matters for two key reasons: first, because exile had and still has a great impact on the development and progress of every human culture and society, and secondly because despite its ancient history, exile, in the sense of forced displacement, is surprisingly not a past history yet. In other words, forced displacement is still a serious issue in today's world.

Exile and exilic conditions are a prominent source of new thoughts, arguments, creativity and progress. In other words, human history's change and progress in the past, present and future have been shaped and continue to be shaped and function by the forces of exilic conditions. Edward Said argues that exile is "a potent and, even enriching, motif of modern culture".<sup>8</sup> He says that "[m]odern Western culture is in large part the work of exiles, émigrés, refugees".<sup>9</sup> Numerous groundbreaking writers, philosophers, scientists, musicians and artists who have had a profound influence on ways of thinking, were, in one way or another, in exilic conditions. Take for example Socrates, Rumi, Nietzsche, Dante, Freud, Einstein, and many more artists, intellectuals and scientists who had great roles in offering ground-breaking thoughts, movements and sociocultural progress.

In this thesis, I show that exile is not history since first, in one sense, it is necessary for the thought development and understanding of all human beings. Bertolt Brecht said that anything that seems most obvious and available makes us take it for granted and abandon all attempts at understanding it. The displacement and dispossession that comes with all exilic conditions, therefore, prevents this abandonment of thinking and understanding. Secondly, exile is not history because it has not been deeply scrutinised. In other words, exile has been largely overlooked in scholarly analysis and the cultures that emerge in exile or in exilic conditions have not been studied, differentiated or analysed in much detail. This maintains the vicious circle of the conflicts and forced displacements of human beings, which are, for the most part, unnecessary, dysfunctional, destructive, cruel, and considering twelve thousand year history of human civilization,<sup>10</sup> backward. This is even though the tools and various techniques of enforced displacement are technologically and mentally complex and impressively intelligent. I argue that we as human beings cannot afford to overlook the concept of exile in our personal, socio-political, and cultural lives.

---

<sup>8</sup> Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile: And Other Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), p.173.

<sup>9</sup> Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile*, p.173.

<sup>10</sup> Sam Roberts, 'U.N. Reports 7 Billion Humans, but Others Don't Count on It.', *The New York Times*. 31 Oct 2011.

Due to their interdependence and inter-relevance, both the concepts of 'home' and 'exile', logically, cannot be limited to their traditional definitions. As such, 'exile' cannot simply be understood as merely a forced displacement from a homeland. Debates around the issue of exile are not limited to the actual physical forced displacement from a native land (external exile). Some argue that the condition of exile can be experienced in its metaphorical sense, *within* the borders of the native land (internal exile). The problem this leaves us with, however, is that these understandings of exile and exilic identities do not have the same complexity of those of the home. It would seem logical that the more the concept of home absorbs dimensions and definitions the more exile must also be understood as a multidimensional and complicated condition. However, that is not the case, especially when we consider the evidence from humanities scholarship. Regarding the long ancient history of exile, its prominent impact on human history, culture, socio-political movements, and life styles and so on, the concept of exile, its dimensions and the ways they function have not been effectively scrutinised, studied, analyzed and differentiated. In this thesis, I offer some new reflections, understanding and thoughts about exilic identities through the different exilic cultures they generate.

Thirdly exile is not history because cultural works that are generated within exile have a tendency to approach the concept of exile (as it is most commonly understood) in such a way that in itself promotes exilic conditions. In other words, the ways through which some cultural works of exile resist forced displacement essentially and ironically encourages the persistence of forced disruption. In this thesis, one of the important concepts which I am dealing with is the concept of resistance. I argue that the cultures generated in exilic conditions, predominantly, have a Janus-faced structure; they are constructed in ways that are both productive and destructive. On the one hand, they develop critical and oppositional thinking and thereby move the process of human thinking forward. On the other hand, they offer a conflictual culture, which in a way criticises one form of forced displacement while encouraging another form of it. I show that the element of exilic culture that is necessary for critical thinking can and should be differentiated from its destructive and conflictual element.

To do this, I examine and show the varieties of exilic identities in the context of Iran, which provides a rich framework for studying and analysing exile and exilic conditions. Saeed Talajooy says:

The transitional worlds of contemporary Iran [...] are characterized by multi-faceted demands and impositions of modernization and globalization clashing with traditional systems to create chaotic forms of hybridity that have caused drastic moments of confusion and conflict.<sup>11</sup>

Talajooy suggests that Iran due to its position “at the crossroads of ancient civilization” becomes the space of diverse cultures, languages and civilizations and at the same time suffered “heavily under economic exploitation and its resultant conflicts”.<sup>12</sup> Iran has at no time in its history been spared external and internal conflicts and, therefore, exilic conditions. All of the cultural works chosen for analysis in this thesis are related to the context of Iran and all of them are written and produced by Iranian writers and a filmmaker living in the conditions of exile. I examine three various exilic identities: external, internal and a third exilic identity, which I call intrinsic exile. I argue that it is not possible to fully understand intrinsic exilic identity without first understanding external and internal exilic identities. Each exilic identity has its own specific set of cultural values and my analysis focuses on these. My main argument in this thesis, therefore, is that exile in general, and in the context of Iran in particular, is an intrinsic phenomenon.

By intrinsic exile, I refer to a state of being born into confusion and dislocation which is not a matter of choice. In an existential sense, exile is a human condition; it is an essential element of the self which in the process of self-growth plays a fundamental role. In the cultural products of intrinsic exile, this unavoidable condition comes to awareness, predominantly because of the country’s socio-political history of arbitrary rule which leaves it in a volatile state. This awareness results in the development of a culture of resistance which, although it comes about because of despotic impulses, has a fundamentally irenic potential. The culture of resistance offered by the intrinsic exile is essentially different from that of external and internal exile. Studying their essential differences is important; one of the reasons for perpetuation of exile, in the sense of forced displacement, is the ways the concepts of home, exile, settlement and resistance are perceived by various exilic identities which are reflected in their cultural products.

Throughout this dissertation, some of the terms I use will remain stable. The majority of them, however, change depending on the type of exile being examined. The term ‘cultural

---

<sup>11</sup> Saeed Reza Talajooy, ‘Mythologizing The Transition: A Comparative Study Of Bahram Beyzayee And Wole Soyinka’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 2008) , p.2.

<sup>12</sup> Talajooy, p.3.

products' remains stable throughout and refers to creative works in general, which are, for the purposes of this dissertation, literary and cinematic. Some other key terms I will be using are 'exile', 'the constructor', 'home' and 'trauma'. These remain mostly stable throughout. By 'exile' I refer to both forced displacement and the individuals upon whom this is imposed. 'The constructor', in this thesis, is the individual and/or the system that imposes, supports and rationalises forced displacement and exile. 'Home' has both actual and metaphorical interpretations. In its actual sense, it refers to Iran, the authors' country of birth where their closest family and friends live, and in its metaphorical sense it concerns an environment where an individual is safe, free to create, produce and to express themselves. 'Trauma' or traumatic experiences, in this thesis, do not concern the rapidly growing field of trauma theory in clinical and psychological debates.<sup>13</sup> Trauma in this thesis is applied predominantly in its metaphorical sense referring to a deeply distressing or disturbing existence. All of these terms will keep these main definitions until chapter four of this thesis. In chapter four, with the introduction and description of intrinsic exile, the terms will take on new dimensions and will consequently function differently.

In chapter one, I examine various theoretical debates on exilic conditions and various aspects of two exilic identities – external and internal exile – in the Iranian context. External exile deals with the cultural works of the exiles who are forced to leave their home countries. Internal exile refers to those who live in their homelands but are at odds with the dominant socio-political and socio-cultural discourses of their homelands; as a result they are marginalized and are in an exilic condition. At this point, a variety of theoretical frameworks are considered, including those of Lacan and Spivak since the theoretical concept of o/Othering is central. Through this I develop the concept of the exilic Other. I argue that the exile, especially external and internal exile, and the constructor both *need* each other's identity to function and survive. I show that although the exilic cultural products, in the Iranian context, are mainly narratives against totalitarianism, oppression, dogma and tyranny, they simultaneously have a prominent role in provoking and maintaining oppression, albeit in a different sense. This point, however, is difficult to apprehend mainly because they are

---

<sup>13</sup> For further readings on trauma, traumatic experiences and their effects and reflections on memory and narrative see: Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995). Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 2010). Cathy Caruth, 'Parting Words: Trauma, Silence and Survival', *Cultural Values*, 5 (2001), 7–26 <doi:10.1080/14797580109367218>. Cathy Caruth, 'Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History', *Yale French Studies*, (1991), 181–192.

written against oppression by individuals who have experienced despotism and some even continue to experience it firsthand.

In chapter two, I offer a comparative study of different viewpoints on exile and exilic cultural products. This offers a more detailed explanation of their shared elements. Considering the debates, I come to the conclusion that all of the selected exilic cultural products, in the Iranian context, focus on the three main issues: the self, the Other/constructor and the sense of a lost home. The exilic sense of self intersects with the sense of a lost home whereby its loss is predominantly perceived by the individual exile as a result of the constructor's acts. In the Iranian context, the Other plays a key role in the narratives of exile. Using Spivak's approach to the concept of othering, I look at what she argues are the qualities and practices of othering and their similarities and differences with those applied in the Iranian exilic cultural products.

In chapter two, the theoretical debates around external exile are examined and exposed through the analysis of two cultural products: a memoir and a graphic novel. The memoir is *Reading Lolita in Tehran*<sup>14</sup> published in 2003 by Azar Nafisi, narrating her life in Iran during the revolution and her teaching experiences at the University of Tehran after the revolution, her resignation and her decision to emigrate to the United States. The book was originally written and published in English and has subsequently been translated into thirty-two languages.<sup>15</sup> The second work in this chapter is a graphic novel, *Persepolis*<sup>16</sup> books 1 and 2, written and illustrated by Marjane Satrapi. This autobiographical text was originally written in French and depicts the author's childhood up to her early adult years during and after the revolution. It has subsequently been adapted into a multiple award winning animated feature film.

These works are relevant because both of them are internationally well known and widely read and because they are written by and about the exilic experiences of their authors. Both of them focus on the trauma of imposed displacement, which is a prominent discourse in producing their senses of self as exiles. Through comparing them I show how both the memoir and the graphic novel touch on the issue of dual identity imposed on the exile by the constructor, which, in this case, is the Islamic Republic of Iran. I also show the methods they use to show their resistance to the constructor's imposed rules. I also explore how they

---

<sup>14</sup> Azar Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books* (London: Fourth Estate, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> <http://barclayagency.com/nafisi.html> Retrieved (07/05/13).

<sup>16</sup> Marjane Satrapi, *The Complete Persepolis*, 1st ed (New York: Pantheon Books, 2007).

practise their power mainly through demonising the constructor and through the disavowal of loss; this shows that the constructor was not powerful enough to silence them but immoral enough to impose insecurity and ultimately actual displacement on them. Also the way that their sense of exilic self is interrelated with the concept of home and the constructor will be analysed in this chapter.

In the third chapter, I undertake a study of the characteristics of internal exilic identities and the ways they are projected in Ahmad Shamlou's poetry and Granaz Moussavi's film, *My Tehran for Sale*.<sup>17</sup> The genres of poetry and film have been selected for this chapter because of their specific roles in narrating history. Both the genres of poetry, specifically in the context of Iran, and film, in general, play an important role in voicing histories of the margins as well as marginalized histories from within. I show that both Shamlou's poetry and Moussavi's film are products of an internal exilic identity and condition. The main issues shown in these works include forced stagnation, philosophical loneliness and the anxiety of losing agency at home. Due to their shared thematic concerns and shared internal exilic positions, I argue that both attempt to apply various techniques to first picture their internal exilic status, voice their marginalized agencies, practise power and promote their culture of resistance. At the same time, due to their position at home (the centre of danger) they apply some artistic/creative techniques to call the culture of resistance indirectly to the readers/viewers' minds and, as much as possible, to avoid attracting the constructor's attention.

The fourth chapter offers an introduction to and an analysis of intrinsic exile in the context of Iran. As explained earlier, it is not possible to fully understand intrinsic exilic identity without first understanding internal and external exilic identities. Through exploring the essential aims and functions of external and internal exile, I show that intrinsic exile is essentially different to both the concepts of external and internal exile whilst maintaining its exilic identity. I argue that the main reason for these essential differences is because of the ways they perceive and approach the concept of exile. In the context of Iran, there is a presumption of the lost home in both external and internal exilic works. The ways external and internal exiles illustrate and approach their exilic identities is through the concept of home: that it has been lost because of the constructor. In their works, therefore, there is a dichotomy between the constructor and the exile; each is morally, physically, and ideologically distant from the

---

<sup>17</sup> Granaz Moussavi, *My Tehran for Sale* (Cyan Films, 2009).

Other. Their essential aim, as they generally claim, is to save and regain the lost home from the tyrannical hands of the constructor through tackling the constructor. External and internal exilic works, therefore, apply a variety of techniques to empower their cultures of resistance and their exilic identities. I show that the ways external and internal exiles suggest their exilic identities is essentially conflictual, although they use non-violent approaches.

I argue that, in the context of Iran, intrinsic exile exposes its exilic identity from the opposite direction compared to those of external and internal exiles. Intrinsic exile shows its exilic identity through exposing the exilic conditions of *both* the self *and* the constructor. Through the concept of exile, intrinsic exile aims to provide a space and a way to make home possible. The lost home, therefore, for intrinsic exile is a myth; home is possible but not available yet to be lost or lamented. For intrinsic exile, in the context of Iran, home does not exist. So, the essential aim for intrinsic exile is to evoke a sense of doubt about the concept of home and through it to the sense of self of both the exile and the constructor. Also for intrinsic exile, the exile and the constructor are immersed and interconnected with each other. That is why the aim of intrinsic exile is not tackling the constructor since it is a determining part of the exilic self. I argue, therefore, that even though it is fundamentally about conflict, the ways intrinsic exile offers its exilic identity is essentially irenic. Due to the introduction of intrinsic exile and the essential difference its substance has with that of external and internal exiles, the fourth chapter on intrinsic exile demands a different structure, compared to those of external and internal exile. The fourth chapter is divided into two sections: a section on the historical background of the particular Iranian cultural and sociopolitical discourses and a section on intrinsic exile, its characteristics, dimensions and its reflection and analysis in the selected cultural products.

To explore and examine intrinsic exile, in the context of Iran, I examine the cultural and sociopolitical history of Iran. I offer a brief history of the dominant cultures supporting the prominent characteristics of various Iranian states as well as their contributions to the sociopolitical and cultural states of current-day Iran. I focus particularly on the roots of Islamization and Iranian racial thinking. Showing the brief history of the sociopolitical aspects of life in Iran, I argue that the concept of exile, in the context of Iran, is an intrinsic phenomenon. However, in general, the intrinsic nature of exile is a kind of amnesia in the cultural products of Iran. I argue that the works of intrinsic exile actively try to remember this ‘amnesia’ and through it provide an open space for the possible home to come into being. In this thesis, various qualities, aspects, statuses (preliminary and developed) and stages of



intrinsic exile are exposed and explored. They are illustrated through the analysis of two cultural products: *Prisoner of Tehran*<sup>18</sup> and *Azadeh Kanom and Her Writer or Dr. Sharifie's Private Auschwitz*.<sup>19</sup> *Prisoner of Tehran* is a memoir written by Marina Nemat recalling the story of her growing up in Iran, her arrest at the age of sixteen for political “crimes”, her imprisonment in Evin prison and her migration to Canada in 1991. *Azadeh Kanom and Her Writer or Dr. Sharifie's Private Auschwitz* is a novel written by Reza Baraheni. The novel is an example of discursive self-reflexivity or, in other words, is the story of the process of writing this novel.

Through exposing, exploring and analyzing intrinsic exile, I show that it is a mistake to read external and internal exilic works as cultural products that dismantle oppression while they actually maintain it. Through understanding and comparing external, internal, and intrinsic exilic identities, in the context of Iran, this thesis argues that while home, in its actual sense, is not available it is nevertheless desirable, and everyone has a right to it. I argue that exile, in the sense of forced either metaphorical or actual displacement, is prevalent essentially because the illusion of home is prevalent and is considered as an actual phenomenon which can be owned, lost or confiscated. To be homed, it is necessary to understand that exile is a complex and complicated state and any understanding of exile and exilic identities that are too general or simple means that being homed will remain unavoidably out of reach.

---

<sup>18</sup> Marina Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, (London. Great Britain.: John Murray, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Reza Baraheni, *Azadah Khanum Va Nivisandahash (chap-i Duvvum), Ya, Ashvits-i Khususi-i Duktur Sharifi: Ruman. (Azadeh Kanom and Her Writer or Dr. Sharifie's Private Auschwitz)*, Chap-i 2 (Tehran: Caravan Books, 2006).

## CHAPTER I: Theoretical Framework

This chapter touches upon general understandings of exile, exilic identities and their cultural products. For this, various theoretical discussions and terms about exile and exilic conditions are offered. To explore exile in more detail, I consider various concepts of liminality, hybridity, power and discussions around the issues of o/Other and othering for two main reasons; first to define and examine external and internal exile and secondly to suggest a new viewpoint and fill the gaps of previously argued theories. The theoretical discussions offered in this chapter support the analysis of the selected cultural products of external and internal exiles in the context of Iran, in the following two chapters. Before going into the theoretical discussions, it is helpful to first look at brief explanations of some of the key terminologies I will use. This will prevent possible ambiguity and confusion in understanding the various dimensions of exile.

In the description of the practice of power in exilic discourse, I make use of Michel Foucault's terminologies on the elaboration of power. I will apply some terms such as 'the constructor', 'exile/s', and 'the constructed subjectivity' in which the former defines the system that causes exile, the second one refers to the people who are sociopolitically and socioculturally active in exilic situations and the last one explains the constructed social, cultural, and political systems of knowledge which are dominated by the constructor. In this and in the next two chapters, the main focus will be the examination of the two main exilic identities of external and internal exiles. External exile refers to the individuals and the conditions of those who are sent to exile in its actual physical sense. Cultural products in the external exilic mode refer to and describe the hybrid characteristics and aims of cultural works produced by the individuals of external exile. Internal exile refers to those who live in their homeland but are in conflict with the dominant sociopolitical and cultural discourses of their country. As a result, their internal exilic identity and cultural works are pushed to the margins and the constructor tries to silence their voices and cultural products. For more elaboration, the next section offers some general understandings of exile, exilic conditions and the influence they have on the cultural products.

## Exile: External, Internal And Its Liminality

The earliest myth of exile is arguably Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden. The story of Adam and Eve, in various books of different religions, revolves around Adam and Eve's disobedience to God's orders, which ultimately result in their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. This expulsion comes as a punishment fundamentally because they feel and become aware of their separation from nature, through losing the sense of unity and "the original animal harmony with nature",<sup>20</sup> by having emancipated themselves and their birth as human beings. This myth offers, arguably, the "deepest need" of human beings which is "the need to overcome [their] separateness".<sup>21</sup> As a result, as Eric Fromm argues, human beings of all ages and cultures are confronted "with the solution of one and the same question: the question of how to overcome separateness, how to achieve union, how to transcend one's own individual life and find atonement".<sup>22</sup> Due to the sense of separation and the lacunal conditions of human existence, Fromm argues that, throughout human history, the answers to the question of how to overcome separateness are not innumerable, especially if small differences which belong to the periphery than to the centre are ignored. The question is mostly answered by "animal worship, by human sacrifice or military conquest, by indulgence in luxury, by ascetic renunciation, by obsessional work, by artistic creation, by the love of God, and by the love of [human being]".<sup>23</sup> He argues that the history of religion and philosophy essentially deals with "the history of these answers, of their diversity, as well as of their limitation in number".<sup>24</sup> These answers apart from seeking a solution for the sense of alienation and separation of human beings and their lacunal existence suggest the hope of return to an Edenic existence of unity and wholeness.

Exile tends to be understood in its actual external exilic sense, in which an individual is forced to be displaced from their homeland. This displacement, however, is not necessarily limited to the physical banishment from homeland. It contributes to the marginalized identities and voices inside the home country; this condition is often imposed by the constructor. For some, exile is perceived in its cultural and linguistic sense, especially in the works of translation, when lingual and cultural aspects of a literary work are displaced and

---

<sup>20</sup> Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, (New York: Open Road, 2013), p.26.

<sup>21</sup> Fromm, p.26.

<sup>22</sup> Fromm, p.26.

<sup>23</sup> Fromm, p.27.

<sup>24</sup> Fromm, p.28.

transferred from the domain of its source language into a domain of a different language and culture.<sup>25</sup> Understandings of exile, in its lingual and cultural sense, are essentially associated with the fundamental aspects of the myth of Babel, whether it be in its actual, physical sense or in a metaphorical sense.

According to the myth of Babel,<sup>26</sup> exile was aroused from lingual and cultural confusion caused by God which devastated the Edenic linguistic oneness of the homeland. The myth suggests the linguistic and cultural confusion and transformation of people who once were united by the same language, culture and homeland who are now unable to understand each other. This confusion separated them from each other and displaced them from their homeland. Exile, in this myth, is a moment when individuals find their languages and cultures outside of the common lingual and cultural understandings of their compatriots. In other words, the reason behind exile, is often a non-acceptance of the dominant administrative, moral, or socio-cultural discourses in the home country.

This myth inspired several modern philosophers and writers in their theorising about literary works. For example, James Joyce's work reached its multilingual peak in *Finnegans Wake*. Ida Klitgard argues that "translation to Joyce is a kind of cultural and linguistic exile, not only between Irish and English, but across all languages".<sup>27</sup> In this regard, Klitgard argues that exile happens in the work of translation because in translating a work of literature "its body and soul from one language community [is transferred] to another".<sup>28</sup> In this sense, according to Klitgard, the literary work, metaphorically, is sent to exile. The key issues, understandings and dimensions of exile are essentially the same with the fundamental aspects of exile offered in both the myths of Adam and Eve and of Babel. For instance, John Durham Peters'<sup>29</sup> idea of exile describes it as a painful and "punitive banishment from one's own homeland. Though it can be either voluntary or involuntary, internal or external, exile generally implies a fact of trauma, an imminent danger, usually political, that makes home no

---

<sup>25</sup> For further readings on exile in cultural and lingual sense see: David Bellos, *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?: The Amazing Adventure of Translation* (London: Particular, 2012).; Babak Elahi, 'Translating the Self: Language and Identity in Iranian-American Women's Memoirs', *Iranian Studies*, 39 (2006), 461–480 <doi:10.1080/00210860601004933>.

<sup>26</sup> Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation History, Post-structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

<sup>27</sup> Ida Klitgard, '(Dis) Location and Its (Dis) Contents: Translation as Exile in James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Finnegans Wake.', in *Re-Mapping Exile*, eds. by Boss, Micheal Nordin, Irene G. Olinder, Britta (Aarhus, DNK: Aarhus University Press, 2005), pp. 107–134, p.110.

<sup>28</sup> Klitgard, p.110.

<sup>29</sup> John Durham Peters, 'Exile, Nomadism, and Diaspora: The Stakes of Mobility in the Western Canon', in *Hamid Naficy, Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*, ed. Hamid Naficy (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 17–41.

longer safely habitable.”<sup>30</sup> In his study of exile, he categorizes exile as a concept that most explicitly invokes a home or homeland. Thus, the notion of exile always carries the hope of return when the situation has changed for the better. In this regard, Salman Rushdie has a similar opinion about exile. He calls exile “a dream of glorious return”.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Hamid Naficy argues that exile invokes home and for exile there is always a hope for return.<sup>32</sup>

Internal exile, like external exile, is the product of forced disruption to the homeland. It results in the forced banishment of the individual to create, speak and work at home. Internal exile is usually the result of an attempt from totalitarian figures to victimize the individual through imposing limitations, mainly for political reasons, on their social life and networking. Its difference from external exile is in the location of the individual. While external exile laments the loss of home *outside of* the home and celebrates the "glorious return", the individual of internal exile laments the loss of home *at* home. The suffering for the external exile is expatriation, acculturation, loneliness and forced hybridity and for internal exile is forced stagnation, philosophical loneliness and anxiety. The condition of internal exile mostly declares its philosophical loneliness in a situation of being surrounded by its compatriots. The anxiety is a fear of losing agency and the thought of re-empowering it. The forced state of internal exile orders their marginalization in the society in such a way that ensures that the individual is and remains invisible and, most specifically, feels unimportant until the controlling element/s lose their power, change their policies, or forgive the individual. However, paradoxically, internal exile achieves the power of its visibility through this forced state of invisibility. In the next two chapters, I will argue that, regardless of their apparent differences, external and internal exiles are essentially the same, in terms of perceiving the experience of exile and its application in their cultural products. .

Hamid Naficy in his “Exile Discourse and Televisual Fetishization”<sup>33</sup> attempts to clarify the reasons why exile has the hope of return. He argues that for exile there are two different states of loss: depression and disavowal of loss. He suggests that the unresolvable state of grief over the loss mainly leads to depression. However, he suggests “the disavowal of loss and the separation from home is augmented in exile by another impulse, that of return”.<sup>34</sup> In

---

<sup>30</sup> John Durham Peters, p.19.

<sup>31</sup> Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses a Novel* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2008) , p.205.

<sup>32</sup> Hamid Naficy, *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>33</sup> Hamid Naficy, ‘Exile Discourse and Televisual Fetishization.’, in *Otherness and the Media: the Ethnography of the Imagened and the Imaged.*, eds. by Naficy, Hamid, H.Gabriel, Teshome (Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1993).

<sup>34</sup> Hamid Naficy, ‘Exile Discourse and Televisual Fetishization.’, p.87.

other words, Naficy suggests that exile disavows loss since there is a hope for return. Naficy considers this to be a “characteristic that sets exiles apart from all other displaced people”.<sup>35</sup> I argue that the impulse behind the disavowal of loss by both external and internal exile is not just the hope of return but it is also the anger of no return. I argue that this sense of anger compels both external and internal exiles to first resist the limitations that have been imposed upon them and secondly expose and practice the power they have against the constructor. Offering new structures of authority, exposing and practicing power against the constructor and being heard are vital for both internal and external exiles. To support this argument, I will look at the dimensions and characteristics of the culture of resistance both external and internal exiles offer in their cultural products. Studying their works, I will show how the concept of power is both suggested and practiced in the cultural products of exile. Exilic culture is, arguably, a culture of resistance<sup>36</sup> in which the exile questions the cultural, socio-political limitations defined for and imposed on them. Exilic culture, therefore, deals predominantly with dethroning the culture of the constructor and enthroning the culture of marginalized exile. Exilic identities, therefore, are produced through the attempts of exiles to shift power from the popular culture of the home to the exilic self-culture. Amy Malek referring to Naficy argues that “popular culture is a landscape where assorted groups, cultures and ideologies interact, all working to attain ‘cultural, moral, and ideological leadership over allied and subordinate groups and over marginalized cultures and ideologies’”.<sup>37</sup> Naficy argues that the dominant culture neutralizes the specificity of marginal cultures in order to make them invisible. They also, he argues, try to rationalize the silencing of a mere difference a marginalized culture may have in relation to a dominant culture.

Naficy on the one hand, points to the silencing of any exilic opposition within the popular culture and on the other hand in his “Exile Discourse and Televisual Fetishization” mentions the colonized status of exilic themes offered in Iranian TV programmes produced in the US. Naficy describes the themes of TV programmes as reminders of the loss (home) which “acknowledge the continued existence of home, [and] paradoxically and masochistically elevate what they consider to be inferior and marginal, i.e., Islamic Iran, to assume a higher

---

<sup>35</sup> Hamid Naficy, ‘Exile Discourse and Televisual Fetishization.’, p.88.

<sup>36</sup> For more see: Paul Gready, *Writing as Resistance: Life Stories of Imprisonment, Exile, and Homecoming from Apartheid South Africa* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003). Stephen Duncombe, *Cultural Resistance Reader* (London ; New York: Verso, 2002). Barbara Harlow, *Resistance Literature* (New York: Methuen, 1987).

<sup>37</sup> Malek, Amy, ‘Memoir as Iranian Exile Cultural Production: A Case Study of Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis* Series’, *Iranian Studies*, 39 (2006), 353–380 <doi:10.1080/00210860600808201>, p. 356.

central position within the exile discourse”.<sup>38</sup> Further to his argument he says in “exile, home colonizes the mind”.<sup>39</sup> Due to their confrontations with various cultures, Naficy argues that, hybridized exiles are most likely to be affected by the doctrines of host cultures and support the colonial mentalities/viewpoints offered by the host country. Naficy notes that exiles often “employ the host’s popular culture and its mediating institutions” in creating symbolic communities through preserving the popular culture of the host society to protect their exilic culture from being appropriated by the dominant culture. He indicates the vitality of exilic culture by stating “culture for exiles [...] is not just a trivial superstructure, it is life itself”.<sup>40</sup> In other words, the culture of dissent for the exile is interrelated with and is an intimate aspect of the exile’s sense of self. External exile is predominantly produced by two fundamental disruptions: the disjoined experience of forced displacement to a host country and the disruption to the homeland brought about by the internal conflicts, such as revolution, in the home country. As a result, the cultural products of external exilic identities are shaped under the influential impacts of these two disruptions. In chapter three, I will explain that for the external exile it is a necessity to be, consciously/unconsciously, the internal exile first. In other words, external exiles at their essence are internal exiles who decide/are forced to be external exiles.

Naficy argues that the culture of exile is generated within the condition of in-betweenness. In this regard, Malek reading Naficy’s understanding of exile argues that for Naficy the exilic state is based on the condition of “*inbetweenness*” that is to be in neither one place nor the other but instead “the traveler who ‘wavers between two worlds’”.<sup>41</sup> It is this swaying that in Naficy’s opinion, as Malek explains, allows exiles to “continually negotiate or ‘haggle’ for new positions” and from these new positions to create “new modes of expression and cultural production”.<sup>42</sup> Thus for Naficy the state of exile, as Malek argues, is “a process of perpetual becoming, involving separation from home, a period of liminality and in-betweenness that can be temporary or permanent, and incorporation into the dominant host society that can be partial or complete”.<sup>43</sup> Naficy’s focus on the liminal stage of exile supports his argument on exilic culture. Malek’s reading of Naficy’s argument suggests that “exiles become deterritorialized” and, therefore, are in a unique position to question previous “authorities,

---

<sup>38</sup> Naficy, ‘Exile Discourse and Televisual Fetishization.’, p.111.

<sup>39</sup> Naficy, ‘Exile Discourse and Televisual Fetishization.’, p.111.

<sup>40</sup> Naficy, *The Making of Exile Cultures* , p.34.

<sup>41</sup> Malek, Amy, p.355.

<sup>42</sup> Malek, Amy, p.355.

<sup>43</sup> Malek, Amy, p.355.

authenticities, identities, and cultural practices, but also to forge new ones in their place”<sup>44</sup>. Exile, as Malek concludes is, therefore, “capable of productivity” as well as “eradicating one set of codes and replacing them with different sets of syncretic inscriptions”<sup>45</sup>. From this process, she argues, exilic culture “becomes an important mode of negotiating these codes, inscriptions and identities”<sup>46</sup>.

Homi Bhabha’s hybridity is similar to Naficy’s liminality; it refers to “identity that occurs in the space between cultural borders”<sup>47</sup>. Homi Bhabha argues that hybridity is the refusal of two original moments from which a “third space” emerges. Within this “third space” emergence of any other new positions becomes available and possible because “[t]his third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom”<sup>48</sup>. Naficy’s liminality alongside Bhabha’s “third space” describes the fusion and in-betweenness of exile and the condition within which their culture generates; it is a form of resistance in displacing the histories that dominate, suppress their voices and constitute them. Exilic identity, therefore, is interrelated to and interdependent on the oppositional nature of exilic culture. In this sense, exilic identity predominantly contains a culture of resistance and hence for the exile, exilic culture or the culture of resistance is as important as “life itself”. That is why I argue that what Naficy calls the colonization of the mind in the cultural products of exile is secondary and external exile chooses to have and use a ‘colonized’ mind to expose their culture of resistance. For exile, the first priority is practicing and offering a culture of resistance, through a variety of techniques. These techniques are then applied to shift the power of the dominant culture into the exilic culture. Here, the dominant culture refers to the constructed culture of the authorities who send those in opposition to exile. Narrating the trauma of forced displacement is a power-related strategy with which exile attempts to question, criticize and decline the power and doctrines of the authorities that normalize the imposition of forced displacement on the exile. To shed more light on this power-related aspect of exile, I use Michel Foucault’s arguments on the issue of power. But before going through Foucault’s argument, it is worth mentioning here that power is a multifaceted and multifunctional phenomenon. For the purpose of this thesis, I apply power in a sociological

---

<sup>44</sup> Malek, Amy, p.356.

<sup>45</sup> Malek, Amy, p. 356.

<sup>46</sup> Malek, Amy, p.356.

<sup>47</sup> Christine L. Ogan, *Communication and Identity in the Diaspora: Turkish Migrants in Amsterdam and Their Use of Media* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2001) , p.6.

<sup>48</sup> Homi K Bhabha, ‘The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha’, in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), pp. 207–221, p.211.



and sociopolitical sense, which indicates a conscious and an intentional application of “the ability to influence the behavior of people”.<sup>49</sup> Power in this sense, however, does not necessarily need to involve coercion.

## Practising Power And Resistance

Michel Foucault in his lecture, “Orders of Discourse”<sup>50</sup>, addresses the nature of power and how it functions as a system that controls knowledge and through it is used as a form of social control. In it he elaborates on the construction of subjectivity within certain historical, social and cultural systems of knowledge in a society. He also offers an analysis of how power is exercised in both producing and controlling individual subjects through systems of knowledge. In particular he considers the "criminal", "pervert", and "lunatic" within the discourses of criminality, sexuality and psychiatry. Foucault argues that within any historical period various discourses compete for control of subjectivity. He argues that controlling discourse is the function of power that determines knowledge and truth. A person might be a subject of various discourses but the discursively produced subjectivity dominates at the time. For the sake of analysis in this part, I will use Foucault's applied terms in his description of power related activities. The constructor in this chapter refers to the authorities who in order to maintain the subjectivity they produce rationalize and encourage exile. Since the authorities find exiles to seriously threaten their power through questioning the constructed subjectivity they find that encouraging and imposing exile on individuals is a solution to that threat. In this dissertation, the term ‘exile/s’ refers to a group of people who first of all are aware of their exilic condition and secondly are socio-politically and socioculturally involved and active in resisting and dissenting the power of the constructor and the subjectivities it produces.

Michel Foucault’s discussions on discourse suggest “the interplay of the rules that define the transformations of [...] different objects, their non-identity through time, the break produced in them, the internal discontinuity that suspends their permanence”.<sup>51</sup> With a specific focus

---

<sup>49</sup> James T Tedeschi, *Social Power and Political Influence* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction, 2008) p.85.

<sup>50</sup> M. Foucault, ‘Orders of Discourse’, *Social Science Information*, 10 (1971), 7–30.

<sup>51</sup> Michael Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. by A.M. Sheridan Smith (Great Britain: Tavistock Publications, 1972) , p.33.

on power relations, for Foucault a society is affected by various sources of power; they are expressed through a constructed language. In Foucault's discussion the controlling discourse, which is created through the construction of subjectivity, is normalized. Based on this model, the authorities aim to construct subjectivities to control the variety of discourses and to maintain their power. For example, Foucault explains that "discipline" is a constructed "physics" or an "anatomy" of power. It is a "modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, [and] targets[.]"<sup>52</sup> It might be applied by "specialized" institutions or by "preexisting authorities that find in it a means of reinforcing or reorganizing their internal mechanisms of power[.]"<sup>53</sup> He argues that "discipline" may be taken over by "state apparatuses whose major, if not exclusive, function is to assure that discipline reigns over society as a whole [...]"<sup>54</sup> Applying these arguments, in the discourse of exile, exile is the result of totalitarian policies that, through the imposition of constructed subjectivities of criminal discourse, "rationalizes" exiles and their products as "crimes" and "criminals" who/which should be banished. In the discourse of exile, the constructor of related subjectivities of exile does not control the exilic discourse. In other words, the constructor neither controls the exiled subjects nor the discourse. Both the constructor and the exile are consciously powerful elements and are fighting for the agency of their power. Both aim to empower their exilic or authoritative values and subjectivities to, as Foucault says, "determine [their subjective] knowledge and [offer their] truth".<sup>55</sup> Further to his discussion, in the context of Iran, both exile and the constructor need to practice their power not only to confirm their legitimacies but also to identify each other. As a result, neither of them or their power is at the centre and without one the other would lose its identity and power. Each of their identity and power is defined through the other. As Jacques Derrida's logo-centrism undermines not only the notion of individuality but any notion of a fixed subject, power in the discourse of exile is not a fixed subject placed in the center of exiles or the subjectivities of the constructor; power, as a dynamic phenomenon, sways between the two.

To return to Naficy's argument about the disavowal of loss, that he argues is the silenced colonized mind of the displaced exile, I suggest disavowal of loss as one of the techniques of exile used to practice power and through it undermine the constructor's power; this leads to

---

<sup>52</sup> Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought* (UK: Penguin Books, 1984), p.206.

<sup>53</sup> Rabinow, p.206.

<sup>54</sup> Rabinow, p.206.

<sup>55</sup> M. Foucault, p.21.

promoting their exilic identity. As Lavie and Swedenberg note, the activity of exile is the only true form of resistance.<sup>56</sup> Similarly Bhabha describes it as newly constituted structures of authority which emerge from exile's "third space".<sup>57</sup> In both these conceptualizations, the exile's constituted authority competes for agency and power with the constructor. The constructor of the discourse of exile determines the exiled subject's banishment.. Without the banishment notice the constructor would not exist. The exiled subject, on the other hand, resists the constructor by disavowing its verdict. By excluding disavowal, therefore, exile would fail to identify itself. So, for exile there is always a hope/possibility of return even if the subject never returns. Therefore, as I suggested earlier, the colonization of the mind in exile is secondary. Islamic Iran, which Naficy uses as an example, is considered inferior not necessarily because of the exile's colonized mind but predominantly because of the nature of the resistance of exile before its constructor (here the Islamic Republic of Iran) to identify itself as an exile. The constructor celebrates its power at home by boasting of the exiles it produces and its remaining power and position at home. The exile celebrates the power outside of home through both the function and narratives of resistance.

The constructor oppresses the exile to guarantee its power and agency however, it makes a dent on the body of its existence by providing an agency for exile through making the minds ready to hail it as oppressor, thereby strengthening the exile. Exile resists the constructor through narrating their confiscated agency at home in their cultural products and voicing their identity. Exiles' narratives of resistance damage the power of the constructor and, at the same time, address the power and therefore strengthen the power of the constructor through describing their imposed exilic status. In this regard, using Foucault's arguments on the notions of power and resistance, Karima Laachir and Saeed Talajooy focus on the "multidimensionality of power and resistance"<sup>58</sup> and through it they argue that resistance and its functions are multifaceted. They argue that in the Middle East, therefore, "cultural resistance can be a force for change, contesting hegemonic narratives on socio-political and economic issues and revealing the agency and role of the people in pushing for them"<sup>59</sup>. For them, cultural resistance is not perceived as a simplified "clear-cut opposition to the prevailing power relations in societies" but rather it is viewed as "a way of appropriating,

---

<sup>56</sup> Lavie and Swedenburg, p.8.

<sup>57</sup> Bhabha, p.211.

<sup>58</sup> Karima Laachir and Saeed Talajooy, eds., *Resistance in Contemporary Middle Eastern Cultures: Literature, Cinema and Music*, Routledge Research in Postcolonial Literatures, 34 (New York and London: Routledge, 2013).

<sup>59</sup> Laachir and Talajooy, p.20.

transforming, negotiating and subverting them”.<sup>60</sup> Considering the concept of power in Foucault’s arguments and Laachir and Talajooy’s cultural resistance, in the discourse of exile the power rests neither in the centre of authority nor with the exile but is, instead, constantly on the move. It is in the dialectical exchange between the constructor and the exile. Given the dialectical exchange between the constructor and exile, I argue that to function, exile and the constructor have an inherently interdependent relationship with each other. I will come back to this argument in the analysis of the cultural products of external exile. It is, therefore, important to see how each of them exists in the Other’s gaze. In the next section, I will look at the means exile sets out to empower its sense of self and identity.

## The Function of o/Other And Othering in The Cultural Products of Exile

In postcolonial debates, the Other is compared to the imperial centre and corresponds to the focus of power in relation to the ‘other’, the excluded and mastered subject by the discourse of imperial power. I argue that, in the context of exile, both the voices of dissent and the tyrannical system that imposes silence and exile on individuals are powerful. Therefore, the power is not at the authoritative centre but it is a dynamic phenomenon moving between the exile and the constructor. However, the ways in which they practise their power are different. I argue that in the works of exile, in the context of this thesis, there is no ‘other’ with a small ‘o’ which corresponds to the subjugated subject. In this regard, I also argue that due to the dynamic nature of power between the exile and the constructor, the cultural products of exile have a prominent and determining role in both resisting dislocation and dispossession and in regenerating them. To shed more light on these arguments, I will employ an inter-theoretical study of the Lacanian o/Other and the ways it is applied in postcolonial theory. At the beginning, I will look at Lacan’s o/Others and its theoretical influences on postcolonial discussions. Through inter-theoretical studies, I will develop the concept of the exilic Other which, apart from several similarities with the postcolonial o/Others, have some essential differences with them. I will also apply Spivak’s theory of othering to suggest the parallel practices of othering in the cultural products of exile.

---

<sup>60</sup> Laachir and Talajooy, p.33.

The term other is used extensively in existential philosophy to define the relations between Self and Other in creating self-awareness and ideas of identity. The use of the term in the work of the psychoanalyst and cultural theorist Jacques Lacan is notably applied in postcolonial discourse. Lacan's terms involve a distinction between the 'Other' and the 'other'.<sup>61</sup> This distinction is known as a useful debate in postcolonial theory. In Lacan's theory, the other with the small 'o' authorises the other who resembles the self like a moment a child discovers when s/he looks in the mirror and becomes aware of itself as a separate being. The Other with the capital 'O' in Lacan's thinking is the great Other, *grande-autre*, in whose gaze the subject gains identity. It can refer to the mother or father that represents the child. In Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin's readings of Lacan, "[t]he Symbolic Other is not a real interlocutor but can be embodied in other subjects such as the mother or father that may represent it".<sup>62</sup> Therefore, in this sense, it is summoned each time when a subject speaks to another subject; it is fundamental for the subject since the subject exists in the Other's gaze. In this regard, Lacan says: "all desire is the metonym of the desire to be"<sup>63</sup> because it is fundamental and arguably the first desire of the subject to exist in the gaze of the Other since the subject's sense of identity is deeply related to the Other's perception of the subject.

In postcolonial studies, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin suggest that "[t]his *Other* can be compared to the imperial center, imperial discourse, or the empire itself, in two ways: firstly, it provides the terms in which the colonized subject gains a sense of his or her own identity as somehow 'other' dependent; secondly, it becomes the 'absolute pole of address', the ideological framework in which the colonized subject may come to understand the world".<sup>64</sup> This ideological framework interpellates the colonized subject so that they understand the functions of the colonizing power. The dominance of the imperial language through which colonial subjects may be inducted gives them a clear sense of power practiced by the colonizer which metaphorically enter the colonized subjects into the Symbolic order and the discovery of the law of the *Other*.

While numerous analyses of othering were offered by several critics, the term othering was coined by Gayatri Spivak who used it to refer to the process and various methods in which

---

<sup>61</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Anthony Wilden (Michigan: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968).

<sup>62</sup> Bill Ashcroft, *Post-colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000) , p.170.

<sup>63</sup> Cited in Ashcroft, p.170.

<sup>64</sup> Ashcroft, p.169.

“colonial discourse produces its subjects”.<sup>65</sup> “The Other corresponds to the focus of desire or power [...] in relation to which the subject is produced, the other is the excluded or ‘mastered’ subject created by the discourse of power”.<sup>66</sup> In Spivak’s argument, othering is a dialectical process since “the colonizing Other is established at the same time as its colonized ‘others’ are produced as subjects”.<sup>67</sup> According to this argument, the construction of the o/Other is fundamental to the construction of the self.

Based on Lacan’s theory, the ‘other’, in postcolonial debates is the one who is spoken for and defined. In the context of the cultural works of exile both the exile and the constructor are spoken for and defined by each other, since neither the constructor nor the exile are able to colonize each other. This is the case because, as I argued before, both are powerful elements in defining one another. In the context of exile and their narratives there are, therefore, two Others with the capital ‘O’s which are spoken for and defined by each other. It is so since the exile, unlike the colonized, is aware of their imposed identity and the oppression the constructor and its constructed subjectivities are imposing upon them. That is why exile dissents/resists against the constructor while the constructor oppresses the exile since it is aware of the exile’s resistance against its power and agency.

In the discourse of exile power relations exist between the constructor and the exile. I argue that both apply their power for a similar objective and with the same quantity but with a distinct quality: they both aim to displace or defeat the Other. However, while the exile practices its power through applying a variety of creative and artistic techniques, to overpower the Other, the constructor applies tyrannical, violent and homicidal techniques to impose exile on the opposition. The constructor eliminates the opposite Other for prolonging its power. As mentioned before, the constructor controls subjectivity in the constructed criminality discourse to rationalize this elimination, punishment and violence. Exiles, on the other hand, through their cultural products, interrelate the difficulties of exile to the tyranny of the opposite Other. In the next two chapters, I will argue that this approach assists exile to practice its power against the constructor to scandalize the constructor and thereby erode its position, place and power. I will show that exile, through showing the power relations, attempts to be more analogous to the colonized, in terms of being subjugated, oppressed, devalued and defined by the constructor. However exile, equally, shares more obvious

---

<sup>65</sup> Ashcroft, p.171.

<sup>66</sup> Ashcroft, p.171.

<sup>67</sup> Ashcroft, p.171.

characteristics in common with the colonizer; like the colonizer, exile, especially external exile, leaves the homeland behind and consciously tries to relate to the cultural experience of the forced dislocation and the host country. Both Others, exile and the constructor, exist in each other's gaze and both are required by each other to define their self and their identities. As a result, both use a variety of techniques to define each other. One of the techniques exile applies to empower its sense of self is othering. The question here that needs to be asked when reading the cultural products of exile, in the context of Iran, is: *how* they articulate their opposite Other and the sense of exilic self and how they promote their culture of resistance in their cultural products? The experience of exile, also, substantially and necessarily involves a feeling of inauthenticity. For understanding variety and substantial differences of exilic identities it is worth asking *how* they narrate and express this feeling of inauthenticity? Analyzing the selected cultural products, some possible answers will be suggested to these questions throughout this thesis.

External exile, due to its position outside of the homeland (the center of danger), is able to openly criticize the tyrannical constructor in a relatively safe environment. Internal exile, due to its position within the homeland, however, does not have the same level of freedom of expression. This difference between internal and external exile, however, does not necessarily have an impact on the power of the internal exile in terms of resistance and empowering the culture of exile. Internal exile, like the external exile, is a powerful element which resists the dominant sociopolitical and cultural discourses of home inside the country. To achieve this aim of voicing their resistance and empowering the culture of resistance, internal exile applies a specific set of techniques. But apart from these techniques, some marginal issues around the distribution of the cultural products of internal exile have an effective influence on their power through being widely read/viewed and well received. For internal exile, resistance is embedded with the possibility of their banishment and the serious risks of imprisonment or even their assassination. The possibility of such risks, paradoxically, gives the cultural products of internal exile considerable power.

In this regard, Afshin Matin-Asgari's article, *The Intellectual Best-seller of Post-Revolutionary Iran*, links the popularity of the best-selling books to the challenging and recalcitrant themes they explore. He argues that the well received and widely read books by people inside Iran are products of the exposition of the sensitive issues of "the double burden

of political and religious despotism"<sup>68</sup> addressed in them. He also addresses the risks the authors have taken and the oppressive consequences some were forced to endure. Matin-Asgari's study on the intellectual Best-sellers of Post-Revolutionary Iran focuses on three ranges of books: "successful", "best-sellers", and "super best-sellers" to find the common features that attract readers to them.<sup>69</sup> He argues that "super best-sellers" are "mostly collections of boldly critical journalistic pieces that went as far as accusing the highest government officials of political crimes".<sup>70</sup> Matin-Asgari names the journalist and essayist Akbar Ganji's outstanding book that, during Khatami's presidency, went into twenty to thirty printings within two years. Soon Ganji and his fellow journalists, who Matin-Asgari argues "had pushed the limits of critical journalism, as well as their own sales figures", were imprisoned while the sale of their books skyrocketed [;] Conforming to a familiar Iranian pattern, spending time in prison was once again linked to authorial success".<sup>71</sup> His study on "super best-sellers", "best-sellers" and "successful" books, articulates that the books which push the limits and boundaries of the constructed subjectivities of the socio-political and cultural discourses achieve both the attention of the intellectuals and fame and popularity. The authors' imprisonment also does not hinder their power but paradoxically contributes to their empowerment. It is so because their banishment encourages curiosity and reveals the authority's fear of losing agency by internal exile. In this power relation, when the constructor's power weakens, through exposing its fear, that of the exile strengthens. Through banning the cultural product the constructor reveals its fear and consequently internal exile achieves its fame.

In terms of power and popularity at home, internal exile is more influential than external exile. Although both share almost the same difficulties of forced displacement or forced stagnation, internal exile is granted more respect and admiration from within for its heroic image supported by the courage internal exile demonstrates in fighting at the centre of trauma (home) whilst the external exile is believed to have it less. Also unlike the works of external exile, the cultural products of internal exile are mainly in Persian: this obviously involves more Iranians in reading and understanding them.

---

<sup>68</sup> Afshin Matin-Asgari, 'The Intellectual Best-sellers of Post-revolutionary Iran: On Backwardness, Elite-killing, and Western Rationality', *Iranian Studies*, 37 (2004), 73–88, p.82.

<sup>69</sup> Matin-Asgari, p.73-74.

<sup>70</sup> Matin-Asgari, p.74.

<sup>71</sup> Matin-Asgari, p.74.



Based on Matin-Asgari's argument, it is clear that the cultural products of internal exile with oppositional themes are powerfully influential. The cultural works of internal exile attract a great level of public attention and some of them tend to be canonized by the intellectuals. Their canonized status, however, is not merely due to their thematic constructions or the marginal issues around them but it is a response to their creative techniques and the quality of production. In the next part, I will explore the state, process, and practice of canonization in the cultural products of internal exile, in the context of Iran. These arguments will be applied in the analysis of the cultural works of internal exile in chapter three.

## Canonization, Fascination And Prejudice

Certain Iranian cultural products of internal exile, which tend to be canonized inside the country, contain distinct characteristics that arguably contribute to the dominant dimensions of canonical works. It is useful to see what these dimensions are and how they function. It is noteworthy that the characteristics of canonical works, in this thesis, are considered mainly in aesthetic terms. The political dimensions of the canon are not explored in the analysis of the works of internal exile. This, however, does not intend to propose that canonization is unproblematically defined in aesthetic terms. Aesthetic properties of the canon are considered to be compared with those of the cultural products of internal exile. Understanding the characteristics of the canon will shed more light on the techniques the cultural works of internal exile apply, to empower their sense of self and through it generate the culture of resistance. Across the variety of arguments on the canon and canonization, what emerges is that certain elements of canonical works contribute to the sense of fascination they evoke in a reader whenever s/he is engaged with them. Similar elements are traceable in the cultural products of internal exile that have been canonized by the intellectuals, which tend to evoke an analogous implication of the sense of fascination and its responses. Also the dominant characteristics that are referred to in canonical texts are clearly evident in the canonized cultural products of internal exile. I argue that these characteristics play an important role in the works being influential as well as in empowering their voices of dissent. To shed more light on these matters, in the next chapter, I will apply the elements of fascination, in

canonical texts, in reading and analysis of the influence and power of the cultural products of internal exile. This will be helpful to understand better the notion of their oppositional culture and the various techniques cultural products of internal exile use to resist the constructor and at the same time stand out to empower themselves. Studying the characteristics of canonized texts and through them reading the cultural products of internal exile, I do not intend to suggest that these cultural products are canonical works but instead I intend to focus on the importance of their pioneering role in the development of a culture of resistance.

Theo. L. Hettema defines a canonical text as a text which is recognized as a “genuine part of a certain tradition, literary, or religious”.<sup>72</sup> To achieve this status, based on Hettema, a reader builds a specific relationship with the text. Hettema suggests, therefore, that the attitude of the recipient towards any forms of literary expression and the interplay between the message and interpreter play significant roles in the recognition of the text as canonical. Hettema takes Charles Altieri’s stance in describing the relationship between the canon and a reader. Altieri argues that “the canonical texts enter into a conversation with their readers and shape their readers’ attitudes and experiences”.<sup>73</sup> He focuses on the “cultural grammar” canonical texts suggest to the readers, which are applied for “interpreting experience”.<sup>74</sup> This aspect of the canonical texts, Altieri argues, create idealized attitudes through which the readers shape or re-evaluate their experiences and their understandings of ethics. Hettema argues that the canonical texts urge a reader to develop a sense of self within a style offered by the text. For more exploration of his argument, Hettema describes the notion of a grammar within the canonical texts and its fundamental role in the process of canonization through a reader’s self-development while reading the text.

Regarding a reader’s relationship with the text in the process of canonization, Hettema argues that the difference between the interpretive stances of the three pronouns have significant effects on a personal involvement of the reader with the text. He argues that the ‘I’, as he discusses, is needed to connect a reader’s understanding to the writer since the metaphors and the meanings only could be understood by a reader’s participation not their observation.<sup>75</sup> Compared to the first pronoun ‘I’ the third person, ‘she’, ‘he’, and ‘they’, is more impersonal and has a danger of abstraction. Therefore, as Hettema argues, to create a

---

<sup>72</sup> Theo. L. Hettema, ‘The Canon: Authority and Fascination’, in *Canonization and Decanonization*, eds. by A. van der Kooij, K. van der Toorn (The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill 1998), pp. 391–398, p393.

<sup>73</sup> Cited in Hettema, p.393.

<sup>74</sup> Hettema, p.393.

<sup>75</sup> Hettema, p.393.

balance “between the personal first person and the impersonal third person”, ‘you’ is applied in texts. Through ‘you’ the text is capable of addressing the reader with “a more personal ethical engagement than the mere third person can do”.<sup>76</sup> As he argues, “The other of the text questions us and, in being questioned and being responsive, we develop our selves. The ‘you’ from the text creates a commitment that exceeds the fragmentation and differentiation”<sup>77</sup> Further to his discussion, in regards of the role of the three pronouns in the texts, Hetteema applies Altieri’s and Ricoeur’s notions of metaphor on the formation of the self in dialogue with the text. He suggests “Narrative and narrative identity have an important role in preparing the self for a full ethical responsibility”.<sup>78</sup> Their notions, however, express different approaches. Altieri calls the personal ethical engagement of a reader with the text a “universal intimacy”<sup>79</sup> while Paul Ricoeur calls it a “laboratory of forms”<sup>80</sup>. There are different approaches in Hetteema’s reading of Altieri’s “universal intimacy” and Ricoeur’s “laboratory of forms”. According to Hetteema, the notion of intimacy indicates the proximity of the text and a reader whereas the notion of laboratory considers “the forces of distancing in the relation between text and reader”.<sup>81</sup> Hetteema argues that the text’s meaning is only created “through the difference between the implied and real reader”.<sup>82</sup> That is why he believes that there is no direct identification between the implied and real reader. His discussion declares his approval of the notion of a laboratory in which the forces of distancing are focused. Alongside the above grammatical concepts, the force of metaphors, the meaning of narratives and the literary richness of the texts assist the canonical texts to build a strong connection with a reader and enter into a close relationship with them. As a result, fascination emerges in a reader’s mind whenever they acknowledge the text. This paves the way for the reader to be fascinated by the text. The notion of fascination, therefore, dominates in the recognition of the canon.

The canon originally refers to theological texts, however, presently it contributes mainly to literature. Compared to the field of religion in which the notion of authority has a strong force, in the literary field the notion of fascination replaces authority. Hetteema applies the *fascinans* in Otto’s phenomenology of the sacred as a model term to describe a “hermeneutic

---

<sup>76</sup> Hetteema, p.393.

<sup>77</sup> Hetteema, p.393.

<sup>78</sup> Hetteema, p.393.

<sup>79</sup> Charles Altieri, *Canons and Consequences: Reflections on the Ethical Force of Imaginative Ideals* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1990).

<sup>80</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

<sup>81</sup> Hetteema, p.396.

<sup>82</sup> Hetteema, p.396.

of canonicity”.<sup>83</sup> He argues that a strong attraction of the canonical text is due to its strong movement and at the same time its incomprehensibility. However, as he argues, “this does not stop the reader from developing an attitude of reverence”.<sup>84</sup> He suggests that the major element in differentiating literary fascination from the traditional univocal authoritative text is “irreducible plurality”.<sup>85</sup> He argues that “the canonical text is *deinos*, embarrassing, Dionysian”.<sup>86</sup> Hetteema names these characteristics as a ‘frightening plurality’ that attracts the reader to a canon. This ‘frightening plurality’ aspect of a canon is perceptible in the cultural products of internal exile, mainly within and through the sensitive and controversial themes they suggest. In other words, the distinguished cultural products of internal exile consist of ‘frightening plurality’ of either socio-political and/or cultural discourses. That is why they usually face challenges and sometimes even serious threats from authoritative organizations. This aspect of the cultural products of internal exile attracts the curiosity of the intellectuals and public as well as their fascination. For convenience, from now on, I will refer to the elements which encourage the sense of fascination as fascination.

As I mentioned earlier, the best-selling books in Iran predominantly deal with either sensitive socio-political and/or cultural issues. Some of them in the field of literature are canonized however, they are not officially introduced as canonical texts. Applying the word ‘canon’ to some of the internal exilic cultural products, I intend to indicate the extent of their influence and the consequential level of fascination they evoke. I will show that the notion of fascination is the dominant shared element between the canonical texts and the well-known cultural products in internal exilic mode. Using Hetteema’s argument on the inseparable notion of prejudice, as a result of their fascinating aspects, in the interpretation of canonical texts, I will argue that the fascinating aspects of the cultural products of internal exile result in a kind of negative authority, which I call the curse of canonization. These issues will shed light on the state and characteristics of the cultural products of internal exile, internal exilic identity and its dimensions. Also, the role of internal exile in resistance and the ways through which it functions will be analyzed. This analysis will be performed mainly through studying the relationship of internal exile with the constructor and the techniques internal exile apply to picture and resist the constructor and through it empower their sense of internal exilic self.

---

<sup>83</sup> Hetteema, p.396.

<sup>84</sup> Hetteema, p.396.

<sup>85</sup> Hetteema, p.396.

<sup>86</sup> Hetteema, p.396.

Hettema, in applying Gadamer's argument, discusses the role of prejudice in the interpretation of canonical texts. He states that prejudice is inseparable from the process of the interpretation of canonical texts mainly because "[t]here is no neutral, autonomous, external point of view".<sup>87</sup> He points to Gadamer's 'rehabilitation of authority and tradition' in which "the acknowledgement of the authority is not an act of submission, but an act of recognition and, subsequently of cognition".<sup>88</sup> He argues that textual interpretation in the phrases of postmodernism and deconstruction expose the continuous process of differentiation that creates meaning. He continues his discussion with the inescapability of the differences, claims and commitments that texts impose upon their readers. He mentions the deconstructed notion of traditional authority in postmodernity on the one hand and his observation of the deconstructivist attitude in recognition of the authoritative appeal of the texts on the other hand. He concludes that "we cannot escape from the appeal of these texts, from their force of thinking".<sup>89</sup> He calls "this inescapability of certain texts a matter of authority, though one should perhaps call it a negative authority".<sup>90</sup> Applying Hettema's ideas enables me to explore the notion of the authoritative position of the cultural products of internal exile as the advocates of a culture of resistance within the country. By doing so, I focus on the inescapability of their appeal to readers which results in a negative authority; I call it the curse of canonization. It is a process within which a creator of a canonical work, in the context of internal exile, applies conscious self-censorship. This is the case only if the author of a canonized text witnesses the status of her/his works' canonicity. This self-censorship is not a response to the imposed oppression and is not in a sense of applied strategy to avoid authoritative banishment but is a response to the status of canonicity in order to sustain fascination in the canonized cultural products of internal exile. I will argue that the curse of canonization is a self-imposed censorship in order to avoid self-contradiction and at the same time avoid reduction of fascination. I will explore and come back to this point in the analysis of the cultural products of internal exile. Applying the theoretical debates offered in this chapter, I will analyze the cultural products of both external and internal exile. In the next chapter I begin the analytical reading of the cultural works of external exile.

---

<sup>87</sup> Hettema, p.392.

<sup>88</sup> Hettema, p.392.

<sup>89</sup> Hettema, p.392.

<sup>90</sup> Hettema, p.393.

## CHAPTER II: External Exile and External Exilic Identity In *Reading Lolita In Tehran And Persepolis*

This chapter offers a comparative analysis of two cultural works of external exile: *Reading Lolita in Tehran*<sup>91</sup> by Azar Nafisi and *The Complete Persepolis*<sup>92</sup> (henceforth *Persepolis*) by Marjaneh Satrapi. In the first section of the analysis, applying the theoretical arguments of the previous chapter, I show the reasons why these two works are the works of exile. In the second part, I argue that both of the works offer models of a culture of resistance that Hamid Naficy and Homi Bhabha draw upon. I argue that the techniques and qualities that equip them to be works of resistance, at the same time, contribute to their dominance in the power relations between the external exile and the constructor. I will show that the culture of resistance they offer and the ways with which they attempt to define resistance recreate forced displacement and exilic conditions in a different sense. Considering the dimensions of the culture of resistance and power that they offer, I explore why both works are the works of external exile specifically. Drawing the picture of external exile through the analysis of these cultural products, I do not intend to exorcise what I critique in these works but instead reveal the tensions promulgated within them, which I argue, should be studied and addressed.

### The External Exilic Sense of Self in the Self-Narratives of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* and *Persepolis*

The experiences of exile for Iranian writers deal usually with painful either personal or political circumstances they have endured and from which they have escaped in their homeland. Similar to the experience of exile in Durham Peters' idea, as mentioned before, their migration could be either voluntary or involuntary. Their exile experiences generally imply the fact of trauma and an imminent danger, usually socio-political, that make the home no longer a safe place to live. The trauma of forced displacement, both in its actual and metaphorical sense, for exile is the prominent discourse in producing their senses of selves

---

<sup>91</sup> Nafisi.

<sup>92</sup> Satrapi.

and their identities. Narrating the self for them is, therefore, intersected with issues of home as a place where trauma occurs and the issues of forced displacement. As a result, self-narratives of external exile in the context of Iran, arguably, are produced through the historical events of home that they experience rather than elaboration of private or personal events.<sup>93</sup> In other words, the selves of exile seem unable to ignore the traumatic experiences of home. The selves can be understood, interpreted, empowered and transcribed through the difficulties of their exilic experiences embedded in exilic discourse. The other prominent factor in the works of exile is that they attempt to challenge the dominant sociopolitical constructions of the home country and be the voices of dissent. Through focusing on the issues of return, nationality, originality, and the past, hybridized exilic identities on the one hand elaborate and raise awareness of the subjectivities produced in the exilic discourse which controlled and dominated them, and on the other hand try to undermine the function of power of those who construct and control the discourse.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, external exile is predominantly composed of two fundamental disruptions: the disjoined experience of displacement to a host country and the forced/deliberate dissociation from the dominant cultural and sociopolitical matters of the homeland brought about by internal conflict, such as revolution, in the home country. The cultural products of external exile are influenced by these two disruptions and are the narratives of the experiences and insights raised in the external exilic situation. Certain issues related to the disjoined experience of external exile, such as alienation, the pain of losing home, and separateness are prevalent in the narratives of external exile. External exile is primarily an internal exile who decides/is forced to be displaced from their home country and become an external exile. In the next chapter, after a description and analysis of internal exile, I will argue that both external and internal exiles are essentially the same. I will show that for external exile there is a necessity to be first an internal exile.

Based on the understandings of exile discussed in the previous chapter, both *Reading Lolita in Tehran* and *Persepolis* are self-narratives of exile since their senses of self are configured and offered through the two fundamental disruptions and the issues of a lost home. They are also narratives of resistance and the works of external exile because, first they resist the dominant socio-political and cultural discourses, secondly both apply specific techniques to

---

<sup>93</sup> For more see: Sidonie Smith, *Reading Autobiography: a Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, 2nd ed (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010). Naomi Sakr, *Women and Media in the Middle East: Power through Self-expression*, Library of Modern Middle East Studies, 41 (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

voice and empower their resistance and thirdly their senses of self-transcendence are in contrast with that of their loved ones. By the sense of self-transcendence I mean the sense of relative satisfaction in moulding, socially, professionally and intellectually, oneself to the private and public socio-political and cultural aspects of the home country. This sense of relative satisfaction is achieved when one is given a space to apply one's ability and move beyond the needs of self and be of some service to the needs of one's society. In this sense, I suggest that they apply two main approaches to expose their external exilic identities and fulfil their resistance: they use imposed duality and adopted duality. In *Reading Lolita in Tehran* and *Persepolis*, resistance is approached, voiced and rationalized through depicting the constant, imposed duality that the constructor puts on the lives of the authors, which eventually leads them to leave their homeland. Adopted duality, or what Hamid Naficy calls liminality or Bhabha calls hybridity, is acceptance and usage of a deterritorialized and intercultural space within which both authors are equipped to empower their resistance and practise their power against the constructor. This is most clearly evident in the early parts of both works to which I will now turn.

From the very first pages of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* and *Persepolis* a reader is informed about the identities imposed upon them that both of the authors had to endure and resist. In *Reading Lolita in Tehran* Nafisi describes how she resigned her academic post due to the unjust policies of Islamization that the Islamic Republic of Iran enforced on the constitutional law in general and the rules of Universities in particular. In *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, it is shown that Islamization marginalized secular academic members in general and the rules of mandatory veiling marginalized secular women even more. In the memoir, the imposed dual identities that the IRI oblige people to adopt are openly depicted and criticized. The description of the Islamization of the country in general and the issue of mandatory veiling in particular shows how the regime tries to Islamicize and homogenize society, especially the women. This is how Nafisi describes imposed dual identities at the beginning of the memoir:

I have the two photographs in front of me now. In the first there are seven women, standing against a white wall. They are, according to the law of the land, dressed in black robes and head scarves, covered except for the oval of their faces and their hands. In the second photograph the same group, in the same position, stands against the same wall. Only they have taken off their coverings. Splashes of color separate one from the next. Each has become distinct through the color and style of her



clothes, the color and the length of her hair; not even the two who are still wearing their head scarves look the same.<sup>94</sup>

In the above excerpt, the imposed duality caused by “the law of the land” is vividly addressed. The narrative voice comparing the two different photographs of the same people exposes that the women’s individuality, free choice of clothing and essentially their diverse identities are forcibly homogenized and Islamicized, according to the laws and policies of the forced Islamization of the Islamic Republic. As it is evident from the opening of the memoir, the self-narrative of this external exilic work begins the narrative of the self with the issues of the home and the dislocated experience of the imposed duality Nafisi has to deal with and endure.

To introduce her sense of self, Marjaneh Satrapi in *Persepolis*, in a way similar to Azar Nafisi, addresses the same issue of imposed identity by the constructor. In her graphic novel, the first picture of the first section (The Veil) shows Marjaneh as a 10 year old student among her other female classmates who are veiled with bewildered, sad, and confused facial expressions. Their facial expressions make it clear that veiling has been forced upon them and is unusual for them. In another drawing, two pictures of the same people are shown: one is of the group outside in public and the other is in a private space of someone’s home. The outside picture shows a group of women all covered according to the Islamized rules in the almost identical, uniform-like outfits. . The other shows the same women without their veils with different and individual styles of clothing, haircuts and make-up. In the captions to these the two pictures Satrapi says: “... this disparity made us schizophrenic”.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> Nafisi, p.4.

<sup>95</sup> Satrapi, p.305, p.3.

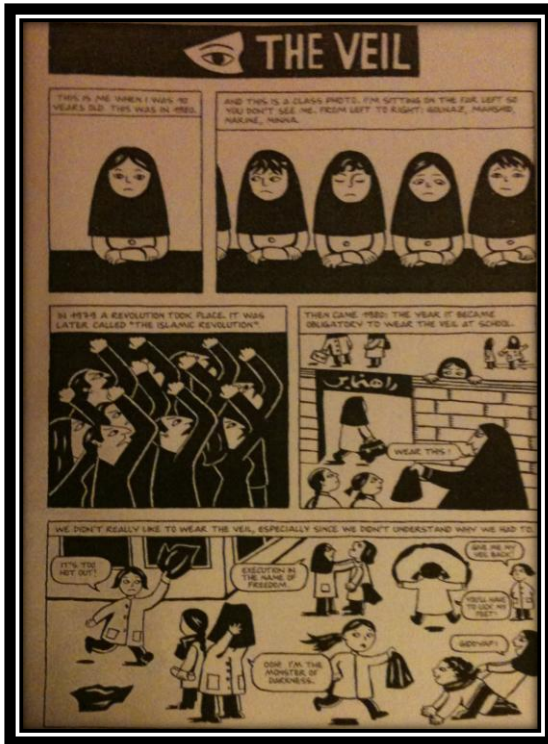


Figure 1: The Veil

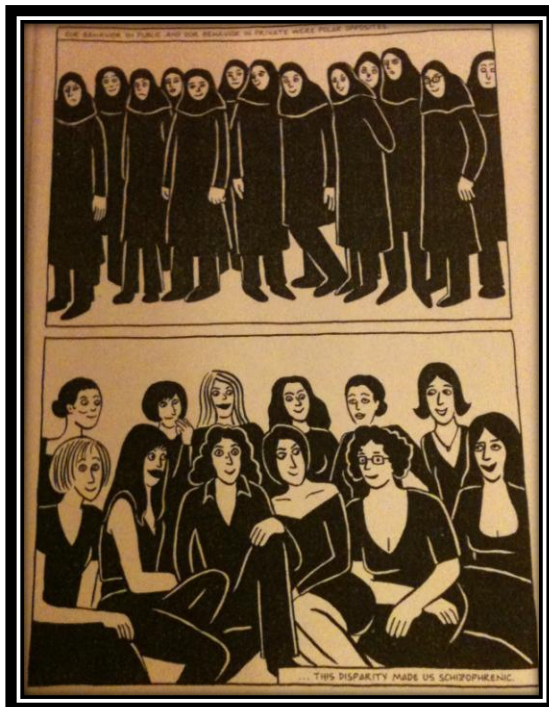


Figure 2: Disparity

The significance of these two drawings is how Marjaneh describes her sense of self. Both of the drawings, similar to the pictures described in *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, suggest

Marjaneh's disjointed experience of imposed duality at home which comes to her childhood as a strange, uncomfortable feeling illustrated through the facial expressions of the drawing. Marjaneh's sense of self, in her autobiographical graphic novel, deals at the outset with the, direct or indirect, representation of the constructor. It is through the depiction of the imposed duality that throughout the book is perceived as the oppression for which the constructor is responsible. The second drawing similar to the first one stresses the issue of imposed duality. It, however, has a fundamental difference with the first one; in the second picture, unlike the first one the characters and Marjaneh have happy smiley faces. The patterns that emerge from this contain three basic messages. First, awareness about the imposed duality is raised. Secondly, it suggests that the imposed duality is not powerful enough to fully consume the individuality of the people. And thirdly, at the best situation, even with smiley faces, which suggests Marjaneh's coming-to-terms existence with the issues of home, still their existence because of the "disparity" is "schizophrenic". These messages enable the author to practise her power of resistance against the constructor. They suggest the inability and weakness of the constructor in fully determining the peoples' diverse individualities. Simultaneously, the drawing conveys a message of the tyrannical system and policies of the constructor that is imposing such an oppressive situation on the people.

The second book offers an account of the events with which Marjaneh is faced on her return to the home country, after years of being away from home during her adolescence. The second book clearly suggests the disjointed experience and the inauthentic existence of external exile. In this section, Satrapi, upon return from Austria, vividly expresses a sense of deep alienation from her environment and its prevalent socio-cultural matters and the perspectives they generate. Through illustrating these issues, she stresses her sense of the inauthentic existence reflected in her struggle to conform to the new policies of the socio-politically altered home, as a result of the revolution. Her sense of inauthentic existence is illustrated through the discomfort and disappointments she repeatedly feels around the attitudes and various cultures of her immediate and extended family and friends. This ultimately results in her psychological breakdown, shown in her several suicide attempts. It is after these difficult times of return that she tries to come to terms with the issues of home, to pursue her education and find like-minded friends. However, this attempt faces her with another obstacle of her sense of self-transcendence.

Both works are begun with the introduction of the senses of self of external exile interrelated with the issues of home. These issues at first are raised as problems however, throughout both

of the books these turn into not only mere problems but serious matters of oppression and tyranny. Raising the issues of oppression and tyranny allows them to voice their resistance against the constructor. Also, through voicing their senses of self with the issues of home both Marjaneh and Nafisi identify their senses of self with resistance against the policies of the constructor. They give voice to their marginalized identities at home, which ultimately leads to their expatriation and through it they practice their power against the constructor. In both of the books the constructor is exposed as a major figure responsible for tyranny and oppression.

Considering the opening and the entire content of the self narratives of both works, it is evident that the exilic senses of self intersect with the issues of home. With the specific focus on the issues of imposed duality, both works show how and why the authors felt oppressed and marginalized. These descriptions pave the way to explaining why, in the end, they both had to leave their country and live in exile. Criticising such oppression, both works aim to resist and dismantle constructed subjectivities, rewrite their histories of self, which have been silenced by the constructor, and also take pride in their outspoken manners and exilic identities. Through resisting this imposed duality they reclaim and expose their confiscated identities. This matter is predominantly shown through both authors describing the difficulties they face in pursuing their careers and in adjusting themselves to the forced rules. Not willing to give in to the forced stipulations, they create spaces of their own within which they become closer to their senses of self. For example, Azar Nafisi sets up a private class consisting of seven of her best students in which they discuss the forbidden works of literature of the west, after the Islamization of the country. Azar informs the reader that she sets up the private class after her resignation from the University, which is due to her having been controlled and limited by a tightly proscribed set of methods and materials for teaching: the ones which do not clash with the Islamized doctrines of the IRI. About her private class, Nafisi says:

When my students came into that room, they took off more than their scarves and robes. Gradually, each one gained an outline and a shape, becoming her own inimitable self. Our world in that living room with its window framing my beloved Elburz Mountains became our sanctuary, our self-contained universe, mocking the reality of black-scarved, timid faces in the city that sprawled below[...] One reason

for my choice of these particular girls was the peculiar mixture of fragility and courage I sensed in them. They were what you would call loners, who did not belong to any particular group or sect. I admired their ability to survive not despite but in some ways because of their solitary lives. We can call the class “a space of our own” [...] a sort of communal version of Virginia Woolf’s room of her own.<sup>96</sup>

In the above excerpt, the individuals who have made the “space” of their own offer prominent exilic characteristics, for four substantial reasons. First, these individuals do not fit neatly in their country; they are at odds with their environments and as a result are “loners” who are displaced from their environment and consequently do not have the sense of belonging. Secondly, this displacement is stated as a matter of imposition not a voluntary preference because the environment where they live in is described as somewhere with a “reality” which causes the timidity and fragility. Thirdly, the individuals are aware of their disjointed and displaced experiences since they make a conscious choice to configure their own space within a dominant environment. In other words, the above excerpt is the description of a built-in space in a bigger environment which is not compatible with the dominant environment and at the same time, at least physically, not separable. Fourth, these individuals regardless of encountering the dominant intimidating world and their “fragile” existence are described to have the “courage” of resistance through creating “a space of [their] own”. This space is exposed as a place that equips its occupants with the power to “mock” the intimidating “reality” of outside and at the same time empowers them to voice their “inimitable self”, their individual “outline” and “shape”.

Resistance and rewriting histories of their selves is manifested in the ways exiles create the private spaces of their own; this recovers and empowers the sense of self under the repression of their individuality through forced homogeneity. A similar example of forced marginalization is traceable for Marjaneh and her classmates in pursuing their studies and careers as artists. The issue is illustrated through pictures showing the new rules of their anatomy or life drawing class. According to the Islamized rules, the model who is the subject of their drawing project is fully covered in a black veil, leaving the artists not much bodily figures and flesh to draw. As a result, Marjaneh and her like-minded friends decide to create a private space of their own to pursue their interests in a more logical, and therefore challenging and creative, environment. The incompatible private space of the exiles with the

---

<sup>96</sup> Nafisi, p.6-12.

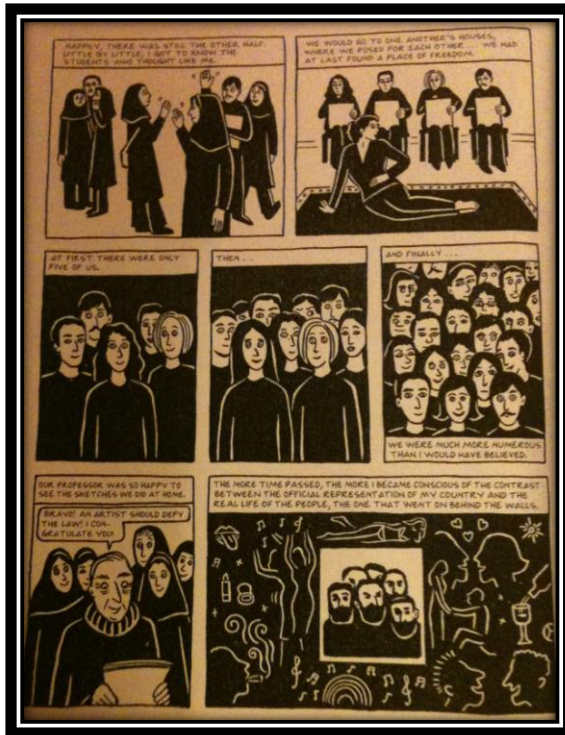
dominant environment of their country is evidently illustrated in the last picture in which Marjaneh says:

The more time passed, the more I became conscious of the contrast between the official representation of my country and the real life of the people, the one that went on behind the walls.<sup>97</sup>



Figure 3: Drawing Project

<sup>97</sup> Satrapi, p.304, p.299.



**Figure 4: The Contrast**

The last drawing, similar to Nafisi’s private spaces, illustrates a space which consists of two incompatible figures: one is an Islamized/patriarchal figure and the other is depicted as a figure which is in “contrast” with the Islamized figure through showing it as a place that contains alcohol, dance, music, an unveiled female body, hetero and homosexual relations. The admixture of the two incompatible figures also offers another insight that while the “official representation of [the] country” is the one that is seen and exposed, it is not representative of the real life of the people. Quite the opposite is shown to be true since the official representations and the people are opposite to each other. It also suggests the oppressive nature of the officials as they impose their being on the people and marginalize the people by pushing them “behind the walls”. This is shown through their exposed, clearly visible, dominant picture in the drawing. At the same time, the drawing shows that regardless of the officials’ exposed and imposed existence on the people they do not have enough power to control them even if they make them marginalized and invisible.

As it is shown in the private spaces of both Nafisi’s and Satrapi’s narratives, there is a necessity for external exile to be an internal exile first in a sense of being aware of her/his displaced and marginalized identity at home. External exile is in fact an internal exile who is pushed to expatriation mainly because of the issues of self-transcendence, which I will come back to it at the end of this chapter. The private spaces assist exiles to resist enforced

homogenization and help them to reclaim their individual selves. Narratives of resistance of external exile, however, have a cause and effect strategy of writing. This strategy, often, offers a reader oppressive systems, which frustrate external exile and consequently evoke their resistance.

From the beginning until the end of both works there are totalitarian, controlling and oppressive pictures of the Other which constantly frustrate and disappoint the exiles and which are constantly being criticized, challenged, and resisted by them. I argue that this cause-and-effect strategy of writing confuses the personal grievous incidents with totalitarian policies and the actions of the constructor. This strategy gets the readers accustomed to the always-oppressive-and-responsible-for-all-wrongs picture of the constructor to the extent that all the tragic incidents and personality delicacies are automatically blamed on the Other. For example, in Nafisi's private class during their talk about the colour of paradise, one of the students, Manna, says:

My paradise is swimming-pool blue! [...] My best memories are of swimming in our huge irregularly shaped swimming pool. I was a swimming champion at our school, a fact my dad was very proud of. About a year after the revolution, my father died of a heart attack, and then the government confiscated our house and our garden and we moved into an apartment. I never swam again. My dream is at the bottom of that pool. I have a recurring dream of diving in to retrieve something of my father's memory and my childhood [.]<sup>98</sup>

The narrative voice, in the above example, offers the reader with four main points: Manna's nostalgic feelings about swimming and the specific swimming pool, her father's death, their house which was confiscated by the government, and her avoidance of swimming. The narrative voice juxtaposes Manna's personal sufferings of bereavement, as a result of her father's death and the matter that she stopped swimming, with the establishment of a new government which confiscated their house. This juxtaposition in a way implies that the father's death of the natural cause of a heart attack is to be blamed on the revolution and the establishment of the new regime. Manna's fragility in the sense that she stopped swimming altogether, on the other hand, is to be blamed on the government confiscating their house and, consequently, their swimming pool.

---

<sup>98</sup> Nafisi, p.14.



The similar cause and effect dilemma is illustrated in *Persepolis* with a humorous tone. Unlike *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, in *Persepolis*, this dilemma, however, is not addressed to confuse the personal tragic incidents with totalitarian policies. With the use of humour, it is rather depicted to stress on the presence of such dilemma through which people manage to express their anger with the oppressive regime. For example, there is a section in which Marjaneh's father recounts the pretence of the martyrdom of a man, who died of cancer, by a group of demonstrators during the upheaval of the revolution.



Figure 5: Martyr. Not.



Figure 6: Martyr

He recounts that although the widow of the man explains to the demonstrators that he passed away because of cancer and he is not a martyr the demonstrators still insist that “No problem. He is a hero”<sup>99</sup>. Marjaneh’s father explains that the rest of the story is even more amusing when the widow joins the demonstrators and chants along with them their slogans in the honour of her husband. The point of this cause-and-effect dilemma is expressed with this story and with a humorous tone of the voice of Marjaneh’s grandmother when she says: “If I die now at least I will be a martyr!!! Grandma martyr!”<sup>100</sup>

There is no doubt that the socio-political pressures have an effect on the people’s physical and psychological well being but if the aim of resistance is to resist the dominant socio-political and cultural discourses, the dimensions, structures, ideologies and the ways these discourses function need to be scrutinized, studied and properly understood. This cause-and-effect strategy of writing simplifies the complex structure of the constructor, gets in the way of an adequate understanding of its complexity and, therefore, obstructs any effective resistance to it. I argue that the constructor in the works of external exile is represented in a way that is simple and homogenous, whereby the external exile aims to marginalize it rather than effectively resisting it. It is so because the selves of external exile not only intersect and interconnect with the issues of home but they are interdependent with the Other. In other

<sup>99</sup> Satrapi, p.32.

<sup>100</sup> Satrapi, p.32.

words, exile and the constructor require each other's identity to function and survive. As shown in both cultural products, they suggest and narrate their exilic identities and their senses of self through narrating their resistance.

To put it another way, in order to define their senses of self and to voice their resistance, external exilic identities or external exilic narratives of resistance are necessarily interdependent with the Other. Without the Other, the external exilic self cannot function. The extent to which this is important is made clear with the fact that their life narratives or memoirs begin with the picture of the Other. The Other is, therefore, fundamental to their sense of self, which is their exilic identity.

The Other in *Reading Lolita in Tehran* and *Persepolis* are predominantly the governmental institutions in power and their religious representatives who are encountered, directly or indirectly, by the authors. The authors' selves, lives, and identities are interrelated/interlinked/entangled with the ways the Other influences them. As a result, I argue, the main aims of narratives of external exile, alongside resisting the imposed subjectivities of the constructor, voicing their resistance, writing their histories, is also to ostracize the constructor and its culture from the global gaze. To do this, they apply their adopted duality to practice their power against the Other. In the second section, using the theoretical arguments of the previous chapter and excerpts from both cultural products, I clarify how this happens.

### Adopted Duality, Practising Power and Persisting Resistance

Exile, arguably, is the individual sense of self's dispute with the popular culture of home. Earlier in this chapter, it has been explained that exilic narratives of resistance voice their dissent through exposing and challenging the imposed duality (like forced Islamized identity and culture) upon them. In the case of external exile, in which the individual physically leaves their homeland, they are exposed to the different cultures, languages and socio-political systems of their host societies. They are, therefore, in the 'liminal', 'hybrid' and 'inbetween' spaces of their exilic, home and host cultures. Both works of *Reading Lolita*

*in Tehran* and *Persepolis* are shaped as much by the disjointed experience of relocating to the United States and France respectively as they are by the disruption to the homeland brought about by the revolution. For external exile, the dissenting attitudes of their exilic identities are not necessarily given to the cultural dimensions of their host societies. Quite the opposite is true: they accept and employ some cultural aspects of their host countries to empower their exilic identities and selves. Having said that, *Persepolis* is critical of certain aspects of the host country, Austria, like racism.<sup>101</sup> By adopted duality I mean, therefore, a deliberate choice of intercultural and interlingual space within which their exilic identities and aims can better function and flourish. I argue that adopted duality equips external exile to first identify their sense of exilic self, through resisting the constructor, and secondly equips them to empower and centralize an external exilic identity and culture. I argue that they aim to marginalize the constructor and its culture in order to centralize their external exilic identity and culture. It is so because, as I mentioned before, both external exile and the constructor are interdependent with each other and without the Other neither of them functions. For more clarification, it is useful to study how the adopted duality of external exile serves their sense of self and identity.

The liminality of Azar Nafisi's exilic position is accordant with what Hamid Naficy argues as the productive potential of exile. Azar Nafisi's state of liminality enables her to empower her exilic identity through the emergence of new hybrid cultural forms. In the case of *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, the readers are offered western literature, as an appropriation of western dominant culture, through which Iranians and particularly a group of Iranian women in an exilic condition express their culture, voice and historical identity. She applies the international language of English and western genres and literature to communicate and narrate the selves and exilic identities of Iranian women with the world. She also has managed to effectively incorporate her profession into her memoir-writing. Nafisi, as a professor of English literature, manages to bend her passion for English literature and the genre of literary criticism within her memoir to voice her resistance. As a result, *Reading Lolita in Tehran* was on the *New York Times* bestseller list for about one hundred weeks and has been translated into thirty-two languages.<sup>102</sup>

Regarding the international success of *Reading Lolita In Tehran*, some argue that the political climate about the IRI at the time of the publication of *Reading Lolita In Tehran*, has an

---

<sup>101</sup> Satrapi, pp. 177,220.

<sup>102</sup> <http://barclayagency.com/nafisi.html> (retrieved 04/06/13)

important impact on its success and its widely-read status. For example, Amy Malek argues that “the post-9/11 atmosphere created a level of curiosity towards Iran that though it may have originated in the 1980s, was never satiated or answered publicly by Iranians themselves until recently”.<sup>103</sup> She suggests that Nafisi’s success is, therefore, “a product of both the quality of her writing and public curiosity”.<sup>104</sup>

Similar to *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, *Persepolis* by Marjaneh Satrapi elaborately depicts the productive potential of exile due to the author’s liminal status. The author’s liminality makes the emergence of marginalized exilic culture and voice possible. Malek argues that Marjaneh Satrapi “combines traditional western genres with Iranian history and culture to create a third space from which dominant media-based notions about Iran”, Iranian culture and history in western society have been challenged and rewritten. Satrapi created her graphic novel in France where *bandes-dessinees*<sup>105</sup>, which literally means "drawn strips", as a genre is highly popular and critically read. This genre refers to comics and comic books in the Franco-Belgian tradition and is translated as graphic novels in English. According to Malek, this genre is an established one in Francophone scholarship and criticism, and is distinguished as *le neuvieme art*, the ninth art.

Satrapi applies this genre to expand and develop the genre of memoir as well as comic worlds. As for the genre of memoir, she applies comics to draw and write her memoir through narrating it in graphics. This allows her to communicate and express her exilic experiences and identity, both in words and visual expressions. Also her adopted duality and liminality allows her to produce a creative cultural approach that pushes the boundaries of memoir in which the issues of identity, exile and return are addressed. As for the comic worlds, Malek notes that *Persepolis* is the first to deal with Iranian women's experiences in graphic novel form. It is also the first that appealed to such a wide readership.<sup>106</sup> The wide readership and international appeal, as Malek notes, has contributed significantly to “the acceptance of comics and the graphic novel as an art form and legitimate form of adult literature, moving it from novelty shops to best seller lists and mainstream bookstores”.<sup>107</sup>

Satrapi’s adopted duality allows her to create a hybrid cultural product, which can easily be translated and transferred to other cultures. In this regard, Malek states that Satrapi creates

---

<sup>103</sup> Malek, . p.378.

<sup>104</sup> Malek, p.378.

<sup>105</sup> Malek, p.370.

<sup>106</sup> Malek, p. 371.

<sup>107</sup> Malek, p.371.

“an engaging forum from which to perform the important work of cultural translation for the Iranian diaspora”.<sup>108</sup> She also says that “graphic novels themselves have been seen as a hybrid form in its site of comic art and storytelling [.]”<sup>109</sup> It makes Satrapi’s use of this genre better suited to her hybrid identity in a liminal situation. Malek argues that Satrapi, through being internationally acclaimed and widely-read in the world, helps the Iranian diaspora to be better understood in their host countries. She argues that Satrapi helps to complicate the media-driven negative images of Iran and Iranian culture, particularly in the west. This argument about the popularity of the works and differences they make about their exilic culture to be understood and differentiated from that of the constructor, provides an insight to the identity, extent and aims of resistance, tools and functions of external exile in the context of Iran.

The structure of external exilic narratives, in the context of Iran, is configured by and consists of three main domains: exile, the constructor and the host society. External exile cannot function without any of them. External exile can only exist through offering their exilic identity, which is achievable only by voicing their resistance against the constructor, and marginalizing the constructor. As argued before, imposed duality, therefore, is a tool for them to voice their resistance and adopted duality is a tool and strategy in maintaining power relations. Through resisting imposed duality, they raise awareness of oppression and tyranny. Their adopted duality provides a space for them to first overcome the politics of censorship and the dominant socio-political and cultural discourses, while at the same time making their voices dominant. Their hybrid, inbetween, liminal spaces equip external exile to have a connection with a great number of readers and audiences around the world. Using the languages of their host countries as well as their familiar literary genres they also, on the one hand, voice their silenced identity and centralize their marginalized histories and, on the other hand, ostracize the constructor. To shed more light on the matter, at this point, I will examine the power relations between the external exile and the constructor.

In power relations, as mentioned before in the previous chapter, both the exile and the constructor are powerful elements. For the external exile, in the context of Iran, resistance is not the only aim but for external exile to function it should also dominate. As argued earlier in this chapter, each of their identities is interdependent to the Other; neither of them can function in the absence of the Other. That is why external exile refuses to scrutinize the

---

<sup>108</sup> Malek, p.359.

<sup>109</sup> Malek, p.366.

complex structure of the Other to effectively resist it; effective resistance of the Other would threaten its own existence and ability to function. For this, the interdependence of external exilic identity and the Other is obscured in the narratives of external exile. The subdued aspect of this matter is mainly perceptible through the dichotomous pictures the narratives of external exile offer about their identity and that of the Other. Through offering dichotomous representations they claim that external exile is independent and distanced from the Other in any ideological, mental, moral, and physical sense. The essence of the narratives of external exile is, therefore, hierarchy, stratification and a determinedly univocal position. This is mainly discernible in the homogenous criminalized picture they offer of the constructor.

Earlier in the previous chapter I explained how exile and the constructor are both powerful. Karima Laachir and Saeed Talajooy view cultural resistance not just as an opposition to “the prevailing power relations in societies, but more as a way of appropriating, transforming, negotiating and subverting them”.<sup>110</sup> Reading Michel Foucault’s argument about power and resistance which are intertwined, in the sense that domination evokes resistance and resistance leads to another form of domination, they argue that resistance and power are interrelated and cannot be separated. To understand the diversity and complexity of exile and exilic conditions and narratives, power relations and resistance should at least be distinguished. In order to challenge the elements that impose forced displacement and exile, it is important to address and read *how* power is practised in the narratives of resistance. I argue that due to the dynamic nature of power, the narratives, which are in essence hierarchal and dichotomous, will ironically perpetuate it even if they are resisting, with the best intentions, forced displacement.

Another aspect which is evident in the identity of external exile is that their sense of self-transcendence is different and occasionally in conflict with that of their loved ones, or the ones who are close to them. As mentioned earlier, in the previous chapter, the sense of self-transcendence is a satisfactory sense which makes the sense of self meaningful through its professional, personal and intellectual integration with the society in a relatively gratifying manner. In other words, the self is meaningful through self-transcendence: when the individuals successfully mould themselves with the culture of home. Exilic identity challenges the dominant sociopolitical and cultural discourses of home; this is manifestly and openly depicted in the narratives of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* and *Persepolis*. Exilic identity,

---

<sup>110</sup> Laachir and Talajooy, p.19.

therefore, cannot easily mould their sense of self with the popular culture of home. This oppositional sense of self, however, is not always accordant with the self-knowledge of their loved ones. External exile realizes that their loved ones are not only easily able to mould their senses of self with the popular culture but occasionally they even support the very culture external exile eschews and resists.

For example, in *Reading Lolita in Tehran* Nafisi from the beginning until the end of the narrative finds fitting into the Islamized culture unbearably difficult. She acknowledges consistent barriers, which frustrate and trouble her ability to adequately and productively contribute to and assimilate with society. In other words, she does not see herself being transcendent enough in the society. Nafisi, therefore, does not feel useful, engaged and involved to the extent that her abilities, education and talents should allow her to be. For example, in *Reading Lolita in Tehran* Azar Nafisi describes how bizarre, unbearable and unacceptable the enforced policy of mandatory veiling was for her. Also she describes her frustration with the academic evaluation criteria of the University lecturers' knowledge and teaching skills, which are replaced by the Islamized mandatory rules and criteria for evaluating University lecturers. During a meeting with a group of revolutionaries – Mr. Bahri and his friends – Nafisi narrates how she tried to explain to them why she did not want to comply with the rules of mandatory veiling in the University. She describes her feelings after the meeting:

I think that day I realized how futile it was to “discuss” my views with Mr. Bahri [...]. For a few months I had seen it coming, but I think it was that day, after I left Mr. Bahri and his friend, that it first hit me how irrelevant I had become [...]. People like me seemed as irrelevant as Fitzgerald was to Mike Gold, or Nabokov to Stalin's Soviet Union, or James to the Fabian society, or Austen to revolutionaries of her time.<sup>111</sup>

Nafisi is not willing to fit herself into the imposed sociopolitical culture of home. Also she finds herself, her knowledge and her abilities “irrelevant” to the demands and the sociopolitical culture of the society. She also finds her sense of self-transcendence to be in contrast with that of her husband, Bijan. She realizes that although her husband does not ideologically support and approve of the regime, unlike her, he is able to relatively and satisfactory contribute his professional knowledge to the dominant systems of the homeland

---

<sup>111</sup> Nafisi, p.165-166.



and become engaged with it. That is why her husband is not willing to leave the country. Nafisi says:

Being a good architect or dedicated civil engineer did not threaten the regime, and Bijan was excited by the great projects they were given [...]. He felt creative and he felt wanted, and, in the very best sense of the term, he felt he was of some service to his country. He was of the opinion that we had to serve our country, regardless of who ruled it. The problem for me was that I lost all concept of terms such as *home*, *service*, and *country*.<sup>112</sup>

She experiences the sense of detachment to the concept of home at the time. She feels alienated, not wanted and also unable to effectively transcend her sense of self in the society. As a result, as she says, the concepts of *home*, *service*, and *country* lose their substance and meaning for her. In other words, she loses the meaning of her sense of self through not being able to transcend it. This state of detachment, displacement and alienation is not what her husband feels or experiences even with having adverse feelings about the dominant Islamicized policies. As a result, their senses of self-transcendence are different and in ways in conflict with each other. This is evident in their perceptions of their future life; while Azar insists on leaving the country Bijan wants to stay.

Similarly, Marjaneh in *Persepolis*, given her potential and talent, does not feel allowed to make useful contributions into the society. After several failed attempts to contribute her artistic project for the theme park she realizes that she is deprived of a space to transcend herself to a satisfactory level.

---

<sup>112</sup> Nafisi, p.169.



Figure 7: Job Interview

Not having been given a space for her professional and intellectual contributions, like Nafisi, she feels wasted and useless in the home country. This drives her to leave home for the second time and reside in another country. She says: “[...] not having been able to build anything in my own country, I prepared to leave it once again.”<sup>113</sup>

The attempts of external exiles for self-transcendence in their home country emphasises the external exilic identity of them as individuals. It is so because their attempts testify to their sense of love towards a place that they can call home and where they try to remain but from which they are banished. That is why the phenomenon of external exile is a painful banishment since the separation is imposed by force from home, where the individual external exile *wants* to stay, and more importantly in the case of separation *wants* to return if the situation changes for better. That is why there is a dream of “glorious return” for external exile.

This difference between the sense of self-transcendence of the external exile with that of their loved ones is a significant aspect which differentiates external exile with internal exile. The next chapter is about the performance, dimensions, and functions of internal exile. In the next chapter, I will argue that external and internal exiles are essentially the same. Due to the

<sup>113</sup> Satrapi, p.339.

position of internal exile at home (the center of censorship), however, they use different techniques to those of external exile to challenge dominant sociopolitical and cultural discourses.

## CHAPTER III: Internal Exile and Internal Exilic Identity in Ahmad Shamlou's Poetry and *My Tehran For Sale*

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how internal exilic identities develop and how they are reflected and function in cultural products they offer. I will apply the theoretical debates of internal exile, discussed in chapter one, to examine the various techniques through which internal exile functions and flourishes. I will examine the dimensions and characteristics of internal exilic elements in two different cultural genres of poetry and film. Film in general and poetry in the context of Iran are arguably both powerful genres in the terms of influencing, shaping and reshaping culture.<sup>114</sup> Due to the powerful role of these two genres in influencing the culture (and of course being influenced by culture), within the scope of these two genres, internal exilic identities and their cultural products play a prominent role in promoting resistance and the culture of resistance within the country. The essence of the cultural works of internal exile, as argued before, is to first resist the dominant socio-political discourses and culture and secondly promote a culture of resistance. Examining internal exile in a joint study of these two genres helps develop a deeper understanding of internal exile. It also assists examining its identity and reading its cultural products, aims, and the techniques applied in the cultural works of internal exile. In this chapter I will argue that a variety of techniques in both genres of poetry and film are used for internal exile to endorse and advocate a culture of resistance. Numerous innovative methods of narrative have appeared in Iranian new poetry, *She'r e No*.<sup>115</sup> These methods allow the poet, under the guise of metaphors, similes and varieties of poetic techniques, to use the medium as a means of social protest and as a way of discussing issues that are sensitive, marginalized or banned, with a large group of people. In the first section, analysis of Ahmad Shamlou's poetry will focus on this matter; mainly because of the oppositional nature of his poetry and its widely read and well received status in Iranian society. In the analysis of Ahmad Shamlou's poetry, I will explore and argue that various narrative techniques of visualization of reading and allusive messages are used to first demonstrate the internal exilic sense of self, secondly, to empower

---

<sup>114</sup> For more see: S. Chaudhuri, 'The Open Image: Poetic Realism and the New Iranian Cinema', *Screen*, 44 (2003), 38–57 <doi:10.1093/screen/44.1.38>. <http://sensesofcinema.com/2006/41/poetry-censorship-iran/> (retrieved 10/10/2009).

<sup>115</sup> For more on *She'r No* see: *An Invitation to Persian Poetry: a Bilingual Text, Persian-English*, First edition (Los Angeles: Ketab Corp, 2006). Reza Baraheni, *Khiṭāb Bih Parvānah'hā: Shi'r ; Va, Chirā Man Dīgar Shā'ir-i Nīmāyī Nīstam: Bahsī Dar Shā'irī. (Addressing Butterflies: And Why Am I Not a Nimayi Poet Anymore?)* (Tehran: Nashr-i Markaz, 1995).

internal exilic identity and culture, thirdly to challenge the dominant sociopolitical and cultural expositions and finally, to promote the culture of resistance.

In the second section of this chapter, I will look at Iranian cinema and the significant role film plays in narrating its history. I will argue that the films of internal exile, in the context of Iran, voice and rewrite their suppressed histories. For this chapter, Granaz Moussavi's film, *My Tehran for Sale*, will be analyzed. Her film has significant elements of internal exilic identity and culture and due to its financial support from Australia pushes the thematic and visual boundaries confined to the policies of censorship or the *red lines* of IRI. Analyzing the film, I will elaborate that the filmmakers, in a way similar to the poets, are equipped with techniques to challenge imposed authoritative limitations. In *My Tehran for Sale*, I will explore the cinematic techniques Moussavi employs to give voice to a marginalized identity. Although this film is bound to abide by official governmental rules, it, nevertheless, clearly manages to avoid certain policies of IRI censorship, when it is compared to the other films produced inside the country.

Considering the fundamental aims of internal exile, I will argue that both internal and external cultural products of exile are essentially the same, in the sense of perceiving and exposing the constructor, and voicing and empowering their culture of resistance. To fulfil their aims, however, they pursue different approaches. This difference is mainly derived from the location where they are based: one inside home (in the centre of danger) and the other outside of the home.

### Shamlou: 'Poet Of Liberty'

This section offers an analysis of a series of well-known poems written by the prominent Iranian poet, Ahmad Shamlou. Shamlou was born in 1925 in Iran. He is one of the most influential poets of modern Iran who apart from poetry was active in journalism and writing. He is known as one of the active figures of literary society in his questioning and criticizing of the tyranny imposed by the authorities both before and after the 1979 revolution. Before

the revolution, Shamlou “became a political prisoner under the Shah’s regime.”<sup>116</sup> For about three years, Shamlou lived in exile in the UK and the US before the revolution and soon after the revolution, in 1979, he returned to Iran.<sup>117</sup> Shamlou was also actively trying to “establish an independent Iranian writers’ association, an effort that continues to evoke resistance from the state authorities even today.”<sup>118</sup> The new Islamic regime after the revolution was not favourable to him or him to them. The new regime considered him to be an anti-Islamic nationalist element and a traitor because he was considered as a ‘westernized’ writer. After the revolution, publication of some of his works was banned for many years and some remain banned to this date. It was during Mohammad Khatami’s presidency that Shamlou’s standing was reinstated, even though he is well known for his political poems against the state; this was mainly due to the rather liberal policies Khatami’s presidency had. When Shamlou died on July 2000, Khatami’s cultural minister, Ataollah Mohajerani, openly expressed grief.<sup>119</sup>

In the field of literature, he received his prestigious status mainly because of his free poetic and distinctive style in which he employed “new means to expand the metrical and verbal resources of poetry.”<sup>120</sup> It is known as *Sepid* Poetry; it is a kind of free verse that is distinguished from the strict, balanced rhythm and rhymes of classical Persian poetry. He is also known for the specific language and words he applies in his poetry and the wide range of themes going all the way from political issues, mostly regarding ‘liberty’,<sup>121</sup> to love poems. Among the general public, he received his fame for his ‘humanitarian’<sup>122</sup> poems written in strong, new and charismatic language and his special focus on developing the culture of resistance inside home. Inside the country his poetry has also been canonized by the intellectuals. Analyzing some of his widely read and well-known poems, I will show that the cultural products of internal exile share similarities with certain aspects of the canon. Through juxtaposing characteristics of the canon with aspects of internal exile in Shamlou’s poetry, I will demonstrate that Shamlou’s poetry first has similar characteristics to the works

<sup>116</sup> Nahid Mozaffari, Ahmad Karimi Hakkak, eds. *Strange Times, My Dear* (New York, London: Arcade, 2006), p.370.

<sup>117</sup> Mozaffari, Karimi Hakkak, eds., p.370.

<sup>118</sup> Mozaffari, Karimi Hakkak, eds., p.370.

<sup>119</sup> <http://www.asheghoone.com>

<http://sabouteh.parsiblog.com>

<http://www.shamlou.org>

<http://www.shamlu.com/faMajor.htm>

<http://www.boxdl.com>

<sup>120</sup> Mozaffari, Karimi Hakkak, eds., p.370.

<sup>121</sup> The concept of liberty in Shamlou’s poetry concerns his understandings and perceptions of freedom from tyranny and oppression. He is known as a Poet of Liberty in this sense.

<sup>122</sup> By ‘humanitarian’ I refer to a sense of moral and ethical code of benevolence which was perceived by Shamlou.

of canon and secondly that these aspects have a powerful force in developing an exilic culture of resistance. I suggest that certain poems of Shamlou represent significant elements and functions of internal exile.

The reason I chose poetry as a cultural product for exploring internal exile is due to the special status poetry has within Iranian culture. For centuries, poetry has been the essence of Iranians' sense of identity and it has played an essential role in the preservation of their cultural and traditional heritage.<sup>123</sup> Poetry in Iran, unlike poetry in the West, is not merely an obscure branch of literature that attracts a small numbers of admirers. It is an intrinsic part of people's routine lives and ceremonies and is inseparable from them. Even some illiterate elderly people with no knowledge of literature are able to recite poetry, know of some popular poets, and hold an intrinsic respect for them. A few poets hold a status of high respect to the point that makes criticism of them or even attributing certain cultural practices of their times to them sensitive and difficult. To criticize some poets is often considered to be almost equivalent to blasphemy since some poets like Hafez or Rumi are considered to be sacred.

Various discussions are suggested to explain the popularity of poetry in Iran. For example, Laleh Shahideh referring to Sandra Mackey argues that in the heterogeneous Iranian society poetry is "the only common language for interconnecting all Iranians" who are living in "a complex pattern of ethnic groups, language, religions and regions".<sup>124</sup> In this regard, she refers to Salehi who offers an alternative explanation in the context of politics. He says:

Another factor contributing to the popularity of poetry may have been the presence of a sustained state of oppression. All through the history of Iran, people were not able to exert much influence upon the course of political events, and had to recreate their desired world in their minds. In making such a hypothetical world, they themselves decided how they wanted the order of things to be [...] Poetry became a common medium in which art, reality, and fantasy all met, a medium in which

---

<sup>123</sup> For more see: Hamid Dabashi, *Iran: a People Interrupted* (New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton, 2007). Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, 'Of Hail and Hounds: The Image of the Iranian Revolution in Recent Persian Literature', *State, Culture, and Society*, 1 (1985), 148–180. Nahid Mozaffari, *Strange Times, My Dear: The PEN Anthology of Contemporary Iranian Literature*, 1st ed (New York: Arcade Pub, 2005). Sorour S. Soroudi, 'The Iranian Heritage in the Eyes of the Contemporary Poet Mehdi Akhavan Salis (M. Omid)', in *Towards a Modern Iran: Studies in Thought, Politics and Society*, Ellie Kedouri, Sylvia Haim (London: Frank Cass, 1988), pp. 132–154.

<sup>124</sup> Laleh Shahideh, *The Power of Iranian Narratives: a Thousand Years of Healing* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004) , p.28.

certain political-minded poets found some degree of freedom to exercise their thoughts in a world that was not concrete but poetic.<sup>125</sup>

The prominent role of poetry as both a medium of communication between the ethnic groups of Iran and in sociopolitical disclosures makes this particular type of literary product an important focus for study when it comes to an understanding of internal exile. For the purpose of this chapter, I quote only two of Shamlou's poems in full, *In This Blind Alley* and *On Death*. This is because of their explicit visualization of internal exilic existence perceived and experienced by internal exile. *In This Blind Alley* is one of his most popular and well-read pieces of poetry. I will now turn to undertake an analysis of Shamlou's poetry. First I will consider *In This Blind Alley*. In the analysis of this poem, I will mainly explore first the ways in which the identity of internal exile is presented; secondly the perspicuous message offered and through it the dominant aim of resistance pursued in this piece and thirdly the techniques that are applied to assist the poet to convey his message and achieve the aim of resistance.

‘ In This Blind Alley’,<sup>126</sup>

They smell your breath.  
lest you have said: I love you,  
They smell your heart.  
These are strange times, my dear

They flog love  
at the roadblock. Let's hide love in the larder.

In this crooked blind alley, as the chill descends,  
they feed fires

---

<sup>125</sup> Shahideh, pp.28-29.

<sup>126</sup> Nahid Mozaffari, Ahmad Karimi Hakkak, eds. *Strange Times, My Dear* (New York, London: Arcade, 2006), pp. 372-373.



with logs of song and poetry.

Hazard not a thought:

These are strange times, my dear.

The man who knocks at your door in the noon of the night  
has come to kill the light.

Let's hide light in the larder.

There, butchers  
are posted in passageways  
with bloody chopping blocks and cleavers:  
These are strange times, my dear.

They chop smiles off lips,  
and songs off the mouth:

Let's hide joy in the larder.

Canaries barbecued  
on the flames of lilies and jasmine:  
these are strange times, my dear.

Satan drunk on victory,  
squats at the feast of our undoing.

Let's hide God in the larder.

The poem vividly elaborates the internal exilic condition and existence in which the danger and unsettling experiences happen in the intimate space of home. A cursory reading of the poem induces in the reader the sense of a gloomy, horrific, threatening and intimidating atmosphere. It suggests a sense of constant fear, anxiety, intimate insecurity and danger imposed by a Satanic element which is too close to the point that this element can smell the breath of the implied reader. The poem also pictures an intrusive interrogating system which constantly intrudes in the life, heart, and thoughts of the implied reader and undermines the freedom of living based on one's individual choices and preferences. This aspect of the poem presents the condition of internal exile because the danger and unsettling conditions are immediate to the individual and these traumatic experiences are imposed on the individual by another force. The historical context of the poem is important. It was written a few years after the establishment of IRI in 1979 and is a response to its disgraceful policies and punishments, such as public flogging for alcohol consumption. This poem is arguably Shamlou's "symbolic expression of his feelings"<sup>127</sup> during that era. These feelings of Shamlou describe his internal exilic situation: being at home where is the center of danger and being encountered with an alienating space with strange times. In this regard, Ahamd Karimi-Hakkak argues that:

At the core of many literary works of the decade following the Iranian Revolution of 1979 lies an attempt at the cancellation of the revolution as revolution and its re-codification in negative terms – a breach of trust, an illegitimate seizure of power, and, above all, an alien invasion of some kind.<sup>128</sup>

As Karimi-Hakkak argues the sense of being invaded by an alien force is prevalent in many literary works of that era. Consequently, the sense of perceiving the homeland as a strange and anonymous land is evident in the above poem. This sense of feeling alienated at homeland is the sense of internal exilic existence.

As mentioned before, suffering is an important factor in producing the identity of internal exiles. For internal exile this suffering is perceived to be imposed by the constructor. To elaborate his internal exilic identity, Shamlou begins the poem with a reference to the unknown figure of "they" who are a powerful controlling and tyrannical organization capable of chopping "smiles off lips and songs off the mouth". To elaborate and to expose the sense

---

<sup>127</sup> Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, 'Revolutionary Posturing: Iranian Writers and the Iranian Revolution of 1979', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Cambridge University Press, 23 (1991), 507–531.

<sup>128</sup> Karimi-Hakkak, 'Revolutionary Posturing: Iranian Writers and the Iranian Revolution of 1979', p.519.

of self, internal exile, similar to external exile, requires the description of the opposite Other. Similar to the openings of the previous works of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* and *Persepolis*, the sense of the poet's self-description starts with exposing the picture of the constructor. The sense of self for internal exile, like external exile, is, therefore, interrelated and interdependent to the opposite Other. Through exposing the picture of the Other, Shamlou establishes his sense of an internal exilic self and his exilic conditions.

Shamlou then offers a perspicuous message of resistance through anticipating the approaching risks of forced inhuman homogenization and warns and invites the implied readers to resist them through hiding and sustaining their "love", "light", "joy", and "God". The first priority in the narratives of internal exile, as I explained before, is to generate resistance. As mentioned earlier, internal exile aims to voice and at the same time empower the culture of resistance. To implement their culture of resistance internal exile applies different techniques one of which is othering. This technique equips internal exile to picture a dichotomous image and through it compare and contrast opposite aspects of self and the Other. In the above poem, two oppositional cultures are suggested: the culture of "us" and "them". The culture of "us" associates with humanitarian and positive principles of "love", "joy" and "light" while the culture of "them", on the opposite side of "us"-culture, contains the inhumane brutalities of torture and execution. Juxtaposing both oppositional aspects, Shamlou invites his readers to preserve the humanitarian values against diabolical systems and impositions. This technique has a prominent role in the elaboration and development of internal exilic identity for two main reasons. First, it allows internal exile to project the sense of self which, as I argued before, is interrelated to the identity of the Other. That is why internal exile in its essence needs the identity of the constructor to function. Secondly, this technique provides tools for internal exile to enact power against the constructor or the Other and shift the power from the dominant sociopolitical discourse into the culture of internal exile. So, in one sense the aim of resistance for internal exile is to be separated and to be distanced from the constructor. This technique provides space for internal exile to function, to advocate the culture of resistance, and most importantly rationalize the reasons and the aim of resistance, which is fundamentally separation from the constructor. This technique is evident in Shamlou's poetry in general and the above poem in particular.

Shamlou feels the urge to raise awareness about his political and social concerns. Many of the themes and much of the language in Shamlou's poetry address the issues of home. That is why, when reading the poem, readers indirectly learn that the poet knows the constructor

better than they do. It is so because the poet claims to observe the constructor and its deeds from an optical perspective and therefore stresses his ability to *see* the 'true' image of the constructor. The poet's insistence on portraying such an image clearly is to show a reader about the risks involved with facing the constructor and its brutal tyranny. For example, at the beginning of each clause, he describes the constructor's character and accordingly suggests a need to preserve a 'humanitarian' culture by the repeated refrain: "Let's hide love in the larder.../Let's hide light in the larder.../Let's hide joy in the larder.../Let's hide God in the larder." This offers an implied reader a way to be distant from the constructor through putting 'humanitarian' elements out of the constructor's reach in the larder. Furthermore, Shamlou introduces his culture of resistance; he indirectly refers to the importance of a culture of resistance through his insistence on preserving positive elements out of the constructor's hands. In other words, Shamlou intends to offer resistance against the product of the constructed subjectivities that ban the freedom of love, thought and joy. So the poet's message is: preserve your freedom of thought even if you have to conceal it. Although he does not encourage people to physically fight the tyranny, clearly he suggests the importance of natural humanitarian beliefs which should be kept up, even through dissemblance, without letting the constructor undermine, abolish, or control them. Shamlou rationalizes this message through showing the constructor as a system which oppresses brutally the concepts of *love*, *thought*, and *joy*. The message is not only to introduce but also to promote the culture of resistance specifically through suggesting a dichotomous picture of the exile and the constructor. When the poet's culture of the sense of self admires the positive elements of love, thought, light, joy, and God (faith and hope), the culture of the Other is depicted as opposing all of them. In other words, he suggests readers take sides and decide where they want to stand. Also the dichotomous image with its simplistic black and white picture assists the poet to show readers how simple and straightforward the decision is for them to make. Through it, Shamlou pushes the reader to a supposedly obvious decision of choosing to side with the good, unless a reader is 'bad'. An indirect comparison of the two sides of good and evil in the poem is a strategy in the enactment of the power of internal exile. It enables the poet to distance the culture of self from the culture of Other. That is why readers are faced indirectly with two completely black and white images. The other technique that empowers his resistance is the methods through which he involves the reader with the text. In the next section through the joint study of notions of fascination in the works of canon and Shamlou's techniques, I will show the reasons why and how his works are canonized and why the canonization of his poetry empowered his culture of resistance.

## Techniques Applied In Canonized Texts Of The Internal Exile

In studying the notion of fascination, using Hettema's argument, I explained in chapter one that canonical texts involve their readers in a conversation that, arguably, influence their outlooks. Previously, I mentioned that I do not intend to suggest the cultural products of internal exile are in and of themselves canonical works. The similarity between the notions of fascination in the canonized internal exilic works and the works of the canon in general, however, is useful for further understanding and analysing internal exile and its dimensions.

One of the notions of fascination evident in the works of Shamlou and the works of internal exile is comparable to what Hettema calls the 'frightening plurality' of the works of the canon. As mentioned before in Chapter I, Hettema argues that the works of the canon have a strong attraction due to their 'frightening plurality' which includes their "*deinos*, embarrassing, Dionysian" aspects and at the same time their "strong movement of non-identification and incomprehensibility".<sup>129</sup> To put Hettema's argument in a nutshell, he argues that the works of the canon confront the reader with the phenomenon which is frightening and mighty and at the same time not logically, immediately or fully comprehensible. The Dionysian aspect of the works of the canon, considering its literary concept, is based on chaos in the sense of unity in destruction, which appeals to the instincts and emotions of the reader rather than their logic. The notions of fascination in the works of internal exile are comparable to the 'frightening plurality' aspects of the works of the canon in the sense of their ability to arouse frightening, inexpressible and incomprehensible responses.

The works of internal exile, in the context of Iran, touch upon controversial and sociopolitically sensitive themes, through highly coded linguistic tools and literary ambiguity, to express the inexpressible and say the un-sayable (*harf haye magoo*). As a result, they evoke fascination through offering a highly visual glimpse of the chaotic, displaced, socio-politically sensitive and frightening existence of internal exile without fully disclosing it. In this sense, the existence of internal exile, in the majority of Shamlou's poetry, becomes amorphously frightening, emotionally perceivable but logically vague and, as a result, based on Hettema's argument, fascinating and admirable. For example:

---

<sup>129</sup> Hettema, p.396.

In this crooked dead end of twisting chill,  
they feed the fire  
with the kindling of song and poetry.  
Do not risk a thought.  
[...]He who knocks on the door at midnight  
has come to kill the light

He articulates a sense of imminent danger through using the words like “crooked dead end”, “twisting chill” or “kill the light” but through his highly symbolic language he keeps the frightening elements emotionally perceivable but logically ambiguous. In other words, the readers do not and cannot know for sure why they are frightened. Personally, as a reader I interpret this section as the frightening experience of an internal exile being raided at midnight by the authorities with the intention of at least arresting him/her, without any hope of release. But I cannot offer this interpretation with any certainty. And that is precisely the point. This technique equips Shamlou to unite the implied reader with his feelings of a chaotic, frightening, and marginalized existence.<sup>130</sup>

The condition of internal exile in these works is, therefore, expressed and at the same time not expressed. This is mainly due to internal exile individual’s location at the center of censorship and danger. Their application of literary ambiguity keeps the accurate comprehension of the internal exilic situation out of the reach. Karimi-Hakkak, in studying the characteristics of prominent works of Persian literature, before and after the 1979 revolution says:

Literary ambiguity, linguistic polysemy, and endless possibilities of semiosis as essential vehicles through which vision is expressed and communicated tend to conceal the ontological simplicity of such images as “night”, “winter”, [...] most frequently relied upon in post-World War II Persian literature – which, through semantic agreements in the intersubjective community that includes writers and their immediate readers, come to refer to aspects of the actual social condition. Because of the polysemous nature of the literary discourse, such images disclose and hide at the same time. [...]. While they allow the readers to grasp one aspect of their meaning, they deny access to another. As a result, the language of contemporary

---

<sup>130</sup> For further reading of his poems which excites unity in chaos see: *Tekrar* (Recurrence) in Aḥmad Shāmlū, *Āydā dar āyīnah* (*Ayda In the Mirror*) (Tehran: Mu’assasah-i Intishārāt-i Nigār, 2001).

Persian literature tends to conceal the structure of the argument presented by the writer.<sup>131</sup>

One of the dominant characteristics of Persian literature, therefore, especially during the times of the 1953 *coup d'état* and the early 1980s due to the “increasing self-consciousness against the state power”<sup>132</sup> was their ambiguity. This ambiguity, however, did not raise the reader’s reverence. Quite the opposite is true: it evokes curiosity and a desire for further knowledge about the condition of internal exile, through involving the reader emotionally with the text. I call this use of ambiguity the allusive message, which helps the poet to call a message to a reader’s mind without mentioning it explicitly. I suggest it allows the poet to develop the culture of resistance through its significant impact on a reader, by being fascinated by the text. Here I demonstrate, through the analysis of some of Shamlou’s other poems, the wider use of this allusive message. In the analysis of the selected poems, I will demonstrate that the use of the allusive message is a tool of resistance and for empowering the culture of internal exile.

In order to explore this concept of the allusive message in more detail, I have chosen one of the most popular poems by Shamlou, called *Az Marg* (On Death).<sup>133</sup> It was written in 1962 and is widely-read and admired among the Iranian intellectuals. In a documentary about (and with the presence of) Ahmad Shamlou, directed by Moslem Mansouri, some well-known Iranian intellectual figures are interviewed about Shamlou’s poetry. For example, Abbas Kiarostami, a well-known Iranian filmmaker, states that *Az Marg* is the best of Shamlou’s. He says: “After 30 or 40 years of work, Shamlou has arrived at such credibility in his work that confirmation or denial of anybody cannot reduce from or add anything to that credibility.”<sup>134</sup> Kiarostami then starts to recite the poem:

I have never dreaded death

Though its hands have always been more fragile than banality

My fear - however – is of dying in a land

In which the grave digger’s wage

---

<sup>131</sup> Karimi-Hakkak, p.508-509 ‘Revolutionary Posturing: Iranian Writers and the Iranian Revolution of 1979’.

<sup>132</sup> Karimi-Hakkak, ‘Revolutionary Posturing: Iranian Writers and the Iranian Revolution of 1979’, p.508.

<sup>133</sup> Shāmlū, *Āydā dar āyīnah* (*Ayda In the Mirror*), p. 23-24.

<sup>134</sup> Moslem Mansouri, *Ahmad Shamlou: Master Poet of Liberty* (International Film and Video Center, 1999). Translation from the subtitles.

Is higher than

The price of human freedom

Searching, finding and then choosing with freedom: Turning the essence of oneself into a fort

Even if there were more value to death than all this

I deny that I had ever dreaded death.<sup>135</sup>

This relatively short poem, through its use of allusive messages, encapsulates and powerfully expresses the most prominent aspects of internal exilic identity and its culture and also manages to promote the culture of resistance; it calls to the reader's mind extreme and round criticism of the socio-political aspects of the country without addressing them directly.

The poem projects a land which has become strange, incomprehensible, anonymous and ethically unacceptable to the poet although it is the writer's homeland. It is ethically unacceptable since the price of freedom is significantly low. This condition is the condition of internal exile in which the individual feels alienated in their home country and at odds with the dominant value systems of it. The fear of dying in a strange land is precisely the fear of an exile. This fear, in another sense, is a fear of passing a life in an incomprehensible land where the individual predicts/wonders, fearfully, about whether they have to spend their lives in the strange land up until their time of death. So, based on this view, passing life in such a land is not living but is instead a frightening existence worse than death and banality. Through conveying, indirectly, this sense of fear and anxiety, the poet raises awareness about the unacceptable condition of living in the homeland, criticizes it and, through it, practices the culture of resistance. Also, through the personification of freedom, specifically the 'who' that needs a wage in a country to survive, he encourages a culture of resistance.<sup>136</sup> The allusive message allows the poet to express his extreme criticism of the situation of the country through metaphors, allegories, and personification. It is also worth pointing out that the application of this allusive message requires a special poetic talent which, through linguistic techniques, turns simple words into an impressive content. In terms of Shamlou's use of

---

<sup>135</sup> Mansouri. The Translation is from the subtitle of the film. For more see Ahmad Shāmlū, 'End of the Game', in *Strange Times, My Dear*, Nahid Mozaffari, Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2005) , p.374.

<sup>136</sup> For further reading, see the very similar concept of fear of living in a strange homeland in *Shabaneh* (Overnight) <http://www.shereno.com/4/12/171.html>, An unnamed, numbered poem, 8, in Shāmlū, *Āydā dar āyīnah* (*Ayda In the Mirror*) , p.63.



poetic discourse, Mohammad Hughghi, a poet and a critic, focuses on Shamlou's special talent in using simple words to convey complex meanings as well as his technique of applying rhythm to the words instead of rhymes.

[T]his poem [one of Shamlou's poems] enchanted someone who is our most traditional poet, I mean Akhavan Sales. He was so enchanted with it, that he wrote a critique about it and praised it. I have always wanted to write a poem, which would begin so simply, but I failed each time. Not only me, even Akhavan used to say that he tried often in secret, to write rhythmless poetry and could not. This seems to be only Shamlou's talent and nobody else can accomplish it.<sup>137</sup>

The development of the allusive message is manifest in the majority of Shamlou's love poems. As a humanitarian, Shamlou has woven themes of personal love with his sociopolitical knowledge. In some of his love poems, what stands out is his method of addressing or describing the object of his affection using words not commonly found in mainstream love poems. Shamlou's love poems suggest his determination to simultaneously project his social and political opinions and his internal exilic culture. An abundance of social phrases are explicit in the love poem below which creates an unfamiliar and innovative atmosphere in love poetry. Here is part of the clauses when the narrative voice speaks to his beloved:

Which salute to the sun from this dark window  
Are you the star-ridden response? [...]  
Hidden behind your eyelids are the cries of which prisoner who  
With swollen lips  
Throws liberty a rose? [...]  
And your heart is the pigeon of reconciliation rolled in blood  
On the bitter roof  
Nonetheless, you fly, so tall, so high.<sup>138</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup> Mansouri. Translation from the subtitles.

<sup>138</sup> Mansouri. For more see: Aḥmad Shāmlū, 'Love Song', in *Strange Times, My Dear*, Nahid Mozaffari, Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, eds. (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2005) , p.373.

His style makes strategic use of contradiction: dark and bitter words to show his admiration for his beloved. It is unusual to see words such as “dark window”, ‘cries of ... prisoner’, ‘rolled in blood’, and ‘bitter roof’, in a love poem. This is especially the case if the beloved is loyal, alive, or the love story has a happy ending. While, in this poem, the loyalty of the beloved, her presence and their happy union is immediately perceptible, equally the demonized atmosphere of the place in which they live is also clearly evident. Shamlou creatively distinguishes, in his reader’s mind, his strong and beautiful lover and his happiness in their relationship from their socially and politically oppressive home. To do so, he interweaves two opposite atmospheres. For example, he admires the profundity and wisdom of his beloved’s eyes and compares it to the hope of freedom they offer to the cries of a prisoner. Therefore, two oppositional contents are offered within a single context: the insight and beauty of the beloved and the absence of freedom in their unjust society. In this poem, through the use of ‘you’ instead of ‘her’, as a reference to his lover, the implied reader is also involved in the poem. This helps the poet to pull and move the implied reader between two extreme emotions of love and its benevolence and hate and its brutality. The elements of love and hate in the poem each associates with an ‘us’-versus-‘them’ scenario through the technique of othering. The Other or the constructor is indirectly pictured in the poem; the implied reader is offered the “prisoner” but not for example the interrogator or “swollen lips” but not the torturer. This technique leaves the reader with space to imagine the Other, however, within this space, the reader is unlikely to imagine the Other as a complex human being and not a tyrant. It is so because the implication is clear: that this Other is responsible for the cries of the prisoner and for the swollen lips.

Similar to one of the notions of fascination in canonical works, in which the implied reader is involved with the text, in Shamlou’s poetry the implied reader is involved in the text mainly through the use of the pronoun ‘you’ in the poem. This technique helps the implied reader to be involved with the existence and identity of internal exile, through being united with the pronoun of ‘us’ that Shamlou applies both to himself and the implied reader. This technique posits the implied readers on the side of the internal exilic existence against ‘them’. It, therefore, assists the poet to advocate his internal exilic identity through encouraging unity with the implied reader and at the same time this technique evokes fascination.

These notions of fascination have determining roles in the popularity of the cultural products of internal exile. These notions assist the internal exile to both voice their marginalized identity and advocate their culture of resistance. These techniques equip Shamlou to engage

with the implied reader in a way that the reader can develop a sense of self within the context and style offered by the text. This is one of the reasons why Shamlou's poetry in general has been widely read and praised both by the intellectuals and the general public in Iran.

Notions of grammar, as Hetteema argues, have a fundamental role in the process of a reader's self-development within canonical texts. As I explained before, in canonical texts a writer is required to create a balance between the personal first person and the impersonal third person. So, 'you' is applied to address a reader with a more personal ethical engagement. In several poems by Shamlou, he interpellates his readers with his political opinions and experiences by directly addressing them. The majority of his poems are written in a conversational form as if he is talking with his addressed reader. His addressed readers are mostly either his beloved or the implied readers. The repetition of 'you' and 'we' when talking about himself and his reader, and 'he' when pointing at the opposite Other clearly articulates his attempt to engage the implied reader with his opinions and, in turn, with his internal exilic identity and culture. This is achieved by the poet's and the reader's unified aims through the *recognition* of the opposite Other. The exilic Other of the text questions and involves the reader with the opposite Other who directly influences their lives. In this direct involvement, the implied readers develop their 'selves' and in the process of self-participation and development they recognize the text as an impressive, fascinating piece of literature.

The gradual identification of the implied reader with the 'you' of the text pushes the reader to firstly acknowledge the issues raised in the text and secondly to develop their identity. This helps internal exile to promote the culture of resistance. For example in *Asheghaneh* (Romance), Shamlou depicts a black environment filled with 'ignorance' and 'coffins' where "Sun rises as a curse and the day is an irredeemable shamefulness" and "[...]the disheveled mourners are the honor of the earth". Shamlou then directly addresses the implied readers and clearly invites the reader to resist by stating: "Do not sit in silence, for God's sake/ Say something, something about love before I drown in tears." This encourages a culture of resistance to be generated by internal exile inside the home. Notions of fascination in the canonized works of internal exile bring to them a sense of authority and as a result their appeals become inescapable. The inescapability of their appeal, however, has the potential to generate a negative authority, which I call the curse of canonization. The next section is about the curse of canonization.

## The Curse of Canonization

By the curse of canonization, I refer to a kind of self-imposed censorship which is used to obscure changes to internal exile's outlook or opinion that may occur naturally over time. Their need to promote a culture of resistance therefore presents an obstacle to their freedom of expression, especially if they develop opinions which stand in direct contradiction to those previously expressed. The curse of canonization, as a result of internal exile's silence about their transient viewpoints, ultimately leads to their self-imposed censorship. So, on the one hand, due to their position at home, they are challenged by the censorship policies imposed by the authority and on the other hand they are exposed to their own self-imposed censorship. The curse of canonization arises precisely because internal exile aims and *wants* to promote the culture of resistance and witness the positive reception and therefore success of their cultural products. This is the case only if the internal exile's life time coincides with the experience of their canonized status.

The canonized status of the cultural products of internal exile, in this case Shamlou's poetry, gives internal exile the authority and respectable prestige to develop and contribute their culture of resistance to a larger group of readers. Not all of the creators of the canonized cultural products have the opportunity to observe the canonized status of their works in society. However, Shamlou was among the minority who was able to experience his works being canonized, and therefore witnessed the influence and success his works had and to experience being dubbed the 'poet of liberty'. The popularity of his poetry inside Iran, among both the intellectuals and the wider general population, and his various tours to different countries to express his message of 'liberty' and resistance mean he has come to be known as a prominent figure of resistance, standing against dominant sociopolitical aspects of the country, both inside and outside of Iran. Certain challenging elements, such as self-imposed censorship, arise as a result of these situations when the creators of the canonized internal exilic cultural products witness the status of their works. Under such conditions, certain issues become challenging, which I will now go on to explain.

As I elaborated earlier, internal exile has the ability to develop and affect a reader's identity. This ability is particularly strong in those whose works have been canonized, using notions of fascination and a variety of techniques mentioned above. Because his work is so effective, readers find themselves coming into constant contact with his work. This is vital to his aim of

building a cultural of resistance because, despite whether his readers admire his work or not, what matters is that his work continues to attract attention. In other words, because internal exile *wants* to promote the culture of resistance they are in *need* of the people's attention (positive or negative) and from this *need* arises certain challenging issues. To further clarify the curse of canonization, it is useful to refer to some of Shamlou's public speeches and private conversations. After considering Shamlou's poetry alongside a variety of writings, a documentary and his talks in both overtly public and semi-private contexts, what emerges is that Shamlou has imposed upon himself a kind of self-censorship. This self-censorship is not a result of the author's attempt to escape the dictated authoritative limitations but appears to be a personal choice. Self-imposed censorship assists Shamlou to maintain the promotion of a culture of resistance by insisting on pursuing the expressed sociopolitical issues, which attract and 'fascinate' the general public and the intellectuals alike. Shamlou's self-imposed censorship seems to be the result of his life coinciding with the canonized status of his poetry. This coincidence has been significant in pushing Shamlou to play down the doubts he expresses in low profile media about the accuracy of his viewpoints on the sociopolitical and cultural issues he raised in his poetry. It seems that he feels obliged to insist on the principles that his poetry has previously established; this narrows any possibility of change or further negotiations. In this sense, the curse of canonization locks the creator of the canonized works into their own narrative positions. A comparison of Shamlou's poetry with some cultural works about him (with his direct involvement) exposes this matter further.

It is useful, at this point, to consider two commentaries on Shamlou. The first is a book written by Mehdi Akhavan Langerudi, called *Yek hafteh bah Shamloo dar Otreesh* (A Week With Shamlou in Austria).<sup>139</sup> Langerudi hosted Shamlou during the poet's trip to Austria in 1991. The book was authorized by Shamlou before its publication. The other one is a documentary, mentioned before, called *Shamlou: the Poet of Liberty*, directed by Moslem Mansouri. The book is in the form of a memoir narrating the daily conversations between the author and Shamlou, alongside the discussions and recreational activity that he and his wife enjoyed during their visit to Austria. Similarly, the documentary explores Shamlou's poetry and life through interviews about him with prominent Iranian intellectuals. Also it includes the examination of Shamlou's private life reflected in interviews conducted with him in his house. The document was released a year before Shamlou's death in 2000.

---

<sup>139</sup> Mehdi Akhavan Langerudi, *Yek hafteh bah Shamloo dar Otreesh*. (A Week With Shamloo in Austria) (Tehran [Iran]; Markham, Ont.: Morvarid ; [Distributed by] Far Eastern Books, 1999).

Langerudi in his book gives a sense of Shamlou as a person, rather than a poet, with his sense of humor, personal beliefs, informal conversations, his tastes and style and his private responses in the conference or his interviews. Langerudi explores Shamlou's poetry using a kind of inter-narration between his poetry and his personality. In the book, he is clearly influenced by Shamlou's personality, which, he contends, is in a close harmony with his literary narratives. However, within the book, a series of possible conflicts between Shamlou's public and narrative persona emerge.

In several parts of the book Langerudi reports Shamlou expressing his opinion about the relativity of morality. According to Langerudi, Shamlou insists that morality is a human-constructed concept which is inherently transient and that is why it differs from one culture to another. On several occasions during Shamlou's trip to Austria, as reported in the book, he suggests the fundamental role of circumstances and situations in the development of a person's morals. In other words, Shamlou, according to Langerudi, tells that a morality of a person is predominantly determined by the environment in which they live. In response to a friend of Langerudi's question about morality, he says:

Morality is not a determined this and that. Circumstances of life impose ethics on human beings. So, critical circumstances can carry both desirable and undesirable ethics [...] a social life without ethics is impossible but we do not have right to follow our customs in judging morality and immorality. For example, in Pamir Polyandry is moral even if in Saudi Arabia they call it prostitution.<sup>140</sup>

Shamlou does not perceive the concept of morality as a universally defined and clear-cut phenomenon. Rather for him morality is a dynamic and complex trend, which depends on the situations and circumstances of a community; these determine how an individual acts in a certain situation. This opinion of Shamlou on the issue of morality, presented in a semi-private context, has a clear distinction with what he strongly offers as good or bad, moral or immoral characters and situations in his poetry. I suggest that the rigid dichotomy he offers between the exile and the constructor in his poetry is a form of self-imposed self-censorship as a result of the curse of canonization with which he is faced, rather than what he as an individual believes in. Reading and watching books, the documentary and some clips about Shamlou shows clearly that he is faced with a sense of doubt and uncertainty about the dichotomy between the exile and the constructor. However, this sense of doubt is not

---

<sup>140</sup> Langerudi, p.33.

reflected in his poetry which is, necessarily, presented in an overtly public context. In his cultural products, Shamlou silences the sense of doubt he has about the dichotomy of ‘good’ and ‘bad’, ‘angel’ and ‘evil’, ‘us’ and ‘them’ in order to be true to his professed understanding of the culture of resistance and in order to avoid risking diminution of resistance.

Furthermore, in explanation of what he calls the NBR (No Breathing Right) joke to Langerudi he points to the inescapability of othering in human nature. Shamlou, with a humorous tone, describes that in the future even inhaling the air will be taxed. To make the joke serious, he explains that science has a duty to control the people through killing them. Interestingly, he even tries to rationalize this point, addressing Langerudi, by asking him a rhetorical question “what would you do if you, yourself, a sensitive poet whom you have no doubt on his sensitivity, see some groups of ugly and ill slum dogs pouring into this reputational, clean and beautiful city which is rich with culture and art and are going to ruin it and turn the museums into stable?”<sup>141</sup> Shamlou tells, with a black humorous tone, that AIDS appeared from one of the scientific laboratories for population control. In his opinion, they later on try to convince people that the virus appeared from “a human’s intercourse with a monkey and well, where is the monkey? Africa”<sup>142</sup> According to Shamlou’s joke, the scientists also informed people that “within ten years eighty percent of Africans will be diagnosed by it” which, he says, in reality has happened; needless to say that it is not the case. Shamlou continues that for physical omission of these “slum dogs” wars and bombs are not adequate since the past experiences showed that after the wars the population has been doubled. Therefore, as he explains, scientists have to use some practical methods with a “normal appearance” like inventing “fatal epidemic disease” to control the population. Shamlou says:

They should discover something like a valium, sprinkle its powder from the above and the job is done! Otherwise sixty years later the population will reach to twenty billions! I am not joking. [The population] will be twenty milliards while right now we are struggling to feed five, six billions.<sup>143</sup>

Regardless of the inaccurate percentages, scenarios and figures, Shamlou suggests in his rather light-hearted black humor conversation with Langerudi the understandable complexity

---

<sup>141</sup> Langerudi, p.78.

<sup>142</sup> Langerudi, p.78.

<sup>143</sup> Langerudi, p.78-79.

of human conditions in their ethical and unethical engagements. In the book, it is shown that Shamlou appears to be exposing the idea of the intrinsic equality of everyone which, given the circumstances, may look ethically different. Shamlou states, according to Langerudi, that all human beings are able to commit a crime even if they are sensitive poets. In his joke, he considers and understands both the scientists who, in his opinion, are busy with discovering a disease for population control and Africans who are the major victims of their discovery. Also, in different parts of the book, Langerudi describes Shamlou's power in understanding paradoxes of 'good' and 'evil'. He quotes a poem, "To Those Born Later", by Bertold Brecht to clarify Shamlou's outlook:

[...] And yet we know:

Hatred, even of meanness

Contorts the features.

Anger, even against injustice

Makes the voice hoarse.<sup>144</sup>

Selecting the clauses, Langerudi focuses on Shamlou's ability to deal with the paradoxical issue of achieving resistance against the tyranny without allowing hatred of the tyrant to develop. He argues that in Shamlou's poetry this "beautiful balance" is applied between the issues of resistance against tyranny and not hating the dictator. However, throughout the book, Langerudi contradicts himself about Shamlou when he says "If he could have hated anyone, undoubtedly hating dictators would have exploded him [...]"<sup>145</sup> He then contradicts himself even more by saying:

[For Shamlou] hatred is not the case. He draws a caricature from these dangerous psychos to turn hatred into sarcasm, to expose their real selves, and to convert the carved fright, from their rules, in some people's hearts into his shame.<sup>146</sup>

Langerudi contradicts himself by stating first that "hatred is not the case" for Shamlou yet, according to Langerudi, Shamlou manages to turn his hatred into sarcasm. It is not clear what

---

<sup>144</sup> Langerudi, p.87-88. Translation from: Bertolt Brecht, *Bertolt Brecht: Poetry and Prose*, eds. by Reinhold Grimm and Caroline Molina y Vedia, German Library, (New York: Continuum, 2003), p.75.

<sup>145</sup> Langerudi, p.87.

<sup>146</sup> Langerudi, p.88.



Langerudi perceives as hatred which on the one hand “is not the case” for Shamlou and on the other hand is apparently the case since he manages to turn it into sarcasm. Similarly, Mohammad Ali Sapanlou, a poet and a reader states that in Shamlou’s poetry even a dark topic has always a hope or in his words “an opening to the light”.<sup>147</sup> In Shamlou’s poetry, however, as I analyzed before, his opinions of unity and equality of all human beings’ complexity, expressed in a semi private context, are not the main focus. Neither his allusive messages nor his other techniques problematize the dichotomous pictures he illustrates, beautifully with his rich language, about the justice and tyranny, the exile and the constructor. In most of Shamlou’s poems, even in his love poems, as I argued before, the reader is often introduced to an “absolute” corrupt system or person which or who is intrusively obstructing the ways of humanitarian progress. As a result, what is offered in some of his poems as knowledge about the constructor, is a simplistically negative picture and what is offered is resistance against this system. After describing societies under tyrannical governments, Shamlou, in one of his public speeches outside of Iran, argues that the role of poetry as a genre is to promote resistance and through it affect sociopolitical make ups in a positive way. He points to governments and political authorities as systems which have “no care for sanity of life” and consider “living as mere tools that must be sacrificed without delay for its own victory”.<sup>148</sup> He continues that “each government feels it has right to condemn poets as unfit and dangerous elements” and that is why “the goal of poetry is to fundamentally change the world [...]”<sup>149</sup> Clearly in his speech, Shamlou introduces the objective of poetry to be used as a tool of resistance and a ‘savior’. In this speech, Shamlou describes the world as a lawless place “whose leadership and management have fallen into the hands of thugs” and “lunatics” and that is why art is diminished to a medium of entertainment that “cannot be expected to be a savior”. He then argues that it is important and necessary for everyone to protest against them. He also focuses on the main aim of poetry, which should be protesting against totalitarianism and “changing the world”. It is evident from this public speech that he perceives with certainty the political figures as insane enemies and poetry as a medium of resistance. He stresses the need to promote the culture of resistance. This speech with its extreme content is rather in contrast with Shamlou’s rather moderate conversations with Langerudi about the relativity of morality and equality of human beings (regardless of their deeds). I suggest this contrast is due to the internal exile’s *need* to resist the dominant

---

<sup>147</sup> Mansouri.

<sup>148</sup> Mansouri.

<sup>149</sup> Mansouri.

sociopolitical discourses and to promote the culture of resistance. This *need* imposes self-censorship on internal exile for the sake of resistance. Studying Shamlou's opinions in a semi private context shows that he does not necessarily side with his own extreme narratives. Having said that, he clearly and rather passionately, believes in the necessity of promoting the culture of resistance. The works of internal exile, in this case the works of Shamlou, which aim/hope to 'free' the country from oppression, are inherently not free from their own self-imposed censorship. The works of internal exile raise awareness about oppression and cultivate a voice that articulates an oppositional vision of Iran however, I argue that due to their essential self-imposed restrictive dimensions they cannot cultivate a path for freedom of expression, as one of the aspects of democracy. In other words, the cultural products of internal exile cannot effectively resist oppression. In the absence of any precise knowledge about the complexity of tyrannical systems and their ideological make up, resistance would turn into an unsystematic and uncompromising protest in which two groups of people are in conflict without having negotiation as an alternative. Resistance, consequently, will not be achieved in a systematic, coherent, and successful process; it will be passivized.

### *My Tehran For Sale*

This section offers an illustration of the internal exilic identity, condition and voice expressed and shown in *My Tehran for Sale*.<sup>150</sup> This film was the first ever Iranian-Australian co-production film. It was shot in Iran and Australia and directed by Granaz Moussavi. Film is particularly useful for further elaboration and analysis of internal exile. This is because film plays an important and influential role in voicing the history and lives of people, which I will explain in more detail later. Film is, therefore, a powerful and pragmatic medium for the internal exile since it equips them to fulfill the aim of voicing their marginalized identity and culture. This medium for the internal exile is also pragmatic since, as I argued before, the elaboration of the identity of internal exile is not the only aim of the internal exile; promoting a culture of resistance is equally essential. Also film is an international medium in the sense that it, arguably, attracts wider and more international audiences than other media since it has

---

<sup>150</sup> Moussavi.

greater potential to move beyond political, social, cultural and religious borders. Film is a compelling and important tool for the internal exile. Film because of its broader contact with people has greater potential for the internal exile to literally be heard, seen and thereby to have an impact on a wider range of people.

*My Tehran for Sale* is useful to consider as an example of a cultural product of internal exile due to both its subject matter and its production process. In terms of its subject matter, the film revolves around the lives and culture of a certain young Iranian generation, the secular youths who are necessarily marginalized by the dominant sociopolitical aspects of Iran. The film offers the voice of the lives of, in Moussavi's words, "the youth and their subcultures, the underground art and life in Tehran, and most importantly the unheard voices and bottled up stories of people around [Moussavi]".<sup>151</sup> Through showing the marginalized lives and cultures *My Tehran for Sale* challenges the myth of Iranian culture as a homogenous Islamic culture, which has been imposed mainly after the establishment of the IRI. In terms of its production process, the film was shot inside Iran without having an official license to be broadcast inside the country. According to Moussavi, the film was made as a part of her doctoral thesis and it had official state permission to be a 40-50 minute film,<sup>152</sup> which, eventually with the help of Australian Cyan Films' production, ended-up as a full-length feature film, even with the absence of the Iranian authoritative license. This in itself highlights the flawed logic of the censorship system within Iran. With the help of the Australian production team, the film, with the consent and thanks to the efforts of the director, was smuggled out of Iran and in to Australia. Therefore, *My Tehran for Sale* not only narrates the marginalized lives and cultures of certain characters in Iran facing various social, cultural, political and religious challenges but also tells a particular story about the process of the film's production which is in itself a witness to the marginalized and the internal exilic situations and struggles of its Iranian film crew.

As I argued before, the cultural works of internal exile essentially engage with the sociopolitical aspects of society and the identity of internal exile is intertwined with these issues. Therefore, before going into the analysis of *My Tehran for Sale*, it is helpful to look briefly at scholarly works on the socio-cultural aspects, roles and influences of the medium of film. Also, for a better understanding of *My Tehran for Sale* in terms of its contextual

---

<sup>151</sup> [http://www.indiewire.com/article/tiff\\_09\\_granaz\\_moussavi\\_something\\_different\\_and\\_fresh\\_from\\_iran](http://www.indiewire.com/article/tiff_09_granaz_moussavi_something_different_and_fresh_from_iran) .(retrieved 9/10/2009).

<sup>152</sup> <http://vimeo.com/6525514> (retrieved 9/10/2009).

structure and production process, the position of the film in the context of Iranian cinema needs to be considered. To do so, a brief historical background on Iranian cultural movements, the emergence of Iranian New Wave Cinema, censorship and Iranian post Revolutionary cinema will be offered. I will then go on to analyze the internal exilic elements in *My Tehran for Sale*.

## Film, Society, and History

The medium of film, arguably, has long had a significant impact on people's broad understanding and awareness of history. In this regard, Marine Hughes-Warrington, referring to a US-based project, shows that 81 per cent of a sample of 1500 people had watched film or television about the past.<sup>153</sup> Based on this project, she argues that respondents have "a stronger connection with the past when they watched films and television than when they study history in school".<sup>154</sup> Similarly, James Monaco's book on reading film focuses on the historical aspects of film and introduces film as a popular phenomenon which "has changed the way we perceive the world".<sup>155</sup> Monaco emphasizes the communal and global availability and popularity of film by calling film "a medium of communication" which is "immediately apprehensible to large numbers of people".<sup>156</sup> Both Monaco's argument and Hughes-Warrington's statistical analysis explain film's vast contribution to the social and personal lives of people. Although Hughes-Warrington notes that "people trust historical films and television programs far less than books, academic historians and museums"<sup>157</sup> film's ability to access collective and mass audiences make its influence difficult to ignore. In terms of film's popularity and its impact on the sociopolitical, socio-cultural and individual lives of the people Monaco says:

[F]ilm is such a popular phenomenon[;] it plays a very important part in modern culture, *sociopolitically*. Because it provides such a powerful and convincing

---

<sup>153</sup> Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *History Goes to the Movies: Studying History on Film* (London, New York: Routledge, 2007), p.1.

<sup>154</sup> Hughes-Warrington, p.1.

<sup>155</sup> James Monaco, *How to Read a Film: Movies, Media, and Beyond: Art, Technology, Language, History, Theory*, 4th ed., completely rev. and expanded (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p.291.

<sup>156</sup> Monaco, p.252.

<sup>157</sup> Hughes-Warrington, p.2.

representation of reality, film also has a profound effect on members of its audience, *psychopolitically*.<sup>158</sup>

Monaco perceives film as a revolutionary art form which is available both on “a regular basis to large numbers of people” and also “meets observers on their home grounds”<sup>159</sup>. As a result it intertwines the public and personal aspects of audiences and plays a powerful role in changing how people perceive the world. However, Monaco argues that the paradoxes of the politics of film make it impossible to determine if the social establishments affect film or if the politics of film influence prevailing socio-political attitudes. Monaco argues that film on the one hand is revolutionary and on the other hand “is most often conservative of traditional values”.<sup>160</sup> In this argument, Monaco concludes that film is a product “of the dialectic between film realism and film expressionism: between film’s power to mimic reality and its power to change it”.<sup>161</sup> So, as he states, “the politics of film and the politics of “real life” are so closely intertwined that it is generally impossible to determine which is the cause and which is the effect”.<sup>162</sup> Further to Monaco’s argument, Michael Ryan argues that film is “a subset of social processes (or social discourses)”.<sup>163</sup> This is the case because, as Ryan argues, film is made up of elements that are encoded “within the existing social systems of significance, the prevailing social discourses or systems of encoded relations[.]”<sup>164</sup> He argues that films incorporate these elements and through recodifying them provide them with meanings and values which are specific to the codes of the film. However, he points out that, the raw material “out of which the new values and images are constructed is always already codified by social codes of meanings”.<sup>165</sup> He calls this interconnection between film and social discourses *transcoding* in the sense that “[f]ilm discourse transcodes social discourses”.<sup>166</sup> Furthermore he argues that:

Film is fundamentally social because it draws on and reproduces social discourses and because it is itself a socially discursive act. Cinematic discourse is inherently social, for even the most formal dimension of film presupposes social codes of

---

<sup>158</sup> Monaco, p.289.

<sup>159</sup> Monaco, p.290.

<sup>160</sup> Monaco, p.292.

<sup>161</sup> Monaco, p.292.

<sup>162</sup> Monaco, p.292.

<sup>163</sup> Michael Ryan, ‘The Politics of Film: Discourse, Psychoanalysis, Ideology’, in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 477–486, p.479.

<sup>164</sup> Ryan, p.479.

<sup>165</sup> Ryan, p.479.

<sup>166</sup> Ryan, p.479.

perception that allow it to be received and decoded by audiences. Moreover, the external object or referent that film sociology posits for fictional film is always a construct of the semiotic or rhetorical operations of film discourse.<sup>167</sup>

Ryan suggests that the multiplicity of this interconnected system between the film and society relays “social ideas and feelings from the extracinematic culture to film and back into the culture, where they circulate further”.<sup>168</sup> Interconnected aspects of the film and society and also the admixture of “the politics of film and the politics of “real life” in film, which Monaco suggests, are evident in the films of internal exile in general and *My Tehran for Sale* in particular. The films of internal exile represent the collectively felt fears, anxiety and frustrations that their marginalized status in society brings about for them. The films of internal exile find that mimicking their reality is challenging due to the direct, enforced political pressures from the authority, which I will explain later in the history of censorship. On the one hand, the internal exile, using the medium of film, tries to visualize and voice their marginalized “real life” and on the other hand they try to empower their culture of resistance. Ryan argues that “[f]ilm discourse and social discourse intertwine as a struggle not only over how reality will be represented but over what that reality will be”.<sup>169</sup> Similarly, the interrelationship between films of the internal exile and the society from which the films are mainly from and about determines the struggle about what “reality” is. The socio-politically oppositional nature of the films of internal exile, also, has a determining role in their protrusive position. To support this argument, Monaco believes that in film history “many of the most notable auteurs [...] stand out precisely because their work goes against the establishment grain, politically”.<sup>170</sup> The above mentioned scholarly works make clear both the popularity of historical films as well as the impact they have on the people who watch them. Also they make it clear that society and film are intertwined; both have a determining impact on each other’s progress and demeanor. Considering these arguments, films of internal exile need to be closely examined for their historical narrative as well as their oppositional nature. The fact that these challenging ideas are so popular and attract such large audiences demands that we better understand how filmmakers present these ideas. Furthermore, the visual nature of the media facilitates an easier communication of the history across borders because the cinematic representation of history attracts more audiences than

---

<sup>167</sup> Ryan, p.478.

<sup>168</sup> Ryan, p.480 .

<sup>169</sup> Ryan, p.483.

<sup>170</sup> Monaco, p.292.

written literary works thereby a wider variety of viewpoints are developed about the country and its history.

On an international level, the films of internal exile in the Iranian context are viewed as a window to a rather closed-door country, which due to its current political configuration sustains controversial political relations with other countries, especially the west. While the films of internal exile are clearly produced in opposition to the dominant sociopolitical discourses of the country, they are nevertheless considered to be a reliable source of information about the oppressive policies of the country and the people dealing with them and being affected by them. There are two key reasons why they are considered so reliable: first because they have been produced inside the country, secondly because they have been produced by people experiencing life in Iran first-hand. While these products are at least partially illegally produced, they fall outside the control of the government and are consequently not censored. Because they have been produced inside the country and relatively far from the authoritative supervision they are less likely to be accused of promoting either western agendas or state sanctioned propaganda. *My Tehran for Sale* as a film of internal exile deserves more understanding and scrutiny for its visual, socio-political and oppositional characteristics. Earlier in this chapter, I analyzed the internal exilic elements in the works of Shamlou's poetry. It is noteworthy to mention that the genre of poetry and Iranian cinema are intertwined. This is manifest in the very production of *My Tehran for Sale* which is written and directed by Granaz Moussavi who is also a poet. This intermixture of the cultural and sociopolitical issues in Iran makes it essential to look at *My Tehran for Sale*, first and foremost in the context of the historical and cultural background of Iranian cinema.

## Iranian Political and Cultural Movements

Film in general as Monaco says "is a distinctly political phenomenon. Indeed, its very existence is revolutionary".<sup>171</sup> Film in the context of Iran is no exception; sociopolitical movements in Iran are essentially and fundamentally intertwined with the cultural movements in the country. Their coincidence and intermixed contextual structures are so

---

<sup>171</sup> Monaco, p.289.

extensive to the point that Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak argues that the 1979 revolution in a profound sense was “a work of the imagination”.<sup>172</sup> As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the reason behind the popularity of poetry in Iran in one sense is due to, as Shahideh<sup>173</sup> refers to, its only common language status in a multi-lingual Iranian society, and in another sense is due to particular sociopolitical aspects of Iran. Iran has nearly always, in one way or another, been led by despotic governments. Poetry has served as a voice of dissent and truth under the guise of its rich literary devices as a way of saying the otherwise unsayable. This interdependence of the cultural works and sociopolitical aspects of Iran led to the coincidence of the sociopolitical and cultural movements in Iran. Iranian cinema and its movement was no exception in the process of the cultural movements. That is why, the movement of Iranian cinema and especially the rise of Iranian *New Wave* cinema<sup>174</sup> is the result of the works of prominent writers or poets like Ebrahim Golestan and Forough Farrokhzad.<sup>175</sup> It is worth looking briefly at the sociopolitical movements in Iran which led to the emergence the Iranian *New Wave* cinema.

For nearly a century Iranians have struggled for democracy and freedom. The constitutional revolution, for example, was the first systematic sociopolitical movement which took place between 1905 and 1907 and led to the establishment of a parliament in what was then named Persia. Its aims were to create new opportunities through replacing the old orders of Nasser-al-din Shah Qajar with new institutions and socio-political orders. Almost 50 years later in 1951 Mohammad Mosaddegh became the democratically elected prime minister of Iran. He carried out a wide range of progressive social reforms. However, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August 1953, Mohammad Mosaddegh and his democratic government were overthrown in a *coup d'état* by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to bring Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi back to power. He relied heavily on US support until his own overthrow in 1979. During these political movements, disappointments and repressions, various intellectual movements developed alongside them. In the field of literature, socially committed literary works were written and published in the early 1900s. Since then, many realist texts have offered social

---

<sup>172</sup> Karimi-Hakkak, ‘Revolutionary Posturing: Iranian Writers and the Iranian Revolution of 1979’, p.507.

<sup>173</sup> Shahideh, p.28.

<sup>174</sup> It needs to be mentioned that some writers, like Ebrahim Golestan himself, detest the term *New Wave* in the Iranian cinema and believe such a thing does not exist. Since the controversial debates on the title of *New Wave* cinema are not the main concern of this thesis, I will carry on using the term as it is widely applied in Iranian scholarly works.

<sup>175</sup> For further reading on this matter see: Parviz Jahed, *Neveshtan baa Doorbin: Roo dar Roo baa Ebrahim Golestan. (Writing with Camera: Face-to-Face with Ebrahim Golestan)* (Tehran: Akhtaran, 2005) , pp. 45-92. Shohini Chaudhuri, *Contemporary World Cinema: Europe, the Middle East, East Asia and South Asia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005) , pp.71-92.



and political critique. These socially conscious literary writings reached their peak in the 1960s.<sup>176</sup> The development of prose was contemporaneous with the emergence of New Poetry (*She'r e No'*). New poetry became known through the revolutionized poetry of Nima Yushij. It brought new concepts into poetry to reconcile it with the realities of Iranian society during this time. The emergence of New Poetry in Iran attracted two sorts of intellectual poets: those whose poetry focused on the political and social issues of the country and those whose poetry focused primarily on 'humanitarian' (i.e. philosophical and romantic) issues with only indirect reference to socio-political matters. For example, Ahmad Shamlou was among the political poets and that is what brought him the title of "Poet of Liberty" while Sohrab Sepehri and Forough Farrokhzad were mostly known for their poems that were predominantly philosophical and sexual alongside having social concerns.

In the field of cinema, a small number of films introduced new ways of filmmaking to Iranian cinema in the late 1950s which was dominated by a cinematic trend known as '*filmfarsi*'. Coined by Houshang Kavussi, the term referred to most of the popular melodramatic cinema, which often featured dance and cabaret singing that was irrelevant or incidental to the plot. Saeed Zeydabadi-Nejad,<sup>177</sup> referring to the juxtaposition of literary and cinematic movements, argues that it was a group of renowned but innovative writers and poets who turned their attention to cinema and introduced innovations there as well.<sup>178</sup> Political and literary movements in Iran, in the global context, coincided with the artistic movements in the west following the impact of World War I and II.

For the purpose of this chapter, studying the influence of Italian Neorealism in Iranian cinema is useful because the emergence of Iranian New Wave cinema had a very specific impact not only on representing social issues but also in highlighting the realities that the state tried to suppress. Visualizing these realities brought a new understanding to the body of

---

<sup>176</sup> During this time many prominent literary writings emerged. The most enduring work of prose and the major literary work of 20<sup>th</sup> century Iran is *The Blind Owl* by Sadegh Hedayat, published in 1937 in Bombay. It was/is banned in Iran. This work has been translated in to several languages including English and French. It is a surrealist novel and is considered as the first modern Iranian novel. Andre Breton, who was the key figure in the French surrealist movement, named *The Blind Owl* as a 20<sup>th</sup> century masterpiece.

<sup>177</sup> Saeed Zeydabadi-Nejad, *The Politics of Iranian Cinema: Film and Society in the Islamic Republic*, Iranian Studies, 6 (London, New York: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>178</sup> Some prominent writers and poets made well-received socially realist films like *The House Is Black* by Forough Farrokhzad 1964, a prominent poet, *The Brick and The mirror* by Ebrahim Golestan 1965, a well-known writer and *The Cow* by Dariush Mehrjuyi 1969, based on Gholamhossein Saedi's novel titled *The Bayal Mourners*, have played an important role in introducing alternative cinema which later on became known as New Wave Cinema.

Iranian social culture. Iranian cultural and literary movements on the one hand and Italian Neorealism on the other hand influenced a group of filmmakers in Iran which led to the foundation of a vibrant, creative and internationally well-received film industry called Iranian New Wave Cinema (*Moj-e-No'*), which emerged in the 1960s. The next section charts the emergence of New Wave cinema in more detail.

## Iranian New Wave Cinema and Italian Neorealism

Italian Neorealism, which emerged in the aftermath of World War II, was characterized by telling stories set among the poor and working classes normally shot on location and with a reliance on non-professional actors. They, arguably, were influenced by the poetic realism of French cinema that appeared in the 1930s and during the war years dealt with marginalized characters who were depicted as either unemployed members of the working class or as criminals. The poetic realism of French cinema offered a fatalistic view in which the characters were dealing with the disappointments of life, often culminating in nostalgic or bitter endings. Following the fatalistic views of the poetic realism of French cinema, Italian Neorealism's concerns were with impoverished working class people who were largely ignored by wider society and the authorities. The films tend to have an open-ended structure in which the main characters often fail to achieve their goals.

Iranian New Wave cinema has arguably been influenced by Italian Neorealism. As a result, new art films emerged, in the Iranian cinema, with political, social and philosophical themes using poetic language. Similar to Italian Neorealist films, most of these films tend to rely on non-professional actors with their themes focused on working class people struggling with significant personal problems that are usually ignored or misunderstood by social institutions. Considering the characteristics, style and themes of these films, they seemed to have similarities in terms of substance and techniques to Italian Neorealism. However, some scholars argue that these films used a distinctive Iranian cinematic language. For example, Rosa Issa<sup>179</sup> in her article admires the unique approach Iranian cinema developed “by blurring the boundaries between fiction and reality, feature film with documentary.”<sup>180</sup>

---

<sup>179</sup> [http://archiv.hkw.de/en/dossiers/iran\\_dossierroseissa/kapitel2.html](http://archiv.hkw.de/en/dossiers/iran_dossierroseissa/kapitel2.html) (retrieved 21/05/2011).

<sup>180</sup> [http://archiv.hkw.de/en/dossiers/iran\\_dossierroseissa/kapitel2.html](http://archiv.hkw.de/en/dossiers/iran_dossierroseissa/kapitel2.html) (retrieved 21/05/2011).

Referring to Michael Winterbottom's award-winning film *In This World*,<sup>181</sup> she argues that the Iranian cinematic approaches inspired European cinema directors. Issa also suggests that the emergence of Iranian New Wave cinematic styles and techniques had a profound influence on Iranian national issues as well as international issues. She says:

This new, humanistic aesthetic, language determined by the film-makers' individual and national identity, rather than the forces of globalism, has a strong creative dialogue not only on homeground but with audiences around the world.<sup>182</sup>

Similarly, Stephen Weinberger<sup>183</sup>, in his article, comparing Italian Neorealist films and Iranian cinema, argues that regardless of the great influence Italian Neorealism has had on Iranian cinema "these [Iranian] films are not merely imitative. Iranian filmmakers have made Neorealism their own".<sup>184</sup> What Weinberger stresses as the distinguishing aspect of Iranian cinema with Italian Neorealism is the difference in their endings. He argues that Italian Neorealist films tend to have tragic endings in which the main characters not only fail to solve their material problems but also morally and spiritually deteriorate in the process. In contrast, he argues, Iranian films are characterized by a strongly 'humanitarian' spirit. In his opinion, Iranian films do not necessarily suggest a realistic view of life in which people are unable to solve their problems. The main characters, as Weinberger argues, "manage either to achieve their material goals, or, at least, become better or more self-confident people in the process".<sup>185</sup> In other words, in Italian Neorealism the main character is confronted with a system, political or social, which is apathetic to them. At the end, the main character's failure is blamed on the system. In Iranian films, as he explains, the main characters and the system are in a dialectical relationship with each other whereby no one is directly blamed for the main character's torment. In these films, as Weinberger argues, in understanding or helping a main character, some logical reasons are often given for a system's failure.

Like the new poetic movements which changed the language of poetry and encouraged the direct or indirect expression of sociopolitical issues of the country in its content, Iranian New Wave cinema established similar trends. For some filmmakers in this cinematic movement social and political issues are of particular importance and are addressed directly in their

---

<sup>181</sup> Michael Winterbottom, *In This World*, 2002.

<sup>182</sup> [http://archiv.hkw.de/en/dossiers/iran\\_dossierroseissa/kapitel2.html](http://archiv.hkw.de/en/dossiers/iran_dossierroseissa/kapitel2.html) (retrieved 21/05/2011).

<sup>183</sup> Stephen Weinberger, 'Neorealism, Iranian Style', *Iranian Studies*, 40 (2007), 5–16.

[http://archiv.hkw.de/en/dossiers/iran\\_dossierroseissa/kapitel2.html](http://archiv.hkw.de/en/dossiers/iran_dossierroseissa/kapitel2.html) (retrieved 21/05/2011).

<sup>184</sup> Weinberger, p.14.

<sup>185</sup> Weinberger, p.14.

movies while for some others these subjects are embedded and reflected in ‘humanitarian’ and philosophical films. This differentiation is not simply about the choice and personal taste of the filmmakers. Some elements like censorship play a key role in the distinction. Political and social codes that are determined and imposed on filmmakers by the authorities, force them to address issues either directly, within the available free space of expression, or indirectly under the guise of ‘humanitarian’ or philosophical topics or concerns. That is why certain arguments regarding Iranian ‘humanitarian’ and philosophical films suggest that these films’ reluctance in directly presenting sociopolitical issues and their impact on people’s lives is a response to and a product of censorship. Apart from these films, however, other types of film try to criticize and resist the oppressive policies of the country. The films of internal exile in general and *My Tehran for Sale* in particular are in this category; they are keen to allow oppositional voices to be heard. *My Tehran for Sale* is a film representing the new generation of secular young people who are at odds with the sociopolitical cultures and aspects of their country. The oppositional films of this subject matter, due to the policies of censorship, are either unable to visualize this generation in detail or, in the absence of the financial support of the state, are of poor quality, are not made on location in Iran or are not made at all. Alternatively, directors conform to imposed censorship policies or self-censor by choosing to avoid controversial themes altogether. *My Tehran for Sale* is rare in that it is a partially-licensed film, made in Tehran with high production values.<sup>186</sup> Part of the reason for this is that it had an Australian production team and the other part is because of the absence of consistent Iranian rules of censorship. To understand the complexity of how films of internal exile show and voice their marginalized identities it is necessary to first look at the complexity of the rules of censorship in Iran.

---

<sup>186</sup> *No One Knows about Persian Cats* by Bahman Ghobadi (2009) is also a documentary of this generation who are leading their double and underground lives in Tehran. The film was shot within 15 days in Iran and smuggled out to international film festivals. It won the special Jury Prize in the UN Certain Regard section at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival. It was broadcasted in many countries including UK. The film was banned in Iran and without considering the copy right rules was distributed in the country. It was for the first time that a director at the beginning of his film declares his satisfaction with the copied and distributed versions. He encourages people to copy the HD version of his movie and enjoy watching it! *This is Not a Film* (2012) by Jafar Panahi is a self-reflexive documentary made after his house arrest in 2010 and being banned from filmmaking for twenty years. The film was smuggled out of Iran on a USB stick hidden in a cake. It was sent to different film festivals such as Cannes Film Festival and was nominated and won several prizes for the best experimental film and the best non-fiction film.

## Censorship and Iranian Post Revolutionary Cinema

Saeed Zeydabadi-Nejad's journey into the complex world of censorship, especially after the establishment of IRI, outlines some of the internal conflicts and contradictions that are sustained by the state authorities responsible for censorship.<sup>187</sup> Understanding these complexities sheds more light on the reasons behind how thematically controversial films manage to be screened or made inside post-revolutionary Iran, despite the imposition of the censorship policies. Film censorship has a long history in Iran. It is almost as old as the cinema itself. Azadeh Farahmand referring to Jamshid Akrami, outlines the first attempts of censorship in Iran. In her opinion, it dates back to the 1920s when cinema owners were under pressure from religious groups who had concerns over the exposure of Iranians to Western morals and to the overt sexuality displayed in imported films.<sup>188</sup> According to her these pressures were not a systematic kind of censorship developed by the state. However, as she explains, in the 1950s a committee was established to supervise both local and imported films. In this regard, Zeydabadi-Nejad refers to the Shah's censorship, which in his opinion, was meant to stop any features undermining the state's national prestige. For example, as he explains, films were not allowed to show poverty and backwardness which, to the minds of the authority, questioned state values and aspirations. The most famous example of this policy of censorship was, he argues, the delayed exhibition of Dariush Mehrjuyi's *The Cow*<sup>189</sup> which was later released only after "the filmmaker agreed to have a statement added to the beginning of the film which said that the story took place before the Pahlavi dynasty".<sup>190</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad's personal interaction with the committee members of censorship after the revolution and his various interviews with filmmakers and state members expose the complexity of the criteria of censorship that, to this date, have never been clearly defined. Zeydabadi-Nejad in his study elaborates the confused state of the Islamic government's approach to the policies of censorship in their encounter with the phenomenon of cinema.

After the revolution, the Shi'ite clergy's opposition to cinema developed an extreme mindset that, based on Zeydabadi-Nejad's statistics, resulted in arson attacks on 180 out of 436

---

<sup>187</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad.

<sup>188</sup> Azadeh Farahmand, 'Perspective on Recent (International Acclaim for) Iranian Cinema', in *New Iranian Cinema: Politics, Representation and Identity*, Tapper, Richard, ed. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), p.88.

<sup>189</sup> Dariush Mehrjui, *The Cow* (Iran, 1969).

<sup>190</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.34.

cinemas. He refers to the most tragic of these incidents which was the fire in the Rex Cinema in the city of Abadan, where almost 300 people were killed on 10 August 1978. Part of these extreme reactions, as he argues, was due to the religious groups' lack of knowledge of the fields of art and cinema. This is because the key members of the censorship committee "had no education relating to cinema (or art), nor any experience in filmmaking".<sup>191</sup> As a result, after the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran supporters of the regime were unable to deal professionally with the phenomenon of cinema. This, however, is still the case for most people who are involved in decision making around censorship.

The Islamization of the country was/is the most important goal of the IRI. Therefore, Ayatollah Khomeini declared that the role of cinema, as a tool, was to educate the people "and that, like all art, [it] was to be put in the service of Islam".<sup>192</sup> Going to the cinema, therefore, became acceptable while there was no guideline to determine "what constituted an Islamic cinema".<sup>193</sup> According to Zeydabadi-Nejad, moderate authority members like Mir-Hossein Musavi and Khatami "took over the reins of the [Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance] MCIG".<sup>194</sup> These more liberal members of the state tried to revitalize the industry of cinema through financial support and training ideologically committed youths in this field. They announced their responsibilities as "*hemayat* (support), *hedayat* (guidance) and *nezarat* (literally supervision, but in effect censorship)".<sup>195</sup> As a result, the quantity of films being produced increased. However, a rating system for the exhibition of films set a number of rules to categorize them in terms of their commitment or relevance to Islamization. Films received "preferential treatment such as higher ticket prices, screening during better periods at better cinemas"<sup>196</sup> based on this rating system from A to D. As a consequence, film producers made more money from films that were more Islamized. The rates relied on, in Zeydabadi-Nejad's words, "loosely defined criteria of technical aspects, aesthetics and content".<sup>197</sup> Also they were based on the filmmakers' ideological commitments to the regime. These rates did not have specific criteria. The mere ideological support or ideas of some filmmakers refer them to *khodi* (one of us) or *gheyr-e-khodi* (not one of us) – in Zeydabadi-Nejad's words insider and outsider – which qualified them to have or not have the privilege of the MCIG's support. These discriminatory rates were endorsed by state authority members

---

<sup>191</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.47.

<sup>192</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.35.

<sup>193</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.36.

<sup>194</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.37.

<sup>195</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.37.

<sup>196</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.38.

<sup>197</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.38.

like the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamene'i, "who in a meeting with the MCIG authorities said, '[i]f you want cinema to grow, you have to provide opportunity [sic] to insider filmmakers.'"<sup>198</sup> This speech placed an expectation on cinema to be at the service of the regime's ideology. They established an organization to teach ideologically committed members filmmaking. This idea was intended to teach religion through film. Among them Mohsen Makhmalbaf a "then ultra-religious" man started his filmmaking. However, as he explains, years later he became one of the opponents of the same ideologies and was among the first members of the organization who crossed the metaphorical red line of censorship by making *Marriage of the Blessed* (1989).

The film was a strong critique of Iran-Iraq war and post-war Iran, a theme which went against the IRI's promotion and rationalization of the war.<sup>199</sup> Most disagreement about the rules of censorship among the post-revolutionary authorities circulated around a complex entanglement of Iranian cultural issues, power relations and personal preferences. Zeydabadi-Nejad's study offers a useful overview and analysis of the complexity of the internal conflict between the reformists and the conservatives, and, consequently, the complex and vague policies of the IRI censorship.

Zeydabadi-Nejad explains that in February 1983, the cabinet of Mir-Hossein Musavi approved a set of censorship codes. These codes were determined according to the recognized but sensitive issues itemized by the Islamized government. According to Zeydabadi-Nejad,

[E]xhibition permits would not be issued to films that:

[I]nsult directly or indirectly the prophets, imams, the supreme jurist, the leadership council or the qualified jurists

[E]ncourage wickedness, corruption and prostitution

[E]ncourage or teach abuse of harmful and dangerous drugs or professions which are religiously sanctioned against such as smuggling, etc.

[E]ncourage foreign cultural, economic and political influence contrary to the 'neither West nor East' policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

---

<sup>198</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.38.

<sup>199</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, pp.38-44.

[E]xpress or disclose anything that is against the interests and policies of the country which might be exploited by foreigners.<sup>200</sup>

In addition to these codes, as he explains, a sub-clause was added to determine how women could appear in Iranian and foreign films. As Zeydabadi-Nejad argues, although these codes were approved, the criteria of censorship remained ambiguous.<sup>201</sup> For example, the interpretation of ‘wickedness’, ‘corruption’, ‘foreign cultural influence’ or the representation of women came down to “those who put the code into practice”.<sup>202</sup> He perceives this ambiguity as being the result of a combination of two things: first that the authorities genuinely had little or no knowledge about the relativity of moral issues and secondly that they were confident enough of their interpretations to impose them on cinema. That is why, as he concludes, they felt they did not need to clarify the terms.

After 1989, following Ayatollah Khomeini’s death and Rafsanjani’s presidency, a level of negotiation and critique of post revolutionary Iran began to emerge. Rafsanjani declared his time the time of ‘reconstruction’ in which he would “reduce the role of the state in the economy and [allow] a degree of openness to market forces”.<sup>203</sup> Khatami, as a liberal figure, remained at his post as a cultural minister and removed some limitations from cinema. For instance, “filmmakers no longer needed to gain the approval of the MCIG for their screenplays”.<sup>204</sup> With the presidency of Khatami, the internal ideological conflicts took new shapes and dimensions. These internal conflicts, as Zeydabadi-Nejad’s study shows, had/have a very specific impact on the release of films pursuing an overt socio-political agenda. He takes *The Hidden Half* (2001) by Tahmineh Milani as an example explaining that it was released and screened in the theatres but suddenly a month after its release Milani was arrested and sentenced to death. Following an outcry from many well-known directors all over the world, she was released two weeks after her initial detention, however, the charges against her were never dropped. In an interview she clearly declares that she was victimized by the internal

---

<sup>200</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.40.

<sup>201</sup> Hamid Dabashi, *Close up: Iranian Cinema, Past, Present, and Future* (London ; New York: Verso, 2001). Reza J. Poudeh and M. Reza Shirvani, ‘Issues and Paradoxes in the Development of Iranian National Cinema: An Overview’, *Iranian Studies*, 41 (2008), 323–341 <doi:10.1080/00210860801981294>. *The New Iranian Cinema: Politics, Representation and Identity* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2002). Ḥamīd Rizā Ṣadr, *Iranian Cinema: a Political History* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris ; Distributed in the United States by Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

Hamid Naficy, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2011).

<sup>202</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.41.

<sup>203</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.42.

<sup>204</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.42.



conflicts state members had within the cultural ministry.<sup>205</sup> Similar cases all are a product of ideological conflicts within and between political factions attempting to promote their preferred cultural values through cinema. That is why, even to this date, there are no specifically defined rules not only in the field of cinema but in any other cultural fields, like music, theater and photography to name a few.

The criteria of censorship, therefore, were never consistent but varied from time to time, based on the taste of the prevailing ruling authorities. Zeydabadi-Nejad's valuable research into the MCIG elaborates the level of ignorance and prudence, and at the same time genuine efforts they make for the development of art. For example, when discussing the prudence of the reformists he says:

Contrary to what is generally assumed, the reformists have not always been wholehearted supporters of artistic freedoms. They have often put their own political survival ahead of their concerns for artistic freedom.<sup>206</sup>

He also argues that the internal conflicts between the reformists and the conservatives, in the field of culture, were at least in part due to a "lack of understanding about the modern medium of cinema".<sup>207</sup> What he suggests in his study is that neither conservatives nor reformists have the fixed and known characteristics that many people would imagine, which is what makes the process of censorship and film release so complex. He argues that neither the censorship barrier is impenetrable nor the authorities ignorant enough to be fooled by the possible techniques filmmakers may apply to bypass censorship. I suggest, this complex set of policies and conditions of censorship provides opportunities for filmmakers like Granaz Moussavi to receive permission for her film to be shot in Tehran, despite its controversial theme. Although the film was not given permission to be screened inside Iran it was given a license to be shot on location in Tehran and was then smuggled out to Australia for post production and release. It is important to consider *My Tehran for Sale* within the historical, cultural and sociopolitical context of Iranian cinema. This also allows the analysis of the internal exilic elements of film to be more careful and detailed. The next section offers an analysis of the internal exilic dimensions and identity shown and reflected in *My Tehran for Sale*.

---

<sup>205</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, pp 43-45.

<sup>206</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.45.

<sup>207</sup> Zeydabadi-Nejad, p.45.

## *My Tehran For Sale: Analysis*

In the analysis of *My Tehran for Sale*, I will look at the notions of home, imposed duality, marginalized cultures and lives, and the opposite Other shown in the film. Using the theories of film and the historical background of Iranian cinema, I will show how Granaz Moussavi pictures the identity of internal exile and the “reality” of their lives. Throughout the analysis I will also briefly compare the film with the cultural products analyzed previously in this dissertation. This comparison allows me to clarify particular points about the condition of internal exile in the context of Iran. Through the analysis, I will conclude that the cultural products of the internal and external exile, across a variety of genres, are substantially the same in terms of their fundamental perception of home, voicing their marginalized identities and promoting a culture of resistance, mainly through othering.

### Underground and Aboveground Homes, Identities and Cultures

*My Tehran for Sale*, like the previous cultural products of both external and internal exile, introduces the main characters of the film by interrelating them with the issues of home in general and the constructor in particular. The film shows the condition of internal exile, the identity of internal exile, the resistance of the internal exile and at the same time proposes a culture of resistance. To touch upon these matters, the director uses various cinematic techniques. For example, to show the condition of internal exile in which the individual is at odds with the popular culture of the homeland, lives in the margins of home and has marginalized cultures and identities, the director uses some cinematic techniques like lighting and montage in the mise-en-scene. Monaco refers to the mise-en-scene in film as the modification of space and location where the subject in front of a camera can be shown. He says: “[t]his French phrase literally means “putting in the scene”.”<sup>208</sup> He names mise-en-scene and montage as “the engines of film esthetics.”<sup>209</sup> Monaco argues that within the framed image, filmmakers apply different cinematic techniques and elements, like montage, focus, camera angle, movement, distance, point of view and so on to apply the codes and signs of the movie to express connotations of their films.

---

<sup>208</sup> Monaco, p.193.

<sup>209</sup> Monaco, p.193.

The mise-en-scene is designed to show a clear distinction between underground and aboveground spaces and through this establishes a clear sense of dual underground/aboveground homes, lives and identities. The mise-en-scene of *My Tehran for Sale* offers a visual incarnation of the sense of home of internal exile. The homes offered in the film play a vital role in proceeding its theme. Throughout the film, locations are divided into the two main spaces: underground Tehran and aboveground Tehran. In this section, by ‘underground’ I refer to both its metaphorical and actual meaning. In its metaphorical sense, underground home is a space that is marginalized and hidden yet in which the internal exile feels comfortable and closer to their true sense of self. In its actual sense, it is literally an underground space where the internal exile engages in creative activities hidden from the authorities’ eyes. Underground Tehran is the space where the main characters find relative freedom to conduct their ‘real’ lives, practice their cultures and express themselves. Aboveground Tehran is a place where they find themselves at odds with its popular culture, feel alienated and as a result try to leave it for a better place. Nearly the entire film is an illustration of the constant intermixed underground/aboveground spaces through which the characters’ dual identities are exposed. For example, the stable, the play rehearsal space and the private houses are all either metaphorical or actual underground spaces in which the characters are able to easily fit, have fun and express themselves, unless their hidden spaces are revealed by the constructor, like the scene of the characters’ arrest during the private party at the stable. This is reminiscent of Shamlou’s *In This Blind Alley* in which his didactic narrative technique asks a reader to hide “love”, “light”, and “joy in the closet” to be happy. Similarly, the early scenes of the film engage with happy characters who owe their joy to their dark, hidden and underground place. The moment their joy stops is when their hidden homes are discovered. These underground scenes are intermixed with the scenes of aboveground Tehran where the characters are shown to be stressed, anxious and scared generally because they are at odds with the popular sociopolitical aspects of the country. Also, the discomforting, stressful and anxiety-driven aspects of aboveground Tehran contribute to this; it is a place where the internal exile faces and confronts the opposite Other on a daily basis. For example, there is a scene in the film in which a rack focus of Marziyeh’s face in a taxi reveals the fear and anxiety she feels after seeing a bearded man rushing toward a taxi for a lift. In this scene, she anxiously fixes her loose scarf to conceal strands of her hair out of her scarf. In response to Saman’s concern – he offers to take her to a doctor – her facial expression eases the anxiety when with a happy face she tells him that the rehearsal will make her feel better. The play rehearsal space is literally an underground space; it is shown

through a shot of a stairway descending to a dark, underground setting. This double narrative technique allows the filmmaker to show repressed self expression in the society, forced marginalization, stagnation and displacement of the internal exile from aboveground home. Simultaneously, it suggests the double lives of the internal exile with manipulation of the structure of the cinematic code in which bright colour associates with happiness and vice versa. I will explain this in more detail below.

To show the marginalized identities and cultures of the internal exile alongside their imposed dual identities and double-lives, the director uses the techniques of lighting and montage. The techniques of lighting and montage assist Moussavi to convey the stressful lives and feelings of the internal exile. Lighting is an important element used by filmmakers to show their subjectivities, viewpoints and the aspects they want to be seen in the film. Richard Dyer describes movie lighting as a technology that tries “to ensure that what is important in a shot is clearly visible to the audience”.<sup>210</sup> Lighting, as he explains, apart from its contribution to the medium’s technology is a guiding principle to control the visibility of a filmmaker’s subjectivity. In the beginning of the film, Moussavi applies the lighting to focus on the hidden, marginalized identities of the internal exile. To do so, she makes use of lighting technique in a way which is opposite to how it is conventionally applied in cinema: where happy atmospheres are lit in bright and colorful settings and vice versa. In this film, this code of lighting is inverted; the dark settings, for the most part, are those where the characters feel safe, happy and able to express themselves freely while bright settings are places where the discomfort, challenges and anxiety of the main characters prevails. In other words, what is visible in the beginning of the film are the joyous faces of the characters in their dark environments. These paradoxical settings and atmospheres are applied to suggest certain issues: the imposed duality, marginalized lives and cultures, and, in a bigger picture, being in exile in their homeland. In the beginning of the film the hidden, marginalized identities and cultures and their underground home are evident mainly through lighting and montage. Monaco refers to the theoretical works of a Russian filmmaker, V.I. Pudovkin, who developed a theory of montage. In his essays, Pudovkin explains that montage fundamentally is “the method which controls the ‘psychological guidance’ of the spectator”<sup>211</sup> He focuses on the power of the filmmaker in controlling and affecting the observer. Furthermore, he emphasizes the importance of the shot which determines the audience’s apprehension of the

---

<sup>210</sup> Richard Dyer, *White* (London, New York: Routledge, 1997), p.86.

<sup>211</sup> Monaco, p.449.

scene. Using lighting and montage, *My Tehran for Sale* begins with the parallel montage of the two different traditional and modern locations, their inhabitants and activities, using the dark lighting associated with atmospheres of happiness and safety. Shallow and deep focus on hands, gestures and faces in the two different locations – a private house and the stable – and lighting technique gives the audience the opportunity to feel settled and comfortable in the paradoxical dark settings and happy atmospheres. The first location is a small room with shallow focus on the characters' clapping hands and smiling faces listening to traditional Afghan music being played and sung by a father figure. The second location shows a relatively large place where a party is in progress. Part of this scene is shot with a handheld camera which both heightens the impression of it being a celebratory atmosphere and stimulates the youths' jumping and dancing to loud techno-like music. The second location with the whinnying and neighing sounds of horses shows that the party is being held in a stable. As a stable is an unusual place for throwing a party, it makes it clear that this party is clandestine and being undertaken without the permission of the authorities. The leading characters are shown in the second location followed by the focus on the youths' hands in the air and their joyous faces when the main characters, Raziye and Saman, exchange glances with inaudible or mouthed words.

The lighting technique of these two locations allows the director to focus on happy facial expressions in contrast with the darkness of the locations. Using this technique, the director suggests to the audience that the people in her film are happy in the darkness. Considering Dyer's arguments regarding lighting, the lighting in the parallel montage of these two locations, at the beginning of the film, focuses not only on the happiness of the characters but also on the darkness. In other words, Moussavi's lighting techniques emphasize the happy faces and gestures of the characters made possible in their hidden and dark places. However, at this point, it is not clear why the characters are happy in darkness. Before long, even before the beginning of any audible dialogue, the reasons become clear.

To do this, the director uses the jump cut between two locations to interrupt the natural movements of the scenes and through it conveys the approach of danger to the audience. The sense of danger is confirmed when the police guards raid the two locations, arresting the father figure of the traditional family and arresting the young party goers, as many as possible. This scene suggests that the characters are in imminent danger of being invaded by a powerful force and their lives and cultures are led in the margins. Just like the cultural products of external exile in which the self-narrative starts with the depiction of the

constructor, in this film the characters start audible dialogues after the visual exposition of the constructor. This suggests that the identities and self-reflections of both external and internal exiles are interdependent with the constructor and with issues of what constitutes home. That is why home defines the identity of internal exile. This style of narrative clarifies that as long as the issues of home are not known to the audience the characters are not able to be narrated, understood, and empowered. The main character's narrative voice begins right after the first scenes of the underground home being invaded by the police. This is shown through the reverse shot of Marziyeh's face in an office like room, which the audience will later find out is a detention centre in Australia.

Comparable to the allusive messages Shamlou applied to call the culture of resistance indirectly to the readers' minds, Moussavi in *My Tehran for Sale* applies similar techniques. One of the significant characteristics of the film is its style of narrating torment. The director applies some cinematic techniques to purposely simplify the harsh realities of her society. The director does it through incompatible atmospheres, incidents, dialogues, facial and emotional expressions. This assists the director to both show the issues of home and not to expose them overtly. It is similar to saying the otherwise unsayable issues of home, as explained previously in the written narratives of the internal exile. This technique also helps the director to avoid the authority's attention. For example, in a scene, Marziyeh and Saman enjoying the taste of two corn kebabs, talk about their flavour ignoring the child who has sold them. Both characters disregard the problem of child labour which is one of the worrying problems of Tehran. In the shot the audience sees a close up of three corn kebabs along with Marziyeh's voice narrating her time at school and a later on Marziyeh and Saman's humming voices praising the smell of corn kebabs. The camera slowly pans up to show the seller child's sad facial expression intermixed with the medium shot of the leading characters talking and enjoying their corn kebabs. The audience here is more likely to follow the camera's movement and the heroine's story which overtly avoids focusing on the child's misery. As a result, it is unlikely for a viewer to sympathize with the boy or even notice him. However, the backgrounds of *My Tehran for Sale* are equally important as its foregrounds. They highlight the sociopolitical issues of home as motifs in a series of subplots. Child labour, as a social issue, is a significant theme in the film since it appears repeatedly in the background. Backgrounds give space for the director to address and criticize the issue indirectly through suggesting how oppression is normalized, and how people have become

inured to it; it is breathed in society like air. This double narrative technique reaches its peak when the difficulties are narrated through the child protagonist, Nilufar's view point.

The deep focus on Nilufar's obsessive recording of everything around her with her cell phone camera picks up minute behavioral details of people in the medical clinic. This allows the audience to observe the people from the child's point of view. The rack focus of her shocked face looking at the argument between two women implies the sense of childish naivety which is attended by her observation. This scene makes the audience aware of an unpleasant incident while being distanced from its tragic reality. Through the child's point of view the audience is informed of the issue of illegal abortion and the difficulties surrounding it. The scene is shot from three different angles: 1- rack focus of Nilufar suggesting her shock 2- deep focus of the scene simulating the child's perspective 3- deep focus of Nilufar recording the scene on her camera phone which gives an audience a third person point of view through which to judge the scene. The combination of these three angles allows the filmmaker to address the issue without explicit focus on it. The next scene is a suicide scene of the girl in the street. Although the arguments are disturbing with a tragic outcome the distancing effects of the double narrative mode in the movie prevents the audience from being overwhelmed by sorrow. The distance is partly structured by the naive narration of the child's recording. The audience's perception of the environment is paralleled with the domain of a child's perception of the difficulties; this defuses the scene and through a child's gaze provokes the emotional power of the film. Using a child's perspective allows the director to visualize the issues of a society which are so entrenched in adult situations. Within the alternate and equally acceptable conventions of the naive perspective the audience would have felt neither distress nor objection to the statement that the environment is distressing.<sup>212</sup>

Nilufar's cell phone camera recording is also a reference to the culture of resistance through citizen photojournalism and camera witnessing, which recently is commonly used as embodied socio-political dissent in the world in general and in Iran in particular.<sup>213</sup> It shows that the culture of resistance, using a variety of techniques depending on the time and era of

---

<sup>212</sup> For more on child's gaze and unsympathetic characters see S. Chaudhuri.

Farhang Erfani, *Iranian Cinema and Philosophy Shooting Truth* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) <<http://www.palgraveconnect.com/doi/10.1057/9781137012920>> [accessed 1 October 2013].

<sup>213</sup> For more on citizen photojournalism see: K. Anden-Papadopoulos, 'Citizen Camera-witnessing: Embodied Political Dissent in the Age of "Mediated Mass Self-communication"', *New Media & Society*, 2013 <<http://doi/10.1177/1461444813489863>>. M. Mortensen, 'When Citizen Photojournalism Sets the News Agenda: Neda Agha Soltan as a Web 2.0 Icon of Post-election Unrest in Iran', *Global Media and Communication*, 7 (2011), 4–16. Pedram Khosronejad, 'Some Observations on Visual Representations of the 2009 Iranian Presidential Election Crisis', *Iranian Studies*, 44 (2011), 395–408 <[doi:10.1080/00210862.2011.556391](http://doi/10.1080/00210862.2011.556391)>.

the people, passes along and between the generations. Similar citizen camera witnessing is shown in the beginning of the film when the moral guards raid the party. It shows that the youths despite the fear of being arrested are still able to record the brutality of the moral guards using their phones. Some scenes are shot from a citizen photojournalist viewpoint. These scenes serve different purposes. First their documentary-like format stresses the reality of the moral guards' brutality and secondly through positing the audience, metaphorically, behind the cameras of the citizens encourages and promotes a culture of resistance.

To practice the culture of resistance against the constructor, *My Tehran for Sale*, in a way which is similar to the cultural products of external and internal exile, applies the cause and effect strategy. For example, Marziyeh is shown to be diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. This illness contributes to the dual identities and double lives she is leading. In an interview, conducted by Behnam Nateghi, when Moussavi was asked about the rationale behind the exaggerated tragic destiny of Marziyeh she said:

I believe when there is no freedom and security to experience love freely and openly, obviously when it [love] is moved behind the walls you cannot expect a good outcome of it. My film is addressing the issue and it is not exaggeration.<sup>214</sup>

The cause of the character's illness is directly attributed to the dominant sociopolitical aspects of the country which forces the internal exile to lead a double life. However, AIDS is an illness and can be related rather to personal matters and knowledge about sexual safety than unambiguously to the constructor. The character of Marziyeh is developed in a way that shows her strength, independence, sophistication and good education. Moussavi's argument on the relationship between unawareness about sexual matters as a result of them being moved behind the walls by the constructor and the tragic outcome of it, like AIDS, is acceptable, in general. In the case of Marziyeh, however, her AIDS cannot be attributed to her unawareness imposed by the constructor since she is clearly pictured as an educated and independent young woman.

Similar to Ryan's transcoding, not only does the film apply a variety of cinematic techniques to have an impact on the audience but also the audiences have an impact on the ways the film is made. In *My Tehran for Sale*, the director *tries* to keep the oppositional figure of the internal exile in the audience's eyes. In other words, considering the audiences by the

---

<sup>214</sup> 'Granaz Moussavi in Toronto', *Behnam Nateghi*. VOA Report, 9 October 2009.



filmmaker determines how the film is made. For example, a play rehearsal scene shows a play which does not get the permission to be performed in front of the audiences, while the audiences of the film are watching it. The play does not have a dialogue; the only sounds in the play are the human humming horror music, body movements and taps. It suggests on the one hand the lack of audiovisual facilities in the absence of governmental supports and on the other hand offers a metaphorical reference to the marginalized voices, identities and faces of the internal exile. Also the scene shows the audience that the play does not get governmental permission to be seen while the play is shot inside the country and it is seen by the film audiences. To promote the culture of resistance, the filmmaker seems to hold on to the oppositional image of the internal exile before the eyes of the spectators. In this sense, the filmmaker seems to impose a kind of self-censorship comparable to that of Shamlou's, mentioned in the curse of canonization. The filmmaker does not show the complexity of the relationship between and within the internal exile and the constructor. The very fact that the film is shot on location, with an authoritative permission, suggests the complexity of the conflicts inside the country which is clearly avoided in the movie.

## CHAPTER IV: Intrinsic Exile and Intrinsic Exilic Identity in *Prisoner of Tehran* and *Azadeh Kanom and Her Writer* or *Dr. Sharifie's Private Auschwitz*

An examination of the cultural products of internal and external exile shows that both of these exilic identities have similar perceptions of home: a lost place which is confiscated by the constructor. Due to the constructor's invasion of homeland both the external and internal exile express their inauthentic existence in their homeland and outside of it. Both stress their imposed dual identities and the double lives they had/have to live and endure in their homeland. To voice their marginalized and oppressed identities, they introduce their exilic cultures in their cultural products and promote a culture of resistance against the constructor in their works. External exilic discourses, and to a lesser extent internal exilic perceptions, have already been widely examined by various scholars. This is mainly because external exile prevails as central to the study of exile as the term 'exile' is mainly understood to refer to it. As argued before, the specific traumatic experiences of losing home either through voluntary or forced expatriation or being alienated by force from the homeland, that accompany the external and internal exile, have a significant impact on the configuration and characteristics of the cultural products they generate. Both the external and internal exilic identities are fundamentally dependant on their confrontation with the constructor. As a result, their narratives and their senses of selves predominantly deal with the experiences of the encounter between exiles and the constructor.

After examining some of the Iranian cultural products of the external and internal exile, a gap emerges. This comes in a new form of exilic identity. This, to my knowledge, has attracted no previous scholarly attention. My work in this dissertation intends to redress this. I refer to this type of exile as the intrinsic exile. By intrinsic exile, I refer to an unavoidable state of being born into confusion and dislocation. This condition imposes an intimacy with the phenomenon of exile on an individual from birth. The state of intrinsic exile, however, cannot be recognized unless it becomes conscious. It becomes conscious mainly as the result of the specific historical and socio-political ground on which Iranian society is based and also the specific type of traumatic experiences this imposes on the individual, from early childhood. In this chapter, I will argue that the phenomenon of exile is intrinsic in the Iranian context

because Iranians are, and have always already been, living a homeless, exilic existence. Iranians, throughout their entire history, have never experienced a sense of consistent security at home. This is because at no time in Iran's history have any Iranians, regardless of their religion, ethnicity, class, education, power or affiliation with the authorities, been safe, stable or settled in their country. This has fostered a kind of consistent unpredictability for all Iranians. Iranians are, therefore, all in a kind of persistent exilic condition since banishment from the security of home always has been and continues to be ever present.

In this chapter, I argue that in the Iranian context, the internal and external exiles are effectively only illusions of intrinsic exile. In other words, while the concept of exile is intrinsic in the Iranian context, what is offered *as* external exile tends to be presented in such a way that makes it compatible with and understandable to those outside of the Iranian context. Similarly, the internal exile is really just a misapprehension of the concept of exile in Iran. In other words, both the external and internal exiles have mistaken interpretations of their intrinsic exilic situation. The internal exile as an individual, for example, perceives the sense of self identity through consciously resisting the constructor while, in the Iranian context, fundamentally both the constructor and the exile are in exilic positions. In fact, and as I will show later, this exilic situation is, at its most basic level, what the exile and the constructor share. To support this assertion and to develop the concept of intrinsic exile it is necessary to look at the socio-political history and make-up of the Iranian states and the people and their relationship, throughout their history. Also it is essential to look at the dominant aspects of the culture of resistance generated within the socio-political make-up of Iran. So, for the purpose of introducing the intrinsic exile, this chapter is divided into two main sections; the first section deals with the historical background of the characteristics of the Iranian state and the people and the second section is about intrinsic exile, its dimensions and the analysis of the ways it is reflected in the selected cultural products of the intrinsic exile: *Prisoner of Tehran* by Marina Nemat and *Azadeh Kanom and Her Writer or Dr. Sharifie's Private Auschwitz (Azadeh Kanom)* by Reza Baraheni.

Intrinsic traumatic experiences of intrinsic exile are best understood through the lens of a specific type of racial thinking, or racialization, that prevails in contemporary Iranian society. Racialization in Iran rarely attracts scholarly attention but a few scholarly works and one book in particular, *Iran and the Challenge of Diversity: Islamic Fundamentalism, Aryanist*

*Racism, and Democratic Struggles*, by Alireza Asgharzadeh address and study it.<sup>215</sup> Their valuable historical research and the arguments they put forward not only address, assess and criticise racial thinking in Iran but also provide a better understanding of it. However, what some of these scholars fail to address is the specific qualities racial thinking has in Iranian society. This is mainly due to their attempts to compare Iranian racial thinking with the known forms of racism elsewhere in the world. Most scholars, therefore, either ignore the concept of Iranian racism altogether or try to compare racism within Iran with other known examples of it. What I will argue in this chapter is that Iranian racism is similar to the basic characteristics of racism found elsewhere in the world but at the same time contains specific qualities that make it unique. It is my contention that these unique qualities are the result of the intrinsic exilic condition that I am investigating here combined with a modern racist take on Iran's past. This imposes specific types of traumatic experience out of which intrinsic exilic identities emerge. Understanding those unique qualities will, thereby, further understanding of intrinsic exile and the cultural products it generates. The main objective of this chapter, therefore, is to offer an introduction to intrinsic exile and an analysis of it in practice.

To fulfil this objective and to clarify intrinsic exilic identity, it is useful to first of all examine the specific characteristics of Iranian racial thinking that is focussed internally, that is within the nation. These ways of thinking can be understood as being both caused by and reflected in a set of key dominant concepts that prevail in modern Iranian culture: Aryanism, Persianization (through imposed monolingualism) and Islamization as monofaithism. All of these require detailed examination here. Secondly, it is important to consider the development of intrinsic exilic identity. The emergence and influence of intrinsic exilic identities on the cultural products it generates will be analyzed using two texts: *Prisoner of Tehran* and *Azadeh Kanom* by Reza Baraheni. In order to offer a clearer and more detailed scrutiny of the intrinsic exilic identity, these will be explicitly compared and contrasted to internal and external exilic identities and their cultural products. This will shed light both on intrinsic exile and the traumatic experiences associated with it.

---

<sup>215</sup> Alireza Asgharzadeh, *Iran and the Challenge of Diversity: Islamic Fundamentalism, Aryanist Racism, and Democratic Struggles* (Gordonsville, VA, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

## The History Of Racism and its Contribution to Iranian Internal Racial Thinking

Racism is a complex and contested term and the causes of racism are multifaceted in both their specificity and operation. Too often simplistic assumptions are made to define what racism is while, paradoxically, in order to effectively challenge racism, a deep understanding of its causes is required.<sup>216</sup> Studying the complex issues of racism in detail is outside the scope of this dissertation. However, in order to fully understand how the intrinsic exilic identity develops, it is important to consider the role that racism plays in terms of instigating traumatic experiences for the individual exile within Iran.

Racism can be defined as “the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.”<sup>217</sup> The term racism did not exist in the English language until the 1930s. It was first defined in 1936 by the Oxford English Dictionary as “[t]he theory that distinctive human characteristics and abilities are determined by race”.<sup>218</sup> Racism involves the belief in racial differences, which in turn is used to justify discrimination of members of that race by members of another race. Although the term has only relatively recently appeared in the dictionary, its practice, according to Bernard Lewis, has a long history all around the world. He argues that racist opinions have been vividly stated in the historical, philosophical, and literary writings of different eras. His argument, however, is open to question with others arguing that racism, in its present form, is a modern phenomenon and during ancient times it was not a known practice in its modern sense.<sup>219</sup>

---

<sup>216</sup> For more on the complexity of racism see: Reena Bhavnani and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *Tackling the Roots of Racism: Lessons for Success* (Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2005). Ali Rattansi, *Racism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>217</sup> <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/racism?q=racism> (retrieved 27/12/11).

<sup>218</sup> Oxford English Dictionary of 1982.

<sup>219</sup> Bernard Lewis refers to Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, who states in his discussion of slavery that Greeks by nature are free and barbarians (non-Greeks) are by nature slaves. Aristotle does not specify a particular race as barbarians but he refers to the people outside of Ancient Greece. The term barbarian itself is originated from Greek civilization meaning “anyone who is not Greek”. They used the term when they encountered different cultures and languages and found sound of their languages unfamiliar. So they used barbaros which evokes the image of babbling (a person speaking a non-Greek language). The term barbarian was mainly used to the people who were perceived by Greeks as uncivilized. Since their essential way of encountering with other people was through invasion they found justification of their invasion in the others’ inferiority. <https://www.amherst.edu/media/view/307584/original/The+Question+of+Orientalism+by+Bernard+Lewis+|+The+New+York+Review+of+Books.pdf> (retrieved 27/11/12).

See: Edward Paulino, ‘Anti-Haitianism, Historical Memory, and the Potential for Genocidal Violence in the Dominican Republic’, *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, 1 (2006), pp. 265–288 <doi:10.3138/7864-3362-3R24-6231>.

In spite of the challenges to it, racism is still widely evident in today's world. In some societies it is open and overt and in other societies it operates more covertly or unconsciously. In different shapes of racial discrimination, institutional racism, and economic racism, many scholars have argued that racism is mainly the product of xenophobia.<sup>220</sup> In other words, what many categories of racism share is a sense of antipathy towards or fear of difference. All types of known racism in the world show discriminatory behaviours of one group of people over another group based on such things as skin colour, linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and religious differences. This can escalate into internal conflicts and genocide.<sup>221</sup>

In terms of racism, Iranian culture, like many other cultures of the world is no exception in terms of inflicting these types of racial thinking or racialization on its fellow people. However, despite the racist political and historical thoughts, strategies and practises in Iran, surprisingly, Iranian internal racial thinking has rarely been seriously scrutinised. Most recently, the existence of what Asgharzadeh calls racism in Iran has been examined, in his book, *Iran and the Challenge of Diversity: Islamic Fundamentalism, Aryanist Racism, and Democratic Struggles*. By situating Iran within an Orientalist discourse and by analysing cultural, linguistic and ethnic developments within "Aryanist discursive reconstructions of Iran's history", he challenges contemporary "racism" in Iran. Also Reza Zia-Ebrahimi in his recent article, *Self-Orientalization and Dislocation: The Uses and Abuses of the "Aryan" Discourse in Iran*, argues that the specific role of Aryanism and its contribution to Iranian identity politics is supported by the strategies he names "Self-Orientalization and Dislocation".<sup>222</sup> By self-Orientalization Zia-Ebrahimi refers to the way Iranian intellectuals have tended to be amendable to European thought. By "dislocation" he refers to the way these same intellectuals have built a sense of racial affiliation with Europe's achievements. Both scholars interrogate racist constructions of Aryanism in the Iranian context. Asgharzadeh argues that a radicalized interpretation of Aryanism has privileged Persian ethnic groups over non-Persian Iranian communities. Similarly Zia-Ebrahimi sees the claims of the "Aryan race" as "a fundamental pillar of the Iranian nationalist discourse".<sup>223</sup> Reviewing European sources and Iranian texts, he argues that the Aryan discourse which is evident in Iranian culture is a recent import that has achieved certain outcomes: specifically

---

<sup>220</sup> See: Bernhard Dieckmann, Christoph Wulf and Michael Wimmer, eds., *Violence-Nationalism, Racism, Xenophobia*, 5 European Studies in Education (Munster, New York: Waxmann, 1997).

<sup>221</sup> See: Zeus Leonardo, *Race, Whiteness, and Education*, The Critical Social Thought Series (New York: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>222</sup> R. Zia-Ebrahimi, 'Self-Orientalization and Dislocation: The Uses and Abuses of the "Aryan" Discourse in Iran', *Iranian Studies*, 44 (2011), 445–472.

<sup>223</sup> R. Zia-Ebrahimi, 'Self-Orientalization and Dislocation', p.445.

self-Orientalization and “dislocation”, in identity politics in Iran.<sup>224</sup> By exploring the strategies of what he calls “self-Orientalization” and “dislocation” his historical study highlights and criticizes the influence of various ideologies on “the Aryanist definition of Iranian identity”.<sup>225</sup> To explore the roots of racism in Iran, Asgharzadeh’s discursive reconstructions introduce and investigate the level and intensity of racism in Iran. Asgharzadeh’s study explores Iranian cultural, linguistic and ethnic developments through Orientalist and Aryanist discursive reconstructions of Iran’s history. He concludes that racism is not limited to Western countries and that this problematic phenomenon should be studied in Oriental societies themselves.

Although racial thinking and its prevalence in Iran have played an important role in both the strategies and practises of policy making in the society, they are substantially different from other racist practices in the world. They are different in that the essence of Iranian racial thinking is not derived from xenophobia. This is because Iran has a multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual heritage that has existed for around 6000 years. As a result, xenophobia does not and cannot accurately characterise the Iranian persona. Current racial thinking in Iran is arguably a modern phenomenon that is a product of Aryanism which was effectively ‘imported’ but it found fertile ground in which to thrive in the form of its present racialization. This fertile ground was provided by Iran’s long history of arbitrary rule, the dominance of faith/superstition, a patriarchal system, and a prevailing predisposition whereby conspiracy theories are widely accepted.<sup>226</sup> This is, obviously, a complicated and complex set of ideas, so for convenience, and for the purposes of this dissertation, I will refer to it as Iranian racism.

The difference between Iranian racism and racism more generally needs to be clarified to articulate first of all the essential substance of the intrinsic exile, secondly the traumatic experiences it imposes and thirdly the cultural products the intrinsic exile generates. For more elaboration, I will challenge how Asgharzadeh is able to attribute Iranian dictatorial policies to racism and how he blames Orientalism for Persianizing the country. To shed light on the dimensions of the intrinsic exile, I will look at what key scholars have argued to be the

---

<sup>224</sup> R. Zia-Ebrahimi, 'Self-Orientalization and Dislocation', p446.

<sup>225</sup> R. Zia-Ebrahimi, 'Self-Orientalization and Dislocation', p.446.

<sup>226</sup> For more see: Homa Katouzian, *The Persians: Ancient, Mediaeval and Modern Iran* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2010). Ahmad Seyf, *Despotic Mind, Despotic Culture: The Case of Iran: Iran: Estebdad-e Zehn Va Farhang-e Estebdadi* (Regent’s College, London: H&S Media, 2011). Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, “‘Arab Invasion’ and Decline, or the Import of European Racial Thought by Iranian Nationalists”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. (2012), pp. 1–19. DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2012.734389

characteristics that are dominant in the cultural and socio-political history of Iran, which for centuries created, in Homa Katouzian's terms, "one of the most varied, volatile, and fascinating civilizations of humankind".<sup>227</sup> These characteristics, I argue, have made a situation in which the population has consistently felt unable to achieve a sense of being settled. Using these studies, I will bring into light the concept of intrinsic exile, its dimensions and reflections. Although the intrinsic exile has, for the most part, come about because of negative, despotic and harmful impulses in Iranian socio-political history, understanding it shows that the intrinsic exile has a fundamentally irenic potential. I will show that this irenic potential is essentially the outcome of a sense of doubt the intrinsic exile tends to maintain and is the result of its adaptability. This makes it worthy of study and consideration. The next section offers an examination of Iranian internal racism, or Iranian racism.

## The Roots of Iranian Racism

In this section, looking at the roots of Iranian racism allows me to elaborate the intrinsic exile further. It is important to understand in more detail the fertile ground which arguably provided the space that allowed Iranian internal racism to grow and thrive. This is necessary for clear illustration of the intrinsic exile, which is raised from the specific socio-political, cultural and even psychological aspects of Iranian society. It is essential to articulate the dominant characteristics of this ground in order to show what intrinsic exile, the intrinsic exilic situation, its cultural products and its highly irenic potential are. Now I will turn to briefly look at the different arguments around the roots of the emergence of Iranian internal racism. Some intellectuals like Edward Said argue that Western scholars, in search of their roots and their sense of self, became curious and interested in oriental societies.<sup>228</sup> In the case of Iran, some, like Asgharzadeh<sup>229</sup>, argue that occidental studies of oriental societies were a kind of double-edged sword. On the one hand, their invaluable studies have made a significant contribution to the body of oriental studies and helped to make the oriental people themselves aware of some aspects of their history. On the other hand, the studies established racist tendencies through inventing a prehistoric imaginary race. According to

---

<sup>227</sup> Katouzian., p.18

<sup>228</sup> For more see: Edward W Said, *Orientalism* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1995) pp. 96-201

<sup>229</sup> Asgharzadeh.



Asgharzadeh<sup>230</sup>, Aryanism, as an origin of Iranian internal racism, is the direct result of these occidental studies. It has, as he argues, in turn, had an influential role in the development of Iranian identity politics. The conduct of Iranian racism is argued by some like Zia-Ebrahimi<sup>231</sup>, however, to be the result of the dominant culture of research among Iranian intellectuals, which predominantly support European racial thoughts.

Although Iran has never been officially colonized, it is clear that colonial discursive constructs played an essential role in the emergence of power relations inside Iran, as well as prevailing notions of misrepresentation and privilege that are clearly evident there. The main focus of post-colonial studies has always been on the impact of colonization on the colonized. As a result, some countries which have never been officially colonized have tended to remain outside of the scrutiny of post-colonial scholarship. Iran remains, therefore, as a non-colonized country that has rarely been considered as having been affected by European imperial discursive constructs at various levels of nation building and nationality construction. Both Asgharzadeh<sup>232</sup> and Zia-Ebrahimi<sup>233</sup> in their discussions focus on the important role that the Orientalist reconstructions of Iran by Western scholars played in the formation of racist trends in Iranian identity politics. On the one hand, Zia-Ebrahimi looks at Orientalist reconstructions, through the interpretive lens of Iranian socio-politics and culture, arguing that they are responsible for absorbing racial thoughts. On the other hand, Asgharzadeh contends that current Iranian racism originates in European paradigms and racist discourses like Aryanism.

The appearance of ethnic nationalism in Europe advocated the belief in a hereditary membership of the nation.<sup>234</sup> This belief influenced Romantic nationalist movements which conceive of a nation as a community based on ethnic groups and on a specific common language.<sup>235</sup> In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, ethnic nationalism overlapped with scientific racist discourses and promoted, for example, a pan-German discourse which propagated the

---

<sup>230</sup> Asgharzadeh.

<sup>231</sup> R. Zia-Ebrahimi, 'Self-Orientalization and Dislocation'.

<sup>232</sup> Asgharzadeh.

<sup>233</sup> R. Zia-Ebrahimi, 'Self-Orientalization and Dislocation'.

<sup>234</sup> On ethnic nationalism and nationalism see: Ernest Gellner and John Breuilly, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008). Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. and extended ed (London, New York: Verso, 1991).

<sup>235</sup> See: Ernest Gellner, *Language and Solitude: Wittgenstein, Malinowski, and the Habsburg Dilemma* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.21-29.

racial superiority of the German race.<sup>236</sup> Pan-Germanism tried to associate the idea of nation with the biological concept of a “master race”: the “Aryan race”.<sup>237</sup> This assumption of the “Aryan myth” declared that civilization on earth originated from the Aryan race who are blonde, blue eyed, white-skinned and were considered biologically and culturally superior and allowed to subjugate other people when possible. This idea led to another debate of “racial purity” which justified ethnic cleansing based on an argument that political boundaries should mirror racial and ethnic groups; declaring that henceforth Germany should be the country of “Aryans”. According to Asgharzadeh<sup>238</sup>, the discovery of Indo-European linguistic fragments in Iran and India was coincident with the invention of the “Aryan myth”. This heavily influenced the trend of Aryanism or racism within Iran.

While Hitler was openly practising genocide in Germany through rationalizations of Aryanism, Reza Shah in Iran, influenced by this same racist discourse, was proud that the roots of Aryanism as a superior race had been found in Iran. This tied neatly into his attempts to consolidate Persian political, cultural and linguistic hegemony in Iran. There are, however, two sides to the debates on the racist attitudes of Reza Shah. On the one hand, Asgharzadeh calls Reza Shah’s policies and practices racist and argues that he “renamed the country Iran, which presumably meant “the birthplace of the Aryan race”. He goes on:

Reza Khan’s racism echoed the racist ideology of European fascism and Nazism, as he came to identify the Persian minority as the sole founder of civilization on the Iranian Plateau and called on non-Persian ethnic groups to abandon their culture and language for the supposedly superior Aryan/Persian culture and language.<sup>239</sup>

The name of the country, however, has always been, and called, Iran by the Iranians but “Europeans still used the name *Persia*, based on ancient Greco-Roman histories.”<sup>240</sup> In 1935 Reza Shah officially declared that the name Iran, “instead of *Persia*, should be used as the official name of the country in all international correspondence”.<sup>241</sup> On the other hand, Sadeq

---

<sup>236</sup> See: Zaheer Baber, Joseph M Bryant and Zeitlin, *Society, History, and the Global Human Condition Essays in Honor of Irving M. Zeitlin* (Lanham, MD.: Lexington Books, 2010) <<http://site.ebrary.com/id/10437335>> [accessed 1 October 2013] , pp.175-178.

<sup>237</sup> On scientific racism and pan Germanism see: Nicholas Atkin, Michael Biddiss and Frank Tallett, *The Wiley-Blackwell Dictionary of Modern European History Since 1789* (John Wiley & Sons, 2011) , p.341.

<sup>238</sup> Asgharzadeh, p.67.

<sup>239</sup> Asgharzadeh, p.106.

<sup>240</sup> Price, Massoume, *Iran’s Diverse Peoples: A Reference Sourcebook* (Santa Barbra, Calif., Denvor, Colorado: ABC-CLIO, 2005), p.173.

<sup>241</sup> Price, p.173.

Zibakalam<sup>242</sup> and Hamid Dabashi<sup>243</sup> acknowledge and address Reza Shah or the Pahlavi dynasty's attempts to develop the country in all areas of industry, education and military. These scholars see the services of Reza Shah or the Pahlavi dynasty as either contributing to the country's progress or as treasonable actions, which are responsible for the country's backwardness.

Asgharzadeh argues that Iran's indirect colonization was through "covert control of governing bodies and natural resources, a situation that did attract the full attention of Western colonial powers".<sup>244</sup> His research shows that prior to the presence of Western colonial powers in Iran, the country engaged "the imagination of Western scholars, writers, travellers, and literary figures".<sup>245</sup> The main reason for this, he argues, was their desire to discover their prehistoric origins and their original homeland. These were, however, not documented and, as such, he suggests that instead Europeans had to invent an imaginary prehistoric race for themselves through language. Some primary materials, however, were required to construct "a discursive reality and a reality in discourse".<sup>246</sup> Asgharzadeh refers to Bernard Lewis who states that the rediscovery of Iran's past in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century became possible when "Iranian intellectuals read European scholarship and literature, and began to realize that they too had an ancient and glorious past to which they could lay claim".<sup>247</sup> Asgharzadeh concludes that Lewis's observation clearly confirms the role of European scholars in the construction of Oriental nationalist histories. He argues that by discovering histories and symbols of Oriental society that were previously unknown to Orientals themselves, Western scholars produced new understandings of and arguments for the emergence of nationalism and nation-stateism. So, he argues that, it was only through these discoveries that Oriental intellectuals became aware of their glorious past. A lack of questioning of and critical engagement with these discoveries and a growing 'awareness' by Iranian intellectuals of them is what Zia-Ebrahimi calls "self-Orientalism".<sup>248</sup> He argues that Aryanism played an essential role in Iranian identity politics mainly because of the fascination Iranian intellectuals had with the idea of Aryanism. According to him, this led Iranians to not only cease to attempt emancipation but "to catch up with Europe in terms of

---

<sup>242</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BjSFxQrjKA> (retrieved 10/02/13)

<sup>243</sup> Dabashi, Hamid, *Iran: A People Interrupted* (New York: New Press: Distributed by W.W. Norton, 2007), p.116.

<sup>244</sup> Asgharzadeh, p.21.

<sup>245</sup> Asgharzadeh, p.21.

<sup>246</sup> Asgharzadeh, p.21.

<sup>247</sup> Asgharzadeh, p.71.

<sup>248</sup> R. Zia-Ebrahimi, p.468.

military, economic and political advancement”.<sup>249</sup> This “self-Orientalist” mindset of Iranian intellectuals, in his opinion, is the main cause of the prejudices of Orientalism about Islam and the “East” being internalized in the Iranian society.<sup>250</sup> According to him, this internalized prejudice later led to a sense of antipathy towards Arabs.<sup>251</sup> It is useful at this point to look at the reasons why the dominant viewpoint amongst Iranian intellectuals not only refuses to challenge Orientalist constructions but in fact enthusiastically embraces them. Looking at these reasons will help clarify the substance of the intrinsic exile and its emergence, which, as I mentioned before, is mainly due to the lack of a sense of security or a sense of feeling settled, and an absent future. This has generated a sense of constant timelessness where the only certainty is uncertainty. These ideas, I will explain later, are central to the traumatic experiences of the intrinsic exile.

There is a strong consensus within recent socio-political and historical scholarship regarding the basic characteristics of the state in the Iranian context. They all agree that nearly all of the regimes in Iran, in one way or another, were and are examples of arbitrary rule or that they sustained some of the characteristics of it. According to Homa Katouzian, the structure of arbitrary rule in Iran has a unique quality. This quality is an unlimited and extraordinary power of the state which makes it independent from any social class. Katouzian in his recent thought-provoking book, *The Persians*, compares the typical configuration of the state in Europe with that of Iran. He argues that “[i]n a feudal society landlords formed the ruling classes, which were first and foremost represented by the state” while “[i]n Iran, the landlords and other social classes depended on the state”.<sup>252</sup> So, based on his argument, in Europe the state was for the landlords but in Iran the landlords were for the state. Each of these structures formed a substantially different hierarchal pyramid shaped system. According to him, in feudal Europe and in other European type societies, social classes formed the hierarchal pyramid and the state was at the top of the pyramid as their representatives. But in Iran the state “stood over and above the social pyramid and looked upon the whole of the society, both high and low, as its servants and flocks”.<sup>253</sup> The Iranian state was, therefore, powerful

---

<sup>249</sup> R. Zia-Ebrahimi, p.468 In its artistic/literary sense see: Hamid Keshmirshakan, ‘The Question of Identity Vis-à-vis Exoticism in Contemporary Iranian Art’, *Iranian Studies*, 43 (2010), 489–512 <doi:10.1080/00210862.2010.495566>. Aphrodite Desiree Navab, ‘To Be Or Not To Be An Orientalist?: The Ambivalent Art of Antoin Sevruguin’, *Iranian Studies*, 35 (2002), 113–127. Reza Baraheni, *Guzārish Bih Nasl-i Bī Sinn-i Fardā*, Chāp-i 1 (Tihṙān: Nashr-i Markaz, 1995).

<sup>250</sup> R. Zia-Ebrahimi, p.468.

<sup>251</sup> Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, “Arab Invasion” and Decline, or the Import of European Racial Thought by Iranian Nationalists’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. (2012), 1–19.

<sup>252</sup> Katouzian, p.4.

<sup>253</sup> Katouzian, p.4.

enough to both assign land to a person and withdraw the land from the existing landlord. He argues that The *Shah* (king) “wielded the kind of power which no European ruler ever did”.<sup>254</sup> As a result, no independent law or custom existed to determine or prevent who can do what to whom. Anyone, either in the state or outside of it, including the king himself, was under the threat of expropriation or death. In this context, although the state has the power of life and death over every member of the society, this was precisely what made it extremely vulnerable; it necessarily constructed a situation whereby the members of the society were always opposed to the state. In this regard, Katouzian says “Iranians typically opposed their rulers precisely because their lives and property were in the rulers’ power”.<sup>255</sup> Therefore, for Iranians, the state was never inherently legitimate.<sup>256</sup>

The arbitrary rule of Iranian states have had and continue to have some significant outcomes one of which was the ever-present conflict between the state and the society. For the purposes of this chapter, some outcomes and aspects of the arbitrary rule of Iranian states have been selected in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the intrinsic exile. One of the outcomes was the configuration of, in Katouzian’s term, the short-term society. The other was what Ahamad Seyf calls a widespread lack of rights amongst the general public (*Bihaghi ye omumi*), which consequently generates a widespread sense of indifference.<sup>257</sup> The final one is the prevalence of a belief in a very specific conspiracy theory in the Iranian context, known as ‘Uncle Napoleonism’.

In Katouzian’s argument, the state had extraordinary power and it was independent from society so it could not depend on the support and sympathy of the privileged classes at the critical times when it was needed. This, he argues, resulted “to an unusual degree [...] in personal as well as social unpredictability and insecurity”. In this sense, on the one hand the state made life insecure and unpredictable for the people and the people on the other hand did not regard the state as inherently legitimate; they used any opportunity to harm the state any time they could. So, in the lives of both the people and the state, insecurity and unpredictability were shared issues. This, according to him, gave rise to a short-term society in which nothing was predictable and planning for the future was regarded as futile. In this context, having the individual right to live and to possess land, for example, was never able to

---

<sup>254</sup> Katouzian, p.4.

<sup>255</sup> Katouzian., p.5

<sup>256</sup> According to Katouzian the arbitrary behaviour of the state with its unique hierarchal structure is different from absolutism or despotism. To clarify their difference, the tyrannical imposition of the arbitrary state is more gratuitous than that of a despotic state.

<sup>257</sup> Seyf.

be guaranteed because it was always dependant on the state. Consequently, all the problems and issues of the country were perceived as being the fault of the state and the people thought that they were, therefore, not responsible for their own decline.

In Seyf's argument, the people who do not have civil rights and freedom would not consider themselves responsible for the society in which they live.<sup>258</sup> So, according to Seyf, the issue of irresponsibility was a constant and common theme in the Iranian cultural context. Consequently, scapegoating became a habit in Iranian culture. This trend allowed a tendency towards conspiracy theory to flourish. It is now known as 'Uncle Napoleonism', named after *Uncle Napoleon (Da'i jan Napoleon)*, a famous satirical novel which portrayed a popular paranoia that everything negative that occurred was in the hands of the supernatural powers and actions of the British in Iran, even events which were apparently insignificant. Similarly, Katouzian<sup>259</sup> refers to this conspiracy theory and argues that it was a direct consequence of modern Western imperialism however, the old habit of scapegoating provided a suitable ground for absorbing it. Considering all of these arguments, what emerges is that in the Iranian context two prominent prerequisites for a peaceful, stable and prosperous society going into the future were absent; as such, there was no safety and hope for the future. These issues were, arguably, traumatic experiences for Iranian society. Seyf argues that the concept of time for Iranians is the past and the present since a sense of security and safety is required for any hope for the future.<sup>260</sup> It is not surprising, as Seyf argues, that Iranians canonize their pasts to tolerate their difficulties in the present and the ever present reality of their absent future. This canonization is an opiate, offering a refuge in the hallucination of the glorious past and thereby offering a way of easing the pain of the insecurity and futureless realities of their lives.

After considering the above mentioned historical and socio-political cultural pattern in Iran, it is now important to return to the questions I asked earlier. Specifically: why do Iranian intellectuals lack adverse feelings to Orientalist constructions of their culture and how has Aryanism, without serious challenge, even until today, fitted so easily into the Iranian socio political and cultural context? To answer these questions in a simple way, Aryanism had two essential characteristics that matched perfectly with some of what has so frequently been argued as the dominant Iranian cultural pattern of scapegoating and canonization of the past.

---

<sup>258</sup> Seyf, p.48.

<sup>259</sup> Katouzian, p.5.

<sup>260</sup> Seyf, p.94.

Aryanism first of all argued that the superior race of Aryans were based and originated in the ancient Iran, which lost its glory and power after the Arab invasion. This Orientalist construction of Aryanism supported the Iranian habit of scapegoating by being able to blame Arabs and Islam for the country's backwardness. In this way, Aryanism also supported the canonization of the past, which is another strong tendency in the context of Iran. Aryanism in the West, both in theory and practise, was racist at its core but in the context of Iran, though it exposed/s some racial conflicts and thoughts, it was not necessarily a racist phenomenon. In this regard, Katuziyan says:

Indeed conflict and antagonism over race, language and ethnicity in Iran were almost as new as the twentieth century itself, and were a product of the Aryanist and pan-Persian ideology which swept over the then-modern intellectual terrain and became the ideology of Pahlavi Iran. Iranian history, like that of other countries, saw significant conflicts over power, religion, and creed, but ethnic or racial hatred or a sense of superiority and inferiority was not normally a significant factor in its make-up.<sup>261</sup>

When Aryanism came to Iran it placated the pain of Iran's backwardness, in terms of technology and modernity, through scapegoating and canonization of the past, while it also encouraged the state to keep up with Europe in terms of technology and modernity. So not only was there no need to challenge and question the concept of Aryanism but it was widely supported because Aryanism was perfectly matched with both the psychological pattern of the country and, in a way, it was assumed by the state to be useful for the country's progress. These socio-political and psychological patterns of the country later on had significant impact and role in the configuration of the despotic state of the IRI. The next section will show how.

## Islamization

In the previous analysis of both cultural products of the external and internal exiles, I argued that the irrational, superstitious, ridiculous, misogynous, unjust and tyrannical rules the external and internal exiles resist are mainly perceived as the outcome of the Islamization of the country, which followed the establishment of the IRI. Although after the establishment of

---

<sup>261</sup> Katouzian, p.243.

the IRI, Islamic issues found new dimensions, the tyrannical rules and Shi'ism practised in Iran were by no means new concepts configured by the IRI. Rather, they are deeply rooted in the context of Iranian-ness.<sup>262</sup> In the previous section on Aryanism, I showed that the arbitrary rule of the various Iranian states and the consistent insecurity they impose on the people have a long pre-Islamic history in Iran. Due to the constant insecurity that arbitrary rule imposes, an anti-state attitude and the people's sense of resistance also has a long history. In this regard, Katouzian argues that "Iranians typically opposed their rulers precisely because their lives and property were in the rulers' power".<sup>263</sup> Both Islamization and Shi'ism, as the religion of protest and resistance, have some important elements that have arguably been ingrained in Iranian culture since pre-Islamic times.

The belief in the divine power assigned to certain men has a long, even pre-Islamic history in Iran, which over the years has changed shape and dimension but remained substantially the same. This is especially true in regards to its core concept of the divinity of certain selected men who are understood to be above all other human beings. According to Katouzian, the principle of *shahanshah* (king of kings):

[H]ad the power of life and death over every member of the society, from princes of the blood and the chief minister downwards [...]. If he was not expressly worshipped as a divine being, he certainly was God's vicegerent on earth[.].<sup>264</sup>

As it is clearly shown in the above excerpt, Katuziyan emphasizes the point that the Persian *shahs* did not gain their legitimacy from an aristocratic or priestly class but rather they claimed that they gained it directly from God "by possessing the *farr* or divine grace".<sup>265</sup> This concept of kingship survived and developed into Islamic times which absorbed new aspects after Ayatollah Khomeini's theory of *Velayat-e Faqih* (Guardianship of Jurisconsult). The theory of *Velayat-e Faqih*, now *Velayat-e Motlaghe Faqih* (Absolute Guardianship of Jurisconsult), is the theoretical and practical basis of the IRI.<sup>266</sup> This theory has a significant impact on the ways in which matters of such things as freedom of speech, security, and peace are conducted in Iranian society. This theory has two main interpretations, which I will go on to explain below.

---

<sup>262</sup> For more on Iranian-ness see Katouzian, pp.13-15.

<sup>263</sup> Katouzian, p.5.

<sup>264</sup> Katouzian, p.4.

<sup>265</sup> Katouzian, p.5.

<sup>266</sup> For more on *Velayate Faqih* see <http://arashnaraghi.org/wp/?p=438> (retrieved 2/12/2009)



The first interpretation of the theory was developed by Ayatollah Khomeini during his time of exile in Najaf, before the establishment of the IRI. As Katouzian argues, before the revolution the theory was not well known outside of Khomeini's 'circle of disciples'.<sup>267</sup> In the first interpretation of the theory of *Velayat-e Fagih*, Khomeini argues that the state should be constituted by traditional Shi'ia theory and Islamic law. In Khomeini's first theory, he argued that an Islamic government is the only type of just, true and legitimate government and that it should belong to the imam. From this he argued that, in comparison, all other governments in the world were necessarily 'unjust'.<sup>268</sup> Katouzian argues that this theory was, in both political and religious ways, revolutionary.<sup>269</sup> He argues that the theory was revolutionary because it was opposed to the clergy's dominant belief in regards to their political engagement. The clergy, at that time, believed that they should stay away from direct involvement in governmental matters since, to them, the ultimate salvation is in the advent of Mahdi, Imam of the Time and Guardian of the Age, and they had to wait and pray for his rise to save the world from corruption and injustice. Opposed to this belief, Khomeini stated that in the time of Imam's absence, "there could and should be Islamic government led by the *ulama* [the clergies], just as the Prophet had ruled the Islamic community of his own time."<sup>270</sup> The theory had two paradoxical dimensions; on the one hand, according to Katozian, in Khomeini's theory he claims that the practice of the theory as a governmental law and rule is neither tyrannical, nor absolute but constitutional. On the other hand, he emphasises that it is

[N]ot constitutional in the current sense of the word, that is, based on the approval of laws in accordance with the opinion of the majority. It is constitutional in the sense that the rulers are subject to a certain set of conditions that are set forth in the noble Qur'an and the Sunna [traditions] of the Most Noble Messenger.<sup>271</sup>

In this theory Khomeini argues that "sovereignty in an Islamic state belongs to God, and Islamic law has absolute dominion over people and government alike".<sup>272</sup> These paradoxical dimensions of the theory created further ambiguity and uncertainty in terms of the freedom and human rights people could have under the rule of such an Islamic government.

---

<sup>267</sup> Katouzian, p301.

<sup>268</sup> Katouzian, p.300.

<sup>269</sup> Katouzian, p.301.

<sup>270</sup> Katouzian, p.301.

<sup>271</sup> Katouzian, p.301.

<sup>272</sup> Katouzian, p.301.

In his first interpretation of the theory, prior to the establishment of the IRI, Khomeini opposed the dominant belief of the clergy that, due to their spirituality, the Prophet and the imams had greater governmental powers than everyone else, and especially so when compared to those of the *fagih* (Islamic jurisprudence). Khomeini argued that the *fagih* can and should actively be involved in governmental matters and should be in the centre of the Islamic government. In his argument, therefore, the *fagih* was given both an equal power to that of the Prophet, in terms of taking control of governmental issues, and the ability to interpret and offer Islamic law, which "has absolute dominion over the people and government alike".<sup>273</sup> In this sense, the *fagih* became, in Khomeini's eyes, the mediator between God and the people whose job is to interpret Islamic laws and how they should be obeyed both by the people and by the *fagih* himself.

In this theory clear binary oppositions are suggested between the 'just' status of the Islamic government and the other 'unjust' governments in the world. Within this concept of the absolutist religious authority, a binary opposition also exists between the superiority of the *fagih* as an active, conscious and capable interpreter of this absolute Islamic law, and the inferiority of the people as passive members of the society who are bound to merely follow the Islamic law. However, in the first interpretation of the theory both the *fagih* and the people are bound to follow Islamic law. Once again, according to this theory, the *fagih* potentially achieved the same absolute power as *shahanshah* had done before the Islamization of the country. The only difference between the power of the *fagih* with that of the *shah* was that the *fagih* should have himself been bound by certain Islamic law whereas for the *shah* there was not any set law. However, because he was the only religiously legitimate and capable interpreter of Islamic law he was able to do the interpretation subjectively. In other words, in practice the *fagih* and the *shah* had the same absolute power.

After the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran the theory gained a new dimension in which the title *Velayat-e Fagih* was changed to *Velayat-e Motlaghey-e Fagih* (Absolute Guardianship of Jurisconsult). According to this new concept, the *fagih* is not only responsible for the interpretation of Islamic Law but his interpretation, most essentially, should be in accordance with the idea of governmental expediency (*maslahat-e nezam*), and for the sole benefit of the Islamic Republic. His main duty, therefore, was to preserve the Islamic Republic regime and not necessarily Islamic law. Within this interpretation, Islamic

---

<sup>273</sup> Katouzian, p.301.

law should be interpreted according to the needs of the regime's stability. It is neither for the propagation of the religion nor is it for the people's peace and security.<sup>274</sup> This interpretation contains rigid juxtaposition between absolutist political power and divinely ordained religious authority. In the second interpretation, the binary opposition was between, on the one hand, the absolute superiority of the IRI, the *fagih* maintaining and protecting it and its followers, and, on the other, the inferior people and even Islam itself. According to this model, the people and Islam were in the service of the Islamic Republic and the main concern of the government was the stability of the regime. Today, *Velayat-e Motlaghey-e Fagih* is a theory that contains strong potential for the configuration of another form of an arbitrary rule when compared to the previous ones, like *shahanshah*, as mentioned before. It needs to be addressed that the clergy and the king each sometimes tried to check and balance the power of the other. For the purpose of this chapter, however, only the similarity of *velayat-e fagih* and *shahanshah* is on the main focus.

This comparison of the position and power of the *shah* with those of *velayat-e fagih*, in the Iranian context, shows how the *shah* claimed to be directly appointed by God while in the Iranian Islamic context Islamic law was believed to be directly appointed by God and the *fagih* is an Islamic scholar whose duty, according to the first interpretation, is to interpret the Islamic law. In the second interpretation, however, the *fagih*'s main duty is to preserve the regime with the potentially unlimited strategies and power available to him. Applying Arash Naraghi's examples, if *fagih* realises that 'lying', 'cheating', 'imposing false accusations on the people', 'killing innocents' or 'raping the opposition' are necessary for the stability of the regime, then conducting and imposing these actions for the believers and for the followers alike are not only 'morally' acceptable but they also are religiously obligatory.<sup>275</sup> In both cases the *shah* and *Velayat-e motlagey-e fagih* enjoy unlimited power to rule and, therefore, try to have absolute control over the people. The laws, in this context, even if constitutional, can easily be distorted or ignored by those in power when required. So, according to the theory of *Velayat-e motlagey-e fagih*, the articles of the current constitutional law of the IRI do not have a guaranteed implementation and can be altered or ignored whenever *Valiy-e fagih* desires or whenever he recognizes that the change of the law is necessary for the stability of the regime. Having said that, since power is dynamic and in practise it has complex dimensions, *Velayat-e Motlaghey-e Fagih*, in practise, cannot rationally impose its

---

<sup>274</sup> See also: Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

<sup>275</sup> <http://arashnaraghi.org/wp/?p=438> (retrieved 2/9/2009)

arbitrary rule, proposed in both theories, on all aspects of Iranian society and people's lives. But what remains ever present in the Iranian context is the unpredictability of the socio-political situation, constitutional laws, rules and regulations as observed in practice and henceforth the ever-present sense of insecurity.

In a similar way to how the concept of Aryanism remains unchallenged by Iranian intellectuals, this arbitrary rule of the Islamic republic state, advocated by the theory of *Velayat-e Motlaghey-e Fagih*, inside Iran, has remained essentially unchallenged by the theorists within the regime even when reformists have been in power. Apart from a few critics who challenged the despotic essence of the theory and the regime, the rest remained conservative in terms of this debate. This is presumably due to the possible serious risks the debate could impose on them. Although they criticized some policies of the IRI, reformists, mainly after the election of Khatami, did not question the legitimacy of the regime. Their criticism was mainly about the ways the IRI conducts some of its policies. The reformists' tendency in not questioning the despotic essence of the IRI is what Arash Naraghi calls, "recalcitrant expediency" (*maslahat andishiy-e legam gosikhteh*)<sup>276</sup> in which human rights, equality and freedom are all at stake. In 2009, during the presidential election, the main candidates of the presidency, Mir-Hossein Moussavi and Mehdi Karroubi, openly criticized the policies of the government; they nevertheless claimed to be loyal to the system. Those claims were, however, clearly not considered satisfactory for Ahmadinejad's cabin, which won the election, as their criticism has resulted in their home imprisonment since 2009.

Any sense of security, peace, and freedom, under such a totalitarian system are always under the threat of abrogation. Hope for the future, which arguably derives from the stability of the present, is consequently suppressed. This comparative look at the pre-Islamic and Islamic rules shows that the Islamization of the country, according to the reading and practises of *Velayet-e Motlaghey-e Fagih* theory, is essentially the continuation of the two major historical crises in the Iranian context: security and the future.

Iranian culture of resistance contains certain manifest aspects. These are defined by some scholars like Katouzian and Dabashi who suggest that the culture of resistance is a dominant factor of Iranian identity or Iranian-ness and resistance is a 'moral' obligation which is not necessarily for triumph. These characteristics are evident in Shi'ism and the Iranian culture of resistance reflected in cultural, ritual, and artistic works. However, the culture of resistance in

---

<sup>276</sup> <http://arashnaraghi.org/wp/?p=438> (retrieved 2/9/2009)

the context of Iran is diverse and more nuanced. It is so because exilic identities and the cultural products they generate, as means of resistance, are essentially different, in terms of what they perceive as home, exile, self, Other and resistance. To illustrate the diversity of the Iranian culture of resistance, I will explore the concepts of resistance, home and tragedy reflected in the cultural products of intrinsic exile. Their essential differences with those of the works of external and internal exile will shed more light on the diversity of the Iranian culture of resistance. I will show that for intrinsic exile, unlike internal and external exile, resistance is the process of coming-to-terms with the enemy, home is not a lost/past concept and exile is an enforced displacement from the intrinsic unsettlement to an imposed settlement and conformity. In this sense exile, for intrinsic exile, is a self-imposed tragedy which can be self-redeemed. I will come back to these points in more details in the analysis of *Prisoner of Tehran* and *Azadeh Kanom*.

In Shi'ism, according to Dabashi, paradoxically success is achieved in failure and failure is achieved in success. This is the case since, as mentioned before, the state has been perceived by society, as a cruel, unjust and tyrannical system because of its arbitrary rule. The state is, therefore, always a threat for the people's security because it is the oppressor. The opposite to the 'bad' oppressor, rationally therefore, is the 'good' oppressed. Comparing the consistently totalitarian state of the governments with the consistently oppositional attitude of the people shows how the Iranian people, arguably, have come to be perpetually against their governments. Within this sense of perpetual resistance, the people are 'moral' as long as they are opposed to the state and they consequently remain 'moral' as long as they are subjugated by the powerful totalitarian state. Their 'morality', in this sense, is in their oppressed status. As such, they should be fighters but they cannot possibly be winners or dominators since if that occurred they would lose their 'moral grip'. This success-in-failure aspect of the Iranian culture of resistance is reflected in the destinies of the popular mythical and religious heroes; all of these heroes fight for the people's rights and nearly all of them are tragically killed in their battles. Iranian heroes and, later on, recent martyrs, are perceived to be winners in their defeats. This trend, fundamentally, is in accordance with the dominant religious affiliation of the people, which is Shi'i Islam. Katouzian argues that Shi'i Islam, "which is unique to Iran as a state" has aspects which are rooted in Iranian culture since "pre-Islamic times".<sup>277</sup> To show the compatibility of Shi'ism with the dominant trend of the culture of resistance it is useful to briefly explain Shi'ism and its complexity.

---

<sup>277</sup> Katouzian, p.13.

Shi'ism, according to Hamid Dabashi, is “a voice of dissent, [...] a moral cause, [...] a deeply rooted rebellion against the status quo”.<sup>278</sup> He argues that Shi'ism is “a religion of perpetual protest”.<sup>279</sup> He argues that because Shi'ism “has doctrinally and historically been a religion of protest” it should not be politically successful as “it loses its moral legitimacy”.<sup>280</sup> He suggests that, “[i]n order to remain morally potent, Shi'ism must always be in a posture of protest”.<sup>281</sup> From this study it is clear that Shi'ism, with its perpetual protesting nature and success-in-failure aspect, is very much compatible with and adaptable to the culture of resistance in the context of Iran. Within such a cultural frame of resistance, the establishment of a democratic government is close to impossible since in this context of resistance the concept of democracy is not compatible with the body of the government. In other words, the “absolute power” of the state over the people encourages and perpetuates the people’s “absolute hatred” of the state. Whoever gains power, therefore, is a dictator, is disgraceful and is to blame. The society and the state are in a kind of extreme oppositional existence whereby Iranian states are “absolutely” dictatorial and the people are “absolutely” rebellious. The state and its people, therefore, are bound together in the shared perspective of the extremist tendencies of both absolutes. Both “absolutely” desire each other’s failure and subjugation. From this the only thing that the state and its people share is a consistent sense of insecurity; neither is safe in each other’s hands. It stands that this is also true for the relationship between the internal and external exiles and the constructor of their exilic conditions.

The 1979 revolution, in Ayatollah Khomeini’s words, was “the revolution of the oppressed”. The morality of the ‘good’ who are oppressed is that they should not win or rule according to the success-in-failure quality of the culture of Shi'ism. But, in 1979, the popular trend of resistance in Shi'ism was dismantled by Khomeini, through the theories of *Velayat-e Fagih*, which he offered during the revolution. This time the ‘oppressed’ won by attracting a great deal of support from the people; as a result, the IRI was established. Triumph of the ‘oppressed’ soon afterwards became problematic since within the frame of the culture of resistance and Shi'ism the state could not possibly function as a democratic state; it had to be despotic. The aspect that went fundamentally wrong after the establishment of the IRI was

---

<sup>278</sup> Hamid Dabashi, *Shi'ism a Religion of Protest* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), p.103.

<sup>279</sup> Dabashi, *Shi'ism a Religion of Protest*, p.309.

<sup>280</sup> Dabashi, *Shi'ism a Religion of Protest*, p.313.

<sup>281</sup> Dabashi, *Shi'ism a Religion of Protest*, p.313.

that the regime morally failed in its success and quite soon after its establishment the IRI turned into the totalitarian, oppressive state, which could not possibly function otherwise, within the context of Shi'ism. Shi'ism, as Dabashi argues, should not be politically successful. The IRI as a Shi'i state became politically successful and consequently lost, in both theory and practice, its moral legitimacy. Once again the state became the main source of tyranny and oppression and the necessary sense of insecurity was resuscitated soon afterwards.

Considering the above arguments, the prominent characteristics of exile are evident in Shi'ism as, arguably, one of the main factors of Iranian-ness. This factor is attributed to the historical precedents compounding the relationship between the state and its society, mainly through the hostile interrelations between them. According to Edward Said, exile in its metaphorical sense "is restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others".<sup>282</sup> All of these aspects of metaphorical exile are conspicuous both in the situations of the Iranian states and the Iranian people. As mentioned before, both the state and the people were restless: constantly unsettled and constantly unsettling each other. Another of Said's observations about exile, especially in the case of intellectuals, is also comparable to the culture of resistance in the Iranian context or Shi'ism. Said argues that:

The intellectual as exile tends to be happy with the idea of unhappiness, so that dissatisfaction, bordering on dyspepsia, a kind of curmudgeonly disagreeableness, can become not only a style of thought, but also a new, if temporary, habitation.<sup>283</sup>

This style of habitation is comparable to the characteristic of the success-in-failure aspect of the Iranian culture of resistance or Shi'ism, which has a pre-Islamic root in Iran. The cultural products of the external and internal exiles, as previously analysed, quite clearly follow this pattern of Shi'ism, even though the producers are secular. They follow the pattern of Shi'ism in a sense that they celebrate their 'moral' success in their marginalized status and in their failure. They also constantly stress their dissatisfaction and disagreeableness through predominantly depicting the constructor as an "absolutely" tyrannical system that encourages inhumanity.

---

<sup>282</sup> Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (Random House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA: Vintage Books, 1996) , p.39.

<sup>283</sup> Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, p.39.

Apart from tragedy, nothing effective can be produced in the Sisyphus cycle of Shi'ism or the Iranian culture of resistance, within which the only residents are two extreme figures of oppressed people and oppressors, determined to remove each other. This cycle of Shi'ism, with its 'sacred' tragedy, potentially obstructs movement towards the future since death and marginality are considered as 'morally' valuable and, paradoxically, socially victorious. Time, within this cycle, is inevitably revolving around the past and the present because the future is 'morally' and 'sacredly' dead. A negotiation of the two "absolutes", the oppressor and the oppressed, and a more moderate engagement between them can possibly break open the obstruction of this cycle. Through this more moderate engagement the level of the "absolute" nature of each of them can be lessened. This provides an open space to enable a move towards the future in a way which is safe, more settled and relatively predictable. To build this space, there needs to be a greater awareness of the intrinsic nature of the exilic situation in the Iranian context. Some exilic cultural products contain this capacity. I call them the cultural products of the intrinsic exile. The next section is about the concept of intrinsic exile, its dimensions and how it is reflected in the cultural products of intrinsic exile.

## Intrinsic Exile

In the context of the Iranian culture of resistance, as mentioned before, we are dealing with two "absolute" and oppositional things. On the one hand are the Iranian states as "absolute" oppressors and on the other hand are the people as "absolutely" oppressed. Shi'ism, which according to Dabashi, is the religion of resistance, was so easily adopted by the Iranian culture of resistance because they share a success-in-failure composition. As mentioned before, in the context of both Shi'ism and the Iranian culture of resistance, any successful state is always despotic, inherently illegitimate and a 'moral' failure while the people are, paradoxically, 'morally' successful due to their failed status. In this context, we are offered one scenario, two casts and two different costumes. Within the Iranian culture of resistance and within Shi'ism, the casts are the oppressor states and the oppressed people. The scenario tells the story of their extreme conflict and hatred towards each other; they are serious threats



for each other's stability. Due to the absence of safety, they are constantly unsettled and unsettling one another. In this scenario, the only available costume for the state is brutality and that of the people is, therefore, presumed as benevolence. The ending is always tragic, in the sense of the inevitability of the people's loss. But, in this context, the tragedy is considered a 'morally' happy ending because if the people win the only costume for powerful winners is tyranny. So, for Shi'ism and the Iranian culture of resistance, it is better for them to 'morally' die than to 'immorally' win. This is the key message of Shi'ism. Negotiation, therefore, between the casts is 'morally' out of the question.

At its core this scenario, however, has a contradictory element. In this scenario, it is essential to maintain a clear 'moral', physical and ideological distance between the casts while, contradictorily, they are dependent on each other. The tyrannical rule of the state does not make sense without the oppressed people nor does the 'morality' and resistance of the people make sense without the state. In this sense, on the one hand, each of them is obsessively dependent on the other's extreme qualities and, on the other hand, to exist, they must provide a situation within which their dissent and 'moral' distance remains stable. In order to function, totalitarian strategies, like racialized practices, must be upheld by both the state *and* the people. Both, therefore, can only exist and function in an environment where their "absolute" roles and makeup can flourish. Monolingualism and Islam as monofaithism come into being *precisely because* being an oppressor and imposing homophony *is* the sole role and duty of the Iranian state. So, no matter which ethnicity they belong to, for the individual members of the state to maintain stability and for *maslahat e nezam*, they have no other costume for their role but the costume of tyranny.

However, paradoxically, monolingualism and Islamization pose a threat to the important distance that needs to be maintained between the state and the people. This is because the imposition of monolingualism and monofaithism is fundamentally in conflict with and a threat to the "absolute" roles of the state and the people; the 'distance' between the "absolutely" despotic state and the "absolutely" oppressed and rebellious people would collapse. The ingression of the tools of the state's tyranny, like language or religion, into the domain of the people integrates the state and the people through a common language or a common religion. This integration lessens the 'distance', encourages negotiation, and problematizes the rationality of the extreme nature of their roles. In other words, it is an illogical and contradictory claim that each domain – the people and the state – is 'morally' and 'ideologically' incompatible and "absolutely" distant because they exist in a state of

mutual dependence. So, they have to feed each other's "absolute" roles in order to remain *in* their roles. In this context, the Sisyphus cycle of 'happy-ending' tragedy will break down if this mythical 'moral' distance is revealed and dismantled.

As I argued earlier, the concept of exile is intrinsic in the Iranian context and that is why what is offered *as* external exile or internal exile is really just a misapprehension of the concept of exile in Iran. In other words, external and internal exiles have a mistaken interpretation of their intrinsic exilic situation. To support this argument, it is necessary now to turn to look at what intrinsic exile is.

Exile essentially is a forced displacement from the sense of home. This forced displacement is a traumatic experience for the individual exile. Exile, in its actual sense is argued by various scholars to be an imposition of dislocation on people from the security and familiarity of home, by those in power. It also connotes a sense of permanent insecurity at home, because of which return to home is out of the question. As mentioned before, traumatic experiences in exile comes as a result of being uprooted, dislocated and, even worse, being banished from home.<sup>284</sup> Exile is perceived as a traumatic experience because it is banishment from security, familiarity, peace and settlement, which are all positive associations with the concept of home. In this sense, exile raises the sense of lament for the lost home. It is therefore, a bitter, cynical or, in Said's opinion, "a jealous state" within which:

[N]othing is secure [...]. What you achieve is precisely what you have no wish to share, and it is in the drawing of lines around you and your compatriots that the least attractive aspects of being in exile emerge: an exaggerated sense of group solidarity, and a passionate hostility to outsiders, even those who may in fact be in the same predicament as you.<sup>285</sup>

A significant point to be made about Said's observation is that exile, as a traumatic experience, only makes sense if the individual has the experience of and also values this settled, familiar and secure state of being at home. For those who have no concept of home or homeliness the concept of exile is, therefore, meaningless. In other words, in the concept of exile, dislocation cannot be considered as a traumatic experience unless the sense of being settled and secure or the sense of homeliness has been experienced.

---

<sup>284</sup> For more see: Hamed Shahidian, 'To Be Recorded in History': Researching Iranian Underground Political Activists in Exile', *Qualitative Sociology*, 24 (2001), 55–81.

<sup>285</sup> Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile*, p.178.

Bearing in mind the two main phenomena of exile (forced displacement and the traumatic experience of it), the intrinsic exile is an intrinsic and inevitable sense of forced displacement and it is a traumatic experience without being cynical or, in Said's words, jealous. So, the intrinsic exile is an unsettled state not in a sense of indifference or ignorance towards the concept of home and settlement but in a sense of trying for the sense of home to come into being. The next section offers an elaboration of intrinsic exile, its dimensions and characteristics in more detail.

Earlier in this chapter in showing the pattern of Iranian history and culture, I argued that the phenomenon of exile, in a sense of consistent dislocation from the security of home, is intrinsic in the Iranian context. For the tangible identification of the intrinsic exile and in order to show the conceptual distinction between intrinsic exile and the external and internal exiles, it is necessary to study the situation of the intrinsic exile in more detail. The intrinsic exilic situation is partly reflected in the practice of racialized thinking, as discussed above. Studying these racialized practices helps us to understand the conceptual makeup of intrinsic exile in a bigger picture. The practise of racialized thinking in Iran, enables me to elaborate and clarify the nature of intrinsic exilic identities and the ways they are reflected through the cultural products they generate. Through using the example of the practise of racialized thinking in Iran, it is not my intention to say that non-Persian Iranians are the only ones under the influence of the intrinsic exilic condition. Neither is it to say that Iranian racism necessarily brings the intrinsic exilic situation with it. I argue that the implementation of racialized thinking in Iran is just the façade of the phenomenon of the intrinsic exile in the country and, as I argued before, they are not racist, although they resemble racism. For the purpose of this chapter, the practice of racialized thinking will be offered only as an example. Using it will further clarify the concept of intrinsic exile. My intention, here, is to explain intrinsic exilic qualities, dimensions, and its productive and irenic aspects, in the Iranian context.

Intrinsic exile, in the context of Iran, is a state of being born into confusion and dislocation. It is not a matter of choice. It happens, as a phenomenon, to the individual. For this, a constant exilic state of being unsettled, dislocated and homeless has an intimate and intrinsic relationship with the person. Home, for the intrinsic exile, therefore, is homelessness. The intrinsic exilic condition imposes an intimacy with the phenomenon of exile on an individual from birth. Its function is best perceived in the study of Iranian racialized thinking.

In the Iranian context, the sense of dissent is a populist concept. As argued before, in this context, two main extreme figures abide by the populist rules of provoking exile. In the Iranian context it has been presumed that the state and the people have “absolute” oppositional natures. However, this is illogical because of their dependence on each other. The state does it through being an “absolute” oppressor and the people through being “absolutely” oppressed. Their conflict can never end because their ‘moral’ role and the very nature of their existence is to throw the opposite other into an unstable, insecure and exilic situation. Their “absolute” nature can be logically acceptable if, at least, they can exist independently from each other. Because that is not the case, neither is their “absolute” nature. A useful analogy is to consider the intrinsic exile to be like a situation within which a traveller reveals the travel between two oppositional extreme zones. In the case of intrinsic exile this ‘travel’ is between the extreme domains of ‘love’ and ‘hate’. By ‘love’, I refer to the space where familiarity and a sense of security and safety are comprehended. By ‘hate’, I refer to the space of unfamiliarity where a sense of insecurity, confusion and anxiety is conveyed. The constant travelling between and immersion within both domains has a determining influence on the configuration of the intrinsic exilic identity. In other words, the intrinsic exile as an individual is constantly being exposed to both domains of ‘love’ and ‘hate’. The individual does not fully rest or settle in or confine themselves to either space. The intrinsic exilic identity is, therefore, pulled and produced between these two opposite extremes.

As shown before, in the external and internal exiles, exile is perceived to be imposed only after the development of a sense of exilic identity in the individual exiles. In reality, in the Iranian context, exile happens to the person before their sense of self has been configured. Having said that, an individual, obviously, needs to be aware of the concept of exile to address their exilic identity but it is ultimately the exile’s choice as to whether to put the blame of the traumatic experience of exile on socio-political conflicts with the constructor, to ignore and deny such a conflict altogether, or to reveal the intrinsic aspect of exile in everyone. The intrinsic exile as an individual offers an intermediate character. Compared to the internal and external exilic identities, the intrinsic exile has a self-transgressive and non-essentialist character. For the intrinsic exile the encounter with the constructor is firstly unavoidable and secondly it does not necessarily lead to conflict. Also, the exile and the constructor are immersed and for this their encounter is an interrelated mutual coming-to-terms process that is beyond defeatism or pessimism. This aspect of the intrinsic exile

problematizes the ideological and ‘moral distance’ required to be between the exile and the constructor, which is implicit in the works of the external and internal exiles. So, to fully understand the inevitable immersion of the constructor and the exile in each other without becoming merged, it is helpful to look at the immersed boundaries of ‘love’ and ‘hate’ as a result of Persian as monolingualism or Islam as monofaithism.

The traumatic experience in the intrinsic exile, in for example the context of Iranian racism, is an incomplete separation from linguistic or religious bonds from early childhood. This incomplete separation means that an individual is forced to merge their identity with the Other’s language or religion. This imposition is not the outcome of an individual’s life in another country or their expatriation or birth beyond the borders of their home but it is the result of a complex socio-political systems and representations which are collectively held by both the people and the state in the society. This imposition does not offer a choice for the individual to have a determining role in adopting or refusing dual identities. Rather, it aims to empower one identity over the other. For example, a person cannot expect to learn in their mother tongue<sup>286</sup> alongside the national language but is required to learn only in the national language. In other words, the country’s education policies exclude the individual’s mother tongue from the education system. Similarly, the same policies are applied in religious issues. A person is bound to behave according to the defined rules of the dominant religion even if the individual is born into or believes in another or no faith. For example, a Christian or a secular woman is forced to be veiled. Under such a rule, a person is constantly dislocated and on the move between the space of familiarity to the space of unfamiliarity and vulnerability. Homelessness in this sense is, therefore, intrinsic and has a determining and influential impact on the individual’s identity construction.

Understanding the context of these complex racial, linguistic and religious relations and the effects these have is key to understanding the development of the intrinsic exilic identity, as it is configured within the contradictory and opposite domains of ‘love’ and ‘hate’. To clarify this, I consider, for example, a mother tongue as a domain of ‘love’ and an imposed language as a domain of ‘hate’. This presumption makes sense if the mother tongue is perceived as a safe space from which a person can communicate, understand the world around them, and develop and apprehend their identity in relation to society. In contrast, a different language that is imposed comes into conflict with this sense of belonging, security and comfort. For

---

<sup>286</sup> By mother tongue I refer to the first language which is used as a main language by the child’s main carer/s, during a child’s birth and growth. By mother tongue I do not mean the main language of the child’s mother.

example, under the system of monolingualism the identity of non-Persian Iranians is developed by two languages: one being a lingual tool of the oppressor (like Persian) and the other a lingual tool of the oppressed (other Iranian languages). In fact, the tool of oppression is an important, determining and permanent factor in the development and expression of the intrinsic exile's self identity. In this sense, the tool of oppression is a means of the intrinsic exile's self-knowledge and self-expression. For this, the exile, rationally, cannot be absolutely rebellious to all aspects of the constructor because they share some elements, like language or religion, as prominent factors in their sense of self. Being "absolutely" rebellious to the constructor would mean despising some aspects of the self. That is partly why the intrinsic exile allows for a better understanding of the oppressor and why the intrinsic exile can come to love the tools of oppression, like an enforced language or religion. In the case of the intrinsic exile, the constant acquaintance of hatred and love alters the concept of hate in such a way that hate does not offer a completely negative image, is in an endless relationship with love and is even able to become lovable. For more clarification, it is useful to look at the practise of Iranian racism in more detail.

The practice of Iranian racism inside the country is accordant with the totalitarian principles of arbitrary rule. Under such rule, the sense of insecurity, dislocation from familiarity and homeliness, or a sense of exile is ever present. For example, schooling in Iran expects the children to communicate and be literate (*baa savaad shodan*) in the national language, which might be different from their mother tongues, when they commence study. Schools also expect them to behave according to Islamic ideologies, which might be different from their faiths practised at home. Therefore, the policies imply the secondary positions of mother tongues other than Persian (Persianization). The same thing happens in the religious sphere to religions or beliefs different from Islam (Islamization). These policies are in accordance with the dominant Iranian social, cultural, and religious ideologies within which the existence of a superior element is essential, whether it be in the general populace, or in political or religious matters.

As it is shown above, the intrinsic essence of constant dislocation, from the domain of familiarity to the domain of unfamiliarity, plays a fundamental role in the identity configuration of those who have first-hand experience of the imposition of Iranian racism. As a result, it offers this insight: that the concept of exile, dislocation and insecurity is intrinsic in the Iranian context. It is so because the imposed racialized thinking, as argued before, is not the result of racism. At its core lies the socio-political history of arbitrary rule. The

totalitarian dimensions of the state and the people's oppositional attitudes towards the states are both Iranian phenomena; it is in the Iranian persona and it is a product of its history. These totalitarian dimensions and the people's attitudes are not limited to certain ethnic groups. All Iranians, regardless of their power and position, are exposed to the same sense of insecurity and dislocation. All of them, for being in the Iranian context, are born into exile. A further elaboration of the characteristics of the intrinsic exile in the examples of the cases of monolingualism and monofaithism clarifies how and why internal and external exiles are merely illusions of the intrinsic exile.

The establishment of a national language in a multi-lingual society and its education system is both essential and acceptable as it enables different multilingual ethnicities to interact and communicate with each other, through a kind of lingua franca. However, a monolingual education system in a multi-lingual country is discriminatory since it deprives individuals of the opportunity to effectively develop their cultural identities. Also it imposes an identity crisis on people from the early years of their life and education. This issue is supported through the significant role the mother tongue plays in the development of an individual's cultural identity. Some studies suggest that the exclusion of the mother tongue from educational environments obstructs students' identity construction, language learning and critical thinking development. They also argue that the non-use of the mother tongue in education negatively influences identity construction and the way pupils perceive themselves.<sup>287</sup> In other words, the exclusion of the mother tongue from the learning environment has an impact on children's identity construction and self perception. Therefore, in a monolingual education system, education starts with a difficult, shocking and unpleasant experience for children who are forced to leave the secure and safe space of their mother tongue when they start school.

Obviously the prohibiting of learning in the mother language can trigger the exclusion of thinking in the mother tongue, can impede cultural understanding in that language and creates duality in a person's self perception. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o stresses the essential role of language on self-knowledge. He says:

---

<sup>287</sup> <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/06/100609094701.htm> (retrieved 11/02/2011).

For more see: Anna Kwan-Terry, 'Language Shift, Mother Tongue, and Identity in Singapore', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 143 (2009), 85–106. Verity Saifullah Khan, 'The "Mother Tongue" Of Linguistic Minorities In Multicultural England', *Early Years*, 3 (1983), 8–25 <doi:10.1080/0957514830030205>.

Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. How people perceive themselves affects how they look at their culture, at their politics and at the social production of wealth, at their entire relationship to nature and to other beings [...]. Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others [...]. The domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonizing nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonized.<sup>288</sup>

Although Ngugi's arguments focus on colonial contexts, they clearly address the significance of mother language in self-definition in general. A mother language has a determining position in people's understanding of their cultures, identities and their social and political relationships with the world.

In Iran, several debates and controversies have circulated around the monolingual education system, with many criticising it for its destructive effect on pupils' critical thinking and self esteem. Considering and acknowledging all of the concerns raised in these debates, I should point out the complexity of the situation and express my awareness of the insights that monolingualism enables. In doing this, I do not intend to condone monolingualism and I do not intend to explain different aspects of it but rather I intend to use it to understand the identity of intrinsic exile. The intrinsic exile, when it is a result of monolingualism, is aware that the mother language is expropriated. Also the intrinsic exile sees the language as a commodity which in ready-made forms is fabricated for certain purposes. For this, the intrinsic exile tries to step outside the limits of those fabrications and develops a way of using language that is not always accordant with mainstream connotations and understandings. A good example of this is in an interview with Reza Baraheni about language which, for him, is not just a tool but is an aim. In particular, he looks at all of the languages he knows alongside his mother tongue as elements of his alienation towards languages, which eventually leads him to love alienation. He says:

We fell in love with Persian, we fell in love with English, we fell in love with West, and we fell in love with whatever we could learn in other languages. That is why when I read Hedayat [Hedayat's *Blind Owl...*] although I was reading it in an alien

---

<sup>288</sup> Cited in Asgharzadeh, p.38.



language [Persian] but at the same time I was reading alien characters. I had never seen ethereal woman<sup>289</sup> around me and ethereal woman became important to me. The novels I read were [for example] Dostoyevsky's and were all in Persian translations. A lady called Azadeh Kanom who was one of our relatives and I referred to her in one of my books [*Azadeh Kanom and Her Writer or Dr. Sharifie's Private Auschwitz*] took me and my brother to a place where we could borrow books for free, because she was paying for them. So, we gradually were directed in the path of expatriation, meaning whatever is alien is beautiful; whatever is farther is more beautiful than whatever is closer. Because this matter was in a way imposed on us; that your mother tongue is useless and the others' mother tongues are useful because culture lies there. Later on we returned to 'mother'. That is why my mother is present in almost all of my novels.<sup>290</sup>

For Baraheni, some terms like alienation or expatriation do not share the mainstream negative connotations with which they are often associated. These terms for him carry different connotations in which alienation is profoundly lovable and expatriation is, most of the time, exotic and educating. Also he is one of the key critical figures who vividly expresses his opposition to the policies and practices of prohibiting mother tongues in the education system in Iran. I will now turn to explain in more details how the intrinsic exilic life experience keeps the individual in a constantly unsettled state within which expatriation is ongoing.

Edward Said argues that the intellectuals in exile have a double perspective view of life. He argues that it is so because they "see [...] things both in terms of what has been left behind and what is actual here and now".<sup>291</sup> He goes on to say that:

Every scene or situation in the new country necessarily draws on its counterpart in the old country. Intellectually this means that an idea or experience is always counterposed with another, therefore making them both appear in a sometimes new and unpredictable light: from that juxtaposition one gets a better, perhaps even more universal idea of how to think, say, about a human rights issue in one situation by comparison with another.<sup>292</sup>

---

<sup>289</sup> Ethereal woman is one of the key characters of Hedayat's masterpiece, *Blind Owl*.

<sup>290</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNaTVnbuu2g> (retrieved 30/April/2013). The translation of above excerpt is my own.

<sup>291</sup> Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, p.44.

<sup>292</sup> Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, p.44.

For Said, in the above excerpt, exile clearly refers to physical expatriation or exile in its actual sense. However, Said's observation on the double-perspective view of exile is useful for understanding the corresponding double-perspective exposure of the intrinsic exile to the domains of 'love' and 'hate'. As argued before, unlike Said's exile, intrinsic exile happens to the person from birth. Unlike Said's actual exile, for the intrinsic exile home is not necessarily left behind. For the intrinsic exile, the sense of homeliness and exile existing both at the same time are immediate and ever present. As mentioned before, in the Iranian context, the tyrannical systems, in one way or another, expose the individual to the domains of insecurity, dislocation and alienation. These issues are in a constant relationship and are constantly engaging with the individual intrinsic exile. Intrinsic exile travels constantly between the domains of home and exile. For the intrinsic exile, being exposed to what Said calls a double-perspective view is not a matter of choice: it just happens to the person. That is why the life of the intrinsic exile is always the experience of the juxtaposed and counterposed domains of 'love' and 'hate', of home and exile, in a way that each absorbs new, unpredictable and different dimensions to those of the mainstream understandings of 'love' and 'hate' and of home and exile. This enables the intrinsic exile to develop countertransference issues with the constructor. They develop an ambivalent attitude to the issue of resistance in the sense that they do not call for the complete elimination or overthrow of the constructor without first establishing a clear line of negotiation with it. Intrinsic exile comes to this awareness that the reality of life is to live with the constructor, to understand it and to come to terms with it. They attempt to build a relationship with the enemy or, in other words, they develop a level of understanding about the enemy. That is why in the narratives of intrinsic exile the constructor is assigned both agency and voice. This is so partly because, as I argued before, the element of 'hate', like the forced language or religion, is a determining part of the intrinsic exilic sense of self. Therefore, the element of 'hate' can be understood, admired and even loved. Analysing the narrative voices of *Prisoner of Tehran* as an intrinsic exilic narrative will illustrate some parts of these aspects.

## Some Aspects of the Intrinsic Exile in *Prisoner of Tehran*

*Prisoner of Tehran* was written by Marina Nemat, an Iranian Christian author from a Russian background living in Tehran. It tells the story of her life including her childhood, the memories of being arrested, marriage, being released and migration to Canada. She was arrested on 15 January 1982 at the age of 16 for her views against the oppressive policies of the new Islamic Republic of Iran. The memoir recounts her experiences as a political prisoner. It offers an account of how her death sentence was, with the help of one of her interrogators, Ali Moosavi, reduced to life imprisonment. In the memoir, Marina explains how, under the threat of persecution of her family, she is forced to marry Ali who later is assassinated by a rival faction of prison guards. With the support and help of Ali's parents she is released after almost two years, gets secretly married to her teenage lover in a Christian church and flees the country for a new life in Canada. Nemat was awarded the first Human Dignity Prize in 2007<sup>293</sup> and was chosen for it "because of her strength of character despite her life."<sup>294</sup> Her memoir also has attracted some dissenting criticism, many of which have been widely read. These have come especially from ex-prisoners now living outside of Iran. They question the story's veracity and the picture it offers of the members of the Islamic Republic, which to their mind is too positive.<sup>295</sup> Inside Iran, the book is banned and, to date and to my knowledge, it has never been reviewed inside Iran.

From the early parts of the text, the intrinsic exilic characteristics of the memoir are obvious. The narrative voice, from the beginning, reveals her travel between the domains of 'love' and 'hate'. As a result, a sense of ambivalence is suggested to both the domains of 'love' and 'hate', throughout the memoir. For example, she falls in love for the first time with a Muslim boy from Christian parents and background, Arash, at the age of thirteen, who, as an anti-Shah revolutionary, loses his life in a demonstration. The description of her deep affection for Arash and profound grief at his loss is accompanied, simultaneously, with a description of the anti-Shah Muslim revolutionaries vandalising the small restaurant, in their neighbourhood belonging to an Armenian family, which eventually results in the restaurant being set on fire.

---

<sup>293</sup> <http://www.newswire.ca/en/story/88795/toronto-author-marina-nemat-awarded-first-human-dignity-prize-by-european-parliament-presentation-in-milan-italy-on-december-15-2007> (retrieved 7/7/2011).

<sup>294</sup> <http://www.magazine.utoronto.ca/all-about-alumni/social-justice-award-marina-nemat-human-dignity-prize/> (retrieved 7/7/2011).

<sup>295</sup> For the sharp criticism of the book see: *Evin e Khiyali dar zendaniy e Tehran* (Fictitious Evin in *Prisoner of Tehran*. Monireh Baradaran. <http://168.144.104.240/digar/zendanitehran-Bradaran.htm> (retrieved 7/7/2009)

<sup>296</sup> In this part, there is a double perspective on the nature and modes of contact and conflict of the people of different religions.

From one perspective the readers are offered Muslim and Christian people's love and affection and from another perspective the Islamists' attacks on the Armenian/Christian properties are shown. This affords important insights into the complex make up of a multi-religious society where, during a critical time like the upheaval caused by revolution, the peace between the people of different religious convictions turns into conflict. The root of the conflict, however, is not shown to be a result of their religious differences but rather because of the revolutionaries' attempts to gain power. The ambivalent attitude of the narrative voice towards the issue of racialized thinking in relation to the treatment of the people from religious minorities in Iran, exposes the unfocused methods used by the revolutionaries to target the enemy. At some points, in the memoir, they are attacking Christian properties and at other points they target their former revolutionary Muslim friends. Showing this ambivalence in the memoir suggests two arguments. First, it addresses the presence of racialized thinking in the country and secondly it suggests that there is more than this to the nature of the conflicts in Iran. This narrative strategy also places heavy emphasis on Marina's lack of prejudice, which is shown through her love for Arash. This is very much constructed as being regardless of his religion. Similarly, her hatred towards the vandals again is presented as being regardless of their religion.

Exilic identities, whether they be intrinsic, external or internal, are all the result of an individual's confrontation, conflict and clash with popular culture and the constructed values of the dominant socio-political or ideological system. An exilic narrative is, arguably, subversive and its framing carries profoundly political implications. This is because the narrative voices are attempting to describe their social reality, constitute their social identity, and vindicate their social existences which have all been pushed to the margins by the constructor. It is not surprising that the exilic personal lives reflected in the memoirs are interconnected with specific socio-political situations. *Prisoner of Tehran*, as an exilic memoir, illustrates the development of an individual's intrinsic exilic identity in her personal life interrelated with her socio-political circumstances.

*Prisoner of Tehran*, like the works of external and internal exile, is a narrative of forced displacements and traumatic experiences. In the previous chapter, it has been shown that the

---

<sup>296</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.95-96.

exilic narratives focus in particular on the shock of forced displacement from the sense of security of home. In a way which is similar to the previously analysed cultural products, in *Prisoner of Tehran*, the adapted identity is used to voice those matters which have been forcibly silenced and oppressed.

In a way which is similar to the cultural products of external and internal exile, one of the primary aims of *Prisoner of Tehran* is to be heard. This aspect of the writing is articulated in the sense of guilt the author feels for remaining silent for years prior to the book's publication. For example, at the end of the book, she finishes the book with this sentence: "[p]lease forgive me for my long silence and many other faults".<sup>297</sup> Resistance and voicing resistance against tyranny, as mentioned before, are fundamental to the aims, morality and identity of exile, in its general sense. She constructs herself as guilty for being silent, and in doing so of supporting tyranny by not narrating her experiences in the previous 20 years since their occurrence. Not voicing resistance is perceived as defeat for the exile. As Salman Rushdie puts it: "Silence: the ancient language of defeat".<sup>298</sup> Later on, in the analysis of *Azadeh Kanom*, I will show that for the developed works of intrinsic exile, being heard is not the main concern at all.

Nemat, in a way which is similar to the other authors of external exile, uses her adapted identity to voice her culture of resistance. *Prisoner of Tehran* is written in English and through a Christian philosophy of 'love your neighbour' and belief in 'guardian angels' the author articulates her intrinsic exilic identity. It is similarly written in the genre of spiritual autobiography central to Christian writings for hundreds of years.

This 'neighbour', which she is encouraged to love and readers are encouraged to understand (according to the Christian philosophy espoused in the book), is in fact a totalitarian, oppressive closed system which imprisons the author and at the end forces her to leave the country. The memoir often positions the author/narrator's Christian faith as the main tool used by the author to both tolerate the otherwise intolerable levels of hardship imposed by the tyrannical regime and to find ways to forgive their actions because they were shown to be done through ignorance. The issue of monofaithism in this book is more obvious in comparison to the other secular<sup>299</sup> exilic works because the issue of religion, its practise and

---

<sup>297</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.280.

<sup>298</sup> Salman Rushdie, *Shame*. (London: Vintage, 1995) , p.89.

<sup>299</sup> I use the word secular in its mainstream definition. As I argued before, the external and internal exilic works are under the profound influence of the rules and values of Shi'ism or the Iranian culture of resistance. But since

imposition throughout the memoir has a substantial role in recounting the events. By using religion in the memoir, the author exposes her travel between the domains of 'love' and 'hate' and through it problematizes the aspects of both domains. At the beginning of the memoir, the narrative voice describes the confusion, anxiety, fear, and hatred she feels facing the constructor, the dominant ideologies of them and the brutality they openly practice. Throughout the memoir, however, the sense of doubt is extended and exposed to both domains of 'hate' and 'love'. For example, the narrative voice refers to the confused and guilt-driven sense of loving the domain of 'hate' after being closely engaged with the constructor, through getting married by force to her interrogator. Marina referring to Ali's family says:

With them I felt more loved and cared for than in my old life, and their love made me feel guilty because I realized I loved them in return. But love wasn't supposed to make one feel ashamed. Love was not a sin, and yet, for me, it had become one.<sup>300</sup>

The intrinsic exilic elements are evident in the memoir through the elaborated sense of doubt to both domains of 'love' and 'hate'. The narrative voice expresses the sense of doubt and confusion about her feelings toward her parents and Ali's parents. To her surprise, she realizes that she actually loves some aspects of the domain of 'hate' and her level of confusion is such that she feels guilty. This characteristic of the memoir in its articulate emotional elaboration of the direct relationship between the exile and the constructor is in contrast with the 'distance' between the exile and the constructor shown in other works of the external and internal exile. I will come back to this point in more detail later.

While the cultural products of intrinsic exile share some aspects with the cultural works of external and internal exile, such as narration of the shock of the forced displacement, unlike them intrinsic exilic narratives do not stop at this level of shock. Instead they evolve into a further three stages: conscious doubt, transformation and immersion. I will now go on to explain these in more detail.

As argued before, the intrinsic exile is developed in the constant movement between the domains of 'love' (family culture and fate) and 'hate' (imposed culture and religion). This first, normalizes the constant travel between these domains and secondly exposes individual

---

they present their positions as non-religious authors and their works are not about religion, but an Islamicized country, I call them secular. Otherwise, in regards to their similarity to Shi'ism, they hardly can be called secular works.

<sup>300</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.224.

intrinsic exile to the values of both domains. For the intrinsic exile, this double perspective condition provides the privilege of contrast and comparison of both domains and evokes insight that is not achievable in the isolation of each domain. Intrinsic exilic identity is configured within these contradictory domains and so it is neither fully settled in the area of 'love' nor 'hate'. In fact, it is normal for the intrinsic exile to perceive neither the area of 'love' as a pure, comfortable and beautiful space nor the area of 'hate' as absolute pain.

Before going further into the analysis of the text, it is worth mentioning here the breaking points between this intrinsic exilic text and the earlier cultural products. There are three key elements which set aside the exilic identity of *Prisoner of Tehran* and those of the other cultural products. These elements are the issue of resistance, the perception of home, and the concept of tragedy. Resistance in *Prisoner of Tehran* is the process of coming-to-terms with the enemy and with the traumatic experiences rather than resisting against the enemy. That is why the intrinsic exile is able to break the myth of 'distance' between the exile and the constructor. In the external and internal exiles, the focus is on the vital 'distance' between the exilic self and the Other. That is why, the phenomenon of exile both in its metaphorical and actual sense is a moral duty of exile since it guarantees this 'distance'. This aspect of the works of the external and internal exile is compatible with the Iranian culture of resistance or Shi'ism. In this model, exile is a tragic event precisely because it is perceived as a lost (or a sense of lost) home. For the intrinsic exile, the phenomenon of exile is intrinsic and for this home is something achievable rather than a past/lost concept. That is why, for the intrinsic exile, leaving the country of birth is not losing home and consequently is not tragic. The concept of tragedy for the intrinsic exile is the shared exilic condition of both the exile and the constructor. Precisely because of this tragic element, the exile and the constructor are able to be immersed. In *Prisoner of Tehran* highly affecting accounts of exilic conditions are not limited to only the author's experiences in prison but they also include her interrogator/late husband's exilic conditions. Both are perceived to be the victims of exilic conditions. In other words, the reader weeps for both the exile and the constructor. This aspect of tragedy is approached differently in the more developed levels of the intrinsic exile, like *Azadeh Kanom*. Neither the exile nor the constructor is victim and *this* is perceived as a tragic element since they both actively create tragedy. I will come back to this point in more detail in the next section. The issues of resistance, forced displacements and perception of home unfold themselves gradually in the various stages of the intrinsic exile shown in *Prisoner of Tehran*.

The intrinsic exilic elements in *Prisoner of Tehran* develop in four main stages. The first stage is the stage of doubt. Here a sense of doubt emerges about the nature of the relationship between the Other and the self as being simply black and white. The second stage is one of shock, which emerges as a realization that not only is the enemy heterogeneous but that it is also complex. This makes the enemy, at this stage, clearly hateable. The third phase is one of transformation where the exile is forced to put their intrinsic exilic insight of doubt into practise. In other words, the exile realises that there is no choice but to come to terms with the enemy and the traumatic experiences with which they are faced. The last or fourth stage is the stage of matrimony or immersion. At this point, intimacy occurs between the constructor and the exile. In this stage, intrinsic exile empathizes with the enemy as a complex human who, occasionally, displays and articulates insights that are identical to the life and insight of the intrinsic exile.

In the early pages of the text, the stage of doubt is initiated in the memoir through the hybrid picture the narrative voice offers about the constructor. This is manifest within the description of two essential issues: first, the totalitarian policies of monofaithism and secondly the author's sense of identity within the complex boundaries of 'love' and 'hate'. Nemat tries to develop these two issues in the process of her narrative to articulate a sense of self and the Other. For example, she refers to the totalitarian Islamic policies followed by the ideologies of monofaithism. During her arrest, she is asked to put on a *chador*<sup>301</sup> and she explains that she has not got one because she is a Christian.<sup>302</sup> She eventually is forced to put on a scarf and is escorted to the prison. The policies of Islamization and politicized 'Islamic' dress code are expressed and criticized in the early parts of the book. Throughout the memoir some insights into the ideology behind monofaithism are suggested. As mentioned before, the ideology behind monofaithism essentially concerns the belief in the superiority of an element. Nemat offers this insight through her first encounter with Ali Moosavi, her interrogator. For example, Ali is surprised by Marina's explanations about her study of parts of the Quran says:

You've studied the Holy Koran? Now, this is even more interesting! A brave Christian girl who's studied our book! And you're still a Christian, even though you know about our prophet and his teachings?

---

<sup>301</sup> Loose and long piece of a black cloth used for covering hair and body figure.

<sup>302</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.10.



Yes, I am.

My mother had always told me that I spoke without thinking. She mentioned this when I answered questions truthfully, when I did my best not to be misunderstood.<sup>303</sup>

Nemat, in here, addresses monofaithism, exposes the totalitarian ideology behind it and at the same time expresses the sense of self identity through being confronted by monofaithism. The ideology behind monofaithism as expressed above is the belief in the fundamental superiority of Islam over other religions (or no religion) and as a result is inherently suspicious of those who study the Quran but do not follow it. It is shown that the followers of this ideology expect all people who know or come into contact with Islam to be helplessly overwhelmed by the religion and eventually become Muslims; otherwise, it will be perceived as a matter of suspicion. This issue is expressed both in the surprised tone of the man, who is bewildered by how Marina could still be a Christian while claiming to have studied the Quran, and her reference to her mother. Ali's suspicion is indirectly addressed when she refers to her mother who sees Marina as someone who does not think before speaking: meaning she could land herself in trouble. Elaborating the reasons behind monofaithism allows a sense of understanding of both the ideology and those who support it. Also Nemat expresses the sense of self identity which, as a Christian minority, is configured within and between the imposed domain of 'hate' and familiar space of 'love'. This is particularly exposed in the description of her first torture when she explains how the *Hail Mary* prayer was a refuge for her during difficult times of torture. Constant conscious travel between the two contradictory spaces equips her to expose and initiate the sense of doubt about the homogenized negative picture of the constructor. It is shown in the double description she offers from her interrogator, Ali. At the beginning, the interrogator is projected as someone who is prejudiced, dangerous and cruel, and who also can be understood and appreciated as someone having "a deep and gentle voice".<sup>304</sup> The dichotomous picture of the self and the Other is perceptible in the memoir but due to the sense of doubt that is evoked about the authenticity of both the rightness of the self and the wrongness of the Other, the dichotomous image that is offered in the beginning does not remain stable throughout the memoir.

---

<sup>303</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.13.

<sup>304</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.13.

Through her experiences of a series of conflicts and contradictions she reaches the first stage, which is conscious doubt. The insight that is offered in this stage is a problematic aspect of understanding a human being merely through their ideology. The realization reaches the conclusion that no political ideology is rich enough to consume all aspects of an individual's cognition, is arguably not peaceful enough for collective social satisfaction and is not accurate enough to be used as a way of fully understanding a person. This aspect of the memoir paves the way for the intrinsic exile to eventually be immersed with the constructor. She explicitly and deliberately sets herself apart from any ideological frame during the upheaval of revolution and goes to some lengths to demonstrate how she builds relationships with people from different groups regardless of their political tendencies or ideological beliefs. In response to Gita's encouragement for Marina to join *Fadayan* (a communist anti-Shah and later an anti-Islamic republic political party) she says: "[e]ven if I'm against them [the Islamic Republic] that doesn't make me a communist. I respect you and your beliefs, but I don't want to get involved with politics".<sup>305</sup> Marina demonstrates a challenging attitude towards the then popular phrase of having a shared enemy: "[w]e have the same enemy, so we're friends".<sup>306</sup> This was then a key element in uniting opposing political parties against the Shah. Nevertheless, exilic attitudes of resistance against the limitations of popular culture and politics as well as her intrinsic exilic doubt, though naive, show that her identity is constructed in contrast to the ideological prejudices of the time. She says: "I simply had a habit of speaking out, and if we had a Communist government instead of the Islamic one, I probably would have spoken against it as well".<sup>307</sup> Here she acknowledges her exilic outspoken manner while challenging any bigotry propagated through different ideologies. As discussed before, although exile resists imposed dominant socio-political and ideological discourses but, at the same time it sets exilic ideals. In the above example, a contradiction between Marina's espousal of non-political and non-ideological views and her determination and pride in being outspoken and oppositional is clear.

Marina moves into the second stage of shock and observation at the point of her arrest. The shock is generated by her reluctance to be politically active and yet she is arrested and accused of being an anti-Islamic Communist. At the stage of shock, she acknowledges her human weaknesses and the frailty of her morality under severe physical pressure. For example, under excruciating torture, when she is asked to give up the whereabouts of one of

---

<sup>305</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.146.

<sup>306</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.147.

<sup>307</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.147.

her friends, Shahrzad, she says: “I would have told if I knew. I would have done anything to stop it”<sup>308</sup>. In the other cultural products of external and internal exile the reader is warned against such an encroachment on the people’s ‘humanitarian soul’ by the constructor. But as I argued before, in the cultural products of the external and internal exile the main focus of the warning is a call for resistance against tyranny. Often the process in these cultural products is based on the ideas of power and morality. By power, they show that the tyranny of the IRI is powerfully corrupt which exhausts their/their readers’ ‘humanitarian soul’. By morality, the narratives show that it is necessary for exilic morality to resist this powerful tyranny. Therefore, resistance, philosophical loneliness and expatriation are in fact all aspects of exilic morality. In other words, resistance at home and enduring philosophical loneliness or leaving an oppressive environment of home for preserving the ‘humanitarian soul’ is presented as the moral duty of the exile. In terms of exilic ‘morality’, the essential difference between the internal and external exilic writings when compared to that of the intrinsic exile is the difference in stamina of exilic ‘morality’. In the internal and external exilic cultural products, exilic ‘morality’ is presented as flawless and the most powerful characteristic that is used against the constructor. For the intrinsic exile, however, the ‘morality’ is not extremely powerful and under certain situations can break all too easily. Although the humanitarian and ‘moral’ power of the exile against the constructor is illustrated in this memoir, at the same time it shows that the inhumane impositions of the constructor’s tyranny on the exile can be powerful enough to force the exile into a position of betrayal, such as giving up a friend. Unlike the external and internal exilic narratives, exile is not heroic in the works of the intrinsic exile. Instead, the exile is a fallible human being with strengths and weaknesses who is engaged in a peaceful but not passive journey of resistance. Showing the shared human conditions of everyone in the works of intrinsic exile plays a determining role in breaking the mythical ‘moral distance’ between the self and the Other. These narrative differences are recognized and mentioned in Nemat’s second memoir, *After Tehran: A Life Reclaimed*. She says:

I’D HEARD that a few ex-prisoners from Evin had published their memoirs in Persian in Europe. [...] Even though I was aware of these books, I read them only after I completed my manuscript [of *Prisoner of Tehran*], mainly because I didn’t want to be influenced by anyone. [...] I found four memoirs about Evin. [...] They had chronicled the horrors of Evin, but, unlike my memoir, their works were ideological.

---

<sup>308</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.18.

All the writers claimed that they had never broken under torture and never been affected by the intimidation and brainwashing techniques common in Evin. Apparently, all of them were heroes.<sup>309</sup>

The issue Nemat does not realize is one of the aspects of the external exilic resistance, which is a disavowal of loss. As argued before, in chapters I and II, disavowal of loss is a form of power relation established by the external exile between the exile and the constructor. In this power relation, disavowal of loss by the external exile is used to undermine and weaken the power of the constructor. Disavowal of defeat under torture operates in much the same way; as a form of resistance it shows that the constructor is not powerful enough to break the exile. By saying this, I do not intend to and I am not in a position to devalue the invaluable resistance of Iranian political prisoners. What I intend to project is that vilifying the picture of the Other and valorising the Self image by the external exile does not effectively resist the constructor. Instead, ostracizing the constructor suggests another form of oppression, albeit in a different sense.

At the stage of shock and observation, the complex heterogeneous system of the constructor is vividly illustrated. In prison Marina is exposed directly to the handful of representatives of the newly established regime's political supporters and protectors, including three main interrogators, Hamehd, Ali and Mohammad, and female prison guards and other staff who are briefly mentioned in the book. Among them, Hamehd is clearly presented as a "hard line" interrogator. His act of torture is not shown as a deed motivated by his ideological beliefs or as a result of his support of the government but it is shown because of the pleasure he is taking in torturing others. In other words, he is presented as a psychopath through the pleasure he is taking in brutally torturing others and through his unpredictable aggressive behaviour. In contrast to Hamehd, the rest are presented often as having gentle, cooperative and supportive attitudes. A comparative and heterogeneous picture of the Islamic regime's representatives is articulated clearly through the narrative voice recounting the personal relationship Marina establishes with them. For example, in one incident, the female guards show care and concern for Marina when they learn she has been taken by Hamehd. To help Marina, they think of a way to get her out of Hamehd's grip. In a conversation between female guards and Marina, one of the female guards, addressing Marina, says:

---

<sup>309</sup> Marina Nemat, *After Tehran: a Life Reclaimed* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2011) , p.53.

“Thank God I was able to find Brother Mohammad! He and Brother Ali are very close friends. [...] I called and told him Hamehd had taken you. He promised he’d find you and bring you back,” said Sister Maryam.

“You were lucky Marina. Hamehd does not need a good reason to seriously hurt people if he feels like it,” Sister Masoomeh whispered. “As you can see” – Sister Maryam turned to me – “Sister Masoomeh is not Hamehd’s best friend,[...] Even though she was one of the “Muslim Students Following the Line of the Imam”, one of the hostage-takers at the American embassy, and personally knows the Imam, she’s had problems with Hamehd.”<sup>310</sup>

Here it is clear that Hamehd is not only constructed as psychopathic but it is also clear that the terror and horror he enacts are attributable to him personally rather than to the regime or to his religious ideology. At this stage of shock and observation, a descriptive heterogeneous picture of the representatives of the constructor signifies the state of subjectivity conferred by the ritual of personal belief exposed in practise. In other words, the narrative voice suggests that it does not matter if certain people are devoted to certain ideologies; their character can still be different and they can practise the ideology based on their personal opinions and subjective interpretations.

The sense of Nemat’s intrinsic exilic self, which is essentially described as an identity configured in a constant conscious state of oscillation between the spaces of ‘love’ and ‘hate’, assists her to unsettle the previously set and clearly homogenized hostile and oppressive picture of the constructor. This is evident in the narrative voice describing two complex and rather opposing figures within the body of one system. For example, Hamehd, on the one hand, is brutally torturing Marina and with a sense of triumph takes the “enemy of Islam” or the “infidel” to the firing squad, for execution, and on the other hand Ali is going through a cumbersome procedure to obtain Khomeini’s “pardon”, for Marina’s rescue. The condition of the intrinsic exile helps the individual to set and encompass the sense of doubt to the settled representations of the exile and the constructor. At the stage of shock and observation, however, this is accompanied by a sense of frustrating confusion, which reflects a sense of fear and hatred towards the enemy, while it is, at the same time, *not* hatred. For example, comparing the different attitudes of Hamehd and Ali, Marina says:

---

<sup>310</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, pp.114-115.

In a way, it was easier for me to deal with Hamehd, because with Hamehd I knew what to expect. With Ali, things were different. He had never hurt me - but yet I felt a raw, deep fear when he was close to me.<sup>311</sup>

She expresses the sense of fear of the unknown since Ali is described as someone who stands against the expectations Marina had, before coming to Prison, of the constructor. In other words, she is not afraid of Ali but his unknown complexity to her causes a frightening sense of being in an unknown space. This is manifest when she says “no” in response to Ali’s question of whether she is afraid of him or not. He then assures Marina that: “[y]ou don’t need to be”.<sup>312</sup> Unfamiliarity and confusion about the domain of ‘hate’ is the main cause of fear and hatred; hatred is towards the confusion not the constructor. This matter can be perceived in her ambivalent statements on whether or not she hates Ali. For example, after being rescued by Ali from execution she states that she hates him. This is how she expresses it:

The longing in his eyes was deep and real. My stomach hurt. I could feel a scream forming in my throat, but he turned around and left the cell. My body shook with every tear that streamed down my face. I hated him.<sup>313</sup>

Several psychological issues are engaged at this part of the memoir such as the survivor’s sense of guilt or blaming/hating the saviour for causing such a profound sense of guilt. These issues are not, however, the main concern of this chapter and by giving this example I aim to show, at the next stage, that ambivalent approach the intrinsic exile has to the domain of ‘hate’ or ‘hating’ the constructor. This matter is evident in the next stage of transformation.

The third stage of transformation for the intrinsic exile is the result of how the intrinsic exile approaches the issue of resistance. In other words, transformation happens as a result of intrinsic exilic resistance. Intrinsic exilic resistance is substantially different to the culture of resistance of the external and internal exile. For the intrinsic exile, resistance is achieved through tolerating the constructor. In other words, the traumatic experiences and the constructor are being resisted through tolerance and leniency, which can be, and in some cases are, interpreted by external and internal exiles as cooperation with the enemy. To fulfil the aims of resistance, the external and internal exiles consider their self identity to be

---

<sup>311</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.109.

<sup>312</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*. p.41.

<sup>313</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.41.

privileged through their reluctance to tolerate the enemy. Conversely, for the intrinsic exile tolerance is essential for resistance. This form of resistance is in conflict with the Iranian culture of resistance or Shi'ism within which compromising with the enemy is 'immoral' and out of the question. This is because the constructor, in this culture, is perceived as an "absolute" oppressor. Tolerating the constructor, consequently, for the external and internal exile, first of all would problematize the mythical 'distance' between the constructor and the exile and secondly would call into question the 'moral'/ 'immoral' values being associated with each of them. In the other external and internal exilic cultural products, any obedience to or cooperation with the enemy's doctrines, even as a result of force, is not acceptable and therefore, *even if it is done*, goes unmentioned.

Marina's active resistance to save her life and her loved ones' lives is when she, unwillingly, converts to Islam and gets married to her interrogator, under threat. This form of resistance proceeds to the transformation of the intrinsic exile. For example, Marina's conversion to Islam, a formal name change due to this conversion and her marriage to Ali, give her the sense of "being dissected alive".

In the process of transformation, the reader is offered a dramatic change in Marina's view point in general and her negative expectations about the Other in particular. A sense of discomfort and guilt are shown to be accompanied in the process of resistance and transformation. This is most clearly evident when she meets Ali's parents for the first time. The meeting is described as painfully and surprisingly opposite to her expectations. It is painful because the process of transformation dismantles part of her former viewpoints forever and surprising since she is exposed at an intimate level to a new and previously unknown domain of 'hate'. For example, Marina says: "I had expected his family to be mean and cruel to me. But they had been very kind. They had been everything my family had never been".<sup>314</sup> The transformation occurs in both domains of 'love' and 'hate'; neither the domain of 'love' (her parents) is fully loving nor the domain of 'hate' (Ali and his parents) is fully hateful. Quite the opposite is true; the space of 'hate' in the stage of transformation becomes lovable, though with an accompanying sense of confusion and guilt. This is manifest in the feelings she expresses following Ali's parents' strong emotional support and help. She says: "[w]ith them I felt more loved and cared for than in my old life, and their love made me feel

---

<sup>314</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.173.

guilty because I realized I loved them in return”.<sup>315</sup> The sense of guilt, however, expressed by the narrative voice is complicated by Marina’s personal superstitious viewpoints. For instance, during her conversion ceremony she says: “I was waiting for God’s anger. I wanted a bolt of lightning to come and strike me where I stood”.<sup>316</sup> Of course this doesn’t happen – and she recognizes it as superstitious. At this stage, the old visions of the intrinsic exile about the supporters of the constructor are transformed from the sense of the unfamiliar domain of ‘hate’, which as I argued before is not hate, into an unexpected and previously unknown space of love and thereby into a realm of contradictions. The domains of ‘love’ and ‘hate’ for the intrinsic exile at this stage are consciously perceived as interchangeable and unsettled spaces within and between which the intrinsic exile is constantly on the move. Interconvertible aspects of both domains afford the last stage of immersion between the exile and the constructor.

The last stage of matrimony or immersion is where the exile establishes a close connection with the constructor. At this stage, the exilic position of the exile and the settled oppressive position of the constructor and their roles are destabilized. This makes the similarity, connection and the immersion between the exile and the constructor possible. In the stage of immersion, I suggest that the condition of exile is an intrinsic phenomenon not only for the individual intrinsic exile but also for the individual constructor. As a result, the term ‘exile’ is attributable to both the exile and the constructor. However, I will keep the same terms as a short hand to distinguish the individuals and to be in harmony with the terms of the previous chapters.

The exilic condition of the protagonist in the memoir is predominantly attributed to her imprisoned status (as a political prisoner) and its aftermath. At the stage of immersion, however, the exilic condition of an imprisoned status is similarly attributed to Marina’s interrogator. This begins to unfold with the progress of the narrative presenting numerous dialogues which position Marina’s interrogator as a prisoner himself. The dialogues between Marina and Ali show him as a political prisoner at the time of the Shah and as a metaphorical prisoner of his ideologies and ungracious, cruel job as an interrogator after the revolution. For example, when Marina criticizes him for holding her as a captive in forced marriage, Ali insists that the marriage was for saving her not for his selfish desires and continues:

---

<sup>315</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.224.

<sup>316</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.179.



In a way, we're both captives. [...] "Before the revolution, I was a political prisoner for three years. I know what it means to want to go home. But let me tell you something: your 'home' isn't the same as you left it, or even if it is, you are not the same. Your family will never understand you; you'll be lonely for the rest of your life. I'm probably wasting my time telling you all this, because you're still too young and too good. There's nowhere for you to go."<sup>317</sup>

The collective sense of homelessness or the intrinsic nature of the phenomenon of exile is evident between both the exile and the constructor. In the Iranian context, no matter what positions and power the individuals have, whether they are political prisoners or interrogators of the same prisoners, they are all in an exilic condition. None of them are really safe and both are equally exposed to the risks of forced displacement. As argued before, the exilic situation is at its most basic level, an element the exile and the constructor share. The memoir demonstrates in a way the shared intrinsic exilic experience of both the exile and the constructor. This is reflected not only in the voice given to Ali in particular but also in remembering the insights suggested by Ali after his death. For example, after being released from prison, Marina says: "Ali had been right. Home wasn't the same, because I wasn't the same".<sup>318</sup> Both Marina and Ali's perception of home or homelessness becomes the same in the process of their encounter, negotiation and shared married life. At this stage of immersion not only part of their selves are intersected into each other but also unlike the first stage of doubt the confusing and frustrating sense of hatred towards the unknown constructor vanishes, since the opposite Other resembles some aspects of the self. This is expressed when Ali asks Marina if she still hates him and she responds: "No, not anymore. I hated you at the beginning, but not now".<sup>319</sup> As explained before, the sense of hatred in the intrinsic exile is towards the sense of confusion emerging as a result of the intermixed domains of 'love' and 'hate'.

The matter which brings both Marina and Ali together is their shared tragic experiences of being political prisoners. It is manifest in the sense of closeness the narrative voice expresses after seeing her interrogator's lash marks. In a way which is identical to Marina's journey through the stages of doubt, shock and observation, transformation and immersion, Ali has gone through the stages prior to Marina and occasionally advises her about how she is likely

---

<sup>317</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.221.

<sup>318</sup> Nemat, p.249.

<sup>319</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.220.

to feel after being released. Ali's short leave from Evin is partly because of the sense of doubt he develops about the Islamic political values that he holds close to his heart in practise. In the narrative, Marina observes that she was "the embodiment of everything he stood against: [she] was a Christian, an anti-revolutionary, and a prisoner".<sup>320</sup> Yet regardless of all these elements of 'hate' he falls in love with and determined to protect the strong and innocent character he is dealing with. Facing his values with serious challenges and criticism both from Marina and himself, he resigns from the post and eventually, due to the clash with Assadollah-eh Lajavardi, who was in charge of Evin, is assassinated at the age of 28. Ironically for the second time the constructor saves the exile.

As argued before, in the Iranian context, the rebelliousness against the regime is a populist tendency among the Iranian people. In the memoir, Marina (to some extent) and Ali, although from different backgrounds, are both consumed by the Iranian populist concept of rebelliousness. Marina resists the configured Islamic values of the regime in a way which is similar to Ali's opposition to the values of the Monarchical system before the revolution, which had placed him in the torturous prisons of the Shah. Marina and Ali's closeness emerges after Marina sees the scars of lash marks on his back. This allows her to see their shared experiences of torture as political prisoners. Their difference is not a simple Islamic or non-Islamic outlook. Instead, it is laid in the alliance established in each of them through resisting systematic values. To fight the Shah, Ali complies with the systematic Islamic values and involves himself with the political activities following the 1979 revolution while Marina remains reluctant to ally herself with any anti-regime political groups.

The close interaction and immersion of the intrinsic exile with the constructor offers a means of reading the position within the Islamic system and examining closely the life of its active supporters. In this intrinsic exilic narrative, like the external and internal narratives, Islamization or the established values of the Islamic system are undoubtedly the focus of criticism. However, unlike them, a close scrutiny of the complexities within the system and the heterogeneity of its supporters make the system appear less stable. In other words, at the end of the book, the reader is not given a picture of a fixed system with determined rules and laws. The concrete faculties of the regime are repeatedly undermined by the conflicts raised within it. Simultaneously the intrinsic exile reveals the constant travel between the domains of 'love' and 'hate' and the unsettled sense of the self that results. The ever-present state of

---

<sup>320</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.162.

homelessness and the intrinsic condition of exile makes the intrinsic exile perceive that leaving the place of birth behind for a safer place constitutes a happy ending. Unlike the external and internal exile, forced displacement is not perceived as a lost home since home is only in the state of homelessness and accordingly the 'glorious return' is not particularly desired. In this memoir, unlike the cultural products of the external exile, there is no epilogue for the lost home. What Nemat mentions about the things she left behind mostly attribute to the sense of home rather than to her country of birth. They are her grandmother's "silver jewellery box" and her first love, Arash's "flute", "the necklace" he never had a chance to give her because he was shot in the demonstration, and her "first wedding ring".<sup>321</sup>

As I mentioned before, the tragedy in this work of intrinsic exile is the helpless intrinsic condition of exile for both the exile and the constructor. In other words, both are perceived as victims of the totalitarian system. This responds to the idea of collective rightlessness (*bi haghhi ye omoomi*). This supports the conspiracy theory in the Iranian context, argued for earlier in this chapter, within which the people are assumed to be in a passive situation before a superior element. The intrinsic exilic elements do not stop at this level and have the capacity to absorb new qualities and dimensions. In the more developed narratives of the intrinsic exile the tragedy *is* the active roles of both the exile and the constructor in creating the exilic conditions. This seemingly minor difference plays a significant role in the structure and in the content of intrinsic exilic narratives. In the next section, the analysis of *Azadeh Kanom and Her Writer or Dr. Sahrfie's Private Auschwitz*, will shed more light on the evolved intrinsic exilic elements and the new qualities they adopt.

---

<sup>321</sup> Nemat, *Prisoner of Tehran*, p.273.

## Reflections of Intrinsic Exilic Elements in *Azadeh Kanom and Her Writer or Dr. Sharifie's Private Auschwitz*

As mentioned before, in the more developed intrinsic exilic narratives the concept of tragedy is that the exilic conditions are enforced by both the exile *and* the constructor because the self is interrelated to the Other. Unlike the exile and the constructor in *Prisoner of Tehran* who are both victims of forced displacement, in the more developed narratives of intrinsic exile neither the exile nor the constructor is a victim. So, responsibility for the destructive exilic condition is attributable to both the exile and the constructor. So, if the individual exile has an active role in creating the tragedy of imposed displacement then they also have the ability to change the scenario to the sense of homeliness. Therefore, the sense of homeliness or happiness is within this tragedy precisely because the responsibility of the tragedy is given to the individual. In other words, the tragedy, in these narratives, is the forced displacement as a self-imposed phenomenon and that is why it can be turned into the sense of homeliness as a self-redeemed existence. The sense of homeliness which can be achieved, therefore, is intrinsic for the intrinsic exile. The self of the intrinsic exile is essentially unsettled; self identity is not a fixed property. It comes into displacement, confusion and unsettlement, and through it shapes/unshapes and reshapes. In other words, the self of the intrinsic exile develops in an inevitable pattern of unsettlement and displacement. That is why the only state of settlement for the intrinsic exile is a state of unsettlement. Enforced displacement, in this sense, is the displacement of the individual by force from their intrinsic displacement. In other words, enforced displacement for the intrinsic exile is a condition created by the Other in collaboration with the self and/or by the self in collaboration with the Other, in which the self is forced and forces the Other to be fixed, to conform, to be for example, Islamicized, Persianized, politicized, and so on. Thus unsettlement is an intrinsic condition of the self. Resistance for the intrinsic exile, therefore, is an extension of resistance to every established, hierarchical and fixed issue, which creates destructive exilic conditions and enforced settlement, regardless of whether it emerges from exilic or authoritarian sources. To do so, the intrinsic exile pushes the boundaries of exilic values and thereby places emphasis on its preliminary sense of doubt to both the domains of 'love' and 'hate', self and the Other. It is not surprising, therefore, that the concepts of postmodern theory are particularly well suited to reflecting the condition of intrinsic exile in the cultural products it generates. This is because in postmodernity there is always a ground for suspicion and doubt. As Lloyd Spenser

put it, "[p]ostmodernity is still so amorphous. If postmodernism can be most accurately described as a certain mood then it is one characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty".<sup>322</sup> For postmodernity nothing is absolute and even the term itself refuses to be bound into a clarified definition. With the ambivalence and uncertainty of postmodernity, its characteristic of fluidity in terms of its refusal to take shape and its Deleuzian pluralism=monism, in which divergent elements are interrelated and ultimately unified, the intrinsic exilic condition has no better way than to be exposed through postmodern narratives.

In the textual analysis of *Azadeh Kanom* by Reza Baraheni, I will show how the condition of intrinsic exile is illustrated and evolves through certain concepts of postmodern theory. Before going into the analysis of intrinsic exile and its manifestation in the novel, it is worth considering briefly Reza Baraheni's previous novels.

Reza Baraheni's novels to some extent are all polyphonic. In the majority of his novels, the villainy and piety of all characters are determined but all are given the opportunity and voice to narrate for themselves. For example, *The Secrets of My Homeland*, is composed of four sections, eight books and eight narrative voices each devoted to the voice of the protagonist of each section narrating similar incidents. This exposes complex characteristics in each of the characters and occasionally disturbs the prior characterizations of them that were established at the beginning as 'positive' or 'negative'. One of the recognized elements of his novels is in their characterization. Baraheni is widely admired for his ability to create a variety of personas with detailed descriptive qualities; this raises other questions about the complexity of the nature of conflict. The dominant theme of his novels is the complexity of conflict within the Iranian socio-political context. But not all of his novels use this approach to characterization. Some, like *What Happened After Marriage*,<sup>323</sup> deal with less complex characters and their conflicts. The text under consideration here, *Azadeh Kanom*, is unique when compared to his other novels.<sup>324</sup> This is mainly due to its textual structure; it is an

---

<sup>322</sup> Lloyd Spencer, 'Postmodernism, Modernity and The Tradition of Dissent', in *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, 2nd edn (London, New York: Routledge, 2005) , p.149.

<sup>323</sup> Reza Baraheni, *Bad az aroosi che gozasht* (What Happened After Marriage) (Tehran: Negah, 2009).

<sup>324</sup> *The Infernal Days of Mr Ayaz* is one of his prominent writings published and banned in 1969. After publication, the books was "squashed" by its publisher, Amir Kabir publishing house in Tehran. Publication of the book was described as an "undoable job". Only one version, in its original language Persian, is available which is with Baraheni himself. The English translation of the book was left unfinished due to the translator's untimely death. Nearly forty pages of the book are translated into English and one version is available at Manchester John Ryland University Library. In 2000, the book was translated into French with the title *Les saisons en enfer du jeune Ayyaz* (Pauvert - Paris, 2000) and now the only publically available version of the book is in French.

intertextual, fragmented and timeless novel. This has a significant impact on the process of characterization within it. In this text, characters are situated within fragmented times, places, incidents, languages and atmospheres; they operate differently in each fragment. For example, one of the characters, Biboghli, who is a devout person and who agrees to sacrifice his life for the safety of his cousin in one state of time and atmosphere, in another state, is a cruel, prejudiced oppressor. The fragmented characterization reflected within and through the textual fragmentation of the novel is less evident in his previous novels. The intertextuality of *Azadeh Kanom* also interrelates the plots, characters and settings of the text with quite a number of other novels by various authors. Some characters from Baraheni's previous novels also appear in *Azadeh Kanom*.

In *Azadeh Kanom* the evolution of the main element of intrinsic exile, which is the sense of doubt about both the domains of 'love' and 'hate', is clearly evident. Fragmentation encompasses every aspect of the novel. It is evident in the structure of the novel, in the characterization, in the characteristics of the characters, in the circumstances in which they operate and in their interrelationships with each other. Exile, in the sense of unsettlement, is an intrinsic phenomenon of the very structure of the novel. The structure of the novel, as a whole, is in a constant state of unsettlement in which all elements of the novel such as characters, time and narrative voices and so on are under a constant shaping, dismantling and reshaping and they continue to remain unsettled or, in other words, ultimately they are settled in their unsettlement, which I will explain in more detail throughout the analysis. Their settled state of unsettlement is essentially due to the active role which is given to all aspects of the novel, including its readers. As argued before, *Prisoner of Tehran* is the work of the intrinsic exile in its preliminary shape. It sheds light on the condition of intrinsic exile yet at the end it tries to settle the intrinsic exile through victimizing and 'passivizing' both the exile and the constructor. In *Azadeh Kanom*, the inevitable unsettlement is celebrated through providing the active role to the exile and the constructor; neither of them is the victim and precisely for this reason the sense of homeliness becomes both possible and achievable.

The timelessness of the novel means that there is no time and space for the intrinsic exilic stages to be developed in a straightforward process, unlike in *Prisoner of Tehran*. All of the stages of unconscious/conscious doubt, shock, transformation and immersion happen simultaneously and are repeated throughout the novel over and over again. This aspect of the novel articulates the condition of intrinsic exile in which the individual is born into

unsettlement without them having a determining choice for adopting it. Readers, accordingly, are exposed to such a state in the text. For example, the novel opens with:

There was one; there was none, none but God [Persian equivalent of 'Once upon a time' in English].

There was a doctor by the name of Dr Akbar who was a writer and a psychologist and also Dr Reza's mother's doctor who was a doctor in literature and was a writer, especially the writer of this type of writing which is being written now. It is being written right before your eyes and you are reading it right before the author's eyes.<sup>325</sup>

Without having a free, determining or at least a conscious role, the reader is exposed to the unsettlement of dual identity: being a reader as well as a writer. In this paragraph, readers do not consciously choose to be one of the writers of the novel. This happens to them without, for example, giving a warning or providing a question beforehand which in effect asks 'would you like to/are you willing to be a writer in this novel? If yes, carry on reading. If not, put it aside.' Readers abruptly, willingly or unwillingly, become writers through being directly addressed and through being involved in its writing; the moment they start reading the lines relate to their role as readers/writers. This abrupt, unavoidable and constantly unsettling condition of having a dual role as a reader *and* a writer is in a way identical to the condition of intrinsic exile, in which unsettlement is sudden, inevitable and ever-present.

As argued before, exile is an intrinsic phenomenon in the Iranian context and it happens to the individual at birth, prior to the development of their personal sense of identity. That is why the individual cannot have a determining role in adopting or refusing such a situation. The same condition is reconstructed here in the opening of the novel. Prior to the readers' knowledge about the content of the novel and their possible roles, apart from being just a mere reader, they are becoming a writer. This in a way is similar to the condition of the children in an intrinsic exilic situation, whose naivety makes them the intrinsic exile; the naivety of the readers, in the sense of their unawareness about becoming a writer through reading makes them writers.

The stages of the intrinsic exilic condition are shown all at once, in the opening. The sense of doubt/questioning is evoked with the ambiguity of the words "especially the writer of this

---

<sup>325</sup> Baraheni, *Azadah Khanum Va Nivisandahash (chap-i Duvvum), Ya, Ashvits-i Khususi-i Duktur Sharifi*, p.3. The translated excerpts of the novel are my own.

type of writing which is being written now”.<sup>326</sup> The sense of doubt/questioning also arises through the constant shifts of the roles of the readers as writers and readers. Simultaneously, the time frame of the novel evokes the sense of doubt as the novel claims it is being written in the present even while the complete version of the novel is in the readers' hands. The shock is raised when a reader is directly addressed, given a role and becomes involved in the novel without prior preparation or knowledge. A transformation occurs when readers in the first paragraph turn into writers and immersion happens when readers become writers, or better still when readers become writers through being immersed with the writer in writing. This immersion is sustained throughout; it returns and is reinforced at the end of the novel when Baraheni says: “So: dear reader, you are my writer.”<sup>327</sup>

The opening of the novel also makes explicit what Roland Barthes calls the ‘writerly’ aspect of reading. In *S/Z*, he argues that the ‘writerly’ text enlists the reader no longer as a passive ‘consumer’ but as an active ‘producer’ or co-writer of the text. This ‘writerly’ aspect of reading in a sense is inevitable since, as Barthes argues, “[t]his ‘I’ which approaches the text is already itself a plurality of other texts, of codes which are infinite or, more precisely, lost (whose origin is lost)”.<sup>328</sup> In this sense, reading, as he puts it, “is not a parasitical act” and for this the ‘writerly’ text incorporates “multiple voices” and “different wavelengths” that are accountable to “dissolve” into each other and “shifts from one point of view to another, without warning”.<sup>329</sup> This constant shifting, as Barthes argues elsewhere, suggests that the text is “written eternally *here and now*.”<sup>330</sup> The inevitable lost origin of the text, the reader and the writer and the constant movement between the domains of reader/writer and the text is the reason why Baraheni says that the text is written and read right ‘here’ and ‘now,’ before the eyes of the reader and the writer, suddenly, inevitably and ever-present.

The opening of *Azadeh Kanom* provides an active producing role for the individual reader, characters and the writer. As a result, throughout the novel the reaction of each individual (the reader, characters and writer) to a constant inevitable displacement and exilic condition is entirely up to themselves. Through this, therefore, responsibility for the individual’s reaction to the conditions of exile is also granted to them. So, in the novel, unlike *Prisoner of*

---

<sup>326</sup> Baraheni, *Azadah Khanum Va Nivisandahash (chap-i Duvvum), Ya, Ashvits-i Khususi-i Doktor Sharifi*, p.3.

<sup>327</sup> Baraheni, *Azadah Khanum Va Nivisandahash (chap-i Duvvum), Ya, Ashvits-i Khususi-i Doktor Sharifi*, p.567.

<sup>328</sup> Roland Barthes, *S/Z An Essay.*, trans. by Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974) , p.4.

<sup>329</sup> Barthes, *S/Z An Essay*, p.174.

<sup>330</sup> Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language*, trans. by Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) , p.52.



*Tehran*, no character is truly a victim – they may be oppressed, oppressor but certainly not victim – since the responsibility of the reaction towards the sometimes unavoidable exilic condition is ultimately down to the characters. In this sense, the self and the Other are responsible for themselves and the Other in the case of the enforced exilic condition which can be avoided by them. The exile and the constructor, therefore, are not fixed identities and are interchangeable according to the reactions they project towards the variety of shifting events. The concept of tragedy in the novel is articulated in a way in which tragedy is essentially not tragic. Tragedy in the novel occurs when the individual (the exile or the constructor) does not respond to the responsibility of their reactions towards the Other and the self. Tragedy as a result of not responding is not truly tragic since it is a self-imposed phenomenon and is therefore preventable. Tragedy in the context of this more developed form of intrinsic exile, in its essence, therefore, has a ‘happy ending’ *precisely because* it is self-imposed and therefore it can be self-removed. To prevent this tragedy, responsibility, in the sense of responding to the self and the Other, can be self-restored whenever the individual wants. Tragedy in this sense essentially has/is redemption and calls for the fundamental role of responsibility of both the exile and the constructor. In this novel, therefore, unstable roles and conflicts of the exile and the constructor are suggested through their active/responsible roles instead of their victimized status in their roles. As a result, the same tragic scenarios of the Iranian culture of resistance or Shi’ism are essentially problematized. They are problematized in two senses: first the very concept of tragedy in their context is questioned and secondly the redemptions they offer through claiming back the lost home or waiting for the advent of Imam, in Shi’ism, are dismantled, which I will come back to in more detail.

The active responsible roles of both the self and the Other and a Janus-faced redemptive/tragic concept of tragedy in intrinsic exile shows that first exile is an intrinsic phenomenon and secondly the sense of homeliness is achievable only in its intrinsic state. These issues are expressed throughout the novel. For example, in the early parts of the novel, General Shadan is in search of the writer, Sharifi, who is Biboghli’s cousin. Sharifi the writer, at the time of Shadan’s search for him, is only a teenage boy who is yet to even become a writer. But Shadan, convinced of Sharifi’s future career, wants to arrest him. For this, he finds Biboghli, Sharifi’s cousin, and through humiliating and painful torture orders him to disclose Sharifi’s location. Addressing Biboghli, Shadan says: “your bastard cousin will write the story of my death. Now, are you going to tell me where the hell he is?”<sup>331</sup> Biboghli

---

<sup>331</sup> Baraheni, *Azadah Khanum Va Nivisandahash (chap-i Duvvum)*, *Ya, Ashvits-i Khususi-i Duktur Sharifi*, p.31.

refuses to disclose his whereabouts and, consequently, is arrested. Shadan eventually finds Sharifi, after “ten or twelve” years of searching for him, near an Iranian bar (*ghahveh khaneh*) in Tabriz while both are drunk. Below is the moment when Shadan, the general, spots Sharifi, drunk who, remembering the old times, is crying. They come face to face with each other for the first time, in *Azadeh Kanom*. The complexity of this encounter means it is worth quoting at length:<sup>332</sup>

Shadan cuped Sharifi’s face into his bony hands and said: “young man! Why are you crying? Have you lost someone?” Tears dried up instantly, but in the same flustered mood he was amazed at how it could be possible that someone’s face be as close to his. He was drunk. Both were drunk. It was obvious. And Shadan’s eyes were glittering from the darkness, like a ghost. And now he thought that [...] he should use the remnant of his consciousness to save himself from the hands of the executioner. And he realized that he forgot Turkish and instead is miming repeatedly, the same mimes he sometimes played in the class, in Tabriz University to the extent that would have thrown a Persian lecturer into doubt and would not let him realize that a Persian-speaking Turk who has appeared before him was raised right from the inmost of Go’ud mortuary and a few steps away from Gadjil gate of Tabriz.

“Have you lost someone?” [Shadan asks in Turkish]. If the cousin [Sharifi] had given him a response in Turkish, that would have been it for him: “I do not know Turkish.”

And now the General was speaking Persian with a Turkish accent: “say it, do not be scared. I won’t eat you.”

“Not at all, scared of what General[?!]!”

“I asked you, have you lost someone young man?”

“No General, lost whom?”

---

<sup>332</sup> Both characters have a face-to-face encounter in Baraheni’s previous novel, *The Secrets of My Homeland*. In that novel, Sharifi becomes an interpreter for American generals and Shadan’s English speaking guests. Later on throughout the novel, Sharifi becomes a writer and records part of the history of Iran he witnessed or heard during the interpreting job he unwillingly did. One of the incidents that he writes about is General Shadan’s brutal assassination. In this novel, Shadan, from the experience of the previous novel, is aware that Sharifi knows how Shadan will be killed. He wants to know it and stop it from happening. However, he could not stop it from happening and the same scene of murder is repeated in this novel. General Shadan is killed once again in this novel.

“So you know me! You know who I am?”

“I don’t know you in person, but it is obvious from your insignia that you are a General.”

“Haven’t you met me before? Say it. Don’t be scared, believe me I won’t eat you.”

“I didn’t have the honor of knowing you before.”[...]

“If you didn’t have the honour of knowing me before, you had the honour of not knowing me then. Ha? Say it young man.”

“I haven’t seen you before.”

“Not even in your dreams?”

Has he? Damn this bad luck. Now, in front of all these people, what could he have said if he spat on his face or grabbed his cheek or changed his strange tone into even stranger actions? What other tricks he could have used?

“This is the first time I am at your service.”

“Service is all mine young man. But say it, have you or have you not? I don’t care about your waking time. Have you dreamt me or not? [...] “Doesn’t matter if you have seen me or not. I am looking for a bastard whose eye colour is the same as yours.” [...] “I am asking you a trace of a pair of eyes which I heard they are tracing me until the end. Tracing me into whatever shape I turn into, they also want me to be a wretch.”

“Want you what?”

“To be a wretch. Understood? a wretch.” [...] “Aren’t you a writer?”...

What kind of question he was asking. Now, General lifted his hands off his face. But he was looking at him while standing. He [Sharifi] was not drunk anymore. None of them were.

“What writer General? I don’t even have the slightest literacy. I arrived in Tabriz couple of hours ago [...] “ [...]I am from Shiraz and I don’t know you.”

“And you are not a writer?”

“No sir.”

“Another question. For God’s sake, tell me the truth this time. Weren’t you then at Biboghli’s house ten twelve years ago?” [...]

“I don’t know anyone by this name. I am not a Turk General. Which Turk can speak Persian like me?” [...]

And suddenly before the crowd the General approached his face and quietly with greatest formality kissed him on his cheeks and [...] stood still watching him and said:

“Two murderers before each other. No?”

“Not at all General.”

“But I am a gambler. A professional one, indeed. For me, winning or losing does not matter but the gamble itself does[.] Go now”.<sup>333</sup>

This face-to-face encounter of Sharifi and Shadan, as the exile and the constructor<sup>334</sup>, reflects two prominent issues. First, through referring to the policies of monolingualism it shows that exile in the sense of enforced displacement is an intrinsic phenomenon in the context of Iran for both the exile and the constructor. Secondly, the face-to-face encounter plays a prominent role in giving the responsibility of enforcing displacement to both the exile and the constructor. This suggests that both are actively involved in enforcing displacement on themselves and each other and, therefore, neither are victims.

As for the first issue, with the recollection of the mimes Sharifi used to perform in Tabriz University, the writer indirectly refers to and criticizes the policy of monolingualism through which Persian is imposed on non-Persian Iranians in the education system. Then, the writer shows that the oppressive system of monolingualism also includes the constructor. This is illustrated through showing Shadan as a Turk general who speaks Turkish and later on speaks Persian with a Turkish accent. It also shows how the oppressive policies of the country are

---

<sup>333</sup> Baraheni, Reza. 2006. *Azadah Khanum Va Nivisandahash (chap-i Duvvum), Ya, Ashvits-i Khususi-i Duktur Sharifi: Ruman. (Azadeh Kanom and Her Writer or Dr. Sharife's Private Auschwitz)*. Second edition. Tehran: Caravan Books, p.245-250.

<sup>334</sup> Even so, in order to compare the characters in *Azadeh Kanom* and those of other cultural products analyzed in this dissertation, I will continue using the terms ‘the constructor’ for the state members and ‘the exile’ for the ones against or in conflict with them in order to easily distinguish between them.

not necessarily imposed by only one ethnic group, such as the Persian; all ethnicities are collectively involved in the oppression that permeates the whole country. Another aspect of the languages they each speak is that Sharifi, to save himself from Shadan, takes refuge in the domain of ‘hate’, which is this imposed language as I will now go on to explain. This assists the writer to distinguish the oppressive policies of monolingualism from the tool of oppression (here Persian); the tool of oppression is not only irrelevant to the oppressive policies of the country but also is a prominent aspect of the self that can be used for identification (even if it is faked) and refuge. This section of the novel also suggests the heterogeneity of the people in the same ethnic groups. Although both Shadan and Sharifi are from the same ethnic background, one as the constructor and the other as the exile both threaten each other’s safety and stability. Offering the imposition of the oppressive policies of monolingualism and the instability of both the exile and the constructor also emphasises that exile in the sense of enforced displacement is the shared status of the exile *and* the constructor. Sharing them in their exilic conditions shows that both are in a way responsible for the creation and development of these unsettling conditions.

To expose their responsibility in the creation of exilic situations, the writer encounters both the exile and the constructor face-to-face. Their face-to-face encounters are reminiscent of the concept of responsibility in the relationship of the self/other illustrated in the works of Emmanuel Levinas. In his *Alterity and Transcendence*, he argues that the face of the other calls the self to their responsibility for the other. In other words, the self is inevitably responsible for the other and this inevitable responsibility is the basis of each of their existences. The inevitable responsibility that arises, as Levinas argues, is through the ‘contradictory nature’ of the face, which “is all weakness and all authority”.<sup>335</sup> He says:

The face is a seigniorship and defenslessness itself. [...] That face, exposed to my look, is disarmed. Whatever countenance it may put on, whether this face belongs to an important person, titled, or in appearance simpler. This face is the same, exposed in its nakedness. Beneath the countenance it gives itself, all its weakness comes through, and at the same time its mortality emerges; to the point where I can want to liquidate it entirely. Why not? But that is where all ambiguity of the face, and of the relation to the other, lies. This face of the other, without recourse, without security, exposed to my look and in its weakness and its mortality is also the one that orders

---

<sup>335</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, trans. by Michael B. Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p.105.

me: ‘Thou shalt not kill.’[...] The face is that possibility of murder, that powerlessness of being and that authority that commands me: ‘Thou shalt not kill.’<sup>336</sup>

This face-to-face encounter first calls on the responsibility of both Sharifi and Shadan not to kill each other (metaphorically or physically). This shows clearly how the narratives, which aim or claim to dismantle oppression, actually have enough power to maintain it. The metaphorical murder as an act of ostracizing and excluding the Other is reminiscent of Roland Bogue’s arguments relating to Deleuze’s concept of ‘deterritorialization’ and his approach to “death, doom and black metal” music.<sup>337</sup>

The concept of ‘deterritorialization’ essentially refers to an element that takes control and orders away anything from a territory that has already been established. Bogue argues that this approach clarifies the relationship between violent action and artistic practice. Using Deleuze’s concept of deterritorialization he argues that black metal music is not a direct form of violence but “like all modes of artistic practice, [offers] ways of shaping materials that can be appropriated for any number of social ends”.<sup>338</sup> Similar to Bogue’s arguments on the destructive power of black metal music, Baraheni in *Azadeh Kanom* focuses on the destructive power of narratives of exile through positioning Sharifi the writer as a murderer (in his own way) in Shadan’s perceptions of him.

This aspect of the novel also shows how the vulnerable exilic status of both the exile and the constructor is imminent, shared and evoked actively by the both. Through offering a shared active role of potential ‘murderer’ to both characters the ‘moral distance’ between the exile and the constructor, offered in the cultural products of external and internal exile through the Iranian culture of resistance and Shi’ism, is problematized.

Sharifi knows that Shadan is after him to arrest him and that is why he is displaced from safety by force by Shadan and is on the run. Shadan in a similar way knows that Sharifi is first going to write the story of his death and secondly is going to write it in a way in which he will be shown as wretched by the writer. In other words, Shadan is aware that Sharifi is going to kill him in the narrative because he is going to make him look wretched in his death, while writing his death. For Shadan his unavoidable death is not an issue but rather being

---

<sup>336</sup> Lévinas., p.104

<sup>337</sup> Roland Bogue, *Deleuze’s Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics*. (UK: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2007), p.14.

<sup>338</sup> Bogue, p.4.

rendered wretched in his death by the writer becomes a vital issue; for Shadan, Sharifi's writing is a form of murder. He wants to save himself and prevent this murder from happening in the narrative. He is, therefore, displaced by the force of the writer from the safety of his 'dignity' and as a result moves from place to place in pursuit of Sharifi. Both the exile and the constructor are, therefore, actively responsible for one another's peace, murder and enforced displacement. Exile in the sense of enforced displacement, therefore, is suggested as a self-imposed phenomenon that can be self-redeemed. This paves the way to the non-tragic essence of tragedy that emerges in more developed intrinsic exilic narratives which can lead to happiness and a sense of homeliness.

As argued before, in the context of the Iranian culture of resistance or Shi'ism, the Sisyphus cycle of tragedy will not be stopped unless the lament for the glorious past and lost home, has been questioned, criticized and moved on from. One of the possible means of achieving this aim, in *Azadeh Kanom* and the above excerpt, is through revealing the myth of the glorious past, the lost home, and the 'distance' between the constructor and the exile. This is approached by exposing the certain confluences of time in the context of the Iranian culture of resistance or Shi'ism, in the above excerpt. In the context and system of the Iranian culture of resistance the past is not stored as a past memory but it is a vivid memory of loss of a glorious time, which is always present to be lamented for. In this context, the present is unsettled and insecure, and consequently a sense of future is lacking. This timeless conflation is exposed first of all to project its dimensions and secondly as a means of dismantling both exilic and authoritative constructions, which contribute to such a structure.

The lives of Sharifi and Shadan as timeless sequences are traumatic experiences that contribute to their anxiety and unsettlement. The characters' timeless lives are depicted through the relationship they have with the tenses of time (past, present and future). The past is the most essential time for both Sharifi and Shadan. Both of the characters live in the past and, therefore, their respective presents are unsafe and unsettled. Consequently, the sense of a future is not available for either of them.

Sharifi is on the run because of the threatening incident of the past that is imposed by Shadan and when he gets drunk the vivid and present memories of the past make him weep in the present. Shadan on the other hand, has been shamed and killed once before in Baraheni's previous novel, *The Secrets of My Homeland*<sup>339</sup> however, this time he is given another

---

<sup>339</sup> Reza Baraheni, *Raazhaye Sarzamin e man* (The Secrets of my Homeland) (Tehran: Moghan, 1987).

opportunity to narrate or save himself. He is, therefore, looking for the writer to stop him from writing, with whatever means he is capable. For an incident in the past, Shadan in the present is actively determined to kill Sharifi and ruin Sharifi's future. However, both Sharifi and Shadan are deprived of a sense of a future. This is evident since Shadan calls life a "gamble" and Sharifi calls it a "lottery".

In the concepts of gambling and lotteries there are some amount of money saved from the past, which is to be spent in the present without any guarantee of securing the invested money, through winning, in the future. By applying the terms "gamble" and "lottery"<sup>340</sup> both characters convey the concept of their lives revolving around a glorious past, an unsettled present and a definitely unknowable future. The concept of time in this scenario is timeless. Its timelessness is parallel to the concept of time in the context of the Iranian culture of resistance, in which there is a glorious past, an unsafe present and a distinct lack of any sense of a future. To dismantle this structure, the sense of self-doubt is offered through the responsibilities given to both the exile and the constructor.

Shadan's self-doubt and self-questioning is perceptible through the constantly repeated questions he is asking of Sharifi, to find out if he is the one who is going to narrate his "murder" or who wants him to be a "wretch". Although, through stating "tell me the truth this time", he is very sure that the one before him is the writer of his death, in a face-to-face encounter his responsibility orders him, as Levinas argues, not to kill. The same issue of self-doubt and self-questioning goes with Sharifi. Prior to his face-to-face encounter with Shadan, Sharifi has not thought of himself as a "murderer". It is only after Shadan indirectly calls Sharifi a murderer that he starts to develop a sense of doubt about his self-perception. The section ends with the question raised in Sharifi's mind: "what was this murderer, two murderers, all about?"<sup>341</sup> As can be perceived from the narrative of *Azadeh Kanom*, in the narratives of intrinsic exile the self is questioned and the sense of doubt contributes to any issues relating to the self and the Other. In other words, intrinsic exilic narratives do not offer

---

<sup>340</sup> It is worth noting that the terms contributing to each of the characters are carefully selected by Baraheni. The term "gamble" is selected for Shadan, while the term "lottery" is chosen for Sharifi. Through contributing these terms to each of the characters, Shadan is shown more baneful than Sharifi. It is so because in gambling, an individual is willingly engaged in a game which is a direct, personal attempt in putting the opponent in the unsettling state of losing a huge amount of money while in lottery the individual cannot personally see who the opponent is and for this it does not seem like unsettling the opponent. In this sense, gambling seems more malefic than lottery because of the personal encounter of the gamblers whose winning, joy and pleasure are dependent on the other's failure while lottery does not convey these characteristics. Both, however, have the same substance.

<sup>341</sup> Baraheni, *Azadah Khanum Va Nivisandahash (chap-i Duvvum)*, *Ya, Ashvits-i Khususi-i Duktur Sharifi*, p.250



answers or any indication of the origins of questions relating to tyranny and traumatic experiences but instead simply pose more questions about the issues around traumatic experiences and the phenomenon of exile to expand, challenge and deconstruct the traditionally understood, two dimensional relationship between the exile and the constructor.

The most essential thing that makes intrinsic exilic identity thrive, as argued before, is the act of remembering the amnesia of the intrinsic nature of exile in the Iranian context. In other words, in the works of external and internal exile, the intrinsic nature of exile is forgotten – it is amnesiac. The cultural works of intrinsic exile aim to expose this amnesia and through it actively remember that in the Iranian context the exilic situation is shared by both the constructor and the exile and is thereby intrinsic.

Remembering the amnesia of collective homelessness and the illusion of home is evident in several parts of the novel. For example, in one incident Sharifi, the writer, is arrested and interrogated for one of his novels. The interrogator tries to extract all the information and whereabouts of the characters of one of his novels. Sharifi tries to explain to his interrogator that all characters are imaginary and they do not exist in real life. Unconvinced of his explanation the interrogator asks:

“Was not your home in Tabriz the center of *Zalleh*, books of traitor parties?” [...]

“We never had a home.”

[...] because of such a response, the interrogator leaned on the chair [...] and then with the intention of one long yawn floated his arms in the air. Tears streamed down. He said: “perhaps you were living on the air?”

“No Sir, we were living on the ground.”

“Then, in which part of your home have you hidden *Zalleh*, books of traitor parties?”

[Sharifi wrote down:] “I do not know what kinds of books are *Zalleh*. We didn’t have a home. A rented home cannot possibly be the center of *Zalleh* books.”

When the interrogator read this response he became furious in a way that Sharifi thought he is going to harm not only Sharifi but also himself [...] he paused for some minutes and with greatest infuriation shouted: “hey man I, who am your interrogator, live in a rented home!”

At first, Sharifi did not get the meaning of the sentence. He did not even get in what regards the interrogator uttered the sentence [...]. He felt sorry for the interrogator. It was strange, neither the interrogator nor the one who was being interrogated had a home of their own.<sup>342</sup>

Baraheni, in a subtle way, is playing with the concept of home here. Both Sharifi and the interrogator who are positioned in opposite conditions have at least a shared element: a “rented home”. A rented home refers to a temporary place, which is not permanently owned by the residents. This state of a rented home for both Sharifi and the interrogator raises the sense of collective homelessness, unsettlement and the temporary, futureless state of the people in the Iranian context, no matter who and how powerful they are.

For intrinsic exile, in the Iranian context, addressing, emphasizing and remembering the ‘amnesia’ of the intrinsic nature of exile is essential. In exposing this amnesia – the illusion of a lost home and a glorious past – a third and open space is offered within which a sense of doubt and questioning prevails, in which all structures become fragmented and within which a sense of homeliness and a future is offered. This is perceptible within the narrative mode of the novel which Baraheni calls the ‘Secondly what?’ narrative mode.

This mode is derived from Scheherazade’s story telling in *One Thousand and One Nights*. Scheherazade saved her life through keeping the king curious about the rest of the first story, which she started on the first night. According to Baraheni, this narrative, which he calls *Khezri*, is a mode with which a reader or a listener after reading or hearing the “first” of that narrative “asks constantly: ‘secondly what? Secondly what?’”<sup>343</sup> Baraheni in *Azadeh Kanom* suggests that his novel is in ‘secondly what?’ narrative mode within which a reader would not be offered one beginning, one middle part and one ending. He says: “one ending will be effacement of the other ending and that ending will be effacement of the next ending”.<sup>344</sup> This narrative, therefore, has multiple beginnings and endings and a past-present-future configuration of time, which is seen as a convention that in reality is a timeless space. This, in Barthes’ term, ‘writerly’ aspect of narrative dismantles monophony and domination since it

---

<sup>342</sup> Baraheni, *Azadah Khanum Va Nivisandahash (chap-i Duvvum), Ya, Ashvits-i Khususi-i Duktur Sharifi*, p.464-466

<sup>343</sup> Baraheni, *Azadah Khanum Va Nivisandahash (chap-i Duvvum), Ya, Ashvits-i Khususi-i Duktur Sharifi*, p.431.

<sup>344</sup> Baraheni, *Azadah Khanum Va Nivisandahash (chap-i Duvvum), Ya, Ashvits-i Khususi-i Duktur Sharifi*, p.428.

suggests, according to Baraheni, the process of “writing story writing”.<sup>345</sup> In this mode, writers, readers and characters are all creators and therefore no one dominates.

*Azadeh Kanom*, therefore, is the narrative of intrinsic exile within which displacement is unavoidably intrinsic, nothing is settled and settlement is only available in a state of unsettlement. Also *Azadeh Kanom* is a work of intrinsic exile since it deals with a variety of types of conflicts and travels between the domains of ‘love’ and ‘hate’; in the novel the exile and the constructor are heterogeneous, sometimes indistinguishable, interchangeable and therefore, immersed. Although the novel describes varieties of individual, sociopolitical, cultural, linguistic and gender conflicts, through its ‘secondly What?’ narrative mode it does not inflict displacement on the Other nor suggest a conflicted structure which is limited.

Baraheni’s emphasis on the ‘secondly what?’ narrative structure focuses on the open space of the novel in which various voices are not only heard but are also yet to become, to be heard and to be narrated. In this sense, this narrative space is similar to what Gilles Deleuze argues about the possibility of a “mode of existence where individuals overcome repressive modern forms of identity and [...] are] in a constant process of becoming and transformation”.<sup>346</sup> For Deleuze, this process of becoming and transformation is possible through the intercession or creative interference which is not simply “to advocate for the other, but also to “go between” [...], to assist the other by intervening in the other’s world [...]”.<sup>347</sup> For Deleuze, truth does not exist in the absence of “falsify[ing] established ideas.”<sup>348</sup> Intercession facilitates it through intercessors falsifying one another in different ways, through their divergences in concepts, theories, strategies and sensations. Intercession for him is a “positive dissonance, made possible through an openness to interferences that disturb one’s regular harmonic vibrations.”<sup>349</sup> Deleuze’s process of intercession is not limited to individual creativity in various domains but instead is concerned with the configuration of communities. He argues that there is a need to develop a “people to come.”<sup>350</sup> In this regard, he explains that a “people to come” is “not exactly a people called upon to dominate the world. It is a minor people

---

<sup>345</sup> Baraheni, *Azadah Khanum Va Nivisandahash (chap-i Duvvum), Ya, Ashvits-i Khususi-i Duktur Sharifi*, p.428.

<sup>346</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Martin Joughin, *Negotiations: 1972-1990* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p.126.

<sup>347</sup> Deleuze and Joughin, p.126.

<sup>348</sup> Deleuze and Joughin, p.125.

<sup>349</sup> Deleuze and Joughin, p.126.

<sup>350</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* (London: Verso, 1994), p.218.

eternally minor, taken up in a becoming revolutionary.”<sup>351</sup> He argues that a compound body is essentially a dynamic and metamorphic process. He, therefore, argues that the object of art is to encourage people to come and to achieve what Deleuze calls “fabulation” in their works; to activate the “power of the false” through which social categories and codes are dissolved and new possibilities for life are suggested. He argues that artists need to be equipped by intercessors which/who assist them to undo their presuppositions. Intercessors accompanying the artists enter into “fabulation” in the process of collective formation of new possibilities.

In *Azadeh Kanom*, all the characters are intercessors of one another who constantly falsify each other’s established ideas. None of them function in the absence of the other and although some of them may seem quite distanced, incompatible with and in a sense irrelevant to each other, they cannot exist in the absence of the other. What Deleuze calls “positive dissonance” is the dominant structure of the novel in which, according to Baraheni:

[T]he story is a spatial story; meaning in it no one is following the other in a periodical time, but people find each other like stars in the space, in a timeless accident. Only the one who looks for a meaning, forgets how that space has been performed; [...] not a mime of inside or outside, but a luminous dissemination from several lingual – textual – expressive incidents which have no intention of compatibility, and despite this incompatibility, exist only in a way they are together and they do not exist in another way.<sup>352</sup>

Since this sense of compatibility and dissonance is acknowledged, encouraged and even cherished in this novel it offers displacement in the sense of Deleuze’s positive interference but not the imposition of displacement and a state of insecurity on the Other. It is so because the narrative begins with the process of becoming and ends with the process of becoming as the writer says that “the novel has multiple beginnings and endings”.<sup>353</sup> For this it has the space for people to come.

The ‘Secondly what?’ narrative structure of the novel, in which nothing is settled and various elements are in a constant state of shaping, reshaping and unshaping suggest that exile in the sense of unsettlement and constant loss is an intrinsic phenomenon. It is also an essential

---

<sup>351</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. by Daniel W Smith and Michael A Greco (London: Verso, 1998), p.8.

<sup>352</sup> Baraheni, *Azadah Khanum Va Nivisandahash (chap-i Duvvum), Ya, Ashvits-i Khususi-i Duktur Sharifi*, p.431.

<sup>353</sup> Baraheni, *Azadah Khanum Va Nivisandahash (chap-i Duvvum), Ya, Ashvits-i Khususi-i Duktur Sharifi*, p.567.

element of the self that plays a prominent role in the process of self-growth since human beings are essentially dispossessed. As Thomas Carl Wall puts it: “[b]eing-expropriated is human being”.<sup>354</sup> That is why, earlier, I argued that for the intrinsic exile, exile is an enforced displacement from the intrinsic unsettlement to an imposed settlement and conformity. Giving the active and responsible roles to both the exile and the constructor in creating enforced displacement suggests that not only is exile, in the sense of enforced displacement, a self-imposed phenomenon but it can also be self-redeemed. This paves the way for addressing the intrinsic nature of homeliness; no one except the self is responsible for the sense of homeliness of the self and the creation of the space of homeliness for the Other. So both unsettlement and homeliness are simultaneously intrinsic phenomena. As Adorno puts it, “[h]eaven and hell, however, hang together”.<sup>355</sup> With this level of responsibility and will offered in the more developed cultural products of intrinsic exile it is not surprising that they do not ask, encourage, expect or wait for the radical and revolutionary exterior and out of hand changes through overthrowing, for example, the constructor or waiting for a savior to come and save their ‘oppressed’ nations. As a result, wanting and trying for the constructor to be overthrown, in the case of the cultural products of external and internal exile, and waiting for the advent of Imam, in Shi’ism, is not only *not* resistance against the tyranny but is irrational. The narratives of intrinsic exile encourage the intrinsic state of unsettlement to be settled in a constant questioning of the self and emphasis on the active roles and responsibility towards the Other. Resistance, in the sense of being morally or physically distanced from the constructor, is not an effective resistance for the intrinsic exile; it is rather a illusion. Resistance for the intrinsic exile, therefore, is resistance against enforced settlement, by both the exile and the constructor. The intrinsic exile, accordingly, attempts to balance the intrinsic state of unsettlement and any intrinsic sense of homeliness, wherever the individual can easily achieve it and wherever they reside. As a result, the known impulse of exile, which is hope for a return, is not a concern for the intrinsic exile. These concepts of intrinsic exile, as mentioned before, dismantle the concept of tragedy, redemption or resistance, home and exile and the ‘fixed’ roles of the constructor and exile in the Iranian culture of resistance or Shi’ism. In Shi’ism or the Iranian culture of resistance, as argued before, two “absolute” figures of the oppressor and oppressed are offered through which the concepts of exile, home, hope of return and redemption are defined, mostly as involuntary,

---

<sup>354</sup> Thomas Carl Wall, *Radical Passivity: Lévinas, Blanchot, and Agamben* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999) , p.156.

<sup>355</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Verso Classics (London: Blackwell Verso, 1997) , p.14.

exterior experiences and elements. Nothing effective, apart from irresolvable tragedy and destructive conflicts, can be raised from these structures. Through dismantling the fundamental constructions of the Iranian culture of resistance or Shi'ism, intrinsic exile pictures a non-tragic tragedy within which homeliness is an intrinsic aspect. For the intrinsic exile, home, like exile, is ever-present, however only through calling the sense of active responsibility towards the self and the Other, homeliness balances itself out with intrinsic exile, and this is the essential aim of the intrinsic exile. That is why, in various ways, the structure of cultural products of intrinsic exile, in the context of Iran, bears certain postmodern characteristics, especially in its more developed form. In Derridean/deconstructive terms an Iranian is 'always already' an exile. In Levinasian terms, the face of the Other grounds the self and its ethical responsibilities. In Deleuzian terms dissonances are not only unavoidable matters in a society but also they are positive elements of creation and growth.

## Conclusion

The cultural products of resistance all, in a way, invite resistance, especially in its metaphorical sense. All of them challenge the dominant socio-political discourses of the societies from which they emerge. In this sense, they are valuable resources for human beings to challenge the absolute rules, laws, thoughts and policies these dominant discourses expose them to. Narratives of resistance, however, are heterogeneous, predominantly in terms of their perceptions of home and exile. Using the variety of exilic identities in the Iranian context, I have illustrated how the various concepts of resistance that they offer, are essentially related to and dependant on their perceptions of home, exile and the elements which generate exile. All of them challenge what they perceive to be the elements that evoke exile. The concept of exile, however, due to its interdependence with the concept of home varies among and between them. Home and the perception of home are the essence of their difference in the exposure of exile, exilic elements and resistance against them. Also how they pursue home plays a prominent role in the ways that their perceptions of exile and home are portrayed. That is why the narratives of resistance need to be differentiated.

The cultural products of external and internal exile, start their journey from home which leads to exile and they try to *go back* home. For external and internal exile home is available but is lost and confiscated by an exterior tyrannical system; their morality is, therefore, focused on repossessing their lost home. The element which forces exile on them is perceived essentially as a tyrannical system outside of their domain against which their works encourage resistance. The concept of responsibility in the cultural products of external and internal exile is limited to resistance against tyranny and decrying the constructor. So responsibility for external and internal exiles lies in eradicating the tyranny through strategies in which they can name and shame the constructor. In this sense, the exiles are not directly responsible for the conflict and they will be held responsible only if they do not act or speak out. In external and internal exilic works the exile and the constructor cannot come to terms with each other and they cannot be possibly unified or immersed because their essences are shown to be substantially different from one another. According to the cultural products of external and internal exile, exile is the representative of justice and the Other is the representative of tyranny; the incompatible nature of justice and tyranny cannot be logically unified.

External and internal exile want to achieve their aim of resistance through displacing the constructor, which is why exile, as enforced displacement, essentially remains stable. So, the cultural products of the external and internal exile are essentially unable to challenge exile in the sense of enforced displacement; they therefore are effectively maintaining enforced displacement. In a way, home is also not possible in the cultural works of the external and internal exile since home stands in contrast with their very structure. The substance of their structure is interdependent with what they perceive as a lost home. In other words, the external and internal exile can only exist and function if there is a lost home. Home, therefore, for the existence of the external and internal exilic works should not be available; home can only ever be lost for the cultural products of external and internal exile to be.

The journey of intrinsic exile has an opposite direction to that of the external and internal exile. The journey starts from an unavoidable and immanent exile and through accepting the unavoidable exile, home is reached. For intrinsic exile, exile is an unavoidable, intrinsic phenomenon and only through understanding the various, complex aspects of exile a sense of homeliness emerges. Their morality, therefore, is to remain as a traveler and a foreigner, and to dismantle any exilic or authoritative construction that gave rise to the myth of home. In the cultural products of intrinsic exile, the complexity of exile and its intrinsic status is essential for the perception of home. For intrinsic exile, home is in exile. In the narratives of intrinsic exile, both exile and home are the intrinsic and essential elements of everyone. As a result, the exterior tyrannical elements can neither impose home nor can they impose exile since they are an intrinsic aspect of the self. What they can impose, however, is the enforced displacement from the intrinsic unsettlement to settle the individual by force, to make them conform and to make them be homogenized.

Intrinsic exile is based on the travel between the domains of 'love' and 'hate'. Because as a traveler it cannot be fully settled in either of the domains. The only settled state for intrinsic exile, therefore, is in its unsettled state. For this, it lives with the sense of doubt to both contradictory domains. That is why the morality of intrinsic exile is to expand the sense of doubt to any constructed and fabricated systems, whether it be exilic ('love') or authoritative ('hate'). For intrinsic exile, therefore, the problem is not the constructor but it is any constructions that gave rise to the enforced settlement, no matter if it is on the side of exile or on that of the authority. The morality of intrinsic exile is to remain an outsider, a foreigner, and to be unsettled everywhere because home, in its exterior sense, is an illusion and, therefore, so is settlement.



This is similar to Adorno's perception of exile and home. Adorno says: "It is part of morality not to be at home in one's home".<sup>356</sup> For Adorno, abiding by any fabrications or setting, a home in any space is far from what he suggests as morality. In this regard, Muller-Doohm looking at Adorno's arguments about home, refers to Adorno's letter, addressing Thomas Mann, in which he says: "one is nowhere at home, but of course anyone who is engaged in the business of demythologization should not complain too much about it."<sup>357</sup> A homeless intellectual, according to Adorno, finds that "writing becomes his home" but even in that case they are not "permitted to set up house in [their] text".<sup>358</sup> Similar to Adorno's prudence about setting up any construction, intrinsic exile is vigilant towards the entire range of impulses relevant to and responsible for any forms of construction, dominance or sovereign constructions and authority.

The illusion of home has always been and still is furthering exile, in the sense of enforced displacement. Logically, there is no home as long as there is exile. Home can cease to be an illusion only if the exilic condition ceases. In other words, because in the reality of the Iranian context there is exile, home is an illusion. Homeland can truly exist only if the homeland becomes unconditionally available for everyone. Because that is not the case, homeland, logically is an illusion. As Adorno says: "[t]here is no longer any homeland other than a world in which no one would be cast out any more, the world of a genuinely emancipated humanity".<sup>359</sup> As can be perceived in Adorno's understanding of homeland, at the moment, there is not such a place as homeland since this "world of a genuinely emancipated humanity" is not yet available. In the same way, as argued before, in the Iranian context because everyone is in danger of dislocation and exile, logically in this context there is not any homeland for anyone. One of the reasons for the unavailability of homeland, at least in the context of Iran, is the way certain cultural products of exile perceive the matters of home, exile, settlement and resistance. It is necessary not to perceive all cultural products of exile as the works of resistance against exile since some essentially perpetuate it.

---

<sup>356</sup> Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile: And Other Essays*, p.184.

<sup>357</sup> Stefan Muller-Doohm, *Adorno: A Biography*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009),. p.170.

<sup>358</sup> Stefan Muller-Doohm, , p.170.

<sup>359</sup> Stefan Muller-Doohm, p.169.

## Bibliography

- Adorno, Theodor W., *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Verso Classics (London: Blackwell Verso, 1997)
- Altieri, Charles, *Canons and Consequences: Reflections on the Ethical Force of Imaginative Ideals* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1990)
- Anden-Papadopoulos, K., 'Citizen Camera-witnessing: Embodied Political Dissent in the Age of "Mediated Mass Self-communication"', *New Media & Society*, (31/05/2013) <<http://nms.sagepub.com/cgi/doi/10.1177/1461444813489863>>
- Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. and extended ed (London, New York: Verso, 1991)
- Arjomand, Said Amir, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988)
- Asgharzadeh, Alireza, *Iran and the Challenge of Diversity: Islamic Fundamentalism, Aryanist Racism, and Democratic Struggles* (Gordonsville, VA, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)
- Ashcroft, Bill, *Post-colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000)
- Atkin, Nicholas, Michael Biddiss, and Frank Tallett, *The Wiley-Blackwell Dictionary of Modern European History Since 1789* (UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2011)
- Baber, Zaheer, Joseph M Bryant, and Zeitlin, *Society, History, and the Global Human Condition Essays in Honor of Irving M. Zeitlin* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010) <<http://site.ebrary.com/id/10437335>> [accessed 1 October 2013]
- Baraheni, Reza, *Khiṭāb Bih Parvānah'hā: Shi'r; Va, Chirā Man Dīgar Shā'ir-i Nīmāyī Nīstam: Baḥsī Dar Shā'irī. (Addressing Butterflies: And Why Am I Not a Nimayi Poet Anymore?)* (Tehran: Nashr-i Markaz, 1995)
- , *Azadah Khanum Va Nivisandahash (chap-i Duvvum), Ya, Ashvits-i Khususi-i Duktur Sharifi: Ruman. (Azadeh Kanom and Her Writer or Dr. Sharifie's Private Auschwitz), Chap-i 2* (Tehran: Caravan Books, 2006)
- , *Bad az aroosi che gozasht* (Tehran: Negah, 2009)
- , *Guzārish Bih Nasl-i Bī Sinn-i Fardā*, Chāp-i 1 (Tehrān: Nashr-i Markaz, 1995)
- , *Khiṭāb Bih Parvānah'hā: Shi'r; Va, Chirā Man Dīgar Shā'ir-i Nīmāyī Nīstam: Baḥsī Dar Shā'irī. (Addressing Butterflies: And Why Am I Not a Nimayi Poet Anymore?)* (Tehran: Nashr-i Markaz, 1995)
- , *Raazhaye Sarzamin e man (The Secrets of my Homeland)* (Tehran: Moghan, 1987)

- Barthes, Roland, *S/Z An Essay.*, trans. by Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974)
- , *The Rustle of Language*, trans. by Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989)
- Bellos, David, *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?: The Amazing Adventure of Translation* (London: Particular, 2012)
- Bertolt Brecht, *Bertolt Brecht: Poetry and Prose*, eds. by Reinhold Grimm and Caroline Molina y Vedia, German Library, (New York: Continuum, 2003)
- Bhabha, Homi K, 'The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha', in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), pp. 207–221
- Bhavnani, Reena, and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *Tackling the Roots of Racism: Lessons for Success* (Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2005)
- Bogue, Roland, *Deleuze's Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics*. (England: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2007)
- Caruth, Cathy, 'Parting Words: Trauma, Silence and Survival', *Cultural Values*, 5 (2001), 7–26 <doi:10.1080/14797580109367218>
- , 'Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History', *Yale French Studies*, Yale University Press, 1991, 181–192
- , *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 2010)
- , *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995)
- Chaudhuri, S., 'The Open Image: Poetic Realism and the New Iranian Cinema', *Screen*, 44 (2003), 38–57 <doi:10.1093/screen/44.1.38>
- Chaudhuri, Shohini, *Contemporary World Cinema: Europe, the Middle East, East Asia and South Asia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005)
- Duncombe, Stephen, *Cultural Resistance Reader* (London, New York: Verso, 2002)
- Dabashi, Hamid, *Close up: Iranian Cinema, Past, Present, and Future* (London ; New York: Verso, 2001)
- , *Iran: a People Interrupted* (New York: New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton, 2007)
- , *Shi'ism a Religion of Protest* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011) <<http://site.ebrary.com/id/10456070>> [accessed 22 September 2013]
- Dahlie, Hallvard, *Varieties of Exile: The Canadian Experience* (Canada: UBC Press, 2011)
- Deleuze, Gilles, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. by Daniel W Smith and Michael A Greco (London: Verso, 1998)

- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* (London: Verso, 1994)
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Martin Joughin, *Negotiations: 1972-1990* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)
- Dieckmann, Bernhard, Christoph Wulf, and Michael Wimmer, eds., *Violence--nationalism, Racism, Xenophobia*, 5 European Studies in Education vols. (Munster, New York: Waxmann Verlag, 1997)
- Durham Peter, John, 'Exile, Nomadism, and Diaspora: The Stakes of Mobility in the Western Canon', in *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*, ed. by Hamid Naficy (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 17–41
- Dyer, Richard, *White* (London, New York: Routledge, 1997)
- Elahi, Babak, 'Translating the Self: Language and Identity in Iranian-American Women's Memoirs', *Iranian Studies*, 39 (2006), 461–480 <doi:10.1080/00210860601004933>
- Erfani, Farhang, *Iranian Cinema and Philosophy Shooting Truth* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)  
<<http://www.palgraveconnect.com/doi/finder/10.1057/9781137012920>> [accessed 1 October 2013]
- Farahmand, Azadeh, 'Perspective on Recent (International Acclaim for) Iranian Cinema', in *New Iranian Cinema: Politics, Representation and Identity*, ed. by Richard Tapper (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002)
- Foucault, M., 'Orders of Discourse', *Social Science Information*, 10 (1971), 7–30
- Foucault, Michel, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. by A.M. Sheridan Smith (Great Britain: Tavistock Publications, 1972)
- Fromm, Erich, *The Art of Loving* (New York: Open Road, 2013)
- Gellner, Ernest, *Language and Solitude: Wittgenstein, Malinowski, and the Habsburg Dilemma* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- Gellner, Ernest, and John Breuilly, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008)
- 'Granaz Moussavi in Toronto', *Behnam Nateghi*. VOA Report, 9 October 2009
- Gready, Paul, *Writing as Resistance: Life Stories of Imprisonment, Exile, and Homecoming from Apartheid South Africa* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003)
- Harlow, Barbara, *Resistance Literature* (New York: Methuen, 1987)
- Hetteema, Th. L., 'The Canon: Authority and Fascination', in *Canonization and Decanonization*, ed. by Brill Koninklijke (The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill 1998), pp. 391–398

- Hughes-Warrington, Marnie, *History Goes to the Movies: Studying History on Film* (London, New York: Routledge, 2007)
- Jahed, Parviz, *Neveshtan baa Doorbin: Roo dar Roo baa Ebrahim Golestan. (Writing with Camera: Face-to-Face with Ebrahim Golestan)* (Tehran: Akhtaran, 2005)
- Karimi-Hakkak, Ahmad, 'Of Hail and Hounds: The Image of the Iranian Revolution in Recent Persian Literature', *State, Culture, and Society*, 1 (1985), 148–180
- , 'Revolutionary Posturing: Iranian Writers and the Iranian Revolution of 1979', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 23 (1991), 507–531
- Katouzian, Homa, *The Persians: Ancient, Mediaeval and Modern Iran* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2010)
- Keshmirshekan, Hamid, 'The Question of Identity Vis-à-vis Exoticism in Contemporary Iranian Art', *Iranian Studies*, 43 (2010), 489–512 <doi:10.1080/00210862.2010.495566>
- Khan, Verity Saifullah, 'The "Mother-Tongue" of Linguistic Minorities in Multicultural England', *Early Years*, 3 (1983), 8–25 <doi:10.1080/0957514830030205>
- Khosronejad, Pedram, 'Some Observations on Visual Representations of the 2009 Iranian Presidential Election Crisis', *Iranian Studies*, 44 (2011), 395–408 <doi:10.1080/00210862.2011.556391>
- Klitgard, Ida, '(Dis) Location and Its (Dis) Contents: Translation as Exile in James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Finnegans Wake.', in *Re-Mapping Exile*, eds. by Micheal Boss, Irene G. Nordin, Britta Olinder, (Aarhus, DNK: Aarhus University Press, 2005), pp. 107–134
- Kwan-Terry, Anna, 'Language Shift, Mother Tongue, and Identity in Singapore', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 143 (2009), 85–106
- Laachir, Karima, and Saeed Talajooy, eds., *Resistance in Contemporary Middle Eastern Cultures: Literature, Cinema and Music*, Routledge Research in Postcolonial Literatures, 44 (New York, London: Routledge, 2013)
- Lacan, Jacques, *The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Anthony Wilden (Michigan: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968)
- Langerudi, Mehdi Akhavan, *Yek hafteh bah Shamloo dar Othreesh. (A Week With Shamloo in Austria)* (Tehran [Iran]; Markham, Ont.: Morvarid; [Distributed by] Far Eastern Books, 1999)
- Lavie, Smadar, and Ted Swedenburg, 'Introduction: Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity', in *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity*, eds. by Smadar Lavie, Ted Swedenburg (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 1–26
- Leonardo, Zeus, *Race, Whiteness, and Education*, The Critical Social Thought Series (New York: Routledge, 2009)

- Lévinas, Emmanuel, *Alterity and Transcendence*, trans. by Michael B. Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999)
- Lipsitz, George, ‘“Home Is Where the Hatred Is” Work, Music, and the Transnational Economy’, in *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*, ed. by Hamid Naficy, (New York, London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 193–212
- Malek, Amy, ‘Memoir as Iranian Exile Cultural Production: A Case Study of Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis* Series’, *Iranian Studies*, 39 (2006), 353–380 <doi:10.1080/00210860600808201>
- Mansouri, Moslem, *Ahmad Shamlou: Master Poet of Liberty* (International Film and Video Center, 1999)
- Matin-Asgari, Afshin, ‘The Intellectual Best-sellers of Post-revolutionary Iran: On Backwardness, Elite-killing, and Western Rationality’, *Iranian Studies*, 37 (2004), 73–88 <doi:10.1080/0021086042000232947>
- Mehrjui, Dariush, *The Cow* (Iran, 1969)
- Monaco, James, *How to Read a Film: Movies, Media, and Beyond: Art, Technology, Language, History, Theory*, 4th ed., completely rev. and expanded (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009)
- Morse, Margaret, ‘Home: Smell, Taste, Posture, Gleam’, in *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*, Hamid Naficy (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 63–74
- Mortensen, M., ‘When Citizen Photojournalism Sets the News Agenda: Neda Agha Soltan as a Web 2.0 Icon of Post-election Unrest in Iran’, *Global Media and Communication*, 7 (2011), 4–16
- Moussavi, Granaz, *My Tehran for Sale* (Cyan Films, 2009)
- Mozaffari, Nahid, *Strange Times, My Dear: The PEN Anthology of Contemporary Iranian Literature*, 1st ed (New York: Arcade Pub, 2005)
- Muller-Doohm, Stefan, *Adorno: A Biography* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2009)
- Naficy, Hamid, *A Social History of Iranian Cinema* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 2011)
- , ‘Exile Discourse and Televisual Fetishization.’, in *Otherness and the Media: the Ethnography of the Imagened and the Imaged.*, eds. by Naficy, Hamid, H.Gabriel, Teshome (Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers., 1993)
- , *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place* (New York: Routledge, 1999)
- , *The Making of Exile Cultures: Iranian Television in Los Angeles* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993)

- Nafisi, Azar, *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books* (London: Fourth Estate, 2004)
- Navab, Aphrodite Desiree, 'To Be Or Not To Be An Orientalist?: The Ambivalent Art of Antoin Sevruguin', *Iranian Studies*, 35 (2002), 113–127
- Nemat, Marina, *After Tehran: a Life Reclaimed* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2011)
- , *Prisoner of Tehran*. (London: John Murray, 2007)
- Niranjana, Tejaswini, *Siting Translation History, Post-structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992)  
<<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=10072>> [accessed 7 September 2013]
- Ogan, Christine L., *Communication and Identity in the Diaspora: Turkish Migrants in Amsterdam and Their Use of Media* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2001)
- Paulino, Edward, 'Anti-Haitianism, Historical Memory, and the Potential for Genocidal Violence in the Dominican Republic', *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, 1 (2006), 265–288 <doi:10.3138/7864-3362-3R24-6231>
- Poudeh, Reza J., and M. Reza Shirvani, 'Issues and Paradoxes in the Development of Iranian National Cinema: An Overview', *Iranian Studies*, 41 (2008), 323–341 <doi:10.1080/00210860801981294>
- Price, Massoume, *Iran's Diverse Peoples: A Reference Sourcebook* (Santa Barbra, Calif., Denvor, Colorado: ABC-CLIO, 2005)
- Rabinow, Paul, ed., *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought* (UK: Penguin Books, 1984)
- Rattansi, Ali, *Racism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)
- Ricoeur, Paul, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994)
- Robinson, Ken, and Lou Aronica, *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* (London: Penguin Books, 2010)
- Rushdie, Salman, *Shame*. (London: Vintage, 1995)
- , *The Satanic Verses a Novel* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2008)  
<<http://www.contentreserve.com/TitleInfo.asp?ID={4F1A1E32-5FAC-4398-BBD9-AD06A3C4E2FF}&Format=410>> [accessed 24 June 2013]
- Ryan, Michael, 'The Politics of Film: Discourse, Psychoanalysis, Ideology', in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 477–486
- Saberi, Reza, *An Invitation to Persian Poetry: a Bilingual Text, Persian-English*, First edition (Los Angeles: Ketab Corp, 2006)

- Şadr, Ḥamīd Rizā, *Iranian Cinema: a Political History* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris ; Distributed in the United States by Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)
- Said, Edward W., *Orientalism* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1995)
- Said, Edward W., *Reflections on Exile: And Other Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000)
- , *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (London: Vintage Books, 1996)
- Sakr, Naomi, *Women and Media in the Middle East: Power through Self-expression*, Library of Modern Middle East Studies, 41 (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004)
- Sam Roberts, 'U.N. Reports 7 Billion Humans, but Others Don't Count on It.', *The New York Times*. 31 Oct 2011.
- Satrapi, Marjane, *The Complete Persepolis*, 1st ed (New York: Pantheon Books, 2007)
- Seyf, Ahmad, *Despotic Mind, Despotic Culture: The Case of Iran: Iran: Estebdad-e Zehn Va Farhang-e Estebdadi* (Regent's College, London: H&S Media, 2011)
- Shahideh, Laleh, *The Power of Iranian Narratives: a Thousand Years of Healing* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004)
- Shahidian, Hammed, 'To Be Recorded in History': Researching Iranian Underground Political Activists in Exile', *Qualitative Sociology*, 24 (2001), 55–81
- Shāmlū, Aḥmad, *Āydā dar āyinah (Ayda In the Mirror)* (Tehran: Mu'assasah-i Intishārāt-i Nigār, 2001)
- , 'End of the Game', in *Strange Times, My Dear*, Nahid Mozaffari, Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2005)
- , 'Love Song', in *Strange Times, My Dear*, Nahid Mozaffari, Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2005)
- Smith, Sidonie, *Reading Autobiography: a Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, 2nd ed (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010)
- Soroudi, Sorour S., 'The Iranian Heritage in the Eyes of the Contemporary Poet Mehdi Akhavan Salis (M. Omid)', in *Towards a Modern Iran: Studies in Thought, Politics and Society*, Ellie Kedouri, Sylvia Haim (London: Frank Cass, 1988), pp. 132–154
- Spencer, Lloyd, 'Postmodernism, Modernity and The Tradition of Dissent', in *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, 2nd edn (London, New York: Routledge, 2005)
- Talajooy, Saeed Reza, 'Mythologizing The Transition: A Comparative Study Of Bahram Beyzayee And Wole Soyinka' (Leeds: University of Leeds, 2008)



- Tapper, Richard, *The New Iranian Cinema: Politics, Representation and Identity* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2002)
- Tedeschi, James T, *Social Power and Political Influence* (New Jersey: Transaction, 2008)
- Wall, Thomas Carl, *Radical Passivity: Lévinas, Blanchot, and Agamben* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999)
- Weinberger, Stephen, 'Neorealism, Iranian Style', *Iranian Studies*, 40 (2007), 5–16  
<doi:10.1080/00210860601138590>
- Winterbottom, Michael, *In This World*, 2002
- Zeydabadi-Nejad, Saeed, *The Politics of Iranian Cinema: Film and Society in the Islamic Republic*, *Iranian Studies*, 6 (London, New York: Routledge, 2010)
- Zia-Ebrahimi, R., 'Self-Orientalization and Dislocation: The Uses and Abuses of the "Aryan" Discourse in Iran', *Iranian Studies*, 44 (2011), 445–472
- Zia-Ebrahimi, Reza, "'Arab Invasion" and Decline, or the Import of European Racial Thought by Iranian Nationalists', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. (2012), 1–19

### Online References

- 'Granaz Moussavi: Something Different and Fresh from Iran', in *indiewire*  
<[http://www.indiewire.com/article/tiff\\_09\\_granaz\\_moussavi\\_something\\_different\\_and\\_fresh\\_from\\_iran](http://www.indiewire.com/article/tiff_09_granaz_moussavi_something_different_and_fresh_from_iran)> [accessed 9/October/2009]
- 'Iran Sadegh Ziba Kalam on Reza Shah Pahlavi (1) contributions P1', in *Youtube*  
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BjSFxQrjKA>> [accessed 10/February/2013]
- Monireh Baradaran, 'Evin e Khiyali dar zendaniy e Tehran (Fictitious Evin in Prisoner of Tehran)' <<http://168.144.104.240/digar/zendanitehran-Bradaran.htm>> [accessed 7/July/2009]
- Rosa Issa, 'Real Fictions' <[http://archiv.hkw.de/en/dossiers/iran\\_dossierroseissa/kapitel2.html](http://archiv.hkw.de/en/dossiers/iran_dossierroseissa/kapitel2.html)> [accessed 21/May/2011]
- Staff, 'In Pursuit of Human Dignity', in *UofTMagazine*  
<<http://www.magazine.utoronto.ca/all-about-alumni/social-justice-award-marina-nemat-human-dignity-prize/>> [accessed 7/July/2011]

