



Assn. in 2007 and was recently named co-recipient of the 2014 Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize for the best article of the year on intergroup relations, awarded by the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues.

Her research examines social psychological models of intergroup conflict across cultures, including ethnic, national, and religious conflict. She received her B.A. in Psychology from UC Berkeley, and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Psychology from UCLA. She is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Tau of California at CMC.

Shana Levin has research interests in prejudice and discrimination, ideologies of group inequality, ethnic identification, social dominance orientation, and intergroup attitudes in the United States, Israel, Northern Ireland, and Lebanon.

Professor Sidanius has primary research interests in the interface between political ideology and cognitive functioning, the connection between ethnic and national identities within the context of multiethnic states, the political psychology of gender, prejudice and institutional discrimination, and the evolutionary psychology of intergroup prejudice and conflict. Most of his recent work has concerned some of the implications of social dominance theory, a general model concerning the development and maintenance of group-based social hierarchy and social oppression.

opment of social dominance theory, a general model of the development and maintenance of group-based social hierarchy and social oppression. Professor Sidanius' latest books are entitled: Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression (1999, Cambridge University Press), Racialized Politics: Values, Ideology, and Prejudice in American Public Opinion (University of Chicago press, 2000), Key Readings in Political Psychology (Psychology Press, 2004), and The Diversity Challenge: Social Identity and Intergroup Relations on the College Campus (Russell Sage Foundation, 2008).

Prof. Sidanius was also the recipient of the 2006 Harold Lasswell Award for "Distinguished Scientific Contribution in the Field of Political Psychology" awarded by the International Society of Political Psychology, was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2007, was elected as a Fellow of the Society of Experimental Social Psychology in 2009, was elected as a Fellow of the Association for Psychological Science in 2013, and was the recipient of the 2013 Career Contribution Award conferred by the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.

**3 Shana Levin, Crown Professor of Psychology and George R. Roberts Fellow, has been named Associate Dean of the Faculty for Research, in 1st of July 2016.**

Levin has been on the faculty at CMC since 1998 and served as Chair of the Psychology Department from 2011-2013. She received the G. David Huntoon Senior Teaching Award in 2012 and teaches psychological statistics, social psychology, prejudice and intergroup relations, and the psychology senior research seminar. She received the Early Career Research Award from the Western Psychological

**immigrants, violations of International Humanitarian Law in war-time, terrorism and counter-terrorism, and the Arab uprisings. She is co-author of the book Social Dominance, and more recently, of Power Basis Theory.**

**2 Jim Sidanius is the John Lindsley Professor of Psychology in memory of William James and of African and African American Studies in the departments of Psychology and African and African American Studies at Harvard University. He received his Ph.D. at the University of Stockholm, Sweden in 1977 and has taught at several universities in the United States and Europe, including Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Texas at Austin, New York University, Princeton University, the University of Stockholm, Sweden, and the University of California, Los Angeles. His primary research interests include the interface between political ideology and cognitive functioning, the political psychology of gender, group conflict, institutional discrimination and the evolutionary psychology of intergroup conflict.**

Professor Sidanius has primary research interests in the interface between political ideology and cognitive functioning, the connection between ethnic and national identities within the context of multiethnic states, the political psychology of gender, prejudice and institutional discrimination, and the evolutionary psychology of intergroup prejudice and conflict. Most of his recent work has concerned some of the implications of social dominance theory, a general model concerning the development and maintenance of group-based social hierarchy and social oppression.

He has authored and published more than 330 scientific papers, and his most important theoretical contribution to date is the devel-

(Endnotes)

**1 Felicia Pratto is a professor of psychology at the University of Connecticut .She completed her PhD from New York University in 1988, was an assistant professor at Stanford University from 1990 to 1997 whereupon she joined the faculty at the University of Connecticut as an Associate Professor .Her researches concern social cognitive processes that contribute to group biases, intergroup relations ,particularly power and the structuring of sexism and ethnocentrism ,and international violence .She is a fellow of the APA and APS.**

**She is (with Jim Sidanius) creator of Social dominance theory, a multilevel theory which attempts to explain the stability of group-based social hierarchies and group-based inequalities in the world. This theory has provoked hundreds of empirical reseches all over the world and several thousands of papers in peer-reviewed academic journals.**

**Professor Pratto researches power, intergroup relations, prejudice and discrimination, and social cognition. She is a Fellow of the Association for Psychological Science and a Fellow of the American Psychological Society. She teaches courses in experimental research methods, social cognition, theories of intergroup relations, social psychology, and the communication of prejudice.**

**Prof. Pratto's researches address the processes and consequences of inequality. Thus, her work is known in social psychology, political psychology, and related disciplines. Her researches have addressed a variety of real-world issues, including race- and sex-discrimination in hiring, prejudice against lesbians, gay men, and**

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## Conclusion

In this research, The Social dominance theory by Felicia Pratto, Jim Sidanius and Shana Levin has been used as a critical framework in order to evaluate Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. The theory says that all societies are based on hierarchical system. It is divided into three main types; Age which focuses on the oppression upon children from adults, gender which focuses on the oppression of men upon women and arbitrary-set which focuses on the differentiation of the background; age ethnicity... etc. Nafisi is considered westernized and anti-Islamic; however, this research shows that she is just expressing her personal experience in Iran and that is a thing anyone can wright about and she is also not criticizing Islam, she is against the misuseage of Islam and the different attempts to denigrate it through controlling people and say this is the religion as Islam is superior than their personal desires.

the country and the citizens of the Iran and applied their rules and called it the Islamic rules when in fact it is their personal desires. This wouldn't happen if the Iranian revolution hasn't provoked and the Iranians' dream that has been manipulated.

ri, and still she shunned politics. She resented the fact that her veil, which to her was a symbol of her sacred relationship to God, had now become an instrument of power, turning the women who wore them into political signs and symbols. Where do your loyalties lie, Mr. Bahri, with Islam or the state? (p.67)

This shows how always throughout time for different reasons with different people, religion has been misused from politicians to accomplish their own desires without the objection of people as they think they are doing what God wants and that if they were patient and don't object on a thing, God will grant them Heaven for their true sincerity. This is the arbitrary-set system being part of the misusage of religion.

Nafisi hints when she comments on the American dream or the idea of dreams in general, in *The Great Gatsby* that we have to be cautious of our desires and dreams so they would not turn to be our worst nightmares:

What we in Iran had in common with Fitzgerald was this dream that became our obsession and took over our reality, this terrible, beautiful dream, impossible in its actualization, for which any amount of violence might be justified or forgiven. This was what we had in common, although we were not aware of it then. (p.95)

Nafisi says that the Iranian dream of free Iran after the revolution has turned into nightmare after the Islamic Republic controlled

Zarrin and Vida, Nafisi's students when she was in the University of Tehran, confronted Dr. Nyazi saying:

“What am I to think of your slogans claiming that women who don't wear the veil are prostitutes and agents of Satan? You call this morality?” she shouted. ...

“But this is an Islamic country,” Nyazi shouted vehemently. “And this is the law, and whoever . . .”

“The law?” Vida interrupted him. “You guys came in and changed the laws. (p.88)

This shows the point of view of women specifically and the Iranian citizens generally about Iran, the revolution and the Islamic Republic and how the government manipulated everything and used the religion as its cover that they can go with their personal desires and control everybody and whoever thinks to object, they could call him/her anti-Islamic and the enemy of God and the agent of Satan and take him/her into prison or even kill him/her.

The misuse of Islam in politics and the fact that the politician and the government is using the religion as a tool to dominate the citizens of Iran is refused from people in Iran in general, before and after the revolution, with its two sides; imposing it or ignoring it completely as Nafisi shows while talking to Mr. Bahri, the head of the Islamic Republic students in college:

He [Mr. Bahri] cautiously tried to make me understand what political Islam meant, and I rebuffed him, because it was exactly Islam as a political entity that I rejected. I told him about my grandmother, who was the most devout Muslim I had ever known, even more than you, Mr. Bah-

sion. This I would call a rape of our culture, (p.82)

This shows that to the Islamic Republic, because the west has different ideology and different culture, they are being judged as becoming "the Great Satan" who are fighting Islam, and not the country, and who wants to domain Muslims and erase their ideology and culture. This is a misuse of both power and religion.

Nafisi shows a critical point that Khomeini, the head of the Islamic Republic, said after the revolution:

"Criminals should not be tried. The trial of a criminal is against human rights. Human rights demand that we should have killed them in the first place when it became known that they were criminals," proclaimed Ayatollah Khomeini, responding to protests by international human rights organizations of the wave of executions that followed the revolution. (p.62)

If Khomeini is really applying the rules of Islam, he would know that killing is a serious matter in all religions including Islam and it is actually forbidden to kill and forgiveness is almost a must on all Muslims to forgive their enemies. Now how could a person demanding to apply all the rules of Islam with its smallest rules, use this kind of language in front of a crowd considering him the teacher of Islam. We find Nafisi asking in the novel: "We were all victims of the arbitrary nature of a totalitarian regime that constantly intruded into the most private corners of our lives and imposed its relentless fictions on us. Was this rule the rule of Islam?" (p.45) This imposes the idea of is this Islam or is it the personal desires of the government?

Nafisi and the revolutionaries dreamed of was taken from them and Khomeini's dream was imposed on them and the whole country under the name of the religion as Nafisi explains: "A stern ayatollah, a blind and improbable philosopher-king, had decided to impose his dream on a country and a people and to re-create us in his own myopic vision. So he had formulated an ideal of me as a Muslim woman, as a Muslim woman teacher, and wanted me to look, act and in short live according to that ideal." (p. 107) Iranian were deprived from living their life as they want and only to follow the rules of the country which is supposed to be the Islamic rules but it is implied on them as the country's rules which makes us wonder if they were the rules of the country so one can break and pay a fine or even face jail if the breaking of the rule was big, or one should follow as these are the rules of the religion and if one doesn't follow he/she will face God's displeasement and might go to hell if the rule he/she had broken was a big one. This dominance is again an arbitrary-set one as one group is demeaning the other group for the religious' different point of views.

The main idea of the arbitrary-set system is the dominance of one group over another upon their cultural and religious backgrounds' differences. This is obvious and clearly explained by Mr. Nyazi, one of the members of the professors in the University of Tehran who is with the Islamic Republic and defending on them, saying:

All through this revolution we have talked about the fact that the West is our enemy, it is the Great Satan, not because of its military might, not because of its economic power, but because of, because of"-another pause-"because of its sinister assault on the very roots of our culture. What our Imam [Khomeini] calls cultural aggres-

the veil under false pretenses ... Little did I know that I would soon be given the choice of either veiling or being jailed, flogged and perhaps killed if I disobeyed." (p.100) This applies both the gender and arbitrary-set systems as being a woman she has to wear and act in a certain way, not religiously but because they wanted to control women and force some rules on them. This also shows the misuse of religion and the dominance of one group that has the power upon the other. Even in war between Iran and Iraq, the misuse of religion continues; the government uses the war as a tool to show its dominance over the country and people's need of them and their protection and that people should be aware that the war is against Islam when in fact Iraq is a Muslim country which for just political and social reasons need to use Islam saying:

At first the war seemed to pull the divided country together: we were all Iranian and the enemy had attacked our homeland. But even in this, many were not allowed to participate fully. From the regime's point of view, the enemy had attacked not just Iran; it had attacked the Islamic Republic, and it had attacked Islam. (p.102)

This shows the arbitrary-set system with its misuse of religion and even in something serious and dangerous like war, the government doesn't think about the country and what is best for it but what is best for their own preferences and their personal desires as Nafisi shows: "At all times, from the very beginning of the revolution and all through the war and after, the Islamic regime never forgot its holy battle against its internal enemies." (p.102). This proves that The Islamic Republic is following its own desires and not what is good for the country. The dream of the revolution and the Iran that

This shows the possibility that Iranian men are the one who impose the oppression and create it even if they were educated abroad. They have this mentality of looking down on women and look at them as sexual objects through different situations no matter this situation was, even if this situation is a hard divorce of a young woman that was less than twenty.

Azar Nafisi adds that the dominance is not only in women but in men too as one male student wanted to attend the classes but couldn't as Nafisi puts it: Azar Nafisi adds that the dominance is not only in women but in men too as one male student wanted to attend the classes but couldn't as Nafisi puts it: "They were all women-to teach a mixed class in the privacy of my home was too risky, even if we were discussing harmless works of fiction." (p.1) However, she also shows the determination on the person's right by showing Nima, a male student who were deprived of attending their classes with Nafisi, however he managed to keep up with Nafisi: "One persistent male student, although barred from our class, insisted on his rights. So he, Nima, read the assigned material, and on special days he would come to my house to talk about the books we were reading." (p.1) This is part of the arbitrary-set system; when a male can't do a certain thing because he is a male or because of political or religious reasons this is considered a domination of one group who has the power over the other group who has less power, or in some cases no power at all, that could allow him to have the freedom of making the smallest decision like attending a class or not.

Nafisi shows her point of view in the decision of forcing the veil on women after the revolution and the domination of the Islamic republic and Khomeini on Iran saying: "... my integrity as a teacher and a woman was being compromised by its insistence that I wear



everyone depended. They worked at home and they worked outside the home. Their marriages had been arranged, at a very young age, to much older men, and apart from one of the sisters-Yassi's mother-they all had to put up with spoiled, nagging husbands, inferior to them intellectually and in every other way. (p.41)

It is clear that women are being oppressed by men in this society because the society allows them to as if it is the nature of things when in fact women have the same rights as men and are being honored in Islam. If the society is a true religious society they would know that and would treat women with this mentality, not focusing on how to oppress women and deprive them from their freedom under the name of Islam.

Even when Nafisi was in the United States, she was being dominated by Iranian men after struggling to gain her freedom and to get a divorce. A right which needed her father's interference and threats to be given, and also how Iranians thought of her as a divorced young woman who is available saying:

My father was all in favor of divorce, and threatened to sue for alimony, a woman's only protection under Islamic law. My husband finally consented when I agreed not to sue for alimony and let him have the money in our bank account, the car and the carpets. ...I shunned the company of the Iranian community, especially the men, who had numerous illusions about a young divorcée's availability. (p54)

The dominance of the government, the Islamic Republic as they call themselves, after the revolution upon people in general has unconsciously made men feel less masculine for not being able to do anything or even object to the fact that they can't do anything. This of course made men suffer just like women and to feel manlier, they used women to oppress like the government is oppressing them. In this Nafisi shows the story of Sanaz, one of her students, saying:

There were two very important men dominating Sanaz's life at the time. The first was her brother. He was nineteen years old and had not yet finished high school and was the darling of their parents ...and his one obsession in life was Sanaz. He had taken to proving his masculinity by spying on her, listening to her phone conversations, driving her car around and monitoring her actions. ...The other was her childhood sweetheart, a boy she had known since she was eleven. (p.10)

This shows the gender system's usage; dominating women because they are in less power than men, and that women won't be able to do anything about it as the government itself is in the men's side in dominating women.

The injustice to women is clear in Yassi's words, one of Nafisi's students, when she tells Nafisi about her family and the role of women in it:

Her [Yassi] uncles. She had five uncles and three aunts. One uncle had been killed by the Islamic Republic, and the rest lived in the United States or Europe. The women were the backbone of the family, the ones on whom ev-

need to go through the torturous rituals that had marked my days when I taught at the university-rituals governing what I was forced to wear, how I was expected to act, the gestures I had to remember to control. For this class, I would prepare differently. (p.5)

Along with Nafisi, her girls or students or the heroines of this novel had also suffered from the regime and the fact that they are unable to focus completely on their studies as they have other things to think about:

Female students were being penalized for running up the stairs when they were late for classes, for laughing in the hallways, for talking to members of the opposite sex. One day Sanaz had barged into class near the end of the session, crying. In between bursts of tears, she explained that she was late because the female guards at the door, finding a blush in her bag, had tried to send her home with a reprimand. (p.6)

This is how the society is oppressing females and they are helpless to its continuous domination of them. On this Nafisi's comments: "how well could one teach when the main concern of university officials was not the quality of one's work but the color of one's lips, the subversive potential of a single strand of hair?" (p.6) This is how after the revolution women were treated, as if they are impure and unwanted, things that society wished to get rid of or to control completely that they don't get to have a voice to use to say no to the government's and the society's oppression.

how they wished to see themselves and the appearance that the government and the society is forcing them to be and if they didn't become what the laws say, they are considered as anti-Islamic as Nafisi shows in her student Sanaz saying: "Sanaz, who, pressured by family and society, vacillated between her desire for independence and her need for approval" (p.2) and also:

Against the tyranny of time and politics, imagine us the way we sometimes didn't dare to imagine ourselves: in our most private and secret moments, in the most extraordinarily ordinary instances of life, listening to music, falling in love, walking down the shady streets or reading *Lolita* in Tehran.

And then imagine us again with all this confiscated, driven underground, taken away from us. If I write about Nabokov today, it is to celebrate our reading of Nabokov in Tehran, against all odds (p.3)

This belongs to the gender dominance and what women are becoming because of the society. Not only are women controlled that are being controlled, but also how objects should be in the houses of the citizens such as: "the curtainless windows, which I refused to dress until I was finally reminded that this was in an Islamic country and windows needed to be dressed" (p.4) These were the words of Nafisi herself about her house.

In another passage, Nafisi describes her day and how she felt and thought every day after the revolution and the life she is supposed to lead by comparing it to the first day of her class saying:

For the first time in many years, I felt a sense of anticipation that was not marred by tension: I would not

ety considers her a women that is responsible for her behavior and the way she thinks and acts.

After the Iranian Revolution, women were obliged to wear in a certain way and if they didn't wear in that manner and follow the rules, they had to face the circumstances from a number of lashes to being jailed. To Nafisi that was dominance upon women and their freedom as they couldn't be differentiated; they all are the same now and no one is unique and identified:

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. (p.2)

These two images show the difference between women in Iran after the revolution and how the government wanted them to be versus how they wanted to be and how they saw themselves. This is part of the gender dominance as women are not allowed to wear how they want or else they are breaking the law. They can't do anything except following the laws but in a small rebellious action they took a photo of how they wished to be in public and how they wanted to be identified. The psychological depth of these characters shows that they are torn between what they wanted to become and

child and Humbert was a 38 year old man but that didn't prevent him from seeing her as a sexual object just like what happened after the revolution as the marriage laws were changed so that a 9 year old girl can marry a man of any age which is part of the age system domination; as Nafisi comments on *Lolita* saying: "had she [Lolita] lived in the Islamic Republic, would have been long ripe for marriage to men older than Humbert." (p.29) This shows the dominance of the society over children, or whom the society considers women.

One of the faces of age system dominance is what happened to Negar, Nafisi's daughter, and her classmate that was physically abused and she was just a child. She is being treated and searched from the principle like women from the police. The principal even punished her in a cruel, not childlike, way. Even the fact that children are being searched is not normal, and the search is for some-things that will definitely be with girls everywhere else but girls are not allowed to have it in Iran:

The entire class had been escorted out of the classroom, without any explanation, their schoolbags searched for weapons and contraband: tapes, novels, friendship bracelets. Their bodies were searched, their nails inspected. One student, a girl who had returned from the United States the previous year with her family, was taken to the principal's office: her nails were too long. There, the principal herself had cut the girl's nails, so close that she had drawn blood. (p.39)

Even if she made the mistake of not cutting her nail, she shouldn't be treated like that at all. That makes us wonder if society considers her a child so what happened to her is a physical abuse, or the soci-

from the eye of the censor but also from those who read such narratives to discover who's who and who did what to whom, thriving on and filling their own emptiness through others' secrets. The facts in this story are true insofar as any memory is ever truthful, but I [Nafisi] have made every effort to protect friends and students, baptizing them with new names and disguising them perhaps even from themselves, changing and interchanging facets of their lives so that their secrets are safe. (p.1)

This paragraph is like a warning from Nafisi that the dominance in this novel is true enough that it might put its characters or heroes into dangerous. That is why she needed to change their names for their own safety.

Nafisi chooses *Lolita* as part of the title as, to her, Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* made all the change to the girls when they read it. She says it expressed them and how the revolution and the dream of how the people wanted Iran, was stolen and Ayatollah Khomeini's dream was imposed on them, just like Humbert Humbert, the stepfather in *Lolita* who was obsessed with his dream of finding his childhood beloved Annabel Leigh who died, ruining Lolita and her childhood:

he [Khomeini] had tried to fashion reality out of his dream, and in the end, like Humbert, he had managed to destroy both reality and his dream. Added to the crimes, to the murders and tortures, we would now face this last indignity-the murder of our dreams. Yet he had done this with our full compliance, our complete assent and **complicity**. (p.162)

Nafisi says that the title is what exactly happened that they read *Lolita* in a different way in Tehran. Also that Lolita was a 12 year old

theory of social domination is integrating the ideas of many previous points of view, of which the most influential are: (a) cultural ideological theory, (b) realistic theory of group conflict, (c) theory of neoclassical elitism, (d) social identity theory, (e) Marxism, (f) feminist anthropological analysis of family and work, and (g) evolutionary psychology. Nafisi made the choice of the cover as two girls who show part of their hair and read in the street which to her is part of the freedom that people managed to get as they were prevented from showing a single strand of their hair and a lot of books and newspapers were prevented in Iran and also it was a reminder of her students who are the heroines of this novel. The book is divided into four parts and to Nafisi four different stages of herself and the girls who changed a lot through their meetings which lasted for two years as they used to meet once a week; *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov which expresses individuality and freedom, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald which expresses the dream of the revolution which was shattered just like the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby*, *Daisy Miller* and *Washington Square* by Henry James which shows how people fight the change and they see life as black and white, right or wrong, *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen which shows the power of choice and saying NO to parents and society and also that despite all what happens in the world from wars and injustice, there is still hope of an existence of a world like the one in Austen's novels.

Azar Nafisi is the writer and one of the main characters herself. At the beginning of the novel, Azar Nafisi says that she has changed the names of the characters to protect them which alert us from the first paragraph that this novel is a risk the writer needed to take:

Aspects of characters and events in this story have been changed mainly to protect individuals, not just



who distorts Islam. El Shall thinks that this is not correct and Nafisi never shows her opinion of Islam, she never praises or scorns anything concerning the faith, Nafisi's only comment is on veil and her objection is not against the veil as a symbol of dedication of faith but on the fact that it is being used as a political tool. This research agrees with El Shall's point that Nafisi's point of view towards faith is not clear and not easy to be spotted. However, unlike El Shall and other reviews of this novel, this research is dealing with the novel through the Social dominance theory and does not concentrate on the importance of the women's book clubs and the importance of literature.

The novel is a memoir of actions or events that have already taken place and Azar Nafisi who is one of the characters herself is also the narrator, along with seven of her students; Yassi, the youngest, Azin; the most outspoken and outrageous; Mitra, the calmest; Mashid, the so sensitive one; Manna, the poet; Sanaz, the caught between two worlds one; and Nassrin, who will not make it till the end. At first sight, the researcher would attempt to write about the novel through Feminism; however, while reading the novel there is a character called Niam who is a young scholar who is deprived from joining the book club and discussing literary works that makes the researcher think again and while feeling that this character should be mentioned and his suffering and the fact that although he is a man, he is not completely free. This goes along with the Social dominance theory which shows that the domination is not necessarily on women but also on men from a higher power, which is the government in this novel. Moreover, in addressing the processes structuring human societies, social dominance theory is more general than theories that focus only on capitalism, empires, gender, immediate self- or group interest, social identity, or individual differences. The

ward Muslim countries as Afghanistan (the war starts since 2001) and Iraq (the war starts since 2003). The novel managed to change the public opinion by denigrating the culture of Iran and not mentioning the Persian literature and praising the culture of the west and its literature. John Carlo Rowe in his article "Reading *Reading Lolita in Tehran* in Idaho" agrees with Dabashi that Nafisi is praising the west and is working according to their plans. He starts his article with showing his interest in history of imperialism, especially the American imperialism, and begins to explain it and that after 11/9 the imperialistic way of thinking has led the American government to use the event to promote patriotism and to praise the American life style. The American government began its plan by giving the voice to the minorities and acting like it is embracing the change, Rowe claims, and that is obvious when Bush's government came with a black American woman, Condoleeza Rice, as an important part of it. Also with Nafisi, America has allowed her to publish her work as she opposes Islam and shows the injustice that happens in the Muslim countries like Iran. Rowe confirms Dabashi's comment on the perfect timing of publishing the novel, at the time of the Iraqi and Afghanistan wars.

Maryam El Shall in her journal article "Review: *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi" has focused on the effect of the literary works on Nafisi and her students and the dream of the life in Iran that they wished for after the revolution. She begins her article with a quick summary of the plot and then shows the effect of literature on Nafisi and the other characters by describing each character and Nafisi's comment on them. El Shall focuses on *Gatsby* in particular and the different reactions that it received in both the book club and earlier in the university where Nafisi used to work. Then, El Shall focuses on another point which is the fact that Nafisi is considered someone

different aspects than it has been seen before as in Hamid Dabashi who claims in his article "Native Informers and The Making of The American Empire" that the idea of empire still exists but instead of being in the ideology of Britain, it is now in the American's. Back in 2004, in the US presidential election between President George W Bush and Senator John Kerry, there was a debate of an empire with no hegemony (for President Bush) versus a hegemony with no empire (for Senator Kerry). This idea remained unspoken about after the elections, at least in public, until in April 2006 Seymour Hersh published an article in *The New Yorker* exposing an apparent Pentagon plan to attack Iran. Eventually the idea of the nuclear war was dropped, but the idea of controlling Iran remained in the US government, according to Dabashi. The new idea of controlling Iran is through the idea of globalization, by imposing the cultural, social, and economic ideology and life style of the United States and ignoring the identity of Iran. Dabashi argues that the United States government invented the momentary amnesia concept that is losing the collective memory which basically means that the US makes us remember what it wants us not to forget such as 9/11 that keeps appearing everywhere propagating the cruelty of Islam and Muslims and makes us forget the wars that the US government launches. This kind of selective memory created the slogan War on Terrorism that the Bush's government invented to interfere and oppress Muslims and their countries. They invented a shape for Islam and the Muslim countries, which is not true, focusing on women and how injustice the religion is to them and the fact that they needed white men to defend them from other Muslim males. To explain that more, works like Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003) are being published. Dabashi argues that the timing for publishing was perfect, too perfect for changing the opinion of the world to-

## **Social Dominance in Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*: A Psychosocial Approach**

This research is based on Felicia Pratto<sup>1</sup>, Jim Sidanius<sup>2</sup> and Shana Levin<sup>3</sup>'s theory in their book *Social dominance theory and the dynamics of intergroup relations: Taking stock and looking forward* arguing that societies create three systems of group-based hierarchy: (1) an age system, in which adults have social power over children; (2) a gender system, in which men have social, political, and military power compared to women; and (3) an arbitrary-set system, in which a group dominates another group for difference of nationality, race, ethnicity, class, estate, descent, religion, or clan. Beginning with the age system, it differs from one society to another and it depends mainly on the cultural and class background of the individuals for determining the age in which the adults can consider the person a child or an adult and whether marriage, sexuality, labour, and freedom are expected of or prohibited from this person, child or adult. Then the gender system, which mainly focuses on the dominance of males on females. Finally the arbitrary-set system, which differs from one society to another and it depends on the historical and social background of the society that makes this society's dominance on a certain thing more than the other.

The research tries to answer these questions: What is the social dominance theory? What is significant about this theory than other theories? How is the social dominance theory obvious in Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*? Why the choice of this particular theory to be applied to the novel and not another theory like Feminism? The research does not consider the novel as a novel shows Islam or considers Nafisi as an anti-Islamic, it is only showing the novel through



## Abstract

This research is a different reading of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi using the social dominance theory by Felicia Pratto, Jim Sidanius and Shana Levin. The novel is usually considered an anti-Islamic novel that shows Islam as a religion promotes oppression; however, this research considers it as a novel showing the social dominance that happens to the characters. This is shown by the social dominance theory with all the theory's different types; age, gender and arbitrary-set. The age system which focuses on the dominance of the adults over children and it is shown in the novel in the new laws of marriage under the age of nine; the gender system which focuses on the dominance of one gender over the other but it is usually the dominance of men over women and it is clear in the novel in the oppression that the characters face from men; the arbitrary-set system which focuses on the dominance of a group of people based on their religious and political backgrounds and also their mentality which is obvious in the novel in the fact that the characters are forced to act or think in a certain way.

**Key Words:** Social Dominance, Injustice, Oppression, Felicia Pratto, Jim Sidanius, Shana Levin, Psychosocial Approach, Azar Nafisi.



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