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**THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF
ANGLO – IRANIAN RELATIONS**

by

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Dr. Javad Nateghpour was the 2001 Sir William Luce Fellow.

THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF ANGLO – IRANIAN RELATIONS

Based on a lecture given by the 2001 Sir William Luce Fellow

Javad Nateghpour

Anglo-Iranian relations have enjoyed a long pedigree stretching back several centuries. During this period there have been a growing number of studies, largely from the British perspective, on aspects of Iranian history and development. Indeed, many have concentrated on aspects of political and economic development and have tended to neglect the very important cultural dimension of this intimate relationship. This paper will attempt to redress this imbalance by focusing on the cultural dimension and, in particular, the changing nature of this relationship over the past two centuries, concentrating on the main changes evident since 1979. I want to argue that while in the 19th and early 20th centuries the relationship was dominated by universalism and European particularism – a monologue of civilisations – recent cultural developments in Iran and the emergence of a globalising multi-cultural environment has begun the transformation of the monologue into a more productive and reciprocal ‘Dialogue of Civilisations’. This has been possible in large part because of the intellectual and cultural changes that have taken place since the election of Seyyid Mohammad Khatami in May 1997 and opening up of political and religious discourse in Iran, which has allowed for a more fluid and inclusive approach to both domestic and international relations.

Methodology

Methodologically, this study is a qualitative piece of research; it is based to some extent on English theoretical texts, Persian documentary sources and, wherever appropriate, English secondary accounts of Iranian society. Taking into account the importance of the historical background of social events, this research is a historically oriented study of the sociology of culture and the international relationship of Iran.

I have drawn for my research on the methodological and analytical frameworks outlined by, among others, Philip Abrams, Theda Skocpol and Hall & Neitz. The main paradigms being applied, as noted above, are that of ‘Universalism’, and ‘globalisation’.

The Triumph of ‘Modernity’

Since the 19th century there has been an increasing correlation, both implicit and explicit, that modernisation and modernity were synonymous with Westernisation. This concept proposed the West as unique in the world and the only way for progress. In other words, the western experience was the only way to modernise.¹ One key

determining factor in this intellectual development was the importance of the process of Industrialisation which lent weight, and no insignificant justification, to the belief in a Universalism founded on European particularism. This trend has been extended to encompass Eurocentric thought and, in some cases, ethnocentrism. One of the consequences of this thinking was the generally negative view of Religion in the modernisation process and the belief, drawn from the European historical experience, that religion was contra progressive and modernisation. Just as Christianity was regarded by many European writers as a break in progress so too this view found itself transferred to the Islamic world. It was a view many Iranians educated in the West in the 19th and early 20th centuries, often too readily accepted.

Anglo-Iranian Relations: the seeds of socio-cultural changes

Historically, Great Britain was one of the first western countries which made a fruitful relationship with Iran.² The Sherli brothers, Sir Anthony and Sir Robert Sherli, both encountered the first Safavid King, shah Esmaeil, in 1195, establishing a contract for weapon commerce. It is confirmed that the first generation of the Iranian students dispatched abroad left Britain in 1811, returning to their indigenous land with new ideas regarding science and technology.³ Five years later, some more students were dispatched to England accompanying with Colenle Darcy.⁴

Many years earlier in 1238 the first Iranian arrived in England by the order of 'Ala al-Din Mohammad, the governor of Alamoot, located in today Qazvin. He was informed to bring aid by Henry III for the conflict with Mongol troops.⁵ Four hundred years later, Naghd 'Ali Beig, as the first Iranian ambassador in England, arrived in Portsmouth by the order of Shah Abbas, the First King of Safavid. Naghd 'Ali Beig was requested to do his best to increase the commercial relationship between Iran and England.⁶ Mirza Abol-Hasane Shirazi called 'Ilchi', the second ambassador of Iran, left the country in 1809 towards England. Previously, as a close relative of Ebrahim Khane Kalantar, the assassinated Prime Minister of Fath Ali Shah, the Second King of Qajar, Ilchi had escaped to India under the increasing threat of destruction. More than four years living in India resulted in his familiarity with British ideologies, traditions and customs; consequently, he received a high position in the view of Harford Johns, the British *charge de fairs* in Iran. Johns introduced Ilchi to Fath Ali Shah as an Iranian official in England. During two years stay in London, Ilchi recorded his experiences in England, which he later entitled 'Heirat Name' ('Surprising Letter!'). During his stay in London, Ilchi visited many of the scientific, industrial, technological and socio-political institutions of England and studied the modern way of life in British society.

Of course, it was not only Ilchi: other Iranian officials, such as Abdollatif Shoshtari, visiting England in 1760, transferred the many ideas of the socio-cultural changes in Britain to Iran. Shoshtari has argued intensively regarding modern geography in England; his idea about socio-cultural and political issues borrowed from British culture and society made him particularly noticeable amongst Iranians. For example, he was attracted by a multitude of social services in London such as water supply; illuminating the streets at night; road construction; modern schools and hospitals. Arguably, one can label Shoshtari as one of the founders of the intellectual

movements within Iran during the early nineteenth century, generating enthusiasm for the country progressing by achieving the ideals of British civilisation. He was very conscious and an advocate of the political, religious and judicial systems in England. For instance, reformism and the apparent British challenge against the absolute power and authority of the church for a substantial period. He proposed the idea of freedom and liberty as the most important result of the British socio-cultural movements. Newspapers, as the main significant issue, attracted Shoshtari and in turn he recommended the medium in order to expand the modern idea in Iran. Shoshtari conclusively forwarded democracy, freedom for newspapers, social equality, the constitutional power of the King and the authority of parliament as the main constituencies of socio-cultural movements in Britain.

In his second trip to London, Shoshtari visited the scientific, industrial, technologic and socio-political institutions in England, resulting in his idea about the universality of the British style of social life which led to encourage Iranians to imitate the British social constructs. As he was deeply influenced by modern English socio-cultural changes, as one of the oldest tones of living in England, Shoshtari detailed these changes to offer a British resembling socio-cultural ethos in Iran. For example, he supported the metal bridge on Times, ship making factories, banking, cash printing, tax system, public census, army management, crystal factories, weapon factories, caring for homeless infants, mothering issues, controlling epidemics and illnesses, Parliamentary systems, and many other cases which he has explicated in his memoirs.

Other Iranians who visited England mostly became familiar with modern English ideas and traditions in India for the first time. Consequently, they enthused travelling to England. For instance, Soltan al-Va'ezin, who visited England in 1806, lived with British people in India six years earlier. Mirza Aboo-Taleb Khan Esfahani also mostly lived in India and visited England in 1800 for more than two years. Both visitors were influence by English socio-cultural and political changes.

Imitating the west and copying the style of western life are the important points which have been found in all works of Iranians in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Ilchi, Shoshtari, Mirza Taleb Esfahani, Soltan al-Vaezin, Ahmad Kermanshahi and others were deeply influenced by universalism and particularity of the west. In their memoirs, most encouraged Iranians to imitate the west in all aspects of life, as they considered it the only progressive civilisation in the world, in order to restore and efficiently preserve their beings and achieve balance based on the western style of life. Western rationality in all spheres of socio-cultural life were the main point for those Iranians who lived in England.⁷ They suggested these ideas to Iran, categorising them within three main divisions: 1) cultural changes, such as; modern ideologies, scientific progress, new traditions of religion, and modern philosophical outlooks to social and individual life; 2) political change, resulting in modern political structures and institutions, particularly the power of parliament and the according reduction of the absolute power of the king; 3) social changes such as modern industry, social services, social security and welfare.

The significance of the transfer of such ideas about Islam to Iran coincided with the beginning of the rule of the Qajar Dynasty (1794-1925), during which the social structure of Iran was gradually changed.⁸ A new group of intellectuals, who also

reflected the emergence of a new middle class from the turn of the nineteenth century, emerged and made many efforts to modernise the country. The modernisation era was also strengthened by the *Mashruteh* (Constitutional) Movement in the country in 1905. This was a socio-political movement which contributed to the ascendancy of the modern intellectuals. The significance of this new group stems from their socio-political and ideological relationship with the West in general and Great Britain in particular and also their major role in modernising the country.

It should also be noted that the rise of the Qajar Dynasty also coincided with the socio-political and economic impact of Europe (though mostly England) on Iran, which was to a large extent the result of the geo-political significance of Iran in the region. For example, as claimed Taghavi, a member of the first Majlis of Masruteh, Malkam Khan, father of the constitution in Iran, played a major role in changing the Iranians attitude towards a new Western style government in Iran. British support of Mashruteh during the reign of Mohammad Ali Shah (1905-9) salvaged many people from the shah's attack and led to the triumph of the Constitution movement in Iran. In this regard, more than 5000 people asyumed to the British embassy in Tehran to save the movement.⁹ This temporarily led to a beneficial position for the British government in the eyes of millions of Iranians who had believed the British government as the main cause for their political and economic despotism and dependency.

The powerful influence of Eurocentrism and the superiority of the West resulted from universalism caused some Iranian scholars to view Great Britain as the absolute power in the world and the British society as the particular matrix. Seiyed Jamal al-Din Asadabadi (called al-Afghani abroad), in his lecture in London, referred to absolute despotism as the internal and foreign powers, mainly England, as the external causes for the backwardness of Iran. Despite this, he considered Great Britain to be the main power which is authorised to interfere with Iran by falling down the shah from his thrown (Sheikh Jemal al-Din, 1892, 238-248). He points out:

"...a word from a free, powerful people on behalf of a beleaguered and enslaved, but noble, active-minded, and capable people. This is all we want at present...its echo has at last reached England: 'Change the Government, or dethrone the Shah!'" (Sheikh Jemal Ad Din, 1892: 248).

This is the power of universalism and particularism of Europe which pushed al-Afghani to agree to an absolute authority of English position at the international scene. Malkam Khan suggests such imitation of the west was the only option for achieving a substitute form of Western civilisation as a medium for promoting the society and country's progress. He points out: *"Why have Mohammedan people not been able at least to copy Europe -if they really want what Europe has got?"* (Malkam Khan, 1891: 240). Once again he emphasises: *'As the principles which are found in Europe, which constitute the root of your civilisation, we must get hold of them somehow, no doubt...'* (Malkam Khan, 1891: 243). Malkam goes on to the civilisation clash and considers the religion as the main impediment for imitating the west. Interestingly, he encourages British politicians to export European civilisation free from the religious dynamic. He asserts:

"Any ambassador who can convince our countrymen or our Government that he comes quite independently of religious interests, and that he has

*nothing to say against our established religion, will do more good even for your politics and your interests than all your armies and navies and railways and banks have hitherto accomplished” (Malkam Khan, 1891: 244).*¹⁰

Despite this outstanding relationship, some political occasions from the British side changed the Iranian attitudes and constructed a negative outlook towards the UK losing any reliance upon her: a tobacco concession in 1888; the treaty of 1909 between Russia and Great Britain which divided Iran into three zones, the North for Russia, the South for the England: the 1919 agreement: and Reza Khan’s coup under the supervision of Aironsid the British commander. These attitudes appeared in socio-cultural traditions in Iran. For instance; malek al-Sharaie Bahar as the chief poet in Iran referred to Sir Edward Grey, the English ambassador in Iran, as the knowledgeable man who did a fault by signing the agreement of 1919 which can be considered as the affection of politics in cultural area. From the moment of the coup of Reza Khan, for an extensive period there was a cold relationship between the two societies; until the eve of Oil Nationalisation by the Iranian liberal Prime Minister Mosaddegh in 1951 and the end of the British hegemony over Iran in general and the oil industry in particular.

One of the most significant results of the Anglo-Iranian relationship goes back to a longstanding intellectual tendency in Iran which changed the social atmosphere within the Iranian cultural elite. The same affection with another direction occurred in the academic realm in Britain through the establishment of some Persian studies centres which were the result of the cultural enterprise between some Iranian and British intellectuals and politicians, such as Edward Brown, Lord Salisbury, Lord Crruson, Sir Edward Grey, and Emeritus professor Ann Lambton.

To conclude, modernisation in Iran amounted to the Westernisation of the country. The fact that the “modernisation” term was taken as a synonym for “Westernisation” confirms this view. Farman-Farmayan, for instance, points out: *“In Persian historical literature, the term modernisation has been used synonymous with Westernization”* (Farman-Farmayan, 1968: 6). Hulme and Turner (1990: 35), also believe: *“Modernisation thus becomes synonymous with Westernisation.”* Voll (1996: 1) asserts: *“One of the most frequent conceptual mistakes made in discussing Islam and the West in the modern era is the identification of “the West” with “modernity”.*

In addition, given the socio-economic conditions which brought about an increase in poverty and the marginalisation of large sections of the Iranian population from the political arena, it is not surprising that the appeals of the clergy found such a ready response among the several social classes. The mobilisation of the vast majority of the Iranians against the Shah and his tyrannical system was therefore a ready made product during a historical period in virtue of which the victory over the Pahlavi State had already been secured. At that time, Modernisation/Westernisation had come to its end: it had been introduced in the early part of the nineteenth century as a means of developing the country and was displaced because it had played a central role in the underdevelopment of Iran.

On this footing, what happened in Iran in 1979 was not a revolt against a real process of modernisation. It was, in fact, a protest against the unfettered trend to Westernise

the country. Therefore, one may say that although the 1979 Revolution was Islamic in character, it should not be interpreted solely as another phase in the struggle between modernity and Islam.

The Recent Changes in Relations: Globalisation and post-war Iran

The political climate and, most significantly, the socio-cultural atmosphere have changed since the rise of the new generation of Iranian intellectuals who paved the way for the recent social movement in Iran. The major thinker of Iran, Abdol-Karim Soroush, and his lucid agreement with the philosophical idea of British resident philosopher Karl Popper, changed the socio-cultural and even political atmosphere in Iran, indirectly paving the way for a better relationship between Iran and the UK during recent years. Soroush, by his idea on Shari'a, opened a new gate for religious interpretation which resulted in the emergence of a new reformist group in Iran. This group played a major role in socio-cultural and political arenas addressed to the Soroush's ideas. An Epistemological version of Religion, submitted by Dr. Soroush during the period of 1988-1995, addressed in his major theory of '*Ghabz va Bast-e Teorik-e Shari'at*' (Theoretical Tolerance of Shari'a, 1989), brought any absolute and unchangeable interpretation of Islam to an end.¹¹ His idea received a great wealth of approval from the religious intellectuals, as well as many opponents among the seminary (Hawzeiy-e Ilmiya). Some of the clergies claimed he was going to abolish the Shari'a. Through his idea of the epistemological interpretation of religion Soroush establish a foundation for critical debate on religious knowledge, thus leading to the reduction of the sacredness of the religious knowledge (not religion itself) in order to reduce the absolute authority for the traditional interpretation of religion adapted to the pre-modern society; it was replaced by a new interpretation of Islam adopted to modern society and concomitant to constant socio-cultural changes.¹²

Soroush came to the conclusion that, 'Islamising of the society is to avoid the Islamise of everything in society, for example; Islamising sciences, Justice, freedom, fact, etc. None of these could not be Islamised. They should be as they are a based on the human understanding' (Soroush, 1999). This conclusion in fact can be considered as an ideological platform for a wide and global relationship in the world, which latter happened when 'Dialogue among Civilisation' came to the scene.

Role of the new version of religion in social change

Following Soroush's philosophical idea, of which resulted in the emergence of 'Reformist Religious Intellectuals' on the one hand and social needs in socio-cultural changes on the other, the vacuum of pragmatic strategies were apparently felt. Reformist religious intellectuals and their desire to change the society from its traditional form to a modern shape without omitting religion from society led many endeavours to find solutions; they endeavoured to change the society through participation in social institutions for a constant civil society on the one hand, whilst adapting the religion with the modern social structures to save Islam on the other. The solution lay in socio-political participation through establishing some reformist political parties: the party which could play a crucial role in government and Majlis.

The Emergence of the Reformist Government

A few years before Khatami's office, some of the scholars put forward the critical debates on Islam and Modernisation to clear some vacuity of this relationship. They tried to show that not only was there not any hostility between Islam and modernity, but that Islam itself ratifies modernity and new style of life. Voll (1996), is one of these scholars who wrote about the 'the mistaken identification of "The West" with "Modernity"'. It was not the first time this idea appeared: Islamic scholars such as al-Afghani (1892) and some Iranian intellectuals such as Malkam (1891) Khan confirmed that there is no hostility between Islam and Progress (which was used instead of modernism during the nineteenth century).

Some endeavours occurred to clarify the values in the matter of Islam and modernity, as well as Islam and democracy. Voll (1996), as one of the main advocates of the relation between Islam and modernisation, believes that the hostility between Islam and modernisation goes back to a fundamental misunderstanding about the modernisation and westernisation. This misunderstanding which comes from the early nineteenth century Orientalism belongs to the unilinary of modernisation. As mentioned above the idea of universalism and evolutionism claimed that the only way for progress and modernisation comes from westernisation. Voll points out:

One of the most frequent conceptual mistakes made in discussing Islam and the West in the modern era is the identification of "the West" with "modernity". This mistake has a significant impact of the way people view the processes of modernization in the Islamic world as well as on the way people interpret the relationship between Islam and the West in the contemporary era. (Voll, 1996: 1)

Voll tries to transfer the idea that:

1) "modernity" is not uniquely "western"; 2) "the west" is not simply "modernity"; and 3) the identification of "the West" with "modernity" has important negative consequences for understanding the relationship between Islam and the West. (Voll, 1996: 1)

This idea was the first and main step in closing the gap between the Islamic culture and the West. This paved the way for the Islamic country to go ahead for modernisation without any panic from the influence of the western cultures. This kind of idea worked in Iran during the post-war period and is still useful for the cultural enterprise in the compressed world today. It is true to say that this idea was able to change the atmosphere of universalism and paved the way for the triumph of globalisation which now is the main concern for the reformism in Iran.

Globalisation and the Dialogue among Civilisations

The idea of Dialogue among Civilisations as the main manifesto of the Khatami's government closed the gap between the socio-cultural relationships between all societies in the world. This idea, with its potential to close the gap between civilisations and bringing them together, is able to describe the idea of globalisation. According to Robertson (1996: 8), globalisation as a concept refers to two meanings:

compression of the world and intensification of the world. Although the origin of this global tendency goes back to the early nineteenth century social philosophy, however, there is a big difference between the early purposes of globalisation and the current aims. As discussed earlier, the first usage of this concept goes back to the idea of universalism which assumes the superiority of the west in the world.

The second function of the concept of globalisation refers to the idea which began in the early 1980s. This concept comes to end the theory of universalism and western particularities, and facilitates the expanding of post-modern theory, mainly multiculturalism. The concept was used first established within the context of development studies, particularly environmental studies. In this meaning some scholars believed that as the world has been compressed, any problem in environment in one part of the world affects it in other parts. However, the theory of 'the global village' from Marshall McLuhan (1960)¹³, paved the way for the emergence of the idea of globalisation.

Sociologically, this term goes back to some classical sociologists in nineteenth century such as Saint-Simon, Comte, and also Marx; those who used the meaning of this term in their analyses to show the universalistic notion on the world. The emergence of the 'nation-state' and empowerment of nationalism in Europe allowed the sociologists to proposed the concepts of 'nationalism & globalisation' (Robertson, 1996: 16). Historically, globalisation is the last stage for developing sociology. Albrow (1990: 6-8) draws five staged for the history of sociology which is useful to understand the meaning and the stage of globalisation. These stages are: Universalism, National sociologies, Internationalism, Indigenisation, and finally, Globalisation.

As Albrow elucidates, during universalism sociology was deeply under the influence of the natural sciences: there was a new tendency to change this atmosphere. As Robertson (1996) believes, it was Saint-Simon who changed for the first time the climate and offered the concept of 'glob'. Once again it shifted to the idea of universalism, but this time by its socio-cultural meanings. This again referred to Europe as the only example of universalism or the concept of glob (Merle, 1987). To show the originality of the 'global' meaning in socio-cultural changes, Robertson (1996: 17) believes that the followers of Saint-Simon were involved in a large project for 'world' organisation. Turner (1990b: 344-8) has argued that Saint-Simon believed the close ties between the new social science or rather scientific social sciences and globalism. In fact, the general view of Saint-Simon of the world or 'globalism' was the main and central core of Comte in establishing the school of Positivism in sociology. The early meaning of globalisation evident in the idea of Saint-Simon was related to the Western example of the society. Like, modernism, 'globalism' covered the meaning of universalism and particularism which led to the rise of the idea of Civilisation Clash and in turn strengthened it.

Albrow (1990) postulates that globalisation is the direct result of the interaction between nationalism and internationalism. Because of the internationalisation of the socio-cultural, political and economic activities and consequent corporations, all scientists, politicians, merchants, and economic corporations needed to know the same language and manner in social relations: the language and way in which this enable them to save their own identities in a global sense. This paved the way for

globalisation instead of universalism. In this manner sociologists agree that they confront with the variety of cultural facts which they have to consider and study. Another important point was that they had to agree globalisation as 'a process at a new level of social reality'. Albrow adds that the new fact is described in its best form by the term 'global society'.

It is a truism that contemporarily any cooperation in the world needs to agree a mutual understanding and feeling for the equal conditions for all participants in socio-cultural, political and economic relationships at the international level. As postmodernism closed the gap between traditional and modern society (Robertson, 1996: 20) and resulted in multiculturalism, globalisation is the result of postmodernism at the global level of life and relationships. Albrow (1990) believes that globalisation has to be seen from the point of 'relationship' instead of 'ideas'. His argument about sociology is a good example for understanding globalisation, cited in Robertson (1996: 21):

*"Albrow's outline of the history of sociology in relation to globalisation becomes increasingly concerned with relations between sociologists on a worldwide basis, rather than with the issue of the analysis of the global circumstances as such. As he moves through the stages which he has identified in the history of sociology, Albrow shifts his attention from sociological **ideas** to the scope of **relationships** among sociologists and he tends, with respect to the more recent stages, to conflate the two."*

Tendency towards globalisation in academic and political relations has recently moved further ahead. Robertson (1996) points out that this tendency mostly occurred within the cultural and communication studies. He asserts:

"Slowly at first, in recent years more rapidly, the division between the internal and the external has been destabilized. Out of that destabilization has been born the present and growing interest in globalization, in which new academic areas such as communication and cultural studies have played significant roles. Interest in the phenomenon of globalization is multifaceted. A growing number of movements, organizations and interest groups have their own perspective on, as well as interests in, globalization; while 'analysts,' who certainly cannot be simplistically separated from 'participants,' have different interests in that issue. 'Globalization' has also become a significant ingredient of advertising. It has, as well, become a matter of great concern in considerations of the curriculum in many educational systems, along with an often competing interest in multicultural -indeed 'postmodern'-education. (Robertson, 1996: 16).

The idea of globalisation received some critical condemnations as well as approvals. Skelton and Allen (2000: 23) believe that globalisation is another meaning of westernisation because the globalised culture would be the western culture rather than all world cultures: "It is, in short, simply the global extension of *Western* culture." They refer to the broad implications and also the causes of critical concern as follow:

(a) this process is homogenising, that it threatens the obliteration of the world's rich cultural diversity; (b) that it visits the various cultural ills of the West on the other cultures; (c) that this is a particular threat to the

fragile and vulnerable cultures of peripheral, 'Third World' nations; and (d) that it is part and parcel of wider forms of domination -those involved in the ever-widening grip of translational capitalism and those involved in the maintenance of postcolonial relations of (economic and cultural) dependency. (Skelton and Allen, 2000: 23).¹⁴

Here, it is important to know the idea of people as Skelton and Allen (2000) argue about Westernisation:

What do people mean when they talk about 'Westernisation'? A whole of range of things: the consumer culture of Western capitalism with its now all-too-familiar icons (McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Levi Jeans), the spread of European languages (particularly English), style of dress, eating habits, architecture and music, the adoption of an urban lifestyle based around industrial production, a pattern of cultural experience dominated by the mass media, a range of cultural values and attitudes - about personal liberty, gender and sexuality, human rights, the political process, religion, scientific and technological rationality, and so on. (Skelton and Allen, 2000: 23)

According to Skelton and Allen (2000) there are two main reasons for criticism of globalisation. First, it is what Hannerz (1991) points out as the obvious importance of the western culture everywhere which is difficult to change. This culture will be dominated again in the world through globalisation, as opponents argue. Hannerz asserts:

"The global homogenisation scenario focuses on things that we, as observers and commentators from the centre, are very familiar with: our fast foods, our soft drinks, our sitcoms. The idea that they are or will be everywhere, and enduringly powerful everywhere, makes our culture even more important and worth arguing about, and relieves us of the real strains of having to engage with other living, complicated, puzzling cultures." (Hannerz, 1990: 109)

The second reason for this opposition originated from the unilinear way of the offering of the western culture. As Skelton and Allen point out:

"A Second set of objections concerns the way in which Westernisation suggests a rather crude model of the one-way flow of cultural influence. This criticism has -rightly - been the one most consistently applied to the whole cultural imperialism idea. Culture, it is argued, simply does not transfer in this way. Movement between cultural/geographical areas always involves translation, mutation and adaptation as the 'receiving culture' brings its own cultural resources to bear, in dialectical fashion, upon 'cultural imports' (Skelton and Alley, 1996: 24)¹⁵

Considering the critical debates mentioned above, there appear some points which make more negotiable the mentioned criticism on globalisation. First, all mentioned criticism has already existed; or, alternatively, there is nothing more to do with the non-western culture through globalisation. Westernisation, in fact, has maintained all points which frighten the authors and scholars who feel culturally threatened for non-western countries through the expansion of Western culture by globalisation. On the

other hand, globalisation will pave the way for exporting non-western societies' culture into the west either by those people who are living in the west, or through socio-cultural, political and economic enterprise. This, in turn, closes the gap between western and non-western societies in cultural relations. So, both kinds of societies would be able to experience benefits from their cultures. In other words, in my view, globalisation not only leads to the expansion of the non-western societies cultures within the western realm: it also brings to the end the unliterary way of life left from nineteenth universalist approach to the world. It is, in short, globalisation as an opportunity for the non-western countries to consolidate their culture in the world.

Giddens (1994b), and Bauman (1995), two British social theorists in 'modernity', believe globalisation is the cause of the decline of the West. Giddens (1990: 187) believes globalisation is the extension of the 'phenomenal worlds' from the local to the global. He also argues that the gradual decline in European or Western global hegemony is the other side of the increasing expansion of modern influences world-wide, of the decline in the grip of the West over the rest of the world or of 'the evaporation of the privileged position of the West. (Giddens, 1990: 51-3).

For Giddens, extension of Western institutions globally means declining the western particularity and the loss of the West's (once unique) social-structural 'edge'. He points out:

"The first phase of globalisation was plainly governed, primarily, by the expansion of the West, and institutions which originated in the West. No other civilisation made anything like as pervasive an impact on the world, or shaped it so much in its own image... Although still dominated by Western power, globalisation today can no longer be spoken of only as a matter of one-way imperialism... increasingly there is no obvious 'direction' to globalisation at all and its ramifications are more or less ever present. The current phase of globalisation, then, should not be confused with the preceding one, whose structure it acts increasingly to subvert. (Giddens, 1994b: 96)

Regarding the transferred Western institutions and technology to the non-Western societies and the mostly emphasised Third World, some of these countries now are more advanced and developed than some Western countries: for example, Little Tigers countries which are affected from the transnational markets in the world. Also, some others, like Japan, even penetrated to the Western capitalist market. Culturally, the utopia of Western culture as the first and the only conquered culture in the world gradually changed to one culture amongst the others.¹⁶

Skelton and Allen (1996: 28) take the result with reference to Giddens' debate on anthropology, its situation in academic development, and cultural studies: *"This could also stand, more broadly, for the way in which current globalisation subverts and undermines the cultural power of the West from which it first emerged."*

As a result of these theoretical debates it seems globalisation is entirely different from universalism and, as McGrew (1992) and Massey (1994) point out, globalisation is an uneven process which neither takes any risk nor unique opportunity for a special culture in the world. The increase in socio-cultural knowledge and awareness in fact resulted in the world compression and intensification. Today, people feel that it is the

world coming to them, not that they are moving towards the world: it is because of the development in mass media and communication technology.

However, a problem still remains which goes back to a socio-political and cultural racism in the West. In this regard, it is important to know which kind of image Western mass media, particularly news agencies and Television, shows about the non-western societies. Skelton and Allen (1996: 26) refer to Cleasby (1995: iii):

*“Now, of course, it can be argued that the **contents** of these images of a wider world are often highly selective and restricted ones. For instance, it has long been observed that the picture of developing countries portrayed on Western televisions tends to be restricted to ‘the narrow agenda of conflicts and catastrophes”*

Skelton and Allen also refers to the argument of Peter Adamson of UNICEF (quoted, Cleasby, 1995: iii):

“with no ‘equivalent sense of the norms in poor countries to set against this constant reporting of the exceptional...the cumulative effect of the way in which the developing world is portrayed by the media is grossly misleading’.

In other words, there is a socio-cultural commitment necessary to bring to an end the period of Civilisation Clash, as appears from the argument of Cleasby and Peter Adamson, instead opening the gate for the century of the Dialogue among Civilisations as Khatami, the reformist president of Iran, has suggested.

Anglo-Iranian Cultural Relations within the context of Globalisation

It was for the first time in Iran that a new idea came to power with an outlook to the global cultural enterprise. He was Khatami who kept the office by a surprising election campaign and strongly confirmed his so called popular position in Iran.

Khatami’s idea on Islam in general and reformism within the Islamic context caught many by surprise and delighted those who are interested in ‘dialogue’ instead of ‘clash’. According to his speeches, lectures, interviews, Khatami sees the world from the eyes of the man who believes humanity in its spiritual meaning, not its materialistic view. His foreign policy at the international level is a good example for applying the view of globalisation based on the theory of postmodernism.

Khatami’s idea of culture may be summarised in two main parts: Firstly, the importance of Islam; secondly, the importance of the world. He put both together to find a synthesis in the modern world. He uses the world ‘*Tamaddone Novine Eslami*’ (Islamic Modern Civilisation) in his speech for OIC* members to confirm the Islamic modern style of life which has been combined from two main elements: Islam as a belief system and Modernity as a materialistic dimension of life. Through combining Islam and modernity, Khatami in fact transfers his idea on globalisation and cultural enterprise, which he latter called ‘Dialogue among Civilisation’. When he calls all

Islamic countries for the construction of 'Islamic Civil Society', he mentions the society full of peace, security, and welfare for the people.

Khatami practically describes the Islamic Civil Society as neither a dominant nor a dominated society in international relations. Methodologically, he believes in 'dialogue among civilisation' as the way in which all societies in the world can reach peace, security and welfare; the main aims in development programmes in the world. All issues which Khatami takes as the main needs for social and individual life go to the cultural foundation which he advocates. Social justice, humanity, democracy, popularism, pluralism, tolerance, freedom, liberty, mutual understanding, independency, and religious beliefs are some examples for what he is looking for constructing within the Islamic Civil Society.¹⁷

His endeavour to offer a practical interpretation of Islam is shown in his interview with CNN when he analysed the 1979 Islamic Revolution by its two directions. Firstly, the reinterpretation of Islam combining religiosity with freedom: he believes that humanity experiences in social life, which confirms that prosperity and happiness are dependent to religiousness, freedom, and justice. Secondly, independency which leads to self confidence and consequently facilitates better understanding and relationships with the west in order to receive the scientific, technological and social profit from the Western civilisation.

Khatami often refers to the unity of human beings and globalisation in several forms. One of his main concerns in globalisation goes back to the same history of human beings and the same origin of their belief in God. He takes as the main result in his words 'Dialogue' instead of core and 'Culture' as the main foundation for political relations in the world. His outlook is of the west as a civilisation which received many points from Islamic civilisation, as well as giving many points to the Islamic civilisation.

This idea, in fact, proves the critical debate of Voll (1996), in his attack of the mistaken identifying of modernity with the West. It proves the idea of Giddens and Bauman in declining the Eurocentrism by extension of the globalisation. Khatami refers to the last two centuries as the civilisation clash: in his answer to the question of a CNN reporter regarding the Rusdi affair, Khatami referred to the Rusdi affair as the dramatic case belonging to the period of the Civilisation Clash, emphasising that today is the time of Dialogue among Civilisation. He means by this that there is no room for any clash between cultures and civilisations in the world. This, in turn, replaced the idea of universalism and the conquering of Eurocentrism by globalisation; it is the answer to the Hannerz (1992), and also Skelton and Allen's (2000) critical debate about 'globalisation as the new way to make more important the culture of the west and also the turn of westernisation'. This also crystallised in Khatami's idea as 'coming out from the past and looking at the future'.

Globalisation, in the Words of Khatami

The reformism in today's Iran is in the hands of Khatami. From the moment he took to office his lectures, speeches, and interviews display the world Khatami consciously

has tried to impose through the idea of 'globalisation', evident in all the examples he has given. There are some main elements in Khatami's ideas of international relationships which will all be applied within the context of Islam, as he explains. In his speech for Iranian young peoples, who's advocating led Khatami to reach an unbelievable number of votes in the Election of June 9th, he emphasised that the idea of reformism relates to the 'religious democracy'.¹⁸ Describing the roots of the reformism in Iran, Khatami presents four foundations of Islamic Revolution which he insists to put forwards: religious belief and purity in cultural and religious traditions in confrontation with the cultural hostility and despotism of rulers; a new and modern outlook to religion and belief in human citizen rights; challenge (contention) to foreign hegemony and the struggle for independency; and finally, progress and making benefit from all facilities which God has provided for human beings.¹⁹ Religious Democracy is a matter of fact which Khatami tries to trace in all scientific, political and cultural senses.

Dialogue among Civilisation: A Case in Cultural Globalisation

Dialogue Among Civilisation, as an example of cultural globalisation, forms the basis of Khatami's Reformist Government. It is a new viewpoint in foreign policy, which is felt to be a necessary concept, after the Iran-Iraq war. This idea covered almost all cultural shortages, created by gloomy years of imposed-war with Iraq, as well as paving the way for cultural trends and activities to infiltrate foreign policy as a significant principle. 'Culture' as a practical concept, which has drawn the attention of the new generation of intellectuals and reformists, was neglected by the post-war cabinet, namely the 'Reconstruction Government', in order to keep the economy in balance. As the Third Economic Development plan reveals, ignoring culture has resulted in a decrease in consuming cultural products in families.²⁰

The statistics show that the more one isolates the Reconstruction Government period, and approach to the Reformist Government of president Khatami, the more one must pay attention to the issue of culture. On the other hand, the presence of Khatami in the political scene of Iran could be seen within the cultural point of view; that is, the application of culture in politics has turned out to be an important issue since Khatami took office in 1997. Noticing cultural activities will smooth the transition to suit the new social and political needs, thereby creating suitable mechanisms in social relations that would replace despotic and autocratic approaches in society. In response to negligence of the previous years it should be encouraged in the use of cultural facilities among Iranian families. This could be a common solution for Iranian people, to accurately reflect their problems and untie their social and individual knots. Therefore, the idea of Dialogue Among(st) Civilisations, which was the axis of the foreign policy in the Reformist Government of president Khatami, was in practice a cultural approach, and his Government is taken as a Cultural one accordingly.

Setting forth the idea of dialogue Among Civilisations by Khatami reflected the necessity of noticing culture and tendency towards it in Iran's foreign policy. It was a consequence of international developments and widespread global change on the one hand, and the necessity of Iran's successful presence in the international sphere on the other.

Although this opinion has now been restricted only into Religious Dialogue it will expand to the Dialogue Among Civilisations and could solve some of Iran's foreign, as well as internal policy's problems. It could be a triumph, if the announced aims of the country's foreign policy are fulfilled, that is, détente policy in relations with other countries, recovering Iran's profile in the international level, co-operation with international organisations, improving Iran's relations with political units in two significant fields of Islamic Civilisation and Iran.

It seems that in the present complex atmosphere of the world, Iran could achieve its foreign policy goals through the issue of Dialogue of Civilisations. Apparently, based on our notable cultural heritage, and long precedent in Islamic Civilisation, Iranian can play a key-role in the future, however, it should be born in mind that the issue of Dialogue Among Civilisations, has its own weaknesses and restrictions in definition, performing method, Dialogue limitations, as well as subjects. It appears that the issue of Dialogue Among Civilisations is restricted to theological discussions, rather than noting socio-cultural functions and structures of civilisations, as well as applying civilisation's elements in social life.

Apart from military, political, technological and informational competitions, Iran, on the basis of its dynamic culture and civilisation, could attain a prominent role in the dialogue of viewpoints and opinions. Referring to the Dialogue Among Civilisations, as an important cultural factor, and as a major source of our foreign policy, Iran could fill the gap of its foreign policy, and attain the following significant goals:

- 1) Performing détente policy in its relations with other countries;
- 2) Having more active role in international organisations;
- 3) Creating a trustful and secure atmosphere.

Reformism in Cultural Presence

Reaching cultural agreements with other countries is now one of the most important and effective methods for expanding ties with other nations at the international level. Statistics show that this aim has been gained after Khatamis taking office. However, it does not seem that there is a clear policy for governing cultural relations presently. In a study on the foreign relations of cultural organisations in Iran only a minority of the organisations, such as "The organisation for Islamic culture and relations", "Farabi Film-Foundation", and "Soureh university" (as a scientific unit for Islamic thought and Art) had a remarkable relationship with other foreign organisations, all of which have been reinforced after the Khatami, the 2nd cabinet. The majority of these relations were made with Non-European Countries; in this regard, African and Arab countries made profound contributions, as well as East European states. For example, most of Iran's cultural relationships in 1999-2000 in Europe have been with Cyprus, Greece, Albania, Spain, Austria, Slovenia, Hungary and Czech Republic. Also, in 2000-2001 most of the cultural relations of Iran were with Germany, Yugoslavia, Romania, Russia, Croatia, Bulgaria and Bosnia, amongst all European countries.

Regarding the translation of scientific books for children and youths, almost 90% of the translated resources had been from the US and Britain (US: 50%, Britain: 40%). In effect, though, 90% of Iranian translators know only English. The remaining 10% are translating from French, German, and Japanese. The majority of translations are in

the social sciences, romance, social and historical novels, and so forth, which were translated from American and British books.

The statistics demonstrate that soon after the Reformist Government took power, 'The Organisation for Islamic Thought and Art' had increased its relations with European countries. In contrast with organisations, which are responsible for expanding Islamic culture, such as the 'Organisation of Islamic Culture and Relations', some other organisations are not known as Islamic Research Organisations: Farabi Film Foundation, and the Children and Youth Intellectual Education Centre, are interested in cultural relation with African, Asian and, to some extent, Latin American countries, while the latter group are more tendentious towards European and American states. It seems that the benefit and income from these relationships encourage us to move towards European countries for socio-cultural relationships.

According to statistics, released in the third Development plan Document in 1988, 3734 titles, and in 1993, 9234 titles have been published. In 1997, only 15307 titles of books have appeared in Iran. The statistics show the Government's astute attention to the issue of culture. Of course, it is only a fraction of its attempts in developing culture: in 1988, 556 titles of books were published for children. This would increase to 1104 and 2854 in the 1993 and 1998 respectively. Similarly, in 1988, 486 public libraries were inaugurated in the country; in 1993 there were 647, and in 1997 there were 1147. In 1988, around 160 minutes of motion picture was produced annually for rural areas. This heightened to 230 and 349 minutes in 1993 and 1997 respectively.

Another important aspect in cultural development is the remarkable increase in the tourism industry. In fact, a number of tourists travelling to Iran reached to 764,092 in 1997; in 1988 and 1993, that was 707,740 and 311,243, which had saved 29.4 million, 131.1 million, and 351 million dollars income for the country. In recent years, the Government has paid more attention to cultural and historical monuments: in 1988, 19 historical and cultural buildings were repaired, which has increased from 64 to 98 cases in 1993 and 1997.

Additionally, in 1988, 10 historical monuments were registered as national heritages, while in 1993 and 1997 the whole cases were restricted to 26 and 45 monuments. Museums and historical monuments visitors, which were 4,183,000 in 1988 and 6,275,000 in 1993, increased to 8,688,000 in 1997.

Periodicals, issued in Iran in 1988, 1993, and 1997, were 163,439 and 824 titles. In the meantime, newspapers, which were 8 and 19 titles in 1988 and 1993, reached to 39 titles in 1997. The average number of papers were 136.6 million copies in 1988, which has since grown to 488.6 million in 1993 and 623.5 million copies in 1997.

Cultural Enterprise in Anglo-Iranian Relations

More than two years have been passed from the new Anglo-Iranian relationship at the level of ambassadors. The cultural relationship between two countries, in truth, mostly took place in the area of education which mostly led to dispatching the Iranian students to the UK to complete their studies at the level of MA, or MSC, and mostly Ph.D. The programme had begun in 1811. According to data, close to 50 per cent (592 students) of 1206 Iranian students dispatched abroad to complete their studies in

medical sciences at the level of PhD between 1983 and 2000 studied in one of the academic institutions in the UK. While 16.9% (204 students) were dispatched to Canada, 9.7% (118 students) to USA, 8% (97students) to Australia, and only 2.6% (32 students) were dispatched to France.²¹ This data confirms that the UK still is the first choice for Iranian students who receive scholarship to pursuing their studies abroad. At the moment there are about 1400 Iranian students in the UK (close to 850 received scholarship from the Iranian government) mostly studying their PhD in all fields of sciences.

It seems some improvement has taken place in some cultural fields since 1999. From that moment a number of academic agreements have been signed between academic institutions in both nations. For example Royal Holloway' coordination with the Universities of Tehran, Allame and Honar (Art). Glasgow, Newcastle, Manchester and recently Durham University have all signed the mutual academic and scientific relationships with the University of Tehran. A good relationship has developed between the British Museum and the National Museum of Iran which have resulted in some joint conferences and lectures. There is a contractual agreement between the British Library and the National Library of Iran to increase their relationship in its highest level. Less than a month ago a major agreement was signed between the Barbican Art Centre and the (*Moozeie Honarhaie Mo'aser*) Contemporary Arts Museum and a big exhibition concerning the works of the Iranian poets and artists such as Sohrab Sepehri and Mohammad Ehsaei held in London in this regards. In addition, SOAS, in cooperation with the Iran Heritage Foundation and the Barbican centre, invited some of the rather more well-known Iranian cinema artists for the conference on the 'Women in the Iranian Cinema: behind the lens, beyond the veil'. Two Iranian female artists, namely Niki Karimi, the young film actor, and Rakhshan Bani-E'temad, the cinema director and film producer, both attended the conference. One of the notable occasions regarding cultural enterprise originates from the very recent preliminary discussion between the CMEIS at Durham University and the Centre for the Islamic Great Encyclopaedia of Iran to translate more than 30 volumes of the Islamic Encyclopaedia from Persian to English.

Apart from these official relationships, several Iranian university professors usually attend scientific conferences and seminars held in the UK annually. Additionally, some Iranian national and traditional art occasions, in the form of painting exhibitions and music groups, hold exhibitions in the UK, with the most recent event being held in the Oriental Museum at Durham from 6 June onwards.

It seems that both countries are increasingly striving to strengthen their cultural relationship more and more. Apart from an ostensible increase in education and academic relationships through allocating some scholarships for Ph.D. students in both societies, as well as professor exchange policies and more joint research projects, it seems many other cultural enterprises are possible between the two countries:

- sabbatical-leave opportunities;
- fellowships;
- student exchange schemes for a period of three months or longer;
- joint projects in arts, such as film and TV serial production;

- Cultural institutions such as the Islamic studies, historical studies, and socio-political studies;
- cultural centres in memorandum of both countries' scholars as the foundations allocated for scientific research, book translations, joint scientific journals, fellowships, conferences, etc...;
- sistership between Municipalities;
- arts exhibitions;
- cultural centres for Iranians living in the UK.

Cultural Enterprise on the Way

Socio-cultural developments in Iran, as an independent and irrefutable principle, has smoothed the ground for the advent of a cultural Government. The Reformist Government, as a representative of the idea, has also built its foreign policy on culture, which is manifested in the Dialogue Among Civilisations.

The idea has formed the strategy of Iranian foreign policy during the past four years, as a suitable solution in expanding trustful relations with other nations, détente policy, and successful presence at the international organisations. By creating cultural relations with various countries, in the form of signing cultural agreements and understandings, this idea could be practised. The statistics reveal that these two aims have been achieved remarkably by president Khatami's government. Its major objective is to create new ties with European countries.

This policy, apparently, provides a good opportunity for Iran progress to establishing a solid cultural friendship with other countries, particularly Western constituencies. On the other hand, because of the elimination of Universalism and Eurocentrism, as the main historical obstacles for any mutual relationship between the west and the rest, which resulted in the end of the period of Civilisation Clash and the triumph of globalisation based on multiculturalism, the gates are open for the mutual cultural relationships between the west and Iran to continue. The United Kingdom, as one of the countries with a longstanding relationship with Iran, is integral for establishing a mutual cultural relationship with Iran either through officially opening their cultural councils or some separate agreements based on the circumstances.

As a sociologist I hope the cultural relationship between the two societies leads to cultural exchange, thereby promoting the relationship between two nations to abolish the era of civilisation clash and to build a new spiritual history fully based upon kindness, friendship, and justice.

ENDNOTES

¹ -For more information see: Champbell, 1965; Steward, 1995.

² - This relationship encouraged Iranian rulers to increase their external relations. For example: Shah Abbas 1st, the major King of Safavid was interested in establishing an economic relationship with Poland.

³ - for more information see: Nateghpour, J. 1996,

⁴ - Ibid.

⁵ - the name of this man is not mentioned in any of historical documents.

⁶ - Denis Right, (1368) [1988], *Iranians Between British*, Tehran, Nashre-No.

⁷ - Haeri, A. 1367 [1988], pp: 280-90; also: Right, D. [Emami], 1368 [1989]: pp: 109-140.

⁸ -To avoid confusion, all Arabic dates have been converted, based on the Mayr (1961) calendar starting from the Immigration of the Prophet Mohammad, to Christian ones.

⁹ - See Dawlatabadi, vol:1-2.

¹⁰ - See: Sheikh Jemal al-Din, 1892, *The Reign of Terror in Persian*, *Contemporary Review*; No: 61, also, Malcom, 1891, *Persian Civilisation*, *Contemporary Review*, No: 59

¹¹ - briefly, Soroush's idea regarding 'Ghabz va Baste Teorike Shai'at' can be summarised as follows:

- The nature and identity of religion is so different from all knowledge and science of religion. Knowledge and science of religion are based on the religion, but they are not the religion itself.
- Religious knowledge and science are one kind of human knowledge and science. In other words they are the human made knowledge and sciences.
- All human knowledge and science can be exchanged altogether. In other word there is a dialogue between them based on the human understanding of the fact.
- Religious knowledge and science, like other human knowledge, might be exchanged based on human knowledge.
- Fiqh (jurisprudence) as the main religious sciences is not an exception from this knowledge enterprise, and might be changed based on the human agencies understanding about the society, modernism, etc.
- As a result of this, it is not to say that there is an extreme and stable fiqh in Shi'a. It is changeable at any time, based on the social conditions.

¹² - This version of religious interpretation encouraged many religious intellectuals and clergies to study and criticise it. All discussions crystallised this idea and formed it by today which is the platform of the reformist strata of Iran. Intellectual and social characteristics of this version of religious interpretation led to an increase of its influence in the society both generally and within universities. For example:

- this version was submitted in the scientific and academic form of research;
- it follows a formed programme of social change and reformism;
- this version, by dividing religion into the religion itself and its knowledge and understanding, firstly, saves the nature and identity of religion from and critical attack, and secondly, brings religion in society to work in social change, e.g. modernisation and development.
- This version proposed the issue of 'the expectation of religion', which made a revolution in religious understandings. The traditional and dominant question of 'what religion expects from us?', which is the normal and vital question in the understandings of traditional spheres of religion (mainly seminary), was replaced by the new question: 'what we expect from religion?'. This question suggested a lot of opposition from the seminary and traditional notion of religion against Soroush. But, he continued his endeavour regarding completion of the new version.
- This question paved the way for an interaction between religion and society, particularly social needs. Consequently, secular science and knowledge penetrated into the religious knowledge to understand what religion can do for society.
- This version offered a historical outlook to religion which confirms human-made nature of its knowledge. This part of the version invited criticism of religious knowledge and its relation with the social structure and change during the last few centuries. This also makes it possible to adapt the religious knowledge with the social changes.
- 'Minimal Religion', instead of 'maximising religion', is another character of this version. Consequently, many duties would remove which have attached religion during the last centuries.
- By this notion, Fiqh (Jurisprudence) will loose its traditional power and authority as the only means for Islamic rule.

- Structurally, the language of this version is both ethical and mystical, instead of the violent language of Fiqh which is *Kufr* and *Irtidad*.
- Despite the ideological version of religion which reduces religion (at least at the level of ideology), this version will increase its position to the ethical and moral means in the world for the attainment of peace and security.
- In this version we do not need to adopt democracy with Islam, rather we will adopt Islam with democracy, justice and freedom. In other version it might be said 'Islamic Democracy', instead we can say 'Democratic Islam'.

In his work soroush separated the essence of religion from the science and knowledge regarding it. He believed that religion itself and its identity is unchangeable, but the knowledge and science of religion, which he called "*Ma'refate Dinin*", is the same as human made knowledge and changeable. This idea received many criticisms amongst 'ulama and traditional intellectuals from Qom, Tehran and the rest of the country. It might be said that when he claimed that Fiqh -as the platform of the religious rule of Iran- is the knowledge of religion and changeable like the other sciences, his idea received some points from postmodernism; mainly theories of socio-cultural and political Tolerance and Pluralism. His idea emerged when many intellectuals and youths were looking for a theoretical answer to their requests. His idea was exactly that which many of religious intellectuals were looking for. For more information about soroush, see: Sadri, A. And Sadri M. 2000

¹³ - McLuhan, M. (1960), *Explorations in Communication*, ed. E.S. Carpenter. Boston: Beacon Press.

¹⁴ - for more information regarding the critical debates on 'globalisation' as the Western 'cultural imperialism' see: Friedman 1994; Hannerz 1991; and McQuail 1994, Boyd-Barrett 1982; Schlesinger 1991; Sinclair 1992; Tomlinson 1991, 1995, 1997.

¹⁵ - For more information see: Appadurai 1990; Garcia Canclini 1995, Lull 1995; Robins 1991; Tomlinson 1991; Martin-Barbero 1993.

¹⁶ -for more information, see: Giddens 1994.

* -Organisation of Islamic Conference, 1997.

¹⁷ - For more information see: Khatami, M. (2001), *Insan, Moltaghaye Mashreghe Jan va Maghrebe 'Aghl* (Human being, the Combination of spirit and reason): the collection of the speeches and interviews of Khatami, Centre for Documents and the History of the Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran.

¹⁸ - Khatami, Haiate-Now newspaper, 29 May 2001, 8 Khordad 1380, web address: <http://www.ARIA.WS/HAYATENO>

¹⁹ - Khatami, Haiate-Now, 29 May 2001, p: 2

²⁰ - The Book of the Third Development Plan, 1378 [1999], Plan and Budget Organisation, Tehran.

²¹ - Centre for the Students affairs, Office of Scholarship, Ministry of Health, Care and medical studies, 2001.