

The American Soft Power between Cultural Reconciliation and Identity Obliteration in Multiethnic-Oriented Novels

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Abstract

One of the debatable concepts which receive an increasing interest among scholars, philosophers, politicians, sociologists, and others is the concept of 'soft power'. A concept with a long history and a contested nature, soft power was mainly developed by Joseph S. Nye, the American political scientist, to ensure the idea that USA can realize all its wants through attractiveness rather than coercion or payment. For him, soft power is more rewarding and less costly. It is through soft power that America can realize what the military power failed to achieve. This idea of influencing citizens/nations through persuasion rather than coercion urges some scholars to relate Nye's approach to the third dimension model of power developed by Steven Michael Lukes, the British political theorist. Through this dimension, Lukes discusses the ability to influence individuals' thoughts and make them accept things that they are familiar to be in opposition with. It is the most effective and the most dangerous form of power. Due to the inseparable and interdisciplinary relationship between literature and politics, the aim of this study is to analyze Nye's perspective on soft power and to examine the similarities between his opinions on soft power and Lukes' third dimension of power. The study then applies both approaches to some selected novels from different cultures, including *Amricanly* by the Egyptian novelist Sunallah Ibrahim, *The American Granddaughter* by the Iraqi novelist Inaam Kachachi, and *Americanah* by the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie . It is an interdisciplinary literary critical study.

Key Words: Soft power, Joseph Nye, Steven Lukes, *Amricanly*, *American Granddaughter*, and *Americanah*.

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One of the debatable concepts which receive an increasing interest among scholars, philosophers, politicians, sociologists, and others is the concept of 'soft power', a term frequently used in speeches by decision-makers and in worldwide media and press. Noticeably, adopting soft power has become inescapable, especially at the present time because "we are presently caught in [a] break-neck wave of change [...] and with this speed and magnitude of outcomes, we are faced with ever greater threats and opportunities," as Giulio M. Gallarotti describes (4). Noteworthy, the term 'soft power' is "hard to define conceptually," although it is not a new term (Singh et al. 4). It is, actually, Joseph Samuel Nye Jr., the American political scientist, who largely contributed to its development until it has become a focal topic in many debates, and it has inspired some scholars to relate it to the theory of the 'Three Dimensions of Power' by Steven Michael Lukes, the British political theorist.

Thus, the aim of this study is to analyze Nye's perspective on soft power as one of the American strategies to ensure its global hegemony and to examine the similarities between Nye's opinions on soft power and Lukes' third dimension/face of power. The study then applies both approaches to some selected novels from different cultures. The selected novels are: *Americanly* (2003) by the Egyptian novelist Sunallah Ibrahim, *The American Granddaughter* (2008) by the Iraqi novelist Inaam Kachachi, and *Americanah* (2013) by the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. It is an attempt to examine whether the American soft power has indeed contributed to cultural reconciliation, or it is the cause of obliterating identities rather than asserting freedom. This is an interdisciplinary cross-cultural literary critical study.

The term power is a "contested" concept, as Steven Michael Lukes and Joseph Nye describe, and its definition varies from one person to another according to the context in which it is used (*Power: A Radical View* 108; 'Soft Power: The Evolution of A Concept' 1). Some people perceive power as an ability to control people's thoughts and desires to influence their behaviour to get certain outcomes, while others perceive it as an ability to resist any form of subjugation and to protect individuals' liberty. On the other hand, some define power based on the relationship between human beings and nature that power is embodied in the ability of humankind to adapt environment to achieve their desires and ensure their prosperity, while others view it as an attempt to make a change to the reality.

The term power is mostly associated with coercion or the tangible resources and capabilities that a country possesses and enables it to control others to achieve its goals. In contrast, Nye believes that this view of power is a narrow and restricted one. In Nye's perspective, some countries do not have those resources or such capabilities but still have the ability to influence. This ability to influence others through attractiveness rather than coercion or payment is the core of Nye's approach of soft power. Likewise, Lukes' theory of the three faces/dimensions of power has been devoted to illuminate the other dimensions that power can be perceived and understood through, especially after a debate he had in the 1960s with the political scientists Robert Dahl. Dahl views power as "something like this: A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (Dahl 202-3; *italics original*). Power for Dahl is confined to who wins and prevails in the conflict of interests; a view that is perceived by Lukes as a "one-dimensional view" since it describes power in a narrowly manner (*Power: A Radical View* 16). For further and deeper

understanding of Nye's concept of 'soft power' and Lukes' theory of power, it is necessary then to illuminate the traditional vision of power that prevailed among researchers for years and inspired Nye and Lukes' hypotheses to reject it.

This traditional vision was represented by the Realist vision of power. The Realists related the term power to the material assets and military capabilities that a country owns and enable it to control or dominate another country to achieve definite goals and get certain outcomes. The prominent contemporary representatives of this Realist approach are Kenneth Waltz and John J. Mearsheimer. In his *Theory of International Politics*, Waltz represents the neo-realism or structural realism. He assumes that material capabilities that any country possesses are the core of the concept of power. These capabilities, in Waltz's view, consist of "size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence" (131). In a similar vein, "capabilities" was the key word in Mearsheimer's definition of power. In his *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Mearsheimer proclaims that "power is based on the particular material capabilities that a state possesses" (55). These material capabilities, according to Mearsheimer, are the "tangible assets" that the country owns and through which its "military" force can be measured (Mearsheimer 55). Such traditional visions of power used to be conceptualized as "hard power", which is usually associated with tangible resources.

However, such tangibility cannot be regarded as a sole feature of hard power resources because other resources of hard power such as threat and oppression are of intangible nature. Accordingly, "it is not tangibility that determines the principal distinction between soft and hard power," but these intangible

resources at the same time depend on the tangible resources/assets to be influential (Gallarotti 7). Notwithstanding, certain elements as coercion, force, and threats are familiarly described as pillars of hard power based on the traditional/Realist vision; the vision that inspired and later supported Nye's call for *Soft Power*.

Nye introduced his approach at first in collaboration with Robert O. Keohane through a book titled, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*. This book initiated what is known as the 'neo-liberal' approach to international relations. Nye states that through this book, he and Keohane "tried to capture the growing importance of transnational relations, economic interdependence, international regimes, and institutions" (Nye, 2021, 4). Nye and Keohane's neo-liberal approach, however, does not mean that they dismiss realism: "Realism is not wrong as an approach to power [...]; it is just insufficient" (4). Describing himself as a "liberal realist", Nye justifies his real attitude towards realism that his "complaint is not that realists start with traditional elements of power but they stop so soon after they start without realizing there is much more to be explained" (Nye, 2021, 4). Later and specifically in his *Future of Power* (2011), Nye emphasized that *soft power* is not a total rejection of the realist approach, and that it "is not a form of idealism or liberalism. It is simply a form of power, one way of getting desired outcomes" (56).

"There is much more to be explained", a justifying statement by Nye and it was the same reason for which Lukes had developed his theory. When Lukes was asked in one of his interviews about his third dimension of power, he replied that he attempted to give a "further and deeper" explanation ("Steven Lukes Explains" 00:46-00:47). It was his debate with the Pluralist Robert Dahl

during the 1960s that necessitated his theory and resulted in a book titled, *Power: A Radical View (PRV)*. In this book, Lukes argued that the traditional vision of power is a narrow one. Ergo, it is necessary to "think about power broadly rather than narrowly- in three dimensions rather than one or two" because "if you think about power in a narrow way or one dimensionally, you can then expand your view into two dimensional view, but my view is that power best seen in three dimensions" (*PRV* 1; "Steven Lukes Explains" 00:23 – 00:38).

Lukes uses the term dimension/face to illuminate the deeper meaning and function of the concept of power due to its pivotal role in raising awareness of individuals of the nature of their relations whether with their folks within the borders of one state, or their relationship with the other of different cultures and ideologies. He presents power in three dimensions through what he terms "a conceptual analysis" of power (*PRV* 14). Those three dimensions/ faces of power are: decision making, non-decision making (agenda setting), and ideological power (an insidious face).

The origin of the first face (the one – dimensional model of power) is known as 'the pluralist approach' and is attributed to the political scientist Robert A. Dahl during the 1950s and the 1960s. This face is confined to decision making, and presents a "behavioural study of decision-making power by political actors" (*PRV* 58). Those actors of power can be influential individuals or political organizations. In an article titled "The Concept of Power", Dahl explains his "intuitive idea of power" that it is "something like this: *A* has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do" (202-3, *italics original*). In any democratic structure, there are parties with different interests and preferences compete for power. The

focus in this view is on who prevails or wins during such conflict of interests which is described as an "observable direct conflict" (PRV 36). Through his analysis of power structure in his city New Haven in the state of Connecticut, Dahl noticed that there is no single group that holds power and that these groups are not equal in the degree of power they own as power depends on the capacity of this group to control the important resources, as well as its weight within the community.

In addition, Dahl asserts that winning the conflict of interests is not restricted to the possession of power but power exercise as well. The decision-making process, accordingly, involves coercive and non-coercive actions. For example, if a manager forces his employees to stay overtime without being paid to achieve the target of the company, this is classified as a coercive type of power where the conflict of interests is explicit. The manager, in this case, uses the power he possesses to force the employees to achieve the targets (i.e. his interests/preferences) influencing the decision made by the employees to keep their jobs and continue with feelings of resentment for not being paid, or to lose the job and face the risk of unemployment.

For the non-coercive guided action, when the government attempts to take a decision concerning a controversial issue, they present the bill to the parliament for approval and try to obtain the support of the influential non-governmental partners in order to issue the law. Due to such apparent democratic nature, citizens, in return, accept this law. *A* in this case (i.e. the government) participates in the making of decisions that affect *B* (i.e. the citizens) and exercises power by showing how the proposed law will reinforce interests of the citizens. People, in turn, accept the proposed law. In both examples, decisions are overtly made and people are aware of what is being decided.

Indeed, the one-dimensional model of power managed to present a "clear-cut paradigm for the behavioural study of decision-making power by political actors", but it failed to examine the biased factors that indirectly affect the decision-making process (PRV 58).

The second face of power, or the elitist view, is of the two-dimensional type and is concerned with the non-decision making face of power (agenda setting). This face is originally associated with Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz. Although they admit the visible and observable nature of power that Dahl referred to, Bachrach and Baratz claim that the decision-making process is mostly characterized by lack of transparency as power holders reduce the possibility of reaching to the decision making stage. Agendas and decisions are made away from B's participation to reinforce the hegemony of a certain group. Thus, the visible conflict between A and B is avoided while the power of A over B is practised. It is the hidden or invisible form of power where agendas are set behind the scenes with no "observable direct conflict" and therefore it is described as a "non-decision-making" case (PRV 36; 39). Noticeably, "A may exercise power over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants" (PRV 27, *italics original*). Thus, the two-dimensional power involves decision-making and non-decision-making. The making of decision is associated with the selection of one alternative from a list of alternatives, while the non-decision-making phase is represented through avoiding any interest that opposes the interests of the decision-makers.

In this secretive face of power, the power holders prevent the issues that may threaten their interests from reaching the decision-making stage and people's grievances are completely

neglected. Indeed, the two-dimensional model of power criticizes and tries to treat the shortcomings of the one-dimensional model, it however "lacks a sociological perspective within which to examine, not only decision-making and non-decision making power, but also the various ways of suppressing latent conflicts within society" (PRV 59). Thus, Lukes suggests his three-dimensional model of power for deeper understanding of power relations within the society.

The third dimension, as Lukes prefers to use rather than the word face, marks his prominent and debatable contribution of on power. Through this dimension Lukes tries to present a deeper understanding of the concept of power that the first and second faces lack. It is about shaping desires (ideological power) and Lukes considers it the most insidious face of power. These three dimensions, in Lukes' point of view, can be used effectively to study power relations. If the one-dimensional view of power focuses on who prevails when the decision is made, and if the second dimension of power revolves around who decides what gets decided and how the agenda is controlled, the three-dimensional model of power was developed by Lukes to examine who shape peoples' ideas, preferences, and beliefs. Through this third dimension, Lukes presents a "*thoroughgoing critique*" of the first two dimensions (PRV 28; *italics original*). Moreover, through this dimension Lukes discusses the ability to influence individuals' or peoples' thoughts and wishes, and may even make them accept things that they are familiar to be in opposition with. Thus, it is the most effective as well as the most dangerous form of power.

People are aptly involved but their ideology is, elusively, formed to reinforce the interests of the policy makers. For this reason, Lukes describes his third dimension of power as "[the]

supreme and most insidious exercise of power” because it prevents people

from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable. (PRV 28)

The power holders, according to this dimension, have the ability to persuade citizens that the decisions being made serve their interests. For example, the ability of the Prime Minister Tony Blair to manipulate the mass opinion that Iraq under Saddam Hussein represents a threat due to the weapons of Mass Destruction that it possesses, and, accordingly, invasion of Iraq became an inescapable alternative. Later on people discovered that they were deceived as evidences proved that Iraq did not own any destructive weapons.

Rejecting such manipulating form of power, Lukes asserts that "power over others can be productive, transformative, authoritative, and compatible with dignity" (109). In such productive power relations, people have the capacity to make a change, to receive it, and to resist it as well. It is not a "power over" relations or "Potestas", a Latin term borrowed by Lukes from Spinoza (73). Domination is a type of such *Potesta*, which means "the ability to have another or others *in your power*, by constraining their choices, thereby securing their compliance" (74, *italics original*). Such *Potesta*, in Lukes' perspective, is a sub-set of what Spinoza refers to as '*Potentia*' (i.e. "the power of things in nature, including persons, 'to exist and act'") (74). Thus, *Potesta* signifies "the power over", while *Potentia* is "the power to", as Lukes explains (74). Lukes, therefore, uses his third dimension of power "to identify and criticize values that lead

dominated people to acquiesce and even celebrate their own domination" (Dowding 136). The powerful can recognize his wants by advancing people's interests in a productive manner rather than using force or coercion, the same criteria upon which Joseph Nye's approach of soft power is built.

It is such a similar state produced by Lukes' three-dimensional model of power and Joseph Nye's approach of soft power of obtaining the required outcomes by getting citizens/nations do what the power holders want them to do willfully, at least as it apparently seems, without coercion that makes many scholars state that Nye's approach of soft power was influenced by Steven Lukes' three –dimensional approach. However, Nye denies that because he "did not discover [Lukes'] important and insightful work until after [he] had published [his]" (Nye, 2021, 6). In the same spirit, Lukes states that Nye's soft power is "similar but not identical with his third face of power," and describes Nye's soft power as "a cousin of his third face of power" (2021, 6). Nye's concept, on the other hand, "was developed in the context of international relations and includes the voluntaristic aspects of agenda setting [...] by attraction and persuasion", and he repeatedly asserted that he "was more concerned with the actions of agents and less concerned about the problematic concept of 'false consciousness'" (2021, 6). Thus, Lukes' and Nye's approaches look similar but not identical, complementary but each has its unique methodology.

Noteworthy, the term 'soft power' is not a new term as its roots can be traced back to ancient philosophers. Nye himself objectively affirms, "I have never claimed to have invented soft power. That would be absurd since the power behavior is as old as human history. I even start one of my works with a quotation from Lao Tsu in 630 BCE", and later justifies his interest in the

development of such concept that it was an attempt to "fill a deficiency in the way analysts thought about power" (Nye, 2021, 1; 2017, 2). The concept of soft power, actually, witnessed changes/developments throughout history according to the context it existed in. Whenever there is a change in this context, there is a change or an evolution to the concept of soft power as well.

Nye attracts the attention to the concept of soft power firstly in collaboration with Robert O. Keohane in the late 1980s through a book titled, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*, and then through his own books and articles reacting to Paul Kennedy's proclamation in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (1987) that American power was in decline. He attempted through his book *The Bound to Lead* (1990) to reject such gloomy perspective that America became a declining over-stretched empire, and tried to attract the attention to other alternatives or sources that could enable his country to pursue its leadership and restore its positive image as a role-model country. He found the solution in soft power as he clarified in his book *The Bound to Lead*. In this book, Nye argues that if the US is globally perceived as a declining power due to its military and economic losses, it still has a great chance to restore its powerful position by investing in soft power resources. Nye asserts that the US is still able to get its required outcomes depending on attraction and persuasion rather than its tangible resources such as the military force or the intangible ones such as threats and coercion.

In fact, Nye does not deny such instilled association in peoples' minds between power and coercion or what is known as 'carrot and stick policy', but he feels that "sometimes people influence others by ideas and attraction that sets the agenda for others or

gets them to want what you want," and that "the carrots and sticks are less necessary, or can be used more frugally because others see them as legitimate" (Nye, 2017, 2). In addition, Nye finds that international relations today necessitate the study and adoption of soft power "because it has become more difficult to compel nations and non-state actors through the principal levers of hard power" (Gallarotti 5).

In his article, "Soft Power", Nye starts his definition of power using the dictionary definition "that power means an ability to do things and control others, to get others to do what they otherwise would not," and he refers to the traditional association between such ability and possession of certain resources that makes "politicians and diplomats commonly define power as the possession of population, territory, natural resources, economic size, military forces, and political stability" (Nye, 'Soft Power', 1990, 154). However, the increasing changes witnessed by the world at the present time reduce the emphasis on military forces in favor of "factors of technology, education, and economic growth [which] are becoming more significant in international power, while geography, population, and raw materials are becoming somewhat less important" (154).

In the same vein, Nye broadly defines the concept in his article "Soft Power: the Origins and Political Progress of a Concept" as "the ability to affect others to get the outcomes one prefers" (2017, 1). Similarly, in his "Soft Power: The Evolution of A Concept" Nye views power as "the capacity to do things, but more specifically in social situations, the ability to affect others to get the outcomes one wants" (2021, 2). At a general level, Nye assigns through his writings two categories of power tools: coercion, military force, threats and payment, on one hand, and attraction and persuasion, on the other. The first category of tools

is related to hard power which, in Joseph Nye's opinion, negatively influenced the international relations between the United States and other countries. He noted in an article titled, "Get Smart", that "over the past decade, public opinion polls have shown a serious decline in the United States' popularity in Europe, Latin America, and, most dramatically, the Muslim world" (2009, 161). Accordingly, the United States, in Nye's perspective, needs to change its policy and adopt another type of power based on attraction, respect, and persuasion, which are the tools of soft power. Soft power, accordingly, refers to "the ability to obtain preferred outcomes by attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or payment" (Nye, 2017, 1).

In *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Nye assigns three main sources of the soft power of any country: "its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)" (11). On the other hand, he thinks that some resources of hard power can be attractive and, in turn, produce soft power: "countries may be attracted to others with command power by myths of invincibility ... A strong economy not only provides resources for sanctions and payments, but can be a source of attractiveness" (7).

The difference between hard power and soft power is represented through the difference between imposing power over countries and owning power over the outcomes. According to Gallarotti, hard power depends on tangible resources and adopts "more direct and often coercive methods" such as threat, while soft power is associated with intangible resources and its methods are "more indirect and non-coercive" (10). Soft power for Nye means "the ability to get others to want what you want"

and therefore it "tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology and institutions;" a definition that he describes as "a behavioural definition of power" (2021, 5). At the time that soft power includes "a variety of policies, qualities, and actions that endear nations to other nations", hard power "contemplates nations compelling other nations to do what the latter would ordinarily not otherwise do" (Gallarotti 11). Soft power is synonymously termed, therefore, by Nye as "co-optive" power while hard power is described as the "commanding power of *ordering*" ("Soft Power", 1990, 166, *italics original*).

Affirming the clear-cut importance of soft power, Nye attracts attention to the truth that military security has not become the only indicator of the power of the state or its only guarantee of survival because "national security has become more complicated as threats shifts from the military [...] to the economic and ecological" (Nye, 'Soft Power', 1990, 157). What makes soft power distinguished and more preferable for Nye than hard power is that it is based on principal of freedom not coercion. Nye observes that in international relations, power is measured by the materialistic and concrete resources that a country owns such as military force, natural resources, economic strength, technological advance, territory, and stability. He, in return, views this traditional vision of power as a misleading one. For him, it urges people to "think of power as synonymous with the resources that (may) produce outcomes, but they then encounter the paradox that those best endowed with power do not always get the outcomes they want" because "[t]he effectiveness of a power resource depends upon the context. For example, having superior battle tanks helped the US to prevail against Iraq in desert warfare; they were less successful in the context of swamps and jungles in Vietnam" (2021, 2-3). However, Nye does not deny the importance of these resources in achieving the

outcomes that a nation wants, but "power resources that win in one game may not help at all in another" (2021, 3). These sources are not always the winning horse for any country to get the outcomes it aspires to. In addition, Nye finds that although the military force is still perceived as "the ultimate form of power in a self-help system", it has become more expensive for any country than it was in the past ("Soft Power", 1990, 157).

The concept 'soft power', actually, went through several stages until it became familiar in the American international relations. Before the 9/11 terrorist attacks against America in 2001, the term was unfamiliar and rarely used by the American political leaders. After the attacks, Nye felt that "in that climate of fear, it was difficult to speak about soft power" but after the American invasion of Iraq, which negatively affected the American reputation and provoked many hostile reactions to the American policy, Nye felt that it was urgent to "spell out the meaning of soft power in greater detail" (Nye, 2017, 2). In his *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics*, Nye defines the type of 'soft power' as "only one component of power, and rarely sufficient by itself" (2017, 2).

Due to his experience at the American Foreign Affairs Policy and the Defense Policy Boards, Nye noticed that "defining power in terms of resources was a shortcut that policymakers often use ... [For example,] oil was not an impressive power resource before the industrial age nor was uranium significant before the nuclear age nor big data before the digital age" (Nye, 2021, 3). In addition, owning massive resources and being the most powerful country did not protect the United States from September 11 attacks in 2001. On the contrary, it was the invasion of Iraq under Bush administration in 2003 that reduced the trust in the American policies and damaged its global relations, especially in

the Arab and Muslim world. Nye perceives that the fault of Bush administration was that it relied a lot on hard power and tried persistently to force other nations to follow and support the American policies otherwise they would be considered enemies. Nye observed that the American invasion of Iraq "[has] made it more difficult to develop cooperative approaches toward solving global problems" (Shin 460).

Explicitly, the relationship between hard power and soft power is "complex and interactive. The two are neither perfect substitutes nor are they rigid complements. Often, they can actually reinforce one another" (Gallarotti 24). Using military force as one of the hard power sources can provide a positive image of hard power in some exceptional cases. For example, using the military force during the Gulf war to liberate Kuwait was approbated and supported by many countries during that time. Likewise, adopting soft power sources may bring negative image of the nation and may raise feelings of resentment and refusal. For example, "the contempt that many hold for international development organizations (IMF, World Bank) because they see such institutions as promoting neo-imperialistic economic relations" (26). Another illustrative example and closely related to the topic of this paper can be seen through the contradictory attitudes towards Western culture and values. Some people see that adopting Western values and lifestyle is an indicator of progress and freedom, while others perceive that as a threat to the identity of the individual and may contribute to obliteration of the culture of his/her homeland.

Indeed, hard power seems preferable due to such association between it and the tangible resources that "makes power appear more concrete, measurable, and predictable" (Nye, "The Benefits of Soft Power", 2004). However, the rapid and successive

changes in the world today make "soft co-optive power [...] as important as hard command power" and "the ability to frame the international agenda and set the rules of the game" relies now on soft power currencies (Nye, "Soft Power", 1990, 167; Hongying Wang & Yeh-Chung Lu 425). In addition, Nye believes that the term soft power has been misunderstood and, superficially, restricted only to McDonald's, Hollywood movies, and so on.

Owning soft power, in Nye's opinion, means making others admire you and look forward to doing what you do, so they take a positive attitude towards your values and ideas, and thus their desire matches yours, which in turn help you realize your outcomes. He also believes that soft power dispenses with the carrot and stick policy, and some countries that do not have a large military or economic power enjoy soft power as a result of their participation in important global issues such as peace talks, environmental conservation initiatives and combating diseases and epidemics. In Nye's point of view,

the United States can [...] tackle tough global changes [and] can become a smart power by once again investing in global public goods [...]. Achieving economic development, security public health, coping with climate change, and maintaining an open, stable international economic system all require leadership from the United States. (Nye, "Get Smart", 163).

Nye, moreover, argues that the U.S has many elements that can enrich its soft power. For example, many global brands are in the United States, many international students and scholars are enrolled in academic programs in the U.S; the United States is the most attractive country for immigrants from all over the world; and it is a pioneer country in the field of movies and TV shows production. However, the availability of these elements does not guarantee the inevitability of achieving soft power in the

state that owns these elements, as there should be consistency between these elements and the state's general policy and its international relations with other countries. Despite the worldwide fascination with scientific, technological and artistic advances in America, America's occupation of Iraq in 2003 has damaged the positive image of America in Arab countries, and the availability of all aforementioned elements did not prevent feelings of anger and criticism against it.

He, furthermore, argues that feelings of hatred in the Middle East against America can be justified by the cultural differences between America and these countries. However, these countries admire some aspects in the American culture, the important point that US has realized and tries to improve through the increasing opportunities of scholarships and that can greatly help in instilling the American culture in the minds of the students coming from these countries. Beside scholarships, translation of English books into Arabic, providing libraries and references in all disciplines, and increasing numbers of educational and cultural visits to America all are elements that the US invests in to consolidate its soft power globally and, in turn, achieve its planned outcomes. The influence of these soft power tools has been great. Adoption of soft power makes travelling or immigrating to the US a dream for millions who seek fortune, liberty, and progress. This, in turn, sometimes influences identities, creating a conflict between one's feeling of belongingness to his/her original culture and the American one. Although soft power tends to achieve cultural reconciliation, but it sometimes leads to identity obliteration. In *Americanly, The American Granddaughter* and *Americanah*, this conflict is overtly embodied.

Amricanly is a novel by the Egyptian novelist Sunallah Ibrahim (b. 1937), one of the renowned and eminent novelists in the Arab World. An upper middle class descendant, Sunallah Ibrahim was known for his leftist and nationalist tendencies that urged him to be a member at the Marxist Democratic Movement for National Liberation (DMNL), a supportive movement for the Free Officers Movement. However, he was one of the DMNL's members who were imprisoned due to Gamal Abdel Nasser's attempt to repress the Communists. This political background and his political activism in general are greatly reflected through his novels which not only illuminate his great interest in developing the art of fiction in terms of style and ideas, but also his instilled belief that his works have an enlightening and awareness-raising function for people of their political and social reality. This has notably made his novels characterized by deep political messages and he is described as "a relentless internal critic of successive Egyptian regimes" (Aboul-Ela 251). Some of his well-known novels include *That Smell*, *The Star of August*, *The Committee*, *Zaat*, and *Amricanly*.

Amricanly (2003) means in Arabic 'my affairs were mine' but literally means 'American' or 'following the American style'. It narrates the story of an Egyptian professor of history, Dr. Shukry, who was invited to teach a course of history at one of the American universities in San Francisco in the fall of 1998. The novel is immensely replete with many historical events, mostly followed by footnotes for further details, to the extent that it seems as a historical narrative rather than a literary work. Shukry chooses the title of 'personal history' for the course to enable his students to understand the society based on the individual's interpretation of a historical event. Belonging to different ethnic cultures, which reflects a pivotal characteristic of the American society as a multi-cultured society, Shukry's students express

various perspectives through their presentations. The title of such lectures, 'personal history', is not restricted to the academic issues but includes an autobiographical element through the narration of Shukry himself of some of his personal experiences. Through such personal memories, many historical details and developments occurred within the Egyptian society are also told. In addition, "the students' voices become reflections of America's historical and contemporary consciousness," in Smith's viewpoint (185).

Shukry's interactions with his students and colleagues inside the university and public life communications in restaurants, supermarkets and the American street evoke Lukes and Nye's ideas concerning internal and international power relations led by the American government. Through his lectures with the students and interactions with the colleagues and staff of the university, Shukry knows a lot about the American policies. This knowledge gets deepened by his observation of the demonstrations occurring in the streets by various sectors of the society including demonstrations against racism, the American proposed wars against Iraq, and protests of the homeless for rent cuts. Through such focus on the voices of the minorities and detailed depictions of their sufferings, the myth of the American Dream and the image of America as the patron of freedom seem suspicious and needs rethinking.

It is worth noting that Shukry encountered the American presence even before his travel to America through his talk about the McDonald's restaurant, which he went to after visiting a psychiatrist who diagnosed him with depression. McDonald's is a symbolic tool of the American soft power due to its widespread presence in the Arab world. Another reference for the presence of the American soft power or Americanization of the Egyptian

society is promptly reflected when Shukry visits one of his relatives. Shukry's aunt tells him that she forces her husband to continue at his work in one of the gulf countries despite the unbearable working conditions to buy a mobile for their son. This situation reflects how the acquisition of this technology has become necessary to the extent that one is forced to give up his comfort to get it.

When Shukry arrives in America, his indulgences inside the society in various forms help the reader to hear various voices and see a real image of the power relations inside the American society. These forms include Shukry's lectures with students of different races (e.g. Native Americans, African- Americans, Japanese- Americans, Brazilian and Egyptian students) , his interactions with the colleagues and staff at the institute where he has been invited to teach (mainly Maher, Shadwick, and Jini), his attendance at the Thanksgiving at the house of one of his students, his visit to Maher's house, his attendance at the gathering of the Egyptian –Americans (organized regularly to express nostalgia for the homeland and enable the coming generation to know about the Egyptian traditions) and his daily interactions at supermarkets, cinema, restaurants and the streets.

Amricanly illuminates through various scenes in the novel how the American government attempts to make the American people approve and support the decision to wage wars on the Arab and Islamic world. It uses its soft power embodied in filmmaking, for example, to consolidate the image of the Arab as a terrorist. This is exemplified in the novel when Shukry is wandering in a street and wants to get a videotape from a video tape store. The contents of the store include movies by famous actors as James Bond and Rambo. On the top of these movies are: the *Iron Eagle*, which depicts the success of an American commando

group in blowing up an attempt for the establishment of an Arab nuclear reactor,” *Navy Seals* about “another commando group succeeds in destroying an Arab terrorist group trying to use Stinger missiles against the innocent civilians,” and other movies produced after the collapse of the World Trade Center by the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (Ibrahim 15; translation mine). This indicates how the American cinema has been used as a soft power tool to demonize the image of the Arab to give legitimacy to the American government in its war on Afghanistan and Iraq.

Another example that aptly embodies Lukes' third dimension of power and Nye's soft power is represented through the reference to *Wag the Dog*. Shukry concludes that the title of this American movie infers “giving the dog a plastic bone to distract it from real food” (Ibrahim 26; translation mine). Shukry understands that the movie is symbolically selected to refer to the American nation whose government is trying to distract them from the crisis of the President Bill Clinton due to his illegitimate relationship with Monica Lewinsky. They (i.e. the American government) assigned a famous director (as one of the tools of the American soft power) "to bring out a fake war that distracts people and makes them forget the president's scandal" (26; translation mine). The media announces the occupation of an unknown country that the people do not know, and the media is used as another tool of soft power to shape public awareness to support the president's decision to “direct a military attack against the terrorist state that does not exist” (26; translation mine). People, in return, "follow the details of this war in newspapers and on television,” which represent other tools of soft power, to form the public opinion that the government is doing what it should be done for the sake of their safety and security. Rather, “imaginary heroes are

fabricated from among the soldiers that the people sing about” (Ibrahim 26; translation mine).

Another soft power tool used by the American government is the American Dream. The American power holders insist on exporting the image of America as the paradise that everybody dreams of living in. Since its beginning, the American government has insisted on difference and distinction in order to ensure the American leadership over all countries of the world. This is evident in the novel when Shukry faces a problem with the lack of a suitable electrical connection for his computer, to find Shadwick, the secretary, explains that “the first European immigrants wanted to make everything American different from what is European. They made the electric current 110 volts instead of 220 and they also doubled the thickness of the socket rods” (Ibrahim 35; translation mine). Shadwick pursues her emphasis of such difference as a major quality of America "that you noticed our way of writing the date: the whole world begins with a day, then a month, then a year, except for us: the month first, then the day, then the year"(35). It is this insistence on being different at all levels, as referred to more than once in the novel, that illuminates how the effectiveness of the American soft power attracts immigrants to America and consolidates the image of America as a role model for all countries of the world, and therefore achieve all its goals.

The character of Maher represents such category of immigrants who are entirely ready to sacrifice their native identity to realize such American Dream. Maher was one of Shukry's students and a colleague at Cairo University. He received a scholarship to America and after getting his PH.D., he decided to stay in America rather than returning to Egypt, and now he is the director of the institute that invites Shukry for lecturing. Notably,

Maher is considered an exemplary model for everyone who sacrifices his identity and enables the American culture to dominate his life and way of thinking. In other words, Maher is captivated by the tools of the American soft power to extent that he completely lost his belongingness to his native culture. Throughout the novel Maher appears as a typical representative of the American culture in clothing and way of thinking; and he frequently defends all decisions by the American government. When Shukry meets him in America, Maher is a man who is proud of "obtaining American citizenship and becoming [...] the director of the study center that hosted [him]. He was plump, elegant, in a deceptive American style with a simple appearance" (Ibrahim 36; translation mine). Based on Nye's soft power and its attractive tools, Maher is an example of millions of immigrants who are fascinated by the American propagandized image of liberty, wealth, and technological and scientific advances. On the other hand, Maher is also a typical model of Lukes' third dimension of power. Like most Americans, Maher justifies the international American policies as protective means and that all decisions taken by the power holders (i.e. American government) are decided for the welfare and safety of the American nation.

Maher's belongingness to the American culture has become evident in all his responses; he speaks "enthusiastically about books, the possibilities of scientific research, and the numerous conferences" that fascinated him like thousands immigrants and even those still in their countries dreaming of living in America (36; translation mine). Later, he praises the American genius and its ability to solve crises due to its "enormous potential, economic progress, brilliant minds from everywhere, and the military arm that is able to pursue anywhere in the world" (62; translation mine). These are the same tools that the American government uses to form the internal awareness and obtain the

support of its citizens for the decisions of the power holders, which, ultimately, achieves the government's predetermined agenda, as Lukes pointed out in his third dimension of power.

Those tools are also employed within the soft power resources to control the international power relations between America and the rest of the world, and thus America achieves its political and economic agenda without wars or losses, as Nye indicated through his soft power approach. The success of promoting the American image as a leader in military, economic, scientific and political progress is not confined to the present, but rather Maher also believes that America is capable of solving "the problems of the future by going out into outer space and entering a completely different stage with other laws" (Ibrahim 63; translation mine).

Ironically, the walls of Maher's house are decorated with posters of the pyramids and Cairo Tower, but such attachment to the native culture is restricted only to the walls. Maher's children are also an outcome of such identity crisis. Despite their Arab roots, they appear in complete isolation from everyone who represents the original culture of their ancestors. They always speak English and prefer playing with their American friends or watching an American program than sitting with Arab guests. Soft power then in Maher's case as well as his children's results in obliteration of identity in favor of the American culture. In contrast is Maher's wife, Fathya, a woman with "a tingle of sadness on her face despite her well-styled hair" (60; translation mine). Despite being in the same dazzling culture, in her husband's point of view, she does not feel any integration into the American society. She is always longing to return to Egypt. Fathya is considered a model for those people that soft power tools cannot control, but rather she is constantly in a state of

struggle to achieve cultural integration within the American society.

Notably, unlike Maher or those who suffered identity obliteration in favor of the culture of the power holder (i.e. America) or even those suffer identity crisis inside the American culture, Shukry is characterized throughout the novel by his objective perspective. He has the ability to perceive the merits as well as the contradictions inside the American culture. Like Maher and others, Shukry already believes that America is a role model in scientific, military, economic advances, and liberty. Thus, it has been logical for Shukry to hold a comparison between his native culture and what he sees in America. This is clear, for example, when Maher walks around with him and they stop at the bulletin board of the student activities including various and freely expressed issues by "ethnic minorities [...], opponents of the nuclear war, [...] defenders of the environment, [...], supporters and enemies of the Palestinian state [...], opponents of racial discrimination, those who demand shelter for the homeless...etc." (Ibrahim 37; translation mine). This scene evokes a comparison in Shukry's mind between what he sees and what he is used to at his native culture embodied in the poor bulletin board of the student activities at his college at Cairo University, which is always surrounded and monitored by the armed state security force. Unlike their American counterpart, the activities by the Egyptian students were characterized by "their weak ideas such as their language, and the faces of male and female students with early signs of aging" (37; translation mine).

Although it is a nonverbal comparison, it was easily recognized through Shukry's facial expressions that made Maher stare at him "with the tip of a sample smiling and I realized that he

recognized what was on my mind," as Shukry notices (Ibrahim 37; translation mine). Obviously, Shukry's existence in America enables him to express all his criticisms of the Egyptian society. Like Maher, it seems that Shukry's presence in America provides him with such sense of freedom to criticize his native culture, as he admits when one of his students asks him about his opinion about life in America, he replies, "I enjoy expressing myself freely" (383; translation mine). In another scene, he compares between the customer service at the Egyptian banks and its counterpart in America. In Egypt, he has to visit the bank four times over the course of a week in order to finish his transaction:

on the first time the computer was broken, and the second time the employee was absent, on the third visit he was there, but the printer broke down, and the fourth time the in charge employee was there, the computer and printer were working , but the assessor was absent. (438; translation mine).

However, Shukry is not entirely captured, like Maher, by all such tools of the American soft power as he neither abandons his feeling of belongingness to his homeland nor his desire to live in it in spite of the threatening phone calls of assassination that he used to receive, like other writers as Naguib Mahfouz and Farag Fawda, due to his liberal ideas that he published in a book. Unlike Maher, Shukry still has the ability to perceive the contradictions within the American culture as well as the contradictory policies practiced by the American government at the global level. He is conscious of how the American power holders use media and press in the process of controlling the public opinion towards the policies of the government. For example, Maher knows from the British newspapers, not the American ones, that the factory that Clinton bombed in Sudan was a pharmaceutical factory, "and had nothing to do with nerve

agents, as he claimed" (Ibrahim 51, translation mine). Surprisingly, Maher admits in a censuring manner that he does not know this truth because "no American newspaper mentioned all that" (52; translation mine). In another situation, Maher, ironically, confirms the duality in the American personality by telling Shukry about a conference that is going to be conducted to enable the Arab intellectuals and thinkers to "express themselves without any censorship" (53; translation mine). This confirms the duality in the American policy that the country that conceals from its people the truth concerning bombing a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan or waging a war against Iraq is organizing a conference to enable others from different cultures to express their opinion freely.

Shukry is in fact conscious of such duality and is not totally absorbed in the American culture like Maher. He has the ability to perceive the other face of the American allegation of rejecting racial discrimination through the suffering of the minorities who live in such role model culture. For example, he describes the suffering of a Latin American family, hosted in an American news report, living in arduous conditions: "in one room live the father, the mother, their daughter and her uncle. A ten-year-old girl appeared, pointing to her bed above her uncle's bed [...]. She said she attended the death of her father and begged the killers not to kill him" (45; translation mine). The mother pursues telling their story that "the area was safe until the number of the illegal immigrants increased, to find a racial response directed by a white American [...] saying, 'I have the right to live in a clean and safe area and you pollute the place,'" justifying the killing of the innocent minorities. (45; translation mine).

This duality of the American policies is also asserted through Maher's description of the ethnic and racial discrimination

suffered by the non- Americans including him: "Maher was talking all the time about the conspiracies against him by some of the staff at the institute because of his straightforwardness and being an Arab," a matter that astonished Shukry because Maher is not involved in any political activity and he is " an American in the eyes of the law" (Ibrahim 57). Responding to Shukry's inquiry and feeling of astonishment, Maher replies:

The original race is important here. There are 30 major races arranged in a hierarchy: the highest occupations are for whites, followed by blacks, then Hispanics, [...] Asians and other races. [...]. There are also ready-made patterns: the black is a criminal, a rapist, the Mexican is a drug dealer, and the Arab is a terrorist. (57; translation mine).

On the other hand, the conference that hosted prominent Arab intellectuals and thinkers includes many like Shukry who are aware of the negative impact of the American soft power on the Arab identity as expressed in the speech by one of the attendees, Albardisi, who starts by "diagnosing the status quo in the Arab world and how it risks losing identity" (54; translation mine). He identifies through the introduction the causes represented in "the double siege that Arab peoples suffer from the atrophy of creativity on the one hand and the increasing dependence *on America* on the other hand" (54; translation mine; *italics added*). However, Al-Bardisi's words infer the positive environment for soft power in Arab societies, emphasizing that "there is no real sovereignty and no real independence without the ability to protect it (i.e. Arab identity): scientific knowledge, artistic and cultural production, as well as control over natural and social conditions" (54; translation mine).

Like Shukry and Albardisi, Marwan is another representative of those who are conscious of the hidden dimensions of the power

practiced by the American government. In contrast is Maher who is entirely controlled by and trust in the power holders (i.e. the American government). When Marwan states at the conference that "a third of the Americans live under the poverty line", Maher defends the American policy and utters the convictions that obsess many people that America is the bastion of freedom of expression and that "it is transparency that has enabled you to know such percentage," replying to Marwan (Ibrahim 63; translation mine). In an attempt to make Maher perceive the truth, the Palestinian intellectual asserts to Maher that such transparency is mere illusion and "you yourself told me a week ago that Reagan's advisors were preparing in advance the issues that the media would raise, and the result was the people's complete ignorance of the facts" (63; translation mine).

These words echo what Lukes refers to as 'agenda setting' where decisions are made in a secretive manner without informing people. This stage of agenda setting is intensified by persuading people that the power holders are working for their own interests. This third dimension of power is clearly represented by Maher's permanent defense for the government. For him, even if they decide the issues that are going to be discussed,

it suffices that you can here write whatever you want and sell it to the publisher you like and also sell the rights to publish a series for one of the magazines, then [the publisher] buys a movie studio and turns it into a movie [...]. All without objection from the state. (63; translation mine)

Marwan, in turn, replies that this is another illusion because the publisher belongs to that company that will publish the book in a magazine affiliated with it, and it is the same company that owns the movie studio and theaters, and it also stipulates that "the book

should not transcend certain red lines, otherwise it needs a miracle to be published" (Ibrahim 63; translation mine). In a society dominated by capitalism, Marwan believes that "money is everything to the American," which causes harm to workers and immigrants because of "low wages , the absence of health insurance, and safety rules" (65; 119 ; translation mine).

In a society that calls for democracy and denounces racism, the blacks despite the abolition of slavery "are still isolated in their own neighborhoods, complaining of poverty, disease and violence" (152; translation mine). The majority of them occupy lower jobs, and a few of them are among doctors, lawyers and engineers. In spite of that, media and press are used as a source of soft power to prove that "American democracy has fulfilled the promises made in the Declaration of Independence" (151; translation mine). The impact of the American soft power was not limited to forming the consciousness of immigrants like Maher who believes that America is a paradise that smart people should seek to live in, but that American citizenship also means safety if they want to live in their home countries. Such control over the formation of public consciousness is associated by Lukes with the third dimension of power and Nye calls it 'false consciousness'.

Masterly, peculiarities of the American culture are objectively reflected by some American characters in the novel, including Shukry's students in the class, the staff of the institute, and some American characters that Shukry interacts with in his public interactions outside the university. Such category of American citizens or immigrants can be described as survivors from the brunt of the 'false consciousness'. Criticisms presented by such American characters provide honest and trustable perspectives concerning the policies practiced by the American government at

the national and global levels. The presence of such American characters also makes questioning of the American power possible. For example, the character of Larry who believes that racism is still practiced against blacks, "even though some blacks occupy a prominent place in society, in fact they are the ones who were chosen by the whites according to specific conditions" (Ibrahim 152; translation mine).

There are also some Americans like Mrs. Shadwick who knows that America is not the paradise as many imagine and dream of. It is through Mrs. Shadwick, at the very beginning of the novel, that Shukry starts to perceive the other side of the socio-economic side of the American culture. Through her offer to accompany him in a tour in a dangerous area around 6th Street in San Francisco, one of the areas that Shukry has been warned not to go, Shukry is now able to see sufferings of the minorities and the invisible reality of both American soft power and the false consciousness status lived by defenders of the polices of the American power holders (e.g. Maher). Historically, the 6th Street area witnessed protests during the 1960s to restore the public land to Native Americans. Now, it is the same area that witnesses sufferings and deteriorating conditions of poor Americans, minorities, homeless, and drug addicts.

Through this tour, both Mrs. Shadwick and Shukry can be described as representatives of those who spoil agenda setting of power holders and whose desires oppose those desires of the power holders. Listening carefully with great curiosity to discover the causes of such phenomenon of homelessness, Shukry is influenced by Mrs. Shadwick's description that drug addiction and unemployment are among the main causes of such phenomenon that make half of the "American population spends seventy percent of their income on housing that they don't own,

and therefore they could easily lose!" (Ibrahim 248; translation mine). As an American, Mrs. Shadwick is afraid to wake up one morning to find herself "unable to buy a piece of meat [...] helped by a young man to get on the tram [and] begging the vegetable seller to be patient with [her] until [her] meager Social Security check comes in" (247; translation mine). The same difficult living conditions will prompt Zeina, the protagonist of Inaam Kachachi's *American Granddaughter*, to join the American army and participate in the occupation of her homeland, Iraq.

The author of *Sawaqi al-Quloob (Streams of Hearts, 2005)* and *Al-Hafeeda al-Amreekiya (The American Granddaughter, 2008)*, Inaam Kachachi is an Iraqi novelist, journalist, and activist. She left Iraq and settled in Paris due to the restriction of freedom of expression under the regime of Saddam Hussein. This may justify why enabling the oppressed and the voiceless has become a pivotal theme in her writings since her departure from her homeland. Living in another culture has enabled Kachachi to depict such sense of self-split that a refugee or an immigrant suffers in the host culture as masterly exemplified through the character of Zeina Benham, the protagonist of her shortlisted novel for the 2009 International Prize for Arabic Fiction, *The American Granddaughter*.

The American Granddaughter, al Hafeeda al Amreekiya as titled in Arabic, depicts the hoax promoted by the American government to legitimize its invasion of Iraq in 2003, claiming that the aim is to search for weapons of mass destruction to protect the Americans and the world at large from terrorism and to liberate the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein's regime. Narrating "a story like no other," Kachachi manages through her novel to depict the dilemma of "Iraqi and other Arab refugees...

[of] divided loyalties and shattered lives—the simultaneity of conspicuous togetherness and conspicuous otherness in a predominantly globalized world" (Kachachi 8; AbdelRahman 2).

Like Maher in *Amricanly*, Zeina is entirely captivated by the American culture at the time that her mother shares Fathya, Maher's wife, the belief that "emigration was like captivity: both left you suspended between two lives, with no comfort in moving on or turning back" (Kachachi 97). In Iraq, Zeina's father was a famous TV presenter and her mother used to work at the University of Baghdad, a respectful family that was forced to leave Iraq due to the cruelty of the regime. Zeina was only fifteen years old when her family immigrated to the U.S.A. In America, the condition of such family turned upside down as the father becomes a carrier of "beer boxes at a storehouse owned by relatives," the mother works in the kitchen of a hotel and then the reception, and Zeina's younger brother, Yazen, is a drug addict (105). Like millions who dream of the American citizenship to realize the American Dream of liberty, as globally propagandized, Zeina's family immigrated to America to realize such dream but it turns into a nightmare. In "the rotting wooden houses of Seven Miles" and impoverished neighborhood, Zeina's family and their immigrant neighbors suffered poverty and "gained money only after hard labour took their health. They went home at the end of the night drained and barely able to recognize their families" (99).

Like Fathya in *Amricanly*, Zeina's mother, Batoul, suffers such identity crisis. Both refuse any sense of belongingness to the host culture. Their behaviour and their daily actions are devoted to strengthen the bonds with their motherlands. Fathya always watches Egyptian movies and decorates the walls with posters of the Pyramids. It is her longing to return to Egypt that makes her

cry day and night. In contrast are her children who speak English only and totally indulged in the American culture. Likewise, Batoul speaks at home the Iraqi Arabic only and is keen to make her children to do the same: "English remained the language of the street, work and the news. We [...] speak it the moment we stepped outside the house"; and as "the homes of all immigrants in our community, the corners of our apartment were also piled high with cassette tapes and CDs of Arabic songs by Fairuz, Um Kulthum and Kazim Al-Sahir," as Zeina narrates (Kachachi 15; 16).

The most traumatic moment for Batoul was the time of getting the American citizenship, as described by Zeina: "She was the only one not dressed up ... for the occasion like the thousands who filled the area surrounding Wayne State University in Detroit ... All were in their best attire, as though it were a holiday, but even more special than a holiday" (19). She refused to join the gathering of immigrants and "walked apart ... and looked like she was in a funeral procession" (19). At the time that everybody was boasting after the oath saying, "I am an American citizen," the voice of the Iraqi woman Batoul Fatouhy Saour "break[s] as if she was suffocating" and "she wailed in Arabic, 'Forgive me, Father. Yaabaa, forgive me'"(20). However, Batoul's attempts to relate the children to their Iraqi roots do not protect them from being immersed, like Fathya's children, into the American culture. It is Batoul's daughter, Zeina, who considers her participation in the American invasion against Iraq as a holy mission and not only an opportunity for a financial reward.

Zeina's life can be divided into three stages: the stage before going to Iraq, or what can be described as the stage of complete identity obliteration. Secondly, the dual identity conflict stage

that starts on her arrival in Iraq and her meeting with her grandmother. Thirdly, the stage of self-recognition, which begins after her return from Iraq and the death of her grandmother.

Zeina and her family are like most American citizens whose beliefs are formed by the decisions of the power holders, i.e. the American administration. The American administration uses all sources of soft power to form and control consciousness of the citizens and, therefore, legitimize the American invasion of Iraq. Through the TV channels and the press, they were able to convince most of their citizens that the war on Iraq became an inevitable destiny to protect the American citizen and the whole world from the danger of terrorism and the awaited destruction due to the alleged American claim that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction.

Rather, the sources of soft power represented by the media and the press did not stop at these justifications only, but also made the war on Iraq a humanitarian mission to liberate the Iraqi people from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein. The success of the American administration in forming such kind of false consciousness among the majority of American citizens, among whom are immigrants of Arab origin, became obvious when the American administration announced its need for translators to accompany the American army in its war on Iraq or what is known as the Second Gulf War. Unbelievably, Zeina considers it an opportunity of a lifetime to improve the living conditions of her family, condoning all patriotic ethics towards her motherland, Iraq. Zeina describes how Iraqis and other Arabs in Detroit agree to sacrifice their original identity for "Ninety-seven thousand dollars a year. All expenses paid", it was "the mantra that started it all. It spread among Iraqis and other Arabs in Detroit, setting suns alight underneath heavy quilts and making palm leaves

sway above the snow that still covered front yards" (Kachachi 12).

Due to the influence of the financial rewards of such mission as well as various tools of soft power that were devoted to spread the news in the communities of immigrants, Zeina has become a mouthpiece of the American administration. She is ready now to accompany the American army to "bring down Saddam and liberate a nation from its suffering" and believes that the Iraqi people "won't believe their eyes when they finally open onto freedom. Even old men will become boys again when they sup from the milk of democracy" (13). On the other hand, other Arabs decide to accompany the American army for the same purpose, which is to obtain thousands of dollars that will change their lives, forgetting all the principles of Arabism and disavowing their Arab identity.

Based on Luckes' third dimension of power and Nye's soft power, this attitude reflects the domination of the American government and its ability to control one's consciousness and beliefs through media as a source of soft power to impose the American hegemony and achieve what the American administration wants nationally and globally. However, some Arabs and Iraqis survived such clutches of soft power and see in the cooperation with the American army "betrayal of the land from whose Tigris and Euphrates we had drunk, even if it was for the good of our new land that poured us Coca-Cola morning and night" (13).

Secondly, the dual identity conflict stage between Zeina's Iraqi and North American identity begins when Zeina arrives Baghdad to see "terrified children and innocent civilians dying in Baghdad" and how the American presence in Iraq makes funerals like a "daily routine, no different from going to the cinema in

happier lands” (Kachachi 17; 103). Destruction is everywhere in Iraq as if it "had witnessed the end of the world" (31). This dual identity crisis is intensified and gets worse when she meets her Iraqi kinships, she is "their daughter and their enemy, while they could be [her] kin as well as [her] enemy" (11). At the time that she wants to be proud of her Iraqi roots and to tell her Iraqi kinships that "Colonel Youssef Fatouhy, assistant to the chief of army recruitment in Mosul in the 1940s, was [her] grandfather", she cannot because this is against orders of the American camp she belongs to because it could put her and her colleagues at risk (11).

Zeina who used to boast about her US army uniform, now resents it as it is "cutting [her] off from [her] people" (11). Before coming to Iraq and while she was at the security interview, the woman officer asked her, "If the terrorists kidnap you and threaten to torture you, what secret information would you be willing to give them?", and she seriously and rudely replied, "I'd stick my shoe up their asses" (103). Ironically, Zeina is completely different in Iraq. Now she wants "to flaunt [her] kinship in front of *Iraqi people*, show them that [she] was a daughter of the same part of the country, that [she] spoke their language with the same accent" (10 - 11; *italics added*). Unfortunately, this cannot be done because she returned to them "not as a visitor to her birthplace but as a soldier in the battlefield" (27). At this stage, Zeina "brings the readers into her world of shattered identity" between loyalty to her roots and belongingness to the American culture; she plays a dual role now: "the colonized and the colonizer," in Elnamoury's words (102).

This stage of self-split is masterly represented through the internal conflict between Zeina and the author inside her, the

"alter ego who'd learned to imitate the pitch of [her] tone" (Kachachi 80). This inner presence of the writer symbolizes Zeina's Iraqi identity in its struggle with her American identity, but Zeina fiercely refuses the presence of such writer who tries to "force out a patriotic novel at *her* expense. *This writer* wants to paint *her* as the villain and *her* grandmother as the brave and kind heroine," something that Zeina will never accept (24; *italics added*). Moreover, this alter ego in a writer's shape attempts to rescue Zeina from the obliteration of her Iraqi identity in favor of the hegemony of the American identity: "The writer sees me as a stepdaughter of the occupation and my grandmother as a jewel of the resistance. [...]. She gives me the features of the prodigal daughter who returns like a female Rambo on a US Army tank," in Zeina's words (24).

Obviously, this is the most difficult and challenging stage that Zeina goes through. The dual identity conflict gets intensified day after another during this stage. Zeina's self is shattered between the loyalty to the country that was the shelter for her and her family after their departure from Iraq, and the patriotic history of her grandparents. At this stage, stubbornness dominates the actions. Zeina perceives the writer inside her as a naïve person and criticizes

her rancid, Stone Age nationalism. [...]. I nearly die laughing at her passion for slogans, her blindness and her grand sense of mission that turns her novels into rowdy demonstrations chanting pre-written slogans. Long live this. Down with that. [...]. Let the writer go to hell! (25)

The third stage is the stage of self-recognition. It starts after Zeina's return from Iraq. She returns from Iraq to be accompanied with one friend, sorrow: "Sorrow...has turned the world and everything in it a strange color with unfamiliar hues

that my words stutter to describe and my eyes fail to register ... Even my laughter has changed” (Kachachi 7). Zeina now is completely aware of the truth that "war was a rotten onion” (129). She is now a woman with "a cemetery inside her chest"; she is "no longer an ordinary American but a woman from a faraway and ancient place"(7 - 8). Noticeably, the most influential factor in such stage of change and self-recognition is her meeting with her grandmother in Iraq.

It is through her grandmother, Rahma, that Zeina starts her transitional phase from identity obliteration into self-realization and then cultural reconciliation. The memories and the tales told by grandmother Rahma were counter-tools of the American soft power that captured Zeina and the false consciousness shaped by its tools. Although she is a housewife and an old woman, Rahma's comments on the political actions like "an expert on strategic affairs or CNN commentator" (35). Rahma's tales and talks have a magic effect on Zeina, as she narrates:

Grandma Rahma ran a trembling hand across my hair, hoping those stories would win me over to her side. This woman didn't give up easily, and it seemed like her plan was to baste me over a slow fire. She took a little bit out of her pot full of stories and used it to nourish my roots, to bring life into the branches of my belonging. She spread her fingers to rub my forehead, the way she used to drive fear away after a nightmare when I was little. She rubbed vigorously to drive away the evil spirit that had possessed me and returned me to her in a distorted form. (36)

Grandma Rahma would never accept the loss of her granddaughter. Even her death plays a crucial role in such stage of self-recognition. The presence of the grandmother strengthens the bonds between Zeina and the heritage of her ancestors.

Kachachi's portrayal of this character seems as an attempt to "return [Zeina] to her Iraqi righteous path, not to [the] American one" (Kachachi 117). The right path for identity-recovery and self-recognition is the strong bonds with one's roots; the same message to which Adichie's *Americanah* is devoted.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (b.1977) is a Nigerian storyteller. Her works include a short story collection titled, *The Thing around Your Neck* (2009) and remarkable novels as *Purple Hibiscus* (2004), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2007) and her award-winning novel *Americanah* (2013). Ironically, the formation of Adichie's identity as a writer is, partly, a typical example of the influence of the American soft power on the form of her literary production, as she recalls in one of her speeches: "I was an early reader, and what I read were British and American children's books [...]. When I began to write [...], I wrote exactly the kinds of stories I was reading: All my characters were white and blue-eyed" ("The Danger" 0:35-0:58). However, it was the influence of African writers as Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye that later caused "a mental shift in [her] perception of literature", as she appreciates saying, "I realized that people like me, girls with skin the color of chocolate, whose kinky hair could not form ponytails, could also exist in literature. I started to write about things I recognized" ("The Danger" 2:16- 2:36). Such recognition strengthens the sense of loyalty towards her heritage and her African Nigerian identity, as reflected in *Americanah*, her third novel that was awarded the National Book Critics Circle Award in 2014.

Like Sunallah Ibrahim's *Amricanly*, which is set on his experience of staying and lecturing at one of universities in the US, Adichie's *Americanah* is related to her stay in the US as a university student. As many students from the developing

countries who are fascinated by the propagandized image of the incompatible qualified education in the US, Adichie got also fascinated by the American higher education but at the same time was bitterly shocked, like the protagonist of her novel (Ifemelu), by the racial discrimination that contradicts all the US claims of equality. She discovered that being black is a shame in the American culture which still respects and glorifies white skin and blonde hair as icons of beauty:

It didn't take me very long to realize that in America black was not necessarily a good thing, and that black came with many negative assumptions. And so I didn't want to be black. I'm not black. I'm Nigerian. I'm Igbo. I'm not black. Race was not an identity I was willing to take. ("Conversation with Damian Woetzel" 37:07- 37:21)

Ergo, Adichie's *Americanah* belongs to the social realist fiction as it addresses the reality of the immigrants and the challenges they encounter abroad. It tells the story of a young Nigerian girl, Ifemelu, who escapes the instability and strikes at her country and travels to the US to study at the university. Like Maher in *Amricanly* and Zeina's family in *The American Granddaughter*, Ifemelu is another seeker of the American Dream, and she faces the same trauma of identity obliteration that some immigrants face in America but in Ifemelu's case, she is doubly traumatized due to her black skin. Being a Non-American black inside the American society categorizes Ifemelu as an outsider in spite of all her efforts to adapt to the American culture.

Ifemelu notices that many immigrants try hard to imitate white Americans in their accent and lifestyle at the expense of their original culture. For example, when she meets her Aunty Uju, Ifemelu finds her a typical American image. She speaks and behaves like Americans abandoning anything that may disrupt

such case of belongingness to the American culture. When Ifemelu uses their native Nigerian language, Igbo, in front of Aunty Uju's son , she dislikes such behaviour and asks Ifemelu to stop doing that:

“Dike, I mechago?” Ifemelu asked.

“Please don’t speak Igbo to him.” Aunty Uju said. “Two languages will confuse him.”

“What are you talking about, Aunty? We spoke two languages growing up.”

“This is America. It’s different.” (Adichie 114)

The only moment that Aunty Uju uses her native language, Igbo, is when punishing her son threatening him to send him back to Nigeria. She, then, sacrifices her original identity for the favour of the American one: “Aunty Uju had deliberately left behind something of herself, something essential, in a distant and forgotten place,” as Ifemelu notes (124). She is now an *Americanah*; a term used by the Nigerians to describe and criticize those who travel to the US and return back talking like the Americans (i.e. using the same accent) and adopting the same American lifestyle. As a result, Aunty Uju is a type of a mother who causes identity trauma to her son by snatching him from his roots. Nigeria for him becomes a place for punishment while in America he, like all black people, suffers identity crisis due to his black skin. The guilt that Aunty Uju committed against her son is that she "told him what he wasn't but [...] didn't tell him what he was" (377). The outcome is then an American/African identity crisis that motivates Dike's attempt to commit suicide.

Following the example of Aunty Uju, Ifemelu at the beginning tries to adapt to the values of the American culture but the result is her self- split. She finds herself in a society completely

different from her own. She never faces such issue of racism in her country. She is trapped between adaptation and resistance. She tries to adapt to norms of the Whites and at the same time refuses identity obliteration represented by her aunt and her friend, Ginika, who find in their adaptation to the American norms tranquility even if it is at the expense of the norms of their native culture. During the secondary school, Ifemelu's friend, Ginika, used to be described as the prettiest girl in the class, and Ginika used to justify the reason of being pretty that her mother is white. Beauty, racism, and identity are then pivotal issues in the life of Ifemelu.

Being an undergraduate student with African roots in America places her among the marginalized and the stigmatized due to the racial reality of such society. At this society,

discrimination can be self-consciously motivated, or it can be half-conscious or unconscious and deeply imbedded in an actor's core beliefs. At the level of everyday interaction with black Americans and other Americans of color, most whites can create racial tensions and barriers even without conscious awareness they are doing so. Examples of this include when white men lock their car doors as a black man walks by on the street or when white women step out or pull their purses close to them when a black man comes into an elevator they are on. Stereotyped images of black men as criminals probably motivate this and similar types of defensive action. (qtd. in Dias and Pinto 237)

Ifemelu finds herself in a societal context entirely different from her Nigerian one: "I came from a country where race was not an issue; I did not think of myself as black and I only became black when I came to America," in Ifemelu's words (Adichie 293). Here in America, she is classified as one of the minorities or the

marginalized because of the racial reality of the American society. This inspires Ifemelu to create a blog titled, *Raceteenth or Various Observations About American Blacks (Those Formerly Known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black*, to address the racial issues that still faced and suffered by the African American immigrants in spite of all the American claims of equality and liberty. In one of the provoking posts published at her blog, Ifemelu cynically addresses the Non-American Black telling them what means to be a 'Non-American Black' within the American society:

Dear Non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I'm Jamaican or I'm Ghanaian. America doesn't care. So what if you weren't "black" in your country? You're in America now. We all have our moments of initiation into the Society of Former Negroes. [...] you're black, baby. [...] Black people are not supposed to be angry about racism. Otherwise you get no sympathy. This applies only for white liberals, by the way. Don't even bother telling a white conservative about anything racist that happened to you. Because the conservative will tell you that YOU are the real racist and your mouth will hang open in confusion. (Adichie 225-6)

Ifemelu tries to let the silenced voices to speak and share their stories of suffering within such racial reality. Unexpectedly, her blog attracts huge numbers of followers and gets various invitations to lectures in some universities and speak in some events. On the other hand, some people attack her severely with harsh comments: "YOUR TALK WAS BALONEY. YOU ARE A RACIST. YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL WE LET YOU INTO THIS COUNTRY" (307). Obviously, Ifemelu is attacked

by such comments because she unmasks a critical issue (i.e. racism) that Americans avoid any discussion related to it. It can be said that this unknown attacker projects his instilled discourse of racism onto Ifemelu by describing her as a racist. Creating such blog can be described then as the first step for identity recovery and self-recognition. Noteworthy, it was such stereotypes and the American social structure encountered by Ifemelu that enable her self-recognition and influenced her identity construction process. It is an inevitable reality that neither African-American or American-African can escape.

At one of her interviews when Adichie was asked about the difference between "African American" and "American African", she replied that she

made it up in the novel, but it reflects a real difference, because African American is a word I would use to describe the person of African descent whose ancestors were brought forcefully to the US as slaves. And an American African is a person of African descent who came, or whose family came, more or less willingly. ("Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie- *Americanah*" 1:20- 1:44)

Unfortunately, whether you are an 'African American' or 'American African', you are a victim of marginalization and racial discrimination in the American society

despite anti-discrimination laws [...]. A large gap – in education, income, wealth, health and justice – persists particularly between white and black Americans, whose history of slavery, legalized segregation and state-approved terror partly accounts for their ongoing stigmatized status in society. (Harris 104)

After the success she achieved by her blog, Ifemelu decides to return back to Nigeria; a decision which shocks the hair braider whom she visits to have her hair braided before travelling to Nigeria. At the salon, the hair braider and her black fellows wonder how she can cope with life in Nigeria again after living in America for thirteen years. Returning back to Nigeria is considered by such black fellows a step backward from success and progress; a reaction that reflects how their identities are entirely captivated by the American soft power that is always devoted to show America as a role model of success, liberty, and progress. Symbolically, to have her hair braided before returning to Nigeria indicates the success of identity formation process that Ifemelu goes through and finally her self-recognition. Now she is totally free of the captivity of the American norms of beauty that make race, skin color, and hairstyle the standards that classify people into superiors and inferiors.

When Ifemelu returns to her homeland, she is now described as an "Americanah". In the same context, when Adichie was interviewed by Synne Rifbjerg and she asked her if she can be described as an "Americanah", Adichie unhesistantly replied, "No!" in an attempt to confirm her loyalty to her African and Nigerian roots ("Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie- *Americanah*" 0:30). Adichie tries through her protagonist Ifemelu to convey a resisting message against racism in the American society that

race is not biology; race is sociology. Race is not genotype; race is phenotype. Race matters because of racism. And racism is absurd because it's about how you look. Not about the blood you have. It's about the shade of your skin and the shape of your nose and the kink of your hair. (Adichie 339)

The message implicated through Adichie's *Americanah* is that man has no hand in the colour of his skin, or the race he or she

belongs to. Such shameful stereotypes of black people and degrading qualities associated with them (e.g. tar baby, Negroes, etc.) are inventions of racial societies as the American society. The problem with such a society is that it does not discuss or confront the problem of racism honestly and transparently, as it considers it a problem that goes back to the past and that it has been overcome ignoring all frequent racial accidents faced by the coloured people. Such racial incidents reflect the racial reality of the American society, the "self-proclaimed colour-blind nation," in Pardiñas' words, that Ifemelu faces through her inspiring blog against racism (22).

As noted through the aforementioned analysis of *Amricanly*, *American Granddaughter* and *Americanah*, the impact of the American soft power tools, whether represented through Lukes' three-dimensional model or Nye's approach of soft power, on the identity formation process is obvious. However, the result of this impact varies from one character to another and the characters can be divided then into three categories. The first category includes those who realized self-recognition and got rescued from identity obliteration. They, like most of the other characters, are fascinated by the American culture and the American advances in science, technology and economy but enjoy insight and consciousness that enable them to transcend such conflict between loyalty to their roots and belongingness to the American substitutional identity. This category includes characters like Shukry, Zeina, and Ifemelu.

Professor Shukry in *Amricanly* is aware that America is a role-model country due to its superiority in science, technology and human rights, but at the same time he is aware of the contradictions and the other face of the American soft power. He also prefers to live in his native culture, Egypt, with complete

awareness of the type of life that cannot be compared with the American lifestyle. In addition, the threat that he received due to the publication of his book does not influence his attachment to his native culture. Other characters as Bardisi and Marwan belong also to such category in *Amricanly*.

In *American Granddaughter*, Zeina's survival from such conflict seems more difficult. She and her family were forced to leave Iraq and it is the American society that host them. This may justify why her loyalty at the beginning is totally for America to the extent that she considers participating in the American army in the invasion of Iraq a holy and humanitarian mission. She plays the role of both the victimized and the victimizer at the same time. A double-sided experience, Zeina's shameful travel with the US army to invade Iraq turns to be unexpectedly blessing. That military mission enables Zeina to encounter her roots and to meet her grandmother Rahma who struggles to restore her granddaughter and to put her on the right path.

In *Americanah*, the conflict between preservation of the native identity and adaptation to the American culture is deeper. Ifemelu is not an ordinary immigrant, she is a Non-American black girl, an attribute that intensifies her suffering and makes her survival more challenging. Ifemelu finds herself in a society with different concerns. She never faces in her Nigerian society an issue like racism. In order to lead a rather ordinary life in America, she has to be adapted to the American norms of beauty and follow the same lifestyle. However, this does not guarantee a peaceful life for a Non-American black as she is always treated as an outsider and a marginalized figure. Ifemelu's step towards self-recognition starts with her blog about racism. When she later decides to leave America, she decides that as a victorious not as a marginalized. It is a return to the right path, not an escape.

Having her hair braided before returning to Nigeria symbolically infers full recovery of her identity. She is no longer captivated by the American norms. When Ifemelu returns to Lagos in Nigeria, she creates a new blog. However, the Non-American black blogger Ifemelu in America is entirely different from the Nigerian blogger Ifemelu. In America, she was struggling for self-recognition and identity recovery, while in Nigeria she lives her true self, free from any sense of identity obliteration. Beside Shukry and Zeina, Ifemelu managed to combine between positive aspects related to the role-model culture (i.e. America) and their native cultures achieving cultural reconciliation; the main target of soft power.

The second category includes the characters who failed to realize such stage of cultural reconciliation. This category is trapped between feeling of estrangement in the American society and inability to return to their homelands. Fathya, Maher's wife in *Amricantly*, and Batoul, Zeina's mother in *The American Granddaughter*, represent this category. Despite being in the same dazzling culture, in others' point of view, they do not feel any integration into the American culture. Fathya is always longing to return to Egypt, watches Egyptian movies, and decorates the walls with posters of the Pyramids. It is her longing to return to Egypt that makes her cry day and night. Likewise, Batoul never feels that she belongs to such dazzling American culture. Unlike others who consider the day of getting the American citizenship a festival, for Batoul it is the most traumatic moment in her life. She refuses to join the gathering of immigrants and behaves as if she is in a funeral procession. People like Fathya and Batoul cannot realize such stage of self-recognition and therefore they are deprived of any sense of happiness.

The third category, or the identity-obliterated category, includes those who abandon, or ready to abandon, any bonds with their roots. This category is entirely captivated by the American soft power tools, and their awareness is formed by the American power holders. Maher and his children in *Amricanly*, Haydar in *The American Granddaughter*, and Aunty Uju in *Americanah* represent such category. Throughout the novel Maher appears as a typical representative of the American culture in clothing and way of thinking; and he frequently defends all decisions by the American government. For him, America is the role- model of liberty, wealth, and technological and scientific advances. Because of his sincere belongingness to everything American, Maher always justifies the international American policies as protective means and that all decisions taken by the American government are decided for the prosperity and safety of the American nation. The US for him has such magic ability to solve any crises due to its enormous resources at all levels. Being a role-model for his children, Maher's children, in return, are typical Americans. They prefer playing with their American friends rather than interaction with their Egyptian acquaintances. They speak English all the time and prefer watching English movies rather than Arabic ones. They Are Americans to the bones.

In *The American Granddaughter*, Haydar is an American in the way of thinking although he has never travelled to the US. He rejects any harsh words by grandmother Rahma against Zeina because Zeina

could be his only ticket out of the shifting quicksand he was in. She could help him with the immigration documents and take him along to America. There he would catch up on his lost youth, he would drink as he liked, let his hair down and

sing and dance without the self-appointed guardians of virtue coming after him. (Kachachi 53)

Living in his homeland and among his folk is considered a dilemma that Haydar dreams of being rescued from.

In *Americanah*, Auntu Uju abandons anything that may relate her to her native culture. She is a typical *Americanah*, as her Nigerian folks describe her, a woman who refuses to use her native language while bringing up her son, Dike. The only moment that Auntu Uju uses her native language, Igbo, is when punishing her son threatening him to send him back to Nigeria. As a result, she causes identity crisis to her son by separating him from his roots. Nigeria for him becomes a place for punishment while in America he, like Non- American blacks, suffers identity crisis due to his black skin. Due to such American/African identity crisis, Dike decides to commit suicide but is rescued by Ifemelu. It can be said that such category failed to recognize the real aim of soft power.

Notwithstanding, in spite of the success and popularity of Nye's approach on soft power, some scholars criticize this approach describing Nye's explanations of the significant role of resources in differentiating between hard and soft power as ambiguous and confusing. Responding to this criticism, Nye wrote, "I originally wrote that the ability to get others to want what you want 'tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology and institutions'", and added that he "was using a behavioral definition of power but trying to reconcile it with the common policy practice of using a resource definition" (2021, 5-6). Other researchers as L. Gelb and C. Layne view in Nye's description of the importance of soft power a kind of exaggeration that leave people with an impression that "soft power now means everything," as Nye mentions (2021, 6).

Nye justifies such criticism against his approach of soft power and the traditional preference of hard power that hard power is always associated with tangible resources and that "makes power appear more concrete, measurable, and predictable", while soft power seems more difficult as it "work[s] indirectly by shaping the environment for policy, and sometimes takes years to produce the desired outcomes" ("The Benefits of Soft Power" 2004; "Soft Power: The Means to Success" x). Commenting on this views, David A. Baldwin believes that tangibility should not be the only criterion to distinguish between hard and soft power, but he asserted the significant contribution of Nye to the development of the concept of soft power. For Baldwin, "Nye's discussion of soft power stimulated and clarified the thoughts of policy makers and scholars alike- even those who misunderstood or disagree with his views" (171).

Actually, Nye views the relationship between hard power and soft power as complementary. Hard power sometimes provides the fertile environment for the production of soft power. For example, the presence of the American troops in some regions is welcomed by some nations and is justified as means of protection and indication of mutual benefits. In this case, hard power (i.e. military presence) provides respect, cooperation, and admiration (tools of soft power). The effectiveness of power in Nye's perspective depends on the context in which it is employed, or cultural and social background of its target receptors. For example, "a given cultural resource such as a Hollywood film may produce attraction in Brazil at the same time it produces repulsion in Saudi Arabia"(Nye, 2021, 6). Another example can be traced back to the Gulf War time when the American policy was appreciated in the Middle East and increased feelings of attraction towards the US because it was associated with protection, while the same policy was angrily received and

rejected after the invasion of Iraq, and it distorted any positive attitudes towards the US. Thus, the positive or negative image of power depends on the context in which this type of power is employed.

As for Lukes' opinion, the traditional vision of power is perceived by Lukes as "entirely unsatisfactory" because it focuses only on "the *exercise* of power", while power "is a dispositional concept, identifying an ability or capacity, which may or may not be exercised" (*PRV* 109, *italics original*). On the other hand, this traditional vision perceives power as a game where there is a stronger or superior partner who owns the capacity to control and influence another partner who is weaker in this case and is obliged to do what the power holder wants even though it is against his own interests (i.e. the weaker one). Power in this sense is synonymous with domination and control where power relations are based on ability and superiority of the power holder (i.e. the dominant), on one hand, and submissiveness and compliance of those subject to this power (i.e. the dominated).

This vision was entirely criticized by Lukes because it "neglect[s] what we have seen to be the manifold ways in which power over others can be productive, transformative, authoritative, and compatible with dignity" (*PRV* 109). Notwithstanding, Lukes does not deny existence of domination in power relations and he considers it as the most significant form of power. In addition, Lukes argues through his third dimension of power how the dominated willingly accept this domination by showing acquiescence to norms or ideas that oppress and obsess them. Lukes' third dimension of power is then about "how people can be powerless on their own without action from the powerful," as Dowding puts it (137).

In a nutshell, Lukes and Nye's perspective on power seems integrated and complementary. Both reject this type of power that dispossesses a person of his freedom, dignity, and ability to be a positive human being with will, vision and freedom. Both assure that power to be described as positive, it has to be productive. For Lukes, the traditional vision of power, where domination controls power relations, is unhealthy and results in a false consciousness. The power holders in this case have the ability to control individuals' consciousness to do what the power holders want and, moreover, to believe that the power holders' wants are their wants too. For Nye, soft power has to be prioritized to hard power. He believes that hard or the military power brought tremendous losses to the US and had a dangerous influence on the international relations with his country. He finds in the soft power tools, such as scholarships, aids, commercial exchange, media, filmmaking ... etc., the hope to compensate all the American losses and to enable the US to realize all its goals. However, he neither neglects the importance of hard power nor legitimizes domination to be a tool of his soft power. The aim of soft power is to achieve cultural reconciliation at the global level; the message and the aim that some characters as Shukry, Zeina, and Ifemelu in the selected novels have realized, while others failed.

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القوة الناعمة الأمريكية بين الوفاق الثقافي وطمس الهوية

في روايات متعددة الأعراق

مُلخَص

يُعتبر مفهوم "القوة الناعمة" **Soft Power** من المفاهيم المثيرة للجدل، والتي تحظى باهتمام كبير بين العلماء والفلاسفة والسياسيين وعلماء الاجتماع وغيرهم ؛ لذا نجد صنّاع القرار يستخدمونه بشكل متكرر في خطاباتهم وأحاديثهم في وسائل الإعلام والصحافة في جميع أنحاء العالم، حتى أصبح تبني سياسة القوة الناعمة أمراً حتمياً، لا مفر منه ، خاصة في الوقت الحاضر؛ نتيجة للتغيرات التكنولوجية المذهلة من جانب وما تشهده العلاقات الدولية بين بعض الدول من توتر من جانب آخر . وبالرغم من الجذور التاريخية لهذا المصطلح إلا أن تطوره ، ولفت الأنظار إليه - بشكل كبير- يرجع إلي عالم السياسة الأمريكي جوزيف ناي **Joseph Nye** . فلقد لاحظ ناي أن استخدام القوة الصلبة **Hard Power** والتمثلة في الحروب والقوة العسكرية قد ألحق أضراراً اقتصادية بالغة بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، فضلاً عن تشوية صورتها- خاصة- في الشرق الأوسط عقب غزوها للعراق؛ الأمر الذي جعله يري في استخدام القوة الناعمة الحل الأمثل فضلاً عن كونها أقل تكلفة. وتتمثل أدوات القوة الناعمة من وجهة نظر ناي في دعم بلده (أمريكا) لحقوق الإنسان في مختلف بلدان العالم ، وفي تسخير وسائل الإعلام المختلفة لتحسين صورة الحكومة الأمريكية ، فضلاً عن توفير المنح الدراسية بالولايات المتحدة وتقديم المساعدات الإنسانية لبلدان العالم المنكوبة وقت الكوارث والأزمات. وبهذا تستطيع الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية - من وجهة نظر ناي- تحقيق ما فشلت القوة العسكرية في تحقيقه من حيث تأكيد سيادة أمريكا وتحقيق أجندتها العالمية.

والجدير بالذكر أن فكرة التأثير على الشعوب لفعل ما يريد أصحاب السلطة يكون من خلال الإقناع بدلاً من الإكراه؛ دفعت الباحثين إلي ربط نهج ناي بنموذج البعد الثالث للسلطة **Third Dimension of Power** الذي طوره ستيفن لوكس **Steven Lukes** ، المنظر السياسي البريطاني ، الذي يستعرض من خلاله قدرة أصحاب السلطة علي التأثير علي أفكار الأفراد أو الشعوب والتحكم في أفكارهم ورغباتهم إلي الدرجة التي تدفعهم لقبول قرارات كان من المألوف رفضها حال غياب هذا التأثير. لذا يرى لوكس هذا

النوع من السُلطة بأنه الأكثر فاعلية وخطوره في الوقت ذاته . ونظرًا للعلاقة المتداخلة بين الأدب والسياسة ، فإن هذه الدراسة تهدف إلى تحليل نهج ناي عن القوة الناعمة كإحدى الاستراتيجيات الأمريكية لضمان هيمنتها العالمية ، ودراسة أوجه التشابه بين آراء ناي حول القوة الناعمة وآراء لوكس المتمثلة في منهجه عن البعد الثالث للقوة. كما تقوم الدراسة علي تطبيق كلا النهجين على بعض الروايات المختارة لثقافات مختلفة، وهي: رواية "أمريكاني" (٢٠٠٣) للروائي المصري صنع الله إبراهيم ، و رواية "الحفيده الأمريكية" (٢٠٠٨) للروائية العراقية أنعام كجه جي ، ورواية "أمريكانا" (٢٠١٣) للروائية النيجيرية شيماندا نخوزي أديتشي. وهذه الدراسة دراسة بينية نقدية أدبية ، فهي محاولة لدراسة تأثير القوة الناعمة الأمريكية على هوية الشخصيات المتجسدة بالروايات موضع الدراسة؛ للتحقق من فرضية إسهام القوة الناعمة الأمريكية في تحقيق الوفاق الثقافي بصورة فعلية أم أنها كانت سبباً لطمس الهوية. وذلك في ضوء منهج كل من ناي للقوة الناعمة ومنهج لوكس عن البعد الثالث للقوة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القوة الناعمة ، جوزيف ناي ، ستيفن لوكس ، أمريكاني ، الحفيده الأمريكية، أمريكانا.