

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF RADIO TELEVISION AND CINEMA**

**MASTER THESIS**

**INVESTIGATING THE REPRESENTATION OF  
IRANIAN WOMEN IN IRANIAN CINEMA;  
POST IRANIAN REVOLUTION**

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**THESIS SUPERVISOR  
ASSIST. PROF. HAKKI ÖCAL**

**ISTANBUL, 2021**

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by

**SAADAT ESKANDARIFAR**

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in  
Radio Television and Cinema.**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR  
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**ISTANBUL, 2021**

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Radio Television and Cinema.

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This is to confirm that this thesis complies with all the standards set by the School of Graduate Studies of Ibn Haldun University.

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## ÖZ

### İRANLI KADINLARIN İRAN SİNEMASINDAKİ TEMSİLİNİN İNCELENMESİ; İRAN SONRASI DEVRİM

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Günümüzde sinema, görsel çekicilikler yaratarak izleyicileri, özellikle de genel halkı kendine çekmeyi başaran en önemli kültürel araçlardan biridir. Kitle iletişim araçları, toplumsal yaşamı yöneten normatif kalıpları gösterici biçimiyle temsil ederek, pratikte bu normları günümüz toplumsal yaşamında inşa etme ve yeniden üretme rolünü oynar. Kadınların belirli bir imajını sunarak, o belirli imajın kavramsal çerçevesini kurumsallaştırmada önemli bir rol oynayabilirler. Ünlü kitle iletişim araçları arasında diğer sanatlardan üstün bir sanat olarak sinema, cinsiyet ilişkilerini göstermedeki özel olanaklarının yanı sıra, toplumdaki eşitsizlikleri ve cinsiyet farklılıklarını araştırmamız için kendisini ideal bir örnek olarak tanımladı. Bu çalışma, İran sinemasında kadının toplumsal rolünün nasıl temsil edildiğini vurgulamayı ve bu temsillerin ardındaki gizli ideolojileri tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, göstergebilimsel kuram analizlerine dayalı içerik analizi tekniklerine dayalı olarak, bu araştırmanın vaka çalışması olarak hedeflenen İki Kadın, Baba evi, Satıcı gibi filmler seçilmiştir. Buna göre bu çalışmada, söz konusu filmler incelenerek sinemanın toplumdaki etkilenen ve kadınları da içine alan onun içindeki sorunları temsil eden bir toplumsal sanat olduğu; ayrıca ideal bir form yaratarak ve yaratarak toplumu ilerletmeyi ve etkilemeyi amaçlar.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Göstergebilim, Kadın, İran Sineması, Temsil

## ABSTRACT

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Today, cinema is one of the most important cultural tools that succeed in attracting the audience, especially the general public, by creating visual attractions. By representing the normative patterns governing social life's demonstrative form, the mass media practically plays the role of constructing and reproducing these norms in today's social life. By presenting a specific image of the women, they can play an essential role in institutionalising the conceptual framework of that particular image. Among the well-known mass media, cinema as a superior art over other arts, as well as its special possibilities for showing gender relations, identified itself as an ideal example for us to research the inequalities and gender differences in society. The present study aims to highlight how the social role of women is represented in Iranian cinema and to identify the hidden ideologies behind these representations. In this regard, relying on content analysis techniques based on semiotic theory analyses, it targeted movies such as *Two Women*, *Paternal House*, and *Salesman* which are selected as case studies for this research. Accordingly, in this study, by examining the films in question, it has been concluded that cinema is a social art influenced by society and representing the issues inside it, including women; besides, it intends to promote and influence society by inducing and creating an ideal form.

**Keywords:** Representation, Iranian Cinema, Semiotics, Women

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God Almighty, my creator, my strong pillar, my source of inspiration, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. He has been the source of my strength throughout this dissertation and on His wings only have I soared.

I dedicate this work to my parents, who have encouraged me all the way and whose encouragement has made sure that I give it all it takes to finish that which I have started.

In addition, I would like to dedicate this work to the women of my country, hoping that we will be able to rebuild our homeland together one day.



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Saadat Eskandrifar

ISTANBUL, 2021

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Modern equipment, by the use of beautiful and attractive faces, brings more audiences to the cinema every day. Besides that, the cinema legitimises some matters by mass-producing cultural issues and cultural consumption. By reproducing and reconstructing social realities, cinema can offer a repressive or critical view or a purposeful view that reflects the dormant voice of society.

The women's social movement in the early twentieth century overshadowed many cultural issues. Many branches of sociology are now focusing on women's rights issues as one of their top priorities (Garrett, 1987). In this sense, "gender" is distinguished from "sex", which refers to the biological differences between men and women. In fact, gender is related to established cultural correlations around sex (Goffman, 1997, p. 210).

By representing the normative patterns governing social life demonstrative form, the mass media practically plays the role of constructing and reproducing these norms in today's social life. Gender is a concept that is presented in different ways. Cinema can be considered as a powerful tool for showing and constructing a gender culture. Cinema's role in content creation is vital for the reason that, as a public medium, it can have a significant impact on gender culture. As a matter of fact, it has a dual role because it can both produce traditional gender stereotypes in favour of a particular group and can raise awareness among the masses by criticising the division of gender work. Media representations are primarily used to shape public understanding and standards. Although the relationship between representation and people's lives and experiences in the social world is complex, representations have real consequences for people. Richard Dyer emphasises that how social groups are treated in cultural representation is part of how they are treated in real life. (Giles & Middleton, 1999

p.59). The study of cinema with the approach of gender and representation of the role of women seeks to identify cultural products and their reflection in society.

### **1.1.1. Iranian Cinema in Post-Revolution**

Whereas the given era of this study is cinema in post-revolution, the research will glance toward Iranian cinema after the revolution. The upheaval of the revolution in 1978 brought a tragic future to the cinematic industry; many movie theatres in Iran were burned down. Even though some filmmakers altogether anticipated the end of the production of Iranian films (Mirbakhtyar p.100). The hysterical and tumultuous situation of the war and the fledgling revolution of that time had a profound effect on the fate of cinema. The early years of the revolution were the culmination of Iranian cinema. The confrontation between Islamic ideology and pre-revolutionary secularism was the fundamental cause of the dark fate of cinema, especially for the presence of women in cinema (Mirbakhtyar, 2006). After the transition of the Islamic Revolution of Iran from the initial formations, a new pattern of cultural production was formed. This cultural model, which was under the supervision of the Islamic Development Organization (Sazman-e Tablighat-e Eslami) and the Farabi Foundation, was one of the important restrictions for the active presence of women in the field of the film with the enactment of new laws. During this period, the determination of how to represent female characters was provided to directors. In this period, women are rarely depicted in the main characters in the movies, and if they appear, there is more of a traditional stereotype of women (AmniyatParast, 2019 p.4).

Over time, with the dominance of the reform movement over political discourses, cinema was gradually accepted alongside other arts. This tumultuous history of cinema was tied to gender. Maternal values, being a good wife and self-sacrifice are the main characteristics of women in this period. One of the characteristics of wartime cinema is that due to the masculine nature of war, women were not addressed. In addition, the bad memories left by the pre-revolutionary movies and the complete contradiction with the ideologies of the Islamic Revolution caused the removal and exclusion of the pre-revolutionary actors, which was the main reason for the cinema to be disillusioned (Amniyat Parast, 2019 p.4).

At the end of the war, Iranian cinema entered a new phase following the social conditions, which was accompanied by the emergence of female directors who addressed the social issues of women. With the end of the war and the formation of specialised film festivals, such as the Fajr Film Festival, the structural conditions for the flourishing of the film industry after the revolution was completed. In addition, the government began supporting government and non-government studios, which was another factor in the growth of the film industry for directors and producers. Another considerable factor that arose after the war was the entering of female directors and actors into the cinema. Theatre was one of the most important sources of collaborating with cinema for female actors in this period. In addition to theatre, other vital resources, such as film schools and cinema training centres, came to the aid of cinema to train film technicians, directors, and actors (Amniyat Parast, 2019 pp.5-6).

By entering female filmmakers and actors into the cinema, various issues were played out from the women's point of view. In this arena, the vision of women was formed, which caused women's cinema to be closer to its formation. In this period, the political atmosphere that collaborates with the ideology proposed in films, or at least allows it to emerge, has not been formed yet. This was the beginning of the strong presence of women in the field of cinema (Amniyat Parast, 2019 p.7).

### **1.1.2. Evolution in the Representation of Women in Iranian Cinema**

In this section of the study, the evolution of the representation of women in Iranian cinema before and after the revolution will be examined. As an illustration, the primary subject matter and content of most of the movie's pivotal content focusing on women have been accompanied by extensive changes over time and specifically by the spread of revolutionary ideology.

To begin with the first decades of Iranian cinema, the popularity of the family melodrama was set in two different types of Iranian women – traditional and modern – reflecting a permanent tension between the Pahlavi state and the Shi'a establishment (Sadr, 2006).

Thus, the rural and traditional women were presented in a positive effect and women who followed fashion and the West appeared to be demonic and deceptive creatures. It is noteworthy to specify that the filmmakers formed the commercial attractions of the film by showing fashionable women dressed in bodysuits, dancing, singing, and seducing. For instance, in the movie, *Seductress*, Forugh, a woman who loses her lover and becomes the cabaret singer, was more a fallen angel than a fallen woman. Therefore, this fall frequently occurred in these movies. A paradoxical representation of 'good-bad girl' – good because she was naive and hardworking, and bad because she was a singer (Sadr, 2006 p.80).

In the fourth decade of filmmaking in Iran, according to Soltani's research, one can claim that it was the dominance of traditional and patriarchal meditation towards women. Although women embodied the leading roles, they were creatures with unstable, dependent, lacking courage and passive characters who were subject to the men and the patriarchal atmosphere of the film. Women's deception and rape, and consequently her murder and forced marriage, were other remarkable elements in this chapter in the history of Iranian cinema.

In the fifth decade, when the status quo was changing and the grounds for revolution were being formed. A hierarchical structure, with the father as the head, and subservient mother and children was depicted. The family offered a model or metaphor for the hierarchical, authoritarian society that was witnessed. In the ideology of what the Shah called the 'Great Civilisation', the royal family was presented as the domestic model. As the ideal Iranian man, the Shah was powerful, masculine, single-minded, moralistic, protective, and the undisputed head of the nation. He believed in the participation of women in society but would not tolerate women who 'tried to imitate men'. He was 'not influenced by any woman' in his life and 'respected women as long as they were beautiful, feminine, and moderately clever' (Sadr, 2006 p.150).

This ideology was reflected in the movies of the time, the obsession with the body, sex, good look, fitness and beauty were reflected more with emphasis on commercial aims (Sadr, 2006). In this regard, Abdolkhani and Nasrabadi (2011) believe that in this decade, the performance of traditional and non-traditional women with a positive and acceptable image is depicted in the cinema. Besides, a woman compelled by her father,

older brother and husband deprived of her civil rights, along with a fate not in her own hands, are issues that the filmmakers of the period considered for female roles.

Mainly, pre-revolutionary women appear in the form of typecase, including an innocent woman who sheds tears, dances, sings and shows her body. In terms of gender roles, housekeeping, prostitution, and dancing were fun and victims of the dominant image of women in the cinema of the time.

The Islamic Revolution in 1979 can be considered a turning point in the process of changing the image of women in Iranian cinema (Zeyabadi-Nejad, 2007). In fact, the image of women in Iranian cinema has not had a constant image. Sometimes she was an ideal figure and beyond herself, and sometimes she went downhill and was disliked by the director. In Beyzai's works, a symbolic image of a woman is embodied, which is the manifestation of the highest love in the world in the form of self-sacrifice, love and affection, which has turned her into a myth (Yasrebi, n.d).

After the revolution, the representation of women was one of the issues for revolutionists to be considered, for the reason that women went back under the veil and new rules applied for women. The main strategies adopted to deal with this situation in cinema were either to avoid stories involving women altogether or adherence to a rigid code requiring that Muslim women be shown as chaste and maternal, never sexualised. Parliament occasionally debated the dilemma of television images of women, as in when the neck of an Iranian actress protruded from under her headscarf in the popular serial *Paeiz-e Sahra* (The Plains in Autumn). (Sadr, 2006 p.188)

In the early years after the revolution, the lack of confidence in the attitudes and frameworks of the new official regulations, along with the imposition of restrictions and the lack of a codified policy on the presence of women in cinema, eliminated their presence in the film by some directors. The Woman of the Revolution is a term that Sadr (2006) put on a woman in the era of the revolution and considered her as a representative of cultural and transformed attitudes and the executor of the laws of that time. Gradually, a sharp change happened in the social status of women in films, the beautiful, delicate Iranian heroine with her perfect face, who was a suffering victim of her circumstances, was replaced by the lower-class worker or peasant, the Woman of the Revolution. The sexual aspects were the main reason for her removal.

Soltani's (2003) evidence points to the absence of women in Iranian cinema in fifty films at this time in which no trace of women is found. For instance, the male hero in *Jang-e Athar*, Najafi (1980), didn't need a woman for his conflict.

After this stage, accompanied by the emergence of a new ideology, the Iranian revolution entered a new period of its history. War cinema was the post-revolutionary stage that emerged in the sixth decade of Iranian cinema. The image of women in war films in the 1980s wished to create feminisation. A narrative of the passive, inactive, fearful and submissive feminine (Sadr, 2006). Nick Akhtar (2010) indicates that the war cinema was a male one in which a woman took care of children and nursed behind the scenes of the Holy Defense. Consequently, displacement, warfare, and relief were common images of women.

Movies such as Rasool Sadramoli's *Chrysanthemums*, which dealt with family issues, gradually portrayed more prominent roles for women. The roles such as mother, good sister, devoted wife depicted a mythic depiction of the woman besides having a great impact on the upbringing of children, who were also domineering and passive (Ravdrad and Sedighi, 2006). In this era, a woman does not have her voice and independent existence. Representation of home management, traditional roles, family sanctification is the significance intended for women.

In the third stage after the revolution, according to Ravdrad, we are witnessing a change in the way women have been portrayed in the works of directors, a passage from a stereotypical woman to a more rational and active image than compared to previous depictions of her. During this period, women find a serious and passionate presence and appear behind the camera as a director. Few successful sentimental melodramas by female directors, including Puran Darakhshandeh's *Parandeh-ye Shirin Khoshbakhti* (Sweet Bird of Fortune) and *Parandeh-ye Kuchak-e Khoshbakhti* (The Little Bird of Happiness), and *Bachehha-ye Talagh* (Children of Divorce,) by Tahmineh Milani were representative cases of this success.

With more freedom to show images of women, along with the virtual dismantling of censorship and above all the fast-growing analysis of the effects of war, a new climate emerged that was increasingly conducive to the production of films critical of Iranian

institutions, which would have been unimaginable a few years before (Sadr, 2006 p.240).

The advent of the reformist government allowed women to be represented in the media in a new way. Women step out of a distorted image, which is generally emotional and without intellectual power, and enter a new world that is more associated with education and social activities.

The new revelation came to the surface for women's representation. Besides the trajectory of the heroine, the atmosphere of risk that came with a new sense of licence was the result of these changes. Women tended to be victims who had just woken up to a sense of her own position, she went on to become an attacker in a film like *Ghermez* (Red, Feridun Jeirani), in which a wife kills her husband, or a woman defined by her female friends in *Dow Zan (Two Women)*, Tahmineh Milani). This more aggressive, independent image appeared not just on screen but also in posters and paintings (Sadr, 2006 p. 262).

*Nim-e Penhan (Hidden Half)*, Tahmineh Milani) dealt with the theme of women's complex, interwoven intellectual and emotional lives, touching on many controversial issues. In the film *Souse of Fakhimzadeh*, women compete for professional power with a man, and the stereotype of a jealous and narrow-minded lady who only considers home ties is shattered. Women are demanding and sometimes winning modification of the discriminatory rules in both media and real life (Sadr, 2006 p. 262).

The seventh and eighth decade of Iranian cinema is considered as an advanced image of womanhood from a passive cipher to a more fully formed, molded character with clear convictions. In movies such as *Red and Two Women*, instead of beauty on a pedestal, a strong, ordinary woman, by her prominent features, is depicted.

Examining the films of this era, it can be concluded that the traditional view of women as an emotional beings continue, but it is noteworthy that the image of women from negative stereotypes that cause women to be unable to participate in social arenas shifted to a meticulous point of view towards social issues.

The portrayal of women in the last recent decades of Iranian cinema designate a transfer to modernity in behaviour, dress, and lifestyles. For instance, in terms of appearance, dialogues (using Latin words) and social relationship (sitting in coffee shops and restaurants) can be seen as a hallmark of cinema compared to previous decades. Hence, here not only do we see the breaking of the primitive taboos of femininity, but also the evolution of this important point is that she has taken over the leading roles and becomes the kingpin so that it acquires the main axis of the story (Sadr, 2006). To point out, movies like *I am Taraneh 15 years old* (Rasoul Sadr Ameli, 2002), *Chaharshanbeh Soori* (Asghar Farhadi, 2005), *M Like a Mother* (Rasoul Molagholipour, 2006), *Cease Fire* (Tahmineh Milani, 2006), *Circle* (Parisa Bakhtavar, 2008) and *About Eli* (Asghar Farhadi, 2009).

To conclude this section, the evolution of a female protagonist in Iranian films is a phenomenon that was made possible, strengthened and highlighted by the recent decades. Although intellectually rooted in traditions, heroes who belong mainly to the middle class are ready to accept new ideas, have aspirations, and are not satisfied with the situation ahead (ibid).

## **1.2. Literature Review**

This section of the study will investigate the representation of women in previous related studies. Movies exhibited in the media have been able to portray women's issues in different periods of time actively. Various researches have been done in the field of representation. Every work or event can be interpreted and analysed, and cultural sociology and cultural studies are the proof of this. The problem of femininity is one of those issues that semiotic studies and methods are efficient and applicable.

“Analysis of the female subject in the discourse atmosphere of Iranian cinema” has been conducted by Ahmad Bokharaei, Fardin Alikhani and Amin Nabatishoghl. In research, they have focused on the field of cinema and visual signs. In their research, this group of researchers explores the discourse on the relationship between cinema and reality through movies and how women encounter the world they live in. In this research, based on Laclau and Mouffe's theory about society, politics, subjectivity and power, by utilising the method of discourse analysis, semiotic discourse analysis of several films has been done.

According to Laclau and Mouffe's theory about society, discourses are the only way for human beings to know the world. Besides that, from the point of view of these two social theorists, the power resulting from discourses forms its own semantic system, which overshadows all identities and subjects within their discourse framework. This is what they have examined in their research.

In the movie called *Leila*, Leila is a subject influenced by the traditional discourse of her community and family, and her identity is challenged by her family discourse in relation to her infertility. In addition to that, in *Separation*, the subjectivity of two characters of the movie is under the dominant discourse of society. Both of the protagonists have been desperate by the norms and discourses which dominate society.

They concluded that, considering the Iranian society after the revolution, due to the increasing penetration of modernity in the last two decades, fundamental changes have been made in society at various socio-cultural and political levels. However, representations in the field of media and cinema indicate, despite the fact that Iranian society is a society in transition, the traditional values and beliefs under the pretext of traditionalist discourse still prevail, which shade over the social relations of the members of the society.

In a thesis titled “The image of a woman in the of Rakhshan Bani-Etemad’s films”, Khuvidaki and Ravadrad examined the image of a woman in the works of Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, one of the prominent female directors in Iranian cinema. The most considerable issue that this research investigates is the role of the director's gender in the representation of women and its issues which are illuminated in a new horizon in studies related to the representation of women in the media. This study has examined the social developments and their role in women's cinema. The finding indicates that the political, social, economic and cultural conditions of each period are one of the most important and influential factors on how women appear in cinema. So that we see three different periods in Iranian cinema (war, construction, reform) and there are three different types of representation of women. They have distributed a different representation of women in their works. In the first period and the interval, women are portrayed as stereotyped and limited. In the movies like *Narges*, *Lady of May* and

*Under the Skin of the City*, they pay attention to women and while presenting their problems, shows a new image of a woman with characteristics such as independence, perseverance and responsibility.

This study illustrates that the gender of the filmmaker and her femininity is influential in the way women are represented. The presence of women in cinema and increasing women's media products can be an effective step towards presenting women's problems and a more realistic representation of them in the media.

In the article “Women in Iranian Cinema”, Soltani has studied the way women are represented in Iranian movies between the forties and seventies decades (based on the solar calendar). Employing the Gender Oppression Theory, he has examined the change in attitudes toward women in Iranian cinema. Based on the findings of this study, attitudes toward women have changed from a patriarchal to a feminist perspective. In between the forties and fifties, men are the circuit of everything, and women have always played a marginal role, or in which the role of mother and wife is sanctified by fidelity. In this period, what women have always been in history, which represents traditional values, is usually seen and emphasises motherhood and love. But over time, in the sixties and seventies, this trend changed. In the 60s, women stepped into the arena of presence in society alongside men and showed a more active presence compared to previous decades. In the seventies, we observe the distribution of movies that featured feminist features such as women's experience of the world and a little critical look on the favour of women's interests.

In these movies, the effects of a patriarchal society on the men and the way they treat women close to them are highlighted. For instance, he was digging into psychoanalytic feminist analyses of a man harassing his wife out of emotional need and fear of losing his wife. The selfish love presented in the *Red* is clearly explored from the masculine selfishness that is rooted in the patriarchal culture of society. In another film, *Two Women*, he talks about the benefits that men have over women and thanks to the norms and laws of society that come to the aid of men and lead to the subjugation of women. In *Skokaran*, he illustrated the fact of female's dependency on males, which suffocates any independent action in the woman.

Given what has been discussed so far, it has been concluded that the representation of women from different perspectives and attitudes in different eras has always sought a passive image and enduring stereotypes that keep the problem of femininity alive.

### **1.3. Problem Statement**

In today's world, all kinds of media have been overused, and many thinkers believe that a large part of our knowledge and beliefs is obtained through indirect sources, such as the media, and their role in our lives is undeniable. In the meantime, the mass media, as a representative of society, can impose or take the side of a particular attitude towards society. Therefore, it can be said that their role in social representations is unrivalled.

Cinema, as one of these mass media, plays a vital role in the world today due to its large audience and the ability to convey the message. In addition to that, it fills the leisure time of people who interact with it and spend a lot of time on it every day. To some extent, one can say they empathise and even sympathise with movie characters. Cinema, which is also known as the seventh art, has a great communication function if it can be effective in magnifying and minimising important issues. It can change the way we perceive the world and, to some extent, how we play a role in it.

In Iran, due to the significant growth in movie sales in recent years and the increase in its audience on the one hand, and the introduction of Iranian cinema in the world community, on the other hand, reveals the necessity for more attention to the concepts represented in movies.

Since there are different perceptions of gender as well as its representation in the cinema scene, this phenomenon can be considered as a problem. There is also a research gap in this area in this regard, in order to study the representation of women in Iranian cinema, three movies will be examined. The significances of these movies are best-selling and attracting public attention of movies, also they focused on issues related to women from different angles. Another privilege of some of these movies, such as *The Salesman* is, it has won international awards and *Paternal house* was not allowed to be screened for nearly a decade due to its controversial content. Concepts

such as how gender is produced and reproduced in traditional culture and traditional culture's encounter with the modern world are significant concepts in terms of gender representation and semiotics.

Even though in recent decades, for many reasons, the culture of society and the family has undergone significant changes, and gender roles and human relationships have been somewhat compromised. In fact, due to these changes and their reflection in cinema, we still observe the same traditional presumption of women.

To illustrate the subproblem of the research, it is noteworthy that women make up almost half of Iran's population. Hence, this particular population has been ignored in the context of unwritten laws and imperfect ideologies. The purpose of this study is first to examine the profound problems that these citizens are struggling with. Then clarify my claims by means of analysing some awarded movies in Iranian cinema that play a significant role in the reflection of a social issue.

The author of this study believes that the way women are represented seems to be very decisive and determined. Since according to the official announcement of the Statistics Organization of Iran, out of 78.4 million people in the population of Iran, 38.8 million people are women, which is approximately equal to half of the population (49.5%). Hence, their problems are the problems of half of the population.

Cinema can play a dual role whether it is to help to improve the situation and position of women by providing an appropriate role model and showing their abilities, or by showing the inability of half of the population of a society which has destructive effects on the growth and development of that society. This institution, along with others, can significantly impact the formation of attitudes and mindsets of men and women about their abilities and capabilities.

#### **1.4. The Scope and Aim of the Study**

Iranian women still have been the core of domestic violence after dramatic social and political changes during these recent four decades after the revolution. However, modern Iranian women are negotiating their birthright of liberty in society. Besides

the negotiations, the Iranian cinema represents the culture and ideology in society, and despite serving the patriarchal rules and mentality, this violence has recently been represented in the media.

Findings indicate that the representations of women in all of these movies have been taken to consolidate the gender stereotypes of Iranian society. Now the question which arises here is, what is the responsibility of Iranian cinema on shaping public opinion. In other words, how gender inequalities are represented and constructed in post-revolutionary cinema.

Due to the fact that in the qualitative method, the general and partial purpose due to the fluidity of phenomena and the subject is basically indefinite in advance and it is possible to change the objectives in the course of research.

#### **1.4.1. The Importance of the Study**

As a female member of society, there is significant rhetoric towards women. Rights and wrongs, taboos and customs that shape a woman's mediation in Iranian society. Observations clarify that one of the sources that strengthen this shaping is media. Consequently, cinema, one of the vital arms of media, plays a crucial role that has to be studied. Modern techniques came with the help of cinema to impress the audience subconsciously. Given that, the approach of gender semiotics with detailed and accurate analysis can critique or examine cinema in the production of gender knowledge. Given that women's issues have been formed and reproduced under the influence of social currents and there is a research gap in this field, so the representation of women seems necessary in today's cinema.

The purpose of this study is first to examine the profound problems that these citizens are struggling with. Then clarify the claims by means of analysing some awarded movies in Iranian cinema that play a significant role in the reflection of social issues. The primary users of the present research can be social scientists, critics and activists in the field of gender studies and media. Besides, because this research is exploratory research, its results can be used for a cultural policy as well.

## **1.5. Research Questions**

My focus in this study is how the representation of women in Iranian cinema after the revolution in 1979? I will also investigate specifically the representation of women in Iranian cinema how has it been depicted? As a matter of fact, media as representative of political ideologies, what is the image of the ideal female accordingly? and finally, what is the role of the media in this regard?

## **1.6. Research Methodology**

Considering the present study's approach is semiology, and it is a type of qualitative analysis, accordingly utilizing the usual quantitative random sampling methods is not applicable here. The samples in a qualitative study are not randomly based; in fact, each element of the population has an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. In addition to that, in most qualitative studies, the purposive sampling method, which is the selection of samples depending on the objectives of a research study project, is relevant. Given that, the intended movies have been selected in order to clarify both implicit and ideological meanings, which accommodate the answers to the questions of this research.

Media analysis is a way to track gender perceptions and social change in the media. One of the types of media analysis methods is semiotics. Semiotics is a method of representation that seeks to reveal hidden meanings and themes in a text. Theorists of this methodological approach believe that language is like a system of representation because it is through language that we use signs and symbols, and all of these different ways of producing meanings work like language (Hall, 2003). One of the essential approaches to semiotics is rooted in linguistic analysis in the dichotomous structure. Hall considered semiotics as a science that studies signs in the centre of social life. Saussure emphasises the importance of discovering the meaning of signs through understanding binary contrasts and the reciprocal structures of the texts. He considers the sign to be the result of a combination of signifier and signified. From his point of view, the relationship between them is contractual, and there is no inherent relationship between signifier and signified.

Furthermore, meaning arises from the distinction of the signifier; these distinctions themselves are of two types, syntagmatic and paradigmatic. The meaning of syntagmatic relationships between signifiers and the analysis of a text's paradigmatic is to look at it as a series of events that make up a particular type of narrative. In syntagmatic, we achieve contracts or rules of composition that are the basis of the interpretation and production of text. While in paradigmatic, we are looking for the hidden pattern and the contrasts hidden in the text.

In reviewing the selected movies, for this research, in the mentioned semiotic, an attempt has been made to the first show in a sit-in position that the female signifier has accompanied with. Consequently, according to Chandler's argument (2006), first, the obvious or explicit meanings of the film are discovered, then in the position of substitution analysis, the hidden meaning and implicit implications of the text are discovered.

## CHAPTER II

### REPRESENTATION OF GENDER IN MEDIA

In the first part of this chapter, the conceptual issues related to representation, the sex-gender distinction, the concept of Gender Advertisement and semiology will also be introduced. The general definitions of concepts related to representation, semiotics, and gender will be provided in this section.

#### 2.1. Concept of Representation

Representation is the production of meaning through conceptual and discourse frameworks. This means that meaning is produced through signs, especially language. Hall argues that there is nothing meaningful out of discourse; media studies are not supposed to measure the gap between reality and representation but to understand how meanings are produced through discourse procedures and formulations (Hall,1997). Hence, Stuart Hall sees representation, along with production, consumption, identity, and regulation, as part of the culture cycle. He defines representation as to the use of language to convey something meaningful about or to represent the world meaningfully to other people. Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of the culture (ibid, 15). According to the Oxford dictionary, the simplest definition of representation is "the act of presenting somebody/something in a particular way; something that shows or describes something." But this concept has a more complex definition that Chris Barker has expressed from the perspective of cultural studies "The commonsense meaning of the concept of representation is that of a set of processes by which signifying practices appear to stand for or depict another object or practice in the real world" (Barker, 2004, p.177). As a matter of fact, as he mentioned in his book titled *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*, it is the process of representation that makes practices meaningful and significant to us. He argues that the power of representation is that it enables some knowledge while eliminating other ways of seeing.

Consequently, cultural studies writers often talk about the ‘politics of representation’. Politics of representation provide the answers for the question of what is the meaning of being a certain kind of person? male, female, young-white, black, etc., this is where we realise the importance of representation. Representation is one of the fundamental concepts in media studies.

According to Richard Dyer, the concept of representation in the media is the structure that the mass media creates from different aspects of reality, such as people, places, objects, persons, cultural identities, and other abstract concepts. Representations may be spoken, written, or animated.

The *Book Dictionary of Media and Communication Studies* define representation as:

A core function of media is to ‘re-present to audiences the realities of ‘the world out there. Most of our knowledge of that world is brought to us via the media, and our perception of reality is mediated by newspapers, TV, advertisements, films, etc. The media image the world for us. They do this by means of selection and interpretation, which operate through gatekeeping and according to agendas that are suffused by ideology. The media represent to us the past as well as the present, and representations – or interpretations – of the past affect our perceptions of the present. Out of such representations arise issues concerning, for example, the representation of women, of race, asylum-seeking, poverty, minorities. What we as the audience know [...] is what we have experienced through the reports and pictures brought to us by the media. The study of media representation, therefore, is central to cultural, media and communication studies. Because it is impossible to represent the world in all its massive complexity, media representation has to be viewed as a ‘version’ of reality, in which framing has taken place according to criteria such as news values or pressures to propagandize, sensationalize, binarize (that is, divide ‘us’ from ‘them’...) or a desire to impose meaning upon webs of complexity. Representation is essentially about the definition, and media representation tends to be about promoting certain definitions, and therefore meanings, over others; thus, endeavouring to affect the preferences of the public (Watson and Hill, 2006 p. 248).

In the study of representation, some central questions arise, as Web (2009) has illustrated in his book *Understanding Representation*, who is the performer of it, what is the meaning it produces and finally, what effects does it have?

Hall (1997) connects culture, language and meaning through representation, "culture is about 'shared meanings while language is the privileged medium in which we' make sense of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged" (p.1). Therefore, language is central to meaning and culture and has always been regarded as the key repository of cultural values and meanings. In this regard, in the first place, the concepts of culture, meaning and language will be briefly argued in order for a clearer comprehension of representation.

The culture in Hall's notion, in more traditional definitions of the term," is said to embody the 'best that has been thought and said' in a society". "Culture, it is argued, is not so much a set of things- novels and paintings or TV programmes and comics- as a process a set of practices. Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings- the "giving and taking of meaning'- between the members of a society or group" (Hall, 1997, p.2). In other words, meaning is an inseparable part of the culture, it organizes and regulates society, influences our conduct and consequently has real, practical effects.

The *Dictionary of Media and Communication Studies* identifies culture as "Culture is transmitted through socialization to new members of a social group or society. The media play an important role in this process. A central concern of culturalist studies of the media is the degree to which the media's output may both reflect and communicate the culture of the more powerful social groups in that society at the expense of the less powerful" (Watson and Hill, 2006, p.66). Barker refers to culture as questions about shared social meanings, the various ways we interpret the world. However, meanings are not simply floating there but are produced and generated through signs (Barker, 2004, p.45).

On this subject, we come to the notion of "circuit of culture", which Hall widely expressed in his book. He suggests that meaning is produced at different levels and publish through different processes, such as the circuit of culture. Meaning clarifies our own identities and answers to the question, to whom we belong, thereupon, culture maintains identity within and the difference between groups. Meaning helps us to set the rules, norms, and conventions of social life and what it has ordered. We interpret things, people, and events in terms of the interpretation we give them. To some extent,

we make sense of things by using them or integrating them into our daily work (Hall,1997, p.3).

The way we represent things in fact, we give them meaning. Our representing can be designated through the emotion we have toward them, the importance associates with them, even the placement of things in our daily practice, give them meaning through representation. In this context, we can find the best definition in D.r Barker's dictionary of cultural studies, "The idea of meaning is an important one to cultural studies in so far as the concept of culture is based on the notions of 'maps of meaning' and shared or contested meaning. Indeed, cultural studies' particular take on the concept of culture has stressed the intersection of power and meaning. Thus, key ideas such as ideology, hegemony and discourse depend on some notion of meaning."

The question is that what the meaning is producing? To answer this question, it can be said that, the meaning related to the all different aspects of deeds and action in our life which shapes "cultural circuit", it can be in the construction of identity and distinction, in production and consumption, as well as in the regulation of social behaviour. The aforementioned concepts are producing through meaning by the privilege of language (Hall, 1997).

The aforementioned concepts are producing through meaning by the privilege of language. Language is "a system of communication and meaning-making, and not an object or identity" (Web, 2009). The sign is the cornerstone for language through which the concepts and, specifically, the meaning are produced.

Eventually, Web (2009) introduces language as a system, which particularly is representational, *something* is provided to make *something else* be presented. Henceforth, through a vehicle or media that carries the meaning, the symbols are operated. Hall (1997) concluded that any kind of principles through which the language is represented produce meaning. This meaning is a part of the representational system that represents the dominant culture of the society. "Thus photography is a representational system, using images to communicate with photographic meaning about a particular person, event or scene. Exhibition or display in a museum or gallery can also be thought of as 'like a language', since it uses objects

on display to produce certain meanings about the subject matter of the exhibition. Music is 'like a language in so far as it uses musical notes to communicate feelings and ideas' (Hall, 1997 p.5).

Representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully to other people. Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things (Hall, 1997 p.15). To sum up, representation is a chain of meaning and language that takes the signals from culture through the relation of concepts, signs and things to represent what is supposed to be a pabulum for commonality through media.

### **2.1.1. Strategies of Representation**

Hall has predicted his argument on representation through strategies of representation, which included naturalisation and stereotype.

#### **2.1.1.1. Naturalization**

The world is 'naturally' shown in media as white, bourgeois, patriarchal and heterosexual. These images of western society are accepted as natural. Naturalising, then, functions to reinforce dominant ideology. Naturalisation discourses operate in such a way that class, racial, and gender inequalities are routinely portrayed. They build images of women as the base and goal of the male gaze. The working class is naturally subject to the middle class in terms of intellectual and economic (Hayward, 2001, p. 285).

Thus, the female is economically inferior to the male, is associated more with the domestic than the public sphere, is more emotional, less strong than the male. She is the site of reproduction and not production which is the male domain, and so on. It is clear how this essentialist approach (the woman is this/man is that) fixes gender and leads to a naturalising of gender difference (we accept it as 'natural') (ibid, p.160). In this context, Hall (1997) illustrates the naturalization discourse in the representation

of racial differences in slavery and how the black nation was considered as genetically incapable of civilized refinement, as like women who could not escape their "true nature", which their biology was their destiny. Constructing representation is necessarily a matter of power because each representation involves selecting and organising signs and meanings. For example, whether someone describes a particular gunman as a "terrorist" or a "freedom fighter" is an act of cultural power. In fact, the naturalisation of meaning expresses power (Barker, 2004 p.12)

Naturalisation in Roland Barthes's works is included as a branch of mythology. Regarding the Myth, he briefly presented it as a type of speech. In cultural studies, the concept of a myth refers more to the naturalization of the connotative level of meaning, a use that is somewhat similar to the notion of ideology (ibid p. 129). Therefore, he deciphered a way in which the naturalisation of connotative meanings made it possible for a culture to appear as the pre-given universal truths, which he called myths (ibid, p.12.) Myth does not hide anything and does not distort anything, besides it's neither a lie nor a confession, but flexibility (Barthes, 1972).

In Greek, the word mythos means speech and, therefore, message. But in our time, we also consider myth as a kind of distorted message (Moriarty, 1991 p.19). He wants to critique myth, which is the ideological language of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, with a semiotic analysis, and show that the mechanism of myth is the naturalisation of historical things. Make it seem as if they are natural things and thereby make the contradictions created by them seem natural. The task of the mythologist is to discover the mystery of this process (ibid).

For Barthes, myths help the ideological function of "naturalisation" to make cultural reactions to things seem completely "natural", "normal", "conscious", and in accordance with "common sense". Naturalisation rationalises certain ideological representations, thereby rendering them opaque, that is, they are not seen as ideological (Fairclough, 1995).

### 2.1.1.2. Stereotype

Stereotyping reduces people to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by Nature, which has four further aspects: (a) the construction of "otherness" and exclusion; (b) stereotyping and power; (c) the rule of fantasy; and (d) fetishism (Hall, 1997 p.257). Richard Dyer (1977), in his essay titled "Stereotyping", makes a discernment between typing and stereotyping. We make sense of the world by typing through decoding people, events, objects according to our culture (ibid). Alfred Schutz's typification indicates that type is essential to the production of meaning. Given this point, "type is any simple vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognised characterisation in which a few traits are foregrounded, and change or "development" is kept to a minimum" (Dyer, 1977. p. 28). In essence, what is the difference between type and stereotype? Hall illustrates the differences through recounting the features of stereotypes. The first point is that stereotyping reduces, essentialises, naturalises and fixes differences. Secondly, Stereotype establishes the strategy of "splitting", It divides the normal and the acceptable from the abnormal and the unacceptable. Another feature is, stereotyping tends to occur where there are gross inequalities of power.

To illustrate, stereotypes exclude and fix boundaries between the normal and the deviant, the normal and the pathological, the acceptable and the unacceptable, what belongs and what does not or is 'Other', between insiders and outsiders, Us and Them (Hall, 1997, p.257).

As maintained by Gramsci, stereotype, which classifies people according to the norms, is a wing for hegemony. Besides that, Dayer stated, stereotypes establish the habit of ruling groups. The ruling groups try to establish the society according to their own worldview, values and ideologies. Consequently, their hegemonies are set up through the naturalised and normalised norms (Dyer, 1977. p. 30).

To sum up, if we want to address the importance of stereotyping, we must know that it is a permanent and necessary process in the human mind. The reason can be found in the complexity of the world around us, which the inability to obtain information solitary in various fields causes these complexities. As a result, human beings, in order

to gain a better understanding of the world around them and the ability to create a mentality, create schemas and images of the world around them, which leads to stereotyping.

## **2.2. Gender and Media**

One of the keynotes of this research is gender and, more specifically, the female. In general, sociologists distinguish between two terms, sex and gender. Given that the social group of this research is women and the way they are presented in media and aim to investigate the expectation of these representations. First of all, there has to be a clarification toward the terms sex and gender. Sex refers to the anatomical and physiological aspects that define male and female bodies. Gender, by contrast, concerns the psychological, social and cultural aspects of males and females (Giddens, 2009 p. 607). Accordingly, Gender is linked to socially constructed notions of masculinity and femininity. It is not necessarily a direct product of an individual's biological sex (ibid).

To Study gender stereotypes, the researcher must take a look at how men and women are characterised. By analysing how gender stereotypes are represented in the media, it will help understand how both genders are portrayed in media and by relying on the effect of media on shaping society thought, the ideology behind that will be illustrated. As a matter of fact, children learn their sex roles and their identities of masculinity and femininity in society and by the effect of media production. Children easily get involved in the socialised norms and gender treatments, for instance, a girl is preferred to play with dolls, or in advertisements, the girls likely to be represented in pink colour while a boy is sanctioned to play with the dolls and preferably the blue is more suitable for them. Social influences on gender identity happen through many channels like family, environment and the most considerable one is media.

At this point, the concept of gender stereotypes arises. "*Gender Stereotypes*" are defined as stereotypes that contribute to gender-specified norms that separate male and female behaviour patterns (Golden and Jacoby, 2018).

In traditional society restrict women to the home, where they do various household chores related to running a home and raising children, while men have to work in public areas, i.e., on farms, factories, markets, and offices, etc. From this point of view, women who follow traditional roles are known as "good women", which means that those who follow the social codes of chastity and virtue will be respected and protected by men, while those who cannot match are deprived of respect and social security.

Gender stereotyping is portrayed in most of the Iranian films along with the relied films in this study. Male characters tend to play more active, adventurous roles, while females are portrayed as passive, expectant and domestically oriented (Giddens, 2009). Thus, a woman is either a foolish and vulnerable creature or a creature who should be sexually abused if possible. Sometimes the protagonist is an educated and strong woman who deals with different types of men independently throughout the film. As a result, they intentionally and unintentionally try to lower her self-esteem by using offensive language, emotional violence, and even rape. In traditional stereotypes towards women, there has to be a passive, dependent and submissive woman in order to be accepted by society and benefit from social security. On the contrary, men must be dominant and have too much power.

### **2.2.1. Gender Inequalities**

Ritzer (2007) illustrated four contents that constitute the indicators of theories of gender inequality. First, men and women not only have different positions in society but are also in unequal positions. Compared to men in the same social position, women have fewer material resources, social status, power and opportunities for realisation. This social status can be based on class, race, occupation, ethnicity, religion, education and nationality, or any other important social factor. Second, this inequality stems from the organisation of society and does not result from any significant biological or personality differences between men and women. The third content of the theory of inequality is that although human beings may differ in their talents and characteristics, there is no significant pattern of natural difference that distinguishes the two genders. In fact, all human beings are characterised by a deep need for freedom for self-realisation and a kind of flexibility that allows them to adapt to the requirements, opportunities and situations of their lives. Gender inequality stems from the fact that

women have less power than men to meet the need for self-realisation, while both share this need. Based on the fourth content, all theories of inequality assume that both men and women can react easily and naturally to more equal structures and situations. In other words, they believe that it is possible to change the position of women as Ritzer has indicated:

The processes that confer privilege on one group and not another group are often invisible to those upon whom that privilege is conferred. Thus, not having to think about race is one of the luxuries of being white, just as not having to think about gender is one of the 'patriarchal dividends' of gender inequality. (Ritzer, 2007 p.1664)

In this regard, it should be noted that in the structure of the patriarchal and repressive family, which has also benefited from Islamic law, is going toward the gender inequalities. For instance, the high position of the father in terms of economics and politics, which is also defined by the Islamic social system, is easily supported by Iranian law. The father is solely responsible for the care of his wife and children because he is required by law to do so. His sons also find a strong identity with him that enables them to identify emotionally with any kind of authority. On the other hand, girls are trained to relate to the submissive and resigned behaviours of the mother towards all male members of the family (Azari, 1983).

### **2.2.2. Gender Advertisement**

Butler The postmodern theorist, in the "*Performative Theory of Gender*" indicates that gender is an ideal construct that is flexible and is realized over time (Butler, 1991, quoted by Barker, 2012). In fact, gendered norms, dress code, style of dress, language traditions, gait are all gendered (or learned) performances. Butler generally believes that we do not learn to be male or female; rather, we learn to act like men or women. In fact, gender identity is played.

This theory fits into Goffman's analytical framework in the field of gender. Goffman addresses the issue of how interactive frameworks produce the meaning of gender in the framework of analysis approach in his book titled *Gender Advertisement* (1979). The focus of Goffman's theoretical discussion on *Gender Advertisement* is the concept of "gender representation," in which gender and gender identity are expressed in social situations through what he calls "drama". According to Goffman, these dramas tend

to convey expressive behaviours in order to be transferred, received and in social life play the role of conveying information about each other's identity, profession, intentions and expectations about other people. Goffman argues that gender representation is a ritual expression of male domination and childlike female obedience. In his view, gender representations in social circumstances not only establish gender hierarchies but also create them (Goffman, 1979).

As it was mentioned before, according to Goffman, gender is constructed in various forms in the sphere of media (Stanly,1989). By proposing the idea of "Hyper-Ritualization" of gender representations in advertising (and other visual media), he "indicates to us how advertisements give a natural dimension to gender differences that are socially constructed, and thus impose stereotypes of gender" (Dahlberg, 2004, p.3). What was a ritual becoming itself ritualized, a transformation of what is already a transformation, "hyper-ritualization" (Goffman, p.3)?

In this theoretical framework, Goffman identified six visual patterns of gender representation in advertising that can be extended to other genres of representation. He believed that gender differences and inequalities are displayed and constructed through the six patterns of ritualization of subordination, relative size, function ranking, feminine touch, licensed withdrawal and family. Among the six mentioned models, three models such as ritualisation of subordination, relative size, function ranking are used in the analysis of texts.

**a) Ritualization of Subordination:** In this case, women adopt a position that shows their submission to the control of others. In this sense, women are more likely to exhibit comforting behaviours such as smiling and expressing disability. For instance, Goffman designates smiles, which can be argued often function as ritualistic mollifiers, signifying that nothing agonistic is invented or invited (ibid, 48). Women also take on more subtle moods than men (such as fear and subtle feminine curvature). In this sense, women are often portrayed as dirty and puppet-like characters, while men are portrayed quite seriously (Goffman, 1979: 40-56). By these definitions, the components we have used in this concept in film analysis are: asking for help, smiling, expressing disability, agreeing, supporting, dominating, flirting,

emotionally spontaneously welcoming, or chasing away, expressing concern, providing services and giving orders.

**b) Relative Size:** Goffman, in this part, manifested the fact that women are generally portrayed as shorter than men in advertisements and visual media, which is a symbol of less authority. "One way in which social weight power, authority, rank, office, renown is echoed expressively in a social situation is through relative size, especially height," he pointed out. By the same token, the other clue which is substantial in this pattern is that on few occasions, women are pictured taller than men. The men seem almost not only subordinated in social class status but also customized "craft-bound" servitors who are insignificant (Goffman, p. 28,29).

**c) Feminine Touch:** refers to the fact that in advertisements and visual media, women touch and caress objects but never grasp or clutch objects, while men manipulate and shape them. This notion can become entitled in various models such as trace the outline of an object, pictures in the form of hedonistic, use of a product, touching of clothes, caressing a child by women. As a matter of fact, men are not pictured in this form; hands are merely their means of producing products, holding the hand of a partner, calculating and playing baseball (ibid, p.29).

**d) Function Ranking:** all instruction seems to involve some sort of subordination of the instructed and deference for the instructor (Goffman, p.33). Indeed, this pattern refers to the notion which pictures how males associated with other individual's deeds while females are portrayed as being controlled by an instructor. Goffman alludes to the form of "kinaesthetic" in learning which is more associated with child status; this form stimulates a modelling physical contact between instructor and instructed.

Thus, men play more in directorial roles; specifically, those are instructing women, whereas women are more likely to receive this kind of help than giving it to them and are not depicted markedly guiding their response. Moreover, this type of inferiority becomes more active when a group of women is targeted. Men are less likely to be portrayed in the kitchen or kindergarten; if so, their roles are more unrealistic, which real males would not preserve.

Our social life has been bombarded with messages about which gender is dominant and how each of them should behave. In particular, all forms of visual media, from advertising to cinema and music, tend to emphasise traditional gender stereotypes. Perhaps the most insidious method of mass media is television advertising, which typically portrays women as sexual objects in the market for manufactured products. Studies in textbooks show that men and their activities are more emphasised than women and play more significant and diverse social roles.

**e) Family:** According to this analytical model, women are often pictured inside the home and men correspondingly outside of the house. In the mocked-up families in the advertisement, "unity" symbolise engagement in the collaborative action. "In a word, there is a tendency for women to be pictured as more akin to their daughters than is the case with the men. Eventually, boys have to push their ways into manhood, and problematic efforts are involved." Eventually, based on his findings, in this unit, special relationships emerge between the child and the sexually similar parents (Goffman, p.38).

It is noteworthy to allude to the general stereotype of men's absence or being away from home in visual media. Goffman believes that there is a distance of males from the physical circle of other members, which represents a special mission for them: the role of protectiveness and supervision. For instance, in advertising, the father has a small space at home because he spends a lot of time working outside the house, which indicates gender differentiation through a social role. This is where the concept of the "feminine domain" comes into play.

Home is traditionally considered a feminine domain; consequently, men occupy a small part of the home; besides, they are less involved in the housework and a short shot in the kitchen. Thus, advertisements tend to portray women as managers of the house, while men are portrayed only as assistants and helpers for women in the kitchen. Advertisements often assume that women have authority over cooking, cleaning, and shopping, which refers to the genderization of areas where women belong to the home area and men to the area of work and politics outside the home.

**f) Licensed Withdrawal:** this pattern points out that women often withdraw or are excluded from social situations through psychological conflict. In such a way that men often take the lead in eliminating women from this position.

Goffman observed that in advertising images (and generally in visual media), "Women more than men, it seems, are pictured engaged in involvements which remove them psychologically from the social situation at large, leaving them unoriented in it and to it, and presumably, therefore, dependent on the protectiveness and goodwill of others who are (or might come to be) present" (Goffman, p.57).

He sees conflict and emotional secrecy, and physical dependence on others as signs of this type of retreat that can be portrayed in various ways in women's images in the media. These symptoms can include loss of emotion and tearing, malignant smiles, hiding the face behind their hands from fear, shyness, embarrassment, or anxiety. One can also conceal behind a door or a book or an object or a man. This kind of ritualisation is called Withdraw in order to, the person involved in the present situation tries to withdraw or abdicate from it (Baronz, p. 230-231). Thus, some examples of such behaviour examined for research in movies are as follows: turning one's gaze from another's, finger-to-finger position, covering the mouth with a hand, head/eye aversion in emotional rising, participation shield, snuggling...

"It has already been remarked that in ads women, more than men, appear to withdraw themselves from the social situation at hand through involvements, including the emotional response. Significant here are the responses of pleasure, delight, laughter and glee-states of being transported by happiness"(Goffman, 1979).

### **2.3. Classical Film Theories**

Classical film theory refers to the historical period of cinematic theories that lasted from the beginning of cinema until the 1960s; this period marks the formation of film semiotics. This course consists of two important and very contradictory periods.

First, the formalists, which include writers such as the German Rudolf Arnheim and Sergei Eisenstein, and then the realists and writers, like Andre Bazin and Siegfried Kracauer.

Although other film theorists in these two periods did important works very well in this field, the way the abovementioned four writers have influenced is primordial (Ethope, 2013).

### **2.3.1. Formalists**

Rudolf Arnheim, is one of the most influential theorists amongst the Formalists. He tried to not band the cinema with the reality of everyday life. In his book *Film as Art* 1957, he indicates that the film is vice versa with the experience of everyday life. Arnheim's main theory in cinema is based on the explicit differences between the world of the senses and the world we perceive from the two-dimensional level of the screen.

According to him, the experience of daily life engages us in the experience of a three-dimensional world, while the experience of a film is a two-dimensional experience. Eisenstein, another influential formalist, had views on the importance and power of “montage” (editing). Because of his extraordinary theoretical and practical knowledge, he had a far wider and more lasting influence on film theory than Arnheim (Ethope, 2013).

Montage does not mean placing one frame after another. Every view has not an independent value and meaning. The art of “montage” creates a meaning that puts a whole chain of views and each of them together (Arnheim, 1957). According to Eisenstein (1898), however, “montage” is the basis of cinema. Scenes are not of independent value, but the interaction of the scenes (through montage) creates the cinematic concept (ibid). The connection between Arnheim and Eisenstein was due to the fact that they both believed that watching the film offered a different and independent experience. For them, formalism was considered the creative force that the director must use in making his film in order to offer a different experience of daily life. However, Eisenstein insisted that this experience was the product of the art of “montage”.

### 2.3.2. Realists

The second phase of classical film theory, which became the dominant film critique in the 1950s, begins with the French researcher Andre Bazin and the German Siegfried Kracauer. Unlike the formalists, who considered cinema beyond the everyday narrative, the realists believed that the credibility and importance of cinema is the result of the closeness and kinship with "reality".

Andre Bazin, in his book *What is Cinema* (1967), directly shows his interest in natural reality in the film. Bazin emphasized the characteristic of the cinematic image index and considered it the essence of the recorded image. Although, he considered cinema as an art that has the power to represent reality. He is working with a set of binary oppositions which may be summarised as the following (Eathope, 2013 p.4):

Illusion/ nature

Imposition/ discovery

Single interpretation/ ambiguity

Personal/ impersonal

Theatre / cinema

Montage/ deep focus and the long take

Realism was of great value to Bazin because it allowed the viewer to actively participate in the interpretation of the film. According to him, Eisenstein's style of montage prevents any interpretation. In the montage, the filmmaker creates a personal worldview that prevents the audience's active participation. The audience will passively get involved in the meanings offered by the director (Bazin, 1971).

Also, Bazin believed that Eisenstein's dialectical montage predetermined the meaning of the film. In this style, a shot serves to express this meaning and is dominated by the montage.

On the contrary to the dialectical montage that Eisenstein considered the basis of the concept of cinema, Bazin introduced the concept of *mise en scène* as the fulcrum of the film. According to him, unlike montage which is a closed and unified concept, *mise en scène* is an open and plural concept that leads to polysemy (Easthope, 2013 p.3).

Bazin was deeply influenced by Sartre and the prevailing Existentialism of the 1950s. His famous statement that "the existence of cinema precedes its nature" was undoubtedly reminiscent of Sartre's famous statement that "existence precedes nature". Common terms in Bazan's writings (originality, emancipation, destiny) were terms used by Sartre at the time (Easthope, 2013).

Besides Bazin, Siegfried Kracauer is another realist theorist of the period. Like Bazin, he considers external reality as the source of his subject matter and obliges cinema to record it. In addition to that, he admired Italian neorealism which is another similarity between them. Kracauer wished that cinema could preserve profound nature in the same way. He believed that cinema was the first art that could record reality without trampling on its nature. He claimed that cinema stands in contrast to poetry, painting, and theatre, and comes ever closer to the novel (Bazin, 1971 p.38).

Kracauer considers the greatest artists to be those who conquer nature in the same crude form. Cinema is praiseworthy for its potential to reveal artistic reality. Besides, he considers "film sought to give the spectator as perfect an illusion of reality as possible within the limits of the logical demands of cinematographic narrative and of the current limits of technique" (Bazin, 1971 p.38).

The difference between the formalists and the realists was rooted in the commonality of their original assumption. The formalists praised cinema to the point that it was more than "the weak mechanical reproduction of real-life" (Easthope, 2013). Realists, on the other hand, accepted cinema to the extent that "mechanical reproduction remains faithful to the construction of something in which man has no role" (Easthope, 2013). Both of them adjudicate cinema on the basic premise that it is a mechanical reproduction; given that, this reproduction is either convincing or insubstantial and unbelievable.

#### **2.4. Contemporary Film Theories**

Contemporary film theory began in the 1960s with changes in the naturalistic concept of classical film theory. More precisely, by breaking away from the notion that every literary and artistic text is an imitation of reality, and the degree of its success also

depends on the degree of representing or reproducing it successfully. Thus, this rupture occurred a decade ago in the field of literary theory when Roland Barthes published *Writing Degree Zero* in 1953 (Easthope, 2013 p.1). This was a book that had a huge impact on contemporary film theory. In this book, Barthes points out that a decade later, he paved the way for contemporary film theory. He indicates that Realist writing is not merely a copying of external reality, but writing in a way that conveys the effect of reality (Abazari, 2001). The efforts of contemporary film theory in the first decade of its formation were to develop this concept in the form of film theory. When film was considered a semantic language, not a tool for mechanical reproduction, and when macro-linguistic theories were targeted, film theory took a new direction. The overlap of three important theories, psychoanalysis, semiotics and Marxis in the 1960s led to the emergence of film semiotics as the first entry in contemporary film theory (Easthope, 2013).

Film semiotics is inspired by structuralist methodology. It seeks to show how films create the sign system they create and communicate with the audience and convey concepts to them. Semiotics sought to place the aesthetics of cinema as part of the general science of signs, to give scientific significance to previous debates about the language of film, which was largely weak and inadequate. Hence questions such as whether cinema is a form of language? And is it like language according to a specific command? It became the headline of semiotic activities (Easthope, 2013).

#### **2.4.1. Semiotics**

After the naturalistic fallacy begins to emerge, film theory moves away from visual models (cognition, perception and psychology) to language theories. The most influential work of language, that was the comprehensive contemporary film theory, comes from Saussure's "*Course in General Linguistics*", first published in 1916. In general, Semiotics was first introduced by Ferdinand Dossossor and his American colleague Charles Sanders Pierce which now is used in human science studies.

According to (Bronwen Martin and Felizitas Ringham, 2000), there are four basic principles on which the semiotic analysis of texts is based:

1. Meaning is not inherent in objects; objects do not signify by themselves. Meaning is constructed by something known as "competent observer". That is, a subject which is able to "give form" to objects. For example, in the implementation of a different culture, African or Asian, however we can communicate with the meaning that is relevant to our knowledge.
2. Semiotics views the text as an autonomous unit, that is, one that is internally coherent. A widely accepted approach in the academic world, semiotic analysis begins with a study of the actual language and structure of the text. Semiotics, showing how meanings are constructed, what those meanings are at the same time and becomes a method of discovery for those who are engaged in original research.
3. Semiotics posits that story structure or narrativity underlies all discourse, not just what is commonly known as a story. For instance, it underlies political, sociological and legal discourse. One can even go as far as to say that narrativity underlies our very concept of truth.
4. Semiotics posits the notion of levels of meaning.

For example, it's a deep abstract level in which studies a text at different levels of depth. Semiotics derived from the Latin word *Semion* means sign that examines signs. Therefore, in the definition of semiotics, it can be said that semiotics is a science that examines how meaning is produced in society. Hence, semiotics is equally concerned with the processes of signification and communication. That is, it studies the methods of production and exchange of meaning (Culler, 1986). "Language is a system of signs that express ideas, and is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet of deaf-mutes, symbolic rites, polite formulas, military signals, etc. But it is the most important of all these systems" (De Saussure, 1959 p.16).

The question that arises here is that what is the sign? In defining the sign, different Semiotics scholar's definitions will be indicted. For Saussure, "what alters the sign is a shift in the relationship between the signifier and the signified" (De Saussure, 1959 p.181). The relationship between signifier and signified is called "signification".

The sign is the result of the correspondence of these two elements, namely the signifier and the signified. The sign always has two sides. A signifier without a signified, or in

other words a signifier that does not signify any concept, is nothing more than a vague sound, and a signified with no form (signifier) to signify it is not possible to recognize (Sojudi, 2011 p.13).

The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image. The latter is not the material sound, a purely physical thing, but the psychological imprint of the sound, the impression that it makes on our senses. The sound-image is sensory, and if I happen to call it "material," it is only in that sense, and by way of opposing it to the other term of the association, the concept, which is generally more abstract. (Ibid, p.66)

A sign can be defined in such a generalized and semantic way that any identity that carries information is called a sign. So maps, road signs, diagrams, pictures, words, and sentences can all be signs. But what Peirce calls a sign is anything that defines something else, that is, its interpreter. This interpreter aims to signify something that implies itself in the same way. Accordingly, the interpreter becomes a sign in itself and this series continues indefinitely (Sheriff, 1994, P.33-34).

The point to consider in Peirce's semiotics is that for him, ideas are also signs. So, if we want to understand ideas, we have to interpret them. The sign has a role as an idea when it is interpreted (Gallie, 1952: 118).

In Peirce's view, all ideas are made meaningful by signs revealed by real external affairs. In this case, Peirce cites the example of a child who has no knowledge of the concept of self. And he does not know anything about the distance between his body and, for example, the object which is the heater. By touching the heater (object) and feeling the pain (sign) that arises from it, the child comes to the (interpretant) conclusion that there is something other than himself and that thing is the heater (object) (Hoops, P.8).

In other words, the concept of self and object both are achieved by the child's contact with the hot heater. The feeling of pain does not show anything by itself, unless another thought arises with it. Thus, the child should interpret in his mind that he is separate from that heater and that heater is for instance harmful (Hoops, 2014).

#### 2.4.1.1. De Saussure

Saussure, as the initiator of the science of semiotics, distinguishes his area of concern as synchronic, how a language works at a given moment as a rule-governed system. To do this he introduces two further distinctions, between langue and parole, between signifier and signified. Parole is considered as the writing and speech, and language using word formation and sentence structure in a particular language. Accordingly, Saussure defined signifiers as sound and image and signified the concept and meaning implied by the signifier or a conception. What Saussure has done is that he restored the distinction between signifier and signified which is classical rhetoric by breaking the word (Easthope, 1993 p.5).

According to Saussure, it is impossible for a sign to be composed of a word without meaning and a meaning without a word. He demonstrates that the two are interdependent and neither is superior to the other. In the Saussure diagram, the relationship between the members of the sign can be easily understood (Sojudi, 2011 p. 14).

In this diagram, the relationship between signifier and signified, which is called signification, is shown as an arrow. When signifier and signified are joined together they form a sign. A signifier without a signified, or in other words, a signifier that does not signify any concept, is nothing more than a vague sound, and a signified that has no form to signify can not be received and recognized. The two elements are intimately united, and each recalls the other. (Saussure, 1959 p.55).

At this point as Saussure declared, the linguistic sign is then a two-sided psychological entity. He predicted that one day there will be a science that conducts the life of signs in society. He was right, and the implications of the signifier/signified distinction have come to touch many areas of contemporary thought, including film theory (Easthope, 1993 p. 6).

Saussure provides highly efficient conceptual tools for semiotic thinkers, which can be used in all areas of semiotic study. The conventionality of signs, the signifier and signified system, as well as syntagmatic and paradigmatic, along with the possibility

of simultaneous analysis, are part of the facilities that Saussure provides for semiotic analysis (Sajudi, 2011). The application of these elements in various fields has caused semiotics to not be limited in linguistics and go beyond other fields such as cinema.

#### **2.4.1.2. Peirce**

Unlike Saussure's model, which has a dual form, Peirce introduced a three-dimensional model. Defining a sign as something that stands for something, Peirce discriminates three kinds of relationships that distinguish between a sign and the object it represents (Ethope, 1993).

Representamen: A form that a sign takes on is not necessarily material.

Interpret: The meaning derived from the sign.

Object: The sign attributed to that object.

Peirce declares the interaction between representamen, object, and interpretant, which is the process of meaning-making introduced as semiosis. According to his pattern, a red traffic light sign that indicates a "stop" command is a representamen, halting vehicles is an object and the thought that a red light indicates that vehicles should stop is an interpretation. Peirce discriminates three kinds of relation between a sign and the object; thus he defines a sign as something that stands for something, eventually he concludes that it represents: iconic, indexical, symbolic relation (Ethope, 1993).

In an iconic relation the sign resembles what it stands for, which is obtained through visual imitation. Which means the sign is similar in some respects to its subject (a photos, replicas, metaphors, diagram, etc. is similar to or like what it shows); indexically the sign may have a causal relation to its object one can say the relation can be physically (smoke is the sign of a fire or Natural sign, medical sign, such as video, television, or tape recordings); and in a symbol, the relation between sign and object is purely arbitrary, which are linked to their meanings through the application (language, in particular, is symbolic - there is no natural connection between, say, the word 'tree' and a tree growing in someone's garden) (ibid, p.2).

As Peirce pointed out, a photograph represents both the iconic and indexical relation. Since cinema originates in photography, it also obviously counts as bearing an iconic and indexical relation to reality. This is the commonsense understanding classic film theory tried but failed to free itself from (Peirce, 1991 p.3).

In comparison, between Peirce and Saussure's pattern, some differences came to the surface; for instance, Peirce has utilized an object that has no place in the Saussure pattern. The representament is more or less similar to the signifier, and interpreted is similar to the signified (Sojudi, 2011 p.22).

It must be remembered that the quality of interpretation is distinct from signified because it is a sign in the interpreter's mind. In Peirce's semiotic theory, a sign is addressed to someone, which means it creates in that person's mind an equivalent sign, or perhaps an extended sign, which is the interpretation of the sign. The meaning of a sign is not extracted from within the content, but it is derived from the interpretation of that sign (ibid).

#### **2.4.1.3. Barthes**

In his book *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes analyzed the developing forms of contemporary culture, especially advertising (depending on colour photography), television, and cinema. One can hardly identify the areas of Barthes' work in one field due to the wide range of his works. But if we want to make an effort in this field, perhaps the sufficient expression is "semiotics of everyday life".

Abazari (2001), in the article "Roland Barthes, Myths and Cultural Studies", declares that Barthes's articles between 1954-1956 focused on different aspects of daily life and popular culture. What set these articles apart from other articles in the field of culture, apart from his insightful view, was the method he used in writing these articles. Aspects of everyday life and the discovery of meaning and significance through these aspects were fundamental to Barthes.

As previously mentioned, myth is a kind of speech and conveys a message, but nowadays, we consider myth as a kind of distorted message. Barthes based his research on Saussure's dual division, signifier and signified. The sum of the two together is called the sign. Saussure insisted on the arbitrariness of the relationship between the signifiers and signified.

In Barthes' semiotic system, the signifier is called the meaning-form. The signified is called the concept, and the sign refers to the signification. Thus, Barthes transforms

Saussure's famous formula, signifier/signified/sign, into this formula, meaning-form/concept /signification. It should be noted here that the sign of the first system becomes the signifier of the second system, the signifier which itself consists of meaning and form. The concept has the same position in the second formula as the signified in the first formula, and the relation of significance to the sign also follows the same rule. In the same way, one can go to infinity, that is, start from the first-order semiotic system (Saussure's model) and continue to the n semiotic system (Abazari, 2001 p. 140).

According to Barthes, Saussure's model, which only demonstrates the explicit meaning and called it "denotation", is incomplete, so he completes this defect and mentions the implicit meaning, "connotation", "of the signs Saussure neglected. Thus, in addition to the literal and explicit meaning or denotation of each word, there is also an implicit meaning or connotation that both appear in the relation of signifier and signified. These categories of meanings are used to distinguish between two types of signified. Both denotation and connotation are determined by context. For a deeper understanding of these concepts, with a view to Chandler's (2007) definition, there will be more illustrations:

**Denotation:** Literal meaning, meaning based on general perception. Which in linguistics has the same meaning in the dictionaries.

**Connotation:** The socio-cultural and personal associations (ideological, emotional ...) of the sign. Factors such as class, age, gender, and ethnic and racial affiliation of the audience and the like are involved in the formation of connotation.

Barthes concluded that denotation is not the first meaning but pretends to be in analysing a literary text. As a matter of fact, denotation creates both the illusion of the connotation and the illusion of explicit language and the signifier and the identical signified. In other words, denotation is another connotation. According to such a view, denotation is no longer a natural meaning but a process of naturalization. This process makes a strong illusion that the denotation is pure reality and universal meaning that is not at all ideological (Chandler, 2007).

Chandler (2007) writes in this regard that the deformation of the sign while maintaining the exact meaning is the cause of the production of many connotations. A

change in style or tone can have many implications. Like when we use different fonts to typeset text. To understand myth, it must be noted that myth has a lot to do with the connotation. Usually, we know myths about ancient gods and heroes, but Barthes gives a new perspective on them; myths are the dominant ideologies of our time. He argues that the levels of signification, that is, denotation signification and connotation signification, synthesis to produce ideology (Sojudi, 2011 pp. 79-80). Myth is a kind of language or system of signs which is specified by history and society but basically tends to indicate itself as general. So, the special task of myth is to turn history into nature (Bashiriyeh, 2000). In fact, Barthes' intention of the myth is the same ideology in Marxism, which is a set of thoughts and actions that supports the status quo and promotes the accepted values of the ruling class (Bashiriyeh, 2000). Given this point, he identifies the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is “a social class that does not want to be named”, constantly denigrating itself. “As an ideological fact, it completely disappears: the bourgeoisie has obliterated its name in passing from reality to representation, from economic man to mental man”.

He explains that, in France, “several types of the bourgeoisie have succeeded one another in power; but the same status -a certain regime of ownership, a certain order, a certain ideology- remains at a deeper level. 'Bourgeois', 'petit-bourgeois', 'capitalism', 'proletariat' are the locus of an unceasing haemorrhage: meaning flows out of them until their very name becomes unnecessary” (Barthes, 1957 p. 137).

The bourgeoisie tries politically and ideologically to be unnamed and naturalize everything it has built so far, including everyday life's realities. In his view, the improvisation of everyday life is a kind of ideological abuse perpetrated by the bourgeoisie. To sum up, Barthes' theory is that every sign has a primary signification secondary signification, and myth begins when this secondary signification appears as something natural, not something artificial and transient. He tries to clarify this by using a photo of a black soldier saluting the French flag with respect. According to him, the original meaning of this photo is clear. The black soldier who salutes the French flag is a meaning-form, the French military force is a concept, and the glory and neutrality of French imperialism is the signification. The connotation here is that the black and white people are no different, while the reality is the opposite (Abazari, 2001).

#### 2.4.1.4. Eco

Eco argues that semiotics should not limit the concept of "sign" to its minimal functions in an abstract system. An essential element of Eco's theory is that it also addresses non-linguistic and natural signs in addition to words and language. Accordingly, these signs are based on a code or previous learning. He indicates that, in order to provide a practical definition of a sign that is consistent with his conception of semiotics, a science that deals with the whole of human culture, it is necessary to provide a description of the structure of the sign-in cryptography. Consequently, it removes the sign from a purely linguistic model. When the code allocates the elements of the conveying system to the elements of the conveyed system, the former becomes the expression of the latter and the latter the content of the former (Eco, 1979 p.48).

As Eco claimed in his book *A Theory of Semiotics* (1976), the sign is used to transmit information. He is saying or specifying something that one knows and wants others to know. In fact, the signs should not be examined regardless of their socio-cultural realm. Hence, he designed the theory of Unlimited Semiosis. Understanding and receiving signs in the socio-cultural realm, he believes, requires the use of hypotheses and methods that have always been proven. The interpreter must identify the specific language used in the art thus can achieve the aesthetic features of the work (Zamiran, 2005). He completely denies the sign in its classical sense and speaks of the existence of a more dynamic, as well as unstable and transient, phenomenon which is called sign-function. At this instant, a) sign is not a physical entity b) a sign is not a fixed semiotic entity (Eco, 1979 p. 49).

Echo believes that if signs can be used to tell the truth, they can also be used to lie. Because both senses have a bilateral relationship when something cannot be used to lie, it cannot be used to tell the truth as well (Bashiriyeh, 2000). He indicates that power is established in human life through language. Language, which is the highest semiotic system or prototype system, is a model for other semiotic systems that are established in different cultures as tools of power and knowledge (Eco, 1979).

### **2.4.2. Phenomenology**

Phenomenology emerged with a critique of the materialist and structuralist disposition of semiotics. The pioneers of this school of thought in the cinematic area were Henri Ajel and Amedee Alfred. Alfred declares that there are many types of truth; thus, the phenomenological theorist wants to unveil a kind of truth that cannot be reduced to logic.

Dudley Andrew (1976) is a phenomenologist who believes in the power of art. He considers the initial activities beyond logic and says that these are the activities that evoke nature in the human mind; these activities teach him the correct position of human beings.

Ajel indicates that, in addition to the cinema that Eisenstein introduced as it is based on a combination of shocks and semiotics just appreciate this one, there is another cinema that semiotics has generally ignored, which is the cinema of “contemplation”. Ajel compared semiotics and phenomenology, came to the conclusion that semiotics as a method and analytical theory favours cinema that divides the world. While phenomenology is a poetic theory that values excellent films, which depict life, unity, balance, and harmony. Besides, while in semiology, the filmmaker imposes a concept on the world through the mechanism of their signs, Ajel designates that great filmmakers in their films recognize the concept of the world not mechanically but simply and unadorned (Andrew, 1976 p.379).

From a phenomenological point of view, watching a film is a process through which we interpret the signs of nature and the signs of humankind from a personal point of view. Looking at this issue through this perspective, the distance between semiotics and phenomenology is narrowing. The semiotician interprets a sign with atomism as well as showing how cinema is possible, but the phenomenologist seeks to describe the value and importance we feel in some scenes of the film ((Andrew, 1976 p.388).

## CHAPTER III

### THE ARTICULATION OF FEMININITY IN SOCIETY OF IRAN

In the following, a brief overview of the matter being discussed will be propounded. In Iranian society, some profound articulations shape society's thought toward women that will be discussed.

The emergence of femininity in Iranian Society:

#### **3.1.Domestic Violence**

Roots of violence are founded on gender inequalities and power imbalance between men and women; some exist and grow in family and society "The Paternal House" can be referred to as a movie that fully addresses this issue. The phenomenon of discrimination against women is closely linked to the cultural and social structures of societies. In other words, in traditional societies, the frequency and intensity of violence against women are much higher than in modern and developed societies. And the reason for this difference can be sought in the influence and dominance of structures formed on the basis of patriarchy and the acceptance of this discourse in the private and public spheres.

#### **3.2. Patriarchal Values**

According to some scholars (Ahmed 1992; Moghadam, 1993; Tohidi 1996), the patriarchy and its presence in the Middle East have a great deal of scholarly literature. Since ancient times, the patriarchate has been an essential institution in the region and is rooted in religious, legal and cultural practices. Studies of the early women and feminist movement have also focused on this issue in the Middle East. Issues such as the low status of women, women's chastity, honour killings, gender

discrimination, etc., have a significant impact on women's lives and experiences in countries where patriarchal systems exist.

In general, there are different theories and readings of feminism today, each of which is named and categorised according to theoretical tendencies, analytical tools and focuses explicitly on the subject of women. Meanwhile, a group of feminist theories has been called "theories of gender oppression" because of their emphasis on "sexual oppression" that affects women in the shadow of patriarchal power (Ritzer, 1991).

An indication of this theory is the use of the concept of "patriarchy" in explaining the inferior position of women in society. Theorists of gender oppression believe that women are subjected to restraint, citizenship, coercion, abuse and mistreatment by men. They see the position of women as a consequence of the direct power relationship between women and men, a relationship in which men have objective and fundamental interests in the surveillance, abuse, subjugation and oppression of women through sexual oppression of women. The pattern of oppression is embedded in the most profound and most pervasive forms in the organisation of society and forms a fundamental structure of domination commonly referred to as patriarchy (Ritzer, 1991 pp. 483-484)

A structure in order to make its power and domination possible must permeate the entire organisation of society, from production and consumption to politics, law, and culture. Thus, patriarchy has two aspects, the domination of men over women and the dominance of older men over the younger. And this domination continues through violence and ideology. Thus, patriarchy reproduces its authority through its specific roles and structures (Manuel Castells 1983, p. 175).

From the oppressive approach, patriarchal roles and structures have been developed and preserved in accordance with the artificial contradiction of the qualities of traditional stereotyped behaviour. The image of a person with authority and understanding that embraces his role has been associated with the perpetual masculine behaviour that refers to rationality, objectivity, aggression, domination, and the tendency to draw boundaries between oneself and others (Manuel Castells 1983).

On the other hand, the biological and physiological differences between men and women, as well as the differences in their social positions, have led to the separation of the two key and controversial concepts of "sex" and "gender" in the feminist theoretical literature. Sex is a term that refers to the biological differences between men and women, the apparent differences in the sex organs and the related differences in reproductive practice. But gender is a cultural issue related to the social classification of "male" and "female". These concepts have helped oppress theorists explain much of the sexual oppression and repression of women (Giddens, 2009 p. 187)

Oppression begins when biological differences become the basis for the social differences and discrimination between men and women. Women's capacity for childbirth, breastfeeding, and physical strength, which is usually less than their own capacity, have for centuries determined their social status as mothers and housewives. In this sense, women are primarily attracted to domestic activities because of their role as mothers and caregivers. Thus, theorists of gender oppression consider the concepts of femininity and masculinity as the product of patriarchy and believe that they are myths that subvert reality so that the domination of one sex over another continues (Giddens, 2009).

The differences in the social status and roles of men and women have continued throughout history in the form of myths of femininity and masculinity that are no longer considered part of the nature of women. Simone de Beauvoir (2013 p.13) emphasises that women are not born women but become women. The social structure of women has been a constant "repression" of women.

According to Ritzer, theories of oppression include three psychoanalytic, radical, and socialist feminist approaches. Each of the three theories has been analysed according to their own theoretical approach of patriarchy, gender oppression and repression of women by men. Psychoanalytic feminism, using Freud's psychoanalytic analysis and emphasis on gender as a central category, explains oppression of women and patriarchy in terms of men's deep emotional need to control women.

Radical feminists express anger and disgust at the very positive value of women, the humiliation and deprivation of women's power, and view women as victims of patriarchal and male-dominated regimes. Radical feminists consider two sources of sexual oppression to be men's sexual needs of women and their fertility. And in their analytical focus, they place an image of patriarchy that is manifested by the violence of men and male-dominated organisations against women, which may not necessarily manifest itself in the form of physical cruelty. Finally, socialist feminism, which uses the concept of patriarchy to analyse capitalism and explains the oppression of women through the economic and cultural exploitation of women (Giddens, 2009).

According to Walby (1990, p.20), patriarchy is "a system of social structures and practices in which women are dominated, oppressed and exploited by men". She sees patriarchy and capitalism as separate systems that, depending on historical circumstances, interact in different ways- sometimes in harmony with each other and sometimes in tension and conflict. For example, Walby argues that capitalism has benefited from patriarchy through the sexual division of labour. But sometimes capitalism and patriarchy have been in conflict. For instance, during the war, when women entered the labour market in groups, the interests of capitalism and patriarchy were incompatible.

Walby (2002 p. 5) identifies six distinct structures through which patriarchy operates. In her view, the weakness of early feminist theory was that it focused on a single cause for the oppression of women, such as men's violence with the role of women in reproduction. But because Walby deals with the depths and interrelationships of gender inequality, she sees patriarchy as composed of six structures that are independent of each other but interact with each other. Patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality and patriarchal relations in a cultural institution.

- 1. Patriarchal mode of production:** Women's unpaid domestic labour, such as housework and childcare, are expropriated by her husband (or cohabitee).

2. **Patriarchal relations in paid work:** Women in the labour market are excluded from certain types of work. Receive lower pay and are segregated in less-skilled jobs.
3. **Patriarchal relations in the state:** The state has a systematic bias towards patriarchal interests in its policies and priorities.
4. **Male violence:** Although male violence is often seen as composed of individualistic acts, it is patterned and systematic. Women routinely experience this violence and are affected by it in standard ways. The state effectively condones the violence with its refusal to intervene, except in exceptional cases.
5. **Patriarchal relations in sexuality:** This is manifested in 'compulsory heterosexuality and in the sexual double standard between men and women, in which different 'rules' for sexual behaviour applies.
6. **Patriarchal relations in the cultural institutions:** A variety of institutions and practices- including media, religion and education- produce representations of women 'within a patriarchal gaze'. These representations influence women's identities and prescribe acceptable standards of behaviour and action.

Walby distinguishes two distinct forms of patriarchy. *Private patriarchy* is the domination of women, which occurs within the household at the hands of an individual patriarch. It is an exclusionary strategy; because women are essentially prevented from taking part in public life. *Public patriarchy*, on the other hand, is more collective in form. Women are involved in public realms, such as politics and the labour market, but remain segregated from wealth, power and status. As we will see in the selected movies, the interaction with the female character, no matter

Which class or period of time; all are prevented from taking their part in public life. Only patriarchy's form has shifted from private to the public. In other words, as Walby quips: 'Liberated from the home, women now have the whole of society in which to be exploited' (Giddens, p.618).

### 3.3. Mandatory Hijab

Since taking power until now, Iranian authority has sought to impose the hijab on women as a reflection of the ideological values of the Islamic Revolution. Ceasefire (a centre for civilian rights), in an article titled "Beyond the Veil: Discrimination Against

Women in Iran" (2019), has extensively explored this issue. According to Article 8 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, calling for good, "enjoining the good and forbidding evil," is public and reciprocal duty of the people toward each other, the government toward the people and the people toward the government.

According to Article 538 of the Fifth Book of the Islamic Penal Code (under the title of Sanctions and Deterrent Penalties), women who appear in public without hijab will be sentenced to imprisonment for ten days to two months or a fine of fifty thousand to five hundred thousand rials. Mandatory hijab is not only a violation of women's freedom of expression but also a freedom of religion or belief because it is also compulsory for women belonging to religious minorities.

Consequently, the hijab and the structurally related gender segregation are strategies for controlling and containment of female sexuality in Islamicate societies. As mentioned before, the media, especially cinema, play an important role in creating the hegemonic conditions of the values of the Islamic Republic in society; therefore, the issue of hijab and covering is well represented in these media. In this regard, for instance, the type of clothing women wear represents their social status, women with hijab are obedient and responsible, but women with unconventional hijab represent disobedient, irresponsible and uncommitted characters.

### **3.4. Honor**

Honor or zeal in Iran has always been considered a part of cultural values and has been a part of the hegemonic masculinity of Iranian society. The zeal of the Iranian men has surrounded them with desirable and positive individual and social attributes. The adjective "zealous" has also acted as a powerful socio-cultural stigma to reinforce such a perception and the Iranian man has expressed many unscrupulous actions to escape this heavy stigma.

From the perspective of feminism, zeal in Iranian history and culture is an excuse to deprive women of all their human rights. In such a way, nothing is left of the woman except pure obedience (Bakhtiari Nejad, 1388 p. 13). As a result, the more obedient a woman is and the more indifferent she is to her lost individual and social rights, the

more credibility her male relatives (father, husband, or brother) gain, and thus the woman is reduced to the man's property.

In conclusion, this belief that if women's sexuality is not controlled by men and by zeal, corruption and immorality will occur rampantly, and this is a threat to social order. But in fact, zeal has become a tool for controlling women, an excuse for depriving them of life and subjugating them. In this feminist point of view, the zealous deny women's right to choose and the power to distinguish by themselves, limit their presence in the public sphere, and subjugate them in the private sphere, thereby consolidating patriarchy. From the point of view of some feminist scholars, this historical conception of woman and zeal in Muslim societies contradicts some of the principles of Islamic law. Accordingly, these interpretations and practices are, in fact, a breach of the patriarchal ideology of the period of Arab ignorance in the Islamic period, which Islam and the Qur'an sought to overthrow.

### **3.5. Marginalization**

Dr. Soltani, in a study entitled "Gender Screening in Iranian Cinema", using Ervin Goffman's theories of content analysis method, has tried to examine the image that post-revolutionary cinema presents to the spectator of showing gender relations. Using five of Goffman's six models, he examines all the films made between these years and compares different political eras. The results of this research can be summarised as follows: By showing women as inferior to men, these films show the superiority of one sex over another and reproduce traditional norms.

With this in mind, in the movie *About Eli*, The woman is portrayed as an incompetent, inferior, and sacrificial creature living in a patriarchal environment. At the same time, Taghizadegan and Ravdrad (2001) believe that "what is portrayed of women in this film is in accordance with the social context and ideologies hidden in social norms." These authors believe that Sepideh's role in the film is portrayed as a "modern and educated young woman with a modern cover that also has skills such as driving, a woman with many relationships and social experiences." However, the point is despite that, she still makes mistakes in her decisions, and it is her husband who tries to make

up for her mistakes. It is as if a woman, no matter how modern she is, because of her inherent incompetence, cannot lead and manage the community.

### **3.6. Male Dominance**

Like many other sociologists, Bruce Cohen (2012) believes that socialisation begins within the family. The family, as the representative of the whole world, is responsible for children. The family's attitudes and perceptions shape even a child's perception of him/herself, the world, and the people around him. As a result, the process of socialisation of human beings makes the customs, laws and norms of a culture stick in his/her mind. When norms stick in one's mind, one no longer doubts about the rightness or wrongness, the merits or the inappropriateness of norms, and in this case, the individual himself follows the norms as proper social behaviour. The main factors of socialisation are family, school, peer groups and mass media. But it is perhaps safe to say that the core and thorny ground of socialisation that leads to the unequivocal acceptance of the norms of a culture is the family and the relationships within the family.

As Charles Horton Cooley (1902) points out in his theory of the "looking-glass self", society is like a mirror in which one responds to the reactions of others. He can see his behaviour in it. He believes that the social self-evolution of each person begins from the first years of life. As a result, a child born into a family with an ethnic and tribal structure inherits the norms of his or her environment from childhood.

Boys become socialised with superiority and independence and are allowed to commit violence, and girls go through the process of socialisation with inferiority, lack of independence, dependence on men, which they have been used to. Thus, male dominance and female's tolerance of violence forms a significant part of men's and women's beliefs in society.

### **3.7. Religious Rules**

Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, based on Islam, which declares its goal, like other divine religions, to establish a system of justice and the elimination of

discrimination and oppression against all humanity, seeks to guarantee the removal of any intellectual, social and economic monopoly and based on this orientation. It claims that it provides the ground for the participation of the people in all stages of political and decisive decision-making for all members of society (Hashemian 2016, p.186). On the other hand, in religious governments, God is the main and fundamental legislator, and all people have a duty to obey the divine laws.

In such systems, obedience to divine laws and religious regulations is highly valued. Thus, other values, such as freedom, justice, and equality are valid if they are either limited to or derived from these laws (Katouzian 1997, p. 20). Accordingly, the treatment of women in Iranian society is directly related to what is stated in the law, which has religious roots.

In this regard, Dr. Vasmaqi (2014), in her book "woman, jurisprudence, Islam" indicates that today, jurisprudence is involved in all aspects of the Iranian people's lives. Jurisprudence is so vast that it covers the most important social and political fields on the one hand and the most straightforward and most personal matters on the other. Many of the laws and regulations that jurists have referred to as sharia rules are rooted in pre-Islamic laws and rules. The method of punishment, discrimination are some of them. These existed both before Islam and after Islam. Many of these rulings have not changed significantly, not because Islam agrees with them but because it takes a long time to bring about these changes in societies. Developments occur as human beings, human thoughts, human science, human culture change, and consequently, human intellect grows. The jurists and fundamentalists in the definition of Sunnah say that Sunnah is the word, deed and narration of the Prophet. In the meantime, all the customs, traditions, and current regulations in the community of early Muslims that were not established by Islam and existed before Islam which for whatever reason, the Prophet was not exposed to it. All of these have entered the hadiths and narrations, and from there, they have entered our jurisprudence as "signature rulings" and religious instructions and today, unfortunately, we see them in penal code and civil code, while this issue is very debatable.

In fact, it can be said that in the time of the Prophet, there was a set of laws and regulations governing the Muslim community, which, of course, did not contradict

Islam but was appropriate to the conditions of that time. This set of laws can be changed in different circumstances as long as it is not contrary to Islam.

There are some religious principles, and related laws are briefly reviewed. These laws, which are even controversial from the jurisprudential point of view, have taken root in the subconscious of society and, as a result, have become a lever to put more pressure on women in Iranian society.

### **3.8. Religious Instructions and Penal Code Related to Women in the Iranian Constitution**

- Friday prayers for women, slaves, travellers, older men, the blind and the paralyzed are void.
- The woman's mosque is her house.
- A woman should not leave the house without her husband's permission.
- A girl cannot marry without her father's permission.
- The mother can demand payment from the child's father to breastfeed her baby, and the father can give the baby to another woman if she does not agree.
- A mother has only the priority to her child's breastfeeding, not the right
- A woman's atonement is half of a man's atonement, and if a man intentionally kills a woman, the woman's parents must pay the difference between the two atonements, that is, half of the man's atonement, to the man's heir if they want to retaliate against the man
- The military can only hire women for health care jobs
- According to the Islamic Penal Code, boys and girls are not the same age to start criminal responsibility. "A person who has not reached legal maturity" is exempt from criminal responsibility. A note to Article 1210 of the Civil Code states that the age of puberty is fifteen full lunar years for boys and nine full lunar years for girls.
- The boy has been criminally liable since the age of sixteen, while the girl has been criminally liable since the age of ten
- Any woman who does not observe her hijab in public is sentenced to 72 lashes or a fine. A law that still stands in Iran.

- In an honor killing, the jurists consider paternity a hindrance to retribution. If he commits it, he sentences to atonement and ta'zir. If committed by the mother, the same crime will be sentenced for killing the child as the same as for other people.

These are brief and implicit references to laws written in the Islamic Republic of Iran that deprive women of their rights. Whereas, the fourth principle of the constitution stipulates that "all civil, criminal, financial, economic, administrative, cultural, military, political, and other laws and regulations must be in accordance with Islamic standards. These principle domains the application or generality of all other principles, laws and regulations". According to these principles, Iranian law should not conflict with its primary source, which is Islamic law.

### **3.9. Ethnic Dimension**

Dr. Mohammadi (2009), in a study entitled "*Silent catastrophe: honor killings*" (Bakhtiyarnejad, 2009), remarked that one of the most influential and highlighting causes of discrimination against women is the cultural nature of that society. In other words, there is a theory that indicates that development or awareness is a regional phenomenon. For instance, if Afghanistan were in Europe, then it would be developed like most other continent's countries. According to this theory, which region you live in determines your destiny, nature and identity. Studies have shown that violence against women, including honor killings, has been closely linked to ethnic and cultural minorities. In the study of Iran's political history, minorities have always been marginalised from the centre and settled on the borders. As a result, the border areas of Iran are completely minority and ethnic-religious or subcultural, or in other words, ethnic communities, which have their interpretation and analysis (Bakhtiyarnejad, 2009).

In analysing some Iranian traditions, perceptions, values and attitudes, we must pay attention to regional awareness or the personality and culture of the region. A culture that gives courage to zeal and a role to men that is supportive, protective and in the first place, the role of patronage. The more this role increases due to geopolitical necessity and socio-cultural status, bureaucratic administrative organisations, and its

social structure, the more absolute the supervision becomes, and his role becomes more prominent. Accordingly, we can say discriminations against women are a more regional issue (Bakhtiyarnejad, 2009 p.83).

When we say ethnic, religious, racial minority, it means that due to being a minority, these groups return to their own traditions and norms; however, it is backward. Why? Because they have not been allowed to enter a large social organization, have been humiliated, or banned, or economically impoverished, consequently, they find their own original roots as a safe zone. It is also a theory that the more you put pressure on fundamentalist communities and ethnic communities, they will definitely become more fundamentalist. Central policies also help them return to their correlation and coherence structures and characteristics when reversing them (Bakhtiyarnejad, 2009). In the past, the man, because of his zeal, had the duty of patronage, maintenance and protection of family privacy. Family members had the same awareness and belief, and the awareness was completely consistent. The man performed his duties as a patriarch, and the others expected the same from him. This is how social cohesion and relationships within the family were ensured. The more manly he was, the more he could support, the more he wielded a sword and the more violent he demanded.

The legitimacy of the use of force given to the patriarch in the tribe is given to the state in modern societies. Consequently, violence has not always been condemned, but now relations have changed, part of the use of force has been given to the government and the law. Due to these social changes, men are frustrated by the loss of bread-winning power and the centralist government, which has paid less attention to minorities, and despite the many social changes, they continue to adhere to their patriarchal norms.

### **3.10. Social Class**

In the psychological analysis of violence, Freud and many psychologists believe that the primary stimulus for violence is deprivation. Deprivation and discrimination increase feelings of anger, followed by increased violent behaviour. A person who has experienced a lot of deprivation believes that the law of the jungle governs the world and that no one has had mercy on me so that I can have mercy on someone. For this

reason, poverty and discrimination are some of the main causes of violence, violent behaviour, and oppression.

In a study titled "*Silent catastrophe: honor killings* ", Dr Rasuliyani, a psychiatrist, divides violence into two categories: legitimate (valuable) and illegitimate (non-valuable) violence. Cases such as legal punishment, execution and war are legitimate violence and torture; rape and murder are called illegitimate violence. It is legitimate (useful), which means that dividing the type of violence into legitimate and illegitimate cultural issues and the level of development of society are considered. For instance, research about honour killings, manifesting violence against women, indicates that those who commit murder usually have low levels of education and socioeconomic status. As a result, it can be said that one of the social reasons for the existence of such murders is immaturity. There are cases of honour killings in which a person has a high level of education or social status, but these are rare.

Regarding violence against women, it should be noted that in progressed societies, issues are usually resolved between husband and wife or family members. But in primitive societies, it is common for any male who is a girl "Maharam" to have feelings of ownership or jealousy for a girl, and in instances of honour breach, the husband may even delegate responsibility for punishment to his wife's family in order to avoid embarrassment. The fact that he believes himself to be the owner of the lady may lead to threats, torture, or even death.

Another thing to say about these societies is that men in these cultures cannot separate the identities of women or sisters or wives. They feel that the fault of the women of the family or even the relatives are being blamed on them. In other words, they consider this fault as the reason for their impudence, and to compensate consequently, they show aggressive behaviour toward women.

## CHAPTER IV

### CINEMA AND SEMIOLOGY

#### 4.1. Introduction

This article aims to study the representation of women in Iranian cinema after the revolution. As the media is a powerful arm for reflecting public opinion and macro-policies of society, it can be a reliable source for sociological studies. As a matter of fact, the cinema can be considered a set of instructions that can be accessed by deciphering and interpreting its language. Thus, it helps to recognise the contemporary features and characteristics of the society in the cinema.

To point it out, this view can be seen in some film critiques that seek to find commonalities in film and social structure. Krakauer, in the book *Caligari to Hitler* (1974), analysing German films from 1920 to 1930, believes that the tendencies that led to the acceptance of German Nazism are reflected in the movie of this period. Some believe that the frustration of the two world wars and the disappearance of traditional values led to the emergence of a wave of fiction films from the 1950s and 1970s (Jinks, 1971).

To illustrate more, by studying the cinema, one can also concentrate on the special topics of different cultures; for instance, by selecting a few movies about the role of blacks in American films from a particular period, one can obtain a relatively realistic view of life in that period. Besides, on other topics such as people's religious attitudes, sexuality and morality, one can perceive arousing information in the films of a certain period of time (ibid).

Javerie (1999) declares that the best way towards a sociology of a society is to study art products for domestic consumption. Although they may not be a direct reflection of the state of society, products such as movies, provide the necessary clues for researchers. Given that the structure of the Iranian family has undergone significant

changes and transformations throughout its life history, a study of the characteristics reflected in the films can indicate one of the important changes in the studies era (Radvar, 2001 p.136). Semiotics is generally the science of concepts, and the semiotics of cinema seeks to create a comprehensive paradigm that explains how the film makes sense and how it is seen (Andrew, 1976).

#### **4.2. Barthes's Semiotics in Cinema**

Semiotics in this sense conceived by the French culturologist Roland Barthes, in contrast to the previous constructivism, refers to the general lack of structure behind the signs. Thus, the subject of semiotics is the study of the methods of producing a system of meaningful signs (Bashiriye, 2000).

Denotation and connotation are keywords in Barthes' semiology; he used these two terms to describe the sign in any given culture. For more illustration, they are the two orders of the sign. Therefore there is the first order of signification (denotation) and a second-order (connotation) accordingly, there will be a third-order which is a myth. Given what has been discussed in the second chapter, denotation means the literal relationship between sign and referent; thus, *Salesman* denotes the object it refers to. In other words, he declares that the denotation reflects the symbol itself, while the connotation reflects the mystery that is represented in this symbol. In film terms, this first order of meaning refers to what is on the screen, which is the technical (re)production of an image. For instance, in *Salesman*, there are two people in a frame. A woman and a man who the woman hides herself behind. Thus, the second-order of meaning, connotation, adds values that are culturally encoded to that first order of meaning. And it is at this second order of signification that we can see how signs operate as myth-makers. At the denotation level, a woman is standing behind the man. At the connotative level of meaning, the image signifies an anxious woman being protected by a wise and thoughtful man (Hyaward, 2000 p. 83).

On the other hand, the key concept of representation in semiotics is a myth. According to Barthes, certain aspects of popular culture explain how these cultural artefacts produce meaning (Hyaward, 2000 p.254). He introduces mythology as both formal knowledge and part of ideology because it is historical knowledge. In addition, cultural

artifacts have a mythic function, which means we perceive the culture we live in. History and culture inform myths which are explained as a natural process. Eventually, it is part of the ideological process of naturalization (Hyaward, 2000).

#### **4.2.1. Barthes Five Codes**

Barthes considers text to be the result of the interaction of codes and offers five elements involved in the semantic mechanisms of the text. In *S/Z*, Barthes provides a comprehensive analysis of the codes involved in reading and writing. *S/Z* is, in fact, Barthes' comprehensive analysis of *Sarazin Balzac*. He aims to decode the general significance of the text (Hawkes, 1977). His method is to split the story or as (Barthes himself puts it, to break it down as if a slight earthquake had struck) into 561 units of lexis (different lengths of reading) and then to analyze these textual signs based on five codes (Sojudi, 2008 p.147). These codes, which are the way of grouping signifiers according to the role they play in the text, include Hermeneutic (the voice of truth), Proairetic (the voice of empirics), Semantic (the voice of the person), Symbolic (the voice of the symbol), and Cultural (the voice of knowledge).

- I. Hermeneutic Codes:** these codes are all units whose role is to ask a question, answer a question, and a variety of random events that may either formulate a question or delay answering it or even puzzle and guide us to the solution. Hawkes indicates that these are, in fact, the mysteries of storytelling, through which the narrative raises questions, creates suspense and mystery, and finally unravels in its own way. These codes usually deal with the syntactic system, vocabulary, etc., and can be distinguished by their general shape. For example, a Mysterious process with deciphering creates a state of suspension and then decoding it (Sojudi, 2008 p.148).
- II. Proairetic Codes:** these codes are actions and behaviour. The cumulative actions constitute the plot events of the text. These codes, which originate in the concept of the intellectual ability to determine the outcome of an action, can be seen in cases such as the unit of reading. In other words, these codes deal with a chain of events that are recorded and named during the reading and gathering of the information that the narration gives us; for example, we say the sequence of "murder" or the sequence of "tramp" (Sojudi, 2008 p.150).

- III. Semantic Code:** these codes use semantic allusions or connotations, also known as "flickers of meaning", and are produced by special signs. Consider the name of the story, *Sarrasine*, again. The final "e" in these codes indicates femininity, and this femininity is a quality that is at the heart of many of the subsequent complexities of the story. These codes are more similar to the theme of American-English criticism theme or motif. These codes present a more profound implication than what their surface suggests (Sojudi, 2008 p.148).
- IV. Symbolic Codes:** these codes are grouping or recognizable combinations, which are regularly repeated in different forms and different ways in the text and eventually form the dominant composite. For instance, "I was deeply immersed in one of my daily dreams ..." in the contrast or contrasting nature of the day/dream, the first case of what leads to the contradictions which are constantly reproduced in the story is shown. Contrasts that culminate with the sexual conception of contradictions (male/female) within the general meaning of the text. In other words, these types of codes provide a more profound implication than what their appearance suggests (Sojudi, 2008 p. 149).
- V. Cultural Codes:** these codes are manifested in the form of a moral, collective, anonymous, and powerful voice that is called accepted knowledge or wisdom. Cultural codes are the conduit for referring texts to the outside world, including public knowledge (art, medicine, politics, literature, etc.). Cultural codes are the realm of mythology and ideology. They render more than connotative meaning (Sojudi, 2008 p.150).

According to Barthes, these five codes provide the ability to understand the text (in *S/Z Sarrazin* text). The proairetic codes and the hermeneutic codes make the text move forward from one point to another and towards the inevitable end. The other three codes, the semiotic, cultural and symbolic codes, provide basic information and implications to complete the comprehensibility of the text.

#### **4.3. John Fiske**

He considers the purpose of semiotic analysis to be the identification of those layers of encoded meanings that are embedded in the structure of films, television programs

and, in general, audio-visual productions, even in small parts of these programs (Fisk, 1986). In this regard, he considers the most important part of semiotic analysis to be the identification of the codes in the film, and introduces how to identify and analyze them. He defines television as a bearer/provoker of meaning and pleasure and culture as the generation and circulation of the variety of meaning and pleasure within society. The code is a system of lawful signs to which all members of a culture adhere to its rules and customs. This system creates and disseminates concepts in culture that preserve that culture. In fact, it is the interface between the creator of the text and the addressee and also acts as an internal link between the text.

According to Fisk, codes have three levels: reality, representation, and ideology. The facts that are to be turned into a movie have already been encrypted with social codes. That is, the level of reality, in order to be technically applicable, passes through the filter of technical codes and is placed in the categories of cohesion and social acceptance by ideological codes. Fisk says the classification of these codes is based on arbitrary and flexible categories (Fisk, 1986 p.128).

**Table 4.1: Different Levels of John Fisk**

Level 1	Realities with social codes	The facts that are to be broadcast on television are already encrypted with social codes. Such as appearance, clothing, facial expressions, environment, behavior, speech, head and hand movements, sound, etc.
Level 2	Representation with technical codes	Social codes are encrypted by technical codes using electronic devices. Some of the technical codes include camera, lighting, editing, music, and sound, which convey the conventional codes of representation and more recent codes represent the representation of other elements, such as narrative, conflict, character, dialogue, time and place, casting, and other.
Level 3	Ideology or ideological codes	The codes of ideology place the above elements in the categories of cohesion and social acceptability. Some of the codes of ideology include individualism, patriarchy, race, social class, materialism, capitalism, and so on.

According to Fisk, the purpose of the semiotic analysis is to identify the different layers of meanings encoded in the structure of the programs. According to Fisk, meaning is created only when reality and types of representation and ideology are combined and united in a coherent and seemingly natural way (Fisk, 1986).

It is noteworthy to mention that the reality is already encrypted. In other words to be more precise, it is through our cultural codes that we can comprehend reality. In any culture, what is considered reality is the product of the codes of that culture. Thus, "reality" is always pre-encoded and "pure reality" does not exist. If this encrypted reality is shown on TV, it will be affected by the technical codes and customs of the TV representation. Therefore, the program is first, technically playable and, second, a suitable cultural text unit for viewers (Fisk, 1986 p.130).

Meaning is created only when reality and representation and ideology are combined and united in a direct and seemingly natural way. Semiotic or cultural critique deconstructs this unity and shows that the "natural" appearance of this unity is due to the punitive effect of ideological codes on it (Fisk, 1986).

One dare to say, this method is a comprehensive and complete way to analyze visual messages. The benefit of the Fisk method is that in addition to dealing with the text and the methods of extracting signs from the text and expressing it clearly also pays serious attention to out-of-text and intertextual analysis. In fact, John Fisk's method can be considered social semiotics (Esmaeili, 2014 p. 71).

#### **4.3.1. Social Codes**

Social codes mean that the presence of human beings in real life has always been encrypted. In other words, our perceptions of different people based on their appearance are shaped by the conventional codes in our culture. The person responsible for casting, by using these codes, does his job more consciously and conventionally, in other words, in a stereotyped way (Fisk, 1986).

The reality is already encrypted. More precisely, it is only through the codes of our culture that we can understand reality. There may be objective and empirical reality,

but there is no universal way to perceive and understand it. Therefore, in any culture, what is considered reality is the product of the codes of that culture. So, the reality is always pre-encoded. If this encrypted reality is shown on television, the technical codes and customs of television representation will affect it. For instance, wearing black clothes during mourning days in Iran is part of the country's culture. If this culture is presented in the movie, eventually, the cultural codes are presented (Fisk, 1986 p. 129).

#### **4.3.2. Technical Codes**

As mentioned before, the facts to be broadcast on television or in the cinema are pre-encrypted with social codes in order to make them real. In order to be presented in the cinema, it goes through technical codes such as camera, sound, props, and so on. These technical codes are important due to their important role in creating meaning. With this intention to be more creative rather than focus just on technical aspects to create a general meaning (Selby and Cowdery, 1995).

To clarify, the technical codes that Fiske has introduced have been designated in this study. These codes include time and place, props, actors, sound and camera. Here is a brief overview of the most important technical codes that help the director to translate their meaning into movies.

**Time and place:** The location of a film can give a special meaning to the audience. In any case, the place of residence, work, or activity of the film protagonist is in the direction of the director's goals to show his desired meaning to be presented in the best way. In addition to that, time is also important because the social conditions in which the film was made at that time have an impact on the film (Esmaeili, 2014 p. 71). Some of the specific genres require proper adjustment of time and place. In general, all the elements in front of the camera are controlled and selected. Locations provide more realistic scenery to the audience, hence, they can identify the location of the film and see the actors in that location. These differences in the social codes of time and place on the stage represent ideological codes, social class, morality, heroism and criminality, and charm (Fisk, 1986).

**Props:** Props are the equipment used in movies. A movie, in order to convey the intended meaning, relies on the props. Selby and Cowdery (1995) clarified props as playing the major role as signs in most advertisements. The props that you need to identify in the analyses are those that play an important part in what the advertisement is trying to put across. For instance, if an advert for tea shows the product being poured into a fairly ordinary teacup, then this cup is a prop only it needs to be there for tea to be poured into. As its role is clearly purely functional you need not analyse this. However, if the tea were poured into a highly decorated bone-china teacup, then the cup, since it conveys a meaning (class or sophistication) is clearly a sign to which you need to pay attention. The “*symbolic props*”, symbolize particular ideas or qualities. A common use of these symbolic props are the spectacles which have been worn by a woman in laboratory-type settings to encode intelligence and science (Selby and Cowdery, 1995 pp. 42-43).

**Camera:** the usage of camera to induce its intended meaning is categorized into two categories: shot size and camera angles. “As onlookers, we are compelled to occupy the physical position at which the photographer placed the camera; the placing of the camera is not at all neutral, since it affects how we feel about the events shown” (Selby and Cowdery, 1995 p.27).

**Shot size:** the camera shot size has two possible sources: 1. The social code is the distance between people for example, what distance does society consider privacy? 2. The technical codes that make close up equivalent to observe better (Fisk, 1986). The most important shot sizes are Extreme Long Shot (ELS) or Establishing Shot, Long Shot (LS), Medium Shot (MS), Close-up (CU) or Head-and-Shoulders Shot Big Close Up (BCU).

**a. Extreme Long Shot (ELS):** in this shot, the subject takes up only a small part of the frame. The setting itself is the main thing that we see. Because of this, such a shot is often known as an *establishing shot* because it establishes what scene or location we are looking at (Selby and Cowdery, 1995 p. 48).

**b. Long Shot (LS):** in this shot the camera has come a little closer to the subject. Nevertheless, we can still see all of the standing subjects within the frame, neither feet nor head being cut off. The subject is no longer quite so lost in the setting as in the ELS, but the setting still takes up most of the frame (Selby and Cowdery, 1995 p. 48).

- c. **Medium Shot (MS):** this shot is one of the most commonly used shots. The MS is obtained when the subject is cut off just below the waist by the bottom of the frame. In such shots, the subject and the setting normally occupy approximately the same area of the frame. This shot is frequently used in film and TV work as a transition shot between long shots and close ups, because to jump suddenly from one to the other would be far too abrupt and disorientating (Selby and Cowdery, 1995 p. 48).
- d. **Close-up (CU):** This shot is sometimes known as, head-and-shoulders shot. The subject now fills most of the frame and little of the setting can be seen. The close-up is really at the limit of intimate space and is usually reserved, for instance, for particular occasions, news items relating sudden or grave news. The close-up allows one to study the subject in detail. On a large cinema screen every flicker of emotion will be registered on the face of the subject which maybe 12 or 15 feet high when shown in close-up (Selby and Cowdery, 1995 p. 48).
- e. **Big Close Up (BCU):** This is obtained when only a part of the full face is shown, such as tear-filled eyes or a smiling mouth. Such shots are usually reserved for drama and they are frequently used in melodrama to reveal the inner states of characters (Selby and Cowdery, 1995 p. 48).

**Camera angles:** In most television shots the height of the camera matches that of the actors' faces. This camera height is so ingrained in our understanding of camera style that eye level has become synonymous with "normal" height. It becomes transparent to the viewer, taken for granted. Variations on this height consequently become important, apparently signifying something about the characters (Butler, 1994 pp 132,133). Stylistic elements such as camera angle do have meaning, but those meanings are always set within the context of the program and general aesthetic practice (Butler, 1994).

There are three principal variations on camera angles: high angle shot, eye-level shot, low-angle shot.

- a. **High Angle Shot:** this angle is probably the easiest to identify. For instance, the camera looks down at the subject which inevitably makes the viewer feel more powerful than the subject being shown. Spectator may feel like an adult who is looking

down on a child or may also feel pity for the subject depending on the nature of the context (Selby and Cowdery, 1995 p 51).

**b. Eye-Level Shot:** in this angle we are at the same level as the subject. If the subject talks to us directly we see as if we are taking part in communication. If a TV advertisement cuts between various figures in a room, all in conversation and all of whom are shot at eye level, then it almost feels as if we are in the room ourselves taking part in the discussion (Selby and Cowdery, 1995 pp. 52, 53).

**c. Low-Angle Shot:** this angle is as easy to identify as a high-angle shot, but in a low-angle shot the subject looms above the viewer and, because of this, appears powerful and dominating. The audience is now in the position of the child and the on-screen subject in the position of the parent. Such shots may occasionally be reassuring, but, because of the spatial disorientation involved in such a shot, normally they make us feel uneasy (Selby and Cowdery, 1995 p. 53).

**Sound:** Sound is another means of understanding film action. A simple test can illuminate the importance of sound in visual media. Thus, if one turns off the sound and watches 15 minutes of a program, then watches the next 15 minutes with clear sound but does not look at the picture. Which 15 minutes is more conceptual? Definitely, sound without image is more self-sufficient than image without sound (Butler, 1994).

There are many purposes that sound serves on television, but among them, four will be more concerned here (Butler, 1994 p. 192):

1. Capturing viewer attention;
2. Manipulating viewer understanding of the image;
3. Maintaining televisual flow;
4. Maintaining continuity within individual scenes.

There are two types of sound in a film, one type of sound, which includes sounds that arise from inside the scene, such as the sound of dialogue or the natural sound of the environment, the second type of sound, includes sounds that are placed on the film, such as music (Hansen et al., 1993).

**a. Dialogue:** Another influential way to empathize with the characters in the film is to use the characters' dialogue. For example, the dialogue between the criminal characters is limited to their evil plots and mutual oppositions, while the protagonists are allowed to talk about their thoughts, ideas and arguments for their actions in the film and express their feelings, or joke about various things (Fiske,

1986 p. 135). Understanding the meaning of dialogue is essential because it is the kind of audio feature that the audience responds to most easily. In movies, nothing is more accessible to us than the meaning of what the characters say (Casebier, 1976).

- b. Music:** The best use of music is to increase the audience's emotional sense of the film's protagonist. Music can greatly affect the audience's emotional reactions. As it can be reminiscent of a particular character, space, situation, or concept. Music creates mood, space and tone. It can also be used as an introduction to transition between views. An example is when the music continues as the scenes move to a new time and place (Casebier, 1976).

**Actors:** Actors convey the feelings, intentions, desires and thoughts of the characters in various ways. In film analysis, four issues are more important in the discussion of actors: casting, the behaviour of the figures or actors, costumes and make-up.

- a. Casting:** The characters in the film are not just representations of individuals but also ideological encodings. The actors who play the roles of heroic or criminal men or women, as well as the roles of the film's "sub-ideological values", are real people whose presence has already been somehow encrypted by social codes. Actors who play male or female heroes or villains, as well as supporting roles in the film, are real people whose presence has already been encrypted by social codes. These actors are characters in the media who have intertextual existence for the audiences and the meanings of their presence are intertextual. These actors are characters in the media who have an intertextual existence for the audience and the meanings of their presence are also intertextual. These characters are not only representations of individuals, but ideological codifications or manifestations of ideological values. Gerbner's research declares that for audiences the difference between heroes and criminal characters comes from only two dimensions: heroes are more attractive and successful than criminals. Whether the characters are attractive or not is partly a reflection of the way their social and technical codes are encrypted, such as lighting, time and place, scenes, cast, and so on (Fisk, 1986 p. 132).

- b. The behaviour of the figures or actors:** one of the ways that actors do to create meaning in the film is their performance and behavior. There are differences in the behavior of protagonists and antagonists. One of the differences between these two groups of characters is their cooperation and companionship. For example, the protagonists of the film work together and get closer to each other. However, the

criminals disagree with each other and eventually separate. This is another sign of the dominant ideology in a society that takes the unity of couples into account (Fisk, 1986 p. 135).

**c. Costuming:** costuming is a significant component making meaning in the character construction. Within television (which we can generalize to all visual media), there are two very active overlapping codes determining our understanding of costume: the code of dress predominant in a specific culture at a specific time and the code of dress specific to television and television genres (Butler, 1994 p. 42).

**d. Make-up:** The form and type of makeup of the actors help to convey the ideological codes of the movies. The integration of the ideological codes of morality, their charm and kindness, their criminality and condensation into an objective social code can be seen, for example, in an insignificant phenomenon such as the lipstick of an actress. Besides, despite the evidently insignificant nature of some codes, they can be as effective as possible (Fiske, 1986 p.134).

**4.3.3. Ideological Codes:** The most important use of ideological codes is to place the social and technical codes in the category of social cohesion and acceptance. For this reason, meaning is created only when all kinds of representations and ideologies are combined in a coherent and natural "reality" to reach unity. Ideological codes are important because they explain the relationship between the technical code of the actors and their social code of them. In Fiske's studies, the most credibility has been given to these ideological codes. But in order to analyze and extract the meanings in each text, one must pay attention to all the signs. Many codes in the text can be analyzed and interpreted according to technical codes. Eventually, these technical, social, and ideological codes come together to create a coherent and integrated meaning in the text. The ideological codes derived from ideology picture the values of the capitalist system, patriarchy, class and racial differences, etc., not historical but natural (ibid).

To better analyze ideological concepts in films, they will be explained in three categories:

**a. The Main Concept:** The concept that the director seeks to designate throughout the film, in other words, it is the basis of the text. The main concept is what is repeated and instilled in the mind of the audience throughout the film (Esmaeili, 2014 p. 88).

**b. Classification of Concepts:** All the other concepts that the director uses to prove the main concept are included in this section. In fact, all the concepts that help the main concept to signify its meaning are included in this section (Esmaeili, 2014 p. 88).

**c. Marginalized Concepts:** Important concepts that the director marginalized and did not address while he could have expressed them. In other words, the meanings that the director could have used in a film, but because of his particular ideology, he has marginalized them. For example, if a religiose is displayed in a film, the director can tell the difference between the two by displaying a pious man. But if the director shows only a holy religiose to the audience as a representative of all believers, here the director has marginalized the true believer (Esmaeili, 2014 p. 88).

**Table 4. 2: Framework for Analyzing Communication Messages Influenced by John Fiske**

<b>Film Codes</b>	<b>Social Codes</b>	Appearance		
		Speech		
		Environment		
		Dress		
	<b>Technical Codes</b>	Time and Place		
		Props		
		Actors	Casting	
			The Behaviour of the Figures or Actors	
			Costuming	
			Make-Up	
		Camera	Shot size	
			Camera Angle	
		Sound	Dialogue	
			Music	

**Table 4. 1: continued**

	<b>Ideological Codes</b>	The Main Concept	
		Classification of Concepts	
		Marginalized Concepts	

#### **4.4. Qualitative Research**

Over the past few decades, qualitative research has undergone a proliferation on at least three levels. First, it has established itself in a wide range of disciplines beyond such as sociology, anthropology and education, etc. The developments have led to an interesting gap, which forms the second level of proliferation: a variety of methods and approaches for data analysis have been developed and spelled out in the methodology literature, mainly in the original disciplines. Another way of describing (and doing) qualitative data analysis is to mix up tools with methods (Uwe, 2014 p.4).

#### **4.5. Sampling**

Sampling can be divided into a number of different ways. At a basic level, with the exception of total population sampling, you will often see the divide between random sampling of a representative population and non-random sampling. Clearly, for many more quantitative-minded researchers, non-random sampling is the second-choice approach as it creates potential issues of ‘bias’. However, in qualitative research, the central resource through which sampling decisions are made is a focus on specific people, situations or sites because they offer a specific – ‘biased’ or information-rich – perspective (Patton, 2002).

Qualitative research has recently grown in popularity and shifted in focus beyond documenting the unique and particular, in part due to funding from evaluation and policy-orientated sources. In this context, considerations about sampling, alongside considerable debate and discussion, have become more central (Ward Schofield, 1993).

#### 4.6. Case Studies

The most common strategy for retaining contextual information in qualitative research is the 'case study.' In this approach, the data are interpreted within the unique context of each case in order to provide an account of a particular instance, setting, person, or event. However, case studies often employ primarily categorizing analysis strategies. Their main advantage is that the categorizing (coding, thematic analysis, etc.) occurs within a particular case rather than across cases so that the contextual relationships are harder to lose sight of. Qualitative case studies can be highly contextual or connected in their analysis (Uwe, 1990 p.26). The case studies of this research are the movies of the last three decades after the revolution.

After watching many movies, these three of them were chosen for the study due to some considerable criteria as like:

- These movies have been among the best-selling and best-awarded movies.
- Movies focused specifically on women's issues.
- The quality of the movies and the director has been considered.
- These movies are one of the best movies in Iranian Cinema in terms of representing women's matters.

Given the aforementioned criteria three movies have been selected, which namely are *Two Women*, *Paternal House*, *the Salesman*.

The analysis of the movies will be according to Fiske's three level's semiology codes. These codes which are social, technical and ideological codes, examine the layers of encrypted meanings in the movies.

## CHAPTER V

### FILM ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the mentioned films will be analyzed. First of all, a selected scene from the movie will be examined afterward, the semiotic analysis of the movie based on the Fiske method will be analyzed. Subsequently, through social codes, issues related to women will be mentioned. Eventually, with the technique of mise en scène codes and technical codes, the selected scenes will be analyzed and criticized

#### 5.1. Two Women (Do zan)

##### 5.1.1. Film Information

- **Genre:** Drama
- **Original Language:** Persian
- **Director:** Tahmineh Milani
- **Writer:** Tahmineh Milani
- **Release Date:** 1999
- **Runtime:** 1h 35m
- **Production Co:** Arman Film, Arta Film

##### 5.1.2. Film Synopsis

In the first scene of the film, Fereshteh calls Roya and seeks help for her husband Ahmed, who is hospitalized. Those who studied architecture at the University of Tehran 14 years ago became friends. Roya quickly moves from her office, a construction engineering company, to the hospital, and on the way, remembers fifteen years ago when she got to know Fereshteh and their friendship days during college. The events of the Fereshteh's life during the last fourteen years are revealed through a series of flashbacks that reflect the memories of Fereshteh and Roya.

Fereshteh, whose family lives in lower social conditions in Isfahan, is an excellent student who has hopes and expectations for her future. She also intends to help her family after graduation. A voracious reader, she seems to know almost everything and is ready to deal with any problem. Roya, who is from a rich family, becomes one of Fereshteh's private students, and eventually, they develop a deep friendship until they are obliged to separate. For various reasons, such as the student demonstrations in the spring of 1981, as well as the harassment of a young man named Hassan, who considers himself remorseful of Fereshteh, they fall apart. Stalker causes a lot of problems, including Fereshteh's cousin, who mistaken him as her boyfriend, sprays acid and causes serious injuries to him. Besides, her father believes that the actions of the stalker must have been provoked by his daughter. For this reason, her father forced her to return home to Isfahan.

Fifteen years have passed since that date, and now Fereshteh is with Roya, meeting with her old friend, reviewing the adventures of her life in the last fifteen years. She narrates the days that Hassan pursued her in Isfahan. Once he was chasing her, a fatal accident happened and a child has died due to the accident, consequently he was sentenced to thirteen years. When he was dragged away to prison, he promised to come back and kill her since he was released from prison.

Ahmed, who is assisting Fereshteh and her family in the lawsuit and the costs of the incident, proposes Fereshteh, and despite Fereshteh's strong opposition to the proposal, he promises to support Fereshteh's plan to continue his studies after the opening of the university. Finally, he succeeds in obtaining the consent of Fereshteh and marries her. He was a jealous husband who forbade his wife from contacting outside worlds, including Roya, her best friend.

She tries to leave her husband several times, but the events conspire against her, and she is unable to do so until 13 years have passed and the stalker is on her doorstep again. Finally, when again she was fighting with her husband due to her secretly acquiring and reading books (about childcare), she ran out of home and was chased by Hassan. Therefore, she asks the stalker to kill her but suddenly Ahmad interferes and is stabbed instead. At the beginning of the movie Ahmad is in ICU and Fereshteh calls her friend Roya for help. When Fereshteh finishes her story, she is informed that her

husband has died. In the last scene, she is confused and believes she has much to do, including going back to the university, raising children, taking her licence, etc. Finally she asks Roya whether she can find books about single mothers raising their children alone.

### 5.1.3. Social Codes of Women

The movie deals with the details of daily life in post-revolution Iran and provides a picture of women's life. It expresses the norms that govern Iranian society. The director of the movie is Tahmineh Milani, whose movies have made her a symbol of hope among Iranian feminists. The theme of the movie is about a girl who is the victim of the madness of men, who in turn make life bitter for her. Contrary to the film's name, which is *Two Women*, the director actually focuses on one woman. This movie challenges the tradition of Iranian cinema, which always portrays Iranian women with perpetual stereotypes, and narrates the story of a woman who doesn't want to be overwhelmed by taboos and unwritten rules that ignore her. But emancipation is not possible for her due to the fact that patriarchal values took their roots in the society and the unwritten law slumped. Her name is Fereshteh, which means Angel. She is the representative of her kind who is surrounded by social obligation. Thus, the director's attempt has led to a show in which the appearance, clothes and environment of Fereshteh's life are represented in a way that is consistent with critical readings in Iranian society.

Roger Ebert, an American film critic, who as a first film critic won the Pulitzer Prize, in a review on this movie indicates that, "Two Women" deals in the details of daily life in post-revolutionary Iran: In the unspoken ways that a woman's duties, her clothing, her behavior, who she speaks to, what she says, all express her servitude in a male-dominated society". Ebert, in his review, declares that Millanie's cinema is the symbol of hope among feminists. Her criticism is attentive, she does not make any overt or specific criticism of Iranian law or Iranian policy. The conclusion is in the hand of spectators and accordingly, Fereshteh becomes the representative of Iranian women in the post-revolution era<sup>1</sup>. In this regard, other reviewer, Dennis Schwartz, considers

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/two-women-2000>

Millani's humanist expressions about the patriarchal society of Iran as an illustration and hope bringng to Iranian women, because she marks on the controversial subjects in the country<sup>2</sup>. Furthuremore, in *Majaleh-ye Zan* (Woman Jurnal) Basiri in an article titled "Victory is on the Way", point out about the thriology of Millani: *The Hidden Half, Two Women, The Fifth Reaction*. She declares that, Milani repeatedly states in interviews, "If being a feminist is talking about women, thinking, making films, showing their dreams, aspirations and problems in order to achieve a social balance, I am a feminist".

There are some considerable characteristics related to the movie to be noted. Fereshteh is in a struggle with the traditional influence on one hand and the deprivation of the development in modern society which is her right. This deprivation occurs from the closest men who are her father, her husband and the striker. Oppressed Fereshteh in a patriarchal society who ultimately rebel against men and the masculine system.

Reciprocally Roya is the other character who represents the ideal model of a woman and the vanished dreams and aspirations of Iranian women. In fact, Fereshteh and Roya, the leading role and supporting role, both are women who not only signify the gender social criticism, but their names are encrypted as a descriptive supplement for them.

The main character of the film is Fereshteh, who does not succeed in achieving her dreams in pursuit of her actual self. By the representation of a traditional woman, she marks the camera of a traditional woman by connotating the signs of an ideal woman.

1. Wears Chador (a black veil)
2. Obedient to the men of the family, husband, father
3. Devote a lot of time for family members, children and spouse and ignore herself
4. Disaffiliation with the outside world
5. Simple appearance and innocent face

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<sup>2</sup> See: <https://dennischwartzreviews.com/twowomen/>

6. A woman with forgiveness, forgetfulness, self-sacrifice and adapting herself to others demands
7. Ride roughshod over her desires

There is another key point about the movie, which is the differences in the perspective of female and male spectators. For the male spectators, Fereshteh's behavior is unjustifiable because the main part of the film is the description of her misfortunes, and since the male is alien to the feminine inner feelings, he describes the story as a long and irrelevant narrative. On the contrary, the female spectator, who has suffered similar hardships in her personal life, can dig her feeling better. The common denominator of the female spectator and the main character of the film (oppression) first evokes a sense of empathy and eventually causes emotional empathy between them (Khavari, 2001).

#### **5.1.4. Female Characters in Two Women**

**Fereshteh:** A girl from a traditional family, who despite being harassed by a striker, is found guilty and her father accuses her of misbehavior that provokes him. She is alone in achieving her goals and is trying to cope with them. An intelligent girl who came to Tehran with a thousand hopes and aspirations and did not ignore any opportunity for progress. She who breaks all taboos also donates money to her family. A woman in a patriarchal society who has been marginalized by male characters and obliged to either surrender to modernity, or struggle with it, or get used to the status quo. Her character represents a community of women who are forced to surrender despite their inner desires. She is obliged to spend her entire life at home and retire into her own shell. Someone who is not even allowed to communicate with the outside world. She is captivated by her husband's pessimism and skepticism, the striker's selfish love and his father's traditional and discriminatory point of view. Fereshteh is a representation of an Iranian mother, who in despite of all the abusive behavior of her husband, agrees to live with a man who persuades her to marry him by bluffing her into continuing her education. To prove my argument, given that divorce was the only option for her, despite all the emotional and intellectual suffocation she faced in her marital life, the court dismissed the case outright. The reason was that none of her husband's behaviors were sufficient to grant divorce. The judge was asking about his

faith, physical violence, drug addiction, etc. However the judge didn't want to waste the time of the court while she was appealing for her life as a human being.

**Roya:** As her name suggests, she is a successful Roya (dream) who has a mutual understanding with her husband not only in married life but also in the workplace. She drives works in a masculine environment, continues her education and has a friendly relationship with her husband. Note to mention that, not only she had not arranged marriage but also, it's a love marriage.

In this movie, director also puts an example of an ideal family along with the movie's subject family, which shows the favorable situation desired by the filmmaker. In this movie, the protagonist is a female student who wants to continue her education but is deprived of further education by her husband. When Fereshteh gets into trouble, she contacts her friend Roya, who has finished her studies and met her husband in the university; they work together in the same company. Both of them have a mutual understanding and work together on various issues (Ravdrad, 2000).

**Fereshteh's mother:** She is a simple and compromising woman who cares about what people say. A mother who prefers to shush her children to obey men. A woman for whom people's backbites are very important. In the sequence in which Fereshteh complained to her mother about Ahmed's actions and asked for a divorce, she said to Fereshteh, "What do people say?"

#### **5.1.5. Technical Codes**

Given the previous chapter's discussion, technical codes are engaged with representation. Facts must be pre-encrypted with social codes to make them credible before they can be aired on television. Technical codes are used to depict this fact in this respect. In this movie, various codes have been used to present the fact of the society through media.

### **Time and Place**

The place and time of a film can signify a special meaning to the spectators. In other words, the situational context of each film is influential in creating its meaning. The code of time and place helps to create the overall meaning of the film.

In that time, the political upheavals and significant changes such as, the civil war, the closing of the universities, Cultural Changes, Iran- Iraq war, monopolization of the political arena occurred. Despite the fact that the time mentioned in the film was related to the period of riots and cultural disorders and people's lives, Fereshteh in the film, despite these problems, was a woman who was thinking about progress and spiritual and intellectual leap.

Another noteworthy point is that Fereshteh goes to Tehran to continue her education, but her family lives in Isfahan. She comes from a religious and traditional family in Tehran and freely chooses her cover away from her family. In Tehran, she does not wear a chador, while the time she returns to Isfahan, and even after marriage, we do not see her without a chador in any sequence outside the home. This code indicates the imposed hijab that her family and environment force her to wear. Using this code, the director has well portrayed the issue of compulsory hijab and its impact.

### **Sound**

As mentioned earlier, sound in technical codes consists of dialogue and music. Henceforth, sound has several important features, the first of which involves a strong sensory aspect. Second, sound can actively shape how the viewer perceives and interprets images. In addition, the sound is another means of understanding the action of the film.

### **Dialogue**

Dialogue is a sound feature that the audience responds to most easily. In movies, one of the ways to decode movie codes and implicit the signs to reach the meaning is through the words that the characters say.

**Dialogue 1:**

**Hasan (striker):** I wanted to marry you, you did not let me, I wanted to make you happy, you did not let me, I wanted to be your man and your breadwinner, you did not let me. I wanted to not violate, you did not let me go, I wanted to and you did not let me.

**Fereshteh:** stop mocking the actors. I wanted to study, you did not let me, I wanted to serve my family, you did not let me, I wanted to change the destiny of my sister and brother, you did not let me, I wanted to live, you did not let me, all of you did not let me; you, my dad, my husband. Why procrastinate? Let's get rid of me, I am tired of a life with threats, humiliation, insults...

**Dialogue 2:**

**Judge:** Does he give money for expenditure?

**Fereshteh:** yes

**Judge:** Has he provided you with housing?

**Fereshteh:** yes

**Judge:** Is he beating you?

**Fereshteh:** no

**Judge:** Does he have a bad friend? Do you drink alcohol? Does he gamble?

**Fereshteh:** no

**Judge:** Then why do you want to divorce?

**Fereshteh:** He is bad-tempered, skeptical, harassing me, insulting my conscience, imprisoning me.

**Judge:** These reasons are not enough for a divorce decree

**Fereshteh:** I am living with a man whom I did not choose. This man destroys my human identity. He is taking me away from me.

**Judge:** I have already informed you, these reasons are not enough for the court.

**Fereshteh:** Please let me speak, this man wants to turn me into a woman who is not me, what he wants and what I want are two different things.

**Fereshteh:** Sir, I am a human. See me, I am a human. I want to live like a human being. How do you think that if a man does not spend, he is a bad person, but if he insults my conscience, if he destroys my human identity, is he not a bad person? I do not have high expectations, I just want as a human being, as a spouse, as a partner, my

opinion as what I want to wear, what I want to eat and where I want to go, who do I want to communicate with, and my opinion be respected.

### **Dialogue 3:**

**Fereshteh:** He will never realize I was here?

**Roya:** no, he won't

**Fereshteh:** I think I loved him. Like a prisoner who loves her turnkey. I did not want him to die. I feel pity for him. Roya! What should I do now?

**Roya's Husband:** live

**Fereshteh:** I don't think I can. I forgot it. Now I have to raise the children alone. I mean, can I? I should be patient and realistic... I have a strange feeling. I'm free, just like a bird. But I don't have wings.

### **Music**

The best use of music is to affect the spectator's emotional feeling towards the narration. In addition, music can significantly affect the spectator's emotional reactions. Thus, it can be reminiscent of a particular character, space, situation, or concept (Rafiei, 2013).

At the courtship ceremony, when Ahmad promises her that she can continue her education and Fereshteh starts thinking about it, spontaneously, Fereshteh's father is shown, and a piece of terrifying music begins. A menacing melody that signifies that Fereshteh's father is worried after hearing Ahmed's words, clenches his hands together in a state of anxiety and looks at Ahmad as if he knew that these words were only a pretense. Unlike the usual music in Iranian movies, music is terrifying in the sequences related to shopping and wedding, which quickly takes the spectator's optimism away from them. In the continuation of this sequence, the following sequence shows Fereshteh, who seems to be reviewing what happened to her. This sequence begins with the church bell ringing and continues with the ticking of the clock. A voice that draws her from dreams to reality.

## **Casting**

Each actor brings the mentality expectation of them in the spectator's mind. Each of them has its own personality traits, and the director chooses them according to these traits. For instance, Niki Karimi, the actress who plays Fereshteh's role, can influence the spectator's point of view with her innocent face. It signifies the feminine, who has been oppressed by society. Karimi's childish and innocent face has also been well for the spectator to make this sense believable. These women, whether educated or employed, are all dominated by men and oppressed by society.

### **5.1.6. The Behaviour of the Figures or Actors**

It is noteworthy to mention that the men in this film were introduced as the most important cause of backwardness, exploitation and oppression of women, and the image presented of them in the film is well addressed. The film has used all the tools and components to prove this idea. The camera angles and the shots were taken, their dialogue, the words that address the men and the images that are presented indicate the restraining behaviors of the men.

In the sequence of the delivery where Fereshteh is in pain, Ahmad irrationally calls her to be silent and does not want anyone to hear her scream, while the nurse accompanying her repeatedly tells Fereshteh to scream.

## **Camera**

In this part, the shot size and the camera angle of the three aforementioned sequences and the effect of these codes on the depiction of women will be discussed.

### **Sequence 1:**

**Shot size:** The shot size is close up (CU) and shows only the head and shoulders of Fereshteh.

**Camera angle:** The camera angle is from up to down when Hassan speaks and when Fereshteh speaks down to the up.

### **Sequence 2:**

**Shot size:** A medium shot size in which Fereshteh and the judge both are included and show the total space in the courtroom.

**Camera angle:** Low angle shot

**Sequence 3:**

**Shot size:** the shot size in this sequence is close up, focusing on Fereshteh's face.

**Camera angle:** camera angle is an eye-level shot.

### **5.1.7. Ideological Codes**

The most important use of ideological codes is to place the elements of social codes and technical codes in the category of social cohesion and acceptance. In order to create meaning, both representation and ideology are combined and reach "reality" to reach unity. The mass media, which are basically governed by the authorities, in fact, consider the country's political condition and ideologies. The authority of Iran, which is based on religiosity, has built social unity on religious values.

In any multicultural society, besides religious values, there are traditional and ethnic values. In Iranian society, the two are intertwined; thus, the values that govern society are derived from not only religion but also a mixture of tradition and religion. The meaning and realities the film seeks to convey are that these imposed values, which limit the role of women to the values of home and family, have no direct bearing on religious values.

In this film, even the attitude of those around Fereshteh is directional. Instead of encouraging her to struggle and demand her rights, her mother and sister, who are themselves, victims of this traditional system, invite her to forgiveness and tolerance. As a matter of fact, these films and films with the same subject reflect the realities of society, which on the one hand, are intertwined with the life of the people and, on the other hand, are inducing dictated cultural policies. This film, which is a critique of the current situation, also the director depicts the desired situation by presenting the ideal example of Roya's family.

**Table 5. 1. Semantic Attribution and Semiotic Codes**

<b>Connotation</b>	<b>Fereshteh</b>	The realist form of female character, covered with black veil which is the symbol of miserable
	<b>Roya</b>	The desired and idealistic femal character
<b>Dinotation</b>		

## **5.2. The Paternal House (Khane-ye Pedari)**

### **5.2.1 Film Information**

**Genre:** Drama

**Director:** Kianoush Ayari

**Original Language:** Persian

**Writer:** Kianoush Ayari

**Release Date:** December 25, 2014 (initial screening), October 10, 2019 (re-screening), November 13, 2019 (third screening)

**Runtime:** 100 min

**Production Co:** Filmiran

### **5.2.2. Film Synopsis**

The film begins with the arrival of an anxious girl to the house. Moluk, who knows that she will face severe punishment, worries and looks around the house to find her father. The father calmly asks her to go to the basement and darn the carpet. Simply, it is an aristocratic house, and their business is carpentry. There is no one else but the father (Kalb Hasan) and his son (Mohtasham). After a long chase, Moluk was trapped in the basement, the father enters by force and hits her on the ground. He puts a sack on her head and tells Mohtasham to hit the girl with a stone. The body is buried in a grave in the same basement that Mohtasham has been making for Moluk for a couple of hours. In the following sequence, Kalb Hassan's brother comes to his house and asks about the girl, and in the meantime, he emphasizes shedding the girl's blood to protect their reputation. They thanked him and kissed his feet for finishing this serious

matter. He stares at the swing in the corner of the yard where a girl is playing, through the window, afterwards, the film enters the next period and the next generation.

At this time, we see that the children have grown up and one of his daughters, who was forced to marry her cousin, has incompatibility with her husband. She wants to continue digging the carpet in her father's basement, but her husband, who knows what happened there, does not allow her to do so and says he does not want his wife to work in the cemetery. The repetition of the word cemetery makes the mother suspicious, and after the follow-up, she realizes that her daughter was dumped in this basement years ago by her father. The mother, who could not endure the suffering, died at the girl's grave. This sequence ends by the Kalb Hassan's staring at the girl on the swing in the corner of the garden and the next period and next-generation come to the fore.

The third generation of the family was screened when Kalb Hasan's grandchild was proposed by a man of his father's age. The girl who sees that her protest against this marriage is not going anywhere commits suicide. This time, Mohtasham, Kalb Hassan's son stares at the girl through the window on the swing and the film enters the next generation.

This period of the film begins with Kalb Hassan's funeral. His family had kept this big secret in their hearts until now, and no one but the elders knew about this secret. In this family, the girls are always sacrificed or invited to silence for the sake of family. Mohtasham's daughter, who was teaching carpentry when she learned what happened to her aunt. She packages her belongings to leave this basement or, according to her uncle, the cemetery forever. But the father does not allow her for fear of the reputation and people talk, therefore, asking her to postpone displacement to another day. The story of this period ends in the same way, with Mohtasham staring at them on the swing. The fifth period comes to the screen as if Mohtasham can no longer bear this heavy suffering on his heart and asks his son to temporarily keep his aunt's bones somewhere so that they can be moved back there after the house construction. This time his son interferes to help his dad, but he has a stroke. The son, like his father and grandfather, tries to keep this secret for the sake of the family.

### 5.2.3. Social Codes of the Paternal House

*Paternal House (Khaneh-ye Pedari)* is not the first Iranian film to be shown in a European festival while banned at home, but it will be the first to seriously challenge the new, more stringent laws of the Islamic Republic regarding foreign film festivals (Rajabi, 2012). The film begins with the concealment of the family's young daughter, Kalb Hassan's daughter. The body of a girl who was killed for honor was buried in the basement of the house. Although the basement hides a crime for years, it changes the destiny of all family members for seven decades. The paternal house which signifies the sense of security that any child expects, which deliberately chosen for the film, becomes a father's graveyard.

In a statement that was published, the court ruled that all cinemas across the country must stop screening the movie; "The film contains scenes insulting the Iranian people's religious beliefs, promoting violence against women, undermining the perfect Iranian-Islamic traditions and culture, and representing a false and distorted image of the Iranian family". "Screening the movie has caused negative and extensive impacts on people's minds," it was added to the statement. Finally, Ayari agreed to make some modification to screen his work after 10 years which was banned due to its violence content<sup>3</sup> (Tehran News, 2019).

As the semiotic theories allocate on the signs represented in art works, Ayari's film has several aspects in terms of signification that need to be considered. The passage of time is the initial and prioritized point in the patriarchal society of Iran. Despite decades of such crime the men of the family try to hide it in order to preserve their reputation. This film has five episodes that tell the story of family life during 70-80 years in an Iranian aristocratic family. Second, over the years, the movie shows the coherent progression of women as they gradually gain power over the years. The same patriarchal values, ignoring and devaluing the demands of women, marginalizing women are still prominent despite the advent of modernity. The other signification that the movie is representing is the culture of secrecy. In the movie clearly the spectator

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<sup>3</sup>See: <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/441528/Paternal-House-banned-again-after-modifications-fail-to-satisfy>

can touch the sense of keeping family members, especially women, away from the big secret that was buried in the heart of this house.

The characters in *The Paternal House* are deliberately trying to keep others away from their work. Thus, many elements are used in this regard, and it is constantly repeated at different times in the film. The story of secrecy begins with the burial of Moluk and continues. The wife hiding in the basement from her husband, hiding the sister in a barn to protect the honor, locking the barn's door, constructing on the wall, at Kalb Hassan's funeral, Mohtasham shouts at his daughter, "Is it time to bring these (carpet loom)?", he didn't want anyone to know that his daughter is working. The basement of the paternal house is a symbol of secrecy in society. Basement, carpet and honor are the most keywords in the story.

In an interview, Ganjavi and Pasandideh made with the director, he pointed that "Of course, Moluk's father admits that they have been taught from a very early age to do what they have done. In fact, he places the blame on his culture and history and says that they imposed these attitudes upon him"<sup>4</sup>. Besides that, Masooud Farasati, the prominent Iranian critic, blame the film for representing excessive violence and a dark image of Iranian society (Tehran News, 2019).

We see the same story in the movie *Hush Girls Don't Scream*. The protagonist of the film, who was raped when she was a child, is told by the rapist to hush! girls don't scream, and then the girl hides the incident in order to be genteel. Even though she refrains from expressing her problem in court because of her reputation.

#### **5.2.4. Key Concepts of the Movie**

There are some denotations that the movie wants to put across in order to connote the main message of the director. These denotations which include basement, swing, and honor are the most important keywords in the story. The basement of the paternal house is a symbol of secrecy in society. The paternal house's basement is a sign of Jung's unconscious theory. The unconscious mind is divided into two layers; the

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<sup>4</sup>See: <http://filmint.nu/banned-again-kianoosh-ayari-on-paternal-house-2012/>

individual layer and the collective layer. The individual layer ends with the revival of the oldest content of childhood. The collective layer includes the time before childhood, that it contains the content of ancestral life. In this film, the layer of the collective unconscious is a layer like the layers of the earth, which contains the memories, fears, experiences, etc., of the past. Kalb Hassan's aristocratic house, in the surface has a charming courtyard with fruit trees and freshness, but once one travel to the inner layer which is the basements, dark and hidden layers come across. The basement as an inner layer is encrypted. This is where the most abominable human crime has taken place. The camera goes through the encrypted history and the depths of darkness is representing the the reality of the women hidden by the murderer. The hands of males in the history of house is soaked in this blood. In the following episodes of the film, we witness other girls who have been sacrificed by patriarchal values.

The second denotation which needs to be decrypted is the swing. It is located in the corner of the courtyard, each time we see a swing moving, one of the male characters of the family is staring at it, right after that we enter another episode of the movie. This swing is engaged with the passage of the time, until the time still in the paternal house. Another important point is that we see a girl playing on it from the male character's angles. This repetitive sequence along with the women's stories that have the same theme, is the signifier for duplication of life of women in patriarchal society. However, at the end of the movie, when the time stills and the secret is revealed, no one else plays on the swing and it is broken. It seems that, the murdered girl has always wanted to spill the beans. Since the beginning despite the efforts of the men in keeping the secret and silencing the witnesses to protect their honor, Moluk emerges from the cellar, accompanied by a little girl who devotes the narrative to the murder scene.

Another denotation that is underlined in this movie is the issue of honor. This issue has been well covered in previous chapters. The important point here is how the father of the family convinces himself to commit such a crime against his child. Unfortunately, such a crime has occurred many times in the real world, and the lack of a protective law along with short-sighted prospects of traditional culture has made it persist. For instance, Romina Ashrafi, a 14-year old girl was murdered (chopped up) by her dad in her sleep for eloping. Honor killing is one of the crimes that Iranian law escalates and encourages in the men of the immediate family. In this movie, the father,

brother, uncle and cousin are the executors and protectors of the family's honor which encouraged them to commit such a crime.

### **5.2.5. Technical Code of the Paternal House**

Given the previous chapter's discussion, technical codes are engaged with representation. Facts must be pre-encrypted with social codes to make them credible before they can be aired on television. Technical codes are used to depict this fact in this respect. In this movie, various codes have been used to present the fact of the society through media.

#### **Time and Place**

The formation of the film refers back to 37 or 38 years before Iran's revolution. The same crime was committed in Ahvaz, where the director was born and he kept it in his mind<sup>5</sup>. One of the main themes of this movie is time. What the director intended to present was the passage of time on the gender transformations of the two genders. As a matter of fact, in addition to its storytelling, this movie has also undergone changes in the role of women in the contemporary history of Iran and has chosen the family, which is a symbol of society, as an example to better represent the evolution of this process. Another reason why time is important in this film is that even after the crime took place, this open lesion still did not heal and the issue comes to the fore every couple once in a while.

The story took place in an aristocratic house. One of the reasons for choosing such a house could be that this traditional point of view does not depend on the social or economic level of the family, but is a poisoned cup that is drunk by anyone despite the social class, whether old or young, carpenter or teacher, rich or poor. Given the aforementioned concepts, the house has a surface layer and an inner layer. The surface layer, which includes the yard and the realm of mobility for others is depicted charmingly. However, no one is aware of the "secret" and the content buried in the inner layer of the house, except for a few.

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<sup>5</sup> See: <http://filmint.nu/banned-again-kianoosh-ayari-on-paternal-house-2012/>

## **Sound**

As mentioned earlier, sound in technical codes consists of dialogue and music. Henceforth, sound has several important features, the first of which involves a strong sensory aspect. Second, sound can actively shape how the viewer perceives and interprets images. In addition, the sound is another means of understanding the action of the film. Dialogue and music are two applicable categories of sound.

## **Dialogue**

In this film, revealing the great secret of the family (murder and the corpse of Moluk) is followed in each episode, which is mostly from the fight of the family member or through dialogue. In the second episode, the secret was revealed through the words of Alireza “cemetery”, in the third episode, through Mohtasham’s wife, and in the fourth episode, through the insistence of Mohtasham's sister. Therefore, in this film, one can well perceive the constructive role of words in the process of the story, which, despite being few, have a prominent presence.

### **Dialogue 1**

**Moluk:** Why are you digging here?

**Mohtasham:** I don't know. Go do your job

**Moluk:** Dad wants to kill me? Tell me? Does he want to kill me?

**Mohtasham:** I don't know.

...

**Moluk:** Are you not my brother?

**Mohtasham:** I am not your brother. You disgraced us.

**Moluk:** I did not do anything.

**Mohtasham:** It's not my business, tell this to dad.

....

**Moluk:** What do you want to do?

**Kalb Hasan:** This is not your business, go downstairs.

**Moluk:** What do you want to say to God when you face the Qibla?

**Kalb Hasan:** Rinse your mouth or I will pour hot lead into it. Do not talk about this. Go after your work. Go downstairs.

**Moluk:** I won't go downstairs,

**Kalb Hasan:** I will cut off the carpet, don't get my back up.

## **Dialogue 2**

**Marziyeh:** what happened

**Kalb Jan (Moluk's mother):** leave me alone. I want to be with my daughter. All of you go out of my daughter's grave.

...

**Kalb Hasan:** how did she find out?

**Mohtasham:** Alireza provokes her...He beat Reyhaneh and said, "Didn't I tell you not to step in this cemetery anymore?" He was repeating the cemetery; therefore, they found out.

**Kalb Hasan:** Did he beat Reyhaneh again?

**Marzieh:** An unjust bloodshed in forty days depresses and sometimes for a lifetime.

## **Music**

Director Kianoosh Ayari prefers to implement music in a less but well-timed style instead of repeated usage. As we can see, he has tried to use all the factors of production for his own purposes, however, music is one which he did not give up and adequately benefited from it. The only scenes we witness music in this film are the repetitive scenes where the men of the family stare out the window and a young girl on a moving swing follows the forced predestination that will be decided for her. This music, with its sorrowful theme, intentionally is the same for each man who looks out the window. Meaning that the three sequences in which Kalb Hassan stares at the window are slightly different from Mohtasham. To put it another way, the slight difference is that over time, it seems that music follows the same path as women in the family seek transformation. Nevertheless, music cannot achieve a revolution and retains its nature with a slight change. And at the end, when Mohtasham's son stares at the swing, Mohtasham's body passes in front of the swing and a broken and empty swing is accompanied by the same music, and finally, the sequence ends with absolute blackness. In this regard, it can be said that it is the prospect of the father and the Mohtasham that is related to the fate of each girl, and the heaviness of this sorrowful gaze can be seen in the subjective view that the girls are trapped in a small hole.

## **Casting**

Mehran Rajabi, who worked in a series with the same director before the film *The Paternal House*, by playing his realistic role, acquaints the spectator with the dual feeling of the murderer's father. He is a father who is the impetus to his son to the grave and throw stone to his sister, kills her own kid and weeps crocodile tears over her corpse in public. Kalb Hasan is a father who, in the process of killing his daughter, does not forget the iron on the carpet. Also, even when his daughter asks for water, instead of looking at her eyes, he puts all his attention on the carpet. Besides this the father warns about the groan of the door while his granddaughter is being beaten by her father. With the help of Rajabi, this role conveys the depth of the tragedy to the spectators. All these details show that women are not important to the father of the family. He cares about the carpet before killing the girl, in his view, the value of a stranger's carpet is more important than a woman's life.

## **Behavior of the Figures or Actors**

As mentioned before, the movie portrays hypocrisy and secrecy well. The deplorable behaviors are applied by male characters to maintain honor. What is clear is that the value propounded to the father and other males is honor. Honor must be maintained in this house at all costs. For instance, the basement is where the opposition is buried alive. This hypocrisy, which is depicted as manifested by the beautiful courtyard of the house in contrast to the hidden dark basement, has been dealt with in other details of the film. For instance, the girls of the family do carpet darning; with this skill they make the defects of the carpets in such a way that no one will notice its appearance. This is the way they grow up, they must darn everything. In one scene when Mohtasham's daughter commits suicide and vomits in the courtyard, he sent his daughter with other women to the hospital. Farkhondeh (his sister), tell Mohtasham if she was a boy, he would be like a cat in hot bricks. Therefore, when they can not change things, they try to remove them, such as Moluk, who was a girl and the disgrace of the family. Mohtasham, who plays the lead role in the film, is involved in this story from childhood to his death. While murdering Moluk, in a moment of reverence, he steps back and falls into the grave he has dug. This tomb is further linked to his fate and disgrace and scandal to him in each episode.

## **Camera**

In this film, the camera is watching. Usually most of the shots are long and the depth of field is large enough to present the closure of place. To further induce a sense of watching, the camera is positioned to cover the entire environment from a male angle. For instance, in the sequence of the first dialogue, the camera is in a high angle shot, consequently, the spectator can dominate the entire environment. But when Moluk is talking the angle becomes close up to draw all the attention to her facial expression. In the second dialogue sequence, the same extreme shot size has been implemented. In fact, the director's camera is a real camera. Thus, it never ran after characters. It tries to keep the distance from the subject and the people. The camera seeks to represent the truth, not the fear, so it can be said that its sole purpose is to be at a point where nothing is hidden from our eyes for judgment.

### **5.2.6. Ideological Codes**

In the narrative of the film, the camera never leaves the house and its yard because the identity and roots of everything can be sought not outside but inside, in the basement of the paternal house. Violence, patriarchy, discrimination towards women, abuse, misuse of children and most importantly, secrecy are repeated over a period of seventy years. The name of the father which accurately represents a religious and traditional man.

The main concept of the movie is the patriarchal social structure of the family, which is a micro-level of society. In this film, the family is a symbol of the patriarchal society of Iran. The only common sense of this family is the father and, in his absence, his son and other men of the family who are involved in everything. In fact, they are the ones who decide who is the murderer and who will be murdered. This film is a representation of the reality of Iranian society. In the first period, we witnessed the physical removal of the female of the family, but after that, although there was no physical removal, the women of the family were still ignored. They were spontaneous in their fate. This is the ideal woman of a patriarchal society.

The remarkable point of the *Paternal House* is that not only women but also men fall victim to this unwanted suffocation. In this house, both men and women are the victims

of patriarchal values. As in the last episode, Mohtasham, who had a stroke after looking at his sister's bones, whispers quietly to his daughter in law that “I did not want; my father told me”. Here the spectator feels pity for him that even he was helpless in the initial choice of his life.

**Table 5. 2. Semantic Attribution and Semiotic Codes**

<b>Connotatin</b>	<b>Basement</b>	Secrecy
	<b>Carpet</b>	Traditional values
	<b>Swing</b>	Passing time
<b>Denotation</b>		

### 5.2.7. Destination of Paternal House

The film *Paternal House* was made in 2010 with the joint investment of the police force and Naji Honar Institute and the private sector, but with the completion of the film, the police force was the first institution to oppose it and demand that the film be archived. The Guidance of Culture and Islamic Ministry and the Naji Honar Institute did not issue a release permit due to the initial scene of the film in which a girl is murdered by her father and brother, a sequence related to the sequel to the film. Ayari about not removing the first sequence of the movie quoted that, " I'm not interested in denigrate; Do not censor me. How can I overcome these in a society full of problems? So you do not want me to go into the details of society". The film was released in January 2014, but was banned on the first day of release due to a violent scene in the film. Five years later, the film with some corrections and with an age rating of over 15 years, went on the screens of cinemas again on November 22, 2017. But after 5 days, on November 27, it was detained again by the direct order of the prosecutor. The ban on the controversial film, *Paternal House* was lifted on November 13, and was it was re-released in the country's cinemas until December 4<sup>1</sup>.

Ayari's controversial film received a lot of reactions from the very first day of its release. Reactions that paved the way for the film to be banned again. Conservative and extremist media outlets and newspapers such as "Kayhan" and "Fars" attacked Kianoosh Ayari and the directors who lifted the ban with the release of the film, calling *Paternal House* an "anti-Iranian" and presenting an "insulting and savage image of Iranians" who have been screened by the negligence of cinema officials (DW,2019).

## 5.3.The Salesman

### 5.3.1. Film Information

**Genre:** Drama

**Director:** Asghar Farhadi

**Original Language:** Persian

**Writer:** Asghar Farhadi

**Release Date:** 21 May 2016 (Cannes,) 31 August 2016 (Iran), 2 November 2016 (France)

**Runtime:** 125 min

**Production Co:** Memento Films Production, Asghar Farhadi Production, Arte France Cinéma

### 5.3.2. Film Synopsis

Rana and Emad are a young couple who are in a theatrical performance based on the play *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller. One night, their apartment begins to collapse and they run away from the building with other residents. Frustrated with finding a place to live, their fellow actor, Babak prepares another apartment for them, a woman has recently moved from, although she hastily left countless belongings. One night, Rana is alone at home and taking a bath. Then when Emad returns, he realizes that his wife is not at home and the bathroom is full of blood. He has been told by neighbors to change the house's lock. Rana returns home, but she is not the previous Rana. She suffers from trauma but despite her trauma, she refuses to go to the police; she is afraid of what people might say. Consequently, she does not want to go to the bathroom because of her fear and in the middle of the performance, she sheds tears and leaves the stage. On the other hand, the attacker left behind some stuff like his car keys, mobile phone and some money which Rana thought Emad had left for her for groceries. Finally, Emad, with help from his student's father, follows the truck and finds the driver. By some tricks, he tries to take the truck owner to the apartment. But instead, the driver's father-in-law arrives. Emad investigates him and finds out the truth. He called Rana and tells her the truth. Meanwhile, he locks the old man in a

room, but then the old man has heart trouble, and finally they have to call his family. The only revenge they could take was to slap in the face of the old man and return the money Rana mistakenly bought groceries with.

### **5.3.3. Social Codes of the Salesman**

The *Salesman* is a story of a young couple named Emad and Rana who are forced to leave their house due to an accident. Meanwhile, in the new house there are some problems with the previous tenant. The film, which seeks to present the social situation, implements the psychological symbols, including a broken wall on the top of the bed in their bedroom, which is a symbol of mishaps between the couple. The film opens showing us a marriage bed—a startling image in an Iranian film. But the lighting soon signals that this bed is on a theater stage; it will be the bed of Willy and Linda Loman (Ebert, 2017).

In the new apartment we see a woman who is harassed. Her privacy is violated and her husband cannot rise to the occasion. Soon the trauma becomes more like bewilderment and emptiness. Accordingly, the movie tends to demonstrate all its efforts to exhibit the misfortune and hardship of a woman in this situation. But gradually, she is pushed to the margins and the story pays less attention to her story. The female character of the film, as the main victim of the story, has been put aside into the darkness, and the story of the man culminates.

From the second half of the film, Rana has been marginalized compare to her husband and her presence diminishes. Instead, the film relies more on Emad's downfall than Rana's defeat. Apparently, the director intentionally wants Rana's character to play her role unmet so that the spectators are no longer involved with her. Farhadi, who is known for his attention to detail and uses the slightest action to convey his message, pursues a goal (Rdio Farda, 2017). This marginalization of Rana is generalized to the realities of society. Although the girl had a bitter experience that has been put aside from social life, the play deals with the mental conflicts of a moral man, which denotes the elimination of ignoring women in Iranian society. They do not dare to go to the police and are very afraid to discuss the matter with their friends. In fact, involving the police or friends tarnishes the man's zeal, therefore, he bears the burden of this issue

alone. This is an issue that has been addressed in the previous two films. The male characters of the family are like common sense, who alone solve the calamities that a woman causes. In this film, simple negligence from Rana justifies such a tragedy, and now the man alone must cope with this disgrace. The same subjectivity is portrayed in the movie *Paternal House*, the girls bring stigma and the male alone has to deal with this tragedy.

#### **5.3.4. Comparison of the Lead Characters of Salesman**

**Rana:** Rana is a theater actress. She is an example of a middle-class woman who is socially active, modern, idealistic, and at the same time inconsistent and conventional. The fact that she is not willing to call the police or share her problem with her friends is a sign of her customary characteristic. Rana's driving, the way she chooses her clothes, her ability to decide on various matters show her independent and modern personality. On the other hand, she has a pretextual and a weak personality who, in the critical time, forgets all the unique features of a modern woman and changes her position.

Another noteworthy point in this film is the identity crisis of the character. Rana, who has been assaulted and is naturally depressed and no longer enliven, will never become Rana before the incident. This is the problem of femininity in this society, which are not able to solve problems and help others. At the end of the film, Rana looks almost like Simin in the film *Separation*, she uses her right to leave, so she protests to her husband in her own way. In fact, the problem is that women, instead of solving the problem, sweep the problem under the carpet and prefer to run away rather than stay and find the aggressor.

**Emad:** A compassionate, good-tempered teacher, a warm and friendly husband, a committed actor to the law and a moral person. Throughout the film, his character gradually shifts from individualism to a social role and adherence to collective agreements. Collective Agreements in the patriarchal society considers itself the owner of women and like the previous two films, a man considers himself common sense to solve problems.

Emad's character can be divided into before and after his wife's harassment. He, who is a reasonable and independent person, attentive and sensitive to his wife, becomes a "ruthless" and peremptory man. The reason is that his personal identity that is his wife's body, has been violated (Rdiao Farda, 2017). Overall, regarding the crisis of Emad's identity, it can be said that compared with Rana, there were not dramatical changes for him. In the last sequence, while he had the potential to kill the aggressor, a slap in his face was enough for him.

Emad carries a red and black suitcases alone while moving to his new home. Their luggage and color express the burden of grief alone. Red is a symbol of love and black is a symbol of suffering, which both are on the shoulder of the husband. His masculine wisdom is the significance of him while he has been violated by a weak man

### **5.3.5. Technical Codes**

Given the previous chapter's discussion, technical codes are engaged with representation. Facts must be pre-encrypted with social codes to make them credible before they can be aired on television. Technical codes are used to depict this fact in this respect. In this movie, various codes have been used to present the fact of the society through media.

#### **Time and place**

The *Salesman* is a film with sociological themes whose main theme is rape or, in other words, the invasion of the privacy of a woman. This film recounts the relationships and problems of a middle-class family (teacher and artist), which is about rape and its psychological effects. The events of this film take place in Tehran in contemporary times. Their new apartment is located on the top floor of the building, which does not have an elevator. Emad and Rana have to climb several floors to reach the house, which is their safe place. These steps can denote the difficulties that the two are going through to achieve their security.

#### **Sound**

As mentioned earlier, sound in technical codes consists of dialogue and music. Henceforth, sound has several important features, the first of which involves a

strong sensory aspect. Second, sound can actively shape how the viewer perceives and interprets images. In addition, the sound is another means of understanding the action of the film. Dialogue and music are two applicable categories of sound.

### **Dialogue**

#### **Dialogue 1**

**Rana:** What about tonight's performance?

**Emad:** I called and told them to cancel it.

**Rana:** No, call and say I'm coming.

**Emad:** how? In this condition of yours?

**Rana:** It's harder for me to stay at home.

**Emad:** Put this on, let's go to the police station. We might get held up there for a while anyway.

**Rana:** No, leave it. Let's not go to the station.

**Emad:** We can't just do nothing.

**Rana:** I don't want to have to go there and tell a bunch of officers or whoever what happened.

**Emad:** Did something happen that you can't tell?

**Rana:** No

**Emad:** Then you don't have to say anything. I will tell them.

**Rana:** I can't, it will be too much for me.

#### **Dialogue 2**

**(In theater, the dialogue of play characters)**

**Emad:** This isn't foolish talk, Linda. When I'm walking in the street, I clearly feel these things. They pass me by, but it's as if they are laughing at me with their eyes.

**Rana:** Why? Why would they laugh at you? Don't talk about yourself that way Willy.

**Emad:** Sometimes they pass me by as if I don't even exist. As though nobody sees me. Nobody notices me. Nothing.

#### **Dialogue 3**

**Emad:** look how mentally and emotionally shattered she is. There's my wife. Are you gonna keep saying you haven't gone into the bathroom?

**Man:** I'm sorry

**Emad:** Answer me

**Man:** I made a mistake

**Emad:** Tell me, why did you go into the bathroom?

**Man:** I gave in to temptation

### **Music**

Mehrdad Mehdi has been one of the most brilliant figures of playing accordion during these years. The end credits of the *Salesman* were also made by him. The remarkable thing about the soundtrack is that the director has not cramped the movie with different soundtracks. The music begins in the final part. The final part of the movie is a chain of sequences simultaneously with this soundtrack connotes the judge has hit the hammer and the trial is ended. The denotation of this chain are closing all the doors of the house by Emad, a room where two chairs and a sofa are in front of each other and a lamp lit up in the middle of the two.

### **Casting**

Taraneh Alidosti and Shahab Hosseini, who already had a successful collaboration with each other, were able to play it well with a correct understanding of their role. Shahab Hosseini, who has won the best actor award, comprehended his role well and showed the intricacies of Emad's character on stage in such a way that the spectator understands the anger and hatred inside him well. This family apparently is from Tehran and lives there. Hosseini and Alidosti in this film have played more introverted and emotional, their effusion such as anger or crying, involved the spectator in their pain. In particular, Ms. Alidosti can well show the psychological pressures on a woman after being harassed. Cinema critic Martin Liebman admires Alidosti and Hosseini's impressive acting and believes that you do not even need subtitles to understand, feel and admire *The Salesman* and that words can be taken from the actors.

Farid Sadjadi Hosseini, who plays the role of aggressor, presented one of his best actions in *Salesman*. The director took distance from the usual clichés of cinema in portraying the reputation in Iranian cinema. The aggressor was in the form of an old and sick person, who apparently looks like a hardworking and respectable man and is respected by his family. That is why the issue of "reputation" is vital to him, and in the end, he can't bear this scandal only for his fear of reputation.

## **Camera**

A selection of three scenes from this film will be examined for differences in camera perspective and shot size. The camera's angle and size aid viewers in forming an impression of the narrative in their minds.

### **Sequence 1**

**Shot size:** the shot size is close up and emphasizes Emad and Rana's frustration by zooming on their facial expression.

**Camera angle:** The angle of the camera is eye-level angle which emphasize the reality of the story

### **Sequence 2**

**Shot size:** A long shot in which the characters are in the theater scene and the audiences are included in the shot.

**Camera angle:** Eye-level shot from characters behind.

### **Sequence 3**

**Shot size:** close up shot, the camera focuses on both the man and Emad to show their facial expressions precisely.

**Camera angle:** the man is at a lower angle, ashamed to look at Emad's face, while Emad is at a high angle which is interrogating the man.

#### **5.3.6. Ideological Codes**

As it was mentioned in the forth chapter of study, zeal is one of the achievements of the patriarchal system. In fact, this phenomenon is connected to the identity of the individual. Therefore the social role of the individual is affected by this coersive identity. This identity is juxtaposed with masculinity which is consequently tied to a man's connection to a woman. Thus, in this movie the man's identity which is his honor has been harassed In this regard, one can say that zeal can be defined as the connection of social role with masculine identity on the female body. The husband's role is to protect his honor and woman. "The emphasis on the "body" of the woman is related to the sense of ownership consequently control of the female body, therefore concepts such as zeal and honor are primarily considered in Iranian society" (Rdio Farda, 2017). Peter Bradshaw in a review regrding *The Salesman* in *The Guardian* declares that there is a fascination in the way the director has juxtaposed the grimness between the movie

and Miller's play. In fact "Miller has given him a conceited, dramatic, morally heroic view of himself. Willy Loman wondered in anguish what sort of a man can't give his wife and family the good things in life. Emad is wondering what sort of man can't protect his wife from assault" (The Guardian, 2016).

In a sequence in which all of the characters are backstage, Katee (the theater director) asks Emad to stay a little longer after the performance to talk to the inspectors and resolve the censorship issues. She mentioned if the matters are left unresolved, they might prevent the theater from performing. The censorship which happens in some media works are due to some contrast on authority's policy which was pointed out in this scene. The aggressor entered their home the same night. The connotation of this is underestimating the valorization of art works have brought misfortune of violence to the society. The movie could be called "A Violation", for the reason that even though Rana is recovering herself, "Increasingly, though, it seems the harshest violation was of Emad—his self-worth, his ego, his manhood" (Ebert, 2017). The victims of this type of violence are usually women. The life of the aggressor's wife, and the previous tenant is proof of this. The weakness and irresponsibility of female characters of the movie which they have common, make them become victims due to trivial mistakes. When Rana willingly opens the door to the aggressor and aggressor's wife went off the rails due to her husband's betrayal or even the previous tenant as another problem maker of the movie, are proof of how society judges women.

**Table 5.3. Semantic Attribution and Semiotic Codes**

<b>Connotation</b>	<b>Rana</b>	Middle-class, idealistic, active, inconsistent, conventional, customary, irresponsible, troublesome, anxious
	<b>Emad</b>	Compassionate, good-tempered teacher, warm and friendly husband, responsible, untying, liable
<b>Denotation</b>		

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

This research, in general, has tried to deal with the representation of Iranian women in Iranian cinema after the revolution by the method of Fisk semiotics. The study of cinema from a socio-cultural perspective has a great impact on our prospects and knowledge toward our society. On the other hand, gender studies, which have recently received a lot of attention in the field of sociology, helps us to become better acquainted with common gender problems that are dominant in our society. The connection between cinema and gender studies is one of the important areas in social studies. An important contribution of cultural and sociological studies is the connection between cinema and gender. Given these points, the representation of gender in cinema is one of the social media topics about women.

As discussed at the beginning of this study, the approach of representing women in Iran has been assuming that this representation reveals the prevailing social conditions. It is noteworthy that cinema and the media in general have a bilateral relationship with their contemporary society. In fact this relationship like a mirror portrays the contemporary society. Considering the examination of the representation of women in different periods after the revolution, it can be concluded that Iranian women in post-revolution era, like other nationalities, have not been deprived of modernity and its effects. Evidence of this claim is the three movies of this study. In *Two Women*, the main character Fereshteh aims to move beyond traditional values and enter the realm of modernity. The *Paternal House*, which depicts the transformation of women over several decades, illustrates the course of events well. A girl whose life was once worthless compared to the family's reputation eventually has reached a point where she has the right to choose whether stay or leave her husband. Or it can be said that it reaches from the underlying layers of the basement to the ideal surface layers. A perfect contemporary example of this has been portrayed in *Salesman*, Rana is a woman who is completely accustomed to the world of modernity, she is a theater actress, has a strong social presence and is educated. The position of women has

undergone many changes in recent decades, and the situation of women before the revolution has changed compared to after it. In the post-revolution era that the level of awareness are increasing through education, the provision of literacy facilities and, as a result, active presence in various social, political, artistic, etc. fields, women have gained self-confidence and recognition of their abilities. These progresses, which have taken shape at the heart of the traditional and patriarchal values, have led to the acquisition of new values and attitudes in them.

Given what have been said and considering the cinema as a mirror of its contemporary society, these macro-social progresses related to women have affected the way they are represented. This evolutionary path of representation and the advent of female directors have changed from a deceived, weak, passive, battered and worthless woman to a social and educated activist.

After all the circumstances and developments that have been mentioned, the results of this study indicate that despite all the contemporary female progress codes, inequalities are still being reproduced. The represented female character in these three films is in such a way that she is not able to solve her problems, in fact, she throws in to disarray and creates disorder. Examining the ideological codes hidden in the movies based on Fisk semiotics, despite all the apparent differences between the three movies, the women are shown to be weak, reluctant and submissive to the traditions of society. Fereshteh, who was a talented girl with many skills, was eventually deceived by her husband's promises about her education. Mohtasham's daughter, who was educated and a teacher, embarrassed her father, or Mohtasham's daughter in law, who was a doctor, did not condemn the actions of her father-in-law and his father and simply said, "I do not live in a house where there is a corps in". In the *Salesman*, Rana gave rise to the tragedy with a simple mistake. Other women in the film, including the previous tenant or the woman of the aggressor, also brought about these disturbances. The woman does not have independent intellectual power and is silent in front of the man; also, she has to endure the hardships and problems of life, which is the discourse after the revolution (Hosseini, 2013).

It can be concluded that the inferiority of women in the post-revolutionary era follows the inferior representation of gender. According to Goffman's statements on gender,

women are on a par in terms of social and classes with men but in a lower position than them. Men appear to be common sense who solve problems. On the other hand, women always rely on men and cannot express themselves independently. However, Rana, as a modern and independent woman compared to the women in the other two films, decides to leave her husband, or because she is afraid of what people say, she prefers not to share her problem with the police. With this in mind, a woman is represented in a state of helplessness, worry, crying, desire, astonishment, and in general obedience. In the studied movies, women are depicted as creators of conditions that they cannot solve except by relying on men's wisdom. As in *Two Women*, the Fereshteh's father accused her of inciting the strikers instead of accusing the man. In *Paternal House*, Mohtasham is eager to accompany his daughter to the hospital because she disgraced him by rejecting marriage with a man the same age as her father. In the *Salesman*, the previous tenant is the responsible for all misfortunes. As a matter of fact, it is important to state that the atmosphere of Iranian society after the revolution, due to the penetration of modernity, has led to social, political and cultural changes, which are also well portrayed in the representation of women in cinema. However, it should be noted that despite these changes in modernity, traditional values and traditionalist beliefs still prevail in Iranian society. As a result, this traditional discourse has overshadowed all social contexts. That is why women's subjectivity is challenged in relation to the prevailing discourse. Hence any desire for independence by women that is contrary to the traditional values that dominant society is marginalized and a hated image of them is portrayed. This traditionalist discourse, which is the construction of authority and one of the pillars of the political system, can be established according to the social, economic and political conditions which are acceptable in certain styles of representation. In most of the countries the media is in the hands of the authorities, therefore media as a state, which has governmental management, actually reflects the ideology of the authority. The values defined by the authority in Iran, which are based on Islamic culture along with traditional values, have created a structure in which patriarchal values are prominent. The aim of this structure is to unify people aligned with the desired discourse. Therefore, women like Fereshteh, who want to distance themselves from these values, are rejected and marginalized.

To come to a conclusion, in post-revolution era despite reflecting the realities of its society, cinema serves as a tool for power to reproduce its ideology. Stereotyping and

naturalization strategies have been used to reinforce the patriarchal discourse to become a believer in the life of women, and if a woman wants to step out of this realm, she will have a fate like that of Fereshteh, Moluk and Rana. The revolution in Iran despite some achievements in other fields could not satisfy the women in terms of emancipation and the media itself is a testament to this. As a matter of fact, one can say that the dominant discourse in Iranian society is based entirely on the patriarchal discourse. Accordingly, the men who constitute this structure themselves try to use the appropriate tools and reproduce and inject it into society.

The Iranian academic in terms of semiotics is more engaged to theoretical approaches rather than practical aspects. Due to this unilateral aspect of the theory, the critical approach is limited which affects the reader of this type of research. The last limitation was the difference between the solar calendar and the Gregorian calendar to understand the historical course of the representation of women in Iranian cinema.

As previously mentioned about the importance and role of cinema in influencing and attracting an audience, it is recommended that by considering this feature, filmmakers improve the quality of their works in the socio-cultural field and to present new and popular topics engage themselves in more study and research.

The new generation of the society of Iran are more engaged in art works nurtured by them. Thus, cultural policymakers should consider this crucial point and to reform the norms of the society should promote the cinema, films, serials, and national media, and provide the necessary education for citizenship to both genders through entertaining representation.

As a media student, the author believes that the Iranian cinema relies more on body cinema, which critically it bases on the superficial and exterior aspect. Due to the importance of media, specially cinema, in presenting the realities, it is suggested that the aesthetic of the movies for the professional audience comes to the fore.

For the last recommendation the author suggests that films with the neutral and fair gender concept be made so that both genders will be acknowledged with their rights and realize them beyond the words.

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## APPENDIXES

### APPENDIX A: TWO WOMEN (DO ZAN)

Director/writer: Tahmineh Milani

Cinematographer: Hossein Djafarian

Editor: Mustafa Kherqepush

Music: Babak Bayat

Cast: Mohammad Reza Forutan (Hassan, “stalker”), Niki Karimi (Fereshteh), Reza Khandan (Fereshteh’s father), Atila Pesiani (Ahmad), Marila Zare’i (Roya), Hasan Joharchi (Roya's husband)

Runtime: 96

Film Awards:

Best Director Award at the 2001 Los Angeles International Film Festival

Best Director Award at the 2001 Los Angeles International Film Festival

Special People's Award for the best film of Abadan Film Festival, 2000

Special Audience Award of Istanbul International Film Festival 2000

Titra Award and Cash Prize of the Geneva Film Festival, 1999

Award for Best Actress at Taurmina International Film Festival, 1999

Golden statue of the best actor in the first role and the supporting role of the 1378 Cinema House Festival

Crystal Simorgh The best screenplay of Fajr Film Festival, 1998

Diploma of Honor for Best Actress in a Leading Role at the 1998 Fajr Film Festival



**Picture A. 1. Dialogue 1**



**Picture A.2. Dialogue 1**



**Picture A.3. Dialogue 2**



**Picture A. 4. Dialogue 3**

**Two Women (Do Zan). Source: Movies link:**

<https://www.imvbox.com/watch-persian-movie-iranian-movies/two-woman-do-zan/play-film>

## APPENDIX B

### PTERNAL HOUSE (KHANE-YE PEDARI)

Director & Scriptwriter: Kianoosh Ayyari

Director of Photography: Dariush Ayyari

Editor: Kianoosh Ayyari

Music: Behzad Abdi

Sound- Recordist: Saeed Salehi

Cast: Mehdi Hashemi, Shahab Hosseini, Mehran Rajabi, Nazanin Farahani, Naser Hashemi, Mina Sadati, Negah Khaqani, Masume Bafande, Mojde Hamrang, Setare Mirmohammad, Padina Rahnama, Aynaz Azarhoush, Moeineddin Oshaqi, Azade Movahhed, Goli Shariflu, Hossein Falah, Mehdi Kheyrollahi, Eqlima Raisi, Rasul Salimiyan

Engineer: Massoud Behnam

Make-Up: Hossein Salehian & Azam Rahmani

Production Designer: Asghar Nejad Imani

Still Photographer: Mazdak Ayyari

Producer: Kianoosh Ayyari

Country: IRAN

Runtime: 105 Minutes

Release: 2012-2014

Film Awards:

Venice Film Festival 2012



**Picture B. 1. Dialogue 1**



**Picture B. 2. Dialogue 1**



**Picture B. 3. Dialogue 2**



**Picture B. 4. Dialogue 2**

**Pternal House (Khane-ye Pedari): Source: Movie's link:**

<https://streamboox.com/english.php?movie=182829#magelo-player>

## APPENDIX C

### THE SALESMAN (FORUSHANDEH)

Director: Asghar Farhadi

Screenwriter: Asghar Farhadi

Cast: Shahab Hosseini, Taraneh Alidoosti, Babak Karimi, Farid Sajjadi Hosseini,  
Mina Sadati, Maral Bani Adam, Mehdi Kooshki,

Producer: Asghar Farhadi, Alexandre Mallet-Guy

Composer: Sattar Oraki

Cinematographer: Hussein Jafarian, Hossein Jafarian

Editor: Hayedeh Safiyari

Art Director: Keyvan Moghadam

Costumes: Sara Samiee

Make Up: Mehrdad Mirkiani

Sound/Sound Designer: Yadollah Najafi, Hossein Bashash

Sound Editor: Reza Narimzadeh

Production Manager: Hassan Mostafavi

Film Awards:

Academy Awards, USA **2017**

BAFTA Awards **2018**

ASECAN **2018**

Asian Film Awards 2017

Association of Polish Filmmakers Critics Awards **2017**

Awards Circuit Community Awards **2016**

Broadcast Film Critics Association Awards **2016**

Cannes Film Festival **2016**

Chicago International Film Festival **2016**

Chlotrudis Awards **2018**

Dallas-Fort Worth Film Critics Association Awards **2016**

Denver Film Critics Society **2017**

Fajr Film Festival **2017**

Fajr Film Festival **2016**

Faro Island Film Festival **2016**

Florida Film Critics Circle Awards **2016**

Golden Globes, USA **2017**

Guldbagge Awards **2018**

Hafez Ceremony **2016**

Iran Cinema Celebration **2017**

Las Vegas Film Critics Society Awards **2016**

Melbourne International Film Festival **2016**

Munich Film Festival **2016**

National Board of Review, USA **2016**

North Texas Film Critics Association, US **2016**

Online Film & Television Association **2017**

Online Film Critics Society Awards **2017**

Palm Springs International Film Festival **2017**

Prêmio Guarani **2018**

San Francisco Film Critics Circle **2016**

Satellite Awards **2017**

Turkish Film Critics Association (SIYAD) Awards **2017**

Valladolid International Film Festival **2016**

Vancouver International Film Festival **2016**

Washington DC Area Film Critics Association Awards **2016**

World Cinema Amsterdam **2016**



**Picture C. 1. Dialogue 1**



**Picture C.2. Dialogue 1**



**Picture C.3. Dialogue 2**



**Picture C.4. Dialogue 3**



**Picture C.5. Dialogue 3**

**The Salesman Source: Movie's link:**

<https://fmovies.to/film/the-salesman.pr71j/m2xrv07>

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Name and Surname: Saadat Eskandarifar

### Education:

2008-2012 BA in English Literature

2018-2021 MA in Redio Television Cinema

### Work Experience:

2020 Teaching Persian to non-Persian students in Umran organization  
(2020)

2020-up to now Collaborating with UARA (Umran Academic Research  
Association)

2020- up to now İRAM (Iran Research Center)

2015-up to now English tutor