Application of Neoformalism for Analysis of two Iranian Distinguished films

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Abstract

Neoformalism is one of the recent film criticism approaches which appeared in the 1980s and 1990s. This approach uses a new strategy in addition to achievements gained using prior methods. In this article, the specifications of this approach are studied on the basis of works of founders of neoformalism including David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson and issues such as definition of form and narration, differentiation of plot and story, principles of form, definition of device, function and motivation are expressed. According to the definition given by neoformalist, form is the overall system of relations between the elements in the whole film and narration is the plot's way of distributing story information in order to achieve specific effects. The set of all the events in a narrative, both those presented explicitly and those inferred by the viewer, constitutes the story and the term plot is used to describe everything visibly and audibly present in the film before us. A large number of Iranian filmmakers and critics believe that too much attention to content and lack of attention to form is one of the most important problems of Iranian cinema that has emerged in recent years. Also, neoformalism emphasizes the importance of analysis of form and aesthetical principles of cinema. Therefore, this approach is appropriate for studying contemporary Iranian films. Then. this approach has been used for analyzing of two important films of Majid Majidi including Children of Heaven and Baran as two distinguished Iranian contemporary films. These two films awarded the best film prize from Fajr festival in 1997 and 2001. Majidi has yet to achieve this prize again. Results of this neo-formalistic analysis show that in these two films, the form is developed to present main themes including family affection, dedication and love. Majidi in Children of Heaven has presented an attractive narration with sufficient rise and fall. He has used some devices such as overhead shot, slow motion and sound design and has applied form principles in order to represent the theme of dedication. In Baran he has taken a step further and has created a form that is consonant to theme of film, by using appropriate devices and form principles. Due to this film he rose up from ordinary form of Iranian cinema. In Baran, theme of love has been expressed with a mystic and spiritual aspect and Majidi has used Iranian mysticism and Sufism and especially has used Rumi's works for expression of romantic story of film. Therefore, through directing of these two films Majidi gained more knowledge about cinematic form and expression and obtained more strength and ability for creating consonant form to themes of his films.

Keywords: Neoformalism, Majid Majidi, film analysis, narration, form.

Introduction

Over the history of cinema's life, different approaches have been emerged to criticize cinema films. Some of these approaches have been derived from Schools of Literary and Art Criticism and some of them are derived from thinking and cultural streams of relevant historical ages. Semiotic

and structuralist approaches are examples of type 1 and feministic criticism is an example of type 2. However, critics of cinema have gone toward discrimination of new approaches to analyze films and have created the notion of the auteur and genre criticism using older methods of art and literary criticism. Neoformalism is one of the recent film criticism approaches which appeared in the 1980s and 1990s. The approach uses a new strategy of achievements of previous approaches.

Later, two films directed by Majid Majidi have been analyzed. The two films include Children of Heaven and Baran awarded the best film prize from Fajr festival in 1997 and 2001. Majidi has yet to achieve this prize again.

It should be noted that reliance of neoformalist approaches on film form analysis and aesthetics of cinema have changed the approach into a good approach to analyze contemporary Iranian films. This is because; many authorities and critics of Iran's cinema believe that paying more attention to content and lack of considering form of films is one of the most important problems of Iranian Cinema over the years. According to neoformalists, attention of filmmakers to a part of film form containing concept, meaning and content is more than attention to other aspects of film form. Hence, it is important to choose a method to analyze films with specific attention to form, aesthetics and technical features of works to demonstrate artistic status of films.

Introducing neoformalist criticism approach

With his wife Kristin Thompson, David Bordwell created neoformalist criticism that is a kind of compositional criticism. They wrote the theory for the first time in introductory textbooks Film Art (1979) and in PhD thesis in Cinema of Thompson at the University of Wisconsin-Madison under the title of "Neoformalism Analysis of Ivan The Terrible". Origin of the theory turns back to Russian Neoformalism. Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell have defended the formalism against the claim that it is just formal and have attempted to separate the attitude from content analysis of social and historical paraphrase (Haile and Gibson, 2009, 127).

From perspective of neoformalists, traditional criticism approaches are definite and are not adequate to analyze any kind of film. They believe that films emphasized in each criticism approach can confirm that approach and methods can't be tested by different films. Moreover, neoformalists believe that previous methods pay no attention to technical achivements of cinema. However, criticism approach is changed as a result of technology development in this attitude.

The aim of neoformalist criticism is choosing the best question about film and answering the question using previous criticism methods. The question conducts people toward dominant element of film, an element that is repeated in film. Moreover, assessment of film narration and form arrangements and their relation with dominant element are important issues of neoformalist criticism.

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson as founders of neoformalism have attacked "Film Interpretation" and presented historical poetics as an alternative to interpretative tradition. Historical poetics is a term applied by Bakhtin in secondary title of the paper "Time-Place Pattern" in 1930s. Historical poetics studies this issue that how films gather together under certain conditions and presented specific function and gain specific results (Bordwell, 1991, 266). Bordwell believes that historical poetics take action with the assumption that no predetermined arrangement is considered for meanings as the basis of criticism approach. Hence, Thompson has considered "historical poetics" as an approach that can use different methods (Bordwell, 1991, 267).

Useful examples of this type of criticism have been written in appendix of "Cinema Art" book. Bordwell and Thompson have criticized 17 films in this book and have investigated in each text function of film form in induction of dominant element. For example, they have analyzed "suspense and mystery" in the film "North by Northwest" by Alfred Hitchcock and have analyzed

"social ideology about family traditions and values" in film "Meet Me in St. Louis" by Vincente Minnelli.

Features of neoformalist film criticism

In this section, the most important principles of neoformalist criticism approach are presented in summary.

Formalism and neo-formalism relationship

Neoformalist criticism of film has used concepts and methods of Russian formalism theory a lot. One of the most important concepts derived in this approach from formalism is nature of art and defamiliarization concept. From perspective of neoformalists, two models of "relationship originality in art" and "art for art's sake" are rejected. They believe that in the model "artistic relationship", artistic work should be measured using the amount of the clarity in conveying meaning. Moreover, as relationship is an applied activity, artistic work should be also directly in service of an applied target in life. In this model, just entertaining works are not so valuable, since they do nothing useful. The model results in traditional separation of high art and banal art (Thompson, 2013, 21).

On the contrary, in the model "art for art's sake", the art is created to make people enjoy in reacting against it is the criteria for measurement of similar art, aesthetics and feelings and modes. Here, an expert-oriented separation of high and banal arts has emphasized this issue, since aesthetic experience aesthetic experience is in margin, compared to top taste of aesthetic experts that are able to prefer attraction of well-made works.

Russian formalists, contrary to opinions of some people, have not supported art. They have found an alternative for the model and this was realized through separating applied routine perceptions from unapplied perceptions of aesthetics. Art is separated from the daily world and applied perceptions. Artistic works make people full of happiness and unapplied processes and give new life to perception (Thompson, 2013, 22).

Art acts like mental practice through this. In fact, individual use of artistic works in most cases is similar to use of sports without movement like chess and is also similar to aesthetic thinking about the nature that is just for its own nature. As entertaining and fun films can make perception of people involved as much as serous films with difficult contents, neoformalism would not separate high and banal arts in cinema.

Artistic works take their personification power through aesthetics in subjective process of people that is applied as the term "defamiliarization" by Russian formalists. According to Shklovsky, the technique of art is the technique of defamiliarization of objects, hardening forms, increasing difficulty and duration of perception. This is because; the process of perception has an aesthetics ultimate in it and should be elongated (Thompson, 2013, 23). Bordwell and Thompson have referred to this issue in "Film Art" book as follows: al stylized arts such as opera, comedy and other genres are depended on the desire of viewer to neglect daily life experience and accept specific principles (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004, 63).

Although neoformalists have also criticized differentiation of high and banal arts in two models of applied art and the art for art's sake, they have divided artistic works to original and unoriginal types. Is a collection of artistic works use a fixed method constantly, the capacity of defamiliarization would be declined and weirdness would be decreased over the time. As a result, unfamiliar would become familiar and aesthetic approach would be automated to high extent. Thompson believes that Westerns of rank B are examples of ordinary artistic works that can't defamiliarize contracts of Hollywood Classic Filmmaking Genre. However, even one unoriginal film is also different from similar films in terms of subject. As a result, they would take

defamiliarization in terms of manner of showing the environment and history and common realities. Original works take defamiliarization powerfully or defamilirize proved traditions of old artistic works or a combination of both of them. Hence, defamiliarization is existed in all artistic works; although its concept and amount varies in different works (Thompson, 2013, 24).

Concept of content and form

Using the concept of defamiliarization and automation by neoformalists allows neoformalism disregard certain specification of many well-known theories: separation of form from content. According to Thomson, meaning is not the ultimate result of artistic work, but also it is one of the components of artistic work. In other words, artist makes the work on basis of many things such as meaning (Thompson, 2013, 25).

Now, it should be found that what definition neoformalists present for form to encompass all components of artistic work such as meaning and content. From their perspective, an internal system that related different parts of an artistic work is form (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004, 48). Form has adhesive feature. Form is certain system of pattern-based relations perceived in each artistic work. The experience of every artistic work is also an adhesive experience (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004, 72). Hence, if form is a general system attributed to film by audiences, no local and foreign pattern is existed. In their view, content can be applied in the general pattern and is one of the formal elements.

Film form principles

The principles recognized by audiences in film formal system are as follows:

1. Function: each element in generality of form has one or more functions. Concept of function is not dependent on intention of filmmaker. Motivation is the existential reason for an element that can specify its function.

2. Similarity and repetition: repetition is like beating in music and weight in lyrics and meets formal expectations. Every important repetitive element is named motif.

3. Difference and variation: form needs stable base of similarities and repetition; although it needs differences and variations too. Characters, locations, actions and other elements can be against each other and make differences.

4. Expansion: expansion is originated in some patterns of similarity and difference. To analyze expansion patterns, it is better to partition film (e.g. to scenes). Another way is to compare first film with last film.

5. Unity/lack of unity: collection of relations among different elements of film can create a kind of general cinema system. When all relations in film are clear and are interwoven, it could be mentioned that film has unity and is self-sufficient. Some films create lack of unity as a positive feature in their form like "Last Year in Marienbad" (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004, 73-80).

Types of meaning in film

In view of neoformalists, meaning in film can be divided to two general groups including explicit (including referred and clear meanings) and implicit (including implied and signifying meanings).

1. Referred meaning: viewer recognizes dimensions of the real world that have impact. For example, Ivan the Terrible shows life of a real Tsarist in 16th century in Russia.

2. Explicit meaning: abstract ideas expressed by film explicitly. According to experiences of artistic works and the real world, they could be found or perceived.

3. Implied meaning: public tendency is to find firstly referred and explicit meanings and go toward interpretation, when being unable to explain the meaning through this. Implied meanings are

made by perceivers from artistic works and are interpreted. Abstract mode of implied meaning can lead to wide expanded concepts named mostly as content. Searching to find implied meaning should not affect specific qualities of a film. It does not mean that films should not be interpreted, but also interpretations should be careful according to film form. Signs of implied meanings are existed within the work like end shots of Antonioni's Silence that shows empty streets for 7 minutes.

4. Signifying meaning: concepts that go beyond surface of a work and help defining its relationship with the world like implicit ideology of film, film as a reflection of social orientations, a sign of mental modes of wide group of people such as interpretation of Kracauer about German films that indicate social tendency for submission against power of Nazism Regime (Thompson, 2013, 24-25; Bordwell and Thompson, 2004, 66-70).

Determining concept of Device, function and motivation

Device is an element or structure that plays role in artistic work like movement of camera, an event, a repeated word, special clothes or content. For neoformalists, all devices are equal in terms of probability of defamiliarization and efficiency in making cinema system of film. Meaning is also different in each film and is a device such as any other aspect of film.

Each device has a function in artistic work. Function is a target that has each device in service. Many works may use a single device; although function of the device may be different in each work. For example, Rod-like shadows can't be always symbol of imprisonment of character (Thompson, 2013, 28).

Motivation is a cause that explains existence of device. In fact, motivation is a clue existed in work and makes people determine that what can explain inclusion of a device. Hence, motivation acts similar to mutual interaction of artistic work and mind of viewer. Main motivations are 4 types as follows:

1. Compositional motivation explains existence of each device required for causal building of place or time and is in service of the story. This type of motivation shows more than everything placing information that may be required later.

2. Realistic motivation persuades the viewer. For example, Phileas Fogg in Around the World in Eighty Days is a wealthy person that can do everything in this trip. Realistic motivation can be attracted by two expanded limits of knowledge: knowledge of daily life and knowledge of common aesthetic criteria of realism during certain period of evolution of an artistic work.

3. Intertextual motivation refers to any kind of reference to contracts of artistic works. In cinema, types of intertexual motivation are mostly depended on knowledge of people about the specific genre and actors or similar contracts in other arts.

4. Artistic motivation: on one hand, every device in artistic work has artistic explanation; although most of the devices have more brilliant motivation of structural, realistic or intertextual motivations. Storyboard can place artistic motivations systematically in default. A specific and powerful case of artistic motivation is along with clarification of device. For example, theft of bicycle places his realism in the default. Some artistic works change explicit devices to effect central structure (Thompson, 2013, 29-32).

From perspective of neoformalism, the main goal of analyst is analyzing function and motivation and interpretation is just a part of this goal.

The key distinction of film's story and plot

In order to discriminate their ideas about narration of story in cinema, neoformalists use fabula/story syuzhet/plot concepts with their definitions that is rooted in theories of neoformalism. From their perspective, a series of events relied on causal logics occurred in time and place is named

as narration. Collection of all events in narration, those supplied explicitly and those inferred by viewer, can form story. They call the world of story as "Dayjsys" (a Greek word for the recounted story).

The term "plot" is used to describe seeable and hearable things offered in film. Above all, plot includes all events of the story offered directly. Plot can even include irrelevant matters of the world of tory like titling and opening and orchestral opening scene of film "North by Northwest" (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004, 82-84).

In other words, plot is a regular set of causal events watched in film supplied in the film. Some events are offered directly and others are juts referred. Such events would not be supplied most of the time based on arrangement of occurrence (like flashbacks). Perception of viewer of plot events is most of the time depending on arranging them in the mind respectively. The assumed structure of events based on occurrence in terms of causality is named story (Thompson, 2013, 50). Figure 1 has illustrated differentiation of concept of story and plot properly.

Story

| Inferred events | Offered events | Non-fiction materials added |
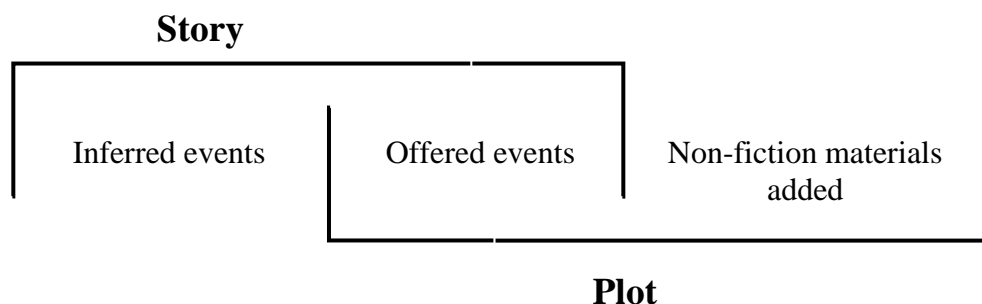
Plot

Figure 1: difference of story and plot from perspective of Neoformalist approach

Definition of narration

The process, in which plot offers or hides story information through a specific order, is named narration. In other words, narration means manner of distribution of story information using plot to achieve specific effect. Narration is a moment-based process that conducts viewer to change the plot into story. Range and depth of story information play key role in narration. In narration of omniscient, the information is more than total information gained by each character. However, in finite narration, knowledge of viewer is limited to everything that is perceived by the main character (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004, 84).

Film can create Curiosity and surprise through limiting the information. On the contrary, when information is more than information of characters, waiting and suspense would be created. Each film can be fluctuated between limited and unlimited supply of story information.

Depth of story information indicates that to what extent plot considers depth of psychological states of character or to what extent objectivist and subjectivist it is. If Seen and heard things by characters are displayed, perceptive subjectivism would be created and if the sound of their thoughts are heard or subjective images, memories, imaginations and dreams of them are watched, narrative subjectivity would be created. Most films place subjective moments in overall framework of subjectivism (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004, 98-99).

Analysis of films of Majid Majidi
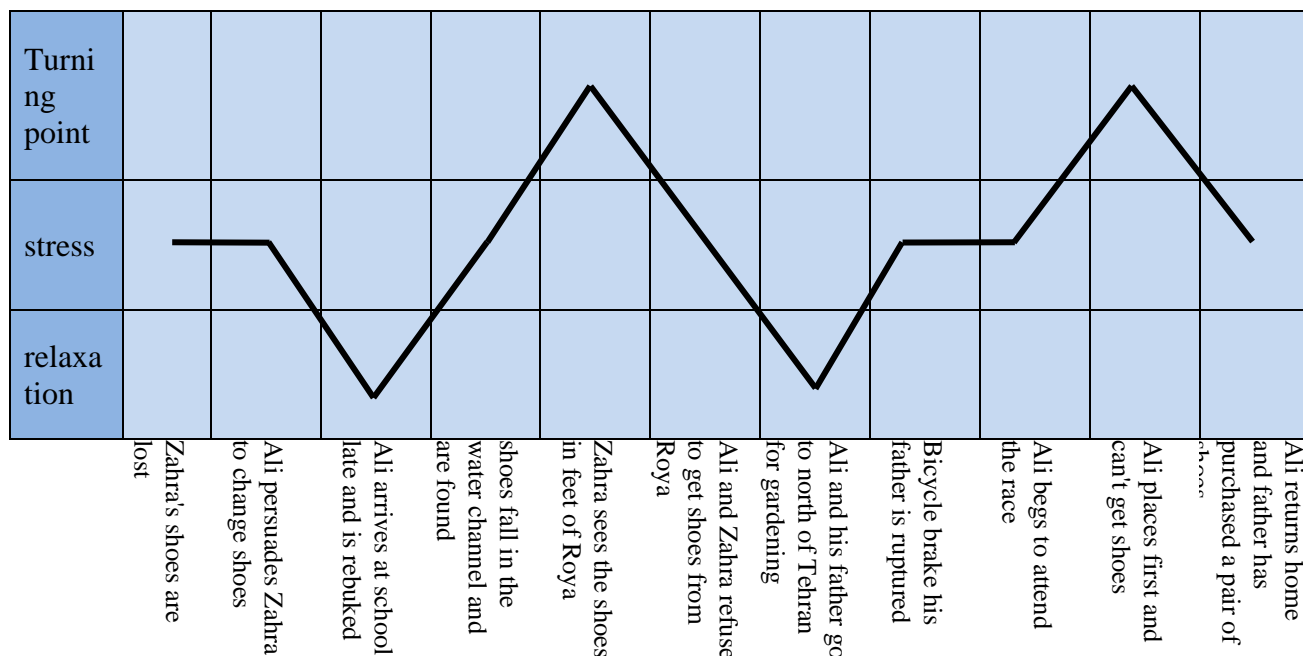*Children of Heaven*

Children of Heaven is product of 1997 and is 90 minutes. The film starts with Ali (Amir Farrokh Hashemian) fetching his little sister Zahra's (Bahare Seddiqi), pink shoes after a cobbler has repaired them. He leaves them unattended to buy some potatoes. Zahra has no other shoes and her

father is too poor to buy another one. Ali persuades Zahra not to tell their parent and to use Ali's shoes to go to school. Zahra has to run all way of school to home to get the shoes to Ali to be at school on time. However, again Alia arrives at school late and is rebuked by the moderator. Finally, Ali learns of a high-profile children's 4 kilometer footrace involving many schools; the third prize is one week at a vacation camp and a pair of sneakers. Ali sees this as his chance to earn a new pair of shoes for Zahra. To his bitter disappointment, in a hard-fought dash to the finish, he accidentally places first instead. Ali returns home where Zahra is waiting for him. In a separate scene, there is a quick shot of the children's father's bicycle as he's riding home, showing a pair of white and a pair of pink shoes among his purchases.

Analysis of film "Children of Heaven"

Analysis of film narration: according to the story of this film, diagram in figure 2 can be traced for rise and fall of the story of this film:

Figure 2: Diagram of rise and fall of story of "Children of Heaven"

Narration of "Children of Heaven" has good rising and falling. In addition to main line of the story, narration has also narrated other stories (e.g. Ali and his father traveling to north of Tehran for working; illness of mother and their relations with landlord and neighbors, father working for the mosque) that create good rhythm for the film. This is one of the devices that was missed in previous film of Majid Majidi and caused slowing the rhythm down.

Although major part of the story is narrated along with Ali's character and the range of information is limited to the character, the narration goes away from him in some shots intentionally and the range of story is expanded and this has created some suspense and regrets for the audiences. For example, the director shows the door-to-door salesperson (the person, who took Zahra's shoes as a result of a mistake) in other shots intentionally. However, Ali is not informed about this issue, contrary to the audiences. In another scene, blind father of Roya (Zahra's schoolmate) is buying new shoes for his daughter and father of Ali and Zahra is also watching the vitrine of same shoe store.

Principles of film form and devices: Majidi has used various devices in regard with transferring desired contents. One of the devices is using overhead views in two scenes of the film. The first one is the scene that Ali and his friend pair the shoes of mourners in mosque after

distributing teas during the ceremony at mosque. Ali pairs the shoes with no pause; although he and his sister need just one pair of shoes. Another scene is in final shots of the film, where Ali returns home from the race and he is then shown dipping his bare blistered feet in a pool. The two overhead views can have implied meaning for the audiences that is a supervisor and viewer in the skies (overhead) that controls actions of characters (figure 3).

Figure 3: Overhead supervisor point of view in Children of Heaven (source: picture of original frame of film)

Another device is using slow motion in race sequence, where the race is in its sensitive stage and Ali is in hard competition with other several boys. In this scene, Majidi has used slow motion and breathing sound of Ali to picture his effort to win the race. In this scene, film music is played by a sitar and sense of loneliness of Ali is transferred to the audiences. Moreover, Majidi uses in this scene sound of conversations of Ali and Zahra in previous scenes about shoes and getting third in race and Ali finds more motivation for race through reviewing the dialogues.

Types of meaning in film: narration considers accuracy of main content of film. Main content and implied meaning of film can be considered sacrifice and honesty even under hard economic conditions. Zahra sees her old shoes worn by a little girl named Roya and follows her and finds her home. Ali and Zahra go to Roya's home and immediately after that they find her father is blind and door-to-door salesperson refuse to get the shoes back after watching to face of each other.

Another important example is the scene in Ali's small home, where the father is breaking sugar loaf for the mosque. Father wants to drink tea with sugar loaf, but they have just rock candy. The girl tells father surprised that here is a lot of sugar loaf and the father answers that these are not ours and we should be honest to keep them safe.

Anne Gregory, filmmakers and film researcher, has written in paper of Majid Majidi and Iran's modern Cinema published in Journal of Film and Religion as follows: "the content of sacrifice because of religion and faith is like a clear path in films of Majidi, the path that should be followed even with its hardness and difficulties for the family. This issue can be observed in scene that Ali's mother gives Ali a bowl of soup to give their ill neighbor; although they have not enough food for themselves." (Gregory, 2008, 3)

He has also referred to the ending of the film and believes that the ending of film shows divine providence for hardworking people in a symbolic manner or in form of an implied meaning. She believes that Majidi shows his common style for lack of ending in a perfectly good shot through displaying that children see their new shoes (Gregory, 2008, 5). In other words, Majidi saves the feelings of difficulties for his characters in audiences even with such ending in film "The Color of Paradise".

One of the most important aspects in "Children and Heaven" is showing poverty, along with honor, honesty and happiness against humiliation and crime. Although Ali's and Roya's families are

poor, they commit no crime or don't rebel through observing class differences. Even in the sequence of going to north of Tehran, filmmaker has not considered class differences and the respect of the wealthy old man to Ali's father can indicate this issue. However, the scene of accident at the end of the sequence indicates that they can't earn money through this way and this is expressed not bitterly, but also with a little humor and joke.

In same view of pairing shoes, this issue can be indicated. Ferasati Masud has referred to this issue in a critique to this film as follows: "dominant viewpoint to the film is an impartial and ideal human, not black and class-based. If point of view of the film was touristic and implacable, in scene of pairing shoes in mosque, Ali had to steal a pair of shoes same as the theft of bicycle. After seeing the shoes, audiences should clap for Ali and confirm his action and evaluate the film as a social and advancing work. However, audiences in this scene think about honesty and faith of Ali." (Ferasati, 1997, 71)

Through reading the film in historical field, it could be noted that some technical critics of Contemporary Iranian Cinema also use the film as a meter and index to determine national and ideal cinema and have considered it as the best film in history of Iranian Cinema to that date (Ferasati, 1997, 70).

In general, it should be mentioned that "Children of Heaven" has used suitable devices and form elements to express its dominant content that is sacrifice and Majidi has been able to create a form adjusted with the film's content.

Baran

Baran is product of 2001 and has 98 minutes. The story of this film is about Lateef, a 17-yaer old boy. Lateef's job is to serve tea and prepare food for the workers with whom he is always quarrelling. As the story starts, an Afghan worker, NAJAF, falls from the building and breaks his leg. He is taken to the hospital. The next day, SOLTAN, another Afghan worker, brings in RAHMAT, Najaf's son, who is around 14 years old, to replace his father. Memar soon realizes that Rahmat is not fit for such hard work, and decides to switch the jobs between Rahmat and Lateef. Lateef is furious, threatens Rahmat, tries to sabotage his work and spies on him. One day, by looking through the door where Rahmat works, he is totally shocked to discover that Rahmat is a girl. As he watches her comb her hair, he finds himself in a strange state, surrounded by unusual sounds. From then on his attitude changes completely; he becomes protective, helpful and gradually desperately in love with Rahmat. During a surprise visit of the labour inspectors, they find themselves face to face with Rahmat. She panics and runs away, as they chase her through the city streets. Lateef runs after them, struggling with the inspectors while Rahmat flees.

Now Memar must pay a fine, comply with the law, and lay off all illegal Afghan workers. He gets all his accumulated wages from Memar, and hands them to Soltan, asking him to pass them on to Najaf. The next day at the shrine, instead of Soltan, Najaf shows up to inform Lateef that Soltan has gone to Afghanistan and leaves a letter for Lateef. He sells the only valuable thing he has, his identity card. When he brings the money to Najaf, Lateef learns that thanks to this money, Najaf and his family will return to Afghanistan. Lateef is unable to express his love to Baran and she and her family go to Afghanistan. The truck takes Baran away. Left alone in the empty place, Lateef stares at the footstep in the mud left by Baran's shoe, and smiles while the rain covers it.

Analysis of Baran

Analysis of film narration: in Baran film, plot and story are same and narration is limited narration goes forward with Lateef's character. Selecting this type of narration has made audiences go along with Lateef and perceive his feelings and conditions properly. For example, main turning point of film's story that is finding that Baran is a girl is created for audiences, when Lateef sees her

while combing her hair. In diagram of figure 4, rising and falling points of story of Baran are illustrated.

		Baran comes to workshop		Lateef's job is changed and Baran comes instead of him		Lateef finds out that Baran is girl				Lateef helps Baran		Latees tries to find Baran		Finding Baran and Helping her family		selling ID card and giving the money to Najaf		Lateef finds that Baran's family are going to Afghanistan		farewell to Baran

Figure 4: Diagram of rising and falling points of Baran Story

Principles of film form and devices

Form of Baran film is in service of main content of film that is evolution of human personality by love and kindness. Cold and boring atmosphere of the workshop, cloudy sky in major part of film and cold color of film, especially in scenes of workshop, make the space violent and cold for Lateef and other workers. For this reason, Lateef fights others again and again. He is a proud and selfish person at the beginning of the film and don't allow his interests to be endangered. Long views, used many times in film, indicate loneliness and frustration of people at the world. On the contrary, some views related to district of Afghans in Kan, using warm colors and sunny sky displays contradiction of atmosphere with space of construction workshop. The contradictions are signs of film form principles; meaning difference and variation.

In Baran, repetition has been used, along with difference, as another principle of film form. For example, Lateef at the beginning pays no attention to people and environment around him, but he feeds birds after seeing Baran feeding the birds (Figure 5). Majidi has illustrated the deformation using repetition of two views and replacing Lateef instead of Baran.

Figure 5: Using repetition and difference as film form principles
(source: picture of original frame of film)

Advancement of Majidi in field of using form elements is not only interesting for Iranian critic, but also Anne Gregory has also referred to it in paper of Majid Majidi and Iran's Modern Cinema: "as Baran is the most pioneer film of Majidi in terms of content and is involved with issues such as racism, poverty, refugees and love, it is the most effective and systematic film of Majidi. Majidi has used long and continuous views of workers moving in construction workshop, light colors and various scenes with rain and snowfall. The elements can not only display growth of Majidi as a cinema storyteller, but also they can express development of film industry in Iran as an art and commerce" (Gregory, 2008, 9).

Types of meaning in film: Majid Majidi has mentioned about Baran that: "three subjects are linked in baran: one of them is love, second is marginalized people and those have identity in their birthplace; although they lose their identity when migrating big cities and the third one is Afghan immigrants" (Talebi Nejad and Majidi, 2001, 24). Majidi has been properly able to display signs of falling in love using form elements like repetition (in scenes of feeding birds or irrigating flowers). About situation of immigrants to big cities, Majidi highlights farness of lateef from his identity through showing loneliness of Lateef and farness from his family. In scene of selling his ID card (before that, his ID card was only as a guarantee in supermarket for shopping of workers and had no other value) the film shows rise losing his identity. However, this action of Lateef has also implied meaning to concept of poverty in mythical literature of Iran in addition to have referred meaning. This is an issue that is referred also by Michel Pittman, professor of religious and literature studies in Albania University in New York in a paper under the title of "Majid Majidi and Baran, Iranian Cinema poetry and spiritual poverty of Rumi" in The Journal of Religion and Film. Pittman believes that works of Majidi show content that the best description for it is spiritual poverty. Spiritual poverty is a basic content in works of Rumi (Pittman, 2011, 2).

Pittman has used the relationship to present another implied meaning of elementary views of Baran that are pictures of a bakery, where Lateef buys bread: "beginning shot is bakery and changing Bread dough to bread. This has been applied by Rumi many times as the symbol of spiritual evolution process. Soul is also baked like bread and reaches its spiritual maturity" (Pittman, 2011, 6). In general, in should be mentioned that Baran is a successful effort of majidi to achieve a form adjusted with story content.

Conclusion

In this study, coordinates of neoformalist approach is introduced that is one of the recent criticism methods in cinema studies and the approach has been applied to analyze two films of Majid Majidi. As it was mentioned, in neoformalist approach, film analyst uses form and narration to investigate used devices in film and recognizes its functions. Moreoverm the approach mines explicit and implicit meanings of work.

Accordingly and through neofromalist analysis of two films of "Children of Heaven" and "Baran", it should be mentioned that Majidi has placed both of his films in service of presenting moral contents like preservation of family interest, sacrifice and love. Majidi has presented an attractive narration in "Children of Heaven" with sufficient rising and falling and has used devices and formal elements properly to transfer the content of sacrifice. However, in Baran, he has gone beyond this and has created a form adjusted with his content and has refused to use common devices in cinema. Through this, the process of understanding of Majidi of cinema form and evolution of cinema expression could be observed in these two films and over the time, Majidi has gained more dominance on creating good form based on content of his works.

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