

The Factors of Iranian Cinema's Global Success at Festivals: Content Analysis of Prize-Awarded Movies at Cannes, Berlin, Venice and Locarno Festivals

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Abstract

This article is about the factors of Iranian cinema's success at global festivals, particularly Cannes, Berlin, Venice and Locarno. The main aim is to understand the amount of "blackening" in the Iranian movies that were prize-awarded. The research method is content analysis which the sample size 34 movies. The findings indicate that among 34 examined movies, only in two films i.e. *The Circle* and *Crimson Gold*, all indicators related to blacken have been represented. In two other movies, only the story was related to the Iranian social issues. Therefore contrary to the official viewpoint, blackening was not at a level that could account for the success of the Iranian prize-awarded films. On the other hand, the examination of ethical values shows that most sequences of examined movies consider to apply ethical values, affection, love and caring, and except for the movie *20 Fingers*, this variable is represented more or less. Therefore the representation of human affections and values has been the most significant factor of Iranian cinema's global success at the international festivals.

Key words: Iranian cinema; Iranian movies; International film festivals; Content analysis; Representation

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INTRODUCTION

Iranian cinema's international attendance goes back to the period before the Islamic Revolution of 1979. In 1958, for the first time in the history of Iranian cinema, the movie *Night Party in the Hell* was shown at Berlin Festival (Abdollahzadeh, 2008, p.29). Iranian movies continued their international attendance in the next twenty six years and secured several prizes. But the considerable and useful attendance of this cinema happened after the Islamic Revolution. The peak of this attendance was during 1990s that Iranian cinema recorded more than 4,500 global attendance events and secured 280 prizes all over the world that showed an increasing attention to the Iranian movies (Ibid., p.30). From 1979 until now, Iranian cinema has secured 1,451 international prizes. Adding the 152 prizes before the Islamic Revolution, the Iranian cinematographers have won 1,603 international prizes during the history of cinema in Iran. The peak of success for Iranian cinema was 2005 in which they won 152 prizes (Film Magazine, 2008, p.50). According to a summary, from 1979 until now, the Iranian cinema has won 1,708 international prizes of which 1,000 prizes were secured during 26 years of revolution and 700 prizes during five past years (Attebayi, 2009, p.1).

There are many viewpoints about the factors of Iranian cinema's global success. Some believe that in these movies, sublime human values are depicted that evoke the feelings and emotions of their audience. They believe that while Hollywood cinema horrifies its audience by using its huge technology, the Iranian cinema by using its small facilities narrates humanistic and effective stories that attract those audience that have been disappointed with violent and immoral cinema (Moazezinia, 2009, p.7). In this regard, Majid Majidi says "If we talk in human nature language, our speech will not be limited to a geographical region" (Hosseinejad, 1999, p.1). Esfandyari also considers the reactions of foreign audience after viewing *The Cold Roads* as motivational and says "After watching

the movies, they talked about fresh air and believed that in the world film market which is full of sex and violence, a healthy and attractive movie is like fresh air in a polluted atmosphere” (Esfandyari, 1998, p.6).

Contrary to the above-mentioned positive viewpoint towards these movies, some believe that the reason for paying attention to these movies is their critical perspective. In their opinion,

the prize-winner movies are favored by the Western critiques because they show a bitter and dark image of Iranian social conditions. All Western festivals have a political approach so they want to support our cinema through a distorted path by giving prizes to those movies that blacken our society. (Moazezinia, 2009, p.7)

These controversies have been current for a long time and they have even culminated in contending groupings among Iranian cinematographers. Each group insists on its stance, and criticisms have culminated in reinforcing their stances, instead of weakening them. In this regard, no independent and conclusive examination has taken place. Of course, dealing with all efficient factors in the success of these movies is very difficult, if not impossible. A part of this process is related to the mechanisms of global festivals which are not easily examinable. It seems that the best way of solving the problem is to examine the content of these movies in a scientific and systematic way. By doing this, it will be cleared that how much these movies have blackened Iranian social conditions. Therefore the main question in this research is: What image have the prize-winner movies represented in Iran?

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this article we will concentrate on representation and its important factor of stereotyping which is based on the findings of the research.

1.1 Representation Theory

The term representation embodies a range of meanings and interpretations. Etymologically, representation can be understood as a presentation drawn up not by depicting the object as it is but by re-presenting it or constructing it in a new form and/or environment. In ancient times representation played a central role in studying and understanding literature, aesthetics, and semiotics. The construct has since evolved into a significant component to analyze the contemporary world's creation of audio visual as well as textual arts, such as films, museum exhibitions, and television programs and so on. None of these representational forms are neutral because it is impossible to divorce them from the culture and society that produces them. R-rated films are an example of cultural restrictions, highlighting society's attempt to control and modify representations to promote a certain set of ideologies and values. Despite these restrictions, representations have the ability to take on a life of their own once in the

public sphere. The term representation cannot be given a definitive meaning because there will always be a gap between intention and realization, original and copy. In a 1997 essay entitled *The Work of Representation*, the sociologist Stuart Hall discusses the relationship between politics and representation and the systems representing both. He approaches representation as the medium or process through which meaning, associations, and values are socially constructed and reified by people in a shared culture. Representation involves understanding how language and systems of knowledge production work together to produce and circulate meanings. According to Hall, we give things meaning by how we represent them. Cultural representations help form the images people have of others; if assimilated by those others, they help form the images people have of themselves as well; cultural representations get embodied in institutions and inform policies and practices. The politics of representation, then, revolve around issues of power and control over one's own self and its representations and reproduction by others.

Stuart hall believes that there are broadly speaking three approaches to explaining how representation of meaning works through language. These three approaches are called the reflective, the intentional and the constructionist approaches. These approaches attempt to answer the questions, “where do meanings come from?” and “how can we tell the ‘true’ meaning of a word or image?” In the reflective approach, meaning is thought to lie in the object, person, idea or event in the real world. Language functions like a mirror, to reflect the true meaning as it already exists in the world. There would seem to be some truth to this mimetic theory, in that language works by simply reflecting or imitating the truth that is already there and fixed in the world, and since visual signs do bear some relationship to the shape and texture of the objects which they represent. However, there are many words, sounds and images which we fully understand, but which are entirely fictional or fanciful and refer to worlds which are wholly imaginary. Thus the second approaches to meaning to argues this opposite case. It holds that it is the speaker, the author, who imposes his or her unique meaning on the world through language. Words mean what the author intends them to mean. This is called the intentional approach. While we as individuals do use language to convey or communicate things which are special or unique to us, to our way of seeing the world, this approach is flawed in that we cannot be the sole or unique source of meanings in language, since that would mean that we could express ourselves in entirely private languages. The essence of language is communication and that in turn depends on shared linguistic conventions and shared codes. Thus our private intended meanings, however personal to us, have to enter into the rules, codes and conventions of language

to be shared and understood. This means that our private thoughts have to negotiate with all other meanings for words or images which have been stored in language, which our use of the language system will inevitably trigger into action (Hall, 1997, p.25).

1.2 Stereotyping

As already mentioned, some critics accuse the Iranian prize-winner movies in the international festivals of blackening. By this term, they mean that in these movies, some social groups, symbols, women, ethnic groups and so on are shown in a negative way and their weaknesses are emphasized. The theory that explains some aspects of blackening is the theory of stereotyping. On the other hand, stereotyping is regarded as one of strategies of representation. Therefore in this section, we explain it.

The theories related to stereotyping imply that through making perceptions about some characters or positions, media want to inject a widespread spectrum of audiences that the intended character is the representative of a given social group and consequently, they should be treated in a particular way which is usually a negative one. In this relation, even if a part of attributed feature is found in the represented social group, media claim that these features are the main truth about that group, and they do this through repeating and highlighting these features in front of their audiences.

The new concept of stereotyping was raised and introduced to the social sciences by Walter Lippmann. Lippmann was interested in the credibility of public knowledge and believed that public knowledge is poor due to the fact that the information secured from the media is inadequate. He used the word "stereotype" for showing the incorrect and misleading image of the world which is represented by the media.

Williams depicts stereotyping methods. He believes that media categorize different groups in a biased way and to emphasize their apparent, usually negative features. In a world full of complicatedness and ambiguity, stereotyping by the media helps us to get rid of everyday realities but at the same time, it can pave the way for misunderstanding and dogmatism. Research has shown that stereotyping in media is conducted by three methods: In the first method, media present a false image of the presence or dominance of the intended group. They do this through several ways. A research in 1995 showed that men attend the TV prime time programs threefold than women. The other method is to highlight the presence of a particular group in a specific scene. For example, repeated focus on the role of black people in increasing crime. The other method is to present an inappropriate image of a group for a specific activity. For example, trade unions and strike. The second method is to make stereotypes by limited and unchangeable behavior of a specific group. For example, women in TV programs or other media are either wife or mother or they are sexually abused. The third method is to delegitimation

of a group or different groups through an ideal behavior. By doing this, those who are abnormal or different from other people, are depicted in a different way (Williams, 2007, p.147).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The main research method here is quantitative content analysis. Content analysis is a method through which every communicative product can be examined in terms of its content. In this research, the Iranian movies are reassessed as a communicative product. Two units of sequence record and film record are used. The units of analysis include sequence, movie and time length.

2.1 Population, Sampling Method and Sample Size

The population of this research is all prize-awarded Iranian movies in four international festivals including Cannes, Berlin, Venice and Locarno, after the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Sampling has not taken place so the sample size is equal to the population. The examined films are: (1) White Balloon, (2) The Wind Will Carry Us, (3) Taste of Cherry, (4) Dot Means Daughter, (5) The Day I Became Woman, (6) The Song of Sparrows, (7) The Girl in the Sneakers, (8) A Time for Drunken Horses, (9) Banoo, (10) Smell of Camphor, Fragrance of Jasmine, (11) Snake Fang, (12) Under the Moonlight, (13) No One Knows About Persian Cats, (14) Friday, (15) Blackboard, (16) Maternal Love, (17) Offside, (18) Crimson Gold, (19) The Circle, (20) About Eli, (21) Siren, (22) Dance of Earth, (23) The Mirror, (24) The Jar, (25) Where is the Friend's Home? (26) A Moment of Innocence, (27) I Am Taraneh, I Am Fifteen Years Old, (28) The Blue Veiled, (29) We Are All Fine, (30) Captain Khorshod, (31) Abadani-Ha, (32) Life, and Nothing More, (33) A Separation, (34) 20 Fingers.

2.2 Reliability Coefficient

In this research, by using William Scott's formula, 270 scenes (almost 20%) of sequences were selected randomly and were coded again considering the 9 variables. According to the calculation, the resemblance between two coding was 92%. Since the reliability should be 70% (Badi'i, 1996, p.31), it can be said that the coding is reliable.

2.3 Operational Definition of Variables

Given the theoretical definition and the contents of the examined movies, the variables related to "blackening" include: social issues, the main character's stance towards social problems, the main character's problems, the main character's behavioral and emotional reaction to problems, poverty symbols, political issues, inter-familial relations among the poor, subjects of dialogues, subject of the scenes, prominent subjects, story of the movie, approach towards personal and social issues, how the movies ends.

Among these variables, in this article, only important ones have been mentioned. Also in order to prevent from repeating the topics, the operational definition of variables has not been mentioned. The categories of every table are regarded as the operational definition of the variable.

On this basis, the story of 9 movies are about diligence regarding personal life troubles, 6 movies are about love and affection, 3 about internal change and the understanding the meaning of life, 3 about women's social restrictions, 2 about social abnormalities and troubles. Thus the stories of 4 movies were about Iran's social problems, i.e., *Snake Fang*, *Crimson Gold*, *The Circle* and *A Separation*.

3 FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the story of the examined movies.

Table 1
Frequency Distribution of the Examined Movies According to the Story

Movies	Story	Frequency
<i>White Balloon, The Wind Will Carry Us</i>	Iranian-Islamic culture and traditions, and Iranian ethnicities	2
<i>The Day I Became Woman, The Girl in the Sneakers, Offside</i>	women's social restrictions	3
<i>The Song of Sparrows, Smell of Camphor Fragrance of Jasmine, Under the Moonlight</i>	Internal change, understanding the meaning of life and return to human nature	3
<i>A Time for Drunken Horses, The Mirror, The Jar, Where is the Friend's Home? Captain Khorshiod, Abadani-Ha, Life, and Nothing More</i>	diligence regarding personal life troubles	9
<i>Banoo, About Eli</i>	Weakness of Personal and psychological structure in personal-social interactions	2
<i>Snake Fang</i>	Socio-economic condition of Iran-Iraq War	1
<i>No One Knows About Persian Cats</i>	Preparing an underground music band for leaving Iran	1
<i>Dot Means Daughter, Friday, Maternal Love, The Blue Veiled, Dance of Earth, A moment of Innocence</i>	Love and affection	6
<i>Crimson Gold, The Circle</i>	Social abnormalities and problems (prostitution, class and social discrimination)	2
<i>We Are All Fine</i>	To prepare a video about the condition of a family whose elder son has migrated several years ago	1
<i>A Separation</i>	A husband's disagreement with migration due to his father's Alzheimer, and divorce demand by his wife	1
<i>20 Fingers</i>	Disagreements between wife and husband due to their traditional and modern viewpoints	1
<i>Taste of Cherry, Blackboard</i>	Other	2
Total		34

In addition to the stories of the movies, every scene was examined too. The findings depicted in Table 2 show that 21% of the scenes were about enforcing ethical values, 9% about love and affection, 6.7% about social problems, and 6.1% about diligence regarding troubles. 34.5% were not about the categories (they have proceeded a story but they are not related to this research). By omitting this category, we reach Table 3. On this basis, 32.1% of the scenes are about enforcing ethical values, 13.8 about love and affection, 9.8% about social problems, and 9.3% about diligence regarding troubles.

Thus enforcing ethical values are more prominent than other categories in the examined movies.

Table 3 displays the social problems in the scenes of examined movies. In general, in 9.1% of scenes, different social issues have been presented. These issues include: poverty (2.1%), escaped girls (1.9%), socioeconomic issues of Iran-Iraq War (1.2%) and other social issues. The distribution of variables in the movies has not been the same. Social problems have been depicted in *The Circle* (70%), *Snake Fang* (52.5%), and *Crimson Gold* (34.8%) more than other movies.

Table 2
Distribution of Scenes and Time According to the Subjects

Subject of the scenes	Number of scenes		Time length	
	Frequency	Percent	Seconds	Percent
Social problems	87	6.7	13708	7.3
Diligence regarding problems	83	6.1	10309	5.8
Women's social restrictions	55	4	8721	4.9
Social restricting traditions	9	0.7	1117	.06
Enforcing ethical values	286	21	36712	20.6
Youth enthusiasm for migration	8	0.6	605	0.3
Iranian-Islamic costumes and traditions	70	5.1	11642	6.5
Love and affection	123	9	12723	7.1
Socioeconomic issues of Iran-Iraq War	19	1.4	2774	1.6
Preparedness for forming an underground music band	30	2.2	4032	2.3
Attempts at finding student	15	1.1	1684	0.9
Preserving order and security by organizations	7	0.5	947	0.5
Police oppression		0.7	2189	1.2
Anti-ethical values	12	0.9	1639	0.9
Seeking for a person who is ready to cover the main character with soil after suicide	8	0.6	3179	1.8
Value of life and living	11	0.8	2574	1.4
Others	59	4.3	12167	6.8
None	470	34.5	52196	29.3
Total	1361	100	178288	100

Table 3
Cross Distribution of Social Issues and the Movies

Social problems	The White Balloon	The Wind Will Carry Us	Taste of Cherry	Dot Means Daughter	The Day I Became Woman	The Song of Sparrows	The Girl in the Sneakers	A Time for Drunken Horses	Banoo	Smell of Camphor, Fragrance of Jasmine	Snake Fang	Under the Moonlight	Nobody Knows About Persian Cats	Friday	Blackboard	Maternal Love	Offside	Crimson Gold
Poverty	6.2	0	4.8	1.8	12.5	2.8	0	16.1	1.7	2.7	12.5	2.4	3.9	0	0	1.9	0	0
Escaped girls	0	0	0	0	0	0	24.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Discrimination and class gap	0	0	0	1.8	0	1.4	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21.7
Socioeconomic problems of Iran-Iraq War	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37.5	0	0	0	2.6	0	0	0
Drug sale and addiction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.8	0	0	0	1.9	0	0
Prostitution and prostitute women	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery and armed robbery	0	0	0	0	70.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Suicide	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.7	0	2.4	2	73.8	0	0	0	0
Others	0	0	87.3	9.1	87.5	95.8	4.9	3.2	3.3	5.4	2.5	9.5	0	0	97.4	0	4	4.3
Without presenting social problems	93.8	100	95.2	87.3	87.5	95.8	70.7	80.7	95	89.2	47.5	73.8	94.1	100	97.4	94.2	96	65.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
		3	21	57	32	71	61	31	60	37	40	42	51	37	39	52	25	23

Table 4 displays the main character's reaction towards his/her problems. The findings show that in 79.2% of scenes, the main character has demonstrated seriousness and diligence and in 2.4% of scenes, s/he has been surrendered to the existent circumstances. In 1.8% of the scenes, s/he has chosen crime and felony.

Table 4
Frequency Distribution of the Scenes According to the Main Character's Reaction

Behavioral reaction	Frequency	Percent
Seriousness and diligence	359	79.2
Indifference and surrender	11	2.4
Crime and felony	8	1.8
Escape	21	4.6
Indefinite	8	1.8
Other passive behaviors	46	10.2
Total	453	100

DISCUSSION

As mentioned before, some critics have propounded the issue of "blackening" as the main reason for Iranian movies in the international festivals. Since the concept of "blackening" had not a particular meaning in other cultures, I made it operational through specifying some tangible attributes for it and referring to various variables and indicators in the movies. Among these variables and indicators, it seems that the stories of the movies are the first axes of manifestation and displaying the so-called "blackening". The findings indicate that the stories of 3 movies are about the main characters' internal change, 3 about women's social restrictions, 2 about personality weaknesses, 9 about diligence facing troubles, 6 about love and affection, 2 about Iranian-Islamic culture and traditions and Iranian ethnicities, 2 about social abnormalities and 1 about socioeconomic problems of Iran-Iraq War. As observed, the stories of the movies have a considerable diversity. Some of them deal with the positive aspects of personal and social life, and the others with the negative ones. Those dealing with the negative aspects raise such issues as prostitution, social discrimination, women's social restrictions, and the troubles of underground music bands. But all these issues are different, in terms of content, from what some critics regard as blackening through raising problems facing the system. In general, only 4 of these 34 movies are exactly related to Iranian social issues.

On the basis of the findings, women's social restrictions constitute the stories of 3 movies which deal with negative aspects of social life but they are not categorized in Iran's social problems. By taking a glance at the stories of these movies, we can find out

that these movies are not exactly related to the social problems, particularly the issue of prostitution. *The Day I Became Woman* is constituted of three separate episodes: compulsory hijab (scarf) and preventing women from cycling are the topics of the first and second episodes. In the third episode, an old woman realizes her old wish which is to buy her daily requirements. *The Girl in the Sneakers* shows the prohibition of girl-boy relations by family and society. "Offside" shows that women and girls are prohibited from going to football stadiums. *No One Knows About Persian Cats* shows the troubles of an underground music band in Iran; a story which is not categorized in Iran's social problems.

Although the story of a movie and its relationship with social problems may clarify the research problem but more precise assessment requires dealing with more detailed issues displayed in scenes and sequences. From this perspective, the findings indicate that 21% of the scenes show enforcing ethical values, 6.7% social problems, 5.1% Iranian-Islamic customs and traditions, 4% women's social restrictions, and 9% love and affection. In this relation, we can find out the emphasizing points better by omitting secondary and unrelated scenes.

Beside the stories of the movies, the subject of scenes and prominent topics were also studied. The findings indicate that social issues have been presented in 9.1% of scenes. These issues include: poverty (2.1%), escaped girls (1.9%), socioeconomic problems of Iran-Iraq War (1.2%), class gap and discrimination (0.5%), and prostitution (0.5%). Other issues including drug sale, unemployment, favoritism, robbery, and suicide constitute less than one percent. The movies have not displayed these issues in an equal distribution. *The Circle* (70%), *Snake Fang* (52.5%), and *Crimson Gold* (34.8%) have dealt with social issues more than others.

But the movies' approach towards these issues is more important than raising them. By approaching, I mean the movie's general orientation, from formation of story to its end, facing social and personal issues. The findings show that 27 movies have adopted critical-reformist approach towards the situations. In other words, in addition to the social problems and their factors, the main character and his/her supporters combat those problems, and the movies represent the combat. Contrary to that, in 4 movies *The Day I Became Woman*, *Crimson Gold*, *The Circle* and *20 Fingers*, the critical-reformist approach is not considered and the society is represented as embedded in that problem. Therefore in *Crimson Gold* and *The Circle*, blackening is observed in terms of social problems and the approach.

Since the main character in a movie is the focus and axis of narrative, his/her style of confronting problems is important in relation with blackening. From this point of view, the findings indicate that almost in 80% of the scenes the main character confronts problems, s/he is represented in a determined and self-respected manner who wants to solve the problem, and in 2% of the scenes

s/he chooses felony. In this regard, tendency to felony is observed only in *Crimson Gold* and *The Circle*.

How the movie ends may determine the extent of blackening. From this aspect, we can classify the movies into "promising" and "disappointing" ones. By "promising", I mean that the main character reaches her/his desirable end or the undesirable condition has moved towards improvement. The findings indicate that 20 movies have a promising end, 12 movies have disappointing ends and 2 movies have unspecified movies. Among the movies, *The Circle* and *Crimson Gold* have dealt with social problems and their approach has been non-reformist. Therefore the result of the variable "how the movie ends" in these movies highlights blackening. So according to both micro indicators and macro indicators, blackening is observable in these two movies but the others cannot be classified in this category.

In general, the findings do not show the indicators of stereotyping, as mentioned in Hall's theory. Given the general and particular topics and the number of highlighted issues, it is obvious that these movies have a considerable diversity, and there is not any repeated topic. Therefore they are not seeking to impose a particular subject or attribute a specification to a specific group. In other words, these movies are not parts of a puzzle which could be placed side by side and constitute an integrated image of Iran and Iranian people. Therefore on the basis of these movies we cannot reach the conclusion that Iranian people have such characteristics which make them different from other nations. Only in *The Circle* and *Crimson Gold* we can observe negative stereotyping and biased viewpoint. In *The Circle*, a highlighted and inappropriate image of a particular social group is observed. In this movie, a woman who has born a girl in the first scene faces a possible divorce. In the last scene, she becomes a prostitute. In other words, giving birth to a girl is regarded as a catastrophe. In addition to those women who play as characters, those women who play secondary roles and generally all women have a kind of notoriety (except for the nurse, old woman and young woman shown in the first scene). Although we cannot say that Iranian woman has been represented in the movie, however, no other woman is seen except for escaped girls and prostitutes. The fact that no one is playing in the movie as the main character and the first role circulates among the actors is due to trying to show that the social problem is not personal and many people are engaged in it.

As mentioned before, stereotyping happens where there are unequal power relations among social groups, and as usual, the power is exerted against the subaltern and marginalized group (Dyer, 1997). This is evident in *Crimson Gold* that depicts class gap. In this movie, a society is depicted in which class gap encourages two men towards felony. The upper class men treat the lower class in a humiliating way. The main character who has a worthless job makes a rich man's acquaintance who has

all facilities of life. While the main character lives in small room which is like a slum, the rich man has such a large and expensive house, that the poor man can hardly find his way. The main character chooses personal revenge and finally commits suicide.

CONCLUSION

The main questions were: What image have the prize-winner movies represented in Iran? What are the factors of these movies' success? A glance at these movies shows that their topics cannot be integrated in one category. The findings indicate that even those movies in which "blackening" is observed, have not the same topics. Therefore the movies do not imitate other themes and their motives are original and creative.

Beside these differences, and more importantly, these movies are different from the mainstream cinema or Hollywood. It is said that in the Hollywood movies, sex and violence are the keys of attraction and they increase these motives in order to increase their attraction. It is while the findings of this research show that in these movies, such motives have not been observed, and Iranian movies are attractive because of other factors. By omitting the additional features, we can reach the core of motives. On this basis, enforcing ethical values are seen in almost 40% of the movies. In *Dot Means Daughter* the main character's deep affection for his sick sister makes him to do everything in order to save her. In "The Song of Sparrows", Karim's sons work hard to earn the bread of family when he is sick in bed, and Karim looks at his son's blistered hands when he is asleep. Karim's daughter, who is deaf and needs hearing aid, pretends to hear sounds so that his father feels happy. Even in those movies that "blackening" is observed, we can see these ethical values. In "Offside" one of captured girls escapes from police custody but because feeling pity for the police officer, surrenders her to them. Also love and affection are observed in 13.8 percent of the movies. The main motive in four movies i.e. *Friday*, *Maternal Love*, *The Blue Veiled* and *Dance of Earth* is love and affection. Of course, this motive is also observable in other movies, including *Dot Means Daughter*, *A Time for Drunken Horses*, *Snake Fang*, *Smell of Camphor*, *Fragrance of Jasmine* and *Under the Moonlight*.

Therefore we should talk about various representations regarding the topics and motives of these movies. It is better to examine every single motive, subject, symbol and other issues in all motives. But as the case studies of these movies were not intended for this research, the analysis was done on the base of representation theory and classification of the prominent aspects. Therefore the image which is represented in these Iranian movies is a humanistic and pure one. In general, in most of these movies, the image of Iranian people is a positive one. Thus the success of these movies is not related to the so-called "blackening". Regardless of external factors such as the process of

decision-making in festivals which require another research, the factors of Iranian cinema's global success in festivals are their difference with the mainstream cinema and representation of humanistic relations.

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