



Family Dynamics, Class Divide, and the Legal System in Iranian Cinema: Analysis of the movie A Separation

Nasrullah Dharejo^{1*}  | Dastar Ali Chandio²  | Fatima Dayo³ 

Abstract

This paper explores Asghar Farhadi's "A Separation," focusing on how it depicts the relationships between families, class division, and the intricacies of Iranian culture in other movies and the movie Separation. The paper looks at the story of the movie, and its characters, and carries a thematic analysis of the movie using a combination of content analysis and a thorough literature review. The results show how moral and ethical dilemmas interact intricately within family and society systems, and how socioeconomic disparities and legal obstacles worsen these concerns. The paper concludes that by illustrating the conflict between traditional values and modern conventions, the film provides important insights into Iranian society. We also talk about the movie's broad themes and its appeal on a worldwide scale. The greater knowledge of Iranian cinema and its cultural and social ramifications is enhanced by this research.

Keywords: : Family dynamics, social commentary, Iranian cinema, A Separation, and cultural analysis

Author's Affiliation:


Institution: Sukkur IBA University¹, SBBU Shaheed Benazirabad², Aror University of Art³, Architecture, Design and Heritage³

Country: Pakistan

Corresponding Author's Email: *nasrullah.dharejo@iba-suk.edu.pk

The material presented by the author(s) does not necessarily portray the view point of the editors and the management of the ILMA University, Pakistan.

(Print) 2707-8906 (online) 2788-8304 ©2023, published by the ILMA University, Pakistan.

This is open access article under the  license. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

INTRODUCTION

The pleasures, complexities, and problems of society are reflected in cinema, which acts as a mirror. We see storylines in movies that speak to us because they are like our own, which helps us feel understood and connected. It encourages empathy and compassion in the audience by portraying a variety of cultures, lives, and challenges. Since late 1800s, the film has had a great impact on human civilization. According to Kilbourn (2013), film is an effective tool for communicating ideas and influencing people's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Cinema also plays an important role in recognizing different cultures across the globe and protecting historical moments and customs (Barthel, 1996, 2001). As individuals visit historical locations impacted by movie portrayals, it also strengthens their connection to the past. Pascalis (2016) emphasized the influence of cinema on the formation of collective memories and historical narratives. Trotter (2020) highlighted its impact on the political and cultural spheres.

Films have a great impact on national and international levels. For example, the globalization of Bollywood expands to international cultural politics (Khan, 2011). A study conducted by Pramari (2022) suggests that the impactful delivery of the messages conveyed through a film plays an important role. Furthermore, Gennari (2018) highlighted how oral history and cinema might enhance the enjoyment of the past. Steward (2014) talked about how national cinema cultures depend on television and film. Sengupta (2020) investigated how minorities are portrayed in South Asian films, considering social and historical contexts.

As far as Iranian cinema is concerned, it is rightly said that Iranian films have the essence of reflecting its society through the camera lens showing great stories. Iranian films are famous for the depth of their stories and cinematic brilliance. Regarding Aboutalebi (2023), Iranian films have become internationally recognized due to their reputation for artistic depth. According to Kazemi (2018), the Iranian New Wave and New Iranian Cinema have had an impact both before and after the Islamic Revolution. Aqababae and Rieck (2023) talked about the difficulties faced by Iranian cinema because of governmental censoring. Nevertheless, as noted by Rahbaran (2016) and Gow (2018), directors such as Farhadi have garnered recognition on a global scale. In 2012, Farhadi's "A Separation" even took home an Academy Award.

Zeiny (2013) emphasized the resilience of Iranian filmmaking, which produces about 100 films a year despite obstacles. Partovi (2014) and Han (2022) have examined their consequences both domestically and globally. Mohammadi (2003) examined Iranian cinema as a cultural asset. Internationally recognized motion pictures such as "A Separation," "The Salesman," and "Taste of Cherry" showcase Iran's cinematic prowess.

Few studies have been conducted on "A Separation," though; this is especially true when seeking to make connections between family dynamics, class differences, and the judicial system (Çakıcı & Meriç 2023), Nemani & Rasekh (2013), and Zhu (2020). This study attempts to close this gap by examining the movie's critical

examination of these societal issues through analysis. A thorough analysis of a well-known Iranian film, a deeper comprehension of Iranian society and culture, and an examination of how intricate societal issues are reflected in the film all contribute to the field of film studies. Furthermore, some other cinematic works of Iranian Cinema will also be discussed concerning societal issues reflected in them.

Objectives:

1. To look at Asghar Farhadi's "A Separation" film critically and comprehend its social and cultural commentary, especially about family dynamics, class distinctions, and Iran's legal system.
2. To learn how these facets of Iranian society and its underlying messages are portrayed in Iranian cinema, with a particular emphasis on the interactions between family dynamics, socioeconomic differences, and legal issues.
3. To advance the field of film studies by offering a thorough examination of this widely recognized Iranian movie and illuminating its cultural and social significance beyond amusement.
4. To investigate the storyline of the movie's wider significance for understanding cultures, looking at how it acts as a mirror reflecting intricate societal issues. Top of Form

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review presents a thorough review of previous studies on the movie under discussion, portrayal of family, class, and legal issues in Iranian cinema in general and in "A Separation" in particular. This review of literature will help understand these dynamics portrayed in Iranian cinema and "A Separation.

As discussed earlier, there are some studies conducted on the movie "A Separation". Scholars have researched using thematic analysis to explore its impact not only on Iranian cinema but also on International films. The film's strong societal impact was examined by Ahmadgoli and Yazdanjoo (2019), who examined the conflict between Iranian religious beliefs and secular perspectives as well as how it employs a variety of semiotic tools to examine strained interpersonal relationships and class divisions. This research validates previous views regarding the intricate social message delivery in the movie. Rugo (2016) also emphasized the diverse history of Iranian cinema and drew comparisons with classic Hollywood movies to illustrate the emotional nuance and complex narrative structures of Farhadi's post-revolutionary Iranian films (Rugo, 2016). This realization strengthens the earlier assessments of the film's conceptual depth, especially about the narrative device. Furthermore, the movie Bye (2016) portrayed the sublime intricacy of interpersonal connections in Tehran as depicted in "A Separation," suggesting viewers not accept moments at face value and recognize the challenges both internal and external to the characters. This study improves the understanding of the film's analysis of social dynamics. When considered collectively, these studies aid in our understanding of

“A Separation,” illuminating its complex themes of societal discourses, complex narratives, and the study of interpersonal relationships. This gives us a deeper understanding of Farhadi’s cinematic style and the complexities of his subjects. The research demonstrates how popular movies are with both moviegoers and moviegoers themselves.

Portrayal of Family dynamics in Iranian cinema

For many years, Iranian cinema has reflected the sociocultural growth of Iran through a multifaceted portrayal of family dynamics in cinema. The Iranian new-wave film, which started in 1964, examines subtle themes of loneliness, family dynamics, and identity issues, making symbolism a criticism of the modern world (Z. Irannejad & F. Shahrodi, 2015). For example, A. Fatehrad (2015) says that some early Iranian films from the 1930s including “Haji Agha, the Cinema Actor” (1933), portrayed the family as a crucial component of the religious boundaries that separated men and women. This trend carried on the depiction of intricate family dynamics by highlighting the challenges that adults experienced and how those challenges impacted the next generation. Moreover, Western films have had a detrimental effect on contemporary Iranian and Russian cinema, which generally depicts the breakdown of the traditional family (M. Kosinova & T. Solgi, 2022). Iranian cinema holds that political culture is a reflection of the rise, fall, and resurgence of authoritarian control; the revolution in Iran is viewed as only another recurrent cog in this machine that influences the dynamics and structures of families (Farhi, 2001). Contemporary Iranian cinema critiques gender hierarchies and patriarchal ideas while presenting women in vulnerable roles within the family structure (Rad, 2016). Films centered on cultural paradoxes and family issues in urban living, such as those directed by Asghar Farhadi, are known for their intricate narrative patterns and complicated emotional dynamics (Daniele Rugo, 2016).

The Islamic Revolution led to an evolution in Iranian cinema, with a focus on filmic poetry and rural poverty as a reflection of changing societal structures and family dynamics (Johannes Bockwoldt, 2007). Prior to the revolution, Iranian cinema focused on the everyday lives of Iranian families and incorporated foreign elements into nationally conscious films that addressed social and political issues (Golbarg Rekabtalaei, 2015).

Top sum up, family dynamics are examined in Iranian cinema in a subtle manner that shows the political, social, and historical dynamics that have occurred in Iran. Iranian films, from the early portrayals of religious and social norms and customs to the contemporary criticism of patriarchal institutions and the exploration of the complexities of urban life, have consistently offered insights into the evolving notion of family within the Iranian socio-cultural environment.

Portrayal of Class in Iranian Cinema

Iranian film shows class subtly and dynamically capturing the country’s political and socioeconomic changes. This cinematic legacy has used aspects such as colonialism, class, racism, gender, and the complexity of the social setting to depict

the different socioeconomic levels (Chuyi Han, 2022). For example, the post-revolutionary era of Iranian film, frequently depicts scenes of vivid rural poverty, emphasizing the stark differences and contrasts that exist throughout Iranian society (Johannes Bockwoldt, 2007). On the other hand, pre-revolutionary Iran's cosmopolitan alter-cinema combined foreign cinematic elements with socially and politically conscious films, frequently emphasizing everyday and vernacular aspects of life, such as class dynamics (Golbarg Rekabtalaei, 2015). Before the Islamic revolution, popular Iranian cinema was criticized for being viewed as superficial and derivative, allegedly catering exclusively to the lower classes and less educated people (P. Partovi, 2012). This viewpoint reveals a clear class divide in Iranian audiences' perceptions and comprehension of movies. Italian Neorealism and the French New Wave impacted New Iranian film's formal and narrative techniques have been replaced by a more inclusive and diversified style in contemporary Iranian film (Farshid Kazemi, 2018). Among the movies that show a more deliberate recognition of class disparities in addition to gender, ethnicity, and religion are "Mum's Guests" (Shahab Esfandiary, 2011). Several political and social issues, such as the Islamic Revolution and official backing or restriction, have shaped the evolution of the Iranian film industry and how the class is portrayed in movies (Reza et al. Shirvani, 2008). Cinema has always served as a platform for social commentary and introspection on how society is evolving, particularly about class divisions and the effects of fast industrialization and globalization.

In summary, the representation of class in Iranian society has been a recurring theme in Iranian cinema. Iranian cinema has depicted the nation's changing class dynamics since its inception under the Shah era. The films frequently challenge the status quo and provide a critical prism through which to examine socioeconomic shifts and distinctions.

Portrayal of Legal Issues in Iranian Cinema

The portrayal of legal issues in Iranian cinema offers a rich fabric of narratives reflecting the complexities of Iran's legal system and societal norms. Beyond the films of Asghar Farhadi, like "A Separation" and "The Salesman," which provide nuanced portrayals of divorce, custody battles, and legal dilemmas, other films and directors contribute significantly to this narrative. For example, Jafar Panahi's movies "The Circle" and "Offside" depict legal and social restrictions, especially related to women's rights and gender-based challenges and limitations, providing a critical perspective on what society expects and Iran's judicial system (Ehsan et al., 2022). Iranian film frequently portrays the banal operations of the legal system, where conflicting legality and legal notions collide in the quest for justice (R. et al., 2018). This reveals the dynamic interplay between society standards and legal laws and is obvious in films that portray love and relationships within the tension between legal and erotic discourses (S. Haeri, 2009). In addition, Dariush Mehrjui's adaptation of Ibsen's "A Doll's House" for the Iranian film emphasizes women's social rights claims and security, using historical and cultural adjustments to address pertinent legal issues for Iranian society (N. Grigoreva, 2020). Iranian cinema benefited from the Islamic Revolution by producing films that offer distinct viewpoints on legal and social concerns while eschewing Hollywood influence

(Johannes Bockwoldt, 2007).

Iranian Women Unveiled challenges dominant portrayals of women in cinema by focusing on themes like women's bodies, voices, and sexuality, often intersecting with legal issues (Pune Parsafar, 2022). Additionally, films during the Globalizing Era (1984-2010) focused on the Islamic Revolution and post-revolution society, with a strong presence of women in cinema, contributing to the narrative on laws affecting women's rights (H. Naficy, 2012).

In summary, Iranian cinema profoundly displays legal issues beyond only depicting the legal system's workings. It explores Iran's social and political fabric, addressing gender hierarchies, societal norms, and the individual's struggle for justice. Through the prism of these movies, academics and viewers can gain a deeper understanding of how Iranian law, culture, and cinematic expression interact.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Family Dynamics in the movie “A Separation.”

The film “A Separation” by Asghar Farhadi deeply investigates the cultural and societal factors that intricately influence family dynamics in modern-day Iran. It profoundly affects the tension between traditional values and contemporary goals, characterized by Simin's desire to move abroad for her daughter's better prospects, conflicting with Nader's dedication to traditional family responsibilities (Ahmadgoli & Yazdanjoo, 2019). This contradiction reflects a larger social conflict in Iran, as people attempt to strike a balance between upholding tradition and advancing modernity and progress (Sehat & Jahantigh, 2018). Additionally, the movie emphasizes how important socioeconomic status is in family dynamics, with Razieh's recruiting a caregiver with less money to work with by Nader's middle-class family highlighting differences in class and their associated struggles. Family connections in Iranian society are greatly influenced by gender norms and expectations. Simin faces traditional female roles in her quest for independence and improved possibilities, while Nader represents the traditional masculine role that is weighed down by family obligations (Rich, 2021; Ghaffari, 2020). The movie explores the nuances of these positions, illuminating the difficulties of living in a culture where gender norms are still deeply ingrained. Furthermore, it highlights how Iran's judicial and legal system affects family life, portraying how interactions with the legal system represent cultural standards and ideals that are upheld by the law. (Han, 2022). The movie's exploration of moral dilemmas rooted in religious and cultural values reveals the characters' internal struggle between personal desires and the need to adhere to societal and religious norms.

With the backdrop of modern Iranian culture in mind, “A Separation” subtly examines the influence of undercurrents of politics and society in family life, with the characters' stressors, reflecting the wider political and socioeconomic milieu in Iran, such as the wish to leave the country, the difficulties of providing care, and class conflicts. (Partovi, 2009).

The following are some examples of dialogues, each with a commentary, from different scenes of the movie “A Separation” that show family dynamics.

The divorce scene at the Court: This scene demonstrates the opposing goals of Simin, who wants to leave Iran to give her daughter a better future, and Nader, who is unable to leave because of his father’s Alzheimer’s disease. Their exchanges in court reveal the conflict and the effort to strike a balance between one’s own needs and those of the family.

Simin to the Judge: “Your honor ask him why he won’t why he doesn’t want to come?” (Nader is not happy to leave Iran)

Nader to Simin: “I’ll give you a thousand. The first one is I can’t leave my father.” (Giving priority to his parent)

Simin to Nader: “But you can leave your wife?” (depicting the conflict between personal and familial obligations)

Talks at Home: Scenes at Nader’s house show the stress on family ties, particularly through conversations involving Nader, Simin, and their daughter Termeh. These talks demonstrate the anguish and effects of the couple’s separation on Termeh.

Nader to Simin: “You brought me here! You filed for a divorce! When did I leave you?!” (Nader’s anger and frustration over Simin’s take to leave him and file for divorce)

Simin to Nader: “Your honor his excuse is his father’s illness... His father has Alzheimer’s. He doesn’t even know that his son is around.” (Simin challenging Nader’s reasons for not allowing her and Termeh to leave Iran)

Mr. Morteza, his father: Nader’s at-home caregiving for his aging father suffering from Alzheimer’s disease exemplifies his commitment to his family and the significant caregiving load that influences the family’s choices and interactions.

Nader: “But I know that he is my dad.” (Nader’s emotional love for his father although his father has Alzheimer’s)

Simin: “It makes no difference to him whether it is you that is with him or a stranger. He doesn’t even know that you are his son.” (Simin’s selfish view on Mr. Morteza’s health condition)

Class Divide Representation in the Movie “A Separation”

Farhadi’s Iranian film “A Separation” investigates the differences between the conservative working class and the contemporary middle class in Iran (Counter Currents, 2019). The narrative focuses on the divorce of Simin and Nader, a middle-class Iranian couple, where Simin aspires for a better life abroad for her daughter and differs from Nader’s commitment to remain in Iran for his father, Mr. Morteza who has Alzheimer’s (Milestones, 2017). The film starts with a scene of Nader and Simin debating in front of a magistrate who denies Simin’s appeal for divorce due to Nader’s conflict and inadequate justification. The plot further develops when

Nader hires Razieh, from a middle-class family, to care for his father, leading to an incident that involves the two families in a court battle, showcasing societal disparities (Not Even Past, 2012; Cinemablography, 2023). The movie depicts the differences in Iranian society, exemplified by the two female leads: Razieh depicts old, religious Iran, whereas Simin represents modern, secular Iran (The Atlantic, 2012). The film also addresses the issue of access to justice, underscoring the impact of financial eligibility and legal coverage differences on this access, seen through the families' legal battle.

The following are some examples of dialogues, each with a commentary, from different scenes of the movie "A Separation" that depict class divide and economic disparities.

Scene of Razieh, the caregiver lady: The dialogue between Nader and Razieh when she is given a job to take care of Nader's father, Mr. Morteza shows a class divide. Razieh, takes the job although she thinks it's a job for a male worker. This shows economic disparity. The talks over salary fixation, Razieh's unwillingness to let her husband know she's having the job, and the labor both mentally and physically involved in caregiving depict the class troubles so vividly in the movie.

Razieh: "Excuse me... what's the pay per month?"

Nader: "300000."

Razieh: "300000 is a little... it's too little."

Nader: "No that's the rate. Ask around."

Razieh: "The commute is far. Several bus lines."

Nader: "It's all I can afford. So..."

Razieh's Vulnerability: Razieh's ethical and religious problem about nursing Nader's father, who is vulnerable because of his disease, shows her vulnerability and the challenges she faces due to her financial circumstances. Her worry that what she did would be seen as a sin highlights the relationship between personal dignity, religion, and class.

Razieh: "It's not right for me to clean him. Please pay me for today so I can go."

Nader: "Could you at least come tomorrow so that I have a chance to find someone else? I have to place an ad in the paper."

Razieh: "There are companies you can call for a male helper."

Nader: "I can't just let anyone into my home."

Legal Debate in the movie A Separation

Farhadi's film "A Separation" describes the Iranian legal system in detail, focusing on its bureaucracy and complexity. It showcases the extensive and complex legal procedures, such as court hearings and submission of documents, which replicate the difficulties in navigating the system in real life. (Roming, 2012; Mahdavifar, 2019). The film also highlights disparities in legal resource access, showing characters like Nader and Simin affording legal representation, contrasting with Razieh and

Hodjat's struggles to navigate the system independently, reflecting real-world inequalities in legal representation in Iran (Zhu, 2020; Becker, n.d.). Additionally, the film portrays how cultural and religious norms influence legal decisions, with the judge's considerations of religious teachings and societal expectations demonstrating the intersection of law and culture in Iran (Zhu, 2020; Atlantis Press, 2020). The depictions of overcrowded courtrooms and overburdened judges further mirror the institutional challenges within the Iranian legal system, including case backlogs and resource limitations (Roming, 2012; MahdaviFar, 2019). The movie explores moral conundrums that characters encounter in a legal setting, highlighting the moral and ethical issues that are frequently entwined with legal issues in Iran. For example, Simin's demand for divorce from Nader shows the ethical challenges faced by many Iranian women balancing traditional family values and personal aspirations (MahdaviFar, 2019; Becker, 2011). Characters like Razieh and Nader confront dilemmas involving honesty and deception, depicting Iranian society's complex relationship between legal and moral responsibility (Roming, 2012; Atlantis Press, 2020). The characters attempt to resolve conflicts through various means, including legal channels and interpersonal dialogue, shedding light on cultural norms and values. This portrayal offers a nuanced understanding of Iran's intersection of law, culture, and ethics (Becker, n.d.; Becker, 2011).

The following are commentaries on scenes "A Separation" that show the legal framework.

At Court Room: The examining magistrate's office and the courthouse hallways serve as the scene's formal legal settings. Due to the large number of cases and the public character of court hearings, the courthouse is bustling and congested.

Charges and Implications: To emphasize the seriousness of the situation and the seriousness with which instances of this kind are handled, the examining magistrate suggests that Nader could face a sentence of one to three years in jail if it is determined that he knew of Razieh's pregnancy. The appraisal of the fetus as a "complete human adult" and the reference to manslaughter highlight the legal definitions and ramifications involved.

A Cinematic Analysis of Asghar Farhadi's 'A Separation'

Asghar Farhadi's 'A Separation' is itself out by its nuanced and realistic depiction of moral behavior and emphasis on strong narrative above ostentatious filmmaking (Burke, 2011). The cinematography by Mahmoud Kalari improves this through sensitive and dynamic methods, using handheld cameras for movement and voyeuristic images taken through doors (Kochai, 2017; HonarPisheh, 2012). Through close-up shots, Farhadi isolates characters at pivotal periods in his work. (Farhadi, 2011). The editing, mirroring Hitchcock's style, subtly emphasizes the film's themes (Burke, 2011). Farhadi's directing shifts viewpoints, skillfully changing audience allegiances, with techniques like the opening continuous shot placing viewers in a judge's perspective (HonarPisheh, 2012). The screenplay, also by Farhadi, offers a contemplative and detailed narrative, alternating between first-person and third-person narrators (Kochai, 2017). In conclusion, 'A Separation'

excels technically and thematically, drawing from Iranian New Wave techniques to visually explore human morality and social class (Farhadi, 2011).

Broader Implications of the Film’s Narrative for Cross-cultural Understanding

The film “A Separation” mirrors complex societal issues by providing a platform for understanding cross-cultural management, cultural competence, and broader societal concerns. Movies, including “A Separation,” have been recognized as practical tools for teaching cross-cultural management and enhancing cultural competence. They provide visual stimuli that force viewers to see situations from multiple angles, thereby developing multiple perspectives on cross-cultural issues. Furthermore, the impact of online word-of-mouth communication about movies has been found to have implications for cross-cultural settings, providing strategic direction for communication management in such contexts. Additionally, the portrayal of cultural elements in movies has been studied extensively, focusing on understanding the representation of different cultures and their implications for cross-cultural communication. The correlation between movies and viewers’ cultural competence has been proven, suggesting that movies can contribute to cross-cultural respect and understanding. Moreover, using popular movies in teaching has been recognized to understand the trade-offs between personal privacy concerns and other societal concerns arising from new technologies. In conclusion, “A Separation” mirrors complex societal issues by providing a platform for understanding cross-cultural management, cultural competence, and broader societal concerns.

Analysis and Interpretation

The film masterfully intertwines the themes of family dynamics, class distinctions, and the legal system, offering a comprehensive and interconnected depiction of Iranian society. The narrative intricately links family dynamics and class divide, as seen in Simin’s determination to leave the country for her daughter’s better future. This struggle between personal aspirations and familial responsibilities mirrors the broader struggle of middle-class Iranians navigating traditional family values. The legal system becomes a critical point where family conflicts and class disparities are exposed. The custody battle between Nader and Simin serves as a microcosm of broader societal tensions, illuminating how the legal system can exacerbate and attempt to resolve familial disputes while reflecting the economic and social inequalities between the parties involved. The film also delves into ethical dilemmas deeply embedded within the Iranian legal framework, with Nader’s decisions and Razieh’s actions rooted in moral considerations that intersect with legal principles. Thus, the movie raises profound questions about the moral and ethical dimensions of legal processes, adding layers of complexity to its narrative

Social and Cultural Commentary

“A Separation” provides a profound exploration of the intricate layers of Iranian society, offering a deep examination of daily life, relationships, and the interplay between tradition and modernity. It skillfully portrays a society where deeply

ingrained cultural and religious values coexist with evolving aspirations and desires, creating a complex tapestry of human experiences. Notably, the film challenges traditional gender roles by depicting resilient female characters like Simin and Razieh, who embody women's shifting roles and aspirations in Iranian society. The film also serves as a poignant commentary on class disparities, highlighting the stark economic inequalities in Iran and the profound impact of economic privilege on access to justice, education, and overall quality of life. Through the characters' ethical quandaries and moral dilemmas, "A Separation" transcends cultural boundaries, inviting viewers to reflect on universal questions of morality, responsibility, and the consequences of one's actions. The portrayal of the legal system and courtroom proceedings underscores the complexities of the Iranian legal system, demonstrating how cultural and religious factors can influence justice and how access to legal recourse can be influenced by socioeconomic status. The film's multifaceted exploration of these themes provides a rich and thought-provoking perspective on Iranian society and the human condition.

CONCLUSION

This analysis of "A Separation" shows its social and cultural commentary, illuminating the relationships between families, the divide between classes, and the legal system in modern Iran. The film's A complex depiction of family interactions highlights generational differences, marital discord, and caregiving challenges within a middle-class Iranian family, shedding light on how Iranian families have changed throughout time. The film is also lauded for its realistic depiction of social stratification, highlighting the interactions between individuals from various socioeconomic groups and exploring topics related to privilege, power, and economic inequality. The film's exploration of the Iranian legal system provides valuable insights into the legal and moral dilemmas ordinary Iranians face, using the courtroom as a platform to navigate ethical quandaries and social justice matters. This portrayal reflects the multifaceted nature of the legal system in Iran, encompassing religious, gender, and societal influences. In examining cultural and societal factors, the film captures the tension between traditional values and modern aspirations, highlighting the impact of socioeconomic status, gender roles, and the legal system on family relationships in Iran."A Separation" is a significant cultural artifact in contemporary Iranian cinema, offering a profound and nuanced portrayal of Iranian society that resonates both nationally and internationally. Its cultural insight provides a unique window into the intricacies of modern Iranian life, transcending cultural barriers and allowing viewers worldwide to engage with the authentic portrayal of Iranian culture. The film's artistic excellence exemplifies the high caliber of filmmaking emerging from Iran, earning critical acclaim and broadening the international audience for Iranian cinema.

Furthermore, it is a powerful tool for social commentary, delving into complex issues of class, gender, and morality within the Iranian context, prompting viewers to reflect on these themes. Despite its specific cultural setting, "A Separation" addresses universal themes such as family dynamics, ethical dilemmas, and the pursuit of justice, making it globally significant. Its influence on Iranian cinema is undeniable, inspiring filmmakers to explore complex social issues and reach a

broader global audience. Finally, its educational value cannot be overstated, as it provides a realistic portrayal of contemporary Iranian society and is a valuable resource for academic analysis and discussion in fields such as film studies, Middle Eastern studies, and cultural studies.

While the film adeptly explores themes of family dynamics, class conflict, and the intricacies of the legal system, further research could benefit from a more expansive comparison with other works in Iranian cinema and a deeper examination of its artistic elements. Additionally, incorporating diverse critical perspectives, especially from Iranian scholars, would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the film's cultural significance and reception. Future studies should consider these aspects to fully appreciate the film's contribution to Iranian and global cinema.

REFERENCES

- Aboutalebi, S. (2023, September 11). Iranian Cinema's Global Ascent: The Double-Edged Sword of International Acclaim. *Culture*. Retrieved from <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/488944/Iranian-cinema-s-global-ascent-the-double-edged-sword-of-international>
- Ahmadgoli, K., & Yazdanjoo, M. (2019). Multimodal Representation of Social Discourses in Asghar Farhadi's *A Separation*: A Social Semiotic Study. *Social Semiotics*, 30(5), 699-714.
- Aqababae, E., & Razaghi, M. (2022). Islamic Fundamentalism and Gender: The Portrayal of Women in Iranian Movies. *Critical Research on Religion*, 10(3), 249-266.
- Aqababae, E., & Rieck, K. (2023). The Representation of Social Classes in Iranian Cinema During the Reformist Era, 2001–2005. *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, 10(2), 106-125. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23477989231162255>
- Barthel, D. (1996). Getting in Touch with History: The Role of Historic Preservation in Shaping Collective Memories. *Qualitative Sociology*, 19(3), 345-364. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02393276>
- Barthel-Bouchier, D. (2001). Authenticity and Identity. *International Sociology*, 16(2), 221-239. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580901016002006>
- Becker, B. (2011). Rediscovering Morality Through Ashgar Farhadi's *A Separation*. *Senses of Cinema*. Retrieved from <https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2011/feature-articles/rediscovering-morality-through-ashgar-farhadi%E2%80%99s-a-separation/>
- Becker, B. (n.d.). *A Separation*: Exploring Class, Marriage, and Morality Through Iranian Culture. Retrieved from <http://www.cinemablogography.org/a-separation.html>

- Çakıcı, Z., & Meriç, E. (2023). Color, Class, and Gender: The Social Construction of Women and Beyond in Asghar Farhadi Cinema. *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Elektronik Dergisi*, 11(1), 591-621.
- Çakıcı, Z., & Meriç, E. (2023). Color, Class, and Gender: The Social Construction of Women and Beyond in Asghar Farhadi Cinema. *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Elektronik Dergisi*, 11(1), 591-621. <https://doi.org/10.19145/e-gifder.1190696>
- Counter Currents. (2019). Visual Politics of Iranian Cinema: Social Class in Asghar Farhadi's 'A Separation.' Retrieved from <https://countercurrents.org/2019/01/visual-politics-of-iranian-cinema-social-class-in-asghar-farhadis-a-separation/>
- Emami, A., Bakhshayesh, E. F., & Rexhepi, G. (2021). Iranian Communities E-business Challenges and Value Proposition Design. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, 17(2), 479-497. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jec-09-2021-0141>
- Farhadi, A. (2011). A Separation [Film].
- Farhadi, A. (2011). A Separation [Screenplay].
- Farhadi, A. (Director). (2011). A Separation [Film]. Sony Pictures Classics.
- Gennari, D. (2018). Understanding the Cinemagoing Experience in Cultural Life. *TMG Journal for Media History*, 21(1), 39. <https://doi.org/10.18146/2213-7653.2018.337>
- Ghaffari, R. (2020). Beyond Martyrs and Mullahs: Transformations of Gender Roles and Identities Among Tehran Middle-Class Men. *The Middle East and North Africa Space Online Journal*, 3.
- Ghaffari, S. (2020). Gender in Iranian Cinema. *The International Encyclopedia of Gender, Media, and Communication*, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119429128.iegmc153>
- Gow, C. (2016). Real Men: Representations of Masculinity in Iranian Cinema. *Asian Cinema*, 27(2), 165-176. https://doi.org/10.1386/ac.27.2.165_1
- Gow, W. (2018). *Performing Chinatown: Hollywood Cinema, Tourism, and the Making of a Los Angeles Community, 1882–1943*. University of California, Berkeley.
- Han, C. (2022). Documentary Aesthetics and International Communication of Iranian Films from the Perspective of the Third Cinema. *BCP Social Sciences & Humanities*, 18, 337-343. <https://doi.org/10.54691/bcpssh.v18i.1131>
- Hashemipour, S. (2022). Intertextuality in Asghar Farhadi's *The Salesman*. *Sinemada Yeni*. <https://doi.org/10.32955/neuilamer2022-03-0214/ch12>

Honarpisheh, D. (2012). A Separation Review. Tribes.org.

K S, G. (2019, August 1). Visual Politics of Iranian Cinema: Social Class in Asghar Farhadi's 'A Separation.' CounterCurrents. Retrieved from <https://countercurrents.org/2019/01/visual-politics-of-iranian-cinema-social-class-in-asghar-farhadis-a-separation/>

Khamsy, N. (2021). Masculinities in Banietemad's Tales: Reshuffling Gender Dynamics Under Socio-Economic Pressures. In *Gender in the Iranian New Wave: Literary and Cinematic Representations* (pp. 159-172). <https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9781474477611.003.0010>

AKhan, S. (2011). Recovering the Past in Jodhaa Akbar: Masculinities, Femininities, and Cultural Politics in Bombay Cinema. *Feminist Review*, 99(1), 131-146. <https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.2010.30>

Kilbourn, R. (2013). Camera Arriving at the Station: Cinematic Memory as Cultural Memory. *Societies*, 3(3), 316-331. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc3030316>

Kochai, J. (2017). Asghar Farhadi, A Separation. Milestones.

Mahdavifar, M. (2019). Iranian Cinema in Transition: Relative Truth and Morality in Asghar Farhadi's Films. Chapman University Digital Commons. Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=film_studies_theses

Milestones (2017). Asghar Farhadi, A Separation.

Mohammadi, A. (2003). Iran and Modern Media in the Age of Globalization. In *Iran Encountering Globalization* (pp. 24-46). Routledge.

Nemani, F., & Rasekh, A. E. (2013). An Investigation of the Constraints in Subtitling the Conversations: On the Role of Cultural Effects on Variation. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 3(2), 97.

Not Even Past (2012). Film Review - A Separation (2011).

Partovi, P. (2009). Girls' Dormitory: Women's Islam and Iranian Horror. *Visual Anthropology Review*, 25(2), 186-207. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-7458.2009.01041.x>

Partovi, P. (2014). Shahab Esfandiary, Iranian Cinema and Globalization: National, Transnational, and Islamic Dimensions (Bristol, U.K.: Intellect Ltd., 2012). pp. 252. \$40.00 paper.

Pascalis, I. (2016). The (In)visibility of Violence: Jasmila Žbanić's Post-war Cinema. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 23(4), 365-380. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506816666313>

- Poudeh, R., & Shirvani, M. (2008). Issues and Paradoxes in the Development of Iranian National Cinema: An Overview. *Iranian Studies*, 41(3), 323-341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210860801981294>
- Rahbaran, S. (2016). Iranian Cinema Uncensored. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780755609185>
- Rich, B. (2021). *Telluride and After*. *Film Quarterly*, 75(2), 102-108. <https://doi.org/10.1525/fq.2021.75.2.102>
- Rich, B. R. (2021). *Telluride and After: The Revival of Sensation*. *Film Quarterly*, 75(2), 102-108.
- Roming, R. (2012). *Blood Money: Crime and Punishment in A Separation*. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/blood-money-crime-and-punishment-in-a-separation>
- Sarkar, S., & Parmar, U. (2022). A Study on the Usage of Camera Techniques for Communication in Cinema (with Special Reference to Mrinal Sen's *Bhuvan Shome*). *Shodhkosh Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v3.i2.2022.217>
- Sehat, M., & Jahantigh, H. (2018). Law of the Director: Questioning the Unquestioned in Asghar Farhadi's Movies *The Beautiful City*, *Fireworks Wednesday*, and *The Salesman*. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 9(4), 111. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.all.v.9n.4p.111>
- Sengupta, R. (2020). Historical Continuities in South Asian Film Narratives: Contemporary Representations of Religious, Ethno-Linguistic, and Sexual Minorities. *Society and Culture in South Asia*, 6(2), 238-272. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2393861720923811>
- Steward, T. (2014). *Wide-Screen Television and Home Movies*. *View Journal of European Television History and Culture*, 3(6), 58. <https://doi.org/10.18146/2213-0969.2014.jethc070>
- The Atlantic (2012). Azar Nafisi and Robin Wright Discuss 'A Separation'.
- Trotter, D. (2020). *Come-Hither Looks: The Hollywood Vamp and the Function of Cinema*. *Critical Quarterly*, 62(2), 37-53. <https://doi.org/10.1111/criq.12556>
- Vahdat, V. (2021). *Architectural Filth and the Heroic Passivism of Farhadi's The Salesman*. *Interiority*, 4(1), 63-78. <https://doi.org/10.7454/in.v4i1.115>
- Vahdat, V. (2021). *Architectural Filth and the Heroic Passivism of Farhadi's The Salesman*. *Interiority*, 4(1), 63-78.

- Zeiny, E. (2013). Powerful Veiled Visions in a Neo-Patriarchal Iranian Cinema: A Study of Tahmineh Milani's Fifth Reaction (2003). *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 8(5), 94-99. <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-0859499>
- Zhu, J. (2020). *The Impact of Religion on Realistic Choices: A Separation*. Atlantis Press. Retrieved from <https://www.atlantis-press.com/article/125941718.pdf>
- Irannejad, Z., & Shahrodi, F. (2015). Critique of Modernity in New Wave Cinema of Iran. *International Journal of Science Culture and Sport*, 4, 372-384.
- Fatehrad, A. (2015). The Moving Image 16, no. 1—Special Issue: Early Cinema and the Archives, 5, 513-521. <https://doi.org/10.17265/2160-6579/2015.10.003>.
- Kosinova, M., & Solgi, T. (2022). Comparative Analysis of Family Values in Iranian and Russian Cinema. *Vestnik Universiteta*. <https://doi.org/10.26425/1816-4277-2022-5-219-226>.
- Farhi, F. (2001). On the Reconfiguration of the Public Sphere and the Changing Political Landscape of Postrevolutionary Iran, 57-74. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-07175-0_4.
- Rad, M. (2016). A Study of Women's Portrayal in Contemporary Iranian Cinema Based on Social Structure. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2, 595-614.
- Bockwolfdt, J. (2007). Revolution or Revelation. *Comparative Technology Transfer and Society*, 35, 33-33. <https://doi.org/10.1525/aft.2007.35.2.33>.
- Rekabtalaei, G. (2015). Cinematic Revolution: Cosmopolitan Alter-Cinema of Pre-Revolutionary Iran. *Iranian Studies*, 48, 567-589. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2014.895539>.
- Han, C. (2022). Documentary Aesthetics and International Communication of Iranian Films from the Perspective of the Third Cinema. *BCP Social Sciences & Humanities*. <https://doi.org/10.54691/bcpssh.v18i.1131>.
- Review Essay: Reconsidering Popular Iranian Cinema and its Audiences: Digargūnī-i Ijtimā'ī va Fīlmhā-yi Sīnamāyī dar Īrān: Jāmi'ah-shināsī-i Fīlmhā-yi 'āmmah-pasand-i Īrānī (1309–1357)
- Kazemi, F. (2018). Iranian Cinema. *Cinema and Media Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780199791286-0293>.
- Esfandiary, S. (2011). Mehrjui's Social Comedy and the Representation of the Nation in the Age of Globalization. *Iranian Studies*, 44, 341-358. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2011.556385>.
- Poudeh, R., & Shirvani, M. (2008). Issues and Paradoxes in the Development of Iranian National Cinema: An Overview. *Iranian Studies*, 41, 323-341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2008.10555555>

doi.org/10.1080/00210860801981294.

Aqababae, E., & Razaghi, M. (2022). Islamic Fundamentalism and Gender: The Portrayal of Women in Iranian Movies. *Critical Research on Religion*, 10, 249-266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20503032221124551>.

Banakar, R., & Ziaee, K. (2018). The Life of the Law in the Islamic Republic of Iran. *Iranian Studies*, 51, 717-746. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2018.1467266>.

Haeri, S. (2009). Sacred Canopy: Love and Sex under the Veil. *Iranian Studies*, 42, 113-126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210860802593965>.