



T.C.

YEDITEPE UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

POLITICAL CINEMA IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES AND WOMEN

by

Selma SONGÜR

Submitted to the Graduate Institute of Social Sciences

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Communication

ISTANBUL 2011



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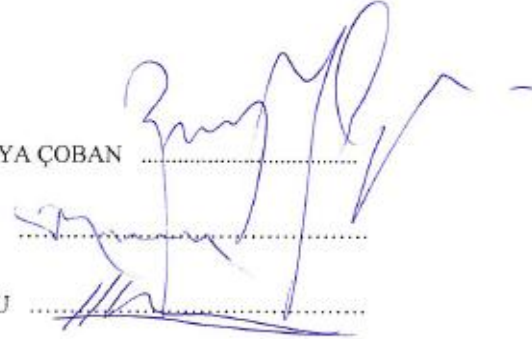
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This dissertation is dedicated to my mother who always supported me on my education and gave me a chance to be myself...

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ABSTRACT

Mass media tools use representations to enunciate certain patterns of thoughts, feelings and ideological constitutions. Cinema is one of the major means reflecting cultural, social and political issues by visual and audio aspirations. This study seeks political cinema conventions that are established on the enunciation of social and political realities while opposing dominant/mainstream filmmaking modes. This thesis also involves the influences of domination of mainstream cinema in relation to aesthetics, narrations and techniques on other forms of filmmaking including Political Middle Eastern Cinema in the category of Third World Cinema. This research is based on research of Iranian Cinema with its specific features in relation to gender construction. This thesis includes the representation of Iranian women who are restricted by political and social repressions after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 under the heading of Political Cinema in the Middle East and Women. There are numerous Iranian directors who have contributed to filmmaking with productions raising the issues of gender. This research analyses two films of Iranian filmmaker Tahmineh Milani. The findings permit a discourse analysis on *Two Women/Do Zan* (1998) and *Unwanted Woman/Zane Ziyadi* (2005), which reveal the way gender relations and gender hierarchy are reproduced under the repressions of society and the Islamic regime. The most important consequence of this study is that women and the representation of women are constrained with social and ideological implements for the sake of the maintenance of social order. The analyses of the films primarily prove that continuous repressions, the oscillations between modernity and tradition, patriarchal and religious values shape gender identities and women. Through this study, it is aimed to highlight the representation of the women identity shaped by their struggles against ideological, political and social implementations in the post revolutionary period.

ÖZET

Kitle iletişim araçları bir takım düşünce, değer ve ideolojik yapılanmayı aktarmak için temsil biçimleri kullanır. Sinema bu araçların içinde göresel ve işitsel işlevi ile kültürel, sosyal ve politik konuları aktarmada kullanılan yaygın araçlardan biridir. Bu çalışma, politik sinemanın yapılanmasında yararlandığı sosyal ve politik gerçekleri aktarma biçimlerini ele alırken, yaygın sinemaya olan karşıtlığını da ortaya çıkarmayı hedefler. Ayrıca bu araştırma, yaygın sinemanın estetik, anlatım biçimi ve kullandığı tekniklerin Üçüncü Dünya Sineması kategorisinde olan Ortadoğu Sineması'nı etkileme biçimlerini de içerir. Bu araştırma, İran Sinema'sında yansıtılan toplumsal cinsiyetin yapılanması üzerine dayalı kalmıştır. Bu tez, İran 1979 İslam Devrimi'nden sonra politik ve sosyal açılardan kısıtlanmış İran kadınlarının temsil edilme biçimlerini Ortadoğu'da Politik Sinema ve Kadın başlığı altında inceler. Toplumsal cinsiyet konusunu ele alan hatırı sayılır derecede İranlı yönetmen bulunmaktadır. Bu araştırma, İranlı kadın yönetmen Tahmineh Milani'nin iki filmi üzerinden şekillenmiştir. Yapılan araştırmada, İslam ile uygulanan rejim etkisi altında biçimlenen ve toplumsal cinsiyet ilişki ve hiyerarşisini açığa çıkaran İki Kadın/Do Zan (1998) ve İstenmeyen Kadın (2005) filmleri, içerik analizi uygulanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın en önemli sonucu, İranlı kadınların ve dolayısıyla onların temsil biçimlerinin, sosyal düzenin yürütülmesi adına ideolojik ve sosyal yaptırımlarla sınırlanmış olduğunu göstermesidir. Film analizleri, süregelen baskıların, geleneksellik ve modernlik arasındaki döngünün, patriyarkal ve dini değerlerin kimlikleri şekillendirdiğini açığa çıkarmaktadır. Bu çalışma ile, 1979 devrimi sonrasında, ideolojik, politik ve sosyal düzenlemelere karşı mücadele ile şekillenen kadın kimlikleri temsil biçimlerinin incelenmesi hedeflenmiştir.

1. INTRODUCTION

The 20th century brought a wide range of technological developments along with political and social changes. The development of technology introduced new mass communication tools that could have an influence on people in a short time. Despite the fact that the contribution of mass media tools to globalism cannot be ignored, it is certain that they were used as weapons to shape societies during political upheavals.

Cinema, one of the means of visual media, has undeniably generated an effective capacity and possibility to be reached all around the world since the late 1900s. The worldwide availability of cinema has accelerated along with the impacts of changing dynamics in the world. It is known that some states and regimes used cinema to legitimize their ideological and manipulative implements. Since cinema mediates the perception of time and space using aestheticism and technology, it uses prolific stands to create representations of which role relies upon transformation imaginary into virtual reality. In other words, cinema creates an illusion, so substantial visual and audio paradigms of cinema offer many choices to impose ideological stands.

It is an undeniable fact that the transformation in visual media technologies has created a wide range of modes of representations around the world. The factors shaping the conventions of visual representations range from political, social and financial opportunities. Hollywood is a protruding dominant cinema industry with its massive production and distribution. As the mobility of cinema brings new modes to cinematic productions, Hollywood filmmaking has inspired other emergence of diverse cinema forms around the world. Mainstream American cinema has been criticized with its modes based on cause-effect narration, linear editing and studio-set aspirations. Thus, there have been attempts to destruct the dominance of mainstream cinema in America and in other parts of the world. National cinemas and industries have also adapted formulas to voice their

political, social, and cultural emancipations through alternative and experimental visualization and narration techniques.

In the late 1960s, revolutionary political currents triggered the advancements in cinema in Latin America. The need for the projection of the political and social unrests enabled to implement realistic approaches to representations and motivated documentary filmmaking. 1968 was the year when the term 'Third Cinema' was coined by Argentinean directors, Fernando Solanas and Octaiva Getione. It has competed mainstream industrial cinema by using artisanal, experimental, flexible and revolutionary elements underpinning political filmmaking. It was named as militant and propaganda cinema in the beginnings of its foundation. Third Cinema opposed standardization in filmic representations and facilitated to reveal divisions and stratifications in social constructions. In other words, Third Cinema is constituted on the shifting dynamics of social struggles and it used raw materials deriving from culture, political and social constructions. Additionally, the term Third Cinema is used for Third World Cinema that is valid for the countries with diverse history, culture and ethnic divisions. Third World Cinema is not confined to certain geographical boundaries. Middle East countries are included in the scope of Third World Filmmaking.

The third part of the thesis takes a brief look at the aspirations in filmmaking, which covers the definitions of representation, ideology and film genre. Dominant/mainstream cinema section includes common narrative and visual modes applied. This part also examines political cinema that emerged as an impact of political and social strives. Mingling the codes of realism and fiction, political filmmaking issues social, cultural, ideological aspirations based on counter, experimental and revolutionary modes. Political art form refuses to be a mere entertainment. Therefore, Third World Filmmaking derives from the concept of political filmmaking.

The last part of this study will attempt to highlight Middle Eastern Filmmaking and its relation to ideology within identity construction. It is evident that Middle East is at the heart of political debates and the ongoing wars and conflicts pervade around the region.

Iran's central location in the Middle East pins its geopolitical importance. In Iran, the social and political upheavals have shaped identities and Westernization has always been a matter of debates in a country ruled by Islamic regime.

This study aims to outline the stands in the representation of Iranian women who are oppressed by the Islamic Regime after the 1979 Revolution under the heading of Political Cinema in Middle Eastern Countries and its relation to the constitution and representation of women. Since cinema provides a visual and narrative context where definitions of gender processed, the evaluation of the analyses are carried out with the depictions of gender relations and diversities. An individual is identified with a gender category by which asserts attained roles for females or males. Since Iran is a theocratic country, religion and ideology have a strong determination on shaping societies. Thus, this study seeks to outline the reproduction of ideology through the Ideological Apparatus of State in the representation of Iranian women. Since censorships are implemented to maintain the ideology of the state, Iranian Cinema is mainly restricted in terms of the depiction of sex, women and religion.

It is known that there is a limited access to Middle Eastern Cinema. Three main reasons underline this limitation. The first one is the dominance of mainstream cinema and the second reason is poor conditions in production, distribution and exhibition process. The final cause is censorship that has led directors to use allegories and symbolism. Concerning Iranian Cinema, the acceleration after the 1979 revolution has yielded to a prolific period which is noticed worldwide. More female directors also began to make films issuing gender, political, social domains in the Contemporary Iranian Cinema period. Film festivals, universities, cinema schools, courses and specific organizations have also contributed to the acknowledgement of Iranian films around the world. Thus, Iranian Cinema has been able to overcome the limitations.

This study promotes a discourse analysis to examine the representation of Iranian women who struggle between tradition and modernity to have equal rights. The analyses cover the evaluation of reproduction of ideological implements and its reflections on

Iranian women in contemporary Iranian Cinema. In this respect, Iranian female filmmaker Tahmineh Milani's *Two Women* (1998) and *Unwanted Woman* (2005) will frame this research with the key elements; construction of gender identity and roles, political and ideological constraints, religion, the polarity of tradition and modernity, and patriarchal reproduction.

2. CINEMA AND PARADIGMS OF FILMMAKING

2.1 Representation

Representations are constituted on illusions or realities depending on films. In other words, some films promote fictional significations while others foster realities in documentary forms or experimental ones attempting mingling both forms. It is important to emphasize the fact that representations embody certain stands, so they shape social life.

Representational codes are used to reflect certain patterns of thoughts, perceptions and behaviors. One of the protruding theorists Stuart Hall's definition is related to the functions of representations. "Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things (1997:15)." Thus, perception of the audience plays an important role since generating meaning is confined to the scenes on the screen and to the experience of audience.

Having said so, it is remarkable to mention that prevalent cultures and their representations influence the construction of identity through narratives and characters in fictions, which impose 'identification'. Identification may create a deception and a conflict with realities. Micheal Ryan and Douglas Kellner relate this construction as, "Cultural representations not only give shape to psychological dispositions, they also play an important role in determining how social reality will be constructed, that is, what figures and boundaries will prevail in the shaping of social life (1990:13)." Filmic representations are among cultural representations and mainstream cinema mostly tends to use 'metaphors' to create new codes which may curtail the ties with realities as Ryan and Kellner sums. The exposures of these codes may bring a standardization to the lives of audience to some extent. Nonetheless, new representations of diversities would help untie these identifications and exposure with diverse representations would raise consciousness on individuals. It is possible to destruct classical conventions of mainstream cinema. In order to do this, cinema can be a tool to untangle the ideological repressions of pervading cultures

by using alternative modes in filmmaking rather than reconstitutions of linear forms with cause and effect relationship ending with a closure. The alternative elements generated are considered revolutionary on the destruction of the habits of audience in terms of perception.

2.1.1 Perception and Representation

Dziga Vertov, Russian Director, has been known as the first filmmaker who brought new approaches to play on perceptions. His theory, *Kino-glaz* (1919) destroyed mainstream cinema codes in many different aspects. While shooting daily life after the revolution, he preferred not to use narrative or fiction. This method is called 'Politics of Perception'. Constance Penley notes that Vertov's experimental shots contribute to the creation of awareness in audience. "Vertov's most important aim was to create a conscious spectator: The conscious alone can fight against magical suggestions of every kind. Vertov's editing makes impossible the passive, cathartic, emotionally manipulated mode which is normal in the popular cinema culture (1990:7)." Audience sees the camera, the projector, and the screen in the scenes of Vertov's 'The Man with a Movie Camera' (1929, Silent Documentary Film) with no actors/actresses and narration. The representations used in the movie always attempt audience to remember the fact that they are watching a movie. Malcolm Le Grice describes Vertov's target: "To give the spectator an affirmation of his own reality. Thus this strategy, seen as entirely counteractive to the mode of popular cinema, represents 'the most advanced and radical state of cinematic language and convention (quoted in Penley, 1990:8)." Vertov's initiative has arisen an awareness in respect to ideological implements through representations. His attempts on uncovering ideological operations and reconstitution of stereotyping modes reveal the need for the investigation of hegemony and its effects on cinema as a cultural production.

Meanwhile, in Germany, the Nazis' political parties influence shaped Soviet films to a great extent. Piel Jutzi's *Mutter Krauzen Fahrt ins Gluck* (1929), revealing a tragic life story of a poor family, represents the results of unemployment in the Depression and Slatan Dudow's *Kuhle Wampe* (1932) of which script was written by Brecht (the leftist playwright

who invented the 'epic theatre'). "[E]xplores unemployment, abortion, the situation of women and other issues in a series of episodes from the life of a single family (Bordwell and Thompson, 2003a:305)." The influence of Brecht, who saw art as inevitably political, awakened many filmmakers for a long time. David Bordwell and Kriston Thompson point out that "His ideas energized a generation of political modernist filmmakers who sought to break the 'illusion of reality' that classical fiction films created for the spectator (2003a:562)." There are also other directors from different parts of the world with experimental ideas in cinema.

Jean-Luc Godard, considered as one of the leading French New Wave filmmakers, has had an initiative role in expressing his ideas upon political ideologies and existentialism. Developing a counter-cinema, he tried to challenge traditional Hollywood cinema. Peter Wollen suggests new conventions against Hollywood cinema in a schema: Narrative transitivity versus narrative intransitivity has reconstituted the linear narration, estrangement has broken the habitual the identification with the characters in a film, so the main element pleasure has been destroyed by the deconstruction of consumer based cinematic motives. Similarly, fiction versus reality has altered the notions in the representative codes of cinema in a wide range (quoted in Rosen, 1986:121-129). Godard is one of the directors that applied experimental approaches to filmic motives. He questioned the form and the content of the cinematic image. Robert P. Kolker pins the directors who practiced similar modes with Godard's initiative ideas, "Godard and his contemporaries and followers-Alain Resnais in France, Michelangelo Antonioni, Pier Paolo Pasolini, the early Bertolucci in Italy; Rainer Werner Fassbinder and the early Wim Wenders in Germany, Glauber Rocha in Brazil; the filmmakers of ICAIC (The Cuban Film Institute) (to name only a few) - made films that took their own textuality as one of their subjects (quoted in Hill and Gibson, 1998:21)." Since they asked audience their opinions about the representations and narrations in the films, they created an interaction to raise consciousness in audience.

2.1.2 Ideology, Hegemony and Representation

Media can be used as one of the most powerful tools of dominant class, which may try to generate hegemonic and ideological implements on cultural productions. That is, ideological structure of a dominant class, non-surprisingly, is organized and maintained through media implicitly and explicitly. Daily lives are subject to, to such an extent, ideological applications of the ruling classes. According to French Philosopher Louis Althusser's description, ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. Since individuals are exposed to significations through cultural productions; hegemonic values, ideology and other class relations would inevitably submit to the representations of imaginary ideological relations with/without their will as Althusser asserts. The term 'ideology' coined by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 1840s. Ideology is a part of a system of domination that serves to further oppression by legitimating forces and institutions that repress and oppress people. Institutions as the Ideological State Apparatuses are listed "[R]eligious ISA (the system of the different Churches), the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private 'Schools'), the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties), the trade union ISA, the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.), the cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, sports, etc.) (1971:143)." These private institutions function primarily by ideology. Likewise, Althusser highlights the importance of the distinction between (Repressive) State Apparatus and ISAs. The Repressive State Apparatus functions 'by violence', whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses function 'by ideology':

This is the fact that the (Repressive) State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly by *repression* (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology. (There is no such a thing as a purely repressive apparatus.). For example, the Army and the Police also function by ideology both to ensure their own cohesion and reproduction, and in the 'values' they propound externally. In the same way, but inversely, it is essential to say that for their part of the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by *ideology*, but they also function secondarily by repression,

even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic. (There is no such a thing as a purely ideological apparatus.) Thus, Schools and Churches are suitable methods of punishment, expulsion, selection, etc., to 'discipline' not only their shepherds, but also their flocks (1971:133).

The Family, the cultural Ideological State Apparatus including censorships and the other Apparatuses are within this discourse according to Althusser. As long as these practices are reproduced, it is evident that the presence of ideology can be seen in reality: Both by a reproduction of submission to the rules of the established order and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology. In conclusion, it can be asserted that ruling ideas reproduce dominant affinities on society, institutions and moralities.

The ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas as Marx and Engels put forward. They maintain that the class which is the ruling 'material' force of society is also its ruling 'intellectual' force. "The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the dominant material relations grasped the ideas; hence of the relations which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance (quoted in Durham and Kellner, 2006:9)." Concerning class relations, the illusion of belonging to 'ideal' group is formed through a wide range of implications of ideological apparatuses.

Antonio Gramsci developed the idea of hegemony based on Marx and Engels' the concept of ideology. The supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership' according to Gramsci. "A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise 'leadership' before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principle conditions for the winning of such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but if it holds it firmly in its

grasp, it must continue to 'lead' as well (quoted in Durham and Kellner, 2006:14).” With regard to Gramsci’s ideas on ideology as a superstructure, it is substantial to remember his reference to unequal class relations, “Dominant ideology, which within the western world, is taken to be white, middle class, male construct (quoted in Hayward, 2003:185).” This specific socio- economic group attempts to imply subordinate groups that they are the representatives of the institutions that govern people. Thus, they create an illusion that emanates among these subordinate groups as a strong wish to belong to this system.

The ideological structure of a dominant class is organized. The organization aims to maintain, defend and develop ideological and theoretical ‘front’. Gramsci states the press is the most prominent part in these terms because it has implicit and explicit programmes attached to a particular tendency. “The press is the most dynamic part of this ideological structure, but not the only one. Everything which influences of is able to influence public opinion, directly or indirectly belongs to it: libraries, schools, associations, and clubs of various kinds, even architecture and the layout and names of the street (quoted in Durham and Kellner, 2006:16).” Gramsci’s ideas may also regard cinema with the possibility of tendency on certain ideas since it also has influence on people with the modes used in filmmaking. Susan Hayward’s explanation of hegemonic impacts and their relations with cinema is related to Gramsci’s, “Mainstream or dominant cinema functions consensually in its mediation of hegemonic values (the family, social mobility, etc.) and as much is inscribed within that hegemony (2003:185).” Since spectacles and narratives are likely to be reflections of ideological regulations in a film, it is evident that a film may attempt to constitute a representation to enforce the reproduction of hegemonic values.

In doing so, reality created through narrative and significations attempt to wield hegemonic values in societies in which social, economic, political and other inequalities arise. Modes in a film symbolize these discursive and disruptive ruptures in a society and audience is evidently exposed to ideological and hegemonic implications. Ryan and Kellner cite that these implications are constituted by specific significations: “Ideology, we have found, is primarily a metaphoric way of representing the world that is linked to a particular

way of constructing reality (1990:15).” They argue that through images displayed in a film, a social order is created and sometimes the conventions are constructed in a way that it may be hard to identify irrationality and injustice for audience. In fact, audience is in/directly led to concentrate on things depicted and highlighted by a filmmaker. Ryan and Kellner exemplify this notion by the fact that films consisting themes like war and crime are confined to a form in order to restrain comprehension of their reasons and results. ”The mapping of personal life stories over structural issues like war and crime makes the existing order seem moral and good. And personal identification with representation of public order creates the psychological disposition for inducement into voluntary participation in a system of exploitation and domination (1990:1).” Ryan and Kellner emphasize that political incentives are powerful in reconstitution of social orders. Therefore, cultural representations may misguide audience by pushing them to the hegemonic cultural values.

As mentioned above, hegemony creates the illusion that common attitudes and values appear to come from nowhere. Patrick Phillips’ criticism converges with Ryan and Kellner’s: “This leads to a compounding of the criticism levelled against popular cinema (and other media) that not only does it disguise its own discursive form, but also ‘naturalises’ these profoundly significant social and political discourses (2000:50).” They urge that the modes of hegemonic stands of popular cinema and media help for the pervasiveness of unconditionally-accepted assumptions. It is likely that people take these shared implements for granted. Meanwhile, filmmakers implement various conventions in the films in order to fulfill their purposes whether implying hegemonic concerns or not. The stands they regenerate may serve as a frame for substantial genres.

2.2 Genre and Film Genre

In the beginning of film history, film genres had a tendency to be very alike not only in terms of themes, but also characters-indexed by costumes and mannerism-, setting and other conventions. Bordwell and Thompson define ‘film genre’ as “Various types of films that audiences and filmmakers recognize by their recurring conventions. Common genres

are horror films, gangster films and Westerns (1994:734).” Cinema, involving fictional characters, wheels around a narration and is set in certain period of time. A director displays his/her story through particular cinematic characteristics and significations. Visual and narrative features play a great role in signification and as Phillips conveys “Much cinema spectacle is genre-based, that is it has its basis in familiar and easily recognized conventions. Genres usually have a high level of predictability, with just enough variation to surprise and delight the audience (and to distinguish the film from all the others remarkably similar to it) (2000:103).” Phillips also remarks after the Silent Era in film industry (1927-1929), Hollywood focused on ‘genres of spectacles’, “The gangster films of the early 1930s and the swashbuckling adventure romances of the later 1930s, for example (2000: 99).” Action, horror, war, conspiracy, disaster films; westerns, musicals, comedies, thrillers, and other modes of films such as documentary, avant-garde, fiction, animation are designated within their own codes and representations.

Social, technological, industrial and financial changes affect film genres. Thompson and Bordwell name genres as, “[R]itualized dramas resembling holiday celebrations-that are satisfying because they reaffirm cultural values with little variation (2003a:117).” They claim that these ceremonies help recipients forget the disturbing aspects of the world and they are distracted from social problems with the familiar characterizations and plots. Not surprisingly, mainstream cinemas-like others are transcoded within ideologies of the prevailing social norms and regulations of government. Governments arrange their apparatus in a way that would help to prescribe certain patterns of behaviors. Another reason for the infected ideological structures of films is to maintain the social order through the representations of illusionary limitations and boundaries that will prevent disorders and contradictions. “Genres are inflected as much by the capitalist imperatives of the film industry as they are by audience preference and the socio-historical realities of any given period (Hayward, 2003:168).” Generic elements are reproduced in certain/typical terms and traditional conventions. In addition, these conventions use similar metaphoric stereotypes, visual texture, narrative structure and cinematographic features.

Actors construct characters and their performances reflect the interpretation of roles. Their performances are supposed to be believable. Characters are also one of the important means to specify a certain genre. In each genre, fictional characters, as the main elements in construction of a narrative, are formed in different methods. Thus, the methods used in a film determine how characters will serve. As Phillips conveys “Every genre has its character types and, in some genres, these characters are easily ‘indexed’ by costume and mannerism (Phillips, 2000:57).” Besides, camera movements, lightening, editing and other related elements are interventions for the projection of a character depending of a narrative. Actors try to make the character realistic and truthful with the attainments of the director. “Genres are the discursive or narrative site in which the star can exhibit her/his potential to fulfill the demands, codes and conventions of a particular genre and even surpass them (...) Genres are also the iconographic in which the star can display the body, or have it displayed (Hayward, 2003:171).” Audience has a tendency to identify themselves with ‘an icon’ which is represented by a character. In other words, a character is likely to be regarded as an ideal role model who accomplishes the dreams of the audience or represents the things in their lives.

Dominance of certain genres has been debated in filmmaking. To exemplify, Hollywood cinema, also named as mainstream cinema, has always been contested with its high budgeted film industries covering most of the markets around the world. Despite the fact that it has used a wide range of aesthetical dimensions, it is criticized with its modes based on profit making. Nevertheless, after the spread of alternative and independent film productions, genres cannot be easily fixed. They have mostly emerged as the combinations of generic elements. Consequently, economic, ideological and social conditions create variations in the modes of cinema depending on the place and time. In the following section, mainstream cinema will be examined concerning its dominance over other experimental and alternative cinemas.

2.3 Dominant/Mainstream Cinema

Domination of American Hollywood cinema on international level can evidently be observed in the analyses of Hollywood Cinema's large amount of mass production, distribution and profit results of film industry. Hayward claims that dominant cinema is mostly related to Hollywood cinema, but dominant cinema does not only confide in Hollywood. All countries with a film industry have their own cinema and economic and political conditions shape the production and other related notions. It is widely accepted that American/Hollywood cinema, has been regarded 'epicenter', having the largest export score in film industry. Other cinemas have tended to define their divergences and convergences with Hollywood cinema of which standardization emerged in the early 1900s. "The ideal type of dominant cinema is commonly regarded as the Hollywood studio systems of the 1930s and 1940s (Kuhn, 1982:24)." Evidently, Hollywood cinema has pervaded more rapidly than other regional and alternative cinemas with its worldwide industrial privileges. "The film industry has three-part structure-production, distribution, and exhibition- but the balance of power between the three is unequal (Armes, 1987:37)." In this respect, it is noteworthy to emphasize exhibition sites of films. Distributors make connection between audience and filmmakers. Therefore, economic power determines the availability of screenings of films.

Annette Kuhn's description of dominant cinema is not farfetched from Roy Armes', "Indeed one of the principal features of dominant cinema is its pervasiveness as a model for modes of production and modes of representation in film industries all over the world (1982:21)." Despite the fact that TV channels, home video, non-theatrical showing at institutions such as schools, libraries, and so forth give a chance for independent or foreign, experimental films as well as documentaries, Bordwell and Thompson agree on their claims, "Most commercial theaters show mass-entertainment movies (...). This trade is done through contributions of major film distributors: Warner Bros, Paramount, Disney/Buena Vista, Colombia, Twentieth Century Fox, and Universal- provides mainstream entertainment to theater chains around the world (2003b:8)." Thus, arguments

have aroused the contradictions of using cinema as a commodity. Since mainstream cinema industries are established on profit-making-commercial incentives, not surprisingly, general characteristics of dominant cinema are mostly shaped by industrial motives. Kuhn assumes that the commercial incentives of a film influence and alter cinematic modes, “In dominant cinema, (...), every film typically becomes a commodity in its physical existence-actual reels of celluloid are at various points products and objects of exchange. But film is more than this, in that representations may constitute objects of exchange within institutions of dominant cinema (1982:24).” Representations attaining the characteristics of a film are categorized in terms of themes, technical features, characters and settings, which can be compiled under the heading of the modes of dominant cinema.

2.3.1 The Modes Of Dominant Cinema

A narrative can derive from imaginations or realities and it is supposed to be coherent with a goal of generating meaning to audience. Building up an interaction between the filmmaker and the audience, a story of a film is mostly conventionalized in a linear form in mainstream/dominant cinema. Bordwell and Thompson urge the basic formulation of a narrative in the following statement. “We can consider a narrative to be a chain of events in cause and effect relationship occurring time and space (2003b:69).” In doing so, the audience is put into a negotiation. Phillips’ definition intersects with Bordwell and Thompson’s concerning the relationship of the narrative notion of ‘stringing together’. He sums the elements of a narrative are compiled of the different conventions of different types of stories, but the vast majority of the stories has a lot in common. ”A film narrative:1. is time-based, 2. occurs in space (location), 3. emphasizes causality (2000:23).” Bordwell, meanwhile, marks that a narrative can be studied in three aspects: Representation, structure and act. In this respect, he explains “[R]epresentation; how it refers to or signifies a world or body of ideas (...), a structure; the way its components combine to create a distinctive whole, (...), an act; a dynamic process of presenting a story to a perceiver (quoted in Rosen, 1986:17).” Thus, the reproduction of these conventions ensures the audience

passivity while constructing identification with the representations. The interaction built between the film and the spectator relies on the creating an illusion of centering the viewer at the representation. Stereotyping meets the expectations of audience and narrative mostly uses 'protagonists' and 'antagonists' to process the identification. In doing so, audience is channelled to think, believe and dream in a similar way.

Ryan and Kellner criticize that using formal conventions in filmmaking construct a certain point of view and impose audience basic premises of the social order while ignoring irrationality and injustice of a system, "[N]arrative closure, image continuity, non-reflexive cinema, character identification, voyeuristic objectification, sequential editing, causal logic, dramatic motivation, shot centering, frame balance, realist intelligibility, etc.(...) help to instill ideology by creating an illusion (1990:1)." Meanwhile, Hayward supports Ryan and Kellner's claims on causality. She puts forward that plots in dominant western films usually follow a standard sequence on the ideological stand: 'order/disorder/order-restored'. In this form, "The action focuses on central characters and so the plot is character driven (Hayward, 2003:93)." All those formulations reflect that the spectator restore the feelings of unity and control because narrative is created with an impression of resolution with a little effort of the spectator. Hayward also gives examples from French Cinema, Gabin of the 1930s, Belmando of the 1960s and Depardieu of the 1980s while defining them as three different types of 'proletarian' heroes. "In addition, the spectators impose on the stars their own expectations: the stars are the mediators between the real and the imaginary (Hayward, 2005:12)." Stereotyped characters perform the roles that audience expects and narration does not surprise audience because stories generate predictability.

Directors and cinematographers have main roles to narrate a story by a camera. While technical details mainly concern cinematographer, director is responsible for script and actors/actresses. They need to maintain a close interaction and communication between each other.

Scenes which are edited by the decision of a director represent the fragments of realities or illusions. These fragments form 'a new reality' in the minds of audience. That

is, these fragmented representations display some aspects of a reality. Therefore, we can conclude that the representation of reality is not 'real'; it is only an interpretation or an illusion. Hayward points out that the representation of reality is accomplished by the 'reality effect', in other words, the illusion of the reality. In this respect, editing does not distract audience. Therefore, the continuity of the film is consistent. She also remarks that," The mise-en-scene, lighting and colour are appropriate to the genre. Shots conform the codes and conventions dictated by the generic type (Hayward, 2003:93)." These conventions can be listed as the following outlines of Jim Pines and Paul Willeman:

Lighting: High contrast and low key

Camera Angle: Mostly governed by eye-level perspective which approximates to our natural position in the world. Use of angle shots primarily for aesthetic look.

Camera Placement: Distance varies according to the emotional content of the scene. Emotion, e.g. anger, is portrayed in close-up.

Camera Movement: Mostly fixed perspective (tripod operation), promoting exposition and understanding. Often the camera moves to stay with the individual to study character development and psychological state.

Set Design: A studio set. Tightens manipulatory controls, enhances fictional reality.

Acting: Hollywood convention, actor as icon.

Parallel Montage: It shows the relations of conflicting characters/forces for dramatic and expository narrative purposes, i.e. suspense.

Point of View: Actors avoid looking directly at the camera. Actors are usually positioned or blocked so that their emotional state is easily observed by the camera (1989:46,47).

To sum up, all the list of techniques above is a part of processing an ideology, which maintains the illusion of 'reality' with an aim of asserting 'a message'. However, there have also been attempts to destroy the structures and representational codes of the dominant styles. The filmmakers who claimed 'form creates content' called the audience to be aware of the structures. "These filmmakers favoured long takes (...), atemporal or non-linear narratives, and subject-matter that differed from the usual Hollywood stories of violence and melodrama." as Kolker pins. (quoted in Hill and Gibson, 1998:21) He sums this process as the experimentations dated back the 1960s and the 1970s have encouraged filmmakers to change the basic assumptions of cinematic form; "Spawned by the French

Wave extending to Italy, England, the United States, and then, in the 1970s, to Germany, the movement produced a body of work, and a series of imaginative filmmakers (1998:21).” The experimental approaches of the filmmakers have enabled the spectator to be more active and speculative and contributed to political filmmaking.

2.4 Political Art Form and Political Cinema

In the dominant/ mainstream cinema section, it has mainly been discussed that there are several factors for the determination of using cinema as a commodity production. Besides, other cinematic forms have developed. The reason for that is cinema, as a mass medium tool, is subject to be used for a wide range of purposes. These purposes can be articulated as ideological, commercial, artistic, educational, informative and so forth. In this respect, the development of technologies has altered the art forms, therefore, these changes have inevitably brought along a wide range of political implications as well as manipulations. Image manipulation used in media has been widely argued. The main concern is that ‘reality’ is covert in ‘reconstructed reality’ in an illusionary form. Patrick Mc Gee explains that reality conjuncts art by referring reality as ‘concrete and particular’ and art as ‘abstract and universal’. Additionally, he cites that political art is a way of resistance and inquires whether a work of art holds a political message or not: “It may be appropriate, depending on the context, to evaluate a work of art for its contribution to the dissemination of a political message (1997:39).” He emphasizes that there is no guarantee that audience would regard a message as it is intended by the artist to be political in any sense. “[A]rt is necessarily political. Art may not be universal, in the sense of transcending the historical, but it results from an articulation of the historical that cannot be reduced to a straight-forward reflection (1997:40).” As an aesthetic producer, an artist ‘interprets’ social notions and what he/she attempts to reflect would be from his/her point of view.

Considering the fact that all films are constituted political in a way, the differentials to define political cinema are not in a limited range. There are controversies about what makes an artifact political and how ‘political and ideological dispositions’ are identified. It

is noteworthy to mention not only narration, but also camera angles-movements, lightnings, settings, characters, financial and geographical limitations, distribution opportunities, technical crews and directors' roles outline how 'political' a product is. On the one hand, there are difficulties in definition of political cinema: There is no cogent definition of what a political film consists. On the contrary, there are so many different ways of being political and so many types of political film as to defy definition. The meaning of propaganda is confused with political. All films are political because they express one ideology or another. It is not deniable that the manipulation of imagery is used for the actions of political propaganda, but propaganda is not likely to be a central concern in all political films. Meanings which are represented implicitly or explicitly in a film are social phenomena and these meanings, evidently, possess ideological traces of social and hegemonic values. Bordwell and Thompson mark that these ideological meanings derive from 'systems of culturally specific beliefs about the world and "Religious beliefs, political opinions, conceptions of race or sex or social class, even our most deeply rooted notions of life- all these constitute our ideological frame of reference (2003b:57)." The emergence of political cinema has the traces of social and political issues to deploy or subvert opposition to regimes and/or social orders.

The emergence of political cinema is not new and its history goes back to "Totalitarian states of Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, China and Latin American countries (1996:78)." as Jill Nelmes outlines. After the outbreak of World War I, (1914) Russian Revolution (1917) led a number of remarkable changes in political applications and the totalitarian system was mostly spotted using cinema as a tool for propaganda. Accordingly, in the United States, newsreels, footages and documentaries portrayed demonstrations, strikes or hunger marches that took place in the country during similar periods. Those films were shot by filmmakers who received no payments and costs mostly covered by donations and other screenings of classic films. "Politically active filmmakers in the United States started while confronting the issues of poverty and racism. Communist groups had produced a few documentaries during the 1920s, but the first regular association was

formed in 1930 (Bordwell and Thompson, 2003a:304).” Documentaries in various kinds formed a constitution to raise consciousness while ignoring cinematic linearity, continuity and other related modes. “The documentary form has long been associated with the voices of specialists, professionals, and authority figures. It tends to draw ordinary people into its frame of reference only when they are victims of some social or political violence or, alternatively, as entertainment, the depoliticized presentation of everyday life (Wayne, 2001:72).” Documentaries had initiative role in enunciations of social and political strives.

Manuel Michel settles and samples his ideas on politically active filmmaking in such a similar base. He draws attention to the way how documentaries have given rise to other movements in cinema: “The movement began in 1918 in the Soviet Union which created the propagandistic documentary series ‘Kino Pravda (Cinema of Truth)’ and ‘Kino Glaz (Cinema of the Eye) (1999:79).” He also outlines that in England, the creation of a vast documentary movement over two decades (1930s and 1940s) gave rise to illustrious works. “Many series were made, including ‘the World of Children, The Dynamic Frame, the New Documentary and above all, Free Cinema, from which emerged the regenerators of current British feature-length cinema (Michel, 1965:79).” These revolutionary practices can be interpreted as foregrounding influences in the following eras. However, there have been impediments in production of counter cinema. Cultural imperialism has a protruding role to restrict filmmaking in experimental terms.

Political and social changes have led cultural imperialism to rise by the spread of technological advances of communication tools. It is noteworthy to mention Fredric Jameson’s criticisms on aesthetic productions since these productions are referred as strategies of limitations in displaying realities. Dana B. Polan comments on Jameson’s ideas that relate cultural imperialism as a trigger for some directors to contribute for the emergence of political films. Polan pinpoints political cinema as conducting a role for the creation of a revolutionary act: “The superficiality of spectacle, its inability to mean more than it shows, is indeed one of the reasons why those political films that set out to counteract current political structures simply by showing that world falls into the trap of

merely confirming ills without offering a path beyond them (1982:136).” Directors use cinematic features to display social, economic, political, cultural realities along with historical processes by a work of art. “The politics of film determines its structure: that is, the way it relates to the world. We understand film, experience it, and consume it from two different perspectives. The ‘socio-politics’ of film describes how it reflects and is integrated with human experience in general. Film’s ‘psychopolitics’ attempts to explain how we relate to it personally and specifically (James Monaco, 2000:261).” To do so, films provide powerful and convincing representation of reality, so it has a profound influence on audience as James Monaco sums. “The politics of film and the politics of ‘real life’ are so closely intertwined that it is impossible to determine which is the cause which is the effect (2000:261).” There have been alternative and revolutionary attempts to depict ideological reproductions of states.

Political and social upheavals have contributed in transformation of the cinematic modes accordingly. The protruding practices can be outlined as in the following examples in different countries. For instance, in Mexico, 1968 was announced as the year when the student movements caused numerous changes in the social structures. During that time, a group of students shot the struggle. The themes and the techniques reflected the reality since the shots were edited in documentary form.”Cinema could not remain estranged from the massive politicization, which was growing swiftly and wondrously...A group of students from the CUEC (University Center for Cinematographic Studies) decided to join the struggle, camera in hand (Michel, 1965:89).” 1960s can be considered as prolific period in terms of political film productions because of the need for raising awareness against oppressions.

In the same period, using the conventions of thriller and detective genres, Costa Gavras tried to raise political consciousness with his film *Z* (1968) -based on a true story about the assassination of a Greek MP- which inspired other directors. “The Greek director Costa Gavras was largely responsible for launching and popularizing a new genre in the 1960s. The background to this was the worldwide political and social upheavals of the

period (Hill, 1997:131).” There are also numerous examples from Hollywood filmmaking industry. Some of the intruding ones have inspired political filmmaking. ”Hollywood directors appropriated this form in such films as *The Parallax View* (Alan J. Pakula, 1974), *Three Days of the Condor* (Sydney Pollack, 1975) and *All the President’s Men* (Alan J. Pakula, 1976) (Wayne, 2001:68,69).” The conventions which constitute political films differ from the mainstream ones. The following part outlines these stands in brief.

2.4.1 The Modes of Political Cinema

Ideological structure of a film has a close connection with mainly social, cultural, political and economic developments and structures. Therefore, cinematic representations not only reflect changes but also cause changes in a dynamic process. As a result of construction of cultural representations, individuals are imposed to a manipulation by a wide range of coded modes in film productions. In this sense, Noam Chomsky argues that visual media counteract against perception of realities and employ prejudices. ”Visual media restrain public opinion with exposure of images through mass media tools (1995:17).” The initiatives of filmmaking on social and political strains have triggered defiance against restraints on public opinion through media.

As mentioned above social, economical and political changes have altered the contents and the other modes of films. Themes including criticisms of racism, government applications, military actions, class and gender discrimination and imperialism were marked to be on the rise in late 1960s. “The motives for the rise of political filmmaking in the United States have not acquired so many different characters from the ones in other countries. Though, political and cultural changes which took place in the United States in 1967 have been noted ‘evolutionary’ according to many film historians (Ryan and Kellner, 1990:3).” Ryan and Kellner sum the historical process with the following; as the time when the economy was expanding, liberals in the government were seeking to reform society, blacks were in revolt against oppression, drug use and sexual experimentation were

changing traditional social values, and protest movements against the Vietnam War were gaining national attention for the New Left. These political and social changes have transformed certain issues such as identity, gender, class relation and so forth.

These attempts of filmmakers cover a wide range of places worldwide including Third World countries. Despite various divergences, most of the political films are constituted with similar modes which enunciate counter stands against mainstream cinema. The details of the convergences will be discussed later in Third World Filmmaking section because the modes of political filmmaking can be assessed to Third Cinema which has initiated counter and experimental productions in Third World countries.

3. THIRD WORLD FILMMAKING

As colonizer countries pervaded their political, economic, cultural and social dominance, colonized countries were disrupted in numerous aspects. The disruption of colonized countries has led transformations in national identities, so cultural representation has been shaped by these dynamics. There are divergent and convergent theories about the emergence of Third World filmmaking. Third World Cinema is triggered with the need of taking control of the representation of *The Others*, who are repressed. Third World Cinema also initiated collective and revolutionary production methods and refused to be a tool of entertainment. Mingling different modes of pluralistic art form, this filmmaking is derived from the deconstruction of dominant mainstream stands of aesthetics and signification. Evidently, straining distinctive representation modes brings out three main frames of filmmaking: First, Second and Third Cinema. The last one has included Third World Filmmaking in accordance with the traits it holds.

3.1 Third Cinema

Several historians mainly categorize cinema as First, Second, and Third cinema. Fenando Solanas describes First Cinema as expressing imperialist, capitalist, bourgeois ideas of big monopoly capital finances. Second Cinema, so-called author cinema, articulated nihilistic, mystificatory, cut off from reality, can be found in different forms like documentary, political and militant cinema just like First Cinema. Third Cinema, meanwhile, covers the aspects of social discourses and insists on its constant experimental aesthetic genuineness: Third Cinema is the expression of a new culture and of social changes and is linked with national culture as Pines and Willeman sum. They also remark that ‘national’ and ‘regional’ cinema, within its address and aspirations, can be named as Third Cinema. “Third Cinema is also experimental cinema, but it is not practiced in the solitude of one’s home or in a laboratory because it conducts research into communication. What is required is to make that Third Cinema gain space, everywhere, in all its forms (...). But it must be stressed that there are 36 different kinds of Third Cinema (1989:9).”

Considering the fact that Third Cinema focuses on changing social processes, it is not surprisingly flexible and aligned with the people and their struggles, especially in Third World countries.

3.2 Third World Countries

The definition of Third World has been quite controversial. Most explanations whirl around whether the term is only restricted within the geographical zones such as inadequately industrialized regions or within only colonized nations which share similar destinies.

‘Third World’ appeared when the strains hardened between Soviet Union and China in 1960 as Thompson and Bordwell summarize. ‘Third-Worldism’ became hope for the developing countries: “Colonies became sovereign states, and many of their leaders rejected both Soviet and Western ways (2003a:535).” The reason for the rejection was to liberate and to establish more equal societies. However, it is obvious that some revolutionary actions had to be taken to restructure the systems in these countries. New adjustments profoundly included to reshape class systems, political, economic, social and military fractures.

These countries are identified, “As a political coalition, the ‘Third World’ coalesced around the enthusiasm generated by anti-colonial struggles in Vietnam and Algeria, and specifically emerged from the 1955 Bandung Conference of ‘non-aligned’ African and Asian nations (Shohat and Stam, 1994:25).” Most Third World countries have suffered from repressions of the colonizer countries and wars, coups, civil upheavals, and ethnic strives. Those struggles have reconstituted economic, political, social, cultural and other related notions as well as cultural productions. Not surprisingly, the concerns on prevailing industrial imperialism have a close relation with the ones on cultural imperialism.

3.3 Cultural Imperialism and the Emergence of Third World Filmmaking

Since cultural imperialism has a dominant influence on consumers' tendencies, cultural exchanges would not be in favor of the national and indigenous cinema sectors of which circumstances are unequal to mainstream ones. Ideological and economic motives of major film industries primarily give a shape to mainstream cinema. Nonetheless, Third World filmmakers have struggled to establish their own aspirations using authentic, alternative, counter, experimental and dialectic transformed contingencies. They urged to maintain the resistance against the dominant pervasion of popular culture.

Hayward posits the beginning of Third World Filmmaking with its counter stands against hegemonic cultural imperialism; "By the early 1900s, film theory was already an arena of debate (as the sixth art and then the seventh) and, by the 1920s, calls were being made for a truly national cinema as a defense against American hegemony (2005:5)." Evidently, hegemonic values determined the cultural productions along with visual arts. "The pattern of Western dominance-first by France and then by the United States- was established even before the Soviet Revolution of 1917, and this pattern causes problems with the definition of Third World film making. Clearly, there was a considerable amount of film production in the non-Western world before the concept of the Third World came into being (Armes, 1987:2)." The convention of these productions changed with the political, financial and social dynamics.

As for Ella Sholat and Robert Stam, after the postwar- the collapses of the European empires and the emergences of independent Third World nation-states, cinematic new movements began. Technologised mass culture triggered new dimensions and paradigms in media forms to a large extent. Simultaneously, the aesthetic and industrial developments of cinema have revealed new genres:

Esthetically the movement drew on currents as diverse as Soviet montage, Brechtian epic theater, Italian neorealism, and even the Griersonian 'social documentary'. The term was launched as a rallying cry in the late 1960s by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, who define Third Cinema as 'the cinema

that recognizes in (the anti-imperialist struggle in the Third World and its equivalents within the imperialist countries)...the most gigantic cultural, scientific and artistic manifestation of our time...in a word, the decolonization of culture. (...) In the late 1960s and the early 1970s, in the wake of the Vietnamese victory over the French, the Cuban revolution, and the Algerian Independence, Third Worldist film ideology was crystallized in a wave of militant manifesto essays (Sholat and Stam:248).

In the other definition of Third World Filmmaking, it is pinned that social structure, national culture, tradition and impact of colonialism are main issues to take into consideration. “The nature of cinema as a product of Western capitalism and the role of U.S.-dominated film distribution as an exemplar of the working of the capitalist world system (Armes, 1987:7).” have given a shape to the cinemas of the countries which were subject to colonization and the dominance of power blocks. Armes describes that a filmmaker, a radio or television producer using a Western technology would apply formal structures derived from a foreign source. Likewise, she names cinema as an imported form of communication and “Unlike the later systems of radio and television broadcasting, the cinema has not been tool or direct expression of the state: as a ‘free enterprise’ system, its inception and development is closely tied to the profit motive as it is expressed in and through Western capitalism (Armes, 1987:35).” Indigenous and national cinemas try to maintain their authenticity with the resistance to cultural dominance of pervading countries with industrial infrastructure. Repressed by the Hollywood Cinema, these cinemas necessitate organizing their market forces via specific ways. “These alternative filmic forms rely heavily upon a number of interlinking independent, nonprofit, political, ethnic, arts, and boutique micro-distributors; speciality film festivals, film series, and film package tours; broadcasting, cable-casting, and narrowcasting channels that specialize in arts, culture, ethnicity, and access; and myriad of site-specific mediating cultural institutions (Naficy, 1999:129).” Nonetheless, the restrictions mentioned above are not only confined to the market opportunities of national cinema. “On all the social indices (measurements of poverty, longevity, pollution, diet, access to technology, culture, medicine and so forth) it is clear that there are fundamental divisions of wealth and opportunity within nations and

regions and between nations and regions (Wayne, 2001:4).” These issues have been the main concerns of the Third World filmmakers and they have also taken social, economic and political considerations to apply in their visual and narrative representations. In doing so, they have had to conceive of specific modes to reflect realities.

3.4 Representation of Realism in Third World Filmmaking

Representation is formed with codes that promote perceptual dimensions on space and time. These codes, however, may restrict portrayals of reality. As the style of Third World cinema is prone to be a mixture of documentary and fiction, this filmmaking, not surprisingly, emphasize to raise an awareness using the certain modes. Its strands are mainly determined by the representations of the images of realities. In contrast to Western tendencies of individualistic psychological analysis, Third World Cinema focuses on social, economical, cultural problems within the collective space. Its concentration on documentary-fictional modes defies the Western filmic styles which are based on illusions of space and time with the shooting, editing, studio-settings, narration and etc. For example, Manuel Octavia Gomez’s ‘La primera Carga Del Machete-First Charge of the Machete, 1969- as if the battle in the film “[W]ere a contemporary documentary, using high-contrast film, hand-held camera, direct-to-direct interviews, ambient light and so forth (Sholat and Stam, 1994:251).” Sound recording, colour correction, editing can also be formed in a disruptive way to exert the realities. However, these specific notions can be a tool to be ‘approximation’ to reality. “No work can ever simply reveal reality. Realism, no less than any other type of art, depends on conventions (Hill, 1997:57).” These conventions are structured with the collaborative work of the staff who labor in the process of filmmaking and marketing as well.

While Third World filmmakers attempt to drag attention to historical, social, cultural, and political past, they take on the roles of representing and establishing a new present and future for the repressed people. Therefore, rather than the aesthetic dominant concerns of Western filmic styles, they wish to express their social, cultural and political discourses

through different stands. These stands reflect folkloric traces of the nations with a shared memory. Thus, it is intended to demolish memorized habits of audience who are exposed to causality notion of mainstream cinema. This counter cinema also tends to disrupt continuity and is set in episodic pattern as it insistently urges to build multi-perspective insight and maintain a participation of audience.

3.5 Representation of Exilic Stands in Third World Cinema

Third World Filmmaking is also defined as having a base on conventions of the exilic and diaspora cinema as a film production of which modes may be characterized in terms of “[I]ndependent, personal, artisanal, interstitial, third cinema, collective, ethnic, immigrant, or exilic- although no single characterization encompasses it fully (Naficy, 1999:129).” Third World Filmmaking deals with the reconstitution of class divisions and inequalities, reconstruction of identity, gender and ethnic issues arising from dislocation. In doing so, cultural diversity and exchange-multicultural and ethnocentric significations have an influence on indigenous folkloric art form.

Gabriel’s definition of Third Cinema is not far-flung from Hamid Naficy’s in terms of consequences of spatial dynamics on social and cultural divergences. “It is not a cinema defined by geography; it is primarily defined by its social politics (Wayne, 2001: 1).” These spatial dynamics constitute an interplay with the lived realities of people and representation. The contemplation of the interactions between gender and identity reconstruction and representation through political and social changes requires the treatments of time-space in films. Since dislocation is a major issue in Third World Filmmaking, chronotopical representations portray how narration is interwoven within these dynamics while giving meaning. “All cinema manipulates ‘time’ and ‘space’. Where Western films manipulate ‘time’ more than ‘space’, Third World films seem to emphasize ‘space’ over ‘time’. Third World films grow from folk tradition where communication is a slow-paced phenomenon and time is not rushed but has its own pace (Pines and Willeman, 1989:44).” National cinema generated from collective social space, emphasizes an active

engagement of audience whose identities are reconstituted as a subject. Additionally, collective heroism is the base of this filmic form rather than the individual hero based mainstream cinema. The collective social feature of Third World Filmmaking enriches depictions of diverse cultures depending on a region.

3.6 The Modes of Third World Filmmaking

Filmic representations are likely to inscribe meanings to audience on screens with the use of certain techniques. These certain techniques, seemingly, can be used as a tool of processing predominance audience. Reproduction of reality through imagery and visual modes create a new perception. Spatial and temporal reproductions of reality illustrate narrative and image of a certain issue and these reproductions also expose audience with new receptions. In other words, a film could possess a function to manipulate its recipient, so these modes also have influences on identity and social re/construction. As for the conventions of Third World Filmmaking, the outline below frames certain techniques and approaches:

Lightening: Lightening as a convention in Third World Films is less developed
Camera angle: Deliberate choice of low/high angle shots for purposes of political or social comment. Low/high angle shots show dominance and power relations between the oppressed and oppressing classes. Camera Placement: There is a minimal use of convention of close-up shots. This is perhaps due to lack of emphasis on psychological realism. Camera Movement: A moving perspective (...) If a camera moves it is to contain a scene or a sequence as a unit and not in response to individual psychology. Set Design: A location set. Location shooting relaxes manipulatory controls, and enhances documentary reality. Acting: Mostly non-actors acting out their real life roles. Parallel Montage: Cross-cutting serves an ideological purpose and donates ironical contrast and class distinction. Point of view: It is not uncommon to see a look directed at the camera, hence direct address to the audience (Pines and Willeman, 1989:46,47).

It is essential to mention that montage, juxtaposing different perspectives, is one of the crucial elements to imply meaning. Eisenstein is one of the initiatives of montage. He emphasized the importance of ‘collision and shock for maximum emotional and intellectual

stimulation' and destroyed linear editing of a narrative while creating an active connection with different techniques. "Leftist cultural practitioners saw a link between montage and social change (Wayne, 2001:27)." His emphasis on social change relates with the stands of Third World Filmmaking.

Camera angles have a significant role in expression of ideology and also visual and stylistic choices evoke particular messages. Stephan Sharff defines that 'a shot' is a piece of film that has been exposed, without cuts or interruptions, in a single running of the camera and adds "*Low angle shot* as a shot which looks up the subject and *high angle shot* as a shot which looks down on the subject from a height (1982:181)." High angle shot is used for to project dominance over an image and constitutes superiority whereas low angle shot implies the dominated image.

The access to technology brings out financial needs for individual filmmakers who are not supported by film industries. "The lightweight cameras and informal lightening of Direct Cinema enabled them (filmmakers who do political films in the Third World) to make films cheaply and quickly. Such techniques also created a sense of direct, intimate encounter with the event (Thompson and Bordwell, 2003a:538)." The use of hand-held camera and poor sound recordings as well as the rejection of Hollywood continuity style were the modes of political filmmaking in the Third World in 1960s and 1970s as Thompson and Bordwell sum. Concerning filmmaking in the Third World countries, national discourses have shaped depictions about social, cultural and political issues.

3.7 Third World Filmmaking as National Cinema

Nation generally may refer to people sharing common culture, language, ethnicity, history as well as a common territory and government. The definition of 'nation' is given by Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson as the following "[I]t is imagined political community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign (1991:6)." The members of a nation do not mostly know the other members of their communion, yet the

comradeship among them may lie in cultural roots they share. They imagine to be free and maintain their sovereignty as a state. Whereas Anderson's argument assumes that an imagined citizen comes out of imagined community, Nancy Duncan remarks her accounts on gendered citizen. "The imagined bonding between individuals and the nation in narratives of national identification is differentiated by gender. Men are incorporated into the nation metonymically. (...) Women are scripted into national imaginary in a different manner. Women are not equal to the nation but symbolic of it. (...) In the national imaginary, women are mothers of the nation or vulnerable citizens to be protected (1996:99)." Women play important roles in cultural transmission and cultural signification.

Nationalism is one of the other impacts that intensified transformations in cultural representation. As a result of political and social repressions, nationalism has been forced among the nations that face imperialist implications of ruling classes. Ilan Avisar marks that the destructive consequences of two world wars in the twentieth century forced nationalism:

With the end of the Cold War in the 1980s, the termination of superpower politics, and the apparent resolution-or suspension-of the ideological conflict between capitalism and socialism, there was a moment of a sense of historical vacuum, popularized by the notion of "the end of history." History, to be sure, continued its course as the 'narrative' of peoples' aspirations and the drama of political conflicts. The most volatile historical force in the post Cold War era has been nationalism. National aspirations have fueled major confrontations in places like Yugoslavia, territories of the former Soviet Union, Africa, and the Middle East (2005:125).

Thus, after the ideological and economic independence from colonial states, the term national identity has been redefined under the influence of the West. The dependence was both in economic and in social terms for countries which had inadequate developments. Yet, the role of technological developments in media is diverse. These nations attempt to find ways to enunciate their struggle through different ways of cultural representations in media. Accordingly, National Cinema has derived from the need of expanding nation's own aspirations. Stephen Crofts pinpoints national cinemas offer varieties of 'otherness' with

their different discourses, national-cultural specificities, productions, distributions, exhibitions in comparison to non-Hollywood films. He explains, “The ideas of a national cinema (...) remained largely unproblematic until the 1980s, since which time they have grown markedly more complex (quoted in Hill and Gibson ,1998:385).” and he also argues that migrations and diasporas resulting from post-Second World War processes of decolonization have announced “[R]ecent accounts of national cinemas which seek to resist the homogenizing fictions of nationalism and to recognize their historical variability and contingency, as well as the cultural hybridity of nation-states (quoted in Hill and Gibson,1998:386).” Thus, Third World Filmmaking, as a body of Third Cinema, has indulged into the portrayals of diverse issues in the region. “Third Cinema seeks to articulate a different set of aspirations out of the raw materials provided by the culture, its traditions, art forms, etc., the complex interactions and condensations of which shape the ‘national’ cultural space inhabited by the filmmakers as well as their audiences (Pines and Willemen, 1989:10).” The interplay between films and audience build a new collaboration leading changes in the reconstruction of identity.

As for Avisar, “The concept of ‘national cinema’ has become a category of reference in popular discourse and a critical concept similar to the status of ‘auteur, genre, or gender (2005:125).” He also marks that ‘national cinema’ no longer regards only developing countries, “which tend to engage in local, exotic themes, reflecting specific-and-marginalized-cultures in relation to the works of leading film artists and the centers of film production in Europe and Hollywood. Rather, in the past two decades, there have been numerous publications on the national dimension in European cinemas, or studies of American cinema as a national cinema (Avisar, 2005:125).” Filmmakers who hold concerns over social issues attempt to defy cultural domination through association of significances not only in Third World countries but also in the world. However, the percentage of national filmmaking in Third world is greater: The national film industries of the Third World are put in four major groups by Armes, ”Two in Asia, one in Latin America, and one in Africa and the Middle East. The commercial industries of the Far East,

which have given Asia a 50 percent share of world film production for thirty years or more are-outside India and Japan- as anonymous- as they are enormous (1987:103).” The Middle East granting a central position forms a prolific filmmaking using their specific significations and ‘the other’ in the scope of Third World Filmmaking.

4. MIDDLE EASTERN CINEMA

Middle East has been in the heart of political, social and ideological conflicts for many years. The Arab-Israeli War, Lebanese Civil War, Iran-Iraq War, The Iranian Revolution, The Persian Gulf War, Uprisings in Iraq and Syria, and The Iraq War can be listed as protruding upheavals that granted Middle East a central position in political debates. Thus, Middle Eastern Cinema mainly engages national discourses, space, identity, gender relations, and ethnic diversities. There is a frequent depiction of national historical background, present situation and future dreams of citizens respectively. Since Middle Eastern filmmakers want to monitor their own representation, they enunciate conventions of realistic and documentary filmic modes mingled with fiction.

Middle Eastern Cinema tends to revolve around the depiction of the regional discourses to assert the historical, spatial, political and social marginalities. There is allegorical tendency to form art because of repressive regimes in the region. Concerning Arab and Muslim countries, censorship revolves around the depiction of sex, religion and politics with the policies of Islamisation as Shohini Chaudhuri sums. She posits the fact that “Due to censorships, this certainly seems to be the case in Middle Eastern ‘Third Cinema’-allegory serves *a form of protective camouflage*. (...) Since 1990s, there has been a rush of films dealing with the oppression of women in Islamic societies, often as a covert critique of political regimes that oppress men as well as women. Other prevalent themes include: politics, imagining the nation; religious extremism; war and occupation (2005:57).” Since it is not possible to outline all the countries in the Middle Eastern Cinema, the contributions of some protruding ones will briefly explained in the following paragraph.

Egyptian Cinema is considered the biggest film industry in the Middle East. “The Egyptian film industry became known as the ‘Hollywood on the Nile’ and established the standards for commercial film production in the region (Chaudhuri, 2005:57).” Lebanon Cinema was also recognized with having one of the best technical facilities in the region before the Lebanese civil war (1975-90), but the destruction of the film infrastructure forced Lebanese filmmakers to move other foreign countries. “Of all the region’s film

industries, the Lebanese film industry has the closest ties to the Hollywood on the Nile (Chaudhuri, 2005:59).” As for Israel, Israeli filmmakers have engaged in enunciating the national culture and political tensions in the region. History and political conflicts interweave present situation in Israel. Accordingly, ideology and national identity play an important role in representations and vistas of national culture frame Israeli cinema. Israeli Cinema pursues the notions of national aspirations. It is known that the history of Palestinian Cinema is closely related with Israeli Cinema. The reason for this is the ongoing conflicts of its territories with Palestine. Palestinian films, meanwhile, mainly mingle the codes of realism and documentary with fiction to express the longing for their previous homeland re-established. ”Palestinian Cinema has recently emerged as a strong contender in the Arab world; (...) Syria, Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia have created films commenting on various aspects of Middle Eastern politics (Lina Khatip, 2006:2).”

Middle Eastern Cinema intersects recurring themes and filmic conventions with the diverse countries and regions. Terri Ginsberg and Chris Lippard give a brief summary of filmmaking in these regions. They remark that this cinema must operate in the shadow of Hollywood’s dominant model despite the fact that audiences have also had exposure to Indian popular cinema ‘Bollywood’.

Saudi Arabia has played substantial role in funding the Egyptian productions for some time, although Saudi Arabian Cinema has until very recently seemed a contradiction in terms. Turkey and Iran have also produced large numbers of films during particular periods, mostly for domestic markets. (...) Algerian Cinema, which flourished immediately after independence, has all but disappeared in recent years, whereas Moroccan Cinema has experienced an upswing through the production of world cinema vehicles. Jordan, Yemen, and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E) have only recently begun to emerge as nations with cinemas, while Iraq, under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, as well as the United States occupation that displaced him, has not been fertile ground for the development of an earlier-established cinema (2010:XXXV).

Politics in Iran has been inseparable from culture similar to the other Middle Eastern countries. Having been through controversies, the establishment of the Iranian history has shaped contemporary Iranian Cinema including narration and visualization. The following

section covers the history of Iran highlighting the conflicts between modernity and tradition in relation to its influence on filmmaking.

4.1 The History of Iran

Iran's central location in the Middle East brings out its geopolitical importance in the region. Ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity reflect its cultural and social divergences. The Islamic Revolution of 1978-1979 was one of the most important events of the twentieth century in Iran's history. Toppling the Shah who was considered a modernist monarch, Ayatollah Khomeini defied secular modernization and established the first theocratic state in the world. Thus, Iran came to the twentieth century confused about its past and uncertain of its future- caught between the traditional and the modern.

Iran as a third-world country with an oil exporting economy and the capacity of fossil fuels have attracted other countries. Concerning foreign affairs, Iran was under the influence of the prevailing countries in the beginning of the twentieth century. The polarity between the modern and the traditional led Iran to conflicts both in foreign and interior affairs. Homa Katouzian describes Iran in this period as “[A] helpless pawn in the diplomatic, economic, and military rivalry between the Russian and British Empires (2003:117).” Iran's attempt for the stability failed and it presented new political programs. “The most important and immediate program of its modernizing intellectuals was to abolish the traditional system of absolute and arbitrary rule (estebdad), and replace it by the rule of law (qanun); hence their campaign for constitutional, constrained or ‘conditioned’ (mashruteh) government (Katouzian, 2003:117).” The conflicts did not end despite the fact that revolutionary program was extended by more radical and intellectual leaders of the revolution to include democratic government. Eventually, the written constitution adapted from the Belgian model was established. That solution also did not change the situation, so Iran became a battleground for Russia, Britain, and Turkey, during the First World War putting Iran into, “[P]hysically, politically and economically devastated, and on the brink of chaos and disintegration (Katouzian ,2003:117).” The influence of the leaders has great

influence in the national history of Iran. Their power on legislative repressions cannot be deniable.

The religious leaders continued its power by legitimized policies especially after Islam was brought to Iran as Masoud Kheirabadi sums. “Dynasties that followed the Safavids, especially the Qajars, also employed the high Shiite leaders in their courts and wanted them to support and sanction their policies and behaviours (2003:43).” It is known that the beginning of modernization in Iran dates back to the period the Qajar reign (1795-1925). The promotion of trade and industrialization was accompanied with new technological schools and the Qajars invited foreign instructors to share their knowledge with young Iranians according to Kheirabadi. “They even reduced the influence of clergy, who opposed modernization process. (...) The Qajars also established a European-style cabinet with administrative responsibilities and a consultative council of senior princes and officials (Kheirabadi, 2003:39).” Following the Constitutional Revolution, which was described as a disorderly and centrifugal situation rather than a constitutional, Reza Khan Pahlavi took over the realm as Katouzian rises, “When he fell twenty years later, in 1941, his departure was greeted with unmitigated joy and approval by the vast majority of the people of all social classes. For by then, his regime had changed from mere dictatorship to arbitrary government. Between 1941 and 1953 there was a disorderly constitutional regime. The 1953 *coup d’etat* brought a dictatorial government to power which was supported by landlords and the religious establishment (2003:122).” The second Pahlavi monarch (1941-1979), Mohammed Reza Shah followed his father, Reza Shah’s vision of modernization. However, Prime Minister Mosaddeq’s political movements resulted in the Shah’s almost losing the throne according to Saeed Zeydabadi-Nejad, “A CIA-led coup restored his power in 1953. In the post coup era, the regime relied on a combination of propaganda and coercion. Since its formation in 1957, SAVAK, the Shah’s brutal secret police, controlled or physically stopped expressions of free thought. State propaganda portrayed the Shah as the captain who would lead to the nation through the stormy waters of social change (2010:31).” The Pahlavi period has been argued about its repressive regulations of

Westernization and modernity. In this respect, it is necessary to mention the notion of modernity that was triggered with the rise of imperialism.

4.2 The Clashes of Modernity and Tradition in Iran

Iranian society has clashes between the struggles of modernity and tradition. Since tradition is not assumed static, rejecting or adapting it has been the fundamentals of the debates to maintain the social order. Jamshid Behnam remarks that from the nineteenth century onward, Iranian authors and intellectuals used the term ‘modernization’ to mean ‘renewal’. “That is different from the meaning of the term in the West, where modernity is a social concept and philosophical idea conceived in a different cultural context. (...) [O]ne should define modernization in Iran as the desire for change and innovation, shaped by temporal conditions and national identity (2004:9).” Considering the concept of modernity determined with national identities, Iran weaves its own cultural and social notions with the effect of dominant ideologies prevailing in the country. After Anthony Giddens coined the discussions on modernity, the clashes between tradition and modernity have been debated around the globe.

Giddens defines modernity in his following explanation as “*Modernity* refers to modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence. This associates modernity with a time period and with an initial geographical location, but for the moment leaves its major characteristics safely stowed away in a black box (1990:1).” Giddens pinpoints the influence of modernity reached beyond Europe. Iran, as a Third World country, is one of these and its primary acquaintance with modernity especially under the British subjugation had transformed Iran in many ways. As its social structure has been established and maintained on traditions and religion, conservative boundaries have determined the pace of modernity since then. Giddens sums the idea of modernity as a contrast with tradition and the combination of the modern and the traditional

are to be found in social settings. In this respect, it is controversial that whether Iran has transformed into a combination of tradition and modernity.

Traditions are based on recollections operating in many ways and these recollections reveal experiences in a society. Thus, the continuity of the past is assured by the repetitive performances in acts. Paul Connerton notes that our experience of the present depends on knowledge of the past and we experience our present world in a context that is casually connected with past events and objects. He also asserts that different past experiences cannot be separated from present ones. “Hence, the difficulty of extracting our past from our present: not simply because present factors tend to influence –some might want to say distort- our recollections of the past, but also because past factors tend to influence, or distort, our experiences of the present (1989:2).” In doing so, across generations different sets of memories encounter each other despite the presence in different settings. Connerton’s implications juxtaposes with Giddens’s ideas on tradition’s linearity. “In traditional cultures, the past is honoured and the symbols are valued because they contain and perpetuate the experience of generations (1990:36).” Thus, an intervention to traditional structures may lead to repression in conservative cultures. Giddens maintains that tradition is a habitual performance and he adds, “It is a means of handling time and space, which inserts any particular activity or experience within the continuity of past, present, and future, these in turn being structured by recurrent social practices (1990:37).” The members of the society do not have to know each other for the constitution of a *social memory* according to Connerton. He asserts social memory as a dimension of political power and participants exhibit a form of habitual behavior. “Concerning social memory in particular, we may note that images of the past commonly legitimate a present social order. It is an implicit rule that participants in any social order must presuppose shared memory (1989:3).” To some extent, the law in Islamic Regime has embodied religion and tradition to maintain social order for the sake of the nation’s continuity.

As a matter of fact, the arguments about tradition and modernity are not restricted to the impediment of the former or the latter. Behman argues another designation, which

rejects to put tradition and modernity in opposing camps. "[M]odernity does not mean that people have to forget their collective memories and abandon their ethical and religious beliefs (2004:12)." The oppressive Westernisation of The Pahlavi Regime led to reactions concerning religious beliefs owing to the tendency to put tradition and modernity in opposing poles. The regimes in Iran have reconstituted religion to maintain social order for many years, so the 1979 Revolution was welcome by conservatives.

During the Pahlavi dynasty, modernity and renewals were not approved by some groups. They protested against the system of which regulations were considered anti-Islamic. It can be concluded that the revolts against Westernization shattered the political ideologies of modernity in Iran with Khomeini's institutionalized and legitimized theocratic regime. In the following paragraph, the political oscillation will be discussed regarding modernity and the divergences emerged in the religious regulations.

The mid-nineteenth century was marked as the significant achievements in the areas of science technology, and capitalism. Meanwhile, as Behnam posits nations all over the world were under colonialism ruled by a few Western countries and Western civilization prevailed around the globe. Reza Pahlavi Shah, who was forced to abdicate by the British-the USSR invasion, was praised, but at the same time criticized due to his regulations of that pervasion. "The ascendance of Reza [Pahlavi] Shah to power-ensued by the establishment of the national unity government, the centralized bureaucracy, and the pursuit of industrialization and of cultural Westernization- was accompanied by a neglect of the political components of modernity (2004: 5)." Despite the criticisms, Westernization brought transformations to Iranian culture in many aspects.

The 1960s and 1970s Iranian academia attempted first researches and studies to educate themselves about the encounter between Iran and the West. However, in the 1960s some attacks emerged against 'Westernization' or 'Westoxication' as Behnam puts forward, "It was in the impact of some social and political events the tide reversed and new ideas emerged in this area. (...) Concerns about lost identity pushed some intellectuals toward a return to tradition and religion and even to nostalgia for the simple village life.

(...) Some intellectuals had socialist-nationalist tendencies. Some advocated the *Third World* (2004:6).” The confrontation to Westernization led to romanticizing and idealizing the past and inevitably religion gained strength as Behnam pins.

The period between 1953 and 1979 was followed by a national referendum. Ruling out Iran’s monarchy (Pahlavi Dynasty-under Mohammed Reza Pahlavi), Islamic Republic was replaced “The traumatic memory of the 1953 coup was very much rekindled and put to very effective political use in the most crucial episodes of the nascent Islamic Republic in order to consolidate its fragile foundations. When on 1 February 1979 Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran, soon after the Shah left, the notion of an Islamic was far from certain and there was an array of opposing political positions and forces (Dabashi, 2010:94).” Opponents ranged from nationalists, socialists and Islamists. Hamid Dabashi remarks that Khomeini attacked against the demands of ‘Westoxicated intellectuals’, meaning those demanded the formation of a Constitutional Assembly to examine the terms of the constitution. In fact, Sami Zubaida notes the Constitution of the Islamic Republic is not the Islamic *shari’a*. He points out the dualism in the Iranian Dualism is between the sovereignty of the people and sovereignty of the god. It is notable to clarify that shari’a is considered as a source of legislation in the Constitution of the Islamic Revolution:

Article 6 of the constitution states that ‘the affairs of the country must be administered on the basis of public opinion expressed by means of elections.’ An elected parliament (Majlis) debates and enacts legislation (within stipulated limits). Government is responsible to parliament, which can scrutinize the actions and policies of the executive. Legislation must not depart from the basic tenets of Muslim law, but this, for the most part, exists not in a codified form but in the books of opinion and interpretation written by the jurists. It was a committee of jurists in the form of the Council of Guardians, which was entrusted by the constitution with the task of ensuring that parliamentary legislation conformed with the shari’a (1997:106).

Political use of religion creates and embeds the dominance of religious interests, ideas and images. Various political clerics and their supporters have struggled constantly against the implements of Islamic politics. Political arena of the Islamic Republic is Islamized in

many aspects according to Zubaida. “Religion enters prominently into political discourse: rival justifications, denunciations, and claims to legitimacy are made with appeal to religious formulae (1997:111).” The influence of the 1979 revolution has been widely argued due to its rigid laws for the sake of the maintenance of the social order.

4.3 The 1979 Revolution

The regulations of the revolution were arranged on the religious base with the leadership of “Ayatollah Khomeini known as ‘guardianship of the jurist’ or ‘velayat-e faqih’ (Torab, 2007:6).” The regime reproduced its ideological repressions similar to the previous regimes. The traditional and the modern have boosted conflicts since the reality in the daily lives has been under the influence of strict religious implications. Ramin Jahanbegloo cites Michel Foucault’s comment on the revolution as it could be sign of a progress toward the modern emancipation and freedom despite the fact that the concept of freedom was the invisible center of gravity of the Iranian Revolution, it remained invisible. “[S]ince the idea itself was hardly institutionalized in the Iranian political system. On the contrary, the political system of the Islamic regime was intentionally designed to institutionalize the involvement and dominance of Islamic clergies in all aspects of the political process and government functioning (2004: X).” Jahanbegloo states that after nearly a quarter of a century of violent revolutionary upheavals, a war with Iraq, the power struggles among the political groups, and the Shi’i clergy that came to the power in 1979 has been able to consolidate its hold over all the levers of power. “Many consider this transformation of the Shi’i hierocracy from a political force to a ruling regime as apolitical exemplification of the historical tension between ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ in Iran (2004: X).” According to Jahanbegloo, the clash between these two terms has been durable and influential in the political and cultural formation of Iranian society for the past 150 years.

Political changes continued the ideological implementations of the ruling regimes. “The Iranian revolution and post-revolutionary period best exemplify the concept of hegemony in practice. The effectiveness of the hegemonic leadership of the revolution by

Ayatollah Khomeini was partly due to his appeal to the common sense of the religious majority population. His hegemony continued after the revolution and was aided by the established of the Islamic state which backed up the Ayatollah's rule by repression (Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010:8).” Iran has been experiencing unavoidable transformation despite the ideological regulations. Moreover, the dissemination of cultural exchange cannot be stopped because the advances in the means of communication have helped many societies to contact with Western and other societies. The interaction with other cultures has an influence on identities and gender construction.

4.4 The Construction of Gender and Iran

Identities are not constituted on singularity, on the contrary, they are subject to different discourses and practices. Since Middle Eastern countries embed various nations, it is not far-fetched to outline the paradigms of the reconstitution of multi-identities by the following impacts. First of all, identities are constructed within social dynamics which have constant influences: “Identities are about questions of using history, language, and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves (Hall and Du Gay, 1996:4).” Secondly, the notions ‘us’ and ‘other’ are constituted within the ways the perceptions interwoven on the following divergences. “Humans create orderly worlds in which to live by creating patterns of similarity and difference, by sorting and categorizing phenomena and experiences. In this process, humans make a distinction between themselves and the rest of physical world, and between themselves and other humans. Thus, people sort themselves and others into groups that are assigned different meanings, uses and values (Rakow and Wackwitz, 2004:13).” *The other* in this study will frame the reconstitution of Iranian women identity formed under repressive regulations.

The explanation of the term gender requires the consideration of social, political and ideological dynamics. In this section, the process of gender reconstruction is given in these

senses. The following arguments presented by Judith Butler, Haideh Moghissi, Joni Lovenduski and Teresa De Lauderis converge in their relation to these dynamics of the women issues in Iran under the Islamic and Ideological reproduction. In this respect, the term gender does not denote a stable signifier as Butler maintains. “[G]ender is not always constituted coherently and consistently in different historical contexts, (...) gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. As a result, it becomes impossible to separate out ‘gender’ from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained (1990:3).” As for the women in Iran, political pressures and Islamic dogma have played significant roles on the constitution of the status and social relations of women. Lovenduski’s ideas on gender juxtaposes with Butler’s explanations. She states that gender cannot be merely defined on the assumption of biological differences. It can be assigned as performance in social, political, cultural and psychological contexts. “Gender is the set of social meanings attached to categories of male and female. Another way of conceptualizing gender is to think of it as a scale of attributes ranging from masculinity to femininity (2005:21).” The studies on gender argue the distinction between sex and gender. Butler maintains that “Originally intended to dispute the biology -is -destiny formulation, the distinction between sex and gender serves the argument that whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed (1990:9).” Butler’s argument on gender construction extends to the polarity between free will and determinism. In other words, she asserts that ‘the body’ appears as passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed.

Gender relations reveal the roles of individuals in a society in terms of ideology. Accordingly, gender differences inscribe hierarchical relations between male and female on determinations such as race, class, and sexuality. “The ideological function of gender is to fix us as either male or female and is the first in a series of binary oppositions that serve to construct us as male and female (Hayward, 2003:161).” Gender differences also prescribe ‘otherness’ in terms of national processes, as Naomi Sakr sums in her quotation from Floya

Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis' argument about how citizenship constructs men and women differently. They identify five ways in which women participate in national processes:

First, women are constructed as biological reproducers of members of an ethnic group. Second, (...) reproducers of boundaries of ethnic or national groups. This has necessitated the establishments of determining women's acceptable sexual behavior, limiting this behavior within the group. Third, (...) ideological reproducers of collectivity and transmitters of culture. Fourth, they signify national difference, and therefore act as symbols in ideological discourses of nation used in the construction, reproduction and transformation of the nation. Finally, (...) participants in national, economic, political and military struggles. (...) Different historical contexts will construct these roles not only in different ways but also the centrality of these roles will differ (2004: 72,73).

Each society constructs diverse gender identities according to variations in its customs, so "In the Middle East as elsewhere, historical and literary records show that it was not by social or economic, nor yet by generational and gender differences, that people saw the basic definition of their own identity, dividing self and other. These were-have been-determined by more traditional criteria (Lewis, 1998:5)." In respect to this, the role of the representation of national identity is highly credited in Middle East as an old and deep-rooted region. However, it has undergone significant changes in modern times. "For more than a hundred years, much of the Middle East has been under the spell of Europe-first influence, then dominance, and then, when dominance ended, influence again. During this time, Western ideas of national self-determination have profoundly affected all its peoples, Muslim and other (Lewis, 1998:15)." Whereas Western ideas have imposed their values, indigenous cultural productions have had a great endeavor to build their own representational aspirations albeit limited opportunities.

Since this study aims to analyze Iranian women's struggle in the post revolutionary period in terms of gender reconstitution, it is notable to mention the main framework on the politics of the Islamic regime concerning women in this period.

4.5 The Politics of the Regimes on Iranian Women

The post revolution state in Iran is based on Islam as its ideology. Zubaida highlights that the new elite attempted to Islamize the society much like the previous regime's modernization drive prevailed. He interlaces the applications of both regimes with Althusser's descriptions of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). "The education system and the mass media were used for indoctrination (1997:35)." As stated in the first part of the study, Althusser defines schools as one of the Ideological State Apparatus. "[T]he school (but also other State institutions like the Church, or other apparatuses like the army) teaches 'know-how', but in forms which ensure *subjection to the ruling ideology* or the mastery of its 'practice' (1971:133)." Althusser's ideas can be generated on the rules of the regime in relation to the various ISAs including the Family. The rules established on the family construction determine the gender relations and the status of women.

The question of women and the family was a central element of the Islamic oppositional discourse during the previous regime before the Islamic Revolution was declared. According to this oppositional discourse, women were condemned as being disruptive concerning social values. "The imposition of Western styles and norms, (...) debases women making them frivolous sex objects and victims of capitalist consumerism, and in process destroys family values, cohesion, and dignity. Islam would restore all these desirable values. This rhetoric, though, contradicted *shari'a* provisions for marriage and divorce which the mullahs attempted to restore after the revolution (Zubaida, 1997:114)." These arrangements made women helpless in the face of men's whims. Women, on the contrary, had some rights to initiate divorce. Zubaida states that the provisions about divorce were abandoned in the legal practice of the revolutionary regime. "The special Civil Courts (really *shari'a* courts in terms of personnel) instituted in 1979 and charged with implementing family law, continued with some of the previous procedures. In 1982, new marriage contracts were introduced which contained provisions enabling women to initiate divorce on a wide range of grounds, including husband's maltreatment,

delinquency, addiction, and contracting second marriage without the consent of the wife (1997:115).” However, these provisions are valid only if the husband signs. The unilateral right of men is kept consistent including polygyny and the custody of boys at age two and girls at age seven as Zubaida sums.

Islamic fundamentalists’ movements have committed to restore Islamic doctrine and teachings on women’s status. “The sex-gender system (...) is both a socio-cultural construct and a semiotic apparatus, a system of representation which assigns meaning (identity, value, prestige, location in kinship, status in the social hierarchy, etc.) to individuals within the society (De Lauretis, 1987:5).” Therefore, identities are constructed on various Islamic traditions and according to Moghissi these traditions are invented in the service of re-Islamization. “To such ends, they dig up medieval Islamic texts prescribing moral codes or invent rules of conduct when the need arises. For example, elements from a dress code practiced in past centuries are pronounced ‘Islamic’ and people are forced to adopt them as a symbol of their ‘Islamic identity’ (1999:73).” Iranian women have been repressed with the prohibition on dress code. The dress code has been one of the major controversies the regime legislated and maintained by law.

On the other hand, Reza Shah’s attempt to unveil the women and to ban wearing the *chadur* in Iran was considered as oppressive by some segments of the Iranian society. “On 7 March 1979, less than one month after the armed uprising that ended the monarchy in Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini demanded the reveiling women. (...) For Ayatollah Khomeini the reveiling of women symbolized the re-establishment of Muslim identity and cultural continuity that the social changes of the Pahlavi era had erupted (1996:140-141) according to Moghissi. She maintains that a group of women’s protests and resistance against the fundamentalists can be marked as a political awareness.

Women had wider freedom at work and public affairs during the presidency of Rafsanjani (1989-1997). That had enabled women to be more mobile and visible in public places. “There are many women (...) who resent the imposition, and who were encouraged by the more liberal atmosphere of Rafsanjani’s presidency to relax their

observance of the dress code. They wore brighter and patterned clothes, allowed more hair to protrude under the ‘hijab’ and used make-up. In the 1980s such liberties would have invited flogging and imprisonment, but in 1990s they elicited no more than reprimand or a fine (Zuibadi, 1997:118).” The compulsory veiling of women predominates debates about social justice and equality. Despite some loosened implications, veiling is still a controversial issue in Iran.

The laws on the protection of family and restrictions in labour force of women have also been debated in Iran. Joel Beinin and Joe Stork’s ideas juxtapose the implements of *dress code* in countries like Iran with the signification of women in the filmmaking. They urge that the state itself sponsors religious fundamentalism and social order is maintained with these confinements. “[T]he exercise of patriarchal authority extends to clergy, the police, or even the unrelated men, who take upon themselves to monitor the dress and conduct of women (1997:191).” Despite the controversial restrictions, women have attempted to overcome the difficulties and involved in various fork force.

The Islamization of public spaces in Iran unexpectedly raised the participation of women from the traditional backgrounds. “Under the previous regime, these women would not engage in public life which was considered secular. Traditional women’s public participation also received a boost because of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, which took many of their men away to the war front, necessitating women’s involvement with life outside the home (Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010:8).” In relation to women’s involvement in the work force, filmmaking has also welcome women directors, actresses and other careers in film settings.

4.6 Iranian Cinema

Before the explanation of Iranian Cinema, it is notable to mention the difference how Western cinema industries represent ‘the other’ and how national- indigenous cinemas represent their ‘otheredness’. Each reflects their own ideological aspects in the way of reconstruction of ‘the other’ and enunciates different angles of the issues, which are likely

to be portrayed subjective. 'The Other' is stereotyped culturally and pinned 'mysterious' as a European invention in the West and the term 'orient' is used to describe the image of the East as the other, "[T]he orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its colonies, the source of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other (Said, 1978:1)." As it has been mentioned in Third World Filmmaking as National Cinema section, national cinema has derived from the need of expanding nation's own aspirations. Thus, filmmaking in the Middle East has maintained the representation of their issues. Lina Khatip sums this resistance as, "Looking at the different aspects of the representation of Middle-Eastern politics in American and Arab films, three main threads can be drawn: the film's constructions of identities of the Self (as national identity) and the Other; the complication of notions of resistance; and the film's relationship with nationalism (2006:201)." In the first part of this study, National Cinema and the construction of identity have already been discussed. In the following section, the main discourse will revolve around how the othered identities (in respect to Western Cinema) represent the Others in their own cinema. As a matter of fact, this question will track the representation of women in the scope of Iranian Cinema which is considered a part of Middle Eastern Filmmaking.

4.6.1 The Modes of Iranian Cinema

Iranian Cinema uses the modes of a national cinema with its distinctive style and realistic stands. Common use of non-professional actors, documentary-fiction style, minimalism, low budget, real settings, minimal scripts, long shots and representation of social, cultural, political issues along with their ideological implements are most of the traits observed. On the other hand, by the New Wave Iranian Cinema period, there have been prolific productions with diverse modes. Laura Mulvey sums Iranian Cinema as "The characteristic film of the Iranian New wave shrinks in scope and expands in time, moving away from dramatic plot, action or romance into scaled-down events and location based stories of great simplicity. With a shooting style that tends to avoid close-ups or shot-

countershot, the camera takes on equivalently greater importance, and its relationship to what it sees enters into the picture, breaking down the cinema's conventional transparency (quoted in Tapper, 2002:259).” The political and social interventions shaped Iranian Cinema before and after the 1979 Revolution in respect to the controversy of modernity and tradition.

The two Russian defeats of the Qajars leading territorial losses and the grip of colonial powers bring Iran to an avoidable encounter with modernity. Dabashi remarks that confrontation with modernity and its resistance through prose and poetry have yielded new cultural creativity.

By far the most influential form of resistance from the earliest moments of the encounter with colonialism was the emergence of a powerful narrative of *social criticism* which was defining moment of Persian cultural production. (...) From the dawn of the constitutionalist movement in the first decade of twentieth century forward, Persian poetry was the principal cultural medium. (...) From the 1930s onward, modernist Persian poetry and prose were the twin peaks of cultural confrontation with a rapidly changing reality. While in the first three decades of the twentieth century *poetry* was the sole defining moment of Iranian cultural modernity, (...), from the 1930s to 1960s, Persian *fiction* secured an equally illustrious position. (...) It is only during the 1960s that cinema rises as the third, equally important, form of cultural creativity (2010: 215).

Iranian filmmakers have had to work under scrutiny and uncertainty as a result of restraints of rules of Islamic regime. Not surprisingly, the representations of national identity, gender and ethnic differences are restricted. “In the heat of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the Cinema Rex in the city of Abadan was set on fire, and hundreds of people were burned alive. (...) Before and after that tragic incident, many movie theaters were bombed in symbolic protest against Pahlavi corruption (Dabashi, 2001:6)” The government started to establish rigid repressions on the film industry. Thus, as for making political cinema, most filmmakers have attempted to express their political opinions by symbolism, allegories and metaphors. Narrative structures of these kinds of films inexplicitly emphasize political discourses. Evidently, Iranian filmmakers have put a great effort to enunciate cinema as a cultural production despite the governmental censorship on

production and distribution of films. Nonetheless, “With the founding of the Farabi Cinema Foundation in 1983, positive steps were taken to liberate arts from the clutches of the clerics and promote national cinema, Iranian films began to be noticed in the West. With Abbas Kiarostami, Bahram Beyza’i, Dariush Mehrjui and Mohsen Makmalbaf leading the way, (...) Abolfazl Jalili, Majid Majidi and Jafar Panahi (...), Rakhshan Bani-Etemad and Tahmineh Milani, Iranian Cinema today is the most vibrant and challenging cinema of the Middle East (Colin, 2006:10).” As Iranian Cinema stands with the conventions of Third World Filmmaking, the notions used are coded accordingly. Shohat states that “Third-Worldist films are often produced within the legal codes of the nation-state, often in (hegemonic) national languages, recycling national intertexts (literatures, oral narratives, music) projecting national imaginaries (quoted in Rowden, 2006:47).”

As mentioned earlier, politics and culture are intertwined closely. The 1978-79 Iranian Revolution with its Islamization policy attempted to take control of culture. After the revolution, the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) and a strong reformist movement since 1997, affected Iranian Cinema as Zeydabadi-Nejad sums. The socio-political transformations were named as reformism, “What began with the candidacy of Mohammed Khatami for presidency in 1997 evolved into a sweeping popular movement with high hopes for democratization, civil society, and rule of law. Almost in tandem, the women’s movement made its presence felt in 1990s, engaging vocal criticism in the post-1997 period. The challenge that the reformist movement posed led to severe backlash from the conservative establishment (2010:2).” According to Zeydabadi-Nejad, reformist-conservative confrontation dominated national politics. However, the former one has legitimized oppressive regulations on filmmaking.

After the revolution, filmmakers have produced a large number of films consisting social and political issues. It is stated that indirect means such as symbolism, metaphor and allegory have been used to evade censors. The Qajar Dynasty used the film for state propaganda whereas the Pahlavi Dynasty (1926-79) attempted to weaken traditional lifestyles and religious leadership following Western style modernization. “During the

Pahlavi period, policies of modernization were implemented with an iron fist, without much regard for public opinion. Obviously, the modernization drive did not extend to the regime itself which remained an undemocratic traditional monarchy (Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010:31).” Thus, it can be concluded that under the Pahlavi monarch filmmaking was restricted because of its significance to the regime. The Qajar dynasty and the Pahlavi monarch carry similar traits in terms of the manipulation of film. During the Pahlavi monarch, the dynasty’s achievement was underpinned. “At the time, cinemas and television were inundated with Hollywood films and locally produced programmes which comforted to the states modernizing ideology. However, there was practically no state support for local production of fiction films which relied on box office earnings (2010:32).” Culture can embody political discourses creating political positions on issues like family, sexuality, gender, religion, artifacts, and so on. Filmmaking is a tool of reflection of culture, so issuing gender enunciates an important paradigm.

4.6.2 The Representation of Women in Iranian Cinema

Gender issues have been reflected in various aspects in cinema since gender is reconstituted not only as a basic notion of sexual difference, but also as a domain of series of hierarchical power relations had influence on gender divisions. In Middle Eastern Cinema, it is uncommon to see women displayed in the form of an idealization of a star image or as an icon for the gaze or active controllers of the look in contrast to those in classic cinema. “In classic cinema, the woman image is typically fetishised both by means of lingering close-ups which, through interrupting the flow of the narrative, constitute woman as spectacle; and also by means of glamorous costumes, make-up, settings and lighting surrounding female stars (Kuhn, 1982:61).” Since the representation of gender highlights social constructs, Middle Eastern Cinema has a tendency to use realistic modes while depicting women. Karen Ross and Carolyn M. Byerly’s ideas reveal that representation of women reflects the reality in social lives. ”Women are presented mostly in

subordination to men (2004:42).” This subordination is not based on fictional narration, on the contrary, it reflects the patriarchal constitution of the society in general.

Regarding the filmmaking in Middle Eastern countries, Iran displays a prominence with its contribution not only with the number of films but also with the variety of the modes of Iranian filmmaking with the issues of gender relations. “The traditional Shi’i clergy were deeply opposed to cinema, and this had strong implications for Iranian Cinema during and after the revolution. Before the revolution, the clergy believed that Iranian and imported films were a threat to the public morals. This had mainly to do with the representation of women. Many of the film-e farsi¹ included women without Islamic dress who sang and danced in the cafes (Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010:34).” After the revolution, women in Iran were deprived of personal and social freedoms under the clerical government that replaced the Shah. However, they struggled against the clerical authority to define the conditions of their lives. The experience of Iranian women in the post-revolutionary movement has been the continuation of the previous ones. Moghissi describes this continuing process as the following “Under the pretext of preserving the authentic cultural heritage against foreign influence, the most reactionary practices have been preserved, antiquated sexist traditions reactivated, and dissenting voices silenced. Women’s political mobilization in many national liberation movements has served to obscure and cloud the patriarchal and undemocratic character of these movements (1996:1).” The confinement of women have shaped the narration and visualization in filmmaking. The films issuing gender have accelerated the transformation and raised awareness despite the oppressive political and social restrictions.

Films issuing gender identities and relations can be referred as political because they project patriarchal values and the implements of the institutions. The prominence of women’s issues in some Iranian films, many of which are made by female directors, has evoked much interest in the role of gender in Iranian Cinema. The involvement of women

¹ Many have discussed film-e farsi as a pejorative term of reference for the popular melodramatic cinema which often featured song and dance routines in Imitation of Indian Cinema (Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010:32).

in Iranian Cinema has evidently been an ongoing debate due to legitimized subordination of women in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Nonetheless, religious prohibitions have not restrained women's presence in performing and visual arts along with other forms of arts. The commercial films made under the Pahlavi regime have been collectively referred to as film-e farsi.

Since issuing gender in Iranian Cinema cannot be segregated from political, social and cultural segments, filmic productions have reflected the fundamentals of the new regime following the Islamic Revolution. There have been increasing numbers of filmmakers issuing women's struggle by both female and male directors.

4.6.3 Iranian Directors Representing Gender Issues

Iranian Cinema has achieved to attract the audience on national and international grounds with its scope of films issuing religious, social, and political prohibitions on women. Richard Tapper pinpoints that women's visibility in cinema has been through rough impediments after the 1979 Revolution. That indicated the time when the domestic film industry was on the razor's edge of bankruptcy and was trying to survive of low government subsidies. Following a few years of the Revolution, the wartime film industry facing lower subsidies and funding could not stop actresses to emigrate from cinema to the TV screen. Meanwhile, TV films had similar depictions of the negative female images to the pre-revolutionary period ones according to Shahla Lahiji, "Screen women could also be selfish, illogical, domineering, highly sensitive and jealous, with nothing else to do but make life hell for their wise, noble, humble and altogether loveable manfolk. More often than that, even these women were nice enough to listen to men's advice, repent, receive absolution and become chaste (2002:223)." During this period, by the way, female characters were divided into 'goodies' wearing chador and 'baddies' in an overcoat and a headscarf as Lahiji sums: "Again, this was a pointed publicity weapon aimed at women who, contrary to that image, expressed a wish for more freedom to choose their own attire, even without violating the Islamic dress code (2002:223)." The reactions against the

confinement of women visibility have created more films on gender and affected the modes of Iranian Cinema.

Both male and female directors' contribution helped to raise awareness on gender and to initiate a cultural change. The contribution of female filmmakers to Iranian Cinema, meanwhile, has given new perspectives to social and cultural situation of women. They attempted to emphasize and re-modulate the real situation of women in the Iranian society. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the revolution of 1979 changed the regulations to code Islamic values and veiling of women and contacting between sexes. The cinema industry had to bring new conventions accordingly. These conventions included acting, touching, gaze between actors and actresses. "Most of the repressive measures were related to the depiction of women on the screen-no close-ups, no women central characters, no appearance of the female gender over nine years of age without the *hejab* (Islamic dress code), no tactual contact between unrelated members of the opposite sex, etc. (Colin, 2006:10)." Iranian filmmakers have had to tackle all these restrictions to reflect women's experiences and perspectives. As Gonul Donmez Colin states, the 1980s Iranian films were able to take positive steps when President Mohammad Khatami was the Minister of Islamic Guidance and Culture. "He declared that cinema *was not a mosque* (2006:10)." Alison Butler lists the directors representing women in Iran ranging from Barzam Barzai to Marziah Meshkini. "The regulation of the industry brought images of women back to the screen, although their roles were circumscribed in ways that favoured moralistic idealization. Barzam Barzai's *Bashu the Little Stranger* in 1985 exemplifies this trend, with its depiction of two powerful maternal presences, one living and one dead. (...) In *Bashu*, a symptomatisation of the idealization of women occurs (2002:96)." Mohsen Makhmalbaf's *Time of Love* (1991) is a trilogy that centers a married woman, her husband, and a lover. The film was strongly condemned and banned when it appeared in cinemas.

4.6.3.1 Iranian Female Directors

Contemporary Iranian Cinema has evolved new approaches of many female filmmakers in terms of visual and narrative significations. The female filmmakers who are mainly concerned about visualizing and narrating women's role and status in the society have underlined the political regulations and their effects on the society and women. The subjects range from realities of social constitutions, repressed feelings, marriage and divorce, polygamy, dialectics of modernity and tradition, gender relation and hierarchy and so forth. Many film critics reveal that after the eight-year war with Iraq, the number of female filmmakers' productions unexpectedly increased. "Kobra Saidi's *Maryam* and Mani (1980), Marziyeh Boroumand's *The City of the Mice* (1983), Pouran Derekhandeh's *The Little Bird of Happiness* (1987), Tahmineh Ardakani's *Golbahar* (1986), Faryal Behzad's *Kakoli* (1989), Tahmineh Milani's *Children of Divorce* (1989) (Dabashi, 2007:384)." Zeydabadi adds "Samira Makhmalbaf, Merziyeh Meshkini and Manijeh Hekmat (2010:109)." to the list of women filmmakers who made films on women's issues as well as the taboo subject of women's romantic love. Likewise, Hamid Reza Sadr highlights three Iranian female filmmakers as prominence in gaining recognition. "Despite the silencing of women in Iranian Cinema during the 1980s, three female directors- Rakhshan Bani Etemad, Puran Darakhshandeh and Tahmineh Milani- were the torchbearers for their gender. (...) Etemad's *Nargess* (1992) was one of the first films after the Revolution to focus on sexual relationships, and played with another Iranian taboo: a sex between an older woman and her younger lover (2006: 257-258)." Since the film analyses focus on Milani's films, it is not possible to mention most of the films women shot. Therefore, Etemad and Meshkini's protruding films will be summed in brief since these films highlight the conditions of women in social, political and cultural concerns in Iran.

Etemad uses melodramatic story as a metaphor for the moral decline depicting the contradictions of the lower classes while issuing employment, sex, and law in *Nargess* according to Sadr. Etemad's films are recognized as stretching the boundaries of the censorships because she criticizes regulations and social values. Meanwhile, Etemad's first

documentary has a much wider implications than the conditions of Iranian women as Dabashi highlights. “By the time Rakhshan Bani-Etemad stood behind the camera to make her first documentary, *Farhang-e Masrafi* (The Culture of Consumption, 1984), the feminine voice and vision constitutional to Iranian cultural modernity was well in place and at her disposal. (...) She wages a war on patriarchal readings of the body so powerful that no other visual theorist comes close (2001:223).” She issues the power in various dynamics involving cultural constitutions, social institutions and financial bases. The other protruding film of Etemad is *The May Lady* in which she avoids visual representation of the male character. “In the *May Lady* (*Banu-ye Ordibehest*, 1997) breaks taboos on subject matter with the story of a female documentary director (Mino Farshi) who is a divorced single mother with a lover. (...) Instead of meeting in person, the characters talk intimately on the telephone, exchange letters, and quote Persian poetry to one another. The two voices are interwoven in a displaced representation of sexual love (Butler, 2002:97).” The director avoids using visual representation in some scenes due to the censorship restrictions, nonetheless, she uses other tools of communication to portray the contexts of women’s struggle and sexual segregation.

Marzieh Meshkini’s *The Day I Became a Woman* (2000) protrudes in Iranian Art Cinema with the presentation of three stories about womanhood. The film is set in three stages of life; childhood, young adulthood, and old age. The film is appraised for its outstanding images and significations along with allegories. The first story focusing on a nine- year old girl whose birthday changes her life with the prohibition of playing with boys and obligation of wearing a veil under the traditional and religious norms. The second story projects a young woman along with others in chadors taking a bicycle race. Her husband and male relatives chase and threaten her with divorce and exclusion for her so-called immoral act. At the end of the story, she is surrounded by the men and loses her struggle. The end is the portrayal of the patriarchal construction pervading in the society. In the last story, the old woman in a wheelchair hires a young boy to buy modern furniture and goods to set up a luxurious house. She also purchases a wedding dress which she longed for

all her life. The importance of the film lies in its concern on tradition and modernity. Alison Butler's comparison *The Day I Became a Woman* with Etemad's *The May Lady*. "As political cinema, Meshkini's film is in some ways more challenging, and in other ways more oblique than *The May Lady* (2002:97)."

The signification of gender relations is problematic in Iranian Cinema. After the revolution, the representation of gender has undergone a new progress. "The cinematic treatment of women in Iran has been an index of social and political constructions of gender from the beginning, but especially since 1979 (Tapper, 2002:17)". Not surprisingly, the revolution brought obstacles in portrayals of women with censorships and social constraints. Mulvey states that the censors' approach to cinema is simplistic and one-dimensional, however, the Revolution created the conditions in which innovation becomes an essential element in cinematic practice. She remarks her interest in post-revolutionary Iranian Cinema, "Islamic censorship reflects a social subordination of women and, particularly, an anxiety about female sexuality. But it then produces, as a result, a 'difficulty' with the representation of women on the screen which has some –unexpected-coincidence with the problems feminists have raised about the representation of women in the cinema (quoted in Tapper, 2002:258)." Despite the obstacles, the signification of women has undergone changes with the contributions of films issuing gender. Tahmineh Milani is one of the directors that has been recognized with her films highlighting gender reconstruction.

4.7 Tahmineh Milani

The New Wave Iranian Cinema began in 1969 and it reached maturity after the 1979 Revolution bringing more female directors to prominence. Milani has become well-known for issuing women's rights and the 1979 Iranian revolution. She put women as the protagonists of her films and criticized the political implements. Zeydabadi-Nejad remarks that she is one of the few who does not scare to call herself as a feminist. "Although many others engage in a critique of patriarchy, they deny being a feminist, for fear of hostile

reactions from the conservatives as well as marginalization and attacks by sexist critics and filmmakers. Some of the leaders of the Islamic Republic have spoken out against feminism (2010:124).” Her persistency against the women discrimination has shaped the films she directed.

Milani’s career in cinema started in the heat of political and social controversies. “While the universities were closed in the early 1980s during the so-called revolution, she took up work in studios to support herself (Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010:111).” Most of Milani’s movies covering gender issues can be categorized as a social practice rather than entertainment. These films not only reflect the challenges of the women in the patriarchal society and the regime but also aim to raise consciousness. Dabashi states that “Tahmineh Milani’s *Two Women* (2000) and *The Hidden Half* (2001) established her as one of the most socially conscientious and politically controversial filmmakers of the time. Milani is not a filmmaker of enduring aesthetic significance or cultural oversight. But she is a courageous rabble-rouser of uncommon dedication (Dabashi, 2007: 386).” The state did not approve the criticism she made against the ideological implementations during the revolution and arrested her in 2001 “[F]or allegedly supporting ‘counter revolutionary’ groups in her film *The Hidden Half* (Butler, 2002:100).” Nonetheless, the regime failed to stop her making films and had a leading role on issuing women in Iranian Cinema.

Milani shot first feature *Children of Divorce* in 1989 when the number of the women directors was more than the ones in most Western countries according to Butler. “These women are active in both types of filmmaking which have evolved in Iran, the popular (national) cinema which operates within (and debates) post-revolutionary Islamic values and the art (international) cinema which addresses its criticism of those values to a cultural elite within and outside Iran (2002:97).” Her other controversial film *Fifth Reaction* (2003) received reactions from conservatives and reformists. The fact that one of the cinema theatres showing the film had an arson attack reveals taboos on gender relations and the depiction of women.

The characters featured in most of Milani's films mainly involve women who suffer under oppressive Islamic regime in Iran. Female characters can be considered as role models for female audiences. Discussing female heroes, Sherrie Inness suggests, "[C]haracters which break established stereotypes are important for offering a more powerful vision of womanhood and as 'new' models for female comportment (quoted in Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010:16)." Issuing women subjugation in Iran, her films have opened an arena of debates.

Milani has been accused of encouraging women to oppose the current system and conservatives condemned her for one-sided view of gender issues. Bahram Beyza'i expresses his views during the interview made by Colin that there is a fashion of making films about women and some films are provoking. In fact, Beyza'i criticizes Milani as being provoking and probably daring, but not very deep "Because I think, she feels her time is short and she has to say everything and when the time is short, she has to prove only. Some works are very realistic and others in realistic form because realism in cinema is a form, too. Many films in Iran have a realistic form but are not realistic (2006:37)." Milani urges that she depicts the realities of the social and political construction in Iran.

The following analyses of her two films will attempt to find answers for how *the gendered other* is constructed. Since the films are *the other's* perception of *the self*, the frame of the analyses will reflect the representation of women's identity, roles and relations changing within social, political, and cultural paradigms in post-revolutionary Iran. Tradition versus modernity will also be covered in the analyses of the films of which protagonists are women having been through challenges.

4.7.1 Two Women/Do Zan (1998)

'Two Women' has been announced as one of the groundbreaking movies in the scope of the representation of the lives of women, which highlights two poles of the society; tradition and modernity in the post-revolutionary period. The film is almost the most

significant of Milani's other films because many critics agree that this film established her known as a filmmaker concerned with women's issues. Milani explained that she had to wait for eight years before the script of *Two Women* could be approved in her speech at the University of Tehran in 1999 as Colin states. Colin also remarks that "Produced during Mohammad Khatami's presidency, the film drew over three million viewers nationally despite the fact that advertisement of the film on television was banned (2007:84)." After the release of the film the religious authorities hated and boycotted the film because of her radical criticism on the status of the women in Iran.

The story is based on two women, Fereshteh (Niki Karami) from a religious and traditional background and Roya (Marila Zare'i) with a modern life style. As a matter of fact, they represent two sides of a coin, referring oppositional binaries. Two women's lives intersect at the university where political upheavals take place after the Islamic Revolution when universities were all closed for three and a half years.

The analysis of this film will focus on the main character, Fereshteh, a woman who challenges against traditional values and institutional restrictions of the Islamic regime. The study will also discuss the how the identities of Fereshteh and Roya are reconstructed under the conditions of the traditionally male-dominated and controversially modernizing society with the regulations of the Islamic regime.

Two Women embodies three specific dynamics in terms of gender construction: political upheavals, patriarchal domination of society and modernity/tradition. Concerning political controversies of the period, the director depicts the influences of the state regulations on society. Therefore, the film is significant in terms of political filmmaking because it reflects how the Ideological State of Apparatus maintains its existence through reproduction. "Milani turned her attention to the brief period of political freedom immediately after the revolution, during which the universities were the hub of political activity in Iran. That period ended with the heavy-handed repression of all leftist parties and organizations (Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2010:111)." In fact, that period evolved many changes and conflicts in social structures. One of the important issues that the film indulges

into is the effect of these conflicts on gender identities and relations shaped by the reinforcements and institutional laws in a patriarchal domination.

4.7.1.1 Fereshteh

Taking these points into consideration, Fereshteh's life can be examined in two periods. The first period shows her as a successful university student with high self-esteem standing for her rights. She earns money by tutoring to pay for her own expenses and learns English from books and tapes on her own. All these depictions suggest that she is a figure of a modern Iranian woman in a society subjected to Islamic law. She is portrayed in public places, which is the sign of mobility of a woman related to modernity. In the second period, on the other hand, the closing of universities by the regime twists her into a married woman discovering the gap between the reality and her expectations. The consistent domination and repression that mainly her husband and parents maintain subjugate her and as the social structures generate, she starts to lead her life in domestic places.

Fereshteh's confinement starts with a stalker harassing and chasing her constantly when she goes to university. One day, he wants to talk to Fereshteh on the bus and he gets frustrated on her denial and starts to shout, "The girl is standing here and talking about parties with her boyfriends, she has no shame". He tries to get the approval of the people, but to his surprise, a woman and a man support the girls and the driver throws him out of the bus. His words display the reproduction of patriarchal repression. However, the people's reaction demonstrates the transformation of the society, which used to be more repressive on women, "They have been talking about the school" says one of the women defending them.

Fereshteh refuses to go to the police station despite the stalker's persistent chase and harassments. The reason for this is, as the dialogue between Fereshteh and her father suggests, the presence of women at the police station refers to the destruction of family honour. Realizing this fact, Fereshteh says to Roya, "As if I have no other problems! My

parents wouldn't like me going to the police station." However, later things get more complicated because the stalker throws acid over a relative while helping her to carry the books. His father arrives from Estefan and blames Fereshteh. "Damn you doing this to me, is this why you came to Tehran, to ruin me and humiliate me." Despite her father's reprimands, Fereshteh's uncle defends her. "She made a mistake, she is sorry." Fereshteh does not accept that it was her fault. "But I haven't done anything." In fact, her uncle's apology confirms the domination of men. The way her father treats her seems to be ironic especially when compared to the incident on the bus where the strangers defend her against the stalker's harassment, but her father reproduces the fixed role attained as a decision-maker to maintain traditional values. "I am disgraced, robbed of my dignity. I wish she were dead. Go pack your staff. You have done all the studying you needed, you gained us enough glory." Social order is based on the reproduction of protecting family honor in patriarchal societies. Therefore, she has to keep silent and obey the punishment given by her father, which makes her subordinated to both her father and the stalker. The construction of family may restrain people's lives and oblige them to fulfill acceptable moral rules and guidelines of religion. Fereshteh's exclusion from public places is related not only to social values but also to political subjugation of women. Society confirms the patriarchal implements, so men have the authority to make decisions in the name of their wives, daughters or other female relatives.

When the universities close in 1981, she has to go back to her traditional hometown. Soon after, she finds out that the stalker who used to harass her in Tehran chased her track. To make matters worse, one day the stalker causes the death of a child when she tries to run away from him in Esfahan. Since she is involved in the accident, she has to go to the police station. Her dad condemns her again although she is innocent. "We have been disgraced. Our daughter is at the police station. You have humiliated me. Totally disgraced me. God damn me for sending you to college. What a mistake, I have to pay for the rest of my life." "We have lost our dignity, our daughter is either in jail or in court, what is left of our dignity? I sacrifice my family so she can go to college, to make me proud, instead she is a

disgrace.” Ferestheh defends herself “What disgrace? What have I done to put you in disgrace? And, money you sent me I repaid in double. Why don’t you get it, some loser was harassing me, it is not my fault. I won’t cry. You belittled me. Instead of supporting, you break me. I am a human being.” Her efforts to defend herself reveal her persistence on demanding her rights, but she cannot display consistency in doing so, and eventually accepts the traditional roles.

4.7.1.2 Fereshteh and Ahmad

Ferestheh’s life changes after the court. She gets married unwillingly to the man who helps her in the court because her father believes that if she marries, their family honour will be maintained as the social construction suggests. As for her husband Ahmad, he seems to be a modern man in the beginning and misleads saying to Ferestheh ”I will provide everything you want. We will live wherever you want. I will provide the wedding. I will give you a written permission for school.” The laws and regulations concerning married woman prescribe husband’s decision. Therefore, as the decision-maker, his promises turn out to be his personal expectations from Fereshteh’s becoming a housewife under his superiority and he demands her obedience. “I have done my part, bought you a house and others, I saved you. I sacrificed my family, my pride for you.” In fact, for Fereshteh’s part, she has to perform the role which has been experienced and regenerated by means of tradition for many years.

Ahmad does not want her to socialize since traditional lives have boundaries with attained roles. His repressive attitudes include jealousy, so public places and strangers can be considered as a threat to destroy these boundaries. To exemplify, Ahmad hides the phone, mocks with her when she does exercises to keep fit, never lets her go out alone, and he even does not allow her to read. He even gets angry when he finds out that she buys books for their sons. It can be concluded that Ahmad’s treatment to Fereshteh is the reflection against modernity because Fereshteh wants to be independent and have a free-will on her rights as a human being. The confinement of women’s behaviors, clothing, and

feelings represent the exclusion of Fereshteh from public places. This exclusion is legitimized with marriage which attains her primary roles as a mother, wife and a housekeeper. Sadr evaluates this period as the continuation of the previous years with its similarity to the oppression of women. "Women were still technically second-class citizens, remaining the virtual property of men; girls could still be married off at the age of nine, wives were not permitted go out without their husband's consent (Zeydabadi-Nejad, 2006:261)." Concerning legal rights, the laws legitimize the superiority of men over women.

As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the prohibition of social mixing between the genders is one of the restrictions prescribed by the society and the regime. Ahmad refuses Roya's request to visit Feresteh because she is an independent woman and she may change Fereshteh's mind. He fears of losing his domination on her. "You remind her past." Roya replies him with a surprise "Her past? What are you talking about? The university has opened and Feresteh hasn't returned." Ahmad decides in the name of his wife. "She doesn't want to study anymore. Her life has changed. She has her family life, don't ruin it for us. She doesn't want to see you anymore. If you care for her, don't write and call." He actually does not want Roya to interrupt the construction of a traditional life he reproduces. Fereshteh's situation reflects the official mood in the 1990s as a woman deprived of equal rights and confined in a family life reproducing traditional roles.

Realizing the fact that she cannot continue her life with Ahmad, Fereshteh convinces her dad for the divorce. The judge's each question projects the implementations of patriarchal domains whereas Fereshteh's answers display her determination to get her rights. "Does he pay the bills? Does he provide shelter? Does he beat you? Does he have indecent friends? Does he drink alcohol? Gambles?" When Fereshteh responds "No.", the judge looks unsatisfied and asks for another concrete reason. "He is negative, suspicious, abuses me, insults me, or locks me." Fereshteh's answer does not convince the judge and his following answer maintains the reproduction of the ideological oppression of women by law. "Lady, these are not sufficient cause for divorce. Don't waste the court's time!"

Ferehteh protests the judge by saying, “I live with a man I didn’t choose. He is destroying my self- esteem. This man wants to turn me into somebody. I am a human. I want to live like one. I want to be equal in this marriage, to have some say.” Fereshteh’s determination cannot change the legislation based on pre-fixed and concrete gender roles in the traditional society. Ross and Byerly’s remark converges with Fereshteh’s situation. “Politics, social values, customs, hierarchies, ideological state apparatus including government, religion, family, police, army, legal constitutions and so forth have a great role in the process of the construction of an individual’s personality. Family and childbearing perpetuates woman’s place in the private sphere and puts her in conflict with her activities outside its realm (2004:41).” Therefore, it can be concluded that Fereshteh’s life is restricted to a question with a wide range of socially reproduced answers. “What will people say if she gets divorced, if neighbours find out she was in the court and prison, if she goes out without the company of her husband” and so forth. Meanwhile, Roya’s life represents a stability compared to Fereshteh’s.

4.7.1.3 Roya

The construction of Roya’s identity will also be examined in two periods, which is outlined as Fereshteh’s in the previous paragraphs. The first period covers Roya resembling a woman with social privileges and having a tolerant family supporting her education. She can freely travel and meet her friends. This indicates the flexibility of her parents contrary to Fereshteh’s. For instance, her father promises to buy a car for her if she passes the driver’s license exam. In addition, Roya is portrayed as having good driving skills when she goes to Esfahan from Tehran on her own. Driving addresses the presence of the women in the public places and it serves as an instrument of rebellion against the hegemonic values in a male-dominated society.

As for the second part of Roya’s life, she first appears at the construction site where she works with men and ordering one of the workers about work security. She is in the management position as an architect, which implies a strong and self-confident woman

with her manners. Accordingly, Roya's portrayal having a male-dominated profession signifies a transformation in terms of weakening Islamization and penetrating Westernization. The modern office of the architects, paradoxically, creates an image of the contrast with female workers in hijabs (modern Islamic version veiling) and khimars (a headscarf worn by Muslim woman that hangs down just above the waist). Whereas, it also indicates that the urbanization weakens patriarchal social controls on women with hijabs. This kind of veiling can be considered as a symbol of negotiator to enter public places. The office also displays social mixing between genders, where female and male employees work together. The employment of women illustrates the flexibility of the political and ideological stands against women. Jahanbegloo sums the period that *Two Women* is set as, "Since 1990s, the employment rate for women has accelerated, and this is because of a proportional increase of those belonging to the lower strata that have sought employment outside their homes. Increased employment has been partly due to the expansion of education for women (2004:160)." The destruction of traditional roles requires changes not only in social constructions but also in legislations, which are maintained by schools, companies and institutions as Ideological State Apparatuses.

Roya and her husband are screened to have a modern relationship of equals in contrast to Fereshteh's marriage. The most significant example can be the dialogue between Roya and her husband when she is on her way to Esfahan. She asks him to do the domestic things which are culturally fixed to women roles. "Pick up Golnaz, warm up some food. Give Golnaz her dinner." Her husband replies as, "You sure there is nothing else? Dry cleaning, laundry, mom's shopping, plants to water?" Roya gets annoyed "Are you being sarcastic?" He answers, "No, no!" Roya's reaction to her husband points out that she does not want to reproduce the role attained. "Then, don't talk this way. It is not nice." This dialogue shows Roya and her husband establish a relationship with equal rights in contrast to relationships based on traditional roles.

4.7.2 Unwanted Woman/Zane Ziyadi (2005)

Milani's *Unwanted Woman* projects a 35-year old teacher Sima's struggle with an abusive husband and her endurance against social and political constructions. The film also examines the sex division and the gender hierarchy in contemporary Iran. The director portrays Sima as a strong, polite, and intellectual woman under the influence of tradition and modernity. She makes a living by teaching and selling dishware to people whereas her husband Ahmad is unemployed. Although Sima appears to lead a double life in the first half of the film, she depicts a brave and more self-confident character defending herself against patriarchal oppression in the rest of the film. The analysis of *Unwanted Woman* will discuss Sima and her relations with the other characters of the film within social, political and cultural reproductions.

4.7.2.1 Sima

Sima teaches a class full of only the girls and the first scene of the film starts with one of the girls' reading her notes of complaints in front of the class. Her students confide in her because of her forward-minded and modern manners. The girl complains about the restrictions girls have to endure in a patriarchal society where the parents expect the reproduction of the traditional roles fixed to women from early ages. "Our parents have imprisoned us in a cage called 'family' and they continuously hit us on the head with a hammer called 'no'. Don't go to your friend's house, your friend can't come here." These are the signification of immobility of the women -even when they are young- who physically cannot enter public places. Girls also have to help with the housework which is the necessity of domestic roles attained to woman. "Wash the dishes, sweep the house, iron your brother's shirt, clean the greens." Just like mothers, girls are expected to do the chores at home unlike their brothers.

Schools serve as the Ideological State of Apparatus conducting the repressive implements. When the girl condemns the strict school rules which they are obliged to

submit, the other girls agree with her “If you don’t wear an Islamic veil in school, your discipline grade will be zero. Why do we have to wear a veil in a school where there are no men and boys?” Her objection reveals their awareness on their rights and signifies the urge for tolerance in patriarchal domains. All the sentences the girls utter beginning with *if* and *don’t* require to be complied by the girls and these ‘restrictive’ orders put them into inferior position. “If you wear colorful socks, if you hold a branded schoolbag.” As mentioned earlier in the first part of this study, Althusser maintains schools are a part of ideological apparatus where the students learn to read, write, techniques, knowledge and many other things along with the ‘rules’ of good behavior. In this way, the educational ideological apparatus installs certain reproductions to assure the maintenance of social order.

Dress code is one of the implements that must be obeyed in Iran. Veiled identity of the woman in the Islamic Republic is reconstituted by religious and ideological enforcements. Therefore, colorful clothing as the images of modernity represents the transformation of gender construction. The girl’s demand for wearing colourful clothes reflects that they do not want to be restricted with the rules at a young age. “We are only 14 and we want to wear cheerful colors.” Another girl protests the inequality that her mother imposes. “Adults ask us not to do the things they used to do when they were at our age. For example, I saw my mother’s album when she was 15 years old. What makeup she used to wear! What shoes! But, she says I shouldn’t do these things!” The period refers to the controversial the Shah regime when Westernism prevailed. The girls’ words reveal the difference of the regulations prior to the Islamic Regime. In addition, since religion has constituted culture in Iran, dress code is compelled for the resistance against social change.

4.7.2.2 Sima and Ahmad

Sima is a respected woman both at school and in the society and has a leader role among her friends, which can be observed during the gathering in her garden with other women asking for an explanation on women’s employment rights. Nevertheless, Ahmad takes her granted and degrades with his impudent behaviours. One day, he meets a young

woman, Saba from a village and asks Sima permission for her to stay for a night in their house. He expects her to be submissive and ready to sacrifice for his demand without asking questions. When she refuses, he gets angry, “Until now I thought I have married a mature and educated woman.” He forces Sima to pretend to be Saba’s relative so that he will not be arrested for being seen in the public together. Since the laws prevent unwed couples from consorting in public, Ahmad needs Sima’s approval at the police station where the regulations of the Islamic regime are enforced. He ironically mentions Sima as an educated and mature woman when he demands her submission.

Ahmad’s personality reflects the reproduction of male-centered society. He consistently devalues Sima with his indiscretions and she seems tolerant to him to some extent. However, when she realizes his husband’s purpose bringing Saba as a mistress, she presents a determination in challenging the established order of male-domination in a traditional culture. She gradually sets a firmer relation with her as they travel to Saba’s hometown and Saba gets impressed with her politeness and strength. Saba’s ideas change about Ahmad changes as she finds out that he abuses his wife just like her own husband did.

4.7.2.3 Sima and Saba

As Sima compares herself to Saba’s appearance and personality, she finds some differences and similarities. While the differences are mainly in their age and education, the similarities outweigh regarding their gendered identities. Having been through common domination and subordination of the society and the regime, they unify against Ahmad at the end of the film. Both women reject being submissive and obedient, which displays the transformation of traditional gender roles undergoing a plight for equality. For instance, in one scene, Saba protects a young girl from her boyfriend who shouts at her in a restaurant. When the restaurant owner tries to stop the man humiliating the girl in public, he reacts and says, “It is none of your business. It is a private matter.” He reveals his domination over the girl. However, Saba says “It is my matter. I am her friend.” Although Saba does not know

the girl, she defends her. This shows her strength against men and her concern on women degradation.

Sima and Saba's unification may refer to Moghissi's definition on gender awareness. She states that promoting power against traditional and cultural practices sustains power without identifying themselves as feminists. "What they are struggling for is what Western feminists have identified as gender equity. Once women start to recognize and question sex-hierarchy and male power and to develop an awareness that what they feel and experience comes from not from their personal failure or bad luck, but is the part of the shared experience of women resulting from an entrenched sex-subordination and sex-power relations, they are gender-conscious in a feminist sense (1996:1)." The film revolves around re-establishing an equal man-woman relationship to define the place of women in Islamic society. Likewise, Sima and Saba defy the social roles and destruct attained behaviours that Denis McQuail puts forward. He states that personality traits are reproduced with the limitations of society. "Teaching of established roles and values by ways of symbolic rewards and punishment for different kinds of behavior and as the learning process whereby we all learn how to behave in certain situations and learn the expectations which go with a given role and a status in a society (quoted in Zoonen, 1994:34)." In that sense, it is possible to conclude that both women's defiance can be interpreted as 'revolutionary', shifting the traditional roles to search for equality.

The argument at the hotel among men and women represents a public debate about gender relations and hierarchy. When they have to stay at a hotel because of the road blockage, a group of people has already gathered in the restaurant. The police arrive and announce that they are looking for the murderer who is a male teacher killed his wife and her cousin on the suspicion of betrayal. It raises the virtue of chastity which refers to sexual behavior of a man or woman unacceptable according to the fundamentals of a culture, society and religion. One of the men says, "It is a good thing that he killed his wife. He has enacted god's order. A filthy woman has to be killed. This man deserves a reward." A woman's answer raises the issue of unjust implications of law legitimizing the superiority

of men in the society. “What about filthy men? What should be done to them?” The following incident shows the audience how the law controversially implemented on honour killings: Sima happens to meet the suspect that night and she finds herself helping him run away. On the way, she asks him the reason for his running away. The dialogue between them reveals that the laws are in favour of men in such a case. “I know if a man finds his wife with her lover and kills them, legally he won’t be sentenced. Of course, it is different for women, they will receive dead penalty.” Meanwhile, the argument in the restaurant reveals the hostile attitudes of the man against women in general. He insults one of the women when she says her opinion. “You shut up with the make-up you are wearing. Such a pity that you are a woman!” The man who sits at the same table with the woman defies, “What the hell you do if she was a man?” The man seems to ignore the women “I would have thought him a good lesson. A little bit of freedom for you woman and look what happens to them?” The man’s attitude reflects the opposition against women with modern manners, who wear make-up and stand for their rights. As for ‘given’ freedom, the man’s words can be interpreted as the deconstruction of male domination and the cause of ‘disobedience’.

The film, in fact, shows that both Sima and Ahmad are culturally oppressed in some ways. Ahmad’s identity also shaped with traditional norms. To exemplify, he confesses in the last scene that his marriage was too early for him because he wanted to have fun with girls and do whatever he liked when he was younger. However, as a married man, he cannot freely meet girls since it is not allowed in Iran.

5. CONCLUSION

As the development of technology contributed to the emergence of multiple mass media tools, audience has had the opportunity to reach not only dominant/mainstream cinema but also various national productions all around the world. The availability of national films has accelerated the announcement of local, ethnic, social, and cultural aspirations through representations. Using signs and images, representations are used to generate a meaning on certain beliefs and perceptions while social, political, historical and cultural issues shape representations. Accordingly, it is known that repressive states have always constrained and censored films opposing their ideology. By doing so, states pervade their emancipations on societies and moralities by legitimating forces and institutions.

The second part of this study focused on the mainstream and political stands with taking visual and narrative forms into consideration. Since mainstream cinema has a tendency to create illusion with its fiction mode, it generally determines 'virtual reality' to be counted as 'real'. Based on high budgeted film industries, mainstream cinema has also initiated alternative and experimental films in recent decades. Independent film productions have enabled the spectator to be more active through using depictions of social issues. As for political cinema, directors urge destruction of standard modes of dominant cinema and reconstitute significations to deploy opposition to regimes and social orders. Despite the fact that political cinema has a tendency to manipulate representations using a propaganda style, this art form has also been a media tool to criticize regimes and states. Political cinema established new dimensions in filmmaking including Third World Cinema. Resistance against dominant pervasion of popular culture and determination to enunciate national and indigenous aspirations yielded into dialectic filmmaking conventions in diverse regions. Middle East is one of these regions with its alternative, experimental, authentic and specific filmic modes.

Middle Eastern countries have always been in the heart of political upheavals. Accordingly, filmmaking projects the reasons and results of these conflicts with national cinema conventions. The filmmakers have interwoven documentary and fictional modes to

depict social and political issues. They have also generated realistic filmic approaches to raise awareness in society.

The last part of the study covered Iranian Cinema under the heading of Middle Eastern Filmmaking. Iran is one of the Middle Eastern countries using ideology to legitimize Islamic social order. Since identities are reconstituted with the dynamics of Islamization, Iranian Cinema reflects the influence of political and social realities, religion in respect to political filmmaking. Having established Islamic theocracy, Iran's Islamic Revolution of 1978-1979 has been remarked as a significant event of the twentieth century, which highlights issues of controversy between tradition and modernity. There have been diverse impacts to frame the representation since the emergence of cinema in Iran. Likewise, the representation of women has been controversial because of the fact that the state constraints women visualization for the sake of maintenance social order. Ideological implements shape women's status and relations with others. Since gender relations reveal roles of each individual, gender differences inscribe hierarchal relations between females and males in Iran.

This thesis analyzed the impacts that shape the representation of women in relation to reconstruction of gender identity under patriarchal domination in the post revolutionary period. The hegemony of the regime has been manipulating Iranian society by the Ideological State Apparatuses as Althusser remarked. Thus, the effects of the ideological implements have shaped significations. The scrutiny of the state and the conservative society make women enter cinema space harder than men. In addition, representation of women and being a female filmmaker may be announced as having dual restrictions in Iran because of the regulations enforced. Constituted with Third World Filmmaking modes, Iranian female director Tahmineh Milani's two protruding films are chosen to outline the representation of Iranian women. *Two Women* and *Unwanted Woman* juxtapose with their focus on changing social processes aligned with the struggles of women under patriarchal domination. Milani's signification of women in social and political circumstances defies the repressive state regulations while reflecting the post-revolutionary period. The films show

that the polarities of tradition and modernity determine gender identities in many ways. The representation of the women mainly revolves around the confinement involving immobility, dress code, male domination and ideological implements.

Two Women stretches symbolism in most of the scenes to highlight the women's conflict in the social, cultural and political circumstances. As for the representation of women, the separation and the reunion of their friendship reveal the oscillation between modernity and tradition in respect to the reconstitution of gendered identities. The shift of Fereshteh's modern Islamic clothing from a scarf to a chadour after leaving the university remarks that veiling is a fundamental indication in the reproduction of social and ideological implements in that period. Similarly, the last scene of the film in which Fereshteh looks perplexed in a black chadour, as widowed and free after the death of her husband, creates the image of a traditional woman in the beginning of new challenges in her life. Her final words refer to the vulnerability of women experiencing life between modernity and tradition. The challenges that Fereshteh represents are the symbols to show the audience the continuation of the vicious cycle of the repressions on Iranian women who search for equal rights. On the one hand, the main male characters of the film, Fereshteh's father and husband and the stalker, portray the power positions of men. Although Milani's use of symbolism is likely to intervene in the exposition of realities, it succeeds in the depiction of the repressed women in a male-dominated society ruled by the Islamic regime. Not surprisingly, Two Women has sparked arguments among the critics. The film is condemned for being unrealistic in the representations of the male characters. Criticisms revolve around Fereshteh's husband with a harsh portrayal of 'a dictatorial' feature. Likewise, the repetitive dialogues of the men, especially the father and the husband, do not actually give their feelings because their presence on the screen asserts a reference to the reproduction of the traditional male-domination.

Milani's Unwanted Woman engages gender hierarchy from the point of a female protagonist. It is significant that most of the scenes of Unwanted Woman are shot in public places. The director attempts to depict women's struggle in public places where women are

excluded or restricted. The school, the restaurants, the streets and the police station are the places where patriarchal reproduction is maintained. These scenes project the tensions about the constitution of gender relations and roles. The girls at school criticize the school system and their parents, the people in different restaurants argue about women's status and the police implement the rules on the relationship of unwed couples. The director also draws attention to the struggles of the women in a male-dominated social order with implicit emphasis on the dress code. Meanwhile, the modern Islamic clothing of Sima and Saba's reflect the flexibility of the regulations on veiling.

The name of the film implicitly inquires to spot 'the unwanted woman', which is the preference of the audience to decide either Sima or Saba as unwanted. Is Sima unwanted on behalf of her husband or Saba on behalf of Sima? In fact, the answer does not solve the question of the women's common problems on gender discrimination and the struggle between the traditional and the modern in the country ruled by Islamic regime. To sum up, the final scene shows the reaction of the women oppressed by the man and they depart him all alone. This rejection may symbolize the protest against socially constructed male-domination.

Two Women and Unwanted Woman embed convergences in several aspects. The main convergence is the issue of gender discrimination which is constituted and reproduced by social values and political regulations. Accordingly, the controversy between the traditional and the modern is given by narration and visualization in detail. Both films have female protagonists who struggle to change their destiny. The tendency of using allegorical and symbolic elements forms the structure of these films because the policies of Islamization and the censorships on issues of sex and religion restrict filmmaking in Iran. It is not surprising that there is no depiction of women and men intimacy in both films.

Despite the fact that the critics debate on Milani's films with portrayals of gender issues one-sided, she attempts to depict people from various social, economical, political and cultural backgrounds. The signification of main male characters in both films reveals cultural, social and traditional suppression as well.

To conclude, Tahmineh Milani reflects the challenges of Iranian women under the influence of social, political, cultural and ideological structures. The continuity of the repressive limitations on signification of gender identities does not impede the filmmakers to criticize the regimes and social orders. On the contrary, it brings along new dimensions with alternative filmic conventions.

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APPENDIX

Appendix-1: Tahmineh Milani's Biography

Biography

Born in Tabriz in 1960, Tahmineh Milani began her film career in 1979 at the Free Film workshop as a researcher for screenplays and worked as script girl and assistant director. In 1986 she graduated in architecture from the Science and Technology University in Tehran. Her first feature film, *Bachehha-ye Talagh/Children of Divorce*, was the co-winner of the Best First Film award at the 8th Fajr Film Festival in 1990. Milani's international breakthrough came with *Afsaneh-ye Ah/The Legend of Sigh and Do Zan/Two Women* as a director and screenwriter. In 2001, she was imprisoned for defaming the Islamist revolution with her film *Neemeh-ye Penhan/The Hidden Half* and was released on bail following pressure from international artistic community and the president, Mohammad Khatami. While pending judgement on her trial, she co-produced with her husband, Mohammad Nikbin, Dariush Mehrjui's *Bemani/Stay Alive* (2002).

Filmography

1989 *Bachehha-ye Talagh/Children of Divorce*

1990 *Afsaneh-ye Ah/The Legend of Sigh*

1991 *Digeh Cheh Khabar?/What Else is New?*

1994 *Kakadu*

1998 *Do Zan/Two Women*

2001 Neemeh-ye Penhan/The Hidden Half

2003 The Fifth Reaction

2005 Zane Ziyadi/Unwanted Woman

2006 Cease Fire

(Colin, 2006:90)

Appendix-2: Curriculum Vitae of the Author

Selma SONGÜR

Born in 1971, Selma Songür completed high school education in Istanbul. After getting a degree in ELT from Anadolu University, she has worked as a teacher of English at various schools and universities. Besides ELT, she is interested in cinema, acting and photography. In 2007, Songür attended Yeditepe University to do her master's degree in the department of Radio, TV and Cinema. She has also some published articles on cinema. She intends to continue her academic studies.