# A Review of Paul Schrader's Selected Works from the Perspective of Cinema Critics

**Maryam Solhi[1]**
*M.A. Student of Culture and Media Studies, West Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran*
**Mehdi Mokhtarpour[2]**
*Assistant Professor of Sociology, West Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran*

***Abstract:*** *This study reviewed Paul Schrader's selected works from the perspective of cinema critics and was conducted using qualitative survey method. Data collection was performed through in-depth interviews. First, 40 experts in the field of film review were contacted and seven people were interviewed. In total, about 16 hours of discussion was conducted on the subject. Findings included the evaluation of family selection, urban layout and furniture, religious and political dimensions, and the evaluation of male and female roles in Paul Schrader's selected films. In addition, the finding included the extent to which Paul Schrader's films are popular and the overall critical evaluation of his works. The data were analysed by conducting interviews and reviewing the obtained data through axial coding method. Since the data were collected through interviews, the results were obtained analytically in a general report of the analysis process and results are presented by considering the views of the researcher.*

## Introduction

Paul Schrader is one of the leading figures in the 1970s American cinema. As a film critic, he has written one of the most significant theoretical books of cinema during this decade: Transcendental style in cinema. As a screenwriter, he has written the most essential film of the decade: Taxi Driver. In addition, he has worked with the most important directors of the decade, such as Spielberg, De Palma, and Pollack. As a director, he began his work this decade with the failed film Industrial Workers to taste defeat and reach his favorite theological- Bressoni world in American Gigolo. He started writing film reviews since studying at university and believes that writing reviews was the only way for him to enter the closed circle of newspaper. He considered his high fame in his third year of university for his troubles and the opposition of the university to run the Film Club. The film "Male/female" changed Schrader, it was a personal, political, original film, and according to Schrader, the film of his generation. The first student film he made was borrowed from the film the Chinese Woman; a film about student riots seizing a television station and reading a leaflets. When he entered the UCLA, he spent the first two years watching 25-30 films a week, preparing himself as a film critic for the future. Schrader's relationship with the history of cinema has been highly analytical. His first screenplay was named The Plumber and he believed that the screenplay was completely ironic and he was satisfied that this film was not made. (Jackson, 2009) Here is a brief reference to his selected works being reviewed in this study.

Taxi Driver directed by Martin Scorsese and written by Paul Schrader in 1976. Travis Bickel (played by Robert De Niro) is the main character of the film who is 26 years old, suffering from chronic insomnia. He decides to work as a taxi driver at night to escape insomnia and becomes more acquainted with the crimes in New York City. Meanwhile, Travis meets Betsy (Cybill Shepherd), one of the candidates in the campaign office of Senator Charles Palantin, who is running for presidency. Although Betsy becomes interested in Travis out of curiosity, she rejects him because of his inappropriate behavior. After getting disappointed with Betsy, the process of mental decay that had begun in Travis accelerates. Thus, Travis aims to stop corruption violently and save the society he fought to defend in the Vietnam War. Dying of the Light is a 2014 production directed and written by Paul Schrader which

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[1] Email: Maryamsolhiii1992@gmail.com
[2] Email: Mokhtarpour.Mehdi@wtiau.ac.ir (Corresponding Author)

was originally directed by Nicholas Winding Refen, the director of the film Drive played by Harrison Ford. The film tells the story of an elderly CIA agent, Ivan Lake played by Nicholas Cage, suffering from a brain disease and should be retired. However, he is tired of recalling the memories of a fugitive Middle Eastern terrorist named Benir played by Alexander Karim, who had tortured Ivan decades before he escaped from captivity. He no longer listens to his superiors' orders and follows Benir until he reaches him. Ivan who is accompanied by a younger colleague played by Anton Yelchin, follows his enemy to Bucharest and the film ends with a bloody fight.

First Reformed, a 2018 production, is another work being written and directed by Schrader. First Reformed is the name of a historic small church in Snow bridge, northern New York, which has been constructed by Dutch immigrants 250 years ago. A distraught middle-aged priest named Ernst Toller with a tragic past played in this famous church with by Joel Jeffers works the black custodian and another senior pastor of the modern church in this area. Toller, growing up in a church-serving family, has served in the military and lost his young son in the Iraq war. The consequences of this loss are widespread and have caused his wife to divorce from him. Now, with this loss and serious stomach pain, he delivers not-so-fiery speeches to a few audience and acts as a guide for a small number of tourists. He is somehow annoyed that this church is not just a place of worship and doubts about what life requires for him. He constantly writes his thoughts but after a while he destroys them. At this time, a young woman named Marry and her husband invite the priest to come to their house to talk to her husband, who is not in a good mood. Mary's husband, Michael, is an environmental advocate and is highly upset that his pregnant wife wants to have a baby in a world with a completely dark future due to environmental hazards. Michael shares his deep worries during this conversation with Toller. The priest, with a brief reference to his own destiny, attempts to moderate Michael's thoughts and asks him to have other meetings. The screenplay of The Last Temptation of Christ, directed by Martin Scorsese, is based on a novel of the same title written by the Greek writer Nikos Kazanzakis and written by Paul Schrader. This film is a product of 1988. In this film, we see the people who stick to violence or sexual relationship with a woman and attempt to live for justice or redemption and be sacrificed. The fake Christ of Scorsese attempts to ask God take the responsibility of prophecy and sacrifice off his shoulder to be relieved not to be crucified, but finally accepts .However, Satan does not leave Christ even on the cross and appears in form of an angel and brings him down from the cross and deceitfully says: "You have passed your exam and now you can marry your beloved woman Mary again. Christ is fooled by Satan and marries his mistress and has children. At the time of dying at an old age, Judah comes to his bedside and complains: "I have accepted to blow you off to be crossed and reach Christians salvation, but you were fooled by Satan and chose a normal life and marriage. » Here, Christ realizes the deception of Satan and asks God to return him to the cross to be sacrificed for human sins and as it happens, Christ shouts on the cross: My mission has been accomplished.

**Research objectives**
**Primary objective**
- Reviewing different dimensions of Paul Schrader's selected films.

**Secondary objectives**
1. Reviewing the narrative aspects in Schrader's selected films
2. Reviewing the film audience aspects in Schrader's selected films

**Theoretical framework**
**Structuralism theory**
Structuralist linguists who are methodologically the successful examples of the 20th century, developed structuralism in other fields based on the principles of Saussure's linguistics. In this regard, semiotics which is a field of research represents an extensive "linguistic turn" or according to Frederick Jameson, a "complete rethinking of everything based on the achievements of linguistics." Film semiotics should not only be considered as the special attention of contemporary thought to language, but also indicate a great interest in the methodological awareness and orientation of contemporary semiotics, including Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914) and the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1913-1857). Nevertheless, Ferdinand de Saussure is the founder of European structuralism and the most influential

figure in film semiotics. Saussure's linguistics is part of a general shift from nineteenth-century involvement with temporal and historical affairs- as considered in Hegel's historical dialectic, Marx's dialectical materialism, and the evolution of Darwinian species- towards the contemporary consideration of spatial, systematic, and structural matters. However, many of the blind spots of structuralism are because of not considering the fact that history and language overlap, although from the structuralists' point of view, the descriptive dependencies of "simultaneity" and "being at time" do not refer to the phenomenon itself but to ab approach adopted by the linguist. Levi Strauss considered kinship relations as a type of language and extended the analytical methods previously used on phonological issues in the evaluation of these relations and the logic of structural linguistics in the field of social, mental and social phenomena and structures. He extended the idea of dual confrontation, which is the principle of phonological systems, to the area of human culture in general. The constituents of myth such as the constituents of language find meaning only in relation to other elements such as myths, social customs, and cultural codes which can only be perceived on the basis of structural contrasts. In the field of film, the structuralist approach implicitly means moving away from value-based review which is concerned with enhancing the artistic status of the media, filmmakers, or particular films. Structuralism / Authorism spoke about genre and authorship based on Levi Strauss' concept of myth during the late 1960s. In dealing with directors, semiotics has little interest in classifying them in terms of aesthetic values and focuses more on how films are generally perceived. As Levi Strauss had no interest in the authors of Amazon mythology, thus structuralism has no particular interest in the artistry of individual authors. While the author's attitude praises certain directors as great artists, all filmmakers are artists in semiotics and all films are art just because the socially constructed status of film is the place of art. (Sojudi, 2004)

**Semiotics theory**
In the US, Nick Brown (1982) and Edward Branigan (1984; 1992) studied the viewing angle of the film. In France, some theorists continued the path of Metzi's semiotics and studied the position of picture (Omoun, 1997), textual analysis (Omon and Marie, 1989), narratology (Goodrow and Just, 1990; and Otto 1989), expression (Mark Verne), and soundtrack (Michelle Shawn). A major part of the studies has been conducted in the field of film expression; In other words, the totality of scattered actions which turn the author's intention into a textual discourse, resulting in the text of "produced" by a filmmaker "for" audience. In this regard, the work of Francesco Casetti (1986 in Italy, 1990 in France) about the film can be mentioned. He considered film as a discourse and believes that film takes advantage of indicators, i.e. the traces referred to the speaker of a discourse. Casetti corresponded the narrator to the pronoun "I", the audience to the pronoun "you" and the unspoken narration, i.e., the story, to the pronoun "he". He distinguished three areas of research in the theory of expression:
1. Studying the expression signs which indicate the presence of audience in the film
2. Studying the place of audience as determined through different compositions (objective scenes, subjective scenes, direct audience, objective but unreal symbols)
3. Tracing the audience trajectory in the film through direct and indirect implications, suggestions, and guidelines.

Other theorists have followed the linguistic streak of semiotics, not its psychoanalytic streak. While a group of epistemologists (Bordwell, Branigan, Kroll) considered their works in conflict with the structuralist and poststructuralist theories of film, as based on linguistics. Another group, especially Dominic Chateau, Michel Colin, and Warren Buckland, worked in the fields of semiotics, cognitive science, and loss application although Chomsky could be as inspiring as Saussure at this time. The goal of applied cognitive semiotics, an intellectual movement tied to the names of Francesco Casetti and Roger Edin, is to evaluate the production and read film as a planned social action. In linguistics, pragmatics is a branch which deals with what happens between a verbal or written action and its reception, i.e. the techniques of creating meaning due to language and the effect of language on the parties to a relationship. Semiotics continues the cognitive application of Metz's perspectives in The Imaginary Signifier, which is associated with the active role of the audience that the existence of the film is the result of his look. Semiotics of cognitive application is not very interested in the sociological study of the real viewers, but deals with the mood of the audience during the film; In other words, it has nothing to do with the audience as they live, but is considered by the audience as the film asks him to

be. Casetti (1986) examined the ways in which the film announces the audience's presence, assigns a place to him, and forces him to follow a trajectory. While the audience was passively in encoding predetermined codes in the early theories of film semiotics and at was deceived by an ideological apparatus in the best case. Casetti considers the audience as an active interpreter. The film gives the audience a special place and role, but the audience can accept or not accept that place according to personal taste, ideology, and cultural context. Throughout its history, cinema has attempted to perfect the technique, language, and conditions of reception to the extent to be adapted to the requirements of imagination ed. The space of imaginary (narrative) communication is becoming the dominant space in Western societies and non-Western societies. According to Edin, fantasy is a process by which the audience is forced to react to and accompany the story; the process which motivates us to empathize with, love, or hate characters.

Edin divided this process into seven distinct operations:
1. Coding: Making analogical auditory-video signs
2. Storytelling: Making a fantasy and fictional world
3. Narration: Timing the events related to antagonistic subjects.
4. Considering the world of fiction "real"; if it is objective or artificial.
5. Belief: In other words, the system of disconnection by which the audience suddenly becomes aware that they are in the cinema and experience the film as if it was reality.
6. Stage makeup: The operation which defines all moments of the film uses musical and melodic work, play of looks, and framing to adapt the audience to the rhythm of the film's events.
7. Fantasy: The aspect which determines the position of the audience who see the field of film expression as the field of imagination and fantasy not as genuine self.

The audience know that they witness an imaginary story that they do not personally reach, an operation which leads to a paradoxical result, making it possible for the film to affect the depths of the audience's soul. From this perspective, non-fiction films are the films which block aspects of the fantasy operation or the whole (Sojudi, 2004).

**Poststructuralist theory**
Poststructuralism generally refers to the shift from signifier to the signified and from speech to expression. The poststructuralist movement including Foucault, Lacan, Cristova, and later Roland Barthes in addition to Derrida was the beginning of a general distrust of any centralist and pervasive theory. Deconstruction aims to specifically refer to Derrida's works, while poststructuralism is a more extensive and general term used in North America more than in Europe. Such deconstruction provided a basis for a deep skepticism on the possibility of obtaining any broad metalanguage because it was believed that the metalanguage signs are doomed to uncertainty as the signs of instability are constantly out of the text and enter the increasing number of other implicit texts. If structuralism believes in self-established structures, poststructuralism seeks the moments of rupture and change. The most poststructuralist analysis and theory of film was often based more on Lacan's "Return to Freud" than on Derrida's deconstruction, showing its presence in the field of film theory and analysis as a method of reading. Emphasis on skeptical reading, consideration of repressions and contradictions, and questioning the film texts or texts about film, place the assumption that any text is placed in such a way that at the same time loses its place, as well as the belief that all texts are in conflict with each other in a constructive way, now they completely dominate film studies. (Nowruzi, 2004) Poststructuralism loosened the textual meaning and undermined the scientistic belief of early semiotics that analysis may obtain the totality of its meaning by identifying all codes of a film. In film theory, the analysts such as Marie Claire Rupar, Michael Ryan, Peter Brunt, David Wills, and Steven Heath explained the implicit meanings of deconstruction. Rupar converted Hieroglyph as a sample set of signifying systems into a textual mission of cinema as a typewriter. He breaks and explodes them through sample readings of films such as M and the Voice of India instead of controlling the films. According to Rupar, film texts potentially play dynamic structural contrasts and the detachability of montage can break the sign by playing on the differences between material signifiers. Films are divided between two forces including writing and anti-writing, one of which tends to the dissemination of textual energy and the other tends to meaning and representation. (Ibid)

**Cognition theory**

This theory which is rooted in the empirical sciences and scientific studies of the human mind and cognitive processes deals with the audience's perception of the film and their reactions to the film, as well as the textual structures and the cinematic techniques which result in his perception and reaction. In cognition theory, he writes that passive recording is not sensory stimulation and sensory inputs are filtered, deformed, placed next to other inputs, and compared to form a continuous and stable global inference. According to Bordwell, the active audience observes fabula or the film story in the process and the perception of different audiences of the film is not completely the same. In fact, epistemologists not only had a clear theory, but an approach to film studies; Bordwell does not like such tendencies in film studies to speak with general confidence but presents macro theories, and he does not consider epistemology as such theories. According to him, epistemology like most theories may be mixed with a new theory or left behind. We can only hope that we are somehow right and the fact that we will be useful somewhere. Cognition theory in cinema can be highly developed due to its interdisciplinary nature as well as its relative novelty in cinematic studies. This theory is condemned for being completely dependent on science and lack of paying attention to cultural, political, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientations, etc. involved in establishing the audience's relationship with the film (Shahba and Saeedzadeh, 2014).

**Method**

The research used in this study was semi-structured in-depth interview. In this type of interview, the researcher's approach can be somehow guiding, but in any case it is he who offers the subject of the in-depth interview. The researcher has full freedom in conducting the interview as the interviewee has full freedom in his answers. In this case, doing some interviews seems helpful. In in-depth interviews, the researcher attempts to observe the hidden content in the interview and analyze it qualitatively. The statistical population of this study included artists, critics of Iranian cinema, media specialists, directors, and screenwriters who are familiar with Hollywood cinema. First, a list of Iranian film critics was provided by the Iranian Critics Association to select the people who can present significant and real information for the study with their answers. Since film form review is not related to the researcher's field of study, the critics who have more content review in their work history were selected. Purposeful sample selection based on information richness increases the internal validity of qualitative studies. In a qualitative study, the sample size cannot be predicted from the beginning, thus the face-to-face interview was conducted among those who were willing to be interviewed. The interview was conducted with open-ended and semi-structured questions and the interviewees were asked about Paul Schrader's selected works through these questions.

The main interview questions are as follows:

1. How do you evaluate family and marriage in the film Taxi Driver?
2. How do you evaluate the type of design in this film, whether the urban furniture or the interior design at home or indoor space, in the film Taxi Driver?
3. How do you evaluate the political discourse (national and foreign) in the film Taxi Driver?
4. How do you evaluate the religious and non-religious attitude in the film The Last Temptation of Christ?
5. How does Schrader define Christianity in the film First Reformed?
6. How does Schrader define family and spouse selection in the film First Reformed?
7. How does Schrader evaluate the type of design in the film First Reformed, whether urban furniture and interior design at home or indoor space?
8. How do you evaluate the religious and non-religious attitude in the film Dying of the light?
9. How do you evaluate family and marriage in the film Dying of the light?
10. How does Schrader evaluate the type of design in the film Dying of the light, whether urban furniture and interior design at home or indoor space?
11. How do you evaluate the political discourse (national and foreign) in the film Dying of the light?
12. How do you evaluate the role of woman in these works?
13. How do you evaluate the role of man in these works?
14. To what extent are Schrader's selected works audience-oriented?

15. How do you evaluate Schrader's works in general?

**Findings**
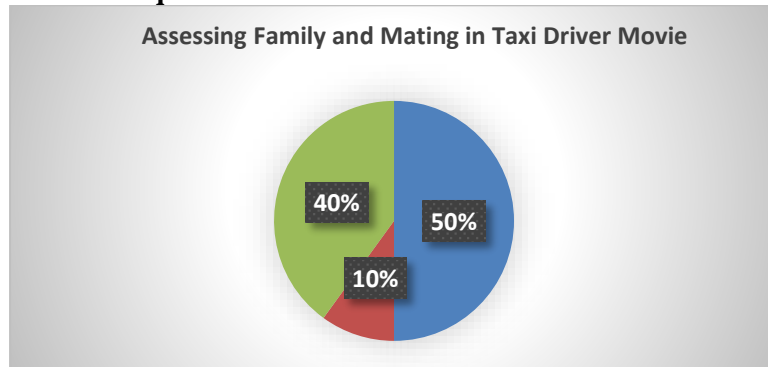**Frequency of answers in the questionnaire**



*Figure (1): Evaluation of family and spouse selection in the film Taxi Driver*

Thus, 50% of the respondents believe that family values are preserved in the film Taxi Driver and 40% believe that family in this film is not a sacred institution and the values of spouse selection are not seen in it. In addition, 10% of the respondents believe that Travis is confused in this concept and fails to follow any specific path.
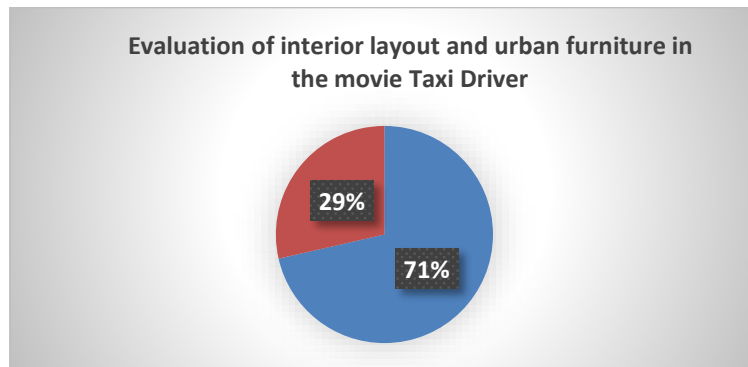


*Figure (2): Evaluation of interior design and urban furniture in the film Taxi Driver*

Thus, 71% of cinema critics believe that the atmosphere governing the film Taxi Driver is dark in which despair and betrayal are pervasive and there is no justice. Furthermore, it is taken from noir atmosphere and 29% agree that the hidden protest is visible in the color and Mise-en-scène of the film. Noir film is a phrase which was first introduced by French critics when confronted with American films in 1946. These films, which were considered as a kind of trailer, were classified as a subgenre of crime or gangster works. In a different analysis, these works can be included in a cinematic wave which began in the early 1940s and continued until the late 1950s. Such works were inspired by several cinematic and literary currents before them. For instance, the films of the French poetic realism during the first half of the 1930s affected noir film due to their pessimism and dark atmosphere. The most highlighted effect was the contribution of the expressionist current of German cinema, which was known for its distinctive style of lighting, as well as use of shadows and high contrast images during the 1920s. Such visual features should be understood along with the narrative elements of noir film, being borrowed from American detective stories; Violent detective novels which played a significant role in the storytelling and heroes of noir films. Noir film used crime themes in its specific style and finally delivered a more mysterious work than a typical crime film. In noir film, the main characters were mainly rough and gray men with penumbra characters such as penumbra lighting on their face. The scenes illustrated the dark spaces which indicated a kind of destruction, corruption, danger and general moral crisis (Adib, 2020).
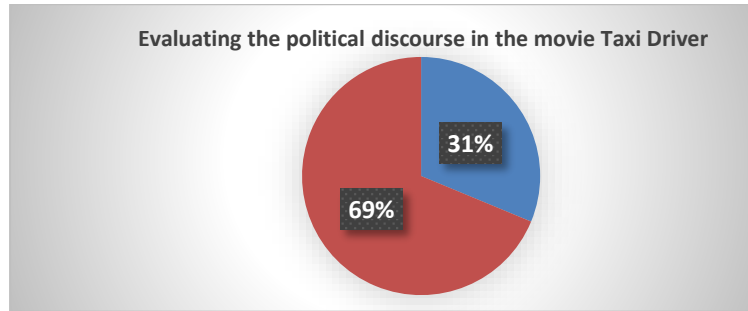
*Figure (2): Evaluation of political discourse in the film Taxi Driver*

It can be stated that 69% of the respondents consider Taxi Driver a political film and this is a public discourse against the protesting government. In addition, the political atmosphere in New York is chaotic. Further, 31% of the interviewees do not consider Taxi Driver as a political film.
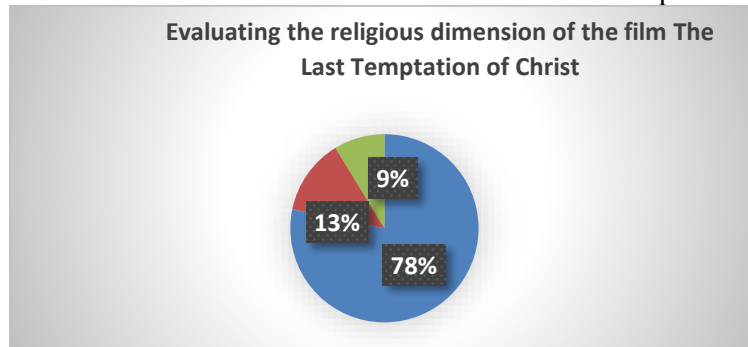


*Figure (3): Evaluation of religious dimension in the film The Last Temptation of Christ*

In this evaluation, most critics agreed that the film was anti-religious, as the film was criticized by the public and cinema critics in 1998. In addition, 13% of the critics, citing Paul Schrader, considered the reason for this anti-value as the combination of three religions, and the appearance and justification of Christ's contradictory and chaotic behavior in this film.
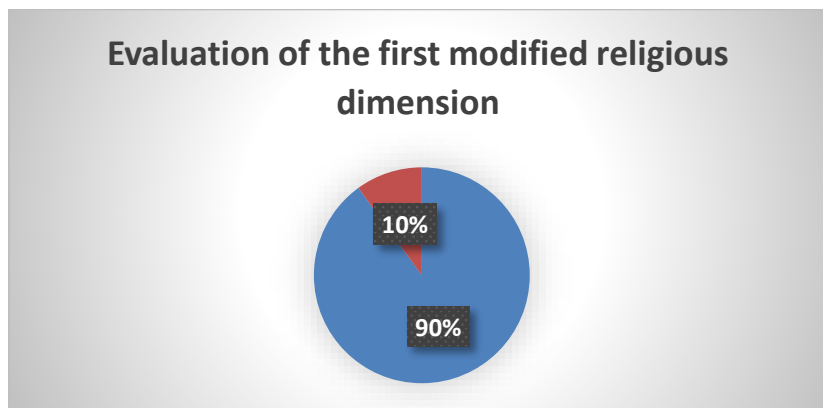


*Figure (4): Evaluation of religious dimension in the film First Reformed*

Thus, the majority of critics agreed that the film was anti-religious and 10% of them believed that Paul Schrader's message was that religion should be criticized easily or he believed that Christianity has some shortcomings and aimed to review this religion in this film.
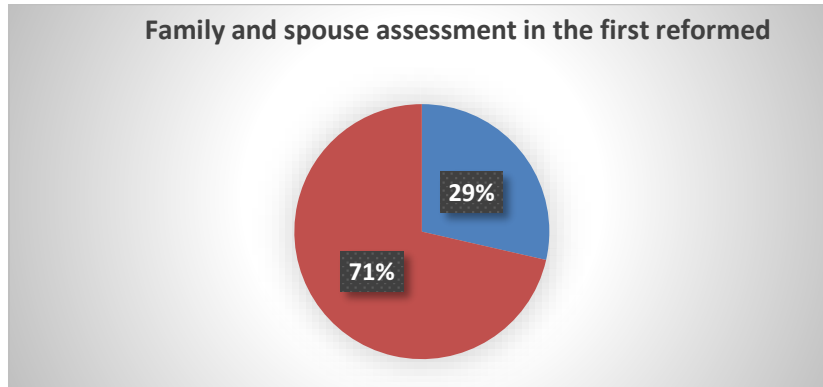
*Figure (5): Evaluation of family and spouse selection assessment in the film First Reformed*

It should be noted that 71 %of the critics inferred the values of family in this film as faded and the reason for this belief is the loneliness of the priest and his family aversion. Someone who has not attempted to start a family. In addition, 29% believe that family values were strengthened in the film First Reformed.
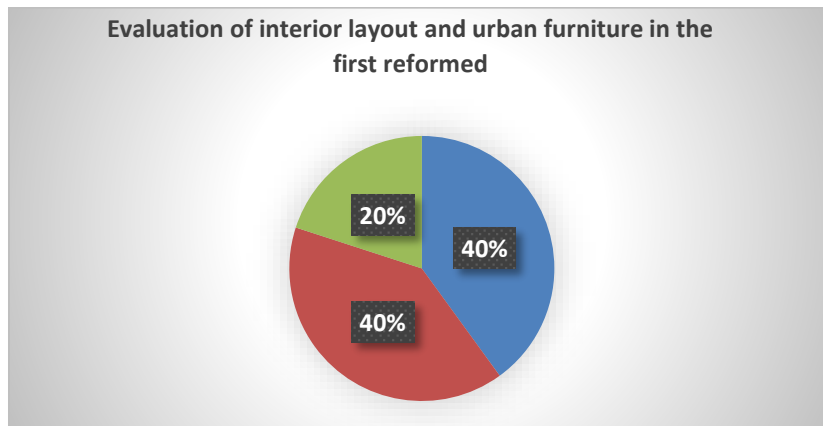


*Figure (6): Evaluation of interior design and urban furniture in the film First Reformed*

It should be noted that 40% of the interviewees see emptiness as governing the film atmosphere and 40% see anti-religious symbols in the film. In addition, 20% of critics believe that the appearance and atmosphere of the film fail to help and promote the theme of the film.
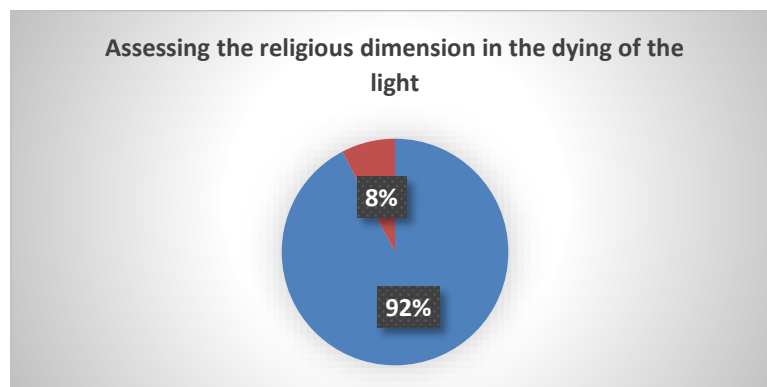


*Figure (7): Evaluation of religious dimension in the film Dying of the Light*

It should be noted that 92% of the critics interviewed in this project consider the film Dying of the Light as anti-religious and 8% of them believe that the director intends to show the Muslims who are fanatical about religion and Even Lak is a person who has risen to end religious prejudices.
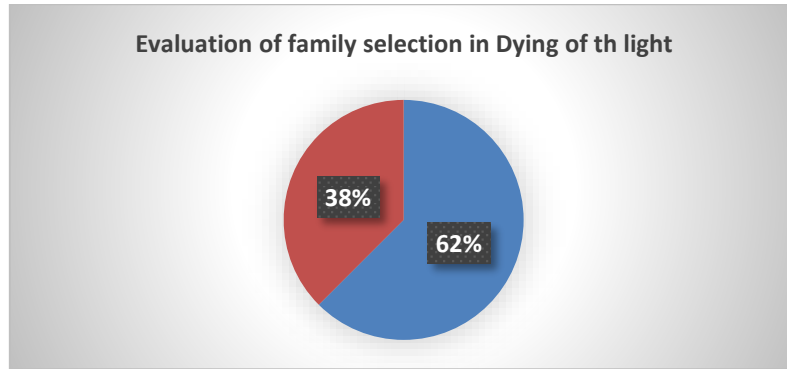
**Evaluation of family selection in Dying of th light**



*Figure (8): Evaluation of family selection in the film Dying of the Light*

It should be stated that 62% of those interviewed underestimate the value of family in Dying of the Light and 38% believe that family has not been questioned, but this film has passed the importance of family to the US government beyond its borders and generalized it to other countries.
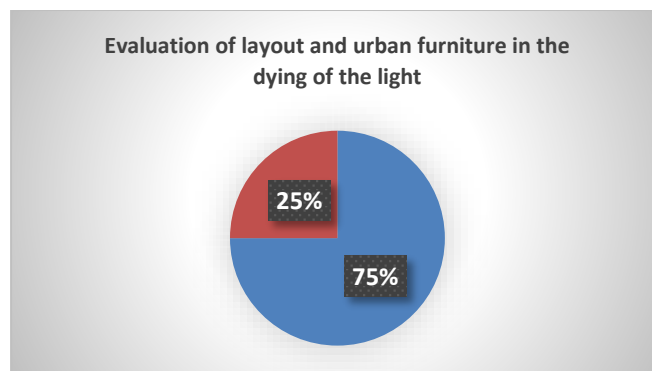
**Evaluation of layout and urban furniture in the dying of the light**



*Figure (9): Evaluation of design and urban furniture in the film Dying of the Light*

It should be noted that 75% of the respondents consider the symbols and signs used in the interior design and streets as anti-religious values and 25% of the symbols in American values have been seen in the urban furniture of the film.
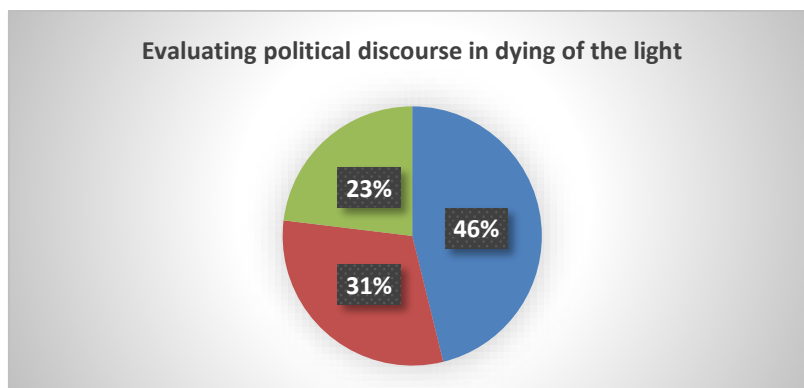
**Evaluating political discourse in dying of the light**



*Figure (10): Evaluation of political discourse in the film Dying of the Light*

It should be noted that 46% of the respondents rated the domestic policy used in the film (the policy used by the US government for its own people) as positive while 31% rated the domestic policy of the US as negative. In addition, 23% of the answers focused on the US foreign policy (the policy used by the US government for other countries) evaluated it negatively.
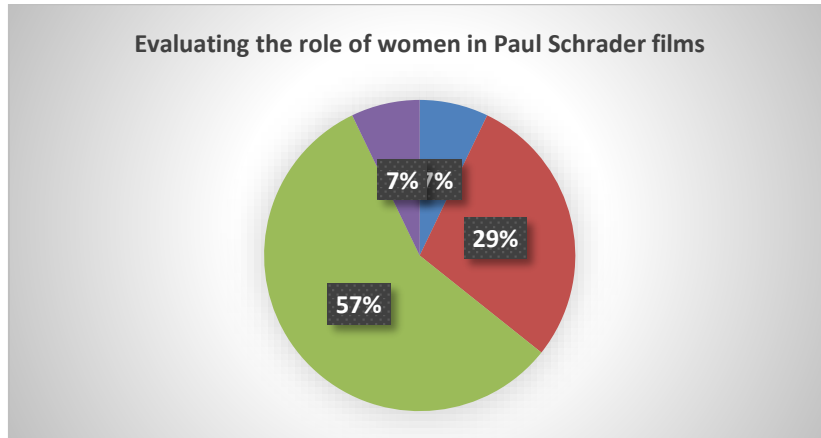
*Figure (11): Evaluation of the role of woman in Paul Schrader's films*

The figure shows that the role of woman in Paul Schrader's films is dim, allocating more than half of the figure and only 29% of the respondents believe that the role of woman is bold. In addition, 7% of the responses refer to the corrupt nature of the female character in Schrader's films and 7% refer to a general rule in American films.
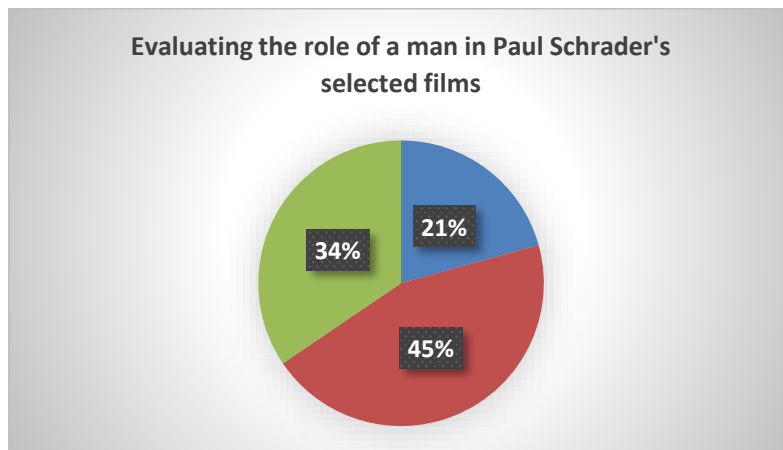


*Figure (12): Evaluation of the role of man in Paul Schrader's selected films*

The major part of the figure belongs to the skepticism and hesitation of Paul Schrader's male hero and film critics attribute this characteristic of the main role in of Schrader's films to a large extent to his own character and see this skepticism in Schrader's thoughts. It should be stated that 34% of the interviewees see the loneliness of the hero as very bold and generalize it as a feature for all of his selected films. In addition, 21% of them believed that Paul Schrader's films are male-dominated and the male gender is more prominent in his films and this feature can be derived from the idea of Scorsese or Schrader.
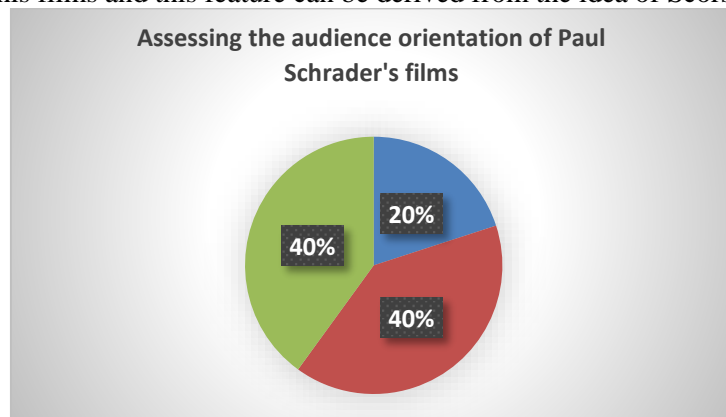


*Figure (13): Evaluation of the audience orientation nature of Paul Schrader's films*

It should be noted that 40% of the figure show that Schrader's works have no audience and only 20% were the fans of his works. In addition, 40% of the critics believed that Hollywood films are not made for the audience but follow a specific program and gain audience by repeating.
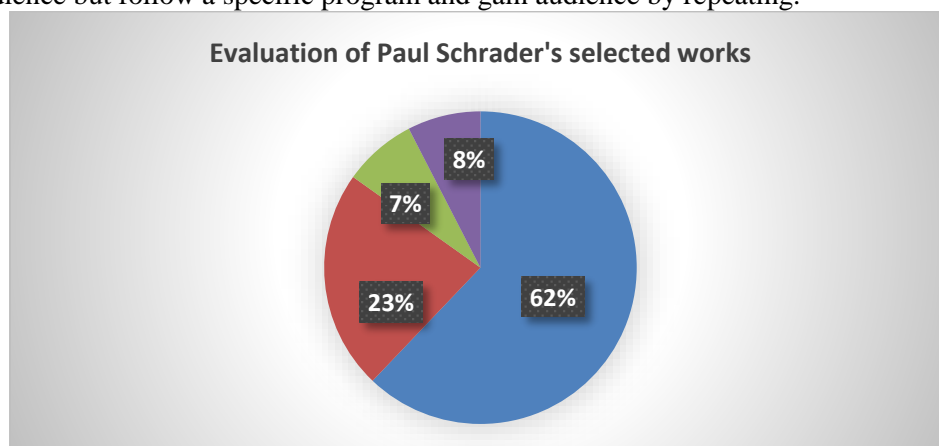


*Figure (14): Evaluation of Paul Schrader's selected works*

Numerous opinions were collected about Paul Schrader's style of work, but the most common one was about the shaky character of his beliefs. An emphasis is on his revolutionary and protesting character which we read in Schrader's book narrated by Schrader that confirms this feature.

Some references were also made to his transcendental style book and few of them believed that his filmmaking style cannot be deduced from his films.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This study aimed to review the selected works of Paul Schrader and the case study included four films with different themes such as Taxi Driver, which has a dominant social and political background, The Last Temptation of Christ and the First Reformed, which has a dominant religious background, and Dying of the Light, which has a dominant political and religious background. In order to achieve this goal, two main questions were designed and Paul Schrader's works were examined from the perspective of Iranian cinema critics. The statistical population of this study included Iranian artists, film critics, media specialists, directors, and screenwriters who are familiar with Hollywood cinema. In-depth interview method was used for data collection.

- Question 1: How do you evaluate Paul Schrader's selected works in terms of narrative?

Narration is more than a kind of thing and it seems to include distinct activities. One activity is called storytelling and the other one may be referred to as story consuming, story receiving, or story taking. However, we have capacities which enable us to understand, receive, and present the story. Such an ability or skill raises many questions. (Ohadi, 2009). Thus, several questions were raised in this regard to evaluate narrative from the perspective of cinema critics. From the conducted reviews, it can be concluded that family and spouse selection are not prominent in Paul Schrader's selected films. Paul Schrader's heroes are reluctant to start a family and corruption which is the opposite of family selection is more highlighted. Nevertheless, most critics have pointed out that Hollywood's policy is in line with family selection but the majority did not see it in Paul Schrader's selected works. Most of the critics' emphasis on interior design and urban furniture in Paul Schrader's selected films, in the political and social films of his selected works namely Taxi Driver imply darkness and corruption, or noir atmosphere despite the cold and black colors. Disappointment in justice that Paul Schrader believes that should be while it is not. In his selected religious films, locations are full of anti-religious and anti-Christian symbols and this duality can be seen in these works. In the field of religion, Dying of the Light, The Last Temptation of Christ, and First Reformed were commented. Most critics clearly referred to anti-religious and anti-Christian symbols and currents, as well as anti-Christ. As mentioned in chapter two at Paul Schrader's biography, he grew up in a Christian family with many biases and restrictions and as a teenager he intended to become a priest.

His life path changed towards cinema and in his repertoire we see the films which have a religious theme along with non-religious symbols. In this way, this religious duality and hesitation of Paul Schrader's character is reflected in his films. In the last sequence of the 3-hour film The Last Temptation of Christ, we see Christ's repentance while we see deviations and hesitations in this celestial character throughout the film. Paul Schroeder is a Christian who has accepted all the deviations and weaknesses of Christ throughout the film and has not hesitated to accuse the Prophet of God of lying. As if he tried to justify this screenplay with the last sequence. In First Reformed, we do not have this sequence of repentance or it is better to say that in the last sequence, Pastor Taylor repents of being a priest and religious. In other words, the end of this hesitation throughout the story causes the collapse of the priest with a flip that is Michael's suicide. In Dying of the Light, we see Schrader's war with Islam. According to film critics, there is an insult to Islam and Islamic symbols, as well as insult to Muslims and the Islamic lands, and the inability of expressing Islamic countries to support themselves in this film. In political dimension of Taxi Driver, the symbol of injustice in the US at the time can be observed and this injustice is not cured at the end of the film and this is a sad ending. In Dying of the Light, Paul Schrader placed more emphasis on the US foreign policy and considered the US responsible for administering justice in Islamic countries. According to experts, this film is fully in line with Hollywood policies. Although the US domestic policy and the inefficiency of the CIA are questioned, it implies that the CIA intends peace and does not seek for war and revenge. As indicated in the figures of the fourth chapter, the role of the man in Paul Schrader's films is much more highlighted. According to cinema critics, Paul Schrader's works are male and his heroes are men, but men are shaky, skeptical, and hesitant to go the path they should go. Based on the figures of the fourth chapter, the role of woman is very fade and ineffective and is used only for achieving the goal in the role of man. From the perspective of cinema critics, the female character in Hollywood cinema has a political symbol and has a clear definition which is a symbol of land and homeland. This definition is observed in all Hollywood films and the American woman who is the symbol of America is not insulted or humiliated.

In the total evaluation of Paul Schrader's selected works, as Schrader stated in his book "Schrader according to Schrader", cinema critics also believe that he has a shaky and protesting character like the heroes of his films. The three selected works of this thesis are the shared works of Paul Schrader with Scorsese. Schrader is an Irish. The Irish are Catholic and have an angle with British Protestants and have problems with Britain due to occupying their land. For this reason, they have revolutionary behaviors and being a Christian in Irish ideology means being a revolutionary. The Irish Liberation Army is one of the few Catholics who used arms. In that atmosphere, religion stood with revolution in the 1960s. The left-wing and protesting artists were mostly from New York; Protest music and bizarre dances, as well as a bad wave of homosexuality began as a wave of social protest from New York and among New York left-wing intellectuals. Scorsese means that this whole package belongs to these subcultures rather than to Catholicism. That is why he has no religious affiliation in his behaviors and is anti-religious. However, he started the opposition and reached the position. Not only Scorsese, but also his generation all started on the left, for instance, they protested the Oscars and did not accept the Oscars awards, but later took the awards of a lifetime for artistic service from the Oscars. Thus, it was as if a duty was defined for a generation in a decade to protest, define a safe protest model and give it to young people in the form of a cultural pack. Schroeder was a Calvinist but at the moment he is separated from this sect and does not believe in it, but the foundations and roots of these beliefs are in his mind. In general, the films he has worked with Scorsese and even the films he has worked on are somewhat fighting against such ideas. Paul Schrader is one of the few American filmmakers who is religious but religious of declining postmodernity. The postmodern school is the forum of all criticisms. Postmodern human is a man who has come out of the channel of the World War I and it can be stated that the border between stupidity and being a hero has been confused in his mind. Paul Schrader graduated from the UCMA and his thesis was a book called Transcendental Style in Cinema, evaluating three filmmakers in this book; Or Sajiro Ozu from the East, Carl Theodor Dreyer in Europe, as well as Robert Bresson. He believes that these three people are at leading the transcendental style and we can see obvious examples of this style and another explicit belief in their films. This is Paul Schrader's main belief in cinema. He implies some concepts in this genre, including the fact that these three filmmakers are among the most prominent

filmmakers whose beliefs are embedded in all plans of their films. In fact, the transcendental style is present in the culture and beliefs of Paul Schrader and in the heart of his films.

- Question 2. How audience-oriented are Paul Schrader's selected works?

The majority of critics believe that Paul Schrader's works are not audience-oriented. As he says in an interview: "I make films for a specific audience".

Being audience-oriented in Hollywood cinema means being accepted by Hollywood rules and policies because the audience of the film is not someone who is present in the cinema. In other words, the box office sales cannot indicate the number of the audience of a film. As we saw in Avengers 2019, this film went on the screen twice and the removed sequences were added to be an incentive to watch the film again. In this way, it could break the box office record. Thus, it can be redefined that the audience of a film is someone who is influenced by the film and creates his ideas, beliefs and lifestyle accordingly. Thus, one of the reasons Paul Schrader's films are unpopular is because of Hollywood's new policies which moved away from social cinema to fiction and transcendental cinema. One of the reasons that Hollywood moves towards the imagination is that the postmodern world is over now and the postmodern era or trans-modernism has arrived in which the concepts of magic and the concepts of parapsychology are strongly highlighted and speak about metaphysics. Like the film Narnia, as if the supernatural invites us go to their world, thus it is safe to say that this analysis model, in which we see Hollywood as a supply and demand, is expired. The film is produced based on the recognition of the behind-the-scenes mafia, not the will of the audience.

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