

***Iranian Cinema in Postmodern Costume:  
How Ghanizadeh's Maskhareh-baz/ A Hairy Tale (2019)  
Approaches Postmodern Art***

**Azra Ghandeharion \***

Associate Professor

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad  
ghandeharion@um.ac.ir

**Mohammadreza Youssefi Sarraf**

MA Student

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad  
myoussefisarraf@gmail.com

**Abstract**

The studies concerning the employment of postmodern techniques in Iranian movies failed to address how postmodern practices can reflect relevant postmodern themes and thoughts. To fill this gap, our paper investigates the significance of utilizing postmodern filmmaking styles in Iranian cinema by referring to one of the most recent avant-garde productions, Homayoun Ghanizadeh's *Maskhareh-baz/ A Hairy Tale* (2019). The analysis draws on scholars' views for theorizing postmodernism, particularly Linda Hutcheon, to find the link between the postmodern form and the movie's contents. Benefitting from Hutcheon's views, the study reveals how postmodern features and styles of *A Hairy Tale*, such as metafiction and the intertextual web of references, reflect the uncertain, cynic, and ironic condition of humans in the postmodern world. The unreliable narrator of the movie, ironically named Danesh/ Knowledge, drowns the film in an intertextual ocean of references ranging from classic cinema, literature of the absurd, pop art, and historical events. Finally, it is concluded that the film is successful in its attempt to portray a barbershop as a microcosm of the postmodern paranoid world, where humans are unable to trust any information they receive. Thus, the film illustrates the ambiguous condition of the postmodern man by depicting his skepticism.

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\* Corresponding Author

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### 1. Introduction

Over the past years, Iranian directors have sought to reach a new kind of expression in cinema. Aligning themselves with the trend of world cinema, directors have tried their hands on employing postmodern filmmaking techniques in their works. One can consider Abbas Kiarostami (1940-2016), Mani Haghighi (1969- ), and Shahram Mokri (1978-) as the representatives of a postmodern spectrum, whose films have entered notable international film festivals like Berlin International Film Festival and Cannes Film Festival.

Trying to demonstrate postmodern features in Iranian directors' works, critics have especially concentrated on the Palme d'Or winning director, Abbas Kiarostami, who has developed a "self-reflexive" style of his own (Naficy 558). For example, Tavasoli (2015) has discussed the postmodern features of Kiarostami's *Close-Up* (1990). Likewise, Zohdi (2015) has presented a postmodern analysis of Kiarostami's *Through the Olive Trees* (1994).

Although these movies employ postmodern techniques, some critics have argued that they do not reflect postmodern mentality, which is characterized by skepticism and relativism (Azimi 2016; Ghotbizadeh 2019). Debates have heated up with the release of a new film, *Maskhareh-baz/ A Hairy Tale* (2019), directed by Homaoun Ghanizadeh (1980- ), at the Fajr Film Festival, the most notable Iranian film festival, where it won the award for "Best Art and Experience Film." Discussing the film in *Haft/ Seven*, the most popular weekly television program broadcast by Iranian State TV (channel 3), Massoud Farassati, Javad Tusi, and Mohammad Taqhi Fahim, who are all among the most well-known film critics in Iran, have claimed that this movie merely imitates postmodern techniques without having the necessary philosophical background. Farassati has delivered a strong opinion claiming that the movie is "neither art nor experience" (Amini, *Haft*).

The present study tries to examine to what extent postmodern techniques in the film can reflect the condition of humans in the postmodern world. To achieve that aim, it will first examine how postmodern fiction is different from modern fiction, drawing particularly on the ideas of Brian McHale (1952- ). Subsequently, the paper will identify what constitutes postmodern cinema, focusing on techniques such as irony, parody, intertextuality, and metafiction. These features will be explored alongside other ideas that can be traced in postmodern art, such as the rejection of objective reality and the preference of the local over the universal (Kvale 18). We will attempt to establish skepticism as the central thread of our argument. Therefore, all of the above-mentioned features are associated with the condition of man in the postmodern world, which is characterized by uncertainty and cynicism.

Particularly, the study will draw on the ideas of Linda Hutcheon (1947- ) and her attempts for “theorizing” postmodernism presented in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (2003). The first part of this paper will briefly examine the concept of postmodernism in cinema. Then, it will explore the studies on major postmodern Iranian movies, ranging from Makhmalbaf's *Salam Cinema* (1995), which has been cited as the first Iranian postmodern movie, to more recent examples such as Haghighi's *Pig* (2018). Subsequently, the research proceeds to its focus of study, Ghanizadeh's *A Hairy Tale*. After analyzing the postmodern characteristics of the movie, such as the unreliability of the narrator, intertextuality, and metafiction, the study provides fresh insight into how the movie has successfully reflected postmodern themes of skepticism and uncertainty. Though cynicism is not necessarily a postmodern theme, it is nevertheless one of the predominant characteristics of postmodern Iranian cinema. The results of this study will indicate how incorporating these features creates a fictional world that exposes postmodern man's doubt towards metanarratives of the real world.

## 2. Postmodernism and Cinema

As Brian McHale argues, the move from modern to postmodern art is marked by a change from a focus on epistemological issues, i.e., questions of truth and knowledge, to an exploration of ontological inquiries (Wilde 44). Postmodern fiction is concerned with ontological questions about the text and the world(s) it portrays, such as:

What is a world?; What kinds of world are there, how are they constituted, and how do they differ?; What happens when different kinds of world are placed in confrontation, or when boundaries between worlds are violated?; What is the mode of existence of a text, and what is the mode of existence of the world (or worlds) it projects?; How is a projected world structured? (McHale 10)

It is challenging to identify what constitutes postmodern cinema, but what can be referred to as the most commonly identified feature of postmodern movies is eclecticism — “drawing upon and mixing of different styles, genres, and artistic conventions” (Hill 99-100). In order to find the first examples of postmodern cinema, one should turn back to the 1970s and the 1980s. *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (Dir. Gilliam and Jones, 1975), *Taxi Driver* (Dir. Scorsese, 1976), and *Blue Velvet* (Dir. Lynch, 1986) are considered among the first postmodern movies (Deo “The 20 Best”). In these movies, particularly in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, one can find features such as irony, intertextuality, and metafiction. A more detailed account of these features will be given in our discussion of *A Hairy Tale*.

## 3. Postmodernism in Iranian Cinema

The status of postmodernism has been described as “both a moment in literary history and [a] periodizing term” (Nilges 187). The term can refer to the characteristics traced in any artistic production created in the postmodern era. In this sense, if we consider the films produced in a so-called postmodern period, we cannot label some of them as postmodern and dismiss others as non-

postmodern. Moreover, some scholars such as Hassan (1986) and Hutcheon (2003) have tried to “theorize” postmodernism. Hutcheon has attempted to define postmodernism by giving specific examples and discussing their characteristics, avoiding “polemical generalizations” (3). She argues, “Postmodernism cannot simply be used as a synonym for the contemporary” (Hutcheon 4).

Whether we consider postmodernism a historical era or a movement, some themes and techniques are nevertheless generally attributed to postmodern movies. Even if we assume that particular themes are inherent to all works of our time, postmodern themes and techniques are more vividly reflected in some works. For our discussion about Iranian cinema, we begin by looking for common techniques employed in what is referred to as a “*pasämodern/* postmodern” movie in Iran, and then we proceed with asking how — and how far— those techniques can contribute to the work’s themes.

*Salam Cinema* (Dir. Makhmalbaf, 1995) is labeled as the first Iranian postmodern movie (Payandeh, “Hello to Postmodernism”). Drawing on the notion of metafiction that William Gass proposed in 1970, Payandeh calls this film an instance of “metacinema” (461). Traditionally, cinema did not expose the production process in order to avoid alienating the audience from the narrated story. However, metafiction refers to works that boldly advertise or ridicule the fact that they should be regarded as fictional artistic creations. Similarly, metacinema, which is associated with postmodern cinema, draws the audience’s attention to the formal qualities of film as *film* (Siska 285). Payandeh argues that the subject of *Salam Cinema* is first and foremost the art of cinema itself (461).

Moreover, in his later discussion of Mehrjui’s *Mix*, Payandeh (2007) examines the elements that constitute a postmodern work. Notably, he mentions the film’s intertextual links with Mehrjui’s former movies, demonstrating its constructedness and amalgamation of different genres. This collage-like atmosphere makes the movie an instance of postmodern cinema.

Among other directors who have experimented with avant-garde techniques, one can name Abbas Kiarostami (1940-2016), Mani Haghighi (1969-), and Shahram Mokri (1978-). Abbas Kiarostami, an internationally acclaimed Iranian director, has developed a “self-reflexive” style of his own “that combines documentary and fictional techniques in a wonderfully ironic manner that raises questions about the nature of film” (Naficy 558). Kiarostami’s style is manifested in *Close-Up* (1990), *Through the Olive Trees* (1994), and the Palme d’Or winner, *Taste of Cherry* (1997).

Similarly, Mani Haghighi has clearly shown his enthusiasm for new forms in his last two films. In *Dragon Arrives!* (2016), he has deployed “an array of post-modern cinematic tricks, from mockumentary-style interviews to temporal leaps” (Marshall “Dragon Arrives!”). Marshall (2016) emphasizes the movie’s complex narration and indefinite meaning by revealing that “ten different viewers are likely to have ten different opinions about what actually happened in this film.” His last movie, *Pig* (2018), has been described as a surreal black humor that delivers a “political message” behind its “colorful shenanigans” (Young “Pig”). Likewise, Shahram Mokri has directed two full-length single-shot movies: *Fish & Cat* (2013) and *Invasion* (2017). *Fish & Cat* (2013) ingeniously plays with time and space by revisiting several scenes from the same—or different—angles (Tsui “Fish & Cat”). In *Invasion* (2017), which is a dystopian detective/horror story taking place in a labyrinthal stadium, Mokri has raised questions about the concepts of past and present, reality and nightmare, and identity (Kotzathanasis “Invasion”).

#### **4. Ghanizadeh’s *Maskhareh-Baz*: A Hairy Tale, A Hairy Tail, or a Clown?**

*A Hairy Tale* is one of the latest Iranian movies that employ experimental techniques. It is the directorial debut of Homayoun Ghanizadeh (1980), who has had a prolific career in theatre as a director, scriptwriter, and actor. The movie was labeled as a “black comedy” in its international premiere at the 35<sup>th</sup> Warsaw Film Festival, where it was awarded a prize for its script (Kończak “Hairy Tale”).

The English title of the movie *Maskhareh-Baz*, roughly translated as “the clown,” is *A Hairy Tale* or *A Hairy Tail*. From the very beginning, the mere title translation reveals wordplay, irony, skepticism, doubt, and the director’s metafictional inclinations echoed in the word “Tale/Tail.” Furthermore, the Persian title, *Maskhareh-Baz* / “Clown,” refers to the unauthentic tales that an unreliable narrator derisively narrates.

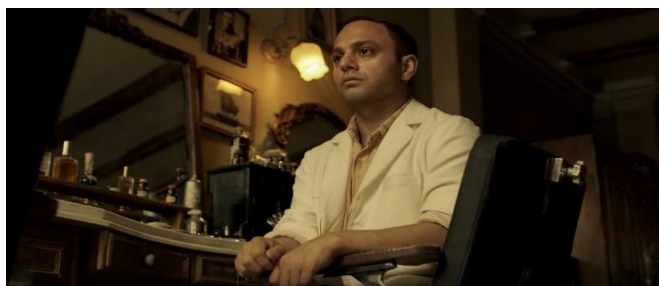
*A Hairy Tale* narrates the story of a young man called Danesh who works in a barbershop. He dreams about becoming the most outstanding actor in the world by continuously referring to the most famous Hollywood classics. The barbershop’s owner is Kazem Khan, who has employed Danesh and Shapour. Their work in the barbershop becomes a dull, unending daily routine where people are bored to death. By using specific camera angles, computer-generated imagery (CGI), and color palette, Ghanizadeh is able to create a dream-like atmosphere. Kończak believes that Ghanizadeh draws parallels with Jean-Pierre Jeunet’s works, especially his *The Fabulous Destiny of Amélie Poulain* (2001) (“Hairy Tale”). In the following sections, the study will decipher the postmodern features of the film. They can best be treated under three headings: unreliability of the narrator, intertextuality, and metafiction. Although any work of art is an interwoven network of miscellaneous characteristics and themes that cannot be separated, the study will deal with them individually for the sake of clarity.

#### **4.1. To Believe or Not to Believe: Unreliable Narrator and Irony**

In *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, first published in 1961, Wayne C. Booth coined the term “Unreliable Narrator,” referring to a character who is “mistaken” or “he believes himself to have qualities which the author denies him” (159). In *A Hairy Tale*, the narrator’s unreliability is evident from the very beginning. Danesh pompously poses as the movie’s grand narrator, but he is a homodiegetic character-narrator that is situated in the narrative discourse through the voice-

over narration device. Since many parts of the movie seem to take place in his imagination and most of the movie is basically his mental image, every instance of his narration adds more to his unreliability in a barbershop saturated with dark humor and skepticism. Danesh claims “he is the greatest actor in the world” (0:02:55), although he is currently working as an assistant in a barbershop (Figure 1).

Moreover, as Danesh brags about his exceptional knowledge of world cinema and artistic taste, he chaotically quotes some dialogues from famous movies several times. To our surprise, he provides the audience with incorrect data. For example, he claims that *Kill Bill* (Dir. Tarantino, 2003) is the work of the famous Japanese filmmaker Akira Kurosawa (1910 – 1998) or *Raging Bull* (Dir. Scorsese, 1980) is the masterpiece of the Oscar-winner director Quentin Tarantino (1963- ). The unreliability and ignorance of Danesh’s claims commingle doubt with paranoia and humor. By understanding that Danesh is disqualified as a narrator, we may doubt whatever he says because he is trying to justify his situation and actions. According to Lyotard, incredulity marks the postmodern condition (Sim 102). The significance of the word “Danesh,” literally translated as “knowledge” in Persian, adds more to the unreliability of the narrator and Ghanizadeh’s ironic stance. In the postmodern world, scientific knowledge with its metanarratives has lost its former unquestioned reliability (Lyotard 93-107).



**Fig. 1.** Brooding Danesh in the barbershop, the only location of the whole film, is anachronistically narrating his story



All of the aforementioned aspects can be associated with the ironic tone of the work. In the broadest sense, irony is a literary technique or a rhetorical device based on contradictions, such as expectations versus reality, or what is said versus what is meant, or what appears to be on the surface versus the entity's true nature. While the character's name, Danesh/ Knowledge, can be an instance of verbal irony, his remarks can be considered as perfect examples of dramatic irony. Dramatic irony, which depends on "a gap in knowledge between the audience and the protagonist as to the meaning of a given situation" (Muecke 137), is typically accompanied by a moment of recognition or *anagnorisis*. Originally a Greek term, *anagnorisis* was defined by Aristotle in his *Poetics* as "a change from ignorance to knowledge" (MacFarlane 367). Recognition occurs when the character, usually the protagonist, realizes one's own or somebody else's identity or pinpoints one's own flaw. However, postmodernist art challenges and even derides *anagnorisis*. Thus, such a moment of recognition is absent, even impossible, for the protagonist Danesh. As Hutcheon illustrates, irony and playfulness in postmodernism do not necessarily deprive the work of any purpose (27). Similarly, the film's playfulness can characterize its vision and worldview. The following sections analyze the film's references, which can playfully reinforce its themes.

#### **4.2. The Web of References: Intertextuality**

The movie is a museum of references to other texts, people, and historical events. As Hutcheon delineates, employing intertextuality can be a double-edged sword: "it can both thematically and formally reinforce the text's message *or* it can ironically undercut any pretensions to borrowed authority or legitimacy" (138). In order to understand the significance of these references, one should examine how they can add further depth to the movie. There is a reference to Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953) when a young boy, mimicking Godot's

messenger boy, challenges Danesh (Figure 2). Since the boy claims that he works for Godot (*Hairy Tale* 0:41:50), the scene is undoubtedly an intertextual reference to one of the best examples of the Theater of the Absurd.



**Fig. 2.** Danesh and the boy: The scene mimics the dialogue between Vladimir and the messenger boy in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*

Danesh can be associated with the two main characters in *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir and Estragon. Intentionally, Ghanizadeh models Danesh after all characters in the Theater of the Absurd. Early in the movie, Danesh claims that he is working in the barbershop “temporarily until his acting talent is discovered” (0:03:00). However, it has been “15 years and 7 months and 14 days” since he has begun his work there (0:03:40). Every day he performs his routine merely waiting for its termination; similarly, Vladimir and Estragon idly wait for their savior, Godot, to come. This information was unambiguous in the movie, even if the audience is unfamiliar with Beckett’s play. However, since the attentive viewer knows that the rescuer of Vladimir and Estragon never arrives, this intertextual allusion can enrich the film’s significance. Expectedly, Danesh’s redeemer will never show up. Danesh is trapped in a routine daily vicious cycle of unending doubt, absurdity, and paranoia. The recurring idea of uncertainty is connected to the barbershop as the microcosm of the world. In the same vein, we may compare Danesh’s narrative with the metanarrative trend in postmodernism.

As Allen delineates, in addition to talking to the other arts, films constantly converse with each other (175). The fact that Saber Abar plays the role of Danesh is significant. In Abar's acting resume, two movies stood out, *About Elly* (Dir. Farhadi, 2009) and *Here without Me* (Dir. Tavakoli, 2011). Narrating a shocking story, *About Elly* portrays the doubts of three middle-class families in contemporary Iran. Its characters face a moral dilemma about whether to lie to Abar or accept the consequences of telling the truth, the reason for his ex-fiancé's death. Needless to mention that they all decide to conceal the reality from him. As a result, Abar shapes his own narrative and believes in what he wants to believe though he cannot flee from his doubts. In *Here without Me*, which is an adaptation of Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* (1944), Abar plays the leading role. His character, which is based on *The Glass Menagerie*'s Tom, is so helpless to improve his living condition to the extent that he keeps contemplating suicide. He is addicted to dreaming. Moreover, Abar is the homodiegetic narrator of the film. The significant point is that the film's last fifteen minutes is absent in the play. In this added part, Abar narrates a presumably imaginary happy ending. The whole part probably portrays his desires rather than reality. As it was discussed in the previous section, Danesh narrates his desires and thoughts rather than reality.

Some references in the movie have no apparent significance, bordering on absurdity, or to put it in Hutcheon's words, the movie ironically challenges legitimacy (138). Some scenes in the film resemble classic canons on the silver screen. For example, when Investigator Kiani breaks into Danesh's closet (1:20:00), he echoes the famous Jack Nicholson's breaking into Wendy Torrance's room in *The Shining* (Dir. Kubrick, 1980). Although one might say that this intertextual reference emphasizes Kiani's madness, Ghanizadeh's intention to include parodic forms of postmodernity must be taken into consideration. According to Hutcheon, parody "clearly involve[s] the issue of

intent” (38). The movie has obviously planned to include parodic forms to refer to such classics as *Casablanca* (Dir. Curtiz, 1942), *The Shining*, and *Papillon* (Dir. Schaffner, 1973).

Nevertheless, it is unclear how each of these references can contribute to the movie’s central themes. Thus, some critics have criticized the movie structure alongside its chaos, superciliousness, and snobbery (Ghotbizadeh 2019). However, according to postmodern principles, this vagueness might be intentional to put the burden of interpreting the parody on the audience’s shoulder. These intertextual references can be analyzed differently. If we consider whatever we see in the movie as a depiction of the narrator’s mental process, the movie expresses Danesh’s obsession with cinema by including all these parodic forms. For sure, *A Hairy Tale*’s extensive allusions to the best-known movies in the history of the silver screen do not need profound cinematic knowledge or proficiency. This is in line with the postmodernist inclination toward and indebtedness to pop art. It reemphasizes the ironic fact that Danesh is more like an ordinary fan of cinema rather than a professional actor or an erudite movie critic. The following section describes how references to real-life people and events can obscure the boundary between fiction and the physical world.

#### **4.3. The Blending of Art and Life: Metafiction**

Almost all of the contemporary experimental works show explicit metafictional strategies (Waugh 22). By undermining literary conventions, metafiction is a tool to explore the relationship between art and reality (Imhof 9). In cinema, this aim can be achieved by reminding the audience that they are watching a movie. Thus, metafiction challenges the “life/art borders” that are present in traditional works (Hutcheon 10). The following dialogue between Danesh and Homa, his beloved female actor, is the pinnacle of metafiction at the end of the movie:

HOMA: I'm dying.

DANESH: You're the heroin. The heroin doesn't die at the end of the movie.

HOMA: It's different in your movie. You always kill me in your movies.

DANESH: *Stand up*, Homa. It's a movie!

HOMA: This is not a movie anymore.

DANESH: Cut! Cut! She is dying. Cut! She is *really* dying! (Emphasis in the original, 1:32:04-1:32:48; Figure 3)



**Fig. 3.** Danesh and Homa (Tehrani) discussing her death: Tehrani's death symbolizes the cynic decline of an iconic film star, the superstar in both *Hairy Tale* and Iranian cinema

Not only do they talk about movies' endings, but also they discuss the fate of the hero in their own movie. By revealing, "She is *really* dying," Danesh implies that reality is different from the movie they are acting in. However, as this happens inside the movie cosmos, "the death" is different from the external reality. *A Hairy Tale* reveals that Hediye Tehrani, who plays Homa, is not dying in real life. Consequently, the movie closes its metafictional circle because it refers to Homa as Danesh's beloved, not as Tehrani. Interestingly, Hediye

Tehrani was one of the most famous superstars of Iranian cinema and a beauty icon in the late 1990s and the early 2000s adored by Abar's generation. Accordingly, the movie's black humor is becoming more morbid because the beauty icon for Danesh's generation is a dying star. By blurring the distinction between reality and fantasy, the movie makes the audience meditate on the relationship between the movie they are watching, the fictive domain, and the real world.

In addition, another instance of metafiction is depicted through Danesh's direct address to the audience: "'We arrested the murderer!' is the most clichéd ending for my movie; it's even more hackneyed than ending the movie with a wedding ceremony" (1:34:25-1:34:30). Danesh does not take the audience for granted. He creates a dialogue, justifies, calcifies, and discusses the significance of the film's ending. This direct involvement of the viewer resembles a dramatic technique that, according to Brecht (1898-1956), creates the *Verfremdungseffekt*, translated as "defamiliarization effect," and more commonly known as "alienation effect." By further remembering that they are watching a work of fiction, Brecht argues, the spectators are enabled to "critique the characters' positions within society and within history" (Butler 67). Likewise, each viewer of the movie/ play has to meditate individually about the questions that are posed against them. Some viewers may look for the possible hidden political message(s) behind the film's surface, while others may find the movie a social critique. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the most important outcome of the *Hairy Tale* is the encouragement of challenging the pre-existent beliefs that each individual possesses.

Discussing the cinema of postwar Europe, Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) argues that "the determinate locations were blurred, letting any-space-whatevers rise up" (Deleuze 121). Similarly, *A Hairy Tale*'s spatiotemporal existence cannot be identified with the outside/ real world or any given moment in history. Though this is a significant trait of Expressionist art, postmodern works commonly merge different schools and genres. Furthermore, this

unidentifiability adds more weight to the irony and uncertainty that prevails in the movie.

First, the characters' accents and their discussions with the shop's customers beguile the audience to assume that the barbershop is located in the capital of Iran, Tehran. However, later by understanding that it is situated beside the sea, or rather a waterfront, the audience's conjecture is challenged because Tehran is a landlocked city. *A Hairy Tale*'s historical references are valid and popular in post-revolutionary Iran. Nevertheless, the dress codes date back to the pre-revolutionary era, especially the 1960s and 1970s. To augment the metafictional playfulness of historical references in the movie, Danesh mentions movies that were produced during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries; *Casablanca* and *Shining* were screened in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that covers both pre- and post-Islamic Revolution (1979) era, and *Kill Bill* is produced in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Though *A Hairy Tale* tries to portray a world of its own, the direct references to social problems, political struggles, and movements in pre-revolutionary Iran indirectly find meaning in post-revolutionary Iran. Thus, it means that one can also provide a sociopolitical reading of *A Hairy Tale* in view of the fact that it is not completely detached from the society in which it was produced.

There are certainly some hints in the movie itself, more than direct and constant references to political prisoners and social turmoil. The investigator is named Kiani, meaning "related to the kings," can refer to the infamous SAVAK, National Organization for Security and Intelligence, the secret police during Pahlavi Dynasty (1933-1979) in pre-revolutionary Iran. The earthquake and the final tsunami are politically significant as they may refer to any revolution or mayhem. To understand the director's political inclinations, it is worth mentioning that after winning the prize for the best creative film in Iran's 2019 Critics' Awards, Ghanizadeh dedicated his award to Pouya Bakhtiari, a protestor who was shot dead in the 2019 civil upheaval in Iran.

## 5. Conclusion

The current study aimed to determine whether postmodern ideas are reflected in the Iranian movies that employ the so-called postmodern techniques. Features such as irony, parody, intertextuality, and metafiction were identified as the common elements of postmodern films. Such features were found in the works of Iranian directors such as Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Dariush Mehrjui, Abbas Kiarostami, Mani Haghighi, and Shahram Mokri. Then, the study focused on Homayoun Ghanizadeh's debut, *A Hairy Tale* (2019). By employing postmodern techniques, the film reflected themes of skepticism and uncertainty that are among the central tenets of postmodern thought. In the intertextual and metafictional universe of the film, Danesh was an unreliable narrator in the microcosm of a barbershop. Danesh's narration is similar to Lyotard's portrayal of the postmodern world — a world that grand narratives cannot be trusted anymore. Different intertextual strategies are at work in the movie, and the audience is invited to examine their significance per case. For example, the allusion to Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* underscores the vicious cycle in which Danesh is trapped in his daily mundane life. The overall significance is that these allusions grant intertextual depth to *A Hairy Tale*. Eventually, the movie was examined as an instance of metafiction, which is employed as a tool for exploring the relationship between fiction and reality. Encompassing all these features, *A Hairy Tale* is an example of how the proper employment of postmodern techniques has led the work to portray the uncertain condition of skeptic humans in the postmodern world.

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