

Carnavalesque in Iranian Cinema: *6.5 Per Meter*, a Social Problem Film

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Abstract This paper analyzes Saeed Roustayi's *6.5 Per Meter* (2019), a police crime drama, based on Mikhail Bakhtin's carnivalesque theory. In order to portray social problems in a new light, Roustayi utilizes carnivalesque techniques, such as *mésalliance*, ambivalence, disgusting characters, and abusive language in depicting the process of searching for, arresting, and executing a drug lord. This criminal is metaphorically kept in the carnival hell and forced to the carnival grave. Roustayi distances himself from the usual type of narrating social problems and crime so that he can bring unprecedented frankness, characterized by carnival, to the screen. Dialogism is depicted in the movie in the sense that both the criminal and the police officer are given voice to express themselves. Handcuffing the police officers in the movie is an instance of radical changes in hierarchies, where the dominant and the subordinate replace each other. Since carnival is associated with death and rebirth at the same time, the drug dealers who are executed at the end of the movie are replaced by others. Thus, even if the drug king is uncrowned, the audience leave this cinematic carnival shocked and disillusioned, with the sense that the drug problem proceeds, probably with other kings.

Keywords *6.5 Per Meter*; carnival; Iranian cinema; police crime drama; Mikhail Bakhtin

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Introduction: Iranian Cinema

The undeniable attraction of movies and cinema provides an ideal opportunity to present ideas to a wide audience. Cinemas in Iran are the modern form of “coffee house narrative paintings” and “*Naqqali* (public storytelling)” in their “audiovisual” perspective (Dabashi 15), influencing people’s morality and political worldview more than anything before (20). Outstanding Iranian movie makers, such as Asghar Farhadi (1972-), Dariush mehrjui (1939-), Bahram Beizai (1938-), and the successful young director, Saeed Roustayi (1989-), take this chance to portray social issues involving poverty, unemployment, divorce, women’s rights, extramarital relationships, effects of war, the youngsters, politics, and traditions, in their movies in order to raise awareness. The Iranians are adept at their indirect techniques because of their habit of understanding multifaceted symbolic figurative Persian literature (Zeydabadi-Nejad 10). Such adroit directors have made Iranian cinema a major “social/political” organization (5). Besides other hits in the *oeuvre* of Roustayi, *6.5 Per Meter* (2019) (in Persian, *Metri Shesh Va Nim*), is a recent prominent one.

At this point, *6.5 Per Meter* is an Iranian box office hit besides being nominated in and winning several prestigious national and international film festivals. It won Special Mention at 2019 Zurich Film Festival, Best Actor Award and Best Director Award at 2019 Tokyo International Film Festival, Crystal Simorgh for Best Editing, Best Sound Recording, and Audience Award Best Film at 2019 Fajr Film Festival and several awards at 2019 Hafez Ceremony, not to mention myriads of nominees in all these festivals and more, which provides a compelling reason for its critical study.

Directed by Saeed Roustayi, a writer, producer, and director of other successful movies, all broaching Iran’s current social problems, this one is about arresting a cunning drug lord. Naser Khakzad, played by Navid Nohammadzadeh, a popular Iranian celebrity, comes from a rather poor family. Within a span of a few years, he temporarily reaches the status of a very wealthy man who lives in a luxurious penthouse, even though he could never be more comfortable than when he speaks his filthy language. He has also provided his family members and his ex-girlfriend, all from poor backgrounds, with fairly the same comfort. Although Naser implicates other wrongdoers at first, for him and his family, this is a carnival per se, which they savor for a short time. Soon after, his family have to return to the same ordinary lifestyle they used to lead, while Naser’s property is confiscated before his execution. His execution at the end and another drug dealer’s accidental living

burial at the beginning of the movie depict the same doom, awaiting people with the same profession. This can be a synopsis of the movie.

Carnavalesque in Realism and Social Problem Movies

Carnival theory is elaborated in Bakhtin's (1895-1975) books *Rabelais and His World* (1984) and *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1999), which examine the writings of the French novelist, Francois Rabelais (1532-1564) and Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky (1821-1881) respectively, but is also applicable to other literary or artistic works. Based on Bakhtin, Carnavalesque was basically the short period of entertainment in middle ages, associated with carnival ambiance (*Rabelais* 5). The traditional customs and ceremonies included "parish feasts," which were recognized as outdoor funfairs, "mysteries," and "agricultural feasts as the harvesting of grapes" (5). The core activities of this rite, whether "folk" or civic, was to caricature the solemn ceremonies like honoring the winners at contests, the transmission of social privileges, or the introduction of cavaliers (5). The most salient feature of such a ceremony was to be distinctly differentiated with the somber formal, "ecclesiastical, feudal, and political cult forms and ceremonials" (5). The "second world" and the "second life" these carnivals presented were entirely diverse, informal, "extraecclesiastical and extrapolitical" (6). Carnival is generally manifested in three related types: "[r]itual spectacles," "[c]omic verbal compositions," and "[v]arious genres of billingsgate" (5). It has myriads of features, which are discussed below.

The first section is devoted to the element of laughing in carnival, which has its own characteristics. It involves everybody; it is a collective laughter, not a single person's response to a secluded comical occasion (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 11). It is also "ambivalent" in the sense that it is cheerful and parodic simultaneously, while it is also addressed to the people who laugh (11-12). Laughter is what overcomes horror, which is the drastic "expression of narrow-minded and stupid seriousness," causing absolute freedom in a totally courageous life (47). The function of hilarity is degrading and materializing (20). Another part of the attraction, which is also connected to the idea of degrading is hurling invectives and cursing, sensual or not, connoting the freedom and veracity inherent in carnivals (27-28). Therefore, liberation and reality are dominant in carnivalesque traditions.

In addition to liberating one from fears, laughing is also able to release the rite entirely from all Christian pious sentiments and theological interpretations (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 7). This ritual is not associated with wizardry or worshipping, whereas it is completely another domain, far from commanding, which parodies religious

extremism (7). It involves a cosmopolitan atmosphere and an exceptional case of the whole universe, in which everyone is involved in the earth's revitalization and rebirth (7). The "clowns and fools" of the carnival, who were "neither eccentrics nor dolts," were not "comic actors"; however, since wherever they went, they were still jesters, they depicted a simultaneously "real and ideal" type of living, standing "on the borderline between life and art, in a peculiar midzone as it were" (8). Hence, carnival is part of reality itself, the part that is associated with birth.

When it comes to the question of earth, Carnavalesque is the place of fertile soil and the "womb," making the "parody" inherent in the carnival, distinctive (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 21). Moreover, "the grotesque concept of the body" is the central theme in "medieval parody" (27). However, "a gay parody of official reason, of the narrow seriousness of official truth" can be recognized in "the theme of madness" for the new outlook it causes, rather than the "normal" one (39). Another rejection of allegiance is inherent in the comical and complicated "theme of the mask," which is relevant to "transition, metamorphoses, the violation of natural boundaries, to mockery and familiar nicknames (39-40). The nature of mask is concealment, mystery, and deceit (40). People in the carnival enjoy participation in practice.

What people savor in the Carnavalesque is the utopia of "community, freedom, equality, and abundance" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 9). Nonetheless, the idealism intrinsic of utopia is mingled with realism, since this is not only imagined, but also practiced (10). Due to its liberation from all conventions and courtesy, its frankness and close companionship, this kind of "communication" is unattainable in our daily routine (10). This communication's manifestation can appear in celebrations such as "[t]he feast of fools" and "the feast of the ass," which focuses mainly on "the ass and its braying" (78) or on "jokes and stories" (79). These characteristics are fundamental to the definition of the carnival.

Bakhtin defines carnival as "a well-known festivity that has been often described throughout many centuries" (*Rabelais* 218). This is while he declares, "carnival is far from being a simple phenomenon with only one meaning" (218). Nevertheless, "carnival developed in the narrow sense of the word and became the center of all popular forms of amusement," e.g. cinema (220). Although Mikhail Bakhtin has devised his carnivalesque theory for "the novel genre as a celebration of linguistic and stylistic variety as a counter to tight canonical formulas," it is also applicable to "media" studies and movies (Holquist xvii). Hence, this can be utilized as a theory for the "analysis of more modern cultural phenomenon" (Osgerby 105), such as a film.

Carnavalesque is not alien to Iranian media. Although this technique has been

used in comedies such as the sitcom *Kolah Ghermezi* (Tahmasb, 1993-2016), in which “the social classifications are deconstructed” (Ghandeharion & Heydari 573), the Iranian moviemakers have been using this technique in order to have significant impact on the audience, even in serious genres, such as dramas. Ultimately, carnival blurs “genres” (Bakhtin, *Problems* 134). Additionally, every innovative work “renews” carnival independently (Bakhtin, *Problems* 160) and signifies “uniqueness” (Anoegrajekti et al. 2). Bakhtin’s theory of carnivalesque has been influential in “critical scholarship in the fields of rhetoric and media studies, comic and otherwise” (Achter 281). Dabashi refers to Kiarostami (1940-2016), a remarkable Iranian director and his movie, *The Traveler* (1974) to argue, “[t]here is a matter-of-factness about Kiarostami’s form of irony, a kind of conspicuous carnivalesque in his weaving reality and romance together” (48). Since the nature of carnivalesque is reality, it can contribute to the movies in the school of realism. In fact, “because of the fundamental post-revolutionary changes to the grammar and focus of Iranian cinema, realism became a major concern for filmmakers” (Jahed 145). “Realism” in Iranian cinema is different because of the “sacred visuality that informs Iranian cinema,” “affected by unconscious forces that open up spaces within the continuity of narratives” (Mottahedeh 68-69). Realistic narratives are ubiquitous in Iranian cinema.

The realistic sense and setting of Iranian movies like *6.5 Per Meter* (Mona Jalali) is embodied in social problem films. Iranian cinema depicts “social ills and inequalities” in the atmosphere of “soul searching, national epistemophilia, and a desire for self-representation” (Naficy, *Social History* xxiv). Iran, as a revolutionary country, reinforces “the official ideology of support for the downtrodden” (Naficy, “Iranian Cinema” 550); that is why the Iranian cinema and social problem movies such as *6.5 Per Meter* have the same preoccupations. Carnavalesque is an appropriate mode for it, since “social criticism” (Achter 283) is an inseparable component of carnival.

Carnavalesque in *6.5 Per Meter*

6.5 Per Meter can be read as a carnival in which the meaning and etymology of “names” is of utmost importance with parodic features (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 192). The main character’s name is Naser, which means helper. Naser is the one who attempts to help and save his family by producing glass drugs. His family name is Khakzad, denoting the one born of soil. It has two connotations for this character, first that he comes from a poor family and second that he is executed at the end, going back to soil and grave. The other main character is Samad, the police officer.

Samad means who does not need anything or anybody. It is significant, since he is characterized as an independent successful agent. His family name is Majidi, which means glorious. Naser's ex-girlfriend is Elham, which denotes inspiration. While she is the one, who under pressure, gives Naser's address to be arrested, she is the one whom Naser desperately wishes to see once more before his death. However, all the phases of Naser's life, which are depicted in the movie, are of carnivalesque significance.

6.5 Per Meter is a carnival because it breaks "the usual norms of" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 201) social problem and police crime dramas. It presents ideas in the cinema that are new to the screen. Although addiction, poverty, smuggling, prisons and courts do exist in society, the pathos of carnivalesque candor (Bakhtin, *Problems* 174) by which Roustayi portrays these issues in his movie as a carnival, "where the tabooed and the fantastic" are all of a sudden feasible (Osgerby 105) is unprecedented. The scenes Roustayi depicts in his movies, although sometimes didactic (Hoseini) are also shocking and lead the audience to disillusionment (Mohammad Amir Jalali), at the same time suggesting the drug addiction tragedy is almost inevitable (Vafakhah). What is more, Roustayi has his own orientations. He especially presents addiction in relation to families (Ostad), raising questions in the audiences' minds (Majidi). He directs the movie in the way that can make it the most believable, overcoming the difficulties. For instance, the presence of three thousand real addicts in this movie, which makes it more tangible for the audience (Matin), contributes to creating a carnival atmosphere, since carnivals blur the boundaries between "actors and spectators" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 7). In addition, Roustayi, like many writers before him, utilizes carnivalesque "for satire" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 119). This is while carnivals do occur in different forms, serving different purposes.

Carnivals in their medieval sense were closely connected "to the feasts of the church" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 8). This, in Althusser's words, is the "religious apparatus," included in the category, "Ideological state apparatuses" or the acronym, "ISAs" (75). This is while Roustayi in the movie *6.5 Per Meter* utilizes jail and the police force as the frame of the carnival. Althusser includes "the government, administration, army, police, courts and prisons" as what is called "Repressive State Apparatus" or RSAs (75). Therefore, because of the shift in apparatuses, although this movie is in the form of a carnival, it is mostly associated with "physical violence (direct or indirect, legal or illegal)" (Althusser 75). Furthermore, "the defiance of the democratic cleric" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 72) in the carnival is replaced by the police in the movie. Apart from the general criminal framework, this film is a

long one, which has many different features.

The movie can be divided into two halves. The first half is spent on the efforts of the police force to arrest Naser, who is concealed in his luxurious penthouse, which is a “temporary liberation from the prevailing truth” of his poverty and also “from the established order” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 10). This is yet another aspect of the carnival when the authority is mocked by the useless attempts to find him. The second half, which depicts him as a criminal in jail offers a panorama of carnival features. Naser, with his pricy clothes has to spend the night beside the disheveled addicts and traffickers. The “people who were usually divided by the barriers of caste, property, profession, and age” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 10) are treated all equally in the jail. These scenes, like a carnival, present people as “eccentric” (Bakhtin, *Problems* 175), stinky, and grubby. The crummy room, the less serious offenders, and the drug users taking naps are celebrated with friskiness when Naser, the symbolic elected “king” presides this “banquet” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 5). He pours water from a hose on everyone, which is a carnival accessory (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 216), therefore making unlikely of people unitedly cheer with joy. This is an instance of the “carnivalistic mésalliances” Bakhtin discusses (*Problems* 123). After all, the carnival is a time of play. When the poor and the rich gather, this scene of the “[c]arnival world is transferring and the people are altering and imitating their higher or lower classes” (Navidi et al. 71). This is while in carnival, everyone, whether high or low, can be given a voice.



Figure 1. Naser pours water from a hose on everyone, Screen shot.

Dialogic voices are another aspect of the carnival. The movie, instead of introducing the monologic voice of the authority, gives voices both to the police officers and the criminals. For instance, Naser justifies his influence on addicting loads of people by explaining his shocking social conditions. This is the polyphonic nature of the carnival. The presence of narcotics agents as gray characters is unprecedented, since Iranian cinema and state TV are consistent in depicting the police officers as perfect heroes. However, officer Samad in this movie, although the epitome of duty, is not always innocent (Nasrollahi) or one dimensional (Khodabande). For instance, since violation is one of the carnival's features (Knowles 6), he repeatedly bullies the criminals. The other related characteristics of the carnival, such as "anatomizing dismemberment" of the body (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 202) and "thrashings" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 197) can be noticed when Samad threatens to break the teeth of a drug dealer with his heel or to beat Naser's face with his knee. Another aspect of the carnival is when the place of the offender and the police changes. Carnival involves "the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 10). Twice in the movie, we see the police officers handcuffed, thus "uncrowning" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 79) the carnival king. This incident confirms that in a carnival, "established authority and truth are relative" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 256). Hence, pro tempore the dominant and



Figure 2. Several large obese men as drug mules are employed to use their big stomachs as containers of illegal drugs, Screen shot.

the subordinate replace each other.

Having said that, the carnival features of this movie are not exhausted yet. The “clowns and fools, giants, dwarfs” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 4) category Bakhtin includes in the carnival is manifested in portraying several large obese men as drug mules employed to use their big stomachs as containers of illegal drugs in order to transport them to another country, i.e. Japan. The gigantic men, the “potbellied men of carnival” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 22), are depicted as bare-chested, the case Bakhtin calls “disrobing” (*Rabelais* 75) in order to add humorous features to the scene. The “exaggeration” of their bodily features (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 63) and their “gluttony” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 74) enhances the carnival spirit of the movie. Besides the physical characteristics, the linguistic ones are also carnivalistic.

In all movies, dialogues play a prominent role. The “new type of communication” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 16) which carnival brings about is manifested in the witty repartee exchanged between Naser and Samad. These two, now equal in the world of carnival, try to persuade, humiliate, and threaten each other amusingly. Their conversations involve “abusive language, insulting words or expressions, some of them quite lengthy and complex” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 16). There dialogues “at the same time revive” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 16) the audiences’ minds by raising fundamental questions. This is while they also contribute to the carnival sense of the movie.

There are subplots added to the story so that the carnival spirit becomes more salient. The “material bodily principle” of the carnival is demonstrated in the movie in all forms of “food, drink, defecation, and sexual life” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 18). First, Samad buys pizza and soda for the young boy in the prison. Next, there is a bathroom in the prison room, which is the location of several scenes. Finally, the sexual life of Naser and his ex-girlfriend, Elham is referred to by Samad in her interrogation. By attempting to impute part of Naser’s guilt to Elham, Samad succeeds in forcing her to squeal on Naser. When Elham mentions Naser’s idiosyncrasies, Samad tells her,

I just want a simple address, I don’t want the address of the places you were having dinner with each other, I want the address of his house, the place you, not married to him, saw he slept in his sneakers (Roustayi).

Although the reference to Naser’s personal life is not a direct one, the interrogator is saying as much as he can in the cultural framework of Iranian cinema. However, what he is implying is crystal clear to the audience.

Next, the “ambivalence” of the carnival (Bakhtin, *Problems* 150) is depicted in the destructive affectionate personality of the main character. Throughout the movie, Naser is shown as family oriented. He gives his family love, financial support, education, and protection. In lieu of focusing on the devastating effects of his business on society, he satisfies himself by sacrificing his life (Freidooni). In the last days of Naser’s life, just before his execution, all his close family members come to visit and farewell him. There his nephew, who has been sent to gymnastic classes by Naser, delivers a gymnastics performance before him to please him in their very last meeting. This scene is supposed to blend the darkness of death with a sweet taste (Sadeghi). The boy is wearing a tight suit. Thus, he has to disrobe in order to perform. His performance, while he is in his underwear, can be construed as the “pageant” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 5) of carnivalesque.



Figure 3. Naser’s nephew delivers a gymnastics performance before him, Screen shot.

Naser is not only kind and supportive toward his family members, but also toward all sympathetic children in general. While he is in prison, he meets a child and a crippled father who are kept together in the same room as him for selling drugs. He hears the parent, who has been released just two months earlier, convincing his son to shoulder the blame and consequently go to prison instead of his father. Agitating the boy against his father (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 237), which implies carnival’s arguments between “parents and children” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 434), he desperately tries to avoid the tragedy, all in vain.

The presence of the boy is also influential in another sense. The “dualistic”



Figure 4. Naser is kind to the child in prison, Screen shot.

nature of the carnival necessitates the presence of opposites, such as the young and the elderly at the same time (Bakhtin, *Problems* 126). Whereas the child mentioned represents one extreme on the spectrum, there are also two old men in the jail who are foregrounded. One is the man who dozes while standing up. Samad points to him telling Naser, “this is the result of your work” (Roustayi, 2019). The other old man who is kept temporary in the clinic accidentally with the boy is found to be intoxicated by the gas in the bathroom. This man, who declares, “neither is my age suitable for quitting taking drugs, nor do I wish to” (Roustayi) can signify the other end of the continuum. Carnivals emphasize such “contrast[s]” (Bakhtin, *Problems* 126), among other characteristics.



Figure 5. The old man dozes while standing up, Screen shot.

Another characteristic of Carnival is its association with “love of abundance and wealth” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 22). This is displayed properly in Naser’s life. When the judge asks him, “the last time you were released, why didn’t you stop (production and smuggling drugs)? You had money and you didn’t have these problems,” Naser answers, “I couldn’t be satisfied.” In another scene, he tells the judge, “with five years of crime, I lived the way the Shah couldn’t,” referring to the extravagant life of Mohamad Reza Pahlavi (1919-1980), the last king of Iran, just before the revolution. Therefore, if Naser is more than a king in this movie and he has been humiliated ever since he was arrested and drawn out of his regular living (Bakhtin, *Problems* 292), we can say he is the clown king who experiences a “metamorphosis,” “uncrowning,” and “death” respectively (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 197). Navid Mohamadzadeh (1986), now fatter in the role of Naser than his previous hit, *Life and a Day* (2015), in Persian, *Abad va yek rooz*, by the same director, Roustayi, indicates the importance of “fat belly” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 22) in carnival. The “realistic” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 52) style through which Roustayi depicts social problems is created by not only the “material bodily images” of a work (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 23), but also the “carnival culture” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 52). This will be discussed shortly.

Carnival is associated with “kitchen” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 210). In the movie, the expression for the clandestine laboratories in which glass drug is produced, is actually the word ‘kitchen’. When the judge declares Naser’s arrestment has increased the price of glass drug, he answers, “tomorrow somebody else starts a kitchen (laboratory) and the price would reduce, you can’t stop it” (Roustayi). While the judge believes they will all go to the court one by one just like him, this implicates the “debasement” and “renewal” themes of the carnival (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 214).

The setting chosen as prison is of significance. As soon as Naser is arrested, he is metaphorically in the “hell” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 91) setting of the carnival or “a globe ejecting flames” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 158). While the hell of the carnival “was solemnly burned at the peak of the festivities” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 91), Naser shouts, “I’m catching fire” (Roustayi) because of his addiction. Later, after months of court sessions, he enters the level of the “defeat of fear” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 91), when he tells the judge, “I’ve thought of death and grave, and everything. I don’t fear anymore” (Roustayi). These are his last words in the court before being condemned to death and swallowed up by “the earth” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 91), before his “living body turned into a corpse” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 197). What is more, after he is sent to prison, he is deprived of his fancy clothes and thereby deprived of “his disguise and

mask” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 197) of a rich man. When all his property is confiscated, he becomes the same poor person he used to be.

The movie portrays the critical time in Naser’s life, that is to say his “degradation,” his “lowering” from his kingly penthouse to a disgusting prison room (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 19) just before his execution, hence going “downward” to “the grave” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 21). Like a carnival, it is “linked to moments of crisis, of breaking points in the cycle of nature or in the life of society and man” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 9). The ending is justified based on the etymology of the word carnival, which comes from German “val or wal,” meaning “dead” and “killed” (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 393). Likewise, carnival signs are all associated with “death” (Bakhtin, *Problems* 125). His execution represents the “moments of death,” Bakhtin refers to, while Samad’s giving money to an addict in the final scene, just after Naser’s execution, can be construed as the “revival, ... change and renewal” aspect of the carnival, whereby results “a festive perception of the world” (*Rabelais* 9). Although the judicial system punishes Naser with death penalty, drug addiction mocks the state by not being on the threshold of, so to speak, extinction at all.

Conclusion

Carnivals are opportunities to distance oneself from the official everyday life. Since they are associated with laughter and jokes, they liberate one from fears, religious extremities and individuality, causing a real ideal utopia that is unachievable in everyday life. Nevertheless, carnivals are realities, one day in your life, in which even a fool is a real fool. Parodies in the carnivals are practiced by utilizing themes such as madness and mask. The frankness, aggression, and at the same time death and rebirth associated with the carnival can provide a suitable background for presenting ideas in different works of art. Although the anti-official nature of carnival makes it completely applicable to analyzing the novel genre as counter canonical, modern media such as movies are not irrelevant to the carnival cause, either. Whereas carnival techniques permeate comedies, they can also be present in dramas. Since carnivals reveal realistic scenes, they are of use in Iranian cinema, which is known for its realistic narratives and social problem movies. *6.5 Per Meter*, as a box office hit, is a social problem movie and a police crime drama, which utilizes such techniques to present the drug problem in Iran with unprecedented openness. Etymology of the names of characters in this carnivalesque works is of utmost importance, while it breaks the norms to represent a new paradigm. Shifting the framework from ISAs to RSAs in Althusser’s terminology, the movie presents unavoidable violence. However, this movie portrays myriads of carnivalesque

features. While Naser's luxurious life is a stage of carnival, his avoidance to be arrested illustrates another aspect of carnival by mocking the authority. After his arrest, carnivalistic *mésalliances* appear in the prison room, where the poor and the rich are united. Naser and Samad make the movie more interesting by their repartees and abusive words. The materialism of the carnival is manifested in eating, drinking, etc. Ambivalence in Naser's characterization and performances are other aspects of the carnival present in the movie. This is the carnival in which even children and parents can be put against each other. The dualistic spirit of the carnival is manifested in the presence of old men and children side by side in the prison room. Greed for abundance of money is characterized in Naser, the carnival king, who is degraded, uncrowned, and replaced by others at the end. The symbolic hell Naser feels helps him overcome his fears of death. Roustayi screens the bitter fact that problems such as drug addiction are renewed in a carnival sense instead of being fundamentally solved.

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