

HonarAndishi

HonarAndishi is a combined Persian word implies "Thinking through/with Art"

HonarAndishi / The second Sundays of each month / 6pm / 18 Kendall St. Harris park NSW 2150

Our hearts are greatly saddened by the death of the innocent people in the streets of Iran and our thoughts are with the injured and troubled ones. We wish the rise of the sun of hope and happiness across that beautiful country we call home and we seek patience and peace for all.

The forth session of the 6th HA season has been allocated to a dystopian sci-fi novel *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) by Ray Bradbury and its movie adaptations, as he said once "I wrote Fahrenheit 451 because of my concerns during the McCarthy era about the threat of book burning in the United States". We will discuss the various aspects of this outstanding poetic novel and we will try to demonstrate the way it has been translated to *Showing Mode of presentation* in one of the classics by François Truffaut in 1966 compared with a new version of that in the digital era by Ramin Bahrani, as Bradbury himself referred to his work nowadays as a commentary on how mass media reduces interest in written literature.

Amir Hadi Nojoumian, Afshin Forghani

A GENUINE FIREMAN!

Bradbury is credited with writing 27 novels and over 600 short stories. Published in over 36 languages, more than eight million copies of his works have been sold around the world. Predominantly known for writing the iconic novel *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), he was one of the most celebrated 20th and 21st century American writers.



Ray Douglas Bradbury (1920 – 2012)



François Truffaut (1932 – 1984)

L'ENFANT SAUVAGE

François Truffaut is widely regarded as one of the founders of the *French New Wave* and without any doubt the most admired one. *Fahrenheit 451* was his only English-language movie made in England and it was also his first film shot in color by genius cinematographer Nicolas Roeg

AN INSIDER!

Ramin Bahrani is an Iranian-American director and screenwriter. The celebrated film critic Roger Ebert hailed Bahrani as "the new director of the decade." Bahrani was the recipient of the prestigious 2009 *Guggenheim Fellowship* and is a professor of film directing at *Columbia University's Graduate Film Program* in New York City.



Ramin Bahrani born 1975

No Books! Heaven or Hell?

Afskin Forghani



Public Book-Burnings, Nazi Germany 1933

Fahrenheit 451 (1953) has been reviewed immensely by many critics and academics from various aspects; its poetic tone and the way the novel deals with allegory, imagery and symbols as well as the way it's concerned with series of concepts like dictatorship, censorship, resistance, mass exploitation, technology, mass degradation and consumerism. It's an enticing strategy though to employ an *Althusserian* point of view in its review.

You may well remember that while *Karl Marx* (1818–1883) raised the notion of infrastructure and superstructure and their dialectical relationship, it was *Louis Althusser* (1918–1990) who investigated the *State Apparatus* and came up with this idea that the *State* does not imply its authority only through repression. In fact, there is another important part which is more integral and he called it *Ideology* which asserts the authority of the *State* insidiously. He described *Ideology* as *a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialised institutions*. In other words, the *State Apparatus* implies its power not just by violence, as traditionally has been assumed, but it does so, mainly, from within, by means of religion, education, family, law, politics and media in

such a subtle way hardly noticeable. It easily transforms us to an integral part of the *State Apparatus*. *Ray Bradbury* in his remarkable dystopian novel sets the ground well for such an approach. On one hand, we have the *Firemen* who are embodying the *Repressive State Apparatus* by enforcing the law of the *State* and punishing the criminals, and on the other hand, we have such a powerful and yet less intrusive mechanism in-place called the *Ideological State Apparatus* which includes the *Televisors* (TVs that cover a wall), *Seashell Radios*, *Comic Books* and school system that practically begins after the childbirth. It's important to remember that *Bradbury* wrote his book at the emergence of televisions that captivated all minds and alarmingly made elites concern and uncertain about the future. The same way that nowadays digital screens, smartphones and computers conquered our world. We rarely see people reading books or magazines in public transportation anymore and we find ourselves surrounded by individuals, heads down, absorbed in their handheld devices. Many propose digital-free days and the idea of *back to nature* has been revived. In fact, encircled by the crazy speed of data, we certainly are in a better position to apprehend what *Clarisse* once said "*I sometimes think drivers don't know what grass is, or*

flowers, because they never see them slowly," she said. "If you showed a driver a green blur, Oh yes! he'd say, that's grass! A pink blur? That's a rose-garden! White blurs are houses. Brown blurs are cows." This idea turned to be the centre

We found a large
number of books in
these characters and, as
they contained nothing
in which were not to be
seen as superstition and
lies of the devil, we
burned them all

*Bishop De Landa
who ordered burning all
Maya folding books
in hieroglyphic script
on Mesoamerican bark paper
in 1562*

point of *Milan Kundera's* novel *Slowness* (1995). One can argue though, that in Bradbury's dystopian future it's not the speed but the static state of media-possessed people which looks like to be the main critical aspect.

Furthermore, if the system meant to bring

the *Happiness* for citizens in *Fahrenheit 451*, and more than that, if this is what people chose to follow - in contrast to 1984 (George Orwell, 1948) that it imposed itself on them - why shouldn't we welcome that? Haven't we regretted the day *Adam* and *Eve* ate the fruit of knowledge and put us in an everlasting sorrow and pain? In the book, while *Faber* asserts that "*Remember, the firemen are rarely necessary. The public itself stopped reading of its own accord*", *Beatty* explains that "*It didn't come from the Government down. There was no dictum, no declaration, no censorship, to start with, no! Technology, mass exploitation, and minority pressure carried the trick, thank God. Today, thanks to them, you can stay happy all the time*". Reading books makes *Montag* to be constantly worry, seeing nightmares and gradually getting disturbed. So the question is, in fact, a reverse one; why do we really need books? To learn, to remember, to express ourselves or to get our identity? *Ramin Bahrani*, in his adapted movie, that ironically has been made for television, shows burning portraits, paintings, books and historical photos during the title sequence to specifically remind us that by burning books we, in fact, losing not only our our culture but also our history and our memory. While *François Truffaut* in his cinematic version, shows TV antennas everywhere with a voice that announces the cast and crew, without any written words in order to create a linguistic



Oskar Werner & Julie Christie in *Fahrenheit 451*

world just based on *parole* as opposed to *langue*.

There is still another significant term in *Althusserian* doctrine which is called *Interpellation*. A term that points out the confrontation with the system in everyday life that reveals the hidden apparatus. He explained that when a police officer calls you and you turn, you don't see yourself in front of that *individual* but rather you stare at the core of the system-in-place. And this is how *Interpellation* proposes two aspects of a character in any story; The *individual* and the *subject*. *Clarisse* in the novel is a good example of an *individual* while *Mildred* is clearly a *subject*. *François Truffaut* cleverly

appoints the same actress for both roles to ascertain the existence of both in every character. It's especially interesting to look at the scene when *Mildred* questions *Montag* about the books and *Montag* starts an argument while she is standing in front of a mirror and her duplicated images refer to her bewilderment between her individuality and her subjectivity i.e. her being as a part of the system.

We will focus on the *Althusserian* approach in much more details, not only through his notion of *Ideology* but also the *interpellation* and the way *individual* turns to a *subject* and vice versa in our December's session.



Oskar Werner & Julie Christie in *Fahrenheit 451*

Director

François Truffaut

Screenplay

Jean-Louis Richard, François Truffaut

Music

Bernard Herrmann

Cast

Oskar Werner

Julie Christie

Nominated for *Best British actress* at
BAFTA (1967)

Nominated for *Golden Lion* at the 27th
Venice Film Festival (1966)

Director

Ramin Bahrani

Screenplay

Ramin Bahrani, Amir Naderi

Cast

Michael B. Jordan

Michael Shannon

Sofia Boutella

Nominated for *Outstanding Television Movie*,
Outstanding Cinematography, *Fantasy/Sci-Fi*
Costumes, *Sound Editing* and *Sound Mixing* for a
Limited Series or Movie at 70th Primetime
Creative Arts Emmy Awards (2018)
Winner of *Producers Guild Awards* (2019)



Michael B. Jordan & Michael Shannon in *Fahrenheit*

Captain Khorshid as will and representation

Amir Hadi Nojournian



Saeed Poursamini and Ali Nassirian in *Captain Khorshid* 1987

Naser Taghvaei (born 1941) in the movie *Captain Khorshid* (1987) gives us a very Iranian reading of the novel *To have and Have not* (1937) written by the great American novelist Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961). This is Taghvaei's 4th feature film and his first movie made after the 1979 revolution.

The story describes the tragic fate of a sea captain (*Khorshid*) struggling to survive in a harsh and unjust environment. *Khorshid's* failed attempts to breakthrough the impasse of economic inequality and poverty step by step alienated him from the established mainstream business and lured him into the illegal activities. His physical disability (amputated arm) is a metaphor of his inability to easily move within this social structure and emphasises on, and justifies his restrictions and limited options. It is interesting that *Khajeh Majed* the patriarch antihero and main opponent of *Khorshid* is also paraplegic which emphasises on the fact that this unfair situation is fixed for the both sides of this game. *Khorshid* finally gets involved with a group of criminals trying to escape the country by using his boat. In this context tragedy is shaped. It is very symbolic that the very people whom he tries to rescue will attempt to kill him and he knows their freedom means his demise. The true tragedy for *Khorshid* unfolds as he finally realises neither the land nor the sea is safe for him. He is

doomed to fail no matter what he does. The boat at the end of the journey is at the same place where this odyssey initially started, which is a sign of absurdity of this trip and the meaninglessness of this vicious cycle. This meaningless tragedy reminds us of the worldview expressed by Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), the 19th century German philosopher, in his seminal work, *World as Will and Representation* (1819) published exactly 200 years ago. Schopenhauer rejected Georg Hegel (1770-1831) idea of human rationality and historical progress. He pointed out the irrationality of human existence and argued that the human "will" is a blind and meaningless force. This force represents itself as the will to live, seek pleasure and reproduce etc. The great tragedy of life is the continuous disappointment of Will in between two poles of boredom and failure. This is the main source of relentless human suffering in Schopenhauer's view. His work greatly influenced another German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) in his revolt against reason.

In arts, *Tragedy* genre may show this human predicament best as Terry Eagleton (born 1943) puts it in his book *The meaning of life* (2007). The tragic fate of *Capitan Khorshid* in Schopenhauer's view is an example of the inescapable fate of humanity in a world set up to disappoint and

impose suffering. As he put it in *On the Vanity of Existence*: “The vanity of existence is revealed in the whole form existence assumes: in the infiniteness of time and space contrasted with finiteness of the individual in both; in the fleeting present as the sole form in which

This amazingly
believable and
probably the best
adaptation of the
novel, originally written
based on a completely
different environment
(Key West, Florida),
testifies to the
universality of human
condition and lived
experience yet again.

actuality exists; in the contingency and relativity of all things; in the continual becoming without being; in the continual desire without satisfaction; in the continual frustration of striving of which life consists.”

The movie demonstrates this cycle of desire and failure through the two missions *Khorshid* carried

out. As his first mission goes well according to *Schopenhauer's* prophecy, *desire* leads him to the next challenge and for the human beings this continuous cycle progresses till they face failure. This is shown through the second mission. At this point he is left with very limited options whether he choose to resist to smuggle the criminals or wait until his boat is confiscated by authorities ultimately makes not much difference to him. He will suffer both ways. He was tempted by revenge from *Khajeh Majed* and the financial benefit of this trip until he finds himself with a group of murderers in a boat on the sea. The will to survive forces him to act and by implementing his *will* with catastrophic consequences, he has a direct experience of the inner nature of himself as well as the world. This chapter is quite telling of human nature and its capabilities.

This amazingly believable and probably the best adaptation of the novel originally written based on a completely different setting (*Key West, Florida*) testifies to the universality of human condition and lived experience yet again.

On a happy ending note (uncharacteristic of *Schopenhauer*, being the philosopher of pessimism) he has three suggestions for rescuing humans from this grim fate, namely, art, compassion and immersion in sorrow (asceticism). He thought these three strategies will disable the *desiring will* and save us from eternal suffering. Although *Khorshid* appeared compassionate on several occasions, it apparently was not quite frequent enough!

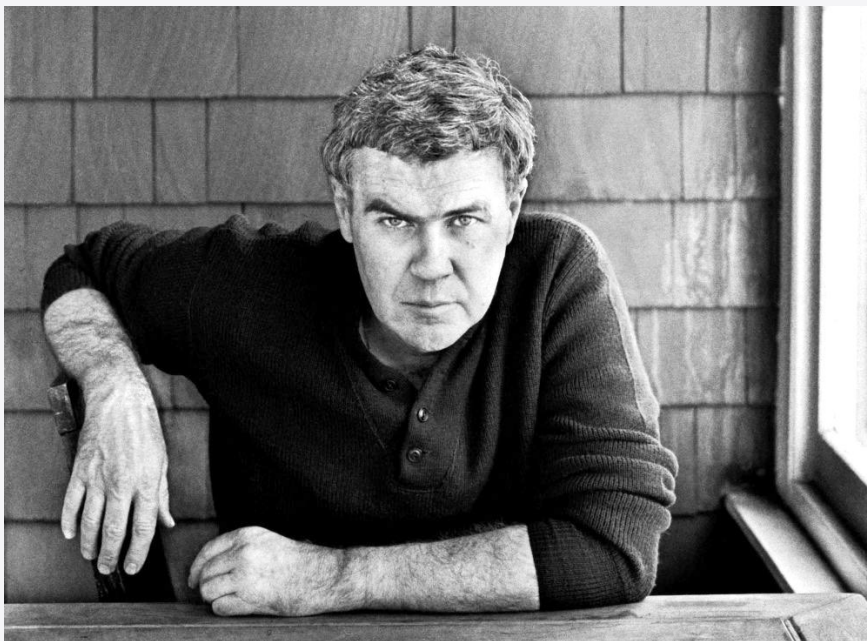
Darius Arjmand in Captain Khorshid 1987





*The pen that told the truth
went into the washing machine
for its trouble. Came out
an hour later, and was tossed
in the dryer with jeans
and a western shirt. Days passed
while it lay quietly on the desk
under the window. Lay there
thinking it was finished and
without a single conviction
to its name. It didn't have
the will to go on, even if it'd wanted.
But one morning, an hour or so
before sunrise, it came to life
and wrote:
"The damp fields asleep in moonlight."
Then it was still again.
Its usefulness in this life
clearly at an end.
He shook it and whacked it*

*on the desk. Then gave up
on it, or nearly.
Once more though, with the greatest
effort, it summoned its last
reserves. This is what it wrote:
"A light wind, and beyond the window
trees swimming in the golden morning
air."
He tried to write some more
but that was all. The pen
quit working forever.
By and by it was put
into the stove along with
other junk. And much later
it was another pen,
an undistinguished pen
that hadn't proved itself
yet, that facilely wrote:
"Darkness gathers in the branches.
Stay inside. Keep still."*



BELONGING

Amir Hadi Nojournian

"Recently returned?
How was the trip?
How did you find
Your old pathways and
field?"
You ask

And I hesitate,
You wish I didn't.
Everyone wants a reply
Quick and clear cut
black and white.

But I live in the shade
I live in between
I am undecided
Unclear and
indistinct.

To give you an answer
I simplify,
sacrifice details
Important details
I sacrifice.

To give you
a bottom line
Clearly cut
I simplify.

"Hard to describe
you know my friend
It's like leaving
a step mum behind
Competent and able,
confident and focused,
But
distant and reserved
To go to your real mum
Lost and simple,
distracted and disturbed
Trapped in between
Protests and unrests
Though
still close and warm
Still your real mum."

"I confused you,
but you realise now

I am confused too."

Then
You ask me the usual
You ask me the routine
"You like it in here?"
Seeking you again
Your favourite
Simple bottom line.

I say
"And I wonder
Who do I belong
The old or the new
The distant or disturbed
Which one is mine,
Which one is me?"

The comfort of here,
Or the amity of there.
The challenge of looking
Outside from within.
Or sadness of watching
Inside from afar.
That lost warm hug
Between these ins and outs.
Where is it?
Where can it be found?
Can it be found,
Ever again?

Freezing Ice in one hand
Blazing iron in the other
Is it strange that we suffer?
How can you average
The Iron and the ice
The frozen and the burnt.
How can you add up
The pleasure and the drought?
How can you sum up
The pain and the rain?
I am thinking
They do not add up
This is the reason why
There is no bottom line."

You often remind me,
How very lucky I am
living in here.

That's your bottom line.

I say,
"And you know what
You are absolutely right
I am very lucky
I agree
Cause I have a piece of her
Still inside me,
You don't see it
It is hidden well
But
I carry it everywhere
Even when I attend
to my new mum
When she is ill.
When she is not well.
You know
When I look after her
It is actually the other mum
That simple and disturbed mum
Inside me
Who talks to her
Cares for her
And loves her much
For what she has given me
Her lost real son."
"And it is
That piece of her
Inside me
That
Thanks the new mum
The step mum
Even
Without any word said."

But my friend and my mate
You have never heard
this story
Never from me
But you could see it
surlily
In a silence and hesitation
When you seek again
keenly
The simple bottom line.
That simple bottom line.

2018 Sydney

December Session

PART ONE

- Panel Discussion on *Fahrenheit 451* (Ray Douglas Bradbury 1953) and its two adapted movies by *François Truffaut* (1966) and *Ramin Bahrani* (2018)

PART TWO

- Screening *One Cambodian Family Please for My Pleasure* (A.M. Lukas, 2019)
- Poetry Corner; *The pen* by *Raymond Carver*
- Group Discussion

One Cambodian Family Please for My Pleasure (A.M. Lukas, 2019)



Emily Mortimer gives a delightful performance as a Czech refugee living in Fargo, North Dakota in this sure-handed 14-minute comedy by writer-director *A.M. Lukas*. Lukas, shot this very amusing story in a house 30 feet from her actual childhood home. The film has been screened in Sundance and considered one of the hidden gem of this year festival.

Our January Session

Close Up (1990) is a courtroom drama of a special sort. It's based on a real-life case of an unemployed Tehran movie buff, *Hossain Sabzian*, who impersonates the director *Mohsen Makhmalbaf*. It features actual footage of the impostor's trial, of Kiarostami's inquiries into the case, and dramatic reenactments of the events leading to and including the arrest-performed by the participants themselves. The movie brings to the fore *Kiarostami's* distinctive notion of the inextricability of being and seeming, of performance and life, of identity as a conscious construction. It also has surprising political implications.

Richard Brody



CLOSE-UP
un film de
ABBAS KIAROSTAMI

PERSIAN CINEMA NEAR AND FAR CREATIVITY AND CONTROVERSY

SUNDAY 08 DECEMBER 10:30 AM PALACE CENTRAL

The Persian International Film Festival is now the largest festival out of Iran that dedicated to showcasing Persian films from Iran, Afghanistan and beyond. This year the panel of experts will explore some of the ways that these filmmakers have approached questions of creativity. Along side this, they will look at some of the controversies that have emerged as these films have circulated the globe



Dr Michelle Langford

Michelle Langford is Senior Lecturer in Film Studies in the School of the Arts and Media at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. Her research spans the cinemas of Iran and Germany. Her research on Iranian cinema has focussed on gender, allegory and aesthetics and had appeared in leading film studies journals including Camera Obscura, Screen and Screening the Past. Her forthcoming book is entitled Allegory in Iranian Cinema: The Aesthetics of Poetry and Resistance (Bloomsbury). Her current research project looks at the German films of Iranian filmmaker Sohrab Shahid Saless.

Professor Shohini Chaudhuri

Shohini Chaudhuri is a Professor in the Department of Film and Theatre Studies at the University of Essex. Professor Chaudhuri's main research and teaching area is World Cinema, with particular interests in film and human rights, film-philosophy, feminist and postcolonial theory. She has written three books including Cinema of the Dark Side: Atrocity and the Ethics of Film Spectatorship (2014) and her current research seeks to transform our understanding of freedom of expression by exploring creativity and constraint in contemporary filmmaking in Iran and the Arab World.



Dr Mahsa Salamati

Mahsa Salamati completed her PhD in Film Studies at the University of New South Wales. Her research is concerned with the dynamics and politics of transnational film circulation in the Iranian context. Her work focuses on cultural policies, the international film festival circuit and piracy. Mahsa is also the programs coordinator at Persian Film Festival

DECEMBER 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 Aknoon Cultural Center	4 5 6 7 The 8th Persian Film Festival, Sydney			
8	9	10 Aknoon Cultural Center	11	12	13 Shab-e-Sokhan Talk Night	14
15 HonarAndishi	16	17 Aknoon Cultural Center	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Aknoon Cultural Center	25	26	27 Azadi Club	28
29	30	31 Aknoon Cultural Center	1	2	3	4

THE 8TH PERSIAN FILM FESTIVAL 4-8 DEC

The Persian Film Festival 2019 will take place from 04 to 08 December at Palace Cinemas. Through film screenings, forums, masterclasses and special events, the Festival highlights the richness of Iranian cinema and Persian-speaking filmmakers from around the globe.

more information on www.persianfilmfestival.com

AKNOON CULTURAL CENTER EVERY TUESDAY NIGHT 8 PM

Aknoon Cultural centre continues to be a prolific hub for Iranian writers and poets in Sydney.

Hornsby Community Centre 20 Muriel Street (corner Burdett street)Hornsby

SHAB-E-SOKHAN (TALK NIGHT) 13TH DEC AT 8:30 PM

In its 199th session, *Shab-e Sokhan* assigns to the topic of *The History of nuclear weapons and the future of mankind* by *Dr HashemiNejad*

Leisure and Learning Centre, 1 Chambers Court (off Pembroke Street), Epping

AZADI MOVIE AND CULTURAL CLUB 27 DEC 7:30 PM

Azadi movie and cultural club will present another night packed with movie and talk on 27 Dec. The details yet to be announced.

Leisure and Learning Centre, 1 Chambers Court (off Pembroke Street), Epping