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## Iranian Sacred Defence Cinema: Religion, Martyrdom and National Identity

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## Sacred Defence Cinema: Religion, Martyrdom and National Identity:

While the cinema of post-revolutionary Iran is internationally acknowledged, the world outside Iran has been ignorant of the Iranian war films that are the subject of this pioneering book. Over 200 Iranian feature films concentrating primarily on fighting and military operations have appeared since the 1980s and the beginning of the war between Iran and Iraq. This book presents a detailed exploration of the 'Sacred Defence cinema' established by Seyed Morteza Avini, a cinema that directly connects this war to the faith and religious belief of volunteer guardians of the revolution. These films remain the primary vehicles of the Islamic state in Iran for the preservation and memorization of the theme of martyrdom. As the distinguished film scholar, Hamid Dabashi writes in his Foreword to the book: 'If national cinemas are predicated on national traumas, in the volume that Pedram Khosronejad has put together we are at the heart of Iranian cinema.' "The eight-year Iran-Iraq war near the end of the 20th century renewed the horrors of the First World War near the start of the century - causing millions of casualties and untold devastation on both sides. It also resulted in a vigorous and dynamic cinematic output in Iran, producing some of the most ardent Islamist political movies, Shii-inflected spiritual films, and original theorization of what constitutes an 'Islamic cinema'. Khosronejad has managed to amass an astute and fascinating anthology - the first in English - that brings together an international roster of scholars to deal with the complexities and varieties of war fiction films, documentaries, television series and auteur directors." Prof. Hamid Naficy Northwestern University