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Brother Tarantino in the mosque: An analysis of the cultural and political instrumentality of satire in "The Lizard" (2004)

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APPENDIX: FILMOGRAPHY

The Lizard (Iran, 2004)

Marmoulak

Directed by: Kamal Tabrizi

Writing credits: Peyman Ghassemkhani

Starring: Parvis Parastui, Bahram Ibrahimi

Summary: Reza is a petty thief known as the 'lizard'. He is apprehended one night and tries to kill himself in solitary confinement. Wounded, he is sent to hospital because the prison infirmary is full. Once there, he escapes jail by stealing the clothes of a mullah. On his way to escape the country from the border, Reza is met by a congregation, which has been awaiting the arrival of a mullah for their local mosque. Laying low, Reza plays the role of the mullah, hoping to escape one day. He unintentionally begins inspiring the local townsfolk and brings them back into the mosque. His sermons feature sexual innuendo and references to "Brother Tarantino's" *Pulp Fiction*. When the authorities finally catch up to Reza, he is ready to turn back and accept his fate as a prisoner.

Under The Moonlight (Iran, 2001)

Zir-e noor-e maah

Directed by: Seyyed Reza Mir-Karimi

Writing credits: Seyyed Reza Mir-Karimi

Starring: Hossein Pour Sattar, Hamed Rajabali

Summary: Hassan is a young seminarian who experiences a crisis of faith as he approaches the ritual of 'taking the turban' to become a cleric. Sceptical of the dogma

taught to him in the seminary, Hassan, nevertheless, buys the necessary vestments. However, a street kid jumps from a streetcar and makes off with them, forcing the trainee mullah to venture into a shocking Tehran subculture to retrieve his garb. The film delves into the world of prostitution, drug pushing and the plight of the homeless. During his journey, he finds that his understanding of faith differs to what he is taught at seminary.

Taste of Cherry (Iran, 1997)

Ta'm-e guilass

Directed by: Abbas Kiarostami

Writing Credits: Abbas Kiarostami

Starring: Homayoun Ershadi, Adbolrahman Bagheri

Summary: A nameless man drives around the streets, asking strangers to help him end his life. He plans to swallow sleeping pills and lay himself to rest in a hole under a tree. All he asks is that someone comes to check on him in the morning; if he is alive, to help him out of the hole, and if he is dead, to cover it with dirt. Finally, he finds someone who sympathises with him. The man agrees but warns the protagonist that he may regret it. He recalls having attempted suicide himself once before but came across a cherry tree that saved his life. Tasting a cherry, he realised that he was not ready to give up the tastes and scents of this world. However, the protagonist seems relentless. That night he paces up and down his apartment. It is unclear as to whether or not he has taken the tablets. He drives to the hole under the tree and lies down. Then comes a final sequence, shot on video rather than film. The main actor, Homayoun Ershadi, smokes a cigarette and walks up a hill. Director Kiarostami looks through his camera and calls: "The shoot is over".

Crimson Gold (Iran, 2003)

Talaye sorkh

Directed by: Jafar Panahi

Writing credits: Abbas Kiarostami

Starring: Hossain Emadeddin, Kamyar Sheisi

Summary: For Hussein, a pizza delivery driver, the imbalance of the social system is thrown in his face wherever he turns. One day, when his friend, Ali, shows him the contents of a lost purse, Hussein discovers a receipt of payment and cannot believe the large sum of money someone spent to purchase an expensive necklace. He knows that his pitiful salary will never be enough to afford such luxury. Hussein receives yet another blow when he and Ali are denied entry into an uptown jewellery store because of their appearance. His job allows him a full view of the contrast between rich and poor. Every evening he drives around neighbourhoods he will never live in, so he can get a closer look at what goes on behind closed doors. The deep feelings of humiliation for his social rank finally build up and push him over the edge. One night Hussein breaks into the jewellery shop and kills the shop owner and then himself.

The Cow (Iran, 1970)

Gaav

Directed by: Dariush Mehrjooi

Writing credits: Dariush Mehrjooi

Starring: Ezzatollah Entezami, Firouz Behjat-Mohamadi, Mahmoud Dawlatabadi

Summary: The film takes place in a remote village whose few inhabitants live primitively, under constant threat of attack from a shadowy trio of foreign marauders. The only cow in the village belongs to Hassan, and he is single-mindedly devoted to it. When the cow is found dead, the other villagers decide to bury it and tell Hassan that it ran away. Unable to cope with his loss, Hassan retreats to his barn and gradually assumes the animal's identity.

The White Balloon (Iran, 1995)

Badkonake Sefid

Director: Jafar Panahi

Writing credits: Abbas Kiarostami

Starring: Aida Mohammadkhani, Mohsen Kafili, Fereshte Sadr Orfani

Summary: Razieh wants a fat goldfish for the Iranian New Years celebration. In the family pond at home, she has skinny fish that she believes do not look as good. After many attempts, Razieh and her brother convince their mother to give them her last bit of money for a fish. Between their home and the fish store, Razieh loses the money. She finds it in a gutter, where it is hard to reach. Finally, someone helps her but coerces her into using the retrieved money to buy one of her own family's skinny fish.

We're No Angels (USA, 1955)

Directed by: Michael Curtiz

Writing credits: Albert Husson, Ranald MacDougall

Starring: Humphrey Bogart, Aldo Ray, Peter Ustinov

Summary: Three convicts escape prison on Devil's Island and arrive at a nearby French colonial town. A search is launched for them, yet they are able to disguise themselves as three of the Island's 300 parolees. Initially, they plan to steal supplies and clothing from the local store and make their way onto a big ship that will take them to Paris. However, they begin to take liking to the store owner's family, especially the young daughter, and decide to stay and help the family overcome their difficulties. In the end, the three convicts have been transformed. Almost boarding the ship for Paris, they decide they can always escape again next year and turn around to return to prison on their own accord.

We're No Angels (USA, 1989)

Directed by: Neil Jordan

Writing credits: David Mamet, Albert Husson

Starring: Robert De Niro, Sean Penn, Demi Moore

Two convicts on death row escape the clutches of a relentless warden. The town has launched a huge search for the convicts. At the same time, the local monastery is awaiting the arrival of a couple of noted priests. The convicts find refuge behind the monastery walls, when they are mistaken for the awaited priests. Their plan becomes to escape the country through a religious procession that normally crosses the nearby boarder to Canada. One of the convicts falls for the town's Molly, a single and therefore frowned-upon mother of a handicapped child. The other falls deeply in love with religion. Just as they are about to escape through the procession leading into Canada, a third convict arrives and creates havoc, preventing the successful crossover into freedom.

The Pilgrim (USA, 1923)

Writing credits: Charles Chaplin

Starring: Charles Chaplin

Summary: When Charlie escapes from prison he dons a preacher's clothes. By mistake, he becomes the new minister for the town of Devil's Gulch. Later, discovered as the convict, the sheriff takes Charlie to the Mexican border where he can either choose to return home as a convict or face Mexican bandits at war with each other.