# Taxi Tehran (2015)

COMPONENT 2 SECTION A: GLOBAL FILM (GROUP 2)

### AREAS FOR STUDY

- ▶ Film Form questions require micro analysis (need to know key scenes in detail) but can be linked to macro issues e.g. representation, messages, themes and values, auteur or even spectatorship)
- Meaning and Response
- **♦** Contexts

### Socio-political commentary



#### Cultural context

- Panahi's use of form and style links to the Iranian neorealist film movement
- ◆ The **aesthetic** has been described as a balance of depicting the problems of human characters (particularly women) while also conveying **political and social messages** − a form of 'realist, but emotive ideology'
- ♦ **Auteur production** (written, directed, produced and 'starring' Panahi)





### Socio-political context 1

- Panahi banned from making films in Iran
- Critically successful
- ◆ Self reflexive filmmaking (see Bill Nichols and reflexive documentary making) the role of Hana and discussions on creating a short film for a school project (at one point she is filming a couple being filmed)
- Documentary-drama (fiction) only in that the stories are probably scripted and told by unprofessional actors

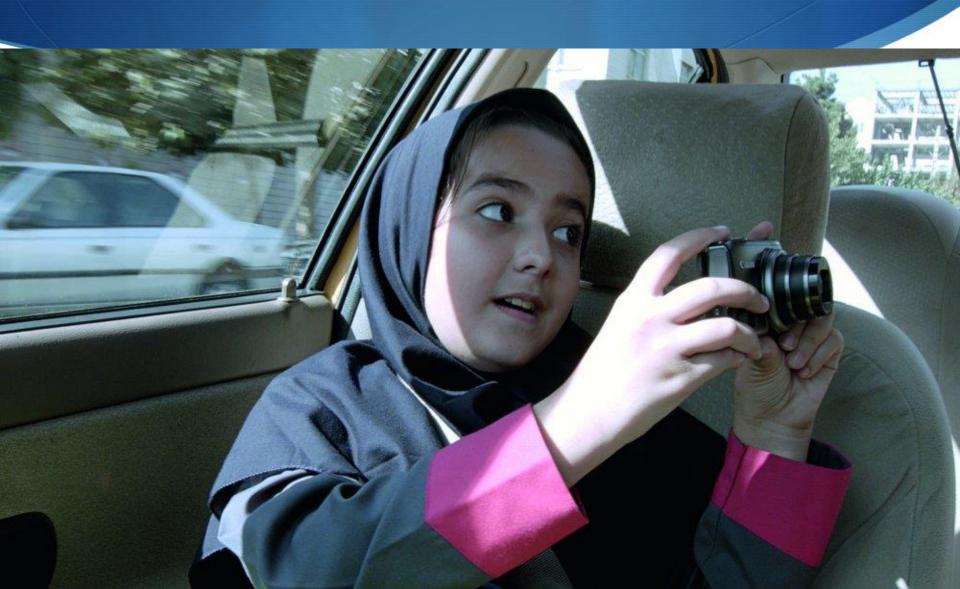
# Optimism from a human rights Lawyer despite bleak narrative outcomes



### Socio-political context 2

- ♦ Filming from dash mounted camera (it can also pan) Panahi as taxi driver, set in Tehran
- ▲ As well as 'documenting' it is also a portrait of a city Panahi **questions notions of documentary realism** his niece Hana is under instructions to "avoid sordid reality" from her teacher
- ▶ Panahi uses technology to "look beyond ideological parameters" a film that will not be distributed in Iran but that can be accessed online

## Hana and self reflexive filmmaking



### Clips

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=If0KreZkurg - recognition

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pl0UJLTtWjE - optimism

<u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFNkvH1WDUE</u> - flowers extended

<u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZ0PQIuXo6E</u> - avoid sordid realism

<u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnXkpjx5TaU</u> - Hana filming extended

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eM2tblIkL4g - trailer

# Discreet filming – documentary realism



### Film Form and Aesthetics 1

- ♦ Lots of wide angle shots (a portrait of a city) although lots of backstreets and not stereotypical grand 'tourist' locations
- ▶ Blurring of the boundaries of scripted drama and documentary realism – questioning verisimilitude and 'Kino-Eye' (see Man with a Movie Camera)
- ◆ Claustrophobic feel as a result of single dashboard camera the mise-en-scene itself creates tension (metaphor for filming restrictions)
- Surprisingly flexible camera offering POV, CU and pan

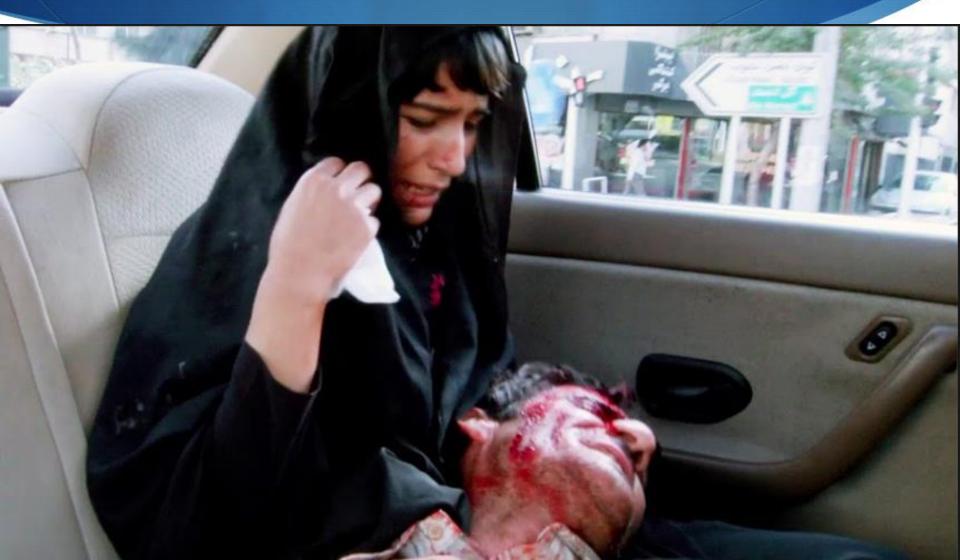
### Classic Panahi reaction shot



#### Film Form and Aesthetics 2

- ◆ Dress code is often in binary opposition many women wear traditional hijabs while notions of almost decadence and difference are encoded by Panahi's flat cap and jacket
- ♦ Editing is linear with many long takes and use of shot/reverse/shot, particularly reaction shots
- Real time is apparent although subverted through editing
- ♦ Low level diegetic sounds from the street adds realism

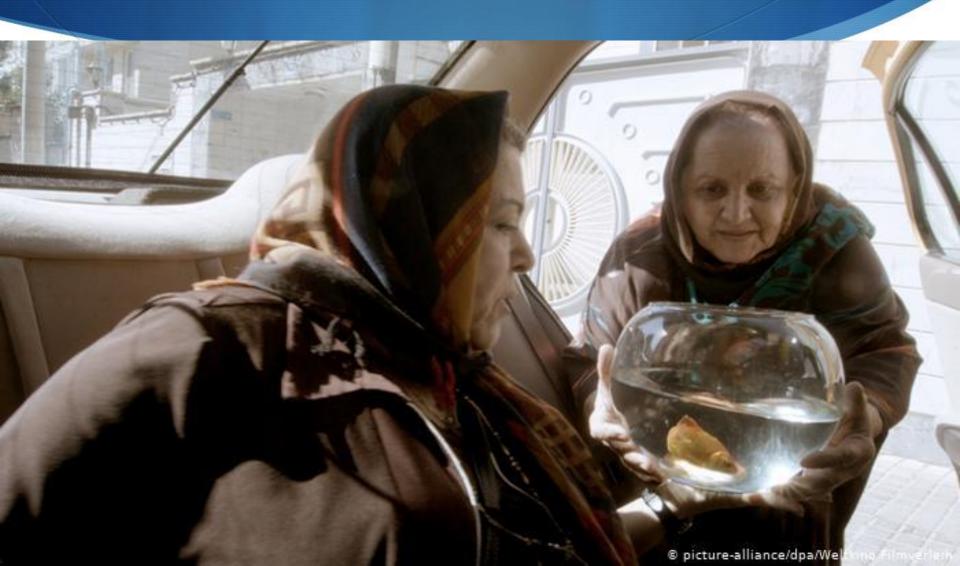
# A discourse on gendered inheritance



## Micro analysis 1: 'Optimism'

- ▲ A close of the Lawyer's finger pointing at the camera encodes self reflexivity but also humour
- ♦ A long take reveals a monologue on political surveillance
- Panahi reaction shots driving see also Hana in the frame as a pedestrian (at this moment the car is stationary in traffic)
- ♦ Shot/reverse/shot is used to establish character relationships while a wipe suggests an edit

# Panahi's films foreground female gender representation (not sure about the goldfish)



### Micro analysis 2

- ♦ A lack of non diegetic sounds reinforces documentary realist tradition
- Dress code identifies traditional Muslim religious ideology
- Diegetic dialogue from Panahi established his older, wiser,
   'Uncle credentials' as a teacher