

ABSTRACT

The formation of the new Islamic state, in 1979, after the revolution in Iran, and the opportunities it offered artists, especially filmmakers, saw the emergence of organizations like the Farabi Cinema Foundation (1983) under the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. Visual Arts and Cinema have, since then, shared a rather contradictory relationship with the Islamic State. While the state encouraged and sponsored a new language of cinema, after the decades of Film Farsis, imitating the West, made in the era of the Pahlavi Dynasty, it also laid down ethical principles and censorship restrictions. Inspired by the works of Dariush Mehrjui, Ebrahim Golestan, Bahram Beyzei and Sohrab Shahid Sales, this period saw a radical change in the language of cinema, the cultural expression and development of individual identities, and the emergence of filmmakers like Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Bahman Ghobadi, Jafar Panahi- auteurs propelling Iranian cinema into larger transnational and global zones.

As the conflict between the state and these artists grew, innumerable cuts and restrictions were imposed on their works, resulting in a series of departures and exiles from Iran in the early 2000's. Several directors were exiled from their homes, many were arrested, their licenses seized; while a few chose to leave voluntarily in order to be able to make films. Those who remained were in no better position: fears of being uprooted made them stay on but only as internal exiles.

In my thesis I divide the phenomenon of Exile in two forms, firstly, the politically banished artist, or the external exile, uprooted from the homeland and placed in unknown territories, and secondly the internal exile, out of place within their own country, fighting for artistic expression. I evaluate the changes in cinematic expression in the works of two

filmmakers exiled out of Iran, Mohsen Makhmalbaf and Bahman Ghobadi, and Jafar Panahi and Mohammad Rasoulof – forbidden to leave Iran and banned from filmmaking in 2009.