

Introduction to Film Studies
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Lecture No. 37
Cinema and Genres (Contd...)
-Genre Blending and Genre Bending
-Quentin Tarantino's Films

Good morning. We will continue with what Rick Altman has been telling us a list of 10 defining features of a genre. We ended up how genres cater to certain expectations. And Rick Altman – according to Rick Altman, producers, readers and critics – all share the same interest in genre. Now, this is an interesting idea that readers are not just readers, but also, the audience we are talking about if film is considered a text. So, producers not just readers or the audience, who wait for a particular kind of a movie to come along. But it is also the producers, who are highly interested in genres.

Now, can you give me some examples? What kind of genres would producers be interested in? High concept cinema – are we talking about that? Get me George Clooney Brad Pitt, Tom Cruise and you have a movie. But if look at a highest cinema like Ocean's series, this would be a typical genre that producers would be interested in – a super hero movie. That is another genre, which producers would like to have. But how many producers do you think will be very enthusiastic to finance a film like Fargo?

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Not many; or, The Big Lebowski or A Serious Man or even A Single Man. Are you aware of Single Man?

Colin Firth.

Colin Firth; and it is directed by a fashion designer Tom Ford, is a very fashion conscious kind of a film. But how many people would be interested in those kinds of movies? Not many producers. So, it is not impossible to have a Punch-Drunk Love. We do find something like The Master; we do find occasionally something like Fight Club or

a Fargo; so Coen brothers what, no Country for Old Men. What do they do? They (()) the expectations that we have of a western; consider both No Country for Old Men and There Will Be Blood, 2007 movies starring one stars Daniel Day-Lewis directed by Paul Thomas Anderson; one stars Javier Bardem, Tommy Lee Jones and Josh Brolin directed by Coen brothers based on a great novel – very successful novel by Cormac McCarthy.

Now, what generic expectations are they fulfilling here? These are the westerns.

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No, I am asking about, are they fulfilling the expectations? There are producers; there are audiences; there are critics. They expect something in a genre.

They expect hero to be (()) The hero dies.

The so-called hero dies; that is voice of reason; the rational voice – it is quite in; that is, Tommy Lee Jones. He accepts defeat; he accept that he is tired and can get no longer go on; even the wife, who is the only noble character in the movie apart from the Sheriff. There are not many characters in the film. Have you noticed that? In No Country for Old Men, it is not populated with people. The setting is a sparse and the characters are also minimum; they keep it to the minimum; dialog is minimalistic. So, it is a very minimalistic kind of movies in many ways. But the best person human being in the movie – Allu Ali's wife; she is killed off for no reason. Why does he kill her? Is he out on a revenge? He has already killed off her husband.

Fate.

It is her fate to die. So, what is he then? The villain becomes the messenger of death; maybe shaken himself; maybe he personifies a walking evil through the deserts; who knows. It subverts in other ways; both these movies subvert the expectations of conventional western. There is no hero; there is no sanity; there is no affirmative consequential model any more. Remember that is what we expect in a typical genre, cause, effect, logic. But these two movies define every logic. So, why did critics go overboard in praising both No Country for Old Men and There Will Be Blood? Between these two movies, they won all the academy awards in 2008. Javier Bardem got the best supporting actor; Day-Lewis won it for the best acting. No Country for Old Men was

also the best movie that year. What makes for this kind of a phenomenal popularity among the audience as well as among the critics? Because they defied genres; and, it is up to us, as consumers, how much we want to take. And, after that, did you notice that there has been no conventional western?

True Grit

But True Grit is a remake. And then again remakes have their own lives. At one level, these movies also generated interest in the western as a genre. So, the audiences were ready; 3:10 to Yuma, yes. So, I think 3:10 to Yuma came a little before these two movies.

3:10 to Yuma also is a remake.

Is also remake, yes. So, on one hand, we are having remakes of very successful popular westerns or we are having completely subverting westerns. So, it is a very interesting film. After Public Enemies and after The Town, did we have any very popular gangster? I am talking... Basically, interested in the western and the gangster, because they are typical hollywood products. Musicals and romantic comedies are common in every country. But can you give me one single example of a very celebrated gangster movie after Johnny Depp's and Michael Mann's Public Enemies?

There were some, but I do not think they were very celebrated.

Yes, we are not even aware of most of these films. Gangster has been a very popular genre in our country as well. Why do you think in India, we do not have the western? Let me tell you. We never had that western culture, the typical western hero culture in our country although our landscape can also give encouragement to that kind of a plot. But we never had a very successful example of a western; except, Sholay is often sighted; but then, it is a curry. Like in the west, we have the spaghetti version; we have the curry western in the form of Sholay. But then, it is a mish mash of many things. That we have already talked about the strong, emotional connect; that is the kind of characters that we had in Sholay. So, that made for its popularity; that accounted for its phenomenal popularity.

But, gangster – yes, we do have. Why do you think gangster heroes are so popular with us.

They subvert authority...

In Z. We always need a hero in our country or in any country; it is a very universal need to have a hero, who subverts authority. At the same time, he comes along a musical and a family drama; family drama is quite peculiar to Asian cinema; I do not think in European cinema or in hollywood brand of cinema, we have this genre of family dramas. Maybe they have melodramas of another kind, but not these joint family sagas. Hum Saath Saath Hain, Hum Aapke Hai Kaun – the mother of all musicals and family dramas. Are you aware of these movies? Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge – it is a love story, but with strong overdose of family. So, it is a family drama. The boy is not out there just to win over the girl; he has to win over the entire family. We have our own category of musicals and family dramas. But at the same time, we also have gangster hero. So, the heroine in a family drama upholds tradition; the hero in gangster cinema subverts tradition.

And, what are we witnessing right now in our country? Mostly remakes; we were just talking about Himmatwala. Himmatwala is being remade.

Zanjeer.

We are having Zanjeer, yes. But we are then it is yet to come out. But then, we have already seen a very successful Bodyguard, which is a remake of one of our own other Indian languages movie. And then, we also have example of something like Singham. And then, the bang was so phenomenally successful that it is fond of a sequel as well. So, these heroes are not upholding family values; at the same time, they are not subverting authority. Am I right? What are we getting? What kind of heroes are we witnessing at the moment?

Kind of mixed.

Mixed, maybe we are still a society in transition and we do have a tendency to lap up those kinds of films, which are mass entertainers, ready for example. Is it a family drama? To an extent it is a musical; to an extent hero, he subverts as well as upholds. So, it is a mixed kind of a hero we are witnessing.

So, he is the authority; but at the same time, he is unorthodox.

Yes, he is very unorthodox. So, we have that kind of a... The idea of having a corrupt cop is nothing new to cinema. Amitabh Bachchan's Zanjeer was an individual against society. He was a product of a certain kind of socio-political context. Amitabh Bachchan's Deewar was a response to certain kind of a political situation in India. We also have a post colonial cinema; that is, something a vast area in itself. When India was just out of the colonial regime, and then, how did our cinema respond to the changing facets of society in that period? That is another category in itself.

Rick Altman talks about genre and he says that not much attention has been paid to genres as history; the question of generic history has not been satisfactorily answered. If it is the case in hollywood, then the need is more acutely felt in our country, because we do not know that how many of genres exists; no one has done a very critical study of genres in our country, in our cinema. At the most, we have these mixed masala kind of films, where everything is mixed and we are served kind of a potpuri of many genres. But this is not the kind of genre bending that Tarantino indelible. It is something like giving the audience a dish, where there is something for everyone. So, genres can never be neutral categories. If it is a genre, then it has to have a category; otherwise, you become The Big Lebowski or you become Fargo.

Now, coming to this popular category gangster cinema, we are talking about genre. And, gangster is a very popular genre. American Gangster – we had a very good example, a successful example Denzel Washington and Russell Crowe; one of the most identifiable genre from hollywood cinema. Interestingly, the gangster cinema or the genre was a precursor to the film Noah. Historically, it was influenced by two socio-economic forces; when is Prohibition? 1919 to 1933 and the Great Depression – 1929 to 34. I was just talking about Once Upon a Time in America. It combines the two events; the gangster hero's are a product of the Prohibition as well as the Great Depression era.

And interestingly, Once Upon a Time in America – those heroes or not Italian-Americans; they are Jewish (()) So, the 20s and the 30s – historically speaking, the Prohibition in 1919 played an important role in bringing the underworld into national prominence. We had regional or big city gangs. So, we had gangs of all kind. If you watch Bruce Willis's Last Man Standing, again, it is set during the prohibition period

and it is a small town. So, most of these gangs – they belong to ethnic and immigrant groups. You already know what we are talking about; which took charge of the illicit liquor trade – Al Capone basically, most famously. The gangs quickly grew powerful and they controlled first neighborhoods and then entire cities. So, they would start off small ghettos. And then, soon they would be fighting rival gangs for domination. Sometimes even the government – they had their one foot very firmly planted among all decision making authorities as well.

Some of the leading gangs; and, you will find these characters very often in cinema Al Capone, who was nick named Scarred Face. And, they had very interesting names – Lucky Luciano, Legs Diamond, Pretty Boy Floyd, who makes an appearance in Public Enemies; Baby Face Nelson. In Once Upon a Time in America, De Niro's character is called Noodles. And, you have Bonnie Clyde of course, immortalized by Warren Beatty; Machine Gun Kelly, Ma Barker's Gang, Alvin Karpis. And then, we had John Dillinger, who had almost like a movie star fan following. When he was shot dead on the streets, some people even collected his blood, which was still fresh on the pavement. He had that kind of fan following, because as you rightly pointed out, what did he symbolize? Subversion of authority; people were sick of this government. But here there was someone, who had risen from ashes to such great heights. And, he died quite young.

John Dillinger happens to be quite an interesting character – 1903 to 34. So, he died at age 31. And, ironically, he loved gangster films. And, the last movie that he watched was Manhattan Melodrama starring William Powell and Clark Gable. And, very interestingly, the movie was co-written by Joseph Mankiewicz, who later went on, he became a big director, hot-shot director, a big time screen writer. He directed the Oscar winning movie, All About Eve – Joseph Mankiewicz. So, Manhattan Melodrama in which Clark Gable plays a gangster. And at the end, he sent to the electric chair. And, while in hiding, John Dillinger decided to watch a movie and the FBI is tipped off and then he is shot dead right outside the theater; theater is biographed in Chicago. And, he was gunned down by the agents. And, this was the end of the crying wave of the 30s. It was almost like closing of an era in American history. These people collectively called by the FBI as Public Enemies. They were held responsible for hires, bang jobs, kidnappings and killings; and of course, boot legging and illicit liquor dealing.

What was the upshot of John Dillinger's killing? And, there was a gangster movie even before. But what happened once John Dillinger was shot dead? Cinema has started almost like defying these people. So, they were not... Gangster movie were not just entertainment flicks any more. But they became something more serious. The gangster hero became a corruptive; yes, corruptive force; yet, at the same time, he also symbolized a revolutionary; he became a revolutionary force subverting the authority, popular morality. He questioned and interrogated popular morality and redefined popular culture. So, a gangster cinema of hollywood and the ace code declaring war on crime movies – we were talking but classic hollywood. They had declared war on excessive sex and violence in cinema. These things became a critical influence on the cause of American cinema for decades to come.

The gangster heroes were glamorized by the media. Sensational and juicy stories were written about these people. The public adored them most importantly. They were looked upon as in a classic American hero almost like that Lone Ranger, who rises from rags to riches symbolizing the elusive American dream. America is a land of opportunities. And, very interestingly, these reporters and journalists, who chronicled their lives; the lives of these gangsters later went on to become successful screen writers. So, you see, they have had firsthand experience with these people; some of them had even interviewed these real life gangsters. Therefore, that touch of authenticity was always there. So, gangsterism and gangster cinema parallels the concept of American dream. The myth is America is a democratic classless society; the reality is there are deep social divisions even in the American society.

And, the gangsters or the gangster heroes, they become fundamental in a socio-cultural approval. They are the people who can bring revolution a change; even someone from the slums can drive them. You look at a movie like Scarface; Tony Montana; who is he? He is an a illegal immigrant to America; he does not even hold the green card; he kills a man to acquire his green card. Remember? And then, his subsequent rise to unimaginable wealth and success. So, the gangster hero causes a subversion of traditional values, yes.

Now, major screen writers of this period – Joseph Mankiewicz, who made Manhattan Melodrama; W. R. Burnett, screen writer for Little Caesar; and, Ben Hecht, who was never interested in writing about conventional heroes and heroines, but focused generally

only about the so-called antiheroes. Hecht wrote Underworld in 1927 for Paramount Pictures, a contemporary tale of big city gangster or bull wheat. So, typical qualities of a gangster hero; we are still talking about a typical genre. So, a typical gangster hero; and we were... Sandeep, if you just remember, we are talking about describable and observable times. This is the quality of a gangster hero. And, please apply it to our Sathya, our Once Upon a Time in Mumbai hero, our Company hero, and our hero from Deewar. Do not think of Shahrukh's Don; it is a very glamorized version, very post-liberalized version of gangsterism.

We are talking about a typical gangster hero from our country invariably from the proletariat class. You access his wealth by stealing, yes; he does not follow the rules; he need not follow the rules; he always takes the crooked path; he embodies the contradiction in any society. I mean you look at a gangster hero in any society. And, what we are told that whenever there is a discrepancy in any society, there would be the growth in the underworld. Do you know Russia is known for its underworld and its mafia? Why? You would think that the country, which so prides itself on its socialist and communist ideology. Why would such a society have discrepancy and why would such a society witness growth of this kind of culture?

Actually, like that it is only on the surface.

It is only on the surface. The so-called equality and so-called socialism is only on the surface. The rich in Russia are really rich, unbelievably rich. So, whenever there is a society, where there is a big or huge casteism between the poor and the very rich, there is always a space or the growth of this antihero. And, this antihero becomes iconoclastic; he is defying the rules; he is defying the existing traditions and value system. Therefore, he is a hero after all. However anti, however negative, but he is still a hero. And, ordinary man would route for this hero, because he is one of us and not that super rich and super well the person.

Robin Hood – it is always a take on the Robin Hood, (()) the robin wood legend. So, ideologically, yes, his death is necessary to restore the so-called calm in a society. He has die, because he has broken so many rules. So, he has to die. But while he is alive, people route for him. I stand corrected; do you have anything to add here?

Movies like Godfather, he does die because of his lifestyle; he dies for natural causes; he just has a heart attack and he dies. But his sons die as a result of violence.

Yes, his sons die as a result of that. So, early gangster films and this is important to note – most of these films are produced by the Warner Brothers; you were discussing classic hollywood, remember? Associated with low budget films; made very popularistic kind of cinema; labbed up by the working class Americans, some of the earlier films were the The Lights of New York, Little Caesar, Public Enemy, Angels with Dirty Faces, The Roaring Twenties, White Heat; and, the most popular actors were Edward G. Robinson, James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart. And then, later on, we had Al Pacino – there was a period when he made a career out of playing the essential gangster hero. De Niro always a gangster, Al Pacino till, what was that movie with Johnny-Depp, Donnie Brasco? Yes, he played a gangster till then, which was late 90s or so.

What is an iconography? When we were doing semiotics and we discussed 7 semiotics particularly in relation to 7, the idea is that the filmmakers employ certain tropes, certain signs, certain symbols to create an iconography. When we are talking about iconography of a star, we talked about James Dean; how his entire persona conveyed that kind of a youthful energy; that was his iconography. And his films consolidated; the kinds of roles he played; they consolidated that persona. So, an icon is created; so gangster hero iconography of a gangster movie, the charismatic hero, who embodies good as well as bad. Remember, an antihero has to be an embodiment of both these elements: good as well as bad; he cannot be an out and out negative hero, negative person, not a dark hearted villain, who kills for no reason. Generally, it has a dangerous woman; there is a good woman, who is the love interest mother - mostly yes, specially in our cinema.

In Scarface, sister is a very important part of the movie. And, if you watch earlier Scarface, it is there even in Al Pacino's Scarface. But the earlier version is Paul Muni's Scarface. The insets tone is so highlighted that he had a strong feelings of attraction towards his sister. The sister becomes an integral feature in most of these films. There is always a mentor? Yes, there is; think of that – the glowing city streets during night lights. Watch Public Enemies once more and you will find the cars, the clothes, the streets; Michael Mann is a master in creating these iconographies; LA is his space; LA is his city.

Collateral.

Exactly; watch Collateralism; thank you so much. Collateral, Heat – Heat is another highest gangster drama; the spaces are like the night clubs, the streets, the bars, the restaurants and the weapon ray of course; say hello to my little friend – the Scarface. And, invariably all these leading to invariably very violent climax; it does not get more violent than Al Pacino's the Scarface. What is the significance of the gangster genre? If you are looking at the overall history of cinema, it brought new wigger and new kind of vitality to the films; stories became more and more realistic and heart hitting; characters became more colorful and varied. So, we no longer had the same goody hero anymore. And, very interestingly, language of the streets – you know what I mean; the jargon, the slang – these things found their way in the films; otherwise, films are very careful about the kind of... It was almost like reading a play or watching a play, the kind of language. But then, we had that kind of language finding its way in cinema.

One of the earlier examples of this genre, Scarface, 1932, produced by Howard Hughes and directed by Howard Hawks, starring Paul Muni, scripted by Ben Hecht along with W. R. Burnett and John Lee Mahin. These are names that you should know; if you are students of film studies, you should know film history. And, based on the Pulp novel... This is also wised to Tarantino, so interested in Pulp. Why does he call his best movie Pulp Fiction; he is an avid consumer of Pulp Fiction, Pulp novel, because from pulp, we get so much of material, so much of detailing of American culture and history and society. Therefore, that is the importance of... Do not be dismissive of pulp. Pulp saves a lot of things; it may be low heart, low culture, but it gives you a slice of life.

Scarface is rooted in contemporary reality with people and incidence drawn directly from Chicago gangster history. The other day, I was telling you about how Howard Hughes – he did not want to release Scarface anymore. And, it was released only after his death, because he had to fight a long, prolong battle with the censors to release the movie. There is a dialog in Scarface in 1932 version, where he says there is only one thing that gets orders and gives orders and this is it and indicates his machine gun. And, if you watch Al Pacino's version of this, this is exactly a thing he says to his boss, you giving me order. Watch the movie; have you watched the movie off late? It is one of my all time favorite films. ((C)) says, that is how I got the south side for you, you know the barrows in the city Chicago and that is how I am going to get the north side for you – is a little

typewriter – machine gun – gangster is also an auteur, camera is still low; that is, camera is pen for a filmmaker; for a writer, it is typewriter; for the gangster, it is his machine gun. Punches hole in people; so, it is a typewriter; I am going to write my name all over the town with it.

Now, Hays code, which we have already done. So, the release of Scarface – this is very interesting; a movie was almost delayed by a year, because the producer Howard Hughes had to battle with the Hays office and regional censor boards. And, the films could no longer show crimes; that is the idea. That is what the code prescribed. And, the exact clause was that films cannot show crime in such a way as to throw sympathy with the crime as against law and justice or to inspire others with a desire for imitation; that is what people say. All the corruption in our society blames it on the movies; they are the murder somewhere, people say. This is the influence of the movies, which could be true to an extent. People watch a movie and they say, oh, I learnt this scene exactly from a movie.

Films should not show such things, which inspire sympathy for the wrong doer, because it creates a very bad template for the society; that is the idea. And therefore, the producer had to fight a law. And how did they manage to release the movie, do you know? It is like a cigarette pack is always accompanied; today, if you watch a movie, where the characters are smoking, what do you see?

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Scroll running through out that cigarette smoking causes cancer; and then, there is a list of ailments that you are given. Not just cancer, but so many things are shown to you. The other day, I was watching a movie directed by Sudhir Mishra, Inkaar, starring Arjun Rampal, where hero is a media executive and he is a chain smoker. So, for the first 5 or 10 minutes, we were just treated to what happens to your lung and to your body if you smoke too much. I actually thought that I have inserted a wrong DVD; perhaps what I bought is not what I really got; and then, it comes. So, this is all part of the film, because censorship has become so strong. So, that is the way it is and we have to accept that. How did they get away with Scarface then? It also comes with a statutory warning. You watch that Scarface. Oliver Stone's Al Pacino, Brian De-Palma version does not come

with any statutory warning. Paul Muni version does come. And, it tells you in a very moralistic tone that crime does not pay.

(Audio not clear. Refer Time: 39:22). They would not allow to be shown in (())

But do you think that today you watch a movie like Scarface.

Today, no.

But, in the 80s also; you had all these Rambo movies releasing at the same time. Perhaps you see that is the difference. Rambo, in spite of his excessive violence, is a politically correct film? What does it tell you? America; Rambo is an out and out and all American good guy and he is fighting the so-called others, defeating the Vietnamese, the Russians, the Afghans, all the bad people of the world. And, Rambo goes on a killing gun. I love the spoof. What was that hot shot?

(Audio not clear. Refer Time: 40:13)

Yes, with Charlie Sheen. It was a very intelligently, very cleverly done spoof of the film. But the Scarface – very realistic; realistically, then... Of course, it had the stardom of Al Pacino looming large over the movie. And, Al Pacino is always over the top. He is operatic in his performance; never the kind of actor, who would give into any under playing or subtleties. He is always over the top; and that is part of his charm. Perhaps, the role was enacted in such a way the performance itself was so powerful. It just over took the message that crime does not pay; I mean who would bother with that if you could lead a life like Tony Montana. Therefore, perhaps x rate; what is the so-called x-rating is important for that movie? A result of this prolong fight between the producer and the censor board was that. Hollywood producers; they panicked and embraced the code for self defense; they said we will regulate our self. The other day we were talking about notorious and the famous kissing scene; you cannot have a kiss more than two or three seconds. But then how Hitchcock managed to? So, there is always a way around to do certain things.

Now, because the code became so strong and because the producers were so scared to make the kind of movies that they wanted to do, that they just shied away from making the gangster movies, because how do you make a gangster movie without glorifying the

hero? You need to that; you need to use certain kind of language; you need to use certain kind of accesses on screen. And, they were not allowed to do that. So, what did that lead to? Audiences were ready for this kind of cinema; they still wanted this kind of cinema; the so-called antihero – a dangerous woman; not the goody two shoes kinds of characters any more. They wanted; there was the audience; there was a demand. So, all these lead towards film Noah.

Now, Noah hero is essentially a cop, a detective, a truth seeker. So, you are using the same elements – a dangerous woman, a morally ambivalent hero. But he is no longer the law breaker; that is the idea. Therefore, Noah could get away in spite of the very strict code, which the gangster hero could not get away with. So, there was a lull in all these films about gangster hero's; there was at the rise of film Noah during the classic hollywood times; there was certain high concept movies, which did not do well. And then, we have already talked about new hollywood cinema at length.

And now, post-vietnam, there was another wave of gangster cinema. Now, the code is no longer in existence. Bonnie and Clyde had redefined the rules of censorship of all the existing codes. So, what happened, we had films like Bonnie and Clyde, 67 – you know the list, The St. Valentine Day's Massacre, 1967; Bloody Mama, 1970; Boxcar Bertha directed by?

Martin Scorsese.

Scorsese, good – 72; Capone, 1975; and then, of course, the mother of all gangster films, The Godfather; and now, it has become... The genre is here this stage. So, we are talking about a very popular genre, which has become a part of all collective consciousness, the gangster hero; and, how a gangster movie satisfies most of the requirements of genre film; a highly recognized, a highly popular kind of cinema, the gangster cinema. So, from genre, a fixed category of genre, we will move on to genre blending – the category of genre blending, where the semantics and semiotics are confusing. They send us mixed signals. We were talking about the signifier and the signified. And, we will see how these codes, which so firmly establish identities and categories in generic films; the same codes are used to defy genres. In films, deliberately seek to defy or blend genres.

There are certain fixed categories – genres; and we have seen how gangster satisfies the features of or expectations of a genre. There are certain films like Once Upon a Time in

America, Sergio Leone's, which redefined the category. But it is still all the signified and the signifiers are in place; it is just the way plot, conflict and characters are developed in Leone's movie that we find that he is deviating from the genre. But it is still the genre is there; the purity of the genre remains. He experiments a lot with the way characters are scathed; that is the idea. But when you bend and blend genres, what happens? The semiotics are confusing; viewers are kept guessing. So, genres are very satisfactory categories; audiences know what to expect; here audience do not know what to expect. Fargo, a pregnant cop – whoever had heard of such a thing; comic villains – Steve Buscemi playing the kind of role; he does so well.

And, when filmmaker seeks to bend genre, he is subverting the established conventions and codes of an established genre. Typical examples; Terry Gilliam's Brazil; and, it starts very vaguely. Somewhere in the twentieth century, it blends all the items of science fictions, romans, a futuristic kind of a film; it is a war movie; dystopic movie; it is also a satire. My personal favorite is Mars Attacks; it is a Tim Burton movie. Mars Attacks by Tim Burton; this is one of the rare movies in which we have no Johnny Depp. But it defies genre and how. It has Jack Nicholson; it has Pierce Brosnan; it has Sarah Jessica Parker; it has a host of big time actors; Glenn Close; but then, you see what he does to them. And, it is a spoof. You can call it as spoof. At the same time, it is a throwback to all those so-called B movies, the cult movies of the 40s and the 50s. It is very pulpy. We know what Tim Burton is capable of doing.

So, it is something like clearing the path for someone like Tarantino, because we have had people like Tim Burton. Therefore, we could have someone like Tarantino. But he came much later after these people; so, The Men Who Stare at Goats starring George Clooney, a serious man. All these are standard examples. So, a supreme example of genre bending and genre blending in recent times would be Tarantino's (()) fiction of much loved, much watched movie.

Now, let us first talk about Tarantino and why he is so important to us. So, what are the subjects, what are the themes that inform Tarantino's films? He is informed by the works of pulp fiction writers. The title itself comes and he pays homage to his favorite writers Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, James Cain, Raoul Whitfield, Horace McCoy. So, these are no eyebrow litterateurs. They are out and out massy entertainers and pulp writers.

Crime writers and, this is important; Elmore Leonard, Charles Willeford. Other important influences – Hong Kong action films from this 80s and even the 70s. Can you mention, give me examples of some of the movies?

Bruce Willi's films.

Bruce Willi's? Not Bruce Willi's, Bruce Lee's films; Hong Kong martial arts. Bruce Lee is the most well-known. But there must have been several other lesser-known people also; after all Tarantino worked with your library before making it big. So, that is all he did for a living; he would watch movies. And, since he would watch movies, he... And all kinds of movies; so, he... Even the title of the film – Reservoir Dogs – it has a very interesting history. What?

H-R... (Audio not clear. Refer Time: 50:39)

Someone came to borrow a video from a video library and asked for a French movie called...

(Audio not clear)

How a Lays on Fon – it is a French movie. And, the owner who understood or spoke very little French, she said I have no Reservoir Dogs. And, Tarantino liked the exchange; and, it remained with him; and, later on, he used it as a title for his very first; that is him. Also, he gets in material and his inspiration from all over the place. Another major influence in Tarantino is blaxploitation cinema of the 70s. It is sub-genre; blaxploitation is a sub-genre or the b movie, so-called b movies, action flix, basically centered on the black citizens specially in the urban settings. The highest film genre, cinema of Jean Melville, the French filmmaker, who made a film like a Bob le flambeur; so, that was the major influence – the highest cinema. And therefore, you can see that in Reservoir Dogs.

The Girl Gang movies and Death Proof is a very good example of the girl gang kind of films.

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Yes, the 60s western, the spaghetti version of the western movies; the B flix, he is not looking at that John Venn kind of westerns; both the spaghetti and the b westerns. Horror

films, Slasher films – that is another very popular; I mean in Kill Bill, he goes all the way; there is just taking off somebody's eye and chopping off an arm. In so much of relation, the blood just flows; it is free flowing all over the place, gushes out like a fountain. Vigilante movies of the 70s, think of Dirty Harry (()) go ahead and make my day and, those are smart one liners; a tough street hero – vigilante films. And, most of the television programs from the 60s to the 90s.

The kind of cultural references, specially references from the popular culture he makes is astounding. And, people have written books on that. How much of television he must have watched and the kind of influences that he has gathered and imbibed and all these things are reflected in his film. And, does he have a genre? People have given his brand of cinema, its title. And, it is called Tarantino's. There he defies genre, do you agree? So, if he makes a gangsters film, you know what he is going to do. So, salient features what makes his cinema so special; his influences are enormous; his film basically an (()) features; then, we can categorize them so. So, his kind of cinema basically injures on a world of masculine codes of violence. He is immensely influenced by the masculine codes of violence as seen in the movies of someone like Sam Peckinpah, who made Straw Dogs with Dustin Hoffman, which was recently remade.

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I guess so and, it did not do well at all. If you watch the Peckinpah version of Straw Dogs, it is so hard hitting. And also, Peckinpah's Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia and The Wild Bunch. Another recurring theme is Betrayal between Friends in Tarantino, Men on a Machine. Let us go to work – that is the tagline of Reservoir Dogs. Let us get into character that is the tagline of Pulp Fiction. His films deal with rituals and codes of criminal, yes. There are lengthy dialogs; it is almost like paying homage to the cinema of Ghodag, where people talk and talk and lovers talk in close apartments, and some of exchanges run into 20 minutes or so. And then, in depth discussions of pop culture.

What is Pulp Fiction? Originally, pulp was a kind of material, the printed kind of literature, lowbrow literature printed on cheap wood, pulp paper, successor to something called penny dreadfuls and dying novels, which you can buy for dime or a penny, not very expensive, cheaply available, accessible. So, pulp afforded entertainment to working class people. Therefore, the word pulp mostly an American phenomenon,

featuring the (()) and dealing with the ruled sensational titillating aspects of life. And some of the recurring themes in pulp was adultery, in trig; and then, you had street smart secretariats mostly females; lots of murder and lots of sex. That is what you find in Tarantino's Pulp Fiction as well. So, please do watch Pulp Fiction and then we will be discussing how Pulp Fiction satisfies all the conditions of genre bending and blending.

Thank you very much.