

Sub-humanising The Others:

Cross-Cultural Reception of Films. , Iranian/Western Interpretation of Snyder's

300

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Abstract:

This paper aims to scrutinizes the reception of *300* film (Dir: Snyder, 2007). Debunking the concepts of “immanent meaning”, “autonomous of the text” and other hermeneutics-based interpretations of text, has been renounced for marginalizing the audiences.

Within the realm of Reception theory and audience research as audiences are understood to be engaged in a process of making, rather than simply absorbing, meanings; this paper takes an approach of analyzing the cross-cultural making meaning of *300* by looking at Iranian/western interpretation of the film and investigating the data: comments and reviews from weblogs and internet forums as well as the encounter between audiences via Youtube, which have been established anti/pro of the film.

Firstly, this paper interrogates the synchronic area of film [film production, distribution, exhibition and journalistic review, and social and historical contexts like economy, law, religion, politics, class, race and ethnicity gender etc] as well as the diachronic areas [academic theory, criticism and history, broadcasting, satellite and cable television, fan culture, the biographical legend and cross-cultural reception. [Klinger, 1997]. Secondly, how the contextual influence on the textual, more precisely how the film has been linked to the political conflict between United States and Iran, during the its ‘War on Terror’ in Middle East. Lastly, due to authorial restrictions and media monitoring on the film in Iran only a few number of Iranian audiences likely to have seen the film. The method of data analysis is based on viewer’s responses to a BBC news report uploaded in Youtube about the political controversy between Iran and US on the film. As well as analysing the Iranian diasporas’ E-protesting by establishing website and weblogs against the film.

Keywords: 300, reception theory, audience research, film studies, authorship, representation, cross-cultural reception, making meaning.

Introduction:

This paper aims at contemplating the reception of *300* (Dir: Snyder, 2007), based on the graphic novel writing by Frank Miller, once of the most controversial contemporary modern epic film. *300* has been criticized for distorting historical facts and depiction of ancient Persian as savages and barbaric but also has been considered an offensive demonization of today's Iran.

The analysis of reception of the film and the differentiations between Persian/western audiences in receiving this film, it also tries to answer questions such the main reasons of Persian audiences' objections to the film and how the contextual influence on the textual, more precisely how the film has been linked to the political conflict between United States and Iran, during the its 'War on Terror' in Middle East.

This paper interrogates that the film has not only denounced by Iranian authorities but also by Iranian people. As *300* has been critiqued for assumptions of racism, sexism, and homophobia by some western critics of film studies, while in eastern countries and more precisely in Iran the film has been criticised for distorting historical facts and sub-humanising other races and also as a propaganda of United States' foreign policy in Middle East during its War on Terror.

The concepts of "immanent meaning", "autonomous of the text" and other hermeneutics based interpretations of text, has been renounced, for marginalizing the audiences, some scholars and media commentators such as Barbara Klinger, Janet Stieger, Henry Jenkins and Thomas Austin have taken other element as context into their studies of films receptions. For example, Barbara Klinger (1997) proposes that both synchronic and diachronic area of study should be taken into account when analyzing a film and its reception. Synchronic area of study may include cinematic practices such as film production, distribution, exhibition and personnel; intertextual zones including other business and industries, other media and arts and review journalism, and social and historical contexts like economy, law, religion, politics, class, race and ethnicity gender and sexual difference, family, ideology and cross-cultural reception. The diachronic areas should cover practices and zones such as revivals and retrospectives, reviews, academic theory, criticism and history, broadcasting, satellite and cable television, video and laserdisc reproduction, fan culture, the biographical legend and cross-cultural reception. [Klinger, 1997:115-128]

Klinger has mentioned such a cross-cultural works analysis but all of them circulate in western countries, or more precisely between the United States and the United Kingdom such as Hollywood star for British women, while this paper will take from western to eastern that is United States to Iran.

This paper will take such an approach in analyzing the cross-cultural making meaning of *300* by looking at Iranian interpretation of the *300*, and investigating the weblogs and Internet forums which have been established against the film, as well as analyzing audiences reviews and comments upon *300* which can be identified through online film

fan communities and other specific websites, as the encounter between western versus Persian audiences via Youtube. Firstly, there will be a brief glance at the Iranian official reactions to the film by reading it as “infrahumanized representation of Persians”. Secondly, I will interrogate the Iranian diasporas’ E-protesting by establishing website and weblogs against the film, finally this paper will also take the Iranian / western audience encounter via Youtube.

The 300 Film

Zack Snyder’s action-epic *300* is a film adaptation of Frank Miller’s popular (1998) graphic novel of the same title. The title refers to the number of the Spartan warriors against the massive forces of Persian army during the last battle of the second Greco-Persian war in a narrow pass at Thermopylae (480 BC) also known as the ‘Hot Gates’ where the Spartan King Leonidas I (Played by Gerard Butler) defeated by Emperor Xerxes I (Played by Rodrigo Santoro).

To added/subtracted elements on the imagery of his film Snyder uses highly digital technologies of blue screen and other manipulation imagery techniques to create cinematic computer graphics. This kind of cinematic style of “arrested image“ is the one that slows or engages the senses through a different pacing. The time-less quality of an arresting image ensures that the aestheticised and ambiguous imagery is more available to be seen. It is the configuration of timelessness and ambiguity that distinguishes the arresting image from what Klinger calls an indelible image” [Aylish 2011:286].

Barbara Klinger in her paper about Jane Campion’s film “ The piano” has developed a differentiation between “arresting” and “indelible” images to tease out the affective and interpretive dimensions of images in which action is deferred: “ We can consider the arresting image, then, as the ‘money shot’ of the art film insofar as it delivers a payoff for one of the genre’s chief pleasures: contact with highly aestheticized, ambiguous and affecting imagery [Ibid].

300 is one of top-grossing box-office peplum (Sword-and-Sandal) film with record breaking 71 Million US dollar on its opening weekend, with the largest-ever box office total in march history and “[t]hird-highest for any R-rated film”[boxofficemojo.com]. The film has to earned “an amazing domestic box-office total \$ 211 million and soon proved its goal popularity with a worldwide total gross of \$ 456 million, nearly matching the 458 million worldwide gross of the sword-and-sandals genre’s undisputed champion Ridley scott’s *Gladiator* (2000)”[Burgoyne 2011:20].

Iranian government's reaction over 300

Iranian Officials has branded the film as “psychological warfare” against their country. This objection came directly during the premiere of film at Berlin International Film Festival.

Ambassadors, and ^[1]Permanent delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural United Nations (UNESCO) released a letter to the director general of the organization, calling and conviction of the overwhelming response to the offending firm films "Warner Brothers" at 300 film was produced [persiancultures.com]. Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran in UNESCO's announcement that a copy has been sent to the agency, the UNESCO Director-General drew attention to the nature of this movie is intentionally provocative and insulting the nation. The statement welcomed the initiative of the Director-General to establish a working group responsible for promoting dialogue between cultures as a logical consequence of recognizing cultural diversity and the protection of intangible cultural.

The Iranian protest was not only against the Hollywood but they also protested its screening other countries such as in “France, Thailand, Turkey and Uzbekistan the film was banned within Iran as "hurtful American propaganda" [farsnews.com]. The Iranian official's renouncement of the film is that the destructive nature of Snyder's 300, its role in distorting historical facts and endangering peace, solidarity and a spirit of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence among nations and increase the tensions between They asked the other countries to condemn these offensive actions, and find appropriate responses is necessary to prevent any insult to the history and culture.

This was not the first time Iran boycotts a Hollywood film, in less than a decade, apart from 300 Iran has banned two other historical based films, over its portrayal in films made in the West such as Redly Scott's “Kingdom of Heaven 2005”, and Oliver stone's “ Alexander 2004”; but the reaction over 300 ranged from government officials to bloggers. The film has been labeled as “Anti-Iranian sentiment” as hostility, hatred, discrimination towards Iran and its culture, therefore it has been denounced for Hollywood's” attempt to demonise Iran at a time of intensifying U.S. pressure over the country's nuclear programme [guardian.co.uk]. As American-Iranian Scholar Hamid Dabashi said that “the Iranian Government has been offended obviously because they think America is planning to invade Iran and this a psychological preparation for that invasion, and Iranian community because it represents them as animal and subterranean creatures and they don't like to see themselves in that way [bbc.co.uk].

Under the rubric of “Boycott 300 the film” a signed formal letter of Iranian protesters declaring their opposition to “Warner Brothers Studios” has been sent to the production company. The letter has been signed by 12430 protesters, the letter accused the graphic novel and the film of distorting the historical facts and deceiving viewers

and readers, the letter says: “Fantasy-like characters should not have names that are based on actual historical figures. Xerxes was one of the many revered and respected rulers of an ancient civilization the vestiges of which last to this day and are acknowledged by historians of all nations. He did not look like a creature out of a frightening bedtime story. Neither did his soldiers” [petitiononline.com].

Although in many interviews, Snyder insists that he only wanted to make a film that is a ride a perfectly fine ambition for any filmmaker, especially one inspired by the comics. In fact, Snyder and the Warner Bros. have expected such criticisms of contemporary and allegorical interpretations of the film, in an interview to LA Times newspaper Snyder said "There was a huge sensitivity about East versus West with the studio said.... is there any way we could not call [the bad guys] Persians? Would that be cool if we called them Zoroastrians? In the seven years he worked on the film, he said, "the politics caught up with us. I've had people ask me if Xerxes or Leonidas is George W. Bush. I say, 'Great. Awesome. If it inspires you to think about the current geopolitical situation, cool"[latimes.com].

In his paper entitled “reception theory and audience research: the mystery of the vampire's kiss “ Jenkins has made an affective specific case for power of cinema in reception theory and audience research by reviewing various approaches to receptions studies on recent theorizing the accepts the role of the views as central in the meaning-making process, “Reception theory and audience research asks basic questions about how we make sense of the movies and what they mean in our lives. Within this paradigm, audiences are understood to be active rather than passive, to be engaged in a process of making, rather than simply absorbing, meanings” [Jekins 2000]

Iranian government official and audiences as well, consistently devalue *300* through articulated discourse: the film is distortion of history, and also as US propaganda for the ‘War on terror’ and Iraq occupation. These interpretations of understanding the film and meaning - making, related to the construction of socio-political and cultural belief systems in Iran towards western countries. As Janet Staiger argues that “ Meaning” is not “in” the text, put there by an agency of authorship, but originates in the event of reading: “ reading is not the discovery of meaning but the creation of it”[Staiger, 1992: 22].

E-protesters - Iranian Diaspora

Iranian people in diaspora have also joined the protest campaign against *300*, some Iranian bloggers and Internet activists established website and weblogs as a way to clarify the truth of the battle of Thermopylae, against what they called the misrepresent image of ancient Persia.

The contributors to the 300 project are mostly Iranian cartoonists and artists, and website consists of numerous of comic books about the “ The battle of Thermopylae” against miller’s graphic-novel and the Hollywood blockbuster *300*. Pendar Yousefi Iranian blogger in Canada who is supervising the project tried to "Google-bombing" the film trough creating and publishing a high number of searchable links and pages which consisting facts and information about Persian culture.” this was only possible with the massive support of the Persian blogosphere who linked to us (4,257 incoming links and counting) ... This project was triggered by the 300 movie but has long since grown to something beyond a simple response to a single movie and is now a source of news and information about Persian art and artists, with an eye towards shedding some light on the History of Persia” [300themovie.info].

The (300themovie) project is an Internet traffic searching for 300 to a web site that introduces the various aspects of Iranian culture through art, according to the website some 600 Iranian blogs and websites have established permanent links to the weblogs. The project consists of three category, photography, illustration and music. The section of illustration has published of a number of caricatures and comic books about the Hollywood Blockbuster *300*, in one of them is redesigning a portrait of king Leonidas (Gerard Butler) instead a sword to fight, he is holding a swatter to hit a fly. In contrast, there is a sketch of a Persian Soldier holding a sword circulated by numbers of lions.

In the section of music, there five songs regarding the film *300*, these records are similar to western hip-hop style; the majority of them are in English language criticizing the film and comic book. One of the songs called Hoviate Man "My Identity" written and produced by Yaser Bakhtiari an Iranian rapper lives in Tehran in protest against the film *300*:

“ You want to say: that we came from generation of barbarians
So take a look then to Takhti Jamsheed “ Persepolis”
You are showing Iran’s name in vein
So your name could be written big on a cover of a CD or DVD?
I am writing down your intentions in my book
I know why you made 300 the film
I know that your heart is made of stone and lead

Instead of using your art to make a culture of peace
In this sensitive air and bad atmosphere
You want to start finishing in dirty water “profiting”
But this I tell you in its original language that
Iran will never be spoiled and surrendered....”

Iran is one of those conservative religious societies, which impose censorship on western culture, and all form of communications are also restricted and controlled by local authority’s gatekeepers including satellite dishes that allow citizens access to western TV channel “ In spite of the objections of patriots of the indigenous heritage American popular culture travels the world with ease, from films, pop music to fast food and jeans. [Liebes & Katz, 1990:04] hip-hop music is among those singing style, which Iran considers it as a western culture, “but for the project like this the authority will not only permit them, they also fund them” [300themovie.info].

Youtube Western-Persian Audiences encounter

The method of data analysis used here is based on viewer’s responses to a BBC news report about the political controversy between Iran and US on the film. The reason behind taking the comments from the News report is: firstly, due to authorial restrictions and media monitoring on the film only a few number of Iranian audiences likely to have seen the film, but all of those who participate in discussion are aware of the consequences in which the film has made; especially after Newspapers in Iran featured headlines such as "Hollywood declares war on Iranians" and "300 AGAINST 70 MILLION" refers to (Iran's population) [time.com], and it also a significant platform for both pro/anti film audience encounters. The polarization of viewers between defend/reject the film can clearly been noticed from their comments,

Stages of investigations the data require careful scrutiny to indicate the pro/against reviewers, from their own comments. The negative comments and feedbacks of this film overwhelmingly emphasis on the explicit racial binaries of the film to an extent which turned the debate into more between Eastern-Western tensions, sometime transit to religious, race and ethnicity issues.

The number of people who have seen the video is 32,474, from 2007 to 2013. The total number of comments is 704; the majority are male between 25-54 years, mostly from Iran, and United States and rest in other European countries such as Germany, Greece, Netherland, United Kingdom, as well as a reviewer from Mexico and another

one from Emirates according to Youtube video statistics. The processes and procedures require with data analysis here in read them accurately and grouping them according to pro and against 300.

Among those audiences who defend the 300 as genre, seems they have read the film as an insensitive film it has nothing to do with race and ethnicity, it is simply a fantasy film, and should have been taken as fantasy only as it has been based on a comic book.

Neill adriaansen from Netherland says” It's freakin fiction! It's a fucking movie, it's NOT FUCKING REAL!”

The primary concerns that most audiences from anti 300 viewers seem to have is that film is not only a fantasy genre, and it cannot ignore the fact that it has characterized the other race as savages and barbaric.

“ Western Europeans and Americans/zoinist should stop sparking wars in the world and they should stop brain washing their own people and should stop trying to change history. because they will not be the worlds super powers forever.”

”

For many Iranians the cinematic movie '300' may come as a shocking revelation. But to those of us who came up through America's school system, the 'Battle of Thermopylae,' which is what the movie '300' is based on, is as familiar as George Washington's fabled "cherry tree" episode (danbagheri from Iran).

The comments I have chosen are comments of reviewers relevant to interpretation and making meaning of the film, because later the reviewing becomes a debate between them, in some way has turned into religious, race, and cultural debating, especially among those talking about the cultural hierarchy and inferiority and superiority of people and culture by using involves with swear and inappropriate expressions.. Hence to polarize the audience between anti and pro film, here the similar comments have been grouped. The negative reviews of this film overwhelmingly focus on the obvious racial binaries of the film; that white, western patriarchy will triumph over ethnic, savage subhuman races (Persian, Arab, Asian, African) by pre-emptive war in the name of democracy (while acting without the permission of their democratic senate):

“ First of all. Iran will never initiate an attack on any country...it is only America who is the oppressor and goes invades other countries...so I will protect my people against the so called "liberators" (Amir H from Iran). “ 300 is part of Americas and Israel’s psychological war against Iran (mt7taba from United Arab Emirates). “ maybe its a Hollywood game and warfare but I think we as Muslims shouldn’t be s racist and

the racists are complaining and would like to portray our ancestors as good people while we all know that they were savage and corrupted (Ali Mohamad From Australia).

Generally, the major complaint from Persian viewers about the film was not taking the socio-political climate into consideration and just ignore the other interpretations of the film but receipting it the way it has been produced the fantasy, in particular in that time when war on terror was the main headlines of Media.

“My opinion, that of 70 million other persians, and a couple of historians who base their logic on facts instead of eurocentrism. And why do you think it isn't hard to offend Iranians? If you're referring to the government of Iran, they do not represent the people, and they often pretend to be insulted by practically anything but most of the time it's just to annoy. This time however, the movie did not only offend the government, but the innocent people as well (Shahin2102 From Iran).

“ What many people ignored, and maybe including the creators of 300, is that today Iranians are actually related to those Persians 2400 years ago, modern Iranians are descendants of the Persians that the Greek fought. Persia just like China and Japan are a culture and people that has been continuously living their land for millennia. Of course the heritage of those times is viewed with great pride by the Iranians just as any other culture respects its great past (Victor Cano from Mexico).

The diversity of interpretations of 300 can be identified from some viewers have just watched the film, without examining it from a modern context, and some of them have gone more far from merely a contextualizing, but they do an allegorical, and symbolic figures in the film especially linking the text with the new situation in Middle East “the multiplicity and instability of meaning of the film from audiences, is that “ meanings are seen as the products of an audience’s reading rather than as an essential property of the film text itself” [Turner, 2006: 163].

“..... history is history.. movies are movies! movies shall entertain us and not teach us history” (Trikala7 from USA) . “ If you want historical accuracy, go the History channel, NOT HOLLYWOOD. The movie isn't government policy, but a project done by a private, independent party. Still, it's a movie, that is not meant to be taken seriously. Hollywood is out to entertain, not educate and has made many historically inaccurate movies based upon events (Aeguis from USA).

RiaceWarrior claims that he is laconphilic as he expresses his admiration for Spartans, and their culture,” Spartans fought for FREEDOM. Do persians have a word for it? Herodotus remarked that the slaves in

Greece were freer than the "free" men in Persia! They are still slaves to the most uncivilized religion. [RiaceWarrior from USA].

Among those who have written their opinion about the 300 there are two Greek commentators, It would be interesting to know what they have thought about the film, “ U "call" urself Persians or whatever, but ur treated not for what u are, ur treated for ur politics. Iam greek and iam proud of it. If ur Irany, be proud of it, but just stop these blamage by insulting urself, being insulted by a comic. ridiculous, childish.....(DasMutzel “ Greece citizen lives “in Germany) I am proud to be Greek too. But Persians have a great culture too. I can understand that they are angry (GigiM2007 from Greece).

Two of comments, which belong to Iranian American have very interesting perspective as they did not find the film’s portrayal of race offensive at all:

“I’m persian, and I really didn't get offended by 300, it was a decent movie and I liked it for what it was to the comic book; however I was pissed off at the morons who took this movie to fact and started saying that persians are pussies because they got their 'ass kicked' by 300 spartans... and then we killed them... all of them. (Messiahlar from Iran) “i am persian. Persian have a problem about showing a bad face about acient persian. Director shouldn't choose real country name he could choose some name that not exist in real world” (husseinmq from Iran).”

Some of the reviewers explain that they have enjoyed the film because they have not been aware of the racial representations “as a person who knew nothing about this until i looked up 300, can tell you that this is in no way intended to insult anyone.

I saw the film it's just kick-ass. Hardly History class material, but what do you expect it's Hollywood (myaccount611 From USA).OMG it's just a movie. I thought it was great. It's just suppose to entertain. I didn't even know those people were Iranians. Anyways just get over it (Paul Fulgencio from USA).

The variability of reading and meaning constructions, the way viewers decoding the contents, and perceiving them have been investigated by some critics such as Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz, who use the Hall’s theory of reception on encoding and decoding model of media circulation in order to investigate the construction [reception] and consumption of cross-cultural reading of Dallas to find out how viewers use the program as a "forum" to reflect on their identities. The audiences become involved morally (comparing "them" and "us"), playfully (trying on unfamiliar roles), ideologically (searching for manipulative messages), and aesthetically (discerning the formulae

from which the program is constructed). Katz and Liebes found divergent readings and argued that different ethnic groups bring their own values and judgment to the program. Such studies of Dallas are the best examples that audiences are more active and critical, and their cultural values more resistant to manipulation, than media theorists assumed. This could clearly be seen in *300*'s reception in Middle East countries and Iran in particular as non monolithic interpretations of the film can be recognize, Some of them have read the film in a very literal way, by examining some specific and concrete details of characterization of Persian warrior comparing to physically strong Greek counterparts, while simultaneously they have enjoyed the film as a genre, fantasy, in other words, despite the malicious, barbaric and slave-driver characterizations of the Persians and, these people are also shown to be far more accepting than the Spartans, who discard their young at the slightest sign of flaw or infirmity. From western audiences' perspective *300* has been criticized for have a massive popularity.

During my research for paper I have encountered a comment says there are 300 ways to interpret *300* as it has been examined under various filters of portrayals of masculinity, femininity and sexuality, that including issues such as homophobia, misogynistic, abilism/dis-abilism of bodies. “ The producers were astonished to discover that the film engaged female audience to an extraordinary level: we got like a 100 percent recommend from women under 25” according to the director [Burgoyne, 2011:23] because the film serves female gaze in terms of visual pleasure and cinematic narrative.

Conclusion:

The film *300* (Dir: Snyder, 2007) has been examined under various filters of portrayals of masculinity, femininity and sexuality, that including issues such as homophobia, misogynistic, abilism/dis-abilism of bodies, Whereas this research focused on reception studies and cross cultural making meaning of the film, asks basic questions about how we make sense of the movies and what they mean in our lives.

Among the total number of comments of 704 responses to a BBC news report about the political controversy between Iran and US on the film in Youtube *300* has been criticized for distorting historical facts , depiction of ancient Persian , and inhumanized representation of people as well as a propaganda of United states' foreign policy in Middle east during its War on Terror. Whilst viewers from United States and rest in other European countries such as Germany, Greece, Netherland, United Kingdom defend the *300* as genre, seems they have read the film as an insensitive film it has nothing to do with race and ethnicity, it is simply a fantasy film.

Objections to *300* as a graphic novel and then film simultaneously consider historical and contemporary interpretations, Historically as it refers to the historical East-West clashes and allegorically as it refers East-West tensions, in particular the occupation of Iraq by United States and it collations forces. Western diplomats at the UN were determinedly ratcheting up the pressure on the Iranian Nuclear Program. Therefore this “inaccurate history versus righteous history” public debate over a film such *300* reflects the historical tension between Iran and western courtiers. In my opinion *300* played its part in provoking a bona fide international crisis by looking at the circumstance when the film been produced, and it have been examined under contemporary context of interpretations, because the historical events in *300* in refer to pre-Islamic period, if fact the film do with Islamic culture, beside that the post-1979 revolution regime in Iran has done enormous plans to eradicate the pre-Islamic Persian heritages that includes Xerxes period.

Although the film is entirely fiction and departure from reality, there are still people called Greek and Persian and the way *300* glorifying white western patriarchy and sub-humanising others, makes Persian audiences to take the film more with its portrayals of race, and ethnicity interpretations. As Hamid Dabashi the Iranian-American scholar says: “But we, the demonised minorities that Snyder sees like monsters swarming around him, can look back through his own camera and reverse his angle. To this "Persian", that weird looking giant coming down from his throne to meet with the leader of the resistance looks amazingly like Bush going to Iraq for a quick visit -- and those obsequious "immortals" bending to accommodate his feet on their backs remind me of the members of the US congress abrogating their constitutional responsibilities and consenting to an immoral and illegal war against Afghanistan and Iraq [ahram.org.eg]. I have discussed the differentiations between Persian/western audiences in

receiving Snyder's *300*, examining the film by illuminating it through the cross-cultural meaning producing, how it has been interpreted as inaccurate portrayal of history and depiction of ancient Persian as savages and barbaric is offensive demonization of today's Iranian.

التقليل من إنسانية الاخرين دراسة عن تلقي الافلام عبر الثقافات، التفسيرات الإيرانية / الغربية لفلم (٣٠٠ - للمخرج شنايدر)

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البريد الإلكتروني :

المخلص:

يستهدف البحث من خلال دراسة فلم 300 (للمخرج شنايدر) إلى فضح (كشف حقائق) مفاهيم "المعنى الثابت" و "استقلالية النص" والتفسيرات الأخرى للنصوص القائمة على تهميش المشاهدين . في إطار دراسات الجمهور ونظريات التلقي التي تركز على مشاهدي الأفلام، يفهم بأن المشاهد يشارك في عملية صنع المعاني بدلاً من استيعابها فقط، وتنتهج هذه الدراسة طريقة تحليل التفسيرات للفيلم من قبل كلا من مشاهدي الفلم في الدول الغربية وجمهورية ايران. و ذلك من خلال التحقيق في البيانات، التعليقات والمراجعات من المدونات ومنتديات الإنترنت وكذلك اليوتيوب حيث تواجه فيها الجماهير الموالية والمعارضة للفلم.

أولاً، يقوم البحث باستجواب المجال المتزامن (synchronic) للفيلم ٭ إنتاج الفيلم وتوزيعه وعرضه ومراجعه الصحفية ، والسياقات الاجتماعية والتاريخية والسياسية إلخ ٭ وكذلك المجال غير المتزامن [(diachronic) النظرية الأكاديمية والنقد والتاريخ والبت والتلفزيون الفضائي والكابليات وثقافات عشاق الافلام والتلقي عبر ثقافات الافلام. ٭ كلينجر ، 1997 ٭. ثانياً ، التأثيرات الظرفية التي تؤثر على معنى النص (الفلم) ، وبصورة أدق كيف تم ربط الفيلم بالصراعات السياسية بين الولايات المتحدة وإيران خصوصاً في زمن "الحرب على الإرهاب" في الشرق الأوسط. أخيراً، بسبب القيود المفروضة والمراقبة الإعلامية على عرض الفلم في إيران تم اخذ وتحليل البيانات من المشاهدين من خلال تقرير خيري ل(بي بي سي) حول الفلم متوفر على موقع اليوتيوب، حيث يتضمن الجدول السياسي بين المشاهدين في إيران والولايات المتحدة حول الفلم. بالإضافة إلى تحليل الاحتجاجات الإلكترونية للمغتربين الإيرانيين من خلال إنشاء مواقع ومدونات إلكترونية ضد الفلم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: فلم 300، نظريات التلقي ، دراسات الجمهور ، دراسات الأفلام ، الاستقبال عبر الثقافات ، صنع المعنى.

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