Analyzing *a Separation*, a Film Directed by Asghar Farhadi, from the Perspective of Iranian Culture-Media Relations with Other Countries

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Abstract: This research aims to analyze A Separation, the film directed by Asghar Farhadi, from the perspective of Iranian culture-media relations with other countries. A Separation is often based on two themes: one is to show Iranian people uncultured and poor, and another is to ridicule religious people or the ruling system in Iran. This film distorts audiences' attitudes towards Iranian Islamic culture. As much as we can transfer the original Iranian culture beyond the borders of Iran using appropriate films, in addition to having a stronger cultural connection with other countries, we can also expand the Iranian-Islamic culture widely. In terms of values and growth of cultural ties with other countries, the audience is confronted with an Iranian family trying to recount minor and major family issues and problems (anti-values) in A Separation.

Keywords: Cinema, Culture-Media Relationship, Separation Film.

Introduction

The impact of cinema on a country's cultural development and technology growth is obvious and significant (Zandi, 1997); a cinema which has adhered to Islamic values since the Islamic Revolution of Iran and is trying to promote Islamic ethics and religion. One of the important challenges regarding the culture is the lack of interaction with other economic, political and social sectors of the country. This interaction among sectors, which can be the basis of cultural progress and development in the country, has not been given much attention in the country's macro-planning sector, and other sectors go forward with the least attention to cultural and artistic issues. If we define cultural development according to the international thesaurus of cultural development, the development or progress of cultural life of a society with the goal of achieving cultural values, and if we consider it as a goal in development planning, it can be concluded that cultural development is the acceptance of cultural change.

If we define cultural development according to international thesaurus of cultural development (thesaurus refers to the collection of common terms in a particular field; then, cultural development thesaurus includes terms related to cultural development), and society's cultural development and progress with the goal of achieving cultural values, and if we consider it as goal in development planning, cultural development regarding attention to local and national values should be able to respond to the spiritual and material needs of people in the society because cultural development is one of the main factors of society's self-confidence; accordingly, it can be concluded that cultural development is the acceptance of cultural change. Acceptance of cultural change in the development process has two theoretical origins: one is considering values in the course of change based on which the whole process of development and reconstruction is defined. Hence, the purpose of cultural

planning in this regard is to motivate creativity and innovation in all areas and to welcome innovation and promote it. In other words, cultural change is considered as a kind of development and progress.

From this perspective, cinema is one of the most efficient tools of cultural change, creation and development which plays an effective role in acculturalization, and it can be said that this impact and attraction of new audiences are increasing day by day with the increasing development of information and communication technologies, to the extent that this media has become an integral and essential part of people lives, and even a large part of tasks has been well done by other cultural institutions such as educational ones.

On the other hand, cultural change and its direction are considered negative which assuming the acceptance of the change reality, goal and direction of cultural planning is to slow down the changing course, to find mechanisms to maintain the status quo and to delay changes.(Film Negar Cinema Magazine). In any case, the functional sociological perspective focuses on the coherence and harmony of culture and other areas of social life.

Change direction and its extent is an important issue in culture that sometimes disrupts social order, and it has a special place in cultural programs. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, as an important institution or cultural position influencing general culture of the society, will play a key role in cultural development due to unique capacities in the course of cultural development and promotion of cultural values. Due to the unacceptability of the theory of different societies' development, the main issue is the localization of development model which seems necessary and avoidable (Zandi, 1997).

In this research, the impact of cinema, regarding Asghar Farhadi's film, on deepening international relations and Iran diplomacy is investigated, and it is shown that to what extent cinema can express the goals and ideals of the Islamic Revolution beyond its borders. From the viewpoint of the main issue and the past years and present challenge, this field can be evaluated from the strong influence of senior managers to the certain pressures of global beneficiaries and influential groups. Hence, in this research, the main effort is to answer this question that what effect Asghar Farhadi's film has had on the growth of the relationship among culture, Iranian media and other countries since the Islamic revolution.

Cultural relations underlying de-escalation

De-escalation is one of the most important approaches in foreign policy. If it is applied by politicians, it will be called de-escalation from the above, and if it is between people of two countries, it will be called de-escalation from the below. Intercultural communications is one of the most important and influential factors in changing people's view and perception about "others"; this relationship leads to people's awareness and their knowledge of each other, and it resolves misunderstandings. However, since the direct relationship between individuals belonging to two cultures is not possible, an important part of this relationship is done indirectly; the media plays this mediating role. This is where the media acts as an effective variable to correct the image of "other" in people's minds (Rezaei, 2011). It seems that what leads to lasting peace is not merely "cultural sharing" but more importantly, "cultural understanding"; as many countries have fought each other throughout the history despite cultural commonalities. From this point of view, the main issue is to strengthen international cognition to increase mutual awareness and understanding not to strengthen international friendship. Countries do not have to love each other, but they must do everything to know and understand each other (Rios, 2008: 60).

In the meantime, what is important is the relationship itself. The term "relationship" represents all trends by which a thought can influence another. That is, relationship causes the human conscience to create various images, concepts, tendencies, behaviors and psychological effects in the conscience of others (Motamednejad, 2011).

From this perspective, intercultural communications are any type of information exchanged between the message recipient and transmitter, which have characteristics different from the culture of message recipient. Hence, intercultural communication is a symbolic process in which people with different cultures share their considered meanings. If cultural diplomacy is related to formal activities among governments to present culture, intercultural communication will include cultural activities of private and non-governmental institutions in addition to the formal cultural activities of governments.

Of course, if we consider examples of intercultural communication, the role of media is more or less evident in all of them. Activities such as exchanging and translating books, showing movies, preparing radio and television programs in the target language, music, social media, scholarships, teaching and promoting the national language, attending scientific conferences, exchange of students and professors and holding various cultural exhibitions.

The impact of media on culture

A culture dominated by the technology which is considered as a consumer good, is placed in a situation in which deals with dispersion instead of cultural harmony. At the same time, it should be noted that mass

communication is not often in the way that a message is sent on the one hand, and the message recipient accepts it passively on the other hand because what is received passes through individuals' cultural logic and makes sense. This means that it is optimistic that there are different perceptions depending on each culture and social environment. In fact, not only has there been coherence and integration in cultural industries over time, but also humanity has always reconstructed cultural differences. In addition, experience has shown that entering the world network does not necessarily mean better understanding each other.

Research background

Kazemzadeh Kamal Kouhi (2010) investigated the role of new means of mass communication in cultural development, obstacles and solutions in his dissertation. In the new world system, we live in the age of media; an age in which the mass media are an integral part of our lives. The media facilitate and accelerate the cultural development of countries by adopting different communication policies. The function of media in the age of communication is undoubtedly undeniable in all aspects of social and cultural life of human societies.

Tavakoli (2011) investigated the role of the media in the cultural democracy of the contemporary world in his dissertation. It is stated in his dissertation that with the expansion of mass media at the domestic and foreign levels and their impact on the cultural institutions of the society, common elements of different cultures are merging due to the contact and connection of cultures with each other. Mutual understanding of cultures with no tendency to eliminate is an important development in the field of culture. In this regard, the plan of cultural democracy is based on the principle that the dependence of each individual on a culture is one of the most basic human needs, and each individual, group and community has the right to belong to a particular culture or cultures. In this research, the question of what the components of cultural democracy are explains the mutual relationship between media and culture.

Giorian and Zakeri (2013) investigated the role of media in culture. In this research, definitions related to media and culture presented while introducing an understanding of culture and media. The mutual relationship between culture and media is rooted in human history, so that it can be said that culture and media were pairs and requirements of human social life, and now they are too. Throughout the history, man has used the media to transfer his message and expand his culture. He uses language, which is a complex communication device, to communicate with others, and this language manifests itself in various forms from the beginning to complex (from silence, ordinary speech and gestures to lighting fire and creating pain and finally the Internet). Language and communication devices or the media are manifested in the context of culture. This particular culture is dynamic, continuous and completely new and has led to cultural convergence.

Methodology

This research is analytical-content type. Content analysis is a research method to reconstruct and achieve valid results using contextual data and communication texts, and pays more attention to the content of mass communication and is known more qualitatively and descriptively than quantitatively. The information required for this research can be presented in two general categories. The first is the use of library texts and documents to gather basic theories and information. The second are journals in which the interviews or critiques of these films were reflected; they were selected as data of this research.

In this research, components of research variables were used as themes of this method and the codes of "yes" and "no" were applied. Therefore, according to the data, if any of variable components of this research has been able to establish a connection between films and critics, the code "yes", and otherwise the code "no" was used. The result of this step is to summarize data obtained from interviews and documents in the form of concepts and categories that are similar in these questions. In the theoretical coding method, there are two trends in analyzing data. Some researchers analyze them in detail. That is, they analyze texts and data line by line and word by word; because this is time consuming, some encode only key points and themes.

Research variables

Attitude dimensions	Cognitive attitude	The cognitive part of attitudes is divided into components including beliefs, thoughts and characteristics attributed to a subject by us. Most of time, characteristics attributed to a subject is divided into positive and negative.
	Emotional attitude	Any feelings or emotions related to a subject are associated to this part of our attitude. Emotional reactions affect attitudes in different ways. For example, many people are afraid of spiders; therefore, this negative emotional reaction may cause you to have a negative attitude towards spiders.
	Behavioral attitude	The behavioral part of attitude is related to previous behaviors as well as experiences on a subject. People may adopt their current attitude from their previous behavior.
Behavioral dimensions	Disruptive behavior	It is a destructive and annoying behavior done with the intention of destroying or harming and harassing.
	Hostile behavior	It is a behavior associated with resentment and enmity, and the person intends to prove his enmity.
	Aggressive behavior	It is a behavior in which a person becomes aggressive.
Dimensions of values	Real feeling	It refers to a true understanding of watching a movie.
	Emotional communication	It refers to the emotional communication resulted from watching a movie.
	Phatic communication	Communication that makes the audience feels excited when watching a movie.

A Separation (2011)

Movie name	Production	Actors
A Separation	2011	Leila Hatami, Peiman Maadi, Shahab Hosseini, Sareh Bayat, Sarina Farhadi, Babak Karimi, Ali Asghar Shahbazi, Kimia Hosseini, Hamid Jananeh, Shirin Yazdanbakhsh, Merila Zarei

Analyzing *A Separation* in terms of attitudinal and behavioral dimensions and Islamic values from audience viewpoint

	Attitudinal dimensions			Behavioral dimensions			Dimensions based on Islamic values		
Magazine	Cognitive	Emotional	Behavioral	Disruptive	Hostile	aggressive	True feeling	Emotional communication	Exciting communication
Cinefantastique	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Cinema Journal	Establish a connection	Establish a connection	Establish a connection	Establish a connection	Establish a connection	Establish a connection	Establish a connection	Establish a connection	Establish a connection

In regard this movie, Thomas Dowson claims that conflict in Iranian families and tension among family members cannot affect important decisions of life; even it is the like after separation. However, regarding the main theme of this movie, there is a strong common feature among all people of the world, and it is self-sacrifice (organ donation), which is a normative and valuable behavior in all cultures. Cahiers Du Cinema Magazine

English Charles Gant, one of Britain's greatest critics, believes that the movie of A Separation has been endorsed by festivals abroad and so called expatriates and foreigners because of showing cultural poverty as well as criticizing Iran's judicial system.

Hereafter, critic of American cinema, believes that A Separation is a special film that became political and won many awards at various festivals, which shows that it is a special film. In this movie, Peiman Maadi's beard is a clue, and its scenario has been written very strongly; of course, this film had gaps such as taking money by mother while her daughter was observing this scene, and her silence in response to her father or looking after the old man before separation. In the movie of A Separation, Islam, Adhan (the Islamic call to prayer), Muslims, etc. are shown undesirable and inappropriate. For example, Razieh swearing to Quarn which is not pleasant, and Razieh's abortion in the middle of the door while her child was observing this scene are among issues that no one has paid attention to. Mark Le Fanu, a member of literary academy and critic, claims that Iranian cinema is still amazing. What I, and in my opinion many others liked about this film was the film's absolute inner suspense combined with humanity and wisdom of life. A Separation is a movie that its theme on human relations and the struggle between the right and wrong has subconsciously found a way to guide audience personally and privately in order to respond this question that "what you really know about Iran". Cinefantastique Journal

Analysis of findings

A Separation is often based on two themes: one is to show Iranian people uncultured and poor, and another is to ridicule religious people or the ruling system in Iran. This film distorts audiences' attitudes towards Iranian Islamic culture. The reason for the film's success in winning awards at foreign festivals is almost obvious, and everyone can guess. Almost 90 percent of the world's media and news agencies are directly or indirectly controlled by the United States and Israel, and it is also clear that the biggest enemy of these countries is Iran. in addition, in A Separation, we observe inter-class and intra-class struggle, and this shows the audience attitude towards the class system of Iran. The stronger the film in cultural dimension, and the higher the degree of its harmony with the country's culture, the stronger the cultural communication with other countries.

In terms of values and growth of cultural ties with other countries, the audience is confronted with an Iranian family trying to recount minor and major family issues and problems (anti-values) in A Separation; even honesty is questioned in some moments of the film (anti-value), and the audience thinks whether it is really necessary to always be honest!

According to the above-mentioned results, any film considering human values is a valuable movie. For example, a film with a moral theme addressing the issue of family relationships can also be considered valuable. At present, this term has a special meaning that we ourselves do not believe it very much. Nick Roddick argues that A Separation has been made like Hitchcock's detective stories. In A Separation, the characters reveal their potential, and more importantly, this film is about modern Iran. This story is about right and wrong in the same direction and is contrary to the narrations that often put right and wrong face to face and on two opposite directions. This film shows Iran as a community full of lies.

Conclusion

According to the findings and analysis, it can be concluded that in the last 4decades, cinema has played a significant role in public and cultural diplomacy, as well as in changing Iran's face and stigmas attached to it. Cinema has been able to participate in the institutions of international festivals as a cultural representative. Cinema, as a determining media, has an undeniable role in shaping the images of unique aspects of a land in the eyes of others and explaining the cultural and political relations between countries. Cinema is the seventh and final art, and it is undoubtedly to some extent comprehensive and complete. Hence, cinema is ideological and is the main axis of culture and power. As much as we can transfer the original Iranian culture beyond the borders of Iran using appropriate films, in addition to having a stronger cultural connection with other countries, we can also expand the Iranian-Islamic culture widely. It can be pointed out here that the movie under investigation in this research (A Separation) has publicized private relationships between husbands and wives. The filmmakers think that if they put a blind on eyes of the audience, no one will understand the concepts while the audience goes beyond them to see everything. This view will undermine cultural development between Iran and other countries. According to the findings of this study, attention should be paid to all aspects of literature, art and philosophy for the success of cultural diplomacy. If we reach to the meaning from the text, all problems will be solved. Many of our problems are rooted in lack of knowledge of the West. In Greece, for example, women are enslaved, but such issues have no place in their films and have not been addressed so far. If we turn the West to the West, and Iran to itself, everything will be pleasant. We will not know the West without Iran, and we will not know Iran without the West, and in both cases, we will not reach a conclusion without examining Islam (swears taken in the film of A Separation), and cultural development and its relationship with other countries will be disrupted. It can be concluded that cultural development is the technique of managing interactions with the outside world in the field of culture, and it shows the need to manage cultural interactions with other countries. Cultural collections, such as artistic field, should examine the extent of our interactions with the

outside world and investigate the benefits of this important principle. Here, it can be said that cultural development means security development. In some movies, the missing subject is the lack of reviewing the content of cinema movies and their impact and relation to national interests and cultural diplomacy, and they have neglected the purposeful horizon of this field. However, with a glance at Western and Hollywood cinema, a serious focus on cultural diplomacy and media is observed in cinema and its impact on audience. Our attitude towards the culture and origins of our country does not require unconventional research, and it is enough to look at productions presented in foreign festivals in recent years to reach a conclusion. A Separation, Film Negar Cinema Magazine.

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