

III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter elaborates the methodology of the study which attempted to investigate the representation of Persians in a movie script entitled ‘300’ and its relation toward socio-political situation between the USA and Iran. It covers research design, data collection, which include data collection procedure, data analysis and data presentation.

3.1 Research Design

This present study employed a descriptive qualitative method because it attempted to describe, understand, and interpret the representation of Persians as villains from the Orientalist perspectives which focused the analysis on the data in the form of texts which included words, sentences, dialogues and narratives. This is in line with Flick (2009) who asserts that in a qualitative research, texts are not just the essential data of the findings, but also the basis of the interpretations and the central medium for presenting and analysing the findings.

Further, he goes on by saying that qualitative research takes into account viewpoints and practices of people in real world which are different because of different perspectives and social backgrounds related to them.

3.2 Research Subject and Context

A ‘300’ movie script written by Zack Snyder was the main subject of this study. ‘300’ movie script is an adaptation of Frank Miller’s graphic novel of the same title. The reason of why the movie script was chosen over the graphic novel is because the movie script was written at a time when U.S. government intensify their pressure over Iran’s nuclear programme. It is interesting to be investigated

since the movie script is believed to be related to the current socio-political issue between U.S. and Iran.

3.3 Data Collection

The data were in the form of words, phrases, sentences, dialogues, and narration. The data were supported by other sources such as journals, articles and other relevant studies related to the issue. In collecting the data, reading the movie script closely was required in order to understand the text thoroughly. The collected data related to the representation of Persians as villains in the movie script were then noted as textual evidences. Further, the evidences were analyzed using Said's (1978) Orientalism alongside with Davis, Mules, and Thwaites' (1994) character and characterization.

3.3.1 Data Collection Procedures

As a guidance in collecting the data, these following steps were taken in this research:

1. Identifying the data from the selected words, phrases, sentences, dialogues and narrations that show any characteristics which can represent the Persians as villains.
2. Categorizing all the data which represent the Persians based on Davis, Mules, and Thwaites' (1994) character and characterization into characters' attitudes and physical appearances.
3. Analyzing and interpreting the data by using Orientalism theory proposed by Said (1978).
4. Making conclusion of the research and giving suggestions related to the further study of the same topics.

3.4 Data Analysis

After the data were categorized, the analysis was conducted using Orientalism framework proposed by Said (1978) alongside with Brian's (2005) *Film and Politics in America*. After, research questions are answered, conclusion of the study and suggestion for further research are then made.

3.5 Data Presentation

The collected data from the movie script were categorized and put into several tables in order to answer research questions. The tables are the representation of Persians as villains and the representation of Spartans as heroes.

Tables of representation of Persians as villains and Spartans as heroes both have five main columns and two subcolumns. The first main column is number. The second is character column which provides names of characters that are characterized. Further, the third is characterization which focus on the ways the characters in the movie are characterized based on characters' attitudes and characters' appearances. These characters' attitudes and characters' appearances are the sub column of characterization column.

While, in the fourth column, there is textual evidence that provides speech, dialogue or description related to the depiction of characterizations of certain character. Last, the fifth column is the comment or the analysis regarding the speech, dialogue or description provided in the textual evidence column. The example of representation tables are presented as follows:

Table 3.1

Example of Representation of Persians as Villains

No	Character(s)	Characterization		Textual Evidence	Comment/ Analysis
		Attitudes	Appearance		
1	Persian emissary 1	Arrogance: Consider women are lower than men	-	<p>Persian Emissary 1 Earth and Water</p> <p>King Leonidas You rode all the way from Persia for earth and water?</p> <p>Queen Gorgo Do not be coy or stupid, Persian. You can afford neither in Sparta.</p> <p>Persian Emissary 1 What makes</p>	<p>Persian emissary complained to King Leonidas because her wife, queen Gorgos cut into their conversation.</p> <p>The messenger's talking indicates that women are not supposed to have a right to speak among men. This representation shows that Zack Snyder, as the scripwriter think that Persian men considered women are lower than men.</p>

				this woman think she can speak among men?	
2	The Immortals		Ghost or evil: army from the darkness, invincible.	<p>Daxos We are doomed.</p> <p>Captain Quiet yourself.</p> <p>Daxos The child speaks of the Persian ghosts, known from the ancient times. They are the hunter of men's souls. They cannot be killed or defeated.</p> <p>Not this darkness.</p> <p>Not this Immortals.</p>	Daxos describes the Immortals (Persian army) as people who cannot be killed or defeated. It can be considered as Snyder's attempt to powered the Persian army character, as well as to challenge the Spartans to defeat those Immortals. By defeating the invincible Immortals, it will shows the incredible power of Spartans.

Table 3.2

Example of Representation of Spartans as Heroes

No	Character(s)	Characterization		Textual Evidence	Comment/ Analysis
		Attitude	Appearance		
1	Astinos	-	Young and brave	<p>King Leonidas He is your son. He is too young to have felt a woman's warmth.</p> <p>Captain I have others to replace him. Astinos is as brave and ready as any. No younger than we were the first time you stood next to me in battle.</p>	Captain describes his son, Astinos as a brave young man and ready to go war.
2	Greeks and Spartan women	Rational, Superior	-	<p>King Xerxes You Greeks take pride in your logic. I</p>	King Xerxes considered the Greeks as people who always use

			<p>suggest you employ it. Consider the beautiful land you so vigorously defend. Picture it reduced to ash at my whim. Consider the fate of your women.</p> <p>King Leonidas</p> <p>Clearly you don't know our women. I might as well have marched them up here, judging by what I've seen. You have many slaves, Xerxes but few warriors. It won't be long</p>	<p>their logical thinking. It shows that the Greeks are known as rational people. Moreover, King Leonidas think that the Spartan women are more superior than Xerxes army judging from the battle he won against Persian army.</p>
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				before they fear my spears more than your whips.	
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3.6. Synopsis of 300 Movie Script

300 movie script tells about battle of Thermopylae where Spartans army led by King Leonidas marched to the Hot Gates of Thermopylae to fight Persian King, Xerxes and his thousands of Persian army. The problem began when Persian messengers came to Sparta to deliver message from King Xerxes. The Persian messenger asked Leonidas to give away ‘earth and water’ as submission to Persia. Feeling insulted by the messengers attitudes, Leonidas turned down the offer and kicked away all Persian messengers into a big well.

Leonidas who realized that the war was coming to Sparta had decided to go to war. Then, he arranged a meeting to ask permission to Ephors, the priests of Sparta’s old gods because there is no Spartan King go to war without the Ephors’ blessing. He explained his plan to repel the great numbers of Persian army in the terrain of Hot Gates of Thermopylae by funneling them into the narrow pass between the rock and sea. He believed that thousands of Persian army would count for nothing because their movement would be limited in that narrow pass. However, the Ephors and the councilmen of Sparta did not give Leonidas permission to go to war because Carneia, a sacred and ancient festival was about to be held and there is no war allowed during the festival. Leonidas left the Ephors in anger, while the Spartan traitor, Theron who is a councilman of Sparta gave Xerxes’ gold to the Ephors as a bribe.

At night, Leonidas could not sleep and thought that all people and things he loved would be in danger if he did not do anything. His wife encouraged him to think out of the box and do anything he think right as a King. He then ordered his captain to gather 300 best soldiers in the morning to be his 'bodyguard' to accompany him on a leisurely walk to the Hot Gates. His wife said goodbye and asked him to be back alive. Alongside with his wife, Theron came to the location where Leonidas and his soldiers are gathered to prevent them go to war. Leonidas explained that there was no march and the 300 soldiers are only his personal bodyguards on a leisurely walk. It was not his intention to go to war in the Hot Gates.

On the road, Leonidas and his soldiers met their allies who seems shocked because Spartan only sent such small force. Leonidas asked the professions of the allied army and found that the answer showed that he brought more soldiers than them. They then agreed to go to the Hot Gates together.

A horribly disfigured man, Ephialtes came to Leonidas to warn him of the goat path at the rear of his position. He said that his parents once fled from Sparta to save his live at the day he was born and he want to help Leonidas as soldier to redeem what his parent did. Leonidas ordered him to lift the shield high, because his soldiers always formed a phalanx as a defence that they must be able to lift their shield high enough to protect each other from enemies' attack. Ephialtes could not lift his shield as Leonidas required him to. Leonidas gently told him that he could not join in the force. Instead, he asked him to take care of the fallen soldiers. Ephialtes could not accept what Leonidas said and felt angry to him.

A battle is happened when Persian emissary found out that the Spartan army were building Pochian wall to block the Persian advance by using Persian dead body from the previous scouting party. The Persian emissary warned the Spartans that their arrows will blot out the sun and kill all Spartans. With fearless, the Spartans challanged the Persians and killed them all. As reaction to this event,

King Xerxes sent a large group of army to ask the Spartans to surrender. The Spartans was once again refused to give up. The battle could not be avoided. The Persians could not defeat the solid phalanx formation of Spartans. They were funnelled to the narrow terrain and fall from the end of the cliff.

Feeling impressed to the Spartans fighting skill, Xerxes asked and persuade Leonidas personally to surrender. He promised Leonidas wealth and power if Leonidas give up and be loyal commander for him. Leonidas turned down the Xerxes' offer and promised to shed blood from Xerxes body instead.

Full with anger, Xerxes ordered 'The Imortal', the army that were believed could not be hurt nor dead. He also ordered to release all the soldiers and animals from various places like Barbarian Mongolian, Eastern Chemist, African Rhinoceroses and Indian war elephants. Some Spartans died in the battle, but the victory still on the Spartans'.

Ephialtes who was still angry to Leonidas' refusal came to Xerxes and agreed to show the goat path in exchange of uniform, women and wealth.

Meanwhile in Sparta, Queen Gorgo was struggling to convince the councilmen to help her husband by sending him more army. A friendly councilman gave her advice that she would need Therons' help to convince other councilmen. Theron agreed to help her, but she must sleep with him. She agreed with his requirement. Then, Queen Gorgo made her appeal at the council. Theron did not support her as he had promised. Instead, he betray her by accusing her of adultery. She mad at him and stab a sword to his body. Surprisingly, a bag of Xerxes' gold fall from his clothes. All of the councilmen in the council room finally realized Therons' treachery and agree to unite Sparta against Persia.

Back to the Hot Gates, Leonidas knew that he had been betrayed. Their fight is doomed and the allied army, the acardians suggested Spartans to retreat but they

refused. Leonidas ordered one of the Spartans, Dilios to go back to Sparta and tell about the battle of Thermopylae to people in Sparta.

As Dilios back to Sparta, the other Spartans prevented the Persian invasion. Xerxes once again persuaded Leonidas by offering him that he could be a Warlord of all Greece, but he only answerable to Xerxes. Ephialtes also tried to convince Leonidas to surrender and follow him by joining Xerxes army. Leonidas replied, "May you live forever", an insult to Ephialtes that only true hero could valuing death rather than live long enough to be a traitor.

Dropping his shield and helmet, Leonidas slowly seems bowing in submission, but suddenly Stelios ran from his back, using his body to jump and kill Xerxes' general. Leonidas quickly took a spear, then threw it away to Xerxes. It ripped Xerxes cheek open. The furious Xerxes ordered all his archer to attack. Rain of arrows came down from the sky aiming at Leonidas and his army. At the final moment of his life, Leonidas loudly said that he loves his wife.

Back to Sparta, Dilios delivered a message and necklace from Leonidas to Queen Gorgo. He told her that Leonidas fought bravely. He told the story of Leonidas and his army sacrifice to protect Sparta. The story triggered the spirit of 10.000 Spartans who led 30.000 Greek army to fight against 120.000 Persians in the next battle which called as a battle of Plataea.

(Source: Synopsis of 300, 2013 on http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0416449/synopsis?ref=tt_stry_pl)