

Abstract

During the 1950s, distinguished non-western movies got noticed by many people around the world. Subsequent to this worldwide acclaim, various research approaches to understanding and analyzing these movies and the emerged resistance against western Cinema were formed, including "Third Cinema", "Immigration Cinema", "Post-Colonial Cinema" and "Media Imperialism Theory". Over the years, these approaches lost their former efficiency due to the political, economic and communicational changes- especially the increase in media literacy and development of media distribution networks.

This study adopts a theoretical, descriptive and analytical approach, based on library research. By reviewing and exploring the theories of John Akomfrah, Coco Fusco and William Brown, this study criticizes them and shows the necessity of rethinking in these approaches by discussing the status quo. The aim of this study is to remind us the importance of going beyond the common bipolar of the west/ the other which over times has been the basis of theories explaining the former resistance movements against the west. And to show us that, as a newly emerged approach to resist against western cinema, de-westernization is aimed at de-centralization of the west instead of rejecting it or substituting the centers. De-westernization of film studies believes that as one among the others, western cinema has its own identity and values and could have an effective, dynamic and fair presence in current multi-focal and multi-cultural world. It is necessary for contemporary film theorists to identify the cultural background of any movie before analyzing it in order to be able to come to a more precise understanding about its specific identity. What makes a movie one of a kind and gives it a sense of originality are the characteristics of the country, nation and culture it belongs to. On the other hand, it is difficult for world-famous figures to keep talking in their native language because they need to build up their native language as detailed and particularized as the world language. In order to overcome this problem various filmmakers have been experimenting with various methods. This study tracks the traces of de-westernization in Iranian Cinema by investigating the works of Abbas Kiarostami and Morteza Avini.

Some film theorist consider Kiarostami's works as a mediator for analytical rules and values of western film theories, and his methods as common modernist or post-modernist technics. Contrarily some critics believe that although Kiarostami's works lack the standard aesthetics, they should be considered as waste or failed products of mainstream. However by using the theories of de-westernization scholars, this study tries to show us that although some of Kiarostami's technics are similar to modernist and post-modernist technics, they are the results of his individual attempts and need to be traced back to the ancient Iranian culture. By applying his non-imitating filmmaking method, Kiarostami constantly challenges the conventional/ western cinema while simultaneously presenting us the new approaches for viewing the world. Kiarostami's cinema is one of the best examples of non-western Cinemas and one of the most influential verifications for those who believe that there are other filmmaking paths, apart from the path taken by the west, both in form and content. This study discusses that this personal approach to cinema has the capacity of creating a new language for cinema.

The ideas of Morteza Avini –as one of the few Iranian theorists of cinema- are an important part of native film studies of Iran. He was attempting to discover new dimensions of cinema with the capacity of expressing theological concepts and representing national identity. Critical reading of the ideas of influential theorists like Avini, opens up new horizons for native theorist of cinema. This study tries to uncover some of the disregarded capacities of Avini's ideas and critically discusses some of its disadvantages.

On the other hand, Avini's works are the examples of a new method of documentary filmmaking which is different from common approaches taken by TV reporters and documentary filmmakers during the war. In his TV series, "haghighat" and "revayat-e fath", based on the requirements of a war zone and by applying his own innovative methods and minimizing the production group, Avini has been moved towards simplification. This simplification is the key principle of de-westernization and the intersection between the works of these two Iranian filmmakers.

Keywords

National Cinema, West, De-Westernizing Film Studies, Morteza Avini, Abbas Kiarostami.

