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Greek History

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300 Analysis

Monstrous Depictions in Zach Snyder's The 300

HOOK: Characters are made to outwardly reflect the values they show in the film.

Describe the kind of monstrous features used in the film. "Many people get what they consider to be accurate pictures of history from such popular cultural sources such as movies..."(Weinstein pg. 3). WORKING THESIS: Although the visual depictions of characters in Zach Snyder's The 300 are used to outwardly portray their values, those values do not reflect the historical values of the time.

PLOT SUMMARY: Who, when, and what is the movie about? Based on a graphic novel of the same name. Directed by Zach Snyder, who has directed many movies based on comics/ graphic novels despite stating he does not like comics/graphic novels (who keeps letting this man do this?). Staring actors famous for action movies. When was the movie made and what similar pop culture things were popular at this time that may have helped inspire the movie?

EPHORS: Greedy men who uses oracle for their own benefit. Withered and weak appearance reflects weak will because they were bribed by Persians. Discuss how their appearance reflects their greed in the film. Contrast frail appearance in film with the

knowledge that Spartan ephors were old, honored warriors. Compare how their thought about the gods were portrayed in the film with what historical information suggest they viewed the gods.

PERSIAN WARRIORS: Discuss how their ogre-like appearance reflects their position as brutal warrior. Compare how the stupidity of the warriors in the films contrast with how tactical the Persian army was in history. Discuss how film portrays Persians as other and lesser than the main good guys, the Spartans.

EPHIALTES: Discuss how his withered appearance reflects that he will betray Leonidas but discrimination because of his appearance is also part of what leads him to betray Leonidas. Discuss historical accuracy of Ephialtes betraying Leonidas “but in fact it was Ephialtes who showed the Persians the way around the mountain along the path, and I hereby record his guilt.”(Herodutus pg. 480).

XERXES’S HAREM: Nonbinary/ non gender conforming portrayed unnatural and evil. Discuss how this continues to portray Persians as other and less than. Note that the harem scene focusses on mouths possibly because Xeres’s wants Ephailtes to tell him Sparta’s secrets. Discuss how Xerxes is portrayed as feminine and therefore weak. Portrayed as sly and manipulative which contradicts the teaching of Ahuramazda that Persian kings followed. “because I was not wicked, nor was I a liar, nor was I a despot, neither I nor any of my family. I have ruled according to righteousness.” (L.W. King pg. 9).

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST DEFORMITIES: Discuss overall theme of discrimination. Compare the good-looking main characters who do no wrong with the discrimination

against the characters with deformities. Note how Sparta practiced infanticide by leaving children born with deformities on a mountain. Discuss how deformities were seen as lesser because they reduced battle ability.

AMERICANIZATION OF ANCIENT GREECE: The 300 focuses on freedom, a typically American ideal, instead of honor, the typical Spartan ideal. Discuss how characters with deformities have more limited freedom in the film.

CONCLUSION: How is this tactic used in a more respectful way in modern movies. How do the values portrayed in the movie differ from values based on historical knowledge. How has discrimination against people with disabilities changed since ancient times?

Works Cited

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