



Television in the Global Age

Teachers' Notes

- The resources are intended to support teachers delivering on the new A level specification. They have been created based on the assumption that many teachers will already have some experience of Media Studies teaching and therefore have been pitched at a level which takes this into consideration. Other resources are readily available which outline e.g. technical and visual codes and how to apply these.
- There is overlap between the different areas of the theoretical framework and the various contexts, and a “text-out” teaching structure may offer opportunities for a more holistic approach.
- Slides are adaptable to use with your students. Explanatory notes for teachers/suggestions for teaching are in the Teachers' Notes.
- The resources are intended to offer guidance only and are by no means exhaustive. It is expected that teachers will subsequently research and use their own materials and teaching strategies within their delivery.
- Television as an industry has changed dramatically since its inception.
- Digital technologies and other external factors have led to changes in production, distribution, the increasingly global nature of television and the ways in which audiences consume texts.
- It is expected that students will require teacher-led delivery which outlines these changes, but the focus of delivery will differ dependent on text chosen.



No Burqas Behind Bars

Television in the Global Age: An Introduction

This section is introductory but obviously forms the basis of the Media Industries section of the theoretical framework.

Page 1

- Television has changed considerably since the advent of digital technology in terms of its production, distribution and consumption. It has become a global, rather than a national industry and has become increasingly commercial, with public service broadcasting forced to adapt its structure, role and function. International co-production is growing and broadcasters such as HBO have achieved global success.
- Broadcasters are now “narrowcasters”, with multiple channels targeting different (sometimes more niche) audiences.
- Audiences consume television texts in a variety of ways as the industry has increased portability via new platforms (tablet, mobile phone) and patterns of consumption have changed alongside this (the box-set & binge-watching, on-demand and catch-up, Netflix, Amazon etc.).
- Interactive social media channels such as You Tube have increased accessibility for the ‘prosumer’ audience, and social media and viral promotion have become a crucial part of marketing television texts.

Students must consider television and your texts in terms of:

- Media Language
- Representations
- Media Industries
- Audience

This should be linked where relevant to

- Social,
- Cultural,
- Economic,
- Political and
- Historical contexts.



Page 2

No Burqas Behind Bars: 2012

Runtime: 77 min

Filmed in the female section of Takhar Prison in Afghanistan

Produced In: Iran/Sweden

Initial release:

19 April 2013 (Sweden)

20 November 2012 Netherlands (IDFA Festival)

30 September 2013 UK(Raindance Film Festival)

September 2013 USA

Directed By: Nima Sarvestani, Maryam Ebrahimi

Produced By: Maryam Ebrahimi

Language: Dari language with English subtitles

Screenplay: Steven Seidenberg

Production Companies

DR Fjernsynsteatret (co-production)

Interkerkelijk Omroep Nederland (IKON) (co-production)

NHK (co-production)

Nima Film

Norsk Rikskringkasting (NRK) (co-production)

Sveriges Television (SVT) (co-production)

Distributors

Deckert Distribution (2012) (Netherlands) (theatrical)

NHK BS1 (2013) (Japan) (TV)

Sequel: *Prison Sisters* 2016 follows Sara and Najibeh after their release



Page 3

No Burqas Behind Bars closely follows three women, who after fleeing abusive households or arranged marriages, have been jailed for 'moral crimes'.

Four prison cells house 40 women and 34 children, but paradoxically prison becomes a refuge, a place where they can safely express their longings, desires and hopes for the future.

Against a harsh landscape of bars and barbed wire, directors Nima Sarvestani and Maryam Ebrahimi gain unprecedented access to this hidden world, in which these women learn to live together and make a home for themselves and their children.

Sima, married at ten, with five children by the time she was 20 years old, is locked away together with her children for 15 years. Her "crime"? Fleeing from an abusive husband, who had already murdered one of his other wives and their child.

Sara, Najibeh, Latife, and many more names – all carry stories that are testament to their inner strength and dignity.

This extraordinarily intimate observational documentary was made under difficult conditions but with the full co-operation of the women and prison officials. It has been heralded at numerous international film festivals and has won many awards.

WINNER! 2014 International Emmy Award for Best Documentary

WINNER! 2014 Prix Europa for Best European TV Documentary

Storyville Global is an international documentary strand that comprises contemporary and challenging documentaries from different filmmakers gathered from across the globe.

No Burqas Behind Bars was broadcast as part of the Storyville Global season on BBC World News channel.

Sat 4 Jun 2016

05:10

Local time

Page 4

- 'BBC World News is the BBC's commercially funded international 24-hour news and information channel, broadcast in English in more than 200 countries and territories across the globe.
- Its estimated weekly audience of 84 million makes it the BBC's biggest television service.
- Available in more than 440m homes, 3m hotel rooms, on 165 cruise ships, 30 commercial vessels, 13 commercial airlines and 36 mobile phone networks - BBC World News broadcasts a diverse mix of authoritative international news, sport, weather, business, current affairs and



documentary programming.'

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-radio-and-tv-12957296>

Television History: screen and questions

Imagine UK - Season 7 Episode 9 - And Then There Was Television 19 December, 2006

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD511F39E7FF8C5BC>

Watch the documentary and answer the following questions:

1. Why are Lord Reith and John Logie Baird so important in terms of the development of TV?
2. How did television develop during the 1930s?
3. What was the impact of WW2 on TV, especially Post War?
4. What television genre developed during the late 1940s and into the 1950s

Page 5

Student research task

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/>

In pairs, look at the BBC website on the "Inside the BBC" section and make notes on the following:

1. How did the BBC develop historically? Create a brief timeline
2. What is Public Service Broadcasting?
3. How is the BBC structured?
4. What is the Licence Fee, how is it collected and how is it used?
5. Why does this make the BBC different?
6. Feedback to the class



Media Language

Page 1

In terms of the theoretical framework, students will need to consider:

- How the different modes and language associated with different media forms communicate multiple meanings.
- How the combination of elements of media language influence meaning. In terms of television, you will need to look at technical and visual codes (e.g. camera, lighting, mise-en-scène, framing, audio, editing) and narrative structures here.
- The codes and conventions of media forms and products, including processes through which media language develops as a genre.
- The dynamic and historically relative nature of genre [Link to Neale here – repetition and difference.](#)
- The processes through which meanings are created through intertextuality.
- How audiences respond to and interpret the above aspects of media language. This could easily be linked to the “Audience” section of the theoretical framework.

Page 2

- Narratology (including Todorov)
- Genre (including Neale)
- Semiotics – Roland Barthes
- Structuralism (including Lévi Strauss) at A level
- Postmodernism (including Baudrillard) at A level

Analytical toolkit for television

Students will need to analyse television texts in terms of media language

This will include:

- Technical Codes (camera: angles, shots, movement, focus; lighting: position, key, contrast; audio codes; editing; FX)
- Visual Codes (costume, setting, colour palette, framing & proxemics - (mise-en-scène); performance and NVC)
- Genre (what type of programme it is, setting, characters, repeated situations)



- Narrative (the story, flashbacks, narration)

Ask them to Mindshower - what would you expect to include for each of these headings.

Then use the digital resource 'Analytical toolkit' to compare your answers with those suggested.

Dependent on delivery patterns, students who have done Component 1 or GCSE will obviously have more terminology, but keeping this generic and introductory should enable all students to put forward ideas.

Technical codes recap Blockbusters task

Name the technical term for

1. *TS - A frame containing two people, usually head and shoulders (two-shot)*
2. *CU - A shot of head and shoulders used to convey emotion or reaction (close-up)*
3. *MES - The French term used for "everything within a frame" (mise-en-scène)*
4. *ES - An extreme long shot used to show where we are, often used as an opening shot (establishing shot)*
5. *HAS - The camera looks down on the scene, suggesting weakness (high angle shot)*
6. *LS - A shot which contains full length figures of people from some distance away (long shot)*
7. *LAS - The camera looks up at the scene or character, suggesting dominance and power (low angle shot)*
8. *D - They type of sound which naturally occurs within the film's story (diegetic)*
9. *ND - Sound which is imposed on top of the film e.g. musical soundtrack (non-diegetic)*
10. *MS - A shot which shows characters from the waist/hips up (medium shot)*
11. *CF - A frame which has boundaries or barriers on each side or above (closed frame)*
12. *SRS - Used for conversation, the camera switches from one person to the other and back again (shot-reverse-shot)*
13. *OSS - Often used in conversation - the camera is positioned behind a character, looking at the other (over the shoulder shot)*
14. *WAS - A shot which uses a wide lens to capture more in the frame (wide-angle shot)*
15. *BEV - An extreme high angle shot looking down from the sky (birds' eye view)*
16. *WT - 'Naturally' occurring background noise e.g. birdsong (wildtrack)*
17. *DF - A shot which shows background information in detail whilst close up may be blurred (deep focus)*



18. F - An edit whereby the picture gradually diminishes to black or white (fade)
19. SB - Audio which continues over an edit, forming a link between scenes (sound bridge)
20. PF - Framing which uses onscreen 'lines' leading us deep into the frame (parallel framing)

Page 3

Watch the first 4 minutes of the text. Analyse this in terms of visual codes and media language. How do these elements combine to create meaning?

- Opens with POV shot through veil. Positions audience with female figure.
- Closed frames in van. Bars/mesh everywhere – connote entrapment.
- Non-diegetic audio is culturally specific and ominous. Diegetic audio of van driving creates authenticity.
- Armed guard in front and wardress next to smaller, vulnerable figure tucked into corner – we begin to question the need for this.
- Hand-held camera jerks and bounces with movement of van. We are there, with the prisoner - verisimilitude.
- ES – open frame of desert. Nothing. Parallel frame of road – couple with donkeys – primitive lifestyle (primitive, uncivilised ideology?). Colour palette is desaturated, pale golden connoting barrenness and heat
- Van arrives at Takhar Prison – guards on dominant right. Parallel frame as it approaches creates a sense of an inevitable journey

Genre:

“Tendencies” or functions of documentary

Michael Renov suggests these are:

- To record, reveal, or preserve
- To persuade or promote
- To analyze or interrogate
- To express

(Toward a Poetics of Documentary in Theorizing Documentary AFI Film Readers 1993 p21)

Look at a week's TV schedules. Identify documentaries which fulfil each of these functions and complete the chart on page 3 & 4.

You may prefer to use some of your own clips or the suggested historical extracts on page 5 of the student workbook rather than look purely at schedules here.



Page 4

The Documentary

Is documentary a genre? A style? A form? A movement? There have been a number of attempts to define it:

“Kino-Pravda” – cinema as truth – Dziga Vertov

“The creative treatment of actuality” – John Grierson

“Representing reality” – Bill Nichols

There are many different definitions of and types of documentary.

Directed Study Task: Henrik Juel: Defining Documentary Film makes some interesting points about defining documentary. Read the article and highlight the key points made.

https://pov.imv.au.dk/Issue_22/section_1/artc1A.html

The definitions are intended to form the focus of teacher-led class discussion and the article explores some of these points in more depth.

Page 4 and 5

There should be some teacher input here with clips, perhaps. There is an activity which allows students to match definition to documentary mode.

Bill Nichols also categorises documentary by mode.

Use the digital resource to match the term with the definition and then have students fill in the definitions in their work book.

Observational: documentary as truth – the filmmaker simply observes the action. Use of fly-on-the-wall camera, long takes, lack of editing and audience manipulation. Direct cinema.

Expository: there is a narrative (usually through an omniscient voice-over) reinforced by visual footage, and the documentary seeks to inform and persuade the audience through rhetoric, usually about social issues.

Reflexive: considers and reveals the process of documentary-making itself so that audiences may understand and question it.

Poetic: focus on aesthetics, mood and tone, rather than following traditional narrative - often regarded as avant-garde.

Participatory: the filmmaker is part of the text – the relationship between filmmaker and subject is focal and the filmmaker is seen/heard.

Performative: the filmmaker actually becomes a performer within the documentary, with their own subjective message, script and agenda – e.g. Michael Moore.



Page 5

This is intended for use with students' original documentary choices from page 7 but other clips may well be useful here. Student may also have their own examples.

Go back to your initial chart of television documentaries and their functions on page 7. What mode do they use? Complete this chart.

Pages 5 and 6

These are suggestions (and only suggestions) for some of the key documentaries through the ages which demonstrate different modes, style and techniques.

These documentary extracts cover a range of different subjects, including some sensitive topics. As with all resources, do check these clips in advance of showing them in class to ensure that they are suitable for your learners.

1895 Lumiere brothers – *Arrival of a train at La Ciotat station* - actuality (0'40")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dgLEDdFddk>

1922 Robert Flaherty – *Nanook of the North* – romanticism (5')

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEajMPZy_0Q

1928 *Man With a Movie Camera* - Dziga Vertov – 'kino-pravda' and the city symphony BFI trailer (1'04")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtTlgxtoqhg>

1929 *Drifters* – John Grierson - creative actuality (5')

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZpd4oV4ucU&list=PLPuEJuyAtM3vuF-mVCHm_VpKATPKrAaDI

1933 *Housing Problems*- Elton & Anstey- social impact (14')

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tphbEpVfv24>

1940 *London Can Take It* – Jennings & Watt – propaganda. GPO Film Unit (8'55")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLgfSDtHFt8>

1953 *Free Cinema* – Lindsay Anderson O Dreamland

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLIKR1x1oWY>

1966 *Titicut Follies* trailer– Frederick Wiseman – cinéma vérité (0'55")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuAGuf-QhAQ>

1966 *Versus: The Life and Films of Ken Loach* - *Cathy Come Home* clip (2'24")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xky8ZqhNAIo>

1975 *Grey Gardens* 2015 trailer - direct cinema - Alfred & David Maysles (2'05")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZI1IJLTMXM>



1998 *Kurt & Courtney* trailer Nick Broomfield – self-reflexive (2'02")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rA8DHLrjjRg>

2002 *Bowling for Columbine* Michael Moores - performative/participatory/Les Nouvelles Egotistes (2'03")

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hH0mSAjp_Jw

2006 Nick Broomfield – *Ghosts* - direct cinema (2'47")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSbqcrVnjNw>

Page 6:

Renov and the “fictive”

Non-fiction also contains “fictive” elements – i.e. documentary uses many of the methods of the non-fiction text, particularly mainstream cinema, in the way in which it constructs meaning.

Read the extract from Michael Renov's Introduction: *The Truth about Non-Fiction* and identify what he thinks are the “fictive” elements of documentary

Michael Renov Introduction: *The Truth about Non-Fiction* pp2-3 in

Theorizing Documentary AFI Film Readers 1993

Use the digital resource to allow students to compare their answers

Suggested answers:

- Narrativity – to “narrativise the real”.
- Performance for the camera.
- Construction of character.
- Poetic language, narration or musical accompaniment to heighten emotional impact.
- The creation of suspense via the agency of embedded narratives (e.g. tales told by interview subjects) or various dramatic arcs.
- Use of high/low camera angles, close-ups, lenses.
- Editing and manipulation of time and space.

Page 7

Romanticism and documentary

In order for stories to be told “romantically” and “authentically”, the truth actually had to be constructed. For example, Robert Flaherty's 1922 film *Nanook of The North* features scenes in which the Inuit family hunt and catch a walrus with harpoons. Flaherty had them re-enact this although



they had not used this method for many years, preferring guns. A special igloo also had to be built with a wall removed so that interiors could be shot. In the same way, the cabins on herring boats had to be re-designed to accommodate the equipment in John Grierson's "Drifters".

The Kuleshov effect

Lev Kuleshov attempted to illustrate the power of editing in the creation of meaning through an experiment in which he intercut an actor's blank face with several other images. Audiences believed the actor was expressing a different emotion dependent on what he was looking at – although the shot was identical.

Alfred Hitchcock explains this in his own way here: (7')

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NG0V7EVFZt4>

Students at the University of North Carolina tried to re-create this experiment in 2009

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQNpHELKjn0>

Allow students to create their own Kuleshov effect using the digital resource.

Edit your own documentary

Cut your own documentary using the BFI's tool

<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/education/thecuttingroom/index.html>

Page 8

Students could look at clips and identify the codes and conventions of documentary, through thought shower or creating a word cloud. These might be:

- Actuality
- Cinema vérité
- Drama documentary/docudrama
- Doorstep challenge
- Hidden camera
- Scrambled voices/faces
- Interviews – think about mise en scène, rule of thirds and construction
- Talking heads
- Noddy shots
- The "expert"



- Graphics
- Eye witness accounts
- “Evidence” – the ‘money shot’
- Vox pops
- Archive footage
- VO – “voice of god”
- Reconstruction
- B-roll
- Still insert images and newspaper pages– denotation, connotation and anchorage
- Fly-on-the-wall
- Hand-held camera
- Cutaways
- Sound bridges
- Verisimilitude
- Social realism
- OS shots
- Montage

Page 9

Which of these conventions are evident in No Burqas Behind Bars?

- Observational: documentary as truth – the filmmaker simply observes the action
- Use of fly-on-the-wall camera
- Long takes, lack of editing and audience manipulation
- Direct cinema
- Actuality
- Cinema vérité
- Interviews
- Talking heads



- Hand-held camera
- Cutaways
- Sound bridges
- Verisimilitude
- Social realism
- OS shots
- ES
- Captions

Genre task – The development and context of documentary (Neale)

Use the definition as a starting point for discussion then answer the questions. Answers in green

BFI's Screen Online - DOCUMENTARY

'Not so much a single genre as an umbrella of related programme types, each seeking to represent versions of reality. Documentary forms have evolved from the beginnings of cinema to contemporary so-called docu-soaps, which some people might not see as being 'documentary' at all. They are characterised by relatively "high modality"

<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/education/glossary.html>

Steve Neale suggests that genres exist within particular contexts and develop through borrowing from other texts. What evidence is there for this?

The documentary borrows from other prison texts (the journey from arrival to departure, the mistrust of the guards, the misplaced trust) and uses familiar narratives such as Romeo and Juliet (Sara and Javid), the classic Tristan root story (Sima, Shamsudin and Shamsollah) and the Pyramus and Thisbe myth (the wall with the hole). Themes of the deprivation of the innocent and institutionalization are also familiar to audiences. The difference lies in the fact that the outside world is also a prison.

How does *No Burqas Behind Bars* reflect contemporary ideologies and concerns? Give examples. Context of war on terror and Afghan war. Threat from the Middle East. Fundamentalist Islam as "enemy" of Western "civilization". Contemporary concerns about role of women in LEDCs. Issues such as forced marriage and honour killings are regularly reported in the news.

MODALITY (Screen Online)

<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/education/glossary.html>

'A term coined to unpack the notion of 'realism'. Modality refers to how close to reality the producer intends a particular text to be. For example, the makers of Tom and Jerry obviously intended their



animation to be some distance from realistic - to have 'low modality'. Some documentary makers, on the other hand, especially observational documentaries - would like to persuade us that they are capturing a version of reality i.e. 'high modality'. Each text will include clues as to how high or low the modality is. 'Modality markers' might include whether there is music on a soundtrack, whether the editing is stylised, or shots are long and static'

Read the quote above and also think about your own understanding of *No Burqas Behind Bars*. What is constructed in *No Burqas Behind Bars*?

Use the digital resource to allow students to compare their ideas with those suggested

- Positioning of audience through POV shot behind the burqa in opening sequence.
- Editing – long takes to establish verisimilitude and manipulation of time and space.
- Interviews with e.g. Director.
- Choice of the articulate and optimistic Sara as key protagonist.
- Paradigmatic choices of other women – different characters to create empathy.
- Soundtrack – choice of culturally specific soundtrack creates authenticity but also used for emotional effect.
- Use of children – shot high angle and playing with barbed wire, peeping through bars etc.
- Colour choices – framing of red objects and background.
- Costume – focus on Sara's bright stripes, the Director's shiny uniform and sunglasses.
- Framing – foregrounding and dominant positioning.
- Shooting of interviews etc. Use of CU and OS shots.
- "Fictive" elements - Narrativity – to "narrativise the real".
- Performance for the camera.
- The creation of suspense via the agency of embedded narratives (e.g. tales told by interview subjects) or various dramatic arcs.

Page 10

Postmodernism & No Burqas Behind Bars

Baudrillard argues that the media create hyperrealities based on a continuous process of mediation. What is encoded as 'real' (and what we decode through media products) is not 'real' but instead a 'simulacrum' which offers us a hyperreality ("A real without origin or reality" – Jean Baudrillard) that we accept as real because we are so consistently exposed to it.

Thus media images have come to seem more "real" than the reality they supposedly represent.



'Our mental pictures of the perfect body, house, meal and sexual relationship have been created through exposure to constantly recycled media depictions that have no basis in fact – but it is these images that create our expectations' (*Em Griffen (2012) A First Look at Communication Theory, p319*)

Lévi-Strauss suggested that media texts are now made up of “debris” that we recognise from other texts and these are combined – “bricolage”. This may be heard in e.g. a musical “mash-up” or remix.

Postmodernism

Some features of a postmodern text:

- Intertextuality – acknowledgement of existing media texts
- References to popular culture
- Bricolage
- Self-reflexive
- Parody/Pastiche (“pasted”)/Homage
- Irony
- Ambiguity
- Narrative fragmentation or temporal distortion
- Anti-realist

Cards with bullet points on – groups are given cards and write examples from the text for each – enables differentiation

Page 24: How far is *No Burqas Behind Bars* a post-modern text?

Use the digital resource to allow students to compare their ideas with those suggested

- Elements of bricolage and “borrowing” from other texts (The prison drama)
- Relies on audience understanding of narrative conventions to decode it. Give examples.
- Highly self-reflexive – acknowledges its processes of construction including the documentary-maker’s role

How could we apply the concept of “simulacra” to ‘No Burqas Behind Bars’? Is what we are seeing hyperreal?

- The prison world is a hyperreality – it is re-presented from a mediated perspective. Consider how this is constructed.



- The outside world is also constructed as an unsafe place – but this is predominantly through suggestion, from the perspective of the women themselves.

Page 11

Extended writing task

How far can *No Burqas Behind Bars* illustrate Steve Neale's concept of repetition and difference? Give reasons for your answer and refer to detailed examples from the text.

TASK : Narrative – Tzvetan Todorov

Can you identify the various stages of the narrative in *No Burqas Behind Bars*?

- EQUILIBRIUM: The given state or balance of affairs before the.....
- DISRUPTION: Disruption of the equilibrium (may stem from a catalyst)
- RECOGNITION: That there has been a disruption
- RESOLUTION: The attempts to restore the equilibrium
- EQUILIBRIUM: Restoration of a similar or changed state of affairs after the disruption has been resolved

Are all these stages realised in *No Burqas Behind Bars*? Why?

The Todorovian narrative model is linear. Is this the case here?

There should be cause/effect links throughout the narrative. Can you identify these?

Use the digital resource to allow students to compare their ideas with those suggested.

- TODOROVIAN STRUCTURE
- EQUILIBRIUM – Perhaps the lives of the women before they arrived
- DISRUPTION – Their “moral crimes”
- RECOGNITION – Arrival at prison
- RESOLUTION – The women serve their sentences.
- EQUILIBRIUM – Sara leaves – but is let down by Javid. Is it even now fully resolved? Sequel – *Prison Sisters* 2016
- Are there non-linear elements within the episode? There aren't any obvious ones although there may have been some manipulation. What we see is a linear journey from arrival to departure.
- Are there obvious cause/effect links set up through e.g. Barthesian action or enigma codes?
Yes



Page 12

Students need to consider what is ideologically important about the resolution of these oppositions.

There are many more which your students will be able to identify as they study the text.

Binary Opposition (defined by Levi-Strauss) – many oppositions are set up to drive the narrative and we watch to discover which side “triumphs” in the end.

What is ideologically important about the resolution of these oppositions?

Can you identify what is in “opposition” to the first word within the text?

- Male v Female
- Outside v Inside
- Prisoners v Guards
- Freedom v Imprisonment
- Danger v Safety
- Individual v System
- Reality v Verisimilitude or mediated truth
- Civilisation v Barbarism
- Old traditions v New ideas
- Rebellion v Acceptance
- Father v Son
- Husband v Wife
- Courage v Fear
- Education v Ignorance
- Isolation v Community
- Honour v Dishonour

Page 13

Story arcs/ Character arcs

There are several story arcs and narrative strands – can you identify them?

Use the digital resource to allow students to compare their ideas with those suggested

- Sara and Javid – the classic Romeo and Juliet love story.



- Nadjibeh and her husband/son – an Orpheus root story of loss.
- Sima and her husband – the backstory with her stepson – a typical love triangle or Tristan root story.
- The director and his control of the camp and inmates.

Page 14

Key Questions for Class Discussion:

Is the narrative entirely linear? If not, why not? Give examples.

Does the episode have a flexi-narrative?

Are there story arcs which run across the series?

Are there obvious codes (Barthes) around which the narrative is structured? Give examples.

Is it realist?

How are time and space manipulated within the narrative?

These are on printable cards for differentiated group discussion.

Points that might be made

- Part of larger narrative. As a documentary it is more likely to contain montage etc.
- Linear/non-linear - is it? Manipulation of time and space.
- Punctuated by narrative markers- enigmas/hermeneutics throughout. e.g. Will Sara get her happy ending? Will Nadjibeh find enough money? What will happen to Sima? And to her stepson?
- Narrative - Characters are complex, storylines interweave, but this is a relatively simple, realist structure.
- Journey/quest structure –link to Campbell/Vogler. Does the documentary maker also have a narrative quest? To reveal the truth?
- Barthesian codes – symbolic codes of the kite and birds representing freedom; the bars and barbed wire through which many sequences are shot, alongside the closed frames, act as indexical codes of entrapment (the women are trapped metaphorically as well as physically).
- The burqa itself as a polysemic cultural code - of oppression? Of safety and anonymity?



REPRESENTATION

Page 1

Theoretical Framework

Students will need to consider:

- The way events, issues, individuals (including self-representation) and social groups (including social identity) are represented through processes of selection and combination.
- The effect of social and cultural context on representations.
- How and why stereotypes can be used positively and negatively.
- How and why particular social groups, in a national and global context, may be under-represented or misrepresented.
- How media representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs about the world and how these may be systematically reinforced across a wide range of media representations.
- How audiences respond to and interpret media representations.
- Theories of representation (including Hall).
- Feminist theories (including bell hooks and Van Zoonen) at A Level.

How are representations constructed/encoded?

- Narrative : e.g. audiences identify/empathise with the women through the restricted nature of the narrative and our positioning
- Dialogue and voice-over
- Technical codes (language) – camera, editing, audio.
- Lighting
- Framing
- Mise-en-scene (costuming, setting)
- Performance
- Barthes - cultural codes

Page 2

Use the digital resource

TASK: Look at the characters.



How are the characters in the documentary constructed to create these impressions?

How might audiences interact with the representations?

Which characters might different individuals identify with and why?

How might an audience 'pick and mix' ideas from this text and its representations?

Need to link to Stuart Hall throughout.

How is the Representation of Afghanistan Constructed?

- Does it conform to or challenge stereotypes? Look at the characters, settings, weather, dialogue (e.g. the primitive lifestyle, the patriarchal structure, the lack of "civilised" law).
- Are the stereotypes 'positive', 'negative' or more complex than this? Is it suggested that society is at fault?
- Why are representations constructed in this way? Consider dominant ideologies and hegemonic models.

Page 3

bell hooks

bell hooks argues that feminism is a struggle to end patriarchal oppression and the ideology of domination, and that the position of the underrepresented is by class and race as well as gender.

"Women in lower class and poor groups, particularly those who are non-white, would not have defined women's liberation as women gaining social equality with men since they are continually reminded in their everyday lives that all women do not share a common social status."

Is "patriarchal oppression and the ideology of domination" evident in *No Burqas Behind Bars*? Or does it challenge this concept in any way?

Write 3 paragraphs which express your ideas.

Students may wish to include some of the following:

- Historical and political context – role and representation of women within strongly Islamic cultures. The director suggests that the war in Afghanistan has held back education for 30 years– "90% are forced to marry because of foolishness and ignorance".
- Representations of women as domestic and maternal.
- Women as repressed by their social and financial status. Nadjibh: 'When I was free I had no life. I don't care if I stay here longer.' Lack of financial freedom. Nadjibeh sells her son.
- Freedom is not simply the prison compound or outside it, but a social and cultural prison – Nadjibeh 'We have no power.'



- Sara dreams of going to study but also wants a domestic lifestyle with Javid, she is happy to do his washing.
- Patriarchal society – Sara - 'Oh god ! He won't marry me. I will be killed'. 'It's the only place where I feel free. The law doesn't understand women. Women aren't heard.'

Liesbet Van Zoonen

'[There is] a depressing stability in the articulation of women's politics and communication . . . The underlying frame of reference is that women belong to the family and domestic life and men to the social world of politics and work; that femininity is about care, nurturance and compassion, and that masculinity is about efficiency, rationality and individuality.' – Van Zoonen

Give examples from *No Burqas Behind Bars* that illustrate this concept.

Use the digital resource to allow students the opportunity to compare their ideas with those suggested

- Women are not absent, but they are marginalized within Afghani culture.
- Women are not sexualized – costuming of burqa and veil. Use of nail polish and make-up as escapism – a hint of glamour in a monotone world. Nadjibeh as a magnet – attracting men (suggestion this is the woman's fault)
- Conforms to feminine 'nurturer' stereotype – Nadjibeh and her son : 'My son is my whole life', Sima with 5 children. Domesticity of compound.
- Men are authority figures – director positioned on dominant right, reviewing his "troops".

Women

- Marginalised (or absent)
- Domestic
- Sexualised
- Emotional

Men

- Efficient
- Rational
- Individual
- Intellectual

Military uniform with (possibly spurious) pips of office – the costume of authority. They are seen as rational – he offers a well-argued case.

- Sima's husband Shamsudin as patriarch prepared even to kill his son – 'I would have killed them both. I would have chopped them to pieces. After his release I'll get him'.



Feminist perspectives

Read the paragraphs from Van Zoonen's essay "Feminist Perspectives on the Media".

Pages 33 -37, Feminist Perspectives on the Media in Mass Media and Society (Curran and Gurevitch) Arnold (1996)

What does she suggest are the key differences between a

- Liberal feminist perspective?
- Radical feminist perspective?
- Socialist feminist perspective?

Use the digital resource to allow students the opportunity to compare their ideas with those suggested

Liberal

- Fighting for power through the equal, legal rights of women in society.
- Media perpetuate sex role stereotypes because they reflect dominant social values.
- Male media producers are influenced by this.
- Men are not the enemy- they can live alongside each other as equals.
- Women can be superwomen juggling home, family, their bodies and work.

Radical

- Men control a patriarchal society through dominance and physical strength.
- Men have no place in feminist utopia.
- Believe in women dominating society.
- Reject typical gender roles.
- Media production is owned by men, operates to the benefit of the male and should be by women, for women.

Socialist

- Concerns with class and economics – 'power is located in socio-economic structures'.
- Women's 'production of labour' and the 'economic value of domestic labour' are not recognised.
- As this work is lower/unpaid, it is essential to maintain a capitalist society.



- Women as consumers in this society.
- Linked often to class, age and ethnicity.
- Advertising reinforces sexual objectification of women.

Page 5

Apply the different Feminist approaches to *No Burqas Behind Bars*.

Socialist feminism: Women are restricted and repressed through their domestic roles and utter reliance on the male to provide for them. They have little/no education or power and no way out of poverty – Nadjibeh is forced to sell her son. It is the patriarchal culture which maintains this social inequality.

Radical feminism: Gender roles are reinforced. Men control this society through aggression and the women live in fear of this. Shamsudin as patriarch When patriarchy is challenged (e.g. through the women fleeing) it destroys the women themselves.

Sara says 'Here you can be yourself. When you are out... They just try to control you'.

The text is written and directed by men so will logically have patriarchal viewpoint, although co-director and producer is female.

Liberal feminism: The representation of women has improved as ideology has changed. Representations reflect our more liberal ideology – we are invited to empathise with the female victims from the privileged perspective of "enlightened" Western culture.

Women are not diegetically marginalised but are central to the narrative. The three main protagonists demonstrate strength – Sara's articulate hope and optimism, Sima's protection of her son-in-law despite the threat to her own safety, Nadjibeh's feisty temper.

Page 6

Van Zoonen

- Van Zoonen argues that gender is constructed and that its meaning varies dependent on cultural and historical context.
- She suggests that masculinity as well as femininity is constructed – and that the codes used to construct men 'as a spectacle' are different. But are they here?
- Look at the representation of the Director and of Shamsudin, Javid and Shamsollah

Think about:

- Males constructed through movement (active)



- Silence and impassivity
- Strength, muscularity and aggression
- Competition – males as gladiators or combatants – ‘the spectacle’
- Constructed more through the intradiegetic gaze – the way they are looked at by other characters (e.g. with respect/fear)
- Allows narcissistic identification without erotic gaze



MEDIA INDUSTRIES

Page 1

Students will need to consider:

- Processes of production, distribution and circulation by organisations, groups and individuals in a global context. This could begin with an overview/introduction to television industries – commercial and PSB.
- The specialised and institutionalised nature of media production, distribution and circulation.
- The significance of patterns of ownership and control including conglomerate ownership, vertical integration and diversification.
- The significance of economic factors, including commercial and not-for-profit public funding, to media industries and their products.
- How media organisations maintain, including through marketing, varieties of audiences nationally and globally.
- The regulatory framework of contemporary media in the UK OFCOM, BBFC classification, watershed.
- How processes of production, distribution and circulation shape media products.
- The role of regulation in global production, distribution and circulation.
- Regulation (including Livingstone and Lund) at A level.
- Cultural industries (including Hesmondhalgh) at A Level.

No Burqas Behind Bars

This should be linked where relevant to

- Social,
- Cultural,
- Economic,
- Political and historical contexts.
- The significance of different ownership and/or funding models in the television industry (i.e. whether media companies are privately or publicly owned, whether they are publicly or commercially funded etc.)
- The growing importance of co-productions (including international co-productions) in the television industry today.



- The way in which production values are shaped by economic factors.
- The impact of risk aversion on television production (e.g. in terms of the commissioning and financing of programmes).
- The different sources of funding available to producers working in the television industry today.

Page 2

No Burqas Behind Bars: 2012

Runtime: 77 min

Filmed in the female section of Takhar Prison in Afghanistan

Produced In: Iran/Sweden

Initial release:

19 April 2013 (Sweden)

20 November 2012 Netherlands (IDFA Festival)

30 September 2013 UK (Raindance Film Festival)

September 2013 USA

Directed By: Iranian/Swedish Nima Sarvestani, Maryam Ebrahimi

Produced By: Maryam Ebrahimi

Language: Dari language with English subtitles

Screenplay: Steven Seidenberg

Production Companies

Nima Film (Sweden)

Sveriges Television (SVT) (co-production)

DR (Denmark) (co-production)

IKON (Netherlands) (co-production)

NHK (Japan)(co-production)

NRK (Norway)(co-production)

Distributors

Deckert Distribution (2012) (Netherlands) (theatrical)

NHK BS1 (2013) (Japan) (TV)



Sequel: *Prison Sisters* 2016 follows Sara and Najibeh after their release

Page 3

Funding Agencies

- Maryam Ebrahimi received a grant of \$25,000 in 2011 to develop the film from the MPA (Motion Picture Association) and APSA (Asia Pacific Screen Awards) Academy Film Fund.
- Swedish Film Institute provided a grant <http://www.filminstitutet.se/en/about-us/swedish-film-institute/mission-and-organisation/film-funding/> Factsheet for No Burqas Behind Bars <http://sfi.se/en-GB/Swedish-film-database/Item/?itemid=73515&type=MOVIE&iv=PdfGen>
- The film also received a Swedish Arts Grant <https://www.konstnarsnamnden.se/default.aspx?id=11813>
- In 2011 Nordisk Film and TV Fund <http://www.nordiskfilmogtvfond.com/about-us> provided production funding of NOK 300,000 (about £28,500).
- **Nima Films** Nima Sarvestani, and spouse Maryam Ebrahimi of Nima Films <http://www.nimafilmsweden.com/> were supported by Greenhouse Film Centre where they met Scriptwriter Steven Seidenberg who worked as a Mentor for the programme.
- “Greenhouse is a Development Program for Documentary Filmmakers from the Middle East and North Africa. Greenhouse is a ground-breaking initiative positioned at the intersection of media, social change and peace-building. <https://www.ghfilmcentre.org/en/home#!aboutGH>
- The program nurtures a diverse and sustainable community of young documentary filmmakers from across the Middle East and North Africa, helping them develop the necessary skills to create powerful films that advance a more just, democratic and peaceful region.
- For the past 11 years, Greenhouse, a leading and prestigious documentary film program, has been sustaining its critical role as a meeting point for regional filmmakers, creating a community of documentary filmmakers that are committed to dialogue and reconciliation. As a result, the program has been supporting and promoting cultural exchanges between the participating countries, by underlining both common values and inherent cultural diversity.

Svt: Sveriges Television

- SVT is the Swedish national public broadcaster.
- Funded like BBC - television licence fee payable by all owners of television sets, set by the Riksdag.
- Sweden's Television is a public limited company that can be described as a quango – a quasi-autonomous non-government organisation.
- Has regional offices and production facility in Malmö. Politically it is perceived as being leftist liberal.



DR

- Danmarks Radio - Denmark's national public-service broadcasting corporation.
- DR is funded by the levying of a licence fee, payable in Denmark by all owners of radios, television sets, and, in recent years, computers and other devices capable of receiving its content.
- Politically it is perceived as being leftist liberal.

'It dominates Danish cultural life to the extent that, each week, ninety-seven per cent of the population listens to or watches something from its web site or one of its ten radio stations and six television channels ... Danes with televisions pay an annual licensing fee of about four hundred dollars, giving DR a yearly budget of six hundred and sixty million dollars. Because Denmark is small, and relatively heterogeneous, DR can attempt to appeal to almost everyone. It is both mass-oriented and high-minded—CBS and NPR, with a touch of HBO. Like the BBC, it is considered a tent pole of the nation's identity, and even though it is by definition apolitical, it is suspected in certain quarters of harbouring a left-wing agenda.' Lauren Collins in *The New Yorker*.

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/01/07/danish-postmodern>

Danish television funding

- Drama and quality programming are often financed through (1) co-funding with external partners (most often foreign broadcasters and/or foreign distributors); (2) canned programming sales; (3) pre-sales of canned programming; (4) format/remake sales and (5) international funds, both regional and international as well as pan-national funds.
- The Journal of Popular Television, Volume 4, Number 1 When public service drama travels: The internationalization of Danish television drama and the associated production funding models.
- Authors: Jensen, Pia Majbritt; Nielsen, Jakob Isak; Waade, Anne Marit

IKON

Article 2.42 of the Dutch media law (the Mediawet) makes room for faith-based radio and television broadcasters.

The Interkerkelijk Omroep Nederland (IKON) was a Dutch public broadcaster which made radio and television broadcasts on behalf of seven church communities.

In the 1970s and '80s IKON was known as a left-wing broadcaster, focussing on subjects such as racism, oppression, emancipation, development aid and peace. IKON journalists were often active in dangerous warzones. On 17 March 1982 four IKON journalists were murdered in El Salvador.

In IKON's airtime, the Wilde Ganzen collected money for projects in the Third World.



On 1 January 2016, IKON was closed down and its programming is now produced by EO

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interkerkelijke_Omroep_Nederland

Page 5

NHK

- NHK (official English name: Japan Broadcasting Corporation) is Japan's national public broadcasting organization, broadly based on the format of the BBC. It is a publicly owned chartered corporation funded by viewers' payments of a television license fee. NHK operates terrestrial and satellite television services and three radio networks.
- NHK also provides an international broadcasting service, known as NHK World. NHK World broadcasting (for overseas viewers/listeners) is funded by the Japanese government.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NHK>

NRK

- NRK is Norway's state-owned, public service broadcaster, funded by Licence Fee. Its mandate is to be non-commercial and politically independent

<https://www.nrk.no/about/a-gigantic-small-broadcaster-1.3698462>

Social / Industrial / Economic context

Task: Read the factsheets and articles on pages 3-11

- Summarise the key points made about the financing and production context of *No Burqas Behind Bars*.
- Is it mainstream or independent?
- What do the organisations involved have in common in terms of their structure/funding?
- What impact does this have?
- What political viewpoint is it suggested that these broadcasters share? Does this context have an impact on their choice of programme?

Use the digital resource to allow students the opportunity to compare their ideas with those suggested.

Social / Industrial / Economic Context

- The text was developed and initially funded by a number of grants from different arts funding agencies. This is typical of a low-budget, independent production.
- The text is made by an Iranian Swede, and is an international co-production between Scandinavian and Japanese broadcasters.



- Nima Sarvestani, and spouse Maryam Ebrahimi were initially supported through the Greenhouse Film Centre which promotes peace. The varied ethnicity of the crew and backers suggests a focus on cultural diversity.
- All the broadcasters come from a public service rather than a commercial context – message rather than money-driven.
- Low budget is evident in the low production values (e.g. hand-held camera) but this is also appropriate for the genre as it creates a strong sense of verisimilitude and a gritty, authentic style.
- Non-English language programming remains unusual – the PSB context supports this.
- This allows producers to inform and educate, challenge stereotypical representations within a character-driven narrative and produce more idiosyncratic programming which is not for profit.
- Scandinavian ideology is traditionally liberal and the viewpoints offered may reflect this.
- Liberal political viewpoints enable more unbiased coverage of nations such as Afghanistan and a key focus on women's rights. Some, e.g. IKON, have a history of fighting for emancipation and liberal values.
- Large broadcast companies from MEDCs with “Western” ideology may still reinforce dominant readings of the Middle East as “uncivilized”.

Page 6

DVD Distribution

'We distribute and display movies from all over the world, for all ages. Movies that roar and worry, engage, create debate and provide new perspectives. Quality, commitment and broad representation in film offering and activities permeate everything we do.

With own cinemas and proprietary distribution, People's Bio guarantees that a wide range of films reach an audience without having to be tested against strict commercial requirements. Our movies can also be viewed online and purchased as DVD on our website.'

Marketing: A limited campaign

Marketing Task: Watch the trailer and look at the posters and marketing on pages 15 - 18 . What are the posters, trailer and DVD covers “selling” to their target audience?

<https://vimeo.com/66887904> English trailer – also in Swedish

Folkets Bio indie distribution – the People's Bio <https://www.folketsbio.se/om-folkets-bio/>

Marketing:



Students should watch the trailer and look at the posters and marketing on pages 15 – 18 of their student workbook. What are the posters, trailer and DVD covers “selling” to their target audience?

Use the digital resource to allow students the opportunity to compare their ideas with those suggested

- Genre – documentary. Authenticity and ‘reality’.
- The promise of revelation.
- Sense of moral obligation to watch the documentary.
- Drama and conflict – narratives driven by opposition of prison/freedom.
- Enigmas – very little information given away – intrigues audience.
- Recognisable type – the universal, faceless female.
- The non-English language USP.
- The notion of a narrative “journey” (monomyth).
- Testimonial – “Fantastisk” SVT and high ratings.
- FolketsBio & Nima Films logos – selling credibility to an indie, more alternative audience.
- Sold on its credentials as an independent text.
- Sold on its political message.
- Sold on enigma – what is so good about it?
- Sold as a must-see for liberal or politicised audiences – festivals such as One World, International Human Rights Film Festival.
- Sold on diversity.
- Sold on the promise of revelation – seeing something rare.
- Marketed on quality – awards and festivals.
- Interactivity through social media.
- Promoted through festivals – to an arts-literate audience.
- This challenges Hesmondhalgh’s viewpoint as it is an alternative text which conforms to the notion of a legitimised culture and is therefore subsidised. However, whilst the text’s independent context is clearly outside the profit-driven mainstream, we could link the PSB background of the companies involved to notions of Western liberalism and a reinforcement of these values.



Extended Writing Task Essay: What strategies were used in the marketing and distribution of *No Burqas Behind Bars*? Give specific examples and justify your points. Compare these strategies to those used in the promotion of *The Jinx*.

Consider:

- Website
- Social media
- Are these as important as more traditional marketing methods? Look at the trailers/posters etc.
- Poster campaign/trailer/interviews and publicity
- Independent/mainstream production and distribution contexts



MEDIA AUDIENCES

Page 1

Media Audiences

Students will need to consider:

- How media producers target, attract, reach, address and potentially construct audiences through media language and representations.
- How media industries target audiences through the content and appeal of media products and through the ways in which they are marketed, distributed and circulated. This will be through a combination of marketing and media language.
- How audiences interpret the media, including how they may interpret the same media text in different ways.
- How media organisations reflect the different needs of mass and specialized audiences, including through targeting.
- How audiences use media in different ways, reflecting demographic factors as well as aspects of identity and cultural capital.
- The role and significance of specialised audiences, including niche and fan, to the media.
- The way in which different audience interpretations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances.
- Reception theory (including Hall). Encoding & decoding, preferred, negotiated and oppositional readings.

Critical perspectives

Reception theory Stuart Hall: Encoding & decoding, preferred, negotiated and oppositional readings

How does *No Burqas Behind Bars* target audiences?

Who is the audience for *No Burqas Behind Bars*? Think about age, gender and social class, lifestyle and taste. Justify your response.

How does the text itself target audiences? Consider genre, narrative, character, representations and intertextuality.

How does the marketing target audiences? Look at social media, festivals, awards, posters and trailers.

Use the digital resource to allow students the opportunity to compare their ideas with those



suggested

- Primary Target Audience – fans of documentary – more alternative/niche audience. ABC1 (subtitles and BBC World News Storyville slot)
- Secondary audience – Western, educated, politically liberal audience.
- Exempt from age classification but Ronin films recommends PG
- Cross-gender appeal– female audiences may identify with women.
- Thinkers (VALs) may enjoy the cross-cultural context. May interest those interested in Middle Eastern cultures.
- Film Festival audience – e.g. London's Raindance,
- Inherited fan bases – e.g. from other Storyville episodes
- Rising Prosperity ACORN classification <https://acorn.caci.co.uk/downloads/Acorn-User-guide.pdf>
- Task: Look at the ACORN classification document. Are there other audiences here who might watch “No Burqas Behind Bars”? **City Sophisticates, Townhouse cosmopolitans, Younger professionals in smaller flats, Metropolitan professionals , Mixed Metropolitan Areas**

Page 2

How do Audiences respond to No Burqas Behind Bars?

The audience models are on printable cards – group discussion which can be differentiated

The answers below are in the digital resource

- Identification – Uses & Gratifications Model. Audiences may identify with characters and their individualized stories.
- Surveillance – audience given “real” insight into current situation in Afghanistan.
- Enigma –Who will be released? What will happen to the women? Will Nadjibeh sell her son? Will Sima be moved? Will Sara and Javid be together?
- Response on social media – shock, outrage/action.
- Testimonial – e.g. on DVD cover – (ABC1 audiences). The reviews act as opinion leaders and audiences believe in the show's quality because of this (Lazarsfeld – 2-step flow)
- Audiences may consider/question their own attitudes by comparing them to those of the characters



Audience Response Factsheet

- Imdb (Internet Movie Database) 6.9/10 from 140 views
- Won the International Emmy Award in 2014 for Outstanding Documentary
- Prix Europe 2014, AWARDED with the Prix Europa for Best Documentary
- Swedish TV Awards “Kristallen” (August 2014, Nominated Best TV Documentary)
- Brooklyn Film Festival 2014, Awarded Best Feature Documentary
- Rome Independent Film Festival (March 2014, Awarded Best International Documentary)
- Whilst it's on Rotten Tomatoes and on Amazon, there are no reviews at 23/10/2017
- Shown at HRAFF 2014 (Human Rights Film Festival)

Social Media

3,993 views on You Tube posted by Brave Afghan 20/7/17 with 15 likes and 2 dislikes.

- Posted on Nima Films Facebook page
- 6,237 people like this
- 6,209 people follow this
- Erik Meesters 'We just saw the two movies about Sara....at the end we were left in shock. We hope she is ok. Brilliant documentary. Heart breaking'

Page 3

Audience Task: What 'pleasures' might audiences gain from *No Burqas Behind Bars*?

Task: Create a word cloud of the pleasures we might gain from the text. Develop three of these points with examples from the text itself. Check against the list of potential pleasures.

- Audience expectations of documentary genre - one-off and loyal fans – pleasure in seeing expectations fulfilled (Neale).
- Education – self-actualisation.
- Reality – creates audience empathy and identification (U & G).
- Escapism – diversion as audiences enter another world/country, heightened by subtitles.
- Character identification through representations – e.g. of women.
- Moral messages – reinforces ideologies but also challenges them.
- Catharsis as Sara is released.



- Voyeurism, scopophilia – fly on the wall.
- Social needs fulfilled – topic for discussion.
- Subtitled – has element of “highbrow” viewing which creates a sense of exclusivity.

Page 4

Audience Positioning: How does the text position audiences? Discuss in groups and then give feedback to the class.

Use the digital resource to allow students the opportunity to compare their ideas with those suggested.

We are:

- Positioned with the women from the opening shot from behind the burqa. We seek answers to narrative enigma codes (as defined by Barthes) – what is going on?
- We become part of the group in the compound. This fulfils the audience’s need for belonging or social needs within Blumler & Katz’ Uses & Gratifications model.
- Positioned to decode the women as “different” or “other” but sympathetic and vulnerable – particularly through their backstory.
- Positioned with the West to see Afghanistan’s ideology as archaic and unjust.

Readings – Stuart Hall

Extended writing task:

Look at the reviews on the next 2 slides

Extended writing task:

Write a paragraph on each of the following questions

1. What is the preferred meaning of ‘*No Burqas Behind Bars*’?
2. How is this encoded?
3. What other readings might this text generate?

Give examples.

Points may include:

- Preferred reading – the women are imprisoned both inside and outside the compound by an unjust society which seeks to control them through patriarchal aggression and a law which backs this up.
- Different readings – Remember to refer IN DETAIL to the text to support your ideas on readings



– e.g. what do/say etc.?

- An oppositional reading may struggle to find Nadjibeh a sympathetic character. Audiences may view her angry outbursts with concern, or find it difficult to connect to her emotionally.
- A more conservative, devout Muslim audience may respond negatively to the women breaking away from their husbands or families.
- Feminist readings may be different (see representation slides).

There will obviously be many potential readings of the text – these are merely **examples**.

Preferred Reading

“My journeys to Afghanistan have opened my eyes to the power that is hidden underneath the burqa. Young girls and women who run away from their male owners are quite aware of the risk it entails for their lives. Yet, they risk their lives in order to try and achieve freedom. These women have never heard of things such as human rights or emancipation. Still, they act against the cruelty that they are suffering and the men who are abusing them. They do this in a way that signifies how important their self-determination is for them. There is an ocean of power underneath the burqa. If only the women of Afghanistan could get rid of the burqa, and if only they could achieve a relative safety in society, this power would be released and change their lives and then change society once and forever.”

- Nima Sarvestani, co-director

Page 5

IMDb Review

User Reviews IMDb Future outside prison? 20 April 2013 | by stensson (Stockholm, Sweden)

“Afghanistan. One woman is in prison for six years because of murder. Another is there for 15 years, because she ran away from home. That’s reality, but it also seems to be more freedom behind bars than in front of them. The women don’t risk to get killed.

A very strong documentary. We meet many kinds of previous lives and different characters. Some women are in prison together with their children. Another is close to her boyfriend who also is a moral convict, but on the other side of the wall. The female guardians sometimes are attacked, but mostly It’s about sisterhood in a very special society.

Touching, very human, much closeness. To be strongly recommended”.