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قواعد النشر

تقوم المجلة بنشر البحوث والدراسات ومراجعات الكتب والتقارير والترجمات وفقًا للقواعد الآتية: يعتمد النشر على رأي اثنين من المحكمين المتخصصين في تحديد صلاحية المادة للنشر. ألا يكون البحث قد سبق نشره في أي مجلة علمية محكمة أو مؤتمرًا علميًا. لا يقل البحث عن خمسة آلاف كلمة ولا يزيد عن عشرة آلاف كلمة ... وفي حالة الزيادة يتحمل الباحث فروق تكلفة النشر. پجب ألا يزيد عنوان البحث (الرئيسى) والفرعي) عن ٢٠ كلمة. يرسل مع كل بحث ملخص باللغة العربية وآخر باللغة الانجليزية لا يزيد عن ٢٥٠ كلمة. يزود الباحث المجلة بثلاث نسخ من البحث مطبوعة بالكمبيوتر .. ونسخة على CD، على أن يكتب اسم الباحث وعنوان بحثه

على غلاف مستقل ويشار إلى المراجع والهوامش في المتن بأرقام وترد قائمتها في نهاية البحث لا في أسفل الصفحة.

لا ترد الأبحاث المنشورة إلى أصحابها
 وتحتفظ المجلة بكافة حقوق النشر، ويلزم
 الحصول على موافقة كتابية قبل إعادة نشر
 مادة نشرت فيها.

تنشر الأبحاث بأسبقية قبولها للنشر.
 ترد الأبحاث التي لا تقبل النشر لأصحابها.

🥚 جميع الآراء الواردة في المجلة تعبر عن رأي صاحبها ولا تعبر عن رأي المجلة

محتويات العدد

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 د/ هنادي غريب زينهم

📃 الاستمالات المستخدمة في صفحات المشاهير عبر فيس بوك وعلاقتها 1779 بمنظومة القيم لدى المراهقين «دراسة تطبيقية» محمد بهجي محمد محمود الشاعر ا فاعلية توظيف الإنفوجراف المتحرك في تصميم الإعلانات الإلكترونية بالصفحات الرسمية الحكومية وانعكاساته على مستوى وعي الجمهور 1414 أيمن أنور أحمد الزهيري بالخدمات المقدمة Religion as Depicted on Netflix Originals - A Dialogue 1309 **Analysis Using an AI Tool** Dr. Reham Salah

Management I & De	& DSS nformation System cision Support System		Salıq	ات المصرية	تقييم المجل	P SCL	L'AT LE STATE
نقاط المجله	السله	ISSN- O	ISSN-P	اسم الجهه / الجامعة	اسم المجلة	القطاع	م
7	2023	2735- 4008	2536- 9393	جامعة الأهرام الكندية، كلية الإعلام	المجلة العربية لبحوث الإعلام و الإتصال	الدراسات الإعلامية	1
7	2023	2682- 4663	2356- 914X	جامعة القاهرة، كلية الإعلام	المجلة العلمية لبحوث الإذاعة والتلفزيون	الدراسات الإعلامية	2
7	2023	2735- 4326	2536- 9237	جامعة جنوب الوادي، كلية الإعلام	المجلة العلمية لبحوث الإعلام و تكنولوجيا الإتصال	الدراسات الإعلامية	3
7	2023	2682- 4620	2356- 9158	جامعة القاهرة، كلية الإعلام	المجلة العلمية ليحوث الصحافة	الدراسات الإعلامية	4
7	2023	2682- 4671	2356- 9131	جامعة القاهرة، كلية الإعلام	المجلة العلمية ليحوث العلاقات العامة والإعلان	الدراسات الإعلامية	5
7	2023	2682- 4647	1110- 5836	جامعة القاهرة، كلية الإعلام	المجلة المصرية لبحوث الإعلام	الدراسات الإعلامية	6
7	2023	2682- 4655	1110- 5844	جامعة القاهرة،كلية الإعلام، مركز بحوث الراي العام	المجلة المصبرية لبحوث الرأي العام	الدراسات الإعلامية	7
7	2023	2682- 292X	1110- 9297	جامعة الأزهر	مجلة البحوث الإعلامية	الدراسات الإعلامية	8
7	2023	2735- 4016	2357- 0407	المعهد الدولى العالى للإعلام بالشروق	مجلة البحوث و الدراسات الإعلامية	الدراسات الإعلامية	9
7	2023	2682- 4639	2356- 9891	جامعة القاهرة، جمعية كليات الاعلام العربية	مجلة إتحاد الجامعات العربية لبحوث الإعلام و تكلولوجيا الإتصال	الدراسات الإعلامية	10
7	2023	2314- 873X	2314- 8721	Egyptian Public Relations Association	مجلة بحوث العلاقات العامة الشرق الأوسط	الدراسات الإعلامية	11
7	2023	2735- 377X	2735- 3796	جامعة بني سويف، كانية الإعلام	المجلة المصدرية لبحوث الاتصال الجماهيري	الدراسات الإعلامية	12
7	2023	2812- 4820	2812- 4812	جمعية تكلولوجيا البحث العلمي والفثون	المجلة الدولية لبحوث الإعلام والاتصالات	الدراسات الإعلامية	13

Religion as Depicted on Netflix Originals A Dialogue Analysis Using an Al Tool

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الأديان كما تعرضها الأعمال الأصلية التي تنتجها منصة نتفليكس:
 تحليل للحوار الدرامي باستخدام أداة من أدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي

د/ رهام محمد صلاح الدين
 أستاذ مساعد بكلية الإعلام جامعة أكتوبر للعلوم الحديثة والأداب MSA

Abstract

Religion on Netflix originals is a topic that is recently became a controversial issue in Arab world. And only few studies, up till now has concentrated on how Netflix discusses religion in its TV series. It is alleged that Netflix spread atheism ideas among Arab and Muslim users. and it is also, embraces Abrahamic religions in many of its originals. This study aimed at discovering how Netflix originals depict religion using both qualitative content analysis and quantitative content analysis through an AI tool for dialogue analysis. In this current study there is a cooperation between mass communication and computer science to conduct a quantitative content analysis that uses an AI tool to analyze the dialogue in the sample series of this study. The result of this study shows that AI dialogue- based analysis shows that, atheism was discussed (30%) in this series sample, atheism portrayed positively (20%), and it was portrayed negatively (10%), neutral or undecided (40%). The positive portrayals of Abrahamic religions were 50%, neutral portrayals 30% and the negative portrayals of Abrahamic religions was only 20%.

Keywords:Netflix, Religion, AI dialogue analysis, Qualitative content analysis, TV series

ملخص الدراسة

أصبح موضوع تتاول الأديان من خلال أعمال منصة نيتفليكس مؤخرًا موضوعًا مثيرًا للجدل، خاصة في عالمنا العربي، وهناك دراسات قليلة حتى الآن ركَّزت على كيفية مناقشة منصة نيتفليكس للأديان المختلفة، وعرضها من خلال مسلسلاتها الدرامية. ويوجد ادعاء بأن هذه المنصة الشهيرة تنشر أفكار الإلحاد بين مستخدميها من الشباب العرب والمسلمين. كما أن هناك من يرى أن هذه المنصة تعتنق وتدعو مستخدميها لاعتناق ما يسمى بالديانة الإبراهيمية. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن كيفية عرض مسلسلات نيتفليكس الأصلية للأديان والقضايا المرتبطة بالدين باستخدام كل من تحليل المضمون الكيفي، وتحليل المضمون الكمي أيضًا باستخدام تحليل للحوار الذي يدور بين الشخصيات الدرامية في عدد من المسلسلات، باستخدام أداة أيضًا باستخدام تحليل للحوار الذي يدور بين الشخصيات الدرامية في عدد من المسلسلات، باستخدام أداة تحليل مبنية على استخدام الذكاء الاصطناعي في تحليل الحوار الدرامي. وفي هذه الدراسة هناك تعاون بين عينة المسلسلات. وقد وجدت نتائج الاصطناعي في تحليل الحوار الدرامي. وي هذه الدراسة هناك تعاون بين عينة المسلسلات. وقد وجدت نتائج الدراسة الخاصة بتحليل المحون الكمي أن موضوع الإلحاد نوقش بنسبة عينة المسلسلات. وقد وجدت نتائج الدراسة الخاصة بتحليل المحون الذكاء الاصطناعي لتحليل الحوار في بشكل إيجابي بنسبة ٢٠٪، بينما صوَّرتها بطريقة سلبية بنسبة ١٠٪، وعرضت قضايا الإلحاد نوقش بنسبة بشكل إيجابي بنسبة ٢٠٪، بينما صوَّرتها بطريقة سلبية بنسبة ٢٠٪، وعرضت قضايا الإلحاد بوقش بنسبة سلبي بنسبة ٢٠٪، أما التصوير الإيجابي للديانة الإبراهيمية فجاء بنسبة ٢٠٪، وعرضت قضايا الإلحاد بشكل محايد

الكلمـات المفتاحيـة: نيتفليكس، الديـن، تحليـل المضمـون الكمـي، أدوات الـذكاء الاصطناعـي، تحليـل المضمـون الكيفـي، المسلسـلات التليفزيونيـة.

Introduction:

Netflix is one of the most controversial drama platforms in the middle east region and specially in Arab countries. Arab cinema scholars always learnt that sex, religion and politics are taboos that can't be directly discussed, tackled or addressed in dramatic shows but all at once there is this prevailing platform which is Netflix not only discussing taboos but also concentrating on them heavily. The first shook was that the original Netflix series presents homosexuality in almost every single series it produces. Many Arabic media studies were devoted to seek how this presentation affected the Arab audiences specially Muslims. But only few studies concentrated on how Netflix discusses religion in general whether it is Islam, Christianity or Judaism or even atheism and what is so called the Abrahamic religion.

It is claimed that Netflix has changed the depiction of religion in TV drama in recent years, and that the depictions of religion on Netflix are now more detailed, complex and include fictional performances of religious rituals. This claim needs to be explored from the perspective of Arab and Muslim Media scholars. To accomplish this goal, this study applied both qualitative and quantitative content analysis of a sample of original Netflix series. First, the researcher conducted an exploratory qualitative content analysis on 13 series, secondly, a quantitative content analysis using AI tools was applied on 6 of Netflix original series to analyze the religious dialogue in these series.

Literature review:

First: studies of religion as portrayed in Netflix drama series and movies:

By reviewing previous studies that discussed the religion as portrayed in drama, we can notice that only few studies addressed the issue, what has been missing from the literature of movies is the place of religion in film (McDannell, C. 2008 page 7). One of these studies suggests that because many popular dramas whether movies or TV series shows religious stories and themes that contains violence that is related to religion, viewers may conclude that these movies and TV series confirm that religions are violent. (Abrams, S. A. 2021,page 3).

One of the most important films in the history of American science fiction movies was "2001: A Space Odyssey "because this movie reawakened the dialogue between religion and science, its director Kubrick explored both science and religion and the historical relationship between the two of them and the role of both in humanity's future. This study concludes that the science fiction genre is the perfect genre to investigate the relationship between science and religion. (Harper, John C., I., II. 2003, page 142). In one of the most recent dissertations, the researcher concludes that there is what he calls a lived religion approach that concerns the religion on television. This approach argues that television is a meaning-making in the lives of its audiences who examine the believes, values, and practices of television characters as resources whether these resources are negative, positive or inbetween and these depictions of religion on TV affect the audience members' own religious lives. (Roye, J. 2023, page 46). One of the researchers studied a Netflix original series entitled "Sacred Games", this series is the India's first Netflix crime thriller. It reminds its audience of the necessity to use one's own rational ability to think beyond the misuse of religious narratives, it also points to the danger of sacralization of certain concepts and the blind appropriation of certain ritual and beliefs. (Ashraf, A. 2021, page 14). Another study addressed the subject of how Muslim women were portrayed in the OTT media, especially, Netflix. This was a qualitative study to determine the reception of two shows streamed on Netflix. The result of this study shows that "Elite", a series not produced and written by Muslims was negative

regarding its presentation of Muslim women, whereas "Jilbab Traveler" which was produced and written by Muslims was representing Muslim women positively. (Al-Nassiri, R. (2021,page iii).In a study that aimed at searching for hegemony in Muslim horror movies by the dominant western culture, this study found that Muslim-majority nations horror films included a huge number of elements of the established predominantly Western/Christian horror genre. (Mohammed, S. N. 2022,page 16).There are depictions of borderland saints in fiction representations in movies and series and because these communities are marginal it remains associated with criminality. (Ward, M., 2022,page 260). Also, there is a very recent thesis seeks to provide a practical understanding of how Christian based films have the potential to be practiced as a resource for spiritual formation. (Booth, T. D. ,2023). In her Master thesis, Abbas (2023) the researcher confirmed that "the results of her study proved that more viewers of Netflix originals believed that Netflix positively depicts Arabs and Muslims" (page 70).

Second: studies of semantic analysis of audiovisual texts:

In one of the studies that focused on the verbal expressions of emotions in English audiovisual material about the end of life, this study used methods that included some main steps, for example, extracting verbal language from audiovisual material and converting it into plain text and then using USAS tagger and Wmatrix versions 4 and 5. (Clara Inés López-Rodríguez,2022,page 4). In a thesis that aimed to investigate the construction of identities in the BBC sitcom Citizen Khan, the researcher used both quantitative analysis which identified aspects of identity within the sitcom and also, he used qualitative analysis using a modified version of Fairclough's 3 stages of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, this was in order to provide evaluation of some of the textual and visual aspects of the program.(Kadiri, S. M. B.,2017,page i).One of the studies used a movie scene extraction scheme to try to bridge the gap between low-level features and high-level video semantics by increasing both audio and visual cues. (Li, Y. (2003,page 12). Image analysis tools enhanced our automatic understanding of image content but although tasks such as picture localization remain challenging, scientist enrich textual approaches with face detection and recognition.(Mourchid, Y., Renoust, B., Roupin, O., Văn, L.,

Cherifi, H., & Hassouni, M. E., 2019, page 2). In a dissertation which aimed to create and describe measures that quantify the relationship between popular SF media depiction of technology, this dissertation used a guided content analysis (term-frequency measures, co-word analysis, cluster extraction) of publications (Jordan, P.,2019,page 18). When it comes to using AI in the process of content analysis of movies and TV series, the cooperation between scientist from different disciplinaries is needed as in a study in the discipline of linguistic and communication which compares crime series adaptation in both New York and Paris. This study developed an AI soft ware system Mobius Trip, the soft ware allowed the researcher to mine big data sets from the television programs studied. (Digeon, L. D. F., 2020, page 9). The application of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, virtual reality (VR), and Internet of Things (IoT) in the film and television industry were used in a study in order to reduce some of the problems of technological change in current film and television production mode. The virtual character interaction system based on IoT technology used in this study has a high motion recognition rate, produces a strong sense of interactivity among users and can realize real-time capture and imitation of character movement. (Song, Q., & Yoo, S. W. ,2020, page 1). One of the studies developed three major system modules to analyze video content, the first module the researcher performed a video segmentation to partition a video sequence into shots, in the second module a sophisticated movie content analysis was proposed which contained movie scene extraction, movie event extraction and speaker identification three sub-schemes. While the third module, a video abstraction system was used which contains video summarization and video skimming two schemes. (Li, Y. 2003, page xvi). In a data paper document, it presented a data set that captures cultural attitudes towards machine vision technologies as they are found in games and narratives, this dataset includes records of 500 creative works (including 77 digital games, 190 digital artworks and 233 movies, novels) that use or present machine vision technologies like facial recognition, deepfakes and augmented reality.(Jill Walker Rettberg, Linda Kronman, Ragnhild Solberg, Marianne Gunderson, Stein Magne Bjørklund, Linn Heidi Stokkedal, Kurdin Jacob, Gabriele de Seta, Annette Markham, 2022, page 1). One study used movies and narratives as naturalistic stimuli in human, this study produced a successful

classification of emotional states on the basic of brain activity patterns by developing machine-learning algorithms.(Iiro P. Jääskeläinen, Mikko Sams, Enrico Glerean, Jyrki Ahveninen, 2021). Multimodal sentiment analysis contains rich visual and information related to the sounds in addition to text and uses fusion analysis to more accurately point out the implied sentiment polarity (positive, neutral, negative).(Linan Zhu, Zhechao Zhu, Chenwei Zhang, Yifei Xu, Xiangjie Kong, Multimodal sentiment analysis based on fusion methods: A survey, 2023). Opinions are increasingly being shared online in the form of videos rather than text alone, and that's the case in this current study, this has led to SA using multiple modalities, termed Multimodal Sentiment Analysis (MSA), becoming an important research area and will be used in this study.(Ankita Gandhi, Kinjal Adhvaryu, Soujanya Poria, Erik Cambria, Amir Hussain, 2023). Motivated by the enthusiasm Kdramas have caused global audiences, one of the studies designed a specialized corpus to determine hidden relationships within the data. It used the unsupervised machine learning algorithms called topic modeling to identify common themes within a case study of three K-dramas. (Chima, H.,2023,page 7).Computer vision was used in one of the studies that aimed to bridge the gap between depth which is offer by humanities and social sciences and scale offered by technical disciplines, such as computer science. This study introduces a tree-step approach suitable for "computational grounded theoretical" studies. (Cedric Courtois & Thomas Frissen 2023, page 17).

Problem Statement:

Up till now Netflix has produced thousands of titles of TV series, the purpose of this study is to use an AI tool to conduct a content analysis of dialogues of a sample of Netflix's originals to examine how it dealt with the subject of religion and whether it is biased to any religion in specific or not. Also, this study aims at discovering if Netflix original is spreading atheism ideas and if this platform wants its users to embrace Abrahamic religion as it is alleged.

The Importance of this study:

1-Not much attention up till now has been paid to discovering the embedded messages about religion on Netflix originals whereas there are many TV series on this particular platform that discusses religion.

2-AI tools for analyzing TV series dialogues have not yet been used in our Arabic media studies and this current study will be one of the first to use this tool.

3-Interdisplinary studies are now needed to cope with the new technology in media, in our current study both researchers from Mass Communications and Computer Sciences have come together to cooperate using both techniques manual qualitative content analysis and machine quantitative content analysis.

Objectives of this study:

- 1- To determine to what extent is Netflix originals are interested in discussing religion and all that is related to this subject matter.
- 2- To determine the attitude of Netflix originals towards both heavenly religions and positivist religions.
- 3- To analyze whether there is a tendency towards anti Islam and Muslims in Netflix originals.
- 4- To describe the main religion concepts that Netflix originals are trying to spread among its audiences.

Research questions:

1-What is the most heavenly religion does Netflix originals concentrate on presenting and portraying?

2- What is the most positivist religion does Netflix originals concentrate on presenting and portraying?

3-Do Netflix originals portray atheism regularly? How does it portray it? Negatively or positively?

4-How does Netflix originals portray the Abrahamic religion? And does it really encourage its audience to endure it instead of Judaism, Christianity and Islam?

5-How does Netflix originals portray Islam as a religion and especially its portrayal of Muslims?

6-Is the attitude of Netflix originals towards religion concepts and rituals in general positive or negative?

7-What are the religion texts that are used the most in Netflix originals?

8-Do the nationality and the religion of the producer, director and writer of any Netflix original affect whether the representation of Islam and Muslims would be positive or negative?

Methodology:

This research employs a mixed-method approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses to explore the religious context in various Netflix original series, specifically Orange Is the New Black, Lucifer, Collateral, Dahmer, Firefly Lane, and The Watcher. Youssef Ayman Ali Rizk Al driven analysis of religious context in Netflix originals conducted the quantitative content analysis part of this study under the supervision of the researcher of this study. The methodology consists of the following key steps:

Data Extraction:

The first step involves extracting dialogue from selected episodes of the series. This is achieved using a web scraping technique with Python's requests and BeautifulSoup libraries. A function is designed to fetch the HTML content of a specified URL, parse it, and save the extracted text to a file. By filtering for relevant HTML elements, the process ensures that only meaningful dialogue is captured.

Text Processing:

After extracting the dialogue, the data is processed to isolate specific lines of interest. A function facilitates the extraction of a designated range of lines from the text file, which can be tailored to focus on particular segments of interest in each episode.

AI-Assisted Analysis:

The core analysis is conducted using the LLaMA 3 70b model designed to evaluate dialogues for religious and atheistic content. A detailed system prompt guides the AI in identifying key phrases and conducting sentiment analysis. The prompt emphasizes the importance of terms related to various religious beliefs, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the dialogues' implications. The AI processes the content in two parts to manage large text files effectively.

Sentiment Analysis:

Comprehensive Review and Thematic Analysis:

The AI-generated responses are compiled and analyzed to address specific research questions regarding the portrayal of religions, atheism, and their moral implications across the selected series. The research questions include:

Question 1: Which religion does the show primarily focus on presenting and portraying?

Question 2: Which religion is portrayed in the most positive light throughout the show?

Question 3: Does the show regularly portray or discuss atheism?

Question 4: How does the show portray Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam)?

Question 5: Specifically, how does the show portray Islam as a religion, and how are Muslims represented?

Question 6: Overall, is the show's attitude towards religious concepts, rituals, and practices generally positive or negative?

This includes a thematic review of how each series handles religious narratives and characters, focusing on both direct representations and the subtleties of dialogue.

Combining and Evaluating Data:

Finally, all analyses and insights are consolidated into a single document for comprehensive review. A function is used to merge multiple text outputs into one cohesive file, facilitating easier access to the findings.

Through this methodology, the research aims to provide a detailed examination of religious themes in Netflix original series, analyzing the interplay between narrative, dialogue, and audience perception while employing AI to enhance the depth of analysis.

Theoretical framework:

Semiology theory:

As Christian Metz stated in his theory about semiology, "film is a language without a language system" (Tröhler, M., & Kirsten, G. (Eds.), 2018, p. 25). He confirms that "semiology is not about establishing a grammar of film but it describes film as an open and relational system, that remains subject to constant change". (Tröhler, M., & Kirsten, G. (Eds.), 2018, p. 25). Semiology theory focuses on the system of meanings while excluding the diverse traits of phenomena. Christian Metz used the semiological method of segmentation and classification in fiction film that depends on analyzing film text not film events (Warren Buckland, & Daniel Fairfax, 2017). The first generation of semiology theory was all about the meaning produced by the film's story, whereas the second generation of semiological research examined cinema as discourse but not the verbal discourse. (Rodriguez-Moya, R. ,2000). In Semiology, the technical exploration of montage gives way to the examination of film construction. (Blose, C,2004). James Monaco stated that "semiology is a system for establishing a language of film as it helps the viewers to decode or interpret the film". (Blaylock, S., Jr, 2023, page 53). In a study which examined whether Black Americans were being colonized as human beings using semiology theory discovered that Blacks Arts movement

films represented self-determination, self-defense, Black power and the black women's beauty. (Harris, D. W. ,2023). Barthes is the first semiotician to apply semiotic analysis to mages while Bleackley argues that "a film's dialogue can be considered as texts and read as signs". (Kalalanda, V,2023, p. 11). Dramaturgical analysis combines semiology and sociology in order to understand how the performance creates meaning in a particular cultural context. (Taylor, C. M,2023). In a film called "Semiotics of Sab" (2016) which recorded Asian American stereotypes on screen, research was conducted to discover what semiotic work has been done in this film and the question was answered by visual analysis and historical framing. (Korroch, K,2023). Film theories in the 1970s emphasized the crucial importance of the cinema as an apparatus and as a signifying practice of ideology. (Zogby, J,2012). For example, there is a thesis that tried to find out whether the Arab/Muslim identities in three Hollywood movies are ordered and related to ideologies and agendas of Western institutions or governments, and using the critical semiotic order theory (CSOT) this research found that there was a systematic pattern of negatively stereotyping Arab/Muslim identities. (Al Balushi, I., Abdul Qadir, 2014). In a study about Pasolini's work, the researcher concluded that "while poetry and prose in literature are so easily divided into two separate things, the subjective and objective layers of film are so entwined. Cinema is distinguished by this cinematic free indirect discourse". (Atkinson, S,2023,p.15). Some Arabic studies also used the semantic word to analyze its influence on the news media in Kuwait, and this study concluded that words highlight the news media (Dasmeh, 2013, page I). Another Arabic study used semantic analysis and the still advertising images to identify the meaning of these ads (Suleim, 2022, page 60). A third Arabic study that used semantic analysis to determine the social responsibility ethics of terrorism incidents photos, the results of this study conveyed that these photos tended to protect audience by hiding victim's features (El-Mahdy,2021, page1966). The researcher benefited from semiology theory in this study by analyzing the texts and dialogue about religion in a sample of Netflix's famous TV series to be able to discover the meanings produced by it. This will result in indicating how viewers will decode or interpret those stories and learn more about religious issues which is discussed in it. Netflix's famous TV series watched by millions all over

the world can be an apparatus to signify religion and its practices, especially for new generations in our Muslim and Arab world nowadays.

Religion as portrayed on Netflix: An exploratory qualitative content analysis study:

This study examined initially how religion is portrayed in some famous TV series streamed on Netflix from 2013 till 2023. This was a purposive sample which was chosen because of its popularity on Netflix and because the researcher found that it contained lots of scenes and dialogues that mainly discussed religion.

Title of the	First episode	Cast	Writer	Director/	
series	date	Cast	/Creator	Producer	
1-House of Cards (6 seasons)	February 1, 2013 (USA)	Kevin Spacey, Robin Wright	Beau Willimon, Bill Kennedy, Andrew Davies	David Fincher.	
2-The Watcher	2022(USA)	Bobby Cannavale, Isabel Gravitt	Ryan Murphy, Ian Brennan	Todd Nenninger; Lou Eyrich; Todd Kubrak; Danielle Wang	
3-Dahmer	September 21, 2022(USA)	Evan Peters	Ryan Murphy and Ian Brennan	Paris Barclay	
4-Click Bait	August 25, 2021(USA)	Zoe Kazan, Adrian Grenier	Tony Ayres, Christian White	Brad Anderson, Emma Freeman, Ben Young, and Laura Besley	

Religion as Depicted on Netflix Originals

Title of the series	First episode date	Cast	Writer /Creator	Director/ Producer
5-Sex Education (season 4)	January 11, 2019 (UK)	Emma Mackey, Asa Butterfield, Gillian Anderson	Laurie Nunn	Byron Archard; Jon Jennings
6-Collateral	12 February –; 5 March 2018 (UK)	Carey Mulligan, John Simm	John Simm	S.J. Clarkson
7-Unbelievable	2019 (USA)	Merritt Wever, Kaitlyn Dever	Susannah Grant	John Vohlers
8-Firefly Lane	February 3, 2021(USA)	Sarah Chalke, Katherine Heigl	Maggie Friedman	Aaron Au
9-Maid	2021(USA)	Margaret Qualley, Andie MacDowell	Molly Smith Metzler	Colin McKenna
10-Orange is the New Black	July 11, 2013 (USA)	Taylor Schilling, Laura Prepon	Piper Kerman, Jenji Kohan	Jenji Kohan
11-Lucifer (4 seasons)	2016 (USA)	Tom Ellis, Lauren German	Tom Kapinos, Neil Gaiman	Len Wiseman
12-The Crown	2016- 2023(UK)	Claire Foy, Olivia Colman	Peter Morgan	Andy Stebbing
13-Messiah	2020 (USA)	Mehdi Dehbi, Michelle Monaghan	Michael Petroni	Brandon Guercio; David Nicksay

This qualitative content study has reached some results, the most important ones are as follows:

1- Atheism as depicted in Netflix series: Atheism was a common theme in this sample, For example, one can find that "Beter Russo" one of the characters in the famous television series on Netflix "House of Cards" says personally to one of his colleagues: "I don't believe in God, no hell and heaven", then to win in the elections he says to the people electing him :"I have faith in God". This shows clear hypocrisy. In the episodes 12 and 13 of season one of "House of Cards" the star of the series Kevin Spacey was an atheist politician who didn't believe in God at all and said "I will only pray for myself". Not only this, but in one of this series scenes he spits on God's face. In part 3, episode 4 of the series 'House of Cards' there is an important dialogue about Islam and Christianity and it shows how the hero who plays the role of the president of the United States of America despises Jesus Christ. "Unbelievable" is another Netflix series that deals with religion in its third, fourth and sixth episodes where the victims of rapes and their detectives working to solve their mysteries cases interact with religious matters. The eighth episode of this series is all about religion, one police detective which is religious verses the other one who is atheist and how do they talk about God. For instance, in episode 4 in season one of "Lucifer", the heroine of this show said that she doesn't believe in Biblical things like hell and heaven but she believes that there is good and bad and right and wrong, and here Lucifer comments that she must be an atheist. One can find such a dialogue in many Netflix originals such as "House of Cards" and "Unbelievable". In episode 9 from season one of "lucifer", the events mainly played in a church and the guest of honor in this particular episode is a priest who tries to convince lucifer that God has a plan for each one of us, but lucifer criticizes this by questioning "Why do you think it is a good plan?". When this good priest dies at the end of this episode lucifer blames God and screams at the sky.

- 2- Islam and Muslims as depicted in Netflix series: The two episodes 12 and 13 from the part 4 of the "House of Cards" contains lots of information about Islam and Muslims. It typically portrays Muslims as terrorists. In "Click Bait" an original Netflix series, it is observed in series 2 that the police detective in this series "Rochan" is Muslim, viewers can watch him in scenes where he goes to pray in a mosque and speaks Arabic with his family members, and as for Christianity, the widow of the series hero says that they don't go to church. The amusing thing is that this dramatic work doesn't criticize Rochan, on the contrary he turns to be a man of good ethics and dignity, which gives a positive attitude towards Muslims. "Collateral" is another Netflix TV series that takes the main theme of Muslim and Arab immigrants that come to Britain to live their forever and the problems and complications which face them and challenges the British society. There is a discussion in this series about Christianity as a religion in this TV series. "Orange is the New Black" is a Netflix original that puts Islam in direct confrontation with Judaism, when one of the jail's inmates wearing hijab was introduced to another inmate recently converted to Judaism. And even the first impression was hostile, but they developed a friendship after a while. Also, in "The Crown", things get heated between Mohamed El-Fayed and the British royal family when he accuses them of killing princess Diana because she was pregnant with a Muslim child, and his accusations turns to be false. These results partially agree with Abbas (2023) study which proved that more viewers of Netflix originals believed that Netflix positively portrays Arabs and Muslims.
- 3- Christianity as depicted in Netflix series: Christianity as a religion is heavily discussed in this study sample. The third episode of "The Watcher" a Netflix original series is all about religion and Christianity and how Christian family should behave, but the father of this family turns to be a murderer who murders all members of his family including his mother. This may give a negative attitude towards Christianity. Also, the Netflix original series "Dahmer", and the

dialogues with his grandmother about God and Christianity and the last days of his life where he was baptized to purify or cleanse his sins. In "Sex Education" season 4, episode 2, we watch Eric goes to the church for baptism class and afterwards he discusses Christianity with one of his friends. In the fourth episode of the second season of "Firefly Lane", a religious man is portrayed negatively, whereas in "Maid" there is a character which is the father of the main character in this TV series, this man is an abusive husband who hits his wife and treats her badly in front of their young daughter and then abandon his daughter especially when she needed him the most. We see the picture of Jesus Christ hung on the wall of the house of this man, we watch him insists on grace before eating and we see him as a very religious man. This relates a bad man with religion especially Christianity. Season 6 of the Netflix series "The Crown" discusses faith in lot of its scenes, one of it is when gueen Elizabeth talks to her grandson William trying to convince him that what is meant to you, will never pass you because God will make sure of this. In this particular scene Elizabeth was referring to Kate who William loves but afraid he might lose.

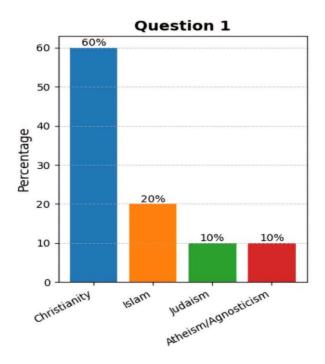
4- The Abrahamic religion as depicted in Netflix series: One of the most famous series streamed on Netflix is the show entitled "Lucifer". Lucifer is the devil in Christianity, it is an entity in Abrahamic religion that seduces humans into sin. In this show, lucifer has less to do with Biblical Satan and more with the humans. The devil as portrayed in this Netflix show never tells a lie, and also the storyline of this show doesn't reflect well the religious issues, for example, God is embodied into the form of a man. "Lucifer" blends the Abrahamic tradition with the spirits of ancient pantheons and that is against the believes of Muslims for example, all over the world. When it comes to Netflix's Messiah TV series, we find a series that concentrate on religious concepts and beliefs in the three main heavenly religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, characters in this series speak English, Arabic and Hebrew .In one of its episodes,

Messiah is praying in a different way than the Muslims do, although he appears to be a Muslim in previous episodes, he also speaks Hebrew and name himself Messiah with clear indication that he presents the three main heavenly religions which can be seen as a call for its viewers to endure what is called "Abrahamic" religion. In the tenth episode of season one of Netflix's Messiah, one can get mixed messages seeing the reverend burning the church while the Messiah is awaking the dead.

Interpretation of the results:

Using the AI tool to analyze and answer the research questions, the results came as follows:

1-Question 1: Which religion does the show primarily focus on presenting and portraying?

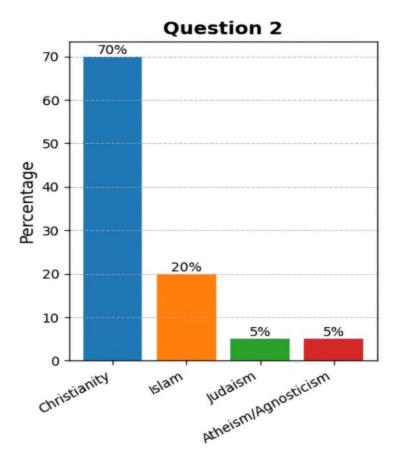


Christianity came in the first place with 60% and this is expected as the sample of the series of this study are Netflix originals that presents the

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United States of America and Britain, based on the dialogue analysis it appears that Christianity is the most prominent religion presented and portrayed across the sample. Specifically, Catholicism and Lutheran Christianity are referenced multiple times, with concepts like the afterlife, heaven, and judgement day being mentioned.

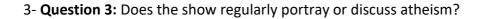
2- **Question 2:** Which religion is portrayed in the most positive light throughout the show?

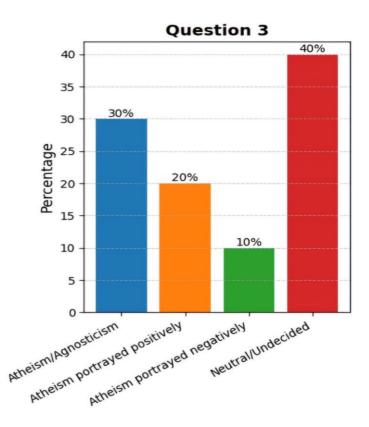


In the series of Dahmer for example, the show explored themes of morality, redemption and forgiveness which is central to Christian values. In this show, Glenda Cleveland 's character is depicted as a devout Christian who finds strength in her faith and Reverend Jackson's character is portrayed as a

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leader who fights for social justice and advocates for marginalized communities. This, positive representations of Christianity contribute to an overall positive attitude towards religious concepts, rituals and practices of Christianity. For example, in one dialogue in the series of "Collateral" one of the characters states:" I am very good friends with the vicar, actually I am more of an admirer, in this community, there are very few practical people who do more than just talk about doing good, that's Jane". This dialogue mentions vicar, a Christian religious leader and highlights Jane's commitment to doing good, this dialogue establishes a positive and respectful attitude towards Christian religious figures. second religion was Islam with 20% of portrayals and this is also expected as this religion is most discussed in Hollywood movies. Judaism and Atheism came at the same level of portrayals with 10% to each one of them. And this shows that Netflix originals concentrate on portraying Atheism more than what is found in Hollywood for example. The "Watcher" is another series in this sample, and it focuses on presenting and portraying Christianity especially Protestantism (e.g., Lutheran Church). The reference to God, Jesus and Christian practices liking saying Grace are more frequent than any other religion. While there are hints of supernatural or occult themes, they are not explicitly linked to any particular religion.



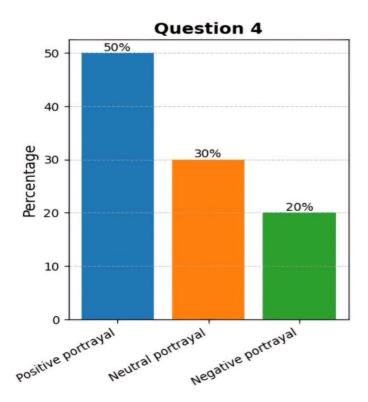


The results show that when Atheism is referenced, it is often depicted as a rejection of religious beliefs or a sense of moral ambiguity, for example the Watcher series, a character states, "And then he makes a plan" when discussing sin and guilt, implying a rejection of religious concepts. In Orange is the New Black, a character says:" When God gives you a swastika, he opens a window, And then you remember there is no God" which is a nihilistic and atheistic message. In Lucifer, atheism is presented as a valid perspective, while in Firefly Lane, it is portrayed as a skeptical or non-religious viewpoint. In Dahmer for example, Jeff Dahmer in one dialogue explicitly states: "I don't believe in God". This is presented as a rejection of religious belief. But is not depicted as a positive or a negative aspect of his character. AI dialogue- based analysis shows that, atheism discussed (30%) in this series sample, atheism portrayed positively (20%), atheism portrayed

negatively (10%), neutral or undecided (40%). This result can affect many Arab viewers especially children and youth as the idea of atheism is considered one of the taboos in our Arabic and Islamic culture and is discussed only very recently in an Egyptian movie which was announced to be released in August 2024 with the title the "Atheist", and all of a sudden it was banned till further notice in August 12th due to the negative comments it got on social media platforms. Overall, Christianity is portrayed in a relatively positive light, with characters referencing its values and practices in a respectful manner, Lutheran Christianity is presented as a potential source of comfort and support for characters. For example, in Jeff Dahmer's series, the characters are discussing the possibility of forgiveness and salvation for someone who has committed heinous crimes, and the sentiment used here is "Ambivalent", the interpretation for this is that this dialogue raises questions about the nature of forgiveness and salvation which is positive. In one of the characters dialogues in Lucifer's episodes, this character states:" I used to believe everything happens for a reason, but now, I am not so sure". This dialogue touches on the idea of fate or divine providence, questioning whether events occur due to a higher power's will or random chance. Sentiment here is neutral and the interpretation of the Al tool is that this dialogue highlights the character's emotional state and its struggle with faith or the concept of higher power. In another dialogue of Lucifer's episodes, a Lucifer states: "Nothing pisses God's off more than exercising free will", this dialogue implies that God is opposed to humans exercising their free will. This could be seen as a commentary on the concept of free will in religious contexts, this is negative towards God, and the interpretation is that this line sets the tone for Lucifer's rebellious nature and his perception of God as an oppressive figure. In the "Watcher" series, the show occasionally touches on atheistic other secular perspectives often in a sarcastic or ironic tone. For example, Dialogue 1 from the last episode ("Who is going to say grace? I am the one who made fucking dinner") mocks the idea of saying grace, implying that the speaker doesn't take religious practices seriously. Atheism is not depicted in a consistently positive or negative manner, rather it is presented as a valid perspective

that challenges traditional religious believes. These results of AI dialoguebased analysis is consistent with the results of the qualitative analysis conducted by the researcher of this study and this implies that Netflix's originals discusses atheism regularly. In the light of those results, one can notice the importance of this study because many previous studies argued that television is a meaning-making which affects the audience member's own religious believes.

4-**Question 4:** How does the show portray Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam joined together in one religion)?

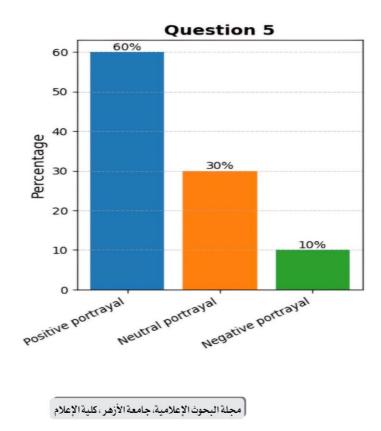


The shows portray Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam joined together in one religion) in a relatively positive or neutral light. Christianity is the most prominent Abrahamic religion presented, with characters referencing its values and practices in a respectful manner. Islam is also portrayed respectfully, with characters mentioning its practices and

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concepts without negative connotations. Judaism is not explicitly mentioned, but the shows do reference themes of identity, community and moral obligation that are relevant to Jewish believes and practices. This result shows that Netflix Originals which is the sample of this study encourage its viewers to embrace what is called the Abrahamic religions which its main aim is for people to join all one religion and leave behind certain believes and rituals and practices that concerns only one of the three main heavenly religions, the Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Maybe because the supporter of the Abrahamic religions, but the opponents of this call see that this is call to leave behind the believes and rituals of every specific religion and to abandon it completely. The positive portrayals of Abrahamic religions was only 20%.

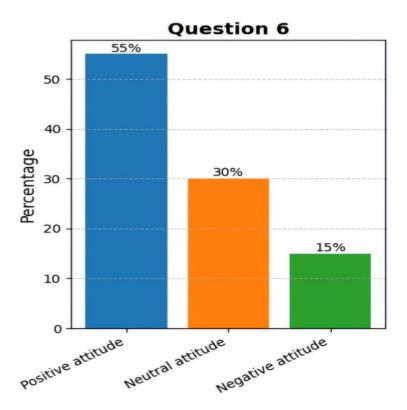
5-Question 5: Specifically, how does the show portray Islam as a religion, and how are Muslims represented?



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Islam is also portrayed respectfully with characters mentioning its practices and concepts without negative connotations, this is an important result as Hollywood used to portray Arabic and Muslim characters in a negative way in many of its movies. This result opposes the finding of (Al-Nassiri, R. (2021,page iii) that when the producers of the TV series are non-Muslims it is more biased against Islam as the producers of this study sample of Netflix originals are mainly Americans and British.

6-**Question6:** Overall, is the show's attitude towards religious concepts, rituals, and practices generally positive or negative?



In conclusion, the series in this sample indicates that overall attitude towards religious concepts and beliefs is one of respect and neutrality, while characters may express skepticism or criticism towards religious beliefs, the series do not promote a negative or dismissive view of religion. Instead, it presents religious beliefs and practices as a natural part of human experience, worthy of consideration and respect. The series also explore the complexities and nuances of religious beliefs, highlighting their potential to inspire both good and harm. The positive attitudes towards religion in the sample of this study were 55%, neutral attitudes were 30% and negative attitudes were only 15%. This means that the AI tool used in this study came to a result that contradict the researcher content analysis of some scenes in this sample, such as the scene of Kevin Spacey spitting on Jesus Christ's face in a church in House of Cards series, which is considered a crime of contempt of religion in our Arab culture and society.

Recommendations:

The recommendations of this study can be divided into Academic and professional recommendations as follows:

Academic recommendations:

1-more studies could be conducted in future to test how children and youth in our Arab and Muslim countries are affected by the ideas in Netflix originals especially those ideas that involves religion.

2-It is recommended to provide our Arab and Muslim users of platforms like Netflix with the essential tools of media literacy to let them thick critically of the content presented to them and not take it as it is to be aware of the ideological and political and cultural messages contained in those TV series.

Professional recommendations:

1-Egyptian, Arab and Muslim drama writers, directors and producers should think of TV series and movies that is out of the box and discusses religion in a way that attracts viewers from all over the world and can convince them of the sacred religious messages of the three heavenly religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. 2-The attractive techniques used in producing Netflix originals could be used by our Arab and Muslim drama producers and film makers to reach and attracts viewer from all over the world and from different cultures and religions.

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