

Carlos O. Rios
Dr. Deborah Grayson
ENGL 1101 – E

“V for Vendetta” Movie Review

The fast-paced action sci-fi thriller “V for Vendetta” tells the story of a future-fiction scenario in which the United States is at civil war and England has become a religiously based totalitarian government. The story begins with a young woman named Evey Hammond, portrayed by Natalie Portman, who is out in the streets of London after the government’s declared curfew. She is assaulted by government watchmen who intend to rape her. A masked vigilante known as V, played by Hugo Weaving, comes to her rescue and later offers her a chance to change the future of England. Using terrorist-like actions and help from Evey, V is bound to unite the citizens of England and turn them against their government. With the combination of well developed characters, plots and literary aspects, “V for Vendetta” is sure to never be forgotten.

In this film, one daring and controversial question is presented – is terrorism justifiable? In our society today, it would be considered intolerable and that all terrorists should be held accountable and punished for their actions. However, V’s actions to free the citizens from corruption and oppression are terrorist-like, even though he is the protagonist. He murders certain political leaders and media figures, as well as destroys landmark government buildings such as Parliament. He even takes control of a government funded television station and uses its media power to encourage the citizens to fight against the government. However, his actions are viewed as positive and are encouraged in order to help free the oppressed people of England. It’s a unique analysis

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into the protagonist of a film. His actions can be either viewed as politically charged or vengeful and violent by the audience.

The intolerability and unrest of the totalitarian government is seen through its use of censorship. The government portrayed in the film attempts to present itself as a powerful and indestructible entity. However, during V's siege of the government's television broadcasting station, the government falsely states that V was killed by government police in attempt to cover up V's victorious mission. Also, V's fireworks-latent destruction of one of England's fascist statues was stated by the government as a glorious tribute to a statue itself destroyed, desperately attempting to show no weakness whatsoever from V's actions.

This film is gracefully filled with several allusions that tie into certain aspects of politics and war. For example, the scene in which the fascist Chancellor Sutler is giving a speech to the English citizens, with soldiers marching past in formation, is similar to the images of Hitler delivering his speeches and asking for support from the German citizens, while Nazi soldiers are marching by. Furthermore, the name Sutler seems to be a combination of the names Stalin and Hitler, known as two of the most powerful and influential political leaders in world history. Also, the colors and design of the totalitarian government's flag are similar to the Nazi flag used during World War II; red and black are used in both flags, each with bold lines meeting each other at right angles.

Another allusion is the totalitarian government funded research facility where V is taken prisoner many years before the actual setting of the film. Several of his prison

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mates underwent many cruel and painful biological experiments. The prisoners are killed after they have served in the experiments, if not already dead from them, and buried in one large dumpsite. This is similar to the Nazi concentration camps during World War II. Several captives during Hitler's reign were spared the torturous gassing execution to be used in Germany's weapons design experiments. Also, the victims of these horrendous experiments in both "V for Vendetta" and the Nazi concentration camps were gypsies, homosexuals, and Muslims. The many allusions to Hitler in the film were to present the government as a pure evil entity, therefore having the audience side with V's terrorist actions.

Repetition is a prevalent tool used in the film. For example, Guy Fawkes, a rebel against the British government, attempted to destroy the Parliament building with explosives on November 5th in 1605. However, his plans were foiled by the British guard and he was later executed. Four-hundred years later, V attempts to bring Fawkes' goal to reality. V wears a mask that resembles Guy Fawkes and attempts to destroy the same building – on November 5th.

The tool of repetition is continued with the use of the number five in the film. The roman numeric symbol for five is "V", which is also the name of the masked protagonist as well as the cell number at the research facility which V is held prisoner in. Also, the quote "Remember, remember the fifth of November", a rebellious chant in remembrance of the late Guy Fawkes, is heard in the film. Furthermore, the music that V listens to in his underground hideout is titled Beethoven's fifth symphony, further

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emphasizing the number five. Another sense of repetition symbolically links V with one of Evey's friends, Deitrich. After saving her from the hands of the government, V gives Evey shelter at his underground hideout. For breakfast he makes her eggs in a basket. When she runs away from V later in the film, she seeks shelter from her close friend Deitrich, who coincidentally makes eggs in a basket as well. This was intended to show that both V and Dietrich are similar in respect to their protection of Evey, despite the harsh punishment they would receive if caught with her.

Repetition also resurfaces one of Evey's horrific memories when the government arrests Dietrich at his home, where he is sheltering Evey, for parodying the chancellor on his television show. When Evey hides under the bed, she is reminded of the time when she was young and hid under the bed as her mother was taken in a similar fashion. The prevalent use of repetition throughout the film was to create emphasis on linking the past with present.

Overall, the film was beautifully played out from beginning to end. It was creatively clashed with political allusions that anyone could clearly notice. It was also ladden with intense emphasis with the use of repetition and presented the controversial question if terrorism is justifiable or not. This film will no doubt become a popular cult classic for the time to come.