

ENGLISH

V for Vendetta/ Lord of the Rings - Dystopian Societies

Authorities in dystopian texts are representative of immoral values of greed, violence and oppression through the fear they keep their societies in. The voice of dissidence that arise within these texts are portrayed to counter-balance and challenge such values and replace them with individual freedoms, with the voice of dissidence then becoming heroes; symbols that unify an uprising against the dystopian leaders. Within James McTeigue's film, V for Vendetta (VFV) set in futuristic Britain, the character of V challenges the totalitarian regimes in uniting England under him in calling for freedom. Likewise in Lord Of The Rings: Fellowship Of The Ring (LOTR) we see the people of Middle Earth unite in support of Frodo and the fellowship to stop the oppressive reign and invasion of Sauron and his forces.

The values of greed, violence and oppression are evident in the practices of the Norsefire Government in VFV, and it is these values that establish V as a hero. Adam Sutler, through constant surveillance and control of the media, oppresses his people and uses violence against any individual who threatens his power and position. By vilifying outsiders or minorities like "immigrants, Muslims, homosexuals, terrorists" (that we hear from Lewis Prothero, the voice of London) Sutler presents himself as the only possible avenue to relative prosperity; as his population are kept in a state of submissive fear. McTeigue deliberately made Adam Sutler, in name and appearance, in resemblance of Adolf Hitler, positioning the audience to condemn his actions and his policies. As McTeigue reveals the horrific values that Sutler represents, he leaves the audience yearning for change, for rebellion; for freedom to come to British governance. In this way, V's arrival within the film, against this backdrop of immorality, sees him portrayed as a hero, even though his methods are also questionable.

Likewise, in LOTR, Frodo's bravery in carrying the one ring depict him as a hero in the eyes of middle earth, as he challenges the values of greed, oppression and violence that are contaminating the beauty and purity of Middle Earth. Jackson presents Sauron, lord of the dystopian realm of Mordor using typical archetypal images of evil, particularly with his in-human and demonic servants the orcs, Urakhai and ring wraith. The Christian imagery of hell that Mordor represents heightens the fear it creates for the rest of Middle Earth. For Frodo, then a lowly hobbit, to challenge these values as they spread through the lands, positions him as the hero, and McTeigue positions the audience to sympathise and support him against the hellish figure of Sauron, the "enemy of the free people of Middle Earth."

While the voices of dissidence with both texts are depicted as heroes in their respective quests for freedom from the oppression of authority, their methods of effectively challenging government values are extremely different, as both V and Frodo react different to their situations.

In the well-established dystopian world under the Norsefire government V's actions for freedom are retaliatory in nature, fighting political spectrum. V uses the tools of oppression of Sutler's government against him, killing those that threaten his cause, talking to the public through Sutler's "emergency channel." In talking to Evey, V states that "people should not live in fear of their government, governments should live in fear of their people." The line exemplifies V's cause in his quest for freedom, and despite his portrayal, as in essence, a terrorist and assassin, McTeigue, in juxtaposing V's values against those of Sutler, still presents V as the hero of the film.

In contrast, Frodo Baggins in LOTR is, in the progressive dystopia of Middle –Earth, portrayed as the ultimate symbols of innocence and peace. Hobbits have none of the prestige of physical power that other races possess and are depicted as inferior. This is shown within the film with the constant use of high angle shots on the hobbits, heightening the sense of their small stature, inferiority and presumed frailty. However, it is this innocent, childlike quality that presents Frodo as a hero, and makes his advances against Sauron all the more important. As the film progresses, Jackson reveals

that it is actually Frodo, who is pure of heart, who shows the most strength against the corruptive powers of the ring.

In both VFV and LOTR, V and Frodo serve as the forefront and symbol of dissidence, challenging the values present in that society. In LOTR the whole of the races of free people are united behind Frodo (which is symbolically shown in the forming of the Fellowship.) V however, as a man in a mask without a past or future (and with V being an inversion of the anarchist system) the Guy Faulkes mask and the black cloak serve as a symbol for Britain to unite with, as they march to Government house in the climax of the film.

In conclusion, V and Frodo, while depicted with different character traits, are both seen as heroes, symbols uniting their worlds against the oppressive values placed upon the dictated society.