



V for Vendetta

**Second film in
our 'Future
from the Past'
Season**

Tuesday 20th
Feb 2018 at
8.15 pm

Film essay by
Dominic
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(InFiFa) and
notes compiled
by Mark
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Released in 2006, set in 2020, from a comic book written in the early 1980s
Director: James McTeigue
Script writers: The Wachowski Brothers
Original source material: Allan Moore and David Lloyd
V: Hugo Weaving
Evey: Natalie Portman
Also starring Stephen Fry, John Hurt, Sinead Cusack, Stephen Rea, Rupert Graves.

This is the third and final film in our *Future from the Past* season, whose premise is that the films chosen were a foretelling of things to come. Our other choices 'Network' and 'Being There' were Oscar winners and recognised as landmark movies in their day.

'V for Vendetta' is not I contend a great film; for some it is not even rated as a good film. So why is it appearing in this series? In part it is because the figure of V, in particular his iconic mask, has been taken up by many people, including those members of the 'Occupy' movement which has argued against the amassing of almost half the world's finance by the 1%, those who run the world in financial terms. It suggests

that the violence of the 'State' has to be challenged with violence. V is a terrorist, and terrorism today seems to have moved from the limited actions of small groups as in the 1970's to a major political tool that affects geo-political events, as occurred with the destruction of the 'Twin Towers', an event that would seem to have been in the mind of the makers of this film, but which is not made explicit in any fashion. Certainly the destruction of the Towers tends to give credence to V's statement that 'Blowing up a building can change the world'.



It depicts a figure who acts in a manner that could be regarded as 'terrorist'. Is this a justified response to protect oneself against the State? It brings to mind the 'One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter' debate. It can certainly be argued that V is a mirror image of his enemies.



The film's depicted premise is that Britain has become a police state, There is a very obvious harking back to '1984' with John Hurt who so memorably took the part of Winston Smith, the victim of the 'Big Brother' state in the film of the book in the 1980s, and also having his face showing on huge screens, just as with 'Big Brother'. Allen Moore apparently had Margaret Thatcher's policies in his sights when he wrote the comic book on which this film is based. Do we need to know this to more fully appreciate the film today?



So what is the film's message? It seems to be that people should not be afraid of their Governments, but that Government's should fear the responses of their citizens to the actions undertaken in their name. Whether fear of either is an optimum response is not a matter debated in this film; should it be?

The figure of V owes something to that of 'The Scarlet Pimpernel' the one-man avenger depicted in the time of the French Revolution by Baroness Orczy. Are there also echoes of 'The Phantom of the Opera' here in the relationship between Evey and V, not least the permanent presence of the mask?

What do the Wachowskis bring to the 'party' given their Matrix credentials?

Is it worth considering that of the three films in this season, two are satires, and the third, if not an actual satire, has a somewhat satirical edge? Is this a default position for those who seek to bring us warnings for the future? How do such approaches measure up to depictions such as 'The Hand-Maid's Tale' which was recently interpreted for the television screen in 2017 to great acclaim, which was told as a dramatic story, with no obvious irony?



The film has a range of actors on display including Stephen Fry in one of his occasional forays into cinema. Natalie Portman's role is generally seen as the weakest. Incidentally her character Evey was a prostitute in the original comic book. It appears that someone in the production team was anxious about this aspect. Hugo Weaving arguably has a difficult role, wearing the mask throughout. The critic Roger Ebert argued that the static nature of the mask limits the actor very considerably, although it was an unavoidable aspect given the source material. Weaving took over from James Purefoy who opted out of the part after a few weeks of filming although he is still there in some scenes.

It is well known that Allan Moore had his name taken off the credits, although accounts differ as to whether this was due to the film itself, or some contractual difficulties.



Film critics are very divided about the film, some regarding it as empty and vacuous with nothing worthwhile to say, others regard it as a flawed movie, but one that attempts to address deep fears about the course of politics, and the sense that the world is descending into madness, 'A world gone wrong' as the old bluesmen had it.

Writer: Dominic Thierry

Our next screening.....A Separation

The first film in our.....Iranian Future



Eden
Court
Cinema

13th
March
2018 at
8.15 pm

Simin wants to leave Iran with her family, but her plans fall through when her husband Nader decides to stay in order to care for his ailing father. Later, Simin files for divorce, while an unforeseen tragedy pushes Nader over the edge. Acclaimed mult-award winner including 2012 Oscar for best foreign film, and Golden Bear award at the 2011 Berlin International film festival.



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