

“In Search of Dystopian World in Select Indian Science Fiction Movies”

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Science fiction , the genre in the modern literary world that typically deals with the scientific concepts and technology widely on space exploration , time travel , extraterrestrial life , mutation of humans and other beings. This genre is also known as the “literature of ideas” as its imaginative world deals with the consequences of scientific social trauma and technological innovations. The literary world doesn’t stop with the concept of writing but it also enhances with the art of Drama that includes acting, direction, sculpture, stage setting and so on, where in the modern times the art of Drama had a great shift and had gone through an evolutionary process and on the result we are able to enjoy the mode called “movie” or cinema. World movies have explored the every literary genre and have made a healthy impact amongst the people or audience. Even the newer genre “science fiction” has also been explored by the world cinema industries through the movies like Total recall, Mission Mars, Things to come, Independence Day etc... when the art of movies is discussed it’s hard to ignore the Indian cinema and its contribution to world cinema as the 100 years old Indian cine industry has explored every genres of literature even the toughest genres like historical fiction through movies like Hey Ram (2000), Ayirathil Oruvan (2009); Bildungsroman through movies like Pathar panchali (1955), Aparajito (1956). Even the concept of science fiction has been explored by the Indian cine creators especially in the Tamil language movies like Vikram, Enthiran , Dasavatham etc... where through these movies the concept of dystopia is been finely showcased by the Indian creators as the every science fiction writings deals with the dystopian world.

“The meaning of dystopia is “imagined state or society in which there is great suffering or injustice, typically one that is totalitarian or post-apocalyptic.” Every science fiction writers like H.G.Wells, Isaac Asimov, John w. Campbell to the modern writers have the dystopian element as every science fiction writers are aware that over the new explorations and inventions in science and over exploitation of science knowledge may lead to the dystopian state .Every science fiction writings of the greatest writers are the fine example of this where

humans are the cause of their catastrophe leading to the state of dystopia. This could be understood from the famous author George Orwell's words *"The further a society drifts from truth the more it will hate those who speak it."* (Pg.45. *On Truth* .2017) Indian movies have perfectly showcased these human actions in their movies where the movies *ulagam sutrum valiban*, *Vikram*, *Dasavatharam*, *Enthiran*, are analyzed in detail.

Ulagam sutrum valiban is a movie by M.G.Ramachandran starring himself in the leading role. The movie is a science fiction movie released by the year 1973. The movie's story revolves around scientist Murugan who is kidnapped by the terrorists and Murugan's brother Raju who is a CID officer from India searches for his brother and research notes that Murugan has created for the lethal weapon. Murugan being a peace lover he neglects to sell the weapon to the other government or to the terrorists that could destroy the entire nation created by Murugan himself. *"Ulagam Sutrum Valiban (English: Globetrotting Youngster) is a 1973 Indian Tamil-language science fiction film, directed and produced by M. G. Ramachandran and co-produced by R. M. Veerappan"* (Wikipedia). The movie portrays the dystopian state through three characters, Murugan the scientist, Bairavan the co- scientist and Lily's brother. Murugan is the first cause for the dystopian state where he discovers a power through thunder but invents a weapon to use the power instead of making efficacious inventions for the humans, where dystopia starts its path in the story line, where dystopian state is a state of tyranny and injustice. Being a responsible scientist Murugan is aware of the consequences of his invention creates a destructive power whereas his co-scientist forgets his responsibility as a scientist and craves for money by kidnapping Murugan then searches for the research notes that is hidden by Murugan in order to sell it to the terrorists or to the nation that provides him with huge sum of money Where its understood through the plot *"Bairavan plans to steal the research notes. While in Singapore, Bairavan shoots Murugan with a special gun (not killing him). Vimala faints on seeing this"* (Plot, Wikipedia). The other one is Lily's brother who is Murugan's friend but betrays his friend for money, tries to kill Raju who is search of Murugan. Being close associates of Murugan and responsible persons these characters commits international crime and betrays Murugan for money where the state of dystopia reaches its higher point that causes injustice, tyranny, betrayal, immorality and crime which could be understood through the definition *"An imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible; opp. Utopia (cf. Cacotopia)"* (oxford dictionary second edition (1989).

Vikram is a 1986 Indian Tamil language film by Rajasekhar, starring and produced by Kamal Hassan, inspired from Sujatha's novel *Vikram*. The movie revolves around the Indian raw agent *Vikram* where *Vikram* is assigned the duty to trace down the nuclear missile stolen by the terrorists where the movie becomes the first Indian movie's story to revolve around the nuclear missile where IMDP has reviewed the movie as *"A Sci-fi movie with missiles, different languages, camels and deserts and head shots. (Review -*

IMDP 2013)”. The concept of Dystopia occupies the story line right from the beginning of the movie where the terrorists capture and steal the nuclear missile while government transfers it from military base to another military base. While the hijack the head of the terrorist gang sarcastically states *“Being too patriotic” vikram (1986)*³ and *“Gonna play the game with you Agni Puthiran (the missile)” vikram (1986)*, these statements from the antagonist shows how a scientific research missile created for destruction of other country can be turned back at any cause when it moves to the destructive hands. The movie still shows the destructive minds of the scientists, the injustice world where at times the scientific mind becomes self-destructive this could be understood through the dialogue between the Protagonists Vikram and Research head A.R. Rao where A.R. Rao states *“The missile has to be diffused within 10 days or else the system is programmed in a way that it would hit any areas of the world” (vikram 1986)* moreover he states *“India is against the nuclear weapons but it has created a secret missile for its defense” (vikram 1986)*. Vikram’s attitude showcases the commoner’s point of view and questions towards the dystopian end of the scientific world where vikram keeps questioning the scientists whoever he meets especially to Preethi the computer scientist whom he travels to Rajasthan to diffuse the missile where he questions her about the culture and society “ Being a scientist what’s your point of view on Feminism?” and again gives a reply for her answer for stating that all are equal through his witty question “ what would you do during summer?! , I would prefer to enjoy the day with bare body and will you be following the same ?” , Even the symbolism innocence is showed through the Rajasthan people where innocents becomes the victims in the voyage to gain the power and destructions that science brings. The injustice served to the innocents itself a dystopian state.

Dasavatham is a blockbuster science fiction disaster movie written by Kamal Hassan directed by K.S. Ravi Kumar. Dasavatham being a science fiction movie that has acknowledged how science could bring a disaster to the innocent people it also deals with the concept that a scientific invention developed for destruction could destroy the entire world if it is placed in the hands of evil minded humans. The story revolves around the bio- scientist Govindarajan who creates a bio weapon through the form of bio virus for the world super power America and when one his head scientist tries to sell it to the American terrorist he safeguards the virus through taking it out from the lab and sends it to India to a proxy address, the remaining part of the story revolves around the protagonist Govindarajan and antagonist Fletcher who were in search of the virus. The movie showcases the dystopian mindset of both government and a terrorist where both aims for the destruction where Govindarajan works for the government that funds the science research in order to create a bio war against the terrorist countries. The super power nation has no care on the negative sides of the bio war , they never cares about a commoner who becomes the victim of the war and scientific destruction that could be understood through the movie where the protagonist conveys his disappointment on himself and the super power government who funds the scientists that *“ why it’s all happening?? If god really wants to save us through Tsunami! Why doesn’t god make the idea of funding mental scientists vanish from the*

presidents like Bush? And even why don't the god eradicate the thinking of creating a virus from a scientist like me??” (Dasavatharam (2008)). The movie eventually proved the transition of humans' necessity for science to redundant of science where science on the hands of humans especially in the evil minded terrorists, scientists, governments leads to the dystopian state.

Enthiran is yet another science fiction movie by Indian Tamil cinema creator released by 2010. The movie showcases the catastrophe of artificial intelligence could bring to the entire world, its theme resembles the Hollywood terminator series. Enthiran's plot revolves around the protagonist Dr.Vaseegaran and Chiti the robot created by Dr.Vaseegaran, where Chiti is created for the purpose to serve the Indian Army but the approval of Chiti fails in the evaluation process through Dr.Bhora who wants to create the same kind of Robot alike Chiti in order to serve the terrorists instead of Army. This Evaluation process makes Vaseegaran to update Chiti with Human senses especially the emotional capability which leads to the dystopian state where Chiti starts loving Sana, the girlfriend of Vaseegaran and in turn Chiti starts its mission of rejecting Vaseegaran's orders to prove Chiti is capable of thinking of its own and it is more capable than Vaseegaran. This leads to the failure of evaluation process for the second time through which Vaseegaran with his anger destroys Chiti with an axe and throwing Chiti in the dumb yard. The dystopian state increases through the characters of the movie where immorality begins with Dr.Bhora who loses his value as a human & scientist through inserting destructive red chip into Chiti. Being greed he loses mind and gets jealous on Vaseegaran through which Bhora loses his moral and ethical values where its understood through the plot “Vaseegaran's mentor, Professor Bohra, is secretly engaged in a project to create similar android robots for a terrorist organization, but has so far been unsuccessful., Bohra embeds a red chip inside Chiti while reconstructing it, converting it into version 2.0, which is more aggressive and unempathetic.”(Wikipedia). Chiti becomes the victim as well as the product of the dystopian result of Bhora which becomes the destructive material for the humans. The plot clearly shows the destructive element of artificial intelligence where Chiti decides to achieve its desire through power and destruction even though it's a man-made scientific machine it destroys the humans without mercy for its desire. The robot achieves the hundred percent human qualities through achieving the dystopian element of destruction, causing immorality and aching for power and desire. Chiti kills Dr.Bhora who gives back the life for Chiti and in order to capture Sana, Chiti kills those who come across Chiti to save Sana. Even after the Indian army is recruited to capture Chiti army fails in the mission as Chiti keeps updating itself in the combat and creates hundreds of robots resembling like chiti which proves the world that scientific invention of humans could destroy its own race this could be understood through the theory of Stephen hawking where he clearly states “The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race....It would take off on its own, and re-design itself at an ever-increasing rate. Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn't compete and would be superseded.” (Interview with the BBC, December 2014). The movie right from the beginning clearly states dystopian

mindset of humans that human himself climbs to be god and creator of everything and finally forgets God and Moralities that what God has taught him, where the director clearly tries to convey it through the dialogues of Chiti where in an interview Chiti clearly states that man is his god but in later part of the movie Chiti tries to kill its creator which could be understood through the conversation of Chiti and the interviewer “Person 1: Do God Exist? Chiti: What you mean by GOD? Person 1: Our Creator. Chiti: Then, Yes, (Pointing Vaseegaran) he is my God, my Creator.” (Enthiran.2010).

Thus the Indian Tamil movies clearly showcase the dystopian world through its character, dialogues, and screenplay and even through its musical lyrics. Where it clearly states the evil-minded humans, scientists and as like “Too much of anything is good for nothing” too much of science spoils the world through the scientific inventions and discoveries eventually leading to the dystopian era as stated in the literary novels which could be understood through the lines from the scholarly article of Misha Ketchell, the editor of The conversation , an academic journal where he states “ If dystopia has once again become fashionable in film and literature, it’s almost certainly because we too now have much to be warned against.” (The conversation. Science fiction and dystopia: what’s the connection? pg.5.2012).

Reference:

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