



Review Article

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Murder, Media, and Middle-Class Morality: A Critical Review of *Drishyam-2*

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INTRODUCTION

Drishyam-2 is the sequel to *Drishyam* (2022) and an official adaptation of the same-titled Malayalam thriller. The film's plot revolves around a murder mystery from seven years ago. The protagonist of *Drishyam-2* (Pathak, 2022) exploits the media to conceal his criminal activity. Within the story, implicit support of middle-class morals serves as a cover-up to hide the murder mystery.

The protagonist, cable TV business owner Vijay Salgaonkar (Ajay Devgan), now runs a movie theater. He aims to make a film inspired by a story he has written. When reality promises to alter things, a sequence of unanticipated occurrences unsettles the life of the Salgaonkars (Chatterjee, 2022). The Salgaonkar family is again under surveillance due to the reopening investigation into Samir Deshmukh's death. The police re-enter their lives. This time, IG Tarun Ahlawat (Akshaye Khanna) showed deep interest in reopening Samir Deshmukh's murder case, the son of his former colleague Meera Deshmukh (Tabu). Tarun engages a certain amount of time with Vijay's family to collect evidence of their guilt.

Anju (Ishita Dutta), the eldest daughter of Vijay, is still recovering from the traumatizing events, while the

youngest daughter Anu (Mrunal Jadhav), is in her early teens (Khurana, 2022). Everyone in the house, particularly his spouse Nandini (Shriya Saran), is proceeding with heightened attention in their everyday activities, with a persistent anxiety that never departs them.

Movies are a kind of self-expression since they show various characters' perspectives. (Kumar & Sharma, 2022b). In the final hour of *Drishyam-2*, Vijay also goes beyond the limit to prevent his family from going to prison for a crime they executed in self-defense. His struggle is not for any great cause or ideals but for the basic 'servile.' He fights to get his family out of trouble. All the family members are victims of circumstances. If he had committed a crime intentionally, the film would not have progressed toward any poetic justice, and the audience would not have been able to connect with the hero and his family.

Passion Propagates the Plot

The prequel *Drishyam* concludes well with the investigation being resolved and Sameer's death confirmed. The sequel *Drishyam-2* connects viewers to a fourth standard fail middle-class cable operator Vijay, now a multiplex owner.

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In the beginning, it is felt that the passion of the protagonist Vijay towards cinema in the prequel *Drishyam* has become a sideline somewhere. However, it becomes apparent in the climax that the same force is the story's narrator. In *Drishyam-2*, Vijay learns life lessons by practicing his favorite art form with spectacular effects.

This mystery becomes more intriguing, entertaining, and exciting when his investigation record on Sameer's murder reopens in the Goa police station. The sequel explores what happened on October 2 and 3, a truth yet to be revealed (Kukreja, 2022). After repeatedly hearing the members of the Salgaonkar family recount this incident during the investigation, the audience has stored it in memory.

Over the past seven years, Vijay's love for films, storytelling, and twisted plots has remained intact. Vijay's film theatre is flourishing, and now he is rich sufficient to recruit a scriptwriter and pursue the film-making profession. He even publishes his script as a book to avoid the story's copyright.

In the plot, cinema is the superpower of the protagonist Vijay, whose actions are defined by escapism. Vijay employs cinematic techniques to depict the entire episode to ensure his family's safety. In his struggle against life's moral constraints, he pursues every strategy as if writing a screenplay. The individual's personality can deduce from the connection between cinephile and the human character. Ultimately, there is a distinction between scene and image; the former is defined visually, but social factors influence the latter.

Beyond or Beside the Morals

Drishyam-2 portrayed the situation with references to the concepts of truth and false, moral conscience, and compassion, making the events intellectual and approachable. The plot of *Drishyam-2* relies on two fallacious perceptions. First, narration authenticates that watching lots of movies sharpens the mind. The other legitimize immorality.

Meera's inner mother drives her to seek revenge against a father who is juggling with crucial evidence. He sees nothing beyond the safety of his family and defies even morality. It implies crossing any line to defend oneself (KUMAR, 2022).

Abhishek Pathak, the director, avoids hazardous cliches in exchange for approximations. Christians are depicted like Hindus within the cultural environment of the province in the movie. There is no distinction in their dialect or attire, much less in their Morality (Vetticad, 2022).

Concept of Morality in Asian Cinema

How to live a decent life has intrigued humans since ancient civilization dawn. Morality is supposed to influence a person's character. Moral norms are intertwined with competing for religious, political, ecological, and economic values that are increasingly asserted. It can

challenge people working in the arts and media who desire recognition and innovation (Goldman & Kim, 2010).

Exploring morality provides a way of maintaining an interdisciplinary perspective on film studies. Films serve diverse social functions, and their makers may smuggle dissident messages into their work under the noses of censors and studio bosses. The relationship between cinema and moral values examines human moral standards (Gillett, 2012).

In Asia, numerous films like *Drishyam-2* focus on morals and the ethical standards of the middle class. The Academy Award-winning Korean film *Parasite* (Joon-ho, 2019) has the morality of middle-class failure looming in the plot's backdrop. The film employs subtle symbolism to identify points that plant the germ of quiet phobia in the viewers. (Park, 2020). The film's plot revolves around a low-income family's plan to penetrate an affluent family's residence by pretending to be distant, highly skilled candidates to gain employment with them.

The Iranian film *A Separation* (Farhadi, 2011) is about an urban middle-class couple who had split. This film's rural-urban, traditional-modern, and moral-practical contrasts converge to produce the central struggle. *A Separation* is ethically complicated instead of morally muddled, artistically intense, and evocative without being melodramatic, emotionally oppressive, and sensitive to all individuals and perspectives while embracing the strength of honesty and affection. (Xueqin, 2012)".

In *Shoplifters* (Kore-eda, 2018), Japanese filmmaker Hirokazu Kore-eda investigates the nature of a family. The film emphasizes that every person can embrace well thought and release brutality and destruction and that his/her conjunction can be devastating (Smullens, 2018). The moral sense that every time subverts ordinary concepts of right and wrong makes the film both strange and fascinating. In *Shoplifters*, Osamu and Nobuyo abduct children and train them to lie and rob, inspiring them with compassion and identity (Carpico, 2018).

The Indian film *Lipstick Under My Burkha* (Shrivastava, 2017) depicts various moral preconceptions and constraints. The plot revolves around four ladies and their desires. Their dreams are concealed from the hostile environment and mentality. Ultimately, this illustrates the restriction of women's independence (Kaushal, 2017).

The Hindi film *Dasvi* (Jalota, 2022), directed by Tushar Jalota, is a socio-cultural satire against political immorality. The film tells the story of a corrupt politician who discovers the moral significance of education while imprisoned (Kumar & Sharma, 2022a).

The Indian web series *Tabbar* (Singh, 2021)" has a similar premise to *Drishyam-2*. A Sikh ex-policeman scrambles to protect his family by concealing an accidental murder of the brother of a dishonest politician. Eight episodes depicted the man engaging in a web of deceit; he will do anything, including murder, to protect his family.



Their moral decline creeps up on the audience, allowing the series to analyze the cost and real-world repercussions of narrative skill.

Frequently Surprises, Occasionally Feel Stretched.

Abhishek Pathak and Aamil K. Khan recreate Jeethu Joseph's veritable story. They intertwine several strands to precipitate a climax with surprises that match the first film *Drishyam*. The plot is surprising, but several setups and situations are excessively artificial.

Ajay Devgn appears as a paternal figure who adores his family passionately. Shriya Saran resumes her attempt as a submissive homemaker, but her pronunciation and nonverbal cues occasionally reveal that she is pretending. Akshaye Khanna gives this exciting event gravitas. As a mom, Meera, Tabu demands retribution for her kid, as her husband Rajat Kapoor engages. Kamlesh Sawant returns as Gaitonde, extremely cruel and vengeful. Saurabh Shukla, as author Murad Ali uncovers the riddle.

In *Drishyam-2*, the cinematography by Sudhir K. Chaudhary gives a more polished feel to the dreary setting of Panaji and explores the gorgeous charm of rural Goa. The music of Amitabh Bhattacharya is lively and captures the familial relationship. The ambient score by Rockstar DSP heightens the drama's intensity. At the same time, there are some idle moments in the first half and the second half amps up the intensity.

The plot of *Drishyam-2* is entirely quiet on some questions. What occurred that prompted the reopening of Vijay Salgaonkar's file? Nothing is depicted throughout the film. Even the most prominent agencies, such as Forensics, must deploy CCTVs. On the other hand, Vijay has CCTV footage of his multiplex office and the road in front of the police station. Furthermore, the Salgaonkars never thought of telling the police that Sameer was blackmailing them, and the killing was unintentional.

Consequently, the film also depicts the cultural context in which the protagonists exist, touching on personal abuse and the harsh social stigma of the guilty and the suspects. The film does not justify the protagonist's acts; instead, it reflects his profound remorse and its impact on him and his family. It does not choose any dark or bright side of life and characters but keeps moving in the twilight of both. The film takes viewers to a larger side of life, where the line between right and wrong gets blurred. Each side has its truth, dishonesty, and lies.

Drishyam-2 looks at fundamental values like moral-immoral, right-wrong, and justice in a new light. This time the story is more dramatic than the first episode. However, it teaches viewers to look at life, people, and situations without judgment.

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