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A Taxi Driver (2017)

# Introduction

South Korean film "A Taxi Driver" is a drama film which is related to the genre of history. The film is released in 2017 and revolves around the story of a taxi driver who belongs to South Korean city Seoul. He became involved unintentionally in the 1980 events of Gwangju Uprising movement.

# Discussion and Reaction

The movie starts with the protagonist of a movie Kim Man-seob who is a father working in Seoul as a taxi driver. He was driving through Seoul when he saw a protest due to which traffic was blocked. He shows his concern by talking to himself that why these students do not go to college for learning, they only go there for doing protest and asked himself "when these people realize that our country is great". He was mad because he thinks that this type of protests is bad for his business. Basically, the scene is shown as the students uprising from the Gwangju Uprising movement which was against the Dictatorship. This scene shows how controlled media sets the narrative of "all is well" and act as a propaganda machine of powerful people in transforming the minds of ordinary people. Then the scene transformed into a pregnant lady and her husband who took the ride from Man-seob taxi and most of the streets is occupied by the clash between protesters and the government forces. None the less the scene shows how during a tense situation Man-seob acts like a perfect taxi driver and talk those to the hospital like any taxi driver. It was a light-hearted scene which shows how people benefits from simple people by using their victim card. It is shown how her landlady was scolding her and telling her to pay his rent. He is a widower living with his daughter was asked by the landlady to pay his rent of 100000 won which he was unable to pay. This scene encourages and is a point of turning the whole story behind his motivation for the trip to Gwangju.

Then the scene set towards the bunch of journalists looking for work and talking to each other about the work. One journalist from BBC told the German journalist "Peter" Hinzpeter about the uprising in South Korea and said that the environment there is tough. Peter who was waiting to wait for such an opportunity was very excited to hear the news. He said that being comfortable is bad for a journalist. After that, it is shown that Peter moves to South Korea and landed in Seoul and told the authorities that he works for the church as a missionary. This was his cover story to be saved as a journalist. Then he plans to go to Gwangju and said that he would give a 100,000 won to the taxi driver for go and comeback trip to a taxi driver who is a restaurant told his comrades about the news. Man-seob who himself was in a dire need of money overheard him and drives his taxi before the other taxi driver. He took Peter and take him to the way to Gwangju but the main road was blocked by the Army men. He talks to them but returns without moving to Gwangju. Peter told him that he would not get money if he did not take him to the Gwangju. Here another case is sensed that it was due to Man-seob less understanding or weak listening skills that he understands that Peter is a businessman and wants to go to Gwangju else he would not go there with him if he would know that he is a journalist. Man-seob uses a backway road for entry into Gwangju but Army also blocked the road there but Man-seob convinces them that his client is a businessman and wants to go to Gwangju for an important business papers retrieval.

They then went to Gwangju and met some boys who were taking a slogan of rebellion with them. Peter paid the taxi driver half the fare and told him that half of the fare you will get when you would drop me back to Seoul(A Taxi Driver). Peter then began filming the boys and one boy became his translator. Man-seob told them that he would follow their truck but feared that due to riot his taxi might get damage so he took a uturn. This scene is very much important and tells how in any uprising young blood is always willing to go.

After he returned, he was stopped by an elderly woman for a taxi ride but he wants to move to Seoul as soon as possible. When he saw her in the rearview mirror, he turned back and take the lady with her. This scene shows that he is a good man and understand the feeling of the elderly lady. The elderly lady told her that her son was missing and someone took her son. She showed concern that it would be army but Man-seob said that it is not possible that the army would do this to people. He was very much ignorant of the fact due to the positive image building of army on media. After they reach the hospital, the elderly lady finds her son who is one of the boys from the truck where the journalist went to. The hospital was full of injured people from the riot. After he was met again to Peter, Peter pays him full money and ask him to return to Seoul but one of the boys took the money and said that it is not right to give him money. After that Man-seob agrees to take Peter and his translator "Jae-sik" to ride.

Where ever they go, local people offer their help to them. They get free gas for their taxi and get a warm welcome when they enter the protest area. Man-seob point of view at this point is changing from a point where he was asking a question from himself that whether I was told truth by media or not. After they get to the rooftop to shoot the riot, another local reporter told Peter that it would be very dangerous for you and people who helped you here to go safe back. At that time riot begins and Peter starts to film the riot. He wants another view from the crowd and wants to go back on road in the protesters and film the crowd.

I think that the way the crowd is shown is one of the best visuals I have seen which clearly shows how the armed brutalities took place and how they oppress people by means of force. At this point, Man-seob understands perfectly that his ideas were wrong and there is something wrong with the army about how they are treating the people. Before that, he thinks that it is only in the reaction of people chanting but now he clearly understands the truth that what really is going on. A man in civil dress who is in command of the army told his men to take the man shooting the tape into custody but before they can do something, Man-seob took Peter to his taxi and drive away and after a ride ask Peter to get back to Seoul, Jae-sik take a promise from Peter to upload this footage and Peter agrees. Jae-sik gets off from the taxi to his destination in Gwangju. He had a good farewell talk with Man-seob and they both seem to enjoy each other company. Man-seob after some distance taxi breaks down. Tae-soo a local taxi driver took their taxi for a repair but finds out that his taxi would take much time to get repaired so he took him to his shop and offered them stay until his taxi repairs. Tae-soo watches the news and saw the controlled news on the media cursing back at the news. Asking Peter to help the true news spread.

I think the other main theme of this movie is press freedom, that when a press is free it can cover all the brutalities which help in stopping the brutalities. Media when plays its rightful duty help to spread the correct image of the instances happening to the world which would help other powers to stop the brutalities. After that, they heard an explosion and they were told that it is a way leading to Television station. Peter films the fire and army truck. Army personnel saw him and ask to bring him. Jae-sik heard the civilian clothed army person and make Peter and Man-seob run. Defence security command took Jae-sik and asked Peter to return the camera and the film for their safe recovery to Seoul and as well he can spare the life of Jae-sik. He killed Jae-sik and caught Man-seob in the chase, beating him and accusing him to be communist, working against the country.

This is a very important point in the movie and the storyteller and director told it with neutrality and perfection that when a person in command thinks he is right, he does not bother to scratch the real truth and would do so without any conscience to right and wrong. It is demonstrated truthfully by the Stanford prison experiment that when someone is given the dominated position, he would do all in its power without any regard of conscience.

Peter saves Man-seob from the Defence security commander. After that Man-seob left Peter at Tae-soo shop and left for Seoul but remain in the Guwangju to repair his taxi and eat some food. When he sits at the shop and was looking at the television and heard people talking about what he was talking earlier, he gets deep remorse inside and heads back to Guwangju to take Peter with him.

This is the best scene which is a great depiction of what will happen when good people get remorse about something. When he reached the shop he learned that Peter is at the hospital, he left for the hospital and get very sad to see the dead body of Jae-sik. He then went with Peter to take further footage of army hitting straight and killing people with direct fire. He makes a plan with other taxi drivers to block the vision of the army to help save people in direct fire and those injured.

This has been a clear depiction is how he was able to do a courageous job once he knows who the oppressors are? After that, he with Peter leaves for Seoul, and on their way get to stop by the army men. When during search Sargent find out that he has Seoul number plates he leaves without getting them detained.

I like this scene because it tells that all fingers are not the same. Some people in the world even if they are entitled to do the bad thing, do their fair right share. Army men chase them, while other taxi drivers became a wall in between the army and the Peter. Peter safely return to Japan and aired the tape. Before Peter went to Japan, Peter asks Man-seob his name and asked him to give his number so that he when get back pay for his damages. Man-seob gives his wrong address and number. Peter when won the award always wants to meet Man-seob but he was told that this name and number are wrong.

# Conclusion

Overall the movie is great showcasing the real strength of people against the oppressors. This movie tells us how media can control the general perception and can be used to block information. This movie is a great showcase of the view that how important an independent media is for the world to express their voice and suppress the oppressors. It can also be concluded that when people get the right perception of things, they stood up against the oppressors and became the voice of oppressed. Even one person can matter if the concerns are true. On one side, it was a sad movement to see all the deaths but on the other hand, seeing people giving their life for a cause and their determination showcase the true courage.

References

A Taxi Driver - IMDb. (2017) Retrieved 10 May 2019, from <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6878038/>