

ANURAG KASHYAP FILMS: A CASE STUDY

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Anurag Kashyap is a prominent offbeat Bollywood filmmaker and screenwriter who have received acclaim for his gritty and realistic films. He is considered to be the wonder kid of modern new wave Hindi cinema. The study deals with the deconstruction and in-depth content analysis of all his 8 films. The deconstruction is in terms of various aspects such as the characterization, themes, the dominant traits and other technical aspects. The researcher also aims to determine the similar pattern or the blue print followed by all his films and look at them in a different and unique perspective.

Keywords: *Bollywood, New wave cinema, Characterisation, Auteur*

Introduction

Anurag Kashyap is often termed as an auteur. Auteur is a French word which translated in English means 'author', the creator of the work. The 'Auteur Theory' suggests that there is one prime force that leads to the creation of the film and that individual guides all the processes of filmmaking. (madaboutmoviez.com, 2012) The 'Auteur Theory' was born out of the French New Wave movement in cinema pioneered by the critic and filmmaker Francois Truffaut which was actually intended to be a protest to free the global medium of cinema from its old and traditional conventions, consequently asking for the liberation for the film maker to express himself beyond the reliance and dependence on the literature and it also demanded due respect for the director who is to be looked as an independent and self-reliant artist in the area and field of cinema enabling the director to invent a body of work, similar to any other ordinary artist, focussed on themes and creating his own distinctive style.

The dark and gritty themes are the main highlight of Anurag Kashyap films. There is a different and unique way in which the director sets the entire story which is entirely different from other contemporary film makers of his contemporary era. The style in which the film has been portrayed will have the typical Anurag Kashyap watermark on the entire films.

There is often both off beat and commercial flavour in all his films. It is impossible to call

Anurag Kashyap films as solely offbeat or solely commercial. Kashyap has created a new style which is one of a kind and which itself is a new genre. Kashyap's films are always involved in controversies as most of his films are so real and they explore the dark depths of the human conscious and it also portray the ruthless and cruel character and behaviour of the contemporary society or world.

The genre of Kashyap films varies from romantic drama to neo- noir psychological thrillers. But the traits in the films are following the same pattern. The nine films he has made have a new and distinctive style on his own.

All the films are peculiar and distinct. The most notable one will be the remake of the classic Bengali novel 'Devdas' by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay published in 1917. This movie has been chosen as it successfully explores the space between the edges of commercial and parallel cinema. It fixes, like other films human subject the film mainly constitutes the state apparatuses of extreme capitalism which provided him or her with a place in relations of the production. The film explores the human emotions such as guilt, jealousy and others in a new and distinctive style through a way which has not been undertaken by any other film maker.

Kashyap also enthrals and also disturbs the audience by showcasing the intimidating and demeaning nature of the contemporary society without any mercy. The audience are struck with such an impact that they will have a whole new perception and clarity about the matters or entities portrayed in the film. He is said to be influenced by different film forms and the narrative style of some of his films also have similarity between western film makers such as Quentin Tarantino and Martin Scorsese. The films selected are The Paanch (2003), Black Friday (2007), Gulaal(2009), No smoking (2007) , Dev D (2009), Gangs of Wasseypur part 1 (2012) and part 2 (2012) and that girl in yellow boots (2011).

Review of Literature

Dinesh Bhugra, and Susham Gupta in their book "psychoanalysis and the Hindi cinema" says "Psychoanalysis raises notions of individual's growth and development, and defence mechanisms are used to suppress anxiety and stress. Portrayal of psychoanalysis in modern Hindi cinema is rare. Psychoanalysis can determine the relationships between individuals and personalities." (Gupta, 2008)

In another book by Ravinder Kaur "Viewing the West through Bollywood: A celluloid Occident in the making" says that "The films sport a fantasy-like, rich look, trendy locations and designer clothes worn by young men and women. The Hindi films are now placed in the realm of fast-changing contemporary India with its new market-friendly economy, a globalised and upwardly mobile middle class, a vast diaspora that constantly searches for authentic Indian values, and a huge, exportable, techno-savvy workforce that thrives on growing western pop-dominated cultural forms such as Bhangra/Indi pop-music and Hinglish theatre. (Mishra, 2002) The search for authentic Indian values, however unintentionally,

reveals the long-held images of the West and the eventual making of a celluloid Occident.” (Kaur, 2002)

In a paper by M. Madhava Prasad “Realism and fantasy in representations of metropolitan life in Indian Cinema” says that “Bollywood is dealing with the representations of metropolitan life, and it is appropriate that we should focus at the outset, on what appears to be an intimate relation between the city and the logic of fictional representation.” (Prasad)

In his book’ John David Slocum says that violence has been portrayed in different countries in different ways and most of them included political violence. He talks about the cinematic representation of violence and they have tended to represent violence as pathological. (Slocum, 2005)

In the article ‘ Sensuality , sexuality and belonging: Representations of the Anglo Indian and the western women in Hindi Cinema’, Geetanjali Gangoli says that the Anglo Asian women represented in Hindi films were seen as liminal as compared to Indian women. The literary projections of Anglo Indian women saw a similar pattern. They are projected as promiscuous, sexually active, disrupting the colonial agenda or as pathetic victims of decrement and boredom.

Methodology

The researcher is doing qualitative analysis. The researcher has analysed eight different films of Anurag Kashyap for the purpose of deconstruction and content analysis. The researcher analyses every dominant aspects of the film and the different crucial components of the film by comparing the films of the director and extract the similarities and dissimilarities among all the films. The researcher has used the coding sheet to bring out the common elements of the films or the parameters to study and analyse the films. The analysis will be based on the parameters

- Dominant traits of the male and female characteristic
- Running time
- Genre
- Psychological aspects of the film
- Overall setting of the story
- Dominant traits of the film
- Theme and genre of the film

Rationale of the Study

The study intends to find out the common strain or the basic pattern of Anurag kashyap films by deconstructing the films in different aspects such as characterization, background of the story, execution, and treatment etc. The study also aims to find out the existence of a common 'blue print' in his way of film-making.

Analysis and findings

The eight films chosen for the research are Paanch (2003), Black Friday (2007), Gulaal(2009), No smoking(2007) , Dev D (2009), Gangs of Wasseypur part 1 (2012) and part 2 (2012) and that girl in yellow boots (2011).

Running Time

The eight films are all above 120 minutes of running time which follows the same track of the all other Indian films.

Genre

The genre of the films are predominantly drama and but the sub-genre vary greatly from romance, action, crime, thriller, political thriller and psychological thriller. All the eight films has the dramatic element as the main genre mainly for its dramatization effect. 7 out of 8 films ie apart from Dev D are thrillers. They have a gripping story line which has an intense effect on the audience. The characters also go through different harsh and extreme phases. They face many obstacles and psychological trauma. Even though there are different genres the traits in the films are following a similar pattern evidently.

Background of the story

The settings and background of the film is very crucial for any story or a narrative. The same is applicable for Anurag Kashyap films. He has beautifully narrated the incidents and happenings of different locales or areas with sufficient intensity and impact. The dark and the cruel atmosphere of the modern contemporary society has been efficiently portrayed in the films. 2 of the 8 films that is the two parts of Gangs of Wasseypur has been shot entirely in the rural area of Wasseypur and the remaining of the films are set in the backdrop of Urban

locales especially the city of Mumbai which is the heart of Indian economy and the hub of different cultures and diversities. Only one of the 8 films (DEV D) is shot overseas that too around 10% of the entire film.

Characterization

The films of Anurag Kashyap follow a common trait in terms of characterization as the lead characters are having the similar traits and the emotional and psychological trauma they go through is also similar processes. The male characters especially the lead characters have similar traits. The lead characters of Gangs of Wasseypur, Paanch, Gulaal and No Smoking They all have common traits.

In the films Gulaal, Paanch, No smoking, Gangs of Wasseypur the lead characters all have a similar traits as they are rich, spoilt, ruthless and arrogant and violent attitudes. On the other side the female characters also have similar attitudes and character traits. The dominant traits of the female character are manipulative, beautiful, seductive and ruthless. There are also traits of femme fatale which is a crucial element of film – noir.

On the whole the characterization follows a same blue print which is evident from the similar and common traits of male and female leads.

Table No.1-Dominant Male Characteristics

Characters	Traits
Ransa (Gulaal)	Spoilt, Rich, Carefree,
Dev (DEV D)	Rich, Spoilt, Carefree,
Faizal (GOW)	Authoritative, Violent
K (No Smoking)	Arrogant, Bold, Rich
Luke (Paanch)	Arrogant, Bold, Violent
Tiger Mamon (Black Friday)	Authoritative, Violent,

Table No.2- Dominant Female Characteristics

Female Characters	Traits
Chanda (DEV D)	Seductive, Manipulative,

Kiran (Gulaal)	Seductive, Manipulative,
Shiuli(Paanch)	Seductive, Manipulative
Durga(GOW)	Seductive, Manipulative
Ruth (That Girl in yellow boots)	Bold , Helpless

Traits

The films have a number of recurring traits which are dominant and crucial for the proceeding for the story. In all his films there is a constant play between the human emotions and other psychological feelings they go through in different situations and consequences. The emotions are so stark that the characters feel so real and which also says that the characters are actually facing a problem. The characters in the films have emotional outbursts. The emotions anger and frustration are dominant and the characters are so much controlled by these emotions that they end up doing undesirable things which tend to be hazardous for both the male and female characters. The emotion happiness is not at all present in the films whereas grief also plays a crucial role in the fate of the characters along with the other dominant emotions. This is evident from the films such as Gulaal, DevD and that girl in yellow boots as the lead characters go through a number of relationship crises and other obstacles which tends to test their emotional stabilities.

Psychological Abnormalities

The characters also show some psychological abnormalities. In No Smoking the character K played by John Abraham shows extreme Narcissism which is evident from the scenes which is similar to the original Narcissus who admires his own reflection and takes great care to preserve his own good looks. The other major abnormality which is dominant is the anti-social personality disorder which can be noticed in all the major characters in most of the movies especially the movies such as Gulaal, both the parts of Gangs of Wasseypur, Paanch and Black Friday. This are mainly evident from the incidents they get into tend the hideous and cruel things they do which are clearly unacceptable by the society.

Substance abuse

The other major trait of the films are the substance abuse which are very much recurring as the lead main characters always indulge in substance abuse which vary from alcohol to narcotic drugs. Most of his films portray substance abuse and the lead characters are having either extreme addiction or they always use the intoxicants. 'Dev D' is the film which portrays the extensive alcohol addiction of the lead character Dev due to his emotional breakdown which was caused by the relationship crises. The film also portrays the usage of narcotic drugs in some part of the film.

The film 'No Smoking' entirely focuses on the smoking addiction and how the lead character is affected by the consequences caused by the addiction and the cat and mouse game he himself gets entrapped into. The film 'Paanch' also portrays a number of scenes in which shows the substance addiction which forced them to do crimes and other anti-social activities especially the protagonist Luke which forces him to fall into many undesired situations and consequently moves the story forward. The researcher as also find out the inter relation between the crimes and the substance abuse.

Treatment and execution

The overall mood of all the films is dark. Most of the lead characters go through a series of emotional outbursts and these outbursts result in various consequences which gives rise to a number of conflicts. The films can also be said as the metaphor for the dark and disturbing mind-sets of the characters in the film. The audience can feel the tension in the air as the characters go through different situations and consequences.

In 'No smoking' the neo realistic atmosphere is evident all over with the unusual settings and the colouring of the film also enhances the overall impact of the film on the audience and the character 'K's mind-set also has been vividly portrayed in the film through the consequence and situation. Likewise the films show the psychological tensions and pressure the characters go through.

Violent Content

The researcher also found out the extensive portrayal of violence in the films. All the films show extensive verbal abuse between the characters and the high profanity is common in all the films. The profane words differ in dialects of the respective areas. The profane words are like the integral part of a normal conversation and The words are of Hindi origin and they vary according to the

Physical violence is also very significant in most of his films. The 'Gangs of Wasseypur' films entirely rely upon physical violence through arms such as guns, pistols and other variants of weapons. The blood and gore is also very apparent in those films. The first film of Anurag Kashyap, 'Paanch' has intense physical violence where the protagonist himself indulges into criminal activities such as murder and hand assaults. Blood and gore is also apparent in this film. Similarly the film 'Gulaal' also has a number of physical violence and gore. Which shows the common trait of violence is present in most of his films. 'No smoking' too shows extreme gore wherein the finger of one of the characters has been cut off. In films 'Gangs of Wasseypur', Black Friday, 'Paanch' and 'Gulaal' the innate human violence and the human atrocities are vividly portrayed and shown.

There are a number of films in which there is a dominant trait of political violence where the power is misused and it is reflected through violence and other means of aggression. The movies also reflect how politics cannot survive without violence and aggression. The significance of violence is that it is vital in all aspects as the films which vary from different genres such from romance to political thriller there is a significant amount of violence in the films portray how violence is dominant in the society now.

The human negativities such as manipulation, betrayal, greed and violence are portrayed in a stark manner which actually has an impact on the audience. Kashyap has also tried to show the consequences of the conflict areas as in all the films' lead characters get consumed by the ill effects or the consequences of the negativities and find their own doom. The plot of the films majorly involves these conflicts which actually pushes the story forward. The corruption of the characters (political and non-political) also has a great impact on the story. The films also depict the misuse of authority and power and use them for their own selfish purposes.

The female characters are the main play a major role in the manipulation and other negativities. In the film 'Gulaal' there are the character Kiran manipulates the protagonist Dilip Singh and other characters for her own selfish purposes. They use their seductive nature to enhance their manipulative abilities. The films are dark moral stories and they convey a message in the end. The violence of the films are too brutal and most of the films are actually true life incidents which have marked some impact on the history. (Booth, 1995)

The psychological aspects of the film are very crucial as there are a number of psychological elements are dominant in the films and they have influence on the characters. The researcher has found out a pattern followed by Anurag Kashyap in making films.

Conclusion

As per the analysis and findings the researcher has found out that all the eight films of Anurag Kashyap have recurring themes and they portray different emotional variations of the characters portrayed in the film. The researcher has also found that the films have tried to convey different messages or implications to the audience. They have tried to cater to the specific needs of the audience which applies to the uses and gratification theory. The films take the audience to a whole new level of cinematic experience which disturbs the very perception and the basic understanding of the audience.

The researcher has analysed all the films follow a same pattern and it has a unique style pertained to the director Anurag Kashyap.

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