

Amitabh Bacchan as an Anti-Hero in Film Deewaar: A Socio-Political Study

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The protagonists of any narrative form whether it is literature or cinema have always attracted much critical attention and a large number of work have been devoted to them.

In the present paper, the anti-hero of film Deewaar who is famous as an angry young man and is extremely fascinating and complex character, has been taken as the topic of study. Nothing has happened suddenly in the lives of human race on this earth. Man has taken billions of years to be what he is at the present time. In the same way the transformation of a modest anti-hero into angry young man was also gradual and continuous process. The aftermaths of Second World War made human heart fragile and suspicious of others. Social disparity and political indignation led to mistrust and unrest which was an atomic element in the formation of angry young man.

But before diving into the boiling water of the concept it is important that we must endeavor not to get confused between the two as the angry young man is the culmination of the anti hero as far as the persona is concerned. The term Anti-Hero is used for a protagonist who abandons the ideal virtues and attributes of the conventional archetypal hero, yet provides himself the pivotal force in the dramatic action. He is least concerned with the welfare of society and self-absorbed, cynical, suspicious and self-destructive creature. He lacks integrity and generally suffers from emotional conflicts and has disliking for social institutions and norms. The anti-hero has a strong element of hamartia that becomes the main reason of his doom. The angry young man is also comprised of the all these qualities. There is no difference as such between the two. Both have less respect for the prevailing social norms and establishments. Both disrespect law and order but where anti-hero does not bother to correct them or repent on them, an angry young man typically sheds anger and frustration on law and order. Both are products of the fabrics of social political and cultural milieu. But Anti-Hero is definitely a precursor of angry young man how came after anti-hero in literature and Cinema both. There was no angry young man in the days of Christopher Marlowe and Dr. Faustus. Dr. Faustus a typical anti-hero but cannot be claimed as an angry young man.

Angry Young Man came into existence in literature in the writing of John Osborne in 1950's. John Osborne's book 'Look Back in Anger' gives a vivid portrayal of angry young man. The hero of the play, Jimmy Porter is constantly angry about the social class- conflict. In M.H. Abrams's words

"The chief person in a modern novel or play whose character is widely discrepant from that which we associate with the traditional protagonist or hero of a serious literary work. Instead of manifesting largeness, dignity, power or heroism, the anti-hero is petty, ignominious, passive, ineffectual or dishonest".

Cinema has the potential to play a very significant and powerful role as a medium of entertainment, information and social transformation. It has projected and manifested various social issues of all times on screen with social, political, historical and cultural contexts and hence the concept of anti-hero and angry young man. The decade of 1970s is marked as a turning point in the annals of Indian Cinema. And the biggest credit goes to the emergence of a new form of anti-hero who sprang up all over the silver screen fully equipped with all the ingredients of Angry young Man, becoming most important thread in the fabric of Indian cinema providing impetus for a more profound drama and multilayered plot. In Indian Cinema the concept of angry young man came to almost two decades after it came to the western literature and Cinema. It came in 1970 there is a series of films where many characters portrayed by Amitabh Bacchhan came to popularity known as Angry Young Man.

As the present paper proposes to explore the transformation of anti-hero into angry young man in Indian cinema, it is quite obvious to go with all the details of political and historical factors of that specific era. To understand what made the angry young man of India cinema a hero in the eyes of his adoring audience, one has to consider the general mood of the times. After Independence, India underwent a rapid change in hopes and aspirations but the creations of wealth and production of goods did not keep pace with the general public expectations. With independence the first shock of bloody partition left its deep scars all over India. By the closing of the 60's agricultural output did not match with the growing population and soon the country was to face the worst famine in 1964. The hype of 'Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai' died a sudden and humiliating death in the India-China war of 1962 and the imagined industrial development did not show results in tangible economic benefits for the people. The famine of 1964 and two wars India had to fight immediately after independence brought a lot of suffering and miseries. There was a great recession in economy and severe

food shortage and widespread unemployment. People started losing faith in nationalism and democracy and hence in moral values as well. In Naxalbarry, economically a very backward district in Bengal, some people resorted to armed violence giving birth to naxallite activities which now spread to hundreds of districts, in India causing a big threat to Indian republic. The decade of 70's was a period of social chaos and political turmoil. Emergency had -been declared by the government and the rebellious politicians were being marched off to jail. This was the time of total industrial failure and labour unrest and starvation. The biggest railway strike was called in the history of India in 1974. In Punjab the situation was horrible and progress and productivity came to a total halt. Law and order reached a situation of total chaos. The youth of this time was bewildered by decline in social, political and economic affairs of so called the greatest democracy. In this era strange things were happening under the garb of law and order. Average Indian was slowly losing faith in all institution-be it the police, judiciary, the government or the bureaucracy. The national heroes or leaders offered much but failed to do anything of substance for the public hence causing unrest, hollowness, chaos and aggression. This unrest, angst and aggression resulted into the origin of anti-hero and subsequently Indian cinema was adored by a new type of angry young man who hated the social system around him and thus attempted to destroy it.

The true seeds of this angst can be traced in the famous block buster film DEE WAR (1975) directed by Yash Chopra. DEEWAR was a ground breaking film as we are talking about 1970's so the film must also be discussed and analysed keeping in mind the historical and political factors of the specific era. This was the era of Pulse of the period, the unrest and confusion of that time. It is this resonance with the time that made the film a big success. The film tells the story of two brothers, Vijay Verma and RaviVerma and Ravi Verma, who follow different career path: Vijay is a smuggler and Ravi is the police officer who is asked to hunt Vijay down. Vijay (Amitabh Bachchan) and Ravi (Shashi Kapoor) are the sons of a trade unionist Anand Verma (Satyen Kappu), who was defeated and disgraced by the management of his firm by using his family as a prey. Unable to bear the public disgrace father deserts the family and the sons are raised by their mother (Nirupa Roy) who brings them to Bombay city, who suffers the series of trials and tribulations of poor single mother. Vijay, the elder brother, grows up with an acute awareness of his father's humiliations and victimized for his father's supposed misdeeds. In the process of fighting for his rights, Vijay, who starts as a boot polisher and become a dockyard worker in his youth, becomes a smuggler and a leading figure of the underworld.

He is traumatized by his father's submission to industrial mafia, and grows up with a burning desire to upset all the so called civilized social and economic system. He smuggles, kills people, visits night clubs and does not show any remorse. His anger is fed up insatiately by the line imprinted on his hand "mera baap chor hai" (my father is a thief). The voices of mob is still echoing and hammering his mind constantly :

Mob : "Wo dekho ja raha saamp ka beta sapolia ...

To ye hai sasura chor ki aulaad.....Anand chor...

likh de is ke haath par..... mera baap chor hai" (Deewaar)

Anybody can well imagine the intensity of anger and frustration of a person who has been burning with such kind of a fire right from his innocent childhood which is an age of fantasies, dreams and innocent pleasures. When this child enters into the practical world, he finds it very much contrary to his dreamy vision and very difficult to cope up with a sense of unease and unrest leads him to a stage of disillusionment and disappointment. Vijay as an angry hero is torn between a desired future and unhappy past. As the "good bad hero," Vijay's, "badness is not shown as intrinsic or immutable but as a reaction to a developmental deprivation of early childhood, often a mother's loss, absence or ambivalence towards the hero (Kakkar 1992, 37)." Vijay (Amitabh Bacchan) as an angry man is torn between a desired future and an unhappy and turbulent past. When Ravi returns home from his training he finds that Vijay's has turned in a very rich person over a night, has assimilated much money, and palatial home. His first assignment is to capture some of Bombay's underworld gangsters and dealers which incorporates his brother Vijay. He shocked to know that his brother is connected with underworld and doing criminal exercises. Ravi decides to move out from the home along with his mother on discovering Vijay's wrong doings. After losing the his family, Vijay is hurt and gets frustrated and he comes across Anita (Parveen Bobby) in a bar. After some time Anita is mercilessly killed by Samant, Vijay losses all sense and kills Samant in exact retribution for Anita's death, driving him to be marked a criminal until the end of time. The mother (Nirupa Roy) is tormented by Vijay's choices and his criminal activities decides to leave him on his own. When Vijay's mother compares him with his brother Ravi and advises him to follow the virtuous path saying :

Maa : "Ravi bhi to tera hi bhai hai aur tum dono mein kitna farak hai"

Vijay : "Haan bahut farak hai aur sabse bada farak to ye hai..." (Deewaar)

He immediately projects his hand showing the line “mera baap chor hai.”

He is full of anger and tries to vent out his anger and frustration through violence and destruction-finding it as the only resolution to reconcile with life. At a point when two brothers meet for a last conflict, Ravi are gives with Vijay to stop running, shoots Vijay in his arm and Vija y kicks the bucket and Vijay’s auto smashed up into a divider and he takes his last breath in his mother arm’s in sanctuary. Vijay has been portrayed as a true Anti-hero by the director reaching the culmination of the motives of angry young man in the film. He is successful in winning all the sympathy and love of the audience by exuding the essence of pure catharsis witnessing the quality of a true anti-hero.

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