

# ANURAG KASHYAP'S FEMALE CHARACTERS - PORTRAYING INDIVIDUALISM IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES

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## ABSTRACT

Anurag Kashyap, a name synonymous to path-breaking cinema in India, has always portrayed women as independent and strong-headed. Kashyap's movies create a woman in freehold, a wild spirit truly living its own breath. She demands, craves, yearns and fights, does whatever is required to keep her individualism and belief intact. The movies like Dev D, Gulaal, Gangs of Wasseypur and Manmarziyaan bring about a wide variety of treatment of the female characters. Anurag Kashyap's craftsmanship outshines as he liberates each of these women from the traditional and conservative bounds of women being the second sex. The present paper discusses the roles of women in Anurag Kashyap's movies namely; 'Gulaal', 'Dev D', 'Manmarziyaan', 'That Girl in Yellow Boots' and 'The Gangs of Wasseypur'.

**KEYWORDS:** Women Characters, Anurag Kashyap's Characters, Bollywood.

*"Cinema is much more than heroes and villains".*

**Anurag Kashyap**

## INTRODUCTION

From drama to cinema the journey of evolution of art as a medium of connection between people has had many twists and turns. Cinema stands as a strong ideological tool to influence the minds of the masses. Cinema with a history of more than a hundred years has now turned into the biggest form of entertainment that affects people all around the world. The subject of cinema has found footing on a wide variety of subjects and in different flavours. The conception, adaptation and reception of movies have travelled a long distance since 1913, the year Dada Saheb Phalke introduced the first silent film to the "naive Indian audience. Today, cinema influences people in many more ways than one and has become a

huge industry that thrives on supply and demand. (Chhetry 2015)

Cinema has always had a reflection of the time it has been created. The art of acting and the subject matter acted is directly proportional to the social-cultural reflection of the society it images. The film makers therefore have a grave responsibility of projection of ideology that in turn is to affect the masses. Cinema in aegis of entertainment touches the contemporary in contemporary light. The modern film makers have a challenge far more than of any-time before. The film-making has developed in technology and connectivity and the film-makers have evolved accordingly.

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Anurag Kashyap, entered the film industry as Ram Gopal Verma's protégé and a co-writer of Satya, has come far in the industry despite his outsider status. Much more important than his progress in the industry, however, are his achievements in cinema. His films are bold, hard-hitting, and revolutionary as far as Hindi cinema is concerned. (Chawla 2016) Anurag Kashyap's films have subjects that appeal the youth and the generation in making. The generation that is informed, is a subject to information blast, is a victim of progress and at the same time confused about the developments. The women characters in Anurag Kashyap films are not characters from the fairy tales. The women characters stand parallel to their male counterparts and create a noticeable space of their own. These women question the rights as much as they demand love. She is a part of society, level headed and discrete with her needs. Kashyap experiments with the roles of these women who are crafted in a certain way that they do not fail to impress despite the male dominated themes and cast.

The present paper has skimmed a few female characters from Anurag Kashyap's movies in comparison to the subject of the movie and the way Kashyap treats the role of the woman characters.

### **GULAAL**

One of the marked films of Kashyap, Gulaal deals with pursuit of power, quest for legitimacy, perceived injustices and hypocrisy of the powerful. Kiran and Anuja two women characters that get involved with the same man Dileep, one for the reason of ulterior motives of college politics and the other for love are two conflicting projections of modern-day woman. Kashyap has depicted women very outrageous and in modern way, in this case the ambitious, illegitimate daughter of a royal who loses the campus election to Dileep, but does not give up rather finds another more deceitful way to realize her ambitions. (Mrs. Sarika Takhar Badsara 2017)

### **MANMARZIYAAN**

Anurag Kashyap's projection of Taapsee Pannu as Rumi is special. This woman of young today is not only angry, drinks, smokes, curses, and is unabashed about her sexual needs but is also unapologetically committed to her desires. In a world where women across classes are wracked by familial and social guilt Kashyap gave us a heroine who has no trouble prioritizing her own happiness and pursuing it with a courage and dedication that her paramour lacks. She is also unafraid to make mistakes and to own them. (Tiwari-2018)

The portrayal is an experiment of its kind establishing the individuality of the female character which is independent of the male protagonist. The mental crisis that Rumi faces is a reflection of plenty of semi-urban girls in India who have tall aspirations of individuality and independence. India has several such developing small towns where Rumis in one way or the other can be found in the roads and gullies tutoring a fight to get educated, resisting the pressure to get married, and yearning for financial independence. Rumi, with her unrelenting passion, could have given a voice to the aspirations of these young women, but she does not. This is especially ironical given that Kashyap claims to have been inspired by Amrita Pritam's life in writing this love story because Pritam's love triangle was secondary to her contribution to the world of ideas and letters.

### **THE GANGS OF WASSEYPUR**

A strong story revolving around the male dominated casts does not bash the presence of Mohsina Hamid. Kashyap creatively brings about the distinct essence of Mohsina in a dominated patriarchal world. In a brutal, male dominated world, Mohsina Hamid (Huma Qureshi) stands out as the woman who owns her sexuality and someone who is not afraid of her gangster husband even though he is one of the most

feared men in the area, and who supports him in tough times. (Chawla 2016)

### **THAT GIRL IN YELLOW BOOTS**

Written by Anurag Kashyap and Kalki Koechlin, his then wife, the film features Kalki in the lead as Ruth, a British woman who comes to Mumbai to look for her Indian father. She works as a masseuse who also gives some of her clients 'happy endings.' Ruth finds herself in a world that is ruthlessly selfish and mean and is waiting every inch to take advantage of her. She is out in a system where bribery is common and that she is forced to bribe every government official she meets. Those volunteering to help her in her search also demand things, including sexual favours. Even her boyfriend takes advantage of her on a regular basis, and she even comes in the cross hairs of his criminal dealings. The end of the story where Ruth comes to know that her father is one of her clients, who knew all along that she was his daughter, is an emotionally strong toll for a woman character on screen. While Kashyap is able to portray the constant quest of Ruth, he is able to create the effect of body trade and women used and misused in order to achieve their objectives. Beauty and intelligence constantly flout the womanly part of the individual in Ruth as a more usable, tradable sex.

### **DEV D**

Anurag Kashyap dares to redo the subject of Sarat Chandra Bandhobadhyay's *Devdas* which had already created a milestone in its own way. The two women Paro and Chanda have dominating presence throughout the film. The male counterpart of Dev is a reckless, egotistical figure that falls easy victim to alcohol. Paro on the other hand is a modern day up-gradation of the original creation of Sarat Chandra. Kashyap redoes her as a woman with self-esteem and balance. Chanda on the other hand is a survivor. She brushes past a debilitating experience owing to her strong sense of individuality. She evolves

and becomes her own person as she chooses to be into a profession of a prostitute and takes charge of her life. While Paro of Kashyap decides against marrying the love of her life for she believes she deserves better it reflects in her identity and demand for trust and respect. Even later, when Dev wishes to return to her, she enjoys her right to say no and refuses to fall into a toxic relationship.

### **CONCLUSION**

Whether it is Paro and Chanda of *Dev D*, Kiran of *Gulaal* or Hamida of the *Gangs of Wasseypur*, Anurag Kashyap reflects his showmanship in crafting a modern day, individual and progressive woman who is sensitive and sensible at the same time. She is portrayed none less in ability and confidence in the male dominated plots. Kashyap deals with the woman's sexuality and utilizes the same as strength for realizing her ambition and higher purposes. The stories of Anurag Kashyap are strongly male dominated, but the women still shine out in their roles. Anurag Kashyap breaks the traditional cocoon and brings forth the woman who is progressive and in charge of her own life.

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