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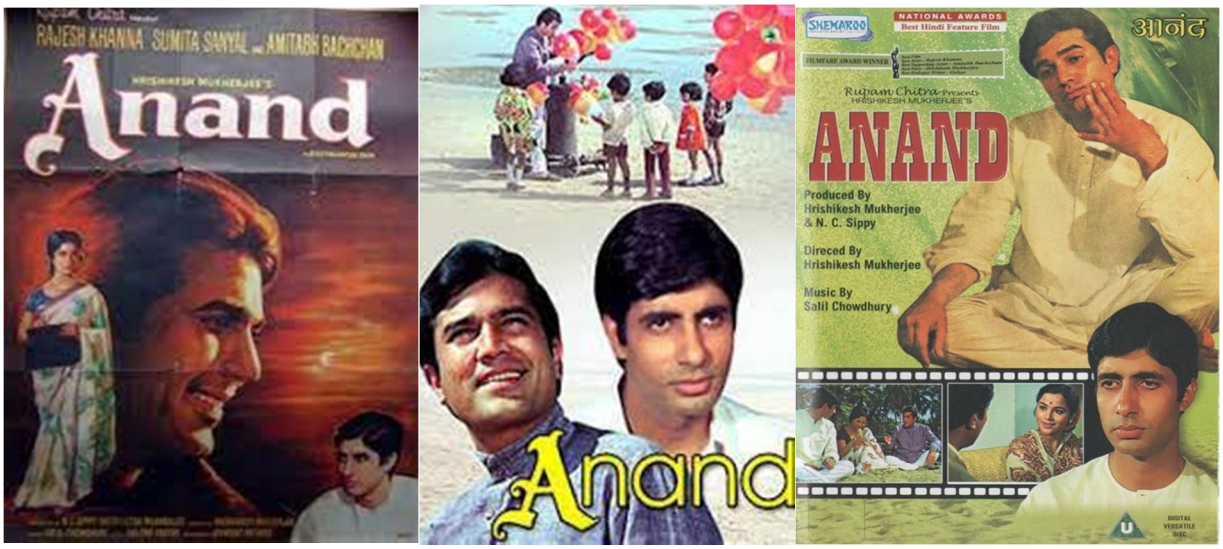
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Interplay of Characters in Hrishikesh Mukherjee's Cinema a Study of Masterpiece "Anand"

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Anand Mara Nahin…..Anand Marte Nahin



Abstract: ***Indian cinema is known in the world for many reasons. Indian cinema has witnessed the craftsmanship of auteurs like Hrishikesh Mukherji who have set examples to deal with serious subjects in a subtle manner, The field of cinema studies stay enriched by researching these legends and filmmakers. The year 1971 was marked with several 'big victories' – in politics, cricket and in war – all of which had long term implications for India. The national mood was resilient, even if the country continued to struggle with endemic problems. Fifty years later, we look back at those times and evoke some of that mood. In a series of articles, leading writers recall and articulate key events and processes that left their mark on a young, struggling but hopeful nation.***

I. INTRODUCTION

An all-time great legend of Indian cinema, Hrishikesh Mukherjee knew how to tell the simplest of stories in the most captivating style. But what made his work resonate deeply with both critics and audiences was the fact that he would bring ordinary Indians to life on 70 MM silver screen.

"Babumoshai …Zindagi Lambi Nahin ..Badi Honi Chahiye" said Anand Sehgal, a terminally-ill cancer patient to his friend, Dr Bhaskar Banerjee.

The line became all-time favorite to all the generations along with the character knit by Hrishikesh Mukherji. The film was landmark for several reasons –Salil Chaudhary's melodious music, Gulzar's moving memorable dialogues and Mukherjee's unique way of looking at and portrayal of death (Das,1998) .The quote symbolizes happiness and living each moment to its full through the dialogue- "Life is not about how long you live; it is about how well you live it".

This dialogue, immortalised by Rajesh Khanna who played the unforgettable character of Anand in the 1971 classic-Anand, sums up the life of its legendary director Hrishikesh Mukherjee. It's a moment in the film which evokes a blend of despair and hope.(Shrivastava,1990)

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II. INSPIRATION

Life, after all, is about living through different moments and experiencing them to the fullest. Mukherjee took inspiration from his own life. Mukherjee's bond with actor Raj Kapoor, who was ill at the time, inspired and flourished the relationship and true bonding between Anand and Dr Bhaskar, played by Amitabh Bachchan beautifully .The legendary actor and director Raj Kapoor used to call Mukherjee 'Babumoshai' as Anand calls Dr Bhaskar in the film. Anand Sehgal, meanwhile, is a Punjabi, just like Raj Kapoor.(Bose,1999)

The story of Anand, in many ways, was inspired by Mukherjee's fear of losing Raj Kapoor. Mukherjee crafted his movies using the essence of life. This is the reason why he directed some of the best and most memorable Hindi movies carrying instances from day today lives. As abrilliant director Hrishikesh Mukherjis treatment with the story stirs the cinegoer.

A. Story & Theme

The story revolves around many characters and two unlikely friends. Dr Bhaskar Banerjee (Amitabh Bachchan), a medical doctor, is the author of a book, Anand, about his relationship with Anand (Rajesh Khanna), who is dying of cancer but wants to enjoy every minute of what is left of his life. The film has been a true inspiration to millions of depressed and disappointed people who could make out a meaning and message out of the film.

The theme is about laughter as the best medicine, while the two medical doctors, Dr Bhaskar and Dr Kulkarni, get on with their lives, the former bemoaning the disease of poverty which he can't cure while the latter is more pragmatic, taking money by giving multicolored placebos to wealthy hypochondriacs to allow him to set up a clinic to treat the poor. Medical ethics intrude little in the film, medicine being a metaphor rather than a science. The medical aberrations are mostly only a plot device, as for many viewers the film is about the two male stars in a deep friendship. The upcoming death of Anand observed and seen on the face of Dr Banerjee every now and then gives meaning and weightage to the script in a beautiful yet subtle way. Rajesh Khanna here has been in his peak and performed as a star in one of his most cherished roles, while Amitabh Bachchan was then almost unknown.(Somaya,2008)

Bachchan's role in the middle-class Hindi cinema of the 1970s is overshadowed by his work in mainstream cinema, Anand being made only two years before Zanjeer, and four before Sholay and Deewaar. Bachchan is well cast as the Bengali (though he writes his diary in Hindi), and had worked in Calcutta before marrying Jaya Bhaduri, whose career started with Satyajit Ray and acted wonderfully with Hrishikesh Mukherjee. Khanna, the Phenomenon, makes a wonderful star entrance to a fanfare here. Bachchan's performance is extraordinary: very un-filmi, intense and thoughtful. He's not a Devdas figure as there's no element of self-destruction, nor is he his Angry Young Man/Vijay character, as here he is angry about injustice and poverty rather than something that someone had done to his family.

Khanna was the guy next door, or the chap you'd like to have as a neighbor, who winked and tossed his head in a mannered way but was always charming. He was the small-town hero, though sophisticated himself, who stepped out of a Hindi novel. What struck anybody in Anand was his astounding ability to handle a song without dancing. It's much harder not to look silly when walking and gesticulating while lip-syncing, but Khanna carries it off beautifully. It's easy to say he had good music but the way he performed the songs is remarkable.

B. Characters and Depiction of City

In this city, people from all over the country gather. The Bengali Dr Bhaskar, the Punjabi Anand (who reads his poetry in Urdu), the Maharashtrian Kulkarnis, the Punjabi wrestler (Dara Singh), the Christian Mrs D'Sa and the Gujarati-speaking Muslim Isabhai Suratwala (Johnny Walker), and the lovely Durga Khote as the archetypal widowed mother. They speak their own language, follow their own religions and culture but they can all live together in the great cosmopolitan city. Bhaskar's servant, Raghu Kaka, speaks up for himself as he nourishes them with his food, which is, of course, the great blend – khichdi. The women are agents and move around with confidence. The only person who is teased is the actor Moolchand with his huge belly. Lalita Panwar plays beautifully the character of caring matron Ms D'Sa. The minute she enters the screen , her signature, the meaning. It seems dated to fear cancer, which is said to be untreatable in the film, more than all other diseases. The form of cancer which Anand has is rare but known by all Hindi film fans: 'lymphosarcoma of the intestine'. One of the themes of the film is that one must live life to the full ('zindagi badi honi chahiye, lambi nahin'). The oncologist, Bhaskar, can't cure Anand but Anand gives him life, and indeed a publication.

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Although we see some scary hospital machinery, Anand looks remarkably well and manifests none of the unpleasant symptoms of intestinal cancer but has a beautiful and fully melodramatic death.

The film is said to be inspired by Hrishikesh Mukherjee's friendship with Raj Kapoor. Bachchan's role as Dr Bhaskar was modelled on the director (and Anand even called him babu moshai, which was Kapoor's name for Mukherjee), while Anand was Kapoor. Certainly Anand has many characteristics of the immature but exuberant male that Kapoor and others, including Shah Rukh Khan in some of his earlier roles, have played. Lalita Pawar reprises her role as Mrs D'Sa, fierce but kind, as she had in the Mukherjee's directed Anari, 1959, which starred Kapoor and has many elements of his style.

It's strange to imagine Mukherjee's original casting, that is Kishore Kumar as Anand and Mehmood as Dr Bhaskar. The story is that Kishore Kumar had a fight with some Bengali impresario over a stage show so told his doorman to refuse entry to 'the Bengali' if he came to the house. The doorman assumed Mukherjee was that Bengali…

Gulzar, who was a later addition to the Bengali group, despite being a Punjabi, played a major role in the film, from co-writing the story, the eminently quotable dialogues, some of the lyrics and the poem that Dr Bhaskar recites, 'Maut Tu Ek Kavita Hai'. In Anand, words are at such a premium that tape recorders move the story along, whether Suman (Seema Deo) Anand himself at the end that allows him to 'speak' to Bhaskar after death. The look of the film is sometimes problematic, as it's quite nonfilmic with harsh and unflattering lighting that makes RK's skin look blemished and AB lugubrious. The indoor locations are mostly undramatic and forgettable, perhaps highlighted by the wonderful outdoor scenes throughout the film.

The music is outstanding, even by Salil Chowdhury's high standards. The popular numbers like Kahin Door Jab Din, Zindagi Kaisi Hai Paheli, Maine Tere Liye, gave a message to live life happily. The picturisation of Anand looking into a glorious Bombay sunset but feeling that something touches him in an uncanny way and reminds him of the past ends with Bhaskar appearing, bringing him back down to earth (Prasad,1998).All the songs but one are picturised on Anand, marking him as the star of the film and the person whose inner life we are following. Always cheerful and bouncy, the songs allow him to express his inner self eloquently though somewhat out of character. There is a feeling that he arrives ready made, kind, trying to help people and spread joy in such a way that he doesn't seem real. The film opens with what I think is 'Zindagi kaisi hai paheli' set to a cinematic march, as we see Bombay, mostly South Bombay, from high buildings, when it looks achingly beautiful, the traffic bustling, not snarled, cosmopolitan, a city where the streets are lively and the population is mobile. The handsome buildings, such as VT and the high rises are set against the stunning Marine Drive, truly one of the world's great cities. (Huda, 2004)

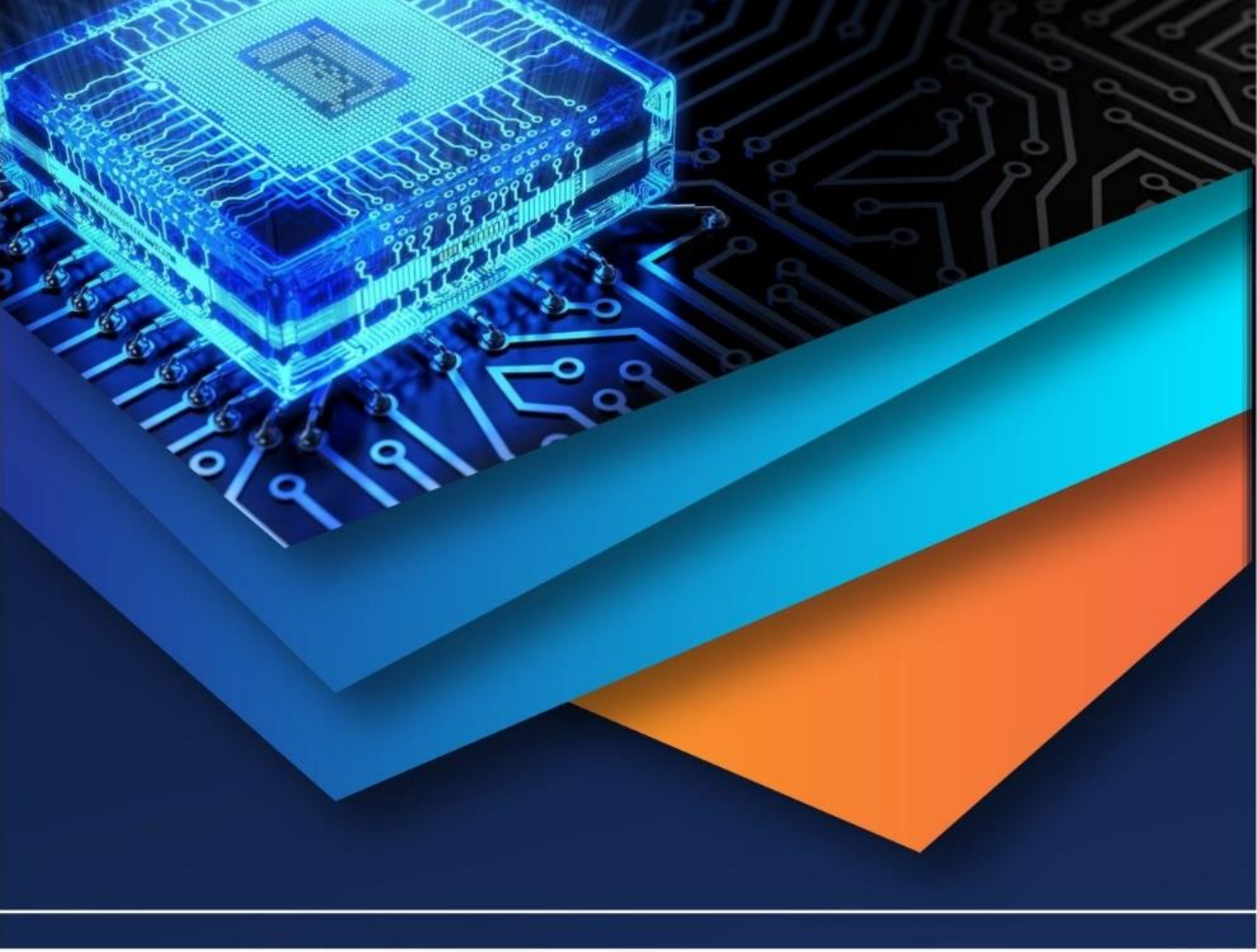
III. CONCLUSION

The study not only unveils the directorial vision but also gives a message that how beautifully a dull dry idea of death can be executed by brilliant filmmakers in a subtle manner. This film sets an example for other filmmakers to portray the reality on screen this way too. Anand not only a film watched by millions billions around the globe stirs everybody and compels to cry many times but leaves a message that how beautifully we can see the life god has given to us. Anand a memorable , beautifully and soulfully knit character exquisitely played by Rajesh Khanna in a small span of two hours spell bounds us to another world. The amazing creation Anand on 70 MM screen is an ocean for researchers of cinema studies.

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