

The Nation at War in the Bollywood Movie *Anek*: A Semiotic Analysis

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Abstract: The film *Anek* (2022), which falls under the action-thriller genre, has been directed by Anubhav Sinha and is set in the north-eastern region of India. The film portrays the north-eastern part of India as a militarised and exotic terrain, where terrorist organisations are causing widespread destruction. The narrative centres on the obstacles encountered by a covert government law enforcement operative dispatched to north-eastern India with the objective of negotiating a peace accord between the government and insurgent factions. In an attempt to depict the insurgency situation in the region, the film portrays the region as a perilous location for travel and labour. The narrative homogenises and exoticizes the entirety of the north-eastern region as a war zone.

This study presents a semiotic analysis of the film, examining the codes and conventions used in its narrative to portray northeast India as an exotic and perilous territory in conflict with mainland India. The study will use both descriptive and analytical methodologies.

Keywords: Exotic, stereotype, homogenize, militarize, other

INTRODUCTION

According to Wikipedia, a nation is a group of people who have come together because they share a common language, history, ethnicity, culture, or social structure. It is the common identity that all residents of a boundary share, regardless of their differences. Despite having specific boundaries to represent it, a nation is largely an abstract concept or idea that has no physical manifestation. According to Benedict Anderson's seminal work, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1983), the concept of a nation is characterized as an imagined political community. According to him, this is because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (Anderson 6)." Despite their shared diversity, the entire population of a country, according to him, remains bound by a "deep horizontal comradeship." During the anti-colonial struggle of the twentieth century, the myth of the nation rose to prominence in many parts of the world. In the struggle against colonialism, the concept of the nation served as an anchor of solidarity for the people. Even though the idea of nationalism was a powerful force to unify its population, newly independent states from colonial authority had to face obstacles due to the diversity among different groups of people in the various sections of the nation-state.

The concept of race is also closely related to national discourse. Because a nation contains diverse ethnicities. In the context of India, this becomes even more evident, as Indian society is comprised of various ethnic groups inhabiting various geographical terrains. Despite the widely revered slogan "Unity in diversity" in the

Indian democracy, racism has been a widespread discourse in the social fabric. In the social discourses of the nation state, the dichotomy, and binary categories of centre/margin, self/other, and we/they have always existed.

In *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, Bill Ashcroft et al. argue that the binaries of centre-margin, self-other, civilized-native, colonize-colonized, and us-them constitute a colonial discourse that postcolonial theory seeks to dismantle (2003). Neo-colonialism, according to Kwame Nkrumah, is the influence and dominance of a more powerful nation over the economy, language, culture, ideology, and political philosophy of a weaker nation (1965). The powerful nations monopolise the binaries and exert authority over the weaker nations. According to Marxist theorist Louis Althusser, Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) such as education, churches, families, the media, trade unions, and the law aid in exercising control over subordinate races and cultures.

The region of northeast India inhabited by a significant tribal population is marginalised in the national imagination. Mainstream media discourses frequently marginalise, exoticize, and stereotype the region. The region becomes the “other” region in the nation-state’s imagination. Connected to mainland India by a narrow strip of land known as ‘Chicken’s Neck,’ the region is frequently excluded from nation-state discourse. The region is frequently viewed as a strategically significant geographic entity rather than a distinct region with a rich cultural and ethnic diversity. Moreover, the national mainstream media focuses primarily on violence and insurgency issues in the region. As a result, the media on the mainland is frequently xenophobic of the other region due to its insurgency problems, and media narratives are full of insurgency coverage that ignores the real issues pertinent to life and progress in the region.

Bollywood is the dominant elite's cultural mass media. The narrative of nationalism it produces are reflective of the nationalism of the dominant class. Here, marginal regions and most of their inhabitants continue to be underprivileged. Hence, northeast India is a region underrepresented in Bollywood film narratives. There are few films that are set in northeast India. The small number of Bollywood films set in northeast India portray the region as an exotic locale with a homogenous tribal population and as the other region in the country’s hinterland. As the mainstream privileged class controls the Bollywood film industry, Bollywood films become agents of neo-colonialism when they depict the northeast as the other territory.

Semiotics is the endeavour of comprehending and analysing cinema as a specific type of sign system or as a language by examining signs, codes, and conventions in the narrative. Christian Metz argues in *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*, which was published in two volumes between 1968 and 1972, that the language of cinema contains short circuit sign and that a film signifies meaning through specific semiotic codes unique to cinema, such as the possible arrangement of shots in a narrative sequence. Metz’s proposed semiotic analysis of a film examines how a collection or group of short circuit signs generates specific cinematic codes in its discourse and how the film conveys meaning through denotation and connotation. Metz concludes that the smallest element of cinematic expression is the shot, which functions as a sentence in the cinematic language.

The Bollywood action thriller *Anek*, meaning many, stars Ayushman Khurana, Andrea Kevichusa, Manoj Pahwa, Kumud Mishra, J.D. Chakravarthy, and others. It addresses insurgency, politics, and violence in northeast India. The film's name is derived from the Hindi phrase "*Anekta Mein Ekta*," which translates to "Unity in Diversity." According to Wikipedia, the phrase signifies unity and harmony between dissimilar individuals or groups of people. In the context of India, the term has been recognised as an apt description of the country's linguistic, religious, caste, and ethnic diversity.

The narrative of the film unfolds through the perspective of Joshua aka Aman (Ayushman Khurana), an IPS officer and agent of the intelligent service (IS). In multiple scenes, Aman presents the northeast as the "other" region on the nation's periphery. In one scene, Joshua refers to northeast India as "*India ka ek naya hissa*" (a new region of India). He calls the rebels in the northeast "*India ka dushman*" (enemy of India). He has been dispatched to northeast India on a mission to execute a peace accord between the government of India and a rebel faction known as the Tiger Sanga group, which is demanding secession from the nation state. "North-eastern Revolutionary Force" is the official name of the Tiger Sanga group. However, there is significant opposition to the signing of the peace accord from other rebel groups, such as the Johnson group. In the narrative, he describes his task as "locating Indian enemies and eliminating them." He states, "From the outside, it appears that the entire northeast was against India."

The narrative portrays the northeast as the most dangerous conflict zone due to the active operations of numerous militant groups. This film departs from previous depictions of insurgency in the northeast in that it does not conflate diverse insurgent groups in the region into a single militant organisation. It refers to various insurgent factions and the layered complexity of the insurgency situation in the region. In the narrative, members of three rebel groups are depicted engaging in terrorist activities. The narrative demonstrates that the Tiger Sanga group is the most powerful outfit in the region, controlling toll taxes, illegal drugs, arms trade, and export-import. They have their own army as well as the support of the government or other allies. However, the narrative also alludes to the philanthropy of certain insurgent organisations.

The narrative also depicts smaller outfits, such as the Johnson group, planting bombs somewhere in the northeast on the eve of the 73rd Independence Day Parade practice ground in an effort to disrupt the peace accord. On the other hand, under Wangnao's leadership, Johnson advocates for education, economic independence, and the rights of children. He operates four drugs rehab centres in the state. Johnson believes that by signing the peace accord, Tiger Sanga is selling the state. He believes that the other factions that have joined Tiger have compromised their morals. According to him, the peace agreement is a fraud as it will never bring peace in the region. He argues that the demand for independence from the nation-state should be maintained.

Additionally, the film focuses on the corrupt game of political negotiations and power involved in establishing peace between insurgent groups and the central government in northeast India. The narrative demonstrates that the government seeks to appease insurgent groups and manage them with incentives and a false promise of peace and development. After receiving an offer from the central government ministry for political power and a statue at the airport, Tiger Sanga has decided to execute the

peace agreement. The narrative therefore implies that the central government signs peace accords as media hypes and political gimmicks. This also suggests that close connections between dissident groups and politicians in the region's power struggle in the name of the peace process. Aman asks his superior officer Abrar Bhatt (Manoj Pahwa) in the intelligence agency, "Is it possible that no one truly desires peace? Perhaps this is the reason why we have not been able to solve this problem for so long. So many politicians and revolutionaries, what a waste!" An IPS officer from India's mainland, Anjaiyaah Bellamkonda (J.D. Chakravarthy), stationed in the northeast, alludes to the government's peace process as a drama in another scene, because peace accords only result in control and not actual peace. Anjaiyaah tells Aman, "Peace is a dirty business, officer!" Peace and control are frequently confused. There is a sense of serenity when everything is under control... Peace is never truly attained, if one is to observe. Violence is achieved for the sake of peace. For control, I apologise. Humans, I believe, dislike peace."

The narrative also demonstrates that rebel groups oppress and persecute innocent civilians who venture to oppose them. Tiger Sanga issues orders to intimidate the villagers, shoot at small children, and burn down the homes of those who support rebel leader Johnson. Thus, the film showcases how innocent civilians are affected by insurgent violence and portrays them as the worst victims of violent conflicts between rebel outfits in the region. The film argues that young children and adolescents from northeast India have joined insurgent organisations as armed cadres. In addition to serving as cadres, rebel groups also employ children as potters to deliver food. In one scene, a young child can be seen delivering food to the rebels hiding in a hilly location. In a number of scenes, young children are shown fighting as members of an insurgent faction, wielding assault rifles and firearms and engaging in ambush with another insurgent faction.

The film *Anek* celebrates the valour and sacrifice of state agencies, such as the Indian army, paramilitary, and police, and portrays them as the torchbearers of peace in northeast India and as the saviour of northeastern citizens. The poster of the film reads, "*Jeetega Kaun? Hindustan*" (Who Will Win? India). This suggests that in the war for peace, the nation will win against those on the fringes. A scene contains references to an Indian surgical operation against Pakistani terrorists. One Indian army officer chants "victory to India" in one scene. The film suggests that Indian paramilitary forces are capable of conveying the message "Violence is not the solution." Aman suggests to the commander of the Johnson group, Wangnao, that he cease violence and surrender to the Indian army. Wangnanao realises this at the end of the narrative as the Indian army slaughters his colleagues and captures him. Wangnao is apprehended from the rebel base camp in Myanmar, and he tells Aman, "You are correct. Violence is not the solution." Consequently, the film depicts an Indian man conveying a message of nonviolence in northeast India.

The film does an excellent job of highlighting corruption in the northeast's administration and police. Aman is depicted bribing the police and Tiger Sanga's army in two instances in the narrative. In the name of anti-terror operations, the film depicts police arresting innocent villagers, torching homes, and assaulting innocent civilians. In one scene, the authorities are depicted as keeping tens of thousands of arrested villagers in makeshift bamboo cages in an open field. The men in the cages

are beaten, kept half-naked, dragged, tormented, and tortured to death. In one scene, it is stated that the police detained and raped a young girl.

The film's plot is filled with explosions, ambushes, gunshots, clashes between the military and insurgents, chase sequences, and the burning of houses and paddy fields. The narrative also emphasises the conflicts between insurgent groups. In several crucial sequences, gunfights and pursuits between the Tiger Sanga and Johnson groups are dramatised. All of these provide a glimpse of the turmoil in the region. A disquieting soundtrack is used repeatedly to suggest that the region is a terror zone and that there is something ominous about the region. Long shots and birds-eye-view shots of desolate lands, deserted streets, and abandoned communities are captured in several scenes to represent the grave, tense situation in the region. In numerous scenes, Indian military personnel are captured in long shots while guarding market places.

Despite a sincere effort to examine the politics, power, and violence in the region, the film fails to capture the nuances of insurgency in the region. So many voiceovers of Aman in the narrative are distracting and out of context. Numerous subplots in the narrative disrupt and deviate from the narrative's tempo. The narrative occasionally appears muddled and confused. However, unlike previous Bollywood films, this film does not refer to northeast insurgents as terrorists. The narrative refers to the insurgents as rebels.

The film tends to conflate the entire region as a distinct geographical entity from the rest of India under the umbrella term "Northeast". Images of iconic locations in the capital city of New Delhi are juxtaposed with images of unidentified scenic locations in northeast India. The Parliament house, Motilal Nehru Marg, Gyarah Murti in Sardar Patel Marg, India gate canopy, Subhas Chandra Bose statue, etc. are among the iconic locations it depicts in contrasts to hilly terrains, rivers, and forest in northeast. However, the narrative does not specify the precise location in the scenes set in northeast. Instead, it unifies the region as the northeast. For instance, the name of the rehabilitation centre operated by the rebel group is "NE Rehabilitation Centre." In a similar vein, all the vehicles in the film's setting have registration plates that begin with "NE." These factors tend to generalise the entire region under the umbrella term Northeast.

Terrorism has been one of the most prominent narrative motifs in Bollywood films. In the extensive history of the Bollywood film industry, most films about terrorism in India belong to various genres such as action thriller, crime thriller, war film, anti-terror film, patriotic film, etc. According to Tejaswini Ganti, the Bollywood industry shifted its focus from the domestic domain to the state, society, and the streets in the 1980s, and the industry witnessed the proliferation of patriotic films depicting the paramilitary force as saviours and the terrorists as villains in the aftermath of wars with Pakistan and China. "Films about terrorism which began in the late 1980s increased in the 1990s, as separatist insurgencies intensified, and bomb blasts, religious riots, high level kidnappings, and hijackings increasingly became more common in contemporary India. The nation was now represented as under siege from acts of war or terrorism and its saviours were the military, paramilitary, or policemen (Ganti 45)."

Bollywood films depicting insurgency in northeast India are prone to stereotyping, exoticizing, and homogenising the region as a dangerous terrain. In Bollywood films,

the northeast becomes a conflict zone as a result of militant operations and militarization. However, such narratives paint a negative picture of the region on the Indian subcontinent. When coping with such delicate issues as insurgency, Bollywood filmmakers should conduct thorough research.

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Synthesis, Characterisation and Antibacterial Study of Zinc Oxide Nanoparticles

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Abstract: In recent science, Nanotechnology is a burning field for the researchers. It deals with the nanoparticles having a size of 1-100nm in one dimension used significantly concerning medical chemistry, atomic physics, and all other known fields. Metal nanoparticles have been intensively studied within the past decade. Nano sized materials have been an important subject in basic and applied sciences. Zinc oxide nanoparticles have received considerable attention due to their unique antibacterial, antifungal, and UV filtering properties, high catalytic and photochemical activity. Now a day the more interesting and attracting point in search area is synthesis of nanoparticles with specific properties. Due to unique properties of oxide of nanoparticles achieve great attention in research areas. ZnO nanostructures obtained a great attention in the research area because ZnO has large band gap. There are many different methods for the synthesis of ZnO nanoparticles. The main objective of this project is to synthesis ZnO nanoparticles by microwave assisted method and study its characterization. Nanostructures were characterized by SEM. Zinc oxide nanoparticles, such as those prepared in this study may exhibit potential antibacterial activity as their unique character. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the antibacterial activity of ZnO nanoparticles. Antibacterial study on Staphylococcus aureus, Clostridium botulinum, Bacillus cereus, E.coli, Streptococcus pneumonia, Pseudomonas aeruginosa. Antibacterial activity evaluated by agar well diffusion method.

Keyword: ZnO nanoparticles, antibacterial activity

INTRODUCTION

Nanochemistry is a branch of nano science, deals with the chemical application of nano technology. It involves the synthesis and the characterization of materials of nano scale size. The word "Nano" is derived from the Greek word for dwarf. Nanotechnology is mainly concerned with the synthesis of nanoparticles of variable sizes, shapes, chemical compositions and controlled disparities and their potential use for human benefits. Although so many physical and chemical methods may produce pure, well defined nanoparticles, these are quite expensive and potentially dangerous to the environment. Physical technique allows atoms to be manipulated and positioned to specific requirements for the prescribed use. Traditional chemical techniques arrange atoms in molecules using well characterized chemical reactions. The nanoscale usually refers to structures with a length scale applicable to nanotechnology, usually cited as 1-100 nanometers.