

Film Review “Animal”

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INTRODUCTION

“Animal” is a cinematic mischief by Sandeep Reddy Vanga. It is an attempt that attempts to weave together different narratives that fluctuates between daring and consequences. The film features a highly star studded cast that includes Ranbir Kapoor in the lead role. Rashmika Mandana, Anil Kapoor and Bobby Deol alongside many others. Clocking in at a runtime that stretches the boundaries of human patience exceeding three hours twenty minutes, “Animal” has failed with the challenge of keeping its audience engaged throughout. The mixed reactions are a testimony to the same. The excessive length becomes a major awkward block that is driving the viewers towards moments of boredom. The excessive length actually takes away a lot of sheen from the good parts that the film has inherited. While audacious in its approach, the film struggles to maintain a balance between boldness and viewer investment as the narrative keeps deviating sometimes leading to a broken son father relationship and sometimes towards the soon-to-be broken relationship between Ranbir and Rashmika.

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One of the film’s notable shortcoming lies in its unapologetic embrace of not-so-needed violence. I sometimes wonder, what the police was doing when the never-seen-before like guns were pouring fire on countless, faceless people who kept on coming like zombies at Ranbir. With this film, Ranbir has probably taken over Sunny Deol in the enemies destroyed per person ration. At times, the intensity of the brutality depicted on screen veers into a plane that provokes pukish reactions. These were some of the moments that acted as a point of contention for a diverse audience that was probably in the cinema hall with their children who had the potential of carrying some very long lasting influences. Though, with the emerging Gore genre, some viewers appreciated the unfiltered portrayal of aggression. But for the others who were far lesser in number, the excessiveness was a nauseating distraction.

The film also broke some of the conventions established in Indian cinema. Some of them are very evident in “Animal” particularly in the treatment of its antagonist. In fact it becomes difficult to separate the antagonist from the protagonist. The late disclosure and immediate demise of the Bobby Deol takes away the fun that could have unfolded. It further defies the conventional narrative structures commonly adhered to in Indian films. While such deviations from the

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conventions can inject freshness into storytelling, in this instance, it risked alienating a portion of the audience accustomed to a more traditional progression of events. The unpredictability of the antagonist's arc, while a daring choice, may not align with the expectations ingrained in the Indian cinematic experience.

A critical flaw surfaces in the pacing of the film, notably in the prolonged depiction of Ranbir Kapoor's character especially when he was grappling for life. The extended duration of this segment looks elongated that diminishes the impact of narrative momentum. While the intention may have been to intensify the emotional impact, the implementation leads to a sense of drag that hampers the film's fluidity.

Certain elements within the film contribute to a sense of disjointedness, diverting attention from the central narrative. Instances such as the underwear incident and the psychologist's attempt to counsel Ranbir Kapoor appear futile and vulgar while also appearing disconnected from the overarching plot. These deviations, rather than adding depth or nuance, seem to serve as tangential distractions, leaving the audience questioning their relevance and impact on the overall storyline.

The film's aspiration to elevate Ranbir Kapoor's character, Ranvijay, to a level akin to a magnified version of Kabir Singh is apparent and very evident. However, this attempt to heighten the intensity of the Ranbir comes across as forced and exaggerated. The portrayal of Ranvijay does not evolve organically. It rather appears to be molded to fit a predetermined

standard. This calculated approach to character development risks sacrificing authenticity for the sake of meeting certain expectations.

Despite its flaws, "Animal" cannot be dismissed outright. The film's audacious storytelling choices, coupled with memorable sequences and characters, ensure that it leaves a strong impression. The moments of brilliance, however, are interspersed with shortcomings that stem from a lack of restraint and a clear sense of direction. The film's failure to strike a balance between boldness and viewer engagement results in an uneven cinematic experience. "Animal" embarks on a cinematic journey that tests the boundaries of storytelling norms. The excessive runtime, unnecessary violence, and unconventional narrative choices contribute to a film that is as bold as it is flawed. While the daring storytelling leaves an impact, it does so amidst a landscape of broader canvas of shortcomings. "Animal" stands as a testament to the delicate art of balancing boldness with restraint in filmmaking, ultimately leaving the audience with a mix of awe and dissatisfaction. It can leave some audience optimistic about a new kind of cinema in future but some have been highly critical.

From individual perspective, Anil Kapoor has done well. Although the maximum screentime was dedicated to Ranbir Kapoor, Bobby Deol leaves a strong mark. Rashmika Mandana did well but could have been better. Tripti Dimri was loved in a small cameo role. Veteran like Prem Chopra also lightened up the silver screen.