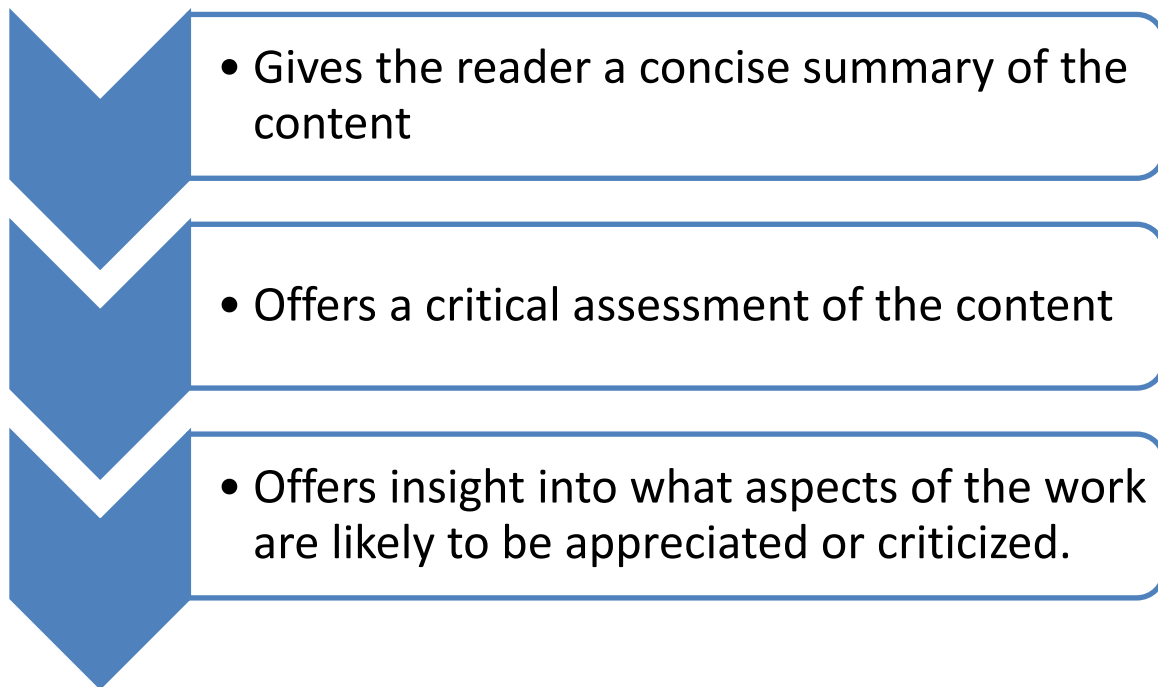


Book and Film Review

What is a review?

A review is a critical perspective of a text or a movie. It is commentary on the book or the film and not merely a summary. You may choose to agree or disagree with the work of the creator, you can comment on where you find the work exemplary or deficient in knowledge presentation or organization. However all reviews must be succinct and make a clear statement on the tone, style, subject and impact of the work in hand.

Features of a review.



How to write a Book Review?

Question approach : - To attempt a Book Review you need to find answers to the following seven questions.

1. Who is the author and publisher? (nationality, political inclination ,intellectual interests, personal history, historical context).

2. What is the genre of the book? (Is it a fantasy, science fiction, detective, romance, mystery, thriller?)
3. What is the main argument of the book and does author accomplish his objective of writing the book?
4. What is the approach to the subject -Is it analytical, topical, descriptive, chronological?
5. Does the author cover the subject adequately and in a balanced fashion?
6. How are the arguments structured and do you see a logical development of thought as you move on from the introduction to the body to the conclusion?
7. How has the book impacted you as a reader and would you recommend it to others?

Writing the review : -

- Mention the author, the complete title, publishing details (with the year of publication).
- Give relevant details about the author and where he / she stand in the genre or field of inquiry.
- Comment on the title and whether the title explains the subject matter.
- Provide a summary of the content briefly but analytically. In course of your assessment, back up your assertions with concrete evidence from the book.
- Place your review in a framework that makes sense to the audience and enlightens the readers by your "take on the book".
- Identify the book's particular novelty, angle or originality to show what specific contribution the piece is trying to make.
- Comment on the theme and characters of the book and whether it compares or contrasts to some similar or contrasting themes or characters of another book by another writer.

- Sum up and make the final judgment regarding the book. Try to balance the book's strengths and weaknesses to unify your evaluation.

Some General Considerations

- Review the book in hand not the book you wish the author had written.
- Do not hesitate to challenge the writer's approach, argument or assumption but back up your assertions.
- Control your tone while reviewing- neither too generous with praises, nor too critical with satires.
- Don't offer harsh judgments-present a balanced evaluation and remember it takes as long to write as a good - so be fair in evaluation.

Sourced from <http://owll.massey.ac.nz/pdf/sample-book-review.pdf> accessed on 29.09.2019

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Example of an academic book review

This book review is included here with the permission of both the author, Heather Kavan, senior lecturer in Business Communication, and the editor of Stimulus, the journal in which the book review was published.

Behind Closed Doors

Ngaire Thomas, privately published, 2 Alaska Court, Palmerston North, New Zealand, www.behind-closed-doors.org, 2004. 294pp. ISBN 0646499106. NZ\$34.

Behind Closed Doors is an inside look at what goes on behind the doors of the Exclusive Brethren. The book answers the question of what it is like to be a member of a select group who believe they are chosen to maintain the only pure path of Christianity. The author, Ngaire Thomas, was born into the church in the 1940s and left in the 1970s.

It is probably just coincidence that this book was launched at roughly the same time that sociologist Bryan Wilson died. Wilson published the definitive study on the Exclusive Brethren in 1967, and was an expert witness in their court cases. Wilson's conclusions were based on information the religion provided about itself; he dismissed ex-members' accounts as suspect atrocity stories and warned courts not to give credence to their testimony.ⁱ Today, after outbreaks of violence in other religions have repeatedly demonstrated that ex-members accounts are often more accurate than academic ones,ⁱⁱ we may be more welcoming of their insights.

As one such ex-member account, Ngaire Thomas' book is compelling. Her style is non-judgemental; she describes her experiences while acknowledging the Exclusive Brethren's right

to follow a religious path in which they find meaning. The book begins with Ngaire's childhood. She is different from the other children with her long dresses and strict upbringing. She loves school because it is the only place that she can be her real self. Worldly things are forbidden: there are no radios (because Satan rules the airwaves) or non-Brethren books. Life revolves around the Bible, and when Ngaire brings friends home from school her mother preaches to them about the end times in Revelation. Other Christians are also deemed suspect, and Ngaire recalls getting the strap when caught secretly attending Bible in School classes.

A Salem-like undercurrent of holy surveillance pervades the scenes, and this undercurrent surfaces in Chapter 10, when Ngaire is pressured into falsely admitting that she has "committed fornication" with her cousin (she has no idea what

Bibliographic information

Introduction

Statement of book's

purpose

Statement about the author

Places the book in a context

Statement about book's genre and potential significance

Overall evaluation

Summary of the book's beginning – giving details which provide the context of the author's conflict

"fornication" means). Her case is taken to the Auckland assembly, and after a hearing in which she is found guilty, she is forced to confess, sobbing, before 500-600 solemn faces. But the story has a strange twist – which I won't spoil for the reader.

In the next chapter, Ngaire meets her future husband, Denis. They marry in the 1960s during the church's notorious "no compromise" era in which the rules are tightened. Members are not allowed to eat and drink with outsiders, and can not be part of another association, such as a library. Even beloved pets are deemed to be idols, and are destroyed, given away or just disappear. There are rules for Ngaire too: she must limit her conversation to 10% of her husband's (which proves difficult as he is generally silent).

Of value is Ngaire's account of the bouts of "confession madness" that swept through the church at this time. The priests take on the role of religious police, examining people's lives like forensic investigators, dragging up rumours from decades past. Members are forced to confess to sins real and imagined, and

encouraged to drink whiskey to prove they have nothing to hide. Those who confess pay heavily. They are “shut up” (in effect placed under house arrest) or “withdrawn from” (excommunicated), and lose access to loved ones. Almost inevitably, Ngaire (who has now had four children) and her family are withdrawn from.

The family’s adjustment is massive. They are unused to their new freedom and do not know how to act in normal society. The two eldest sons end up in prison. (The boys love the prison discipline, and when they earn a reduced sentence they choose to stay instead.) Denis dies of liver cancer, and Ngaire goes to University. Readers, especially those familiar with Fowler’s stages of faith, will be interested in following Ngaire’s shifts in faith throughout, as she ultimately finds the kingdom of heaven within.

It is difficult not to like the author with her unpretentious forgiving style. To be sure, there are some weaknesses in the book. The structure is a little unpolished (some later sections would be better as appendices), and there is a small printing error on the inside cover. Also while the author answers many questions, she invites even more. Why, for example, is the most serious abuse limited to only a few passing sentences?

Nevertheless the book provides a valuable and absorbing window into a religion that is for most of us inaccessible. As religious autobiographies go, *Behind Closed Doors* may not have the theological complexities of St Augustine’s *Confessions*, or the mystical insights of Teresa of Avila’s *Life*, but there is

More summary of later parts of the book, showing how the author has related her own experiences to the experiences of others and to the philosophies that were dominating the religion at the time

Reviewer indicating the value for readers

interested in research on the development of and changes in faith

Further evaluation – some weaknesses and omissions noted

Restatement of overall impression and recommendation

something almost archetypal about one woman’s courage to speak her own truth.

i Bryan Wilson, “The Exclusive Brethren: A Case Study in the Evolution of a

Sectarian Ideology,” in *Patterns of Sectarianism: Organisation and Ideology in Social and Religious Movements*, ed. B. Wilson (London: Heinemann, 1967) 287; Bryan Wilson, *The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism, Sects and New Religious Movements in Contemporary Society*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) 19; Bryan Wilson, Letter to the Editor, *Evangelical Times* (23 Sept 1999).

<http://pub28.ezboard.com/fexaminiinprotestantismfrm2.showMessage?topicID-420.topic> [Accessed 18 December 2004].

ii This point is made by Benjamin Belt-Hallahmi, “Dear Colleagues: Integrity and Suspicion in NRM Research” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Nov. 1997, San Diego, CA). <http://www.apologeticsindex.org/c59html> [Accessed 18 December 2004].

References: These ones are included as endnotes as endnotes

Film Review

Film review, like a book review, is an attempt to evaluate various parameters on which a good film is judged. A film review is generally short (600-800 words) but requires a lot of pre-preparation before the final draft. For a professional approach and analysis, you may want to get a sense of the bodies of work by the director /Actors/Writer before you view the film. This gives you a sense of their individual style and helps you to contextualize the film and determine whether it is in league with the earlier works or a break from the normal. To do an honest review, it is recommended to watch the film at least 2-3 times. In the first viewing you may choose to focus on the cinematic experience. Enjoy the narrative and acting skills. In the second viewing, shift the focus from the plot to the interesting and distinguishing elements that you would like to write about in your review. It could be a commentary on cinematography, editing, sound ,genre, narration and the theme that it highlights – history, race, gender, sexuality, class or environment.

Writing a film review: - Although there is no set format to attempt a film review, most reviews include the following details.

- In the opening or introduction of your film review provide all the basic information about the film- name, year, director, screen writer, major actors.

- Mention the genre of the film. Is it a tragedy, comedy, thriller, mystery, detective, biography, sports oriented, mythological, romantic, social-message oriented film etc? Also comment on how well the film fits the genre.
- Assume the reader has not seen the film so provide a summary. Keep it brief and avoid specific details that would spoil the viewing for others.
- After this, provide a more detailed description of your particular cinematic experience of watching the film- how it feels, sounds – the music – the acting mention what stands out in your mind when you think of this film.
- The closing or concluding paragraph should provide your final evaluation and impression about the film. You may implicitly or explicitly state whether or not you recommend the film. Give sufficient evidences for your assertions.

Some Sample Reviews of Films of Different Genres sourced from Times of India

FILM REVIEW: MS DHONI: THE UNTOLD STORY TIMES OF INDIA

Renuka Vyavahare, TNN, Updated: Oct 25, 2016, 09.43 AM m Critic's Rating: 3.5/5

SUSHANT DELIVERS A MATCH-WINNING KNOCK AS DHONI

STORY: The biopic on India's celebrated skipper, MS Dhoni (played by Sushant Singh Rajput) is the cricketer's ode to his well-wishers, friends and family, who stood by him at all times - in success and failure. Their immense contribution in fulfilling his dream, his faith in himself and ability to battle professional and personal setbacks, forms the story.

REVIEW; If you are a diehard fan of MS Dhoni and cricket (in that order), you are bound to love this film, which reveres its protagonist. Despite the glorification, what works is Sushant's impeccable portrayal of a stoic Dhoni and the latter's inspiring untold story - his journey from being a ticket collector to a renowned attacking batsman/wicket-keeper/captain.

Sushant internalises his character and becomes MSD, without heavily mimicking the cricketer. He even nails his iconic helicopter shot and restrained personality. The actor scores a winning knock. The film also boasts of a spectacular first-half, which showcases Dhoni's initial struggle as an aspiring professional cricketer. It reminds you why sportsmen deserve the fame and money they get.

Neeraj Pandey recreates Dhoni's Ranchi life beautifully. He keeps it authentic and relatable. This one scene shot at Kharagpur station particularly stands out. Sushant is seen trying to make his way through a sea of people. It's him going against the tide, summing up Dhoni's life journey as well. Supporting actors deserve a special mention as their performances tug at your heartstrings. A scene featuring Yuvraj Singh (Herry Tangri) is outstanding.

However the biopic loses its momentum in the second half with Dhoni's love life getting undue prominence. Also, the cricketer's questionable decisions or possible vices are mostly overlooked. His tiff with the senior players (Sehwag, Gambhir), rivalry with Yuvraj Singh, love-hate relationship with the media, team politics and criticism faced on

occasions, barely find a passing reference. As a full-fledged biopic, this one-dimensional approach towards the lead character leaves you a tad discontented. But since you see the film through Dhoni's eyes, it's justified as one rarely sees faults in oneself.

Nonetheless, this cricket movie hits sufficient sixes making the 'Dhoni Dhoni' chants reverberate in the theatre.

(Adapted from Review in Times of India)

FILM REVIEW: MOM

TIMES OF INDIA '

Meena Iyer. TNN. updated: Jul 10. 2017. 03-00 PM IST 'Critic's Rating: 4/5

STOP OR MOM WILL SHOOT

MOM STORY: The bliss of a biology teacher's family life in Delhi is shattered when her daughter, Arya (Sajal Ali) is physically assaulted by Jagan (Abhimanyu Singh) and gang. Does Devki Sabarwal (Sridevi) wait for the law to take its course? Or does Devki become Maa Durga and hunt down the perpetrators of the crime?

MOM REVIEW: Mom reminds you for the umpteenth time that we're in Nirbhaya country. Like other films on the same subject, debutant Ravi Udyawar's emotional thriller tells you that India, or should that be New Delhi specifically, isn't safe enough for women, especially young girls. And its relevance makes it an important watch.

There's a lot packed in here. To begin with, the film dwells on the dynamics of a teenager's standoffish relationship with her stepmom. This entire track is beautifully handled. Then again, it is post the teenager's abduction and assault when the film reveals its true facet. To say anything more on the actual plot is to risk spoiling its surprises.

Instead, it would suffice to say that when the avenging mother is joined by an inconsequential-looking private detective, DK (Nawazuddin), the screen ride becomes edgier and more exciting. There's also a tough-as-nails cop, Francis (Akshaye), who stays close on the heels of the vigilantes, adding gusto to proceedings. At times, there is that sense of deja vu that you experience because most parents – looking – for – – missing - teen movies follow certain set devices. But this one still manages to stay ahead with some interesting twists and turns. However, it is in the graph and the strength of Sridevi's character wherein the victory of this script lies.

In her 300th landmark movie (coincidentally produced by her husband Boney Kapoor) Sri demonstrates why she is the high-priestess of desi cinema. Here she turns in a captivating performance; happiness, helplessness, vendetta and victory, she walks you through the entire gamut of emotions with panache. Supporting her ably is her onscreen husband Anand (Adnan), who plays the polished gent with flair. Nawazuddin, with his quirks and one-liners, turns in a class act and Akshaye Khanna, who is in terrific form here, forces you to ponder why he takes such long matinee breaks.

Dew fresh Sajal Ali, who seems to have grown up watching Kareena Kapoor films, seems like a clone of the senior actor. But this is not to take away from her otherwise adept performance. A R Rahman's background score adds the required chills without distracting and Anay Goswamy's camera lingers as lovingly on the actors' faces as it does on the snow-capped peaks. Mothers are a symbol of strength; this movie further reinforces that.

(Adapted from Review in Times of India)

FILM REVIEW: GOLMAAL RETURNS

Times of India

The Times of India, TNN, Updated Apr 7, 2016, 05.36 PM IST Critic's Rating: 2/5

Dumb seems to be getting dumber. Funny is beginning to feel unfunny. And Bollywood's current tryst with comedy isn't quite "Welcome1 anymore.

Of course, the first Golmaal itself wasn't a high IQ exercise, with its tale of overgrown college students ending up in a blind couple's house. But there were some robust moments of sheer fun along with some crackling chemistry between the foursome: Ajay, Arshad, Sharman, Tusshar.

Here, talented Sharman Joshi has been replaced by also-talented Shreyas Talpade and Kareena Kapoor, basking in the success of Jab We Met, has been added to enhance the star value of the film. Ironically, the silicone shots don't seem work, as the film keeps sagging to unlimited depths, thanks to a no-brainer script and some really bad acting.

First the script. Ajay Devgan has an extended family which includes his couch potato wife, Kareena, his bimchette sister, Amrita Arora and his dumb brother-in-law, Tusshar Kapoor. Wife Kareena is an inveterate serial watcher and draws all her life's mantras from the Kyunki-Kahani soaps of Ekta Kapoor. Naturally, she suspects her husband

when he spends a whole night on a yacht away from her. The husband, who had tried to save a desperate girl, ends up spinning an implausible yarn to save his skin.

The rest is one miserable rigmarole, where Tusshar and Shreyas try to infuse some madcap moments in the tedium, while the rest of the people just keep screaming and running.

It's quite sad to watch seasoned actors like Ajay Devgan and Arshad Warsi goof up in comic roles that they managed to carry off with elan in the earlier film. Shreyas, once again, displays his sense of comic timing, visible in Dor, while Tusshar proves that his dumb act in both the films might just end up as his career best.

The girlie brigade is completely unwatchable, especially Kareena who seems to be sleepwalking through the film. Again, sad, since she's such a fine actress and had managed to become the nation's fav girl after Jab We Met.

Ready for a third sequel? Not if it's as brain dead as the second.

(Adapted from Review in Times of India)

FILM REVIEW: PK

TIMES OF INDIA

Srijana Mitra Das, TNN, Updated; Jan 7. 20i7, 08.56 PM 1ST Critic's Rating: 4/5

PK STORY: An alien lands on earth but loses his remote to go home. Does 'PK' return - and as he navigates the human world, what does he gain and lose?

PK REVIEW: Arriving on earth, an alien (Aamir) is immediately robbed of the only thing he's wearing, the remote via which he can go home. Knowing nothing of human ways, language, clothing or lies, the alien searches desperately for his remote, his antics bizarre enough for people to ask if he's 'pee kay' or drunk. One day, 'PK' meets Jaggu (Anushka), a TV reporter who helps him. Can they find PK's remote, now with god-man Tapasvi ji (Shukla)? And do PK and Jaggu also find love?

PK is as much a philosophy as a film. It takes the 'stranded alien' theme, familiar from classics like ET, but tells the tale equally from the lonely alien's eyes - at times, evoking the beautiful story The Little Prince - as from his human narrator's. Starting with the alien's desperation, PK captures the fears and falsehoods humans weave around faith.

When PK decides to pray for his remote, he's bewildered about whom to and how to pray. PK features brave scenes - money extracted at temples, coconuts offered in confusion at a church, god-men doling out tortuous advice - and strong lines, including a Muslim girl bravely asserting, "Itna chota nahin ho sakta hamara khuda, ki use hamare school jaane pe aitraaz ho." Capturing faith whipped into hate, PK's sterling message, directed sensitively, stands out.

As does Aamir Khan as the wide-eyed alien bemused by human life, a paan-chomping Chaplin from outer space, liked by rustic Bhairon Singh (Sanjay Dutt in a warming cameo). PK's simplicity contrasts with Jaggu's complicated life, heartbroken after she thinks her Pakistani boyfriend Sarfaraz (Sushant) ditched her in chocolate-box Belgium. Tapasvi warned Jaggu's father (Parikshet Sahani) that her Muslim lover would betray her - does PK prove him wrong?

Anushka presents a sprightly show while Boman Irani stands out as a TV channel head. Some supporting acts and special effects could've been sharper though while at points, editor Raju Hirani should've been sterner with director Raju Hirani in trimming tighter scenes. Between gods, frauds, love and bombs, there are multiple threads here. Some distract, others impact, like PK hilariously dazed by humans hiding when they make out - except when they announce it with band-baaja on their wedding day.

(Adapted from Review in Times of India)

FILM

REVIEW:TALWAR

In 'Talwar', the 14-year-old girl killed in her bed in the dead of night, is called Shruti Tandon. But we know that it is the thinly-disguised story of Arushi Talwar, whose murder still remains the foulest of them all: her parents Rajesh and Nupur, both doctors with a flourishing practice, were convicted and sent to jail.

The double murder of Arushi and the Talwars' live-in male servant Hemraj shook us all. Because it involved people like us : respectably middle-class, solidly professional; living with other middle -class professionals .Children from that sort of background go to good schools and graduate from good colleges, not found with their throat slit, opening up a Pandora's box of swirling salacious rumours about sexual proclivities (theirs' as well as their parents').Widespread outrage and shock rippled outward, and it still laps around us, because, really, how can any parent kill their child?

That is what Shruti's father (Neeraj Kabi) cries out, in 'Talwar'. And that anguished cry and the mother's (Konkona Sen Sharma) too-stunned-for-tears face leave us deeply conflicted, deeply uncomfortable. 'Talwar' is a difficult film to watch because we know all along that we are not in some fictitious la-la land; we are in Noida, where the killings took place, and the events that unfold have a distinct ring of reality. The film— part police procedural, part dark, twisted crime drama- is as real as a constructed-for-the-camera document can be, with its portrayal of the professional rivalries between the investigating teams, and insatiable media persons.

And that's mainly to do with the just-right note caught by Vishal Bharadwaj's writing, which starts a little shakily, and then finds its groove—mostly matter of-fact in the face of apparent depravity and keeping away from needless prurience and stays there right through the end : though there is no attempt made to hide the film's sympathies, which lie with the parents, 'Talwar' takes in the contrarians as well. The high point is a round table gathering of the investigators, one bunch who is convinced that it was the other employees who did it; another, which come in later, determined to run down the former, is convinced of the parents' guilt.

'Talwar' maintains the gritty tightrope with a virtuoso act by Irrfan Khan as CDI (standing in for CBI) officer Ashwin Kumar, who comes into the 'case' with some amount of reluctance and healthy skepticism. His Second-in-command is Sohum Shah, again very believable in the way he switches to the side which has more profit.

A fine supporting cast, especially the fresh-faced Sumit Gulati as the Tandons' employee, who makes all kinds of allegations which are swallowed wholesale by the Noida police in the person of the paan-chewing cop' (Gajraj Rao, playing it with gusto) helps us believe. This includes Belvadi's twinkle-eyed officer on the verge of retirement who hands over the case to a man (Atul Kumar, very good) who takes it in a diametrically opposite direction into, many believe, a horrible miscarriage of justice.

It's when Talwar's swings over into exaggeration – for - populism territory that you start fidgeting. Was it the fear of being too grim that it shows us a wholly unbelievable scene involving the physical bullying of a local cop? Though both Neeraj and Konkona channel the unbearable pain of losing a child in such unspeakable conditions well enough, they are drawn sketchily. I wanted more: who were they as people and parents, what did they think, how did they do? And although Tabu is usually always a treat, her addition to the cast, as Irrfan's estranged wife, seems superfluous to the proceedings.

There was no indication that Meghna Gulzar, who's made a couple of terrible films before this, would come up with something that sears, that make us question our

precepts about fealty and loyalty, about crime and punishment. 'Talvar', which rhymes so closely with 'Talwar', is a brave film that devastates, and despite its flaws, makes for a compelling watch.

Cast: Irrfan Khan, Neeraj Kabi, Konkona Sen Sharma, Sohum Shah, Gajraj Rao, Atul Kumar, Sumit Gulati, Prakash Belwadi, Tabu

Director : Meghna Gulzar

(Adapted from Review in Times of India)

Film Review: Dangal

Dangal movie cast: Aamir Khan, Sakshi Tanwar, Fatima Sana Sheikh, Sanya Malhotra, Zaira Wasim, Suhani Bhatnagar, Ritwik Sahore, Aparshakti Khurana, Girish Kulkarni

Dangal Movie Director: Nitesh Tiwari

Dangal movie rating: Three stars

There comes a time when a star give in to the demand of a role which he knows will make him not-pretty: as a winnable wrestler past his prime, Aamir Khan is squat, with a heavy belly, a deliberate gait, and a grizzled beard in Dangal. Only his jutting ears are familiar: the rest of him is pure character. We are going to have to measure Aamir Khan's future performances with this one: as Mahavir Singh Phogat, failed wrestler, rough-hewn authoritarian, but caring husband and father of four girls, he scales it up to a point where you can see the star take on a character, try it for size, and make it his own. That was crucial for us to believe in Dangal, which borrows several elements from the real-life Haryana wrestler who trained his older two daughters, Geeta (Fatima Sana Shaikh) and Babita (Sanya Malhotra), in the art of wrestling, and turned them into winners.

Dangal works on the twin parameters it sets up for itself. One is a straight-forward film about a popular sport and those who play it: we feel and smell the 'mitti' of the 'akhara' the 'daanv-pench' (moves) that truly skilled wrestlers use to face down formidable foes. We see the blood, sweat and tears that go into the making of champions. The other is a strong feminist statement about girls being the equal of boys, if not better, in an area they've never been seen, let alone accepted. When Mahavir steps into that tricky arena, he is derided and ridiculed; so are his young female charges, as well as their mother (Sakshi Tanwar) who could not bear sons. In the Khap-ridden state of Haryana, where baby girls are still murdered at birth, and

'honour killing' is practiced with impunity and condoned (you may be over 18, but you have no right over your life), there cannot be a more important statement, especially when it comes from a big star.

The grizzled wrestler has to work his way to believing in his daughters, and in the fact that his 'chhoris' are no less than 'chhoras'. It echoes the belief the real-life Phogat showed in his girls, as they went on to win medals and prizes in national and international arenas (gold and silver medals in Commonwealth games, Olympic qualifier). The actors who play the young Geeta and Babita (Zaira Wasim, Suhani Bhatnagar) do a competent job of turning into eager combatants from young-girls- who -just -want -to -have -fun , And both Shaikh and Malhotra carry it forward, especially when they spend a lot of the second half on the mat, learning how to lose, and, above all, to win. You know how this will end. And that makes many of the beats predictable. There are times when the film feels flat, and gets into repetitive loops. Those are times you feel like it should have been tighter. But you end up being impressed by the authenticity of the milieu, both in the sporting arena, as well as the domestic one: the girls jousting for that precious medal are not just going through the motions - they are fighting.

(Adapted from Review in Times of India)

Film Review :TOILET EK PREM KATHA

STORY: Go-getter Keshav (Akshay) serenades liberal-thinker Jaya {Bhumi), a woman from his neighbouring village in Uttar Pradesh. They marry but it doesn't strike Keshav to tell her that his house doesn't have a toilet. This then becomes the grounds for Jaya to file for a divorce.

REVIEW: For most of us who take the toilets in our homes for granted, the burning issue of 58% Indians practicing open defecation could be a flush-worthy concept. But, director Shree Narayan Singh holds up a mirror to society, showing as how our superstitious villagers, lazy administration and corrupt politicians have actually converted India into the world's largest shit-pond. Women especially, are treated more insensitively than cattle!

This film is a satirical take on the age-old 'tradition' of seeking fields to relieve ourselves. Mercifully it steers clear of being a documentary on sanitization. Instead TEPK is a robust love-story striking a balance between entertaining and educating. Writer-duo Siddharth-Garima take us through this eye-opening journey of how we need to build toilets for our women (if not a Taj Mahal) through dramatic conflicts between

the lead couple — Keshav and Jaya, followed by those between Panditji (Sudhir Pandey) and his older son. The easygoing equation between two brothers, Naru (Divyendu) and Keshav is also delightful. Not to forget the protagonist's war against his entire village for a latrine. Every characteristic of rustic UP life is captured through the ubiquitous sarpanch and the naughty Kaka (Anupam Kher). The second-half borrows the template for films that address causes and allows for some lecturebaazi. A 10-minute snip here would've helped the focus stay sharper.

Akshay is the backbone of this satire. His inner journey as an actor pays dividends and he delivers yet another topnotch performance. Half a star in the rating is rightfully his. Bhumi is perfect in her rendition of the feisty Jaya and Divyendu is a terrific comic. The presence of veterans, Pandey and Kher, is unmissable. The screenplay is peppered with loads of LOL moments balanced correctly with emotional outbursts. As bonus, you get a hummable soundtrack with Hans Mat Pagli, Bakheda and Gori Tu Lath Maar.

So whether you have pressing matters to attend to or not, please take a detour to this toilet. Each of us needs to raise a stink about what our countrymen do in the open.
(Adapted from Review in Times of India)

FILM REVIEW : PADMAAVAT

PADMAAVAT WINS ITS TRIAL BY FIRE

PADMAAVAT STORY: Rani Padmavati (Deepika Padukone) - the wife of Maharawal Ratan Singh (Shahid Kapoor), is known for her beauty and valour in 13th century India. She captures the fancy of the reigning Sultan of Delhi, the tyrant Alauddin Khilji (Ranveer Singh), who becomes obsessed with her and goes to great lengths to fulfill his greed.

PADMAAVAT REVIEW: Based on a Sufi poem of the same name written in 1540 by Malik Muhammad Jayasi, Sanjay Leela Bhansali has added his own flair and interpretation to 'Padmaavat', giving it a fairy-tale sheen. This makes all the controversy pointless, and pale in comparison to the spectacle that unfolds. Bhansali reunites with two of his favourite leads in recent times - Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh, but adds Shahid Kapoor to complete this trio of commendable acting talent.

Shahid is steadfast and unflappable as Maharawal Ratan Singh - the ruler of Mewar, brimming with Rajput pride. He brings a regal aura to the character that warrants him winning the confidence and loyalty of the Mewar kingdom and more importantly, Rani Padmavati's heart. Deepika is radiant as the Rajput Queen whose beauty, brains and

valour moves the entire plot along once Alauddin Khilji becomes obsessed with her. Padmavati's allure beyond the superficial is prominent post-interval, when her character comes to life and she gets to showcase her acting range. Ranveer as Alauddin Khilji is seen as an unhinged, barbaric Sultan, who is consumed with a ravenous libido for power and flesh. He unleashes an animal magnetism on screen with a scarred face, kohl-lined eyes and a greased torso. The scenes between him and Shahid are some of the most engrossing, as both flex their acting muscles at opposite ends of the moral spectrum. Besides them, Aditi Rao Hydari stands her ground as the naive Mehrunissa who gets a rude awakening when she discovers her husband Alauddin's true nature. Jim Sarbh is somewhat misplaced as the Sultan's slave-general, unable to generate enough menace to overshadow his master's own. Nonetheless, the ensemble moves well in tune with Bhansali's vision of this larger-than-life retelling.

The director's expertise in heightening opulence and grandeur is well-known, further distinguishable in 3D. Cinematographer Sudeep Chatterjee compliments him by beautifully capturing some jaw-dropping scenery. However, the effects in the action/war scenes don't meet the expectations raised by a film of this scale. Also, the songs don't do much to further the narrative other than providing visual delight. Granted, it could do with a tauter screenplay and shorter run-time but 'Tadmaavat' is an entertaining, large canvas experience, brought to life with Sanjay Leela Bhansali's stroke of visual brilliance.

(Adapted from Review in Times of India)