

**A FILMIC-HISTORIC MAPPING OF 1857: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
SATYAJIT RAY'S *SHATRANJ KE KHILARI* AND SHYAM BENEGAL'S
JUNOON.**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Central University of Punjab

for the award of

Master of Philosophy

in

Comparative Literature

by

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June, 2014.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation entitled “A Filmic-Historic Mapping of 1857: A Comparative Study of Satyajit Ray’s *Shatranj Ke Khilari* and Shyam Benegal’s *Junoon*” has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Alpna Saini, Supervisor, Centre for Comparative Literature, School of Languages, Literature and Culture, Central University of Punjab. No part of this dissertation has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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CERTIFICATE

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ABSTRACT

A Filmic-Historic Mapping of 1857: A Comparative Study of Satyajit Ray's *Shatranj Ke Khilari* and Shyam Benegal's *Junoon*

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Degree for which submitted : Master of Philosophy
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Key Words : New Historicism, Film and History, 1857
Revolt, *Shatranj Ke Khilari*, *Junoon*,
Colonialism.

The representation of history through the medium of film has been an important trend in the filmic world. While concerning with the different issues raised by the cinematic representation of a historic event, the films involve various types of thematic, ideological and hegemonic discursive practices of the period. The 'discontinuous' nature of history and the deconstruction of established notions from time to time makes the film version of history subordinate to the times in which it is made. The present study focuses on the comparative analysis of two films: *Shatranj Ke Khilari* by Satyajit Ray and *Junoon* by Shyam Benegal. Both the films are based on the revolt of 1857. The focus is to analyse how Ray's metaphoric use of chess and Benegal's blending of the historic event with the personal makes the difference in representing history through the medium of film. Both the films showcase the history of the revolt, its background and the colonial strategies of the British. The study focuses on how the filmic representation of a historic event in the non-fictional way differs from the fictional and historic representation.

(Name and Signature of student)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To start with, I bow in reverence to **Almighty God** for bestowing in me the patience, strength, zeal, and the blessing to complete this dissertation. Then, I owe a great deal to my parents for their continuous support and blessings.

I do pay my profound gratitude to my Dissertation Supervisor, **Dr. Alpna Saini**, Assistant Professor, Centre for Comparative Literature, for her endless patience during the entire research work. The overall support I received with fruitful suggestions and unstinted guidance, keen interest, constructive criticism comprising of healthy discussions during the research work helped me to complete my dissertation. Moreover, I am also thankful to other faculty members of the Department of Comparative Literature.

Finally, my earnest thanks to my seniors **Barjinder Singh** and **Manpreet Kaur** for their diligence, guidance and an encouraging attitude throughout the work. I will whole heartedly remember the company of my colleagues for their assistance throughout the whole dissertation.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Introduction

The term historicism generally stands for that approach to literature which tries to examine the literary work by placing it in context of ideas, conventions and attitudes of the period in which it was written. The work of literature is valid not only in the time of its creation but for all ages to come. The writer's contemporary cultural, social, political milieu in which he has to work always remains the subject of change. The conditions around an author exert their power in the writings of an individual author. The aim of historicism is to make the work of different periods more accessible to the modern reader. But this can be achieved only through the reconstruction of historically appropriate background as it affects an understanding of the work as well as its perception. As Paul Hamilton says:

... a reconstruction of the past must be modern in its point of view because the historian cannot transform the twentieth century mind. Historicism is a critical movement insisting on the prime importance of the historical context to the interpretation of texts of all kinds. (Hamilton 2)

The past can only be understood on the model of interpreting the text and such text acquires meaning in its relationship with other literary and non-literary texts. A text's meaning is limited by the value attached to its discourse within the culture of its first audience. The change in the perception of fixed sense of meaning marks the shift from Modernity to Post-Modernity because Modernity's typical insistence on the fixed meaning was overridden by the post modernity's refusal to accept the fixed sense of the past. New Historicism tends to study the historic texts with a new perspective which is different from previous critical efforts.

Michel Foucault's work has greatly influenced the historical interpretation of any text or other system of the past. He describes the discontinuity of the discursive practices of each era. Every specific period in history contains its own different ways of controlling mechanism established by the dominant powers of that specific point of time. Foucault puts further his understanding of the past only in order to prove that there is no intellectually reputable continuity between past concerns and their modern understanding or present interpretation.

He believes that history based on any continuity is comprised by the subject unified across time which it serves. This subject assumes

that all historical paths lead to him. Foucault asserts that historical explanation is itself a historical characteristic of modernity. (Hamilton 136)

Michel Foucault was the most influential thinker of the second half of the twentieth century. Foucault's writings *Madness and Civilization* (1961), *The Birth of Clinic* (1963), *The Order of Things* (1966), *Discipline and Punish* (1975), *The History of Sexuality* (1976), show that various forms of knowledge about sex, crime, psychiatry and medicine have arisen and been replaced.

Foucault describes how knowledge was being represented in various periods from past to the present. He observes the distinct and different fields of discursive possibility to support his historicism. Foucault talks about the Saussurean concept of signifier and signified and questions the ability of the signifier to correspond to the signified in a singular manner. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault writes about such a representation posing a "question to which the classical period was to reply by the analysis of representation; and to which the modern thought was to reply by the analysis of meaning and signification" (Foucault 47). Further he describes how a Renaissance mode of signification based on universal resemblances between things replaced the classical episteme detaching language from things it represented.

The nature of things, their coexistence, the way they are linked together and communicate is nothing other than their resemblance. And that resemblance is visible only in the network of signs that crosses the world from one end to another. (Foucault 1970, 33)

Foucault concentrates on the fundamental shifts occurring between the epochs and traces the overlapping series of discontinuous fields. History is this disconnected range of discursive practices which manifest themselves from an era to the next. Foucault talks about historicising the discourse. The discourse of each period has its value only in the specific historic context. He thinks that in each period discourse produces forms of knowledge and objects and practices of knowledge which differed from one period to another without any continuity between them. Stephen Greenblatt also talks about the unreliable universality of the human experience. There is no continuity between the different eras of historic experience.

Foucault in his book *The Archaeology of Knowledge* writes, "The archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end" (14). In other words, a discourse deals with the ways knowledge is produced, legitimated and perpetuated through the medium of language. Garry Gutting in his work *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction* interpreted that in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, "Foucault deconstructed the dominant discourse of madness in society. Madness, for instance, was not an objective fact but a function of a discursive formation that defined madness in a specific manner for a madman to appear" (qtd. in Gutting 46). Foucault describes that power and knowledge directly substitute each other. There is no power relation without the politics of knowledge; similarly knowledge too is not an innocent notion which can exist without power relations.

He also shifts his focus away from the author towards larger systematic social forces. From this point of view, we see his importance to the discipline of New Historicism. Foucault insists on keeping the category of subject as a means to study the historical discourses of power and knowledge that constitute it. Foucault thinks of the subject as an effect to subjection, which refers to particular, historically located, disciplinary processes and concepts which enable us to consider ourselves as individual subjects and which constrain us from thinking otherwise. As Foucault by referring to Jeremy Bentham in his work *Discipline and Punish* described the concept of Panopticon, "The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen" (qtd in Foucault 1991, 201-202).

Further we can observe that Foucault believes that modern individual is produced by a power that individualizes precisely in order to better control. A panoptic power keeps subjects under constant surveillance. Foucault describes that power can be exercised rather than possessed and insists that power is not repressive but productive. Foucault similarly emphasises how social and political power works through discursive regimes by which social institutions maintain themselves. The discursive practices have no universal validity but are historically dominant ways of controlling and preserving social relations of exploitation. New Historicism treats literature as constructed by more than one consciousness. So

the best way of literary criticism is to reconstruct the ideology of its culture on the basis of the specific text and by exploring the diverse areas of cultural features.

The initial endeavor of New Historicism is to relocate the literary text among non-literary discursive practices of an age by making use of documents like chronicles, legal reports and pamphlets and by analyzing other forms of art like painting, sculpture, music, etc. Nevertheless, history is not viewed as the cause or source of literature. The relationship between history and literature is seen as dialectic: the literary text is interpreted as product and producer, end and source of history. (Dogam 82)

The New Historicist thought assumes that literature participates in the active process which helps to reconstruct and establish the desired and dominant discourses of those in power. While studying the Renaissance texts Greenblatt and other New Historicists such as Louis Montrose and Jonathan Goldberg explore the ways in which Elizabethan literary texts act out of the concerns of Tudor monarchy.

They see monarchy as the central axis governing the power structure. Greenblatt thinks of subversion as an expression of inward necessity, we define our identities always in relation to what we are not. The mad, the unruly and alien are internalized others which help us to consolidate our identities. (Brooker, Peter, and Raman 164)

The New Historicism stresses on the need to approach history from such a perspective that emphasises the role of representation and discourse in social life. The focus of the New Historicist study remains on the relationship between literature and history. "The term New Historicism can refer to all those historicist theories of both history and literature which are informed by textualist and post-structuralist ideas and which break with more traditional historicisms" (Woods 164).

There is no single and fixed sense of history which can be treated as the fundamental base on which the works of literature can be fore-grounded. That's why the textual elements of history provide the opportunity to reinterpret the history in a new way. New Historicism denies Derrida's assumption that there is nothing outside the text and interprets the text on the basis of its textual

characteristics. Similarly New Historicism argues that the relation between literature and history must be reanalyzed. New Historicism is a critical approach that locates power relation in society as they are reflected in literary and other non-literary works of the period. New Historicists believe that texts camouflage social reality, just as social reality shapes the textual representations. This means that history is always written by historian's present context. As Hayden White has expressed his views in relation to the revolt of 1857 that:

The example of 1857 revolt describes that how the other factors responsible for the uprising were neglected and the issue related to the cartridges was highlighted. What he means to say that the history always treated the famous and powerful objects or humans. (qtd in Nayar 202)

The role of the present conditions always remains in the driving position. The historic event exists in the present context only in the written form, so the powerful, dominant and the hegemonic codes of the contemporary situation influence the historian to highlight one specific part of the historic event.

The major New Historicist Stephen Greenblatt started his study from the Renaissance texts because the power in Renaissance was at its extreme to influence the literary and non-literary creations of the period. As Stephen Greenblatt describes in his work, *Towards a Poetics of Culture*, that "the work of art is the product of the negotiation between a creator or class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society" (Greenblatt 2013,12). The role of the author is not completely neglected but he is partially in control of it. The author's role is to a large extent determined by historical circumstances. The literary text is the part and parcel of a much wider cultural, social, economic, political environment.

Stephen Greenblatt in his famous work *Renaissance Self Fashioning From More to Shakespeare*, describes the conditions under which the fashioning of the self takes place:

My subject is *self-fashioning* from More to Shakespeare; my starting point is quite simply that in sixteenth century England there were both selves and a sense that they could be fashioned. There appears to be an increased self consciousness about the fashioning

of human identity as a manipulable, artful process. (Greenblatt 1980, 2)

Greenblatt states that self-fashioning directs attention to the problematic structure of power in representation. It is an aspect of the power to control identities. He argues that self-fashioning means submission to an absolute power. Thus it is achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile.

Greenblatt focuses his study on discovering how the writers of the Renaissance era were able to fashion their characters according to the tastes, interests of the powerful discourse and also the dominant role played by the Queen Elizabethan milieu. The underlying socio-cultural contexts, the discursive practices, the ideology and the power to shape something according to the needs of the time, all were responsible for the way in which the major writers such as Thomas More, Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare all shape their characters, works and manifest the spirit of an era.

New Historicist project is not about demoting art or discrediting aesthetic pleasure; rather it is concerned with finding the creative power that shapes literary work outside the narrow boundaries in which it had hitherto been located, as well as within these boundaries. (Gallagher and Greenblatt 12)

New Historicists tries to understand the whole culture as a text with all the textual traces of the past to which they call the creative matrix of a particular era. Similarly the writers represent the whole being with all the other social, culture, political and other subjective or individual traces.

New-Historicism is a method based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period. It refuses to privilege the literary text as a 'foreground' and history as the 'background'. In other words, the historical text is a co-text than a context. (Krishnamurthy and Varadharajan 58)

New Historicism has brought the two disciplines literature and history closer to each other than ever before. It is a critical method that situates a work of art in its historical context and at the same time breaks down the boundaries between the artistic production and other kinds of social production that is between

art and other historical traces. New Historicists argue that the best framework for interpreting literature is to place it in its historical context. New Historicist criticism tries to relate interpretative problems to cultural-historical problems.

Poetics of culture seeks to reveal the relationship between texts and their socio-historical contexts. Cultural politics assumes that texts not only document the social forces that inform and constitute history and society but also feature prominently in the social processes themselves which fashion both individual identity and socio-historical situation. (Veenstra175)

New Historicism argues that there is no universal meaning or truth in history and that meaning imputed to history reflects power relations at the time of writing as well as the time of events' occurrence. New Historicists are able to demonstrate how a text could be dismantled and the hidden hegemonic discourses lying buried within it exposed. The political and cultural context encourages literary studies to re-establish a link with the political and social world that gives rise to it. New Historicism has made the relation between text and society its predominant concern.

In *Shakespearean Negotiations*, Stephen Greenblatt tries to articulate the various ways in which the meaning of the literary text is constituted and also the basis of such meaning. According to Greenblatt, the relationship between art and society is characterized by the processes of negotiation and exchange. "In the performance the social energy decoded by the audience, flows back through the public into society, from whence it may return again to the stage" (Veenstra 187). Greenblatt also suggests that the art does not simply exist in a particular culture but it is accompanied by the other products, social or cultural practices and the prevailing discourses of the specific culture.

New Historicists have employed three discursive strategies of Foucault: the concept of discourse, the construction of power and knowledge and the question of the human subject for locating literature and literary texts in their historical and cultural context. Stephen Greenblatt coined the term New Historicism in his book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (1980) and says:

Literature has a historical base and literary works are not the products of a single consciousness but many social and cultural forces. In order to understand literature one has to take recourse to both culture and society that gave rise to it in the first place. Literature is not a distinctive human activity, but another vision of history. This has obvious implications for both literary theory and the study of literary texts. (Greenblatt 1980, 22)

Since the role of social, political and cultural forces always remains active in the process of creating the works of literature and it also shapes the ideas of a civilization, the human mind can never be completely free from its surrounding socio-cultural circumstances. So, it becomes necessary for the practitioners of New Historicism to examine the relationship between text and context and between art and society.

A historian always acquires the influence of his own socio-cultural surroundings and its ideology. That's why the present reading of any historic text will be different from its reading at the time of its creation. A contemporary reading of a Renaissance text cannot be the same as a Renaissance reading. At most a literary interpretation can reconstruct the ideology of the age through a given text. These presumptions basically imply that New Historicism does not try to retrieve the original meaning of a text but locates the original ideology that gives rise to the text, which the text disseminates, within the boundaries of culture and sometimes beyond it.

Louis Montrose defines in his famous phrase 'the textuality of history, the historicity of texts'. According to Montrose:

. . . the circulation of literary and non-literary texts produces relations of social power within a culture. New Historicism assumes that we can only know the textual history of the past because it is embedded in the textuality of present and its concerns. Text and context are less clearly distinct in New Historicism. (qtd. In Habib 150)

The New Historicist study focused on the contemporary contextual, historical, cultural and political surroundings of the specific time when such text is produced or any such incident like a revolution, literary movement, political

establishment or a revolt against political establishment take place. New Historicism widens the field of historic investigation by including all other literary and non-literary texts and the other means of representing historic events such as films, documentary, street-plays etc. New Historicist approach makes it possible to study an event of history in both textual and cinematic representations. The directors at the world level have been continuously making films which treat historic events from the very basic level. The world history is full of revolts, revolutions and wars. In the world cinema there are some famous films which are based on the great historic events and great warriors. *The War of Troy*, *Alexander, the Great* are some example of how the world cinema treats the historic elements. While in Indian perspective the role of films in representing history cannot be undermined. India like many other countries of the world, itself has a rich, diverse and colonial history. The Mughal regime, colonial period, Indian struggle for freedom against the British, and the post Independence partition provide the sufficient thematic material to represent them in filmic way. Throughout the history there are many important and influential historic events have been occurred. But the Revolt of 1857 was such an event of enormous importance which prepared the very base for the Indian freedom struggle. In the history of Indian struggle for freedom, the revolt of 1857 was a great uprising and it has been variously interpreted and also has been highlighted in the filmic world. The revolt of 1857 was the biggest challenge that the British Imperialism had to face at that time. In the same mode, the Indian literary and historic texts have represented the 1857 revolt widely. On the other hand, the films like *Mangal Pandey*, *Junoon* and *Shatranj Ke Khilari* all are based on the revolt of 1857. The present study is focused on the treatment of the revolt of 1857, both in filmic and historic fields. As far as New Historicism approach is concerned, it gives the freedom to analyse the way how the event has been represented in literary and non literary mediums. The present study focuses on the treatment of 1857 revolt in the two selected films which are in turn based two different literary genres short story and novella.

The revolt of 1857 was a remarkable and revolutionary incident in the history of Indian struggle for freedom described variously as the First Indian War of Independence and The Mutiny of Sepoys. This event has been seen as a major turning point in British-Indian relationships, the commerce oriented East India

Company of pre-1857 transformed India into the biggest part of its Empire, with Queen Victoria calling herself the Empress of India from 1859.

The rebellion of 1857 (also known as the Indian Mutiny) was a watershed event in the history of British India. It was by far the largest, most wide spread, and dangerous threat to British rule in India in the Nineteenth century. One of its most obvious repercussions was the elimination of ruling East India company and the transfer of control of India to the British crown. (Streets 85)

There were various causes for the uprising spirit of revolt against the East India Company, such as peasants suffered due to high revenue while the artisans and craftsman suffered because of the influx of cheap British manufactured goods. The vigorous application of the policies of subsidiaries and the Doctrine of Lapse angered the ruling sections of society who had no inheritors.

Certainly the most famous single explanation for the cause of the mutiny-rebellion is the dissatisfaction of sepoys around the rumored issue of greased cartridges, in the broader context of increasing unease around racially or culturally discriminating pay and working conditions. And yet the close relationship between the mutiny and the social revolt suggests that the rebellion meant something more to Indian communities. (Anderson 4)

The British contemporaries were unable to understand the suddenness and extent of the revolt and then they concluded that it must have been pre-planned. Abolition of *Sati Pratha*, widow remarriage, extension of western education was looked upon as interference in the social customs of the country. The increasing activities of Christian missionaries and the policies of taxing the religious properties were also adding fuel to the fire. The Indian soldiers were being discriminated on racial basis:

The annexation of Awadh was greatly resented. The immediate cause was the introduction of Enfield Rifles; its cartridges were to be bitten off greased with the fat of the cow and the pig, before loading. This was against the religious beliefs of both the Hindus and the Muslims. (Sen79)

This rebellious incident has been represented variously in historic, cultural and fictional works. A characteristic of this event is the quantity of fiction that it

provoked. Beyond the newspaper articles, the historical writings or the autobiographical narratives of those involved, there was an immense output in popular adventure novels and literary texts. Some famous works include *The First Indian War of Independence* by Karl Marx published in 1859 and *The Siege of Krishnapur* by J G Farrell, published in 1973 and winning the Booker Prize for Fiction. A film named *Mangal Pandey* by Ketan Mehta is based on the 1857 revolt by Hindu and Muslim soldiers against the British rule over the issue of gun cartridges being greased with animal fat forbidden by their religions.

S.N. Sen. in *Eighteen Fifty Seven* opined that, the mutiny was inevitable. No dependent nation can forever reconcile itself to foreign domination. A despotic government must ultimately rule by the sword though it might be sheathed in velvet. In India the sword was apparently was in the custody of the Sepoy Army. Between the sepoy and his foreign master there was no common tie of race, language and religion.

While describing the reasons of the outbreak of mutiny historian R.C. Majumdar states that in January 1857, when a high class Brahman sepoy met on the way with a low caste *Khalasi*, who asked him to let him drink from his lota, the Brahman sepoy refused it by saying that you will defile it by your touch. At this the *Khalasi* told the Brahman that, “ You think much of your caste but wait a little, the sahib log will make you bite cartridges soaked in cow and pork fat, and then where will your caste be?” (Majumdar 43).

So the use of the cartridges soaked with the fat of cow and pig was against the religious sentiments of both the Hindus and the Muslims. This issue of new cartridges and the feelings of doubt and anger caused by it had also been highlighted in Amritlal Nagar's work *Aankhon Dekha Gadar*, translated from Vishnu Bhatt Godse's Marathi book named *Majha Pravaas* (1948). The book also described the political situation in 1850's India under the native kings or monarchs like Nana Sahib, Tantia Tope and Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi.

The Hindu sepoys were afraid that by using such cartridges they would not only pollute themselves beyond redemption but also be ostracized by their own people. The sepoys became extremely sensitive about their caste and religious status.

The revolt was not simply a religious response to threats posed by Christianity but a religious conspiracy. Some nineteenth century

British writers argued that the rebellion was a plot masterminded by high class Brahmin Hindus angry at company's evangelical zeal and fearful of the continuity loss of the privilege that interventions like the widow remarriage implied. Others claimed that it was a Muslim Jihad, declared in the context of the decline in political authority experienced by the Mughal elites. (Anderson 4)

Moreover the regiments were made up of diverse composition by including the sepoys from both the religions. By coming together, both the Hindus and the Muslims start to consider each other as brothers. This Hindu and Muslim unity was a very energetic factor for the beginning of the revolt of 1857 on the issue of greased cartridges.

On 29 March 1857 Mangal Pandey, the revolt's first martyr, called upon his comrades to rise against the British. It was the first act of open armed rebellion on the part of the sepoys. This was started by Mangal Pandey who belonged to the 34th infantry of Barrackpur. As Majumdar rightly remarks: "Mangal Pandey fully deserves the honour of the first martyr which posterity has given to him. Mangal Pandey and the Jamadar were tried and executed and the 31st N.I., like the 19th was disbanded" (Majumdar 47). He refused to use the cartridges, mutinied single handedly and was hanged and in this way the fire of 1857 revolt got started.

Although the revolt was started by sepoys but it also takes the shape of civil rebellion or the peasant revolt because of the new policy adopted by the East India Company for the administration of land revenue system in Bengal. The various reformed revenue systems like The Permanent Settlement, The Ryotwari System, and The Village System all were the reasons for the social discontent and unsettlement among the upper land owning classes of India. "The major historical problem presented by the events of the 1857 concern the process by which military mutiny was converted into civil rebellion" (Stokes 140). More important was the sympathy shown to the disbanded soldiers of two regiments because when the soldiers went back to their villages, they told others about the atrocities done to them by East India Company. The reform hit exploited peasant class stood up with the spirit of rebellion against the British and the sepoy mutiny took the form of civil or national rebellion.

Marx recognises that the preconditions of Western conquest lay in Indian rather than British society. His major premise was the peculiar multi-faced

character of Indian society that made it both highly resistant to change in its social and cultural aspects. Marx described the nature of contemporary Indian society as, “A country not only divided between the Mohammedan and Hindu, but between tribe and tribe and between caste and caste” (qtd. in Stokes 28).

Marx examined the conditions of Indian society: how it was divided, why so many external intruders were tempted and attacked India. But the difference between the previous intruders and the British was that the British started to look for every opportunity to exploit the weakness of India whether political or geographic.

England has broken the entire framework of entire Indian society without any symptoms of reconstitution yet appearing. The previous conquerors have effected no more than the political change, but England has struck at the heart of the social system – the Indian village. (qtd. in Stokes 28)

The revolt of 1857 has its importance all over the world because it was the first major blow to the colonial powers by the native or the colonized world. The revolt has been compared with the French Revolution of 1789 by Karl Marx. On 14 September, 1857 in New York Tribune Marx compared the 1857 revolt with the French Revolution and noted as it follows:

First major blow dealt to the French Monarchy proceeded from the nobility, not from the peasants. The Indian revolt does not similarly commence with the ryots, tortured, dishonored, stripped naked by the British, but with the sepoys, clad, fed, parted, fattened and pampered by them. (qtd. In Anderson 4)

The new imperialistic approach of the British by introducing new revenue system broke the very way of traditionally organized land-labour relationship. The colonial exploitation of India made the Indian people angry and that anger was displayed in the 1857 revolt. The important thing that was noted in the revolt was the Hindu-Muslim unity against the British rule.

While concerning other aspects of the imperialistic regime, the role of imperial power has also been interpreted in the positive sense in case of the nations of Asia like India. India was the country of dreams, spirituality, old religious thoughts etc.

Imperialism has sometimes proved a blessing in disguise. Since empires are built up by dynamic and dashing persons involving immense risk, outstanding valour and enormous physical as well as intellectual potentialities, such people also produce some useful institutions in the course of their expansionist activities. (Abdulla 59)

When the British East India Company came to India and did everything for her own materialistic gains at that time the conservativeness of Indian thinking started to change. Then slowly the difference between the East and West come to the centre. "The West is the actor the Orient a passive reactor. The West is the spectator, the judge and jury, of every facet of Oriental behavior" (Said 109). The western view of the orient also describes the social circumstances of India. The constructed ideas related to the phobia of sex were also highlighted in the local circumstances. The relationship between the Indian women and the English soldiers was one of the emerging issues of the colonial encounter between the two races. As Carola Hilmes in her work *The Rebellion of an Indian Temple Dancer* describes:

Sexuality between the members of difference races in the 19th century was theme covered with taboos, an explosive but nevertheless favorite theme. The link between the European male and a woman from the Orient could be more easily reconciled with the supposedly natural difference between the sexes, than the other way round. (Hilmes159)

In the same mode, we note in the film *Janoon* when Javed Khan (Sashi Kapoor) falls in love with Ruth. When Javed discovers that Ruth is in Ramji's custody, he takes Ruth and her family under his protection. Under normal circumstances all British women and Ramjimal would have been killed but they have been forgiven because Javed wanted to marry Ruth as his second wife. Javed's own wife Firdaus (Shabana Azmi) opposes his plans of marriage. Instead of joining the fight for freedom, Javed stays at home and pressurizes Mariam to give him consent to marry Ruth. So this scene as shown in the film has sufficiently represented the intercultural relations between the sexes.

V. A. Stuart in his historic work *The Sepoy Mutiny*, describes the spreading of the mutiny from a very British angle. Stuart further uncovers the responsibility of an English soldier Alex, the condition of his pregnant wife, the hard journey which

Alex undertook to obey the orders from his general; all these were described as the duty of the whole imperial world to suppress the mutinous efforts of any third world colony.

The role of Christian missionaries in exciting the rebellious nature between the sepoys and common people also needs description. The time when the revolt began, it cannot be denied that the Indians who changed their religion and became Christians were made the objects of public anger. It has been said that, “all Indian converts – Hindu or Muslim were sought out and hunted down” (Bhattacharya 17).

In the film *Junoon* we also see that the religious factors are also contributing for exciting the mobs against the British rule. Similarly the role of a *fakir* in the film fulfills the job as a chorus to the whole structure of the film. So the filmic historic representations are carving the same religious factors in the rebellious nature of the common man against the company rule.

Satyajit Ray and Shyam Benegal both are well established directors in Indian cinema and their films *Shatranj Ke Khilari* and *Junoon* are individually interpreted variously but the comparative study of both these films based on 1857 revolt from New Historicist perspective has not been done yet.

History and Film

The growing interest in the historic films has meant that history as seen on the screen has reached far wider audience than the writing of the professional historians. Three different types of approaches can be applied to the subject of film and history:

First, there is the study of the development of film, as an industry, art form or cultural institution in the twentieth century. Secondly the film can be studied as a historical documents or texts which provide a valuable insight into the societies which made and watch them. Then, the film can be treated seriously in its own right as a medium for representing versions of the past. (Miskell 246)

The film history started gaining importance in England as a rightful area of historical research in 1960's. The film became an important medium for visualizing the societies of the past in a new way. The importance of film as a new source was taken up by a number of historians including Anthony Aldgate, Nicholas

Pronay and K. R. M. Short in 1960's and 1970's. But still there were complaints made by professional historians about the accuracy of historical films. Historical films were considered inferior to intellectual history.

Like a history book, a historical film-despite Hollywood's desire for realism is not a window onto the past but a construction of a past; like a history book, a film handles evidence from that past within a certain framework of possibilities and a tradition of practice. (Rosentone 127)

The films made on the themes related to history served as the useful part of knowing about the past. Moreover it is easy to watch any film based on historic topic instead of reading any historic text. But the problem arises when the history as represented in film deviates from the textual history. "The debate over the film Mangal Pandey, has raged on its putative lack of objectivity on one hand and on the other, on its depiction of an event that still has power to move people" (Chakrabarty and Majumdar 1771).

Both Hindi feature films: *Shatranj Ke Khilari* (1977) by Satyajit Ray and *Junoon* (1978) by Shyam Benegal put forward how history is presented in the films. *Shatranj ke Khilari* is adapted from a story of the same name written by Munshi Premchand in 1924. *Shatranj Ke Khilari* is a historical short story set in the year 1856, the year of the deposition of the king, Wajid Ali Shah in Lucknow. The deposition was one of the precipitating features of the mutiny, and Lucknow was in 1857 to be one of the principal sites of the rebellion.

The second film, *Junoon* (1978) is based on a novel *A Flight of Pigeons* (1970) written by Ruskin Bond. *A Flight of Pigeons* is a classic story about the twists of fate, history and the human heart. The short novel is set in Shahjahanpur during the revolt of 1857. In the introduction to the text, Ruskin Bond explains the motivation and the background for writing such a rich and moving novella based on the true event of the 1857 revolt. He describes it as follows:

I remember my father telling me a story of a girl who had a recurring dream in which she witnessed the massacre of the congregation in a small church in northern India. A couple of years later she found herself in an identical church in Shahjahanpur, where she was witness to the same horrifying scenes which had now become a

reality . . . Whether the girl in question was Ruth Labadoor or someone else, one cannot say at this point of time. But Ruth's story is true. (Bond 7)

When we talk about any film which represents history, we are bound to face the change; the change in the medium of history from page to screen, to add images, sound, colour, movement, and the drama. This brings the change we see, read, perceive and used to think about the past. The filmic representation of history is not fixed to show on the screen as it has happened in the past. It may consider what might have happened.

The history film not only challenges traditional history, but helps return us to a ground zero, a sense that we can never really know the past, but can only continually play with, reconfigure and try to make meaning out of the traces it has left behind. (Rosenstone 186)

India has a very rich cultural history. The Indian cinema showcases the nation in varying contexts. As India was under the control of Mughal Empire and then comes the British, who were also outsiders like the Mughals. The films are said to be the mirror of the society. During the colonial era, the censorship was strict because the British were aware of the impact of cinema. The films which criticized the British rule were banned. In post colonial period, the challenge for the film makers was because of the political, social and religious considerations of a fractured volatile society.

“Memory in parallel cinema supplies what formal histories cannot- the lived experience of change” (Deshpande 115). India has a little tradition of film making which blends history with the literature and legend to create new cinematic history. New wave films deconstruct prevalent notions of history, nation, gender, class and caste. While concerning about the contribution of Bollywood films we can talk about several films based on the historic events and themes.

The film Mangal Pandey by Ketan Mehta was recent filmic reconstruction of the early events of 1857. It was based on the rebellion of a soldier, Mangal Pandey, of 34th regiment of the native infantry of the East India Company's army. The film gave rise to a lively debate in the Indian press about historical films and their real relationship to actual histories.

Mangal Pandey was something of an exception in stirring up controversy about history. It seems that with the attainment of independence, the historical films lost the political function. They became stuff of mythic lore, stories inserted into the past with no basis in either fact or politics. (Chakrabarty and Majumdar 1771)

While considering Sohrab Modi's 1954 film, *Mirza Ghalib*, it clearly shows Mirza Ghalib's life and its contemporary circumstances. The film gives a glimpse to the decline of the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar and beginning of British colonialism. This is manifested in a scene, when Ghalib was put in prison and Beghum Chaudvi went to Bahadur Shah for help, but the king expressed his helplessness as Ghalib was taken in custody across the Yamuna River where the regime was under British control. So the film shows Bahadur Shah as the setting sun of Mughal dynasty and the emergence of British rule in 1850's.

The historic film *Mughal-e-Azam* is directed by K. Asif and produced by Shapoorji Pallonji in 1960. Some films remain deeply etched in memory; the film describes that Prince Salim and Anarkali in *Mughal-e-Azam*, the rich man who falls in love with a slave girl. But the Mughal king, Akbar, does not accept as the future queen of Hindustan. Akbar says in his concluding lines as Anarkali is being taken away that he is certainly not an enemy of love, but a slave to his principles and duty. In what appears as extraordinary humility from a powerful and proud king, Akbar asks about Anarkali's pardon and forgiveness.

In this way, the film elaborates the concept of love in the Mughal period and also re-establishes the historical complexity of the possibility of love between the poor and the rich in the contemporary situation. The film *Mughal-e-Azam*, tells a splendid saga, combining historical fact with fiction to present on the screen. The film gives the audience a chance to know about the experience and emotions of the past. The filmic representation of a theme like love between the son of a king and a servant girl shows the extreme passion of the feelings from the past. This act of screening the past event in present context becomes the centre of all the critical thinking, because filmic mode of visualizing the past challenged the generally accepted view of the traditional historic event.

Rebecca M. Brown in his *Partition and Uses of History* in *Waqf/Time*, the 1965 film *Waqf* by Yashraj Chopra that how the film does not directly portray

partition but instead uses an earthquake as a metaphor for the break. The name of the film indicates that time can bring prosperity and drought in human life. The film shows how a rich family of Lala Kedarnath was separated by an earthquake and this changed the fortune of the family. The film acknowledges the complexities of the recent past in its understanding of contemporary life. The film sets in a moment of post- Nehruvian Indian Modern History when the direction of the nation was not clear. So the treatment of history in Bollywood films was represented sometimes metaphorically and sometimes directly.

A Passage to India is a 1984 drama film written and directed by David Lean. The screenplay is based on the 1924 novel of the same title by E. M. Forster. The film is set in the 1920s during the period of growing influence of the Indian independence movement in the British Raj. *A Passage to India* deals with the delicate balance between the English and the Indians during the British Raj. *A Passage to India* sold well and was widely praised in literary circles. The racial differences can never be eliminated, but they can be minimized or overlooked as inconsequential.

For both Forster and Lean, India represents a place, a reality, for which the actual geographical country is no more than a symbol or sacrament. All through the story, the visitors keep asking to see the real India. The real India is closed to the British Raj and the Indians themselves. Both these categories have become caricatures made in the image and likeness of the other: the oppressor and the oppressed bearing the stamp of their internalized portrayal of themselves to each other. (Leans 340)

It is quite clear that the English and the Indians in the film are meant to be caricatures. This point is emphasized by the fact that Lean insisted upon Victor Banerjee, as Dr Aziz, using, not his own very polished accent, but an imitation of the stage Indian accent. The only two people in the story who are either ready or able to meet the real India are Mrs. Moore and Adela Quested.

Pinjar is another heart touching film directed by Chandra Prakash Dwivedi released in 2003. It is about the problems between the Hindus and the Muslims at the time of partition. *Pinjar* revisits one of the most heartrending chapters of India's modern history that of the Partition in a manner that does not unnecessarily wander over the blood and spot of the catastrophe. It is based on a novel written in

Punjabi by Amrita Pritam. *Pinjar* tells the story of Puro, a young Hindu woman during the time of the partition of 1947 with her family.

In *Pinjar*, issues like marriage of girls, their submerged desires, their aspirations, and their education are all seen in the light of the gendered views of contemporary society, which, in turn, has its foundation in the belief of the unequal status of men and women. (Bharat 63)

The film, *Pinjar* represents the historic event of the 1947 and its way of bringing the historic event on the screen has been appreciated by the viewers. The historic specificity of the film visualizes the plight of the female during the partition time. While attempting the critical analysis of the two films in his essay, *Partition Literature and Films: Pinjar and Earth*, Meenakshi explains her views about the representation of history in these two films as, "In these retakes on the historical splitting up, both films attempt a serious appraisal of partition, patently indicating that the issue is pertinent even today" (Bharat 60).

Jodhaa-Akbar is another historical film released in 2008. It is about the relationship between Akbar and Jodha. *Jodhaa Akbar* is a sixteenth-century love story about a political marriage of convenience between a Mughal emperor, Akbar, and a Rajput princess, Jodhaa. Although the film was a huge success but as long as the historical accuracy matters there were some disputes related to the film. Several historians claim that Akbar's Rajput wife was never known as "Jodha Bai" during the Mughal period. The film was banned in some part of India.

Visi Tilak in his review of the film titled as *Jodhaa Akbar: Where Love Unifies An Empire*, describes that the movie arrived with its own set of controversies and objections from religious fundamentalists. The ones worth mentioning are historical in nature. Some historians say that Jodha was Emperor Akbar's daughter in law, and not his wife. Others say that while Akbar did marry a Rajput princess from the same kingdom as in the story, her name was not Jodhabai.

The film is also criticized for ignoring historic characters like Maham Anaga, Adham Khan and Bairam Khan get their moments. Except for Adham, others have multiple layers. This one thrills neither the historians nor the spectators.

Jodhaa Akbar is more contemporary, both in its chosen political agenda and in its representation of religion. It tells the epic story of India's most charismatic and visionary Renaissance ruler, Akbar the Great – the Muslim emperor famed for his tolerant attitude towards other religions in a time when such institutionalised, proactive affirmation of other faiths fearlessly paired with Akbar's unthreatened commitment to his own, rings out as a uniquely contemporary way of thinking. (Frazier 1)

The film *Jodhaa Akbar* has been criticized by historians for ignoring and altering the true facts of the relationship between Akbar and his wife. But the dialogues, the costumes and setting of the scenes in the film show the capacity to make past experience livable in present time. The film causes the audience to rethink about what they used to do before watching the film. This kind of historic film makes the viewers to think and analyse critically about the difference between the historic interpretations of the same event in comparison to what they are watching on the screen.

So the representation of history through the medium of film is one of the favourite means of expressing the past in the present. The emerging trend of representing historic events and the history itself has been gaining importance day by day.

In the US-based 'Presence of the Past' project, for instance, 81 percent of the 1500 people interviewed indicated that they had watched films or television programs about the past in the previous year...higher than the number of people who read books about the past (53 percent) or who participated in a group devoted to studying, preserving or presenting the past (20 percent). (Warrington 1)

This shows the change in the way of knowing about the past. This shift from reading text about history has now being left behind by watching films about history. The popularity of the films based on history is growing day by day. The historic film can represent an event from history or it can describe the individual life any famous legend.

Review of literature

Eric Stokes in his book *The Peasant and the Raj* describes that 1857 stands firmly in a historical continuum. Not of course that it was the direct product

of social forces blowing off the political crust but rather a fortuitous conjecture that laid these forces bare. Like 1848 in Europe despite obvious disparities- it was an uprising sans issue that could catch a society moving into the early stages of modernization.

S.N. Sen. in *Eighteen Fifty Seven* expressed that, the mutiny was inevitable. No dependent nation can forever tolerate itself to foreign domination. A despotic government must ultimately rule by the sword though it might be sheathed in velvet. In India the sword was apparently was in the custody of the Sepoy Army. Between the sepoy and his foreign master there was no common tie of race, language and religion. The mutiny was inevitable in 1857 but it was inherent in the constitution of the empire.

Frances W Pritchett in his *The Chess Players: From Premchand to Satyajit Ray* describes that the film *Shatranj Ke Khilari* shares with the story a basic atmosphere of hollowness and dissatisfaction, a dearth of admirable and even likable characters. Both Premchand and Ray portray a society that has decayed from within. The British do not so much conquer it, as simply take it over. Ray adds to the general sense of futility by making it clear that the incoming British themselves are exploited, self-interested, unable to offer any hope of moral regeneration. The old regime departs unlamented; the new regime arrives unwelcomed. Ray shows us little hope anywhere only a pervasive sense of weariness, inertia, and anti-climax.

In the book *Modern Literary Criticism and Theory*, M. A. R. Habib has put forward that New Historicism saw literary text not as somehow unique but as a kind of discourse situated within a complex of cultural discourses such as religious, political, cultural, economic and aesthetic which both shaped the literary text and in terms were shaped by it.

The game of chess pulsates as a subtle politico-colonial metaphor. The beauty of Premchand's story lies in the parallel that he draws between the game of chess and the moves of the crafty raj leading to the capture of the king as Shreya Bhattacharji in his essay *Decoding the Moves of Colonial Chess* has explored. Further Bhattacharji has illustrated that the film commences with Meer and Mirza absorbed in yet another game of chess while British colonialism burns Awadh into ashes.

Darius Cooper in his *The White Man's Burdens and the Whims of the Chess- Besotted Aristocrats* says as colonized artists both Ray and Premchand exhibit the compulsion to show how colonialism and racism are the structures which promote what Edward Said defines as the difference between the familiar "Us" and the strange "Them". In colonial terms "us" stands for the British and in racial terms it stands for the upper Hindu classes. Similarly "them" stands for Indians in colonial terms and also for the outcast and the untouchable in racial terms.

Robert, A. Rosenstone in his work *History on Film/Film on History* describes the role of the director as an historian. The complexity in making the film on a historic topic is a challenge before the director of such film. He explains that to visit the event of the past is like giving the flesh and blood to the past. To represent history means to reinterpret the historic event that runs against traditional wisdom.

The above mentioned sources define the revolt of 1857 from various perspectives. The historic texts explain the causes of the revolt, its consequences, and the exploitation by the British. On the other hand, the fictional works exploit the idea of the revolt in different ways. The wider treatment of the revolt manifests itself in the way it has been exploited in the works of both the historicists and writers from the fictional world. Moreover the revolt has also been represented in the filmic mode. The filmic representation of the specific historic event related to the kingdom of Awadh and Wajid Ali's place in history and its filmic representation, the annexation of Awadh, its aftermath and the outbreak of mutiny will further be focused in the two selected films. The study will focus on the various themes, politics, events and techniques used by Satyajit Ray in his film *Shatranj Ke Khilari* (1977) and by Shyam Benegal in *Junoon* (1978).

The second chapter will draw attention to comprehensive analysis of Satyajit Ray's *Shatranj Ke Khilari*, describing how the life style of the king and the common man in 1850's Lucknow prepared the suitable cause for the annexation by the British. The film depicts the kingdom of Awadh in 1850's. The king Wajid Ali Shah is described in the film more as an artist than that of a political head of a kingdom. He remains busy in reciting poetry, enjoying dance, and celebrating religious ceremonies. On the other side, as the title suggests, the two chess players continue playing chess under all the circumstances. They do not care about the annexation of Awadh and just change their way of playing the game as

according to the changes made by the British. Meanwhile, General Outram makes his plans in the real life to take over the administration of Awadh. He does this by practicing the tactics like those of the game of chess under the colonial setup. In this way, Ray describes the feudalism, colonialism, the passion for the game and the annexation of Awadh because of colonial politics exploiting the individual passions of native king, feudals, and even of the common man.

The third chapter will study the film *Junoon* from the New Historicist perspective. It will deal with the theme of romance and war in the same era as that of the first film. The film, *Junoon* (1978) is based on a novella *A Flight of Pigeons* (1970) written by Ruskin Bond. It is a typical story about the twists of destiny, the past and the love. The film describes the starting of the revolt of 1857, the incidents of fights between the sepoys and the British troops. On the other hand, the film shows Javed Khan's passion for a young white woman, Ruth. The film also shows how Ruth, her mother and an old lady have to suffer because of the revolt. In the film, the white and black pigeons symbolize the sepoys and the British troops and their movement during the revolt.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation will compare and contrast the similarities and differences in the representation of the historic event in the filmic style. The description of symbols used in the films will be studied. The filmic representation of 1857 revolt will be observed. The characters, the dialogues, and the settings of both of the films will be compared in relation to their description of revolt. The films based on history are always the subject to debate. Films need to be commercially viable and successful since filmmaking is an expensive discipline. Film's timing of release, the targeted audience, and its theme all these factors have their influence. To which extent films represent the true facts of history and its deviations from the original historic fact also questions the true recognition of the films as representing history. All these issues related to the films based on history will be described in the final chapter.

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Chapter Two

A New Historicist Reading of *Shatranj Ke Khilari*

A New Historicist Reading of *Shatranj Ke Khilari*

The film *Shatranj Ke Khilari* was made by the renowned director Satyajit Ray in 1977. The film is based on a short story written by Munshi Premchand of the same name in 1924. It was the first film by Ray in another language than Bengali. The film shows the life style of that time's Lucknow and its social, political, and cultural aspects. The role of the two chess players as it was portrayed by Munshi Premchand in the original story has been skillfully presented through the filmic medium. Satyajit Ray has used filmic techniques quite appropriately such as the costumes, props, colour scheme to bring the realism in the film to recreate the overall surroundings of 1850's Awadh.

Satyajit Ray, the director of the film *Shatranj Ke Khilari*, was born in Kolkata on May 2, 1921 in a Bengali family. Ray was regarded as one of the most incredible filmmakers India has ever produced. He was highly sensitive as a child to sounds and lighting. The small holes in the fabric of his uncle's house taught Satyajit some basic principles of light. He worked in an advertising agency till the release of his first film, *Pather Panchali* in 1955 which won eleven international prizes, including Best Human Documentary at the Cannes Film Festival. The two other films from The Apu Trilogy were *Aparajito* (1956), and *Apur Sansar* (1959). Ray in his work *Our Films/Their Films* (1976) describes his experience in Indian cinema in comparison to the films from abroad which have become the landmarks in the history of cinema.

While concerning about the thematic concerns of Ray's films, it becomes clear that Ray's films usually deal with basics of human life. The subject matter of The Apu Trilogy focuses on the concerns of a family, the relationship between the parents and the children, marriage and reconciliation. His first non Bengali film was *Shatranj Ke Khilari* (1977). Ray was personally interested in the game of chess. Then he made extensive research in the 1856's Awadh: the role of Wajid Ali shah as a King and an artist. It is appreciable that how Ray as being the director of the film utilised his interest for the game of chess and how he relates the metaphor of chess to the historic event in 1856's annexation of Awadh by the British. The film was made during the 1970's which is described as an era of dictatorship and suppression of Fundamental Rights after the Independence. This was made possible by some powerful discourses of the time, their crafty moves

like the game of chess and irresponsible and passiveness of the people; as Mir and Mirza are shown in the film.

The film begins with the close up scene of the chess board with the sound of a running clock. The background of the scene has been kept black and the pieces of the chess like king, queen, bishops, rook, knight and pawn all are shown in red and white colours in the foreground. Then one hand from the right side appears and moves ahead the red pawn. Then from the left side another hand moves ahead a white Bishop and captures a red pawn. In response to this another player moves ahead his red Knight and captures the white Bishop. "The game is symbolic as well as real is soon evident as a narrative voice ironically suggests the bloodless nature of this battle, an early enactment of Wajid Ali Shah's loss of his kingdom without a fight" (Chakravarty 184). In this whole process the narrator tells about the players and says that:

Look at the hands of the brave generals organising their troops in the battlefield. But the battle is not real. There will be no bloodshed and no overturn of any empire. (Narrator)

But when we compare the situation with the real contemporary context it becomes clear that although the narrator describes that there will be no such activity like annexation of the kingdom yet in the context of the Awadh it is perceived to be real. Lord Dalhousie has ordered General Outram to take Wajid Ali's signature on the new treaty. This way the Awadh will be under Company's rule. Then the frame becomes wider and we can see two rich landlords of Lucknow, Mir Roshan Ali and Mirza Sajjad Ali, the two Chess players. As the narrator explains,

Both are not fighting but playing and they don't like to run real horses but to use their mind's power. (Narrator)

In the next scene, the chess board has been shown in a close up frame. The whole focus remains on the chess board. The players have been kept out of the frame but only their hands have been shown. The game continues and different types of moves are employed by the both sides. The narrator explains the situation in this way:

The King in White dress is in danger because the general in Red dress waiting for the opportunity to attack on the King in White. *Mir sahib*

baadshah bachaaiye, baadshah gya to khel khatam. (Narrator) (Mir Sahib! save the king if you lost the king, it means you will lose everything.) (Translation Mine)

We can observe that the whole upcoming story of the film has been described by the narrator. The above lines show that the king of Awadh is in danger from the British general. Also if the regime changes the rich, royal people will not be able to enjoy the luxurious way of living and will not have the leisure to play Chess. Then the narrator tells about the royalty and wealth of both the chess players. Both being the *jagirdars* need not work with their hands. The chess players are totally addicted with their passion for the game. They know nothing about whatever happens in the outside world. On the other hand, in *Junoon*, Ramjimal and his friend talk about the British, the massacre at the church and about the remaining Labadoor family members. In this way similarity on the basis of the props used in the two shows that both films represent a similar culture and correspond to the same period in history.

Then the throne is shown in a close up shot and in then the camera is pulled back slowly to show that the throne is empty. The significance of the empty scene is projected in the next scene. The king is described as playing the Hindu God Krishna, surrounded by beautiful young ladies as *gopies*. The king in the next shot is seen playing the drum, surrounded by the crowd, all dressed in black clothes on the occasion of *Muharrum*. Then we see him at night in the company of beautiful concubines and enjoying *Hukka*.

The series of montage shots is followed by a shot of Wajid Ali Shah's empty throne. The narrator informs us that in this realm full of aesthetes the ruler is Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, a king who has "other interests." These other interests include dressing up as a Hindu god, beating the drum at Mohurram and relaxing with his harem. Once in a while, the narrator states; Wajid also likes to grace his court. Ray's montage characterizes all of the ruler's interests as *shauk* or aesthetic pleasure. Even religious practices and prayer are characterized as *shauk*. (Dube30)

This shows the cultural inclination of the king and his interest and participation in the religious activities. The social set up of a society where a

political head has been enjoying both Hindu and Muslim religious customs is presented.

Next close up scene begins with Wajid Ali Shah's hands and raises his left hand in response to the respect expressed by some person. The camera pulls back and we see the king sitting on the throne. "The judicial system of Awadh was, however not free from imperfectness. Reforms were overdue. But the king had little time for effecting reforms and he was also not free to introduce these" (Singh 88).

The scene is presented in such a manner as the director's intention is to throw special light on this act of the king which arouses his interest in poetry instead of giving a verdict. The actual condition of law and justice has been accurately exposed by Ray. Wajid Ali's irresponsible conduct of the political and judicial matters is highlighted by Ray.

The scene related to king's activities in his court validates the historic records about the misgovernance of the king Wajid Ali shah. In both the filmic and historic fields, the shortcomings of the Awadh kingdom have been equally exposed. The judicial system becomes very clear when in the film we see that the king composed a song while sitting on the throne instead of judging a verdict related to a man who was standing before him. "When a poem comes into his head, it displaces all other business- whether he is judging a difficult case or facing the loss of his throne" (Prichett 195).

The camera moves forward to the head of the king to make close up frame focusing on the *Taaj* (crown). Before five years, he sent this *taaj* to London to be displayed at the great exhibition. At the exhibition of this *taaj*, an Englishman said like what has been described by the close up of a letter written by Lord Dalhausie.

The wretch in Lucknow who has sent his crown to the exhibition would have done his people and us a great service if he had sent his head in it; and he would never have missed it. That is a cherry which will drop into our mouths one day. (Narrator)

As the narrator describes that cherry is Lord Dalhousie's favourite fruit. That's why he had swallowed Indian states like cherry which included Punjab, Burma, Nagpur, Satara, and Jhansi. Only one remained in the form of Awadh whose friendship with Britain goes back to the reign of Nawab Siraj-Ud-Daula. He once did the mistake to fight with the British and lost the battle. But the British did

not dethrone him. They made him to sign a treaty for friendship and a compensation of five million rupees. Since then whenever the British needed money for their campaigns, the *Nawaabs* open their treasury. Then the narrator says ironically;

Nawaab Wajid Ali Shah, kash ! tum jaante ke Angrej resident general Outram tumhare liye kya mansube banaa raha hai ? (alas ! Wajid Ali Shah, you would know what English General Outram have Plans for you? (Translation Mine)

“Ray’s Wajid is his own creation. The film *Shatranj ke Khilari* (1977) has been received and interpreted as a film about Wajid Ali Shah, but at the same time it has been condemned for its portrayal of the last Nawab of Awadh” (Dube 170).

Actually the original story written by Prem Chand has a brief reference to the king. The role as it has been described in the film is purely fashioned by Ray himself. Ray himself was not clear about the duality of king’s life. That’s why Ray at first did not feel any sympathy for the character of King Wajid Ali Shah. But then he came to notice another aspect of Wajid Ali Shah’s life.

“Ray emphasizes Wajid Ali Shah’s musicality. We see him dressed as Krishna in an opera he had himself composed, beating a drum at the festival of Muharram, and watching an entrancing *Kathak* dance performance. ‘Nothing but poetry and music should bring tears to a man’s eyes,’ he tells his Prime Minister with a hint of sternness, on seeing him weep after an interview with the British Resident.” (Robinson 243)

While observing the film, the portrayal of King Wajid Ali looks more favorable for colonial purposes. His role exhibits as if he was the king only by chance. The artistic qualities and imagination as a poet makes him more suitable for becoming a poet, a colourful personality in the contemporary political situation of Awadh under the threat of colonialism. Wajid Ali Shah has been subjectified as the inferior other in comparison to the authoritative character of general Outram.

The human self is a product of its particular historical moment. As Greenblatt states that self-fashioning directs attention to the problematic structure of power in representation. “One man’s authority is another man’s alien” (Greenblatt 9). The powerful, civilized and colonial outlook constructed the image

of the so called kings as we see in the film. Wajid Ali Shah's character was at the center of this power play between the dominant West and the being dominated Indian king. General Outram forcefully describes Wajid Ali Shah in negative terms which show the politics of imperialism.

Nawab's gradual detachment from Delhi and the increasing influence of East India Company was the starting point for the change. The receptions given by the nawab for the company's representatives turned into pure exhibitions of luxurious way of living.

The architecture of Lucknow created a magnificent scenario for the ceremonial rites performed by the nawabs to proclaim their authority. The aesthetic expression of legitimacy was developed through court rituals and through religious ceremonies, which created interaction between the court and the city. (Casci 3713)

This was clear during the time of Wajid Ali Shah. He did not restrict himself to the political rituals but used the architectural beauty of the city to fulfill his own artistic pursuits. He manipulated the scenario for reciting poetry, enjoying music and dance. That's why he was forced to abdicate his power even before the annexation of the Awadh. "The kingdom of Awadh tried to evolve a different cultural life style which in many ways was typical of its own. It is a period in which new forms of music, poetry, architecture, folk come to the fore and reached its pinnacle" (Singh 19). The historians also recognize the multiple cultural and architectural characteristics of the period. This aspect of the 1856's Awadh and its culture is appreciated in historic fields.

The Awadh of 1850's became the hub of all types of artistic modes whether it was music, poetry and dance. The king himself was more artistic rather than being the political head of the kingdom. Moreover the architectural structure of the city was suitable for such luxurious and artistic ceremonies. In both film and historical writings pertaining to this period has been highlighted variously.

In the next medium shot which covered both persons as we see Outram talking to Weston. In this scene we see Outram playing a master's position and Weston keeps standing as a subordinate. The General Outram was reading an official document dated 24th of January that gives every kind of information related to the routine life of king Wajid Ali Shah.

“The hour-by-hour account is introduced by the discussion of an oddity, Outram reads aloud the report’s reference to the royal penchant for breeding a pigeon that has one black and one white wing. The introduction of the oddity illustrates the colonialist/nationalist critique that in Wajid’s court it is oddities like these that are rewarded, rather than useful technological or scientific inventions.” (Dube 32)

In the film this account is given as follows:

Outram: And what about his songs? He’s something of a composer, I understand?

Weston: They keep running in your head, sir. I find them quite attractive. Some of them.

Outram: I see.

Weston: He’s really quite gifted, sir. He’s also fond of dancing, sir.

Outram: Yes, so I understand. With bells on his feet, like nautch-girls. Also dresses up as a Hindu god, I am told.

Weston: You’re right, sir. He also composes his own operas.

Outram: Eunuchs, fiddlers, nautch-girls and “muta” wives and God Knows what else. He can’t rule, he has no wish to rule, and therefore he has no business to rule.

Outram: What the hell are *muta* wives?

Weston: “*Muta*” wives, sir? They’re temporary wives.

Outram: *Temporary* wives?

Weston: Yes, sir. A “muta” marriage can last for three days, or three months or three years. “*Muta*” is an Arabic word.

Outram: And it means temporary?

The dialogue between Outram and Weston shows the surveillance system of the Imperialistic powers in the life of a king. As Foucault discussed in chapter one by referring to Jeremy Bentham in his own work *Discipline and Punish* described the concept of Panopticon. This type of information collected by General Outram shows the imperialistic methodology to reconstruct the image of the king. Actually he was making the so called orient image of the king which can be helpful in their tactics for the annexation of Awadh. Weston is the oriental scholar who knows the language and the culture of the native land and this knowledge of

Weston is being manipulated by General Outram. General Outram's position as the Resident of Lucknow was similar to that of an observer at the centre of the building in the panoptical structure. This mechanism of power and observation was helpful in getting the knowledge about the behavior of the subject under surveillance.

General Outram asks Weston, "Do you know king prayed five times a day?" Weston responds in this way: "Five is a number described by Quran, sir." Then Outram goes ahead talking and about king's daily life. He asks Weston, "You know the language so you know the people here. Tell me Weston what kind of poet is the king? Is he any good, or is it simply because he is the king they say he is good?" But western says, "I think he is rather good". To prove this Weston recites a poem by Wajid Ali and also translates it into English:

Wound not my bleeding body; throw flowers gently on my grave.
Though mingled with earth, I rose up to the skies.
People mistook my rising dust for the Heavens. (Weston)

In this whole dialogue between General Outram and Weston, it is described that Outram was trying to interpret the living style of the king in a very passive, negative, and imperialistically constructed way.

The colonial attempts to classify, record, represent and process non-European societies, barely conceal the imperial intentions of reordering both the incomprehensible 'othered' worlds and the conquered others. To be able to document or codify the other meant absolute knowledge of the other. Absolute knowledge doubled for absolute power over the other. (Bhattacharji 217)

Outram talks about king: his songs, concubines, *muta* (temporary) wives, dressed like Hindu God, bells on his feet like nautch girls. Then Outram asks Weston, "And what of kind of king do you think that all this makes him, Weston?" Weston responds, "Rather a special kind, sir." At this Outram describes the king a bad one, a frivolous, effeminate, irresponsible, worthless king. Outram says that, "He can't rule. He has no wish to rule. And therefore he has no business to rule".

The insidious colonial machinery successfully converts Awadh into a panopticon, and Wajid Ali Shah is under constant British surveillance of which he himself and entire Awadh is unaware. Ray shows

General Outram surreptitiously monitoring each move of Wajid Ali Shah. (Bhattacharji 216)

The outlook of Outram towards the king throws light on the Orientalist outlook of the western powers. The western powers constructed self-defined notions of the third world kings, artists and people to increase their territories under colonial politics. But the argument between General Outram and Weston shows that Weston shows sympathetic attitude towards Indian culture. That's why he supports Wajid Ali's artistic qualities against Outram's one sided criticism of the king.

The role played by Captain Weston in conversation with Outram reveals the relationship between the individuals and colonial knowledge systems. The proper knowledge of languages could become the key to unlocking the culture and facilitating colonial enterprise in the colony. As Bhattacharji opines, "General Outram utilizes Weston's command of Urdu and his conversance with the Lucknawi Nawabi culture to gain insights into Wajid Ali's psyche" (Bhattacharji 218).

The next scene shifts the focus of the story towards the chess players. When the chess players are about to start the game, they are disturbed by the entry of *Munshi*. Although they are not happy about it yet the *Munshi* is received in a welcoming *nawaabi* style. *Munshi* talks about the rumours he has heard of the British intentions of overtaking the Awadh. He has heard that their military has arrived up to Kanpur. Mir has been shown as a coward. He hesitates when Mirza asked him to bring a sword which was hanging on the wall. Mirza boasts about their ancestors' courageousness in the military of *nawaab*. Their blood must be running in our veins. Mir says *khair jo kujh bhee ho, hame in Shatranj khelne se to nahin rok sakte*. (Mir says that whatever it may be but it cannot stop us from playing chess.) (Translation Mine)

The fact that Mirza is infected with the same chess-virus indicated by Ray in the scene that follows between Mirza and his wife Khurshid. Mirza's conceptual view of chess is repeatedly undermined by Khurshid, who as it were, becomes the spokeswoman for Ray. (Cooper 213)

Then the *Munshi* talks about the game of chess and how a change has been brought about by the British in this popular game of Indian origin. While telling the different between the both ways of playing, *Munshi* explains that the *Vizier* of Indian style is called queen in the Western way of playing. Secondly, each pawn can move upto two places; this makes the game faster than its previous style. While concerning these two changes in the shadow of real situation, the perception becomes clear that the kingdom of Awadh is under threat from the Queen. The second change marks the speed of British thinking, the modern way of doing things quickly, as Mir talks about the introduction of *rail* and *taar* system. While going *Munshi* says that he had interrupted them. He also remarks that Collins Sahib would not have given him the permission to interfere while he was playing chess.

Nandlal: Well, I must take my leave.

Meer: So soon?

Nandlal: I feel like an intruder. Mr. Collins wouldn't answer the door to any callers when we played.

Mirza: Then Mr. Collins should not only have studied our languages . . . but our manners (*tehzeeb*) too.

Mirza told *Munshi* that Mr. Collins Sahib should know that it is not enough to learn the language but he should also learn *tehzeeb* (courtesy). This shows the clash of cultural customs and the colonial enterprise. The colonizer tries to learn only the language of the natives but not their cultural manners. Because the knowledge of oriental language is must for proper exploitation of the same. On the other side, Mirza's views explain the imagined superiority of Indian culture over the Western culture. The native Indian culture and its traditions are considered superior than the British culture. In the film, we observe the dialogue between the queen mother and Outram where she reminds him about the treatment given to him at his arrival in Awadh for the first time. But the colonial design does not appropriate native cultural system and tries to define it in its own terms.

Cultural forms in newly classified traditional societies were reconstructed and transformed by and through colonial technologies of conquest and rule, which created new categories and oppositions between the colonizer and colonized, European and the Asian,

modern and traditional, West and East, even male and female. (Dirks 3)

The filmic version of the conversation between Mir, Mirza and *Munshi* describes the role of the colonial interpretation of the native culture. The greed of the colonial powers had reduced the local culture into a flexible structure. This can be changed as it is desired by the powerful as the rules of the game can be changed for the convenience of the British. The culture was what the colonialism was all about. In fact the colonialism was the cultural project of the West to maintain its control over the other world.

Stephen Greenblatt's *Poetics of Culture* seeks to reveal the relationship between texts and their socio-historical contexts. Cultural Poetics assumes that texts not only document the social forces that inform and constitute history and society but also feature prominently in the social processes themselves which fashion both individual identity and the socio-historical situation. (Veenstra 174)

In the film the scenes related to the conversation between General Outram and Weston reveal that the filmic representation of the socio-cultural situations of the 1850's India especially of the Awadh and its understanding by the British both influence each other. In the same way, General Outram asks about the king's perfume whose fragrance lingers long after his contact. The filmic representation of Outram shows him in the superior position than the king. The power of the dominant ideology can be seen in Outram's views about the Indian perfume.

So the views of the general Outram as described in the film about the Indian culture and King Wajid Ali Shah are reconstructed by the colonial politics of the West. The language and culture are the means of self-defining in any society. Moreover the way of representing such ideas through the medium of a film makes the difference between the corresponding cultures much deeper. Because the techniques used in the film, the contemporary and dominant codes of a culture all affect the representation of the difference between the two cultures. As John Fiske has described in his *Television Culture* (1987):

The codes of television comprise three levels of representation. The first level is that of reality, second includes of the representation and the third one is of the ideology. What passes for reality is the product of a given culture's codes. The representational includes the camera,

lighting, editing, music and sound which transmit the conventional representational codes of the narrative, character, dialogue and setting. The ideological level represents the character organized into coherence and made acceptable by ideological codes of individualism, patriarchy, race, class, materialism and capitalism. (Fiske 5)

The first attempt of a colonizer is to displace these means of the colonized subjects by perpetuating the superiority of their own language and culture as universal and developed one. In the film Outram was trying to exhibit the superior position of the Western culture by condemning the perfume used by the king.

In the next scene, the camera moves slowly with a low angle towards the chess board then the scene changes to a close up shot of hands while writing. This shift from chess board towards the writing hands exhibits the similarity between the chess of Indian *nawaabs* and the real tactics applied by the British Governor General, Lord Dalhousie for the annexation of Awadh.

The narrator tells that Lord Dalhousie is sending an urgent and very important order. It was so important that the distance of 600 miles between Calcutta and Lucknow is completed within five days. The extreme long shot as framed of running horses in the evening time shows that there is a long way to go and the setting sun also symbolizes the shortage of time. As the narrator describes that how the document is handed over to Outram on the evening of 31 January, 1856. Then a close up shot of a clock at 10:33:35 validates the narrator's point.

Ray has successfully symbolized the female's burning desire in the corresponding scene when the camera captures the kitchen and its surroundings. In this shot, filmed in semi dark light, the fire burning in the fireplace has been shown as establishing the need of the satisfaction of desires. The female was treated at that time only as an instrument to fulfill male's need whether it was the king or the chess players. In the next scene, again camera moves towards Khurshid standing behind the curtain in mid light and camera moves towards her face. She calls for the old maid servant, *Heeriya*. The next moment camera catches the close up of chess board and again the hand comes from the right side of the frame and touches one of the pawns and goes back without moving anyone.

Then comes old Heeriya and the dialogue between her and Mirza goes like the following:

Heeriya: *Hazur, dulhan Begum bulaayin hain.*

(My lord, dulhan Begum is calling you.)

Heeriya: *Sarkar, dulhan Begum bulaayin hain aapko.*

(Sarkar, dulhan Begum is calling you.)

Mirza: *Kya baat hai?*

(What's the matter?)

Heeriya: *Ab hum kya jaane sarkar ?*

(Now, how should we know?)

Mirza: *Keh do aate hain.* (In an irritated tone)

(Tell, I am coming.) (Translation Mine)

This shows that the chess players are so addicted with the game that they don't even care for their own wives. When somebody like Heeriya in this dialogue comes to invite Mirza, he does not pay attention to her. She had to ask for several times. So the dominance of the game of chess is described in the related scene. Even at home, the shadow of the passion for the game is active as similar to the outside political situation of the time.

In this film, every character makes chess-like moves and sets strategies in motion, but Khurshid's strategy does not work because she refuses to acknowledge the death of desire. Khurshid reproaches Mirza for not loving her and neglecting her and Mirza tries to appease her by replying, "How can you say that? I left the game because you called." Khurshid is unmollified and calls chess a stupid game (Dube156).

The film treated the female characters as inferior to the male patriarchy. The Awadh culture was male dominated where King Wajid Ali Shah has been described as effeminate by Outram. The colonialism used to observe Indian ruling elite as weak and purposeless in cognisance of the inferiority of women.

Mirza enters into Khurshid's room where she is waiting for her husband to come. The conversation between both husband and wife conveys the conflict between patriarchal norms of neglecting even one's wife in favour of a game and her quest for satisfying her needs. On the other hand Khurshid was totally against this very game of chess, that's why when Mirza complains that because of her he

had abandoned the game in midway. She says, “*aag lage es khel ko*” (Let this game be cursed!). (Translation Mine). Mirza still praises chess because it has increased his thinking power. As the argument goes on, Khurshid talks about Mir’s obsession with the game while his wife had an affair with somebody else.

The next shot has been framed from behind the curtains very skillfully. The foreground of the whole scene becomes black because of the darkness of curtains and a little space has been kept to show the background. This captures Mir’s hand moves one of the pawns into a more favorable position. The framing makes the whole scene more intense.

There is also the semiotics of the folk narrative of the carnival within which Mirza occupies the place of the scapegoat, for he is cheated both of sexual pleasure and of his legitimate victory in chess . . . The fact that Mirza cheats his wife of sexual pleasure is offset by Meer’s cheating him at chess. (Dube 156)

The narrator describes that next morning: General Outram calls Prime Minister and tells about the new treaty. But the Prime Minister questions the new one because they had a treaty twenty years before. But Outram insists on getting the new treaty signed from the king as Lord Dalhousie wants. Outram’s behavior shows the intentions of the colonial empire to take over Awadh. General Outram describes the decision irrevocable.

British imperialism was almost at its apogee, and very few even thought to question, let alone oppose, the move towards annexation. In retrospect, the decision to take over a supposedly independent kingdom, not a state but a kingdom, created by the British, and recognized by them as such for nearly forty years, was an act of huge folly. (Jones 100)

So in historic texts the annexation of Awadh has been described as an act of imperial policy of the British. The old treaty is ignored by General Outram and he forces the King to sign the new one. This will make the British to take over the whole administration of the kingdom in its own hands.

The next scene shows that *Kathak* is being performed by a beautiful girl before the king. The king is enjoying the dance. After the dance finished, the Prime Minister informs the king about the new treaty. The scene turns pathetic from a

very melodious *Kathak* dance. Ray had used specific way of filming this *Kathak* scene in the film. The setting of the shot, the whole scene, costumes, music, props and dance every single aspect has been presented in a very careful, conscious and colourful detail. All this was done only for the sake of explaining the private life style and the artistic pursuits of the king. This skillful use of filmic machinery to highlight the specific and even the controversial image of the king Wajid Ali Shah is one of the special qualities of Satyajit Ray's Style.

When we talk about the new historicist analysis, the inclusion of each minor, social, literary, cultural phenomenon becomes useful device for the analysis. This filmic presentation of the *Kathak* scene depicts the role of the king's artistic activities, the use of social and cultural tradition in shaping the historic figure of Wajid Ali Shah. It is easily predictable that king was more interested in the poetic or the artistic life instead of his political and administrative responsibilities.

The long shot framed at the sheep fighting describes the surrounding crowd enjoying the cruel fighting of the animals. Both the chess players also arrive at the scene. The government servants inform that the rumour mongers will be severely punished. While at the same time Mirza draws the chess shaped structure on the ground and asks Mir to go back to their home.

While comparing these last three scenes, it becomes clear that the director has tried to show that all spheres of the contemporary Lucknow life were busy in their own living styles. The king was enjoying the dance while ignoring the intentions of the British Governor General. The chess players did not mourn the death of their known. In the same mode, the common people were busy in watching sheep fighting. So the total overall life was very passive and it shows the shortsightedness of the whole society.

In the next medium shot Khurshid has been shown enjoying *Hukka*. The camera captures the chess board with a hand placing the tomatoes and lemons as the alternatives for the lost pawns. The game begins with tomatoes, lemons, chilly and *paan* on the chess board. This shows that in the real existing conditions under the British Imperialism, the Nawabs and kings will be overthrown and replaced with the favoured leaders of the British.

Then a close up shot introduced the painting made on the wall just behind and above the throne. In this painting, a throne held by two female (from upper part of the body) and fish type (lower part of the body) has been shown with two

swords and a shield. Then the camera moves back and shows the empty throne with two soldiers on its both sides. The king abuses his Prime Minister, other ministers for deceiving him because he trusted them more than his own relatives. The Camera shows the king in medium shot framed from the other men's back. This scene shows the importance of the king and camera moves as the king moves from one side to another. The king talks about the advice of Sleeman sahib who told him to be careful from his own ministers. Then in a close up shot the king touches the throne with his hand and explains how the lightning of these diamonds tempted him. He talks about his own mistake of accepting the kingship. But he did try to be a real king for some time. The king remembers his military, its name, and Persian horses etc. Then as suggested by the Regiment sahib, the king felt no need for such military as there is company's military to protect Awadh. The king expressed his dilemma in this way:

Baadshah agar apni riyait ke liye preshan na ho to kya kare?

(If a King does not care for his subjects, who would?)

Ek baadshah agar baadshahat na kre to kya kare?

(If a King stops bothering about his realm, what is left for him to do?)

(Translation Mine)

Then the king remembers his song and this has been framed in a close up shot. The song was composed when he was sitting on his throne. This shows that the king was interested in composing songs even while sitting on throne. He asks his Prime Minister about the song which he had created at this place.

Wajid: Do you remember that song of mine?

Ali Naqi: Which one, your Majesty?

Wajid: *Tarap tarap sagari raen gujari . . . Kaun des gayo, sanwariya!*

(the whole night went by in distress, to which country the

beloved went?) (Translation Mine)

The king says that nobody complained about his bad rule, nobody asked him to step down from the throne. The reason was that he never hides his reality from them. They knew what type of king he was. They sing his songs in the streets and the king wants to know from Resident sahib that whether the people in England sing the songs of Queen Victoria? The king moves towards the throne and the camera follows him from behind. He sits on the throne and refuses to step

down as the British want. This scene arouses the curiosity in the minds of the audience about the possible conflict between Outram and the king. This defiant gesture made by the king makes the spectator feel that at least the king of Awadh has taken a firm stand against the British. This makes him for the first time to look like a political head of Awadh. This scene shows Wajid Ali Shah in an aggressive mood, totally different from his earlier portrayal in the film. The king is an impulsive character in the film. He tries to justify his artistic activities instead of caring for the political problems. He measures the success of his regime on the basis of his creative persona and ignores the responsibility of being the political head of the kingdom.

The next frame with the medium shot shows Outram in conversation with Dr. Fayrer shows the seriousness of the situation. General Outram shows helplessness when he says, *"I don't like it Fayrer. I don't like it at all, and yet I have to go through with it. That's the problem. That's my complaint Doctor. There is nothing you can prescribe for it. Nothing"*. Outram represents the colonial quest for overtaking a kingdom. *"We cannot dispense with the king and we cannot appropriate the revenue. He moves out. We move in. I don't like this fat king either."* Outram describes the tactics which have been used by the British for annexation of Awadh. But General Outram finds himself in dilemma General Outram has doubts about the peaceful annexation of Awadh. The feudals who will lose their *jagirs* because of the annexation and even the public may rise against them but the annexation is must. He cannot judge Wajid Ali as the king becomes, "the biggest bundle of contradictions" because he prays five times a day and also keeps a harem the size of a regiment as Robinson suggests:

This bafflement and irritation of Outram is the standard response of the west to Indian impracticality and Indian love of the inessential right from the beginning of its encounter with India. Yet, Outram remains hopelessly intrigued by Wajid Ali Shah. (qtd. In Bhattacharji 217)

General Outram was very upset over the multi-dimensional personality of the king. The king was more interested in artistic passions than the political and administration responsibilities. General Outram tries to deconstruct the image of the king. The king's love for poetry, his prayers, and the personal life all aspects have been interpreted in the negative sense by Outram. This becomes similar to

the concept of the 'Other' as described by Edward Said in his famous work *Orientalism*. The role of the Western powers has been criticized by Said which present the inferior, uncivilized and the barbaric image of the East. In the same mode, Outram acts as an agent of the Western ideology of redefining the native's image and its culture. Said describes that, "Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the orient . . . A Western style for dominating, restructuring and having an authority over it" (Said 3). General Outram describes the king as a bad one and says, "He can't rule, he has no wish to rule and therefore he has no business to rule." So this type of labeling shows "the essence of Orientalism is the ineradicable distinctions between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority" (Said 42). Ray has presented the character of General Outram with the intention of depicting the authority and power of a colonizer state over the colonized. In other words, the film exhibits the lack of administrative responsibility of the king. In a wider perspective, the filmic representation visualizes the past reality of the misgovernance which tempted the British to colonize India.

In the next shot, a young man walks through a narrow street and enters Meer's house through the backdoor. The young man, Aqil, enters Nafeesa's bedroom, she grabs him and anxiously warns him that Meer is at home playing chess with his friend, adding "he's never played here before. I'm so worried". Aqil consoles her, "Don't worry; a man with his eyes on the chess board is lost to the world". Ray intercuts shots between Meer's boasts to Mirza in the living room, and the bedroom where Nafeesa and her lover Aqil sit on the bed and laugh and talk. While Meer was boasting about his wife, Mirza's expression shows as it was manifesting everything what Khurshid told him about Meer's wife. Then Meer comes to his wife and finds the young man under his wife's bed. It makes both Nafeesa and her lover frozen in fear but Nafeesa tackles the whole situation in very crafty manner.

Nafeesa: Sh-sh. Don't come out. It's not safe yet.

Meer: What is going on?

Nafeesa: He's hiding.

Meer: That I can see. But why?

Nafeesa: They're after him.

Meer: Who's after him?

Aqil: The army. The army is after me.

Meer says Aqil that he is perfectly safe, advises Nafeesa to give Aqil some hot milk and leaves. Nafeesa and Aqil are relieved, laugh and hug each other. In this way Meer was deceived by his wife. She manipulates the contemporary political situation to make her affair with Aqil, a secret.

The reason that Nafeesa's improvisation is remembered and retold is that she manipulates the public-political events – the fear seizing the city and rumours circulating about forced conscription by the Awadh ruler and other rumours about British aggression – into the plausible reason for the implausible situation of the lover hiding under the bed. (Dube 159)

While comparing the role of both Khurshid and Nafeesa, it becomes clear that Khurshid was honest in her relationship with Mirza. She freely expresses her anger over her husband's priority to chess instead of her. On the other hand, Nafeesa is no longer angry over Meer's obsession with chess. She substitutes her desire by having an affair with the other young man. The scene shows the two female characters in opposition to each other. The characters differ from each other in the way of reacting to their chess addicted husbands. Khurshid tries this by hiding the pawns of the chess board, and on the contrary, Nafeesa manipulates her husband's absence for making love to other young man.

The next shot has been framed in such a way to which shows the *purdah*, a curtain held by a servant. Then Weston explains to General Outram that begum Sahiba has seen the treaty. The camera moves towards General Outram saying about his reason for coming to her.

Outram: I have come to you begum sahiba because I know that I can trust you that you to give your son a good council as you have done in the past.

Begum : What if I would advise my son to order histroops to take up arms against the British forces.

In this way the conversation between Begum Sahiba and Outram continues. The general tries to convince Begum to advise her son to sign the new treaty. Begum talks in an emotional way. Then in a full shot Begum rejects the compensation and decides to go to Queen Victoria for justice. She reminds Outram about the warm welcome he received when he arrived in Lucknow a year

ago. In this way, Begum reminds General Outram about the courtesy of the native culture instead of talking about the failure of her son as a monarch in Awadh dynasty. This shows British eagerness to enhance the colonial empire by ignoring and pushing aside all the native cultural traditions.

Then in next scene Prime Minister describes about the meeting to the king. Another courtier informs the king that the *taluqdars* and *zamindars* of Awadh are ready to help with one lakh soldiers and troops. The king remains silent with seriousness on his face in the whole scene. At this Ray introduces a glimpse of setting sun in over the buildings of Lucknow. In next cut camera moves toward the face of Wajid Ali and the king starts singing a song. "*Jab chhod chale Lucknow Nagari, kahe haal ke hum par kya guzri?*" (After leaving behind Lucknow city, how to know what I had to be bear.) (Translation Mine)

The king decides to take the compensation as on the behalf of a common man of Awadh, if not as a king. He orders to inform the resident sahib to come tomorrow morning at eight. The king orders to withdraw weapons and when English troops will enter in the city nobody will oppose. The whole scene has been filmed in the shadow of evening in the dim light of setting sun. This similarity between the miserable condition of the kingdom and the setting sun is metaphorically expressing the politics of the colonialism and the sinking sun of the native kingdom.

The king Wajid Shah's response to general Outram depicts the unhappiness of the king over his courtiers, the Prime Minister. The king reminds about the previous agreement. Then he recites few poetic lines. This shows the artistic response by the king. He justifies his image as an artistic king among the masses while ignoring the administrative responsibilities. On the other hand, the king first disagrees to General Outram's proposal of handing over the administration of Awadh and says that they have to fight for this. All this exposed the duality in Wajid Ali's character. While concerning this response by the king as a challenge to the colonial politics, the king remembers the advice given by Richmond. According to Wajid Ali Shah, Richmond advised him to abandon his army as company's army was there to protect the kingdom. This shows the gradual politics of colonial power in which first the East India Company makes the king dependent on their army. Then as we saw during the time of annexation the king of Awadh was left with no option only to surrender before the British army.

The king although was more interested in his artistic pleasures yet he in the end became aware about the politics of the East India Company when he remembers the advice given by Richmond.

“The subsidiary system had a ruined effect on the Awadh administration. It made the administration increasingly dependent on British troops to enforce law and order” (Mukherjee 33).

The following scene shows both the players finding the house of a little boy named Kallu to play chess. Kallu describes that all others have run away because of the fear of the *gori paltan*. The whole scene seems quite disconnected from what was happening in the outside world. This shows the chess players passion for the game and their total ignorance to the real chess being played by the British General Outram.

The next scene shows Outram entering the meeting place and was received by the king in a generous way. There is no throne for the king, only a big chair for him to sit. In this way, the absence of throne aptly conveys the purpose of meeting between the king and Outram. Outram begins in the following way:

Outram: We are most grateful to his majesty for granting us an interview. We also appreciate his gesture of disarming his soldiers. I would like if I may to add a personal request to his majesty that he please sign this treaty and formalize his abdication. His majesty should have maximum of three days for the deliberation. After which the company will assume the administration of Awadh. I hope the king have understood what I have said.

Then the king stands up and takes his crown in his hands and says that you can take my crown but not the signature. Wajid's act shows his acceptance of defeat before the colonial politics and the inferior image of the native king. Outram looks silently and tells Weston: “Would you tell His Majesty that I have no use for that”. This describes the imperial hunger for the native land and its revenue. That's why Outram gestures that king's crown is of no use for them. At this point, the viewers become aware about the symbolic use of Cherry and the crown, and all this leads to the chief motif of the native land. The imperial policy of exploiting the colonized only for the sake of making money becomes clear at this point.

The next close up of chess board shows a hand comes from left side of the frame and moves one of the pawns. The chess players were still playing in the outside barren field. Mirza was on the verge of losing the game and gets angry. Suddenly Mirza talks about his wife's affair with Aqil. Then both start cursing each other's ancestors and fighting with each other. Meer shoots Mirza. The poor boy Kallu says, "*Gori paltan sarkar*" (the white garrison, my lord). (Translation Mine). The British soldiers were coming on the other side of the river. Kallu says nobody is fighting or firing. The narrator explains that after three days the, on February 7, 1856. Awadh will be under company's control. Lord Dalhousie will have swallowed the last Cherry. On the other side, Meer talks about the annexation of Awadh and says, "We can't cope up with our wives, how we can fight with the British soldiers." The chess players resume their game again but in a faster way, they replace the Vizier with the Queen. The metaphor of chess is used by Ray in the larger context of colonialism. The replacement of the king by Queen indirectly describes the annexation of Awadh. Besides this, the change in the way of playing chess also exhibits the colonial interference in native culture and age old traditions.

In Munshi Premchand's short story *Shatranj Ke Khilari*, the game of chess pulsates as a subtle politico-colonial metaphor. Known in its heyday as Paris of the East and Babylon of India, Wajid Ali Shah's Lucknow however symbolizes decadent refinement. (Robinson 241)

Even after the annexation of Awadh, the chess players continue to play. They have adopted the British way of playing chess. But in the real context the regime was changed from king to the queen Victoria. The British were playing the game to take over the remaining state of Awadh and they did it by the end, as the chess players try to capture each other's pawns one by one by applying new tactics.

The way in which Premchand's story tells about the moves of the two chess players as they function in the text are used in a specific historical context by Ray. They have been represented in Ray's text by the complicated contradictions arising from the power play that develops between Wajid and Outram, as they struggle for the control of Oudh. Guha's historiographical view of the role of the elite in the process of 'stimulus and response' generated by colonialism can be very aptly applied to Ray's film since it:

. . . helps us to know more of the structure of the colonial state, the operation of the various organs in certain historical circumstances, the nature of the alignment of the classes which sustained it; of some aspects of the ideology of the elite as the dominant ideology of the period; of the contradictions between the two elites and the complexities of their mutual oppositions and coalitions; of the role of some of the more important British and Indian personalities and elite organizations. (Guha 38)

The role of Indian Elite class during the era of colonialism has been an important factor in determining the true nature of native response to the British colonialism. Satyajit Ray sets up the historical frame within which his filmic text is going to operate.

Jasbir Jain in her *Critiquing colonialism through Cinematic Frames* describes the style of Ray. In the film, *Shatranj Ke Khilari*, the meetings between General Outram and Weston and then General Outram and Fayrer, between Outram and the king, between the general and the Begum and all these help to construct an independent political narrative. "Ray works through structural polarities. The two narratives overlap and the Mirza-Mir story becomes a kind of reflecting mirror; pieces of dialogue echo similar concerns but in the main, the royal affairs remain separate"(Jain 200).

The film *Shatranj Ke Khilari* describes the two dominant powers at that time of 1856 in Awadh. The native feudalism was totally indulgent in its own pleasure loving activities by ignoring all other public, political, social and economic circumstances. On the other hand, the British General like Lord Dalhaousie and other British officials like General Outram were making the appropriate moves for the annexation of Awadh as the two chess players were doing only in their play. The British were using the chess like strategies in the larger structure of colonialism in the real world. The filmic representation of the historic event was helpful in putting together all these colonial, feudal and personal images of the particular time. The king was busy in his own artistic activities. The British were making plans to take over the administration of the Awadh.

While concentrating on the diversions from the text to film, we see that the original story written by Munshi Premchand did not highlight much the British policy of annexation. Premchand condemns only the king and the common man of

that time. According to Premchand it was the politicians and the common man who make it easy for the British to come and take over the administration of Awadh. But in the film we see the British resident General Outram as an agent of the colonial powers. Then the characters like Munshi and the boy named Kallu were director's own creation. Premchand did not mention both these characters in his story. The other major difference lies in the way of the ending of both of the story and the film. In the story both Meer and Mirza die because of the fight between them. But in film they remain alive after a short dispute between them. In the same mode the role of the king was not as much highlighted in the story as comparison to the filmic representation. The chess players dominate during the whole course of the story. But in the film, Satyajit Ray has represented the various aspects of the life of the king in a sympathetic way.

So the differences which were made from the medium of the text to that of the film become necessary because of the change in the medium of representation. In a film, the director tries to represent an event in combination with other techniques to make it suitable in both audio-visual ways. Sometimes, intentionally or unintentionally, the director shifts from the original text to make the narrative of the film more influential. In *Shatranj Ke Khilari*, Satyajit Ray tries to represent the social, cultural and political conditions of 1850's Lucknow. The role of two chess players, the king, and the British General Outram have been portrayed in the film in such a way that suits the medium of representation. The addition of some minor characters becomes helpful in emphasizing the more about the role of the major characters.

The film deals with the life of 1850's Lucknow. The time when British started their chess like strategies of the colonialism to spread the British Empire. The film was released in 1977. The decade of 1970's was one of the most turbulent decades in the history of India. The degradation in political field, the problem of poverty, unemployment, and communalism all contribute in making the era of uncertainties in every field of life.

So the focus of the study stresses the reading of the film in such a way which can help to trace the contrast and similarity between the two specific periods of time. The period which the selected film *Shatranj Ke Khilari* represents and the period in which the film was released. So while contrasting the 1850's India with that of the 1970's, we see the similarity in the deterioration and irresponsibility in

the political situation of both the times. The danger of the annexation by the British in the former case and the declaration of emergency in the later and its influence on the whole nation becomes noticeable. Similarly the analysis of the social and cultural circumstances of both the periods makes the difference clear. The people of 1850's India especially of Awadh were busy in spending money for their own pleasures. But in 1970's India the plight of the common man was miserable because of the poverty, the aftermath of the weak and directionless policies of the government and the challenge of over population. So the filmic treatment of the situation and the contemporary conditions of its release both depict the continuity in the struggle for power and the lack of forethought in the policies of the government.

The film *Shatranj Ke Khilari* shows the picture of Awadh in 1856. The description in the film explains the contemporary political, social, cultural and even the personal life in case of the two chess players and their king. The king Wajid Ali's artistic personality makes him a suitable subject for the colonial politics of blaming the native individuals and their socio-cultural traditions. By condemning in such a way, the colonial powers authenticate their politics of exploitation in terms of the notion of white man's burden. The characters of the two chess players show the negligence of national interests for personal passions. Then the annexation of Awadh takes place and the king has to leave his throne as it has been expressed in historic texts related to the revolt. "At least one foreseeing Englishmen, W.H. Sleeman, had indeed warned Lord Dalhousie that annexation would lead to mutiny in Bengal army, for Oudh was the great nursery of sepoys" (Gandhi 168). In this way the film represents the circumstances related to the Awadh in 1856 and how the King's personality, the priority of personal interests over the national interest, and the role of Outram in annexing the Kingdom makes people angry which erupted in the form of the revolt in 1857. The actual situation of the revolt is described in the second film, *Junoon* by Shyam Benegal in the next chapter.

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Chapter Three

Shyam Benegal's *Junoon*: A New Historicist Analysis

Shyam Benegal's *Junoon*: A New Historicist Analysis

The film *Junoon* directed by Shyam Benegal was released in 1978. It is based on a short novel *A Flight of Pigeons* (1970), written by Ruskin Bond. Ruskin Bond describes the whole incident of 1857 revolt from the perspective of a young British lady, Ruth. The sufferings of the Labadoor family which was started from the massacre at the church are described in the form of personal experience by Ruth. Shyam Benegal changed the title of the film to *Junoon*. He explained this in an interview with William Van Dar Heide as following:

Van Dar: what made you decide to change the title from *A Flight of Pigeons* to *Junoon*?

Shyam Benegal: The film concentrates on Javed's obsession and *Junoon* means obsession. When we released it in England, we called it *A Flight of Pigeons*. (Benegal 104)

Shyam Benegal was born on Dec 14, 1934 in Trimulgherry, Hyderabad. He made his first film at the age of twelve with the camera given to him by his father. Benegal made his first Gujarati documentary *Gher Betha Ganga* (Ganges at the Doorstep) in 1962. He also taught at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in Pune. In 1973 Benegal made his first film, *Ankur*. This was followed by other three great films: *Nishant* (1975), *Manthan* (1976), *Bhumika* (1977). All these films express the feudalism and its power to exploit the poor. These successful films by Benegal created the new trend in Indian cinema, called the Middle Cinema. Benegal made a film *The Satyajit Ray* in 1984 on the life of Satyajit Ray. For his contribution to the Indian cinema, Benegal got prestigious awards such as the *Padma Shri* in 1976, the *Padma Bhushan* in 1991 and *Dadasaheb Phalke Award* in 2005. Benegal made *Junoon* in 1978, based on the mutiny fiction written by Ruskin Bond, *A Flight of Pigeons*. The film depicts the director's capacity of treating the historic event with the touch of romance and gives the war like circumstances a more affectionate, personal and individual look.

The film begins with a fade in with a long, eye leveled shot. On the screen, we see a man dressed in white is praying in the Hindu style of *Om Namo Shiwayei*. The colour has been kept black and white. The blurred background with dim shadow mystifies the whole situation. The next scene begins with another

fade in and shows the text on the screen. This text has been read by using voice over.

March 29, 1857. Sepoy Mangal Pandey fires the first shot against the British oppression. He is hanged. May 10, 1857. The Indian garrison at Meerut revolts. May 11, 1857. The sepoy from Meerut arrive in Delhi. Soon after, they proclaim Bahadur Shah Jafar, Emperor of Hindustan. May 24, 1857. A small British cantonment town in North Indian Plan...

The filmic version of the timing of the outbreak of the revolt represents the historic event as it is described in the historic texts. The outbreak of the revolt is an important issue in the historic fields. This attempt made by the director Shyam Benegal helps him to recreate the historic event in the contemporary times as a film. Historian Brantlinger describes the event as:

On 10 May the sepoy mutinied at Meerut, burning the cantonments and killing their British officers and other Europeans. Then they marched to Delhi where they massacred many European residents and installed Bahadur Shah II, hypothetical ruler of the Moghul Empire, as their reluctant leader. (201)

The next scene begins with a close up of a building in a dim light when the pigeons start flying from its top. The camera shows the building and follows the pigeons of both colours; white and black, flying in the sky. This shot has been filmed by moving the camera with the pan and tilt movement. Then a close up of a *fakir* dressed in black with other present persons, appears on the scene, in slow motion. The shot continuously begins from behind with a high angle starting and moves down to capture the *fakir* and the other men. They start singing *qwalli*. Javed Khan also arrives at the scene. Then the *fakir* stops moving and makes a prediction:

Kuchh atpatta he keh raha hai mera mashooq. Ha

(Something different is saying my Lord. ha)

Keh raha hai sabh laal ho jaega. Laal. Ha .

(He is saying that everything will be red. ha)

Mujhe zabardasti khoon ke dariye mein tehrata hai. Ha

(Forcefully makes me to float into the sea of blood)

Keh raha hai napaak firangion ka khoon hai yeh, ab khadere jayenge sabh firangi. Ha

(He is saying that is the blood of treacherous *firangis*, now, all *firangis* will be uprooted. ha)

Unki kismet mein sau saal the, khatam huye who. Ha

(A hundred years were in their fate, they have finished. ha)

Kabootron ki taraah ud jayenge wo. Kabootron ki taraah. Ha. Ha.

(They will fly like pigeons, like pigeons. Ha, ha). (Translation Mine)

This prediction by the *Moulvi* explains the further structure of the events that are going to happen in the near future. He talks about the red colour which symbolises the upcoming bloodshed in the film. The main theme of the film seems war; the war between the sepoys and the British. The *Moulvi* predicts that the British will be killed with utmost cruelty and they will leave the country.

In the prologue of the historic book *The Sepoy Mutiny* (1973) written by V.A. Stuart, the *Moulvi* describes about the upcoming danger of the rebellious nature of the natives against their masters that the days of the Company are numbered.

Is it not written that John Company will endure for only one hundred years after Plassey, due to fall next month? It is the will of Allah, that all the *feringhi* shall be ground into dust. None shall escape from the vengeful swords of the True Believers—men, women, even little children, all will die! *In'sha Allah. . .*" Carried away by his own eloquence, the *Moulvi* talked on, his voice raised, careless of who might hear him. (Stuart 5)

The possibility of the rise of mutiny has been mentioned in the historic texts also. On the other hand, the role of the *Moulvi* or a *fakir* in the beginning of the film has been used to express the similar fate as in the historic field. The British have been compared with pigeons in the film. This shows the adaptation from the original text and film's closeness to the original literary text. In the historic text, *The Sepoy Mutiny* by V.A. Stuart when we analyse the predicting speech by the so called *Moulvi* he does not compare the British with the Pigeons. This is the difference between the both filmic and historic representations of the Revolt. The film shows the close relation to the literary text by its visual representation of pigeons of both the white and black colours on the screen. On the other side, the

title *Junoon* also indicates the madness shown in the film through the character of Javed Khan. He becomes mad for the young white woman, Ruth.

The next scene begins with a long shot taken in a bright and beautiful morning in contrast to the previous one. The whole scenery looks very romantic in the company of sweet music. The camera moves back and a medium close up of beautiful young Ruth Labadoor comes to the focus. Javed Khan is seen staring at her from the outside boundary of the house. When Ruth calls her mother, Javed Khan goes away. This describes the director's attempt to highlight the romantic aspect of the film. Javed Khan loves Ruth madly. But on the other side, the sepoys are seen planning to attack on the British community in the area. So the circumstances of 1857 are being represented in the film with equal emphasis on Javed's madness for Ruth.

The next medium eye level shot shows Sarfaraz Khan talking about the rebellion and the declaration of Bahadur Shah as the emperor. Javed questions the stability of the regime under the leadership of Bahadur Shah as his fate remains in the hands of sepoys. He also talks about the support of the nawabs as just hypocrisy because the British have ruined their luxurious life. In the next shot, Firdaus complains how Javed Khan is ignoring her. She says: *Khuda gaarad kare en kabootron ko yahi inke sage sautele reh gaye hain*. (God save these pigeons, these are the only kith and kin left to them) (Translation Mine). Then Sarfaraz Khan expresses the situation like the following: *Saara mulk aag mein jhulas raha hai aur aap kabootar uda rahe hain aur aap apna rona liye baithi ho*. (whole country is burning and you are flying kites and you have your own troubles) (Translation Mine).

This shows the triangular situation of the time in three major contexts: first, the political context, secondly the personal pursuits and the third the feminist concerns. On the national level, the mutiny started with Mangal Pandey and was followed in the other parts of the North India including Meerut and Delhi. While on personal level, Javed's interest in pigeons and his one-sided attraction for Ruth, a young white lady shows the contrast between personal and national interest. Thirdly the ignorance of his wife by Javed explains the patriarchal dominance.

The next shot marks the entry of relatives in the house. A woman called *chachi* (aunt) advised Sarfaraz for marriage and he remarks like the following:

Yahan gulami ki bedian kaatne ki koshish kar rahe hain aur aap hame bedian pehnaane par tuli huyi hain. (Here the efforts are being made to cut the shackles of slavery and you force us to remain in chains.) (Translation Mine)

So this type of thinking shows the contemporary social and cultural perceptions about the female community. The women were being ignored. The inferiority complex was being assimilated with the colonial rule. The marriage was assumed something which makes a man slave like the colonial rule. The film manipulates the condition of women in comparison to the dominance of the patriarchy. This statement by Sarfaraz Khan also highlights the individual needs being repressed for the sake of national interest. In the same scene they talk about the atrocities of the British Army. The interference made by the British in native tradition and culture. The introduction of cartridges filled with the fat of Pig and Cow, the killing of eighty five soldiers in Meerut: this scene shows the reasons behind the mutiny. The fire of rebellion is spreading from one place to another. This was explained in the next scene at Labadoor's house. Mariam's mother was in conversation with the servant who tells the possibility of massacre and looting tomorrow.

The British failed to read the signs of impending Rebellion and were completely taken by surprise when it exploded. Indeed, in many circumstances it were their domestic servants, who first picked up news about it from the bazaars and streets and alerted their masters about it. (Sen 120)

When the old lady was informed of this by her servant, she orders that nobody will go to the church tomorrow. Ruth objects to her decision. Then the conversation moves further in the following way:

Old Lady: It happened in Meerut, then in Delhi and now it will happen here.

Mr. Labadoor: Would you kindly tell your mother in a language that she can understand that the people who could not rebel against their masters for more than two thousand years are quite unlikely to do so tomorrow morning.

The whole conversation describes the rumours and the possibility of the upcoming danger. But the company officials like Charles Labadoor were not expecting that something like this will happen. "Alex Sheridan had heard such

words before, always whispered, passed in secret from man to man—not intended for English ears” (Stuart 5). This judgment of the British officials proved wrong. That has been shown in the scene at the church. There were rumors about the spreading of mutiny in other parts of India but the British officials overlooked all such things. They could not observe correctly the rebellious urge within the native soldiers.

In the next scene, Ruth hears the sound of the horse outside. Javed has been shown on the horse in high angle shot with a shallow focus. The fear of rebellion has been presented in the corresponding theme of romance. War and romance have a similarity on the basis of the racial difference between the Indian and Western.

The next scene begins at the church. A medium long shot from the eye view angle shows the Father reading the verses from the Bible. Mr. Labadoor and Ruth start reciting verses. The next long shot shows the church from outside. Then a noise is heard and Sarfaraz Khan enters with other sepoys. They kill all Englishmen brutally. Mr. Labadoor and the Father of the Church both were murdered by Sarfaraz Khan. Mariam goes back to her home but it is set on fire. This scene of the British massacre by the sepoys at the church has also been described in the historic works related to revolt of 1857. As Rajendra Mohan Bhatnagar in his work *The Stories of Freedom Movement*, describes the scene as following:

On 31st May, 1857. In Shahjahanpur, the British were gathering in the church when the Indian soldiers suddenly attacked them. Fighting broke out. Many Britishers were killed. Some of them fled to save their lives, and by the time it was evening, Shahjahanpur had fallen into the hands of revolutionaries. (Bhatnagar 54)

In this way, both the film and historic text validate the cruelty shown by the sepoys at the church in 1857. The sepoys kill the British while they are praying at the church. Even in the fictional works like *A Flight of Pigeons* by Ruskin Bond, the same church scene has been described in the same way. As Ruskin Bond in the introduction to the book explains: “I remember my father telling me a story of a girl who had a recurring dream in which she witnessed the massacre of the congregation in a small church in northern India” (Bond vii). So the brutal act

shown by the sepoys at the church has been described in different modes of expression: the historic, fictional and the filmic.

Then Ramjimal takes Ruth to the place where she meets her mother and the old lady. Then in a long shot Javed Khan arrives at the church and goes back. He keeps wandering as he is looking for Ruth. Ramjimal and Ruth reached to the place where Mariam and her mother are hiding. Then in next scene framed as medium shot Sarfaraz Khan is seen coming on horse with a flag in his hand. He is leading the large number of people and some soldiers. Ruth identifies him and says: he is the man. Ramjimal sees Sarfaraz from behind the half-opened door. This last scene expresses the subversion of power. The rebellious leaders like Sarfaraz Khan take power in their hands. Meanwhile, the English women become victims of the outbreak of the revolt.

The similarity on the basis of the same setting and props used in both the films shows the culture of the particular temporal setting. The same social, cultural, space and temporal setting of both the scenes provides the reason to believe that both the selected films adequately represent the same historic period. The next scene shows the conversation between Ramjimal and his friend. This very scene seems similar to the scene in *Shatranj Ke Khilari* when we analyze the props involved in these two. The *hukka* and *paan* are shown in both scenes from the two films. But there is also the difference in these two scenes on the basis of the conversation between the characters involved in it. The chess players are totally addicted with their passion for the game. On the other hand, Ramjimal and his friend talk about the British, the massacre at the church and about the remaining Labadoor family members.

The following shot shows the interior of Ramjimal's house and other households. The cow symbolises the typical Hindu family. Lala's mother was reading *Hanumaan Chalisa*. Mariam was washing her clothes and Lala's wife helps her. This brings out the mixture of two cultures, their way of living. The internal environment of the house becomes the meeting point of the two different cultures. As Nicholas B. Dirks describes in his work *Colonialism and Culture* that "if colonialism can be seen as a cultural formation, so also culture is a colonial formation. But culture was not simply some mystifying means for colonial conquest and rule, even as it could not be contained within colonized spaces" (Dirks 3). In this way, the cultures of both the opposite communities meet each other but this

describes the situation in Ramjimal's house. In the outside, the clash between the sepoys and the British remains continue.

Another long shot with high angle shows the scene in the street. A man declares that the rule of company has come to an end. Now Bahadur Shah will reign again. With the help of cross cutting in the same shot Ruth can also be seen hearing the whole speech. The speaker warns that who those will help the British will be severely punished.

In both the films this type of declaration has been made. The difference lies in the motive behind these declarations. In *Shatranj Ke Khilari* it has been used to warn people from spreading rumors related to the upcoming danger. But in *Junoon* it is used to declare the victory over the British. But it also warns the people about helping the British. So the commonality lies in both scenes is that the common man will be punished if he do not respect the order of the state. The relation between the colonial policy and the ways of punishment is clearly visible in the film *Junoon* where the sepoys were tied before the canons and then blown out.

The British colonialism was facing the most powerful opposition ever faced by them under their colonial regime all over the world. So the way of punishment was also very callous. Another scene shows some much more cruel ways of the spreading fear among the people when we see the dead bodies of the sepoys hanging down from the trees. Foucault also describes the role of punishment in maintaining the dominance of power.

Javed Khan comes to Ramjimal's house and forcefully takes Mariam, Ruth and the old lady to his own house. When they enter the house, the high angle shot introduces the English women before Firdaus, Javed's wife. She questions Javed's decision of bringing them to his house. She says that after killing Mr. Labadoor, Javed wants to keep his wife as a prostitute.

In the next scene, the close up of a burning lamp has been shown by the side of Ruth. Then the camera slowly moves down in a tilting shot and we see Ruth sleeping on the bed. A song in a very low voice has been heard in the background. The next medium eye leveled shot captures Firdaus standing near the cage and then she covers the cage. She moves towards the bed where Javed Khan is lying and the camera follows her. She touches him from behind but Javed throws her hand away with anger and Firdaus feels miserable. Javed goes away

towards the room where Ruth is sleeping. He stands at the door and keeps staring at Ruth for some time.

While comparing this scene to the similar scene in *Shatranj Ke khilari* when Khurshid tries to seduce her husband but remains unsatisfied, it is clear that in both the films the wives wait for their husbands to come to bed. But both Mirza and Javed are interested in other personal pursuits. Mirza was addicted with the passion for chess and Javed was mad for Ruth.

The next scene shows the conversation between Javed Khan and his aunt. Javed expresses his helplessness before the beauty of Ruth. He says that he has lost his consciousness since he saw her for the first time. Javed Khan describes Ruth more beautiful than a blossoming bud on a bush. At this Firdaus points out this is because you killed Mr. Labadoor and separated the bud from the bush. The aunt tells Javed that Ruth is very beautiful but she is a Christian. Javed counter points her that she was also a Hindu before marriage and says that I will get Ruth at any cost. He overlooks the feelings of his own wife. Mariam's mother was from the nawab dynasty of Rampur and she was married to a Christian. It becomes clear that with the emergence of imperial rule the inter-cultural, inter-religious relations between Indians and the British were developing. The two different civilizations were mixing with each other in different ways, especially through inter-religious marriage.

The next long shot with high angle shows Firdaus weeping. In a crosscut Ruth was also weeping. She told her mother that she does not want to marry with him. So both the ladies were expressing grief. The dominance of the male patriarchy under the larger dominant structure of imperialism was at play. The concept of white woman's rape by an Indian which is highlighted in the western writings related to the history of the revolt. As Prem Chowdhry states in his work, *Breaching the Divide* states about the immoral behaviour shown by the natives. "In this, the film uses effectively the stereotypical obsession of the white western race regarding the fear of rape of white woman by a coloured man" (Chowdhry 185). In this way, the film closely represents not only the rebellious incidents of 1857 but also the other self-constructed beliefs about Indians by the Western colonial discourse.

The next long shot in the eye view angle shows that Ruth is enjoying the hammock while other women are talking in the background. Another close up of

the young female from the native family describes her happiness. The sunlight is falling on the land through the trees. The camera remains in the same position for at least forty five seconds which makes the spectators to interpret the whole scene on their own. The both Indian and the English women in the scene sing their cultural songs in this scene. In this way the songs from both the East and West cultures express each other's feelings. So the songs are appropriate to the time, place, and social setting in which the film was set, and were used to enhance the drama.

The songs from New-Wave movement films were set in situations which were complementary to the character and story of the film. For example, "Come Alive", from the 1978 Shyam Benegal film, Junoon, is an English song in a ballad style, sung by the actress who plays the part of an Anglo-Indian lady at the time of the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857. (Skillman 142)

The affinity between the two cultures can be seen. The war brings suffering for both the sides. The English women were the victims of war and the native female whose close up shows her in a happy mood was going to be another victim of war when her husband dies in a battle against the British. The universality of war and nature can be seen in this scene.

Then Javed comes home and asks Mariam about her decision related to his marriage with Ruth. He pressurizes Mariam to give him the consent to marry Ruth. Mariam asks him if the British return to power then what will happen because if they kill Javed and Ruth will become a widow. Javed replies that Delhi is under our control. She says: *to fir karne do dilli ko faisla, agar dilli aapki to ruth bhi aapki*. (Let Delhi decide, if Delhi is yours then Ruth will also be yours.) (Translation Mine). So Mariam puts forth her decision that Ruth can only be allowed to marry if the Indians succeed in breaking the British siege of Delhi. It shows the clash between Javed's obsession and pride. On one hand he wants Ruth but on another his nobility doesn't allow him to use force. Then enters Ruth in a native dress and asks Mariam with excitement, "How do I look mamma?" and then Mariam replies angrily, "Like a *nautch* girl". This scene shows what the English people think about the Indian dress and culture. The white women regard all the Indian women inferior in their culture and behaviour as like the nautch girl. They see Indian dress inferior as compared to the British. As Partha Chatterjee remarks:

By assuming the position of sympathy with the unfree and oppressed womanhood of India, the colonial mind was able to transform this figure of Indian woman into a sign of inherently oppressive and unfree nature of the entire cultural tradition of a country. (166)

In this way, the observations made by the British about the Indian Culture, the native female's dress describe its English perception of Indian vulgarity. The Indian society was regarded as morally corrupt. That's why Mariam shouts at Ruth dressed in native tradition. Although Ruth feels miserable at her mother's remarks but it is true that in those circumstances the colonial interpretation of the Indian culture was an uncivilized and barbaric one.

Then with the close up of an old building appears on the screen followed by the tilting shot of some soldiers coming back in pessimistic mood. Sarfaraz Khan was also coming with them. The *fakir* also comments on the soldiers passing by. The next close up shows Firdaus complains to Sarfaraz Khan about Javed's madness for Ruth. Javed Khan enters with English women. Sarfaraz argues with Mariam over the atrocities done the each side. Mariam reminds him about the massacre at the church and Sarfaraz Khan explains the cruelty of Colonel Neal. The next high angle shot with camera moving in a circular position shows the dead bodies hanging on the trees. This scene exhibits the spirit of revenge among the Indian soldiers against the cruelty of the British soldiers. "The dislike of the British in the region arose from the overthrow of the previous year of its Nawab Ali Shah. He had been exiled to Calcutta; but his advisers had remained behind to foment rebellion" (Gott 452). In this way the anger in the common people of the area was burning. It starts with the annexation of Awadh in 1856. But the situation in 1857 becomes more complex because of the way British punished the sepoy as it is shown in the film.

After this scene, the quite opposite tracking shot begins at the mosque where Sarfaraz Khan was motivating some young men to participate in the war against the British. At this the fakir comes to the scene and says:

khoon-khoon chaaron taraf khoon he khoon hai,

(Blood-blood, there is blood in every direction.)

Kabootron ke malim aasmaan mein mandrate hain ye firangi, fir laut aate hain , aane do.

(These *firangis* fly like the pigeons in the sky, then come back again, let them come.)

Magar mujhe mera dard akele chakhne do. Mere hisse ayaa hai to jhelunga, jhelunga.

(But, let me taste my pain alone. If it is in my share, I will bear it.)

(Translation Mine)

Safaraz Khan gets angry about the prediction made by the *fakir* and describes it as nonsense. He called him a liar, mad and coward. The next zoom-in shows Ruth holding a pigeon in her hand. Then Javed Khan enters from the door. Both Ruth and Javed gaze at each other for some time. Javed gets angry with his wife, Firdaus about not giving *danas* (wheat) to the pigeons and also for not preparing his *hukka*. At this Firdaus angrily says that he should have asked the *firangan*. Then the argument goes on between them and Javed tells Firdaus that she (Ruth) will give him a *vaaris* which Firdaus could not. At this Firdaus feels sad and goes away.

Then the medium long shot shows the explosion of bombs. Then in an extreme long shot sepoy's are seen coming in the leadership of Sarfaraz Khan. The English soldiers are moving ahead. This scene shows a fight between the British soldiers and the sepoy's. A medium long shot brings the *fakir* in the screen. The next medium shot shows the sepoy's coming from the fight. Sarfaraz Khan is seen in a miserable mood. The passiveness and the helpless condition of the sepoy's show as if they have been defeated. The close up of Sarfaraz Khan with angry and tired face shows him throwing the gun as if it has become useless. He starts killing the pigeons and calls them treacherous and the offspring of English. After losing the battle against the British, Sarfaraz's cruelty on the pigeons shows the internal rage of the sepoy's. The pigeons being white have been compared to the British. This symbolises the spirit of anger and revenge on the basis of racial bias for white skin. Javed Khan stops him. Sarfaraz tells him that they have lost Delhi. At this a close up of Javed's is seen in a reactionary shot. Sarfaraz expresses his anger over the British by pointing towards Ruth and Mariam. He tells about the cruelty of the British seen at Delhi. In a flash back it has been shown in a scene where Sarfaraz Khan is tied before a canon and fired. He describes both the pigeons and the British as *dagabaaaj*. Sarfaraz Khan expresses his grief over Javed's madness for pigeons and Ruth in the following way:

Aur aap ek junoon ki girft mein aa kar apne aap ko dagaa de rahe hain. (And you being captured in a passion, are deceiving yourself.)
(Translation Mine).

These words by Sarfaraz Khan explain the dilemma in the life of Javed Khan. Javed Khan was ignoring the national interests for his own desire to marry Ruth. This above mentioned scene from the film simply represents the colonized man's quest for possessing the white female instead of fighting for freedom. So this blending of war and romance has been described in the film. The war against the British was in process. On the other side, we see attraction in Javed's heart for the same community. The conflict between mind and heart runs parallel during the course of the film.

The long shot in a travelling manner shows as the native soldiers are coming. They join another garrison in the open fields. Firdaus is watching the soldiers from the roof of her house and Ruth and Mariam also join her. The extreme long shot with a deep focus shows the elephants in the foreground and the soldiers near the tents in the background. The pigeons of both colours are seen on the roof. This scene shows the soldiers on the ground and pigeons in the sky. So the metaphorical similarity between the pigeons and the soldiers becomes clear.

The final battle between the sepoys and the British garrison begins. The sepoys are led by Sarfaraz Khan and this time Javed Khan is also fighting. During the battle Sarfaraz Khan loses his sword and is killed by the British captain. The other sepoys leave the battlefield, leaving Javed Khan behind. In this way, the British get victory and Javed Khan lost both the battle and Ruth. The people were leaving the city as the British were moving ahead. Firdaus and other family members also leave. Javed Khan meets them on the way. He goes to the Church but Mariam tells him that he cannot see her. Mariam tells him to go back as his life is in danger. The dialogue between Javed and Mariam describes the change in the situation after the battle. As in an earlier scene we see that Javed is telling Mariam about the danger outside. When Javed begins to leave the church, Ruth calls out by his name. This shows that even Ruth has probably begun to have affectionate feelings for Javed. As Prem Chowdhry opines:

In Junoon, the obsession of Javed for Ruth is not one sided. Ruth is always shown to be intensely and sexually aware of him. In the few

words that she mouths, most are about Javed. From 'that Pathan' he requires a name and personality for whom she shows repeated concern. (Chowdhry 185)

Javed Khan leaves Ruth standing near the church gate. So the failure of Javed-Ruth romance describes the unsuitability of the situation in those times of upheaval. The feelings of love and attraction are on both the sides but the time does not permit so that the emotional attachment can take place. The love and warmth of feelings for each other's culture was not possible at that period in the colonial history of India. As E.M. Forster in his work, *A Passage to India*, concludes that "No, not yet," and the sky said, "No, not there" (Forster 139). In the same mode, Rudyard Kipling in his famous ballad, "Oh, East is East and West and West and never the twain shall meet" (Kipling 245) also proclaims the same cultural, moral, and racial, social and ideological superiority of the West over the East.

And on then the voice over proclaims:

Javed khan died in battle.

Fifty five years later, Ruth Labadoor
passed away in London, unwed.

In this way, the film somehow implies that Ruth had also started loving Javed. She probably overcomes her feelings for Javed due to cultural supremacy. In the earlier scenes related to Javed-Ruth encounter, Ruth is shown to have an aversion for Javed. Ruth calls him 'that pathan'. But near the end of the film, her feelings change about Javed and she calls out by his name. The event of 1857 has been filmed by Shyam Benegal in combination with the love story of an Indian nawab and young English lady. Both these two opposite themes of love and war have been described in the historic context through the medium of film.

The events of 1857 were dreadful due to their violence. Both the sides were extremely obsessed with taking revenge from each other. So neither the British nor the rebels had any intention to be very honorable in war. The word *junoon* (obsession) conveys the madness that is very appropriate word to describe the period. The romance is also suffused with similar emotion. Shyam Benegal has made a work of art that captures this parallel visually.

The film also shows the inter-racial female friendship between the Indian and the British female characters. The western woman's openness was first

criticized by the Indian ones because they dance half naked with men other than their husbands. But in the film, we see that women from both the cultures start to understand and respect each other's feelings. "The close intermingling helps women of both races to dispel racist prejudices about the immorality of the Other woman" (Sen 125).

The several scenes in the film describe the mutual understanding between the English and Indian women. In Ramjimal's house and at Javed's place the warm relationship between the English and Indian women is noticeable. The cultural gap between the two cultures is being abridged because of the circumstances which made the Labadoor women to take shelter in the Indian homes. On the other hand, the native women gave away their prejudices against the white women and help them in securing their lives from the sepoys.

The filmic representation of the colonial history of India has been a major concern for the film-makers both the Indian and the Western. The most of these films focus on the difference between the native, the Other and the civilized, dominant West. As a critic, Prem Chowdhry in his work *Breaching The Divide: A Post Colonial Study of Two Films: Reading Images from Junoon (1978) And Lagaan (2001)* described the representation of the West in these two films although these were made at two different points of time.

Both these films importantly share the central theme of miscegenation. This theme provides a fruitful way of looking at these images by analyzing relationship between male and female, between white and the coloured, colonizer and the colonized. Made with a time gap of 23 years, they indicate both a continuum and a rupture in the ways of tackling this theme and the imaging of the British colonial rulers. (Chowdhry 177)

The similarity between *Junoon* and *Lagaan* remains on the basis of their representation of the British as a colonial power. In *Junoon* the struggle between the sepoys and the British was considered as a clash between the dominant west and the resistance provided by the native sepoys against the colonial power. On the other hand in *Lagaan*, the opposition was the same but the native resistance was provided by the common man of the village. The challenge for the British was in the form of the cricket match and the British lost. Although the treatment of colonialism in both the films was different but the image of the dominant, the

colonizer, the superior, and the civilized was represented in the same mode in these two films.

The film *Junoon* by Shyam Benegal was released in 1978. It represents the event of 1857 revolt but in a mixed treatment of the historic event, the director concentrates on the theme of Javed's madness for a British lady. That's why the title of the film was changed into *Junoon* in order to emphasise Javed Khan's passion. The film also shows the massacre of the British at the church by the sepoys, the fights between the British and the sepoys, and in the end the defeat of the Indian sepoys. This film actually represents the theme of war and romance at the same time in the same circumstances and finally between the same two different cultures the East or the West.

The symbolic use of the pigeons is described in three different contexts: first, in case of the revolt, then in case of the English women and thirdly for Javed-Ruth romance. In the film, the white and black pigeons symbolise the sepoys and the British troops and their movement during the revolt. The white pigeons also symbolise the English women moving from one place to another in search of a shelter: first they were taken by Ramjimal to his own house, then to Javed's place by force, and finally to their English home. As pigeons return home after their flight, similarly the English women return to their home. While concerning the romance between Javed and Ruth, the pigeons also symbolise the co-habitation of the white and the black race.

The metaphorical use of the flight of pigeons explains the change in its meaning. Some times on the ground and sometimes in the sky, the flight of pigeons as seen in the film, metaphorically express the change in the narrative structure of the film. The massacre of the British by the sepoys, the victory of the British, and the passionate love affair of Javed and Ruth all these incidents with variant nature manifest the ups and down in the whole course of the film as symbolised by the flight of pigeons.

The film can be analysed in such a way to trace the contrast and similarity between the two specific periods of time. The period which the selected film *Junoon* represents and the period in which the film was released. So while contrasting the 1850's India with that of the 1970's, we see the similarity in the deterioration and irresponsibility in the political situation of both the times: the danger of the colonial expansion by the British in the former case and the

declaration of emergency in the later. Similarly the analysis of the social and cultural circumstances of both the periods makes the difference clear. The unrest and disbelief among people of 1850's India especially among the sepoys (the former soldiers under the British) was a prevailed cause for the mutiny. But in 1970's India the plight of the common man was miserable because of the poverty, the aftermath of the weak and directionless policies of the government, the challenge of over population. So the filmic treatment of the situation and the contemporary conditions of its release both depict the continuity in the struggle for the power and the lack of forethought in the policies of the government. The filmic way of representation of the historic event of 1857 in the 1970's India helps the audience of that time to compare, to contrast, and to introspect themselves in the midst of the chaos in the larger scenario of a nation.

The film *Juno* is a typical story about the twists of fortune, the past and the feelings of affection. The film describes the starting of the revolt of 1857, the incidents of fights between the sepoys and the British troops. On the other hand, the film shows Javed Khan's passion for a young white lady, Ruth. It also shows how Ruth, her mother and an old lady have to suffer because of the revolt. This film mixes history, love and revolt in its visual representation of the actual historic event. Moreover, the two opposite feelings of love and war are being described throughout the filmic version of the revolt between the two communities.

The filmic representation of the revolt enhances the understanding of the viewers on the basis of its actual setting, the characters, their dialogues, the costumes and props of the specific historic period of 1857. All these represent the revolt of 1857 as a lively experience on the screen.

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Chapter Four

Comparative Analysis and Conclusion

Conclusion

The issue related to the history of the revolt of 1857 has been a complex one since it involves a combination of the factors comprising the nature of the incident and its interpretation. In this context, the revolt of 1857 has been interpreted variously by keeping in mind the contemporary situation of politics, economics, society, and culture. Caste, gender and other such social and historical circumstances have played important role in the event. These issues have remained prominent in order to understand the true nature of the revolt against the British colonialism.

The representation of history through the medium of film has been an important trend in the filmic world. The films as a different medium can illustrate an aesthetic delight to the spectators as well as establish an effective medium of communication of new ideas, knowledge or social reality. So a visual version of a historic event as a medium of masses can provide an opportunity for the common man to know about the nature of the historic event without reading the textual representation of the same.

Both the text and the film make use of the historic element although this dependence on historic fact may be diminishing one in their visual representations. The various literary techniques have helped the film directors to present their content in visual form, in a more effective way. The cinema in the influential stage was highly influenced by the modes of realism and naturalism. Social realism actually finds its roots in Italian Neo- Realism. This concept of realism was adapted by Hindi films in 1940's and 1950's including Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar* (1946). Further this trend influenced the New Wave Cinema with Satyajit Ray's *The Apu Trilogy*. Shyam Benegal in his films also represents the socio-political circumstances of the time. The cinema in 1960's and 70's was closely representing the issues of the real life.

The two selected films represent the historic event of 1857 revolt in different manner from each other. Although both the films deal with the circumstances of the 1857 revolt, yet the treatment of the event is different in both films. The first film, *Shatranj Ke Khilari* represents the king of Awadh as a soft character in the whole film. The two chess players also remain busy in their own pleasure of playing chess. The

role of British general Outram is portrayed as an agent of the colonial powers whose chief aim remains only the annexation of Awadh. In the end, the king abdicates his throne and the British take over the administration. All this change of power from the king to the British happens without any kind of violence. On the other hand, in second film, *Juno* the struggle between the sepoys and the British becomes violent. The film shows the pigeons of both the white and black colours flying in the sky. The white and black colours symbolise British troops and the sepoys comparatively. The short flights of the pigeons in the film metaphorically describe the journeys made by the troops from both the sides during the time of revolt. Generally the pigeons are regarded the symbol of peace but in this particular film the motif of pigeons does not work like that. We see the continuous struggle between the sepoys and the British.

Both the selected films contain between them the two parallel structures in their narratives. The first film, *Shatranj Ke Khilari*, describes the life of two chess players, their passion for the game of chess. But on the other side of the narrative, the film shows the colonial strategies through the role of General Outram and his companions. Indians including the King himself remain busy for their own personal pursuits for pleasure. But the British continue creating every opportunity for the expansion of the British Empire.

In the film *Juno*, the narrative also runs on two different themes of romance and the war. The theme of war, the revolt or the spirit of the mutiny is overshadowed by the treatment of the madness of Javed for the British woman, Ruth. The narrative of both the themes intermingles with each other. The native has to face the defeat in both fields of love and war.

While focusing on the actual representation of history in these two films, it becomes clear that the film *Shatranj Ke Khilari* by Ray represents Awadh of 1856. On the other hand, *Juno* by Shyam Benegal, represents the starting of the mutiny of 1857. The former film prepares the background of the revolt and the second one begins from where the first ends. Both the films also showcase history of the revolt, its background and starting.

The characters, dialogues and the setting of both the films look similar as they reflect the same period of history of a similar geographical area. The similar settings

of the films help to represent the 1857 revolt in the shadow of same linguistic and socio-cultural environment. This further enhances the capability of revisiting history of the revolt of 1857 in the filmic mode. The props, costumes and the intercultural factors between the British and the Indians paint a realistic picture in both of the films. The filmic representation of the revolt describes the conflict between King Wajid Ali and Outram, the conflict of characters, in case of the film *Shatranj Ke Khilari*. The second film, *Junoon*, highlights the conflict of choice, between the personal pursuits and the national one.

The issue of intercultural interaction, the prejudices against each other, and the difference between the East and West has been treated in the similar mode in both the films. In *Shatranj Ke Khilari*, the conversation between General Outram and Weston reveals the socio-cultural situations of the 1850's India especially of Awadh and its understanding by the British. The film shows the unawareness and unsympathetic attitude of the Western people towards the traditional Indian culture. On the other hand, General Outram's experience of the perfume can be defined from the perspective of the difference between the colonial and colonized. Moreover, Outram's questioning about the daily life of the king, his poetry, and the tradition of *muta* (temporary) wife exhibits his doubts related to the native culture.

In the film, *Junoon* the treatment of the cultural closeness has been represented in a more subtle way than the first film. After the massacre at the church, the English women including Mariam, Ruth, and the old lady take shelter first at Ramjimal's home and then in Javed Khan's place. The British women eat Indian food in native style, the conversation between Indian women and the British, and the songs in both the languages make the interaction and the understanding of each other's culture better.

Although the cultural overtones of the same historic era have been represented in both the films, yet the two differ on the issue of the treatment of culture. The film, *Shatranj Ke Khilari*, has visualized the culture from the perspective of the dominant, Western, colonized and the superiority of the British over the dominated, Eastern, colonized and inferior natives. General Outram's doubts about

the brevity and melody of the poems composed by Wajid Ali explain his vision about native inferiority.

On the other side, the film, *Juno*, treats the both Indian and British cultures in equal terms. In this film, the scenes related to Ramjimal and Javed's home manifest the respect for the other culture.

While observing the pace of both the films, it becomes clear that the film *Shatranj Ke Khilari* runs in a unidirectional mode from starting to the end. The story depicts the life of the king, the two chess players, and the British plans for the annexation of Awadh. The king gives up his throne, the British annex the kingdom and even after that the chess players continue playing chess. The continuity and the similarity of the thematic concerns through the whole course of the film is maintained in a parallel sequence of events: the film carries within it all the concerned strategies made by the players during the game, on the other hand, the colonial plans which Outram applies for annexing Awadh, are shown in a similar fashion.

On the other side, the film *Juno*, carries within it the theme of revolt and the passion. The film includes the ups and downs in the form of the massacre at the church, the initial success of the sepoys against the British, and then the British defeating the sepoys in Delhi. In the same sense, the miserable plights of the British women keep changing after the British success in Delhi. So the change in the story, the ups and downs, the difference in the situations from time to time all these facts describe the unpredictability of life during warlike conditions.

Both the films *Shatranj Ke Khilari* and *Juno* both reflect the real circumstances of 1856 and 1857's India and especially the region of Awadh. Ray in his film describes through the metaphor of chess the colonial design to exploit the native people. Meanwhile, Benegal in his film *Juno* reflects the impact of war on both the native Indians and the British people. The war brings destruction for both of the sides. The English women like Ruth and her mother becomes homeless and they have to struggle to save their lives. On the other side, when the British defeat the sepoys in Delhi, the situation reverses and this time the Indians become homeless as it is described in the film how the people migrate for the safer places in their own

country. In this way, both the films showcase the horrible impact of war on the common man.

The film *Shatranj Ke Khilari* depicts the plight of a kingdom in relation to the strategic overtones of the game of chess in relation with the colonial politics: the chess player's indulgence in the game, British strategy of annexing the kingdom of Awadh at any cost, and the artistic pursuits of Wajid Ali.

At this point, the smoothness in the narrative structure of the first film, *Shatranj Ke Khilari* differs from that of the *Junoon*, which represents the passion of an individual for a young girl in the era of an emerging revolt against the colonial power. So the change of circumstances, turn of the events, and the treatment of love under the shadow of the revolt make the film a divergent one in its structure of the narrative.

The setting of both the films remains same but the style of both is different from each other. The Ray's film *Shatranj Ke Khilari* is technically more complex than that of Shyam Benegal's *Junoon*. The way Satyajit Ray has used specific techniques appropriate to the situation makes his film far better than the other. When we analyse a scene in *Shatranj ke Khilari* in which Meer changes the position of one of the pawns in his favourite place, this act of deception has been filmed by Ray in such a way that manifests his special use of techniques to exhibit a particular activity. In this particular scene, the act of deceiving Mirza by Meer has been captured by keeping the camera behind the curtains so that Meer is not able to know that he is being watched. While in Shyam Benegal's *Junoon*, we do not see such a micro understanding and special use of techniques. In this way, the two selected films differ from each other on the basis of the special use of filming technique. But both the films show the similarity on the basis of metaphorical use of the symbols as their title suggest from starting to the end. The game of chess in *Shatranj Ke Khilari* and the flying Pigeons in *Junoon*: the two chess players continually play chess in the film and in the same mode; the pigeons can be seen flying in the film constantly. So both the main symbols express continuity in the films.

The image of the East has been represented as the inferior 'other'. The film *Shatranj Ke Khilari*, describes this through the scene related to the conversation between general Outram and Weston and between Outram and Fayrer. Indians are

described as subjects to be included in the regime of Queen Victoria. The revolt of 1857 has been represented in comparison to the larger colonial empire of the British Queen. The filmic treatment of the historic event makes the understanding of the true nature of the revolt wider. The film describes the 1850's Indian people, the king, and the culture in relation to the vivid binary of the colonizer and the colonized. The image of the King Wajid Ali Shah has been described by the British from the perspectives of the dominant. This way of describing 'the inferior other' challenges the perception of age old Indian kings or the royals under the larger concept of imperialism.

The film *Junoon* also brings out the powerful strategic plans of the British to defeat the sepoys. The cruel ways of punishment recognise the establishment of the colonial regime on the national level and its international recognition. The filmic version of 1857 revolt highlights the wider imperialistic design to impose the dominance and define the colonial empire as a solution for the problems of the subjects to be colonized.

The overtones of feministic concerns in both the films bring similarity between the two. The film *Shatranj Ke khilari*, describes the wives of both the chess players in inferior and neglected positions. The game of chess is more important for Meer and Mirza instead of their own wives. In *Junoon*, we see the miserable plight of the British women and the neglected life of Firdaus, the wife of Javed Khan. The similar treatment from the male patriarchal system provides the unity between two films on the issue of the suppressed feministic concerns. The filmic depiction of the 1857 revolt explores the different layers of dominance and exploitation. The British domination of India is implied with the annexation of Awadh. The exploitation by the internal structure of feudalism has been shown in the films, especially in case of *Shatranj Ke Khilari* where the King himself was indulgent in his own comfortable ways of living and ignores the political responsibility.

The revolt of 1857 in the first film, *Shatranj Ke Khilari*, has been depicted by the multi-layered structure of the contemporary socio-political and cultural characteristics of that time's Awadh. The personality of the king Wajid Ali Shah, the representation of the imperial powers by General Outram, the annexation of Awadh in 1856 all these three events described in the film prepare the audience to understand

the background of the revolt. The colonial attempt to deconstruct the native culture, the forced blame of bad administration, the role of the West as on a civilizing mission and the self-constructed responsibility of the white man's burden all are described in the film as the hidden ideological codes of the West over the East.

From this situation of the 1856, the next film, *Juno*, carries away the conflict of the colonized and the colonizer. The massacre scene at the church, explains the anger of the Indians that gets started erupting slowly with the annexation of Awadh in 1856. Then the sufferings lived by the English women of the time have been described in the film. The rebellious incidents by the sepoys continue to take place in the nearby areas of Awadh, Shahjahanpur and other part of the present Uttar Pradesh. This beginning of the revolt in 1857 has been shown coming to an end when the British defeat the sepoys in Delhi.

While concerning with the different issues raised by the cinematic representation of the historic event, the films involve the various types of thematic, ideological and hegemonic discursive practices. The native kings, monarchs and even the common people under the dominance and power of the imperialism and colonialism on the expanded international level of the colonialism. While observing the two selected films in the local and national discourse of marginalization, the ignored and repressed plight of women comes to the mind. Even the English women become the victims of the revolt of 1857 and the conflict between the dominant and the superior West and the dominated and the inferior East-the so-called 'Other', are seen in the film *Juno*.

The other major contribution made by the filmic representation of the revolt of 1857, has been the actual use of the real setting of the scenes where the historic event took place. The original architecture, the buildings made by the Mughal emperors and the natural surroundings of the focused area: lend a realistic touch to the films. In addition to this, the images on the screen, the sounds, the colours and the specific use of camera make the understanding much wider and deeper in comparison to reading the text. This makes the audience to be able to feel a lived experience. In this way, the cinematic representation of the historic incident remains

more powerful in the minds of the audience in comparison to the textual form of representing history.

Both the selected films were released in 1970s and the contemporary situation on the national level was at the lowest current since the independence. The failure of the Indian Governmental set up and the illusion of democratic values seemed to be rolled away with the winds of emergency and autocratic tendencies of the contemporary Indian rulers.

The films based on history are subject to continuous debate and controversy in critical fields. Since filmmaking involves a lot of economic capital and market concerns to be commercially viable and successful it is seldom free of the larger issues of the choice and aptitudes of the targeted or presumed audience or spectators. Moreover, a filmic representation of any historical or particular past events may involve construction as well as diversion according to prevalent perspectives. The historic film differs from other popular films on the issue of this complexity of true representation in the limits prescribed by history and the economics. So the relationship between history and film is quite problematic since it has to adhere to the concerns of economics as well as the representation of valid historical 'truths' and facts. The 'discontinuous' nature of history and the deconstruction of established notions from time to time makes the film version of history subordinate to the times in which it is made and where it is made in response to the spatial and temporal concerns.

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