

**The Legacy of the Empire: A New Historicist Study
of the Colonial and Postcolonial Agenda in
Selected Indian and Western Cinema**

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BY

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CERTIFICATE

I declare that the thesis entitled "THE LEGACY OF THE EMPIRE: A NEW HISTORICIST STUDY OF THE COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL AGENDA IN SELECTED INDIAN AND WESTERN CINEMA" has been prepared by me under the guidance of PROF. (Dr.) Alpana Saini, Department of Languages and Comparative Literature, School of Languages, Literature and Culture, Central University of Punjab. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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I certify that Jagdish Singh has prepared his thesis entitled “THE LEGACY OF THE EMPIRE: A NEW HISTORICIST STUDY OF THE COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL AGENDA IN SELECTED INDIAN AND WESTERN CINEMA”, for the award of Ph. D. degree of the Central University of Punjab, under my guidance. He has carried out this work at the Department of Languages and Comparative Literature, School of Languages, Literature and Culture, Central University of Punjab.

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ABSTRACT

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Name of Supervisor : PROF. (Dr.) Alpa Saini
Name of Department : Languages and Comparative Literature
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Key words : Empire, Cinema, Colonialism, Postcolonialism, Censorship, New Historicism,

The term Empire refers to an expansion of territory by including other countries or other continents under the rule of a powerful state. The concept of Empire Cinema is focused on the agenda of using some specific kind of films for propagating and justifying the existence of colonial forces on the colonised land. Empire Cinema fulfils this need for the imperial powers. New Historicist analysis of the films helps to analyse, to relate and to reinterpret the focussed colonial issues in the selected films with respect to the Postcolonial period. The study of these films helps to have a glimpse into the colonial socio-cultural as well as political encounter between colonial powers and the colonised subjects. The analysis of the empire films also exhibits the politics of film censorship. The films are becoming a vital and interesting medium for describing the events of the past. The selected films offer representation from both colonial and colonised perspectives while at the same time dealing with the representation of colonial and postcolonial issues like the *thugi* cult, *sati*, the communal violence in colonial era, the Indian- British individual interactions, the dilemma of Anglo-Indians and Indian resistance to the British Empire. The New Historicist study highlights the dual role of cinema; as an art form and as medium to propagate a specific ideology by targeting a particular kind of audience, at a specific point of time. The selected films can be analysed to represent the colonial nostalgia in the postcolonial era and remain a useful medium of revisiting the colonial history of a nation.

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(Jagdish Singh)

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

History of Empire Cinema, Cinema in India, New Historicism and Postcolonial Perspectives

1.1 Empire Cinema

The term Empire refers to an expansion of territory by including other countries or other continents under the rule of a powerful state. The concept of empire uses some socio-political propaganda, based on knowing the colonised and then distorting the information for the benefit of the empire. C. A. Bayly in *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (1996) describes that “In India the colonial knowledge was derived to a considerable extent from indigenous knowledge...and distorted by fear and prejudice” (7). The British Empire took control over other Asian, African and American countries such as India, South Africa, United States of America and Australia. Julian Go in *Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empire, 1688 to the Present* (2011) writes, “Empires, in their most basic sense, are socio-political formations that are constructed and maintained through the exercise of power” (6). In this context, the Empire stands for that typical approach which aims to take over other countries geographically and then exploit such colonised nation for the benefit of the colonial powers, in the colonial era by assimilating knowledge and power. Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) opines, “Imperialism means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory, colonialism which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory” (9). In this way, the concept of Empire seems based on ruling as well as exploiting the territories under its dominance by practising the tactics of colonialism. The specific imperial narratives have been propagated to justify as well as expand the policies and the territories of an occupied foreign country. That is why, such imperial design has to face the resistance from the native subjects. Similarly, Arundhati Roy in *An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire* (2012) remarks: “When we speak of confronting Empire, we need to identify what Empire means (77)”. The colonial politics of binary opposition between the colonial and the

colonised, between the superior white master and the inferior coloured subject manages to express these ideas of difference in various modes of expression.

In a similar way, the textual representations about the colonised subjects also propagate this colonial agenda of exploiting the colonised subjects from their cultural, social as well as historic circumstances. As long as the project of the imperial politics gains its depth and widens its territories, the medium of colonial propaganda also needs to be reformed. That is why, the colonial forces seem to use a more popular and a novel way of cinema to exploit the native colonised people for proliferating its own agenda. That is how, the concept of the Cinema of the Empire comes into play. The term Empire Cinema has been defined by Prem Chowdhry in the Introduction to *Colonial India and Making of the Empire Cinema* (2000). He writes, "Empire Cinema is a term now accepted for both the British as well as Hollywood cinema made mainly during the 1930s and 1940s, which projected a certain vision of empire in relation to its subjects" (Chowdhry 1). The concept of Empire Cinema is focused on the agenda of using some specific kind of films for propagating and justifying the existence of colonial forces on the colonised land.

The films have been used for transmitting imageries and ideologies of empire. The ideology of the colonial discourse has also propagated and manifested by the European thinkers, traders, travellers, and writers. The imperial powers used every possible way such as literary writings, historical texts, films and even native arts to stereotype the image of the native people as uncivilised and barbaric. The idea of colonialism was glorified by Britain, France and other European countries. The European nations started to establish their rule in Asian, African and American countries as their colonies in order to widen their imperial boundaries. Hence, the need for such a medium of communication was felt for the first time, to propagate as well as advertise the imperial project in its geographically, culturally and politically divergent colonised subjects in various parts of the world.

The concept of Empire Cinema fulfils this need for the imperial powers. That is why, the Empire Films have been produced in or about the colonised nations by the Imperial powers comprising Britain, France and America as the main players. Even most of the Hollywood films represent the features of colonial politics defending the British imperialism, the soldiers, their values, and their sacrifices made for the defence of the British Empire. Instead of reflecting the social reality, the films of the Empire Cinema serve the hidden agenda of colonial ideology. The

native history, culture and customs have been depicted as obsolete, false, inferior and of substandard in comparison to the European one. Even the British and American films of the same era represented the ideological and political undertones of colonialism on screen. The empire films also challenged the British Empire by demonstrating the western life style in a way which otherwise is quite immoral, unacceptable within the restrictions of typical socio-cultural traditions of a colonised country. That is how, the films like *The Drum (1938)* also include such scenes and dialogues which question the western life style and the western thought about the equality of rights of man and the woman in comparison to that of the culture and the society of the colonised subjects. *The Drum (1938)* demonstrates the conversation between Carruthers and Ghul Khan as follows:

Ghul Khan: Why is it that when I was in London and Paris, the ballroom dancing always impressed me as something unspeakably vulgar and barbaric.

Carruthers: Perhaps because your highness feels that women should never dance with men.

Ghul Khan: Only for men.

Carruthers: You think if they dance together, man loses a great deal of his dignity.

Ghul Khan: And the woman something of her chastity.

Carruthers: We believe in the equality of rights.

Ghul Khan: Equality of rights? Have you ever heard of a lamb persuading the tiger to live in peace with him, and respect this equality of rights? Has the musket equal rights with the machine gun? (*The Drum 1938*)

In this way, the empire films represent the difference of conservative, colonised thinking in relation to the western modern thoughts like equality of rights between the man and the woman. The films of the Empire Cinema seem critical of the Indian rebels as well as those of the western life style. That's why, a comparative study of British, American and Indian films of the colonial and early postcolonial era, explores the traces of the legacy of the Empire Cinema and its ideological significance. In the sixteenth century, the world recognised the British influence as an international power invading every continent approaching a broad imperial framework. The imperial discourse seems aiming at redefining the native culture,

language and history in order to exploit the native resources. Jon Cowans in *Empire Films and the Crisis of Colonialism, 1946–1959*, (2015) explains that “Empire films often featured scenes of sexual temptation, offering audiences the pleasures of fantasy and images of attractive, seductive, scantily clad natives (often played by the natives), before they upheld Western morality in the final reel” (12). The empire films represent the native people as racial, brutal and uncultured. Thus the films of the empire depict how the cinema became one of the most popular and controversial links between the colonised and the coloniser. Nicholas B. Dirks in *Colonialism and Culture* (1992) describes that “if colonialism can be seen as a cultural formation, so also culture is a colonial Formation” (3). The films serve as a medium for the imperial powers to dominate the colonies from cultural point of view. The imperial politics has been aimed at justifying and encouraging the occupation and domination of colonial lands through Empire Cinema.

With Lumiere brothers’ introduction of the medium of cinema in 1895 in Paris, it expanded throughout Europe and America. The usage and mass appeal of cinema having wider audience in both Britain and America, inspired the businessmen in these countries. They started to consider the occupation of filmmaking as a profitable business. The investment in the movie making also increased as a film once produced can be sold many times. The audience in England, America and also, in colonised countries, started going to the theatres to enjoy the first-hand experience of films. James Burns in book *Cinema and Society in the British Empire, 1895-1940* (2013) describes that “the *New Empire* theatre in Bombay (Mumbai) was one of the first cinema houses in British India. It opened in 1908 to provide entertainment to Anglo-Indian and upper-class Indian audiences” (1). The audience in the British Empire got a chance to have a glimpse of the world through the empire films for the first time. The cinema became the first common cultural experience for the whole empire audience as they watched films while sitting next to the people of different religious, ethnic and class identities.

1.2 Indian and Western Cinema

Since, the present study focuses on selected films from both the Indian as well as Western Cinema, thus the origin and the development of such cinematic genres needs to be explored in relation to the empire politics. Firstly, the study will examine the concept of Indian Cinema. In India, the history of the origin of the moving pictures begins with Lumiere brothers’ screening of film shorts on July 17, 1896, at the

Watson Hotel, Bombay. Although this first show included only a series of visuals but it enabled Indians to be familiar with film and filmmaking. The entrepreneurs started to think about investing in filmmaking business. Harishchandra Sakharam Bhatavdekar (Save Dada) ordered a camera from England inspired by the Lumiere Brothers and shot a film *The Wrestlers*. It was a simple recording of a wrestling match. It is considered to be the first motion picture in Indian Film Industry, screened in 1899. Reginald Massey in *Indian Cinematograph Industry* describes that “by 1910, there were cinema halls in all the main cities. Indeed, within sixteen years the cinema had become an established part of city life in India” (370). But these films were mostly of French, British, American, German, Danish and Italian origin. But these films proved extremely popular among Indian audience.

The beginning of the era of Indian Film Industry is assumed to begin in 1912. Suresh Chabria in a chapter entitled as “Before Our Eyes: A Short History of India’s Silent Cinema” in his work *Light of Asia: Indian Silent Cinema 1912-1934* writes, “the first Indian story film is *Pundalik* made in Bombay and released at the Coronation Cinematograph on 18 May 1912 with the first half British film made by N. G. Chitra and R. G. Tourney” (Chabria 7). But the credit for producing the first indigenous Indian film goes to Dhundiraj Govind Falke, known as Dadasaheb Phalke who released the first ever full-length silent film *Raja Harishchandra* in 1913. It was the first-ever Indian film which was screened in London in 1914. Dadasaheb Phalke supervised and managed the production of twenty- three films from 1913 to 1918. That’s why Dadasaheb Phalke has been called the Father of Indian Cinema. The film was based on Hindu Mythology. A.M. Green in his article *Indian Cinematograph Industry* point out that “Hindu mythology in particular supplied popular scenarios ready to hand, with no possible trouble about copyright” (5). Raja Harishchandra’s character was based on the legend in Mahabharata, the great Indian epic. The film also gave a push to the *swadeshi* movement as it was purely an Indian production. Symbolically, the film described the anti-colonial nationalist agenda dominated by Hindu mythology and religion. In this way, the native film producers exploited the Indian audience’s knowledge of their past and love for the subject of myth and folklore.

The role of early cinema in India was favourable for nationalism and anti-colonialism by exploiting the native tradition of Hindu mythological figures. This assimilation between the cinema and nationalism describes how the medium of films

can be utilised for propagating patriotism and resistance to the empire. The father of Indian cinema, Dada Saheb Phalke once remarked that “My films are Swadeshi in the sense that capital, ownership, and stories are well Swadeshi” (qtd in Mishra 13). The Indian filmmakers of the time indirectly connected their films with Gandhi’s *Swadeshi* Movement for the propagation of nationalism in Indians.

The other films as Dwarka Das Sampat’s *Bhakta Vidur* (1921) and *Vande Mataram Asharam* (1926) followed the same path of supporting the anti-colonial and nationalistic feelings. These films were censored by the British authorities. They did not want that the audience should know as well as discuss the colonial exploitation through film having nationalist and anti-colonial agenda. The Indian filmmakers used mythological symbols for talking about British exploitation prevalent at that time of colonial India. Since the popularity of mythological films and the size of the audience was increasing enormously, this made the investors invest money in the film production. The government passed the Indian Cinematograph Act in 1918 to control the flow of money in film making. In this way, Indian Film Industry was legally recognised.

The other key Indian filmmaker from Bengal named J. F. Madan made his first film *Nal Damyanti* in 1917. The film was based on an ancient Indian love story. The leading roles in the film were played by the Italian actors. After two years, the first south Indian silent film named *Keechaka Vadham* (1919) was made in Madras by R. Nataraja Mudaliar at his own studio, India Film Company. The film draws its subject from the Hindu epic Mahabharata and was inter-titled in Tamil, Hindi, and English. J. F. Madan, first of all, identified the commercial value of the poor audience in comparison to the middle class and British audience. He made films by targeting the lowest strata of Calcutta as this specific category of film audience had limited reach to other types of public entertainment. Another key figure at that time was Himanshu Rai who produced the film *The Light of Asia* (1925) based on the poem of the same name by Sir Edwin Arnold dealing with the life of Buddha. Himanshu Rai with his wife, Devika Rani Chaudhury founded the famous Bombay Talkies to produce films raising the economic and social issues. The film, *Achhut Kanya* (1936) focuses on the social issue of caste hierarchy in India describing the love story of a Brahmin boy and a girl from the low caste.

The time when cinema was introduced, India was the time of rapid urbanisation like that of Victorian England. The poor people were rushing towards

the urban areas especially Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. James Burns in *Cinema and Society in the British Empire, 1895-1940* opines, “to many in the West, moving pictures were the wonders of the age, but to the migrants [...] urban life was the wonder and the cinema was just the part of it” (21). The people who came from villages to cities were not aware of the fact that cinema had originated recently. This migrated audience accepted the cinema just as a part of urban novelty like other new facilities in the city life.

Simultaneously, in a contemporary scenario of world politics because of the First World War, the film production and its marketing was badly affected. The British and other European film production houses had to face harsh times because of the war. On the other hand, America emerged as prominent film industry after the war. The Hollywood films started to dominate British market along with the empire audience. That is how, Reginald Massey illustrates in *Indian Cinematograph Industry* (1974): “By the mid-1920s India was making more feature films than Britain and yet this satisfied only 15 percent of the demand; 85 percent of the releases in India were mainly American” (371). In such a scenario, India became the dumping ground for American films. Even, the second hand Hollywood films were making large profits in Indian market. It also ruined Indian film production as they had to recover the production costs in Indian market only. That’s why, the Indian and the British film exhibitors were in favour of screening American films instead of Indian films, to make more profit.

The British were also concerned about the loss of market to Hollywood films in both Britain and its colonies. As a result, the Cinematograph Films Act was formulated to fix the quota for British films as Priya Jaikumar in her article entitled as *More Than Morality: The Indian Cinematograph Committee Interview* explains that, “The 1927 British Quota Act reserved a quota for British Empire Films within Britain, the term was used as grounds for bartering that similar quotas be passed within British colonies and dominions” (84). The British government made an attempt to restructure the Indian film industry by regulating the film distribution through an empire quota, it was opposed by the importers of American Films. The importers had made large profits from American films in India. They were also doubtful regarding the success of Indian films in domestic market because of its cultural, linguistic and provincial differences.

On the other hand, the British authorities were worried about the impact of American films on Indian Audience. The Indian Government appointed a Cinematograph Committee in 1927 to study the impact of films. William Mazzarella in his article *Making Sense of the Cinema in Late Colonial India* describes the danger posed by the cinema to the colonial audience that “Some of the panic was simply an importation to India of anxieties and controversies that had already been circulating in Europe and the United States for several decades” (630). The American films have been describing the travesties of British life at home, the sordid sexual images of the white female, the openness of western culture and English life in front of the Indian audience. As a result, the British authorities and film producers forced the government for a greater censorship to protect the colonial audience from the supposed American immortality and British misrepresentation. Richard Burt in *The Administration of Aesthetics: Censorship, Political criticism and Public Sphere* (1994) describes the usability of film censorship according to certain pre-defined interests. He says, “Censorship not only legitimates discourses by allowing them to circulate, but is itself a part of a performance, a simulation on in which censorship can function as a trope to be put on show” (Burt 18). Censorship in itself works as a discourse to control a specific type of ideology whether it is in case of marginal to central or between the government machinery and the governed.

The need of censoring the films seems an unavoidable question for the British officials because they were aware from the cinematic appeal to the large colonised audience in India. William Mazzarella in his article “Making Sense of the Cinema in Late Colonial India” also talks about the multiple reaction of the Indian audience towards the films of the Empire cinema. He writes, “but others speculated that the civilising project might actually finally take wing by means of the cinema image” (Mazzarella 77). According to William Mazarella, the perception of the Indian audience became clear that the liberal and educated audience had different opinions about the impact of cinema than that of the conservative and uneducated audience.

The British Government wanted to judge the response of the Indian audience to formulate an appropriate censor policy to avoid the negative impact of Hollywood films. As a result they formed certain committees for this task like *Indian Cinematograph Committee* 1925. This has been further verified by the members of the *Indian Cinematograph Committee* who points out that they have studied the

response of the Indian audience for years and found that for the native audience 'the play's the thing'. They respect the performance on the screen and enjoy it, although the performance on the screen depicts the portrayal of a foreign life, the audience still applaud the hero and the heroine. The *Indian Cinematograph Committee* remarks about how the Indians seemed to have some kind of the previous link to the live performances that "Despite some evidence to the contrary we are fully satisfied that Indians gain the cinema sense very quickly—the uneducated sometimes more quickly than the educated" (ICC 112). While talking about the misrepresentation of the western life and morality in the cinema, the European and educated Indian audience do believe that it is harmful. The conservative audience fears that whether the films represents the western life accurately or not but the cinema definitely take away the young Indian minds from their own culture and civilisation.

The increasing demand for the films and the widening of the film market in the colonised audience was a major phenomenon in the history of the cinema in the 1930's. At the same time, the film production was undergoing a transformation from silent films to the talkies. The introduction of the sound into the film brought a revolutionary shift in the field of film production, its marketing and reception in the audience. The vast majority of moving picture viewers came under the influence of the sound films in 1932. But the silent film had the universal appeal in comparison to the sound film because of the language problems. Moreover, the silent films were still in fashion in the rural areas and smaller towns of the British Empire as the sound films were available only in the urban areas at that point of time.

With the introduction of sound films in India, it became clear that the talkies were going to have a far-reaching impact on the business of the empire film production as well as local film production. In case of India, as most of the audience was illiterate and for them it was more comfortable to watch a film in their own language instead of any Hollywood film. This specific reason boosted the native vernacular film production which could compete with the Hollywood films. In this way, the Indian film makers got a secure market for their films and the demand for American films decreased rapidly. This forced Hollywood to make specific films for the colonised regional audience based on the native issues, culture, and society.

The linguistic diversity of India also forced the Indian film producers to make films for regional audience. The local film production houses were being started as

the source of the entertainment for the native audience of all types. At that time, the main production houses were in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. James Burns in *Cinema and Society in the British Empire, 1895-1940* describes that “there are twenty-one moving picture theatres in Bombay, while Calcutta has twenty-three ... the arrival of the talkies was highly anticipated among the Indian cinema going public ” (138). The audience includes the young Indian students and educated middle class, but the mass population from the rural areas remains slightly uninfluenced. Besides this division, the audience in India was also categorised on the racial or national basis as being native or the European one. As *Indian Cinematograph Committee* (1927) described:

The taste of the Westernised Indian and of the Indian who has some knowledge of English and acquaintance with Western ideas [emphasis added] is akin to that of the European and generally the same films whether social dramas, comedies, or whatever they may be, which are popular in the West, are appreciated by this section of the community. The bulk of the population, however, which is insufficiently acquainted with the English language and with Western ideas [emphasis added], enjoys films with plenty of action, especially comic and adventure films, but finds no attraction in the social dramas. (ICC 21-22)

While talking about the reception of films in Indian audience it becomes clear that the native viewers exhibit two different tastes and responses. First, at the beginning stage, audience looked interested in films having mythical origin which depicted incidents from Mahabharata. The second category includes the man on street having both the East-West tastes who demanded a mixture of traditional, cultural as well as Western touch in the films.

The first Indian talkie named *Alam Ara*, (1931) directed by Ardeshir Irani was opened in Bombay. The films were more like musical dramas including a large number of songs. The film included the first song ‘de de Khuda ke naam par’ in the history of Indian cinema directed by Phiroz Shah and sung by W.M. Khan. As the sound films were being produced in India, the regional and linguistic variety of India gave a push to language based films for Bengali, Marathi, and Tamil audience. The first Talkie in Tamil named *Kalidas* was directed by H. M. Reddy. The first sound film in Bengali was *Jumai Shasthi*. The *Ayodhyecha Raja* (1932) was the first Marathi talkie film directed by R. V. Shantaram.

The films were largely based on Indian mythological traditions. The films brought awareness among the Indian masses about the rich mythological tradition of India. The themes of nationalism and colonial exploitation were being addressed in the films by using symbols from Ramayana and Mahabharata. The film *Kismet* was produced by Bombay talkies in 1943 which included a song “Durr Hato Ay duniyavallon, Hindustan Hamara Hai” (Leave, Get Away, People of the World. India is Ours) which symbolically refers towards the essence of the Quit India Movement and the demand for freedom.

While analysing the Indian cinema in the broader scenario of Empire Cinema it becomes clear that the films were emerging as an important medium to make appeal to the colonised audience. In Indian context, the native filmmakers relate the filmic representation with the echo of anti-colonial and nationalistic thinking. The western filmmakers exploited the medium of films to propagate the colonial and imperialistic policies as a much needed solution to civilize the colonized subjects. The Western Cinema, under the influence of empire politics, used the medium of films to educate the colonised audience in the fields of health and agriculture. Cinema was the only medium to communicate the message of general awareness among the uneducated masses in the British Empire. The colonial authorities were fully aware of the role of films for educating the masses on the issue of public health and agricultural improvement.

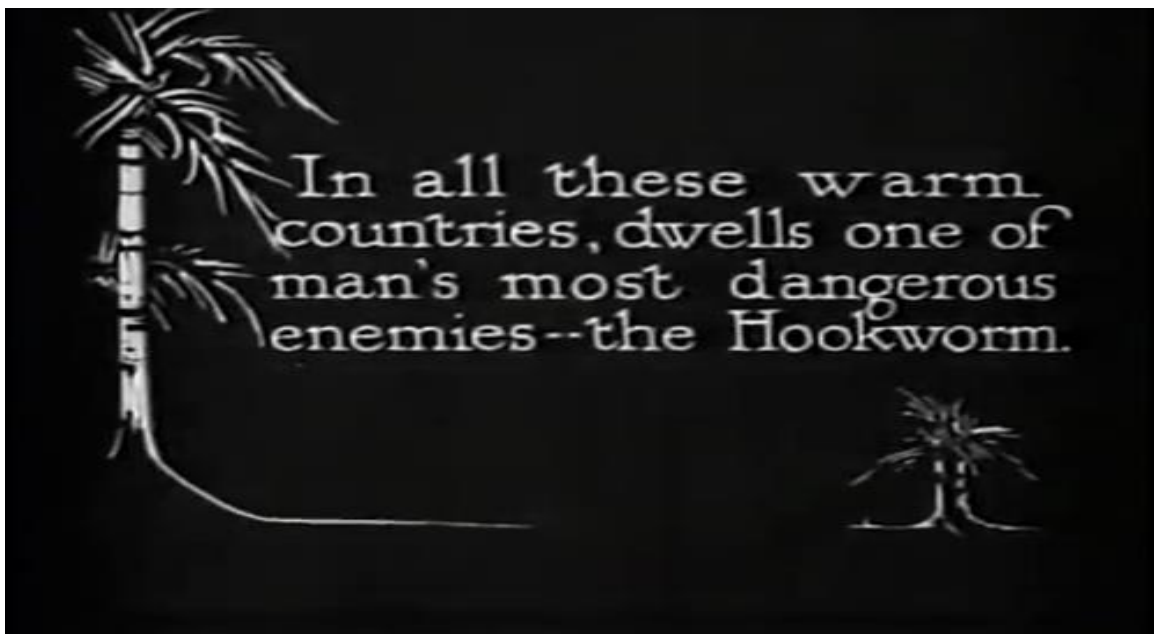


Figure 1.1 A still from the Educational Film: *Unhooking the Hookworm* (1920)

In 1920, the educational film *Unhooking the Hookworm* was produced by Rockefeller Foundation. The film also educates the masses to know about the hookworm and its cure. The film also shows the microscopic images of Hookworm and their larvae. The film shows a young boy suffering from Hookworm is being cured by a doctor. The film with its universal appeal proved successful among the inter-war colonial films. The other such film *Malaria* was released in 1925 which imparts knowledge about the diagnosis and treatment of Malaria. The film *All My Babies* was used to impart the maternity education and it describes the benefits of midwife care instead of old traditional methods. The film functions as an educational tool to improve the service of midwives. William Mazzarella says: “Any medium that might make the government’s case in the language of this silent majority was not to be ignored” (69). In this way, the colonial authorities identified the importance of films as a state-sponsored medium to educate the uneducated, rural colonised subjects of India and the issues concerning the women health and their role in both the colonial and the colonised cultures.

Besides educational functions of empire films for women in the colonial era, these films also exhibit the condition of women under the dominance of colonial and patriarchal structures. That is why, the local Indian woman was ignored and the White woman was associated with the weakness of colonialism. The women were supposed to be inferior in both the colonial and the colonised society under the dominant patriarchal structures.

The politics of empire films seems based on depicting the colonial era dominated by the male body figure. The film “*Black Narcissus* (1947) set in India and released in the year of Indian independence, is a notable example of an immediate post-war empire film that represented female sexuality as pathological, associating loss of empire with female hysteria” (Wendy 5). On the other hand, in early Indian Cinema women’s roles were played by the male actors. Also during that period the jobs related to entertainment were performed by the nautch girls¹, the prostitutes.

¹ Pran Neville in his book *Sahib’s India: Vignettes of the Past (2010)* describes that “the word ‘nautch’ is an anglicised form of the Hindi/Urdu word nach derived from the Sanskrit nritya... meaning dance” (99). In colonial times the young girls whose profession was to dance to entertain the Indian royals and the British, were called

The patriarchal structures of contemporary Indian society were against any type of freedom of women, especially the women from high caste. That's why it was unthinkable for such women of high caste to perform in films. The role was ascribed only to the low caste women like the nautch girls. Likewise, Kalpana Kannabiran described that "The moral strength of the community was defined in terms of the sexual morality of its women" (63). The young Indian ladies from native families were not interested in acting in films. This lack of native female participation was fulfilled by the Anglo-Indian actresses and they played the Indian roles with skills close to the native women. The white women were also used as the symbol of imperial white identity. Although the white women were considered inferior to their male partners yet the same white women dominated their colonised female counterparts as the superior one.

The film *North West Frontier* (1959) based on the subject of saving the young Hindu Prince from the Muslims as they murdered the Hindu king and the British are left to save the Prince by taking him to a safer place. The film also exhibited the English heroine's character as a saviour for a native child whose mother was killed during the Hindu-Muslim conflict. In this way, the empire cinema used the white female figure to support the white male's efforts for imperialistic domination of its colonies. The film indirectly used the symbols of white mother inferring England as the mother country and little Indian Prince as new India for manifesting the legacy of the empire in the postcolonial era.

During the colonial era, the censorship was strict because the British were aware of the impact of cinema. The Hollywood films were also banned as they were criticised by both the British and nationalists for their questioning of the British imperialism and Indian nationalism. The films like *The Drum* (1938) also proved critical of British imperial policies and the native unacceptability of the colonial rule. Priya Jaikumar in a chapter entitled as "Romance and Empire" in her book *Cinema at the End of the Empire: A Politics of Transition in Britain and India* writes, "*The Drum* (1938) justifies British distrust of educated Muslims, of Indian political reformists who sought to invent indigenous forms of secular modernity" (155). The

the nautch girls. The writer says, "Nautch girls would also accompany the British army whenever it was on the move, entertaining the soldiers on the way" (100).

films which criticised the British rule as well as threatened the colonial administration in India were banned. The empire films seem to comment upon the relationship full of suspicion between the colonial powers like Britain and its colonised subjects; especially, the Muslims in films like *The Drum* (1938) and *North West Frontier Province* (1959) where the Muslims challenged the British authority. Prem Chowdhry in his book *Colonial India and Making of the Empire Cinema: Image, Ideology and Identity* mentioned that “The first film, *The Drum* (1938), proved catalytic in the colonial situation in more than one way. Confronted with prolonged agitation the screening of the film had to be banned... *Gunga Din*, which followed in 1939, was banned before it could be screened” (7). On the other hand, in postcolonial period, the challenge for the filmmakers remains as a divergent one because of the political, social and religious considerations of Indian society.

1.3 Importance of a New Historicist Analysis of Historical Cinema:

The selected films are based on the events of colonial era in the history of India. But some of these films have been released in the Postcolonial period. That's why, a New Historicist analysis of the films helps to analyse, to relate and to reinterpret the focussed colonial issues in the selected films with respect to the Postcolonial period. This type of study helps to analyse the selected films in a collective way to exhibit how all these films were actually a part of the larger discourse of colonial politics through the Empire Cinema. The study of these selected films also exhibits the specific usage of filmic techniques like the blackface and high or low angle shots to fulfil the agenda of the politics of the empire. The present analysis of these films highlights the colonial propaganda to justify their presence as well as colonial interference in the native culture and society. The study of these films helps the audience to have a glimpse into the colonial socio-cultural as well as political encounter between colonial powers and the colonised subjects. The analysis the empire films also exhibits the politics of film censorship used by the British to protect their own film market in the colonised countries. The target audience also comes to know the origin as well as the development of native cinema which produced films in vernacular languages. The native films, in its vernacular languages, used the mythological and historical figures to instil the nationalistic and anticolonial consciousness in the psyche of its audience.

New historicism focuses on the study of any historical film in relation to its contemporary cultural context. The films represent the culture of a specific period in

the history of India and the present study helps to investigate the colonial agenda of such films in the context of colonial history. Catharine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt in *Practising New Historicism* (2000) describe the interrelations between history and the other forms of art while discussing the views of a German critic Johann Gottfried Herder and clarify that “more important still, Herder’s brilliant vision of mutual embeddedness of art and history underlies our fascination with the possibility of treating all of the written and visual traces of a particular culture as a mutually intelligent network of signs” (Gallagher and Greenblatt 9). The films represent the past on the screen as it helps to reach out to the historic event and its cultural context through its visual representation.

The empire films used specific filmic devices such as the specific use of camera, light, the props and costumes, the characters, the dialogues and the landscape to show what was required under the colonial propaganda. The colonial films used the technique of dark faces to depict some of the native characters as violent, uncivilised and mysterious, similarly, Sandra Ponzanesi and Marguerite Waller’s *Postcolonial Cinema Studies* (2012) describe this phenomenon in their work. The Empire Cinema used this technique in films such as *Gunga Din* (1939) and *North West Frontier* (1959) to portray the native characters of the chief of the thugs and Mr. Layden, respectively. The colonial films like *A Passage to India* (1985) has used the mystery and obscurity of Indian landscape to differentiate the colonial from the colonised. The empire films assimilate the unstructured, ruined and mysterious landscape with that of the uncivilised and violent nature of the colonised subjects.

All these visual factors in a film work as variables for the New Historicist analysis of selected films to interpret various issues concerning the politics of the Empire Cinema. The study of the selected films helps to understand the embedded cultural and colonial issues of the period and the propaganda of knowledge-power relations. The films also highlight the racial discrimination and the psychology of both the colonised natives and their colonial masters. The present study of the selected films brings out how the colonial culture encountered the native culture and history. As a result, the native audience comes into touch with the openness of the western life style and on the other hand the colonial forces were also surprised to see the old, mysterious, and uncivilised native society. *The Drum* (1938) shows the way, natives like Gul Khan challenged the western propaganda of the equality of

the rights of the woman. The films like *Gunga Din* (1939) and *The Deceivers* (1988) highlight the socio-cultural evils like thugi and sati which inspire the white men to feel the responsibility of civilising the uncivilised. This encounter between the colonial and the colonised also results in changing human relations between the two communities as we observe in the films like *A Passage to India* (1985) and *Heat and Dust* (1983).

In the same way, the present study helps to reinterpret the socio-cultural circumstances in the colonial past of a nation like India. New Historicism believes on mutual negotiation and exchange between society and the form of art, like films in this case. The traditional Indian society was divergent in so many ways because of various types of discourses of language, religion, customs and political and geographical diversities. So these different types of discourses can be studied with the help of Foucault's concept of discourse; the different types of discourses deal with the ways knowledge is produced, legitimated and perpetuated through the medium of language. Michel Foucault in *The History of Sexuality. Volume One: An Introduction* (1978) writes, 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" (67). Foucault also defines how it is in the discourse that power and knowledge are joined together. Power controls the production of knowledge and knowledge enforces the power. He explains how the actual power play between the modern designs of producing and controlling the flow of knowledge at a specific time shifts towards the larger systems of political power in human society. The work of literature is relevant not only at 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 subject to change. Thus the relationship between literature and history must be reanalysed.

The New Historicism tries to examine the literary work by placing it in the context of ideas, conventions and attitudes of the period in which it was written. The influence on the writer may be less or more but the surrounding conditions exert their power in the writings of an individual author. According to Hamilton the aim of historicism is to make the work of different periods more accessible to the reader at present times and 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 writes:

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. (2)

Since, our understanding of the past shapes how we would interpret the text and such text embraces its very meaning in relation to the other literary and non-literary creations of the specific period. A text's meaning is shaped by various social and cultural discourses. In the same way, the concept of New Historicism tries to explore the literary works in their relation to various discursive practices which influenced the work of art and attached a new meaning to these works. Similarly, Michel Foucault's work has greatly influenced the historical interpretation of any text or another political system and its discourses which prevailed in the past as he explained in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977) to highlight the ways of punishment as a result of a certain discourse or mechanism. 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 emphasises the need to examine some certain discourse of history which kept continue through different eras of human history as a series of disseminating knowledge by distinct fields of discursive possibilities. In *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human sciences* (1970) Foucault describes that "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" (33). He describes how the discourse of each period has its value only in the specific historic context. He thought that in each period discourse produced 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. He defines how a written textual record functions within a set of discourses and how New Historicism aims to study the way a typical ideology challenges as well as negotiates with the prevalent continuous discourse of the time like that of colonialism. 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 *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction* (2005) writes 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). He insists on keeping the category of the subject as a means to study the historical discourses of power and knowledge that constitute it. He questions how some discourses managed to get power and became dominant while others were continuously marginalised and subjugated. Similarly, a New Historicist analysis focuses on these often marginalised and neglected voices at the time of the creation of a literary or cinematic expression.

Foucault describes that power can be exercised rather than possessed and insists that power is not repressive but productive. Foucault has similarly emphasised 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. New Historicism tries to use the concept of power relations to know about the relation between society and works of art and aims to reinterpret the literary and historic texts. 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 practices and different types of power relations. In the same way, Dogam writes:

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 analysing 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 a dialectic: the literary text is interpreted as product and producer, end and source of history. (Dogam 82)

The new historicist assumes that literature participates in the active process which helps to reconstruct and establish the desired and dominant discourses. According to Seldon, Greenblatt and other New Historicists in their study of

Renaissance texts, explore the ways in which Elizabethan literary texts act out of the concerns of Tudor monarchy. Seldon writes:

They see the 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. (164)

The New Historicism seems 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 remained 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 various expressions of history like written texts, government records, and the cinematic representations provide the opportunity to reinterpret history in a new way. Similarly new historicism argues that the relation between literature and history must be reanalysed. As the past is only available in the written form and this written text is mainly processed by three kinds of influences. The first one is through the discursive practices at the time of its creation, the second one includes our own perspective and at the last, it is influenced through the network of language.

New Historicism is a critical approach that locates power relations 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 and is in turn informed by textual representations. This means that history is always written by historian's present context. Hayden White gives the example of 1857 revolt and describes how the other factors responsible for the uprising were neglected and the issue related to the cartridges was highlighted. What he means to say is that history always considers the famous and powerful objects or humans leaving the rest.

Stephen Greenblatt started his study from the Renaissance texts because the power in Renaissance was at its extreme. He examines the role of English Monarchy as the centre which controls all the power in that specific period of time.

That's why, the New Historicists re-situate the literary work in the period of its production to analyse it in the larger context of other literary, non-literary works, the social and cultural milieu and other functioning structures and discourses of power relations of the time. The literary text is the part and parcel of a much wider cultural, social, economic, political environment. Stephen Greenblatt in his work *Renaissance Self-Fashioning From More to Shakespeare* (2012) describes:

My subject is *self-fashioning* from More to Shakespeare; my starting point is quite simply that in the 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. (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 the identity. He argues that self-fashioning means submission to an absolute power. 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 More, Marlow, and 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 (Greenblatt and Gallagher 12).

New Historicists tried to understand the whole culture as a text with all the textual traces of the past which they called the creative matrix of a particular era. Similarly, the writers represent the specific scenario with all the other social, cultural, political and other subjective or individual traces. Peter Barry writes:

New Historicism is interested in the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period. As there is no privileging of the literary in a new historicist study literary and non-literary texts are given equal weight and constantly inform each other. (Barry 166)

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.

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).

The concept of the New Historicism is based on the premise that there is no universal meaning or truth in history and that meaning imputed to history reflects power relations at the time of its production. New Historicism has made the relation between text and society its predominant concern. In *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (1991) Stephen Greenblatt tries to articulate the various ways in which the meaning of the literary text is constituted, also the basis of such meaning. According to Greenblatt, the relationship between art and society is characterised by the process 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 in a particular time. Stephen Greenblatt coined the term New Historicism in his book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (1980) and describes:

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. (22)

Since, the role of social, political and cultural forces remain always active in the process of creating the works of literature and it also shapes the ideas of a civilisation, 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. This being the case, a Renaissance man is rooted in his Renaissance idiosyncrasies just as a modern man is rooted in his. “Caught in his own historicity, a historian cannot escape the social or ideological constraints of his own formation. And, therefore, he cannot fully understand the past objectively on its own terms” (Greenblatt 23). A modern 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 infer the original meaning of a text but examines the text in the light of power relations, ideology, and discourses that were in practice during the production of such text. As Louis Montrose writes:

. . . 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 and a revolt against political establishment takes place. Moreover, Leela Gandhi in *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (1998) describes that “Colonialism does not end with the end of colonial occupation. However, the psychological resistance to colonialism begins with the onset of colonialism” (17). That is why, all other records, writings and forms of expression need to be reinterpreted in relation to the discourses of any particular period of history. 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 and documentaries. New historicist approach makes it possible to study an event of history in both textual and cinematic representations.

New historicists are able to demonstrate how a text could be dismantled and the hidden hegemonic discourses lying buried within it is 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. Louis Montrose describes in his famous phrase ‘the textuality of history, the historicity of texts’ that “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” (qtd. In Habib 150). Since the role of social, political and cultural forces remain always active in the process of creating the works of literature and it also shapes the ideas of a civilisation. The human mind can never be completely free from its surrounding socio-cultural circumstances. It becomes necessary for the practitioners of New Historicism to examine the relationship between text and context and between art and society. In the same way, Jasbir Jain remarks: “The real struggle between the colonialism and postcolonial discourses is based on the power knowledge in the Foucauldian sense” (33).

Foucault’s concept of discourse and discursive practices established a link between New Historicism and the process of examining the working of the colonial mechanism because Foucault described that the concept of knowledge is not an innocent phenomenon but both the power and knowledge are connected with each other.

1.4 Colonialism and Discourse:

So looking back at the concept of colonialism, it was a process used by the European powers to exploit the native people of the non-European countries including Asia, Africa, and America. The real practice of colonialism was of two types: the colonies to be settled and colonies of occupation. First means the countries where the colonial powers settled as in the case of America and Australia. The occupational colonies were like India and Africa. Ania Loomba in her work, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (1998) describes that “Colonialism can be described as the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods” (8). Because of the colonial interests, the slaves have to work for the plantation to produce sugar for consumption in Europe. Similarly, cotton was moved to England and then the final products were sold back to India. In addition to the economic exploitation the native culture, language, history, and social customs were also distorted by the colonial masters. Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978) describes that the colonial powers destroyed the native culture and language in order to redefine the native history and culture: “The West is the actor, the Orient a passive reactor. The West is the spectator, the judge, and jury, of every facet of Oriental behaviour” (109). Said unfolds how a systematic and structured set of concepts, assumptions, and discursive practices were produced to construct and reinterpret the knowledge about the non-European people. The western view of the orient also describes the

social circumstances of India. Colonialism described the natives as passive, barbaric, uncivilised and the negative other.

The revolutionary resistance in the form of written work against colonialism appears when Frantz Fanon wrote *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) and *Black Skin White Masks* (1967). Fanon describes how the knowledge of white man's language measures the whiteness of the Negro. He states that "to speak means...above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (Fanon 1952, 17-18). Fanon clarifies how the learning of a new language leads to embracing its very culture and ideology. He describes in *Black Skin White Masks* that "when it comes to a Negro . . . He has no culture, no civilisation, no long historical past" (Fanon 1952, 21). Fanon describes how the European has a fixed concept of the Negro. He explains how black woman desires for a white man with blue eyes and blonde hairs and the coloured man wants a white woman. Colonialism has deeply implanted the seeds of inferiority in the psyche of the colonised subjects. That's why those specific coloured men and women unconsciously wear the white masks on their own divided selves between what they are and what they want to be.

While explaining the politics of colonial powers, Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* explains how the peasants for most of the time initiate and make successful any revolution, rebellion or mutiny against an organised power of the state or any colonial power. "Colonialism is not a machine capable of thinking, a body endowed with reason. It is naked violence and only gives in when confronted with greater violence" (Fanon 1961, 23). Fanon pushes for the violent struggle against the powerful colonial machinery. Chinua Achebe in his work *Things Fall Apart* (1958) describes the arrival of modern Christian missionaries in Nigeria. The traditions and customs of old Ibo community were in confrontation with the British perceptions of the native culture. He challenged the stereotypical representation of his people by colonial powers. Chinua Achebe highlights the pre-colonial Nigeria, its Ibo community and then the arrival of Christianity.

This phenomenon of juxtaposed assimilation between the coloniser and the colonised culture has also been explored by Homi Bhabha in his works *Nation and Narration* (1990) and *Location of Culture* (1994). Bhabha's notion of hybridity is a positive one because it shows that even the coloniser can be influenced by the colonised. That's why Bhabha defines hybrid culture in a positive sense for the postcolonial subject. The position of a postcolonial subject becomes multifaceted

and multicultural. Bhabha tries to represent the postcolonial subject in the sense of using the colonial legacy to face the challenge of the postcolonial discourse, as the mechanism of colonialism still circulates and has ideologies and discourses working in the postcolonial context even after the end of so-called empire.

The Revolt of 1857 was such an event of enormous importance which prepared the base for the Indian freedom struggle. The revolt of 1857 has been one of such biggest challenges 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. The revolt has also been represented in both filmic and historic fields. The films like *Mangal Pandey* (2005), *Junoon* (1978) and *Shatranj Ke Khilari* (1977) all are based on the revolt of 1857. 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. New historicism aimed at bringing together all the socio-cultural and political traces of the specific era to reinterpret the historic event on the basis of those traces. Any nation having its colonial history has the prerogative to interpret its colonial past in accordance with the postcolonial discourse.

In the same way, Jasbir Jain in *Beyond Postcolonialism* (2006) describes that “the history of postcolonialism effectively begins in India in 1857 with the First War of Independence, which lead to even more brutal forms of colonisation and widespread rift between the rulers and the ruled” (24). 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. Then the films made by the British depict the contemporary socio-cultural and political circumstances in India during the colonial era. The films like *Gunga Din* (1939), *The Deceivers* (1988), and *Heat and Dust* (1982) are set in the colonial era in the history of India and served as a colonial narrative to facilitate the discourse of colonialism.

The second chapter explores the films like *Gunga Din* (1939), *The Deceivers* (1988), and *North West Frontier* (1959) to highlight the forms of violence whether the cultural, communal and ritual in the context of colonial era. The analysis of such films helps to study the socio-cultural narrative of cinematic depictions in the colonial era. The films have been selected on the basis of the thematic concerns which they showcase in accordance with the chronological sequence of British Empire in colonial India. In the second chapter, such films depict how the British first came to

India, they gained knowledge about every aspect of native life, its history and culture. They began to focus on the socio-cultural and religious pattern of India to exploit the possibility of differences based on religion and caste. The empire films represent the communal strife between the Hindu and Muslims in Colonial India. These films help to explore how the native beliefs became a taboo with the arrival of colonial ideology. The native tradition, culture, language and religion were redefined, reconstructed and propagated to legitimise the British presence in India. The social evils like *sati*, the cult of *thuggi* were highlighted and emphasised through the medium of colonial films for highlighting native inferiority, savageness, passive nativity in the psyche of the colonised people. Films like *The Man Who Would Be the King* (1975) show the colonial quest of coloniser and shows how the two white ex-soldiers went to Kafiristan to be the king of the newly discovered nation. The film exhibits how the white man was described as the next best thing to God on earth.

The British spend more time in India and acquire more knowledge about the native people, its social, cultural and geographical features. They need to engage with the natives for their assistance in maintaining the administration. They interact more and more with the Indians and the relations between the two begin to develop. The third chapter explores the films such as *Heat and Dust* (1983), *A Passage to India* (1985), *Before the Rains* (2003), and *Bhowani Junction* (1956) to describe the individual Indian-British Interactions, human relations and racial issues.

The fourth chapter studies the violent aspect of the Indian resistance to the British Empire. This chapter will study films such as *Bose: The Forgotten Hero* (2004), *The Rising: A Ballad of Mangal Pandey* (2005), *The Legend of Bhagat Singh* (2002), *23 March 1931: Shaheed* (2002) and *Rang De Basanti* (2006) to explore the colonial politics, the cruelty of the colonial justice system and the violent resistance to the British Empire. The selected films will also be analysed to study the role of the violent approach of the revolutionaries like Mangal Pandey, Subhash Chandra Bose, Shaheed Bhagat Singh and its inspiration in the postcolonial times for the target audience.

The fifth chapter is focused on films like *Gandhi* (1982), and *Jinnah* (1998) and recently released *The Viceroy's House* (2017). This chapter studies the selected Indian and English films based on colonial mechanism to explore how the films influenced the socio-political consciousness of the Indian people during the National Movement in Gandhi's era. This chapter will study the political response to

the British Empire in relation to the concept of non-violence during the Indian National Movement. This chapter explores the various aspects of interpreting the Indian resistance to the British Empire, the role of Gandhi, Jinnah as well as the Viceroy of India, Lord Mountbatten in the complexity of situations near the end of colonial rule in India and the challenges of the postcolonial circumstances for a newly free nation like India.

Robert A. Rosenstone in *History on Film/Film on History* (2006) under the chapter entitled as “Engaging the Discourse” describes that “it is difficult to evaluate a historical film unless you understand the larger discourse out of which it arises” (151). The films of the empire Cinema can be studied in the context of the larger framework of colonial politics of the contemporary times of colonial era. The films can also be explored to know about the representation of Indo-British human relations, the conflicts of gender, class, and communal diversities, the social evils, the racial issues, and the colonial agenda with which such films were made. These films can also be analysed to explore how colonial cinema holds back the anti-colonial facets of the society they were trying to capture and exposes the pro-colonial ones. The 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, documentaries etc. New historicist approach makes it possible to study an event of history in both textual and cinematic representations. Similarly, the concept of empire cinema can be better understood while examining the much wider concept of empire politics in the era of colonialism.

On the other hand, the prefix, ‘post’ in the term Postcolonialism describes its very focus on studying the history after colonialism. The colonial past of a nation as represented in cinema can possibly be analysed from a new historicist perspective on the basis of postcolonial interpretations of the colonial period. New historicism aims at bringing together all the socio-cultural and political traces of the specific era to reinterpret the historic event on the basis of those traces. The selected films will be studied in the context of different fictional and non-fictional sources such as Colonial writings, the govt. records (the report of *Indian Cinematograph Committee* 1927), the documentaries, and Colonial-Historic texts (India and Western) etc.

Methodology:

The present study uses New Historicist perspective to explore the legacy of empire in selected films of Indian and Western cinema under the genre of Empire Cinema, in the context of colonial and postcolonial agenda. In addition to this, the work also includes some specific film theories depicting the particular use of certain cinematic techniques to demonstrate the difference between the colonial and the colonized as well as to serve the imperial agenda. To examine the role of films in depicting history and colonial agenda, the present study gets its insight from works like Robert A. Rosenstone's *History on Film/ Film on History* (2012), Sandra Ponzanesi and Marguerite Waller's *Postcolonial Cinema Studies* (2012). In spite of this, the study also focuses on a particular use of cinematic techniques such as the use of camera, light, framing of a shot to produce the desired meaning in a visual form such as some works like *An Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and in Narrative Film* (2012) by Michael Ryan and Melissa Lenos. Furthermore, the other works like Blain Brown's *Cinematography: Theory and Practice, Image Making for Cinematographers and Directors* (2012) also helps to understand the vocabulary of film's narrative structure. As for as the interpretation of films in relation to the empire politics in colonial and postcolonial era is concerned, the works like that of Prem Chowdhry's *Colonial India and the Making of Empire Cinema: image, ideology and Identity* and Prem Chowdhry's *Colonial India and the Making of Empire Cinema: image, ideology and identity* (2011) help to investigate the form of typical use of cinema in propagating the empire politics. In this way, the present study includes as well as considers the New Historicist theoretical perspectives and how its introduction to study some particular films highlights a novel way of studying cinema in present times. Then, the study moves on the analysis of films from specific film techniques and further it includes how such techniques and devices of symbolising a particular meaning have been used under the concept of Empire Cinema. In the end, the work focuses on highlighting the selected films of Indian and Western cinema to reinterpret the legacy of empire in colonial and postcolonial perspectives. Thus the present work aims to investigate or reinterpret the selected films using New Historicist theory in assimilation with the ideas of some specific film techniques responsible for inferring meaning while interpreting the empire films based on the colonial agenda in the postcolonial times.

Review of literature:

The idea of colonialism and postcolonialism has been widely expressed from both of the perspectives whether the coloniser or the colonised. The works based on these thematic concerns of colonialism reflect the binary differences of race and colour, power and knowledge, inferior and superior complex. The literary works written by native thinkers, express the highly compressed views of exploitation by the European colonial powers. They resisted against the distorted, misrecognition, stereotyped image of the colonised human beings and the construction and representation of native history, religion, culture and language by the colonial powers. Similarly, the films made in the colonial and postcolonial era serve as an important source to look into the history of the colonial period. The English films made on the life of colonial India, its social and cultural aspects and also on evils customs like *Sati Pratha*, the *Thuggi Cult* and the communal disharmony represent the picture of India in colonial period. In this way, as the British writers contributed for justifying the discourse of colonialism as Rudyard Kipling did in case of India, similarly the colonial films also helped for the same cause.

Andrew Dix in his book *Beginning Film Studies* (2008) describes the various types of filmic techniques and aspects of film studies such as *mise-en-scene*. This includes the overall depiction of what we watch on the screen during a scene in a film which means the setting, props, costumes, lighting and acting. Each one of the factor plays its role during an analysis of the film. The shot of a scene can be taken from various distances such as extreme long shot, medium shot, long shot, close up, medium close up, extreme close up.

In the same way, James Monaco in his book *How to Read A Film* (2009) explains the different types of camera movements like as the pans and tilts, the rolls and the tracks or crane shots. In each category camera moves differently as in the case of tilt up-down and pan left-right in relation to the character in focus which helps to understand how film is like language but there is no difference between the sign and signified in case of a film. Besides this, the specific use of camera from different angles also produces a variety of shots such as high angle shot, low angle shot and neutral shot. This is how the study of filmic techniques helps to analyse the selected films with different perspectives in the present era.

The New Historicism edited by Harold Veesser contains some of the brilliant essays on the concept of New Historicism by different scholars in this field, such as Stephen Greenblatt, Catharine Gallagher, Louis Montrose, and Thomas Brook. Stephen Greenblatt in his essay *Shakespearean Negotiations*' tries to articulate the various ways in which the meaning of the literary text is constituted, also the basis of such meaning. According to Greenblatt, the relationship between art and society is characterized by the processes of negotiation and exchange. He describes how the creative pieces of the work of art are the product of negotiation between a creator and the socio-cultural practices of the time. Thomas Brook in *New Historicism and other Old fashioned topics* also describes the major difference between what we used to call old historicism and the current focus on new historical study. He maintains the position that this concept of present New Historicism includes the ideas, situations, discourses, and ways which were neglected by the previous historical analysis.

The New Historicist practitioners like Catharine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt in their book *Practising New Historicism* (2000) describe the interrelations between history and the other forms of art. This work helps to understand the main issues of the concept of New Historicism which include its preference for Foucault, discourse over class struggle and the two way process of art performance and its impact and the circulation of social energy. The book also highlights the emphasis on non-literary documents, the treatises and contemporary records of a particular given periods in the history of a nation and their reinterpretation in relation to the power structure at that specific time.

Bertolt Brecht discusses the film *Gunga Din* in his essay "Is it worth speaking about the amateur theater?" (1964) and reflects that "Despite the fact that I knew all the time that there was something wrong, that the Indians are not primitive and uncultured people but have a magnificent age-old culture" (Brecht 149). So the film must be analysed from the Indian perspective as it works for colonial regime. Brecht explains how the film being a distorted account was both: an artistic success for the colonial cinema and a traitor to its own people.

In the same way, Frederic Cople, Jaher and Blair, B. Kling in their article "Hollywood's India: The Meaning of RKO's *Gunga Din*" (2008) describe how *Gunga Din* exhibits the American and British unity in opposite to the Nazi Germany. But anti-imperialism remains a sub text and glorifies the British Raj and functions only

as an adventure tale. The film also shows that in 1930's Hollywood started portraying Britain in critical ways as America was on the way to become a superpower and Britain's domination was declining. Similarly in Indian context, the resistance shown by the *thuggs* in the film gives the sense of native quest for freedom.

George Grella in his article "The Colonial Movie and The Man Who would Be King" (1980) describes how the colonial film focused on the people not on the landscape of the native countries. The colonial film reframes the ideology that the English life is good and English people are superior in every way. As a dialogue in the film illustrates as a native character asks: "Are You Gods?" the English Men replies: "No we are not Gods. But the next best thing to God". In this way, the colonial films legitimise the presence of the Englishmen in the foreign countries in order to civilise the natives.

David Henry Slavin in his book *Colonial Cinema and Imperial France, 1919-1939: White Blind Spots, Male Fantasies, Settler Myths* (2001) explains how the colonial films reflect and reinforce the mechanism of cultural hegemony, social control, and the underlying colonial politics. The work focuses on several films set in the North Africa. It also describes how the colonial discourse was legitimated to construct a culture of racial dominance and whiteness through the medium of film. This book helps to analyse the role of colonial films such as *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) based on the French colonial discourse in an African country and describes how the French used the medium of film to facilitate their interests in Algeria.

Boria Majumdar in his article "Politics of Leisure in Colonial India: 'Lagaan': Invocation of a Lost History?" (2001), exhibits that the film *Lagaan* highlights how Indian resistance against the British colonialism ignored the cultural politics of colonialism. The Irish revolutionaries opposed cricket as a colonial sport because they knew about the cultural aspects of colonialism.

Similarly, Nicholas B. Dirks describes in *Colonialism and Culture* that "if colonialism can be seen as a cultural formation, so also culture is a colonial Formation" (Dirks 3). In this way, the British were using the cultural machinery to legitimate their colonial ideology in India from which Indians were to some extent unaware. In the same mode, Alison Murray in his article "Teaching Colonial History through Film" (2002) highlights how using the colonised setting the films portrayed the empire as a world where white men's dream, scientific experiments and

fantasies could be realised. While focusing on French colonial films the writer explores how the films shape and reflect the cultural history of colonialism. He also questions the way in which the knowledge about the colonised people was constructed and used for the purpose of control. The films also help to explore the question of race, gender and power relations in the colonial context.

Francis Jarman in his article “Sati: From Exotic Custom to relativist Controversy” (2002), interprets the custom of Sati from Western point of view and exposes how the custom of *Sati* was a touchstone of native inferiority and an excuse of British interference. It explains about the original novel *The Deceivers* (1952) written by John Masters and the filmic representation of the work to explore the social evils of the colonial India.

In the same way, Janet Maslin in “Review/Film: Going Undercover in 1820’s India” (2002) reveals how the film *The Deceivers* highlights the evil social customs like the *thuggi* cult and *sati*. The film exhibits how an English officer discovers that a group of *thugs* who used to kill, rob and then bury the victims as a ritual act of being the followers of a Hindu Goddess named the *Kali*. In this way, the viewers can analyse such film to explore how blind faith or superstition played a key role in Indian society during the colonial era.

Priya Jaikumar in *Cinema at the End of Empire: A Politics of Transition In Britain and India* (2006) mentions the confusion over the role of cinema in a colony which was in the midway because of its ancient culture and illiterate peasantry on one side and the cinema on the other side. The work also shows the defiance of the British authority towards India’s argumentative reception of British and American films. This book also helps to know the way, the pro-colonialist novels were adapted for films and those which critically acclaimed counter narratives of empire were overlooked by the filmmakers of the colonial era. If the colonial films absorbed the Islamic culture, these also highlight the internal conflict of Hindu-Muslim in Indian society. The book questions the films of both the empire and nationalist cinema in the centre of late colonialism and examines how the films deal with the pressure, anxiety and challenges of decolonisation.

Furthermore, the other works like Blain Brown’s *Cinematography: Theory and Practice, Image Making for Cinematographers and Directors* (2012) also helps to understand the vocabulary of film’s narrative structure. This work by Blain Brown helps to to understand language of cinematography, aspects of lighting, camera

movement, and many other essential factors responsible for creating an influential shot. As for as the interpretation of films in relation to the empire politics in colonial and postcolonial era is concerned, the works like that of Prem Chowdhry's *Colonial India and the Making of Empire Cinema: image, ideology and Identity* and Prem Chowdhry's *Colonial India and the Making of Empire Cinema: image, ideology and identity* (2011) help to investigate the form of typical use of cinema in propagating the empire politics

Prem Chowdhry describes that in India few recent works have tried to look at the films as an important source of history. This book helps to construct the belief that the colonial films are both part and parcel of their historical contexts. By focusing on the empire films this work tries to get at the centre of the working of colonial strategy in colonial history of a nation. The films made in that era of British colonialism reflect the British perception of Indian culture, its society and the stereotyping of native man and its history to justify the colonial rule in India. The aim was to shatter the native dream of one India by emphasising its diversities and disparities. The colonial powers were in hurry to highlight the drawbacks of Indian culture and society, its socio-communal disparity which can be controlled only by the British presence in India.

Leela Gandhi in *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (1998) explains the concept of Postcolonialism in its relation to colonialism and the book also helps to know how the emergence of anti-colonial and independent nation states after colonialism carries a desire to forget the colonial past. Further the writer says how postcolonialism can be seen as a theoretical resistance to mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath. Thus the colonial aftermath includes the dual responses of both the historical scene of the colonial encounter and its dispersal.

Sandra Ponzanesi and Marguerite Waller in *Postcolonial Cinema Studies* (2012) explain the mechanism of adaptations in Postcolonial context and describes the four major types of film adaptations: first, the films which are fairly faithful to the source as such do not undermine its colonial and conservative message. The films like *A Passage to India* (1984) and *Out of Africa* (1985) are the best examples of this category of adaptations. Then, the film adaptations of classics, with a view of correcting and complimenting them, seeing through postcolonial lens offering new understanding and highlighting the power relations. The films like *Mansfield Park* (1999) and *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) can be included in this type of adaptations.

Thirdly, adaptation of postcolonial texts whether the critical edge of the postcolonial novel remains or lost. The film *English Patient* (1992) describes this category in the same sense of adaptation. The fourth category describes the films adapted fully on postcolonial novels for exilic and Diasporic viewers as transnational films. The films like, *Earth* (1998), *Cracking India* (1992) and *Women without Men* (2009) stands for this transnational and multicultural scope of adaptations. The specific use of some techniques was visible in such as during the colonial era, the English characters use the technique of black face to look like the natives. As children in blackface played the role of Indians and Africans to represent the colonial subjects.

Robert, A. Rosenstone in *History on Film/Film on History* (2014) 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 films based on history are always the subject to debate. Film's timing of release, the targeted audience, and its theme all these factors have their influence.

The document based on the report prepared by the Colonial Government of India entitled as the *Indian Cinematograph Committee* (1927) is one of the most authentic source related to the analysis of the making of Empire films, their marketing and its reception in colonial India. This explains how the quota system was introduced to secure the colonial markets for the British films to challenge the powerful grip of American films. The large part of revenue was gained by the American films because of the issue of their reception in the colonised subjects instead of British films.

Richard Burt in *The Administration of Aesthetics: Censorship, Political criticism and Public Sphere* (1994) describes the usability of film censorship according to certain pre-defined interests. He suggests how one could discriminate between victims of censorship in terms of their relation to the Centrality or being at the margins in comparison to the central cultural and political power. He says, "Censorship not only legitimates discourses by allowing them to circulate, but is itself a part of a performance, a simulation on in which censorship can function as a trope to be put on show" (Burt 18). The book helps us to know about the various types and forms of censorship and their impact on the different aspects of film production and their target audience.

Jon Cowans in his book *Empire Films and the Crisis of Colonialism, 1946 – 1959*, explains how the concept of colonialism and Decolonisation have been represented in the films. The work also helps to know about the influence of films on the audiences in England, France and America. Cowans describes how the public opinion in western countries changes after the World War. The book also throws light on how the positive representation of colonialism has been made in the films at the time of decolonisation.

James Burns in *Cinema and Society in the British Empire, 1895-1940* describes the history of empire films and their impact on the lives of the colonised subjects. The book also raises the questions about the viewership of the empire films, their reception at home and in the colonies, and after all how the medium of cinema became integrated into their social and cultural lives. Burns describes about the business of the filmmaking, the socio-cultural composition of the audience, as well as the attempts to regulate the screen images. Further, the work explores the journey of cinema from an era of silent movies to the talkies and the rapid development towards being a medium of mass appeal for the colonial governments to communicate with the colonised masses.

Since the last chapter deals with the concepts of Non-violence, violence and Nationalism, that is why, the critical history of these such concept has becomes one of the most important factors in exploring their role in the late colonial India. In the same way, Gene Sharp in her chapter “Non Cooperation and Political Ju-jitsu” included in the book named *Non-Violence: Challenges and Prospects* describes the types of nonviolent resistance based on just symbolic attempt of peaceful opposition. Moreover, the nonviolent opposition to any political power includes the condemnation on the basis of social and moral basis to arouse the public opinion against the unlawful activities of such dominant powers.

The other perspective on the concept of nonviolence resistance has been formed by analysing the critical issues as highlighted in Todd May’s book *Nonviolent Resistance: A Philosophical Introduction* (2015) which helps to analyse the various vignettes of Nonviolence right from the peaceful liberation of Estonia from the Russian rule towards the Non-violent leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in Indian freedom movement. The complexity of the situation at the end of the colonial period and Gandhi’s role in the Nationalism has been brought forward by Simone Panter-Brick in *Gandhi and Nationalism: The Path to Indian Independence* (2012), it

suggests how for Gandhi, the concept of nationalism was far wider, than the idea of getting freedom from the British Empire.

Although some research work has been done in the field of colonial and postcolonial literary works. But the specific portrayal of the selected reviews makes the perception that the empire films had played a great role in propagating the colonial agenda in the history of India. The colonial films were aimed to justify the British presence in India and depict various aspects of colonial era. Thus the field of analysing the colonial films has been remained unexplored at large. For example, the film *The Rising: A Ballad of Mangal Pandey* (2005) has been criticized for inadequately representing the history of colonial era but it lacks an esteemed insight into the fact how films representing historical events can be interpreted from a novel theoretical perspectives like that of New Historicism, in relation to the colonial and postcolonial agenda. Similarly, films like *A Passage to India* (1984) has also been studied for being a colonial product but the present work intends to delineate how such films need to be re-examined from the historical perspectives in the context of the politics of Empire Cinema. This research gap in analysing such typical cinematic representations has been the core agenda for using the New Historicist thought to study the select films of the Indian and Western Cinema. The present study aims to investigate as well as to demonstrate how the introduction of New Historicism to the historical films in postcolonial era, provides a new insight into the representation of colonial past through the medium of Empire Cinema and opens the new dimensions of this unexplored field in present era.

Objectives:

To explore cinema as a political device in colonial and postcolonial times.

To delineate how the selected films represent the colonial ideology with the help of New Historicist critical theory.

To investigate the British and Indian perspectives towards Indian society in colonial era through the Empire Cinema.

To study human relations and racial issues in selected films with the help of New Historicist theory.

To demonstrate the discourses of resistance to the British Empire in select films.

Filmography

- A Passage to India*. Dir. David Lean. Perf. Peggy Ashcroft, Judy Davies, Victor Banerjee. Columbia Pictures, 1984. Film.
- Before the Rains*. Dir. Santosh Sivan. Perf. Linus Roache, Nandita Das, Rahul Bose. Merchant Ivory Productions, 2007. Film.
- Bose: The Forgotten Hero*. Dir. Shyam Benegal. Perf. Sachin Khedekar Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Divya Dutta. Sahara India Media Ltd, 2004. Film.
- Gandhi*. Dir. Richard Attenborough. Perf. Candice Bergen, Edward Fox. Columbia Pictures, 1982. Film.
- Gunga Din*. Dir. George Stevens. Perf. Cary Grant, Douglas Fairbanks Jr. RKO Pictures, 1939. Film.
- Heat and Dust*. Dir. James Ivory. Perf. Shashi Kapoor, Julie Christie. Curzon Film Distributors, 1983. Film.
- North West Frontier*. Dir. J. Lee Thompson. Perf. Laureen Bacall, Kenneth More RCH Home Video, 1959. Film.
- Rang de Basanti*. Dir. Om Parkash Mehra. Perf. Amir Khan, Soha Ali Khan, Alice Patten, Sharman Joshi. Utv Motion Pictures, 2006. Film.
- 23 March 1931: Shaheed*. Dir. Guddu Dhawan. Perf. Bobby Deol, Raj Babbar Vijyata Films, 2002. Film.
- Shatranj Ke Khilari*. Dir. Satyajit Ray. Perf. Sanjeev Kumar, Shabana Azmi. Devki Chitra Productions, 1977. Film.
- The Deceivers*. Dir. Nicholas Meyer. Perf. Pierce Brosnan, Saeed Jaffrey. Warner Home Video, 1988. Film.
- The Man Who Would Be King*. Dir. John Huston. Perf. John Huston, Gladys Hill. Warner Home Video, 1975. Film.
- The Rising: A Ballad of Mangal Pandey*. Dir. Ketan Mehta. Perf. Amir Khan, Rani Mukherji. Tfk Films, 2005. Film.
- Viceroy's House*. Dir. Gurinder Chadha. Perf. Hugh Bonneville, Huma Qureshi, Manish Dayal, Om Puri, 20th Century Fox, 2017. Film.
- Jinnah*. Dir. Jamil Dehlavi. Perf. Christopher Lee, James Fox, Maria Aitken, Shashi Kapoor. Dehlavi Film Production, 1998. Film.
- Achhut Kanya*. Dir. Franz Osten. Perf. Kishore Kumar, Devika Rani. Bombay Talkies, 1936. Film.

Alam Ara. Dir. Ardeshir Irani. Perf. Master Vithual. Zubeida. Imperial Movietone, 1931. Film.

All My Babies: A Midwife's Own Stories. Dir. George C. Stony. Perf. Mary Frances. Hill Coley. 1953. Film.

Ayodhyecha Raja. Dir. R. V. Shantaram. Perf. Govindrao Tembe, Durga Khote. Prabhat Film Company, 1932. Film.

Bhakta Vidur. Dir. Kanjibhai Rathod. Perf. Dwarkadas Sampat, Homi Master, Sakina Kohinoor Film Company, 1921. Film.

Jamai Shasthi. Dir. Perf. Amar Choudhry, Miss Golela. Madan Theatre Limited 1931 Film.

Kalidas. Dir. H. M. Reddy. Perf. T.P.Rajalakshmi, P.G. Venkatesan. Imperial Movietone, 1931. Film.

Keechaka Vadham. Dir. R. Nataraja Mudaliar. Perf. Raju Mudaliar. Jeevarathnam India Film Company, 1919. Film.

Kismet. Dir. Gyan Mukherjee. Perf. Kavi Pardeep, Gyan Mukherjee. Bombay Talkies, 1943. Film.

Nal Damyanti. Dir. J. F. Madan. Perf. Mazhar Khan, Indubala. East India Film Co 1917. Film.

Pundalik. Dir. Dadasaheb Torne, N.G. Chitre and P.R. Tipnis. Coronation Cinematograph, 1912. Film.

Raja Harishchandra. Dir. Dadasaheb Phalke. Perf. Anna Salunke, D.D. Dabke. Phalke Films, 1913. Film.

The Light of Asia. Dir. Himanshu Rai and Fanz Osten. Perf. Seeta Devi, Himanshu Rai. Great Eastern Film Corporation, 1925. Film.

The Wrestlers. Dir. H.S.Bhatavdekar. 1896. Film.

Vande Mataram Ashram. Dir. Dwarka Das Sampat. Kohinoor Film Company, 1926. Film.

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CHAPTER II

Representing the Politics of Empire Cinema

The films of the Empire Cinema depict India as an exotic land with its uncivilised people. The colonial films seem to aim at propagating the western ideology of imperialism. That is how, the films of the Empire Cinema try to explore the drawbacks of Indian society, its communal variety, and above all the age-old cultural as well as social evils like *Sati*¹ and the *Thugi* cult. In this way, the films of the early Empire Cinema, in case of India, aim to expose and highlight a dark picture of Indian society as uncivilised, barbaric, and full of taboos like sati. In this sense, the films based on the colonial history of India like *Gunga Din* (1939), *The Deceivers* (1988), and *North West Frontier Province* (1959) raised the issues of mass killings by the native thugs, the inhuman taboo of sati the existence of communal violence as an inherent phenomena in the colonial India. The films of the Empire Cinema work as a medium to justify the mechanism of colonial violence by highlighting or in some way, exaggerating the inherent violence in the form of social, cultural evils like thugi and sati.

The concept of violence has been an important phenomenon in case of the colonial films. The notion of violence can manifest itself in many forms such as psychological violence, physical violence, cultural violence, communal violence, racial violence, political violence, and ideological violence in general description. While explaining the politics of colonial powers, Frantz Fanon explains why peasants for most of the time initiate and make successful any revolution, rebellion or mutiny against an organised power of the state or any colonial power. That's why again Fanon clarifies his idea of violence from the perspective of the colonised and remarks: "The starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays [...] It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence" (Fanon 61). Fanon was clearly in favour of violent struggle to defeat the colonisers. The practice of colonial violence was evident in colonial administration in India and both the coloniser and the colonised used violent ways against each other.

¹ Sati is a social practice in which a woman has to immolate herself by entering into the pyre after the death of her husband.

The films of the Empire Cinema depict various types of violence exerted by the colonial powers such as racial violence and cultural violence to establish and maintain the imperial rule in India. The thugs of colonial India had also been a brutal, violent native challenge to the imperial rule. This thuggi cult during the colonial era of Indian history has been variously highlighted in literary and cinematic representations. In the same way, Mukul Kumar in his article explains “In pre-British era they had the protection of local authorities. A portion of the booty they collected had to be shared with local chieftains. In return they had their protection” (1086). This kind of collusion between the thugs, the native rulers and even the British officers have been represented in films like *The Deceivers* (1988) and *Gunga Din* (1939).

Such films also highlight how the British manipulated the socio-cultural and religious pattern of India to exploit the possibility of differences based on religion and caste. The empire films represent the communal strife between the Hindu and Muslims in Colonial India. The various forms of violence whether the cultural, communal and ritual have been described in films like *Gunga Din* (1939), *The Deceivers* (1988), and *North West Frontier* (1959). The analysis of such type of films helps to identify the socio-cultural narrative of cinematic representations in the colonial era.

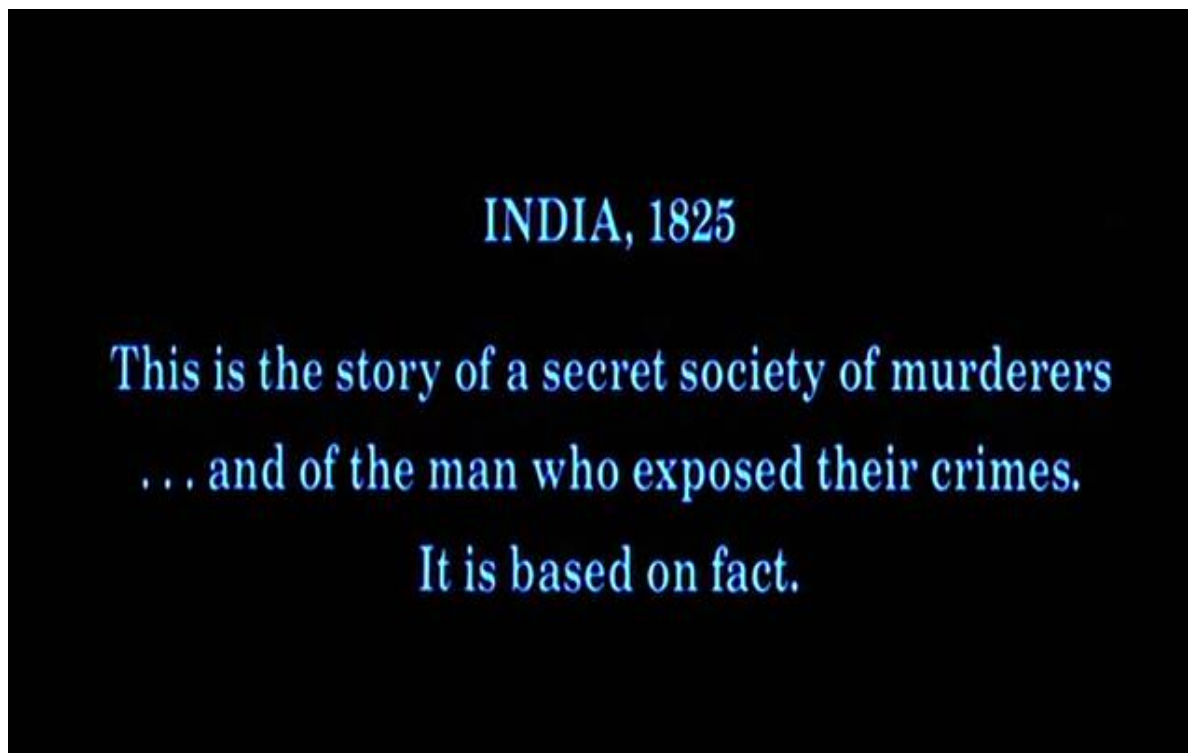


Figure 2.1: An opening shot from the film *The Deceivers* (1988)

The film *The Deceivers* (1988) directed by Nicholas Meyer describes the India of 1820s. It is based on John Masters' novel of the same name published in 1952. The film begins with a fade in of the screen with a black background, which shows a message in the written form, in white colour without any sound effect in a complete silence. Ryan and Lenos explained the technique of art direction in filmmaking. They describe that, "shining is linked to civility [...] it is juxtaposed to uncontrolled rage and the animal ability to do violence to others" (100). The film explains the dark side of Indian society in colonial era featuring the evil customs like thugi and sati, prevalent in those days. So the film maker keeps the screen black, shows a written message about the secrecy of thugs and their crimes to give a hint to the audience about the seriousness of the subject, the film wants to deal with in its narrative structure.

Then, the screen colour changes with the sound of birds chirping in the morning and captures the view of a river in a medium long shot. The camera pans toward left and captures the English soldier passing through a passage in a broad daylight. The next scene describes how the English soldiers are killed at night mysteriously. In this way film remains quite successful in giving its message to the audience about its thematic concerns in these two opening scenes.



Figure 2.2: A still from the film *The Deceivers* (1988)

The analysis of these two scenes, and the continuity of these two scenes on the screen, explain how the film alerts about the dangerous cult of the thugs in the

colonial period as in case of the beginning shot and the second shot in coloured visuals. Ryan and Lenos describe “Early montage sequences [...] exploited the possibilities of selecting and combining shots for a range of effects, from suspense to indictment” (91). The visual combination in these two shots evokes the scene to scene differences or the shift from a secret silence to the violent one. Moreover the film’s shift from the black, silent screen to a visual with sound explains the change in the upcoming narrative structure of the film.

The film clarifies its narrative structure of portraying the thugs, the killings of the native as well as the colonial officers and then the investigation by the colonial officers. This is how, the films of the Empire Cinema use the techniques of film making in a specific way to represent the colonial society in accordance with the propaganda of justifying the colonial presence.

The film, in the beginning depicts the horrible scene at night where the British soldiers are being killed in the jungle. The films of the Empire Cinema also exploit the socio-cultural set up of India at a specific point of time. Robert A. Rosenstone explains about the actual meaning of a historical film that “We must situate it within the larger discourse of history” (59). Rosenstone also opines that the films based on history try to destroy the distance between the viewer and the past so that he can judge and feel an essence of the past. Similarly, the films of the Empire Cinema help the audience to dive deep into history of a specific point of time to know the other various facts related to the concerned subject and their impact in shaping such an event of the history which the film represents on the screen.

The film *The Deceivers* (1988) depicts how a British soldier named William Savage at first discovers the mass killings by the *thugs* and then he tries to uproot this *thuggi* cult from Indian society. Kevin Rushby in *Children of Kali* estimates the number of *thugs* in India “for all the years before anyone know anything about it until its final demise in the 1840s equals at a conservative estimate, one million murders. And most of these achieved with nothing more than a pocket handkerchief” (Rushby 8). The British soldier investigates the whole crime in a brave manner and joins the thugs in the company of Hussein for the purpose. The film shows a scene at night where William, disguised as Gopal and Hussein were in conversation related to the profession of thugs and their devotion to *Kali*.

William: Why does the *Kali* tell you to kill the innocent men. Surely, she is not evil and wicked Goddess?

Hussein: No Gopal! *Kali* is not evil. *Kaali* is beautiful, more beautiful than any woman. To serve her is to know ecstasy. You will see Gopal. You will see. (*The Deceivers*, 1988)

This scene in the film highlights the religious aspect of mass killings by the thugs and shows a profound connection between the killers and their belief in the Goddess, *Kali*. Moreover, it seems to depict a psychological as well as spiritual solace for the thugs after killing the innocent people which seems exactly the same as Sleeman describes:

There is not among others who doubts the divine origin of the system of thuggee not one who doubt that he and all were acting under the immediate orders and auspices of the Goddess Devee, Durga, Kalee or Bhawanee, as she is indifferently called. (7-8)

The films as well as the historical works related to the period highlight the secret association between the thugs and show how the thugs were bound together in a particular system of superstitions. Their victims were the travellers with whom the thugs try to develop friendly relations in the midway disguising themselves as travellers. The thugs used to kill at night and put the corpses in the graves. As Mike Dash in *Thug* (2005) describes that “the killers forced the bodies into make shift graves, twisting limbs and crushing them together until they were tightly packed” (Dash 6). At night, every traveller is surrounded by two or three thugs and then they strangle each one of the travellers to death by using a piece of cloth.

In the same way, the film shows a close up of *Kali* and a guru chanting in for her grace. Then the other thug remarks: “Great Goddess, universal mother, patron of darkness. Because though loves the burning ground, I have made my heart the burning ground. So that though the dark one, hunter of the burning ground may dance the eternal” (*The Deceivers* 1988). The thugs worship Goddess *Kali* so when they kill someone was considered a sacred service to the Goddess. The film also shows how the thugs use the code words to greet each other when they coincidentally meet on the way to deceive the other fellow travellers. The next scene shows an owl crying in the night; the thug describes the crying of an Owl as a good omen. The cry of an owl and the darkness at night has been used symbolically to highlight the danger lurking on the lives of travellers.

After this, the film depicts the native violence in the form of thugs, but it somehow indirectly depicts the phenomenon of colonial violence. The film shows an

act of tiger hunting where the British officers like Mr. Wilson and Colonel Savage kill a tiger in the forest. In the same way, Joseph Sramek in his article entitled as “Face Him Like a Briton” Tiger Hunting, Imperialism, and British Masculinity in Colonial India, 1800-1875 describes:

More generally, tiger hunting was an important symbol in the construction of British imperial and masculine identities during the nineteenth century. Precisely because tigers were dangerous and powerful beasts, tiger hunting representing a struggle with fearsome nature that needed to be resolutely faced like a Briton. (167)

The present analysis of the film helps to include other types of discursive practices in the context of the colonial era as well as the inclusion of Indian films which represent the same scenes. The Indian films such as a silent film *A Throw of Dice* (1929), and *Karma* (1933) also include the hunting scenes in the beginning as in case of Indian films of the period. The hunting scene in the film also exhibits how the films of that specific period commonly include the scenes where the native royals or the colonial masters occasionally enjoy hunting in the native forests.

After this, the next scene metaphorically shows a piece of red cloth used to strangle someone and it is followed by the statues of Indian Goddesses and Gods like *Kali Mata*, the *Ganesha*, *Shivji*, *Durga* with several heads with the tongue protruding, the figure of *Nataraj*, and some other pictures of Hindu goddess. The metaphoric use of these various figures in the frame relates to what Michael Ryan and Melisa Lenos in their book *An Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and Meaning in Narrative Film* described that “the metaphor makes a stronger argument than either visual element alone would have made in a single frame on its own” (Ryan and Melissa134). While analysing this representation of murder and Hindu God and Goddesses, it becomes clear how the empire films explore the connection between the killing of innocents and the native rituals in a symbolic way.

In a similar approach to examine this amalgam of religion and violence in colonial India, Christopher Pinney describes “Indians were able to do things under the guise of religion that they were not able to do in the name of politics” (30). The film highlights the colonial agenda of describing the native religion and its rituals as more violent and rebellious in nature. In *Juno* (1978) we also see how the religious factors contribute for exciting the mobs against the British rule. Similarly, the role of a *fakir* in the film fulfils the job as a chorus to the whole structure of the

film. Therefore, the filmic historic representations are carving the same religious factors in the rebellious nature of the common person against the company rule. David Arnold in his article, "Decoity and Rural Crime in Madras 1860-1940" tries to highlight that "Decoits might be outlawed or improvised members of locally dominant castes; but particularly during the period of high prices and famine, poor peasants and landless labourers joined in or formed their own gangs" (141). Moreover, the British role to curb these social evils from Indian society has also been the major thematic concern in these films. That is why the films *The Deceivers* and *Gunga Din* also seem to show that the colonial powers use the cinematic medium to propagate the native attempt to spread an anti-colonial and rebellious message through the ritualistic and religious ways instead of a direct political challenge to the colonial powers.

John Masters in his novel *The Deceivers* 1952 describes that a *thug* was "a member of a religious association devoted to highway murder and robbery; *Thuggee*, the association and its acts" (286). While in Indian context the thugs were the devoted followers of *Kali*, the goddess. In Indian history this thuggish cult has been in the practice of secretly looting and murdering the travellers. The act of ritual violence has been portrayed in both colonial literature and films. As R. Champalakshmi in *Religion, Tradition, and Ideology: Pre-colonial South India* describes that "to govern the colonised country, one of the major needs of the British was to understand India's culture with its long historical past" (463). The colonial filmmakers also explore the themes related to some of the often-ignored facets of Indian history to know about the mythological, religious, cultural and traditional background of the natives. The film focuses on the evil doings of the *thugs* and on the other hand, depicts the colonial ideology of describing the colonial presence as an inevitable necessity to civilise the native.

The other film *Gunga Din* is based on the poem *Gunga Din* (1892) written by Rudyard Kipling which represents the events of 1830s India. The film was directed by George Stevens and was produced in 1939 by RKO Radio Pictures. The film basically depicts the native water carrier named Gunga Din as a heroic figure who sacrifices his life for the sake of British soldiers. The film also represents the adventures of three empire soldiers and a thugi cult who worship *Kali* and used to loot and kill the travellers and in the end fight with the colonial forces.

Gunga Din also describes the revival of thuggish cult. While focussing on the colonial tactics of Western Imperialism it becomes evident that both the films such as *The Deceivers* and *Gunga Din* serve the colonial agenda. The films in their socio-cultural traces are based on an actual custom prevalent in Indian society to worship the goddess the *Kali*. But the colonial discourse seems to put together the native rituals, their violence, and the savageness of the colonised subjects which need the interference of such colonial powers to civilise the colonised society. The colonial authorities propagate the correctness of their immoral occupation of the other countries to validate the colonial agenda.

Both *Gunga Din* and *The Deceivers* in a way represent the threat from Hinduism to its untouchables and its uncivilised way of dominating the country in contrast to the civilised imperial dominance. Both the films highlight the violent nature of Hinduism and its followers in the colonial era. In the same way, Rene Girard also describes the relation of religion and violence in his work *Violence and Sacred* (1972) when he says, "Religion shelters us from violence just as violence seeks shelter in religion" (24). Girard wants to say that the religion has its own so called mechanism to control human beings, so that human beings can be safe from the hidden force of violence in abstract ways. The politics of empire films was to associate the native barbaric and ritual form of violence with that of native religion. That is why both the films depict the violent killings perpetrated by the thugs in relation to their religious views whether it is the case of Hindus or Muslims.

The metaphoric use of Indian religious figures such as Goddess *Kali* or its other forms has been interpreted to proliferate the idea that these religious sects encourage the killings, looting, and uncivilised behaviour within the followers of such a religious cult in Indian socio-cultural traditions of the time. The culture of the colonised has been described in relation to its social drawbacks of the customs of *sati*, thuggi, and the Hindu asceticism and their barbaric followers with their blind faith. The western culture has been described as more civilised, more sympathetic towards the native subjects in contrast to their own Hindu-Muslim cultural and ritualistic tradition.

In the same mode, Philip Meadow Taylor in *The Confessions of a Thug* (1840) describes the situation on the basis of the experience of Amir Ali, a former *thug*. The writer describes the religious connection of the killings by the *thugs* and says that "Strange too that Hindoo and Moslem, of every sect and denomination,

should join with one accord in the superstition from which this horrible trade has arisen” (Taylor 179). The narrative structure of the film depicts the unity of Hindu-Muslim community with respect to the prevalent crimes of the thugs as an act of killing, looting and ransacking is sanctioned by both of the religions.

The colonial India as represented in the films and some fictional works shows that the transportation was possible only on foot and horseback. This gives an opportunity to the thugs to fulfil their vicious act of killing and looting the innocent travellers. In the same way, the film *Gunga Din* shows in a scene where a group of thugs disguised as travellers request the English soldier to permit them to join them



Figure 2.3: A still from the film *Gunga Din* (1939) depicting the thugs intercepting the British soldiers on their way.

for their security and they are allowed to do so. But in the night, the *thugs* strangle each one of the British soldiers to death. Philip Meadow Taylor in the introduction to *The Confessions of a Thug* describes that “Beyond all, however, the thugs have of late years been discovered to be the most numerous, the most united, and the most secret in their horrible work, and consequently the most dangerous and destructive” (VIII). The roads were not safe and secure because of the small territories owned by the different monarchs.

In the same way, the dialogue between Ali and a leader of the village describes the plans of thugs when the leader of thugs says: In two days' time, the Hunt begins. On the other hand the Muslims also considered the profession of thugs as this was blessed and sanctioned by the divine authority. In this act of killing and looting the Hindus and Muslims were united. The film shows how the thugs became a part of a company of a royal *Nawab* by describing themselves as unprotected. At night, the *thugs* kill the royal *Nawab* and his men and steal everything. The British soldier disguised as Gopal also participates in the killing. The thugs were given the holy *Prashad* of *Kali* by the priest and he remarks: Now you are hers and she is yours. The film depicts another scene at night when the thugs are enjoying in the jungle and at that time an English officer raided upon them. The conversation between the chief of the thugs and the English officer reveals a deeper reality of the current situation. The conversation stands like this:

The thug: We are the jewel carriers, Sir.

English Officer: You are thugs. This is my District.

(After looking all around and searching the luggage of the thugs.)

English Officer: Three of the horses and five hundred moles.

The thug: You are welcome sir. (*The Deceivers* 1988)

This shows the rampant corruption in the company officials. Even, the *thugs* are aware of the corrupt officials and they bribe the Indian as well as the British officials. This was one of the main reasons why this barbarous and murderous cult of thugs still remains unexplored or investigated thoroughly. Moreover, the scene at the market shows how the Raja Chandra Singh who befriends the British officer William was one of the supporters of the thugs. He tries to kill the British soldier while holding a piece of cloth in his hands and remarks: Sahib, I am your friend. Let me do it. This led the company administration to set up an *Office of Thugi Extermination* with Colonel William Savage as its superintendence. As the British officer remarks: No effort is to be spared until this evil cult is finally eradicated.



Figure 2.4: A still from the film *The Deceivers* (1988) depicts the ritual of *sati*

The film seems more effective in serving the imperial propaganda to highlight, condemn, redefine and reconstruct the native socio-cultural undertones. This is why, the film in the next shot captures a scene related to the burning of *sati*. The film also illuminates how the colonial ideology tries to redefine and reconstruct an image of native male as well as the female in case of uncivilised human beings. The symbolic representation of the *sati* seems to undermine the native socio-cultural traditions.

The film also shows the burning fire in the foreground with Gopal's wife behind the fire as ready to be burnt alive as the ritual of *sati* is being performed. This side of the Indian culture has also been explained by Niall Ferguson in *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* about the custom of *sati*. He says that "Above all, there was *sati*. This certainly was no imaginary construct. Between 1813 and 1825 a total of 7941 women died this way in Bengal alone" (Ferguson 101). Even the British authorities at first condoned this as they doubt the natives will take it as an interference in their local religious belief. But later on, like the film, *The Deceivers* (1988) shows the initiative taken by an English soldier William Savage gave a push for the new role of the coloniser as a reformer to end this type of social, cultural and religious evils in Indian society.

While acknowledging the custom of sati then the voice-over narrates in the same words as the thug used to pray before the *Kali* and says: I have made my heart the burning ground. So that though the dark one, hunter of the burning ground may dance the eternal. This narration of the voice over links the *sati* with killings by the thugs as both belongs to the ritualistic practices present at the time and continuous from centuries in Indian society. The film ends as a note appears on the screen with a black background which shows the following on the screen: It took twenty years to wipe out Thuggee. Rather than betray the cult, over 400 Thugs put the hangman's noose around their own necks. Thuggee had claimed almost two million victims.

The film begins as the narrator reads the lines from Rudyard Kipling's *Barrack Room Ballads* published in 1892. As the film glorifies the character of an Indian *Bhishti* (Water carrier) named Gunga Din. This film clearly highlights the empire cinema's politics by representing the clash between the colonial forces and the native clan of *thugs*. As James Chapman and Nicholas J. Cull in their book *Projecting Empire: Imperialism and Popular Cinema* (2009) remark about the structure of the film *Gunga Din* as following:

The plot interweaves three stories. The first is the challenge to the British Empire from a revival of the thug murder cult. The second is the desire of the royal water bearer Gunga Din to become a fully-fledged member of the regiment. The third is the struggle to preserve the team of the three, in the face of Ballantine's decision to leave the army to get married. These three stories overlap playfully. (Chapman and Cull 135)

The film elevates the native person only because he helps the British in their fight with the *thugs*. On the other hand, Gunga Din deceives his own people. He alarms the English troops and they manage to save themselves from the gunshots of the *thugs* who were waiting for the orders from their master. Moreover, in the end when Gunga Din dies, he is shown as a soldier of the empire. His original Indian identity is demolished to glorify his service to the empire. In this way, the political agenda behind the empire cinema comes to the light as the film reincarnates Gunga Din as an English soldier in the end.

Bertolt Brecht discusses the film *Gunga Din* in his essay "Is it worth speaking about the amateur theatre?" (1964) and reflects that "Despite the fact that I knew all the time that there was something wrong, that the Indians are not primitive and

uncultured people but have a magnificent age-old culture” (Brecht 149). So the film must be analysed from the Indian perspective as it works for colonial regime. Brecht explains how the film being a distorted account was both: an artistic success for the colonial cinema and a traitor to its own people. Therefore the films of the Empire Cinema cannot be isolated from the context in which they were produced, as the concept of New Historical analysis demands from a critical point of view.

The other aspect of film *Gunga Din* (1939) is the portrayal of the master of the thugs in resemblance to Gandhi. The character of the chief of the clan of *thugs* is constructed in his appearance on the figure of Gandhi. Prem Chowdhry in *Colonial India and making of the Empire Cinema: Image, Ideology and Identity* describes that “Clearly, in using Mahatma Gandhi’s image for the guru as well as *Gunga Din*, the film wished both to isolate the rebel and to incorporate the loyal” (160). The film fulfils the colonial agenda of isolating as well as punishing the anti-colonial natives by describing them violent and uncivilised. The films seem to favour only those who obey and serve under the colonial demands. Gandhi was a preacher of non-violence while the chief of thugs was preaching violence. In the same mode, Frederic Cople, Jaher and Blair B. Kling in their article “Hollywood’s India: The Meaning of RKO’s *Gunga Din*” described that “Not coincidentally, the Thug Master in the *Gunga Din* resembles the Indian threat to Britain in the person of a man dressed in a white loin cloth, having short stature, and a shaven head: he looks unmistakably – at least to white audience, like Gandhi” (Jaher 39). In the film, the master of the thugs as he has been represented, indirectly symbolised the threat to English Empire. His leadership of the thugs has been compared to that of Mahatma Gandhi’s charismatic leadership in the national movement. Similarly, the master of the thugs equalised his qualities of being a soldier for his own country to that of the British soldiers. He remarks:

You have sworn as soldiers, if need be, to die for your country, your England. Well, India is my country and my faith, and I can die for my faith and my country as readily as for yours. (*Thug guru*) (*Gunga Din* 1939)



Figure 2.5: A still from the film *Gunga Din* (1939) shows the thug guru warning the colonial soldiers.

These words by the chief of *thugs* can clearly be interpreted to portray him as a patriot who believes in the act of violence to save his country if needed. As Jean-Paul Sartre in his introduction to Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (2003) clarifies that "Colonialism creates the patriotism of the colonized. Kept at the level of a beast by an oppressive system, the natives are given no rights, nor even the right to live" (24-25). The film shows how the British soldiers enter the temple and then the British attacked the native thugs.

The empire film politics tries to represent him as a villain. But the thug leader was similarly courageous, brave, and honest towards the duty of his country as do the English soldiers. In the same mode, Jean Paul Sartre in his preface to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, also justifies the violence of the native people against their colonial masters. Sartre describes the colonial tactics to destroy the native culture, language and traditions by substituting it with colonial language and culture. Sartre justifies the violence during the time of revolt by saying that "To shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time: there remain a dead man and a free man" (Sartre 11). So both Fanon and Sartre explain why violence is necessary to defeat

the powerful colonial powers. That's why the chief of thugs preaches about violent resistance against the British soldiers who infiltrate into the temple of Kali and symbolically it was the interference of the British into the social, cultural and religious practices of Indians. But as the film describes in a scene at the temple where the Master of the thugs preaches his followers to kill for the name of *Kali* as he says:

Rise and kill, kill as you be killed yourselves.

Kill for the love of killing. Kill for the love of Kali.

Kill. Kill. Kill. (*Gunga Din*, 1939)

This type of preaching excites the followers of *Kali* to kill and they perceive this act of killing as a sacred deed in the name of *Kali*. On the other hand, the film also shows the racial arrogance of the British. The representation of the natives in the film also comments on the fact of racial inferiority of the natives. Even the colonial officers do not allow *Gunga Din* to think about joining the British regiment in the earlier part of the film, he sacrifices his life to save them in the end. The film also depicts that Indians are less powerful and more savage and violent. The handful of British soldiers defeat the large number of thugs which questions the ability of the colonised to fight and conquer. The defeat of the thugs also symbolically describes the English mission of civilising the East. The film portrays the English officers to rationalise the colonial agenda of civilising the native people whether Asians or Africans as they used to live primitively savaged lives.

While analysing the narrative structure of the film *Gunga Din* (1939) we come to know about the politics of the Empire Cinema. The film's narrative perspective seems to rely mainly on the side of the white colonial masters. Because, through the portrayal of *Gunga Din* it becomes clear that the empire films represent as heroes to only those people who are helpful to proliferate and achieve their colonial agenda. The other important aspect of the film is the glorification of *Gunga Din* in the end, where he has been portrayed as a soldier of the empire with a smiling face. This is similar to filming technique about which Jeffrey Richards talks in *The Unknown 1930s: An Alternative History of British Cinema, 1929-39* (2000), he explains the effects of camera work and remarks: "The facial expressions are lingering, and shown to best advantage by some extremely sympathetic camerawork and lighting" (128). The native *Gunga Din* has been shown in the scene at the end of the film as larger than life figure vice-versa the other native people who challenge the British are depicted as uncivilised, Barbaric and violent. The portrayal

of Gunga Din also represents the colonial tactic of divide and rule. The difference between Gunga Din as a native who favours the colonial masters and the *thugs* who fight with the colonisers for their nation are interpreted respectively as English patriotism and Indian savagery. The name of the film Gunga Din in itself represents what Prem Chowdhry opines, “Gunga the Hindustani name for the river Ganges and Din an Arabic word meaning faith, was a composite one[...] this name symbolically drew Hindus, Muslims and the downtrodden untouchables together in a united loyal fold under the British” (169). The politics of Empire Cinema becomes very clear as it combines all three the Hindus, Muslims and the untouchables in one character and shows Gunga Din obeying colonial forces.

More over the film *Gunga Din* also represents the racial superiority of the colonial soldiers over the Indians. The issue of conflict of race has been highlighted in a scene when Gunga Din tries to imitate the colonial soldiers who are at drill. At this time, a colonial officer Cutter comes and sees Gunga Din. He corrects Gunga Din’s posture and commands him, which helps Gunga Din to fantasise his life as a British soldier. The same act of imitation of the colonial by the colonised has also been described in the film *Massey Sahib* (1985) directed by Pradip Krishen the Indian clerk named Frances Massey imitates the British at church, during his wedding and he also expects his wife to behave like English memsahib. In the same way, Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin White Masks* (1967) describes, “The Negro wants to be like the master” (221). While talking in the Indian colonial context as the film brings forth the difference between the Indian and the British living style and how Massey tries to be one of them or at least to make the British officers to notice that he understands them and their culture as well as their language.

In the same way, the opening scene of the film *Lives of a Bengal Lancers* (1935) also compares the life of Indians with the life of British present in India. The film begins by the opening scene of the map of India. Then in the next scene it shows the native crowd at the Bay of Bengal harbour, people performing the prayers and it was followed by the people in the streets and in the market as in their daily life. Then the camera moves towards the British and this indirectly symbolises the difference between the two cultures and races. In the same way, David Henry Slavin in his book *Colonial Cinema and Imperial France, 1919-1939: White Blind Spots, Male Fantasies, Settler Myths* (2001) describes, “Colonial film reflected and reinforced the machinery of cultural hegemony, non-coercive social control, and the

underlying politics of privilege” (3). The British superiority has been highlighted in contrast to the native inferiority. The camera work indirectly depicts the two communities in a selective way.

The natives are shown in a wider angle so that the maximum people can be shown in a single frame. On the other hand, the British are shown in close ups to show them as the masters, the powerful and the civilised human beings in contrast to the native, uncivilised people. Similarly, the films of the Empire Cinema depict the binary division between the coloniser and the colonised, white and black, superior and inferior, civilised and uncivilised and the master and the slave. The film highlights the colonial politics of describing the native men as physically unfit for being soldiers as in the scene when Gunga Din tries to salute Cutter but he was unable to extend his left arm fully in a proper way.

The present study of selected films enables the viewers to interpret an event of the past, in its relation to the larger discourse of colonial politics to exploit the socio-cultural fabric of India including the plight of the untouchables, the custom of sati and the thugs. In case of *Gunga Din (1939)* which portrays the two main characters: Gunga Din and the chief of the *thugs* in a resemblance to Gandhi, the imperial agenda becomes very clear and well directed. Through the character of Gunga Din, the film symbolically highlights the untouchables and their devotion towards the British rule. On the other hand, the character of the chief of the thugs has been used to exploit the caste hierarchy in India and their danger to the Indian nation as well as to its untouchables.

The politics of the Empire Cinema to exploit the socio-cultural features of India in the colonial times becomes clear in the way the character of Gunga Din develops right from the beginning of the film up to the end. The film shows how Gunga Din helps Cutter to get himself free when the thugs capture him. Then Gunga Din imitates the colonial soldiers at drill and in the end the film completely transforms Gunga Din's character when it shows him dressed as a colonial soldier saluting the British Empire but only after he sacrifices his life for the colonisers. In depth, these empire films especially *Gunga Din*, indirectly targets the untouchables of colonial India by highlighting the fear of Hindu nationalism which has been propagated in the contemporary era in the history of colonial India.



Figure 2.6: A still depicts Gunga Din trying to imitate the colonial soldiers

This typical scene in the film reminds what Judith Butler in the introduction to her book *Bodies That Matter* (1993) explained about the body politic that “the understanding of the performativity not as the act by which a subject brings into being what she/he names, but as the reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates or constrains” (Butler 2). The bodily structure of the native men had been described as defected and inferior in comparison to that of the colonial soldiers. In the same mode, Davinia Thornley in her article “Conceptions of Empire: Three Colonial War Films” describes about this scene that “Instead Cutter pauses; scrutinises Gunga Din and his form and then proceeds to correct his posture...[...] This scene recodes the master slave relationship” (Thornley 109). Thus the film shows the central faith of the western society in racial hierarchy where the white are the masters and the native colonised people are inferior to them.

The myth of racial superiority was propagated by the British in India to exploit them psychologically. In the same way, Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin White Masks* describes:

I begin to suffer from not being a white man to the degree that the white man imposes discrimination on me, makes me a colonised native, robs me of

...[...] all individuality, tell me [...] That I must bring myself as quickly as possible into the step to the white world. (Fanon 98)

In the same way, the film *Gunga Din* (1939) depicts the main character Gunga Din to suffer for not being one of the colonial soldiers. He forgets his own identity and tries to imitate the soldiers. But, because of showing the ill posture of Gunga Din's body, the film also propagates the colonial agenda of the superiority of the white man. The Indians now internalise their inferior race in comparison to the white masters. Although he was willing to join and parade like the colonial masters but he seems aware of the fact that the colonial masters will never allow him to do so. Joanna De Groot in her chapter entitled as "Sex and Race: the construction of Language and Race in Nineteenth Century" describes that "In such depictions, service and devotion might even extend to a willingness to sacrifice life for their imperial superiors" (43). Gunga Din being an Indian tries to behave and act like the British soldiers, but in a symbolic way, he was refashioning his self under the influence of an alien power. In the same way, Stephen Greenblatt in his book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning From More to Shakespeare* describes about the conditions under which the fashioning of the self takes place. He clarifies that "There appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process" (2).



Figure 2.7: The film *Gunga Din* (1939) shows Gunga Din as an English soldier

Moreover the film *Gunga Din* also explains how the colonial powers capture the native colonised bodies and then reconstruct and redefine their subjectivity as Elleke Boehmer in his article “Transfiguring: Colonial Body into Postcolonial Narrative” explains, “For what is body and instinctual is by definition is dumb and inarticulate[...] As it does not (itself) signify or signify coherently, it may be freely occupied, scrutinised, analysed and resignified” (Boehmer 270). The powerful discourse of colonial politics captures the subjectivity of the colonised and then redefines it into another way suitable to their own purposes. He describes how colonialism operates at the level of subjectivity. Through the character of Gunga Din, the film describes how the native colonised people longed for their desire to look like the British. They try to alternate their individual self under the influence of the colonial power like Gunga Din.

The fact of colonialism and the native subjectivity is similar to what Frantz Fanon relates the concept of subjectivity with the politics of the colonialism. Fanon in his book *Black Skin White Masks* (1967) explains the politics of colonialism in relation to the subjectivity of the natives. He described that “Because it is a systematic negation of the other person and a furious determination to deny the other person all the attributes of humanity, colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: ‘In reality, Who am I?’ (Fanon 200). The film *Gunga Din* explains the influence of colonial politics in deteriorating and reconstructing the native subjectivity to justify the colonial presence in the colonised countries like India. Gunga Din forgets his own self and tries to be one of the British soldiers of the regiment. It becomes clear when the scene at the end of the film depicts the conversation at the temple as follows:

Thug Guru: We have three soldiers and a slave to be given to *Mata Kali*.

Gunga Din: Who is slave? I am a soldier.

Sgt. MacChesney: You are what?

Gunga Din: I am a regimental *Bhisti*.

Sgt. MacChesney: oh! (*The Deceivers* 1988)

This externalises Gunga Din’s internal quest for being one of the soldiers of the regiment even though he was aware for the fact that they have been captured

by the *thugs* who are going to kill them to please *Mata Kali*. The film *Gunga Din* (1939), also describes the quest of the native colonised subjects to look like their masters like Gunga Din desires to be an English soldier and to participate in the parade.



Figure 2.10: A still from the film *Gunga Din* (1939)

The films also highlight how the technique of blackface is applied to the characters who play the roles of the natives. This technique of blackface does not offer any change to the racial difference but it just limits the native or the colonised character's subjectivity. Julie Codell in her article "Blackface, Faciality, and Colony Nostalgia in 1930s Empire Films" clarifies that "In the American Film *Gunga Din*, the blackened Thuggee leader resembled Gandhi and the British film *The Drum* demonised a Muslim; both films provoked riot in India"(33). In the film *Gunga Din* (1939), both the black faced characters of *Gunga Din* and the Thug leader are indirectly being associated with the figure of Gandhi, in the larger scenario of Indian politics. Both the characters represent two different castes such as one the *thug* leader as a Brahmin and the other of *Gunga Din* as an untouchable. Since the films of Empire Cinema are based on the ideology of colonial politics, that's why the film *Gunga Din* deliberately focuses on the native response to colonialism having two different aspects in the colonised land. The thugs describe the native resistance to the empire and the portrayal of *Gunga Din* symbolises the native desire for

transformation from uncivilised to the civilised one. And the film remains quite successful in fulfilling this dual agenda of empire cinema in the context of colonialism.

The film, *North West Frontier Province* (1959) directed by J. Lee Thompson shows the empire politics in colonial India. The film depicts the North West Frontier Province of British India in 1905. The film is mainly shot in Spain and some train sequence were filmed at Amber Fort, Rajasthan. Some part of the film has also been shot near Jaipur. The film highlights the threat of communal violence in North West Frontier Province of the British Raj. The film represents how Muslim rebels in the area turn violent and killed the Hindu Maharaja. The film aims to propagate the need for the British control over the disturbed territory to save the Hindus of the North West Frontier Province from the cruelty of the Muslim rebels. The film begins with the voice over describing about the situation as: This is India, the North-West Frontier Province 1905. The country of many religions. The voice-over continues, the camera tilts from behind the shadow of Maharaja's throne and pans right to capture a British soldier Captain Scott, Catharine Wyatt and a child between them. The camera diminishes the Maharaja's identity and treats the British in a positive sense in the context of communal threat of Muslim rebels.



Figure 2.8: A point of view shot in *North West Frontier Province* (1959)

The shot is framed with light falling into the scene from behind the Maharaja making him a less important figure. On the other hand, the white characters are depicted in full light. A point of view shot is framed to interpret the helpless condition of the Hindu Maharaja and as the camera captures how the king looks towards the British for help. The above-mentioned scene captures the maharaja in an over the shoulder shot to put forth him in a helpless condition and to show that only the British can save his son. Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell describe the use of the point of view shot as, “A subjective shot that shows a scene as a character in the film would see it” (316). Here, the Maharaja looks at the British for their help. The rebels murder the Maharaja and the exit of British is followed by the burning of the palace. The film depicts the scene in such a way as to portray the image of the Hindu Maharaja as a scapegoat because of the communal conflict. The complexity of the situation is explained and justified by the narrator as he remarks:

Men find many reasons for killing each other, greed, revenge, jealousy or perhaps they worship different God by different names. Rebel fanatics are gathering in the hills. Their objective to kill a six-year-old boy because he is a prince and the future leader of his people. His father Maharaja has appealed to us, the British, asking us to take his son to the Garrison town of Haserabad and then to send him from there to Delhi. (Voice-over)

This typical scene shows a particular way of using the camera to give suitable as well as the desired meaning to a particular event in the history of colonial India. The film uses this shot to propagate the colonial agenda to justify the need of the British to restore order in the North West Frontier Province as well as in India against the communal violence.

The scene at the beginning of the film with the voice of the narrator clarifies the film’s focus on the native issue of communal violence. The conflict of Hindu and Muslim has been used to propagate the idea of imperial rule of law and justice and its power as well as its capability to maintain peace in communally inconsistent India in the colonial times. David Killingray and David E. Omissi in *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of Colonial Powers 1700-1964* describe “the North-West Frontier Province of India, the most sensitive strategic frontier of the British Empire, posed a complex defence problem for the armies in India during the Nineteenth and twentieth centuries” (Killingray and Omissi 109).

The film uses the symbol of the smoke rising above the hills, which indicates that the communal riots may expand through the whole nation as well as the expansion of Muslim rebels in the North West Frontier Province. This perception turns real when the next long shot from with high angle at *Haserabad* depicts the rebels marching towards the town and the crowd is rushing towards the train which is fully loaded. The people surround the train and try to get into it. A close up of a steam engine describes its journey toward the safer place and symbolically it looks the only source of securing lives of the natives. Dan Bogart and Lalita Choudhary describe that “Railway were the most important infrastructure development in India from 1850 to 1947. They were interconnected with all aspects of society” (1). This is represented in the next shot with a close up of a soldier blowing the trumpet to alert that the rebels are approaching the garrison. Another scene begins with a close up of a steam engine named as Empress of India whose driver says:

Victoria is old. I confess that but she has an experience sahib and when she has experience nothing can go wrong [...] It is not the fault of Victoria sahib. I asked them to give me one litre for repair, but no, like you they said ‘Victoria is old’. Nobody understands. What to do? (*The Deceivers* 1988)

This film shows how an old engine metaphorically stands for the Queen Victoria in England who embodies the power to save its colonial subjects from destruction. The driver Gupta describes that although the engine is old yet it is capable to save the innocent British and Indians from the rebels when it is required. The film, symbolically uses the train as necessary for saving the lives of the innocents from the communal violence in colonial India. Similarly, Prem Chowdhry in *Colonial India and Making of the Empire Cinema: Image, Ideology and Identity* examines the politics of empire films and remarks that “their aim is to demolish the nationalist rhetoric of one India and unity in diversity, to emphasise instead its heterogeneity and disparity” (6). That is why the film *North West Frontier Province* (1959) highlights the communal violence in the contemporary India to justify the imperial agenda of British presence in order to maintain the law and order in the savage society. On the other hand, in the larger scenario of the colonial politics, the film also assists the colonial agenda of propagating the need for the presence of the colonial powers to save the natives from the tyranny of the communal forces.

However, in the film, the violence of the colonial forces has been justified in contrast to the violence of the natives. The Muslim rebels are eager to kill the Prince as he is the symbol of Hindu religion or Hindu authority. On the other hand, the British soldier remarks: Soldier is there not to kill but to keep order. The politics of this dialogue in the film propagates that the colonised people are more violent and brutal. The film justifies the necessity for the empire soldiers to save the imperial subjects from the violence of their fellow countrymen. In the same way, Anil Seal in *Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (1971) explains that “Muslim revivalism, on the other hand, was potentially an all India movement. The efforts of the Wahhabi reformers to purge Islam of the faithless led them to try purging India of the infidel” (13). The film shows how the religious and geographical factors of the North-West Frontier Province make the situation suitable for the Muslim fundamentalists and the Muslim rebels to fight against the British and to kill the infidels; the Hindus living in the area. The film focuses on the threat of communal riots which justify the rule of the British in India to maintain the order. Moreover the geo-political reasons of the North-West Frontier Province forced the British to keep control over the uprising of the tribal groups.

The British represent railway as a symbol of their superiority in comparison to the Indians who have no proper way of transportation. Ian J. Kerr in his book *Engines of change: The Railroads that Made India* also describes the role of railways in transforming Indian transportation. He describes that “the British happily embraced railed steam locomotion as a measure of a superior civilisation (or so they believed) they were prepared to share with Indians” (Kerr 6). The introduction of railways in India helped the British to maintain the control over the vast and diversified land, both politically and geographically. The progress in the transportation system also enables the colonial forces to exploit India economically.

Similarly, the railways make it possible to transport the British soldiers from one place to another in a short time. In the same mode, Ian J. Kerr describes that “the hard backbone of British colonial rule in India, the British soldier and his weaponry, could be quartered in fewer places in the knowledge that the railroads could transport troops rapidly to trouble spots” (Kerr 12). The film explains how the British have been able to defend their empire against the Muslim rebels because of their sophisticated ways of transport in contrast to the rebels on the horsebacks.

On the other hand, the railways are used by the colonial politics to circulate the idea of a superior and civilised colonial rule. That is why the medium close up scene of Mr. Birdie, Scott and Mr. Peter Van Leyden highlights the native doubt about the British mission of civilising the natives and the native belief in the fall of empire as Mr. Van Leyden remarks: I have to travel light. As a journalist I am used to read a book. You could not wish a better company, The decline and the fall of an empire, Roman not the British. The satirical utterance by Mr. Peter highlights about the anti-colonial educated class of Indians. Thus, some typical scenes in the film focus on the larger perspectives of colonialism, the imperial agenda and the native people's doubts about the British Empire in India. A scene in the film describes the conversation as follow:

Mr. Peters: Why you fighting men pretend to despise those that makes themselves to think that they are your tools?

Scott: The soldier's job, Mr. Peter, is primarily not to kill. We have to keep

order. Prevent your customers from tearing each other into pieces.

Mr. Peters: Did you really believe that?

Captain Scott: I would not say, if I did not. What I dislike about you champs is that you sell your stuff without discrimination.

Mr. Peters: The other side you mean, you think we should be like God. Only on the side of the British. (*N.W.F.P.*)

This conversation in the film depicts the criticism of British colonialism by non-British characters and its defence by British characters. Through the character of Mr. Peters the agenda of empire films becomes clear as to how American and British interests are connected by the same thread of imperial politics. The British defend their actions to protect the native Indians from killing each other, which is necessary to keep order. Mr. Peters questions the British presence in India and their civilising mission. Captain Scott defends the British policy of colonialism and is justified when Lady Wyndham remarks: "half the world mocks us and half civilised because we have made them so". Van Leyden questions the moral authority of the British when Captain Scott justifies the British attempt to keep the order, he says that "Mr. Peters is there to sell us guns and we can fight each other" (*N.W.F.*). Because if the British can fight and kill to defend their empire so do the Indians for

the freedom of their country. Van Leyden justifies that the Muslim rebels are fighting for their country and the British should not interfere in India.



Figure 2.9: A shot in the film *North West Frontier Province* (1959) depicts the Massacre of the Hindus by the Muslim rebels.

The film depicts the scene at the *Bhiwandipura* station from the point of view shot from Captain Scott's perspective. Then the camera pans from left to right and tilts upward to describe the scene in a high angle, medium close up shot of a train surrounded by dead bodies. This technique of filming the scene appeals to the feelings and the emotions of the audience. Bhagwat Prasad explains that "we find ourselves in the midst of the people in the screen and become interested in them. Our tears for their sorrows and our delight at the successes are immediately called forth" (qtd in Mazarella 71). The film shows the close up of a blood soaked body. Captain Scott walks through the bodies piled on the platform. There is complete silence on the sound track, disturbed by the sound of flies buzzing around and the crying of vultures.

The filmic representation forces the audience to dive deep into the past to experience the devastating reality of the colonial times in the history of a nation. The film also shows a close-up of a dead person and with a long shot from a low angle to show the vultures flying in the sky. This symbolises death and destruction all

around. This scene looks to similar what Khushwant Singh in his *Train To Pakistan* (1956) describes, “Hundreds of thousands of Hindus and Sikhs who have lived for centuries on the Northwest frontier abandoned their homes and fled toward the protection of the predominantly Sikh and Hindu communities in the east”(9). The filmic representation echoes the views similar to that of William Butler Yeats, which he expressed in his poem *The Second Coming* (1919). Yeats described the brutality of the contemporary culture. His mind was full of gloom because of the bloodshed in the war. As he says in the poem:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold:
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. (Yeats 123)

The film completely describes the miserable situation of colonial India that looks similar to the context of the poem describing the contemporary situation of the political upheaval, the chaos, the loss of belief in the system and fellow human beings. Priya Jaikumar in *Cinema at the End of Empire: A Politics of Transition In Britain and India*, suggests that “each film permits a particular textual figuration of uncertainty about the political future” (3). The film depicts how India at that time was suffering because of the absence of a central powerful authority which could have maintained order. The film also explains a similar chaos where Lady Wyatt goes around to look for any survivor in the massacre and walks through the dead bodies lying at her feet. Lady Wyatt finds a baby among the dead bodies whose mother might have saved the baby by covering with her own body. This recognises the sacrifice of Indian mother in her attempt to save her child. The whole incident highlights the female courage to save a little child on both sides, the Indian as well as the western. This scene completely signifies the failure of the male figure in maintaining the law and order in the contemporary times. The film covers different arguments from different perspectives: the Indian perspective is expressed by Ven Leyden as he remarks: one life saved, thousands lost. This questions the white man’s ability to maintain the order. The next medium close up shot describes Captain Scott discussing the situation with Ven Leyden as:

Captain Scott: See what happens when we are not around to keep
order.

Ven Leyden: Keep Order. You divide. You set Muslim against Hindu.

You divide in order to rule. That's what you do.

Captain Scott: Muslims were fighting against the Hindu for hundreds of years before we came to India.

Ven Leyden: You call this keeping order.

(While pointing towards the dead bodies scattered around.) (*N.W.F*)

This scene depicts the two different perspectives about British colonialism: one represented by Captain Scott and the other by Ven Leyden. The former offers further insights into this chaotic situation by supporting the British presence in India to retain order while the latter sees this as a consequence of the British policy of divide and rule. Rudyard Kipling has described the colonial tactics of justifying and proliferating the British Empire in his novel *Kim*. He writes, "Now I shall go far and far into the North playing the Great Game²" (142). The justification for the British Raj in India in the film *North- West Frontier Province* highlights the representation of the Great Game in the Empire films. Robert Johnson in *Spying for Empire: The Great Game in Central and South Asia, 1757-1947* (2006) describes the term Great Game as "the struggle between Russia and Britain for imperial influence over southern and central Asia" (1). The New Historicist analysis of the selected films aims to interpret the typical colonial situation in the larger imperial discourse of international powers competing with each other in justifying their own agenda. The study helps to analyse the contemporary situation full of challenges because of the power struggle between the democratic West and communist Russia.

The politics of empire films has also been questioned by Prem Chowdhary in his book *Colonial India and Making of the Empire Cinema: Image, Ideology and Identity* as he describes the agenda of Empire films. He writes "They also strive to indicate potential social and political disruptions in India, which can be controlled only by the British presence" (Chowdhary 6). Similarly, another scene in the film describes how the western passenger present in the train questions Mr. Ven Layden about his identity. The scene includes the conversation described as follow:

Mr. Peters: Mr. Ven Layden. Are you a Muslim? By any chance.

Ven Layden: Why should you say that?

Mr. Peters: Because you would not touch alcohol. Because in the

² Peter Hopkirk in foreword to his book *The Great Game* describes that "Central Asia is once again in the headlines, a position it frequently occupied during the nineteenth century, at the height of the old Great Game between Tsarist Russia and Victorian Britain".

morning, you were most unwilling to give Lady Wyndham her case. Her pig skin case.

Ven Layden: Yes, I am a Muslim. (*N.W.F.P.*)

This kind of typical dialogues in the film bring out the colonial agenda of divide and rule. The film highlights the imperial tactics of sowing the seeds of communalism in India, which can be utilised to establish as well as to keep on the British colonial rule in India. The film depicts how Gupta reacts when Captain Scott asks him to hold a gun for security. Gupta (the driver) completely refuses to do so as he remarks: Indians to kill Indians not very good. If other man has other religion why should Gupta mind? Sir. This represents secular wish of a common Indian to see a peaceful co-existence among each other. Moreover, Gupta's views symbolically urge the Indians to think about the larger politics of empire and a desire to understand how colonial powers use them to fulfil the colonial agenda of divide and rule.

The film tries to highlight the differences of communalism and regionalism so that the imperial ideologies of domination and exploitation can be practiced off stage, in the whole process of colonial politics. Prem Chowdhry in *Colonial India and Making of the Empire Cinema: Image, Ideology and Identity* talks about the politics of Empire Films like *The Drum* (1938), "The film implicitly visualised India as Hindu India and made as ostensible bid at arousing latent fears of the Hindus against the Muslim Domination" (64). It becomes clear how the films serve the political agenda of imperial powers.

This film also highlights the American-British understanding in a larger scenario of imperial dominance. Captain Scott asks Lady Wyatt about the baby: Anyway, How is young India? How are we going to feed it? This question regarding feeding the Indian child symbolically refers the British doubts about the shortage of food in India and its vast population. Similarly, Srirupa Prasad in *Cultural Politics of Hygiene in India, 1890-1940: Contagions of Feeling* describes about the causes of famine in India, especially in Bengal and the role of British colonial policy in it. He says that "The Bengal famine has been depicted not only as a tale of death and suffering but also as a struggle against the injustices of those in power against those who lacked it" (Prasad 33). The film indirectly highlights the British propaganda that the independent India will face immense challenge in connection to its needs regarding food shortage and its uncontrollable population growth.

That is why, just after the Independence, India was not able to feed its population because most of her fertile land was given to in newly born Pakistan. Moreover, the conflict over Kashmir worsened the Indian food crisis. Goran Djurfeldt, H. Holman and others in their book *The African Food Crisis: Lessons from the Asian Green Revolution* describes the role of western powers during the food crisis in Independent India:

Europe, including the former colonial power Britain, was not in a position to export cereals to India as the continent itself faced serious food security problems [...] apart from imports from Canada and Australia, the USA was the main supplier of grain to India. (Djurfeldt and Holman 50)

In the same way, the film indirectly symbolises the picture of the whole nation by showing an Indian baby crying, but the British somehow manage to feed him. On the larger scenario, the film refers to a newly Independent India who will be in need of motherly care and it can only be provided by western powers like Britain and America. New Historicist analysis helps to understand other factors at the end of the colonial rule in India, like its challenge to increase the production of food grains after independence to feed its large population.

The British Empire is declining and at the same time, America emerges as a world leader after the Second World War. Joanna De Groot in her chapter entitled, "Sex and Race: the construction of Language and Race in Nineteenth Century" describes that "women and natives might also be portrayed and treated as children in the need of protection and care of male/imperial authority by virtue of their weakness, innocence, and inadequacy" (43). The film shows the collaboration of British and American powers as through the portrayal of Captain Scott and Lady Wyatt to solve the problems of newly independent country, India. The film also shows how Gupta, the engine driver, believes in the white nurse and criticises the Indian nurses in the hospitals. This demonstrates the discrimination because of race and gender and the discrimination faced by Indian female in comparison to the white one.

The film depicts the importance of native help to run the Engine and symbolically to establish and administer the British Empire in India. Gupta remarks: Victoria talks to me. I understand her language. On the contrary, Captain Scott remarks: Well. It's just well as I can't understand a word she says. Moreover, the

description of British custom of Henley Regatta³ highlights how colonialism brings the fusion of cultures with it. The cultural superiority is maintained by ignoring the native situation while the memory of the coloniser still finds the relaxation in age old customs back at home. The film highlights the cultural agenda of colonial forces to propagate how the Western culture is superior to that of the native culture and traditions. Nicholas Dirks in *Colonialism and Culture* gives further insights in this respect:

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)

This shows the clash of cultural customs and the policies of colonial enterprise. The film depicts Captain Scott's indication to the British custom of Henley Regatta when asked by Gupta in the midst of a complex situation to maintain the order on the colonised land. On the other hand, the coloniser also tries to learn only the language of the natives but not their cultural manners. Because the knowledge of oriental language is required for the exploitation of the same. The specific use of stills in camera work to capture the train in the background of stable, useless mountains explains the politics of Empire Cinema. This typical scene highlights the power, the appropriateness of British Queen to save the Indian from the native chaos. The train is named Victoria, which clearly links the power and justice with that of Queen in England.

The next shot in half-dark screen, shows Ven Leydan gazing at the boy with jealousy and it seems as if he is going to harm or kill the boy but has been interrupted by Lady Wyndham. This indirectly explains the imperial powers' role in saving India from bloodshed of communal violence. The British security to the Hindu Prince in the film serves as a symbol to highlight the need of the British presence in the colonial India. Lady Wyndham symbolises the Imperial care in India as she saves the boy's life. Prem Chowdhry writes:

The resultant portrayal showed India in imminent danger of a Muslim take-over and the British as the only hope of maintain peace [...] the film made a

³ Henley Regatta is a British custom of boating and rowing.

comment on the Indian socio-political situation by cinematically recreating the imperial myth of a divided India. (62)

The film depicts the role of the British in bridging the gap between the Hindu and Muslim. The Engine named Victoria symbolically represents the power of Queen Victoria which can bridge the gap between the two communal forces of India. This was further explained in a scene when Ven Layden clears his intention to kill the Hindu Prince and remarks: That one boy. He is a symbol...stands between my country and freedom. The film highlights the communal agenda and the blood thirsty Hindu-Muslim conflict from every angle to emphasise the native communal disharmony in Indian society.

Finally, the film shows how the train is chased by the rebels but Victoria leaves them behind and passes through the tunnel towards the safer place. In this way, the train symbolises the modern imperial invention which helps to defeat the Muslim rebels. The next scene begins at the *Kalapore* station, where the camera pans from right to the left from behind the people waiting for the train. The camera captures the train coming from front in a medium long shot.

The train Victoria marches towards the platform and Captain Scott blows its horn to symbolise its victory over the rebels. The portrayal of Captain Scott throughout the film concentrates on propagating the imperial agenda of keeping the order in an uncivilised land. Prince Kishan thanks Captain Scott for saving his life and describes Captain Scott as his friend. Prince asks whether they have to fight with each other:

Hindu Prince: But you are British. Well I have to fight you?

Captain Scott: God! Heavens know. Why should you say that?

Hindu Prince: My father said that.

Captain Scott: what did he say?

Hindu Prince: I must fight the British to make them go away. (*N.W.F*)

This scene depicts the future of British rule in India as they are still unwanted and the British rule will not be appreciated by the upcoming Indian generation. The next intercut shot captures Captain Scott in a surprised mood and the camera zooms out as Catharine Wyatt joins him and says: Well! You have to fight with little Kishan now. That's all the thanks you get. And Captain Scott remarks: that's all the thanks we ever get. Then he quotes Kipling: Be thankful you are living and trust your luck. March to your front like a soldier. This shows Captain Scott's awareness about how

Catharine perceives the British Empire. Because earlier in the film Catharine criticised the imperial agenda as an outdated one. Then the cries of the baby are heard from within the train and Captain Scott says: Let's try find some help for young India. Once again, as Captain Scott embodies the mind-set of a colonial soldier, emphasising the need for British help for the young India. In this way, the film highlights the colonial politics of propagating the idea of violent chaos in the colonised countries and then the exaggeration of the native socio-cultural drawbacks to justify the presence of the colonial powers in foreign countries in the name of civilising the uncivilised.

Similarly, colonial cinema raised the issues of Indian society in British era. The socio-cultural drawbacks like the sati and thugi cult were the main issues of these films. The New Historicist analysis of the film *The Deceivers* and *Gunga Din* focuses on the exploration of the socio-cultural facets during the colonial times in the history of India. Although the film *The Deceivers* describes the violent killings of the *thugs* yet the film also forces the viewers to question the British policies in colonial India in relation to the increasing native crimes such as the thugi cult. This study includes unexplored ideas of the time where the colonial powers exploit the medium of films to inscribe the fears of Muslim domination in the psyche of the majority of the Hindu population in the colonial times of the history of India.

Since the era of colonial India, this caste difference in Indian socio-cultural situation has been an important aspect to study in its relation to the larger picture of a nation. In this way these empire films do urge the viewers to analyse these types of imperial discourses which try to exploit the native negativity almost in every way. Moreover, the British role to curb these social evils from Indian society has also been the major thematic concern in these films.

So films also highlights the colonial agenda of justifying the British presence in India while describing the communal violence in India. It looks similar to what Thomas R Metcalf in his book named *Ideologies of the Raj* explains that "to describe oneself as Enlightened meant that someone else had to be shown as savage or vicious" (6). The violence of the colonial has been justified in comparison to the violence of the colonised. The selected film in this chapter describe that the native characters have been shown as uncivilised and cruel for the most of the time.

This is why a New Historicist analysis of selected films enables the viewers to interpret an event of the past, in its relation to the larger discourse of its

contemporary times. In case of the film, *Gunga Din* which portrays the two main characters: Gunga Din and the chief of the *thugs* in a resemblance to Gandhi, the imperial agenda becomes very clear and well directed. Through the character of Gunga Din, the film symbolically highlights the untouchables and their devotion towards the British rule. On the other hand, the chief of the thugs has been used to exploit the caste hierarchy in India and their danger to the Indian nation as well as its untouchables. Besides this the films of the Empire Cinema also exploited the socio-cultural set up of India in the specific point of time. The films based on history try to destroy the distance between the viewer and the past so that he can judge and feel an essence of the past.

That is why, when Gunga Din sacrifices his life for the colonial forces, he has been described in the end; dressed as a British soldier, saluting the British Empire. In depth these empire films especially *Gunga Din*, indirectly appear as they target the untouchables by highlighting the fear of Hindu nationalism that was being propagated in the contemporary era in the history of colonial India. The films like *The Drum*, *Gunga Din*, and *North West Frontier* highlights the colonial politics of depicting India as a country torn apart between the communal violence of Hindu and Muslim. The empire films represent the situation propagate the fear among the Hindus that the Muslim will take over the nation. That is why, the British administration in India has the capacity to override the Muslims, especially in the North West Frontier Province to save India from the cruelty of the Muslims.

The films of the Empire Cinema helped to construct an idea of white supremacy, racial difference, and being specific to the Indian circumstances its agenda seems just to create a fear of the Muslim dominance in the minds of the Hindu community so that the Hindus can support the British regime. And the study of the films like *Gunga Din*, also depicts the colonial attempt to make the untouchables to recognise the discrimination they had to face from ages. It seems the core agenda of the British colonial politics to divide India between Hindus and Muslims. And further the Hindus must be divided between the Brahmins and the untouchables to get the support of the untouchables of India as the film *Gunga Din* shows. The New Historicist study helps to find out the way, the selected films represents the often marginalized aspects of colonial times in the history of India. *Gunga Din* shows an untouchable character, Gunga Din in a way which is suitable for the colonial interests. Gunga Din's portrayal in the film is depicted with

sympathetic touch and it is shown helpful for the colonial regime. The film, in the end, shows Gunga Din dressed as a colonial soldier. *The Deceivers* depicts the social evils during the colonial era like thugi cult, the mass killings and their religious connections, the native rituals, and sati. The role of British officers like Colonel. Sleeman has also been appreciated for identifying and curbing these age old socio-cultural customs in colonial India. The film *North West Frontier* also shows the communal violence during the colonial rule and is still prevalent at the end of the British Empire.

The study highlights the way, the films of the Empire Cinema reframe their ideology of colonial agenda to represent the untouchables of India in these films. The present study helps to recognize the role of the marginalised sections of colonial Indian society. The colonial powers used the medium of films to correspond with the discourse of Orientalism with respect to the colonised nations. It is pertinent to observe how colonial discourse justifies imperialism by portraying such characters as the thug, implying that the colonial invasion was aimed at or at least resulted in civilising the uncivilised natives. The films help to know the way, empire films highlight the socio-cultural evils like sati and thugi of colonial India and the British attempt to uproot those evil customs. The selected films also highlight the communal violence of Indians and defend the violence of the colonial powers in the name of restoring the order. The films first highlight, portray and construct the image of the colonised native as self-admittedly uncivilised and then in contrast to that, the colonial mastery of order, justice, and superiority is portrayed as a remedial agency to root out the native socio-cultural evils.

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Chapter III

Study of Indian-British Interactions and the Plight of Anglo-Indians

The Empire Cinema, in its early phase, includes films depicting the way colonial powers used medium of cinema to proliferate the ideology of imperialism. The films like *Gunga Din* (1939), *The Deceivers* (1988), *North West Frontier* (1959), *Clive of India* (1935), *Lives of Bengal Lancers* (1935) are based on the issues of exploration of the colonised countries as well as their people. These films also justify the presence of colonial forces in the occupied territories. Since, it was the beginning of colonialism and the basic idea of colonial cinema seems to highlight the native issues of social vices like the sati and thuggi cult, the communal violence. The films too propagate the importance of the presence of colonial powers like Britain to maintain the order to civilise the uncivilised and vicious natives.

In this way, the British spend more time in India and acquire more knowledge about Indian people, they understand its socio-cultural and geographical features. Then the British sense the requirement to engage with their Indian subjects for their assistance in maintaining the administration. The British start to interact more and more with the Indians and the relations between the two begins to develop. James Chapman and Nicholas J. Cull in their book entitled *Projecting Empire: Imperialism and Popular Cinema* explain the multifaceted benefits of films of the Empire Cinema. They argue “the relationship between early cinema and the popular culture of imperialism can be seen on several levels” (10). In this way, the films can be interpreted to examine the various issues related to Indo-British interactions. Present chapter focuses on selected films to study the Indian-British Interactions, male-female relations and racial issues in the selected films such as *Heat and Dust* (1983), *A Passage to India* (1985), *Before the Rains* (2003), and *Bhowani Junction* (1956).

3.1: Relationship between Indian Men and the British Women in Colonial and Postcolonial era in *Heat and Dust* (1983)

The film *Heat and Dust* (1983) directed by James Ivory is based on Ruth Praver Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust* (1975) and the script is also written by the same author. The narrative structure of the film depicts the two interrelated stories from two different eras. The first story has been set in India of 1920s and depicts the

Olivia-Nawab affair in colonial India. While the second story has been set in 1982 and showcases how Anne, the great grand-niece to Olivia comes to India to rediscover some facts about the life of Olivia. The film uses cross-cutting as a structural device to depict the colonial and postcolonial era of the history of India. C.R.A. Goonetilleke in his article “Disillusionment with More Than India: Ruth Praver Jhabvala’s *Heat and Dust*” explains the use of cross cutting in the film. He remarks “This alleged flaw, cross cutting, is really a postmodern virtue: it prevents the reader from getting too absorbed in the worlds of the novel and thereby keeps him/her alert and critical like the Brechtian alienation effect” (250). The film *Heat and Dust* (1983) begins in a long shot with a low angle where the camera captures the *Nawab* from front as sitting on the throne, surrounded by his men with Indian soundtrack playing in the background.



Figure 3.1. A low angle shot depicting the *Nawab’s* powerful position in *Heat and Dust* (1983)

The cinematographic angle makes it quite evident that the *Nawab* looks a powerful and distinguished figure at the beginning of the film. The empire films depict the specific use of techniques such as a low angle shot to highlight the status of a native king as powerful one in the beginning. The particular use of filming techniques highlights how these films fulfil the colonial agenda to represent the

native colonised subjects according to the colonial interests. The British gave due respect and privilege to Indian royals at first and then gradually worked to implement colonial agenda by describing the native monarchs as incompetent to establish the order. Then the camera moves back and shows how an English lady coming to him and bowing in respect for the *Nawab*. This uncut shot becomes wider and shows the palace of the *Nawab*. The scene explains the royal life, its richness as well as its British recognition and their close relation with the *Nawab*.

The film shifts the focus with a cut away shot which dissolves into an old painting of a river bridge. This depicts some people on a boat, near a large gate in the background. But the foreground depicts the time of nineteen twenties in the Civil Lines at Satipur. The film uses this shot to portray the different characters of the film accompanying the same stillness in the background and continuity of the western soundtrack. The filmmaker tries to specify the characters by applying the iris¹ shot on screen. The film manages to maintain the continuity between two respective shots in its narrative sequence by dissolving the shot with another. The film depicts the change in the sequence with a cut away which highlights the interruption between the continuity of the scenes and their narratives.



Figure 3.2. A shot introducing Olivia in the Colonial era in *Heat and Dust* (1983)

¹ Iris means the use of a circle to focus on a character in the frame by using more light. It aims to depict the importance of such character. The Iris shot also differentiates a particular character from the other visual characteristics in a scene. For more see: Aaron Sultanik: *Camera-Cut-Composition: A Learning Model* (1995) P.36.

The film shows a variety of spatial as well as temporal elements to cover the variations in its narrative structure. This depicts issues of the colonial invaders as well as the colonised societies in the history of a nation like India. The film *Heat and Dust* (1983) covers the two different periods of colonial and postcolonial India. It specifically uses the filmic techniques like cut away and dissolving to maintain continuity and difference between the scenes in the narrative structure of the film. The camera captures a gateway in black and white colour in the background and on the foreground it mentions the palace in *Khatam*. The change in scenery is followed by the change in the soundtrack as it is Indian this time which introduces Indian characters. Both the scenes depict two sides of film's narrative structure. The first scene with English soundtrack describes how the imperial culture is being imposed on the Indians. On the other hand, the next shot with Indian soundtrack depicting an old gateway in the background symbolises the entry to the exotic otherness of India. The film uses audio-visual features in an interesting way to express as well as highlight the complex relations between the colonial and the colonised. Besides this, the film uses the symbol of river to depict the continuity of British Empire in contrast to the scene of an old gateway which symbolises the stable, static and motionless native Indian life.



Figure 3.3. A still from *Heat and Dust* (1983) introducing Anne in Postcolonial era.

In this shot, the frame is designed by using a high contrast image introducing Anne in postcolonial times on one side of the frame while the other part of the shot is kept dark; black and white, to depict its Indian setting in the colonial era. Christopher J. Bowen in his book *Grammar of the Shot* (2018) explains that “The relative difference between light area and dark areas within your frame are referred to as the image’s contrast” (136). The film uses this technique to maintain the essential difference between the English character and the Indian settings, the colonial times and postcolonial interpretations of the same event. Robert A. Rosenstone in *History on Film/Film on History* (2012) describes that “In a world of film, these would be visual metaphors- or perhaps something we can call vision[...]the details of the past are necessary, interesting and even fascinating” (185). The New Historicist analysis of the film enables us to explore how the film uses some specific techniques such as the difference in a single frame to manifest the colonial politics of propagating the difference between the civilised west and the uncivilised east. While a jump cut shot marks the change from the previous scene as it shows Satipur town in 1982. The films use jump cuts to jump from one period of time to another and this also helps the filmmaker to make balance between the varieties of its narrative structure. Tim Barringer in his article entitled as *Sonic Spectacles of Empire: The Audio-Visual Nexus, Delhi-London, 1911-1912* describes:

The aural dimensions of imperial culture have been neglected, the appeal to the ears as well as eyes, in imperial pageantry remains an unexplored problem [...]when the connections between the music and ethnic identity became a matter of intense creative and intellectual interest. (169-170)

This shift in the time and sequence introduces the characters in the postcolonial era of India and describes Anne, Inder Lal, Ritu, Chid and other Indians in the later part of the story. The whole sequence from the beginning of the film is based on the variety of characters; British and Indians, variety of sounds; Western and Indian classical, a variety of narrative structures, and a variety of generations as colonial and postcolonial. This complexity, variety and difference of time and space in the various scenes of the film echoes the multiple thematic concerns of the film. Tasleem Shakur and Karen D Souza in their chapter entitled as “From Heat and Dust to East is East: Journey from the Colonial to Post-Colonial South Asian

Cultural Space” writes, “*Heat and Dust* offers an image of imperialism viewed through the lens of the post-imperial age and goes some way to re-examining this period of colonial history” (79). The film concentrates on the issues of colonial period based on Indo-British interactions, the affairs between them and its catastrophic impact on both communities in the history of India under the British rule. Through the portrayal of Anne who traces back into the life of Olivia, and her relation with Indian *Nawab*, the film highlights how English people, irrespective of their colonial positions come under the influence of the colonised people.

The film concentrates on the intercultural relations which results in the frustration for both the East as well as the West. In the same mode, E. Oliete-Aldea in her book *The Hybrid Heritage on Screen* (2015) remarks about the condition of Olivia, she writes, “From the very beginning she is presented as an outcast in English community” (34). The British start condemning Olivia right from the beginning as Dr. Saunders remarks: I knew she was rotten from the very first time I saw her. Dr. Saunders’ words describe anxiety of the British community with people like Olivia who tried to understand and enjoy and to be a part of Indian life with all its surroundings. The film shows the shift in time with a cross cut scene to capture Henry as an old man. Henry explains his experience about his past with Olivia, in 1920s. At this point, again the story shifts to 1980s to depict Anne’s arrival in India to recall what happened to Olivia in colonial period. Henry discloses the fact how Olivia was different from other *memsahibs* of the contemporary times in the colonial era. Then Anne starts a tape recorder which illustrates Henry disclosing facts about Olivia as “You see she was outraging between two conventions: those of her own people and those of Indians, whose conventions are, if anything, even stronger. And of course you can’t do anything”. This shows how Olivia seems unable to adopt the popular culture of proper *memsahibs* in colonial India. That’s why, the film portrays Olivia in a very different way to that of other *memsahibs* which belong to the traditional British women like Mrs. Saunders in colonial period.

The film also comments on how Olivia behaves when her individual existence as a human being is divided between two cultures and two traditions: Indian and the British. Michael Ryan and Melissa Lenos in *An Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and Meaning in narrative Film* explain how “the self is a part of a community and cannot be isolated without harm from the relations of trust, care, and help the community affords” (161). When Olivia tries to cross the bridge of difference

between the two communities, she gets into trouble. She is out-casted from her own community. The English people do not talk to her. Her own individuality is lost between the clash of the two different communities of the colonial and the colonised. The film also intermingles the two different eras as Anne and Olivia both go to the Bungalow which reflects the spatial uniformity as well as temporal distance of both the events.



Figure: 3.4/5. Olivia and Anne both visit the same Bungalow in different times
The film uses to dive into the past through crosscutting and relates the colonial and postcolonial periods in parallel way. Moreover the film correlates the temporal

difference through the medium of spatial similarity. The film shows the old bungalow in a shadow of the afternoon with light coming from the backside of the building to suggest the colonial times, a past event. Michael Ryan and Melissa Lenos in *An Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and Meaning in narrative Film* explain how “The use of back lighting is appropriate to a story of duplicity, treachery and betrayal in which motives are concealed” (104). The film seems to highlight the relation of Nawab and Olivia to suggest the colonial agenda of depicting the colonised men as rapist, violent and treacherous. On the other hand, the same bungalow has been shown in a morning light to suggest the present times, the postcolonial times. Christopher J. Bowen in *Grammar of the Shot* explains that “A high contrast image is one that contains both areas that are very bright and areas that are very dark” (136). The films of the Empire Cinema specially, *Heat and Dust* (1982) uses this technique of light and shadow to differentiate between the colonial and the colonised and between the colonial and the postcolonial times while depicting the same space.

Similarly, the film also uses both the women characters to differentiate as well as link the two different eras in the history of a nation. Similarly, both the ladies work to connect the time gap from colonial to postcolonial era by visiting the same place in their lives. The film tries to comment on the symbolic value of the spatial attributes of Indian history because these place still symbolise the inter-racial bond between the British and the Indians. In the same way, David Henry Slavin in *Colonial Cinema and Imperial France, 1919-1939: White Blind Spots, Male Fantasies, Settler Myths* (2015) clarifies about the colonial film’s exploitation of the differences of race and gender. He says, “Colonial cinema goes a step beyond the simple love story, however, because in the colonial setting gender and race are inextricably intertwined” (3). This type of filming helps the filmmaker to have some control the narrative structure of the film which continually shifts from colonial to postcolonial and vice-versa.

The film also shows how Henry suggests Anne to be aware of what to drink and eat in India and have some injections before going there. He says: No water ever anywhere. No uncooked foods, no fruit, or no salads. Cecilia Leong-Salobir *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire* also explained the same when he says that “The colonials took great care in following established rules of hygiene peculiar to the colonies. Boiling drinking water was mandatory, as was the washing of fruits and vegetables” (131-132). Thus the issue of food brings out the problems

of making contact with the 'other'. The film depicts how Olivia was exhausted on her first visit to the *Nawab's* palace. Anne as the narrator remarks, "I always wanted to research, search about what happened to Olivia [...] but now I am going to involve not only in Olivia's life but in others. Like the family I board with. And sometimes the two are difficult to reconcile" (*Heat and Dust* 1983). This scene clearly exhibit Anne's perceptions about the conditions which her ancestor, Olivia, had to undergo. The next shot captures Anne opening Olivia's letters to recreate Olivia's world and shifts back to past where Olivia describes about the visit of Mrs. Crawford, the *Burra Memsahib*. Olivia expresses her anger at Mrs. Crawford and says, "Actually her being there is the only difficult thing. Otherwise everything is just too perfect" (*Heat and Dust* 1983). The film exhibits Douglas Rivers' views about Indian weather and its climate. Douglas thinks Indian heat and dust is responsible for Olivia' problems, she is annoyed and irritated because of the harsh Indian weather. He thinks that no English woman is expected to endure its heat and dust. Homi Bhabha in *Location of Culture* (1994) describes the English weather and says: "The English weather also revives memories of its daemonic double: the heat and dust of India; the dark emptiness of Africa; the tropical chaos that was deemed despotic and ungovernable and therefore worthy of the civilizing mission" (169). In this scenario of colonial India as the film showcases, the native Indian weather, its geographical features and the people seem unfriendly as well as uncivilised fit to be ruled by colonial powers for the civilising mission.

Similarly, the film *Heat and Dust* (1983) shows how the colonial politics uses the native weather as a sign of difference between the colonised East and the colonial West. The propaganda of colonialism seems so powerful that the film also depicts the same chaos and unfriendliness in relation to the weather of the colonised. That is why Douglas, a colonial administrator in the film explains the heat and dust in India:

Douglas: No English woman is supposed to stand in this weather.

Olivia: You have these set notions about what English women are supposed to stand. (*Heat and Dust* 1983)

But, Olivia opposes this notion of colonial ideology, she completely disagrees with Douglas and remarks: "The only thing I can't stand is the Englishwomen, the memsahibs" (*Heat and Dust* 1983). The conversation between Olivia and Douglas depicts Olivia's different outlook towards Indians and she is determined to endure

the heat and dust of India instead of going to Shimla with the other British ladies. Cecilia Leong-Salobir in his book *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire* explains the colonial psyche about the Indian weather when he says, “India in the early nineteenth century was perceived by the Europeans to be a place where disease was part of the landscape and where sickness rapidly resulted in death” (117). But this was unacceptable to Olivia, although belonging to the same British class. Through Olivia’s character film comments on the question of fixed, self-determined colonial identity. Because the colonial powers describe India as a dirty place to live because of its heat and dust. While Olivia does not seem agree with the colonial agenda which the film tries to highlight and propagate. On the other hand, the next shot begins with the medium close up of Mrs. Saunders talking about the violence of the Indians and remarks:

In a way you can’t blame them. It’s their constitution. And all that spicy food they eat, it heats the blood...[...] and they only have one thought in their heads, Mrs. Rivers. And that’s to...[...] you know what with a white woman.
(*Heat and Dust* 1983)

This typical approach of Mrs. Saunders exhibits how imperial discourse is based on its colonial politics of propagating the Indians as violent and barbaric, especially in their behaviour towards the white women. The film comments on colonial discourse of describing the native, colonised or coloured man as rapist. The way, it is propagated in literary works like Paul Scott’s 1969 novel *The Jewel in the Crown* where Indian man named Hari Kumar is imprisoned for raping a white lady Daphne although he has done nothing wrong. In the same way, Walter Reid in his book *Keeping the Jewel in the Crown: British Betrayal of India* explains how after the 1857 revolt the British propagates the Indians as being violent, cruel and rapists. He writes, “the predominant reaction in Britain was of anger in the face of treacherous ingratitude. There were many atrocities and public opinion was outraged by reports of rape, of assaults on ‘fragile female bodies²’ of both adults’ and children’s” (Reid 113). In this way, the films of the Empire Cinema also seem to highlight the native

² See also Eilidh Macrae in *Exercise in the Female Life-Cycle in Britain, 1930-1970* describes as the major reproductive responsibility of the nation was seen assigned to the women . . .it has to be ensured that women’s bodies were not pushed so far as to upset their ability to carry out this role. (p29)

man's character in accordance with that of colonial ideology of describing the native subjects as vicious, unkind and rapists.

This attitude also explains the colonial ideology in which the white English women are considered always in danger because they are necessary for the productivity of the white colonial values. This also shows the position of white woman always at risk because the white, superior and racial values have been attached to white female under the politics of colonialism and patriarchy. E. Oliete-Aldea in her book *The Hybrid Heritage on Screen* remarks: "As mentioned in the analysis of Gandhi, non-whites are also considered to be violent, capable of savage, irrational, attacks on the other people, in contrast to European or Western civilised manners" (132). This shows the colonial politics of describing the East as barbaric, uncivilised and primitive in contrast to the West. Thomas R Metcalf further clarifies the politics of empire in his book *Ideologies of the Raj* and explains "to describe oneself as 'modern' or as 'progressive' meant that those who were not included in the definition had to be described as 'primitive' or 'backward'" (6). But in real the British learned ancient laws and Sanskrit to know the past of India by which they could govern this mighty land full of mystery. This helps to them to justify the presence of colonial powers in the colonised countries. It helps to propagate the idea of the white man's burden to control over other territories in order to civilise them to maintain order.

The films of the Empire Cinema also highlight the propaganda of justifying the Western hegemony over the East according to which the coloured people are attracted towards the white women. The film *Heat and Dust* (1982) comments on the same issue when Mrs. Saunders expresses the views like any typical English *memsahib* about the native men. Similarly, Indrani Sen in her book *Woman and Empire: Representations in the Writings of British India, 1858-1900* writes, "the Whole point is that the white woman's racial prejudices were essentially undergirded by Anglo-Indian imperial arrogance...a middle class suspicion of foreigners and deep rooted colonial fears of a sexual threat from men of colour" (21). The pre-constructed fears about Indian men result in total segregation of the white *memsahibs* in India. The film describes how Olivia does not bear the loneliness as Douglas remains busy in his colonial duties. On the other side, the scene at the *Nawab's* palace shows how Olivia praises *Nawab* as being terribly handsome to

cause a sensation in any London drawing room. Olivia's praise of the native was against the British self-asserted sense of cultural and racial superiority.

On the other hand, Douglas describes all Indians from *mali* to *Nawab* as kids in opposite to what Olivia thinks. She regards Indians as nice, grown up men. The film depicts the two types of attitudes toward the Indians. Actually the film tries to highlight some fixed cultural codes through the portrayal of Douglas Rivers. Michael Ryan and Melissa Lenos in their book *An Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and Meaning in narrative Film* state how the "cultural codes are therefore like a norm or unstated rule in that they often tell us what to say and think and how to behave" (164). In the same mode, Douglas' perceptions about Indians becomes clear as he has to follow certain fixed colonial codes about how to behave and think about the colonised people. Albert Memmi in *Colonizer and the Colonized* (1965) writes, "If the small colonizer defends the colonial system so vigorously, it is because he benefits from it to some extent" (55). The film depicts duality of British reactions towards India and Indians such as those who condemn Indians and those who remain sympathetic towards the Indians. Olivia represents the liberal attitude toward Indians and loves to be in India with Indians. On the other hand, there was an anti-Indian attitude based on the colonial stereotypes as propagated under the colonial agenda. Nicholas Dirks in his book *Colonialism and Culture* explain how "colonialism not only has had cultural effects that have too often been either ignored or displaced [...] it was itself a cultural project of control" (3). That is why, Mr. and Mrs. Saunders, Douglas and other British characters criticise the Indians, their food and the Indian weather also. The actual politics of colonialism is based on differentiating the English class from that of the Indians and they use the cultural aspect to achieve and maintain this wide racial gulf between the coloniser and the colonised.

The film also shows a rare glimpse of equality between the British and the Indians. But here the equality of sitting together seems to be applicable only after the native prince and other present royals pay their tribute to the English King. They all have to stand in respect for the British National Anthem. Tim Barringer in his article entitled as *Sonic Spectacles of Empire: The Audio-Visual Nexus, Delhi-London, 1911-1912* described that "The singing of British National Anthem in translation provided a fairly straight forward demand for conformity to the culture of

the imperial centre” (179). The scene also manifests how colonial authorities took the cognisance of its subjects to respect the English crown.

The other scene with a cross cut describes Anne sitting on the same river side which is captured in the previous scene where *Nawab* and Olivia enjoyed in colonial time. The filmmaker uses a cross cut to jump from one period to the other in a scene but the preference is still given to the continuity of the narrative structure of a film. The continuity bridges the gap between past and present, between colonial and postcolonial because of the narrative structure of the film. While following the spatial unity besides the temporal distance film depicts a shrine of a Muslim saint where both Hindu and Muslims pray together. Vandana Bhagat in her book *A Frantic Cry of Disillusionment: A New Dominion, Indian Women Novelists* explains how the sacred shrine symbolised an answer to the barrenness of the lives of two English women characters:

It was such a romantic place that when Olivia with Nawab during the British days visited the grove she had very strong physical sensations and lured the Nawab to have sex with her...[...] In the post-independence India when the narrator of the novel visited the shrine with Inder Lal...[...] they had sex. (Bhagat 11)

Both the white women visit the same sacred shrine. The film uses it symbolically to describe the barrenness of their lives. It was supposed that the women used to visit the shrine for its blessings to be pregnant. In the same way, Anne describes this in a scene as: That’s the way things happen in India. Everything get mixed up and absorbed. Anne’s observation of India gets justified when Chid an American, now turned *sanyasi*, comes to the scene chanting sermons in a river. He describes his experience of being a *sanyasi* as to die materially and reborn spiritually. The symbol of river is used to depict the vastness and mystery of Indian culture and history. A high angle shot has been used to describe Chid as a minor, unable and as an outsider before Indian thought of spirituality and reincarnation. But Chid seems unable to distinguish spirituality from sexuality that’s why he tries to seduce Anne. The film represents the western people’s failure to understand the Indian spiritualism and shows how Chid lost his way from spirituality towards sensual pleasures. The film includes a close up of a tape recorder to narrate the experience of rough weather in colonial India through the voice of Harry:

Its more than fifty years ago, but I will never forget the dust storms that we had that year. It blew all day, it blew all night. If you left a chink open everywhere, within the seconds, there would be a film of dust over everything. It got in your eyes, your nostrils. It was gritty between your teeth. Once those dust storm started, they seem to go on forever. Hot winds whistled and columns of dust came blowing in from the desert. It's no wonder everyone went mad. (*Heat and Dust* 1983)

The film metaphorically uses the description of weather to convey the hardships being faced by the British right from colonial times to the postcolonial era. The metaphoric use of weather help the filmmaker to exhibit the continuity in the narrative structure which intermingles two different eras in the history of a nation. The scene includes the visual aspects of the present and the narration depicts the past to exhibit the unity instead of the difference of Colonial and Postcolonial India.

The film, then enters to postcolonial era where Anne and Inder Lal's visit *Nawab's* palace. But the palace has turned into a ruined, empty, loveless place now in comparison to colonial times. But this time it's all empty as it has lost its glory of the past. Anne also looks nostalgic about Olivia when she looks at her picture and remarks: I was thinking how India changes people. The film shows how both the English ladies got pregnant from their Indian friends. Kumari Jayawardena in her book *The White Woman's Other Burden: Western Women and South Asia During British Rule* (2014) describes how both the ladies crossed the bridge of the difference between the colonial and the colonised, white and the non-whites. She writes, "they crossed boundaries of accepted race, gender and class positions, proclaiming sisterhood, and taking political stand against colonial rule" (9). The situation becomes tense in case of Olivia. She told Douglas about her pregnancy and he got excited but Olivia finds herself in a strange dilemma of whether to tell him the truth or not. The conversation between Olivia and Douglas described her miserable situation:

Douglas: What is it?

Olivia: I ought to tell you. It is not just the heat.

Douglas: What is it? Tell me. Are you ill?

Olivia: The fact is... I am pregnant.

Douglas: Darling. Darling, it's what we want. (*Heat and Dust* 1983)

The scene illustrates the innocence of Douglas as he is not aware from Olivia's affair with the *Nawab* and feels happy while Olivia is worried about the child. Olivia herself was not sure about the paternity of the unborn child. Suzanne Leonard in her article "The Threat to Whiteness: White Women's Marital Betrayals in Colonial Settings" writes, "Biological reproduction conflates here with a racial imperative, for surely blond haired-blue eyed babies populate Douglas and Olivia's beautiful line" (137). The film highlights the dominant role of colonialism and patriarchy which expects only the white children to be born from a white wife but in case of Olivia the conflict of inter-racial, extra marital affair comes into the question. That is why, the unborn baby is claimed by both the coloniser as well as the colonised. The unborn baby represents a threat to British morality and white superiority. The film depicts how *Nawab's* anger goes away when Olivia tells him that she is pregnant. The *Nawab* looks very happy and he remarks:

Nawab: Now they will see.

Olivia: Who will see?

Nawab: Major Minnies and the rest of them. They will laugh out of the other side of their mouths when they will see my son.

Olivia: Do you mean because of the colour? (*Heat and Dust 1983*)

The conversation between *Nawab* and Olivia describes how an English woman finds herself in trouble. Olivia realises how she is used by *Nawab*. Olivia comes to know about her identity as representing the British community in India. This compels her to think about her position in English community which never forgives such a crime she has committed. Olivia's act of being pregnant by an Indian *Nawab* was unacceptable under the colonial prestige. Suzanne Leonard in her article "The Threat to Whiteness: White Women's Marital Betrayals in Colonial Settings" discussed the interjection of colonialism, race and patriarchy and writes, "Olivia's body exists as something of a floating signifier onto which both prospective fathers project the potential to reproduce their own race" (137). The unborn child serves the colonial aim of reproducing the white race to fulfil the goals of patriarchy. On the other hand, Olivia's seduction, her pregnancy and the unborn baby seems a chance for the *Nawab* to challenge and outrun the British in this mighty game of colonialism, patriarchy and race.

Olivia seems to rediscover herself as an English woman and the *Nawab* as *the Other*, for the first time in the film. Her existence comes into the question as

being in-between the colonial and colonised and also because of her being a woman Olivia is exploited by the colonised. Thus Olivia's position appears similar to what Jean Paul Sartre in his book *Being and Nothingness* (1956) defines in detail. He writes, "the *Other* looks at me and as such as he holds the secret of my being, he knows what I am. Thus the profound meaning of my being is outside of me, imprisoned in an absence. The Other has the advantage over me" (363). Similarly, Olivia creates an opportunity for the *Nawab* where he gets himself in a position to humiliate the British. The *Nawab* tries to exploit the situation for his own agenda to make the British look down upon themselves. Olivia is ostracised by her own English community. Olivia seems aware that she would bring disgrace to her own community by giving birth to the child. Olivia is victimised by the colonial pride of the British and the anger of an Indian *Nawab*.

In the same way, Patrick Colm Hogan in his work *Colonialism and Cultural Identity* has explained the collaboration of colonialism, patriarchy and race where he writes, "for patriarchy too is a structure that effaces the identity of the oppressed" (86). Moreover, the patriarchal structure of the society dominates the whole situation and the woman becomes the sole bearer of the consequence of the clash between the colonial and the colonised. This compels Olivia to opt for an abortion and she finds herself in a hospital from where she disappears. Ruth Ben-Ghiat in her work *Italian Fascism's Empire Cinema* describes the male-focused approach of empire films that "The uniformed male body stood at the centre of the particular cult of masculine appearance fostered by the empire cinema" (11). She recognises the plight of the white female figure during the era dominated by the empire films aimed at propagating the imperial politics solely as a male thing. The Italian films were similar to the British Empire films in depicting the white male's supremacy over the white female and the desire for the exotic woman. Thus Olivia, was caught in a clash between the coloniser and the colonised under the dominant patriarchal structures where patriarchy seems equally powerful irrespective of the colonial-colonised bias. Olivia was ostracised from British community and they never talked about her. The film shows how Olivia disappears and it was believed that she took shelter in *Nawab's* secret house somewhere in the mountains where she died.



Figure: 3.6. Anne looks at a picture of Nawab and Olivia in *Heat and Dust* (1983)

Anne reaches the same place to know what happened to her great grand-niece. This shot represents Anne's imagination how she travels back in time to realise about Olivia's sufferings in colonial times. The film manages to show both the colonial as well as postcolonial happenings in a single shot. But unlike her ancestor she decides to give birth to her child because in the postcolonial era the situation has changed from the bitter relations between the colonial and the colonised.

The film seems successful in depicting as well as screening together the two different eras in the history of a nation irrespective of the time gap. The film gives postcolonial interpretation to the unvoiced colonial happenings among the Indians and the British people in colonial era. The film also depicts the shift from the colonial to the postcolonial era which manifests the change in the position of women. Because in postcolonial era, the grip of colonial-patriarchal forces seems somehow less powerful which enables Anne to think as well as decide on her own irrespective of her belongingness to white community. The film also is successful in describing two different periods from the history of a nation like India in a parallel way. The narrative structure of the film remains close to the basic essence of the two different eras of 1920s and of 1980s India.

3.2: Highlighting the way Empire Propagates Mystery about India in *A Passage to India* (1985)

The film *A Passage to India* (1985) is also studied here as a continuous discourse of the agenda of imperial politics in colonial era in the history of India. The film *A Passage to India* was directed by David Lean based on E.M. Fosters novel of the same name written in 1924. The film has been analysed in relation to other films of the Empire cinema such as *Heat and Dust* (1983), *Man Who Would be the King* (1975), *Bhowani Junction* (1956) *Before the Rains* (2007). Simon Featherstone in his article entitled "*Passages to India*" writes "the film does not celebrate the Empire, but the changes that it does make are indicative of the ways in which the politics of empire became an important part of popular culture in early 1980s" (293). In this way the film emerges as a medium through which India can be represented in its relation to British Empire and the politics of colonialism. The film uses the Indian landscape to propagate the colonial politics of including and redefining the nature of the colonised people in accordance to its culture. Nicholas B. Dirks in *Colonialism and Culture* (1992) writes "Often, these transformations seemed over determined, for culture in places such as India became, through colonial lenses, assimilated to the landscape itself, fixed in nature, and freed from history" (3). The mystery of the Malabar caves was associated with the mystery of Indian culture. The history of a nation like India, its culture as well as people have been described in relation to its geographical features.

The film *A Passage to India* begins with the sound effect of rain followed by the close up of people having umbrellas over them moving across the screen in the foreground showing a ship in the background. Then the camera pans left to have a close up of the ship. It shows how a lady looks at the ship from outside having umbrella over her head. Constantine Santas, James M. Wilson and others in *The Encyclopaedia of Epic Films* mention about the micro details in the film shots that "Lean wrote the script for *A Passage to India* with utmost attention to details about sets, location, dialogues, photography describing every single scene and the shots in it, and he shot the movie exactly as was it in the script" (416). In this way, the opening scene of the film showcases the visual mechanism and its richness to express the mighty subject of colonial and colonised interactions, their mutual understanding and the native geographical and cultural features.

The next scene shows Miss Quested looking at various sceneries like the Taj Mahal and the Marabar Caves hanging on the wall. This technique of providing the details about the colonised countries has been a common practice in colonial propaganda. Saloni Mathur in her Book *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* writes, “In case of India, native views depicted Indian buildings or landscapes along with images of colonial bodies defined by caste, occupational status, gender and religion” (116). In this technique, the filmmaker tries to introduce a stranger who is from thousand miles away, to a new country with its monuments like Taj Mahal or the Marabar caves. On the other hand, Michael Ryan and, Melissa Lenos clarify about the narrative of the film and its meaning in their book *An Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and Meaning in narrative Film* that “some meaning comes from the culture a filmmaker inhabits, and they enter a film without the filmmaker realizing it [...] other meanings are shaped by thematic or aesthetic necessity and seem neither entirely unconscious nor entirely deliberate” (3-4). The films of the Empire Cinema introduces India, its people and its geography as uncivilised, mystic and full of chaos to suit the colonial politics and its imperial agenda to deconstruct and redefine the native history and culture in a new way.



Figure: 3. 7. *A Passage to India* (1985) and *Man Who Would be the King* (1975)

The scene at the market, in the film *A Passage to India*, depicts the same kind of native people in the market with similar setting to that of the film *Man Who Would be the King*. Christopher J. Bowen in *Grammar of the Shot* explains that “The result is a selection of shots that depict all of the events in the scene from different angles

and with different subject sizes within the frame” (25). This is a typical example of the films of the Empire Cinema which use this kind of shots to introduce India, its people, their doings and the British as strangers to the land of mysterious caves and snake charmers, on a civilising mission. Robert A. Rosenstone in his book *History on Film/Film on History* describes the meaning making process of a historical film and explains that “Like written history, it utilizes traces of that past [...] to give but a few examples” (182). In this way, the films of the Empire Cinema highlight the awkward moments of native life style, its markets with snake charmers, people carrying dead bodies and other details which can be exploited to propagate the backwardness of an uncivilised native society, in need of an interference of the colonial forces. The film depicts about the colonial mind-set of the British as fixed, racial and full of doubt towards the Indians. It becomes clear when Mrs. Moore asks Mr. Turton to introduce with some Indians, they must have come across socially as friends. But in response Mrs. Moore get an arrogant answer as:

Mr. Turton: *As a Matter of fact we don't come across them socially.*

Mrs. Turton: East is East, Mrs. Moore. It's a question of culture.

The film also shows the condition of the British and the Indians in two scenes which show how Mrs. Moore and Adella used to sleep in a comfortable manner. On the other hand, the corresponding scene shows how a large number of Indians sleeping in miserable condition. The film shows the life in Indian market; full of fruits and vegetables, the buyers and sellers, and in the end shows how a dead body is being carried away. While in contrast to the Indian side, the films depicts the British civil lines as a beautiful and peaceful place. The film juxtaposes the two different images of the colonial and the colonised.

The film also includes a scene with a close up of a reflexion of moon shining in water filmed in a black and white light to express the whiteness of the moonlight and the darkness of the night. But this typical juxtaposition is used to symbolise the racial difference between the present characters on screen. Mrs. Moore and Dr. Aziz represent the two different sides of the entire politics of colonialism. While discussing about the use of characters within the frame Michael Ryan and, Melissa Lenos in *Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and Meaning in narrative Film* (2012) describe “A filmmaker usually assigns greater importance or value to characters who are centred within the frame” (38). It can also be interpreted to explain how empire films use typical filmic devices to construct the image of colonial

India. The use of black and white scene in the film points towards the narrative structure of the film as it focuses on the Indian-English interactions in colonial era.

Moreover, the film also depicts the two different perspectives about India. First in case of Mrs. Moore who leave the club and comes to the masque to have some kind of experience about the real India while others look busy in their British style of life in the club. This scene also highlights how the colonised subjects try to interpret their lives in relation to the British. The way, the film develops Dr. Aziz's character, verifies this. At first, he narrates his own life story to Mrs. Moore and later on interacts with Mr. Fielding. When Dr. Aziz accompanies Mrs. Moore to the club and she tells him about her wish to invite him inside but Dr. Aziz reminds her that the Indians are not allowed to get in the club. This highlights how the film comments on the spatial politics of colonialism which forbids Indians from entering such places reserved only for the English.

The film also suggests how English people perceive their visit to India as a small adventure and try to explore more. They want to experience something real as Miss Adella puts "it: I am longing to see something of the real India". But this is answered appropriately by Fielding who remarks: "Try seeing Indians". This idea helps Mr. Turton to arrange for a bridge party to bridge the gulf between East and West and have some kind of personal experience of real India. The film captures the scene at the bridge party and highlights the multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-ethnic identity of the Indians and the British who participated in the event. The film depicts how the British behave with the Indians at the bridge party which has been highlighted through the conversation between Mrs. Moore and Ronny.

Mrs. Moore: I do not see why you all behave so unpleasantly to these people.

Ronny: We're not out here to be pleasant. India isn't a drawing room. We're out here to do justice and to keep the peace. I'm not a missionary or a sentimentalist socialist. What do you and Adela want me to do? Sacrifice my career. Lose the power I have for doing good in this benighted country?

Mrs. Moore: You are speaking about power. The whole of this entertainment is an exercise in power and the subtle pleasures of personal superiority. God has put us on earth to love and help our fellow men.

Ronny: Yes, mother. (*A Passage to India*, 1985)

This conversation between Mrs. Moore and Ronny highlights the pride of colonial politics to define themselves more civilised as well as more powerful than the colonised. Edward Said in his famous work *Orientalism* (1978) explains how the image of the orient was constructed by the Western scholars and now it has become an essential part of their propaganda of colonialism. He writes, "Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, image, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles" (Said 2). The film depicts how Ronny differentiates himself as a colonial administrator and concentrates on his duty to keep an order in the colonised land. Ronny also symbolises the powerful position of the colonial over the colonised.

In the same way, E.M. Forster writes in the book *A Passage to India* (1924) that "Every human act in the East is tainted with officialism" (188) and then further he further explained that "Where there is officialism every human relationship suffers" (212). The following scene depicts the conversation between Mr. Fielding, Dr. Aziz, Professor Godbole, Mrs. Moore and Adela about the muddle and mystery of India. The film depicts how the architecture of Indian buildings, like the mosque, the caves and the temples does contribute the muddle and mystery of India. As John Dixon Hunt in his article *Muddle and Mystery* in "A Passage to India" (2015) explains that "Temple describes muddle and it is itself artistically rather amorphous...[...] Only Indians can communicate in and about muddle" (498&502). This explains how empire films like *A Passage to India* define Indian landscape and describe the native nature and architecture as formless, dark and mysterious without any historical and cultural importance. The film follows the imperial agenda of describing the colonised people, its nature and architecture as inferior, mysterious and dangerous one.

The film depicts Adela got deeply influenced from the ruins, the exotic God statues all around in the forest and realised her own sexuality. That is why, Adela changes her decision and starts thinking about her relation with Ronnie. Pasticia Pisters in her article "Echoes in the Kernel of the Colonial Discourse" explains the change in Adela's views about human life and sexuality. She writes, "In an allegorical way the scene shows how confusingly desire and fear operate in colonial discourse in order to sustain the colonial order" (298). This change in Adela's

behaviour comes only after she visits the temple whose erotic surroundings revive her sexuality. That's why she changes her mind and asks for Ronny's protection in marriage.

The film depicts how Marabar caves symbolise the mystery of India for Adela and Mrs. Moore. Dr. Aziz and Adela climb up to the caves and Adela starts asking Dr. Aziz questions about love and marriage. Patricia Pisters in her article "Echoes in the Kernel of the Colonial Discourse" explains about this scene and says, "The cave scene shows a similar ambiguity between desire and normative cultural codes ... [...] Adela thinks of her own loveless engagement with her English fiancé that she has just agreed on (binding her to normative cultural codes" (298). This depicts how Adela rediscovers her own relationship with Ronny and the atmosphere at the caves makes her to ask Dr. Aziz whether he loved his wife at the time of marriage or not. It seems as she was in dilemma about the feelings about Ronny. This was the impact of caves and their mysterious powers to make any stranger like Adela and Mrs. Moore doubtful about their own lives. Mrs. Callendar also describes the impact of echoes on Adela and she remarks: She can't get rid of it. In the same mode, Pramod K. Nayar in *Colonial Voices: The Discourses of Empire* (2012) writes, "the landscape's feminine attractions and feminisation of nature constitute a central feature of the colonial exotic landscape, nature and woman were all part of this erotic- exotic discourses of difference" (44). Thus In the light of empire politics, the film functions to portray the landscape of the colonised country as mysterious and dangerous for the colonisers which imprints the mysterious echoes in their psyche having long lasting impact on their lives.

On the other hand the film *A Passage to India* also depicts how Adela decides not to marry Ronny as the film *Heat and Dust* represents the similar event where Olivia leaves Douglas and elopes with the *Nawab*. This phenomenon of interracial love and marriage has also been depicted in the films like *Juno* (1978) and *Memsahib* (2008). The film like *Juno* (1978) shows that even Ruth has probably begun to have affectionate feelings for Javed. Prem Chowdhry opines, "In *Juno*, the obsession of Javed for Ruth is not one sided. Ruth is always shown to be intensely and sexually aware of him" (185). The same concept of love and marriage between the white woman and the native royal king has been depicted in the film *Memsahib* (2008). Clare Monk and Amy Sargeant in their book *British Historical Cinema* explain that "These narrative developments could be interpreted as further

evidence that the films invert the (and so disavow) 'real' colonial power relations: in both cases, the white man cannot win over the force of India" (155). These two similar events depicting English women leaving their English men in favour of the Indians describe the anti-colonial narrative of the films. Both films depict the Indo-British relations in the colonial era and the films were released in the postcolonial era.

Since the films are based on the events from the colonial history but these films are released in postcolonial era which shows how the change in time from colonial to postcolonial, enables a filmmaker to challenge or to question, the white colonial morality or superiority. Otherwise, in colonial era it was nearly impossible to showcase such issues which in any way symbolise the negative aspects of British life on screen. William Mazarella, in his article "Making Sense of the Cinema in Late Colonial India" writes, "These concerns about image and audience were, of course, inseparable from the larger question of how to regulate the cinema in India" (81). That is why the films of Empire Cinema cause a threat to that of white colonial cultural codes in colonial India. Olivia in the film *Heat and Dust* and Adela in *A Passage to India* have been portrayed against the tides of colonial ideology of superior Christian values where the white wife has been defined as a source of reproducing the white Christian values to keep the superior position of the colonial powers over the colonised subjects.

But in case of these selected films, this idea of superiority of the colonial masters has been questioned and also the belief of white morality has been shattered since the films are released in the postcolonial era. That is why, Earl G. Ingersoll in his book *Filming Forster: The Challenges of Adapting E.M. Forster's Novels for the Screen* explains that "Indeed, even before *A Passage to India* was released, Lean's film was already being challenged as a gesture toward nostalgia for the Raj" (31). The films like *A Passage to India* (1985) seem to represent the colonial nostalgia of the colonial powers in the postcolonial era when most of the colonies have got the freedom from the imperial rule.

3.3: Indo-British interactions and Colonial exploitation in *Before the Rains* (2007)

The film *Before the Rains* (2007) is directed by Santosh Sivan. The film begins with a close up of a river flowing in a smoky morning, in the midst of beautiful greenery of mountains. Michael Ryan and, Melissa Lenos in their book *An Introduction to Film*

Analysis: Technique and Meaning in narrative Film describe, “Nature metaphors are often used in the movies to suggest states of being the filmmakers endorse. Nature is often associated with authenticity, spontaneity, and truthfulness” (135). The film also includes a high angle view of the native workers in a diminished and powerless position in contemporary colonial era. The same shot introduces T.K. and his British master Henry Moors, the main characters of the film. As the camera pauses at the picture of TK and Mr. Moors the voice over introduces the situation as *Kerala, Southern India, 1937*. The conversation between TK and Mr. Moors starts as follow:

TK: Sahib. We have to change the way again.

Mr. Moors: This will be the toughest way of the British Empire.

TK: Absolutely. But it will remain safe even after the rains. The straight road could have been washed away.

Mr. Moors: We will name the road after your name, TK. Neelam Road.

Before the Rains (2007)

The act of naming the road also symbolically highlights the main purpose of construction of a road to serve the British interest and this will be fulfilled even if it is named after an Indian. The next shot captures an English character, Mr. Moors who remarks: “aaj chai, kal hogi daalchini, kalimirch” then the list further added by TK as he says ‘*Elaichi*’. While discussing about the colonial knowledge about exploiting the natural resources of the colonised country Daniel Fischlin and Martha Nandorfy in *The Community of Rights/The Rights of Community (2012)* writes, “Bio-piracy has a long history closely linked to European colonisation...[...] In a seventeenth century story from Kerala, India, the Portuguese are caught uprooting the pepper vines and carrying away to ships” (185). The colonial powers like the British try to build roads to export Indian spices in the international market. The film quite similar proposes the idea like another film, *Massey Sahib (1985)* directed by Pradip Krishen where the story centres around the process of making a road in the mountains. The film has been set in the 1929s India and circles around a young Indian clerk named Frances Massey. Both the films *Before the Rains (2007)* and *Massey Sahib (1985)* depict the colonial motive of trade, profit and exploitation, behind the construction of the road. These films deal with the issues of colonial greed, the relation between the colonial man and colonised woman, the beginning of the Indian struggle for freedom. In the end, construction of the road before the

rains to exploit the native natural resources, seems the main motive of colonial administration.

The film depicts a close relationship between Sajani and Mr. Moore. This is quite different from other films such as *Heat and Dust*, *A Passage to India*, and *Bhowani Junction* (1956) where the English women have been seduced by or got attracted towards the Indian men. This scene also depicts the erotic part of film's narrative in the background of colonial India and colonial exploitation of Indian spices and other natural resources. The scene at the water fall describes the eroticism visually when Mr. Moore touches Sajani. The violent behaviour of Sajani's husband towards her explains the patriarchal restrictions on women in India, in the colonial era. The woman has been dually exploited because she belongs to the colonised natives and on the other hand, she is the victim of patriarchy: native as well as the colonised. In this way, Sajani has to suffer because of her race (being an Indian) and gender (being a woman).

The other part of the narrative structure of the film shows Sajani as a victim of her husband's violence when he comes to know about her relation with Mr. Moore. The film also shows how the Englishman, Mr. Moores deceives Sajani. The film indirectly depicts the miserable condition of a colonised woman who has to suffer as she is exploited by the white colonial man. In the same way, Milena Bubenechik in her book *The Trauma of Colonial Condition: in Nervous Conditions and Kiss of the Fur Queen* writes, "This notion of sexual dominance was transferred onto colonial masculinity and engendered an immense break in native masculinity by rendering it effeminate" (11). That's why the film focuses on the both of the stories up to the end to symbolise the colonial exploitation of the native woman figure in the colonial era. On the other hand, for Sajani it was an act of deception because she loves the Englishman that's why she remarks: Where is your love and promises? This makes the story more dreadful and highlights the fact how a white man deceives a native woman as well as his own white mistress.

This typical scene also explains the plight of the white woman deceived by their white husbands, the colonial officers. They indulge in extra marital affairs with native women. The film depicts how the women from both the sides: the colonial and the colonised, became the victims of patriarchy. Mr. Moores exploits the native woman as well as he deceives his own wife. The patriarchal structures play the same role in the exploitation of the women whether it be the colonised native woman

or the white colonial *memsahib*. The film *Before the Rains* (2007) seems to comment on the issue of an amalgam of colonialism and patriarchy by showcasing the relationship of Mr. Moores with Sajani.

The film also depicts how TK's father questions the British attempt to build a road. The dialogue between the father and the son represents the two perspectives regarding British colonialism. TK defends the British idea to build a road as it will give employment to the local people. TK's father questions British colonialism as "First tea, now spices. Don't know what will be in the future? Our people have survived for ages without their help. Have we face any problem till today? Listen to his modern ideas (Pointing toward his mother)" (*Before the Rains* 2007). The film also comments how colonialism effects the relationship of the native father and son. The first to exploit were the Portuguese as Biplab Dasgupta in *European Trade and Colonial Conquest, Volume 1* (2005) writes, "the main trading interest of the Portuguese lay neither in Bengal nor in textiles, but in Kerala and in spices" (252). In this way, the spices of India in the colonial era were the main targeted commodity for the colonial exploitation.

The film also depicts the crowd shouting slogans as *Long live the Mother India*. The next cut captures how TK joins the crowd to participate in the struggle for freedom. The film ends here. The film *Before the Rains* also highlights the colonial greed to exploit the productive resources of the colonised. The British character named Mr. Moores fulfils the both aims as he developed an extra marital affair with the native female and also constructed a road to exploit the natural resources of the native, colonised motherland. The film highlights the way, colonial and patriarchal structures exploit the women from both sides, irrespective of their race. Sajani and Mrs. Moores have to suffer as it happens in case of Olivia in *Heat and Dust* (1983). Olivia also had to suffer because of this mechanism of patriral and colonial structures. The characterisation of Sajani and Mrs. Moors in relation to their husbands highlights this dominant combination of colonialism and patriarchy.

3.4: Colonial Politics and Anglo-Indian Issues in *Bhowani Junction* (1956)

The film *Bhowani Junction* (1956), directed by George Cukor, is based on the novel of the same name written by John Masters in 1954. John Masters wrote many novels about British India to highlight the superiority of the British life. *Bhowani Junction* (1956) like John Masters' other works such as *The Deceivers* (1952) and *Nightrunners of Bengal* (1951), also glorifies the British rule. These novels ignore

the native people's right to freedom and portray them as uncivilised and criminals. In the same way, the film *Bhowani Junction* (1956) also tries to hide the brutalities of colonial authorities. On the other hand, the film depicts the miserable plight of the Anglo-Indian community at the end of colonial era in India.

The film opens with a scene at the railway station, framed from a high angle shot to describe the Indians. Michael Ryan and Melissa Lenos in their book *An Introduction to Film Analysis* mention the usage of high angle shot in films and describe, "The high angle shot can foster an impression of domination, as when someone looks down on someone else" (58). The typical scene, at the beginning of the film, explains the colonial politics of maintaining the difference between the superior and the inferior, the dominant and the dominated, the colonial and the colonised even when the British are very close to their exit from India in 1947.

The film introduces the main characters like Captain Savage and Victoria Jones in a scene at the station and follows with a shot depicting General Ackerby discussing the situation of India. He asks Colonel Savage why, the men there decorate you with garlands instead of cutting your throat? Actually the colonial officers like General Ackerby who have arrived in India recently were not much familiar with India and its people. He looks surprised when the colonised subjects wish good bye to Colonel Savage. That is why Colonel Savage clarifies and remarks: *Davay was as much their enemy as ours Sir*. The British officer, General Ackerby also asks Colonel Savage about Victoria:

British General: Got a very attractive girl. English woman?

Colonel Savage: No sir. Indian, with English blood or English, with Indian blood. Half cast if you like. *Chichi*, a race that never belongs to either side. And wouldn't belong anywhere after we pulled out. (*Bhowani Junction*, 1956)

The conversation focuses on the idea of in-between existence of Anglo-Indian community in India as they represent the mixed racial heritage. The film exhibits its thematic concerns in relation to the miserable plight of the Anglo-Indian community of the times. The film seems to comment on the complexity of the situation of mixed race of Anglo-Indians during the conflict of colonial and colonised. While discussing about the miserable condition of the Anglo-Indians, Noel Gist and Roy Dean in their monograph *Marginality and Identity: Anglo-Indians as a Racially-Mixed Minority in India* (1973) write about the racial identity of the Anglo-Indians.

They described, “Wherever European powers maintained colonial holdings in Asia there developed an “Eurasian” minority representing biological blending through conventional and unconventional sexual contacts” (1). In this way, the colonialism seems responsible for the creation of Anglo-Indian community in colonial era. But with the passage of time, this community representing the biological traits of both the colonial as well as the colonised, has to suffer because both the British and Indian communities dispossess them. The film showcases the Anglo-Indian feelings of belonging to nowhere in the turbulent times at the end of colonialism in India.

The film also comments on the miserable plight of Anglo-Indians at that time like Taylor and Victoria had to suffer at the market. Taylor suggests her to wear the cap otherwise the sun will turn her skin brown. But Victoria remarks that it is not the sun which makes us brown, is it? But this expression by Victoria reminds them of their origin because they are neither purely English nor Indian.

This issue of being an Anglo-Indian continues even when both Taylor and Victoria reach home. Victoria uses to call her father Pater and her mother Mater as the narrator describes: Everything in their own little world was just second hand illusion. It was begged, borrowed and stolen from the British society that have made them and then rejected them with the same breath. Glenn D’ Cruz in his work *Midnight’s Orphan* explains, “In other words, colonial administrators identified Anglo-Indians as one of the dangerous ‘others’ who threatened the normative bourgeois self in particular, and the colonial order of things in general” (73). This revelation depicts how confused the Anglo-Indian might has been at that time in the era of British withdrawal from India.

The film further intensifies the confusion when Victoria and Taylor discuss the fate of Anglo-Indians. Another shot with a cross cut shows Colonel Savage talking to the other soldiers. At this Victoria’s father says whatever happens to India when men like Colonel Savage pack and go home. Victoria replies that they are going to leave very soon:

Taylor: They can’t leave what will happen to us Anglo-Indians? If British left India. We will be finished.

Victoria: They hardly that there are such things like Anglo-Indians. We just drop them into the bucket and to the Indians...[...] sometimes we talk as if Lord fix everything in India so they can’t ever change. But it is changing and the sooner we face it better.



Figure: 3.8. Taylor, Victoria and their parents discuss the situation in *Bhowani Junction* (1956)

Taylor: Do you think that bloody congress government will go on holding jobs open for us especially in railway like the British do? ... [...] But if the Indian go we will be left with nothing. Our schools, our positions they will take the bloody lot. (*Bhowani Junction*, 1956)

Patrick Taylor's fear about losing their jobs in the railways looks quite genuine because at the contemporary times of colonial rule, the most of the railway jobs were given to the Anglo-Indians. Victoria looks confident about the miserable plight of Anglo-Indians after the British left while Patrick Taylor seems worry for their jobs in Indian railways. Similarly, Laura Bear in the introduction to her book named *Line of the Nation: Indian Railways, Workers, Bureaucracy and the Historical Self*, under the title of "Anglo-Indians as A Railway Caste" described as follow:

From the first operation of railways in India, domiciled Europeans and Eurasians were preferentially recruited to the upper subordinate posts, and Indians were excluded from all but the lowest level of the hierarchy...[...] in 1932 almost 100 percent of the upper subordinate positions on the state-managed railway were filled by Anglo-Indians and Europeans. (9)

The film depicts railway's role in giving employment to the Anglo-Indian community. The film clearly shows that the Anglo-Indians like Victoria Jones, her

Father and Patrick Taylor all are employed in railway. That's why Taylor is afraid about their jobs in railways. But on the other hand, Victoria seems worry about their position in Indian society after the exit of the British from India. The film shows this in the conversation between Victoria and Patrick Taylor.

Victoria: Then let them. At least I will stand on my own feet like other people.

Taylor: Yes. So we may throw away our *topies* and turn our skins black. We will be nobody. It's not just our jobs, it's our social positions who you are.

Victoria: And who we are? I will tell you. *Cheechees*.

Mr. Jones: What you trying to do the child?

Victoria: I am only trying to make Patrick to know the truth that when the British go we must take our fate in our own hands.

Taylor: If the British go I will go home with them.

Victoria: Home! Where is your home man? England. Then you will fell in the Black Sea on your way here.

Mr. Jones: Victoria stop this.

Victoria: I used to think you do. But I have spent four years with Indians and English. They know who they are. We don't. We can't become English because we are half Indian. We can't become Indians because we are half English. I discover it's a wonderful thing to know who you are but we don't. Our past has gone the present is going. I am asking you, the big man, use your head and think. (*Bhowani Junction*, 1956)

The film also showcases the Indians and their relationship with the Anglo-Indians. The film comments on the fears among the Anglo-Indians at the time of the freedom of India. Because the Indians look happy as they were going to be free. They will be able to make decisions about their future on their own. On the other side, the British being the colonial power have exploited India in every aspect and now they are going to leave India on their own to decide about their fate. But the third issue, which the film tries to highlight is the dilemma of being an Anglo-Indian under the circumstances of social and political upheaval in India at the end of colonialism. The film specifically focuses on Anglo-Indians relations where Victoria and Ranjit Kasel watch the children and Victoria remarks as how they love to watch

the soldiers and I suppose we all do. While Ranjit Kasel describes about the picture of his imagination about the future of India and he remarks:

They are the future miss Jones, the new India. For them the life will be very different and it will not be politics but education that will shape them... our country will be open like a flower once the British are gone and India is free.
(*Bhowani Junction*, 1956)

The scene depicts two different perspectives regarding the contemporary times at the end of colonial era. First, Victoria explains the Anglo-Indian view in describing the incident of children running after the soldiers and gives a nostalgic touch to this event. On the other hand, Ranjit Kasel gives the native description as he imagines how the future of India will be after freedom from the British. He also talks about the role of education in shaping free India instead of politics.

The film again depicts the psychological state of Victoria and shows Victoria asking Ranjit Kasel that they don't think me as an Indian. Do you Ranjit? And he replies: No Miss Jones. As a European. Then Victoria expresses her fear and says I feel I have come to the point where we don't belong anywhere. In this way, the film strikes the dilemma of Anglo-Indians from which they have to go through in those days at the closure of colonial rule in India. The Anglo-Indians start to feel insecure about their future in India after the Independence. She looks worried and when Ranjit Kasel asks her to accompany her to home but she denies. In her way, Mcdenial tried to rape her but she kills her and Ranjit takes her to his own house. This highlights the miserable plight of Anglo-Indians as being neglected by both sides; the Indian as well as the British.

The film *Bhowani Junction* showcases one of the most turbulent times in the history of India. The film can also be interpreted to know the actual active socio-political movements at that time. The film depicts the non-violent anti-British protest is going on and the congressmen like Mr. Surabhai are leading a crowd of Indians for a peaceful, non-violent agitation against the British. The protestors lie down on the railway track to stop the railway transportation. The connection between the railways and the anti-colonial protestors has been mentioned by Visalakshi Menon and Sucheta Mahajan in their article entitled as "Indian nationalism and Railways" where they write, "It can thus be said that all varieties of nationalists from Gandhian to revolutionaries had a symbolic relationship with the railways" (170). The film also shows Colonel Savage orders Surabhai and other protestors to get away from the

track, but they ignore his warning. Colonel Savage asks Surabhai: Are you a high caste Hindu? Mr. Surabhai replies: Yes. Then Colonel Savage orders his men to carry some buckets full of sewage and told the protestors that I give to five seconds or prepare yourselves for five months purification.



Figure: 3.9. Colonel Savage orders to pour filthy sewage on the protestors in *Bhowani Junction* (1956)

The film shows orders his the low caste servants to pour filthy sewage and garbage on the protestors most of them belong to high caste and run away. It was very humiliating for the Hindus and they were psychologically defeated by Colonel Savage. This scene can also be interpreted to mean how the film comments on the issue of caste conflict between Brahmins and Dalits in the era of colonialism in India. This incident in the film also highlights how colonialism strikes at the psychological backwardness of the colonised people when the physical forces seem ineffective. In the same mode, Nicholas B, Dirks in his work *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and Making of the Modern India* (2011) writes, "Caste had been political all along, but under colonialism was anchored to the service of a colonial interest" (14). The typical scene depicts how the film exploits the native socio-cultural drawbacks such as the caste and class hierarchy to fulfil their own agenda of colonial politics. The caste discrimination in Indian socio-cultural structure is continue since ages. It proved itself as an active phenomenon during colonial era which can be exploited by

colonial powers to exercise the policy of divide and rule. Surinder S. Jodhka in his book *Caste* describes, “Caste, power, and politics are also subjects of contemporary relevance” (36). This scene depicts the amalgamation of colonial knowledge which includes the history of colonised people and the role of caste discrimination in it. The film also shows the high caste Brahmins’ fear of impurity if any low caste human ever touches them. The concept of impurity is directly or indirectly related to the untouchables in accordance to their occupation. The film also depicts how the riots broke out in the city as the narrator Colonel Savage describes: we were expecting riot and we got them. There is violence everywhere and the scene describes the fire, violence and chaos everywhere. The scene typically reflects in the same way as it has been describes in Gurinder Chadha’s film *Viceroy’s House* (2017) where the communal riots take place in both India and Pakistan during partition.

The film *Bhowani Junction* also depicts how Kasel’s mother represents the colonial female’s belief in violent struggle against the British. She has been portrayed as a stern nationalist who applauds the killing of an English soldier in response to what the British did at the platform. The film comments on the role of native female when she questions Victoria:

Why you should support the British law? You are half Indian, are not you? [...]Have you ever met any Englishman who did not insult you? Have not your own people work for them hundred years? How they are going to reward you? They are going to leave you here with us. What you think we are going to do with you Anglo-Indians? We are going to make you realise you that you are Indians, the inferiors Indians, possibly disloyal Indian. Why don’t you see that you are Indian and act like Indians? (*Bhowani Junction* 1956)

The film seems to comment upon the native woman’s role in Indian struggle against the colonial powers. This typical scene also highlights how the native female becomes more powerful in comparison to the Anglo-Indian lady. Ranjit Kasel’s mother exercises her power over Victoria. That is why, Mary A. Procida in entitled *Married To The Empire: Gender, Politics and Imperialism in India 1883-1947* (2002) writes, “Whether Westernized or not, Indian women had long been engaged with the social and political life of their country” (188). The film also highlights the dominant role of a colonised female in the context of the ideological structures of patriarchy and colonialism. This era of nationalism seems an opportunity to strengthen the voice of native female as well as it recognises their services for the

cause of Indian struggle against the British. The film shows, the way, Ranjit's mother looks confident to defeat the forces of both the colonialism and patriarchy.



Figure: 3.10. Victoria looks her image in the mirror *Bhowani Junction* (1956)

This scene is filmed with camera panning from left towards right from Victoria's back. The scene is filmed from over the shoulder's shot to show Victoria's reflection in the mirror. Christopher J. Bowen in *Grammar of the Shot* explains the composition of such shots, and describes that "The camera gets to peek over the shoulder of our main subject and shows the audience what the subject is looking at. The participating viewer is invited to do the thinking and feeling as if he or she were the character" (55). In this scene, the filmmaker wants to point out how Victoria has to recognise a new identity for herself. The film highlights the dilemma of an Anglo-Indian woman by framing such a shot, which makes the focused character to think about her own existence and identity. Michael Ryan and, Melissa Lenos in their book *An Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and Meaning in narrative Film* describe that "Films often operate in the same way. They are fantasies or walking dreams, they allow unconscious material to be expressed in a substitute form" (169). In this way, the film seems to comment on the psychological condition of Anglo-Indian women in the contemporary times at the end of colonial era. The film also comments on how the native colonised female exercises her power to change the

mind of an Anglo-Indian woman. In the same way, Mary A. Procida in her work entitled *Married to the Empire: Gender, Politics and Imperialism in India 1883-1947* writes, “the relationship between the Anglo-Indian and Indian woman was complex, however, coloured by expectations about femininity and women’s role in the empire” (182). As in the picture we can see how Sadani, Ranjit Kasal’s mother, tries to plant her anti-colonial ideas into Victoria’s mind. Similarly, Clifford Geertz in her essay *Thick Description: Toward as Interpretive Theory of Culture* (2000) explains, “One is to imagine that culture is a self-contained super organic reality with forces and purposes of its own; that is, to reify it” (11). On the other hand, the change in Victoria’s look symbolises the change which the Indian society and culture will exercise upon the Anglo-Indians after the British left. More over like other films such as *Heat and Dust* and *Passage to India*, the film *Bhowani Junction* also highlight the interaction between the Indians and the English, their relations and the plight of Anglo-Indians of the times. That’s why these films of the Empire Cinema showcase the native culture’s insistence that a man (as in case of Dr. Aziz) or woman (like Olivia and Victoria) must get married.

That is why, native female character in the film questions the Anglo-Indian woman about their future in a free India. The film showcases Victoria wearing an Indian sari tells her feelings to Ranjit’s mother but the old lady reminds her the need for a man now. Then she covers Victoria’s head with an edge of the sari and it changes Victoria’s look entirely. Indirectly, the film comments on the fact of extreme nationalism in those days where the native female figure could challenge the larger politics of colonialism and patriarchy at the same time.

The film also depicts Anglo-Indians’ sensitivities, their tastes, and perceptions about various issues concerning their lives at the end of colonial rule in India. The film shows Victoria talking with Ranjit Kasal about the native music, their living style, and changing the names after their marriage. The film also depicts the way Anglo-Indians help both the communities because they work as a link, as a bridge, and moreover as a common race which belongs to both the Indian and the British. The Anglo-Indians serve the colonial and colonised in various ways. But as the time passes, the situation begins to change and the actual in-between position of Anglo-Indians comes to the light. In the same way, Gene Phillips writes, “In Masters’ and Cukor’s opinions, the Sikh are a representation of India, and their exoticism is frightening, as Indian identity is daunting and futile. Therefore, the

escape from the temple is also an escape from Indian identity” (qtd in Izhar 79). In this way, the nationalism, the patriotism and even the religion has been described as treacherous, futile, and double crossing Indian tactics used against the British.

The film also raises the questions about Anglo-Indian identity, it's in between existence and then the self-discovery. In the same way, Richard Jenkins in his book *Social Identity* described that “Identity can only be understood as a process of being or becoming” (18). That's why, in the film, we see how Victoria first seems attracted towards Ranjit Kasel. But her experience at the Sikh temple including her nostalgia of violence, murder and being an outsider, forces her to run away from Indian identity, Indian culture and the Indians too. That's why, she travels with his father to wash away her guilt of a murder and the signs of her attachment with the Indians, in any form.

While on her way to Gondwara, Victoria looks at the other train which is crossing their train to go back to the place from which she has run away. This symbolises the actual psychological dilemma of Victoria as physically she is moving away from Bhowani but at the same time her consciousness is dragging her back to past memories. Wendy Rose in her autobiographical essay “Neon Scars” which is an excerpt from Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat's collection *I Tell You Now: Autobiographical Essays by Native American Writers* published in 1987 describes her experience about thriving for her own self which was lost somewhere by being in between the white and native Indian American and expressed that “The coloniser and the colonised meet in my blood. It is so much more complex than just white and just Indian” (258). The actual condition of subjectivity looks similar in respect to the colonial and the colonised whether it may be the case of native American-Indian woman or in case of Victoria as being Anglo-Indian. This clearly shows the in-between existence of Anglo-Indian subjectivity because of the colonial British people and the native Indians.

In the same mode Stephen Greenblatt in his work *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More To Shakespeare* explains that “If improvisation is made possible by the subversive perception of another's truth as an ideological construct, that construct must at the same time be grasped in terms that bear resemblance to one's own set of beliefs” (228). That's why, in another scene with Colonel Savage, Victoria remarks: I was sick of being half-breed. I wanted to belong somewhere. This scene explains how Victoria rediscovers herself and turns to her own people.

The film also seems to comment upon the question of how the Anglo-Indians like Victoria suffer and have to crave for their own subjectivity, own self and own space in the postcolonial world. Ruth Ben-Ghiat in her book entitled *Italian Fascism's Empire Cinema* writes, "the production process of Empire films in the colonies also reinforced cinema's function as a technology of conquest and governance" (6). The film works for the imperial agenda to describe the Indian nationalists from a fixed colonial viewpoint and their violent struggle against the British Empire. The film works as a medium of propagating the British attempt to restore the order in the midst of violence caused by the nationalists and communists like Davay and Sadani. The film portrays the Indian patriots in a negative sense to uphold the superiority of the British rule.

The film also comments on the violence of the colonised people against the British during the 1857 revolt when Colonel Savage and Victoria stop to have a look on a grave. The film includes a symbolic reference to the violence of 1857 Revolt and establishes the link when Victoria reads the words written on a grave: To the memory of Joanna, the beloved wife of Captain Rodney Savage... [...] who died on the 10th of May 1857. Colonel Savage explains how his great grandmother was killed in the mutiny. And he also admits that so you see I am as much as a part of India as you are. The scene describes the violence on the part of the colonised in the Revolt of 1857 which is still prevalent and caused horror in the memory of the British.

Moreover the film proposes how savage and uncivilised the Indians were at that time of 1850s and the British are sacrificing their lives from generation to generation to restore order in India. On the other hand, in the memory of Indians the 1857 revolt still occupies a respectable space as it is considered the first struggle for freedom of India. The film seems to question both the perspectives of Indians as well as the British as the both give different interpretation to a same event from their colonial history.

In the end, the film explains how Victoria refuses Colonel Savage's offer to go to England with him but she denies as she explains that I don't belong there not even as your wife. I belong here. Not as a phony Indian, not as a phony white but as myself. The last scene turns to the same scene where Colonel Savage and General Ackerby are talking in the carriage from which the narrative structure of the film as narrated by Colonel Savage was started. The film functions to highlight the change in Indo-British relations which now took a new turn where both communities

seem divided as one being nationalist and the other as colonial power. Moreover, the film highlights the complexity of mutual relationships and misunderstanding to comment upon a triangular connection among the nationalists (Indians), the colonial power (British) and their Anglo-Indian off springs.

These films explain the politics of Empire Cinema from various aspects of individual Indian-British interactions, human relations and racial issues from colonial to Postcolonial period with Respect to the Selected Films. These films also try to highlight the fluctuating relationships between the Indians and the British in connection to the feelings of nationalism in India. The films like *Heat and Dust* (1982), *A Passage to India* (1984), *Before the Rains* (2007), and *Bhowani Junction* (1956) all highlight the issues of relations between the British male and Indian female or the vice-versa. The era of 1940's was full of anti-British protests and movements whether violent or non-violent ones. The selected films also comment on the idea of the possibility of friendship between the English and the Indians, the exploitation of native female as well as its natural resources. The films empire cinema also depict and highlight the complexity of being an Anglo-Indian in later colonial and early postcolonial era in the history of India. In this way, the films of Empire Cinema serve as a window to the colonial history to create the appropriate knowledge in audience about the colonial past. The films also explain the various types of discourses of class, caste and power in colonial India. The selected films showcase the colonial nostalgia in the postcolonial era and remain a useful medium of revisiting the colonial history of a nation in a changed scenario of postcolonial times where the power structures in the international politics have been changed in comparison to the colonial times.

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CHAPTER IV

Mapping the Violent Resistance to the British Empire in colonial India

The colonial powers used every source of imperial influence to establish as well as to keep control over the newly occupied territories in the colonial era. On the other hand, the colonised people also made efforts to challenge the foreigner rulers in many ways, be it the violent or the non-violent one. But more frequently, the colonised people challenged the colonial oppression and the exploitation in a violent way. But the colonial forces themselves are responsible for the violent resistance by the colonised people. In the same way, Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) talks about the colonial use of violent ways to exploit the natives. He says, “yet he is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native” (38). That is why we have to understand the concept of violence to study the both aspects of resistance to the Empire whether it is violent or nonviolent. But it is also clear that both the concepts of nonviolence as well as violence have their own importance in relation to the resistance to the Empire. Philip Dwyer and Amanda Nettelbeck in *Violence, Colonialism and Empire in the Modern World* (2018) describes the assimilation of empire and violence as “Violence has always been central to the long, complex history of empire and colonialism that stretches back over four centuries of the modern era” (1). Generally speaking the word ‘Violence’ means any act of aggressiveness. This may be acted to do any type of harm to other human beings. While in case of established socio-political and cultural setups it can become a threat to such organisations and customs. The notion of violence can manifest itself in many forms such as psychological violence, physical violence, social violence, cultural violence, racial violence, political violence, and ideological violence in general description.

While from philosophical point of view, violence has been described in somewhat vague and obscure terms. Tobin Siebers in his article entitled as *Philosophy and Its Other--Violence: A Survey of Philosophical Repression From Plato to Girard* describes how philosophy represents violence in a particular way. He remarks, “Philosophy represents violence as an idea rather than as a phenomenon. The idea of violence appears in many guises in philosophy” (Siebers1). So there is no fixed notion of how to generalise the concept when someone approaches the subject of violence or in other words the relation of violence and philosophy. While talking about the idea of Empire, Edward Said

explains that “Empire is a relationship [...] imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining the empire” (9). The politics of imperial discourse based on the suppressive ideological formations construct the difference between the dominator and the dominated, the ruler and the ruled, the colonial and the colonised, the superior and the inferior and in the end, between him and the other.

The master-slave relationship has been once again, reinterpreted by Marx in his distinction of bourgeoisie and proletariat. Karl Marx also defines the class struggle at the core of violent proletariat efforts against the exploitation by bourgeois class. Karl Marx believed in what he called ‘Economic Determinism’. This means that human beings are the product of their economic conditions which shape one’s thinking as a social being. So Capitalism differentiates between Bourgeoisie and Proletariat class. Both are so different from each other. If one is on the pole of wealth and luxury while the other is on the opposite pole of poverty and misery. Karl Marx in his essay “The Victory of the Counter-Revolution in Vienna” (1848) describes, “There is only one way in which the murderous death agonies of the old society and the bloody birth throes of the new society can be shortened, simplified and concentrated, and that way is revolutionary terror” (136). Marx believes that those who have the ownership of the means of production will definitely clash with those who do not have any share in the production process. In this way Marxism seems in favour of violent clash between two different sections of capitalist society. The class struggle of Marxism is manifested in violent clash between the colonial masters and their colonised subjects.

Hanna Arendt’s ideas on the concept of violence too makes it clear that violence is an inherent part of our society. Hannah Arendt in *On Violence* (1970) describes the relationship between power and violence. She says that power always depends on numbers while violence relies on the implements. She further remarks: “The extreme form of power is All against One, the extreme form of violence is One against All” (Arendt 42). While comparing the notion of Violence Arendt also differentiates between such key words like Strength, Force, Power, Authority and finally Violence. Arendt describes that, “power needs no justification, what does it need is legitimacy... violence can be justifiable, but it will never be legitimate” (52). In case of Indian struggle for freedom the violence used by the British seems a part of the politics and the violent resistance of the colonised has been often described as savage, irrational and uncivilised one.

Another distinguished critical interpretation of the idea of violence has been described by Slavoj Žižek in *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (2009). He distinguishes between the subjective, objective and symbolic violence. Žižek says, "Today's liberal communists give away with one hand what they first took with the other" (21). But indeed these people are the largest beneficiaries of the capitalism. These kind of hidden structures of exploitation are in progress like those of the unseen, systemic version of violence. Žižek explains in following remarks: "This violence operates at multi levels. Language simplifies the designated thing, reducing it to a single feature. It inserts the thing into a meaning which is ultimately external to it (Žižek 61). So what Žižek wants to explain in his idea of the violence of the language, means that the reaction in far-away countries, in Muslim countries are possible because the Orient-Occident image construction. He explains that it is actually through the medium of language that a certain misrepresentation can lead to violent reactions in faraway countries.

In Walter Benjamin's *Critique of Violence* tries to establish a relationship between violence, law and justice. He defines the relationship between violence and law in two ways. Violence is the means by which law is instituted and preserved. The second one is law destroying function. He talks about sanctioned and unsanctioned violence and legitimate and illegitimate violence. He also describes the capital punishment and police violence as state's own absolute powers. In this way the end of the law becomes the law itself.

Girard in his essay "*Mimesis and Violence: Perspectives in Cultural Criticism*," explains that individuals imitate others in order to be like what they think to be their role models. Girard also describes the relation of religion and violence in his work *Violence and Sacred* when he says, "Religion shelters us from violence just as violence seeks shelter in religion" (24). Girard wants to say that the religion has its own so called mechanism to control human beings. So that human beings can be safe from its own hidden force of violence in abstract ways.

Michel Foucault unleashed the politics of state sponsored violence in a layered structure. Foucault in his works like *Madness and Civilisation* (1961), *Discipline and Punish* (1975), *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) describes the multiple types of state surveillance, controlling mechanism and ways of punishment. Foucault historically explains the violence in the ways of punishment from primitive era to the present era. First, the punishment was public but then system of prisons

came into use to punish the convicts. Foucault describes how knowledge was archeologically constructed and controlled to exploit others, the powerless strata of a society. The definition of a mad person was supported with his exclusion from the other men. A man's place and role in the society was created and defined by the multi layered structures of discourses. The subjective poisoning of an individual was determined by hidden violent structures in the form of mad versus civilized, order of pre-designed things.

While explaining the politics of colonial powers, Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* explains why peasants for most of the time initiate and make successful any revolution, rebellion or mutiny against an organized power of the state or any colonial power. To support this we have the examples of the French Revolution, anti-colonial Struggles in Third world Countries and 1857 Revolt of India. Fanon clarifies the argument by saying that the peasants all over the world tend to be revolutionary because 'they have nothing to lose and everything to gain'. As further Fanon remarks: "The starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence" (Fanon 61). In this way Fanon was clearly in favour of violent struggle to defeat the colonizers. The concept of colonial violence was evident and both the colonizer and the colonized used the violent ways against each other.

In his preface to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* Jean Paul Sartre, also justifies the violence of the native people against their colonial masters. Sartre describes the colonial tactics to destroy the native culture, language and traditions by substituting it with colonial language and culture. Sartre justifies the violence during the time of revolt by saying that "To shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time: there remain a dead man and a free man" (Sartre 2). So both Fanon and Sartre explain why violence is necessary to defeat the powerful colonial powers.

The Revolt of 1857 has been described as a first violent struggle against the East India Company which keeps continue to inspire the revolutionary activities against the British administration through the colonial period in the history of India. While being specific to Indian context in colonial era, there was violent resistance to the British Empire. It started right from the incident of Mangal Pandey which leads to the First Indian War of Independence, the Revolt of 1857. The notion of resisting

the British Empire in violent ways keep itself continue in various ways during Indian struggle for independence. Even when Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Violence seems at its height, the revolutionaries like Subash Chandra Bose and Bhagat Singh followed the path of violent resistance to the Empire.

The study of selected films helps to understand the violent nature of Indian resistance to the British Empire. The films such as *The Rising: Ballad of Mangal Pandey* (2005), *Hey Ram* (2000), *Bose: The Forgotten Hero* (2007) and *Rang De Basanti* (2006) trace the idea of challenging the British Empire in its violent as well as non-violent ways. The New Historicist study of such selected films of the British as well as Indian cinema helps to analyse the role of violent and non-violent factors in the Indian National Movement in the colonial era. The chapter focuses on the various aspects of Indian struggle for freedom under the leadership of Gandhi and its relation to the violent ideology of other freedom fighters such as Mangal Pandey, Bose and Bhagat Singh. Moreover, the role of Gandhi has also been interpreted from the aspects of British as well as Indian film directors and from the perspectives of pro-Gandhi as well as anti-Gandhi thinkers. The role of Hindu nationalism has also been explored in this chapter to trace back the role of Empire Cinema in the history of a nation from Colonial and Postcolonial era.

This chapter focuses on the Indian resistance to the British Empire as depicted in the films of the Empire Cinema as well as the Indian cinema. The era of colonialism begins in India with the arrival of British East India Company. The selected films depicting the resistance, beginning from the time of Indian uprising in the 1857, towards the end of colonial era in the history of a nation like India, will be studied. The present study concentrates on the National Movement under the role of Gandhi and other leaders like Subhash Chandra Bose. The resistance to the British Empire will be explored in its non-violent as well as violent ways comparatively in case of Mahatama Gandhi and Subhash Chandra Bose in the larger perspective of a nation.

Andrew Higson in his article "The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema" suggests, "It is widely assumed that rituals of mass communications play a central role in re-imagining the dispersed and incoherent populace as a tight-knit, value sharing connectivity, sustaining the experience of nationhood" (65). But in case of early colonial era in India, the feelings of rebellious nature towards the empire emerge gradually. The films such as *Mangal Pandey*, *Bose: The Forgotten Hero*,

Gandhi, and *Janoon* reflect the Indian resistance to the British Empire. The rule of colonial powers like England has been challenged and the demand for self-rule seems to be emerging for the first time. The selected films are based on colonial mechanism help to explore how the films depict the socio-political consciousness of the Indian people during the National Movement in Gandhi's era. Hence, the first major attempt of resistance to the British Empire comes out in the form of 1857 revolt. This is considered an anti-colonial rebellion in which the people of all ages, of all professions, of all religions and of all castes raised their voice against the administration of East India Company in India. This incident has been treated widely in historic texts, literary texts and even in films. The study of Indian resistance to the British Empire begins right from the incident of Mangal Pandey when he challenges the rule of British East India Company and refuses to use the Enfield Rifles. That's why the study of the event becomes necessary to trace the resistance to the Empire.

4.1: The First Violent Resistance to the Empire in *The Rising: Ballad of Mangal Pandey* (2005)

The film *The Rising: Ballad of Mangal Pandey* (2005) directed by Ketan Mehta is the story of an Indian sepoy named Mangal Pandey who becomes a legend for the uprising of the 1857 revolt begins with a gesture to its aim as the introductory text "Where history meets proud folklore, there legends are born", is shown on the screen. This introductory message exhibits the films narrative structure to be based on the mixture of history and folklore because the story of Mangal Pandey has continually been occurring from generation to generation through the popular folklore as well as history. The connection of the folklore and awakening of the colonised masses has been explained by Sadhana Naithani in her article "Colonial Hegemony and Oral Discourse".

Folklore came to signify the narrative and poetic oral genres of the colonised.[...] In India, after the 1857, when the British political influence became pan-Indian and needed to be exerted directly on the vast rural population. Folklore was seen a key to open that mind. (52-53)

The opening scene shows how a static picture comes to life by dissolving into a moving scene. In the same mode, the film clarifies how the folklores urge the Indians to awake from their long sleep and to participate in the struggle against the company rule. The film also comments on the need of the hour in that specific period

of the Indian history related to the awakening of a nation as it includes a song as follow:

Jago jago abb tum, neend me ho kyu tum o o o.
Jagee jagee hai dhartee saree, jaga jaga hai ambar
Jagee jagee hai nadiya saree, jaga jaga hai sagar, jago o o o
Jage nagar sare, jage hai ghar sare.
Jaga hai abb har gaon, jagee hai bagiya toh
Jage hai ped aur, jagee hai pedon kee chhanv
Mangal mangal, mangal mangal, mangal mangal ho o. (Lyrics)

Robert. A. Rosenstone in his book *History on Film/Film on History* (2012) describes that “Using image, music and sound along with the spoken word, the dramatic film aims directly at the emotions” (18). In this way, the film correlates the awakening of the nature, its river, its sky to that of every home in every village of that time to play with the emotions of the people. Anna Maria Rain in her Article “About C - Narrating the nation?” explains “The song encompasses the every aspect of life worth mentioning in pre-modern society: the world as it is whole and the picture painted is harmonious and closed off” (4). The film shows how the seeds of native resistance against the East India Company are being sown among the Indian masses of different castes and different religions.

The film shows an Elephant crossing the British prison. This is accompanied by a textual message appearing on the screen 7th April, 1857. Barrackpore Prison. The film depicts the actual situation through the vice-over which states that in 1857, the whole India is under the rule of one company, British East India Company. The most beautiful example of trading in the history of the world. The company has its own laws, its own government and its own military. The company has the fate of the world’s twenty percent population in its hands. In this way, the film comments on the treacherous rule of East India Company over the mighty Indian sub-continent having the all-round power in every field, beginning from trade, to establish its rule over a nation like India. In the same way, Betty Joseph in *Reading The East India Company, 1720-1840: Colonial Currencies of Gender* writes, “the Company assumed more and more economic, political and military power in India” (Joseph ix). On the other hand, the East India Company had to fight with other colonial forces like French as well as the Indian forces in Bengal. But the film, if it is to be interpreted from a nationalistic perspective, also ignites the

spark of resistance against the cruel, exploitative and greedy rule of the British East India Company in the hearts of Indians.

The film's wider importance has also been clarified as its depiction of 1857 revolt makes it more sensitive for the Indians as well as the British. Prem Chowdhry in *Colonial India and Making of the Empire Cinema: Image, Ideology and Identity* writes, "Moreover, the 1857 revolt had become the most inflammatory memory in the nationalistic agenda" (Chowdhry 29).

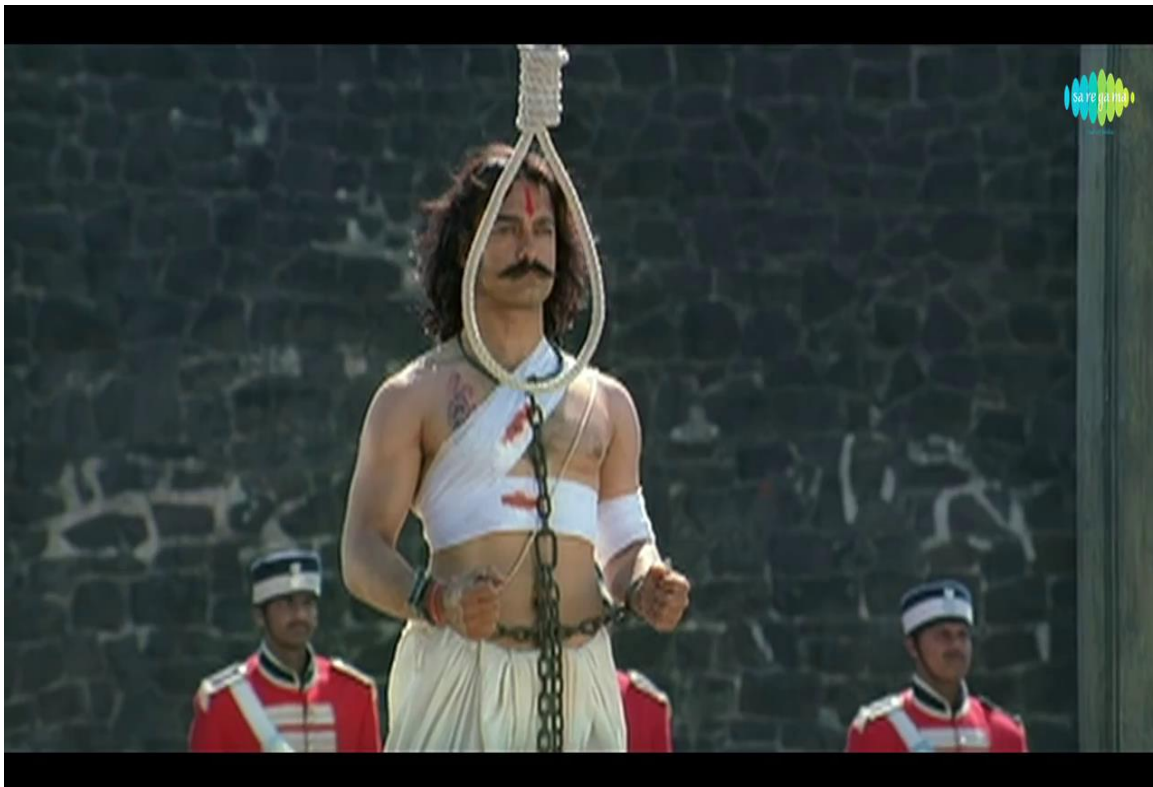


Figure 4.1: A still from the film *The Rising: Ballad of Mangal Pandey*

The film in a medium close-up shows a sepoy named Mangal Pandey from 34th Regiment Barrackpore, locked in shackles from hand to feet, is to be hanged. The shot concentrates on Mangal Pandey's eyes to depict his message to his fellow soldiers to stand against the company rule. The filmmaker's own perspective is also in favour of screening the anger against the colonial forces. Robert. A. Rosenstone in *History on Film/Film on History* describes that "It does not simply provide an image of the past, it wants you to feel strongly about the image – specifically characters involved in the historical situations that it depicts" (18). Therefore, the film portrays the image of Mangal Pandey as a figure of utmost importance in relation to the Revolt of 1857. But the hangman runs away and the present Indian soldier refused to hang him as being Brahmin it was against his religion. In this way, the prosecution

of Mangal Pandey has to be postponed until the other hangman is arranged. In the same sense Lucia Kramer in her article “Neither United Nor separated: Negotiating Differences in Ashutosh Gowariker’s *Lagaan* and Ketan Mehta’s *Mangal Pandey*” suggests, “Mangal Pandey is generally regarded as the first recorded martyr of the Indian freedom struggle” (224). The film highlights the role of an individual in starting the first ever attempt to resist the British rule and that is how the martyrdom of Mangal Pandey has acquired a special place in the nationalistic memory in the history of colonial India.

The film also seems to represent the British perspective to justify the Company’s rule in India. That is why, in a typical scene, the film depicts how in the context of emerging anti-British feeling, Lord Canning, the then Governor General of India describes:

As a servant of honourable East India Company that has ruled the territories of Hindustan for hundred years. It is my privilege to recall that our forebears came to this territory as traders and we now find ourselves, by the will of God, the masters of the entire Indian Sub-continent from Khyber to Khamorin. (*The Rising: Ballad of Mangal*

Pandey)

The film seems to comment on the way, East India Company’s officers try to justify their policies aimed to exploit India in the name of modern governance, scientific progress and above all justice. They seem to give voice to the imperial politics based on the colonial idea of propagating the British rule as a burden of the white man to establish order. But the actual reason behind the success of Company rule seems based on a handful of ambitious Englishmen whose sole aim was to make more money so that they could live like gentlemen in Britain. Lawrence James in *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* writes, “their predatory and private-enterprise imperialism was ideally suited to conditions in eighteenth century India where the central authority of the Mughal emperors was dissolving” (151). The adventurous spirit of the British officers helped East India Company to establish their rule in the absence of central governing power in India because at the time of colonial era, India, as a nation, was not united but it was divided in many small kingdoms.

Similarly, Barbara N. Ramusack in *The Indian Princes and Their States* further explains the politics of recognising princely states by the British. He writes,

“The development of an inclusive, reputedly rationalised list of princely states was a colonial venture” (2). In this way, the British first took the consent of the princely states against other rulers and then they gradually restrict their powers especially the economic, military affairs. The British distort the Indian sense of a nation right from their entrance to Indian Territory as merchants to be the rulers of the land.

The film depicts the British tactics of making more and more profits on one side and on the other, it shows how the issue of Enfield Rifles having the cartridges made from the cow and pig fat was spreading like fire among the sepoy of the British East India Company. Kim A, Wagner in *The Great Fear of 1857: Rumours, Conspiracies and the Making of the Indian Uprising* explains, “According to some oral accounts it was Mangal Pandey who was first informed by a low caste magazine labourer that the cartridges were smeared with the fat of pigs and cows” (Wagner 243). In this way, the film, develops Mangal Pandey’s character as an individual who revolts against the injustice of East India Company.



Figure 4.2: A still shows a sweeper questions Mangal Pandey’s religious belief.

In this scene, the film with a long shot captures a market where in the foreground a low caste man is shown questioning Mangal Pandey. The film seems to give native touch to the interpretation of the role of untouchables in colonial India. Here, an untouchable character is shown as questioning the high caste Brahmin to think about the colonial deception of making them to use the cartridges made from

the cow and pig's skin. While in comparison to the other films of the Empire Cinema such as *Gunga Din*, where an untouchable character, Gunga Din is represented to suit the colonial interests who gives his life for the colonial soldiers and the same has been shown dressed as colonial, white soldier after his death; the film *The Rising: Ballad of Mangal Pandey*, which is released in postcolonial times, represents the role of untouchables from Indian perspective. The film shows how a low caste man challenges Mangal Pandey about their so called religious belief as they have to use the Cartridges made from the skin of cow and the pig. That is why, the sweeper is shown appealing to Mangal Pandey to rebel against the East India Company, not like Gunga Din who dies for the colonial masters. In this way, the New Historicist study helps to explore the essential difference in representation of some specific characters like the untouchables of India in colonial times in relation to the colonial and postcolonial times of film's release.

On the other hand, in the background, the same scene captures various people performing their daily life's professions. Michael Ryan and Melissa Lenos in their book *An Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and Meaning in Narrative Film* (2012) describe about the usage of a close up in a scene and explain that "Film most obviously gives us the look of the past, of buildings, landscapes, costumes and artefacts" (53). Instead of its political message the film also gives the viewers an opportunity to have a glimpse into the way the buildings, the market, the common people and their professions look like in the contemporary times of 1850s India. The film also comments on the telegraph system of the British as the locals give different interpretation to the telegraph system having against all. On the other hand, the film also unfolds how East India Company is involved in opium trade with China to earn more money by purchasing it on fixed price from Indian farmers and selling on higher prices in China.

The film tries to portray Mangal Pandey's character in a larger than life figure in the whole Indian struggle for freedom. The study of film in helps to highlight the importance of Mangal Pandey's martyrdom in the later part of Indian struggle for freedom where Mangal Pandey's figure works as an inspirational source to challenge the British Empire. Sharmitha Gooptu in *Mangal Pandey: Is history Important?* Writes, "The character of mangal Pandey in the film arguably speaks of an emerging maturity in Indian popular cinema" (3799). That is why, the oral folklores have also been incorporated to maintain the continuity of the narrative of

1857 as well as Mangal Pandey in the national scenario of Indian resistance against the British imperialism. Rudolph Binion in *Traumatic Relieving in History, Literature and Film* explains, “history is the prime showcase for its incidence on individual and mass behaviour alike” (xi). The film foregrounds the picture of a nation’s struggle against the colonial powers accompanying the stretched figure of national heroes like Mangal Pandey in its way of depicting the history of the journey of a national struggle for freedom.

The analysis of the film shows what significance the film highlights in relation to the historic event of Indian freedom struggle and its relation to the era, from colonial to postcolonial, in which it is released. The film also shows how the locals at a shop discuss the political scenario of the times. One of them says: “jab saudagar ho raja to praja ka baje baja” (when the king is a dealer the people have to suffer). And the other character named Chowdhry counter argues that baja to company ka ab bajaayeinge nana sahib (Nana sahib will make the company to suffer). He refers to a letter from Queen Victoria which clearly states that Nana sahib is right while Company is totally wrong. They also talk about the power of company in comparison to Nana Sahib. The film also comments on the possibility of upcoming rebellious mutiny against the British and similar happens when the sepoy turn against their British officers. The East India Company’s rule gets resistance from all sections of Indian society including Mangal Pandey, Nana sahib or in case of the support from common man of the contemporary times of 1857.



Figure 4.3: A still from the film *The Rising: Ballad of Mangal Pandey*

The film depicts the hanging scene with a low angle shot. Michael Ryan and Melissa Lenos in their book *An Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and Meaning in Narrative Film* describe about the usage of a low angle shot and describe that “Low angle shots by looking up, often augment the size of characters [...] the semantic effect is often to attribute superior powers” (58). In this way, the film maker wants to enlarge the figure of Mangal Pandey as well as his heroic role in the Indian freedom struggle. The film shows a scene on 12th Feb, 1857 at Bahrapur Cantonment, where colonel Michell orders the soldiers of 34th regiment of Barackpore and 19th regiment of Bahrapur Cantonment to use these new cartridges but no one came forward. At this colonel Michell threatens to blow them by cannons but Mangal Pandey resists first of all and other Indian soldiers follow him. The film centres on Mangal Pandey in relation to the whole ongoing process of East India Company’s tactics. But when he comes to know about the reality of cartridges filled with the grease made from Pigs and cow’s fat Mangal Pandey turns against the company officials.

Similarly, Christopher J. Bowen in *Grammar of the Shot* described that “It is a part of the accepted film grammar that a shot from below implies that the person or object you observe from that angle has a substantial presence, is considered larger than life” (63). The film represents the Indian perspective of the Mangal Pandey incident and tries to make its interpretation suitable for the audience in postcolonial times by showing him as a heroic figure. The British capture Mangal Pandey and hang him in front of a large public gathering. In this way, Mangal Pandey symbolises the Indian Sepoy’s unity against the British. Lenos and Ryan explain that, “Many movies are classic heroic narratives. They tell the story of single individual” (121). The film symbolically uses the martyrdom of Mangal Pandey to instil some sort of nationalist ideas in the audience of the postcolonial times. It looks similar to what Priya Jaikumar in *Cinema at the end of Empire: A Politics of Transition in India and Britain* (2006) talks about the film *Sikandar* as “The film was censored because of its depiction of Sikandar’s mutinous troops and for its nationalistic pride in Porus” (206). The Indian Sepoys revolt against the British but the British curb the revolt at the beginning. In this way, Mangal Pandey’s martyrdom ignites the flame of 1857 Revolt in India against the British.

In the same way, the film shows how a nautch girl challenges Mangal Pandey’s pride and says, “We sell only our bodies but you people sell your souls to

the British". Michael Ryan and Melissa Lenos in their book *An Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and Meaning in Narrative Film* describe "Metaphoric associations also help tell stories by communicating information about a character's inner emotional state" (134). Mangal Pandey feels a jolt to his soul as he used to serve in the army of East India Company. The film highlights the complexity of the situation for the Indian men, like Mangal Pandey, who are the servant of the British but still they want to save their women as well as their nation from the cruel rule of the British.

In the same way, Sikata Banerjee in *Gender, Nation and Popular Film in India: Globalising Muscular Nationalism* explains (2017) the complexity when she writes, "In a way, this tension reveals that in the nation, it is the relationship between men that is central, with women playing supporting roles" (Banerjee 12). The film starts with depicting Mangal Pandey as a loyal company soldier who also fired shots at the helpless and innocent villagers but on his superior officer's command. But then the film changes its construction of Mangal Pandey's character and shows how a pure Brahmin undergoes a change and turns into a rebellious sepoy against the company. The film develops Mangal Pandey's character from a servant of the company towards the rebellious sepoy in the end. The film generates the same kind of feelings among the audience in although in the postcolonial times. Sharmitha Gooptu in *Mangal Pandey: Is history Important?* Writes, "the very logic of making a film like *Mangal Pandey*, at a time when Bollywood has reaped heavily on period films, and those on the lives of Nationalist figures like Bhagat Singh, would entail its fitting into a popular nationalist perspective" (3799). The film released in a time when the Indian Film Industry prefers to make films based on the contemporary issues but Mangal Pandey's depiction on screen seems to target the nationalist agenda of the Indian audience in the postcolonial times. The film seems to reinterpret the colonial-colonised relations from a nationalist perspective and celebrates the development of Mangal Pandey's episode as a maiden attempt to resist the British Empire.

4.2: Violent Resistance to the Empire in *Bose: the Forgotten Hero* (2000)

The film *Bose: the Forgotten Hero* (2000) also shows the violent struggle against the British Empire. The film starts with a scene depicting a session of Congress at Tripuri in 1939. The shot also depicts the conversation between Subash Chandra Bose and Mahatma Gandhi. Bose does not want to weaken the pace of

national movement but Gandhi does not seem anywhere near to reach at compromise with Bose. As the film depicts:

Bose: Now that I have won the election my own, you don't want me. What is my mistake.

Gandhi: Each one has to listen to his conscience, Subhas.

Bose: Do you think I will not follow you? Is that why I should resign?

Gandhi: if you follow the party discipline and swear by non-violence. The Congress can consider you.

Bose: I agree that non-violence was a fine weapon once, Bapu. But that was the time of peace. Today, when the world is facing the war, how can the non-violence sustain?

Gandhi: I am sad, Subhas. Congress banned you for this view-point I have to endorse that. (*Bose: the Forgotten Hero* 2000)



Figure 4.4: A still depicts ongoing discussion between Bose and Gandhi

This typical shot shows Gandhi in the foreground but he is still on one side of the screen. Similarly, S. C. Bose is in the background but occupying the central position in the shot. Michael Ryan and Melissa Lenos describe that, "Placing characters in the background of the image makes them smaller" (42). The shot also depicts the way, two leaders argue with each other before parting their way. The filming technique explains the emerging difference between the two congress leaders who represent two different aspects of Indian struggle for freedom. It also indicates about the future role of these two leaders in the Indian struggle for

freedom. The difference between the two leaders divides Indian resistance in non-violent and violent ways.

Similarly, Mihir Bose in *The Lost Hero: a Biography of Subhas Bose* (1982) writes about the stern, opposite, hateful and non-cooperative approach of Gandhi towards Bose. He describes, "But Gandhi was non-cooperative and refused every solution for compromise proposed by Bose, claiming that his involvement would only be futile" (Bose 162). Gandhi himself refused every chance of compromising as suggested by Bose. Because Bose does not want to weaken the Congress Party as well as National Movement but Gandhi remains Non-cooperative. Mahatma Gandhi wants to achieve freedom by non-violent ways and Bose want to follow the path of violence to get rid of the British Empire. Sitanshu Das in *Subhas: A Political Biography* (2006) writes about such incidents happening in the Congress party based on stopping Bose to start functioning as the president of congress. Sitanshu Das in *Subhas: A Political Biography* depicts what Pyarelal in his letter to G.D.Birla wrote:

Subhas was here, closeted with Bapu for three hour [...] Bapu's outspoken advice fell absolutely flat on him. He is out for a personal adventure. I wonder where the crew on whose shoulders he has mounted to this presidential chair will land him. It is a dangerous crew. (Das 197)

The writer describes how Pyare Lal, a secretary, exhibits some kind of anti-Bose feelings as people in Gandhi's circle has nursed in those days. In this way, the film shows the internal conflict of the Congress party at that times which prevailed at the Tripuri session of congress in 1939. The role of Mahatma Gandhi has been supposed to be a king maker's in such complex moments of colonial history of India. The same scene depicts how Subhash Chandra Bose urges Gandhi to utilise the international situation to throw the British away from India. The film depicts this specific scene as:

Bose: Don't you think that the world war is a good thing to defeat the British.

Gandhi: Wrong. To kick an enemy when he is down is wrong. Wait let the war end. We can fight for our independence after that.

Bose: We helped them in the First World War. What was the result? Rowlatt Act, Jalianwala Bagh. If we loose this chance they will make us slave for ages. This is nat a time to be silent.

Gandhi: That is why I have appealed for individual non-cooperation.

Bose: Individual efforts will lead us nowhere.

Gandhi: Alright! If you insist we have to part.

Bose: Why are you saying this? Are our goals are not same? You cannot cut me off. (*Bose: the Forgotten Hero*, 2000)

The film comments on the two different perspectives of violent as well as non-violent resistance to the British Empire. Bose seems to manipulate the situation as the British were busy in War. But for Gandhi it is a mean, immoral act to attack the enemy when he is weak. At the same time, Bose contests and wins the election for the president of Congress Party. Gandhi wing's defeat proves a wide unbridgeable gap between Gandhi and Bose. As a result, Mahatma Gandhi rejects any activity involving violence against the British. He advocates a non-violent resistance to the British Empire in contrast to the violent, forceful attempt of Bose to get rid of the British. In the same way, Sitanshu Das in *Subhas: A Political Biography* describes:

Above all this, Subhas like many nationalists of this period, carefully monitored the advance the freedom movements in Ireland and Egypt had made during the First World War when the leaders of India's Nationalist Movement had either given Britain unconditional support or remained quiescent. (Das 164)

It seems quite clear that Subhas Chandra Bose wants to correlate the Indian question of freedom with the current international politics divided between the Axis powers and Britain. But Mahatma Gandhi does not seem to go for this kind of opportunistic as well as violent and revolutionary approach to get freedom. But on the other hand, many Indian revolutionaries were severely punished, suppressed and even hanged in the time of war. Sitanshu Das in *Subhas: A Political Biography* writes, "The British employed against Subhas an unrelenting policy of suppression". The film also showcases how Subhas is severely treated by the British. He is kept in prison. Bose still shows respect for Gandhi and recognises him as a mass leader who knows the pulse of the nation but not of the enemy.

The film also shows a scene where the Communist Party comrade Zaman told Comrade Ram that why are you helping Bose? Because Bose has said that India can never become communists. The senior Indian comrades based in Europe say that Chandra Bose is no good for revolution. In this way, the hardships, problems follow Subhas Chandra Bose even as he left India. First, it looks terrible

as Subhas Chandra Bose has to contact with the Russian Embassy, than German Embassy, and in the end Italian Embassy for help and he got the Italian Passport to go ahead through Russia to Germany named as Orlando Mazzotta on March 18, 1941. Similarly, Romain Hayes in *Subhas Chandra Bose in Nazi Germany: Politics, Intelligence and Propaganda 1941-1943* remarks:

'Orlando Mazzotta' was in fact Subhas Chandra Bose, an Indian leftist radical nationalist and former President of the Indian National Congress who had escaped a few months earlier from Calcutta and reached Kabul. From there, the German and Italian legations assisted him in reaching Berlin, via Moscow, under Italian diplomatic cover. (Hayes XI)

Bose talks with the German officials and describes his plan of creating an army of the Indian soldiers who are in Germany as Prisoner of War, against the British. The film also shows how Bose gives a motivational speech to fight for their country and he succeeds in uniting them into an army. But the Germans were not fully interested in helping India to be free. In the same way, Marshall J. Getz in his book *Subhas Chandra Bose: A Biography* writes, "The more inflammable Nazis found the idea of Germany supporting free India unthinkable [...] being falsely labelled a Soviet agent put Bose at grave risk, and yet he survived" (111). Moreover, the film shows what was happening in other world too. The Axis powers were not thinking much about India's freedom. And it also shows how the plans made by Bose got affected when Hitler attacks Russia. Moreover, the incident of Japanese attack on Pearl harbour changes the whole international scenario. The film showcases the challenges to be faced by Bose after he unites the Indian Prisoners of War in Berlin into Free India Army because his meeting with Hitler was not as fruitful as Bose expected. A scene in the film depicts:

Bose: May I make an observation, if the Fuehrer has no objection?

Hitler: Yes, of course.

Bose: Perhaps, the Feurer has been misinformed about India and /
Indians.

Hitler: Really? What have I said that upsets you?

Bose: In your book *Mein Kampf*, you have written that 'England will lose India only if it allows its administrative machinery to be dominated by Indians'. And further, 'I as a German, prefers to see India under British domination than any other country.'

Hitler: The agenda for India should be... 1. Eliminate the British. 2. Avoid the Russians. 3. Make an arrangement with Japan. Only after you have done that you will be able to organise and reconstruct your country.

Bose: Your Excellency I have come to you for support and fight against a common enemy. (*Bose: the Forgotten Hero*, 2000)



Figure: 4.5 Hitler suggests Bose to get help from Japan

The film in this medium close up shot depicts Hitler suggesting Bose to get help from Japan instead of Germany because as we see in the shot, Hitler describes how far Germany is from India. The film shows Subhas Chandra's reluctance to get rid of the British at any cost. He meets with Hitler to get his help. The film shows Hitler in more commanding position as his position was at the time of Second World War and Bose seeks his help.

Hitler: Yeah. Germany and India have the same enemies. Britain and Russia [...] of course you fight with the British and also keep an eye on Russia and its red friends like Pandit Nehru. Communism is a scourge which must be stamped out of the face of the Earth. Now pay attention to what I say. If Germany like Japan were at the India's frontiers, I would have told you to march with me into India. Come and see (approaching to a globe) How far away Germany is from India. So it's better that

you go to Japan and march with an army into India. (*Bose: the Forgotten Hero*, 2000)

The film seems to represent a situation before the audience which aims to interpret the freedom of India in the context of international politics of that time, the late colonial era in the history of India. Hitler gives cautionary advice to Bose that although India has to defeat the British yet you have to be careful from the communist powers like Russia. The audience gets a chance to face the complexity and indecisiveness of situations which seem to challenge the newly free India. The audience also gets to know the different perspectives of the international powers regarding the freedom of India and their own hidden interests in young independent nation. The audience, in the postcolonial times, comes to know the international politics, at the end of colonial times when the film depicts what is generally termed as a Great Game of Empire. The film seems to comment on the interests of the international powers in the internal politics of newly free nations from the colonial rule. The film in some way, also convey the idea of violent resistance to the British instead of Gandhi's passive resistance.

4.3: 23 March 1931: Shaheed: Bhagat Singh and the Resistance to Empire

The other films in the same category of violent resistance to the British Empire are based on the life and martyrdom of Sardar Bhagat Singh. The film *23 March 1931: Shaheed* directed by Guddu Dhawan and the second one is *The Legend of Bhagat Singh* directed by Rajkumar Santoshi, released in 2002. Both these films depict the early life of Bhagat Singh, his family, the genetic urge to sacrifice life for the freedom of India. In the same way, Kuldeep Nayar in his book *The Martyr: Bhagat Singh Experiments in Revolution* describes, "Coming from a clan of freedom fighters, the urge to participate in the struggle for independence was natural" (79). Both the films represent the violent, revolutionary ideas of Shaheed Bhagat Singh in comparison to Mahatma Gandhi's policy of Non-Violence, Non-cooperation and Satyagraha against the British administration.

The film *23 March 1931: Shaheed* (2002) begins with depicting the early life of Bhagat Singh, and showcases how his father Kishan Singh and his uncle Ajit Singh were full of patriotic feelings who also sacrificed their lives for the freedom of India. The film shows how Bhagat Singh leaves his home to join Chandra Shekhar Azad against the British. The film shows how Gandhiji started a non-cooperation

against the British in 1920 and the people from all walks of life including students, lawyers, doctors, civil servants participated in it.

In the same way, Kuldeep Nayar in his book *The Martyr: Bhagat Singh Experiments in Revolution* describes, “More than 30,000 people went to jail. . . . Indeed, non-cooperation was the biggest non-violent movement the Indians ever had launched against the British Yet Gandhi withdrew it suddenly” (19). This act of calling off such a massive non-violent resistance against the British at its peak demoralises the young revolutionaries of the period and they had to follow the path of violent resistance against the British.



Figure 4.5: General Dyer in 23 March 1931: *Shaheed* (2002)

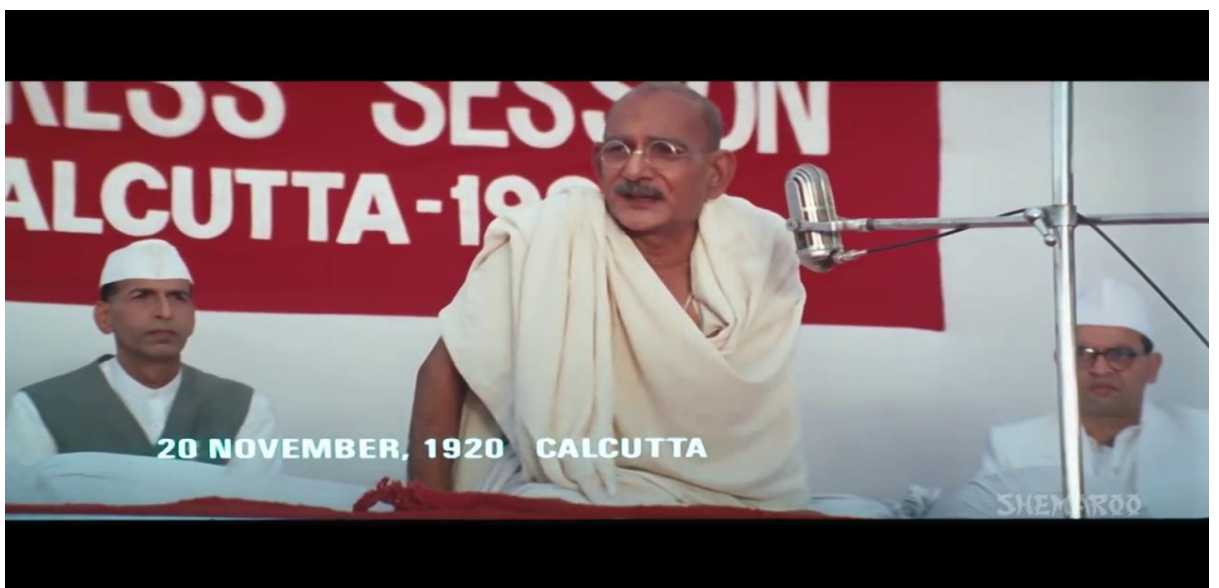


Figure 4.6: Gandhi's speech in 23 March 1931: *Shaheed* (2002)

The film depicts the scenes of massacre at Jallianwala Bagh in 1919 and on the other side, it shows the Gandhi's Non-Violence in response to what General Dyer did in Jallianwala Bagh. The film captures Gen. Dyer in a medium close up shot, from a low angle to describe him in a commanding position, ready to give order to his troops to fire at the innocent people. The film depicts the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh, the violence of the British. But in the second scene, the film captures Gandhi preaching Non-Violence against the British. The film visually represents both the scenes depicting the colonial violence as well as Gandhi's Non-Violence. The first scene depicts a Colonial soldier with arms ready to fire and the second one shows the colonised native in form of Non-Violent Gandhi.

The above shown scenes depict how the British massacre innocent people at Jallianwala Bagh and Gandhi preaches Non-Violence against the cruelty of the British. Robert A. Rosenstone writes, "we must situate it within the larger discourse of history" (59). Similarly, the film tries to raise doubts about the appropriateness of Gandhi's Non-Violence against the cruel, violent and oppressive measures of the British. Gandhi talks about Non-Violence, political resistance when the other countries like Russia, Japan, and Britain were at war against each other, in this mighty game of Empires. That is why the revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh and others do not agree with Gandhi and follow the path which leads to the violent struggle between the coloniser and the colonised. That is how Frantz Fanon in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* describes, "In the colonies, the foreigner coming from other country imposed his rule by means of guns and machines [...] that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native" (40). The film shows in a scene where Lala Lajpat Rai questions Bhagat Singh and his friends' activities of killing policemen and looting by using guns and bombs. But Bhagat Singh justifies their revolutionary, violent activities as Mahatma Gandhi has broken the heart of young Indians by calling off Non-Cooperation Movement after Chaura Chauri incident.

Lala Lajpat Rai: What you and your friends trying to do. You take guns and Bombs and shoot every police officer, this is not what you call freedom. All you guys are irresponsible.

Bhagat Singh: What else should we do? We were not getting freedom that easily. I'm not waiting get slapped on my face, I'll kill them all even if they kill one Hindustani. We are not

going to ask for freedom we are going to snatch it. I understand that guns can't bring revolution, but the sword of revolution sleeps with us. (23 March 1931: *Shaheed* 2002)

In this way, the film strikes at the viewer's mind to have some vague ideas about the prevailed circumstances which may have forced Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Subhas Chandra Bose and his friends to choose the violent, revolutionary resistance against the British instead of Gandhi's Non-Violence. Kuldeep Nayar in *The Martyr: Bhagat Singh Experiments in Revolution* (2000) describes, "Bhagat Singh told his father that he could neither understand Gandhi's political strategy, nor his moral approach, which had hacked the movement into pieces with a single blow" (20). The film also depicts that even Lala Lajpat Rai recognises the revolutionary ideas of Bhagat Singh against the imperial powers like British. That is how, Chaman Laal in the Introduction to *The Jail Note Book and Other Writings*, describes:

On April 8, 1929, Bhagat Singh and Batu Keshwar Dutta threw harmless bombs in what is today the Parliament of India, the then Central Assembly. The slogans they shouted, 'Inqilab Zindabad' and 'Down with the Imperialism', caught the imagination of the Indian people. (Laal 11)

The films depict the revolutionary activities of Sardar Bhagat Singh, his friends against the feudalism and British Imperialism. Both the films depict the circumstances of India in late 1920s and 1930s in relation to the role of Mahatma Gandhi and his non-violence in comparison to the revolutionary activities of Sardar Bhagat Singh, Chandar Shekhar Azaad, and their mentor like Lala Lajpat Rai. The films try to highlight the circumstances which forced the young men like Sardar Bhagat Singh to follow a different path than that of Gandhi's Non-violence.

The film showcases how Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt throw bombs in the National assembly to make the imperial government to hear the noise of the Indian people. The film shows in a scene where Bhagat Singh admits that their purpose of throwing the bombs in the National Assembly is not to kill anybody but it is only aimed to make a loud noise so the deaf can hear. That is why they threw papers in the assembly and shout slogans, 'Down with the Imperialism' and 'Long Live the Revolution'. Even they did not run and arrest themselves so that through the courts they can be able to make Indian people awake and united against the British.

Kuldeep Nayar in *The Martyr: Bhagat Singh Experiments in Revolution* describes Bhagat Singh's ideas about the difference between the violence and the revolution. The writer describes about Bhagat Singh's ideology and remarks: "Revolution was an act of defiance, not of violence. It was an ideological war. His struggle was against the system, the exploitation of man by man, nation by nation" (Nayar 21). The film depicts the resistance of Bhagat Singh in jail as true non-cooperation by a revolutionary when he goes for a hunger strike against the poor quality of food in the jail. Mahesh Sharma in *The Life and Times of Bhagat Singh* (2012) describes that "He decided that to improve the prisoners' conditions and to stop the government's inhuman actions, as soon as he reached the prison, he would start his fast unto death" (104). The film also depicts how Bhagat Singh used to study Karl Marx, the Russian thinkers, and English writers and noted down some of the extracts on his prison note book.

The film shows how Bhagat Singh's revolutionary ideology clashes with Gandhi's Non-Violence and Gandhi too regarded them as misguided young men who favour guns and bombs in place of Non-violent resistance to the British. D. P. Das in his article describes the difference between the ideology of Bhagat Singh and Mahatma Gandhi. He says, "To him Gandhi was just a Utopian visionary nursing a futile hope that the mighty British would leave India under the moral pressure of ahimsa" (Das 315). The film showcases the trial of Bhagat Singh and the way the case was decided by the colonial forces and it seems only in the name of so-called justice. It seems as if the fate of Bhagat Singh and his friends has been already decided by the British administration. A.G. Noorani in the Introduction to *The Trail of Bhagat Singh: Politics of Justice* (2005) describes that "History bears witness that whenever the ruling powers took up arms against freedom and right, the court-rooms served as the most convenient and effective weapons" (13).

The films like *The Rising: Ballad of Mangal Pandey* and *23 March 1931: Shaheed* showcase the injustice of the court-rooms where the colonial powers use the judiciary as a weapon against the colonised. A G Noorani in his book *The Trail of Bhagat Singh: Politics of Justice* explains colonial conspiracy to setup a trap in the form of the trial of Bhagat Singh. He describes about the judgement as "The judgement was obviously written by one of the English judges. The language was harsh. The word 'murderers' was freely used instead of 'the accused'. The judgement gave free reign to conjecture and suspicion" (176). The colonial powers

ignored all the rights of the accused and deliver a blind judgement to hang Bhagat Singh and others. Both Mangal Pandey as Bhagat Singh have been sentenced to death for their violence and the violence of the colonial officers like General Dyer has been often ignored.

The film *Rang De Basanti* (2006) also showcases the revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Azaad, Bismal fighting for their country. The film shows how a young British lady, comes to India to make a film based on his Grandfather Mr. Mckinley's diary when he was a jailer in the colonial police in 1920s. The film's narrative structure depicts the events of colonial era based on the lives of Indian revolutionaries like Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azaad, Rajguru, Ram Prasad, and Ashfaqulla Khan.

The next shot depicts a close up of the face of Mr. Mckinley, the jailer of the imperial police who seems in some kind of dilemma. The scene dissolves into a shot which begins with a close up of opening a diary and the voice over begins and someone writes Lahore in it. The camera zooms out to show Mr. Mckinley, writing his experience in a diary. Michael Ryan and Melissa Lenos in their book *An Introduction to Film Analysis* describe the usage of a close up in a scene and explain that "A close up can suggest emotional intimacy, or it can create fear and alarm, or it can open a window on character psychology"(9). Again the camera zooms in to have a close up of something being written on the page and the voice over narrates the experience as: "I always believed that there were two kinds of men in this world. Men who go to their death screaming and men who go to their death silently. Then I met the third kind.". In this way, the film highlights the sympathetic response of the British jailor towards the revolutionary like Bhagat Singh. It is a rare kind of fact that the film has depicted where the colonial perspective seems sympathetic for the revolutionaries of the colonised nation. The film highlights how, even, the colonial officers like Mr. Mckinley, the jailer show some sense of an unbiased sympathetic attitude towards Bhagat Singh for his sacrifice and determination.

Then the camera zooms out and shows how a young British lady reads all this from a diary in her hands. The narrative structure of the film shows the postcolonial interpretation to an event from the colonial times that is why, the camera catches Sue, a young English lady reading the diary instead of Mckinley writing it. In this way, the film seems to keep its subject in control which keeps changing from colonial to postcolonial era. That is why, when Sue asked the team in London office

about her plan to make a film on Bhagat Singh, the response was very negative. The conversation stands as follow:

Sue: But we need to wire her some money. Everything's cash out there. Have I come to the wrong meeting?

Beth: We had directive from above... budget cuts...
So we have to take some very tough decisions.

Sue: (Face is frozen in disbelief.)

Chief Programmer: If we were doing an episode on Gandhi it would work for us.

Beth: Gandhi sells, as does Che Guevara, even Robin Hood, but these revolutionaries, Bhagat Singh, Chadrashekhhar Ali.
(*Rang De Basanti*, 2006)

The film also exhibits the politics of money making in the production of a film. This scene comments on the selection of the subject to be filmed. Whether to make any film on that particular subject or not depends on its market. Benyahia and Mortimer in *Doing Film Studies* (2013) describe that "The film industry is organised around an understanding of what type of films appeal to the audience. As a business, it needs to package its product to sell to the customer, who also has a clear sense of their preferences when deciding what to watch" (47). Similarly, the colonial ideology still in function which never allows cinema to highlight the brutal violence on the part of the colonial administration which questions the imperial policies of the colonial era in the postcolonial times.

The film *Rang De Basanti* (2006) also depicts the violent resistance to the British and their Brutal violent way to suppress the violence of the revolutionaries. The film also refers to the brutal massacre of Jallian Wala Bagh in 1919 to depict the dark violent aspect of colonial administration. The film seems somehow confusing about its violent ending but this has been clarified by its director Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, with Kamlesh Pandey and Rensil D' Silva in their book *Rang De Basanti: The Shooting Spirit* as they remark, "Many people have questioned me about the end of the film and violence. I do not condone violence but fully stand with my character Dj and his friends do in *Rang De Basanti*" (12). Moreover, the film *Rang De Basanti* (2006), seems to comment on the violence of the colonial forces in response to that of the colonised. In the same way Hannah Arendt in her book

On Violence describes that “Power and violence are opposites; where the one rules absolutely, the other is absent” (56). That is why, the incidents of Jallianwala Bagh, the death of Lala Lajpat Rai needs to be interpreted from the planned, organised and political violence of the colonial powers as the British did in case of India.

These films showcase the violence of the colonised against the colonisers in terms of what Frantz Fanon says regarding the only way to get rid of the cruelty of the colonisers against the colonised subjects to control as well as exploit them for a long period. In the same way Hannah Arendt in *On Violence* (1970) describes that “Violence appears where power is in jeopardy, but left to its own course it ends in power’s disappearance” (56). In the same sense, the selected films such as *Mangal Pandey* (2007), *Hey Ram* (2000), *Bose: The Forgotten Hero* (2007), *23 March 1931: Shaheed* (2002) and *Rang De Basanti* (2006) based on the ideology of the revolutionaries and their violent resistance to the British Empire. These films help to understand the role of Mangal Pandey, Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Bose in making the British to feel the fire of the native resistance in a violent ways as do the British in respect to the colonised subjects. The present study of the films also enables the viewers to examine as well as explore the ideas of violent resistance chosen by the great martyrs of Indian freedom struggle against the British Empire. On the other hand, these films also highlight the propaganda of the films of Empire Cinema which indirectly exaggerate the violence of the native revolutionaries and try to justify as well as hide the violence of the colonial powers.

The film *Mangal Pandey* (2007), is often criticised for exaggerating the figure of a sepoy in the 1857 revolt. The film maker tries to highlight the often neglected role of a company soldier who revolts against the company and fits a foundational stone of freedom struggle for the future generations of India. The film *Bose: The Forgotten Hero* (2007) also gives voice to a forgotten figure in the history of colonial India. The film traces the emergence of Bose as a strong congress leader who opposes Gandhi’s non-violent approach against the British. The film depicts Bose’s understanding of international politics at the contemporary times of Second World War. The film depicts the appropriateness in his violent resistance against the British Empire in contrast to Gandhi’s non-violence. In the end, film also seems to comment on the mysterious end of Subhas Chandra Bose and forces the audience to think about the mystery of the death of a forgotten hero.

Similarly, the films like *23 March 1931: Shaheed* and *The Legend of Bhagat Singh* highlight the role of Bhagat Singh in revolutionary struggle against the British. These films showcase the life and martyrdom of Bhagat Singh in an inspirational way. The present study of the selected films helps to explore the role of Mangal Pandey, Subhas Chandra Bose and Bhagat Singh in the Indian struggle for freedom. The film *Rang De Basanti* also depicts the sympathetic perspective of British officers towards Bhagat Singh. The film targets the young generations in the postcolonial times which follow Bhagat Singh's ideas to fight against the cruel policies of the government of their own contemporary times.

The present study highlights how the violent resistance to the British Empire seems more suitable to counter the same violent strategies used by the colonial forces against the colonised subjects during the colonial era. The films represent how the revolutionary ideas of resisting the British Empire start from Mangal Pandey's times and continue thereafter during National Movement. The era of Bhagat Singh also highlights this continuity of revolutionary activities and then in the end, Subhas Chandra Bose created an army against the British to get freedom by using violent ways. The present study also highlights how these selected films represent the Indian perspective based on justifying the violent resistance to the British Empire. The study shows how these films represent the revolutionary and violent resistance to the British Empire as an important aspect of Indian national Movement, in context of a nation's colonial history and its interpretations in postcolonial times.

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CHAPTER V

Mapping the Non-Violent and Political Resistance to the Empire

The British Empire also comes across the Indian resistance under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. He gave a tough challenge to the colonial powers in his political resistance. The present chapter deals with the political resistance to the empire which includes role of Mahatma Gandhi and Muhammad Ali Jinnah to lead the Indians during the era of National Movement up to the end of colonial regime in India. In spite of this, the study also explores the role of Mountbatten at the end of colonial era. The political resistance was mostly non-violent. While in context of the colonial history of India, it becomes quite interesting to explore the success of the political resistance in mobilising the masses against the British Empire. The Indian people believed on the political approach based on non-violent mass movements lead by Gandhi, Jinnah and Nehru during colonial era. The Indians followed this non-violent political resistance movement to challenge the colonial administration in India. Bidyut Chakrabarthy in the preface to his book *Non- Violence: Challenges and Prospects* writes:

Non-violence is a powerful political instrument, as history has revealed time and again. Mahatma Gandhi launched a struggle against the colonialism, which in conjunction with other movements that were not exactly non-violent, led to India's freedom in 1947.(1)

In this way, the concept of political resistance following a non-violent strategies seems a different way of expressing one's protest against the injustice and unlawful governance of any time. But, in the postcolonial era, the politics of empire is shifted from direct to an indirect way of controlling third world countries in the form of globalisation and capitalisation. The colonial exploitation of Indians and the British interference in native culture, social customs and traditions provoked the sense of unrest among the Indians. In this way, the concept of political resistance based on non-violence against the foreign powers seems quite successful in a dignified way to get freedom from the British. The nonviolence of Gandhi and other leaders of the contemporary times seems the result of their statesmanship and integrity.

At the same time, the social structure of Indian society also helped the concept of political resistance to operate on the age old discrimination of caste system in India. The political resistance lead by Gandhi and Jinnah gave an

opportunity to the neglected and oppressed people of Indian society like the untouchables and women to participate in the struggle for freedom. Roderick Matthews in his book *Jinnah vs. Gandhi* describes that “Gandhi was passionately committed to the idea that India was one, and always had been. [...] Historic national unity would reassert itself and brotherhood among Indians would remake the whole community” (56). The inclusion of all classes of society made the National Movement quite successful in opposing the British rule in a non-violent way. Bidyut Chakrabarthy in the Introduction to his book *Non- Violence: Challenges and Prospects* (2014) writes, “Gandhi upheld non-violence for nationalist mobilization against British rule in India” (XV). Gandhi remains successful to include such ignored, exploited, excommunicated people into the nonviolent resistance against the British Empire who normally feel to be at the margins of Indian society. This makes the leaders like Gandhi, Jinnah and Nehru to channelise the energy of the masses of India for the success of National Movement for Freedom. Bipan Chandra in the Introduction to his book *India’s Struggle for Independence 1857-1947* describes that “In time, the Indian National Movement developed into one of the greatest mass movements in the world history” (17). The study focuses on the leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah and the activities of other leaders of Indian National Congress of the contemporary colonial era.

The political resistance is related with the Indian national movement era. The era of Gandhian Non-violence and the revolutionary activities of other freedom fighters are to be explored in the history of a nation like India. The cinematic traces of the national movement are therefore quite valuable to study the role of films in showcasing the political resistance to the British Empire in the late colonial period in the history of India. The study focuses on the analysis of certain selected films which showcase the role of some influential political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Muhammad Ali Jinnah during the colonial period in the history of India. The present chapter focuses on the films like *Gandhi* (1982), *Jinnah* (1998) and *Viceroy’s House* (2017) to explore political response to the British Empire in India. In *Gandhi* is analysed to know the large than life figure of Mahatma Gandhi in the context of a nation’s struggle for freedom. The film also highlights the Indian perspective of the struggle for freedom through the character of Mahatma Gandhi. In *Jinnah* helps to know the difference between Gandhi and Jinnah during the freedom struggle and the role of Jinnah in the creation of Pakistan. The film also

describes how Jinnah is regarded as the Father of Pakistan, in postcolonial times. The third one, *Viceroy's House* depicts the British solution the problem of India on occasion of its freedom from the British rule. The present study highlights the role of cinema in depicting the lives as well as the contribution of Gandhi and Jinnah in shaping the Indian political resistance to the British Empire. The film analysis also centres on the diversity of problems like Hindu-Muslim divide, the rise of Jinnah as well as his demand for a separate nation for the Muslims at the end of the colonial rule in India. *Viceroy's House* is studied to know the role of the British administration at the end of end of empire and the British attempt to solve Indian problem before leaving their most valuable colony. In this way, the present analysis of the selected films gives an opportunity to the audience to explore as well as know about Gandhi and Jinnah's role in leading the political resistance to the British and the colonial solution of the Indian problem in context of international politics between the democratic west and the communist Russia.

5.1: Gandhi's Non-Violent and Political Resistance in *Gandhi*

The film *Gandhi* is an Indian-British biopic based on the sole character of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in the history of national struggle for the freedom of India. *Gandhi* is directed by Richard Attenborough and is written by John Briley. It is of an epic style dealing with the life of Mahatma Gandhi whose status is as big as the whole span of Indian struggle for freedom. *Gandhi* begins with a morning view of a river bank. The camera in a long shot shows the vastness of the river, the washer men, birds chirping and the morning prayers being sung to show the variety of Indian life. Then the same shot includes a message on the screen as follow in movie, "No man's life can be encompassed in one telling. There is no way to give each year its allotted weight, to include each event, each person who helped to shape such a life" (*Gandhi* 1982).

The use of a long shot, in this scene to depict vastness of life and in the same way, the filmmaker seems to deliver his message to the viewers that the act of filming Mahatma Gandhi's life on screen is quite a tough task. Michael Ryan and Melissa Lenos in their book *An Introduction to Film Analysis: Technique and Meaning in narrative Film* explain that "Long shots tend towards impersonality and objectivity" (53). The filmmaker expressed the challenge to justify the cinematic representation of Mahatma Gandhi's life without adding any amount of subjective likes or dislikes. That is why, the visual aspect as well as the narrative on the screen

seem complementary to each other in highlighting the vastness of the film's subject in itself.

In this preliminary message the filmmaker tries to make it clear that it is quite a difficult task to put a figure like Gandhi's life on screen. The next scene begins on 30th January 1948, New Delhi and shows the Gandhi's assassination by Nathu Ram Godse as he was going for morning prayers. In the same way, Joseph Lelyveld in *Great Soul-Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India* (2011) presents Manu's that one of the girls with Gandhi and writes, "While she's scrambling to retrieve the rosary, notebook, and spittoon she'd been carrying, three shots ring out. Then she hears what for weeks she'd been trained to expect: "Hei Ra...ma! Hei Ra..." (417). It also depicts how in the last moments Mahatma Gandhi utters these words in the praise of the God. The film seems to celebrate the figure of Gandhi even after death and shows a large number of common people and dignitaries of the world attending Gandhi's funeral.

Then the film shows the process of Gandhi's funeral in an epic style. This shot begins with a close up of soldiers' feet crossing over the scattered flower. Symbolically, this shot externalises the film director's emotional attachment to the subject because a soldier represents violence and the flower stands for softness, innocence and non-violence. Graeme Turner in his book *Film as Social Practice* (1988) writes, "in films of epic proportions such as *Gandhi*, the plethora of information contained within the frame can itself be spectacular. The funeral sequence at the beginning of *Gandhi* includes overhead shots of an enormous crowd" (69).



5.1: Soldiers Marching during Mahatma Gandhi's Funeral

The mise-en-scene in the filmic depiction exhibits how the close-up of a soldier's shoe seems more questioning in comparison to a large enormous crowd filmed with a high Angel shot. The close ups are used to give importance to any character in the film, but here the Indians are shown in a high angel shot to decrease their importance. But the close up the soldiers, feet seems to comment on the power of colonial regime and their need to keep order. The second scene depicts Gandhi's dead body. Both scenes seem to suggest the viewers that the contemporary times were full of violence which caused Gandhi's assassination. This can also be interpreted to highlight colonial agenda of justifying their presence in the chaotic and violent situation of India in the later colonial era. That is why, the film in the beginning, shows the way, a non-violent Gandhi is assassinated by a violent man like Godse.

The film's narrative structure then moves back in time to include Gandhi's experience in South Africa in 1893 and comments on the racial discrimination. The film depicts how Gandhi is thrown out of train at the Pietermaritzburg station for travelling in the first class where only the white can travel. This highlights the racial discrimination in South Africa. The film also showcases that Gandhi has arrived in South Africa to fight a case of a rich Indian trader. He is not aware from the discrimination with the coloured people in South Africa. This becomes clear in the conversation at Mr. Khan's house where Gandhi questions about the inequality and the discrimination. Gandhi talks about the different laws under the same rule of British Empire whether it is in case of England or South Africa as follow:

Mr. Gandhi: But you are a rich man. Why don't you put up with this?

Mr. Khan: Yes, I am rich. But I am Indian. I do not expect to travel first class.

Mr. Gandhi: In England, I was a poor student.

Mr. Khan: That was England.

Mr. Gandhi: This is the part of England's Empire.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Khan is a successful Muslim leader. But most South Africans see him simply as Indians. And vast majority of Indians like yours, mostly Hindus were brought here to work in mines and harvest crops. Most Europeans don't want them doing anything else. (*Gandhi 1982*)

In this way, the director seems to be more sympathetic towards Gandhi by showing him as a sole victim in the train. Moreover, the film also seems to glorify the resistance shown by Gandhi on behalf of the coloured people including blacks. But the situation also needs to be interpreted from the other perspectives too. This can be clarified by considering what Arthur Kemp in his book *The Lie of Apartheid and Other Stories from Southern Africa* describes, “This incident did indeed occur, but for very different reasons than those the film portrayed”(19). In this way, the film’s depiction of the incident looks fixed, one-sided and more sympathetic one in its attempt to highlight the train incident. The present study focuses on other interpretations which view differently such an event of history. New Historicist analysis aims to study the role of such diverse discourses in influencing an event of history. To reinterpret this scene from the film *Gandhi* (1982), this can also be studied from the perspective of Gandhi’s actual politics of resisting the British for all or for the interests of a few selected Indians, at the earlier times. The audience can imagine how well dressed gentleman tries to share the space with the whites, which is quite unthinkable for the blacks or the lower class Indians. This describes Gandhi’s struggle against the British, favouring some selective influential elites and excluding the other lower class Indians or blacks, in South Africa like what Arthur Kemp in his book *The Lie of Apartheid and Other Stories from Southern Africa* describes:

For the liberal myth is that Gandhi was protesting at the exclusion of non-whites from the train coach: in fact, he was trying to persuade the authorities to let only upper caste Indians ride with the whites [...] It was never Gandhi’s intention to let blacks, or even lower caste Indians, share the white compartment. (Kemp 19)

The film’s narrative seems to depict Mahatma Gandhi as a saviour for all the discriminated community whether it be the black or the lower caste Indian. But it can also be challenged from the other perspective of Gandhi’s own views regarding the plight and place of other backward classes and blacks in the British Empire. The film depicts an event where Gandhi starts burning government passes in Johannesburg. This seems the first act of resisting the British Empire in itself. Anuradha Ray in her book *The Making of Mahatma: A Biography* describes how “the Indian registrants- some two thousands of them- burned their registration certificates in a cauldron of kerosene in the midst of great excitement” (117). In this

way, the film represents Gandhi's maiden act to resist the British Empire in a non-violent way which later becomes a challenge for the colonial authorities of contemporary times in Johannesburg. Simone Panter-Brick in his book *Gandhi and Nationalism: The Path to Indian Independence* writes, "His stature as the leader of the Indians in South Africa continued to grow. In India he was acclaimed as the hero and the representative of the whole South African Indian community" (45). The film showcases Gandhi's emergence as a leader of Indian national movement in India as well as in foreign countries like South Africa. Gandhi gives an inspirational speech before the Indians in South Africa during a large gathering. He says:

We will not strike a blow but we will receive them. And through our pain we will make them to see their injustice. And it will hurt. As all fighting hurts. But we cannot loose. We cannot. They may torture my body, break my bones even they can kill me. Then they will have my dead body not my obedience. (Gandhi)

Gandhi's act of non-violent resistance to the imperial discrimination brought him a unique fame because most of the anti-imperial activities were used to be based on violence in order to challenge the imperial forces like British laws in its colonies. The film *Jinnah* (1998) also shows a similar scene depicting how Mahatma Gandhi asks the Indian people to keep calm and follow the path of non-violence. He says, "In this great battle for our freedom, let it not be said of us that we are guilty of shedding blood. But let it be said that we suffer" (*Jinnah* 1998). In this way, both the films depict the same ideological aspects of Gandhi's Non-Violence in the larger scenario of a nation and its struggle for freedom, although both the films were produced at different times in different countries in the Postcolonial era yet the cinematic appeal to the history of the colonial India seems quite close in relation to the political resistance to the British Empire.

The film seems to highlight the issues of unjust laws being imposed on the colonised subjects in the time of colonial administration in South Africa or anywhere else in the colonised countries. Henry David Thureau in his book *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* writes, "Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavour to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress at them at once?" (20). But in this case the colonised subjects seem to oppose such laws by non-violent resistance and in this specific Indian context, Gandhi gives the colonised masses such leadership. The political

resistance seems a different phenomenon in its opposition to the colonial administration. The colonial tactics of using power against the colonised subjects does not provide any satisfactory excuse in relation to Non-violence opposition in the way Gandhi did. The film explicitly depicts this problem of the colonial masters in a scene where a Charlie Andrews an English Clergyman in a Church questions the British rule in South Africa. He says:

What Mr. Gandhi has forced us to do, is to ask questions about ourselves. As Christians, those are difficult questions to answer. How do we treat men who defy an unjust law who will not fight but will not comply? (Clergyman)

That is why, Gandhi is released from the prison without any condition and this symbolises the victory of Gandhi. Then the film comments on Gandhi's arrival in India in 1915 and he is received by a large gathering of people and many prominent congress leaders.



5.2: A still from *Gandhi* (1984) depicts his arrival in India

The film, in this scene, shows Mahatma Gandhi's impact in India, but the power remains in the British hands. The camera captures Gandhi in a medium long shot to depict how a large crowd welcomes Gandhi when he arrives in India. The film develops Gandhi's character as well as his arrival in India as a hope for the Indian masses. The film symbolically seems to comment upon the popularity of Gandhi's figure in the Indian struggle for freedom. Graeme Turner in his book *Film as Social Practice* (1988) describes:

The *mise-en-scène* in such cases is not necessarily narratively significant, but is rather a performance of cinema, a celebration of its ability to trap so much of the world in its frame. Many historical films work like this, using their *mise-enscène* to celebrate the power of the medium to recreate the real so overwhelmingly and thus, presumably, so authentically. (69)

This scene also exhibits how the filmic representation of any historic event has to be flexible in terms of its reality as well as how can it be represented in the medium of a film. The film also gives an idea of Gandhi's support for the British in the First World War. Simone Panter-Brick in *Gandhi and Nationalism: The Path to Indian Independence* writes, "Throughout his fight in South Africa, Gandhi looked onto the support of the British Government [...] imultaneously in India, he sought and won the active support not only from the Congress party but of the incumbent Viceroy, Lord Hardinge" (30). The film *Gandhi* shows the various facets of Indian national Movement at the time of Gandhi's arrival in India in 1915. Because the multi-religious, multi-caste and multi-cultured Indian society looks quite unpredictable in its relation to the rise of India as one Nation.

Manfred. B. Steger in the introduction of *Gandhi's Dilemma: Non-violent Principles and Nationalist Power* explains, "In the same way, upon his return to India in 1915, he used his considerable political experience and the religious ideals he had acquired in South Africa to create a mass-based liberation movement" (11). The film comments on the impact of Mahatma Gandhi's arrival in India, right from his participation in Indian struggle for freedom towards his leadership of Indian National Movement until the freedom of India. In the same way, Simone Panter-Brick in *Gandhi and Nationalism: The Path to Indian Independence* writes about Gandhi's role in the journey of Indian resistance to the British Empire till its end.

He changed tactics in the inter-war years, with the non-violent resistance campaign that become known as Satyagraha [...] In the last phase of his life, from 1942 to his death in 1948, Gandhi reverted to seeking cooperation with the British as a way to prevent partition. (Panter-Brick XI)

In *Gandhi* builds up such a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi which seems quite fit to cover, to lead, and to decide about the fate of free India as a united nation irrespective of its differences of religion, caste and culture. Here, the study also

makes clear how the film looks justifying Mahatma Gandhi's ideology to support the British during war as well as his non-cooperation against the British to organise India into a unified nation. The film also raises questions about Gandhi's ideology of non-violence or his political resistance, in the complexity of Hindu-Muslim rift at the end of colonial period in India. The violent nature of communal strife between the two communities has been explicitly depicted in the film *Hey Ram* (2000) where the extremists plot to kill Gandhi on the question of his support for the Muslims. This film represents the opposite side of what Attenborough does tries to highlight about the character as well as the role of Mahatma Gandhi in the complex situation of late colonial era in the history of India.

While speaking about Gandhi's picture of India as a nation, Rajmohan Gandhi in *Gandhi: The Man, His People and the Empire* writes, "he would seek to build an Indian nation not around a religion or a race, but on men and women ready to struggle, irrespective of their background" (174). The filmic representation does indicate Gandhi's effort to keep India united to maintain harmony and peace among different communal forces. The film *Hey Ram* shows a full army of fundamentalists against Gandhian philosophy of one India who challenge the ideology of Gandhi and his support for the Muslims.

The present analysis helps to find how the films such as *Gandhi* and *Hey Ram* both depict the two different types of the prevailing perspectives about Mahatma Gandhi; those who support Gandhi for his liberal view and others who reject Gandhi for his support for the Muslims, his contribution and leadership during Indian resistance to the British Empire. It can also be interpreted that Gandhi's stern belief in non-violence, moral values and the brotherhood of Hindus and Muslims in relation to communal violence externalises his own dilemma about the true picture of free India as a unified nation.

Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi challenged colonial politics of divide and rule. He involved all sections of Indian society for the cause of Indian freedom as well as their own dignity. Gandhi redefines and reorganises the feminine values in its positive way. That is why, the native colonised women get the necessary strength in their resistance to the colonial politics and their participation in the movement lead by Gandhi increased day by day. *Bhowani Junction* (1956) also depicts the same strength on the part of the Indian women in its development of the character of Ranjit Kasel's mother who supports the National Movement against the British. Elahe

Haschemi Yekani in his book *The Privilege of Crisis: Narratives of Masculinities in Colonial and Postcolonial Literature, Photography and Film* explains that “White hegemonic masculinity, and masculinity does not intrinsically depend on the narratives of crisis, but it is performatively constructed” (15). The film *Gandhi* indirectly comments upon the Mahatma Gandhi’s quality of involving all Indian men and women without any discrimination on the basis of gender, against the British.

On the other hand, this seems helpful to challenge the colonial politics based on gender of contemporary times in the history of a colonised nation like India. If colonial politics propagates the native male’s feminine characteristics and describes them suitable to be governed by a foreign power, it has been challenged and pushed back by Gandhi’s ideology of motivating native colonised women to participate in the resistance against the British. Priya Jaikumar in *Cinema at the End of the Empire: A Politics of Transition in Britain and India* describes, “In both silent historical films women are portrayed as essential in facilitating the downfall of evil regimes” (211). Mahatma Gandhi’s policy of involving Indian women in the struggle against the British seems very successful and also provides the often neglected Indian women to come out of their homes and participate in the resistance against the British Empire. The concept of Non-Violence also helps in this type of strategy of resisting the empire because it gives a chance to the women to participate in the freedom struggle against the British.



**5.3/4: Gandhiji motivates for *Swadeshi* and people burn their clothes
(Gandhi 1984)**

In this way, the film, in a long shot depicts Gandhi giving a motivational speech to Indians to boycott English things and support the *swadeshi* movement. The film in the next shot, with camera behind Gandhi's back, in a point of view shot depicts the effect of what Gandhi demands from his people. In both these scenes, the film represents Gandhi undisputedly, as a leader of the people. The film *Gandhi* also shows how Gandhi aroused the feelings of patriotism by giving an emotional speech to a large crowd in New Delhi by raising the issue of colonial exploitation of India. Gandhi motivates them to weave and wear their own homemade cloth instead of buying the Manchester made cloths. The film shows Gandhi's patriotic appeal to the nation:

To gain independence, we must prove worthy of it. There must be Hindu-Muslim unity always. Second, no Indians must be treated as the English treat us. We must remove untouchability from our hearts and from our lives. Third: we must defy the British. Not with violence that will inflame their will but with a firmness that will open their eyes. English factories make the cloth that makes our poverty. All those who wish to make the English see bring me the cloth from Manchester and Leeds that you wear today and we will light a fire that will be seen in Delhi and in London. (*Gandhi 1982*)

In this way, Mahatma Gandhi strike at the central point from where he seems able to include all the other fractions of Indian society in his movement. The film *Viceroy's House*, also depicts a same scene where Gandhi says: "We Indians have always marched, campaigned and fasted together, regardless of our creed or class. For so long we have been united in our opposition to one oppressor" (*Viceroy's House (2017)*). Gandhi's policy of inclusion helps him to make Indians to march against the British irrespective of their class, religion or caste. He tries to include Hindus and Muslims, the factory owners as well as workers, the farmers and the above all the women to weave the *Swadeshi* cloths. Simone Panter-Brick in his book *Gandhi and Nationalism: The Path to Indian Independence* writes about Gandhi's effort to weave and wear own home made cloths. He writes:

The promotion of Khadi (cloth made of spun and cotton) was now associated with Gandhi and his political party as a sort of party trademark... the promotion, production and the wearing of spunyarn

was in itself the best for the Mahatma and his political work. (Panter-Brick107)

This symbolises the spirit of Indian-ness and the unity among the masses directed towards a common goal of freedom. Bipan Chandra in his book *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India* (1996) writes, “He made the sharpest break with the moderates by reaching down to the masses, arousing them to political activity, and bringing them into the forefront of the struggle” (126). The film also shows how Gandhi’s appeal of peaceful, non-violent non-cooperation remains quite successful against the British administration in colonial India.

The concept of non-violence has been rightly explained by Gene Sharp in her article entitled as “Non Cooperation and Political Ju-jitsu”. The writer explains that “Non Cooperation on a large scale or at crucial points a slowing or halting of normal operations of the relevant unit, institution, government or society” (151). The film also comments on the larger scenario of the struggle between the colonial and colonised, violent and the non-violent, national and the colonial issues during the Indian struggle for freedom. The film *Gandhi* (1982) seems quite sympathetic in portraying the role of Gandhi on the screen in spite of the complex situations of nationalism, partition of India, Hindu-Muslim strife and politics of colonialism at the end of the empire. More over the film has been released in the postcolonial times, and its representation of the role of Gandhi must have been kept in view of Indian audience of the 1980s. The film also shows the immaturity of the British administration in assessing the impact of Gandhi’s attempt of making the salt. The film includes a conversation to depict what and how the British perceive about this salt incident.

Gen: Salt?

Charles: Yes, sir. He is going to march to the sea and make salt.

Gen: All right. He is breaking the law. What will that deprive us of?

Two rupees of salt tax?

Charles: Its not a serious attack on revenue sir. Its primary importance is symbolic.

Gen: Don’t patronise me, Charles.

Charles: In this climate nothing lives without water or salt. Our absolute control of it is a control on the pulse of India.

Gen: And that’s the basis of this declaration of independence?

General Edgar: I say ignore it. Let them raise their damned flags. Let him make his salt. It is only symbolic if we choose to make it so.

Gen: General Edgar is right. Ignore it. Mr. Gandhi will find it takes a great deal more than a pinch of salt to bring down the British Empire.

Alex Von Tunzelmann in *Indian Summer: The Secret History of the End of an Empire* writes, "Gandhi's Satyagraha was an alternative to fear, an option more radical and, crucially, more Indian than proposed by the moderate Congress" (113). The film also shows the act of salt making as a remarkable deed of Mahatma Gandhi to challenge the monopoly of the British. Gandhi's leadership, his act of Non-Cooperation to the British seems more real and inspirational to the Indian masses than the proposals being made by the Congress party.

Similarly, Simone Panter-Brick in *Gandhi and Nationalism: The Path to Indian Independence* (2012) writes about Gandhi's effort to challenge the Salt Laws of the colonial administration. He writes, "The salt-laws became that easy target for law-breaking in 1931. Picking up a pinch of salt at seashore or boiling it from seawater made you a civil resister" (64). Gandhi says that every Indian should claim this salt. In this way, Gandhi used this incident symbolically to show the British administration that even the colonised subjects could challenge them in a non-violent way. In the same way, Todd May in his book *Nonviolent Resistance: A Philosophical Introduction* explains, "The Salt March, perhaps more than any other event, was the spark that lit the struggle for independence. It involved not only organizers from the elite strata of the society but also villagers who had not been included in the struggle before" (23). The film also shows how Gandhi walks across the countless villages to reach at the sea and covered hundreds of miles. Bipan Chandra in his book *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India* (1996) writes, "Mahatma Gandhi's unity with the leaders of the khilafat was the most successful effort at Hindu-Muslim unity in the course of the national struggle" (259). This symbolically refers to the idea of freedom from the British rule aimed towards gathering a mass support and seems the goal of the Indian National Movement.



Figure: 5.5: Gandhi during his salt march

The film depicts Gandhi in a high angle shot or a bird's view shot to represent his leadership for the people. The film shows how Gandhi inspires the villagers and they all associate with him in the march against the British monopoly on the salt. But, at the same time, it seems that the use of a high angle shot is directed to exaggerate Gandhi's success as a leader to include, motivate and to lead the people of India more successfully instead of other leaders of the contemporary times of colonial India. The analysis of selected scenes from the film, highlights the way, Richard Attenborough tries to portray Mahatma Gandhi's character as a figure of Mahatma, instead of an individual.

The film also shows how Gandhi left to attend the round table conference on Indian independence in London called by Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. The film shows this scene by introducing a black and white documentary which at once makes the audience to feel as they are watching something really from the past. This introduction of documentary into the film *Gandhi*, seems to exhibit what David Graddol and Oliver Boyd-Barrett in their book *Media Texts, Authors and Readers: A Reader* explain, "Often black and white stock is used to signify the past; it has been used to stimulate documentary in the Australian film *Newsfront* and to offer nostalgic tribute to the past in Woody Allen's *Manhattan*" (125). In this way, the visual techniques employed by Richard Attenborough seems to make the audience of the postcolonial times to feel the politics in their colonial past. Because in the

narrative structure of the film, this scene of introducing the documentary seems quite different and more a part of history than Gandhi itself. This scene can also be interpreted to mean that the director may have treated Gandhi's figure as a phenomenon which still continues in the consciousness of the Indian audience right from the colonial to the postcolonial times.

But the specific scene also depicts how Gandhi travels as the deck passenger like a common Indian. Gandhi symbolises the Indian-ness through his cloths which he used to wear. Jagdish Chandra Jain in his book *Gandhi, the Forgotten Mahatma* (1987) describes about this event as "His clothing and diet brought Gandhi into the centre of the world's attention more than he ever had" (19). In England, Gandhi met various people from different occupations. He also met with factory workers and he got a warm welcome. The British people as well as political leaders were influenced by Gandhi's uniqueness as well as his integrity. In this way, the film *Gandhi* shows the role as well as the status of Gandhi as large as the whole freedom movement. Gandhi seems to be a figure which might stand or stretch itself along the history of India in the larger scenario of nation and its struggle for freedom.

The film showcases Gandhi's success as a non-violent preacher. He forced the masses of India to resist against the British in a non-violent way. Todd May in his book *Nonviolent Resistance: A Philosophical Introduction* explains, "While there is coercion that occurs, it is a moral coercion, one that forces the adversary to come to terms with an injustice that has previously been ignored. The dignity of the adversary is not violated in that coercion" (82). The film aims to measure the importance of Gandhi's integrity and his insistence on Non-Violence justify the usability and effectiveness of Political resistance to the British Empire. The film also depicts Mahatma Gandhi as a mighty figure in the struggle for India's freedom than any other leader like Jinnah at that time in the history of India in the colonial era.

5.2: Jinnah, National Movement and the Creation of Pakistan in *Jinnah* (1998)

Jamil Dehlvi's *Jinnah* is a Pakistani biographical drama about Muhammad Ali Jinnah. It has depicted the other major persona of the history of Indian National Movement through the portrayal of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Quaid-e- Aazm, the father of Pakistan. The film illustrate to comment on the context of contemporary times after the Second World War and the British rule in India which seems losing its grip on India. Moreover, the fear among the minorities like the Muslims related to

their future in free India, a majority of Hindus, also seems to be highlighted on the screen with black background. It depicts:

The Second World War is over. The British Empire is crumbling. India, the Jewel in the Crown, has broken loose. The Muslims of India, a minority, fear for their lives, their property, and their liberties. One man stands for their freedom. Against the might of the British Empire, against formidable opponents like Gandhi and Nehru, he wins for the Muslims a nation of their own. That man is Mohammed Ali Jinnah known as the Quaid-e-Azam, the Great Leader. (*Jinnah*, 1998)

The next shot opens with a low Angel close up of a plane at the Karachi Airport on 11 September, 1948. The scene begins with the close up of Jinnah's face to show the last moments of Jinnah's life as the scene depicts he is being shifted to Karachi for his treatment. Jaswant Singh in his book *Jinnah: India-Partition-Independence* describes that "As the Quaid-i- Azam was being taken on a stretcher to the plane, the crew gave him a salute" (431). Jinnah was suffering from tuberculosis and lung cancer that is why his condition was critical as the film shows in the beginning scenes. However, B. R. Nanda's *Road to Pakistan: The Life and Times of Mohammad Ali Jinnah* explains, "On 11 September, he was taken from Quetta to Governor General's House in Karachi where he breathed his last later the same day at 10.20 pm. The following day, 12 September, he was buried with full honours at Karachi" (327). Jamil Dehlavi's *Jinnah* starts with the death of Jinnah alike Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi*, and presents the mighty personalities of Indian history, but the films want to appeal the feelings, the emotions of the audience which is now divided in two nations, by filming the demise of the two selected leaders in the beginning scenes of the selected films.

The narrative structure of the *Jinnah* keeps shifting between two different times or what we can say, the two different worlds. That is why, the film starts with the death of Jinnah and then depicts how the record of Jinnah's life is lost because of a computer problem. In retroflex, Jinnah's soul discuss with Angel whatever he has done in past on the earth. The Angel asks Jinnah about his record. Dina Iordanova in her chapter "Rise of the Rest: Globalizing Epic Cinema" in the book *The Epic Film in World Culture* by Robert Burgoyne, writes, "Told in a flashback, the film includes a scene of imaginary trial of history in the context of which former

western colonial rulers are challenged in the court” (103). The conversation between the two happens as follow:

Angel: We have everything here (Pointing to a book). Oh no! they have transferred every detail into these wretched computers. And the manuals are written in God knows what language. Your file has gone. We had a very busy time here.

Jinnah: And where had you send them?

Angel: I can't even remember. Problem you fellows pose is desperate. You create Pakistan. And millions died in the division of what was one country into two pieces.

Jinnah: There was no other way. None.

Angel: May be, may be. Please, follow me Mr Jinnah. (Sit before a projector which shows the killings of innocent people during the partition of India)

Jinnah: I did everything I could to stop the slaughter. I fought for Pakistan. So that one hundred million people could live in safety and dignity.

Angel: I have got an hour and a half to prepare your case. What are the charges? They accuse you of being ambitious, arrogant, humourless, stubborn.

Jinnah: I had no ambition. Except for the safety of the Muslims of India. I had no stubbornness or arrogance, except that which was required of me to face my enemies. I died a million deaths for those who suffered through partition. (*Jinnah* 1998)

The cinematic presentation explains why the film follows the course of Jinnah's life through a flash back. The film seems to concentrate on Jinnah's role in partition of India on the basis of religion and his doubts related to the security and safety of minorities in a nation having majority of Hindus. In this scene, the film seems to interpret the situation from the perspectives of both Jinnah and the Angel and Jinnah seems justify what he has done in his life. The narrative of the film highlights what Michael Ryan and Melissa Lenos in their *Book An Introduction to Film Analysis* describe that “The film makes this point by distributing the perspectives from which story is told across several characters” (126). This scene also depicts how Jinnah tries to justify his role in creating Pakistan. Then to access

his past, Jinnah has to recall his life and has to travel back to his lifetimes. The Angel also accompanies him in this journey to the past. Jinnah examines his decision and its impact on the lives of the people of the contemporary times of colonial era. Michael Ryan and Melissa Lenos in describe that “We are responsible for the effects of our actions on others. It portrays why responsibility is so important a category in ethics” (126). The film seems to represent the Life and actions of Jinnah by examining through an Angel to fix the responsibility of someone whose decision might be responsible for the sufferings of the people during partition. The film also seems to comment on the relations of Jinnah and Lord Mountbatten depicted in the following conversation:

Lord Mountbatten: Divide the country in two? Muslims on one side,
Hindus on the other? That is madness.

Jinnah: It would be equally insane to leave the Muslim minority at the
mercy of a Hindu majority, many of whom hate us.

(Jinnah 1998)

The film seems to depict how Mountbatten tries to convey Mr. Jinnah that he is authorised by the King Emperor of England to decide about the future of India. But on the other hand, Jinnah describes himself as a representative of a Muslim nation whom Mountbatten must learn to respect. In the same way, B. R. Nanda in his book *Road to Pakistan: The Life and Times of Mohammad Ali Jinnah*, describes about Jinnah’s doubt in united India after the British left. He writes, “Jinnah argued that the history of 1200 years had failed to achieve unity, and the present artificial unity of India dated back only to the British conquest” (281). In the similar way, the film also depicts how Jinnah fears about the fate of the Muslim minority in India where the Hindu majority will never accept the Muslims. Jinnah demands a separate Muslim nation to protect the rights of a minority.

The film continues in its narrative to depict the political efforts of Viceroy Mountbatten and Gandhi to look for a peaceful solution to the problem. But on the other side, Jinnah and Nehru look quite adamant on their demands to have a Hindu Prime Minister and a Muslim nation respectively. The film depicts this in a scene where Viceroy Mountbatten and Gandhi talks but Nehru does not agree with them. The conversation between the three clarifies as:

Gandhi: I feel like the ‘mother in the Judgement of Soloman’. Give the

child to the other woman, but don't cut into to. Together we must make one last effort to keep this great nation as one...Years ago, Mr. Jinnah was the greatest advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Mountbatten: Was he indeed? Then what changed him?

Nehru: Blind Ambition.

Gandhi: No, no. the feelings that Muslims would have no voice, perhaps.

Mountbatten: Gandhiji, If you were in my position what would you say to Jinnah?

Gandhi: I would say, "Mr. Jinnah, India must stay united. You be its first Prime Minister and choose your cabinet. And tell him Congress agree. They suggested it.

The film *Jinnah* illustrates that how Nehru and Jinnah both were adamant on their demands regarding the Prime Ministership of India in case of Nehru and the creation of Pakistan on Jinnah's point of view. It seems as Lord Mountbatten finds himself helpless and seeks a solution from Gandhi. However, *Viceroy's House* also shows a same scene where Gandhi has been shown as saying:

Shall I tell you what the solution is? Jinnah should be asked to form the first government. Congress must be prepared to accept the leadership of the Muslim League if by so doing they ensure the unity of our country. (*Viceroy's House* (2017)

This offer from Gandhi makes Nehru angry and the film *Jinnah* (1998) shows the same in the next scene where Nehru says that Congress would never agree making Jinnah Prime Minister. In this way, the film seems to depict the situation of political crossroads at the time of later colonial period in the history of India. The film, in this scene, shows Gandhi's attempt to keep India united by offering the Prime Ministership to Jinnah instead of Nehru. Simone Panter-Brick in his book *Gandhi and Nationalism: The Path to Indian Independence* writes about Gandhi's effort to keep united. He writes, "Gandhi came to meet the new Viceroy on 1 April 1947 with his Jinnah card: a proposition to hand over India to his political rival" (174). The film also shows how Gandhi offers Jinnah to lead India and not to divide India. Gandhi plays a master stroke to save India and without offering the power to Jinnah there seems no other option to keep India united in those typical circumstances.



5.6 Gandhi, Lord Mountbatten, Nehru discuss the situation in *Jinnah* (1998)

Similarly, Stanley Wolpert in his book *Jinnah of Pakistan* says “It was a brilliant solution to India’s oldest, toughest, greatest political problem. The Mahatma alone was capable of such absolute abnegation, such instant reversal of political position” (317). The film seems to comment on the typical scenario where Gandhi ji bows before Jinnah to keep India united but Nehru looks quite uncomfortable about Gandhi’s offer to hand over the nation to Jinnah. But, on the other hand, Jinnah too rejects this offer and remarks: “The brutal truth, Lord Mountbatten, is that the Hindus have three votes to our one. You think they will accept it?” In this way, Jinnah does not agree and makes Viceroy to move ahead with his plan to divide India into India and Pakistan.

The next scene with a cross cut shuffles to the other narrative structure of the film and depicts Jinnah analysing his own past in company of an Angel and he justifies his rejection to be the first Prime Minister of free India because he thought it would not work. The film *Jinnah* shows a scene which depicts a meeting in Bombay, 1920 where Jinnah speaks to the audience and says:

We must make two pledges: first is that we stand united: Hindus and Muslims, for an India free from Imperial British rule. Second is that we must act in a constitutional way. We place our just demands because this is the only way by treating the path of dignity can we take our place as Free India, among the civilised and great nations. (*Jinnah* 1998)

In the same mode, In *Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity: Jinnah's Early Politics* Ian Bryant Wells writes, "To Indian nationalists and particularly Jinnah, the role of the British in India was to introduce the gradual constitutional reforms, leading eventually to the granting of full self-government" (40). In this way, the film shows an aspect of Jinnah which looks quite secular, in favour of Hindu-Muslim unity for the freedom of India. It explains that "at the national political level, Jinnah had already brought Congress and Muslim League closer through the adoption of similar goals" (45). The film highlights the fact that Jinnah was understood from the British politics aimed towards the division between the Hindu and Muslim communities so that the chances for a united Indian national front can be minimised, otherwise both the Congress and Muslim League could have given a tough time to the British policy makers at the end of the Empire.

The film also includes a scene where it seems to comment on the difference between Jinnah and Gandhi regarding the struggle for freedom. The film depicts Jinnah's role and thinking during the later colonial era in the history of India. A typical scene depicts how the old Jinnah questions young Jinnah about his logical opposition to Gandhi's way of politics and says, "Mr. Jinnah you are right to trust logic, but is not there some logic in Gandhi's non-violence?" (*Jinnah 1998*). But on the other hand, the scene depicts how young Jinnah reacts it by saying that "Mr. Gandhi is an extraordinary man. A man who believes in his own mission. But, the clothes, this imitation of the Hindu peasants, the spinning wheels, the fasts, the bits and pieces of Sanskrit philosophy. *Ahimsa, Satyagraha*. He is calling forth a flood" (*Jinnah 1998*). This scene can also be interpreted to mean that Jinnah seems quite aware of the upcoming fundamentalist nationalism in India.

As the film shows when Gandhi advocates for a nonviolent resistance and he moves the motion and says, "I put this resolution to Congress that we pledge ourselves to secure complete independence for India through means of non-violence" (Gandhi (Sam Dastor) qtd in *Jinnah 1998*), Jinnah opposes Gandhi's resolution and speaks:

Members of Congress, I beg to oppose this hasty resolution. Yet I wish to point out that these methods of dragging in of religious symbols, these radical marches and provocations are now beginning to split the movement [...] At this moment, the destiny of our country is in the hands of two men and one of them is Mr. Gandhi. Therefore, standing

on this platform I appeal him to cry 'Halt!' [...] Before it is too late. (Crowd starts shouting). (The old Jinnah with an Angel shouts from the crowd). No No... Mr. Jinnah is right. Do not bring religion into politics.

Jinnah brings forth how Indian national movement begins to divert in two different directions based on what is called Gandhi and Jinnah's ideology. Roderick Matthews' *Jinnah vs. Gandhi* (2012), however, have supported the idea of splitting the national Indian movement and explains "This difference lay at the root of their very different style of leadership. While Gandhi excelled as an active protestor, Jinnah was the most skilful of the passive opponents: Gandhi a leader by example, Jinnah a leader by inspiration" (5). The film comments the basic difference between Gandhi and Jinnah as both represents two distinct way of leading the resistance movement. One moves around the countryside and emerges as a mass leader while the other just assumes a position and then leads the specific community. This particularity in case of community and religion gives a way for a new challenge of defining the political differences in terms of the differences of faith. Roderick Matthews in his book *Jinnah vs. Gandhi* writes "Gandhi began his career looking for a way to realize his religious aims in political terms, while Jinnah ended his career looking for a new way to fulfil his political aims in religious terms" (39). The film also seems to interpret the perceived fears about the inclusion of religion into the politics and to some extent such fears turn real when the national movement takes the communal turn and leads to the partition of India.

The narrative structure of the film seems to depict two different eras in the history of India along with the two aspects of Jinnah's life: private as well as public. The film shifts from one section of Jinnah's life to the other. The film seems to highlight Jinnah's sacrifice of his personal life in favour of creating a new nation. Jamil Dehlavi shows Jinnah's role during Indian national Movement, then as a leader of the Muslim League, his efforts for the creation of Pakistan which needs to be analysed carefully. And then, in the postcolonial era, the perceptions about Jinnah again need to be studied cautiously as he is respected as the father of the Nation in Pakistan and in India he is considered the man who seems responsible for the partition of India. The film *Jinnah* offers a difficult task for film critics to give their secular view about the life and role of Jinnah in the colonial India.

5.3: British Solution to India's Problem at the End of Colonial Era in *Viceroy's House* (2017)

Gurinder Chadha's *Viceroy's House* (2017) is a British-Indian historical drama which has released as *Viceroy's House* in England in March 2017 and in India as *Partition: 1947*, (August 2017). The film illustrates the last few months of the British administration in India and seems to comment on the contemporary discourses of freedom and of course, the partition of India. It depicts Viceroy's House as a centre of everything which hosts the British officials like Viceroy Lord Mountbatten, Lady Mountbatten and an army of Indian servants of all religions. The film begins with a shot with black background and shows, "History is written by the victors" (screen, *Viceroy's House*, 2017) and then depicts a scene of Delhi's President House in 1947.



Figure: 5.7: Viceroy's House and Mountbatten's entry as a powerful figure

The film seems to celebrate the depiction of Viceroy's House in a way that in itself looks more important than the actual happenings in the context of the last days of British Empire in India. The film depicts Mountbatten in a low angle shot to represent him as a powerful figure in the circumstances full of chaos at the end of colonial era in the history of India. In a way, the film celebrates the figures of Viceroy's House and the last Viceroy of India, Lord Mountbatten to make the audience to have a glimpse into the colonial past of their nation. The film seems to highlight the epic style of preparations being enforced in a large house. The cinematic representation

displays how the scenery of the Viceroy's House helps the Indians to imagine how England looks like, as the Indian servants in the film imagine:

Jeet Kumar: This is what I imagine England looks like.

Dalip Singh: England is all slums and Bombsites. You know why they are letting it go? The war has exhausted them. They can't afford to keep us. (*Viceroy's House* 2017)

Gurinder Chadha's tries to highlight the perceptions about England in the colonised Indians because the way the British officials, especially in the Viceroy's House, behave as well as live, which appears influential to the Indian servants present there. The film seems to comment on the last days of the British Empire in India while keeping into the mind the British as well as the Indian audience in the Postcolonial era. That is why, the glorification of the Viceroy's house, the superiority of the British dress has been countered by British inefficiency to control India and their miserable position because of the Second World War.

This includes a scene where an old man turns off the radio on which Lord Mountbatten's speech is going on. He replies to his daughter Alia's question for the reason for not listening to Mountbatten and says, "He is the king's cousin. He has Empire in his blood". This shows the common man's doubts about the British ability to offer any solution to India's problem. The film also shows how Lady Mountbatten asks Lord Mountbatten:

Lady Mountbatten: Darling, did you know that 92% of the population in illiterate? And the one in five babies dies before they are four months old?

Mountbatten: Edwina, sometimes we have to accept what we cannot change.

Lady Mountbatten: India's problems are not just political. They are social and economic. Almost half the babies born here die before they are five. That cannot be the legacy of the British leave India after three centuries. We have enough time to improve the infrastructure. (*Viceroy's House* 2017)

The film comments on the issues and problems in the last days of colonial rule in India by raising questions through the character of Lady Mountbatten and the helplessness of the British as Lord Mountbatten shows in the film. The Introduction

of Stanley Wolpert's *Shameful Flight: the Last Years of the British Empire in India* describes "IN THE MID-AUGUST OF 1947 [in the mid of August 1947] the world's mightiest modern empire, on which "the sun never set," abandoned its vow to protect one-fifth of the humankind" (01). In this way, the film echoes the written record about the specific period of the history of colonial India which seems to highlight how the British lost their control over the emerging threats of communal violence, the famine, illiteracy as Anil Saxena in his book *British Empire in India* describes that "The people forgot Gandhi's message of non-violence and adopted their own methods of violent struggle" (304). The film also highlights the impact of the international scenario on India during the last days of the British Empire in India.

It can also be analysed how the film represents, the history of a nation like India, the colonial era situation in the postcolonial times. It also gives an opportunity to the viewers in the postcolonial times to reinterpret the colonial past by analysing what has been represented on the screen and how the film specifically showcases that specific era of the later colonial days in India. It enables the audience to interact with their past history and to feel an essence of their relation with the imperial powers during Colonial era. The film includes a scene where it seems to comment on the complexity of the situation when Lord Mountbatten says: "The longer we stay, the more we risk further violence. We have not the means or the manpower to keep the peace" (*Viceroy's House* 2017). The film highlights the eagerness as well as helplessness of the British administration in India in the last days of colonial rule to control the situation.

The film manages to raise questions about the British incapability to govern India at the last days of colonialism. The film exhibits this in a scene where Lord Mountbatten says: "We have no control". The study of this specific scenario takes into account the other national, international, religious as well as cultural aspects which make British to leave India as soon as possible. As per Stanley Wolpert's *Shameful Flight: The Last Years of the British Empire in India* description "Britain's shameful flight from its Indian Empire came only ten weeks after its last viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten, took upon himself [...] to withdraw its air fleet cover, as well as the shield of British troops and arms" (4). The film echoes the real situation by portraying Mountbatten's character to show how the British themselves seem helpless to control over the situation at their exit from India.

The present study helps to evaluate the situation in the context of Hindu-Muslim strife, the existence of the Princely States, the international political circumstances just after the Second World War. Nicholas Dirks' *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of the Imperial Britain* (2006) describes that "Empire was always a scandal for those who were colonised. It is less well known that empire began as a scandal even for those who were colonizers" (27). The colonial forces like Britain followed a scandalous approach at the end of the colonial period when after the Second World War, they analysed the whole situation in the context of a new international scenario. As a result, Mountbatten cuts short the given time by the British Parliament to free India and does his best to leave India as soon as it seems possible.

The film also shows Mahatma Gandhi saying: For so long we have been united in our opposition to one oppressor. It seems freedom, although longed for [...] is a fearful thing. (*Viceroy's House* 2017). This anticipation of Gandhi seems quite possible to happen when Lord Mountbatten says: And with fear comes violence. It's contagious. The same has been depicted in the film, *Jinnah* (1998) where Gandhi offers Jinnah to form the government but this makes Nehru angry. He opposes Gandhi's idea and says that a nation with majority of Hindu population will never accept the leadership of a Muslim Prime Minister.

The film *Viceroy's House* (2017) shows a scene to depict how Mountbatten reacts at Gandhi's offer and says: "You would give the Muslims the baby rather than carving it up?" Gandhi and Mountbatten seem aware that the situation is running out of control. In the next shot, the film shows how Pug tells Mountbatten as: There has been a massacre in Punjab. Half of Rawalpindi is on fire. Muslims burned down Sikhs and Hindu houses. Brutal reprisal have spread through Muslim streets (*Viceroy's House* 2017). At this Mountbatten asks Colonel Pug to call for the army but he replies: there are barely any English soldiers left. The Indians have divided loyalties. How can we ask Sikhs to fire on Sikhs, Muslims on Muslims? India is a ship on fire. (*Viceroy's House* 2017)

The film depicts how the communal riots get out of control and the bloodshed begins in Punjab, Bengal and other parts of India. In the Introduction of Bipan Chandra *et al's India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947* (2003) describes, "The British recognised that they have lost the battle of hegemony or war of position and decided to retreat rather than make a futile attempt to run such a vast country

by threat of a sword that was already breaking in their hands” (15). The situation at the end of the British Raj seems out of the British control and they too seem aware of the upcoming communal violence, the crisis of Indian soldiers changing loyalties at the time of partition and the helplessness of the British.

The film shows an upsurge of emotional, political, and religious situation to depict Lord Mountbatten, Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru, and other leaders except Muhammad Ali Jinnah talk about the solution of the problem but seem incapable of deciding anything except the partition of India into two nations. The British general describes ‘India as a ship on fire’. Similarly the film shows how Edwina Mountbatten disapproves Mountbatten’s decision to divide India and she says: “We came to India to give her freedom back not to tear her apart”. And Mountbatten helplessly answers that “We have no choice. If we don’t transfer power soon, there will be nothing left to transfer”. The film, in a scene, shows Mountbatten, Colonel Pug and Cyril discuss about the partition plan and Mountbatten says:

Mountbatten: How well do you know Punjab and Bengal?

Radcliffe: I have never set foot in India in my life.

(*Viceroy’s House* 2017)

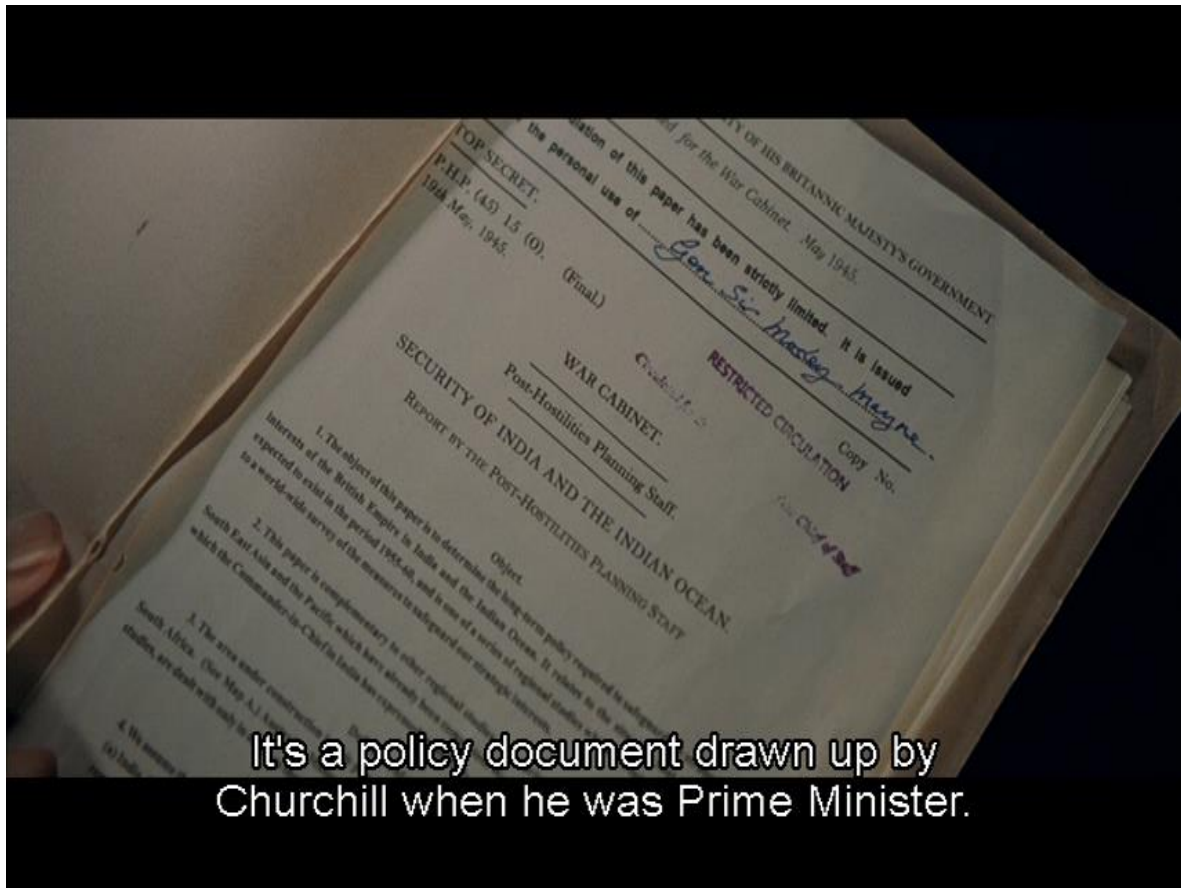
The film seems to comment on the irresponsibility of colonial power through this scene and makes the viewers to think how the responsibility of dividing India into two countries has been given to a stranger who has never been in India before. He does not have any knowledge about the geographical as well as religious differences of India. Hence, Barney White-Spunner’s *Partition: The story of Indian Independence and the Creation of Pakistan in 1947*, describes the experience of Radcliffe when he says, “Cyril Radcliffe, a man had never been east of Gibraltar, and who was now ensconced in a bungalow on the Viceroy’s estate. He had two weeks to finalise the partition lines on the maps of the Bengal and the Punjab” (123). The study of such scene in the film aims to uncover the politics behind such situations created by the colonial powers.



What's this map?



As you can see, there are no straight lines in India.



It's a policy document drawn up by Churchill when he was Prime Minister.



We didn't beat the Nazis and the Japs to give away the shop to the Soviets.





The Gulf, oil.



What about the people whose lives
have been destroyed by this?





Figure: 5.9-5.19: Stills from *Viceroy's House* (2017)

In this way, the film clarifies the actual politics behind the Partition of India and Pakistan to serve geo-political British interests in the region and to stop Russia to reach at the Karachi port. The film itself answers this when at the end Colonel Pug surprises Mountbatten and tells him how he has been used as a scapegoat by naming this activity of dividing India as a Mountbatten Plan because in real it had been decided earlier to protect the British interest in relation to other international communist powers like Russia and Japan. In the same way, Anil Saxena in his book *British Empire in India* describes that “In March 1942, Japanese forces occupied Rangoon [...] The British apprehended a Japanese march into Indian Territory. In the meantime, two war allies of the British government [...] put pressure on Great Britain to settle the deadlock in India” (299). The New Historicist study of the film enables the audience to look into either neglected or intentionally buried facts responsible for such an event in the history of a nation, the partition of India, and the actual geopolitical and international situations responsible for the partition, to serve the colonial interests even in the postcolonial times. The film shows how the plan to grant freedom to India came into existence just during the Second World War to counter the communist powers. That is why, Mountbatten gets angry when he comes to know how Lord Ismay worked covertly to fix the border of Pakistan for creating a buffer state between India and Soviet Russia. In this way, the present study of the film helps to understand other often ignored facts of the contemporary times at the end of the British Empire in India.

This makes the audience to think how tragic the situation was and how ill equipped the British seem at the end of the colonial days just before the Independence as well as the partition of India. The expected bloodshed comprising independence, partition and communal riots seems unavoidable as Khushwant Singh in his book *The End of India* describes that “With Independence came Partition and the worst communal violence in India’s history”(83). The *Viceroy’s House* showcases the brutal communal violence in Punjab and Bengal at the time of India’s Partition in 1947.

The film has been released in India and in England under the different names. The film released under the title of *Viceroy’s House* in England and in India it is released entitled as *Partition: 1947*. This also makes clear the politics of money making in the postcolonial times by making the film suitable for the target audience. Therefore, in England the film target the British audience and aims to exploit the

British audience's sense of feeling proud about their glorious imperial past. In England, the title of *Viceroy's House* also makes the present audience to feel the authority as well as the responsibility which the House of Viceroy symbolised at that time in the colonial period. Similarly, the film seems to appeal Indian audience emotionally and psychologically by making them to think, remember and feel the sufferings which partition of India brings. The study focuses on the politics of naming the film which aims to exploit the target audience both in the East as well as the West. The film exploits the colonial nostalgia of both the colonial as well as the colonised in postcolonial times.

While looking into the variety of representation in these three films such as *Gandhi*, *Jinnah*, and *Viceroy's House (2017)*, seems quite clear that the films aim to represent or give voice to all the responsible aspects concerning the perspective of the Hindu, the Muslim, and the British. This chapter helps to study these three perspectives in relation to the end of the colonial era in India, the emergence of India as a nation, the partition of India and the birth of Pakistan.

The study also seems to comment on the reception of films representing history because Gandhi is regarded the Father of Nation in India but in Pakistan the audience may not have same respect for Gandhi. Similarly, Jinnah as the creator of Pakistan is respected there but in India he is considered responsible for the partition of India.

On the other hand, *Viceroy's House*, seems to work for a balanced approach towards the colonial history in case of Indo-Pak audience. Its politics of target audience also becomes clear as the film maker seem aware from its multinational diasporic viewers. On the other hand, the film aims to strike at a common chord in relation to the joint history of the colonial and the colonised. Gurinder Chadha's *Viceroy's House* aims to appeal as well as exploit the feelings of colonial pride and the trauma of partition in the psyche of the audiences in India, Pakistan and England. Similarly, the present study highlights the Hindu, Muslim and the British perspectives in the last days of colonial regime in the history of a nation like India. The analysis also helps to understand the typical situation during the last days of colonial rule in India where the main challenge seems to assess as well as to control the violence after the Independence of India. All three films highlight the fact that the Independence results in partition of India into two countries. This resulted in violent riots, bloodshed and chaos everywhere including the miserable condition of

migrants who travel from one side of the border to the other side. The study also depicts how a non-violent, political resistance lead by Indian leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Muhammad Ali Jinnah resulted in so much bloodshed at the end. The analysis of selected films also makes it clear that even in the postcolonial times, the shared colonial history of colonial reign and resistance of the colonised still to appeals the audience.

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Conclusion

The films are becoming a vital and interesting medium for describing the events of the past. Although the history of the cinema in itself is not very old. But, after becoming a popular medium of representation of history on screen, the cinematic representation of history has now attracted the scholars to study, to analyse as well as to explore the feasibility of cinema in depicting history in its relation to the actual historic event. The films are said to be the mirror of the society as they showcase the various socio-cultural and political forces at work in a given period of time in any society. The films made on the themes related to history serve as an important medium for visualising the societies of the past in a new way. Moreover, in recent times, audience finds it easy, interesting and easily accessible to watch any film based on historic topic. The change in audience' demand as well as techniques of representing any event from history causes a shift in how we see, read, perceive and use to think about the past.

The opportunity to reach out to the colonised audience gives birth to the genre of the Empire Cinema because of the novelty of the medium of cinema and its mass appeal. The arrival of the Empire Cinema seems beneficial for both the filmmakers as well as the audience, in the far away colonised nations. The films of the Empire Cinema were introduced in India at the time of early colonialism. But, at the same time, indigenous Indian films give a push to nationalism and *swadeshi* movement. The early Indian films choose the subject matter from Hindu Mythology to exploit the native audience's love for the subject of myth and folklore and the support for anti-colonial and nationalistic feelings.

The Deceivers (1988) depicts the social evils during the colonial era like thugi cult, the mass killings and their religious connections, the native rituals, and sati. The role of British officers like Colonel Sleeman has also been appreciated for identifying and curbing these age old socio-cultural customs in colonial India. The film *North West Frontier Province* (1959) also shows the communal violence during the colonial rule and is still prevalent at the end of the British Empire. The film *Gunga Din* (1939) represents the politics of the Empire Cinema to serve the colonial agenda of justifying the colonial violence over the colonised. *Gunga Din* (1939), also describes the native desire to look like their masters as Gunga Din's fantasy to be like a colonial soldier who wants to participate in the parade. The films also highlight

how the technique of black-face and faciality has been applied for such characters who played the roles of the natives.

The films focus on the evil doings of the *thugs* to justify colonial presence to civilise the native. In *Gunga Din* (1939), both the black faced characters of Gunga Din and the thug leader are indirectly being associated with the figure of Gandhi in the larger scenario of Indian politics. Both represent two different castes; the thug leader as a Brahmin and Gunga Din as an untouchable. The film's imperial agenda in portraying Gunga Din and the chief of the thugs, resembling Gandhi, becomes very clear. Through the character of Gunga Din, the film symbolically highlights the untouchables and their devotion towards the British rule. On the other hand, the chief of the thugs has been used to exploit the caste hierarchy in India and its danger to the Indian nation as well as its untouchables; that is why when Gunga Din sacrifices his life for the colonial forces, he is shown dressed as a British soldier saluting the British Empire. The empire films seem to target the untouchables of Indian society and propagate the fear of Hindu nationalism against the downtrodden as well as minorities in the colonial India. The films of the Empire Cinema also exploit the socio-cultural set up of India in the specific point of time.

The politics of empire films seem to associate the native violence with that of native religion. The films depict the violent killings perpetrated by the thugs in relation to their religious views. The film *North West Frontier Province* (1959) also showcases the communal violence during the colonial rule and even at the end of the British Empire. The film quite intentionally uses the symbol of a train named Victoria to save the Hindu Prince from Muslim fanatics.

The issues of individual Indian-British Interactions, human relations and race between the colonial and the colonised have also been studied in *Heat and Dust* (1983), *A Passage to India* (1985), *Before the Rains* (2003), and *Bhowani Junction* (1956). All such films illustrate similar thematic concerns irrespective of their different narrative structure and usage of filmic techniques. The film *Heat and Dust* (1983) depicts the two interrelated stories from two different eras; 1920s and 1980s. The film uses crosscutting as a structural scheme to cut story back and forth between the colonial and postcolonial era of the history of India. The film also depicts the western people's inability to differentiate between spiritualism and sexuality on the path of incarnation. *A Passage to India* (1985) uses the Indian landscape to propagate the colonial politics of redefining the nature of the colonised

people in accordance to its culture and geography. The mystery of Malabar caves is associated with the mystery of Indian culture. The history of a nation like India, its culture and its people have been labelled as uncivilised, mystic and violent. The films depict the mystery of Indian caves, its weather and their impact on the psyche of the white people such as Olivia in *Heat and Dust* (1983), Adella Quested in *A Passage to India* (1985).

The films also highlight the colonial propaganda of describing the native male inferior, violent, uncivilised in contrast to the colonial masters. The selected films seem to interpret how the British people have different perspectives regarding the Indian people and Indian geography (In case of *A Passage to India* 1985), Indian weather as well as its architecture (*Heat and Dust* 1983). The films represent how Olivia, Mrs. Moore, Adella Quested all show respect for Indians whereas, Douglass, Ronnie, Mr. and Mrs. Sanders describe Indians as backward, uncivilised and violent.

The films also showcase the dilemma of the English women like Adella and Olivia who find themselves in-between the coloniser and the colonised. Olivia, gets pregnant by an Indian *Nawab* and then he tries to exploit the situation for his own agenda to annoy the British. She was the victim of colonial pride and the anger of the colonised. The films also raise the colonial propaganda of describing the native colonised man as rapist and a danger to the white women. The films also seem to comment on the plight of being a woman while representing the colonial or the colonised community under the patriarchal and colonial structures. The concept of white *memsahib* has been formed to save the colonial pride in the reproduction of white colonial values. Hence, Olivia is depicted as a threat to the white Christian values and the racial superiority. The patriarchal structures seem functioning for males from both sides; colonial or the colonised. The women have to suffer because of the gender amidst the mechanism of the colonial, colonised and the patriarchal politics irrespective of their race.

Bhowani Junction (1956), depicts the issue of Anglo-Indians, their dilemma at the end of the colonialism, and the colonial exploitation of age old caste prejudices in India. *Before the Rains* (2003), also explains the colonial motive of trade, profit and exploitation, behind the construction of the road. The film deals with the issues of colonial greed, the relation between the colonial man and colonised woman, the

beginning of the Indian struggle for freedom, and in the end constructing the road before the rains to exploit the native natural resources.

The films also comment on the era of Indian National Movement, its leaders and the participation of the common people. The films represent the two aspects of the National Movement; violent and non-violent. Especially, the films like *Bose: The Forgotten Hero* (2004), *The Rising: A Ballad of Mangal Pandey* (2005), *23 March 1931 Shaheed* (2002), *Hey Ram* (2000) trace the idea of resisting the British Empire in violent ways. On the other hand, the political response to the British Empire in relation to the concept of non-violence during the Indian National Movement has been depicted in films like *Gandhi* (1982), *Jinnah* (1998) and recently released the *Viceroy's House* (2017). The films also help to highlight as well as differentiate between what has been interpreted as Gandhi's Non-Violence in relation to the violent, revolutionary resistance to the British Empire in the colonial history of India. The selected films like *The Rising: A Ballad of Mangal Pandey* (2005) deal with violent resistance from the time of Indian uprising in the 1857 Revolt towards the end of colonial era including the period of Bhagat Singh's martyrdom, the revolutionary resistance and in the end the role of Subhash Chandra Bose to make the British to leave India. The film showcases the foremost endeavour to resist the British Empire. The film elevates the figure of Mangal Pandey and his martyrdom. The film *23 March 1931 Shaheed* (2002) also fulfils the same objective and showcases how the Martyrdom of Shaheed Bhagat Singh unites the whole India against the British. Moreover, the film *The Rising: A Ballad of Mangal Pandey* (2005) highlights how the Hindu-Muslim unity becomes a challenge for the British and after the 1857 Revolt the policy of 'Divide and Rule' comes into force which lead to the partition of India as we see in the films like *Gandhi* (1982) and *Jinnah* (1998). The study of such films helps to understand the colonial politics of using the same Hindu-Muslim conflict for colonial interests which at the time of the Revolt of 1857 caused a big challenge for them.

The issue of the self-contradicting identities of colonised subjects in the colonial regime has also been highlighted in these films. *Gunga Din* (1939) tries to highlight as Gunga Din is an Indian but sacrifices his life for colonial soldiers. *The Rising: A Ballad of Mangal Pandey* (2005) describes Mangal Pandey in conflict; he wishes to save the Indian women as well as India from the cruelties of the British while being East India Company's soldier.

The film *Gandhi* (1982) highlights how Gandhi includes the often ignored, exploited as well as excommunicated Indian masses in the non-violent struggle against the British Empire. The film also showcases how a large number of people participate in Gandhi's funeral to comment on the film's politics of describing Gandhi's importance in the history of Indian struggle for freedom. The film shows Gandhi as quite fit to lead or to decide about the fate of free India as a united nation irrespective of the differences of caste, religion and culture at the end of the colonial period. *Jinnah* (1998) also depicts the same in case of Jinnah as a father for Pakistan. On the other hand, the possibility of Gandhi's Non-Violence and one India also has been questioned in the film *Hey Ram* (2000) which depicts the violent nature of Hindu-Muslim communal strife and the murder of Gandhi by a Hindu extremist.

In the same way, *Jinnah* (1998) showcases fear among the Muslim community related to their future in free India having majority of Hindus. Jinnah's character is developed to depict as important for the Muslim community as a leader like Gandhi for Hindu community. Both *Jinnah* (1998) and *Gandhi* (1982) seem to comment on the same scenario of rising the Hindu-Muslim differences, the role of the British in deciding about the Indian independence, its partition and in the end the communal riots after the independence. Both the films give a chance to the audience to know their leaders, their role in Indian Freedom Movement, and the efforts to keep India united or divide it. Moreover, both the films are released in postcolonial times where the audience in both India and Pakistan have different views about Gandhi and Jinnah. The study helps to know how Jinnah is considered the father of the nation in Pakistan while in India he is considered the man responsible for the partition of India.

The film *Viceroy's House* (2017), further seems to comment on the last days of the British rule in India where the Viceroy Lord Mountbatten seems a central figure to decide about the partition of India and the future of India and Pakistan. This particular film gives the audience an opportunity to interact with their colonial history, the role of their national leaders (like Gandhi and Jinnah) as well as the British authorities (Like Lord Mountbatten) in the midst of the complex situation of colonial India during the last days of colonial rule. Such as the title suggests the Viceroy's House seems the central pivot of all power during the last days of British rule in India. The Viceroy's House includes people from all the religions which helps the

audience to know the different types of perspectives at that time of the independence. The film also tries to draw a balance between the policies of Indian National Congress and the Muslim League and the British administration's efforts to control the situation in the scenario of communal violence.

The British authorities were quite familiar with the impact of such films on colonial audience, even though Indian audience seems quite immature and incapable of inferring any political message or any ideological agenda behind these films. The selected films showcase the event of the colonial past of a nation in its varying contexts, right from the colonial period up to the end of the colonial period and even in the post-colonial times, where the films seem to challenge the popularity of the written texts over specific events from the history of a nation. Moreover, the cinematic representation of any historic event reaches out to a larger multinational, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic audience in short span of time.

The present study helps to analyse the specific use of cinematic techniques such as the particular way of using camera: high and low angle shots to differentiate between the colonial and the colonised and to show someone as a powerful character while ignoring the other. The empire films also deal with the time and space facts in their depiction of the same spatial setting with temporal distance as in the film *Heat and Dust* (1982) to give postcolonial interpretation to an event from the colonial times.

The New Historicist study also helps to know the way, the colonial cinema treats the marginalised, often neglected strata of Indian society. The study helps to explore how the empire films interpret any subject in accordance with the political agenda of the colonial enterprise. *Bhowani Junction* (1956), also comments on the rigidity of caste system in India, when Captain Savage threatens to the protestors to get away from the track otherwise they have to go for six months purification. The study highlights the difference between the British and Indian, colonial and postcolonial representation of the same event or same subject from history. The analysis highlights a film's usage of history as well as in itself being a part of such history, and its impact on the colonial and the postcolonial audience from the colonial to the postcolonial times.

The New Historicist study helps to find out the way, the selected films represents the often marginalised aspects of colonial times in the history of India. The study highlights the way, the films of the Empire Cinema reframe their ideology

of colonial agenda to represent the untouchables of India in these films. *Gunga Din* (1939) shows an untouchable character, Gunga Din in a way which is suitable for the colonial interests. The film illustrates the way, an untouchable is recognised, rewarded and glorified by showing him dressed as a colonial soldier after his death. Gunga Din's portrayal in the film is depicted with sympathetic touch and it is shown helpful for the colonial regime. The films also highlight the role of Indian and western women in colonial era, which otherwise does not find appropriate representation in historic texts related to the colonial period. *Heat and Dust* (1982), *A Passage to India* (1984) and *Bhowani Junction* (1956) depict the women characters like Olivia, Adella, Victoria and Sajani as victimised by colonial as well as patriarchal structures, irrespective of being colonial or the colonised. The present study helps to recognise the role of the marginalised sections of colonial Indian society. The films shows how the sufferings, sacrifices and dilemmas of a woman; Indian, Western or Anglo-Indian, has not been give due respect in other historical expressions.

The study also helps to explore how the Indian films and the western films differently represent the same subject or event from the colonial history. The film *Gunga Din* (1939) distorts the image of Gandhi by assimilating the character of the thug guru in resemblance to the figure of Gandhi as a violent character who preaches violence against the colonial soldiers. On the other hand, *Gandhi* (1984), is released in postcolonial era, glorify the role of Mahatma Gandhi as a preacher of Non-Violence. This brings out the duality of perspective in colonial and postcolonial times. *The Rising: A Ballad of Mangal Pandey* (2005) also shows the different interpretation of the same character in relation to the colonial and the colonised. For the British, Mangal Pandey was a rebel, mutinous, violent but for Indians he was the hero of the revolt of 1857. The study also helps to know the reception of films depicting Gandhi and Jinnah in India and Pakistan. The present study highlights the politics of empire films in the larger scenario of justifying the colonial rule.

The present analysis highlights the changing role of censorship in colonial and postcolonial era. At early stage, the censorship was aimed to secure Indian market for the British films from the American and native films. Then, the British used the censorship against the Indian films having anti-colonial and nationalist appeal to the audience. The New Historicist study highlights the dual role of cinema; as an art form and as medium to propagate a specific ideology by targeting a particular kind of audience, at a specific point of time. The films serve as an

interesting medium to know, to reinterpret as well as refashion the events of the past and their politics in the colonial era. The films based on history destroy the distance between the viewer and the past so that one can judge and feel an essence of the past. Even, in the postcolonial times, a film maker is expected to respect all the diversities of religion, culture, caste and the interests of any nation. The colonial powers used the medium of films to correspond with the discourse of Orientalism with respect to the colonised nations. It is pertinent to observe how colonial discourse justifies imperialism by portraying such characters as the thugs, implying that the colonial invasion was aimed at or at least resulted in civilising the uncivilised natives. The selected films also depict the communal violence of Indians and defend the violence of the colonial powers in the name of restoring the order. The films first highlight, portray and construct the image of the colonised native as self-admittedly uncivilised and then in contrast to that, the colonial mastery of order, justice, and superiority is portrayed as a remedial agency to root out the native socio-cultural evils. The selected films showcase the colonial nostalgia in the postcolonial era and remain a useful medium of revisiting the colonial history of a nation, in a changed scenario of postcolonial times where the power structures in the international politics have been changed, in comparison to the colonial times.

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