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Colonial Rebels in Indian Cinema

Narratives, Ideology and Popular Culture

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Abstract

Historical films are a widely discussed genre of visual narration as it poses the challenge of a reliable balance between history, myth and truth. Indian history and independence have been one of those themes that have been adapted into filmic narration, not only as a national oration, but from an international lens. Unlike any other historical moment, Indian Independence is the most celebrated and recurring themes of historical movies and still continuous to be a vibrant subject for Indian film makers. Dealing with the narration of a nation, often these films are looked at with a skeptical attitude, mostly because of its colonizer's view of the colonized. This article addresses Bhabha's (1994) interstitial perspective and mimicry of ambivalence positing that these films neither dominate nor propagate certain colonial ideologies, nor does it make the colonizer as a virtuous subject, but rather create an ambivalent identity, which is neither colonizer nor colonized, but a hybrid of it. Apart from some English productions on Indian colonial rule and independence, some Indian films are also taken as a case study to elucidate the concept of hybridity in cultural meaning. When the 'object' of history or the colonized reacts with their perception, it creates an ambivalence that is far different from the colonizer's perception.

Keywords

Historical film, ambivalence, interstitial perspective, Independence, Bollywood, transnational, filmic adaptation

Introduction

One of the most popular ways of disputing and supporting history is recreating, enacting and portraying through film. The folklore legends of great rulers, the triumph of brave warriors, the great epics and the wreck of the Titanic and the great fall of the Berlin Wall have picturesque visions in our psyche through the unambiguously venerated and enduring cinematic narration. The possibilities of cinematic narration have been seized by film makers for recreating the historical moment of the Indian Independence struggle as well. More than any other historical moment, Indian Independence is a celebrated and recurring theme of historical movies and still continues to be a vibrant subject matter for Indian film makers. One of the reasons for the interminable charm of Indian Independence could be the two centuries long struggle that has a political yet social and religious background. From the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 to the Partition of India and the end of the British Raj in 1947, the struggles of Indian Independence have seen different levels of resistance helmed by national and local leaders.

The narration of nation is often seen as a tricky rendition as it holds a certain amount of authenticity, truth and belief, which may not be manifested in cinematic narration and techniques. As far as Indian Independence is concerned, the moments have been captured and recorded from different perspectives—Gandhian, Marxian, Hindu and Muslim, Sikh—having their own way of looking into and interpreting the same event and incidents. There are also different versions of British history of India written by administrators and army generals of the East India Company like E. Elphinstone's *History of India* (1841), Joseph Cunningham's *History of Sikhs* (1849), Major General John Malcom's *A Memoir of the Central India* (1824), Gen. Briggs's *History of the Rise of Mohammedan Power In India* (1829) which still find a place among school/university reference lists. This goes with the words of Max Muller in his letter to the Duke of Argyll, then the secretary of state of India.

India has been conquered once, but India must be conquered again and the second conquest should be a conquest by education ... India can never be Anglicized, but it can be reinvigorated ... (In Muller (ed.) 1902)

A self-proclaimed cultural superiority may be the driving force behind the process of the ideological and political consolidation of the colonizer's role as a virtuous subject through historical writings (Swarup 1989). However, these filmic narrations are not only produced by the colonizer; perhaps a considerable number have come from Indian directors who they take themselves as the subject of the event.

With Bhabha's (1994) concept of hybridity, ambivalence and interstitial perspective, this article looks into the sub-genre of historical films, i.e. Indian Independence films made by English as well as indigenous filmmakers and the creation of an ambivalence and mimicry of the colonial presence in India. As it is true that these films create a perception of history and hold the immense possibility of establishing a version of history, it is also true that when the 'object' of history or the colonized react with their perception, it creates an ambivalence that is far different from the colonizer's perception.

Out of a purposive sampling, the article takes *Gandhi, A Passage to India, The Legend of Bhagat Singh* and *The Rising: Ballad of Mangal Pandey* as case studies as this group represents the general mixture of English, Bollywood and regional depictions of the Indian struggle for freedom. However, other films are mentioned in due course to give overall meaning and justification to the comments made. Starting with a general overview of the importance of history in films, the article moves on to explore the difference in representation of the independence struggle in Hollywood and Bollywood films.

Why History in Film Matters

History is currently the vogue of mass media whether it is a television series, film or a documentary. Film has the ability to capture the time, context, mood, manner and matter of history through a thorough research of other known historical media like folklore, music, artworks, cave arts and historical documents. Warrington (2007) begins her book *History goes to the movies* responding to a familiar enquiry 'Why devote an entire book to history on film?' She argues that for many people history is what they see in films and television programs (2007, p. 1). Hence, film being an entertainment medium, it is under constant scrutiny when it handles critical issues and it is even more critical when history is recreated. Rosenstone (2006) is also of the opinion that, historical films and any kind of visual adaptations like documentaries and docu-dramas, are increasingly important in understanding history

and our relation to the past and discarding them in evaluating the past is like ignoring the events and people that comprise history.

Even if history is a myth, this myth has an important ability to keep society together by elucidating the world that lies outside of its realm (Levi-Strauss 1963). Creating historical narratives through films is a challenge since it involves gathering bits and pieces of past from folklore, word of mouth, tradition and society, and stitching it together to create a meaningful image and narration. Hence it can be considered as conceptualization, recreation and dissemination through a linear pattern by careful assemblage of the social, political, cultural and economic happenings from the past to create a memory for the present generation.

Creating historical narratives needs extensive research, because often history is written and projected on the ideological framework of the historian or the interpreter of the history (Rosenstone 2006). Recreation of history through filmic medium is tedious and painstaking. It separates ideological lineage, views, opinions and perceptions from the beholder, interpreter and source of the information. Hence the creation of the historical narrative has to travel between mainstream discourses of a true representation and the various perceptions of that discursive truth.

Even though loosely based on facts, historical films offer a journey into the heard and unheard historical facts and provide the audience with knowledge and information which is otherwise available only to intellectuals through books and journals. Rosenstone (1995) points out that film often shows history as a linear process and brings together events and happenings that usually will be split apart in a written history for structural purposes. This could be both a challenge and privilege of films. Moreover, to witness history through this popular cultural lens, literacy is not any mandatory concern unlike the written records. More critical is the fact that visual histories face more criticism than written histories. This is evident in almost all the criticisms leveled against historical movies even though those movies are adaptations of accepted biographies and novels. However, these historical films are either romances, or tales of good guys versus bad guys or beautiful heroines, which have nothing to do with serious events elucidated in the textbooks (Rosenstone 2006). Films are primarily for entertainment lasting for few hours and the primary concern always is to create reality or 'cinematic realism' (Ibid); this creation is neither natural nor spontaneous, yet audiences suspend their disbelief in the name of entertainment. Briley (2002) notes that film is often criticized in the school curriculum for lacking intellectual rigor. Perhaps, film is able to convey knowledge in a powerful and effective manner that written work cannot achieve. The same can be the reason why historical films are criticized for its impact on audience. In this article as well, the main point of concern arises when a national history and independence struggle has been visualized from the creative perspective of a colonizer that can act positively and negatively on the image building process of the emerging economy of a colonized state.

Representation of the Movement and the Period-Indigenous and English Films

It was with Sir Richard Attenborough's much appraised classic, *Gandhi* (1982), that the potential of the Indian freedom struggle as a spectacle was identified by the world. Attenborough's *Gandhi* is regarded as the classic film about India, its freedom struggle and partition, which was 20 years in its making. Despite all the research that went into it, the fact that the director and the lead actor playing the title

role—Ben Kingsley—were both foreigners means that the film represented the international rather than the indigenous perspective of Gandhi. As Yahaya (2007) says,

The filmmakers failed to draw upon the subtle representation of Indian traditions to emphasize the importance and significance of various events that signify great importance to the Indian people ...

There are obvious devices used to capture audience attention. The film starts with Gandhi in his last few moments before his death and then takes the viewers to a flashback of his early years when he was working as a barrister in South Africa. Ironically with the depiction of Gandhi's funeral is accompanied by the voiceover commentary of American journalist Edward R. Murrow replacing the legendary tribute of Nehru, followed by the visual of British administrators like Lord Louis Mountbatten, Mirabehn and Walker (Dwyer 2011). Such an establishing scene strikes the chord that the film is about Gandhi as a global figure and not one that is seen from an Indian perspective. Even though it is considered the most widely viewed 'cinematic portrayal of the man and history' (Juergensmeyer 1984), the film only goes superficially through the political aspect of Gandhi's life without looking at his more commonly critiqued moral, social and religious life. Attenborough, nonetheless, was indeed successful in painting Gandhi as a political leader and portraying his role as a politician (Gupta 1982). In an attempt to celebrate the political life of Gandhi, the director set aside all other major leaders of the freedom struggle and even went to the extent of making Jinnah a morally impious character who paved the way for the partition. In his own book based on the production of Gandhi, he clarifies this derailment from facts as inevitable for a dramatic movie since he first read the script of Briley:

It was by now a really successful amalgam of all the ingredients I felt were vital. Whilst at the same time being a sufficiently moving and dramatic story to become a successful three-hour movie. (p. 177)

Hay (1983) observes that this distortion from facts transpires in two ways: by exaggeration and inclusion of new events from the experiences of Gandhi's followers. For instance, the train travel in South Africa where the director dramatizes and exaggerates the scene with Gandhi falling flat on his face; whereas in the autobiography Gandhi simply mentions 'he took me by the hand and pushed me out' (Gandhi 1957, p. 111). Hay also points out another fictitious scene where, despite terrific baton blows from policeman, Gandhi persists in burning his own and others' registration certificates. But neither in his autobiography nor in his reminiscence *Satyagraha in South Africa*, had Gandhi ever referenced such a hideous incident of police beating. Unlike in the film, Gandhi practiced Satyagraha and non-violence, not as a political weapon, but as an eternal rule that humanity must follow for a better and efficacious life. However, the film's eight Oscar Awards explain how popular it was among international audiences, exemplifying the success of a fictionalized history.

Quart (2006) opines that the 1980s saw a revival of British films mainly because of America's renewed interest in these films after the release of *Chariots of Fire* in 1981. Moreover, companies and British channels like Channel 4 began to finance and commission these films, a move which removed the financial constraints of film production in Britain. As Higson (2006) opines, this period used nation and national past as its narration, resulting in what he referred to as heritage films. The Museum of Broadcasting Communications identified a series of television programs and films which seemed to 'indicate a particular British cultural history' (The Museum of Broadcast Communications website). This includes James Ivory's *Heat and Dust* (1983), David Lean's *A Passage to India* (1984) and

television series like *The Far Pavilions* (1984) and *Jewel in the Crown* (1984). All of these films are based on fictional stories and characters based on British colonial rule in India and the Indian freedom struggle and they represent the Whites' predicaments and reactions to themselves and to the colonized. Indian characters do not have in-depth revelation, but are mere supporters to the western psyche and constructing a fictional and fantasy India for the western audience. The depiction of Indians, or in a broader perspective, India in bits and pieces, in an attempt to stereotype, accumulate consciously or unintentionally in viewers' minds. This ultimately develops into a *schema* (Ramasubramaniam 2005). This stereotyping, however creates a clear distinction between west and east (Mitra 1999). As Davidson and Hill (2005) note, the changing attitude of the British towards Indians after independence was interpreted in terms of gender relations. This trend according to them is a shift from portraying British power to British experiences in India, which in turn 'outstrips the westerner's ability to define or understand it' (p. 5). This leaves the potential of using irony and hysteria prudently in the plot, in understanding what is to be 'Indian' or 'India'. Davidson and Hill argue that these films often suggest ironies and social critiques of the colonial era, but the spectacular display invites a nostalgic gaze that resists the very ironies produced by these films. He posits that these heritage films are so paradoxically naturalized that they are far removed from history and any critical historical perspective, such that an intimation of history is made by the style, look and the recreation of the period details. *Gandhi* and *A Passage to India* find place in this category of heritage films that represent a culturally respectable spectrum of film history. Hence, it is no wonder that films like these and many others made during that period (see Heat and Dust) are internationally successful as classic art works; but their credential as historical accounts cannot be verified or justified. Rather, they are part of the quest to frame India as 'absolutely different and unchanging' (Said 1985) as explicated by Davidson and Hill (2005):

Like the Marabar caves in 'A Passage to India', the Himalayan mountains not only cast an inexplicable spell upon the visitors, but reduce their actions to meaningless ...

The main concern with historical films at this juncture arises if we look at them as a postcolonial creative work. Bhabha opines that the colonizers' representation of the colonized is never uncomplicated and straight-forward and aimed at a stereotyped image of the colonized. Here the image of a colonized society is made as 'fixed reality which is an "other" and yet entirely knowable and visible' (Bhabha 1996, p. 93). Whether in *Gandhi* or *A Passage to India*, a sincere effort has been put forth to make the 'other' a stereotypical society far inferior than the colonized, by making the same 'other' a subject as well as object. While on one hand it is clear that in the revival period British films took their nation and national past as a potential subject to capture the market, on the other hand it is apparent that through the veil of film, they were creating their own history of colonization.

Indian 'Mimicry' of the Colonizer

Bhabha (1990) attempts to challenge the consistent, comprehensive and historically continuous traditions that proclaim the subordinate status of the third world. He argues that there is an emergence of an oriental creativity whether it is in literature, arts or social science, in which there is a quest to rewrite the subordinate status embellished by occidental writings.

Bhabhasays that nation and culture must be taken as narrative constructions arising from the interaction of competing national and cultural constituencies. Hence,

Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time ... such an image of the nation might seem impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical, but it is from these traditions of political thought and literary language that the nation emerges as a powerful historical idea in the west. (Bhabha 1990)

When correlating this with the cinematic productions in India, it is fascinating to see that the image of history held by the colonized makes the colonizers' stereotypical portrayal of others as an 'impossible object' (Bhabha 1996, p. 103). In an effort to rewrite the dominant ideology, the colonized mimic the colonizer making the latter see themselves as the object. Hence perception is never one-sided. Here, the colonized respond to the imagery of the colonizer's version of history by projecting a different perception and level of historical struggle unimagined by the colonizer. Indian film in its structure and flavor holds immense possibilities of propagating diverse emotions through dialogue, music and sentiments with the potential of up to three hours of screen time, in which any event can be brought to the audience demanding an emotional involvement. As such, on one side, many of the Indian films on the colonial period divert from the mainstream national struggle led by Gandhi, while on the other hand, a large number of films created fictional events in the colonial period in India that rightly mimic the presence of the colonizer and their series of failures in India (for instance, *Lagaan* 2001).

The historical genre has been in Indian cinema for a long time (Jaikumar 2006). The historical narrative is a complex genre encompassing a glut of sub genres including religious, social, patriotic, pre-independence and post-independence. During the colonial period itself historical films (often in the form of mythological movies) were present, but they projected an imaginary past incorporated with the hidden agenda of serving a political cause or portraying the Indian society as crisis ridden during colonial rule (Ibid). However, after independence, since the political function deteriorated, historical films began to arouse patriotism among the public through patriotic movies built around real and imaginary pasts. After 1998, as an effect of the political imbalances and struggles, there was a constant endeavour to prejudice history. As a result, different genres of struggles for freedom evolved; for example the partition history, from the inspiration of the stories of the holocaust (Lichtner & Bandyopadhyaya 2008). Remarkably, film emerged as a viable source of interpreting history or at least of rewriting history. As a result there are many films that come under the purview of colonial Indian history like *Bhagat Singh*, *Mangal Pandey* and *Lagaan*, among others.

As the western film industry tried to limit the struggle for Indian Independence with the national figure of Gandhi (*Gandhi*) and some romantic and imaginary plots on colonial India, Indian films set the platform for valorizing the uncelebrated heroes of Indian freedom struggles, setting the realization that the Indian struggle against colonial power was never nationalized and linear, but a complex set of uprisings at regional as well as national levels by rulers as well as civilians. As a result they stepped away from bringing on to the screen Gandhi, as this is part of history that is well known. Even though Gandhi led India to freedom, in the history of Indian Independence, many martyrs are obscured knowingly or unknowingly, not even finding a mention in academic textbooks. Indian film was engaged in constant endeavour to bring out these hidden pearls of our freedom struggle, in which they were successful to a certain extent. Hence the genre of historical films in India is driven mainly by the freedom struggle as a background of personalities rather than re-creating the struggle as a stand-alone event. This is evident when looking back at the history of Indian television. Most of the television programs were

either historical or religious, for instance *The sword of Tipu Sultan*, *Jhansi Ki Raani* and *Chandragupta Maurya*, all programs about figures who lead local uprisings in their respective provinces against the British government.

Even before independence, Indian directors have tried to portray the real pulse of India and the adversities of British rule in the soil on celluloid, but none found light. For instance, Kanjibhai Rathod's *Bhakt Vidur* (1921) was a mythological allegory which reflected political issues of the day. Constructed in an allegorical manner, the section from Mahabharatha concerning the fall of the empire at the hands of two warring clans and the main character Vidur, a character similar to Gandhi, the film excited dissatisfaction and wrath from the then ruling British government and ultimately lead to its ban. But it is a fact that there are only few films about Gandhi and his role in the freedom struggle made by Indians in Indian languages. Yet, Gandhi's moral ethos served as a guide, spiritual light, source of self-identification and a strong sense of patriotism in many of the films between the 1950s and the 1980s, like *Nastik* (1983), *Do aankhenbarahhaath* (1957), *Nayadaur* (1957), *Mother India* (1957), *Nagarik* (1977), the trilogy—*Meghe Dhaka Tara* (1960), *Komal Gandhar* (1961) and *Subarnarekha* (1962), all set in pre-independence or post partition period, but none of the films directly represented him. It was after the 1990s that a strong appearance of Gandhi and his ideologies began to excel in commercial movies like *Lagaan: Once upon a time in India* (2001), *Jodhaa Akbar* (2008), *Swadesh: We the People* (2004), *Maine Gandhi Ko Nahi Mara* (2005) and the most popular of all, *Lage Raho Munnabhai* (2006). These were the daring attempts of filmmakers to capture the philosophies rather than the biased biographies of martyrs. With regard to historical films in India, however, biopics have been quite popular in Indian film industry. The validation of biopics as historical facts has been a concern among scholars (Bingham 2010; Parke 2002). Biopic films are not always a mere recapturing of someone's life, but aimed at discovering the biographical truth and supposedly having a basis in reality (Bingham 2010). As similar to Quart's (2006) heritage films, these biopics also represent the artistic and classical section of the film library, as enjoyed by *Gandhi*. However, *Gandhi* got much higher recognition and appreciation in the world cinema scenario when compared to biopics in India, mainly because of its backing by a British and occidental identity.

After *Gandhi*, the Indian film industry tried not to put the same legend on screen again as a biographical review. It was another hero, Bhagat Singh that the Indian film industry took from ashes to limelight as a counter to the overpowering importance of Gandhi. In fact, Bhagat Singh is one of the war heroes that always caught Bollywood filmmakers' imagination. The films representing Bhagat Singh outnumbered films on Gandhi – *Shaheed-e-Azad Bhagat Singh* (1954), *Shaheed Bhagat Singh* (1963), *Shaheed* (1965), *The Legend of Bhagat Singh* (2002), *23rd March 1931: Shaheed* (2002), *Shaheed-E-Azam* (2003) and *Rang De Basanti* (2006). This last film switched from the stereotypic narration to introduce a new way of storytelling juxtaposing the current youth and the psyche of Bhagat Singh who faced death for his country at the young age of 24.

If *Gandhi* is taken as propaganda (when considering the opening scene of Gandhi being assassinated) to hint at the ingloriousness among the Indian community, Bhagat Singh poses tremendous opportunity to portray the rise of a civilian to the status of a hero and his unbending personality in revolting against the British atrocities. All the films on Bhagat Singh followed the same story of the revenge of Bhagat Singh for the death of Lala Lajpat Rai and the assassination of British Police officer John Saunders, followed by the hanging of the martyr at an early age of 24. So this quest for bringing forth the legacy of Bhagat Singh can be viewed in two ways—to develop political and national consciousness and to rewrite the unipolar/personal history of Indian Independence, both of which Bollywood has succeeded in to an extent.

Ketan Mehta's *The Rising: The Ballad of Mangal Pandey* (2005) is again an unfamiliar moment of history. The core of the film is the friendship and trust between an Indian soldier (Mangal Pandey) in the army of the East India Company and a British Commanding Officer (William Gordon) set against the background of 1857 India. While fighting in the Anglo-Afghan Wars, Pandey saves Gordon's life, resulting in a strong friendship transcending rank, race and relations. The dramatic event unfolds when rumours begin to spread that the sepoy's need to bite the paper cartridge greased with pig fat to load the rifle, a matter that causes concern because consuming the animal fat is a grave religious offense for Muslim and Hindu soldiers. Upon Gordon's assurance that it is a rumour, Pandey bites the cartridge, but later realizes that it is not a rumour but a fact. Mutiny breaks out, led by Pandey, and he is captured and executed, which kindles the flame for nationwide uprisings against the British rule.

If these were the adaptations of real historical events and personalities, mimicry of the colonizer saw different levels of adaptation in Indian films with fictional historical movies and other romantic commercial movies where foreigners were just a means of evil, failure and idiocy. Whether the wicked British colonial officers in *Lagaan* (2001) or the hilarious foreign couple in a typical commercial film like *Bunty aur Bubli* (2005), English characters are often sidelined and stereotyped.

Playing a string of one-dimensional, not-very-sympathetic roles can get a bit frustrating, the foreigners say. Among typical male roles are power-hungry CIA agents, Russian mafia thugs, racist Australian policemen and, most enduring, brutal British colonialists. Actors say they sometimes cringe at the insensitive lines they deliver playing characters that often meet bad endings. (Magnier 2012)

One of the features of a growing global Indian film industry is the presence of foreign characters in these films intended for a global boost. However this can be rightly taken as mimicry of the presence of colonizers in India where the colonizer is no longer the subject, but an object destroying the narcissist approach of the colonizer.

The effect of mimicry on the authority of colonial discourse is profound and disturbing. For in 'normalizing' the colonial state or subject, the dream of post-Enlightenment civility alienates its own language of liberty and produces knowledge of its norms ... (Bhabha 1994, p. 86)

So according to Bhabha all this ambivalence of mimicry not only shatters the discourse of a nation, but gets altered to an indecisive level where the presence of the colonial subject is partial or uncertain. Colonized versions of history and representations often question the endorsement of colonial representation. Moreover, this creates an ambivalence of representation where the concept of binaries breakdown, as Bhabha argues, which leads to a third space of meaning, where neither the colonizer's nor the colonized version exists on its own. Here a hybrid culture is produced where both the assumptions are again reevaluated. In the Indian context, this is particularly clear when the Indian film industry reacts to the colonizer's version by not only taking a different level of struggles adapted by heroes like Bhagat Singh and Mangal Pandey that never found a place in the colonizer's version, but also mimicking the colonizer's presence even in commercial films. However this colonized version also is never complete and unambiguous. When the Indian film industry celebrated Bhagat Singh, it posed a glaring contrast to Gandhi and his life policy of non-violence. Nevertheless, in *The Legend of Bhagat Singh* (2002), while Bhagat Singh was glorified, Gandhi was placed in a demeaning light for letting Singh be hanged as per the agreement reached with the colonizer.

These narratives create a third space where versions of history are created in a post-colonial discussion. As a result, diverse versions of history are created which are neither closed nor prone to further ambivalence. That is again the reason behind the incessant versions of Indian history still being produced and investigated which never pose any conclusion, but only ambiguity. One of the recent instances would be BBC's documentary, *The Making of Mahatma* (2009), which according to BBC website data, 'confronts accusations of racism and hypocrisy leveled against Gandhi in this period and discovers how London played a vital role in the development of the Indian Messiah' (BBC Website 2009).

Conclusion

There are multiple factors that need attention in the process of synthesizing to articulate a record of history through the filmic media. The big challenge for filmmakers is the searching, finding and bringing together of the dependent and independent variables, which constitute history in a linear path of storytelling and presenting. Confining the story into a central theme, personality or event of the Indian freedom movement, attributing prominence to it, diminishing the dependent variables, recreating the linear story line by emphasizing the contributory geopolitical factors and conceptualizing screen adaptations will definitely not be free from criticism. Challenges of historical film making are multifaceted. They range from using the exact colloquial expressions to stitching the costumes, remaking the exact anthropology of the era, context and society to finding the actors after detailed of character study.

Historical film narratives with an ideological perspective can be cited as the film maker's version of history, but in the real sense it is a wider spectacle of 'experimental film making.' Establishing perfection, objectivity, accountability and truthfulness through these filmic narratives is always painstaking and challenging, if it is the hegemony of a diverse population solely bound by the one and only spirit of 'Indianness' against an imperial force. Representation and portrayal may vary according to the motive behind each historical film adaptation but the real effort and inquisitiveness for such a creative rebirth must be genuinely praised.

Historical films attempt to shape the opinion and perspective of audiences and hint at the need for juxtaposing history with the present social, cultural, political, economic and religious state of affairs though often based on 'individualism,' i.e. the idea that one man can change the world. As Tredell (2002) opines, film has the ability to 'animate the past, to reconstruct the great events of history through the performance of the actor and evocation of atmosphere and milieu' (p. 15). Through cinematic devices such as montages, voice-overs, music, inter-titles and long shots, film directs its audience to realize the time and mood of historical events.

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