



PERCEPTION OF HISTORY THROUGH HISTORICAL CINEMA

Mrs. Seema Mahesh Mali

Research Student, Department of English, Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

Corresponding Author - Mrs. Seema Mahesh Mali

Email - malisema07@gmail.com

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Abstract:

Cinema is considered as seventh art which is culmination of earlier six different arts such as painting, dancing etc. It is a machine art which is depending on electronic equipment for both its creation and exhibition. It uses camera and can record music, drama, painting, operas sculpture and any other arts. Camera plays very significant role in making the cinema. Cinema was emerged in late 19th century and became popular in 20th century and also today. Cinema has great influence on the lives of people all over the world. A good cinema changes the perception of people. It changes your attitude towards the world and changes how you see your relationships with other people. It also changes how you see the past and future. It guides us in our life journey and how you see what's possible in future. The most important is it changes how you see yourself. History deals the past event about particular person or event. Many people do not like to read history and they complain that history is boring thing to read. But with the invention of cinema history can be revived in interesting way. Thus, cinemas can enhance our knowledge about the historical facts. The present paper tries to study how the historical films help us to understand history or create interest about history.

Introduction:

Literature is considered as 'mirror of society' or 'criticism of life'. It deals with realistic aspects of life or may deals with past events in the life of human being. Historians record all the events of the past in truthful and realistic way. History is a series of events or facts that is related with some person or specific period. Creative writers also use history while producing piece of literature. During the ancient times literature was produced in the form of verses and mostly they had written

about Kings, Queens, and God etc. Greek dramatist wrote plays about the historical persons such as Sophocles wrote King Oedipus. Likewise one of the greatest dramatists William Shakespeare also wrote historical plays in sixteenth century. Historical drama deals with character from history or event.

In the 18th century novel as a genre of literature emerged and it was develop in 19th century and became popular form of literature. Writers of novel also attracted towards history and started

to write historical novels. Historical novel is a kind of novel which has its setting a period of history. It deals with historical events or historical characters. It attempts to portray the spirit, manners and social conditions of the past age. Sir Walter Scott is considered as father of historical novel. Many writers from all over the world wrote historical fictions such as War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy etc.

Thus, different forms of literature such as drama, novels and also some poems deal with past events or history. Writing history and writing historical fiction is different thing. Though both deals with historical event or character, there way of presentation is different. Generally people do not like to read the history and they feel boring while reading history. The creative writers use history as background and try to depict history in interesting way. They try to make people aware about the historical facts. But still historical fiction is not much popular genre of literature. With the invention of cinema historical fiction or history is reviewed in different and attractive way.

The origin of the cinema and motion pictures began in late 18th century with the invention of the motion toys. There was great advancement in cinema and motion picture technology during the 19th century. Expansion in editing, backdrop and visual flow motivated many

inspiring cinema makers to push into new creative medium. The movies were about the people and around the people. It may either deals with past event or present events. It can imaginatively depict some future events also. The members of the middle class and upper classes as well as lower classes began to watch cinemas. The cinemas depict the conflict of individual and society or aspirations of people, so people like to see the cinemas.

Cinemas are the best medium to depict society or culture because it is popular mass media. Cinemas were made with different purpose. Early cinemas were used to screen First World War propaganda. Apart from entertainment, some cinemas are made for money making while others are created for social awareness. During the World War II, Hitler and Stalin used cinemas for propaganda of their ideologies and they got success in it. They can bring a change in society or in the minds of people. Cinemas portray someone's imagination particularly the directors or producers and inspire us. Good cinemas arouse different emotions and make us feel happy, sad, thrill us. Cinemas are important medium of entertainment. It has great impact on society and individual life because it helps us to understand the society and also connecting to the people of other culture and history. As cinemas are about and

around the people, it reflects the problems of society and makes us familiar with them. It also enhances or gives knowledge of society and make aware about the different issues. Cinemas inspire people to broaden their thinking and imagination.

Cinemas can be categorized into different types such as documentary cinemas, horror movies, science fiction cinemas, romantic cinemas, historical cinemas, actions cinemas, thrillers etc. Each category of cinemas has different appeal to the spectators. The comedy cinemas make up your mood. People can laugh with comedy cinemas and cry with tragic or sentimental cinemas. They can scream with horror cinemas and thrills with science fiction cinemas. We get good knowledge or information from the documentary cinemas. We can see the scenes of the word which you probably never would. Cinemas depict social life as well a political life of the people. They are either realistic, imaginative or combination of both. We learn our past and culture through historical cinemas.

The film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) directed by Griffith is generally considered the early genre of the historical films in US. During that time many films used historical settings and included historical characters, but they did not give much importance to history. On the other hand the film *The Birth of a Nation*

provides the path setter film for the further development of historical films. The film blends family romance with a story of national trauma and natural reconciliation. War film is the subgenre of historical film. The war film generally uses the background of a particular war. It is considered one of the vital modes of cinematic expression. Many war films deals with realistic approach and focuses the cruelties of war and portrays the heroism of particular period for instruction. The film *The Big Parade* directed by King Vidor deals with World War I. It depicts the battle sequence especially a night battle scene.

Some cinemas expand our knowledge of history and culture. Cinema producers or directors take interest in history or past events and made cinemas on it. People can understand their past better way on looking on the screen through the cinemas than reading in history books. Such historical cinemas create interest about the historical characters or events. They can also review our opinions of the history. The cinemas based on historical events can expand the knowledge of the viewers. Apart from the expanding historical information, cinemas also taught some cultural values. Every nation has its own cultural values and these values can be inculcated through

the cinemas. Cinemas describe and explore different cultures around the world.

Through the cinema, we can inform or inspire social change reflecting society in the cinemas among audience. Cinemas reflect the values of society based on the culture and history of particular nation. Some cinemas focus particular issues of society such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, religious conflict etc. which creates awareness among the society about the particular social problems. Such cinemas inculcate social values in individuals and society.

Sometimes, Historical cinemas create controversy or debate among the people or society. The director or filmmaker elaborates the characters or present history in different way. The producer adds some characters which are not in the history. It can harm the emotions of people from different religion. So film makers have to take precaution of dealing history in realistic to avoid controversy.

Conclusion:

Historical cinema plays very important role in enhancing our knowledge about the past in creative way. It is a powerful tool of entertainment as well as education. It affects us powerfully because

the combined impact of images, music, dialogues, lightening, sound and special effects. The cinemas have capacity to change the mind of individual or society. They can help us to understand our own lives better way and the lives of the people around us, society and culture of particular nation. It expands our knowledge of history and culture in different way. Thus, historical cinemas create interest about history review the historical facts for society and individuals.

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