1.1 History and Cinema – Interdisciplinarity

History and Cinema as major disciplines of knowledge and study share a complementary yet an intricate relationship. “History” is a Greek word, which means enquiry, research, exploration or information. The Greeks were the earliest to define History. It was Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who gave us the idea that History is philosophy teaching by examples. Aristotle further suggests that history is an account of the unchanging past in the sense that human nature does not change, and that all activities that originate with the same intentions and motives differ only in the degree of details and not in their basic nature. Polybius and Thucydides think that history is a story of things worthy of being remembered, reminding us that all and sundry events do not constitute history, and that only unique, significant and remarkable happenings would figure in it. Professor Findlay’s view that, ‘History is any sequence of events traced in their relations’ introduces the new element that past events must be judged in their correct perspective. Professor Maitland has further improved our knowledge by saying, ‘What men have done and said, above all what they have thought—that is History’. Renier has a new dimension to add when he says that history is the story of men living in societies. Lord Acton gave a different twist to history when he said, ‘History is the unfolding story of Human freedom’. Turgot and Condorcet developed the idea of progress, a concept that heralded the dawn of true history, bringing unity and synthesis to history. But the most significant definition among all the Western scholars is that of Ernest Bernheim, who says, ‘History is a science that investigates and presents in their context of psycho-physical causality the facts determined by space and time of the evolution of men in their individual, typical and collective activity as social beings’. This definition has touched on all fundamental activities of historical pursuit. It is a science because it embodies
systematized knowledge based on realities of life and about occurrences and happenings that have actually taken place, and not based on myth or imagination. (Collingwood, 1978)

Cinema as a document reveals something about the time in which it was made and released – it is also important to recognize that films often attempt to take on the role of the historian. As per Hayden White’s suggestion that the work of the historian is not far removed from that of the story teller, then films – particularly those that adhere to principles of realism and verisimilitude – would appear to have the potential to be exemplary histories, promising and unrivalled ability to bring the past to life in a way that written histories cannot. However, there are problems with this simplistic view of the movies. Certainly, there is a strong case to be made for acknowledging the important role movies have played in creating and informing common understandings of history. Paul B. Weinstein summarizes the issue succinctly: ‘think about which has made a greater impression on the mass consciousness, myriad scholarly studies of the Normandy invasion or Steven Spielberg’s Saving Private Ryan?’ (2001) But does the fact that movies represent a more popularly accessible route to narratives about the past mean that we should grant the same status – as a form of valid knowledge about the past – to feature cinema as to scholarly written histories? One response to this question is to point out that, despite the widespread assumption that these supposedly rigorous, written histories possess greater objectivity than feature films, these histories are also the product of human agency and so are equally susceptible to distortion. However, the political perspective of the historian may be only one of several factors that can lead to a less-than-rigorous treatment of ‘factual’ data in all histories. The often tenuous relation between ‘hard facts’ and the historical narratives that are developed around them may be an effect of what Fredric Jameson has observed about history; that although history itself is not a text or a narrative it is something that is never encountered in unmediated form, and certainly not in a form that is immune to the influence of political ideologies.
Hayden White adopts a similar stance in his consideration of the relationship between ‘facts’ and the narratives woven around them. He makes a compelling argument that the historian’s role is about more than simply recording chronological sequences of events:

The events must be not only registered within the chronological framework of their original occurrence but *narrated* as well, that is to say, revealed as possessing a structure, an order of meaning, that they do not possess as a mere sequence.

And the process of providing this ‘order of meaning’ to the raw facts of history is one that inevitably possesses a political or ideological dimension.

Whether historical discourse is given material form in film or writing it is essential to acknowledge the role played by the historian in the construction of historical knowledge as he/she transforms the fragmented and de-contextualized events that we regard as the ‘facts’ of history into a meaningful narrative form. While both written and filmed histories are, therefore, inevitably susceptible to inaccuracies and outright distortion, it must also be remembered that feature films are created within a matrix of competing pressures – including the desire to be faithful to historical fact, as well as narrative considerations, economic pressures, genre conventions, political and regulatory pressures and so on – that may increase their vulnerability to historical inaccuracies when compared to scholarly written histories.

Notwithstanding the fact that these debates about the validity of feature films as a medium for rendering histories still continues, there remains considerable interest among the cinema-going public in films based on historical subjects as the success of films such as *Jodha Akbar* demonstrates. The disparity in popular influence between the two forms signals a continuing need to engage seriously with the historical film and to advance our understanding through constructive debate about the problems associated with this mode of
history-writing with film. The field of film and cinema history is complicated, and includes the technical, economic, aesthetic, and social dimensions of films, the biographies of filmmakers and also the ‘history writing’ role of certain films. (Gant, 2008)

Cinema has always played a momentous role in giving voice to the existential concerns and dilemmas of common people, tried and perplexed in our tragi-comic postmodern world. Films are cultural artefacts created by specific cultures, which reflect those cultures, and, in turn, affect them. Film is considered to be an important art form, a source of popular entertainment and a powerful medium for educating — or indoctrinating — citizens. The visual elements of cinema give motion pictures a universal power of communication. Classic cinema has invariably proved its worth by exercising a formative influence on the psyche of cine-goers. It has effectively tried to mobilize the sensitivity and sensibility of cine-goers. Classic cinema, like classic literature, incorporates a polyphonic narrative, that is to say, it projects reality from a multi-dimensional perspective. It does not merely invite us to enter a realm of enchantment and entertainment but also bring us face-to-face with the gruesome realities of ever-changing life. However, the commitment of cinema becomes doubly strengthened when it comes to projecting some of the most disturbing and controversial historical events. Such potentially dangerous historical events have unleashed a destructive wave of communalism, hooliganism, jingoism, violence, war, inhuman atrocities etc. Cinema, thus, plays a pivotal role in representing such unprecedented historical events authentically and objectively. Two of such committed cinemas that intend to re-create and represent Holocaust and India’s Partition and its horrendous consequences are undoubtedly ‘Holocaust Cinema’ and ‘Partition Cinema’.

One may come across certain perennial issues central to the making of Holocaust and Partition Cinema like –
1. How far cinema succeeds in recreating such untranslatable traumatic events like Holocaust and Partition?

2. To what extent cinema can give voice to erstwhile marginalized and oppressed subalterns or victims of Holocaust and Partition?

3. How far cinema succeeds in maintaining a concord between the empirical documentation of Holocaust and Partition and their aesthetic representation?

Mass murder is not a modern invention. History is fraught with communal and sectarian enmities, always mutually damaging and potentially destructive, often erupting into overt violence, sometimes leading to massacre, and in some cases, resulting in extermination of whole populations and cultures.

The term “Holocaust” (30 January 1933 – 22 November 1945) is derived from the Greek word ‘holókauston’, an animal sacrifice offered to the God in which the whole (‘holos’) animal is completely burnt (‘kaustos’). For hundreds of years, the word "holocaust" was used in English to denote great massacres, but since the 1960s, the term has come to be used by scholars and popular writers to refer exclusively to the genocide of Jews. The biblical word “Shoah” meaning "calamity" became the standard Hebrew term for the Holocaust as early as the 1940s, especially in Europe and Israel. The Nazis used a euphemistic phrase, the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question" and the phrase "Final Solution" has been widely used as a term for the genocide of the Jews subsequently. Nazis also used the euphemism, Leben unwertes Leben or “Life unworthy of life” in an attempt to justify the killings philosophically.

The Holocaust was the genocide of approximately six million European Jews during World War II, a pogrom of systematic state-sponsored murder by Nazi Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, throughout Nazi-occupied territory. Of the nine million Jews who had resided in Europe before the Holocaust, approximately two-thirds perished. In particular, over one
million Jewish children were killed in the Holocaust, as were approximately two million Jewish women and three million Jewish men. Some scholars maintain that the definition of the Holocaust should also include the Nazis' genocide of millions of people in other groups, including Romani (more commonly known in English by the exonym "Gypsies"), Sinti, Soviet prisoners of war, Polish and Soviet civilians, homosexuals, people with disabilities, Jehovah's Witnesses and other political and religious opponents, which occurred regardless of whether they were of German or non-German ethnic origin. Using this definition, the total number of Holocaust victims is between 11 million and 17 million people.

The persecution and genocide were carried out in stages. Various legislations like removing the Jews from civil society, predominantly the Nuremberg Laws, was enacted in Nazi Germany years before the outbreak of World War II. Concentration camps were established in which inmates were used as slave labour until they died of exhaustion or disease. Where the Third Reich conquered new territory in Eastern Europe, specialized units murdered Jews and political opponents in mass shootings. The Third Reich required Jews and Romani to be confined in overcrowded ghettos before being transported by freight train to extermination camps where, if they survived the journey, the majority of them were systematically killed in gas chambers. Significant historical evidence points to the idea that the vast majority of Holocaust victims, prior to their deportation to concentration camps, were either unaware of the fate that awaited them, or were in disbelief of the information that they had received; they honestly believed that they were to be re-settled.

The Holocaust is a systematic, purposeful, non-emotional cold-blooded murder of people. Up to six million Jews were murdered wholesale not for what any of them had done but for how they had all been classified. The term ‘Genocide’ was coined by Rafael Lemkin in his 1944 book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. The word ‘Genocide’ is derived from the Greek word ‘Genos’ which means ‘of a natural group or tribe’ and Latin word ‘Cide’ which
means ‘murder’. Nazi Genocide didn’t take place in a vacuum. Genocide was only the most radical method of excluding groups of human beings from the German national community.

In Asian Sub-continent, the end of the British Raj led to the birth of two sovereign nation-states: on August 14, Pakistan came into existence; the next day, India was born. This truncation, referred to as the Partition was a bloody and protracted affair, coming as it did at the end of intense political bickering and parlaying. The event played itself out over a year: roughly a million people were butchered in murderous riots that broke out all over a volatile northern India; as huge masses of terrorized people fled in search of security, 10 to 12 million lost their homes and became hapless refugees. Partition, as the underside of independence, remains a festering wound in the collective psyche of South Asia. So, if Partition history occupies the status of a collective trauma in the psycho-biography of the nation, then Partition cinema and literature are repositories of acts of cultural mourning.

The Partition of India was the Partition of British India on the basis of religious demographics that led to the creation on 15 August 1947 of the sovereign states of the Dominion of Pakistan (later the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the People's Republic of Bangladesh) and the Union of India (later Republic of India). The partition was promulgated in the Indian Independence Act 1947 and resulted in the dissolution of the British Indian Empire. The struggle between the new dominions of India and Pakistan which resulted from the partition displaced up to 12.5 million people in the former British Indian Empire, with estimates of loss of life varying from several hundred thousand to a million. The violent nature of the partition created an atmosphere of mutual hostility and suspicion between India and Pakistan that plagues their relationship to this day. Massive population exchanges occurred between the two newly-formed states in the months immediately following Partition. Once the lines were established, about 14.5 million people crossed the borders to what they hoped was the relative safety of religious majority. Nobody knows how many were
killed during Partition violence. Nobody knows how many were exactly displaced and
dispossessed. What we know is that between 1946 and 1951, nearly nine million Hindus and
Sikhs came to India, and about six million Muslims went to Pakistan. Estimates of death vary
between two and three million.

However, it is worth reiterating that the ‘heroes’ in the Partition stories are not the
rapists, the abductors, the arsonists, the murderers and the perpetrators of violence, but the
men and women – living and dead – who provide the healing touch. The silver lining is that it
is they who emerge as the beacon of hope in riot-torn cities; and it is their exemplary courage,
counterpoised to the inhumanity of killers, that is celebrated precisely in the best of Partition
literature and Cinema.

1.2 History through the Lens of Cinema

“The Camera is so refined that it makes it possible for us to shed light on the human soul, to
reveal it the more brutally and thereby add to our knowledge new dimensions of the ‘real’.”


The Polish cinematographer Boleslaw Matuszewski who worked with the famous film
pioneers, the Lumiere brothers during the 1890s published a little booklet Une nouvelle
source de l’histoire (The New Source of History) in the year 1898. In this text, he suggested
that film could offer not only a source for historical research but a suitable medium for
historical narration as well.

Since the beginnings of dramatic film, narrativization of past events has been one of
the most productive areas of film-making. Historical films have been made since the first
years of motion pictures. The Edison Manufacturing Company, for example, shot several
historical tableaux vivants (French word meaning “living picture”), including Joan of Arc
(1895) and The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots (1895). (Musser, 1990) We may even
argue that historical narration has accompanied many of the essential turning points of film history.

The professionals of historical writing, historians, have traditionally seen historical films as competitors, enemies that shape visions of history without any limits, and who have an enormous and unpredictable influence on the public. Between 1926 and 1934, historians often discussed film in the meetings of the International Congress of the Historical Sciences. This interest went so far that an International Iconographical Commission was established to deal with the problems of collecting film material for historical purposes. According to the Commission, historically interesting films were those “which record a person or period from the time after the invention of cinematography and without dramaturgical or ‘artistic’ proposes those films which present visual record of a definite event, person or locality, and which presuppose a clearly recognizable historical interest inherent in the subject matter.” (Aldgate, 1979) As we can see, the historians of those days were not in the least interested in the feature film – and not ready to talk about historical films which were, to their minds, only dramatized, untrue fictions.

Not only the historians of 20s or 30s but also their successors even today have deemed that the only films of serious historical interest are documentaries, actuality films, newsreels, and other visual versions of newspapers. Film doesn’t tell us only about the object of the cinematographer but it can tell us about the narrator of the film as well. Feature films, such as historical films, can give us information about the opinions and mentalities, ideas and visions, of that person – or of that culture – that has produced them.

The division of films into fiction films and documentaries should not be a matter of judging them as true or untrue, nor as a matter of dividing them into reliable or unreliable sources. Such divisions should be forgotten.
Fiction films, in short, can have validity for the historian’s work. Audio-visual historical narratives are especially interesting because they are so much a part of our everyday historical environment. History exists as both memories and fiction. Of course, there can be different kinds of historical narratives, historical documentaries, historical films, and costume dramas.

To the question, what is a historical film? One may say that it is one of the categories of film-making, a film genre. We are used to characterizing films with such labels. There are gangster movies, musicals, horror films, westerns, science fiction films – and historical films. These genres are, in a way, strategies of the cultural existence of cinema; they are patterns of production and reception. Film scholars have often stated that there are no common criteria for such genres. Every genre has criteria of its own. For example, western movies have a typical arsenal of iconographic elements; they need hats and revolvers, saloons and open prairie scenery to be westerns. Musicals, by contrast, do not need such iconography. A certain mode of speech, the cinematic discourse (style) and the centrality of music are enough. Historical films differ from other film genres because they do not necessarily need certain iconographic elements, narrative structures, or basic themes. It is enough that the film is located in the past and that it displays its historicity.

In her book *British Genres. Cinema and Society 1930-1960* (1991), American film scholar Marcia Landy has pointed out that there actually can be some common themes in historical films. According to Landy, historical film has been a genre through which national film cultures have spoken to their national audiences. They have chosen their themes from national mythology, national identity, famous events of a nation’s history, including the lives of great men and women, rulers and national heroes. (Landy, 1991) Many films have attempted to handle all of these national aspects, problems and even traumatic moments of national history.
Historical film is bound to represent some real historical events or characters. In his book *The Film in History*, the French film scholar and sociologist Pierre Sorlin argues, like Landy, that historical costumes, props and settings are not enough to point out the historicity of a specific film. According to Sorlin, this historicity can be shown by giving exact dates, e.g. through introducing titles or through a narrative voice-over. In addition to this, historical films can show their historicity by referring to common historical knowledge. (Sorlin, 1980) In other words, they reconstruct such events or show such persons that are known by the public. This common cultural inheritance seems to be a typical method in those historical films which draw their essence from the national history.

According to Jean Gili, the French film historian, there are three types of historical films – 1) films that present real, historical persons in a real, historical context, 2) films that show fictitious characters in a certain precise historical context and 3) costume dramas that describe fictitious protagonists in an uncertain, imprecise historical context. In the first two alternatives, the starting point is a concrete historical situation.

Sorlin has stated that it is typical of historical films that they only describe the past in a linear way: historical films do not pose questions. (Sorlin, 1980) This is not quite true. Historical film can formulate questions even though it does not do that very often. For a historical film it is essential to have certain signs of historicity which prove the audience that it is really a matter of a historical reconstruction. But the reception of historical films is not a simple process of decoding signs of historicity.

It is easy to recognize a historical film when we deal with ancient spectacles and other epics. But how can we separate, for example, a historical film located in the 1940s from a film that is made during the 40s and tells a story of its own age? Is this not a problem? It might be possible to receive these films in the same way, but there is an important difference between the two. Historical film is a historical narrative; a presentation of a certain past event
or process. It is, therefore, a presentation of an object, to which the narrative itself does not belong. A film produced during the 40s can, perhaps, look like a historical narrative because it is a narrative from the past, but it is not a historical film in the same sense because it is an organic part of the history it is narrating. A historical film is a narrative presentation of past events, while a film from the past is only a source that tells us something of that past. We may say that both films tell us something but the nature of this telling is different. This confusion between the source-dimension and the narrative-dimension could perhaps be clarified by two heuristic concepts. The German historian, J.G. Droysen, wrote in his book, Historik, that sources can always be divided into ‘Tradition’ and ‘Überreste’, into tradition and artefacts. The film of the 40s is an artefact in its relationship to the 40s, and it should be used by historians as an artefact. The historical film located in the 40s, however, is a traditional source -if we want it to tell us something about the 40s, it is only a secondary source in its relationship to the 40s. We might, naturally, use it also as a primary source, in order to tell us something about how the 40s was seen later. Of course, a historical film is also an artefact. Whether this has meaning or not, depends on our perspective.

A film can also be interpreted as an allegory although it may never be intended to have such an implication. Let us ponder the case of the Richard Attenborough film, Gandhi, shown in Prague in Spring 1988. This film deals with the Indian struggle against the British colonial empire. In Prague, Gandhi was very popular. The local audience interpreted the struggles of the Indians in terms of their own political experience: the events in Gandhi were seen as an allegory of the struggle of the Czechoslovaks against the socialist regime and the political control of the Soviet Union, although the director, Richard Attenborough, can scarcely have had such implications in mind. Gandhi may be located both temporally and spatially far away from Czechoslovakia, but an allegorical interpretation gave it immediate
contemporary relevance. This example shows that the historical context of viewing should always be kept in mind. (Salmi, 1995)

History, we must remember, is organized, constructed and reconstructed in cultural products. We produce history for ourselves, not only in the form of monographs and dissertations but also in novels and films, advertisements and TV series. History is so important that it cannot be wholly left to the control of professional historians. (Ferro, 1988) Literature has a longer tradition than cinema in the formation of historical imagery, but we can surely find similar examples from the history of film.

It has sometimes been argued that academic historical research is superior to historical fiction because it does not only present some states of things in the past but can also assert something that makes it too distinct from other historical interpretations. This argument is absurd. There are at least 20 films having Emperor Nero as central character. (Solomon, 1978) The characterizations differ much from film to film, from a misunderstood poet to a merciless tyrant, from a child-like lunatic to a sexual pervert. The films certainly make assertions - but the difference from scholarly writing lies in the fact that we, as recipients, cannot know for sure which statements are presentations of historical knowledge and which statements are assertions of the film-makers. This problem confronts us always when we examine historical fiction: where is the boundary between knowledge based on research and that based on the film-makers interpretation or, let me say, imagination?

In spite of these ‘buts’, we cannot deny that films as historical narratives can articulate meaningful historical interpretations, sometimes even such interpretations that have not yet been written by professional historians. Historians say sometimes that novelists and film-makers have too much imagination to be able to write a correct work of history. We could, perhaps, put this vice versa: Historians do not always seem to have enough
imagination to represent all those choices that went into creating the flow of the past events.

(Salmi, 1995)

Historical films trouble and disturb (most) professional historians. Why? We all know the obvious answers. Because, historians will say, films are inaccurate. They distort the past. They fictionalize, trivialize, and romanticize important people, events, and movements. They falsify History.

Film is out of the control of historians. Film shows that academics do not own the past. Film creates a historical world with which the written word cannot compete, at least for popularity. Film is a disturbing symbol of an increasingly post-literate world.

The historical film has been making its impact upon us (including serious professional historians) for many years now, and it is time that we began to take it seriously. By this it is meant we must begin to look at film, on its own terms, as a way of exploring the way the past means to us today.

Dislike (or fear) of the visual media has not prevented (some) historians from becoming increasingly involved with film in recent years, at least in the United States. Film has invaded the classroom, though it is difficult to specify if this is due to the laziness of teachers, the post-literacy of students, or the realization that film can do something written words cannot. Hundreds of historians have become involved, at least peripherally, in the process of making films: some as advisers on film projects, dramatic and documentary, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities; others as talking heads in historical documentaries. Sessions on historical films have become a routine part of major academic conferences, as well as annual conventions of professional groups like the Organization of American Historians and the American Historical Association. Reviews of films now are regular features of leading academic journals: American Historical Review, Journal of American History, Radical History Review, Middle Eastern Studies Association.
All this activity has not led to a consensus on how to evaluate the contribution of the [historical] film to [historical understanding]. Nobody has yet begun to think systematically about what Hayden White has dubbed *historiophoty* – (the representation of history and our thought about it in visual images and filmic discourse.) (White, 1988)

The implicit approach of understanding historical films essentially sees the motion picture as a book transferred to the screen, subject to the same sorts of judgments about data, verifiability, argument, evidence, and logic that we use for written history. Involved here are two problematic assumptions: first, that the current practice of written history is the only possible way of understanding the relationship of past to present; and, second, that written history mirrors [reality]. If the first of these assumptions is arguable, the second is not. Certainly, by now we all know that history is never a mirror but a construction -that is, large amounts of data pulled together or [constituted] by some larger project or vision or theory that may not be articulated but is nonetheless embedded in the particular way history is practiced.

We may feel like asking the following questions to historical films – Does the historical film convey facts or make arguments as well as written history? Rather, the appropriate questions are: What sort of historical world does each film construct and how does it construct that world? How can we make judgments about that construction? How and what does that historical construction mean to us? After these three questions are answered, we may wish to ask a fourth: How does the historical world on the screen relate to written history?

It is difficult to talk about the historical film in the singular because the term covers a variety of ways of rendering the past on the screen (Written history, too, comes in different
subcategories, such as narrative, analytic, quantitative). It is possible to put history on film into a number of categories – history as drama, history as anti-drama, history without heroes, history as spectacle, history as essay, personal history, oral history, postmodern history - but to stay within reasonable boundaries, one can look into three broad categories: history as drama, history as document, and history as experiment.

If you say “historical film”, history as drama is probably what comes to mind. Such films have been produced ever since motion pictures began to tell stories. Indeed, the “Historical” has been regularly produced all over the world, -in the United States, France, Italy, Japan, China, Russia, India – wherever films are made. Some of the most beloved motion pictures have dramatized history, or at least dramas set in the past. Among them are the kinds of works that have given the historical film such a bad reputation - Gone with the Wind, Cleopatra, The Private Life of Henry VIII. It has been suggested that history as drama can be divided into two broad categories: films based on documentable persons or events or movements (The Last Emperor, Gandhi) and those whose central plot and characters are fictional, but whose historical setting is intrinsic to the story and meaning of the work (Dangerous Liaisons, The Molly Maguires, Black Robe). (Natalie, 1987)

History as document is a more recent form than history as drama. Perhaps the first such film was Ester Shub's compilation film The Fall of the Romanovs (1924). In the United States, the historical documentary grew out of the social problem documentary of the thirties (The Plow that Broke the Plains), then was given a boost by the post-World War II patriotic retrospective (Victory at Sea), and an even bigger boost by public money, which has been funnelled by the National Endowment for the Humanities into historical films in the past two decades. In the most common form, a narrator (and/or historical witnesses or experts) speaks while we see recent footage of historical sites intercut with older footage, often from
newsreels, along with photos, artefacts, paintings, graphics, newspaper and magazine clippings.

Professional historians trust history as document rather more than history as drama because it seems closer in spirit and practice to written history—seems both to deliver “facts” and to make some sort of traditional historical argument, whether as a feature (The Wobblies, Huey Long, Statue of Liberty) or as a series (The Civil War, Eyes on the Prize). But a major problem for documentary lies precisely in the promise of its most obviously “historical” materials. All those old photographs and all that newsreel footage are saturated with a pre-packaged emotion: nostalgia. The claim is that we can see (and, presumably, feel) what people in the past saw and felt. But that is hardly the case. For we can always see and feel much that the people in the photos and newsreels could not see: that their clothing and automobiles were old-fashioned, that their landscape lacked skyscrapers and other contemporary buildings, that their world was black and white (and haunting) and gone.

History as experiment is an awkward term for a variety of filmic forms, both dramatic and documentary and sometimes a combination of the two. Included here are works made by avant-garde and independent filmmakers in the United States and Europe as well as in former communist countries and the Third World. Some of these films have become well-known, even beloved (Sergei Eisenstein's Oktober and Battleship Potemkin, Roberto Rossellini's The Rise of Louis XIV). Some have achieved local or regional fame (Ceddo by Senegal’s Ousmane Sembene, Quilombo by Brazil's Carlos Diegues). Others remain intellectual and cinematic cult films, more written about by theorists than seen by audiences (Alexander Kluge's Die Patriotin, Trinh T. Minh-ha's Surname Viet Given Name Nam, Alex Cox's Walker, Jill Godmilow's Far from Poland).

What these films have in common (apart from lack of exposure) is that all are made in opposition to the mainstream Hollywood film. Not just to the subject matter of Hollywood
but to its way of constructing a world on the screen. All struggle in one or more ways against the codes of representation of the standard film. All refuse to see the screen as a transparent window onto a realistic world. At its best, history as experiment promises a re-visioning of what we mean by the word ‘history’.

**How Mainstream Films Construct A Historical World**

History as drama and history as document are, in their standard forms, linked by this notion of the screen as a window onto a realistic world. It is true that the documentary - with its mixture of materials in different time zones, with its images of the past and its talking heads speaking in the present – often provides a window into two (or more) worlds. But those worlds share, both with each other and with history as drama, an identical structure and identical notions of document, chronology, cause, effect, and consequence, which means that in talking about how the mainstream film creates its world, it is possible to make six points that apply equally to the dramatic film and the documentary:

1. The mainstream film tells history as a story, a tale with a beginning, middle, and an end. A tale that leaves you with a moral message and (usually) a feeling of uplift. A tale embedded in a larger view of history that is always progressive, if sometimes Marxist (another form of progress). To put it bluntly, no matter what the historical film, be the subject matter slavery, the Holocaust, or the Khmer Rouge, the message delivered on the screen is almost always that things are getting better or have gotten better or both. A film about the horrors of the Holocaust or the failure of certain idealistic or radical movements may in fact seem to be a counter example. But such works are always structured to leave us feeling, “aren't we lucky we did not live in those benighted times? Isn't it nice that certain people kept the flag of hope alive? Aren't we much better off today?”

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2. Film insists on history as the story of individuals. Either men or women (but usually men) who are already renowned or men and women who are made to seem important because they have been singled out by the camera and appear before us in such a large image on the screen. Those not already famous are common people who have done heroic or admirable things, or who have suffered unusually bad circumstances of exploitation and oppression. The point: both dramatic features and documentaries put individuals in the forefront of the historical process. Which means that the solution of their personal problems tends to substitute itself for the solution of historical problems. More accurately, the personal becomes a way of avoiding the often difficult or insoluble social problems pointed out by the film.

3. Film offers us history as the story of a closed, completed, and simple past. It provides no alternative possibilities to what we see happening on the screen, admits of no doubts, and promotes each historical assertion with the same degree of confidence.

4. Film emotionalizes, personalizes, and dramatizes history. Through actors and historical witnesses, it gives us history as triumph, anguish, joy, despair, adventure, suffering, and heroism. Both dramatized works and documentaries use the special capabilities of the medium - the close up of the human face, the quick juxtaposition of disparate images, the power of music and sound effect - to heighten and intensify the feelings of the audience about the events depicted on the screen. Film thus raises the following issues: To what extent do we wish emotion to become a historical category? Part of historical understanding? Does history gain something by becoming empathic? Does film, in short, add to our understanding of the past by making us feel immediately and deeply about particular historical people, events, and situations?

5. Film shows history as process. The world on the screen brings together things that, for analytic or structural purposes, written history often has to split apart. Economics,
politics, race, class, and gender all come together in the lives and moments of individuals, groups, and nations. This characteristic of film throws into relief a certain convention - one might call it a fiction - of written history. The analytic strategy that fractures the past into distinct chapters, topics, and categories. That treats, say, gender in one chapter, race in another, economy in a third. Daniel Walkowitz points out that written history often compartmentalizes “the study of politics, family life, or social mobility. Film, by contrast, provides an integrative image. History in film becomes what it most centrally is: a process of changing social relationships where political and social questions - indeed, all aspects of the past, including the language used- are interwoven.” (Walkowitz, 1985)

6. Film so obviously gives us the “look” of the past - of buildings, landscapes, and artefacts – that we may not see what this does to our sense of history. So it is important to stress that more than simply the look of things, film provides a sense of how common objects appeared when they were in use. In film, period clothing does not hang limply on a dummy in a glass case, as it does in a museum; rather, it confines, emphasizes, and expresses the moving body. In film, tools, utensils, weapons, and furniture are not items on display or images reproduced on the pages of books, but objects that people use and misuse, objects they depend upon and cherish, objects that can help to define their livelihoods, identities, lives, and destinies. This capability of film slides into what might be called false historicity, or the myth of facticity, a mode on which Hollywood has long depended. This is the mistaken notion that mimesis is all, that history is in fact no more than a “period look” that things themselves are history, rather than become history because of what they mean to people of a particular time and place.
How Experimental Films Construct A Historical World

The only collective way to characterize history as experiment is as films of opposition: opposition to mainstream practice, to Hollywood codes of realism and storytelling, to the kind of film described above. Certainly most experimental films will include some of the six characteristics of the standard film, but each will also attack or violate more than one of the mainstream conventions. Among films defined as “history as experiment”, it is possible to find the following: works that are analytic, unemotional, distanced, multi-causal; historical worlds that are expressionist, surrealist, disjunctive, postmodern; histories that do not just show the past but also talk about how and what it means to the filmmaker (or to us) today.

How does history as experiment contest the characteristics of mainstream film? Here are some examples:

1. History as a story set in the framework of (moral) progress: Director Claude Lanzmann suggests in *Shoah* that the Holocaust was a product not of madness but of modernization, rationality, efficiency - that evil comes from progress. (*Film-Historia*, 1992)

2. History as a story of individuals: Soviet directors in the twenties, particularly Eisenstein in *Potemkin* and *Oktober*, created collectivist histories in which the mass is centre stage and individuals emerge only briefly as momentary exemplars of larger trends (much as they do in written history). (Jorge Sanjines in *Power of the People*, Carlos Diegues in *Quilombo*).

3. History as a closed, uncontested story: Jill Godmilow in *Far from Poland* presents a history of the Solidarity movement through competing voices and images that refuse to resolve into a single story with a single meaning.
4. History as emotional, personal, dramatic: Roberto Rossellini made a series of sumptuously mounted but wholly de-dramatized films—including *The Rise of Louis XIV* and *The Age of the Medici*—in which amateur actors mouth lines rather than act them.

5. History as process: Director Alexander Kluge in *Die Patriotin* creates history as a series of disjunctive images and data, a kind of collage or postmodern pastiche. Juan Downey in *Hard Times and Culture* uses a similar approach in a study of fin-de-siecle Vienna. Chris Marker in *Sans Soleil* envisions the past as made up of disconnected, synchronous, and erasable events.

6. History with a “period look”: Claude Lanzmann in *Shoah* tells a history of the Holocaust without a single historical image from the thirties or forties; everything was shot in the eighties, when the film was made. The same is largely true of Hans-Jurgen Syberberg’s *Hitler-A Film from Germany*, which re-creates the world of the Third Reich on a soundstage with puppets, parts of sets, props, actors, random historical objects, all illuminated by back-projected images.

   History as experiment does not make the same claim on us as does the realist film. Rather than opening a window directly onto the past, it opens a window onto a different way of thinking about the past. The aim is not to tell everything, but to point to past events, or to converse about history, or to show why history should be meaningful to people in the present. Experimental films rarely sanitize, nationalize, or reify the past, though they often ideologize it. They tend to make bits and pieces of our historical experience accessible, sometimes in all its confusion. Such films rarely claim to be the only or the last word on their subject; many hope to make us think about the importance of a subject ignored by written history.

   Experimental films may help to revise what we mean by history. Not tied to realism, they bypass the demands for veracity, evidence, and argument that are a normal component
of written history and go on to explore new and original ways of thinking the past. Although such films are not popular, and although reading them can at first seem difficult for those who expect realism, their breakthroughs often are incorporated into the vocabulary of the mainstream film.

**Reading and Judging the Historical Film**

Our sense of the past is shaped and limited by the possibilities and practices of the medium in which that past is conveyed, be it the printed page, the spoken word, the painting, the photograph, the moving image, which means that whatever historical understanding the mainstream film can provide will be shaped and limited by the conventions of the closed story, the notion of progress, the emphasis on individuals, the single interpretation, the heightening of emotional states, the focus on surfaces.

These conventions mean that history on film will create a past different from the one provided by written history; indeed, they mean that history on film will always violate the norms of written history. To obtain the full benefits of the motion picture - dramatic story, character, look, emotional intensity, process that is, to use film's power to the fullest, is to ensure alterations in the way we think of the past. The question then becomes, “Do we learn anything worth learning by approaching the past through the conventions of the mainstream film? The (honest) answer from most historians who are honest about films outside of their area of speciality has to be: Yes.

A slight detour: it must always be remembered that history on film is not a discipline in which historians participate (to any great extent). It is a field whose standards historians may police but, with rare exceptions, only as onlookers. When the historians explore the historical film, it is history as practiced by others which raises the ominous question: By what right do filmmakers speak of the past, by what right do they do history? The answer is liberating or frightening, depending on your point of view. Filmmakers speak of the past
because, for whatever reasons - personal, artistic, political, monetary they choose to speak. They speak the way historians did before the era of professional training in history, before history was a discipline. Today, the historian speaks by virtue of this discipline, by virtue of special training and the standards of a profession. Filmmakers have no such standard training, and no common approach to history. Few, if any, devote more than a minor part of their careers to history; it is more likely that they are moved over the years to make one or two historical statements on film - (Though some major directors have devoted major parts of their careers to history, including Roberto Rossellini, Akira Kurosawa, Masahiro Shinoda, Carlos Diegues, Ousmane Sembene, and Oliver Stone.) One result: history on film will always be a more personal and quirky reflection on the meaning of the past than is the work of written history.

The haphazard nature of history on film, and the lack of professional control, makes it all the more necessary that historians who care about public history learn how to read and judge film. Learn how to mediate between the historical world of the filmmaker and that of the historian. This means that historians will have to reconsider the standards for history. Or learn to negotiate between the standards of historians and those of filmmakers. We will have to adapt to film practice in order to criticize, to judge what is good and bad, to specify what can be learned from film about our relationship to the past. The film world will not do this, for it has no ongoing stake in history (though some individual filmmakers do). The best the historians can hope for is that individual filmmakers will continue to create meaningful historical films that contribute to our understanding of the past. For only from studying how these films work can we begin to learn how historical film adds to our experience and understanding of the past.

Among the many issues to face in learning how to judge the historical film, none is more important than the issue of invention. Central to understanding history as drama, this is
the key issue. It is also the most controversial. It is the one that sets history on film most apart from written history, which in principle eschews fiction (beyond the basic fiction that people, movements, and nations occurred in stories that are linear and moral). If we can find a way to accept and judge the inventions involved in any dramatic film, then we can accept lesser alterations - the omissions, the conflations- that make history on film so different from written history.

The difference between fiction and history is this: both tell stories, but history tells a true story. But is this truth a literal truth, an exact copy of what took place in the past? No, no on the screen. But how about the printed page, is literal truth possible there? No. Think of it. A description of a battle or a strike or a revolution is hardly a literal rendering of that series of events. In such a description, some sort of fiction or convention is involved, one that allows a selection of evidence to stand for a larger historical experience, one that allows a small sampling of reports to represent the collective experience of thousands, tens of thousands, even millions who took part in or were affected by documentable events. One may call this convention Condensation too.

The point is this: however literal the image on the screen may seem, however literal its world, film can never provide a literal rendition of events that took place in the past. It can never be an exact replica of what happened (and neither can the printed page). Historical recounting must, of course, be based upon as much as we know about what literally happened. But due to the demands of space and time, the recounting itself can never be literal. Not on the screen and not, in fact, in the written word.

One reason for this is that the word works differently from the image. The word can provide vast amounts of data in a small space. The word can generalize, talk of great abstractions like Revolution, Evolution, and Progress, and make us believe that these things exist. To talk of such things is not to talk literally, but to talk in a symbolic or general way
about the past. Film, with its need for a specific image, cannot make general statements about revolution or progress. Instead, film must summarize, synthesize, generalize, symbolize - in images. The best we can hope for is that historical data on film will be summarized with inventions and images that are apposite. Filmic generalizations will have to come through various techniques of condensation, synthesis, and symbolization. It is the historian's task to learn how to read this filmic historical vocabulary.

Clearly, we must read film by new standards. What should these standards be? At the outset, we must accept that film cannot be seen as a window onto the past. What happens on screen can never be more than an approximation of what was said and done in the past; what happens on screen does not depict, but rather points to, the events of the past. This means that it is necessary for us to learn to judge the ways in which, through invention, film summarizes vast amounts of data or symbolizes complexities that otherwise could not be shown. We must recognize that film will always include images that are at once invented and true; true in that they symbolize, condense, or summarize larger amounts of data; true in that they impart an overall meaning of the past that can be verified, documented, or reasonably argued.

And how do we know what can be verified, documented, or reasonably argued? From the ongoing discourse of history; from the existing body of historical texts; from their data and arguments which is only to say that any historical film, like any work of written, graphic, or oral history, enters a body of pre-existing knowledge and debate. To be considered historical rather than simply a costume drama that uses the past as an exotic setting for romance and adventure, a film must engage, directly or obliquely, the issues, ideas, data, and arguments of the ongoing discourse of history. Like the book, the historical film cannot exist in a state of historical innocence, cannot indulge in capricious invention, and cannot ignore the findings and assertions and arguments of what we already know from other sources. Like any work of history, a film must be judged in terms of the knowledge of the past that we
already possess. Like any work of history, it must situate itself within a body of other works, the ongoing (multimedia) debate over the importance of events and the meaning of the past.

A New Kind of History

Of all the elements that make up a historical film, fiction or invention has to be the most problematic (for historians). To accept invention is, of course, to change significantly the way we think about history. It is to alter one of written history’s basic elements: its documentary or empirical aspect. To take history on film seriously is to accept the notion that the empirical is but one way of thinking about the meaning of the past.

Accepting the changes in history that mainstream film proposes is not to collapse all standards of historical truth, but to accept another way of understanding our relationship to the past, another way of pursuing that conversation about where we came from, where we are going, and who we are. Film neither replaces written history nor supplements it. Film stands adjacent to written history, as it does to other forms of dealing with the past such as memory and the oral tradition.

What, after all, are the alternatives? To insist that historians begin to make films that are absolutely accurate, absolutely true (as if this were possible) to the reality of the past? Not only is this impossible for financial reasons, but when historians do make accurate films (witness The Adams Chronicles), they tend to be dull as both film and history, for they do not make use of the full visual and dramatic power of the medium. A second alternative: history as experiment. But whatever new insights into the past experimental films provide, they tend, like written history itself, to give up large audiences that film is capable of reaching. A final alternative: to wish film away, to ignore film as history. But this would be to surrender the larger sense of history to others, many of whom may only wish to profit from the past. Worse yet, it would be to deny ourselves the potential of this powerful medium to express the meaning of the past.
It is time for the historian to accept the mainstream historical film as a new kind of history that, like all history, operates within certain limited boundaries. As a different endeavour from written history, film certainly cannot be judged by the same standards. Film creates a world of history that stands adjacent to written and oral history; the exact location of the understanding and meaning it provides cannot yet be specified.

We must begin to think of history on film as closer to past forms of history, as a way of dealing with the past that is more like oral history, or history told by bards, or griots in Africa, or history contained in classic epics. Perhaps film is a post-literate equivalent of the pre-literate way of dealing with the past, of those forms of history in which scientific, documentary accuracy was not yet a consideration, forms in which any notion of fact was of less importance than the sound of a voice, the rhythm of a line, the magic of words. One can have similar aesthetic moments in film, when objects or scenes are included simply for their look, the sheer visual pleasure they impart. Such elements may well detract from the documentary aspect, yet they add something as well, even if we do not yet know how to evaluate that something.

The major difference between the present and the pre-literate world, however obvious, must be underscored: literacy has intervened. This means that however poetic or expressive it may be, history on film enters into a world where scientific and documentary history have long been pursued and are still undertaken, where accuracy of event and detail has its own lengthy tradition. This tradition, in a sense, raises history on film to a new level, for it provides a check on what can be invented and expressed. To be taken seriously, the historical film must not violate the overall data and meanings of what we already know of the past. All changes and inventions must be apposite to the truths of that discourse, and judgment must emerge from the accumulated knowledge of the world of historical texts into which the film enters. (Rosenstone, 1995).
1.3 Rationale of the Proposed Research

The significance of proposed research lies in the fact that first of all it is inter-disciplinary, that is to say, it humbly attempts to contribute with some fresh and ingenious insights to two major disciplines of study and research – History and Cinema. Secondly, the proposed research will attempt to cover greater ground in terms of analyzing thematic issues and the representation of history in cinema which enhance the comprehension of complex historical events. Thirdly, its significance can also be well considered as per the fact that it would function as an ‘Allo-history’ against the ‘meta-narratives’ or ‘grand narratives’ of history, and thereby facilitate our comprehension of complex historical events such as Holocaust and Partition. Fourthly, the proposed research can be regarded as one of its kind because of its selection of two massive historical events taking place almost in the same decade, though in two different worlds within the world. Fifth, it would provide to be an important reference work to the researchers who wish to undertake interdisciplinary research particularly between ‘History’ and ‘Cinema’.

1.4 Scope of the Proposed Research

1) The researcher will confine herself to the representation of history in cinema and thereby study similar thematic issues in the selected films.

2) The researcher will not consider literary narratives representing Holocaust and Partition as a part of her research.

3) The researcher will confine herself to the theoretical work only, that is to say, she won’t include field work and surveys of any kind.

1.5 Review of Work Already Done on the Subject:

The uniqueness of the Holocaust makes special claims upon all who write about it, whether the writer is historian, author, or literary critic. Some would suggest that the nature
of this uniqueness demands silence: others insist on speaking from the distance; and still others would require that words mean something only if they are written by survivors. Although the story of the Holocaust cannot be told adequately by any literary or scholarly means, the event is the stimulus for a startling variety of articles, plays, novels, films and critical references. One of the most significant works on the theme of Holocaust is *Holocaust: A Graphic Guide* by Haim Bresheeth, Stuart Hood and Litza Jansz. It is a classic illustrated guide to the horrors of the Holocaust. With a trenchant text by Israeli filmmaker and critic Haim Bresheeth, this clear introduction looks at the continuing broader relevance of the Holocaust today. It is a powerful graphic guide that dissolves the stereotype related to the Jews, explains the causes and its relevance today. It places the Holocaust where it belongs at the Centre of modern European and world history. Haim Bresheeth and Stuart Hood along with Litza Jansz's outstanding illustrations bring a unique and unforgettable perspective to how we think about this most dark of shadows on human history. Another landmark text is *Hitler and the Holocaust: How and Why the Holocaust Happened* by Robert S. Wistrich. He begins by exploring the origins of anti-Semitism in Europe, and especially in Germany, and tries to explain how millions of Jews came to be killed systematically by the Third Reich. In the process of relating these events, he provides new and incisive answers to a number of central questions concerning the Shoah that have emerged over recent years: who, inside and outside Nazi Germany, knew that Jews were being murdered; how responsibility for the genocide should be divided between Hitler himself and ordinary Germans; and how historians have tried to make sense of the Holocaust. The book concludes by considering the legacy of Nazi crimes since 1945: the Nuremberg trials, the impact of the Holocaust on Diaspora Jewry (particularly in Israel and America), and the rise of neo-Nazism and Holocaust-denial. *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* written by leading Holocaust scholar and the project
director of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, this comprehensive book presents a
historical survey of the Third Reich. Michael Berenbaum covers the pre-Hitler days to the
aftermath of WWII. He draws upon a range of sources, including eyewitness accounts,
photographs, and artefacts. *The Destruction of the European Jews* by Raul Hilberg is a
comprehensive account of how Germany annihilated the Jewish community of Europe. It is
the definitive work of a scholar who has devoted more than 50 years to exploring and
analysing the realities of the Holocaust. Spanning the 12-year period of anti-Jewish actions
from 1933 to 1945, Hilberg's study encompasses Germany and all the territories under
German rule or influence. Its principal focus is on the large number of perpetrators - civil
servants, military personnel, Nazi party functionaries, SS men, and representatives of private
enterprises - in the machinery of death. Zygmunt Bauman’s *Modernity and the Holocaust*
examines what sociology can teach us about the Holocaust, but more particularly
concentrates upon the lessons which the Holocaust has for sociology. Bauman's work
demonstrates that the Holocaust has to be understood as deeply involved with the nature of
modernity. There are stories about the Nazi perpetrators, the passive bystanders, the innocent
victims, and the heroic survivors etc. However, an attempt would also be made during this
research to study the Holocaust in a comparative analysis to another equally destructive
historical event the Partition of India, which may ultimately give the researcher new insights
and which may open new avenues of conducting research.

The best of the literature that emerged in the wake of the Partition bears the imprint of
the struggle to comprehend pain and suffering on a scale that was unprecedented in South
Asia. The Partition Literature became a repository of localized truths, sought to be evaded
and minimized by the dominant discourse on the Partition. These narratives offer insights into
the nature of individual experience, and break the silence in the collective sphere. Trends in
recent Partition research represent a shift away from the parleys and betrayals in the domain
of High Politics, towards an emphasis on the subalterns as both victims and perpetrators of violence, the instigation behind the widespread rioting, the resulting psychological trauma, and most importantly, the feminist concern with recovering lost stories of sexually violated and abducted women during the Partition. New Archives of survivors’ memories are being created to supplement the available sources such as autobiographies and biographies, poetry and fictional accounts. (Ravikant & Tarun, 2002)

Some of the most scholarly and landmark works done on the theme of Partition are:
Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar’s *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories*; Sekhar Bandyopadhyay’s *From Plassey to Partition: A History of Modern India*; Yasmin Khan’s *The Great Partition*; Mushirul Hasan’s *Legacy of Divided Nation and The Partition Omnibus*; Suvir Kaul’s (ed.) *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India*; Sucheta Mahajan’s *Independence and Partition*; Asoka Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan’s *The Communal Triangle in India*; Ritu Menon’s (ed.) *No Woman’s Land: Women from Pakistan, India & Bangladesh Write on the Partition of India*; Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin’s *Borders & Boundaries: Women in India’s Partition*; Gyanendra Pandey’s *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India*; Kavita Punjabi’s *Old Maps and New Legacies of the Partition: A Pakistan Diary*; Ramakant and Rajan Mahan’s (eds.) *India’s Partition: Preludes and Legacies*; Satish Sabarwal’s *Spirals of Contention: Why India Was Partitioned*; Bipan Chandra’s *India’s Struggle for Independence*; Anita Inder’s *The Partition of India* etc.

Some of the landmark texts that highlight the interdisciplinarity between history and cinema are *History through the Lens: Perspectives on South Indian Cinema* by S. Theodore Bhaskaran; Susan Hayward’s *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*; Jarek Kupš’s *The History of Cinema for Beginners*; Marc Ferro’s *Cinema and History*; Bhaskar Sarkar’s *Mourning the Nation: Indian Cinema in the Wake of Partition*; Farzana S. Ali and Mohammad Sabir’s
Partition: The Trauma of Partitioned Lives... in Films and Fiction; Ashok Raj’s Cinema that Heals and Mike Chopra-Gant’s Cinema and History: The Telling of Stories.

The present research is an attempt at studying devastating historical events, namely, Holocaust and Partition from the grounds of ambivalence, hopelessness and suffering of the masses. It also aims to look at the representation of history in cinema and thereby to contribute in a humble way to the on-going trends of interdisciplinary research and reading history from below.

1.6 Research Gaps Identified in the Field of Investigation

Considering the fact that no substantial critical work has been done barring one or two books on Cinema made on both the historical events, an attempt would be made to contribute in a humble way to this on-going trend in research on Holocaust and Partition by analyzing Cinema made on both the massive events against their respective historical background.

1.7 Objectives of the Proposed Study:

1) The fundamental objective behind this study is to re-claim the history of people, who have been the victims of war and violence.

2) This research humbly aims at contributing to the on-going interdisciplinary research and debate between history and cinema.

3) It also aims at emphasizing the difference of approach employed by both history and cinema in depicting historical events and their implications.

4) This research will also focus on the interesting question-how far cinematic representation of history considered at par with history proper? Do they actually share a seamless, complementary relationship as major disciplines or simply exist as adjacent genres without bearing any effect on each other?
5) It also aims to find out that to what extent the cinematic representation of history can provide us with a rich corpus of historical material treated aesthetically when compared with history in proper sense. In other words, does history hold its traditional, canonical significance over other disciplines when it comes to the objective representation of truth?

6) It also aims to find out whether the cinematic representation of history rescue history proper from being unilateral, conclusive and hegemonic or it ultimately results in a distortion of history.

1.8 Research Methodology – Hypothesis and Assumption

At initial stage, I intend this research to be based on thematic concerns portrayed by cinema with reference to two larger historical events namely, ‘The Holocaust’ and ‘The Partition’. However, at a later stage of research, I also intend to make a comparative analysis between history as a discipline concerned with objective representation of truth and the cinematic representation of historical events based on fact and fiction. It will also be an interdisciplinary research.

It is assumed that the deeper analysis of thematic concerns and cinematic representation of two major historical events – Holocaust that ravaged the European World and Partition that shook the whole of South Asia – will help us in relieving History from being hegemonic and unilateral and rather make it more consequential, interpretative and poly-vocal. It is also assumed that such a history based on cinematic representation shall not undermine the canonical significance of ‘history proper’; rather it would function as a complementary narrative to create a comprehensive understanding of historical reality.
References


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