

## CHAPTER-6

### CONCLUSION

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This study is an empirical investigation of film style and structure of the narrative of Hindi biopics. The research primarily explores the question whether there is any similarity in the way the biopics are narrated; through the technical choices in terms of cinematography, in their organization of the narrative content and the progression of the narrative. The broad research question of ‘what constitutes a biopic in terms of style and content’, is addressed through two main research objectives: 1) to identify the pattern of stylistic and structural similarity according to running time considering the entire film at length and 2) to study and compare the different narrative components in terms of style and structure of the narrative content.

There are a number of approaches available to study a filmic text but empirical method like ‘Statistical Style Analysis’ which works by quantifying the data for more objective and verifiable results, is a recent and underexplored method of analyzing a film. Applying statistics to filmic data offers an interesting approach to study narrative patterns especially in terms of film style and this is evident by the results of the present study.

After studying and analysing the variables; shot duration, shot scale, shot angle and camera movement (which are recorded for every single shot of all the five films) certain interesting patterns have been observed. The study not only explores the variables through descriptive statistics but also explores the relationship between the variables through regression analysis and examines the extent to which a shot in a biopic is dependent on stylistic parameters of cinematography. The findings for the two levels of analysis are summarized as follows:

## 6.1 Summarisation of Findings-I<sup>1</sup>

On comparing the overall style of the five films according to their running time, following findings can be listed:

1. The total number of shots for all the films are quite different, but the running time is almost same i.e approx. 120 minutes.
2. Except for F1, the range within which the maximum shot duration for a film operates is 48-66 seconds which is quite a narrow range and it means that films do not deviate much on this parameter from each other.
3. Average shot length (ASL), a very important parameter of style, provides the cutting rate for the film; is significantly similar for F3, F4 and F5 with the mean values of these films being 3.8, 4.2 and 4.5 seconds respectively.
4. The median values (50<sup>th</sup> percentile) indicate a close similarity between F2, F3 (2 seconds) and F4, F5 (3 seconds). This suggests that the overall distribution of shot duration is quite similar for all the films except F1.
5. Observing the values of standard deviation, it can be concluded that shot durations for F3, F4 and F5 deviate in similar manner from the mean as their values are 5, 4.7 and 4.9 seconds respectively.
6. After the analysis of the narrative content of the four acts, it is clearly evident that for all the films, with each of them being very different in their stories; the narrative progression is very similar in terms of the rise and fall of the action. In fact, all the acts for the entire sample of films, begin and end with the similar type of narrative event.

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<sup>1</sup> F1=*Aligarh*, F2=*Mary Kom*, F3=*Rang Rasiya*, F4=*Paan Singh Tomar*, F5=*Manjhi*

7. The results for frequency distributions show that for F2 and F3, the pattern of use of shot scales and shot angles are similar, even though the most preferred shot scale for all the films is close-up and the most preferred angle is the neutral.
8. For camera movements, all the films prefer static shots the most followed by simple moving shots. Complex moving shots are preferred the least by almost all the films.
9. Assessing the relationship between the dependent variable, shot duration and the independent variables; shot scale (SS), shot angle (SA) and camera movement (CM) through regression analysis, it can be concluded that the dependence of the duration of a shot in a biopic on the cinematographic parameters (SS, SA and CM) is very low; with F1, F2 and F4 showing a lot of similarity.

It can thus be broadly concluded that except for Aligarh, which deviates in most of the cases from the entire sample, all the other films show similar patterns. On some parameters F3 is close in terms of style to both F4 and F5 and for certain others it is similar to F2.

A considerable amount of similarity can be traced with certain elements being different but whether these patterns are the genre conventions, cannot be claimed.

For the first phase of analysis which compares the overall style, it is observed that Aligarh stands out from the entire sample. The nature of similarity and difference is quite complex in the sense that if one film is similar to two films on some parameters, it is similar to the other two on some other parameters. For example, *Rang Rasiya* is similar to *Paan Singh Tomar* and *Manjhi* on many parameters but it is also similar to *Mary Kom* on several others. It is observed that similarity in the narrative content leads to similarity in film style as well.

## 6.2 Summarisation of Findings-II<sup>2</sup>

**Table 76: Summary of NC analysis**

NC	Time devoted (mins)	ASL (seconds)	Percentiles	Regression Results
1	F2, F3, F4	F2, F3, F4, F5	F2, F3, F5	F1, F2, F5
2	F1, F3, F5	F2, F4	F2, F3, F4	F1, F3 and F2, F4, F5
3	F2, F4, F5 and F1, F3	F3, F4	F2, F3, F4	F1, F2, F5 and F3, F4
4	F1, F4 and F2, F5	F1, F4, F5 and F2, F3	F2, F3 and F4, F5	F1, F4
5	F2, F4, F5 and F1, F3	F2, F3, F4	F2, F3	F3, F4, F5
6	F2, F5	F3, F4, F5	NS	F1, F2, F4
7	F3, F4	NS	NS	F3, F4, F5
8	F4, F5	F3, F4, F5	F4, F5	F3, F4, F5

1. For the depiction of NC-1, which includes portions or fragments of protagonist's life; the time devoted by F2, F3 and F4 is strikingly similar. Average shot length is also similar for all the films except F1, which shows that the pace of the narrative (cutting rate) for this component is almost same for films. Interestingly, shot distribution as deduced from percentiles is similar for F2, F3 and F5. Regression analysis suggests that shot duration's dependence on the cinematographic elements; SS, SA and CM is similar for F1, F2 and F5 (in table 76, NS- No Similarity).
2. For NC-2, which includes family sequences; F1, F3 and F5 are similar in content as well as the time devoted to the component but the cutting rate shows some variation. F2 and F4 are also similar in narrative content as well as time devoted to NC-II, their cutting rate is also similar and even the extent to which shot duration deviates from mean is also similar. Percentiles are similar for F2, F3 and F4. The shot duration's dependence on SS, SA and CM is also similar for F1, F3 and F2, F4 and F5 and it is quite high as compared to other components.

<sup>2</sup> F1=Aligarh, F2=Mary Kom, F3=Rang Rasiya, F4=Paan Singh Tomar, F5=Manjhi

3. For the sequences related to NC-3, which depict close friends, guides or other sources of motivation; F2, F4 and F5 are similar in devoting lesser time than F1 and F3. Cutting rate is similar for F3 and F4 along with deviation from the mean. Percentiles show similarity in the values of shot duration distribution for F2, F3, and F4. Shot duration's dependence on cinematographic elements is similar for F1, F2, F5 and F3, F4.
4. For NC-4 that deals with the sequences related to public reception, except for F3, all the films devote less time to the component and the total duration devoted to this component is similar for these films. Median is same for F2, F3 and F4, F5. For different films, shot durations depend differently on SS, SA and CM.
5. NC-5 which includes sequences for retribution, similar results can be observed in the total time devoted by F2, F4, F5 and F1 and F3. Cutting rate is similar for F2, F3 and F4. Shot duration's dependence on SS, SA and CM is similar for F3, F4 and F5.
6. For the narrative component depicting struggle i.e NC-6, F2 and F5 devote almost equal time. Regression analysis shows that in F1, F2 and F4 shot duration depends similarly on the predictor variables.
7. For the component that depicts success, total time devoted by F3, and F4 to NC-7 is similar. Dependence of shot duration on predictor variables is similar for F3, F4 and F5.
8. F4 and F5 are quite similar in many aspects when it comes to the portrayal of NC-8. The amount of time devoted to the component, percentage of total shots devoted to it, average shot length denoting the cutting rate and the median are very similar to each other. Shot duration's dependence on predictor variables is similar in F3, F4, and F5.

On comparing the narrative components most similar films are *Mary Kom*, *Rang Rasiya*, *Paan Singh Tomar* and *Manjhi* and though *Aligarh* shares few similarities but it is mostly with either *Mary Kom* or *Rang Rasiya* and in most of the cases it stands out being quite different from the

entire sample. The main reason for this kind of pattern is that *Aligarh* is a film about unacceptable sexual orientation, and Prof. Siras is treated as a social outcaste for transgressing the conventional, hence it shares few similarities with *Rang Rasiya* because even Raja Ravi Varma is a social outcaste because of the sexual content of his paintings, his transgressions as an artist and on the same lines stand, *Mary Kom*; a biopic about a female who pushes her limits and moves beyond the gender boundaries. The most distinct treatment of *Aligarh* is because of its extremely slow pace, which gives a feeling that the protagonist is being trapped in a hopeless and melancholic loneliness.

The study also suggests some interesting findings about the parameters of cinematography and it can be clearly observed that dependence of the duration of a shot is really low on the parameters of scale, angle, and movement.

It is observed during the analysis of narrative components that when a film devotes more time to a component, the style of that component depends very less on the cinematographic parameters, SS, SA and CM but when the time devoted to a particular component is less, the shot duration of the component is largely explained through these variables. An example of this can be the comparison of NC-I and NC-2. In NC-1 for the films which devote around 25 mins, to this component; the regression results show a very low dependence of shot duration on SS, SA and CM whereas for NC-2; the films like *Aligarh* which devote very less time to this component, upto 35% of their shot duration is explained by cinematographic variables. The possible reason for this finding can be; when a film has more time for depicting a narrative component, narrational techniques other than cinematography are also significantly used. But when time is less, narration is more dependent on cinematography. Although this is true in many cases, the deviations are not denied. This points to the fact that cinematography is undoubtedly a key element of film style, which is the reason why it has been the focus of many of the previous studies on style analysis.

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that though the films chosen for the study are produced by different filmmakers, the time period in which they are made is different and they are all the stories of different individuals whose lives have a very distinct trajectory but still certain interesting identifiable patterns can be traced that exist in their cinematic style. These patterns in many cases are strikingly similar and since it is quite evident that to a great extent similarities exist due the narrative content, the results suggest that all the biopics structure the stories in a similar way and eventually even depict these narratives in a very similar formal style, with same kind of technical choices.

Hindi film form has often been criticized by scholars because of its formulaic and stereotypical feature productions (Gregory D. Booth, 1995), and it can thus be assumed that with such film form it is difficult to differentiate between different genres in terms of film style. But narrative structure of Hindi biopics is quite similar to Custen's description of biopics and his structuring of the narrative. Since biopic is a distinct genre in the context of Hollywood, results point to the fact that Hindi biopics are different from standard Hindi films and they have a 'formula' of their own; they indeed have a problem "fitting in the Hindi Film Form", as observed by Dwyer (2012, p. 228).

Statistical style analysis has proved to be immensely significant since it empirically investigates the stylistic parameters and establishes the similarities more convincingly. However, it cannot be claimed that these similar patterns are the genre conventions of biopics, as a comparative study is not done which stylistically explores and compares other Hindi film genres.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Present Study**

While carrying out the research, the chances are that certain limitations might have affected the final results and these are as follows:

1. Data extraction is done manually therefore the shots which have a duration of less than one second have not been taken into consideration and are assigned the value of zero seconds.
2. While recording and coding the shot scale and shot angle of shots which are not static, sometimes with movement of the camera, the scale or the angle of the shot changes, and in such cases, the scale and angle category of the keyframe is considered.
3. In the second phase of analysis, when the sequences are segregated and are assigned different codes according to the component they belong to, only one code is assigned to one sequence. But there are sequences which fall into more than one component, in that case the sequence is coded according to the aspects of the narrative events which dominate that component.

### **6.4 Implications of the Research**

#### **Academic Implications**

1. The study offers a wide scope for further research. The study can serve as a base for exploring the genre traits of biopics using a comparative approach by taking into consideration other popular genres as well; through a wider span of time. Also, increasing the sample of study can help generalize the results.
2. Further research can be taken up to study whether Indian biopics share similar traits with the biopics of Hollywood or other major film industries.



3. Taking into consideration other elements of style, a model of analysis can also be developed.

### **Industry Implications**

Stylistic parameters other than cinematography, can be further studied to assess and estimate the box office collection of films by exploring the impact of style on audience and subsequent critical or commercial success of the film.

### **References**

1. Booth, Gregory D. (1995). Traditional content and narrative structure in the Hindi commercial cinema. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 169-190
2. Dwyer, R. (2012). The Biopic in Hindi Cinema. In R. A. Rosenstone and C. Parvulescu (Ed.) *A Companion to the Historical Film*, Wiley Blackwell, 219-232.