

The Multifaceted Roles of Costumes in Cinematic Artistry: A Study of *Umrao Jaan* (1981)

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Abstract:

Cinema is a collaborative art form. It requires perfection and accomplished contribution from all the stake holder art collaborators. This research paper examines the importance of costumes in cinema, which does not just cater the aesthetic values but contributes on many other levels too. Character identity and acceptance is greatly aided by costumes, which let performers successfully embody their parts and link viewers to the personalities and motives of the characters thus allows the development of the narrative in a smooth fashion. Costumes add the shades of foreshadowing and symbolism. Characters by changing their clothes, can effectively establish a link in narrative elements. Costumes authenticate locations and eras in historical and period films while showcasing ethnic variation and subtlety. While innovative clothes increase viewer involvement and provide a sense of escapism, iconic costumes serve as icons of characters and add to the branding of the movie. Thus, garments and costumes constitute crucial component of the movie experience by enhancing stories, portrayal of history and culture and, building identities, and embedding an imprint of the character in the minds of the audience.

Keywords: Cinematic Adaptation, Cinema, Indian Cinema, Classic Cinema, Costumes, Umrao Jaan Ada, Umrao Jaan.

Introduction:

Cinema, the most collaborative art form, draws contributions from different stake holders. The most challenging task of telling a story on the silver screen is to thrive for perfection in all facets involved in it. Among the acting performances, music, cinematography,

and captivating story element, costume design is a dynamic and essential component that goes beyond simple aesthetics. Costume design and selection play a vital role in shaping the character identity and create a room of acceptance in the minds of the audience. This paper studies the role that clothing has in movies beyond their aesthetic value. Costumes obviously aid in visual storytelling, but they also play a part in character growth, story development, historical realism, and the overall cinematic aestheticism.

Character Portrayal:

Costume design is an effective technique for character development since it helps players enact their characters accurately and impart the continuity of visual cognition to the viewers. Costumes offer visual signals that convey individuals' personalities, histories, and motives through dress, gestures, and accessories. Costumes provide an immediate link between the viewer and the characters, heightening the emotional involvement, whether they are a superhero's famous outfit, a historical figure's period clothing, or a simple ensemble.

Narrative Enrichment:

Costumes may be used as narrative devices to convey subtleties that words may not be able to convey. Filmmakers may effectively express complicated information by using changes in clothing to indicate character arcs, changes in power dynamics, or the passage of time. Additionally, costumes may add layers of complexity to the narrative that connect on both conscious and subconscious levels by contributing to foreshadowing and symbolism.

Historical and Cultural Context:

Costumes are an essential part of setting the scene and era in historical and period films. By accurately recreating certain eras, thorough study and excellent design make the viewer feel immersed. Similarly, costumes may be utilized to depict cultural quirks, customs, and social mores, helping to create a more thorough and inclusive picture of people from different origins. Costumes depict three Ps- People, Place and Period. When used in prudent combination with other elements, costumes help throw light on the demography and social class of the character and also convey information about the era in which the film is set, geographic location, time, season and weather in which the scene was shot. (Ashita)

Visual Identity and Branding:

Characters and iconic clothes frequently become interchangeable, which helps build the film's reputation and brand. These outfits may become instantly recognizable emblems of the film industry and have a long-lasting influence on fashion trends and popular culture. In franchise movies, where character continuity is maintained by maintaining character uniformity throughout sequels, costuming and branding interact.

Audience Engagement and Escapism:

The attractiveness of clothes helps the spectator escape into the universe of the movie. The suspension of disbelief is increased by spectacular, inventive, or fanciful clothing that takes on-lookers to incredible worlds. This interest in the clothing leads to a deeper connection with the narrative and the characters, creating an unforgettable cinematic experience.

The Significance of Costumes in Umrao Jaan of 1981

The costume designer for the movie Umrao Jaan specifically aimed to depict the appropriate period and a very aristocratic culture. With the aid of a costume designer, the filmmaker decided on the outfits to represent and portray the attractiveness of the courtesan and Nawab communities that he wished to depict. Each character's attire effectively introduces them. It displays the range and offers a suitable character dimension. The masculine, female, and other characters' costumes are all taken care of by the costume designer. For Umrao Jaan, Shubhashini Ali created the outfits. She did a wonderful job creating the clothes for each character. Any film needs costumes, but they take on increased significance when the plot calls for appropriate outfits. The Nawabs and the royal families, including affluent courtesans, are the subject of this specific movie. The characters and even the time period portrayed in the original narrative are supported by the costumes utilized in the movie.

Costume of the male characters in the film:

The main protagonist of the movie is a man named Sultan Nawab Sahab. It was played by Farooq Shaikh. Farooq Shaikh had a distinctive appearance that was exquisitely embellished with costumes, just like his general personality. The film depicts this extremely honestly. The narrative takes place in the 19th century, a time when Nawabs and other members of the highest echelons of society wore fantastic and unusual clothing. The Nawab Sultan Sahab is depicted in the movie wearing mostly Anghrakha type kurtas with embroidered embroidery and, at one point, Shawls and a Nawabi Aligharhi cap, which gives him an outstanding regal appearance and adds to the character's aura.

According to the needs of the situations, the film's director employed a variety of outfits. In order to make the character stand out and appear more royal, the costume designer used the Shawl in a variety of ways with various types of Kurtas and Nawabi Dresses. This is because the character is the focus of the movie and drives the entire plot forward. This aids in keeping the character distinct from others and in the focal point of the movie. Nawab Sultan's persona is adorned with a velvet Nawabi Aligharhi hat in olive with golden borders.

Along with his finely wrought Shawl, embroidered Anghrakha, and some jewellery around his neck. The Nawab was dressed completely majestically. Aristocratic and respectable colors are often employed for outfits. Another scenario had a matching costume with another character, and the costume designer utilized the right color to convey the character's decency.

The maroon-colored embroidered Anghrakha, side tie-ups, and a Nawabi velvet Aligharahi hat with a golden strap are all decorations for the persona of the Nawab.

Gohar Mirza, another male character in the movie, wears a simple-worked Anghrakha with an embroidered Nawabi Cap as part of his wardrobe. His light-colored attire emphasizes the character's simplicity and supporting function. However, the embroidered cap reveals that character's luxury. For Gohar Mirza's role, the film's costume designer mostly used Anghrakha. Shawl's character appeared somewhere thanks to her. Another scenario used a bright pink center-knotted Anghrakha with a brown Lahengha, according to the costume designer. It also has the Lucknowie Nawabi Cap that he was wearing when he went on a picnic with other brothel courtesans. His attire mostly reflects simplicity with royalness.

The son of another Nawab who paid a monthly fee to care for him at the Khanum Jaan, his role in the novel is a man who lives among the courtesans at the brothel. In both the book and the movie, his character is portrayed as wicked and fun-loving. That specific Anghrakha's lehenga is broad and straight from top to bottom.

Faiz Ali is the most significant figure and the reason the entire plot flips. who was a key character in both the book and the movie. His outfits were also crucial in explaining the dynamics of the characters. His character first appears honorable, but later on, a dacoit is discovered to be him. The straightforward Anghrakha, Black Shawl, and silky Lehenga were used to adorn Faiz Ali's persona. In the movie, the character was only present for a short while. Although his attire is noble, the black Shawl gives the guy a more enigmatic air. Black color reflects negativity and is a representation of the devil or wicked sort of person.

Every time the character appears in a scene, the black Shawl is seen. The character dynamics are strengthened by this outfit. His character also wears a red-striped Kurta, a black Shawl, and a Lehenga throughout the movie.

In both the literature and the movie, Dilawar Khan is the most crucial character. He is the reason the entire narrative is realized. His persona aids in the development of the event's exhibition. His persona is that of a bootlegger, and the costume designer employed many outfits to fit the part. The character wears the same outfit for the entirety of the play.

The insertion of a crimson cloth on one shoulder and a black Shawl on another shoulder in the identical outfit is the second variation. The character of Umrao's father is played by the movie's director. His role-play is underdeveloped. At Bahu Bibi's Maqbara, Umrao's father is portrayed as Daroga, therefore his outfits are made to fit the dynamics of his character. A black Shawl with a thin golden line, a red-striped Kurta, and a Chaghoshia Nawabi cap. The major male characters are dressed differently in the Anghrakha. Every character supports the time

period specified in the specific scenario. All of the male characters are defensible thanks to their clothing, and their charismatic character dynamics are evident.

Costumes of the female character of the film:

Umrao Jan, the main character and protagonist of the plot, is the most important female character in both the book and the movie. Her persona is portrayed as a courtesan who spent her entire life in Kotha. Costumes from the 19th century were employed by the costume designer to give her character the allure of a courtesan in the movie. Most of the time, from beginning to end, Umrao's persona is depicted wearing distinctive outfits, such as Chudidar Lahenga, Anarkali Dress, Gharara, and variously utilized Dupattas. It was embellished with lovely gowns beginning with her character's early years. The actress Amiran's character was decked out in a variety of dresses. For example, in the opening scene of the movie, the director depicts the young Umrao (Amiran)'s engagement ceremony. Her character is dressed in a red Gharara dress with golden borders and a Dupatta on top of her head that is encrusted with jewellery. She began her life there and practiced dance and music there when she was abducted and sold at the brothel in another scene. She donned a Plazo and a top with Dupatta for her dancing practice. Her persona comes out admirably in that specific outfit.

For the adult Umrao, the costume designer creates astonishing outfits. In the movie, a mature Umrao donned stunning outfits including the Anarkali Dress and many Dupatta styles. The attire of Umrao's character is an Anarkali dress in white with heavy silver borders and a white Dupatta. During the celebration of Bismillah, Jan's Missi Umrao's character appears in another scene of Mujara wearing a crimson Anarkali dress with golden embroidery. The translucent Dupatta's design also enhances the beauty of the character. The silk Chudidar Lehenga beautifies the entire ensemble. The ornaments function better and promote the character's charm when worn with outfits. The mix of the red fabric and the golden color is mesmerizing. The colors of the outfit have a favorable influence on the occasion, convey the significance of the occasion, and foster a festive environment. In the movie, Umrao's character can be seen wearing a variety of outfits, including the Gharara and the Anarkali Suit, and she makes extremely clever use of several Dupatta kinds. The characters' situations throughout the numerous events are reflected in every costume. Each piece of clothing utilized in the movie has beautiful and ideal colors.

The outfits, such as the yellow and white Gharara dress, the pitch-colored Gharara, the sky blue Anarkali suit with a red-colored Dupatta, and the pure white silk Anarkali. Additionally, Umrao's persona is exquisitely decorated by the brown Gharara and cream-colored Dupatta, pure red Gharara with golden lines, green Gharara with orange Dupatta and

white top, and many forms of embellishments. Her outfits give the character additional voice and support.

The clothing worn in the movie were mostly inspired by 19th-century dresses, which were primarily worn by the aristocratic class of Awadh. The Anarkali suit is the uniform-styled outfit used for every scene in Mujara. With the exception of Mujara, Umrao's character may be observed in the Gharara. Khanum Jaan, who portrays the Kotha's landlord, is another crucial member of the cast. a woman who runs the entire Kotha under her rules and regulations. She raised her and acquired the Umrao from Dilawar Khan. She coordinates every event, including Mujara and Mushaira. According to the character dynamics, her character must have an impact, thus the costume designer must create outfits that fit her personality and effectively convey the aura and personality of the required character traits. Her clothing was beautifully created by costume designer Shubhashini Ali. She was mostly seen in the movie wearing a Dupatta and Gharara.

Her individuality is strengthened by the extra fabric she was bending to fit her differently worn Dupatta. The Dupatta is shown in a slightly different way than Umrao Jan. Even her clothing had more embroidery than Umrao Jan did. In the movie, Khanum's character is typically dressed in lavishly embroidered Ghararas and dupattas. Differently utilized and worn dupattas with diverse creative embellishments are considered as more effective and lovely than each other while maintaining the dress's style. All other female characters are likewise dressed differently, including Bismillah Jan, a Khanum Jan's daughter. Her persona is also crucial to the narrative. Her attractiveness was enhanced by the captivating outfits used in the movie by the costume designer. Her persona is most frequently shown wearing an Anarkali suit and Ghararas. Her elegantly made Anarkali outfit in cream colour is stunning. The character's refined personality is reflected in its creamy color.

She wore an Anarkali outfit as part of her character's attire during the whole Mujra. The silver-colored fabric that borders the cream-colored Anarkali suit has a faint design that may be seen below the waist. That represents the simplicity while still giving off an air of great luxury. She also donned a silk Anarkali outfit in a purple colour for Missi's celebration. It has a translucent Dupatta and borders embroidered in golden thread. Her outfits seem more gorgeous with ornaments. Because of its luxurious qualities, the specific shade of purple was chosen for Missi. Characteristics of Bismillah are mostly embellished with Ghararas and Anarkali clothing.

Even all of the female characters are primarily depicted wearing Ghararas and Anarkali attire. Only the way that Dupattas were worn changed as a result of the costume designer's changes. The same-styled clothes were worn by a large number of additional side characters who took on the role of courtesans. The only thing that separates them is that their attire is less

regal and embroidered. Additionally, try not to stare at the screen too much. And also, not focused too much on the screen.

The person who accepts responsibility for taking care of Umrao Jan is Bua Husaini. She is shown as Umrao Jan's mother. Despite not being the main character, her value as a character cannot be overlooked in favour of other characters. The same thing happened to Ramadi's personality. The character of Bua Husaini is adorned with a Ghaghra, a Top, and Dupattas. Where Gharara and Dupatta are worn by Ramdei's character.

Conclusion:

The magnetism of the director and costume designer was evident in the movie. Through the clothes, they succeed in recreating the saga and fervour of 19th century on screen. In conclusion, costumes in the films serve as more than just visual adornments; they are pivotal tools that facilitate character development, enrich narratives, represent history and culture, establish visual identities, and engage audiences emotionally. The holistic impact of costumes on cinematic storytelling underscores their enduring importance in the art of filmmaking.

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