



Photoshop Landscapes:  
Digital Mediations and  
Bollywood Cities.

**I**his recent book Ashish Rajadhyaksha has elaborated on the ‘cinema-effects’, and has asked

Within the universe of the cinema, what does an inclusive definition of the text actually include? Even on its own, as a production process, it is clear that the repudiation of authenticity in Bollywood –in the music of *Bollywood Funk* or in the Jani-Khosla installation at Selfridges –coincides with a widespread social tendency towards evoking film mainly for purposes of re-presentation, re-definition...of reprocessing the cinema in order, eventually, to make it available for numerous and varied uses primarily outside movie theatre.<sup>1</sup>

While, ‘everything goes’ as Bollywood, what is particularly absent in most debates on contemporary Hindi films are questions of film form, contemporary shifts in modes of narration, and the domestic market for small budget films, which happens to constitute about 78% of the market.<sup>2</sup> Thus, while films are being studied from various positions, particularly reading of the industrial structure and reception of Bollywood by the

diaspora, it becomes crucial for film studies researchers to address the umbrella term, and make meaning of the same. And, if cinema has dissolved into 'cinema-effects', what does it do to the cinematic narration? Rather, from a more personal position one may ask how does one narrate when cinema is basically narrativizing its own narratives as in *Om Shanti Om* (Farah Khan, 2007)?<sup>3</sup>

*Making meaning of Bollywood: What is in the name?*

While working on the cinema of the nineteen thirties, I chanced upon an article in the *American Cinematographer* (March, 1932), which described how the Calcutta studios located in Tollygunge area came to be referred as 'Tollywood'. In this article, W E Deming writes how 'Tolly' was a proper name and 'gunge' meant locality and that 'after studying the advantages of Hollywood', they 'decided on Tollywood'. M Madhava Prasad writes about this 'derivative' naming of an industry and how "[o]nce Tollywood was made possible by the fortuitous availability of a half-rhyme, it was easy to clone new Hollywood babies by simply replacing the first letter. Thus, the Tamil industry is referred to as Kollywood..."<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, an article ('Hollywood, Bollywood, Tollywood...') by Shanti Kumar refers to the Telegu film industry and not Bengali film industry as 'Tollywood'.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, naming of 'Tollywood', 'Bollywood' and other 'woods' (SV Srinivas commented in a seminar, the naming of the Karnataka film industry as 'Sandalwood'), does reveal a certain imitativeness and competitiveness as well as a sense of self-conscious mockery. In fact, with the formation of big studios in the thirties, while Hollywood stood as a significant model it was not necessarily seen as the sole paradigm of film production and perhaps not exactly imitable either, given the economic-political conditions of the period. Therefore, such naming was often done for publicity purposes, as well as to produce an identity, which was marked with sameness and difference.<sup>6</sup> For instance, when New Theatres Ltd. (1931-55) used an elephant on its logo, it was knowingly referring to the MGM lion and yet, trying to produce a symbol that would appear more powerful than the lion. However, contemporary usage of the term Bollywood and its popularity amongst academics do project a new kind of industrial shift, which Rajadhyaksha describes as 'the *Bollywoodization* of the Indian cinema' (2002).

Daya Kishan Thussu in his essay ‘The Globalization of “Bollywood”<sup>7</sup> shows how India beat US in terms of number of films produced per year.<sup>8</sup> Thussu also discusses how Subhash Ghai’s *Yaadein* (2001) was screened at the British Academy of Film and TV in London, and entered the UK Top Ten in ‘just one weekend’. Films like *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham*’s (K3G, 2001) gross box office income was 2.5 million pounds and it was released in 41 theatres, while *Veer Zaara* (Yash Chopra, 2004) earned 2.01 million pounds, and was released in 60 theatres across UK. Note, either Yash Raj Films or Eros International Ltd.<sup>9</sup> distributed most of these films. Indeed ‘Bollywoodization’ does mean ‘corporatization’ of the Hindi film industry and attempts to re-integrate finance, production, and distribution, along with the music industry.

*Sant Tukaram* and *Seeta* were sent to Venice in the thirties, and Devika Rani-Himanshu Rai attempted some Indo-German productions during the same period. Moreover, in the fifties some Hindi films and stars like Raj Kapoor and Nargis were extremely popular in the former USSR and Greece<sup>10</sup>. The depictions of foreign locales have also been somewhat fashionable in the ‘old’ Hindi films, and popular in the domestic market. For example, in the second half of *Sangam* (Raj Kapoor, 1964), the couple go on an exotic picturesque honeymoon trip to the West. The song “Main kya karoon Ram...” underlines the pleasures and transgressions the undefined West seems to offer. Such locales not only offered visual pleasures but also became signs that chart the differences between the *self* and the *other*. The newly acquired ‘Technicolour’ encouraged a colourful representation of the world. The demands of the technology intersected with the demands of postcolonial history to generate ‘picture-postcard’ films. Manoj Kumar’s *Purab Aur Pacchim* (1970) is a quintessential example of this category.

In *Love in Tokyo* (Prmod Chakravorty, 1966), the spectators get glimpses of ropeways, entertainment parks, bridges, monorail, Japanese theatre, *geisha* dances and *sake*, along with fragments of Japanese expressions like ‘Sayonara’. The protagonist in this film is a like traveller, gathering mementos, and photographs without actually befriending the people. This is particularly evident in the comic situations played out by the actor Mehmood, who not only ‘flies’ across Tokyo, but it is through his POV or the ‘bird’s eye view’ that the viewers get to see Tokyo. Alternatively, in *An Evening in Paris* (Shakti Samanta, 1967), the heroine Deepa comes to Paris in search of love. She meets Sam/Shyam, who is an

Indian from Lucknow but introduces himself as French. It is through Deepa's and Sam's experiences and the singing ("Dekho, Dekho...") that the spectators experience odd juxtapositioning of traditional dances of Switzerland, women water skiing, and fights around Niagara falls as well as disparate spaces like the Virgin Girl Mountains of Jungfrau, Beirut, romantic scenes in the Eiffel Tower, etc.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, films like the Dev Anand starrer *Prem Pujari* (Dev Anand, 1970) or the Amitabh Bachchan film *Great Gambler* (Shakti Samanta, 1979) project nationalist agendas, and translate European images, metaphors and expressions into Hindi. For instance, the hit song "Do lafzon ki . . .," shot in Venice, attempts to interpret the sense Italian romance into Hindi cinema. These films present the West as alluring, elusive, dangerous and exciting. Hence, in the film, inspector Vijay's experiences are intertwined in curious ways with the exploits of the great gambler Jay (both played by Bachchan).

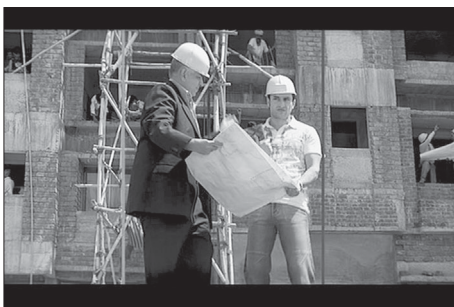
However, the earlier phenomena need to be set apart from the popularity of contemporary Hindi films, especially in the US and UK. Contemporary films are about the branding of a certain kind of aesthetics and visual designs in terms of colours, framing, movement, settings and the overall *mise-en-scene*, which can now be transformed into lifestyle products like T-shirts, caps, bags, coffee mugs and other accessories. Prasad (2008, 49) for instance says, "successful commodification of Indian cinema as Bollywood in the International market is based on the idea of an unchanging essence that distinguishes it from Hollywood." Thus, Bollywood is no longer about any plot as it were, it signifies a series of cultural products and practices; in short, 'Brand Bollywood' is a culture industry.

Kaarsholam (2002), Kaur and Sinha (2005)<sup>12</sup> as well as Rajadhyaksha (2009) refer to the 'Indian Summer' festival in London held in 2002,<sup>13</sup> as an important point from which Bollywood becomes acceptable globally, and is represented as something which is 'kitschy and cool'. The 'Indian Summer' festival showcased a range of Hindi popular films, along with Satyajit Ray's films. It also launched music-composer A R Rahman's and Andrew Lloyd Weber's musical *Bombay Dreams* in London's highbrow theatres, just as Victoria and Albert Museum presented Hindi film posters in their exhibition titled *Cinema India: The Art of Bollywood*.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps it was also the way in which *Moulin Rouge* (Baz Luhrmann, 2001) quoted a popular Hindi film song ("Chamma, Chamma. . .") that gave Bollywood this global appeal. Likewise, *Lagaan's* (Ashutosh Gowariker, 2001) Oscar

nomination<sup>15</sup> located Indian popular cinema on the international map.

Nevertheless, not all Hindi films produced from Bombay are Bollywood films, or for that matter, Bollywood is not merely a diaspora phenomenon. It does not simply comprise of films made by Mira Nair (*Monsoon Wedding*, 2001) or Gurinder Chadha (*Bend it like Beckham*, 2002) or films like *The Mistress of Spices* (Paul Mayeda Berges, 2005), despite their global success and the role played by these in popularising 'Brand Bollywood'.<sup>16</sup> Among other films, it was *Taal* (Subhash Ghai, 1999) which was on the chart of US Top 20,<sup>17</sup> and equally popular at home, particularly in the big cities of India. Arguably, *Taal* ushered in what we now understand as Bollywood. It featured Aishwariya Rai and AR Rahman's music (both mixed and re-mixed versions of the same song) which became global icons. Then *Dil Se* (Mani Ratnam, 1998) also appeared on the Top 10 British film list. Certain films like *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (DDLJ, Aditya Chopra 1995), *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (KKHH, Karan Johar, 1998), etc., have been studied by Ashish Rajadhyaksha<sup>18</sup> and others as crucial points through which the trademark Bollywood emerges. Moreover, if we went to the 'cinemas' earlier, 'cinema' has now arrived in our homes (via TV and DVD cultures), and merged with audio-visual advertisements,

hoardings, large LCD projectors at the crossing etc., and re-constituted our ways of seeing.



Salam Namaste

The Post World War II<sup>19</sup> period experienced mass exodus from South Asian countries to the West and the North, and this eventually produced new kind of publics, spaces, and cultures in those countries. Indians or South Asians moved to the North and West of the world, to countries like US, Canada, and UK as well as to southern and east African counties, and to Fiji, Mauritius, Guyana, Malaysia, Singapore and other East Asian countries for livelihood. Kaarsholam (2002) and Kaur and Sinha (2005) deal with the phenomena of reception of Bollywood by the Indian

diaspora in the countries mentioned above.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, a film like *Salaam Namaste* (Siddharth Anand, 2005) in the beginning shows how both the hero and heroine and other characters who belong to suburban India have moved away from it culturally, to perform their global selves in Australia.<sup>21</sup> They live together outside marriage, which may not be acceptable back home, and have a lifestyle which was somewhat unavailable in India at least at the time when the film was made. More recently, a film like *Chandni Chowk to China* (CC2C, Nikhil Advani, 2009) also charts such travels in South Asia, just as Warner Bros. invests in a Bollywood film and demarcates its market quite literally through the name of the film. Moreover, the stupendous success of *Slumdog Millionaire* (Danny Boyle, 2008) underlines how Bollywood now is a big thing, and how certain stereotypical themes (like brothers and lovers being separated, and later united etc.) and narrative styles (like abrupt song and dance sequences, and “Jay Ho” in the end, or episodic narration) may be appropriated by a more powerful canon.

### *Meandering trajectories of Bombay cinema*

In his oft-quoted work *Ideology of Hindi Film, A Historical Construction*, M Madhava Prasad (1998) has categorized mainstream Hindi films into feudal-family romances of the sixties, the Amitabh Bachchan movies, and middle-class cinema of the seventies. One may argue that the way in which Ranjani Majumdar (2007) divides the representations of Bombay in contemporary Hindi films (that is the ‘panoramic interiors’ and the ‘gangland Bombay’) perhaps stem out of what Prasad had earlier described as ‘feudal-family romances’ and ‘Amitabh Bachchan movies’. Writing about the Hindi middle-class cinema of the seventies, Prasad had also considered the neo-realistic mode, which had played a significant role in the formation of such aesthetics. He argued that the ‘feudal space’ is relocated ‘in the space of modernity’; at the same time as the class learns to address itself beyond the community grid. While women’s issues became crucial, problems of urban spaces, housing, jobs etc., that is the entire middle-class experience of the city with its uncertainties and prospects became crucial in these films.

Certain recent films referred to as ‘multiplex films’ or films from the ‘edge’ (because of their production strategies) may actually be described as the *neo middle-class* cinema. New urban spaces (particularly the shopping mall) and new corporate jobs as well as new commercial ethics

come up in films by Madhur Bhandarkar (*Page3* (2005), *Corporate* (2006), or *Fashion* (2008) etc.). Most of these films borrow TV aesthetics<sup>22</sup>. For example the borrowing of the news mode, in *Black Friday* (Anurag Kashyap, 2007) or the TV soap narrative mode as well as TV aesthetics as in *Life in a Metro* (Arurag Basu, 2007), *Wake Up Sid* (Ayan Mukerji, 2009), the sport telecast mode as in *Chakde! India* (Shimit Amin, 2007) or the MTV musical mode in certain sequences of *Rock On* (Abhishek Kapoor, 2008).

Prasad suggested that middle-class Hindi cinema of the seventies was predominantly about urban spaces and the class. I would like to argue that, the middle-class now returns as the ‘upwardly mobile neo-middle class’, with notions of new city spaces and urban cultures that include viewing films within multiplexes, which are located in shopping malls or watching them on DVDs, which are supported by the home video and 5.1 sound system. While a thorough study of the industrial meaning of home videos, and/or the multiplexes, in terms of its distributions networks, and associated profits, as well as its aesthetics, is outside the purview of this paper, the narratives of films like *Hyderabad Blues* (Nagesh Kukunoor, 1998), *Hazaar Khawise Aise* (Sudhir Misra, 2005), *Being Cyrus* (Homi Adajania, 2005), *Johnny Gaddar* (Sriram Raghavan, 2007), *No Smoking* (Anurag Kashyap, 2007), or *Bheja Fry* (Sagar Ballary, 2007), *Honeymoon Travels* (Reema Kagti, 2007), *Mithya* (Rajat Kapoor, 2008), *Amir* (Raj Kumar Gupta, 2008) *Mumbai Meri Jaan* (Nishikant Kamat, 2008), *A Wednesday* (Neeraj Pandey, 2008) etc., represent an urban middle-class which has different viewing and consumption habits.<sup>23</sup>

I wish to argue that, as opposed to the *hyper-reality* of glossy interiors and what may be described as the *super-reality* of gangland Bombay, a ‘reality-effect’ in terms of characterization, settings, plotting, and an excessive interest in everyday details is produced here. What remains outside the analyses of most of the scholarly discussions is the category of B-movies. Certain B-movies working within comic mode (largely Priyadarshan’s films) as well as the grim Noir form (from the Mahesh Bhatt camp) seem to also succeed ‘locally’ despite the fact that Bollywood now is a global product.

### *Travels in hyper-reality: From feudal family romances to scenic interiors*

The global-local dialogues in the nineties have prompted new Hindi

films to include a diasporic *imaginaire* to deal with its burgeoning worldwide market. In its new avatar Bollywood often locates its narratives in the West (as in *Kabhi Alvidha Na Kehena*/KANK, Karan Johar, 2006 , *Kal Ho Naa Ho*/KHNH, Nikhil Advani, 2003 and *Salaam Namaste*, etc. ), and the protagonist is frequently a diasporic youth who comes to represent the Resident Indian. In KANK Shah Rukh Khan plays the NRI who is caught up in an 'extra-marital' relationship, while in KHNH he travels to US for the cure of his own terminal disease. In both the films he manages to hold up a mirror to both the NRI and the Resident Urban Indian (RUI).

Bollywood films are now dominated by urban settings, and less than 5 per cent of films now have rural stories as opposed to 15-20 per cent some years back,<sup>24</sup> moreover, western cities seamlessly merge into urban India. For instance, the hero in DDLJ journeys through the continent (in Euro Rail with the heroine) before he reaches the mustard fields of Punjab. These two disparate journeys seem to mirror each other effortlessly. In *Rahena Hai Tere Dil Mein* (RHTDM, Gautam Menon, 2001) which is set in Bombay, the exteriors were largely shot in European cities. In fact, during the promotion of the film, the makers explained in a TV interview how they took an *autorikshaw* to Europe to establish that it was indeed Bombay, though they actually shot in Europe because they 'liked the streets'. Art Director Sharmistha Roy, during the making of *Mohabatein* (Aditya Chopra, 2000) said on TV that she liked shooting in Europe because she 'didn't like the colour of the sky' in India. Moreover, in *Jhoom Barabar Jhoom* (Shaad Ali, 2007) the NRI characters visit Taj Mahal in a dream sequence, in an opposing way to the erstwhile Hindi melodrama where characters living in India would often break into song and dance sequences, and then be shifted to Europe. As I have discussed earlier (with Ray, 2002, 137) such new 'troping of the home and the world', allows us to do away with binaries and have the West very much inscribed in our hearts. With consumption acquiring a new dimension and emerging as a way of being recent Bollywood films offer its audience a catalogue of 'western-style' glamour, clothes, locations, wealth and liberty, but within the structures of its neo-traditional views.

One of the biggest hit in the last decade, KKHH, traverses the East/West cycle by not going abroad at all; instead, it creates a 'virtual west' within India. Hence in KKHH we have the urbanized and globalized (basketball playing, baseball cap wearing) female protagonist. Similarly,

the other female star of the film, the Oxford returned, guitar-strumming girl can also quickly switch to singing *bhajans*. She is not the girl who has been spoiled by 'western' influences, but a loving and lovely young woman who simply happens to wear sexy clothes because that is how clothes are or should be.<sup>25</sup> She has accepted the *Indian imaginary* not as someone who represents the West, but as someone who has lived in the West. Such Bollywood representations establish the diaspora community as national as well as local communities as global.

While in a global context, one can go to the West without travelling as in KKHH etc, in certain films like *Bachna Ae Hashino* (Siddharth Anand, 2008), *Dhoom2* (Sanjay Gadhvi, 2006), the characters do not 'return' to India to 'recover' the *self* as in DDLJ. Since, the dichotomies between the *self* and *other* appear diffused through the production of what may be described as 'transnational' identities; these categories do not function in opposition anymore, but in tandem. While the diasporic Indian is now the primary addressee, I would like to suggest here that the RUI is not any secondary receiver. In fact, s/he fixes the image of the global self in these films, and thus such films become a manifestation of its own globalized ideal self. As a matter of fact, many Bollywood films try to project the 'diasporic *imaginaire*', as a reflection of the aspirations of the emergent Indian middle class/ consumer.

During the making of KKHH Karan Johar had declared that his references were the Archie's comics and in a self-conscious fashion he had reproduced the Betty-Veronica binary in the film. In fact, the college campus, classrooms, basketball courts, summer camps, or Betty-Veronica's rooms have a comic strip quality about it, which foreground certain fluorescent colours and flatten out the depth of field through its lighting. T-shirts worn by Shah Rukh Khan, caps by Kajol and mini skirts by Rani Mukherjee became the style statement of the youth. In a recent TV interview Johar insisted that he contemplated for two days whether to buy the 75 pounds T-shirt Shah Rukh Khan had worn in the film. The film had 10,000 pounds budget for clothes, which by his own admission was first of its kind in Indian cinema. While it is not unusual for a film to launch that season's fashion, KKHH established a sense of urban life style, which was unparalleled then. Similarly, besides structuring its songs like a series of music videos, the interiors of *Dil to Pagal Hai* (DTPH, Yash Chopra, 1997) presented a string of lifestyle products that included soft toys, hammocks, or consumable products like Coke etc. Lifestyle products

become an integral part of the *mise-en-scene* in such Bollywood films. In fact, DTPH also popularized Valentines' Day celebration on a mass scale in India.<sup>26</sup> However, such films, are also significant instances where the traditional patriarchal moral order is re-worked<sup>27</sup>.

This in fact, holds true for a film like *Dil Chahata Hai*, (DCH, Farhan Akhtar, 2001). Despite relocating its narrative in Australia, and showcasing it as a land of consumption, the film resolves its crisis in a marriage house, and later in a hospital in the ways in which a 'typical' Hindi melodrama always did. A story of three young men, the first half of DCH is shot in Bombay and in the exotic landscape of Goa, while the second half shows urban and metallic cityscape of Sydney with its flyovers, underground trains, restaurants, cinemas, parks and so on. According to Ranjani Majumdar

Air travel, car travel, leisure, art, discos, music fashion, style attitude, grace, love, and desire-DCH is a combination of all these, perfected through a play with the interior<sup>28</sup>

After its release, DCH became a cult film and prefigured certain fashions patterns, which included notions of leisure, friendship, love, work, living spaces, clothes, hairstyles and so on.<sup>29</sup> In short, such films represent a *hyper-reality* that can only be fathomed in terms of images.

### *Passages through super-reality: From Amitabh Bachchan movies to gangland Bombay*

While new aesthetics of the city and urban cultures emerge through the films discussed earlier, surely, the biggest Indian star Amitabh Bachchan was truly the first urban hero. His early films *Zanjeer* (Prakash Mehra, 1974), *Deewar* (Yash Chopra, 1975), *Muqadaar ka Sikandar* (Prakash Mehra, 1978), *Kala Patthar* (Yash Chopra, 1979) and *Shakti* (Ramesh Sippy, 1982) brought up issues of the working class and conflicts within the modern nation-state. While he largely played a social outsider, it was through his films that problems of urban existence were split wide open. Streets, docks, railways stations, police stations, courtrooms, slums, red-light areas recurred in these films. While *Muqadaar ka Sikandar* has been described as a modern-day *Devdas*, *Agneepath* (Mukul S Anand, 1990) addressed problems of urbanization and ghetto formation in the postcolonial state. It is around him that the industry reorganized itself, redefining production strategies and narrative patterns.<sup>30</sup> City spaces as represented in such films have often been described as sites and sights, where multiple aspirations and anxieties were played out. While one of the

key issues in popular Hindi cinema has been the transition from the rural areas to the city, this transition can be read as a diabolic journey of the nation into and through modernity. The city sometimes appears metaphorical, and witnesses this transition “on behalf of the Big Other, the Nation” (Prasad, 2002). Prasad suggests

[t]he seventies and eighties were a period in which Bombay inscribed itself into the cinematic registrar of urban life in its own right, coming out of the city-country equation where the concreteness of urban existence tended to be smothered under a symbolic representation of opposed values<sup>31</sup>

The new Hindi films of the Bollywood kind have reconstituted in the minds of the masses an image of a *new city*. If Baudrillard argues that American cities grow out of Hollywood films,<sup>32</sup> the ways in which several cities in India have transformed in the recent past in terms of the flyovers and multi-storeyed complexes being built, or neon lights, digital advertisements and shopping malls, there is this mystifying sense that some of our cities may have re-emerged through films like DCH or KKHH.

Ranjani Majumdar (2007) writes about the ‘interiority’ of the consuming family, while she also writes about the architecture of emergent cities. In the films discussed above, the ‘city’ of the fifties and seventies- the film noir streets, slums, working-class crowds- has vanished. Majumdar suggests that scenic interiors which are the “of pleasure, desire, anxiety, and eroticism” (2007, 115) gain importance, just as she argues that a new ‘surface culture’ has emerged. She suggests

Surface here refers to the expressive forms of architecture, advertising, print, television, film, and fashion....The new *sensorium* of urban life<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, the ‘other’ kind of city films like *Satya* (Ram Gopal Varma, 1998), *Company* (Ram Gopal Varma, 2002) (or more recently *Sarkar* (Ram Gopal Varma, 2005) *Johnny Gadaar*, *Shootout at Lokhandwala* (Apoorva Lakhia, 2007)) are described by Majumdar as ‘gangland’ films. However, these films are not ‘classical realist’ texts, despite the location shooting and a display of ‘realism’. Through the images of the city underbelly (comprising of the slums, railway tracks, dance bars etc.), a notion of a ‘masculine city’ is projected. Men with guns and *gaalis* (abuses) move freely within the city, killing and exuding an uncontrollable sense of physical power. In these gangster-films, themes of ‘masculinity and brotherhood’ overlap (Majumdar, 2007, 153). As opposed to the glassy shopping malls

a parallel city seems to exist, which is perhaps only visible under the microscope or through excessive *super-real* Close Ups. The display of the everyday as opposed to the special occasions (like the marriage) present the city as disintegrating, as opposed to the 'good life/feel good' factor projected in the other category. These films seem to demolish the idea of the organized and designer city. The spectacular global city is threatened by the city of violence, ruins, and sadness. A film like *Company* in fact, brings this up within its own narrative as a 'Karan Johar' like film set suddenly transforms into a violent scene, and the happy dancers or participants now raise their hands displaying the arms they were already carrying. This scene becomes an ironic comment on the film industry, processes of filmmaking, and its own plots.<sup>34</sup>

*Reality effects and other realities: Neo-middle class and working-class cinemas*

The neo-liberal economic policies of the Indian Government are projected through what Appadurai (1990)<sup>35</sup> described as the play of *ethnoscapes* (spaces produced through inflow of people, like immigrants etc.), *technoscapes* (inflow of technology etc.), *finanscapes* (flow of global capital etc.), *mediascapes* (the 'repertoires of images and information'), and *ideoscapes* (ideological shifts connected to western world-views). Certainly, the upwardly mobile neo middle-class (specifically the double income group), their spending power and needs, seem to have played a crucial role in the ways in which big cities are changing, and the manner in which housing complexes, shopping malls and multiplex cinemas are being built. The growth of multiplexes is connected to the new economic policies that encourage neo middle-class lifestyles. The neo-liberal economic policies of the Government are apparent through the connections between spatial transformations of urban spaces, inflow of multinational investments, the shifts in everyday living, and consumption habits<sup>36</sup>.

Within the framework of urban developments and emergent consumption economy, new mechanisms for leisure grow for the urban middle-classes. For instance, the shopping malls also include multiplex cinemas to increase 'footfalls'. The policies to permit the multiplexes to deploy 'flexible ticket pricing' outside the terms set for single theatres, as well as low or even zero degree of taxation during the first five years, posit the multiplexes in an advantageous position compared to the single theatre with sometimes blurred projections, unregulated sound, seats with bugs,

dirty toilets and stale popcorns.<sup>37</sup> Thus, arguably, multiplexes are producing new kinds of cinema cultures and cinematic forms for the audiences. Beyond the mainstream blockbuster mould (popularised by Dharma Productions, Yash Raj et al, as well as RG Varma and company) a new form of cinema with relatively smaller budgets, and a ‘realistic’ narrative mode seem to become popular particularly with this neo middle-class. Political films or political thrillers like *Hazaar Khawise Aise*, *Mumbai Meri Jaan*, *A Wednesday*, *Amir* or self-reflexive comedies like *Bheja Fry*, *Honeymoon Travels*, *Mithya*, etc., or even truly post modern narratives like *No Smoking* portray another trajectory, which is beyond any possible binary between ‘panoramic interiors’ and ‘gangland Bombay’.

Besides such films, another category of films referred to as the ‘B-movies’ with meagre budgets and ‘lesser’ stars are also successful in their own rights. ‘B-movies’ have more or less 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the budget, as well as

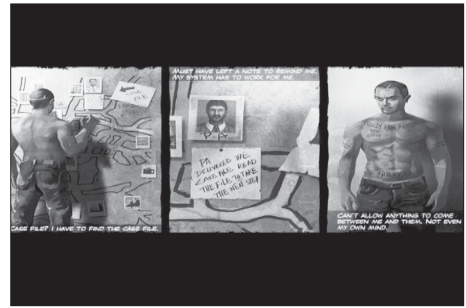
number of released prints, compared to the A-movies. These films are largely released in the single theatres. Even when there are multiplex releases such films mostly get one non-prime time slot. Much of the profits of such films are earned back through Intellectual Property Rights as these films get telecast rights on TV. Such returns are slow, and profits are garnered over a period of eight to ten



Limited comic book edition of the film *Don*

years. Comedy remains one of the most successful genres for such B-movies.

However, recent films like *No Entry* (Anees Bazmee, 2005), *Welcome* (Anees Bazmee, 2007), *Phir Heera Pheri* (Neeraj Vora, 2006), *Gol Maal Returns* (Rohit Shetty 2008), etc., earned unexpected profits, which relocate the A-movies/B-movies distinctions. Interestingly, most of these films are spoofs on the ‘gang’ films, which are in fact derivatives of the *Godfather* series. As a matter of fact, if the ‘gangland Bombay’ films seem to destroy the image of the glossy-glassy designer city, and are anti-theses to the ‘scenic interiors’ of the neo-traditional ‘Dharma productions’, such B-movies seem to demolish the seriousness of the action genre with its own gags and spectacular action sequences, garish colour schemes, flat lighting, song and dance sequences, as opposed to the greyish-brownish sleekness, sweeping camera movements and razor-edged cuts of action



Ghajini, *The Game*

flicks.

In fact, writing about the neo-middle class cinemas and multiplexes it is important to understand that, the multiplex/single theatre distinction may not be as irrefutable as it is made out to be. For instance, ‘Navina Cinema’, in the Tollygunge area in Kolkata has ticket prices that are one fourth of multiplex cinemas; nevertheless, it screens more or less the same films. In addition to this, their distributors (like Shree Venkatesh Films) are mostly the same. Moreover, sometimes A-movies like the *Munna Bhai* series, *Tashan* (Vijay Krishna Acharya, 2008), *Kambakkht Ishq* (Sabbir Khan, 2009) or even a Bollywood blockbuster like *Om Shanti Om* (Farah Khan, 2007) pick up a B-movie plot, characters, comic situations, gags, dialogue patterns, its colour schemes, then rehash it, and re-present it to the international market. For instance, *Don* (Farhan Akhtar, 2006) takes a seventies’ plot, transports it to Malaysia, and twists the ending. Or the Satish Kaushik *Karzzz* (2008) relocates the plot in Miami though one

may argue that, *Karzzz* actually is a B-version of an earlier blockbuster. Briefly, such transactions between A movie-B movie, are complex and fluid.

### *Digital after effects and Photoshop landscapes*

In most of the contemporary films, colours appear to be very saturated, rich, and ripe, and each object as it were, seems to be weighed down by its own colours. The colour correction (and Digital Intermediate) in *Kaante* (Sanjay Gupta, 2002, with added greenish tint), or the *Sarkar* Series (with a pale brownish tint) create unreal spaces despite or because of the imposing Close Ups. The colours and the surface are so luminous and overwhelming that one begins to question one's ability to see beyond the surface, or read its implications, since neither the saturated colours nor spaces shot in wide angles can be the image of reality. Therefore, it forces on us new perceptions, the ways in which perhaps our eyes have not yet been trained. These appear like pure images, or imagination and yearnings. An extraordinary and *super-real* space becomes dominant, where colours seem to have a tactile quality about it. New colour codes suggesting new realities emerge in this context.

Often landscapes merge with fantasy, memory and images, as in the case of *No Smoking*. While aspect ratios have altered drastically from 4:3 to 16:9, the compositions and what it can encompass have been stretched too. Extreme long shots bereft of celluloid's silver grains, its natural structuring, and details thus appear devastatingly desolate. Moreover, there is no hierarchy of depth. Or the 'depth of field' has been now replaced by a 'glossy surface'. Digital medium sometimes becomes its own message. Unlike celluloid images, which have a certain depth of field, grains, scratches, and noises, the corrected digital images mostly foreground a pure image. With fewer details, colours appear like blocks (or pixels) shining beyond the screen image.<sup>38</sup> Diffused, multifaceted images with conflicting facets, juxtaposed within the same frame seem to encapsulate our senses. We can no longer talk in terms of binaries, but in terms of differences. It indeed is a moment of 'trans' something or the other; of transnational conditions, where there can be no fixed identities or images. Thus, the images are now shrunk and stretched; just as a Dolby soundscape surrounds the viewer reworking psychoanalytical readings of the screen-spectator relationships. Perhaps we no longer look and identify with the image; we are surrounded by it, or located at the centre of

it.

Ravi Vasudevan has described the narrative strategies of Indian cinema as

a melodramatic one, displaying the characteristic ensemble of manichaeism, bipolarity, the privileging of the moral over the psychological, and the deployment of coincidence in plot structures. And the relationship between narrative, performance sequence, and action spectacle is loosely structured in the fashion of a cinema of attractions<sup>39</sup>

In a way contemporary Hindi films are now predominantly ‘cinema of attractions’, though the earlier sense of linear progression time, narrative logics and the question of closure have somewhat changed. For instance,



*Dhoom 2* & ‘Super-bikes’ game

the chronology of films like *Bluffmaster* (Rohan Sippy, 2005),<sup>40</sup> *Dhoom 1* and *Dhoom 2* (Sanjay Gadhvi, 2004 and 2006) *Race* (Abbas - Mastan, 2008), *Cash* (Anubabh Sinha, 2007) etc., are fragmented and uneven. The narrative is non-linear, and the films appear like a series of images and stunts. In fact, these films do not even try to tell a coherent story as it were. In *Life in a Metro* (Arurag Basu, 2007) narratives of four couples intersect with each other, or in *Yuva* (Mani Ratman, 2004) the same story is told thrice from different perspectives. In fact, with digital technologies the movement of time has become fluid, it can move effortlessly backward or forward, and can begin at any point, and quite easily so.

For instance, *Dhoom 2* does not try to narrate at all. There are comic book characters like the smart cop and a smarter thief, the mole and others. The plot is bare and simple. The film is a chase-game, involving a series of events. Thus, the thief (“A”) takes on multiple disguises, and each theft is

like a separate section, which can in fact be viewed without watching the entire film. Visually structured like a video game, through movements in highways, tunnels, and of bikes, cars, helicopters, the film becomes a pure spectacle, which is about awe-inspiring stunts and stunning bodies. This holds true for a film like *Ghajini* (Murgugasdoos, 2008), which was released along with *Ghajini, The Game*, its own animated game version. Amir Khan's excessively sculpted body, and staccato actions, fit perfectly well into this comic book images. A certain kind of technology seems to facilitate certain kinds of images, as well as a life dominated by visual signs.

In fact, the *Race* DVD comes with the *Race Video Game* and the narrative of the film is rather close to the idea of navigation in the cyberspace. To present the convoluted plot in the same manner, we see that A and B are brothers. A's fiancée is C, and B's fiancée is D. Eventually C is married to B, and D is married to A, because A and B are plotting against each other. While A wants to kill B, and thinks he has successfully done so; B in fact, allows this because he wishes to appear dead in order to claim insurance. The movement of the plot is zigzag, and since the characters are continuously being watched through a spy-cam, and they in a self-conscious way perform before it, the plot and the narration appear complicated. There is a vertical movement of the narration, integrating disparate elements of thrillers, musicals etc. Multiple mediations take place in terms of the ways in which the plot is structured, and narrated through different POVs. Films now come to share their territories with comic strips, video games, and so on, disregarding melodramatic plots and resolutions.

A recent film *Rang De Basanti* (Rakesh Omprakash Mehra, 2006) produces a 'visual culture' for political protests. A film about a group of college students, who kill a minister to protest, became a cult after its release. It became the reference point for methods in which the youth may stage political protests with candles. Interestingly, within the plot, the characters get involved with a historical film (shot on video), and it is through this filming process that they get politically motivated. Political consciousness is achieved through cinema and sepia tinted images where a historical past is transformed into visual mirages, stereotypes, and the personal memory of the colonizers. Even when the film has a political agenda the characters seem to participate in a video game, which is dominated by digitally enhanced colours, fast movements and cuts, and

digitally produced sharp sounds.

*Om Shanti Om* is a story of the film industry. The first half elaborately works to represent the ‘look’ of the industry in the sixties and seventies in terms of the sets (Bollywood kitsch), makeup (big hair), costumes (big prints and bell-bottoms), dance numbers, acting styles (loud and stylized) etc. It also refers to popular myths of how Sunil Dutt rescued Nargis during the shooting of *Mother India* ( Mehboob Khan, 1957), and reworks the plot of *Madhumati* (Bimay Roy,1958) to address a dedicated Hindi film viewership. While it is a story of re-birth and revenge, Shah Rukh Khan was made to work on his body to acquire a more contemporary sleek look as opposed to the (supposedly) bulky figures of the seventies. The film essentializes and typifies certain notions regarding Hindi popular cinema, which includes its old sonic qualities (as opposed to digitally clear sounds). Even when it is self-reflexive and funny, the film re-presents Shah Rukh Khan’s ‘natural’ body in an almost mannequin like way in the second half. The second half of the film displays



OSO & Sawariya

contemporary Bollywood not through the shifts in plots (in fact it is the story of a remake, while the film itself is a remake), or even the sets, but predominantly through the shifts in musical structures, and through the quality of sound that can be achieved only through digital recording. Thus, to acquire the ‘feel’ of the seventies the makers apparently recorded one particular song in the old studios, just as it digitally juxtaposed old films stars with the new heroine. It appears like what Fredric Jameson describes as “nostalgia films”, which “restructure the whole issue of pastiche”. He says

the nostalgia film was never a matter of some old-fashioned

“representation” of historical content, but approached the “past” through stylistic connotation, conveying “pastness” by the glossy qualities of the image, and “1930s-ness” or “1950s-ness” by the attributes of fashion...[with] a pseudo-historical depth, in which the history of aesthetic styles displaces “real” history.<sup>41</sup>

Hence ‘eternal’ thirties, fifties, or seventies are produced, while art-deco settings, clothes, acting styles, even voice and body type come to represent a certain period. Several films are copies of dead styles and become ‘pop histories’. Such films as it were, try to present nothing novel; but re-present certain nostalgic ideas of the past. Or what Fredric Jameson describes as a ‘schizophrenic’ structure (2006, 26), where we receive random and vast “collections [or catalogue] of images”. As matter of fact, OSO digitally produces a unique opportunity for the viewers to participate in the filming of the famous song sequence from *Karz*, and creates an uneasy excitement by bringing Farah Khan and Subhash Ghai together.

Besides such ‘nostalgia’ films, *Sawariya* (Sanjay Leela Bhansali, 2007) is perhaps what Baudrillard (1994) describes as ‘simulacrum,’ where “simulacrum is true” and “not representation”.<sup>42</sup> Simulacrum is a ‘pure image,’ and its references are purely other images. The film begins with a voice - the voice of the sex worker - saying “this is my city”. We see something like a painted canvas/or a ‘Photoshop’ image in blue, with dark blue skies, bluish-grey *masjids*, far off railway tracks. This city may be described as ‘many-spaces-whatever’,<sup>43</sup> and is presented as floating and timeless images which merge into one another. At the city centre, there is a blue lake, Venetian bridges, a bar called RK and a handful of characters who are mostly women. While the film consciously tries to make it appear as something which is contemporary (through the use of English, mentioning ‘Jeans’ and old Hindi films), its space is unabashedly fantastic. The obvious references are other Hindi films or a series of canned images. The film refers to the eminent actor-director Raj Kapoor (who is Ranbir Kapoor’s or the hero’s grandfather), to the RK (film company) logo, to the rumours of the love affair between Raj Kapoor and Nargis, to images of the film *Shree 420* (Raj Kapoor, 1955) to Guru Dutt’s *Pyasaa* (1957, where Gulabo traverses the streets), to the sixties costume and hair style, to European paintings ( like DaVinci’s *Monalisa* or Monet’s *Water Lilies*), to Indian miniatures, to *Pakeezah* (Kamal Amrohi, 1972), its *mise-en-scene*, and red-light area, even to *Raampur Ka Lakshman* (Manmohan Desai, 1972), where the heroine ‘sings’ a love letter to the hero, to DDLJ

as Ranbir dances with a towel, to *Mughal-e-Azam* (K.Asif, 1960)<sup>44</sup> as the blind grandmother watches/listens to the film, and so on. The film is somewhat bare of human characters. Thus, the *mise-en-scene* becomes its primary character, while the images of the film are re-productions of other films. The absence of human figures excepting a sex worker, three elderly women, the heroine, a group of dancers, two heroes (one of them absent), and pimps (in one scene) make this city appear *hyper-real*. However, the absences of ‘masculine’ characters, and the presence of women belonging to different strata, give the film an exceptional dreamlike quality. One wonders, whose city is it anyway? To quote Baudrillard from an interview

It’s no longer the traditional space, no longer the critical space where there would be a historical contradiction, a contradiction of meaning. This hyper-real space which has no depth – which is therefore superficial – it’s no longer a mirror: it’s a screen. It’s the space of the screen. And the masses themselves are a screen. .... It’s a screen-space we are talking about, I can’t put it any other way. A screen is a pure surface and at the same time it’s a space.

...

So of course there is no longer any possibility of evaluation<sup>45</sup>

*Sawariya*, dominated by its own *mise-en-scene*, transports us to an imaginary city, where the sense of ‘real’ time is included in the narrative (a story of few nights) and dialogues, even though the sense of the ‘passage of time’ is totally diffused. There is sense of both physical movement (through the elaborate dances) and stillness, as the *mise-en-scene* and the lights remain same like the painted backdrops of popular stage. Bhansali not only frames overpowering images, he frames time as well. *Sawariya*, works so much on its surface, that it becomes a ‘thing in itself’, and produces a sense of (post-modern) ‘sublimity’ after which all historical analyses seem improbable.

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## References:

<sup>1</sup> Rajadhyaksha, 2009, *Indian Cinema in the Time of Celluloid, From Bollywood to*

*the Emergency*, New Delhi, Tulika Books, 100. Rajadhyaksha also writes about the modernist interventions by artists like Bhupen Khakhar and M F Hussain.

<sup>2</sup> See Sunitha Chitrapu's paper 'A Regional Mosaic: Linguistic Diversity and India's Film Trade' presented at the 'Bollywood Soft Power' conference held at IIT, Kharagpur in December, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Rajadhyaksha describes as 'the interpellative double-take', op cit, 121.

<sup>4</sup> Prasad, 'Surviving Bollywood', Anandam P, Kavoori and Aswin Punathambekar (ed), 2008, *Global Bollywood*, New Delhi, OUP, 42, 43.

<sup>5</sup> Shanti Kumar in Kavoori and Punathambekar (ed), op cit, 83.

<sup>6</sup> Soviet films as well as the nationalist German films were also idolized. I discuss the process of institutionalization of the industry and canonical film styles in *New Theatres Ltd., The Emblem of Art, The Picture of Success*, (2009), Pune, National Film Archive of India.

<sup>7</sup> Kavoori and Punathambekar (ed), 2008, op cit, 97-113.

<sup>8</sup> India produced 946 films in 2004, while US churned out 611 films in same year. His source: *Screen Digest*, June, 2005 and UK Film Council, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> While *Veer Zaara* (2004) earned \$ 2.92 Million in the US and was released in 88 theatres, *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham's* (2002) gross box office income in the US was \$ 2.90 Million and was released in 73 theatres. Source: <<http://www.boxofficeguru.com/f2.htm>.>

<sup>10</sup> In the eighties, actors like Mithun Chakrabarty and Amitabh Bachchan were also very popular outside India. See Sudha Rajagopalan, 2008, *Leave Disco Dancer Alone! Indian Cinema and Soviet Movie-going after Stalin*, Yoda Press, New Delhi.

<sup>11</sup> With reference to this film Prasad in discusses issues of morality and the problem of the 'kiss' in Indian Cinema in his chapter on feudal family romances in *Ideology of Hindi film. A Historical Construction*, 1998, Delhi, OUP, 89, 90.

<sup>12</sup> R. Kaur and A. Sinha (ed.), 2005, *Bollywood, Popular Indian Cinema through a Transnational Lens*, New Delhi Sage.

<sup>13</sup> See Rajadhyaksha, 2009, *Indian Cinema in the Time of Celluloid, From Bollywood to the Emergency*, New Delhi, Tulika Books, 51-62.

<sup>14</sup> I happened to be in London that summer, and the first thing that struck me were the posters of *Bombay Dreams* (which represented Bollywood as 'cool and kitsch'), in the underground tube stations. Bollywood was literally all over the city. I did walk into Victoria and Albert Museum and was surprised by the enthusiasm around Bollywood as well as the ways in which Bollywood was being marketed as a brand. Picture postcards, bags, other mementos were displayed along with replicas of different 'historical' artefacts. Victoria and Albert Museum often hosts exhibitions of various popular fashion objects that Bollywood was included within this bracket

became crucial for producers back home.

<sup>15</sup> *Mother India* (Mehboob Khan, 1957) was also nominated for the Oscars.

<sup>16</sup> At that point in time, Shekhar Kapur's *Bandit Queen* (1994) was one of the films that was internationally well known and available to a large audience.

<sup>17</sup> Released simultaneously in 44 theatres in North America, *Taal* has set a record for Bollywood releases abroad by notching the highest first three-day collections....*Taal's* initial collections have even surpassed that of Hollywood blockbusters like *Haunting*, *The Blair Witch Project* and *Eyes Wide Shut* (The Economic Times, 1999). Cited in Rajadhyaksha 'The Bollywoodization of Indian Cinema: Cultural Nationalism in a Global Arena', 94, 95.

<sup>18</sup> *Newsweek* report of 2000 mentioned four films which made distribution history in the West, three of them directly or indirectly Yash Chopra productions: *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (DDLJ, 1995), the film which in some ways started it all, *Dil to Pagal Hai* (DTPH, 1997), Karan Johar's *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (KKHH, 1998) and Subhash Ghai's *Taal* (1998). As mentioned by Rajadhyaksha, *Indian Cinema in the Time of Celluloid*, 70.

<sup>19</sup> Travels for trade, religion, etc., was actually common in the pre-modern era, however, there is a specificity in the ways in which mass migration of the working class people happened during the colonial period. This produced a new map for transactions.

<sup>20</sup> In 1975-77, for example, statistics show that Indian films were exported to Africa, the Arab states, Trinidad, Guyana and Barbados, Burma, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand (Office of Statistics, 1981). (Perhaps the most visible form of export in this time was the 'gulf boom', of workers (domestic, industrial, white-collar) exported to the Middle East becoming an audience for Malayalam films through the 1970s). Rajadhyaksha 'The Bollywoodization of Indian Cinema: Cultural Nationalism in a Global Arena', 98.

<sup>21</sup> Devleena Ghosh, points out that the Australian diaspora actually liked *Salaam Namaste* because it was so unlike their own experiences in Australia, which becomes glaringly conspicuous in the present context. (Conference paper, 'Bollywood Soft Power' IIT, December, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> See Abhijit Roy, 2006, 'Live(li)ness and Network Publics in Post-Liberalization Indian Popular Films', *Journal of the Moving Image*, No.5, for a discussion on televisual aesthetics in cinema.

<sup>23</sup> Through easy downloads from the net, and through the telecast of world cinemas on channels like UTV World Movies, the viewers in the metros at least have been repeatedly exposed to multiple film forms and issues.

<sup>24</sup> I have discussed (with Manas Ray) how the urban market now accounts for more

than 60 per cent of a film's earnings compared to 45 per cent about fifteen years ago; the overseas market too is increasing with every passing year, and includes now a substantial 20 - 25 per cent for the big budget films. See Manas Roy & Madhuja Mukherjee, 'Bollywood in Diaspora: In the Tracks of a Twice – displaced Community', in Preben Kaarsholm (ed.), op. cit.

<sup>25</sup> One of the biggest hit of the seventies *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* (HRHK, Dev Anand, 1970), however, sees such influences as degradation. The female protagonist of HRHK, Jesse/Janice/ Jasbir, is an iconic guitar-strumming, beer-guzzling, cigarette-puffing figure of the seventies. The establishing sequence itself analyses causes of Jesse's rebellion and presents western influences as the reason of moral disintegration. Eventually Jesse has to kill herself along the lines of the golden-hearted vamps of mainstream Hindi films.

<sup>26</sup> This has certain political significance because the Hindu right-wing parties have vehemently opposed this by burning Valentine's Day cards and other gifts items, and by breaking shop windows that sell such products.

<sup>27</sup> These films re-establish 'neo-traditionalism' through the market, and thus marriage (as shown in reality TV and on 'Travel and Living') becomes a recurring theme as in *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (HAHK, Sooraj R, Barjatya, 1994). HAHK presented the myth of quintessential Indian joint family and its interiors. It is like a carnival, where uncles, aunts, servants, dogs, temples, elaborate staircases, chandeliers, swimming pools, chocolates, telephones etc., are found in abundance. The scale of the house was truly overwhelming, and so was the representation of Hindu marriage. One may argue that post HAHK Hindu marriages were never the same.

<sup>28</sup> *Bombay Cinema: An Archive of the City*, 2007, Ranikhet, Permanent Black, 142.

<sup>29</sup> Farhan Akhtar and Karan Johar, both TV hosts now, also established the image of the fashion savvy young director-actor.

<sup>30</sup> Also discussed my article 'Shifting Identities and Emerging Codes: Metamorphosis of the Rebel', in *Deep Focus*, July-December, 2002.

<sup>31</sup> Preben Kaarsholm (ed.), op. cit, 75.

<sup>32</sup> *America*, 1988, London, Verso.

<sup>33</sup> *Bombay Cinema: An Archive of the City*, 110.

<sup>34</sup> *Maqbool* (Vishal Bharadwaj, 2004) transforms the Macbeth plot into a story of Mumbai underworld, and plans its climax or the last elaborate action sequence in a shopping mall.

<sup>35</sup> See 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', republished in Mike Featherstone, (ed.), 1999, *Global Culture, Nationalism, Globalisation and Modernity*, London, Sage Publications.

<sup>36</sup> See Leela Fernandes, 2004, 'The Politics of Forgetting: Class Politics, State Power and the Restructuring of Urban Space in India', in *Urban Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 12, 2415-2430.

<sup>37</sup> I must thank Ardrian M. Athique for letting me read his draft paper 'Leisure in the New Economy: The Rapid Rise of the Multiplex in India'. I have found the information on multiplexes extremely useful.