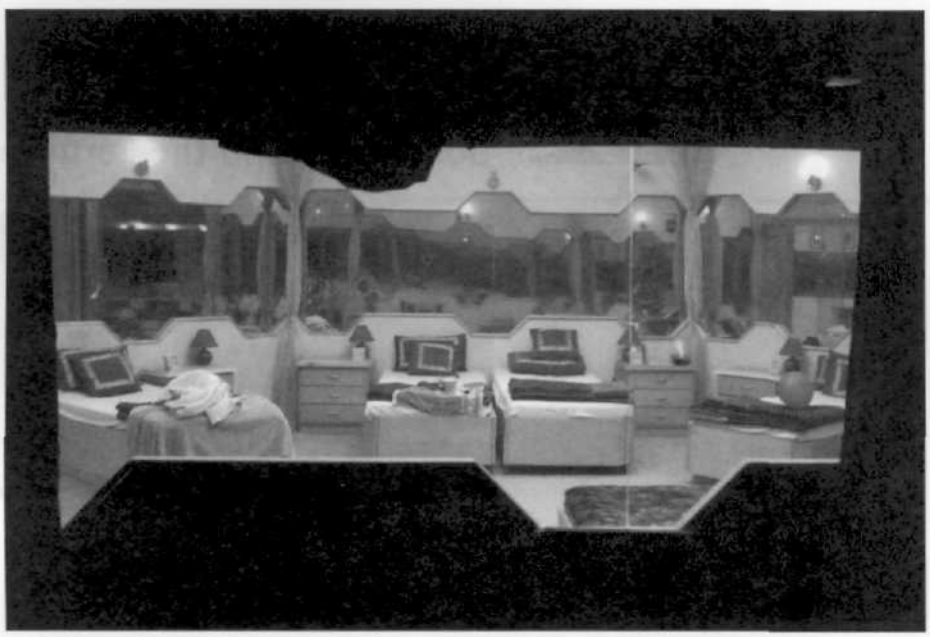
Indian cinema in the time of celluloid : from Bollywood to the emergency/ Ashish Rajadhyaksha; New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2009. (50-68 p.)



Bollywood reality as freak show. Shilpa Gupta, *The Bigg Boss Series – Stills from a Reality Show* (digital photograph, 2007).

11 'BOLLYWOOD' 2004

The Globalized Freak Show of What Used to Be Cinema

Nothing in the hugely marketed hype of the 'Indian Summer' of London, 2002, was more characteristic of the season than the 'recreation' of movie star Dimple Kapadia's Bombay home on the ground floor of the London department store Selfridges, by designers Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla.

But then these were not normal times. An event that might well have seen Dimple's straight rise to the dimensions of a present-day Lola Montes, with crowds ogling at simulations of her living spaces, was here no more than an announcement of 'Bollywood at Selfridges, May 2002', to be attended by Amitabh Bachchan, Madhuri Dixit and Dimple Kapadia. The event jostled for media coverage with a series, through the year, of other crowd-pulling shows: 'ImagineASIA' (April) at the British Film Institute, launching 'an 8-month-long, nationwide celebration of South Asian cinema. Screenings, exhibitions, books and talks galore!'; the 'Bombay Dreams Week' (June) to 'celebrate Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's production of A.R. Rahman's Bollywood musical with a week of special features'; and the 'Devdas Week' (July) 'to mark the release of the most anticipated Bollywood movie this summer. . . . Including exclusive interviews with the stars'.

At a multicultural music, art and dance series at Trafalgar Square, Mayor Ken Livingstone launched the guide to 'Asian London' that officially represented everything that now stood for Bollywood – 'activities including fairs, the musical *Bombay Dreams* and Channel 4's special open-air cricket screenings, as well as Asian food, clothes and street markets' – even as he lamented that 'Visitors to London, and Londoners themselves, often do not know how to access the incredible range of Asian culture, shops, street markets and food that is on offer in our city.'[1] The 'Asian London' website listed the important Bollywood clubs (Bhangra Mix, Club Asia, Disco Divane @Bar Bollywood, Stoned Asia and Azaad) and *melas*, apart from

3 May 2002: Star Mansion. (*Top*) Dimple Kapadia's four-poster bed, (*bottom*) centre table and *zardozi*-covered cushions. Selfridges launched their Bollywood season with a 'star-studded gala at their flagship London store'. The press conference and party were attended by a roster of Bollywood stars including Amitabh and Jaya Bachchan, Madhuri Dixit, and Dimple Kapadia. The highlight of the Selfridges transformation was Star Mansion, built on the lower ground floor, and designed by London-based designers Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla. It was based on the Mumbai home of Dimple Kapadia.

[1] http://www.london.gov.uk (accessed 1 June 2003).

the more usual film, theatre, music and visual art. The best known of the clubs, Kuch Kuch Nights, announced several special programmes in addition to their usual evenings of 'fun, love, glamour, escapism, and having a true cinematic love affair' with DJs Ritu, Sanj, Rizwan and others, which, over the year, included the premier night of Deepa Mehta's *Bollywood Hollywood*; tickets for the stage performance of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* at the Barbican Royal Shakespeare Company (and free passes to all those who could answer the question, 'What date does India's Independence Day fall on?'); and the band Sister India's new performance, *The Catch*, at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith.[2]

Yet other events featured at the astonishing *Cinema India: The Art of Bollywood* show at the Victoria and Albert Museum: an exhibition of Bollywood posters accompanied by hoarding-painting demonstrations, workshops teaching Bollywood dance, collage poster-making and jewellery-making, and Bollywood storytelling sessions in which children could dress 'in character'.[3] Meanwhile Amitabh Bachchan, immortalized earlier in the year with a wax image at Madame Tussaud's, was seen performing alongside Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan, Aishwarya Rai and Preity Zinta – the Hindi stars who have made the 'crossover' into Bollywood – in the *From India with Love* shows at Old Trafford football stadium and Hyde Park. Of the *From India with Love* programme, the organizers said: 'the only comparable Hollywood equivalent would be if Sean Connery, Brad Pitt, Russell Crowe, Julia Roberts and Meg Ryan were assembled for the same show'. They claimed further that 'the Bollywood stars have made 200 films between them and even have temples dedicated to them in some parts of India, where film dialogue is recited in the form of prayer. The festival, a mixture of dance and music, with lavish costumery, will be seen by up to 115,000 people.'[4]

As the 'Indian Summer' hype unfolded through mid-2002 and well into 2003, there were so many players involved in the commerce of it that several conflicting narratives emerged as to who was responsible for the event, what it would eventually consist of, what it might stand for, and who might be its most valid representatives.[5] Amongst the most visible stakeholders were the big British institutions of leisure, consumption and entertainment, all heralding the much-awaited 'arrival' into the mainstream of the ethnic British–Indian culture industry. So BBC's *Asian Life* magazine programme contributed the flaming red-and-yellow 'Indian Summer' logo and title, while Selfridges provided the all-important Bollywood legend,

[2] http:/www.kuchkuchnights.co.uk (accessed 1 September 2004).

[3] http://www.vam.ac.uk/vastatic/microsites/1153_cinema_india/ (accessed 8 October 2007).

[4] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/breakfast/1957579.stm (accessed 1 September 2003).

[5] See, for example, Puwar (2000), for the appropriation of 'bindies, mehndies and related scents and sounds' by white bodies, and the 'rage induced by the power of whiteness to play with "ethnic" items which had not so long ago been reviled when they were worn by South Asian women', as well as the attendant 'historical amnesia' generated by what we have here named Bollywood.

set upon a fashionable, ethnic female face with make-up and earrings. Perhaps the largest event of the season was the Webber–Rahman stage show *Bombay Dreams*, released with much fanfare, and an attendant anxiety that, driven as it was by economic considerations, occasionally revealed an earlier genre of post-colonial cultural concerns. ('After three years of production and an expenditure of over £4.5 million, how does *Bombay Dreams* fare alongside other West End classics? Does it deliver on expectations?'[6])

Despite occasional slips like these or other 'Coolie is Cool'-type regressions, it was clear to many that however one may define the ethnic countercultures of the Indian diaspora, this was an industry, long in the making, whose time had now come. Even as Oscar nominee Aamir Khan was being feted by the Asian elite in New York as he generated support for *Lagaan*'s (Ashutosh Gowarikar, 2001) candidacy for Best Foreign Film, an ecstatic *New York Times* report quoted leading figures of the Indian cultural elite – including film producer Ismail Merchant and socialite author Gita Mehta – to note that something emphatically new was happening, that it had global ramifications and that it now had a name all its own: *Bollywood*.

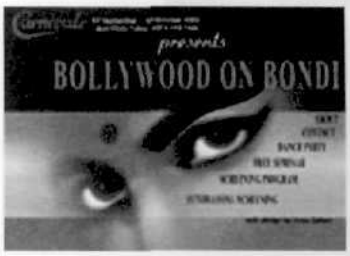
'Today', said the report,

> the exports are more showily crowd-pleasing, arriving in the form of film-inspired fashions, home décor and foods. Once such goods were marketed mainly to Indian–Americans, whose numbers have more than doubled since 1990, to almost 1.7 million. Now they are finding an avid non-Indian audience. Style-struck New Yorkers are embracing Bollywood style, which they once might have dismissed as kitsch. 'When you're living in a society that is always pushing towards homogeneity, flamboyance has an inescapable allure,' said Gita Mehta. Bollywood-inspired style, she added, feeds 'a tremendous hunger for everything that is over the top, rowdy, gaudy and noisy – everything, in short, that is reflective of that mad celebratory chaos of India'.

[6] Quoted in http://www.bbc.co.uk/asianlife/films/indiansummer/bombay dreams/ (accessed 1 September 2003).

These 'riches' the report went on to identify as 'lurid movie posters; wedding ensembles crusted with spangles and gold embroidery; denim tote bags and T-shirts irreverently splashed with Hindu deities; and a maharani's ransom of gold bangles, eardrops and chokers'. It finally quoted the man who may have been one of the pioneers of this entire tradition:

> 'The interest in India's spiritual side has been going on a long time,' said the producer and director Ismail Merchant. The news, said Mr Merchant, is that Americans are about to be seduced by India's exuberant secular side. 'In fashion, in movies, in music and in food, Bollywood is going to hit New York with a bang,' he predicted. (LaFerla 2002)



The Spiced Tingle Bollywood Dancers perform at Carnivale's *Bollywood on Bondi* festival (Sydney, October 2002). Their lead dancer Lalita is perhaps Australia's best known Bollywood dancer, having danced with the gypsy band Straight Back Fellows, appeared in a Punjabi music video for the Australian women's quartet Blindman's Holiday, and performed as part of the Shruti Indian Ensemble at the Sydney Opera House. The *Bollywood on Bondi* festival, curated by Safina Oberoi, screened Ashutosh Gowarikar's *Lagaan*, Guru Dutt's *Sahib Bibi aur Gulam* and Vidhu Vinod Chopra's *1942: A Love Story*. It also hosted a seminar, 'The Bollywood Story', where film theorist Rashmi Doraiswamy, filmmaker Ashutosh Gowarikar, journalist Madhu Jain and scenarist Anjum Rajabali attempted to explain 'why Indian Cinema remains Hollywood's greatest rival, what it means to be a star in a country of almost a billion people, and what those song and dance sequences are really all about'. Other performances at the festival included Bhangra, the Asian Underground and Trinidadian Chutney.

Marketing Nationalism: The Four Absences

As the 'Summer' went into high gear in London and then at several other places globally,[7] comparisons were inevitably drawn with other events marketing ethnic nationalism amidst the growing suggestion that of the many efforts over the past three decades to market 'India' to the west, nothing came bigger than the turn-of-the-century Bollywood blitz. On the counts of sheer scale and cultural and political visibility, these events compared with the contemporaneous Korean Wave: a similar, if far more critically debated, cultural export market for Korean commodities first noticed in the Chinese world, then across East and Southeast Asia, and eventually the USA. Like the Bollywood onslaught, the Korean Wave too started with a series of high-budget, 'blockbuster' films, most of them made as multinational coproductions often with new forms of venture-capitalist backing previously not seen in its cinema (Kim 2003). Also like Bollywood, the Korean exports quickly went beyond cinema to see huge marketing successes in music, television serials, video games, cartoons and animation characters, and eventually to food, fashion, and the marketing of pop icons endorsing mobile phones, cosmetics and electronic appliances ('Pop Culture: Boy Bands to Korean Barbecue' 2002).

Speaking of the trend known as 'Japanophilia', a precursor of the Korea mania, Koichi Iwabuchi (1998) suggests that what was at stake was the rise of a pronouncedly *vernacular* modernity, which, although marked by western influence and assembled in the experience of the globalized industries of consumption and entertainment, was at the same time not a replica but an 'ongoing act' of some kind. Cho Haejoang (2002) draws attention to the central role played by *national pride* as 'one of the actors in the global Asian scene', burying the 'battlelines between the young who stand for the "globalized" popular culture spawned by global capitalism and the old who stand for a "national essence", commonly a legacy of the colonial state', as they stand 'at one at this "victorious" moment'.[8]

Whatever the constitutive elements of Bollywood – national essence or celebration of hybridization – while the Hindi cinema remained a central *cultural* referent, India's *domestic film industry* was at best a marginal presence through the 'Summer', playing no more than a supporting role to a more recently assembled transnational culture industry located as much in Dubai, Britain, the USA and Canada as in India. India's film *production* sector found

[7] A number of mainstream Bollywood websites crosslinked make for a fairly efficient system of announcing events. The database providing the most elaborate information on Bollywood is http://www.bollyvista.com (accessed 7 October 2007). The http://cyberbollywood.com website (accessed 7 October 2007) also provides key links to related websites, alongside the mandatory gossip and announcements on forthcoming films and events.

[8] There have been efforts to capture cultural 'feeling' as an economic category. Dator and Seo (2004) propose that Korea may well be the first global instance of a nation replacing its very purpose in terms of cultural belonging, replacing 'gross national product' as a measure of socio-economic success with 'Gross National Cool'. The related concept is of course Bhutan's measure of 'Gross National Happiness', proposed in a March 1999 workshop by its Planning Commission to 'consider whether or not the concept of GNH could be related to the Human Development Index (HDI) developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'. See Kinga, Galay, Rapten and Pain (1999); also available on http://www.bhutanstudies.org.bt/publications/gnh/gnh.htm (accessed 1 March 2003).

itself rapidly overwhelmed by the Bollywood mania being spawned that summer in London, forced to either reinvent itself or fall behind as it was challenged by new-generation 'productions' far removed from the Hindi cinema as we know it but nevertheless indebted to it for their existence. The difference, perhaps, was that these new sequel industries and services appeared more qualified than the cinema itself to negotiate the demands being made by the capital flowing in: demands for unorthodox distribution formats needed by new forms of brand-building, product- and process-franchising. Their relative disappearance into an undifferentiated Bollywood and the consequent evisceration of the film industry as we have known it, then, is the first of the four absences we note within this new turn.

A second, perhaps related, absence is far more explicitly relevant to post-colonial concerns: the glaring absence of the *Indian state*. One way of making sense of the 'Indian Summer' may have been, indeed was, its tacit invitation to be seen in comparison to the last really big cultural marketing exercise of things Indian in London: the 1982 India Festival organized by the Department of Culture and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. In 2002, the Indian state appeared unable, or at least unprepared, to exploit any of the new opportunities opened up by Bollywood, and the London season saw a pronounced absence of many of the stellar presences of 1982: India's 'national' arts (the sole exception being the mandatory Satyajit Ray retrospective organized by the British Film Institute) and, parallely, the two key state vehicles for marketing national assets – tourism and global investment. A chronicle of the two decades separating the events of 1982 from 2002 might well be conceived of as the Indian state's radical repositioning of its responsibility to its national culture. If so, further underscoring the absence of the Indian state was the sharply contrasting, high-profile presence of the *British* government, in the form of Mayor Ken Livingstone and the London city administration's new policy on multicultural governance.[9] Britain's ability to expand its often controversial 'cultural diversity' policies to take cognizance of Bollywood appeared to highlight, in contrast, the Indian state's inadequacy in accounting for a definition of an 'Indian' identity that might accommodate its diaspora.

Could the first brief absence – of the Indian domestic film industry – make another kind of retrospective sense, given the fact that its evisceration within the newer, post-cinematic culture industries

[9] The key document, *Play It Right: Asian Creative Industries in London* (2003), 'highlights that Asians represent six per cent of the total employment in London's creative industries', and claims that 'this influence is likely to increase due to notable Asian representation in growth sectors, such as computer software, fashion and design, as young second and third generation Asians are attracted to a dynamic industry that allows them to use their skills and knowledge to express their innovative ideas'. The report adds that 'this new generation of young London Asian entrepreneurs are also fusing cultures and styles in music and fashion that appeal to a wider mainstream consumer market'. See http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/economic_unit/docs/asian-creative-ind-rep03v2.pdf (accessed 8 October 2007), for the report. Also see the Creative London website, http://www.creativelondon.org.uk (accessed 8 October 2007).

coincided with the temporary absence of the Indian state, seemingly incapable, for a brief moment, of renewing its place in this arena?[10] If there was an ironic connection suddenly forged between celluloid film and the state, can we use this opportunity to throw light, in hindsight, on the extraordinarily confused, symbiotic relationship the Indian cinema has had with the Indian state in building an apparatus mirroring that of state-derived *authenticity*?

Films were of course hugely evoked on practically every occasion through the 'Indian Summer', and sometimes even shown (notably in the British Film Institute's ImagineASIA events). However, the *Bollywood* presence, revealing a newly discovered financial muscle, was concentrated on an economy of consumption.[11] Fashion, music, entertainment and food – the new representatives of Bollywood – evoked the cinema interminably, but had little economic dependence on either the financiers or the box office from which cinema derives its capital. The cultural references mobilized the cinema itself, or certainly the memory of cinema, on the one hand, and on the other, a clutch of 'Indianness' evocations within which the cinema was implicated in ways that domestic film audiences would not always recognize (as in the Dimple mansion at Selfridges). While these key accessories of Bollywood derived from post-colonial legacies distantly connected to Indian nationalism, in *economic* terms they often existed either independent of Indian state support or, if at all in partnership with the state, as the senior partners.[12]

The 'New' Bollywood Legacies: Music and Fashion

Perhaps the most substantial of the 'new' Bollywood industries showcased in the London season, and generally in the 1990s, was music. The arrival of a British–Asian sound and a new Indian domestic market for it coincided with the explosion of the 'music territory' for Hindi cinema, which rose in this time to anything between 20–30 per cent of the total income of a film production.

This musical tradition has a well-known political history of colonially derived crosscurrents, seen in forms bringing together Bhojpuri, Rajasthani and Punjabi folk, and the Hindi film song, with reggae and calypso. British–Indian musicians' use of classic rhythms, starting with the *dhol* of the bhangra and extending into numerous *taals*, took place, interestingly, *via* the Jamaican influence, and explicitly through the British encounter of the two, as suggested

[10] Since London 2002, the Indian state has significantly adapted itself to these new structures of marketing. Shashi Tharoor (2007) points to how India has been consciously 'leveraging its soft power *in Europe*' (*soft power here referring* to 'Bollywood, television shows and the exportable products of India's popular cultures'). 'India dominated discussions of the "creative imperative" at Davos in January (2007); was the "partner country" for the Hanover Trade Fair in May (2006) and then "theme country" at the Bonn Biennale . . . [it] starred as the country of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October, before November saw the Festival of India throng people in Brussels. That Festival demonstrated what India is consciously trying to showcase, incorporating as it did a classic exhibition of iconic Indian art from the last 1500 years, exquisite paintings in the Kangra style, contemporary photographic expositions on Satyajit Ray, [a] food festival, a fashion show and inevitably a section on business opportunities in India.'

[11] The emphasis on convergence in the culture industries brings together a clutch of industries including food, fashion, automobiles, travel, shopping, entertainment, housing and interior decoration, in turn characterized by a set of media for propagation including print and televisual advertising, home-sales parties, hand leaflets, miniature promotional items, use-by dates and high perishability (see Chua 2003). It is possible to see a consciously developed Bollywood impact on practically all these industries.

[12] So while the Ministry of Textiles has been a significant sponsor of the fashion industry, its new centres include London, Paris, Dubai and New York, with key outlets in India and 'offshore' export production facilities in Mumbai and New Delhi. The more glaring instance of the repositioning of the state's 'partnership' with corporate initiatives is information technology, a constituent presence in Bollywood with major investments in the 1990s dotcom boom ('Hot New Dot.Coms' 2000), as well as with computerized animatronics and special-effects producers like Pentafour, Silicon Graphics and Maya Entertainment, or the film laboratory-turned-entertainment conglomerate Adlabs in Mumbai.

by references to the link between reggae and bhangra such as 'Bhangramuffin' or 'Raggastani' or, sometimes, 'Bhangle'.[13] The generic form of bhangra that emerged was initially associated with the circuit of weddings and private parties, says Ashwani Sharma, reworking 'traditional dhol and drum beats and Punjabi folk melodies with synthesizers and samplers, with a heavier bass line and mixed with western pop and black dance rhythms'.[14] Its establishment of economic viability also inevitably required a negotiation with the dense history of British immigrant politics especially in the 1970s and '80s. Trapped, on the one side, by an illegitimacy due to non-recognition by the official music industry and the music bestseller 'charts', and delegitimized, on the other, even in comparison with the status of reggae (Sharma 1996), bhangra as an ethnic form was for many years marginalized into being at best (to use Edward Said's phrase) 'no more than a dislocation in someone else's discourse'.[15]

To many important musicians such as Bally Sagoo, whose *Bollywood Flashback* album (1997) is seen to have marked the explicit point of change, the Bollywoodization of this entire tradition signalled an explicit repudiation of precisely its political history. *Politics*, then, along with the *film industry* and the *state*, becomes the music industry's explicit contribution to the third foundational absence in the Bollywood of 2002. For Sagoo, the professionalization of Asian dance music, now coming out with more 'punchy, racy bass lines, the great drum beat and the powerful vocals' (Housee and Dar 1996), has meant repudiating the bhangra as something narrow, belonging to an earlier generation and stiflingly limited in its ethnopolitical moorings, in contrast to the global openings for Asian music with mainstream support from MTV, Star, Sony and BMG. Indeed the explosion of the Hindi music rights market coincided with Sony's commissioning of the *Bollywood Flashback* album to reproduce reggae's evolution into the dancehall market, and to 'spice up' popular Hindi film music by remixing its classics with a range of new electronic rhythms and dubs drawn from rap and hip-hop in order to target 'world music' dancehall audiences.

This repudiation of the 'political', or what Puwar (2000) describes in the British–Asian context as the shock and anger of the 'very reconstitution of memory', could arguably have happened only because another unprecedented historical development was taking place just then, and with this very album. A half century-old history of encounter between the Indian diaspora and the Hindi cinema was about to be reversed for the first time. For the better part of the

[13] Jamaica is well known for having pioneered, from roughly the early 1980s, music based on 'programmable drum machines, synthesizers, sequencers, samplers and desktop computers', which 'hit the Jamaican record industry with all the force of a tropical storm, revolutionizing the way instrumental backing tracks are laid down in studios across the reggae island' (Jahn and Weber 1992). Jamaican music incorporated this development into its tradition of dub poetry extending to the DJ who speaks upon the 'riddim' – the original riddim being of course the reggae beat – and the later dancehall tradition that reproduces popular percussion rhythms in numerous song variations.

[14] http://www.salidaa.org.uk/salidaa/docrep/docs/sectionIntro/music/docm_ render.html (accessed 7 October 2007).

[15] Asian musical production, the most visible cultural product of an ethnic minority as recognized by British multicultural state policy, has played a role as an organizing tool for radical anti-racist politics in places like Birmingham and Bradford, through organizations such as the Indian Workers' Association and the Asian Youth Movement, and through explicitly political bands like the Asian Dub Foundation (Kalra, Hutnyk and Sharma 1997). The definitive bhangra website, http://www.southall-punjabi.com (accessed 1 September 2003), alongside a useful 'A to Z of Bhangra' – key names, symbols, instruments, effects and vocabulary – has a section evoking a larger political history called 'Your Rights', explaining in detail the Race Relations Act, 1976 and what racial discrimination means in law.

twentieth century, a diaspora whose cultural productions – such as bhangra in Britain, but also Chutney music in Trinidad – had grown through reconciling the absence of any access to the authenticating agencies of the Indian nation,[16] encountered in the Hindi cinema the only easily available cultural product from the 'homeland'. The Sony-engineered Bollywood turn virtually reversed *this* history as the *domestic* film and music industry in India, for the first time, sat up and took notice. Sagoo's work and its introduction of the radically new phenomenon of the remixed 'cover version', it is well known, transformed not just the British–Indian, but also the domestic Indian music industry beyond recognition.[17]

Coinciding with the Bollywoodization of the British–Asian music industry was the launch of several new record labels, including the one I have selected to expand my argument: Outcaste. This was a label and club that, Huq (1996) says, catered to 'style-conscious Asian youth . . . specializing in the types of music exemplified by the "beyond bhangra" sound . . . [located] in the smart West End rather than tucked away in East London Asian ghettoes'. Known primarily for the new sound introduced by Nitin Sawhney's landmark debut 'Migration' (1995), Outcaste turned to Bollywood retro for the first time in 2000, with the album *Bollywood Funk*. Put together by DJs Harv and Suni (aka Sutrrasonic), it was initially presented as a postmodern recycling act inspired by their discovery that the older vinyl records of Hindi films were now collectors' items. 'Growing up in Hounslow during the 1980s,' says the album's backgrounder, 'Harv and Suni were amazed by the funk and jazz elements contained in the musical scores of the Bollywood films they watched', and they eventually found in 'parents', relatives' and friends' record collections' and in small musical outlets in Birmingham, Leicester, Wolverhampton, East London and Southall, an enormous vinyl collection from which the *Funk* tracks were recreated.[18] Some of the tracks, as the genre required, were familiar – a remix of the *Hum Kisise Kum Nahin* (Nasir Hussein, 1977) title score, songs from Feroz Khan's *Qurbani* (1979), and from several of Dev Anand's films including 'Dum Maro Dum' from *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* (1970), *Johnny Mera Naam* (Vijay Anand, 1970) and *Jewel Thief* (Vijay Anand, 1967) – but the publicity was aggressive:

> WE HAVE TO TAKE IT BACK . . . RIGHT BACK . . . TO THE DAYS BEFORE BAD LIPSTICK AND AIRBRUSHING GRIPPED THE WORLD OF BOLLYWOOD AND THERE WAS ANOTHER FORCE.

[16] See 'The Controversy', in Niranjana (2006: 110–18), about the fierce debate generated in Trinidad by East Indian women singing Chutney, the creolization of the form and its violation of 'Hindu' values.

[17] The Indian Performing Rights Society (IPRS) claims that the Indian music industry loses an annual Rs 1800 crore to remixes which legitimize 'the use of literary, musical and underlying works without the owners' consent and encourage recording popular songs using fresh musicians or singers'. Further, the industry claims that the controversial Section 52(1)(j–iii) of the Indian Copyright Act, 1957, which states that 'no . . . sound recording shall be made until the expiration of two calendar years after the end of the year in which the first recording of the work was made' – effectively limiting the copyright to the original producer, composer and lyricist to only two years – has been passed mainly for the remix industry. In July 2003, a delegation led by IPRS director-general Sanjay Tandon and including composers Naushad, Khayyam, Anandji and Ravindra Jain, along with representatives of record companies, met the Indian Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani, explicitly asking for the repeal of this Section and for a ban on 'the practice of Hindi remixes and cover versions'. Incidentally, the Human Resource Development Minister Murli Manohar Joshi described remixes 'as a blot on India's music culture'. See Narendra Kusnur (2003). Also see Bhagwati Prasad's work on remixes and the new cultures of the popular music industry at Sarai (http://www.sarai.net/research/media-city/field-notes/popular-music-culture, accessed 8 October 2007).

[18] http://www.outcaste.com/index.cfm?do=viewRelease&releaseID=14 (accessed 7 October 2007).

THE FORCE WAS FUNK . . . BOLLYWOOD FUNK.

And elsewhere:

> Bejewelled bad boys, voluptuous beauties, fast cars, and heavy beats. All the ingredients for a good hip-hop video you say? Well, you'd be half right . . . the Indian film industry known as Bollywood was featuring all that and more in its films and as far back as the 60's and 70's. While hustlers, gangsters, and divas pursued one in Technicolor frenzy, their on-screen antics scored with a unique blend of eastern and musical styles notable for some of the funk-fuelled rhythms that propelled them.

An instructive review of this album by Dave Hucker (2000) in *The Beat* magazine shows the further transformation of the post-Sagoo industry. Hucker starts by explaining what he thinks Bollywood is and how he imagines Bollywood composers go about making their music.

> Bollywood: The name given to the Bombay-based Indian film industry, a massive business that over its long and illustrious history has churned out hundreds and hundreds of films (out-producing Hollywood at one point). For these many hundreds of films a year, thousands of songs and millions of minutes of soundtrack music were needed. And of course there was a well-oiled music machine to provide whatever was required, quickly and at a good price. Consummate and expert panel-beaters, or blenders, and the various musicians who made up the top session pools provided the musical assembly lines for Bollywood. They were able to fashion everything out of anything musical. Creatively they fused Western influences with traditional Indian song forms and music, and the singers were often able to perform in any style or range.
>
> Using a large amount of linguistic and imaginative poetic license here, I can imagine the arrangers laying out the structure of the music and how it is to be shaped to the nuances of the particular film's story line, telling the musicians what they should play and where to emphasize, underscore, undermine or create a sub-text to the action on screen.
>
> 'We want a bit of Twist guitar here.'
>
> 'A pinch of James Bond there.'
>
> 'We start with a splash of reggae, heavy on the Augustus Pablo please.'
>
> 'Some James Brown bump.'

'A funky Isaac Hayes' Shaft wah-wah guitar sound which – the violins, this is for you – fades to North by Northwest Bernard Herrman.'

The reality, I'm sure, was much more prosaic. But the range and depth of musical diversity that was on tap from which to draw for construction of the music was immense, despite the factory-like musical assembly line. But I suppose the other way of looking at such a system is that actually it gives you the freedom to experiment, to do whatever sounds right, as long as you just bang the music out, next, next, next.

From here Hucker outlines, via *Bollywood Funk*, the postmodern possibilities now open to artists working in this tradition.

Bollywood Funk is Outcaste's first venture into the retro end of things. I don't know why I call it retro . . . to my ears this sounds very modern, very hip, very groovy, very sampled, very crispy, way ahead of its time and with very lovely tunes. Some of the tracks are Cinemascope epics in their own right. For example 'Pyar Zindagi Hai' starts off in English with the question, 'Hey man, you dig this sorta music, eh? You like it? Then come and join in lovers' paradise.' The wah-wah guitar leads the breakneck pace, the horns charge forward repeatedly, until the female vocals start and things trip back to Hindi. The sleevenotes comment on this track: 'Love is life and who are we to argue, especially when it's played and sung as funky as this. Shades of '70s Euro discotypes Boney M and studio trickery a go-go.'

'Chura Liya' is one of those stone classic tunes that you just cannot get away from. You hear it when you visit the Indian-run grocery shop; it seems to be permanently on the stereos of Indian taxi drivers. It even became a huge crossover hit again when redone by young Brummy bhangramuffin star Bally Sagoo. On the sublime 'Baby Let's Dance Together,' a jazzy funk groove is explained away as 'Imagine New York circa Carlito's Way – well this is Bombay the hard way.' What I find quite amazing in all the Indian film music is that it is outrageously wild and experimental. You get tabla and fuzz sitar, you get what is described as 'Shaft goes to India.' Indian film music is an acquired taste but quite addictive. (It is not worth playing this music through expensive hi-fi speakers. I suggest you set up some cheap thrift-shop speakers to listen to this on – the ones with duct tape holding the cones in are best.)

Perhaps more than any other form, music – more particularly, music at the 'retro end of things' – established the contours of Bollywood, which saw, perhaps for the first time ever in the history of a diasporic Indian culture, an explicit repudiation of *authenticity*.

This particular standpoint for a repudiation of the 'authentic' – which, together with film, the state and the political, makes for the last of the four absences that foundationally characterized the Indian Summer – may need to be cast across a wider horizon than the politicized, pro-hybridity cultural 'mongrelization', using Salman Rushdie's word, that had defined an earlier location for disavowing authenticity. As Hutnyk shows, the oriental phantasmagoria of George Harrison, Kula Shaker and Madonna may have more than passing echoes of the 'cultural authenticity showcase' of Ravi Shankar, qawwali, Hindi film songs, bhangra and some of the Asian Underground (Hutnyk 2000; Kalra *et al.* 1997). In contrast, the first-time-ever of Bollywood's avowed 'post-authenticity' stance may *also* need to be viewed within a longer history of a century or more, if, pushing one's imagination, the Selfridges display is seen as the last of the great imperial exhibitions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in which the display of colonies required 'an accurate, realistic representation of the colony's environment, the key notion in their discourse being the "authenticity" of the display' (and thereby 'essentially a legitimization of colonialism's civilizing mission') (Lagae 2002: 47–48).

Selling Rights: Fashion

Bollywood as a post-authenticity phenomenon is also explicitly *post*-postcolonial, its eventual destiny postmodernism, inaugurating a term that has unprecedentedly scant regard for the credibility that has historically been a central criterion of ethnic value. The adaptation by Abu Jani–Sandeep Khosla (or, to use their carefully worded phrase, 'based on') of Dimple's house for the Selfridges display was characteristic of this new definition. The duo are known for their hyper-ethnic signature style, a sinuous orientalism that includes heavy, dark, gilded *zardozi* harem effects with more than a faint hint of sadomasochism. And they have often proclaimed where they got this from: 'Our fantasies have always been whacked out and over the top, perhaps due to our fascination with movies. The films *Mughal-e-Azam* or *Pakeezah*, for instance, have inspired a certain

Abu Jani–Sandeep Khosla make fashion statements: their Mata Hari images are superimposed on found film stills. The original still (*left*) has Lalita Pawar and Mahipal in *Alladdin–Laila* (Lekhraj Bhakri, 1957), and (*right*) Guru Dutt in *Mr & Mrs 55* (Guru Dutt, 1955). (From Sharada Dwivedi, *Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla: A Celebration of Style*, Mumbai: AJSK Publications, 2000.)

richness and opulence in our clothes' (Dwivedi 2000). This influence, which determines their fascination with Lucknow's *chikan* and *chikankari* embroidery, silver and gold *zardozi*, *badla* and *aree* embroidery, beads, pearls and precious stones, is matched by other influences, most notably the 'Mata Hari' effect named in their 1986 inaugural collection of the same name.

The entire oeuvre was in evidence at Selfridges. Just as it owed (presumably) little fidelity to the actual interiors of Dimple's house, so too its aggressive offering of the definitive look of new designer traditionalism – showcased in Bachchan's costumes in *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* (Karan Johar, 2001) and even more spectacularly in *Devdas* (Sanjay Leela Bhansali, 2002), and in the much-publicized wedding trousseau of tycoon Anil Ambani and movie star Tina Munim where Ambani asked them to, in their words, 'let our imagination run wild and create the most fabulous outfits we could design' – owe little to any established or named traditional practice either in the cinema or outside it. In both instances, here and generally in the overall construction of a Bollywood style, the debt to Hindi cinema is worth exploring – what, indeed, is the repeatedly asserted presence of the cinema in work that, whether as fashion or as music, only depends on simulations of authenticity, to be deployed and departed from at will?

Fashion occupies, with music, the pride of place in the new Bollywood firmament. While 'haute' fashion is worth only around Rs 180 crores ('Fashion: What's Hot' 2003), the larger industry within which its destiny lies is the branded apparel or 'pret' business, worth over Rs 19,000 crore. More significantly, the fashion industry as a whole directly inherits a long history of the central presence of the textile industry in the colonial economy, in the nationalist movement and, after independence, in India's overall economic policy. Extending from raw and processed fabrics to finished goods, from handloom and handicraft to cotton apparel, India's textile policy has been aware of its cultural responsibilities to heritage and to the production of nationalist symbolism.[19] The 1990s' change in export patterns from high volume–low profit sales of handloom and cotton fabric to high-end release outlets and buyers representing department stores such as Selfridges, signalled the rise of a new state policy in this sector. 'Haute' fashion locates its origins in the founding of the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in Delhi in 1986 under the Ministry of Textiles, in collaboration with the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, as the apex institute of India's

[19] Shambhu Prasad (1999) explores both the scientific and symbolic aspects of the legacy of khadi, and the relevance of that legacy to the suicides of cotton farmers in Andhra Pradesh.

Simulations of authenticity. Artist Sudarshan Shetty, photographer Vijay Mahidhar and fashion designer Sunita Kumar's collaborative photo-installation, *A Brisk Walk Makes You Feel Good* (1999). Fashion models surrounded with sado-masochistic realism including used newspaper, plastic sheets, eggshells and animals.

evolving fashion industry – followed by six other centres, in Bangalore, Kolkata, Chennai, Gandhinagar, Hyderabad and Mumbai. Given NIFT's prediction that the 'fibre-to-fashion supply chain' will offer Indian textile and garment exports 'unprecedented opportunities for expansion' after the phasing out of quotas (at the end of 2004) under the WTO, it is likely that fashion will increasingly become the most visible face of the nation's textile and clothing industry.

In its designer variant, this sector is primarily associated with a clutch of frontline designers who include, besides Jani–Khosla, Tarun Tahiliani, Hemant Trivedi, Ritu Kumar, J.J. Valaya, Shahab Durazi, Rohit Bal and a few others, most of whom attribute the rise of the industry to 'haute' clothing outlets (effectively launched, it is said, with Ensemble, started by Tahiliani and several named designers in Mumbai in 1987). Several of these designers acknowledge – in their weaves, in their use of traditional fabric and artisanal skills – an iconography of design that evokes the nationalist histories their industry has inherited.[20] Specifically underscoring the Bollywoodization of this legacy, virtually all the names mentioned above have had a longstanding association with film, and they continue to work in film despite their major financial interests increasingly being elsewhere. Apart from Jani–Khosla and their work in *Devdas* and with Bachchan, the others who have effectively deployed their film links to contextualize their portfolios include Ritu Beri (*Yeh Raaste Hain Pyar ke*, Deepak Shivdasani, 2001), Ritu Kumar (Deepa Mehta's *Bollywood/Hollywood*, 2002), Rohit Bal (*Nayak*, Shankar, 2001) and Wendell Rodricks (*Jism*, Anil Saxena, 2003). Most of all Manish Malhotra, who is responsible, as one blurb has it, 'for reinventing the Bollywood heroine', designing over the years for Sridevi,

[20] Fashion designer Ritu Kumar says, for example, that the 'driving force' of Indian fashion would 'have to be the treasure box of traditional crafts and weaves. As a designer, I feel that in a country which has a 16,000-strong population of traditional craftsmen, it doesn't make sense to adopt mechanized means. We should use our strengths when it comes to the vast resources of art and craft our country has to offer' ('Interview with Ritu Kumar' 2003).

Star designer Rohit Bal (playing himself) being threatened by Bollywood don Boom Shankar (Jaaved Jafri), in *Boom* (Kaizad Gustad, 2003). Several named designers including Wendell Rodricks, Hemant Trivedi and Tarun Tahiliani played 'themselves' alongside supermodels like Madhu Sapre in this fantasy film about fashion, crime and 'Bollywood'.

Urmila Matondkar, Karishma and Kareena Kapoor, Kajol, Raveena Tandon, Manisha Koirala, Madhuri Dixit and Preity Zinta, in a career that effectively started with the hits *Rangeela* (Ram Gopal Varma, 1995) and *Raja Hindustani* (Dharmesh Darshan, 1996), and ranges across such blockbusters as the Yash Chopra productions *Dil to Pagal Hai* (1997) and *Mohabbatein* (Aditya Chopra, 2000), as well as the trendy fashion hits *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (Karan Johar, 1998) and *Kaho Na Pyar Hai* (Rakesh Roshan, 2000).

A relatively accessible explanation for why fashion designers with their own labels and distribution outlets involve themselves with filmmaking might be the visibility that the mainstream cinema continues to have, especially on television, with movie stars still being the most effective clotheshorses designers can access (as is notably evident in Bachchan's work with Jani–Khosla, or in the heavy movie star presence on the ramp at Fashion Weeks). Another explanation points to a crossover of production skills where fashion designers have contributed to an entirely new aspect of production values known as 'styling', traced in its origins to the sets of *Dil to Pagal Hai* and *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, and primarily to the film work of art director Sharmistha Roy.[21] Beneath all this, however, there might be a more fundamental issue involving the convergence of several industrial sectors if we are to now imagine fashion, rather than the cinema, as the visible front of a clutch of consumption practices collectively named Bollywood.

In economic terms, 'haute' fashion explains most clearly the transition that Bollywood negotiates as it moves the cinema away from the box office, hitherto its staple source of income, into a series of new production structures in transnational geographic and financial locations which offer cultural crossovers (movie sells fashion sells brand endorsement sells star sells movie sells music sells . . .), strategic tie-ups, merchandising, publicity avenues (new television channels), as well as new electronic distribution alternatives. This explanation locates the cinema's move in tandem with the global trend towards B-to-B sectors (businesses servicing other businesses as against dealing with the end-consumer), or, in the current instance, in films transgressing their earlier distribution 'territories' and earning much more through selling *rights* than *tickets*.

This might be an adequate economic model, but *culturally* it does not begin to explain what the fashion industry in particular, but not uniquely, draws our attention to with such insistence: the entire process of a Bollywood culture industry assimilating,

Jism (Amit Saxena, 2003): an early instance of the styling attributed to well-known, Chennai-based art director, Thota Tharani

[21] Daughter of art director Sudhendu Roy who was associated with Bimal Roy's work, and 'stylist' for most of the big Bollywood productions (*Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, Dil to Pagal Hai, Taal, Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham*, etc.).

gobbling up and eventually regurgitating the cinema into a ubiquitous presence that may have less to do with the specifics of movie-going, and more with quite another form of manifesting the cinema. I suggest that if we are to seek a cultural explanation, the role that the *cinema* plays in all this is worth interrogating, as this phenomenon offers us, yet again, a vantage point from where to ask some basic questions. Why is the cinema there at all in Bollywood if its economic presence in the box office is being increasingly marginalized? Why does the cinema continue to be evoked? At the back of it all lurks the even more basic question of what the cinema is doing in India in the first place, and what 'India' in turn is doing in Bollywood.