

**A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CINEMA
AND SOCIETY IN INDIA**

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This dissertation entitled “A Sociological Analysis of Cinema and Society in India” Submitted by Roopa Roshan for the Master of Philosophy Degree has not been previously submitted for any other University and is my original work.

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This is an attempt to provide an insight into the world of Indian cinema that has appealed both local and global viewers. My tribute to the million of viewers who provide the life force to the cinema industry.

ROOPA ROSHAN.

INTRODUCTION

The hypothesis that cinema is inextricably interwoven with society and culture is substantiated by themes that have been taken up and patronized by makers of films. These themes reflect the turmoil, ecstasy heroic moments of winning, and sad, disheartening defeats cinema in their its body not only defines historical milestones but also explores socio-cultural processes. The celebration of institutions that continue to reign our lives, the rise of newer practices, the learning and unlearning of ways of life. Economic, political social reality has been painted into the cammas of Indian cinema. As a myth it tells our story and also inculcates hope to go on in life. The darkness in the 'hall' is the psychoanalyst's couch for millions where they relate with characters on screen dream and dance, feel the pain and also celebrate with them. Thus cinema is not only a message bearer but also entertainment.

In this attempt to explore cinematic significance in our lives and society we can begin with the features of continuity and change in cinema. This brings out the journey of cinema with the life of society.

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN INDIAN CINEMA

1. Melodrama
2. Song and dance
3. Stardom
4. Stunt.

Objective of the study:

- a) To map the history of Indian cinema.
- b) To delineate the relation between cinema and society.
- c) To undertake a sociological analysis of cinema as a reality that makes its existence felt in the lives of millions of viewers.

FILM AS MELODRAMA

Melodrama, comes from the Greek word 'melos' meaning song and originally denoted a stage play accompanied by music. According to the early nineteenth-century use of the term, melodrama meant a romantic and sentimental play that contained songs and music deemed appropriate for enhancing the situation presented on stage. From France, the term spread to other European cultures, and the term came to signify a form of drama characterized by sensationalism, emotional intensity, hyperbole, strong action, violence, rhetorical excesses, moral polarities, brutal valiancy and its ultimate elimination and the triumph of good. The words melodrama and melodramatic, which were originally applied to stage plays, later came to be used to describe and evaluate aspects of film and literature.

There are three important aspects related to film and melodrama. (Dissanayake, Wimal (ed) 1993). The first is that melodrama tends to give prominence to the experience, emotions, and activities of women. Second, with the spread of postmodernist thinking, more and more film theorists and critics are abandoning the received category of high art and low, elitist aesthetics and popular entertainment and are beginning to pay more attention to fundamental issues of representation, the role of ideology, and cultural construction. Third, melodramas are important because of the ways they illuminate the deeper structures of diverse cultures. Melodramas exemplify in concrete ways the diverse casts of mind, shapes of emotions, vocabularies of expression, imaginative logic, and priorities of valuation of different culture. Art in any society cannot be understood in aesthetic terms alone. Art need to be related to other domains of social activity, concomitantly, melodrama gain in depth and definition when examined in relation to the fabric of life and cultural contours of the sociality from which they emerge. By examining the processes of creation and nodes of reception of film melodramas, we can move closer to the cultural wellsprings of human creativity.

Melodrama is used to describe cultural genres that stir up emotions, drawing on a tragic structure of feelings. It is often also seen as sentimental trash provoking ridicule for its failed mundane tragedy, its straining for effect, its exaggeration of plot and characters, and its dominance of emotion over other consideration. In melodrama

the emphasis is not on the psychology and lifestyle of a unique individual but on the functioning of characters in situation that push their emotions to extremes.

Melodrama needs to be read metaphorically to understand its typical focus on the family, the suffering of the powerless good (especially through illness, family break-up, misunderstanding and doomed love) often at the hands of a villain. There are situations that can be resolved only through convenient deaths, chance meetings and implausible happy endings. Steve Neale argues that the pleasure of melodrama or the pleasure of being made to cry is a fantasy of love, it is a narcissistic fantasy hence the involvement of other family members, the community, or even, the nation.(Neale. Steve 1986). In these pleasures the audience can overcome the meaninglessness of everyday existence and find reassurance for their fractured lives.

Melodrama foregrounds language as it makes all feelings exterior, with the characters verbalizing their feelings and creating discourses on their emotions. In this vein, in the Hindi movie one of the key places is given to the outpouring of feeling through the lyrics of song where visuals and language are simultaneously foregrounded. This also applies to the dialogues which are delivered in a grand theatrical manner, ranging from formulaic expression or 'already interpreted speech or to the realistic in films where realism dominates. The dialogue are a major pleasure for movie fans, who relish these grandiloquent statements, frequently learning them by heart so they can recite them in subsequent repeat viewing. Today there is a trend where cassettes and CDs of the dialogues are also available for repeat hearing.

Melodrama also affects the images as it uses close-ups to increase the effect of emotional depth, and heightens the role of the star and the viewer's interaction with the image. The star must appear as a star, not as a character playing a role. Today Sharukh Khan is a "candy floss star", while Amitabh Bachchan is the "angry-young man star.(Thoraval, Yuves 2002). Barry King suggests there are two forms of acting: impersonation where the actor transforms his or her body and voice and personification, where the actor's transforms his or her body and voice, and personification, where the actor's persona retains significant similarities in different performances. Thus, on the latter form in Hindi cinema we find that each film one after the other tries to create and maintain the star's text, "restricting the way in which

an image can be presented". (Richael Dwyer) (2002). The exterior display of emotions is heightened through the use of features as storm, remote places and other symbolic representation of a characters interior feeling. Melodramatic features such as location, stage, elaborate display of glamour also add to the list any change the whole look of the film. Today filmmakers like Karan Johar, and even Yash Chopra use the "glamorous realism" to gloss reality in films and make it more attractive.

Gunning and Gaudrault coined the term "cinema of attractions" to describe a cinema in which popular traditions such as the fairground and carnival meet an avant grade subversion. In the work of Sergi Eisenstein, where "a montage of attractions intensified this popular energy into an aesthetic subversion to undermine the conventions of bourgeois realism". This is an exhibitionist cinema in which linear narrative, driven by character and the logic of the narrative itself, and the realist illusion of film are interrupted by spectacle and other "attractions". Ravi Vasudevan argues that in Indian cinema the "relationship between narrative, performance sequence and action spectacle is loosely structured in the fashion of cinema of attractions". Vasudevan points out that attractions appeared in certain genres of early Indian cinema, such as the lower class stunt and the mythological but by the 1950s were included in the previously middle-class "social", which expanded to become a very loose omnibus category. (Gunning 1986).

The main "attractions" of Hindi cinema include the sets and costumes action sequences (thrilling), presentation of the stars, grandiloquent dialogues, song and dance sequences, comedy interludes and special effects. These attractions also accounts for the rationale which explain why Hindi films are held back from gaining recognition as a form of "cultural capital" (Bourdieu). The films of the 1920s were seen as "lower-class" genres, while the more literary genres that emerged in the 1930s were associated with sound. State-sponsored realism largely eschewed the attractions of the commercial cinema while middle class cinema continued to incorporate them along the lines followed by some of the directors of the 1950s. The cinema based on the aesthetic of mobilization, by contrast, deployed the attraction to the full. The star of 1970's Amitabh Bachchan had song and dance routines, use of comedy and stunts, particular fight sequences which reached a state of parody in his films. The mushy

romances, typified by those of Yash Chopra, have negotiated the attractions skillfully, deploying the star and song and dance, while subordinating them to the drive of the narrative.

STARDOM IN CINEMA

Richard Dwyer's brought the attention to the star phenomena to the fore in Western film studies.(Dwyer, Richard 2000). He argues in his work that an individual is said to be charismatic when he or she is the centre of attraction who seems to embody what, at a given time, is taken to be a central feature of human existence. This figure offers value and stability as the focus of the dominant cultural and historical concerns thus creating interest in the life of the star and their off-screen existence. Star's tend to signify as condensers of moral, social and ideological values for instance magazines, newspapers, print and visual media continue to report on their marriage family, parenting and lifestyle.

The ways we involve ourselves with the star are a central part of the pleasure we derive from watching a film. The spectator's emotionally respond to cinema through the process of identification which goes on between the spectator and character. The star system and their charisma amount to the viewer's pleasure. Thus cinema viewing operates through the dynamics of fetishism and voyeurism which deny difference between the viewer and the star. Smith, Murrey (1995).

The emotions the viewer feels for the star exist outside the cinematic experience. The view adopts different attitudes to the star, ranging from an emotional tie to some perception of a common quality. In Hindi cinema the text is created within the film (melodramas) wherein stars perform. The film draws on images of the star in other films and media of the star in other films and media gives them roles as national icons of beauty and desire. In India repeat viewing is a norm and the audience enjoy an incredible knowledge of the life of the star and other personnel involved in the film.

Madhava Prasad has used the term "darshan" to refer to a structure of speculation found in Hindi religious practise and also in forms of social and political practices. Here the image authorizes the look, thereby benefiting the beholder. In

other words darshana' Madhava Prasad is a two-way look, the beholder takes darshana and the object gives darshana in which the image has power, rather than person looking at it. Ravi Vasudevan argues that darshana can as well have a authoritative function. Instance, stars frequently appear in tableau scenes that seem to invite darshan, thus hierarchizing the look and giving stars association with the traditional granters of darshan (Kings, gods).

Wider social practices concerning the star creation manifest in many other localized practices. The star needs other media not only to maintain visibility beyond the brief moment of performance but also to allow the creation of a star persona. Indian television screens the star's earlier films video clips of film songs, interviews with the star. The other major area of circulation of the star's image is in the film and lifestyle magazines that tell of their off-screen exploits. Dating back to the early days of cinema, film magazines remain the key place to find out about the star's off-screen personae although, unofficial gossip, such as the "Stardust", "Film fare". A radical change was observed in the 1970's with the appearance of "gossip film magazine". (Prasad, Madhav 1998). These magazines are closely bound with the emergence in India in the 1970s of new social groups and the availability of wider consumer pleasures and life styles, and have continued...

SONG AND DANCE

The essence of song, music in Indian cinema can be understood by the central space which is given to it. Films at times remain popular and continue to reign the hearts of audience due to their melodious songs. Barnow and Krishnaswamy (1963) consider music to be popular in Indian cinema:

- a) they are linked to the regional theatre of the nineteenth century, which made great use of song.
- b) music provides the catalyst in a country with huge linguistic diversity. Whereas regional theatres were language based films tended to be culture based. Music and mythology provided common cultural bonds between North and South of India. (Barnow, Krishanswamy 1963).

Music, song and dance have traditionally played an integral role in the daily life of Indian people whether for religious and devotional purposes or for celebrations so the music, dance sequences in the field of Indian films are to be seen as natural. Furthermore early films were rather filmed stage plays hence film music directors “transplanted music and dance from the theatre to the screen”

Indian film music seems to have a complex relationship with classical Indian music. The latter was associated with royal courts, religion, and with the ‘Kotha’ or houses of courtesans, only in twentieth century did it reach to the large audience through trained audiences who staged performances domestically and internationally. There are however many music directors, singers in the Indian film industry who have training in classical music. Film music in India is a hybrid, drawing on a range of musical sources including Western popular music, changing styles frequently. Dr. Keskar banned it from All India Radio during the 1950s. Western popular music has been successful in India. Western-style orchestra seem to date back at least more than hundred years, who were trained for colonial bands who played on the bandstands and at parties in Victorian India.

Song sequences are one of the most striking features of the Hindi film. They are often used to denigrate it (running around trees, bursting into song at the most unlikely opportunities), yet, paradoxically, this is the element that is most celebrated by the audience. As in the Hollywood musical, directors have worked in different ways to incorporate the song into their narrative. Sometimes the song is diegetically part of the film, when the character is a singer, dancer, courtesan and so on. The song may be a set in a stage show, a film or it may be a folk song. Other song situations include the “dream sequence”, the lovers’ fantasy that may take the form of a stage show. Some directors like Guru Dutt often move from dialogue into song and dance so smoothly that the transition is barely perceptible; There are songs which do not pretend to have any other purpose than entertainment, without functioning towards the logic of narrative. Today there is a trend towards ‘item numbers’ when dancers seem to have borrowed from elsewhere only to add popularity to the film. They are to be seen in context of rising number of models entering the world of films, discotheques, increasing demand for ‘pop’ and ‘fast’ music. While the songs involve different

personnel such as composers, dance directors, troupes of dancers and special dancing stars they may even be shot by a different director. There is often a break in continuity regarding location since the song may start in India but move to Switzerland or some other paradise. (Vasudevan, Ravi 2000). Real time is again suspended as the heroine may change her costume frequently during the sequence. Love may be expressed in the song but not necessarily acknowledged in the narrative.

Asha Kasbekar argues that song and dance sequences, allow entire digressions from the main plot in the film, sanctioning “areas of heightened transgressive pleasure of its, own Voyeurism by the use of ‘bad’ characters such as the vamp, who is often billed as a special feature of the film. The song also violates other conventions, such as refracting the exchange of looks between the performer and audience through the presence of an on-screen audience, onto whom the feeling of Voyeurism may be transferred.

Today music seems to have a life separate from the rest of the film as the soundtrack goes on sale on audio cassette and C D around months ahead of the release of the film. There are two distinct occasions, release of music, and release of film. At this time the images and songs are also shown on television and producers today make a montage of images and sequences rather than show the actual song “picturization”. This also means that music has an audience in itself. Music is crucially important to producer too since its sale to a record company may cover around half the budget of a film, also acting as a marketing device shortly before the film release. The music of ‘Pinjar’ (2003) was released at the Wagah border as it was a movie based on a novel by Amrita Pritam capturing the trauma of partition. All this familiarise the audience with a major attraction in advance and create apprehension about the film narrative.

‘Stunt’ in Cinema

Stunt and action provide thrilling attractions in most films but some films may even be said to constitute a separate genre, where forces are action men. These films foreground maleness, presenting the male body as a major spectacle, often wounded and suffering in a somewhat masochistic style. These are films with a content very

male, although the emphasis is on heroism within the requirements of the state, whereas the action films often have the hero taking the law into his own hands. The larger budget films may also involve the armed forces (Border (1997), LOC) other attractions featuring in these films include top stars, grand locations and stirring songs.

The fifties in India were not only the nation-building decade but also the decade which followed the monumental changes that hit the film industry during the Second World War, primarily the folding of major studios. The major film genres up to 1942 were social dramas, mythologicals, historicals and stunts. After independent India established a censor board policy, magic and fighting scenes were not favourably looked upon and the production of “stunts” of the type popular in silent days and early days of the Talkie ceased virtually. (Dwyer, Pinney (ed.) 2000).

The heyday of stunt films were the 1930s which depicted the struggle between good and evil, though the magical agency of well executed rescue. The stunt film had been the vehicle of “Fearless Nadia” who appeared in male roles of action and disguise. Critics consider these stunt films to be providing intense psychological satisfaction to a people colonised. These fantasies of power and action built upon the fascination of modern technology had had a major audience.

Stunts were revived in the sixties, primarily with the rise of actor Shammi Kapoor and reached their apotheosis with movies of the “angry young man”. Amitabh Bachchan in one of his stunt scenes injured himself (famously) during the shooting of Coolie. “Stunts posit an externality of action and tend to encourage cross over states, transforming the ordinary mortal into the heroic individual. The post independence retreat of the stunt film is suggestive of the kind of literalness that governs the notion of self representation and the cultivation of an officially sanctioned self image. The fifties emphasised on “authenticity” and the location of action to the internal and psychological plane may amount for the low esteem in which the stunt film was held.

CHANGING PATTERNS IN CONVENTIONAL CINEMA

The choice of themes, the set of concern, the specific problems articulated, even the structures of the films keep on changing so as to adapt themselves to change

in the larger society. From the mythological, to the historical to the socials, to the romantics and then to the post 70s film, the changes in conventional films have closely followed and reflected the change in Indian society itself. However, amidst all these changes, one thing that has always remained central in all these different genres has been some notion of injustice, of exploitation of suffering, always shown from the perspective of the victim.

Cutting across genres and crossing the time barrier, this is one consistent thread which provides a continuity in Hindi conventional films. Right from Raja Harishchandra (1913), the focus has always been on some forms of injustice, of exploitation and more often than not the problems of those in the subordinate sector have been highlighted. If Taramati (the female protagonist) in Raja Harishchandra suffered great ordeals and injustices, her modern counterpart Satyawati in Jai Santoshi Ma (1973) goes through worse trials and tribulations. If the tender love of Salim and Anarkali was thwarted in Mughal-e-Azam (1960), so also was that of the young couple in Ek Dujhe Ke Liye (1983), Qayamat Se Qayamat tak (1988), Dil (1990), Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (1995), Raja Hindustani (1997) and Ishq (1997). If the mother of Mother India (1957) faced universe problems in bringing up her children, so also did the mother of Dewar (1973) and Bazigar (1993). Thus in Hindi conventional cinema we have had films which have highlighted:

1. the poverty and exploitation in rural society eg., Saukari Pash (1925), Aurat (1940), Do Bigha Zameen (1953) Mother India (1957), Ganga Jamuna (1961).
2. the plight of young widows eg., Balyogini (1936), Prem Rog (1982)
3. protest against arranged marriages and social barriers Devdas (1935) Koyla (1997)
4. caste problems making it impossible for a young woman to marry above her caste, Achyut Kanya (1936), Ratan (1943)
5. the tragic consequence of the marriage of a young girl to an old man, Duniya na Maane (1937), Guide (1966)
6. the religious tradition of offering human sacrifices. Sacrifice (1942) Amrit Manthan (1934)

7. the devastating effect of migration from village to city. Dharti Ke Lal (1946), Shri 420.
8. Social inequality Adhikar (1936) Deedar (1957), Awara (1957)
9. struggle for survival in a big city. Do Bigha Jameen (1953), Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman (1992), Ghatak (1996).
10. the deprivation, suffering, disease and want among the lower middle classes. Humlog (1957) Footpath (1953), Boot Polish (1954), Awaz (1956)
11. the problem of orphans left on their own to face the world. Muqaddar Ka Sikandar (1978), Laawaris (1981), Raja Hindustani (1997)
12. the right of workers to participate in management, eg President (1936), Laadla (1997)
13. collective farming and mechanisation of agriculture. Dharti Mata (1937), Upkar (1967).
14. the challenge to traditional ideas. Aadmi (1939)
15. the appeal to nationalism. Sikandar (1940), Raja (1993), Krantiveer (1993), Border (1997), Pardes (1997)
16. the vulnerable position the common man when potted against the underworld dons. eg. Zanjeer (1973), Deewar (1973) Andha Kanoon (1983), Khalnayak (1993), Gahtak (1996)
17. dacoits. Sholay (1978) or the powerful police /politician/ Goonda combine. Aakhri Rasta, Pratighaat (1987), Ziddi (1997)
18. the tragic consequences of doing one's job honestly. Zanjeer (1973), Sholay (1975), Meri Awaz Suno (1981), Pratighaat (1987), Mohra (1994), Vinashak (1998)
19. the problem of corruption eg Hindustani (1997) and communalism eg Bombay (1993), Krantiveer (1993)
20. obsessional love, Darr (1993), Anjaam (1994), Agnisakshi (1996), Daraar (1997).

It is however, surprising to note that Kazmi altogether ignores the important segment of marital films which also form an important focus of conventional cinema.

The category of marital conflict, can be seen as an important seen in films like *Abhimaan* (1975), *Aandhi* (), *Akele Hum Akele Tum*, *Sathjiya* (2003), *Chalte Chalte* (2003). (Kazmi, Fareed 1999).

If the success of a film depends upon the extent to which it has been able to interpolate the audience, it is obvious that the higher the level of interpellation the greater its chance of succeeding. This explains why there is always a multiplicity of interpellations contained within the structure of almost every conventional film. Thus more often than not the familial, religious and political elements are all subsumed within these films.

After independence, as India developed into a more fully capitalist society and its contradictions started surfacing, the forms of interpellation also changed. A capitalist society is essentially one in which the dull compulsion of profit making is the predominant element which characterises it.

In a society made up of atomised, isolated units which, either through, as Hobbes puts it, force or fraud, ruthlessly pursue their own selfish interests. Thus the basis of such a society is cut throat competition, where those who succeed are revered and worshipped, while those who fail are set aside and forgotten. Compounding this is the fact that a lot of residual pre capitalist elements are deeply entrenched in the superstructural consciousness of the people. Consequently, they are susceptible to, and hanker after, all these elements which are now lost to them. Hindi conventional films exploit their psychic needs very effectively. This explains why such pre capitalist values as honour, friendship, loyalty, sacrifice, valour and religion are crucial elements within the discourse of these films.

(1) all the blockbusters of the last 23 years have highlighted and literally gloated over the strong male bonding between heroes. [*Zanjeer*, *Deewar*, *Muqadar Ka Sikandar*, *Amar Akbar Anthony*, *Andha Kanoon*, *Sholay*, *Ram Lakhan*, *Coolie*, *Ishq*] The friends are shown to share a relationship of obsessional, almost unnatural love, willing to lay down their lives for the other.

However is another feudal virtue which is constantly invoked in all these films. The entire concept of 'Pran Jaaye Par vachan na Jaaye' is code by which the hero always abides. In fact, this is the one thing which differentiates him from the

villain. In films like *Raja Hindustani* (1997) as it was in *Mother India* (1957), or *Deewar* (1975), *Sholay* (1975) although the protagonists are poor and marginalised yet they privilege their dignity and self esteem over every thing else. As Rajni Kothari has argued 'what has saved the poor from total eclipse is their own strategies of survival and gradually their own growth in confidence and a sense of dignity and self esteem (1997).

Another key element in the post 70s films has been the concept of loyalty held as the ultimate virtue, which can be of a servant for his master / mistress (*Muqadar Ka Sikandar*, *Laavaris*, *Namak Halal*), or for one he works (*Deewar*, *Sholay*).

One of the most persistent elements of pre capitalist consciousness that exists not only as a residual but rather as a dominant element in Indian society is religion. It is therefore not surprising that nearly all block busters of post 70s have not only incorporated it, but also exploited it fully.

The religious interpellation is done either by using such symbols as a Rakhi (*Muq. Ka Sik.*); Om (*Khalnayak*); qawwalis at some dargah (*Coolie.*) a chadar at a mazaar (*Coolie*); Haj (*Coolie*) showing showing festivals like Holi (*Sholay*) Id (*Coolie*), Diwali (*Zanjeer*), Karva Chauth (*DDLJ*).

In a society where the institution of the joint family is almost dead, where millions have been uprooted from their social moorings, where even amongst the middle class the atomic nuclear family is under severe stress, with continuous friction not only between the wife and in-laws but also between the husband and wife, where divorce rates are going up, the image of a happy, united family is bound to appeal to the audience. It is no wonder then that almost every single successful film of the last 25 years starts of with images of a happy family, which is then torn apart violent by the evil machinations of the villain.

The point is that in conventional films, the most frequently used and effective mode of audience involvement is to play upon the emotional and gut feelings of the audience. In this way the audience is never allowed to 'think' but only to 'feel'. In order to further the involvement and identification process, these films directly address, appeal to, exploit and reflect the 'popular element', the percepts and the 'common sense' of the people, especially those belonging to the subordinate classes.

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HISTORY OF INDIAN CINEMA

Immense and touching is the faith placed in the power of cinema. Cinema is so important a discovery that one day it will change the face of the world's civilization far more than the discovery of gunpowder, electricity and continents. Cinema will create possibilities for all men on this earth of knowing each other, of approaching and loving one another. Cinema will eliminate divergence of views among men and prove invaluable in realizing the human ideal. We should accord cinema the importance it deserves

India cannot be considered an entity, but as a socio-cultural process a changing and contested set of overlapping frameworks stabilized by governmental institutions, be they the colonial administration, the Indian government, or the various institutions, seeking to regulate (or deregulate) the interface between culture and economy within at any given time, specific territorial limits. The sheer gigantism of India's film factories, well known collectively as the world's largest national film industry, have attracted increasing attention from film scholars. For millions of Indians wherever they live, a major part of 'India derives from its movies. Here the cinema has provided, for the better part of this century, the most readily accessible and sometimes the most inventive forms of mass entertainment.

Milestones in the life of the nation inevitably came to be inscribed into the records of Indian Cinema's history, as film-maker, using the technology uniquely equipped to celebrate, intervene in and record the rise of such epochal achievements as the emergent of Indian working class and the birth of an independent nation assimilation of local political imperatives and the language of the "official" and the non traditional.

In ancient and medieval times, India had been known as a land of legendary riches which, through the ages, attracted invaders from the West. They came and they plundered its wealth. Even in the 18th century India's gross industrial production was higher than that of Europe. In a variety of metal wares, cotton manufacture, and silk, gems and jewellery to name a few areas. It is to this that the British dealt a mortal

blow. By the time cinema reached India in 1897, the country had been reduced to a supplier of raw mater and a consumer of manufactured goods from Britain.

The arrival of the cinema in *fin de si e de India* was at first perceived as a new wonder of the Industrial revolution. The Lumiere brothers displayed their wares on screen at Watsons Hotel in Bombay on July 7 1896. From then till 1900, short film was mostly imported. Some of these had an eastern flavour, like Alauddin and his lamp and Alibaba and Forty Thieves. These were brought in by foreign trading groups and individuals and briefly exhibited during their stay. Next, foreign visitors coming not only to show films but to make them on scenes of interest in India, like coconut Fair and Our Indian Empire among others. Soon foreign companies started establishing in India and took over the business from casual visitors. (Dasgupta, 2002).

India was quick to absorb the new technology; before long Indian entrepreneurs supplanted foreign agencies. These was an instant enthusiasm for putting an Indian content into the newly arrived technology from the West. By 1899, the first Indian films had already been made by *Harichandra Bhatvadekar*. One was entitled, the 'Wrestlers', another was about the 'training of monkeys'. Other actuality films were made and beginning was made with the documentary recording of actualities. The Lumiere tradition of films reflecting reality was established early in the day and was to become one of the significant strands of Indian film production.

The early years of the new century saw a spate of film making by Indians. The seeds of realism and myth making had both been planted. When *Save Dada* resolved to make India's first feature film, he choose the miracle – laden story of Krishna's birth. But the death of this brother made him gave up the plan and yield his place to *Dattatreya Govindrao Phalke*, the *Father of Indian cinema* who was to make India's first feature film Raja Harischandra in 1913.

The cinema's power based on the principle of seeing is believing was put to use to reinforce the anthropomorphic polytheism of Puranic Hinduism at a time when a scientific temper rationalism and social reform had begun to take root and lay the foundations of modern India. A product of science was harnessed, in effect to blunt the edge of the growing criticism of tradition, which reform movements had brought

into play. The avoidance of contemporary reality was one of the aspects of the revivalist credo that dominated this period, including the works of D.G. *Phalke*. Phalke saw a foreign film on the life of Christ and was inspired to do for the Hindus what it did for the Christian. No less was his determination to prove that what the Westerners had done with the new technology of cinema the Indians could do as well.

Phalke decided on Raja Harischandra based on Indian mythology and had potential to have a powerful appeal. It is not just an accident that the first Indian film happened to be a mythological. Phalke hailed from an orthodox Hindu household hence it was but natural that the Indian film pioneer turned to his ancient epics and puranas for source material. Moreover the intense religious ethos inherent in the performing arts in the country was another factor.(Thoraval, 2000). Since cinema took off as an extension of the performing arts, the same binding relationship existed between the author and creator and the work in the initial stages, especially in the works of Phalke.

The release of Raja Harischandra (1913) ushered in the genre of mythological films, highly suitable for the silent movie, as the stories were widely known. It set the tone for a kind of film which would go on to enjoy long life and popularity. It immediately gave to the emerging Indian cinema an authentic cultural content.

The significant titles that followed include-Stayawan Savitri (1914), Satyavadi Raja Harischandra (1917), Lanka Dahan (1917), Shri Krishna Janma (1918), Kaliya Mardan (1919). (Rajadhyaksha and Willeman, 1994).

In the 1920s the pioneering stage of Indian cinema was over and many talented people entered this field. All sorts of genres were attempted: comedy, historical films action and social subjects – a foretaste of the shape Indian cinema would take in the future. There was greater focus on cinematographic industry, technical level and the studio system dominated the scene until the 1940's and 1950's.

The most brilliant after Phalke was Krishnarao Mistry alias baburao Painter in 1917, he established the Maharashtra Film Company in Kolhapur. In 1923 he made the first large scale Indian historical, "Sinhasad" in the same year "Sati Padmini. The spell of mythology cast upon Indian fictional filmmaking by its intrepid pioneer. D.G.

Phalke was broken by Dhiren Ganguly. He wrote and acted in “Billet Pherat” (1921) a satire on the mores of the foreign returned. In 1922 Ganguly made a film, which touched upon the problems of Hindu – Muslim communal relations. Razia Begum (1922) was an outcome of various communal flare – ups that had occurred in the 1920s.

The rise of ‘social’ films was followed by Madan’s portrait of Parsi society in “Jehmuras and Jehmulji” (1925). The Madan family’s production company, the Elephantine Bioscope became Madan theatres in 1919 and they owned the first cinema theatre in India to be equipped with a permanent sound system Chandulal Shah made “social” films which had elements of Westernised lifestyle introduced in the Indian context. One of these was. “The Typist Girl (1926), a great commercial success. The box-office success of these films paved the way for the development of the film of social criticism, an abiding strand of Indian cinema.

In 1925, Indian cinema was given an international dimension by Himanshu Rai in Bombay with “Light of Asia”, based on the Edwin Arnold classic on the Buddha Bombay Talkies was founded by him in the wake of Karma (1931). This film brought forth the talent of Devika Rani, his wife later, Himanshu Rai’s (“The Achhut Kanya Untouchable Girl”), (1936) directed by Fraz Osten, and shot in the studio on Europeanized sets of a typical Indian village, was one of the earliest films to speak against untouchability. Thus Rai’s efforts were directed at a modernity that revered tradition, but was critical of superstition they sought to promote pluralism and tolerance and laid the foundations of the progressive, rationalist and pluralist trend in Indian cinema.

The thirties were marked by turbulence both in social scene and in cinema also. Quite coincidentally when Nehru, the President of the Indian National Congress gave a call for “Purna Swaraj” to end colonial rule, the British architect Edwin Lutenys, was busy in the new Imperial capital – New Delhi. The colonial government retaliated through repression, police firings arrest, confiscations of property and suppression of media. In the midst of the imperial show of might and national resistances, the silent films began to talk. Not only talk, but sing and dance as well.(Nair, 1995).

Produced by Ardeshir Irani of Imperial Film Company, *Alam Ara* (1933) Indian's first talkie, had a plethora of songs and promptly set a model that the bulk of Indian cinema has followed ever since. The mainstream (commercial) cinema put the film song at the very centre of filmmaking. The song expressed the innermost aspirations of the characters in the story, even more than dialogue.

By the time the talkies came with *Alam Ara* (1933), India had several studios, which had sprung up in Calcutta, Bombay, Kolhapur, Lahore, Madras studio production, modeled largely on Hollywood, became the order of the day, bringing out most of the 200 plus full length feature films per year. The coming of the talkies also raised the specter of linguistic differences among the many regions of the country. This has been termed as "All – India Films", which appeared after the war. This referred to the films couched in Hindi and their regional counterparts. These two branches of Indian cinema, the national and regional continue to exist. Whereas regional cinemas have sought to highlight cultural specificities, the Hindi cinema's efforts has been to produce a standardized cinematic experience. (Dasgupta, 1991).

The proliferation of the Indian film even before the advent of the talkies had caused enough unease to the British rulers. In 1927, they had appointed a Film Enquiry committee under the chairmanship of a judge. But to their chagrin, the Rangachair committee, instead of giving boost to film imports from England recommended a rapid increase in indigenous film production. The British were anxious to restrain political self-expression despite this, the number of films concerned with social and political freedoms continued to grow through the 1920s and 1930s.

The 1940s, were buffeted by the Second World War and its consequences. The period brought Indian freedom movement to a point of crisis the British were unable to solve. Successive waves of political non-cooperation and revolt rocked the foundations of Britain's Indian empire. In 1943, the British near efforts visited a terrible man-made famine upon Bengal by taking away the grain to feed soldiers in the eastern sector. (Chakravarty, 1996).

Predictably the cinema reacted to the events in a few socially sensitive films. A direct outcome of the thrust of the IPTA was Khwaja Ahmed Abbas' "Dharti ke

Lal” (“ Children of the Earth”) (1946), based on a play o the Bengal famine of 1943. It had shades of Eienstein and bore the marks of its theatrical origins, yet constituted the first of the many attempt at cinematic realism during the period. Another, in the same vein, was Chetan Anands’ ‘Neecha Nagar’ (1946) with its rich-poor contrasts. A third film in this context is Nemai Ghosh’s “Chinnamool” (1950), which had infact sequences of candid shooting of refugees arriving at a Calcutta rail way stations. A notable film was to celebrate India’s growing new internationalism: ‘Dr. Kotnis Ki Amar Kahani (1946)’, by V. Shataram.(Dasgupta, 2002).

Another seminal film reflecting a resurgent India’s new consciousness was the famous dancer Uday Shankar’s ‘Kalpana’ (1948). It was an all-dance film with techniques that showed a rare grasp of cinematic form discarding all formulae then current in filmmaking in India. The dances were derived from classical forms. Which had fallen into disrepute through their association with courtesans. The film gave a fillip to the revival of art of dance in a new context. S.S. Vasani in whose studio was shot, made ‘Chandralakha’ (1948). Vasani’s next film was in an entirely different mould, but it, too, made its mark. ‘Aavaiyyar’ (1953) was about a Tamil women saint – poet. Historical films, which were to go into steep decline in later decade had their heydays in 1940s and 1950s. (Agnihotri, 1990).

Symbols of its “Golden Age” and its heyday when it was considered the tropical Broadway”, Bombay has conserved some of its mythical movie theatres of the 1940s – 50s period. In the 1940s, despite or because of the revival of the Indian economy due to revival of the Indian economy due to increased Allied demand during the war, employment in industry was soaring and many fortunes were made. Some of this money ended up being invested in cinema production. New opportunities for work, plus, widespread rural immigration, led to a massive increase in the urban classes, both lower and middle.

These factors together made for the thirst for cinema, major increase in the number of potential viewers, the boom in the cinema industry etc. paradoxically precipitated the end of studio system as it led to the disruption of their professional organization. (Thoraval, 2000).

Subsequently, the growing urban classes who desired above all else to forget the pain and frustration provided an impetus towards the production of an all out escapist film commercial Hindi, cinema also played a unifying force in this new "urban society" which was heterogeneous. Aruna Vasudev has outlined these formulae as "absurd romances packed with songs and dances, made like fairytales with a moral". (Vasudev, 1986).

The values upheld in these films are profoundly "Indian" and expound the virtues of a poor and virtuous life, while rich city dwellers are generally perceived as westernized egotist and inveterate materialists. At the same time these films were centred on "expressing a story" than on the coherent development of a plot. They defuse many feelings of rebellion and sublimate on screen the dissatisfaction and sometimes even the conflicts which might very well arise from the enormous socio-economic disparities of Indian society. All the genres: mythological, historical, drama and melodrama subscribe to a system of values governed by a clear-cut set of rules. (Barnow & Krishnaswamy, 1980).

Cinema thus became a "Fairytale on celluloid". (Kakar, 1989). During the preceding the best filmmakers looked at cinema with artistic' and "humanist" viewpoint. The filmmakers continued to share these aspirations and tried to develop them with a greater or lesser measure of success.

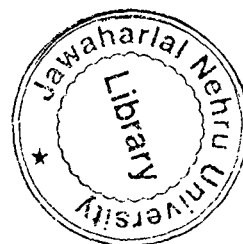
The "All-India Films" carried out a function of national integration it was a major influence on the cinema industry since the 1950s. During the period from the 1940s to 60s it was the Hindustani Language which set the tone for Hindi cinema.

The breakdown of the studio structure was marked by the rise of stars. (Gokulsingh & Dissanayake, 1998). The public transferred its aspirations and nostalgia to the stars who in their eyes were the worthy objects of admiration and imitation. What is true for the whole world as far as popular idols' are concerned, takes on an infinitely deeper dimension due to the heritage of "hero-worship". The phenomena, therefore, is perhaps not so much because of the desire of these stars to attain divine status but because of a transposition to the screen of secular tradition of the hero cult and the adoration of the "saint" and of the overriding importance of cinema in the lives of Indians.

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The decade remained true to the spirit of the times and shared in the modernist progressive outlook of a new India. The personalities it threw up were to carry this spirit forward in the afterglow of Independence, when the faith in the future and disillusion had not yet set in. The upbeat mood dominated the 1950s as well as part of 1960s, in the films of Mehboob Khan, Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt and Raj Kapoor who make up the 'Golden Pantheons' making a glorious chapter in Indian film history in which the divide between the commercial cinema and the art film has not yet arrived. They belong in one way or the other to the humanist and crusading current of Indian cinema which existed much before the Independence of the country. If not politically, they were socially committed citizens of an urban class who pervaded that the city was a source of "illumination" and "Liberation" from the servitude of feudal and vitiated beliefs of the rural areas.

This however did not prevent them from idealizing the peasants who in their eyes were the upholders of the 'real' values of the majority of Indians. Their reformist real was incorporated into a cinema which was an "intermediary" between the typical idealism of the intelligentsia of the 1940s and 50s and the rising violence and neo-traditionalism of the commercial cinema of their era.

The fight for independence, famine changing social mores, the global fight against fascism, all contributed to the ethos in which the directors grew up. The foremost common trait is humanism. Humanism in 1940s had a specific connotation, it was fuelled by outrage against savage poverty and inequalities. A second element was its deep awareness of India's past and present cultures both "high" and "popular". A third was the skill in communicating its outrage and call for change to the masses. This last element has been called 'entertainment'. (Masud, 1995).

Their films often surpass the level of pure entertainment, and impart a message and some innovation in terms of the thematic and aesthetic dimension to the conventional genres. They were based on the affirmation of the individual and national identity and rested on the firm foundations of India cultural religious and aesthetic traditions. Some of the films of these directors are master pieces-or cult films-in the history of Indian cinema.

MEHBOOB: Direct vitality, a tendency to portray conflict in dramatic, even melodramatic, terms a taste for the epic – family and historical as well as for spectacular costume drama characterize his work. For Sagar Film Company, he made three-interesting melodramas “Manmohan” (1936), a ‘social’ subject about a women confronted with the patriarchal order and “Jagirdar” (1937) an adventure film with multiple implication. The theme of the historical film “Humayun” (1945) was a plea for communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims. In ‘Aan (1952), techicour was immensely successful. (Dagsupta, 2002).

It was “Mother India” (1952), which was actually a remake of one of his earlier films “Aurat” (1940), which achieved the status of a Indian cinematic epic. According to Sunita Chakravarty, in the context of the mutation of modern India, the film purports to be an illustration of women’s fight against male oppression and oppression of nature, as well as a celebration of the Indian farmer’s will to save his land from domination by external forces. “Mother India” as a film exploits all emotional possibilities and pointes an almost mystical picture of the suffering of the poor and humble and even more that of women-especially the mother figure. (Chakravarty, 1996).

In the patriarchal Indian society, the mother is more than anything an archetype of stability and continuity. The film indicates an aspect of the vision of a just democratic Indian society defining its values after Independence. There was a vague, general trend towards the socialistic, a learning shared by large sections of the population in the early decades after Independence.

BIMAL ROY: The “humanist” dimension which characterizes a great part of his ocuvere can be seen in his very first production, a documentary entitled “Bengal Famine” (1943), made at the catastrophe which claimed around five million deaths. In Calcutta, his first fictional film for the New Theaters was a powerful film which transposed the values of Bengali sensibility to the level of ‘All – India Films’. (Masud, 1995). This was Udayer Pathey / Humrahi (1944-45), a film described as the first experiment in “experimental cinema” in India and depicting certain pre-independence ideals revealing a personal sense of composition and “flowing” camera movements. This melodrama, at one sentimental and social – is considered by Indian

cinema historians as having opened a path to the neo-realist current in later Bengali cinema.

In Bombay, he founded the Bimal Roy Productions in 1952. This inclination for realism was encouraged by the discovery of Indian neo-realism- The Bicycle Thief of Vittorio de sica and the work of Rossellini among others – at the time of the first International Film Festival in India in 1952 indeed “Do Bigha Zamin” (1953) was inspired by Italian realism and is his finest films. This first great realist Indian film draws its inspiration-from the ideas of IPTA, a pan-Indian theatre movement with communist feelings. In its absence of make up and glamour and song and dance formulas, the films broke many conventions and heralded the new language of cinema. (Rajdhayksha and Willeman, 1994).

Sujata (1959) found him backtracking into a misenscence develop out of New Theatres’ aesthetic. The filmmaking less inventive, less vigorous, it falls back on a standard vocabulary. However, the inhumanity of the caste system in Sujata touched a chord in every heart and was in tune with the optimist – reformist mood of the 1950s.

GURU DUTT: - In the cinematographic memory of the country Guru Dutt, author, director and producer, has left the image of a “sombri” and “self-centred” movie maker a self-destructive romantic hero haunted by failure and death. He eventually committed suicide, but he by then marked the Indian Seventh Art, even the commercial Kind, of his time, by a totally different personal approach that is being rediscovered and admired even today.

Four films which hand been considered as “cult” films uncover the depths of the filmmaker’s personality and crystallize his aspirations, his phobias and his conception of cinema and life. Pyaasa (1957), which was an enormous success, ever among those Indian cinema lovers who were ardent fans of musical films. The dreamy atmosphere of a refined photography in black and white which expresses every tone of dullness was impressive. This factual account of a film which is totally inherent ever if it reflects a settling of accounts with society – cannot do justice to the tragic and spell binding dimension of this premature spiritual “testament”, of a gravity of tone very unusual in the “Golden age” of Hindi cinema.

His next film *Kagaz Ke Phool* (1959) is considered as the first Indian film in cinemascope, giving shape to nihilism and more autobiographical and premonitory than ever, while presenting a well-developed reflection on the place of the artist in society. The film was a total commercial flop, for the public seemed to be put off by the character of a director and probable even more so by too somber and lonely an anti-hero.

In 1960, he produced 'Chaudvi Ka Chand'. By the artifice of a triangular love intrigue, it is a film devoted to the decadence of the traditional art of living at the time of the Nawabs of unknown-one of the shining cultural centres of Muslim culture until the beginnings of the 20th century – In this delicious and sumptuous "Hindustani" film, mistaken identities and sentimental intrigues also serve as a pretext to the deployment of beautiful songs.

The commercial success of this film led to "Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam" (1962) one of the jewels of Indian cinema, adopted from a Bengali novel of the same title by Bimal Mitra. The nostalgic story of the end of a world and of an art of living condemned by the transformation of history has been compared to the *Magnificent Ambersons* one of Orson Welles and possesses "Viscontian" aspects, as much for the meticulous care brought to depict the period, as for his undisguised admiration for some of its splendours. Leaving them out, the film describes the slow physical, mental material and moral degradation of a family and of its class-the Bengali Zaminadari.

His attempts to make a breakthrough in the West also ended in failure largely because he was never totally able to shake off the conventions of the Bombay brand of commercial cinema; what he achieved was mostly a mix of the personal and the cliché. Guru Dutt's story is a seminal illustration of the innate, age-long dilemma of the cinema in reconciling on expansion, collaborative medium with a personal, artistic statement.

RAJ KAPOOR: - Raj Kapoor in his charming operatic style, full of **warmth**, glorified the common man. His films, dealt with variety of themes and subjects. However, as an Indian avatar of Charlie Chaplin, whose gestures, expressions and

movements, he initiated marvelously well, Raj Kapoor endeared himself to the Indian people, as did the humanity and humour with which he handled the futile quest for true love or a host of other serious, sometimes tragic subjects poverty the solitude of the asphalt jungle of the world of crime into which poverty pushes the wretched and damned the cruelty of the rich and harshness of their lower in striking down the poor before the poor are likely to touch them.

Popular heroes in romantic talks were moulded on social outcasts from the lower depths, since a large section of the post-war audience was made up of rooted people drawn to the cities by the economic boom in urban areas. These people literally had to invent new lies of solidarity and community felling that rose above traditional extended family or caste ties, which had governed life in the country side. Raj Kapoor was at the crest of a wave of “optimism” that ran through Indian cinema at that time, bearing the hopes for change of a newly independent India. (dissanayake & Sahai, 1988).

Raj Kapoor’s most famous film ‘Awaraz’ (1951). In its artistic ambition the film goes well beyond its flamboyance and melodrama. As a critique of the alienation of the individual in the ubiquity, it raises a question that is still not raised too often in Indian cinema: does heredity outweigh the social and human environment in shaping the individual. The strange atmosphere of the film, as Oedipal as it is noir, is accentuated by surrealistic dream sequence.

His next film “Shree 420”, was similarly oriented towards the rights of the underprivileged. Its very name came from the section of the Indian Penal Code under which can men, robbers and similar criminals and prosecuted. Again, it glorified the honesty of the poor and the wickedness of the rich in a kind of romantic proletarianism.

In Jagte Raho (1956), which he produced and the famous theater director Shambhu Mitra wrote and directed as well as in Boot Polish (1953), Raj Kapoor was influenced strongly, albeit temporarily, by the new European cinema unveiled at Indian’s first international film festival in 1952. The abiding strand in his most famous film, is a telling mixture of Hollywood and soviet style socialism. These he entwined skillfully with the tradition of song in Indian folk theatre.

During the 1940s and 50s there had been a brief period of social realism. But soon melodrama, the mythological, the adventure film, the “patriotic” film and the “stunt” film, made their presence felt on the Indian silver screen. The ‘Hindustani’ film of the 1940s – 60s, whether in Hindi or in Urdu, was usually a historical, romantic, musical drawing from the India novel and theatre tradition of the 19th century and the “Oriental extravaganzas” and historical film of the silent Era and the 1930s. It tried to build on the heritage of film made in the wake of the pre-Independence swadeshi movements, which showcased Hindu epics and myths, the marital exploits of the Rajputs, the glory of India under Mughals before the arrival of the British. After Independence in 1947, the need was to create a national awareness and the emphasis shifted to periods and heroes perceived as great “federating” forces.

In this context, the Islamic period of Indian history assumed particular importance. (Thoraval, 2000). This particular ‘genre’ of cinema spoke less of the 13th –16th century Delhi Sultanate – a period characterized by massacres, than of the Mughal Empire at its very zenith. By that time with its power extending through the length and breadth of India, Muslims had become completely indianised. The time was of prosperity of cultural and artistic symbiosis, of self-sufficiency in most respects. (Thoraval, 2000).

Mughal grandeur was a platform for extravagant super productions bringing together all the performing arts for a “fusion” of hearts in music. This enabled directors, not all of whom were Muslims to display a national, cultural symbiosis, to show deep Indianness of Muslims. It was a remarkable position to take in order to defuse tensions arising from the tragic rupture between Hindus and Muslims that had caused the outbreak of communal riots and culminated in partition in 1947. ‘Garam Hawa (1973) by M.S. Sathyu, recently portrayed the dilemma of partition on the screen.

It has been said that the growth of “Hindustani” cinema created conditions for the growth of a genuine nationwide, Muslim sensibility in India. However, Indian films on historical subjects do not set out to be “scientific” reconstitution of the past, but rather freewheeling evocations through “stories” string together and linked to the present in a mythic mode. Legend paves the ways for dreams, aided in great measure

by the use of song and dance, for songs and dances constitute the major part of the director's "visualizations" as well as what he wants to say or demonstrate.

This trend is illustrated by films that Indian film historians characterized as "legendary" like R.S. Choudhry's "Anar Kali", (1928), Mehboob Khan's "Humayun" (1945) A.R. Kardar's Shahjahan (1946), Vijay Bhatt's, "Baiju Bawra" (1952) Nandlal Jaswant Lal's Anarkali (1953). (Rajadhyaksha & Willeman, 1994).

The first Mughal film to be a commercial success was Noorjehan (1923). The genre reached its zenith with K. Asif's "Mughal-e-Azam" (1960). Such a romantic used celebration of lost grandeur and art of living would endure until the 1980s, in the superb "Umrao Jaan" (1981) by Muzaffar Ali, Kamal Amrohi, played an important part in most major Mughal extravaganzas of the time. The cult film "Pakeezah" (1971) ensured the lasting repudiation of Amrohi.

The 1950s also saw the consolidation of the film society movement which was to have a far-reaching effect on the emergence of a "New Cinema" committed, primarily to art and social reform. In the 30s and early 40s film societies had been established in Bombay, but the emergence of a movement had to await the coming of Independence. In 1947, the Calcutta Film Society was founded by Satyajit Ray and others. This was soon followed by the emergence of other such groups and the founding of the Federation of Film Societies of India in 1959. (Vasudev, 1986).

The movement was recognized and supported by the governments, which allowed it exemption from entertainment tax and censorship. The movement helped to create new standards in criticism through its many publications and to form an audience for the 'New Cinema' that came in its wake. This "New Cinema Movement" arose in Bengal in the late 50s and 60s and was to spread out all over India. It coincided with the rapid rise of the educated middle class after Independence and resulted from the inner drives of its intellectually most advanced segment. Throughout the country regional language cinema were strongly influenced by this impulse and gave occasional glimpses of powerful talent. Hindi is the link language, promoted by the government and has considerable political clout. Yet despite the obvious advantages of internalizing it, regional linguistic identities asserted their independence and the cinema formed an important means of voicing this protest.

In 1951, the Central GOVERNMENT appointed a high powered Film Enquiry committee under the chairmanship of a cabinet Minister. As a result of their recommendations which were accepted by the Parliament a wide range of infrastructure steps were taken. Among the institutions founded were the Film Finance Corporation, which was to reduce the influence of black money, the Film Institute of India to train film directors and technicians, the Film Archive of India to build up collections of films and promote research, the President of India as Annual Award for excellence in filmmaking and so on. The Government reorganized Films Division of India to produce and compulsorily exhibit documentary films and new reels, support for the film society movement was also recommended. With a whole studio, a laboratory and large grounds at its disposal the confines of Film Institute of India (FTII), outside the confines of film clubs, the International Film Festival this was the first large – scale exposure of Indian audiences to the best products of world cinema. Its immediate effect was seen in Bimal Roy's 'Two Acres of Land' and Raj Kapoor's 'Booth Polish'. (Vasudve, 1986).

The New India cinema has been defined by Aruna Vasudev, as the creative impulse which had various manifestations. Direct or indirect criticism of the political system is new, the denunciation of casteism, feudalism, oppression, and exploitation, fear and hungers, but today helpless emotionalism has hardened into positive. Outward change in the Indian situation itself is reflected in new thematic concerns. The common denominator of most of these themes is the concern with people. No figures cast in the heroic mould just ordinary men and women surviving under conditions sometimes of unbearable stress, surmounting their circumstances with dignity and quiet strength.

It is absolute negations of the popular cinema in which individual ambition or action has to be sacrificed to or is motivated by common will. It is a new and unfamiliar, though still tentative, process of individuation in which alternate cinema is engaged.

The strategies of the new filmmakers are divergent, the skills are uneven, but underlying them is a fascination with cinema and an abiding concern for society. There are those who believe in neo-realism as the appropriate carrier of radical

messages to audiences conditioned and encultured by the popular cinema, there are the pursuits show insists that radical content demands a radical form; there are still others for whom cinema is the ultimate form of creative expression. Together they have given the new Indian cinema a status held till now only by some of the other arts. (Vasudev, 1986).

The decade was notable for the advent of Satyajit Ray. It would be no exaggeration to say that the phenomenal success of “*Pather Panchali* (1955)” split Indian cinema into two categories of art and commerce, which persisted through the decades that followed.

In the mid –1950s neo-realism was monumentalized in Satyajit Ray’s small film, *Pather Panchali*.(Dasgupta, 1994). It not only broke all the rule reigning in current Indian cinema but established a model which numerous serious filmmakers followed. Low budgets, absence of make-up and of song and dance, realistic lighting the use of non-professionals the directors complete control of his work and similar new models set up a credo of film making, which has remained generally unchanged in what is called ‘Art Cinema’ or ‘Parallel Cinema’ or ‘Alternative Cinema’. They caught the attention of the intelligentsia and the bureaucracy the minister and Parliament. Generally speaking this helped to make educated audience aware of how the other half of the population lives. Many of the films went to international film festivals abroad, won prizes and were shown in small circuits, creating a new recognition of Indian cinema on a scale that had never been achieved.

Influenced by the phenomenal impact of “*Pather Panchali*”, a whole new generation of filmmakers began making films they felt were both artistically valid and socially relevant. Ritwik Ghatak who in the early sixties made his great trilogy, “*Megha Dhaka Tara*”, “*Komal Gandhar*”, and “*Subarnakha*”, Shyam Benegal Govind Nihalani, M. Kaul, Shahani all carried the genre of “new cinema” forward in their distinctive style. (Ray Choudhry, 2000).

Under the indirect support lent by governmental enterprise rose the culture of documentary. The resolution adopted by Motion Picture Society of India’s convention read that government was to make exhibition of short film compulsory for every film theatre in the country. The recommendation was promptly put into effect

by government and production was financed by the fee compulsorily paid by the theatres.

A signal role, was played by the company. Burman Shell, which had its own film department and made a number of documentaries of fairly high quality under the leadership of James Beveridge from the National Film Board of Canada. Paul Zils, a German national made a number of these films and so did Harisadhan Dasgupta. A certain tradition of commitment to objective reality, outdoor shooting, and realism was being created and audience exposed to these values.

A passageway was established for new filmmakers to graduate from the short film to the feature which some were to traverse in the coming decades. Notable among them was Shyam Benegal, who served an apprenticeship in advertising and documentary films before emerging as a major figure in feature cinema.

The spirit of the 1960s-1970s can be seen through some Hindi films. A certain number of films made during these two decades were of a quality superior to the norm, as the process of crystallization of genres and themes of commercial cinema evolved a sort of transition between the spirit of the great directors of an earlier era and the unavoidable box-office formula office which would henceforth dominate the Bombay industry. (Thoraval, 2000).

THE ANAND BROTHERS: Four films, on different themes and in various genres, deserve to be mentioned. The productions of Navketan Studio, founded by Anand Brothers in 1949, went to become one of finest in film industry. This film dynasty created a company which operated as a sort of transition between the “studio system” of the 1930s-50s and a certain “social realism”, and on the other, a Hindi commercial cinema influenced by the best of contemporary American cinema. Some of the talented actors and musicians, singers worked in Navketan films. In *Kala Bazaar* (1960), *Hum Dono* (1961), *Guide* (1965) and *Jewel Thief*, we see construction of a complicated plot, liberal dance sequences and the imagination and the dreams that the cinema industry of that time wished to communicate.

HRISHIKESH MUKHERJEE: - He made his first film in Bombay in “(1957) *Musafir*” which was a break away form the cliché – ridden films of the period. The film presented three episodes on the themes of marriage, birth and death,

the only commonality in the three being a house, which is rented by different characters in three episodes.

In (1960) he made 'Anuradha', he presented a new vision of feminine sensibility. Transposed into the universe of commercial Hindi cinema, the story is that of a famous singer who is disillusioned with her dull country doctor Aruna Vasudeve has pointed out that Anuradha is one of the rare films of that period where women plays an action role and makes decision on her own.

Hrishikesh Mukherjee is an auteur in the context of the Hindi commercial film. One of his best films and biggest hits was "Anand" (1970). In Anand, the theme was treated with a rare sense of humour and compassion, caught between hope and fear of the final out come, and touched by the Hindu belief that life is just transitory in a larger cycle.

The period also saw the rise of "the pure commercial". Subodh Mukherjee made a hit, "Junglee (1961)", the film was the first commercial film to use technicolour, other than the rare historical super production. A number of films were shot abroad. The titles gave away like "An Evening in Paris, 'Night in London' love in Tokyo'. In Ganga Jamuna (1961) a trend was started that would have a long life in commercial films. The theme of conflicts between two brothers separated by circumstances in the image of the two sacred rivers flowed in different directions.

The freedom struggle gave birth to a large number of films in the patriotic mode including a couple of off shoots seemingly pro-British-which were well looked upon by the British rulers as a support to the Allied war effort. Some of these as Kismet (1943) had anti-German and Japanese songs which became famous.

Popular in the years between the 1940s and the 1960s this genre – which resurfaced again in the 1980s-90, particularly due to the celebration of India's Fiftieth year of Independence –1997, can be illustrated by some well-known and interesting films. These include, "Kismet" and the "Rani of Jhansi" in Hindi, both of which were very popular. In 1951, Phani Majumdar made "Andolan", which paid homage to the Indian Nationalist Movement from the time of creation of INC in 1885 upto Indian's Independences through the experience of a Bengali family.

The following year, Heman Gupta directed “Anand Math” (1952), about the 18th century revolt against the British led by a Sanyasi. In “Heqeeqat (1964)” made by Chetan Aanand of Navketan Films the message of nationalist propaganda was about an incident during the Indo-China war. Another important films “Shaheed (1965)” by S. Ram Sharma with many magnificent patriotic songs is the story of Bhagat Singh and his co-revolutionaries. “Saat Hindustani (1969)” by K.A. Abbas is a “Western Masala” apparently inspired at least as far as its violence goes, by Robert Aldrich’s, “The Dirty Dozen”.

According to Aruna Vasudev in the 1970s and 1980’s, Bombay and other big cities have been marked by underworld activities, rise in crime, smuggling illicit fortunes, rape and prostitution-evils announced almost daily in press, T.V. and radio. (Vasudev, 1989). A more serious problems was the degeneration and denigration of the forces of law and order-the impact on cinema being very pronounced which had resulted in an exaggerated portrayal of the general growing disenchantment with established institutions commercial cinema sees in this phenomenon, a way of making money – by reflecting in form as well as in context these conditions in its own way. This way requires neither a stepping back to reflect nor any analysis – and is in itself so saturated with violence that more of the humanist and whole hearted civic spirit of the pre and post-independence film remains.

The protagonist is usually a brute but dispenser of justice in conflict with ‘villians” of the world of crime and corruption of the cities. The underlying context of these “urban” films remains conservative feudal and biased towards the values of rural society strong family ties, veneration of the mother figure, rigid social hierarchy. (Vasudevan, 1992). These “action” films fall in the tradition of action and stunt films with very simplistic stories of vengeance, crime and families separated by many adversities before becoming reunited. They are usually violent, punctuated by numerous fights and lascivious dances.

Satyajit Ray would lament, the colour, the songs seeing by voices known and loved, the dances executed by individuals or by groups, a “bad” girl and a “virtuous” girl, idem for the men, and a love story. Tears, strident laughter, fights, chases, melodrama, and characters portrayed in an absolutely empty social context. All this

against the studio sets or in some exotic setting in India or abroad. Out of three Hindi films, you will find these ingredients in at least two. (Ray, 1976).

Emergence of the new hero: Transcending the boundaries of law

India's ignominious defeat at the hands of the Chinese army in the North East lowered its image in the eyes of the masses. With Nehru's death in 1964, came the end of an era of political morality informed by the idealism of a century-old anti-British struggle. At the beginning of the decade the romanticism of the 1950s still lingered on but as the decade wore on, a macho outlook began taking over the romantic, as surely as disillusionment was replacing euphoria within the country. Films about bandits made their appearance with considerable success at the box-office. Dharmendra with his macho appearance, showed signs of becoming the next popular hero ready to fill his enemies by the dozen with his muscle power. The decade saw a marked rise in the sex and violence context of films, which were to become the paramount forces in the 1970s.

Throughout the 1960s, the popular film tried its hand at various things without being to find the formula it was seeking, uncertain of quite what the public had in mind. In this, it perhaps reflected the uncertainties and fear of the post-Nehru era and had to contend with the enormous rise in the national and international prestige of new, Parallel, or Art Cinema supported by the Government. A variety of romantic stars provided the lead in popular films, all of who were popular but none of who had the unique charisma that Amitabh Bachchan was to bring the next decade. (Dasgupta, 2002).

With the growing sense of the states instability to bring to the next decade, came the need to find a substitute for its moral, even its legal authority. In the 1970s, a mafia set of values came to replace the patriotic faith of the years before and immediately after Independence. The family became the mainstay of the individual in a crisis, and the mother the icon of togetherness under the umbrella of tradition. Underneath the enthusiasm for independence and modernity, there has always been a certain unknown fear of what modernity would bring and the extent to which it would destroy traditional institutions, which supply the sense of security required by the

individual and the family. These fears now began to surface more clearly. (Dasgupta, 2002).

The decade began with a continuation of the romantic strand as in “Amar Prem (1971)” alongside a macho self-assertion in “Samadhi (1972)”. By contrast, the emerging hero of 1970s, Amitabh Bachchan, showed with “Zanjeer (1973)”, that he represented a cynical age prepared for extremes of violence to achieve its aims. It was this that launched the wave of “angry young man” films (Dasgupta, 2002). The films were reminiscent of the contemporary films of Charles Bronson and Clint Eastwood in the US – signaling the end of the civil ideal of the post-Independence period and the new era of brutal struggle of the solitary ‘hero’ fighting against injustice

The fruits of development had begun to appear in the form of plethora of locally made consumer goods, which the lumpen did not have money to buy. The have-nots were getting ready to grab them by force and they needed a hero they found him in “Bachchan”.

The double role now often took the form of two brothers, one good and the other bad, as in “Deewar (1975)”. Revenge as the only way through which justice could be visited upon the wrong doer without the law’s delays was a syndrome that the popular all India film carried for nearly two decades and bequeathed many of its characteristics to the big production chains of South India and even regional cinemas. Like the Bengali.

The year 1975 was also that of the legendary and immensely popular Hindi film “Sholay”, which played non-stop for five years to house full audiences in a cinema hall in Bombay. “Sholay” proved to be a turning point in portraying the habitual motivation of the heroes of commercial cinema of that time-of which Bachchan was an archetype – and marked the end of the quest for justice of the solitary avenger. Modeled on the “Curry Western” genre with a length of three hours and 19 minutes, it was a profoundly Indianised offshoot of the Hollywood Westerners as they had evolved with the Italian, “Spaghetti Western” directors. (Barnow & Krishnawamy, 1980). The movie is exciting fascinating and revolutionized in its own way the conventions of the “commercial” Hindi film, it oscillated with regularity between moments of extreme tension and instance of tenderness.

The extent to which Bachchan came to symbolise the thwarted aspirations of the plebian urban population became evident when he was hospitalised after an accident while shooting for “Coolie (1983)”. The philosophy of Bachchan’s films during the period he rode the entertainment scene, like a colossus with an unbroken series of blockbusters, was the exact opposite of the tenets of ‘New Cinema’. These frequently supported by government contained enough exposure of social evils and protests against them but their criticism of government was for not implementing the constitution of India, they were not for the overthrow of the constitution itself nor for urging people take the law into their hands despite all their social criticism, they had a firm underplay of faith in democracy.

The 1980s witnessed, the till then television, government-owned, inbred and confined to a small, listless urban audience, suddenly explode on the mass market. Indira Gandhi freed it from governmental resources constraints and allowed programmes sponsored by advertisements to be shown on a large scale. It led to a quantum jump in the quality of programmes and even put some professional shine on the governments own production. The import of television sets had already been liberalized for the Asian games (1982). Now the production of T.V. sets multiplied and the number of sets in the hands of the public increased rapidly at 10 million.

The enormous success of the pro-development soap opera Hum Log, followed by a number of others showed that popularity was possible even without the sex and violence ingredients claimed as essential by the film industry. There is no doubt that T.V was one of the reasons for the decline of cinema. What hit the cinema still hardened with the arrival of the video. Both those media are per force mainly middle class phenomena, since the unit cost is high in relation to the average cinema. The middle class began to stay away from the cinema theatres, and this itself directed the filmmaking more than ever towards the semi-literate and the illiterate urban underemployed and the street urchins.

Video, cable, and even more television were able to profit from deteriorating conditions of movie halls and the insecurity felt by big city dwellers only allowed a large percentage of cinema audiences to stay at home. Even the movie makers began producing a growing number of ‘soaps’ and series for television, as well as sitcoms,

family dramas, romances, religious and mythological films. The Ramayana, Mahabharata and Shankaracharya, conquered the whole of India. (Nandy, 1998).

The 1990s paved the way for the current trend of the Hindi commercial cinema to adapt its features and themes to its mainly youthful public “teenagers” (the bubble-gum hero) and audience too with a plethora of new actors and actresses. The ‘hero’ is no longer a solitary seeker of justice trying to fight society’s evils in the face of a supposedly corrupt political and police system. He is rather a “loser” with traditional views and dreams mainly the romantic conquest of the heroine and a rather inconsequential position in society but possessing all the qualities of seduction of the rich and powerful.

The ordinary citizen-the spectator wanted characters like themselves, without any illusions in the face of corruption, identification with ethnic or religious groups and frauds and dishonesty of all kinds. This was the end of the era of “superheroes”, like Amitabh Bachchan and his various clones in Hindi and regional cinema since the 1970s, the only ‘positive’ heroes of Indian cinema have been found in the new wave (auteur) cinema. Bachchan’s revenge drama was increasingly replaced by the love play of handsome men and beautiful women.

An interesting anomaly existed between the new freedom in film and the absence of it in real life. Dowry deaths, role of money in marriages are not subjects of many films, audience in the theater, mostly givers and takers of dowry do not want to see their sins on the screen. The love enacted between unmarried young men and women is thus fantasizing of freedom before marriages, so limited afterwards by familial pressures.

The 1990s confirmed what had been a growing suspicion in the previous decades. The ‘Art’ cinema lost its high moral ground and the popular, mainstream cinema crept in to nibble at the edges of the vacancy. With secularist politics under attack, new configurations aligned themselves with forces undermining the art film’s support base and its moral validity.

The process found its landmark in the destruction of Babri Masjid in the state of Uttar Pradesh, 1992. It has since then spread its tentacles into the cultural infrastructure that had upheld art cinema’s social concerns as something worthy of

support. Nevertheless as the new religious chauvinism was not acceptable, there was pro and contra forces emerging especially in the popular cinema, always a battle ground for new and old social forces. There was a marked increase in films taking social issues rather than just melodrama. (Dasgupta, 2002).

At the turn of the century, “Lagaan (2001)”, a period film of British colonialism which got an Oscar nomination, “Gadar (2001)” depicting the agony of partition “Devdas (2002)”, stand powerful for different tendencies that underlie Indian society’s complex preoccupation. An astonishing success greeted a simple film dealing with the process, and decorative details of a traditional Hindu marriage, “Hum Aapke Hain Kaun (1994)”, family drama in “Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham” (2002) Today there is a trend to make low – budget film, some without song and dance sequences, thrillers, romance, period films continue to rule. There is an increasing trend to portray the humane and sensitive dimension of the world of crime, underworld and mafias. Along with it there are film which would also bring the dilemma and sacrifice of police and army. This new century may thus signal a change of values in mass entertainment in India a country which is the largest producer of film in the world.

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CINEMA AND SOCIETY IN INDIA

Films afford an opportunity for the expression of the basic meanings inherent in the relationship of human being to each other to their environment and to the society of which they are a part. This is not limited to a passive reflection of those meanings but a dynamic and creative meanings (interpretation) which finds affirmative solution to doubts, alternative reaction to problems and the opportunity to experience vicariously ways of behaving beyond the horizons our personal world.

The cinema being a powerful instrument for the dissemination of ideas and for the stirring of human emotions the very foundations of a future world civilization depends upon whether we understand this medium and make it work for our good. (Shah, 1950). In modern, civilized and machine dominated society man's leisure has been commercialized and the provision of entertainment for spare time hours has become a large scale business. In that business the film industry plays a major role for the primary aim of cinema is entertainment.

Cinema is not only popular it is also par excellence the people's amusement, a) it is one of the cheapest, most easily understood and accessible form of entertainment b) way to escape from humdrum lives into a world of luxury and make believe c) motion pictures appeal to man's unconscious desire.

India is the second most popular country in the world and the largest democracy. Its present demographic trends hold. India will long before be the most populous country. Perhaps more importantly India has a rich and diverse cultural tradition that evolved over 5,000 years. India is a pluralist and diverse in a way that few countries are. As Amartya Sen has observed; "It is not easy to think of another country that has as their country as many flourishing languages and literateurs".

People of India live in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, East and South Africa, Mauritius, the Caribbean, as well as Australia, Europe and North America.

Although the vast majority of Indians settled abroad regard their countries of settlement as home they invariably consider India as their spiritual and cultural home. As Rajadhyaksha and Willeman note, "Fore millions of Indians overseas, a major part

of India derives from its movies”. There are reasons why we should study Indian cinema and there is perhaps no better way of studying Indian culture than through its culture specific cinema.” (Rajadhyaksha and Willeman, 1994).

India is the largest film producer in the world. Mira Reym Binford in her introduction to the Quarterly Review of Film and Video Vol. II (1989) observed. “this special issue is devoted to the Indian Popular Cinema, a national cinema notable for its highly individual development and distinctive form which poses a range of interesting question for the consideration of Western Film scholars”. (Binford, 1989). It is little known in the country, that Indian films are seen in South Asia, South East Asia, East Africa, Australia, Canada, USA Russia. Raj Kapoor one of the most popular actors and directors of the 1950s and 1960s, attained the status of folk hero in certain part of old Soviet Union and elsewhere.

Cinema clearly opens a most useful window onto a culture and brings us intimacy and immediacy unavailable from most other media of communication. Culture has many definitions To Raymond Williams, it is a “whole way of life” and to Geertz “the webs of significances that human beings spin around themselves”. The study of culture reveals to us deeper understanding of the customs, behaviour patterns values, arts and crafts and the practices of everyday life of the people inhabiting that culture.

Cinema not only reflects culture, it also shapes culture. When we consider Indian Films’ we see how they promoted modernization, westernization urbanization, new ways of life, a sense of pan-Indianism secularization, the emancipation of women, and the right of minorities and in particular the relationship between Hindus and Muslims. Even in aspects such as fashions and dress, films aided by such films magazines and fancies have played a central role in Indian society and have generated discussions and influenced public opinion on issues like drugs and violence.

The objective is to locate how the study of the Indian cinema enable us to make sense of the relationship between popular cinema and society. In film studies our attention has been drawn to the complexity of the cinematic experience. It is possible to speak not of one India but many Indias The India portrayed in the classical Indian texts is very different from the India constructed by British travelers

missionaries and administrators and again, from that described by novelists like E.M. Foster and Paul Scott, V.S. Naipul, R.K. Narayan. (Agnihotri,1990) then there is the India cinematized by Western filmmakers like David Lean and Richard Attenborough. All these Indians are different from the one represented by filmmakers who are rooted in the soil and who grapple with day-to-day lives of the people. Indian cinema allows us to study India contrastively from a different and distinct angle of vision.

By studying Indian cinema we can enter productively into the thought worlds and performances worlds of other traditional arts too. For instance, many Indian film directors, from pioneers such as Dadasaheb Phalke to modern directors like Ritwik Ghatak and Kumar Sahani have sought to deploy creatively the visualizations and the colour symbolisms associated with traditional forms of dance and mime, folk and classical music to enhance the communicated experiences. Indian popular cinema has evolved into a distinctively Indian mode of entertainment by imaginatively amalgamating music and dance and the works of directors as Guru Dutt, Raj Kapoor and V. Shantaram bear testimony to the fact that through Indian cinema one can enter the larger world of aesthetics.

Likewise we will also broaden our understanding of genres through study of Indian cinema. There are a number of genres and styles of cinema such as romantic comedies, gangster films, horror films, westerns, melodramas film noir, musicals and historical films. While some of these genres are present in Indian cinema, often as a consequence of the impact of Western films, Indian filmmakers have created genres and styles that are distinctively their own. This is clearly discernible in the popular tradition of filmmaking in India.

As an art form, film is not indigeneous to India in the same way as poetry, drama or dance. It is an importation from the west. (Barnow & Krishnaswamy, 1980). However films quickly became an indigenised art form, appealing to hundreds of thousands of film goers. Today it is the dominant form of entertainment in India of the 900 million people, an average of ten million moviegoers buy tickets everyday to watch their favourite stars. Some of the audience often pay a whole days earnings to sit in the dark for nearly three hours” and “are mesmerized by the slick imagery that carries them into another world where men with super human qualities

successfully conquer all odds, including bad landlords, greedy industrialists, corrupt politicians and sadistic policeman. Women generally are the icing on the cake upholding traditional virtues of virginity devotion to God and family and service to men. Nevertheless Indian filmmakers have framed women as the protagonist so much so that the attributes of “hero” are condensed into her character. (Chakravarty, 1993).

Indian film are closely associated with modernization. At the time of partition in 1947, India appeared as the country less likely to sustain democratic institutions. The social cleavages within India, the relationship between Hindus and Muslims, the linguistic differences, were just some of the issues which threatened not only democratic institution but the state itself. Many writers about the Indian cinema have underlined the important role that Indian films have played in building nationhood. (Chakravarty, 1993). The Hindi film has been seen by some a great unifier and as a means by which the Indian self, the Indian family, the historically shaped patterns of behaviour including inherited belief systems and scale of values are adapting to modern society. The ways that a modern Indian consciousness has emerged find ready articulation in Indian films. So anyone interested in understanding the complex phenomena of modernization can do better than examine the experiences narrated in Indian cinema. (Agnihotri, 1990).

Indian films can afford foreign viewers greater understanding of the different ways in which fundamental issues of life and death are handled. By seeing films from other countries and examining them critically we begin to shed the parochialisms and provincialisms associated with our limited range of experience. By seeing how others in other societies live we examine our own culture with fresh perspectives.

The undercurrents of Indian heritage that have had profound influence on growth of Indian cinema are delineated as follows: - (Dissanayake & Gokulsingh, 1998).

1. Ramayana and Mahabharata: -

The two epics are at the heart of classical Indian poetry drama art and sculptures nourishing the imagination of various kinds of artists and informing the consciousness of the people. They have consequently had a profound impact on the

development of Indian cinema and given it a unique Indian identity. Their influence can be usefully analysed at four levels: themes, narrative, ideology and communication. From the very beginning until modern times these epics have continued to provide Indian filmmakers with plots and themes. The very first Indian film to later themes associated with motherhood, patrimony and revenge are directly traceable to these epics. Despite the fact that Indian cinema was greatly influenced by Hollywood its narrative structures with endless digressions, detours plots with plots, remain unmistakable Indian there again the influence of the Ramayana and the Mahabharat is very clear instead of the linear and direct narratives realistically conceived found in Hollywood films, India popular cinema offers us a structure of narrative which can be most productively be understood in terms of art of story telling characteristic of the two venerated epics.

Considering the question of ideology, despite various attempts at social analysis, highlighting the disparities between the rich and poor, and underlining the need for social justice, it can legitimately be said that Indian popular cinema is committed to the maintenance of the “status quo”. The central ideology underpinning the two epics is one of preserving the existing social orders and its privileged values. As has been observed because the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were ideological employed for the expansion of values and beliefs endorsed by the ruling classes, there is a significant way in which the Indian popular cinema legitimizes its own existence through a reinscription of its values onto those of the two epics.

The important link that exists between the two epics and mainstream India Cinema can also be usefully understood in terms of the idea of communication. The epics were transmitted orally and were closely related to ritual and folk performance. Being at the core of Indian culture, they found articulation in a variety of ways and forms in local narratives. What this promoted was the proliferation of diverse narratives and performances within the solidly established matrix of the epics. Similarly Indian popular cinema can be understood in relation to this analogy between the two epics and their endless performances. The discourse of the Indian popular cinema, as with the epics, has its basic text, and the different movies that are made can be likened to the diverse epic performances and narratives.

Classical Indian Theatre

Sanskrit theatre constitutes one of the richest and most sophisticated expressions of classical Indian culture. It was highly stylized and its mode of presentation was episodic, laying the utmost emphasis on spectacle. In it, music and mime intermingled to create a distinct theatrical expression. It was highly conventional and specific instructions regarding the portrayal of characters. A number of features of classical Indian drama have an interesting bearing on the structure of Indian popular cinema. Sanskrit plays were highly spectacular dance-dramas as opposed to the tightly-organized realistic plays of the west. The idea of theatre, the dramatic presentation and the make-belief of Indian were shaped to a large extent by the nature and structure of Sanskrit theatre, and it is not surprising that the classical theatre exercised a formative influence on the sensibility of Indian filmmakers. Some of the traits of classical Indian theatre that have been identified can be seen in Indian cinema as well.

Folk Theatre: -

For a number of reasons, Sanskrit drama began to decline after the tenth century. Concurrently, numerous dramatic forms sprang up or matured in different provinces which, albeit of an unrefined nature, preserved and embodied the essence of the classical theatrical tradition. The regional folk drama which were basically the work of untutored peasants have one feature in common, in varying degrees of competence and authenticity, they embody in a living form the characteristic features of the classical Indian theatre. An examination of the central features of these regional folk dramas bring to light the fact that they have been inflated by and carry over the style and techniques of the classical theatre. In the use of song and dance, humour, the structure of narrative informing the melodramatic imagination, these folk plays had far-reaching impact on the sensibility of Indian popular filmmakers.

The Parsi Theatre: -

During the 19th century, the Parsis who had gained a wide reputation as talented playwrights and skilful technicians influenced the theatre of both north and

south Indian. The Parsi theatre excelled in historical and social drama. Stylistically, and social drama. Stylistically, the plays displayed a curious mixture of realism and fantasy, music and dialogue, narrative and spectacle and stage ingenuity all combined within the framework of melodrama. The Parsi theatre, which drew upon both Western and Indian forms of entertainment constituted an effort to appeal to the lowest common denominator. These plays bear a strong resemblance to the generality of Indian films of the popular type.

Hollywood

Indian filmmakers very quickly succeeded in adapting the ethos, resources and inventiveness of Hollywood to suit indigenous tastes, sensibilities, and outlooks. Indian filmmakers were fascinated by the technical immenseness and tried to emulate them in creating colourful works of fantasy. Hollywood musicals held a great fascination for many Indian filmmakers. While drawing heavily on Hollywood musicals the Indian popular cinema adopted a different strategy: song and dance sequences were and are used as natural expressions of emotions and situations emerging from everyday life. The Indian filmmakers, while seeking to enhance the element of fantasy through music, dance and spectacle, created the impression that songs and dances are natural and logical ways of articulation of emotion in the given situation. Commercial filmmakers in India also departed significantly from some of the conventions and norms adhered to by Hollywood filmmakers. For example, one of the central tenets of Hollywood filmmaking is to conceal the artifice, the contractedness of the efforts. The Hollywood filmmakers sought to foster an illusion of reality and to encourage ready identification of audiences with characters on the screen. Indian cinema, on the other hand grew out of different roots and there was never strongly felt the need to conform to the “invisible style preferred by Hollywood” so while whole Indian filmmakers were greatly indebted Hollywood, they also departed in significant ways from the work produced by Hollywood film directors.

Musical Television: -

This is of a comparatively new force, making its impact felt somewhere in the 1980s. The impact of music television disseminated through international channels is very evident in Indian popular films made in the late 1980s and 1990s.

The pace of the films, the quick cutting, dance sequences, camera angles that one associated with modern musical television finds clear analogies in modern Indian films. One has only to examine the work of a filmmaker such as Mani Ratnam to recognize this. As modern Indian audiences are more and more exposed to music television programmes and their innovative techniques of presentation, their sensibilities are obviously beginning to be shaped by them. (Dil Chahta Hai, 2002). Naturally, contemporary Indian filmmakers, in order to maintain their mass appeal, are drawing significantly on the techniques of MTV. This is hardly surprising since films are where art and technology meet.

Study of Popular Cinema and Society

India being the largest producer of films, what happens in the Indian filmscape is of great importance to other film producing countries as well. Broadly speaking Indian cinema can be divided into two major categories artistic and popular. (Thoraval, 2000). It has been considered that it is easier to discuss artistic cinema in depth because the criteria of judgement norms of excellence tools of inquiry parameters of the discourse and canons of greatness are already in place, having already been fashioned by Western film theorist and film critic. It is merely a matter of applying them to the Indian context and making due allowance for the specific of Indian culture. The Indian artistic cinema still by and large, follows the path of Western neorealism.

The situation with popular cinema is considerably different. The question is much complex as popular cinema appeals to millions, it is clearly popular in terms of popular sensibilities of culture and society clearly popular cinema is a phenomena of great moment, and to ignore it is to turn a blind eye to an important, segment of Indian culture and topography of feeling Broadly speaking, one can identify three main scholarly and critical approaches to the study of popular cinema (1) The elitist

critics and scholars who are interested in high art, but reject popular art (including cinema) as being unworthy of serious consideration. (Dissanayake & Gokulsingh, 1998).

(2) The Marxists and those inspired by orthodox Marxism who argue that popular cinema has the effect of blunting critical sensibilities curbing revolutionary impulses of the masses and reconciling them to the existing power structure and network of authority.

(3) Group of cultural analysts who have surfaced during the last three decades in Europe and N. America who are unafraid to examine popular cinema in a serious and sustained manner.

Among these analyst, those associated with the Birmigham School of culture in Britain deserve special mention. They have sought to examine different types of mass and popular art in relation to the complexities of response of audience, the way meaning is negotiated and the role of ideology. For example, Stuart hall calls attention to the three forms of audiences response that is dominant negotiated and oppositional.

1. The first is characterized by the acceptance of the mass cultural text at its face value by the audience
2. The negotiated response tends to challenge a particular claim while accepting the general system,
3. The last response seeks to challenge and repudiate the overall message in the interest of the depressed classes. What Halls categorization points to is the fact that the manners in which a given cultural text functions whether it be literature or cinema or theatre, depends not only on the context of the text but also on the social experience and world view of the audience.

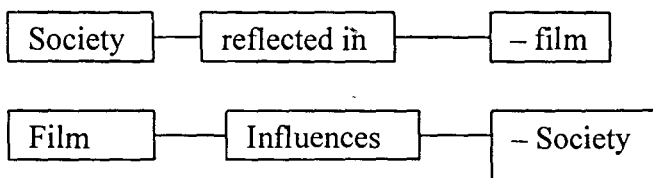
Stuart Hall says that the social role of films and other media of mass communication is the active production of “consensus” in society. (Hall, 1997)./ They perform this role by seeking to construct a definition of reality accepted by the wider society. This is achieved through the process of representation which involves selecting structuring and modeling reality and not merely reflecting a pre-existing

reality. Therefore modern mass media including films are at the centre of the signifying practices that generate meaning and constitute social formation.

We have to recognize films as a site of generation as well as contestation of meaning. Traditionally films were said to reflect society but a more active role is entrusted to the viewer i.e. the generation of meaning. This points out a weakness of traditional Marxist approaches, which have placed great emphasis of the impact of film on society. The process vacated here contradicts the traditional Marxist conceptualization of audiences being homogenized. As a matter of fact neither the films nor the body of viewers should be seen as unified and homogeneous. This springs from the contention that the negotiation of meaning is partly determined by the different social position of the viewers and the semiotic contention that film is a site of interaction of different codes and convention.

Thus, it becomes clear that the reflective function of cinema and the social catalyst function can be seen as two sides of the same coin. The viewer generates the social meaning of film in accordance to with his/her artistic sensibilities and familiarity with the cultural codes that are employed the social vision he/she values, and so on. This very effort at generating meaning results in modification and alterations of the viewers own cultural codes, social vision, values and belief systems this is how films influence society.

Traditionally the relation between film and society was conceptualized as



According to new approach meaning is generated by audience vis-à-vis culture (Kazmi, 1999).

POPULAR CINEMA: THEME AND GENRE

In India a distinction can be drawn between popular and artistic filmmaking tradition. Popular films are the films seen and appreciated by the vast mass of Indian moviegoers. They are largely melodramatic, often musicals, conveying simple clear moral messages: they represent a distinctly Indian approach to cinema as a form of

mass entertainment. The artistic films, which constitute about 10% of the total output, are realistic, often inspired by neo-realism and seek to capture a segment of Indian reality.

It is in popular cinema that we see most vividly the “Indianness” of Indian cinema. In terms of exploration of complex and multifaceted human experiences, depth of psychological motivation and social vision, popular films may be found waiting. However, in terms of popular imagination, they are highly significant with their unique combination of fantasy, unique, songs, action and dance spectacle. Indian popular cinema constitute a distinctly Indian form of mass entertainment.

There are a number of significant themes and subjects that find repeated expression. Romantic love, male friendship, motherhood, renunciation, fate, respect for tradition social injustice are some of the most compelling among them. As with the genres so with the themes a distinctively culture-specific approach is adopted giving these Indian films a characteristically Indian outlook. (Thorval, 2000).

THEME AND GENRE

The Genre of Mythological Films

Mythological films constitute a very important segment of Indian popular cinema. They have their roots in the ancient past, very often as inscribed in epics and scriptures. They depict the action and interactions of gods, demons, and superhuman powers. They are not merely historical, they portray the interface between the past and present. The very fact that these traditional stories are presented in a modern and technological medium like film underlines this. In interesting ways this mythological imagination also informs films based on contemporary experiences. The idea of femininity as represented by Sita and the aspects of alienness and villainy as portrayed in the image of Ravana are not confined to stories depicting episodes from the Ramayana but can also be found in films dealing with modern experiences. (Dissanayake & Gokulsingh, 1998).

Genre of Devotional Films

One of the most noteworthy films of this genre is “Sant Tukaram (1936)” directed by N. Damle and S. Fatehlal, which became the first Indian film to win an award at the Venice film festival. It is about poet saint who lived in the seventeenth century and who holds the villagers enthralled by his songs of devotion. The devotional films appealed to religious cults and sects and their beliefs in rituals. These were immensely popular, always showing occurrences of miracles due to sincere devotion towards God or Guru. They glorified the Indian tradition of followers abiding by the teacher unquestionably and also worshipping with sincerity for years altogether with hope undeterred.

Genre of Social Drama

This genre figured proximately right from the beginning of Indian cinema. The way that social issues are treated is a distinctive flavour characteristically Indian. From “Achyut Kanya” (1936) which explored the issue of untouchability to “Bombay” (1995) which dealt with sensitive issue i.e. relations between Hindu and Muslims in India. Indian cinema has tried to handle problems of terrorism, crime, urbanization, themes of consumerism, marriage, sexuality, children all in different tones and settings. In most of these social dramas with a clear social meaning and message the action unfolds within a framework of melodrama.

Erotic / Romantic Genre

Romance and eroticism have always featured strongly in Indian popular cinema. As with most traditions of cinema in the East and West, romantic films are extremely popular in India and have been so from the very beginning of Indian cinema. Here again, one sees very clearly the shaping hand of culture. Indian film historians observe that in order to understand the true meaning of Indian romantic films we need to reconnect them with tradition. In this regard, the “Laila-Majnu” and “Radha-Krishna” traditions are important. In some popular films such as “Barsaat (1949)” and “Andaaz (1949)” both traditions were present.

The brief discussion of the different genres that go from the popular Indian cinema indicates the importance of reading the cultural inscription found in each. It is these cultural inscriptions that give Indian popular cinema its distinctive flavour.

In Indian popular cinema there are members of readily identifiable characters who already have specific valuations attached to them. The hero, heroine, villain, comic are commonly found in Indian cinema as well as most other popular cinema. However, in Indian cinema there are a few characters who are distinctly Indian in outlook both in their conceptions and in the role they play in propelling the story. The figure of the mother is the most important. She is crucial in the epic, and many classical mythologies and folk tales. Drawing on these resources also modern filmmakers have constructed an image of the mother that is highly visible in Indian cinema she is caring, steadfast in her devotion to the family, nurturing and upholding family values. A common image of her praying in the temple or at home and she epitomizes the virtues of religiosity and spirituality. At times the mother finds herself in very difficult situations, caught as she is between competing loyalties.

TECHNIQUE AND STYLE

Style and technique are as important as the content. The story does not progress in a linear fashion but meanders, with detours and stories within stories. This circular form of narration is commonly found in classical and folk literature song music and dance are significant in conveying the meaning of the story and in generating the desired emotions. Songs fulfill a number of important functions within the film experiences. They generate emotion they underlie moral message, they convey eroticism and sexuality whose overt expression is disallowed on the screen they create the mood for participating in the various episodes. (Dissanayake & Gokulsingh, 1998).

The Hindustani film song is a twentieth century phenomenon no other modern musical form from any part of the globe including jazz can boast of such diversity richness, subtlety and reach. It is the Hindustani or Hindi film song that has cut through all the language barriers in India to engage in lively communication with a nation where more than twenty languages are spoken.

The snide digression notwithstanding, it would be safe had played a pivotal role in Indian cinema in particular since the talkies came to India in 1931. It did not matter whether a social drama, historical adventure, comedy or mythological was being produced songs were bound to be an organic part of the finished film. (Chatterjee, 1995)

In its first phase (1931-45) the Hindi film song was a judicious mixture of well-known classical ragas and folk dances of overtly religion and directly spiritual overtones. With the passing of K.L. Saigal in 1946 it is claimed that the age of innocence came to an end. The second world changed in people's perceptions of the world around them and with that music emerged from major social psychological changes that were coming about. The film song which had till then been a vehicle of tempered civilized emotion in a distantly literary garb, suddenly found itself accommodating the needs of the times. (Chatterjee, 1995).

The holocaust that resulted in the partition also brought about a need for chastity and purity in people's lives. This view was reinforced by the proponents of Aray Samaj who had migrated to India from East Punjab. Ramanand Sagar. B.R. Chopra Devendra Goyal, Raj Kapoor and other. They very quietly and effectively launched the cult of virgin worship. The heroine, regardless of her outer trapping of sensuality had to convey to the viewer her virginal purity: there was no question of her asserting her sensibility.

The song to state the obvious was the most important component of the Bombay film. In it's kernel was hidden the films message the director's true intention. The director who wanted to bring a measure of elegance sophistication and artistic integrity to his work through the songs. Songs sung for the leading lady and occasionally other in the film were vehicles for multi layered thoughts and feelings.

FILM AS AN OBJECT IN SOCIETY

Film technology developed in the capitalist centre, arrived in India during colonial rule and captivated audiences here as it had done elsewhere. It was a part of the movement to promote indigeneous enterprise that the idea of "Indian Cinema" was conceived. Film technology did not arrive in vacuum. There was a cultural

political, social field from within which some people, encountering a new technology of representation devised ways of putting it to uses that accorded with the field. The technology did not bring with it, readymade, a set of cultural possibilities which would be automatically realized through the mere act of employing it. At the same time the technology is not neutral simply sliding into the role assigned to it by the cultural political field it enters. It has its own unsettling reorganizing effects on the field.

As a national cinema it is unlike those of the European countries which are sustained by state support, as part of an attempt to retain a sphere of national activity. The cinemas of India, in spite of significant differences, share a common ground, a set of aesthetic concerns certain dominant tendencies, which show that for from simply remaining in a prolonged state of not-yet-mass Indian cinema had evolved a particular distinct combination of elements, putting the technology to a use that, whether consistent with the camera's ontology or not was consistent enough over time to suggest ideological affectivity.

Indian cinematic institution can be located simultaneously on two overlapping grounds (1) the socio political formation of the modern Indian state, with its internal structure as a determining factor in cultural production and (2) the global capitalist structure within which this modern state and the cinema we are dealing with necessarily enter into relations of heteronously, dependency, antagonism etc. Hindi cinema as an instance of the "ideology of formal subsumption". The binary modernity / tradition, whether it is employed to indicate conflict or complementarily amounts to an explanation "a conceptual or belief system" which regulates thinking about the modern Indian social formation. This binary also figures centrally both thematically and as an organizing device, in popular film narratives. In a social formation characterized by an uneven combination of modes of production only formally subordinated to capital, where political power is shared by a coalition of bourgeoisie rural rich and the bureaucratic elite, the explanatory scheme in question functions as a disavowal of modernity, an assurance can only be ideological in nature operating on an in conscious plane as a guarantee of national identity. It reins counter to the drive,

on another land, towards modernization and the establishment of bourgeoisie hegemony.

Thus the disavowal of modernity on the ideological plane has co-existed with the contrary drive to modernization the project of passive resolution that the state adopted at its birth. Barring moments in recent history when the state attempted to break the stalemate engendered by this coexistence the most significant being the era of authoritarian populism culminating in the internal emergency of 1975, the synchronic dimension of modern Indian history has until recently been centrally defined by the state of uneasy equilibrium between these two dynamics.

If some of these processes are becoming visible now it is perhaps because we are nearing the end of that prolonged stalemate and entering headlong into a full-scale transformation which has already rendered obsolete many of the discourses and institutions of the earlier era. The political spectrum has expanded outwards, with Hindu nationalism at one end appropriating the fragile national project in an attempt to reestablish political unity on a communal foundation, while on the other hand the process of globalization seems to be cording the function of the state as a political constraint on a revitalized rampaging capitalism.

It is against this background that the question of the state as a factor in cultural processes is examined. Cinema has been studied as an institution that is part of the continuing struggles within India over the form of state. Unlike the situation in advanced capitalist countries, where an achieved hegemony manifests itself through the subordination of all internal conflict to the overall dominants of the state formation, the author's argument that in a peripheral modernizing state like India, the struggle continues to take the form of contestation over the state from cultural production too registers this reality through the recurring allegorical dimension of the dominant textual form in the popular cinema.

Indian cinema can be seen as a site of ideological production understood in the spirit of above as the reproduction of the state form. It attempts to identify the social bases of cinematic ideology. It is in these lines that an effective division has been made by Prasad, in the "Ideology of Indian Film", into two kinds of cinema: one is modern, informed by the concern and cores of the modern nation state while the

other is the domain of 'tradition' or oral/folk cultural (depending on whether the interest in cinema is of Indo logical or ethnographic provenance). Some even attribute to the latter a conscious purpose, of asserting its autonomy, difference and even hostility to the 'modern' state.(Prasad, 1998).

Chidanand Dasgupta, in an exploration of "the mind behind the Indian popular film" reveals the power of cinema over the masses. He conforms to the soft model of cinema as myth and while recovering a few exceptions from the general mass, regards Hindi cinema as trash that is worth worrying about. (Dasgupta, 1991). While employing Sudhir Kakares and Ashish Nandy's idea about the Indian psyche, mythology etc he is more hrazen than them in identifying popular Hindi cinema with as "primitive" mass at the core of Indian society while redeeming another segment that is capable of analytical thinking and appreciates realism. The masses inability to distinguish myth from fact is Dasgupta's central thesis and at the end of the long journey through popular cinema he is inclined to be able to return to his realist haven.

Sumita S. Chakravarty deploys some of the metaphore and discourses used by Das Gupta and relocates discussions of Indian cinema with in the context of the modern nation-state emphasizing its "eminently contemporary mode of expression". (Charavarty, 1993). Such a shift away from "traditional accounts of this cinema" is of vital importance in a situation where the "myth" and "Indian-psyche" based interpretation dominates, with their externalist proclamations and while claiming to reveal the truth about Indian cinema actually contribute to the maintenance of an Indological myth: the myth of the mythically minded India. To maintain, as Chakravarty does following Stephen Health, that no film is not a document of itself and of is actual situation in respect of the cinematic institution is not simply to opt for a better approach to Indian cinema it is also to assert the radical contemporarneity of the time we live in the determing effect of the synchronic structure of modern Indian on all or memories of the past. (Chakravarty, 1993).

CINEMA INSPIRED BY RISE OF MIDDLE – CLASS

The middle class cinema is predominantly characterized by an emphasis on the extended familiar network as the proper site of production of nuclear couples.

Even when as in “Rajnigandha”, no such common ground of kinship is suggested the idea of endogamy is strongly inscribed in the narrative delineation of the class. This is because middle class narratives are confined to the world of the upper castes. These castes find themselves dispersed in an urban world, and define themselves as the middle class in the languages of the modern state, the caste identity of this urban society is generally concealed behind the term “middle class”. It is thus the paradoxical thematic of “class endogamy” emerging as a narrative element in films like “Guddi” and “Rajnigandha”.

The middle class, however also carries the burden of national identity on its shoulders. While one sector of the middle class cinema represents a community rammed in by the larger society and devoted to its own reproduction there is another that presents the class’s national profile, its reformist role in the drama of class and religious conflicts within the nation state. Here the realist aesthetic draws upon the tradition of Gandhian melodrama including Bimla Roy’s “Sujata” and “Bandini”, and the films of Hrishikesh Mukherjee, such as “Ashirwad” and “Satyakam”.

Thus, there are two broad sectors of the middle class cinema, of which one is oriented towards asserting the national role of the class while the other is committed to the construction of exclusive space of class identity. The second sector concerned with the consolidation of middle class identity, can be further divided into three sub-types based on thematic differences.

1. The first subtype would include films like Guddi and Rajnigandha, both of which raise the question of threat to class identity posed by the lures of the outside world, to which women in particular are susceptible.
2. The second sub type includes “Abhiman”, “Kora Kagaz” and “Aandhi” where the post-marital tensions of the middle class family arise from the ambitions and individualistic tendencies of one or both the partners.
3. The third sub-type include films which take up the question of the space for middle class existence, the dependence of middle class life on the possibility of privacy. While in “Piya Ka Ghar”, the problem of private space is handled in humorous fashion, Anubhav and Dastak, in a complex mode uncharacteristic of the middle class cinema in general employs the thematic of private space to

explore questions related to the institution of cinema itself as well as the transition of class society.

In all cases, however the women is at the centre of bourgeoisie narrative, the journey towards the recognition of women's subjectivity stands as proof of the arrival of bourgeois conjugality.

For middle class cinema as an institution the thematic of female subjectivity and the problem of domestic space form the basis of a new aesthetic. Homologous to the problem of domestic space and its unresolved conflicts, the middle class segment of the industry, in its products, confronted the problem of its own cultural space. In the populist / socialist political climate the middle class, whose class identity was closely tied to upper-caste status, was more amenable to the exclusivist aesthetic enclosure produced by the narration of domestic conflict than the national integrationist role delineated in the narratives of martyrdom.

Ashish Nandy described popular cinema (Hindi and Urdu) as being a "slum's eye view of Indian politics." (Nandy, 1998). Both the slum and the cinema in India show the same impassioned negotiation with everyday survival, the same mix of comic and the tragic.

Present day heroes, unlike their predecessors, move not from the village or the feudal haveli to the "big city", Bombay but negotiate a "return" after studying in America, starting a big business in London and dancing on location in the Swiss Alps. The vigilante stakes himself, not for the neighbourhood but for the boundaries of an entire nation against the ambiguous threat of terrorism. The Mafiosi coordinates the contours of his "company" on a cell phone with his branch officers in Hong Kong, Nigeria and Dubai. Homes become soft focuses saccharine, with expensive furniture and in house gyms.

There are cataclysmic and tectonic shifts at work in the nature of the 'popular'. The object that Nandy, even till as recently as 1995 could refer to as "cinema" has completely changed in its shape, form and mode of dispersal. At the simplest level, an unproblematic movement from "Bollywood" to "Hollywood" to "Indian" cinema to "modernity" ghettoises a whole host of actually existing sites of

film production and circulation as “regional” in a deeply hierarchical political / cultural geography. (Nandy, 1998).

To move away from these problems cinema has to be shifted from its conception as a purely textual object to being a socially embedded set of practices. This is a shift away from the functionality of cinema as a formal ‘text’ towards its fictive quality, its being “made up” as a form of on the terrain of life, labour and language there we hold these various terms in tension (local/ global. Bollywood / regional, hit / flop highbrow / lowbrow, popular / parallel) concentrating instead on the social contexts within which they circulate and trend are produced.

Arguably the cinematic form is the crucial structure of affect and mode of cultural experience within modernity. How do we start unpacking the seemingly ubiquitous presence of the cinema in our lives? To begin with we might make a distinction here. “Cinema” as a form of public culture is not necessarily the same thing as “film”. The film opens in three intimately related as a technology as a commodity and lastly, as implicated within diverse modes of society. The first two modes can be said to have a certain logi to them, while the last one is the hardest to grasp, each having its own peculiarities.

In considering films as a technological form we come up against question of movement, usage and regulation. Here we might look at the history of film in different parts of India: its entry as a colonial technology and its subsequent domestication, its gradual spatial establishment (in the form of “hall”) in the different localities, and further the ways in which these arrangement change, along with its past and present enmeshing with other technologies the process of production and circulation (the radio, print cultures, television, internet).

At each stage these materialities are intertwined with particular discursive formation: debates on what its effects might be, how such a technology could be used or appropriated by might intersect with perceived “indigenous” aesthetic forms and criteria etc. The node of the state, as a regulatory or “visionary” body is quite crucial here.

At particular junctures how does the state to emission its relation to an emergent technological form. This could be in its use as a pedagogic device in the

construction of an imagined community (as for example, in the “national integration” documentaries and news reels which used to be compulsory screening in the cinema halls till a few years or, in the development of a technological national-cultural “art-form” positioned against the pastiche and “Lack of realism” of the popular (most of the parallel cinema” movement was financially supported by the state, funding has all but disappeared in recent times). A related question to the shift in arrangement along with nature of state alternation is that of policing and control as particular regimes of censorship are formed and claims to “community” and “morality” are negotiated. In each case these relations and regulation are precarious and sustain them, liable to shift across space and time depending on the use to which they are put. (Prasad, 1998).

The question of usage and regulation brings us directly to the presence of film as a commodity “cinema” as a “trade” involving particular forms of transaction, with different use and exchange values. Government Committee reports on films till us, any desire for predictability or completeness in our knowledge in this respect is restricted by sheer size scope of the apparatuses of film production, distribution and circulation in various parts of India.

On a broader terrain: how does film get entangled, both in its creation and in its circulation, with other commodity forms. This could be right from the purchase of a ticket in “black” outside a cinema hall, to inflated film pricing by a producer, or even to the alleged liners with the “mafia” in the production process of many recent films.

The third opening is the implication of film within diverse modes of sociality forms of experience and ways of being in the world. The ways in which people are engaged with film, the relation with technology, commodities or forces of commerce and domain of personal political. These take us into three different directions. To begin with the question of ideology. Here the film writer attempts to speak the unsaid in unmasking what the cinema assumes, foregrounds in the worlds that it depicts. Cinema is involved not only with representation but also ways in which people position or embody themselves. Foucault calls “techniques of the self”. There is a peculiar problem when we approach the sublime almost inexpressible dimension of

“experience”, since in as much as “cinema” is the object of investigation, we are equally exploring ourselves. (Srinivas, 2003).

Madhava Prasad has tried to evoke a thinking that the term “Bollywood” has a wider connotation located in the social and cultural processes. (Prasad, 2003). Cinema today has given us in the last decade a large number of film which may be said to constitute a new genre of sorts, which has been moreover the staple of the new global Bollywood presence. They have figured prominently in the emerging new culture of India, where consumer capitalism has finally succeeded in meaning the citizens away from a strongly entrenched culture of thrift towards a global system of gratification. They have produced yet another variation of the nationalist ideology of tradition and modernity and most interestingly they have relocated what we might call the seismic centre of Indian national identity somewhere in Anglo-America. In other words, it has brought the NRI decisively into the centre of the picture as a more stable figure of Indian identity than anything that can be found indigenously.

The question is could Bollywood be a name for this new cinema, coming from Bombay, but also lately from London and Canada, which has over the last ten years or so produced a new self image for the Indian middle class. This is partly the truth, but there is a much larger popular cinema in general and more particularly the Hindi variety.

Bollywood bears a relation to the structural bilingualism of the Indian nation state. Structural bilingualism is a state of affairs where the multitude of Indian languages are held together by a meta language in which national identity alone can be properly expressed. In this respect Hindi cinema has witnessed a very significant transformation in recent periods. The undisputed role of Urdu as the meta language of Hindi cinema’s ideological work has been challenged by English as it provides the ideological coordinates of the new world of the Hindi film. English phrases and proverbs are liberally used to construct a web of discourse which the characters inhabit. Structural bilingualism has a significance at a different level” today it is the will of the English speaking classes that prevails in giving a names and an identity to the Hindi cinema.

There is a desire to establish Indian cinema as unique and deserving of international acclaim. But one suspects that this is one more postcolonial fixation. One of the consequences of this is that Indian cinema has completely been stripped of any possible historicity. Any hint of historical change would turn of historical change would turn cinema into something without an innate Indian essence, something that changes with time, thus detracting from the key on which this whole thing rests; that Indian popular cinema is based on epic structures puranic themes and Sanskrit dramaturgy. Interestingly while Bollywood tries to capture these very enduring quantities of Indian popular cinema, this object itself is now in the process of undergoing a major transformation, as audiences fragment into class specific segments.

While a lot of writing reflects such Bollywood sentiment use should locate the work of NRI directors like Mira Nari, Deepak Mehta, Gurinder Chaddha and Nagesh Kukknor in this tendency as well. One can imagine that while these filmmakers would frown upon the regressive ideologies of Bollywood, they would join the chorus of appreciation or its energy and exuberance which they try to reproduce in their films. For them, Bollywood seems to offer the possibility of a way of accessing the home culture for their own needs in a globalised world. (Hughes, 2003).

As a variant of international melodrama, Indian popular cinema did not undergo formal transformation comparable to those that signaled the advent of realism, an aesthetic of immanence cut off from the pre modern sources of symbolic meaning. Thus it would be a mistake to regard the thematic elements of Indian popular cinema as reflecting the social realities of their time. Most of the thematic elements are variants of the ones popularized by stage melodrama in 19th century Europe. We need to attend to change at the formal level in order to grasp their relationship to the reality they inhabit. At this level we do see periodic shift and modifications of form. These should be investigation of form not only as a dimension of sensuality, but also in the larger sense as the set of relations between the elements internal to the text as well as those that constitute its habitat: its audiences, its economic structures its ideological matrix etc. Approached from this angle,

Bollywood may well provide insight into the changing modalities of India national identity in a globalising world. (Mazumdar, 2003).

Film culture in Indian context is political for the following reasons it is founded on a democratic promise and it develops around the notion of spectatorial rights. We cannot make sense of cinema in general and film culture in particular if we assume that audiences are either manipulated or resisting collectives both approaches posit an antagonistic relationship between film industry and customers. The film industry plays a crucial role in the emergence film culture. This ought to be fairly obvious once we move away from the manipulation / resistance frame and the non-existent opposition between the industry and viewer.

VILLAGE AND CITY IN HINDI CINEMA

Ashish Nandy in his book “Ambiguous Journey to the city” is concerned with particular, apparently territorial, journey, one that uses the opposition pivot. He argues that over the past hundred years, certain core concerns and anxieties of Indian civilization have come to be reflected in the journey between village and city. (Nandy, 2001). He also contends that the decline of the village in the creative imagination of Indians in recent decades has allured the meaning of the journey drastically. It deals with the changes in the metaphor of journey – in politics, literature, epics, social knowledge and popular culture. The author cover vast ground ranging from the Mahabarata to contemporary films, plays and television serials. Though all of them he seeks clues to an understanding of the Indian heroes as traveller between city and the village.

If Gandhi’s village is Indian public life’s first village, Satyajit Ray’s village is the cinema’s first “Pather Panchali”, may claim is the greatest films ever made on village Indian. (Dasgupta, 1994).

Ray’s genuine encounter with a village was when he started shooting Pather Panchali: “Apur Sansar”(1995).

For a new generation of Indians, the village has increasingly become a demographic or statistical datum Indian economists calculate national income and rural India’s contribution to it. Indian sociologist and demographers know all about

urban and rural differences in education, modern health care and population growth. Policy makers mark out backward areas where new factories are established or dams built as therapeutic measures. (Nandy, 2001).

In the various visions of the future fleeting around in the region there is much that is worth while, but not the vivacity of an imagined village. Today no film producer will finance a project like "Pather Panchali"-but as Nandy would say it is worse that no promising young filmmaker will choose to film something like "Pather Panchali". During the last hundred years, the village has been for the urban Indian the destination of an epic journey of mind from which many have returned richer, deepened, and whole. But it is also true that for others the same journey has been a traumatic descent into a nether world of the self that corrodes physically and emotionally. In either case, its, becomes the obverse of the tragic journey from the village to the city that has been the standard makes of the hero in Indian popular literature and cinema.

The decline in the imagined village has altered the meaning of the journey between the village and city in South Asia. It has become a journey from a disowned self to a self that cannot be fully owned up. The minor contradictions and tensions of the city – as the self which trigger the painful journey back to the village are often the exact reverse of the inner contradictions and tensions of the village, which triggered the fateful journey to the city in the first place.

Apparently the city of the mind does not fear homelessness, it even celebrates homelessness. How ever that merely camouflage the fear of a homelessness which can be cured only by a home outside home. Literature and serious cinema handle the issue as an inner conflict that defines as crisis of personal identity popular cinema sees it as a playful oscillation between the private and public, the financial and neighbourly the rustic and urban.

The mother when not the real mother but is more than one the friend who become a brother and this to prove the point, the self destructive street urchin in love with the millionaires daughter in popular cinema, these are not merely anxieties binding technologies of the self. They supply the cartography of a home away from home in a culture where homelessness despair and the psychology of the outsider are

all relatively new states of minds. The slum and the street urchin defy “the predatory identity” of the city – as Appadurai might identify the process to paradoxically name gate the city more efficiently perhaps even creatively.

The persona who most dramatically symbolized the capacity of the neo from of popular culture to express some of the changing concerns of Indian society – concerns that could no longer be handled within the traditional more enduring art forms was actor, director P.C. Barua. As Chidanand Das Gupta would remark “Barua represented “I” the popular imagination, the final triumph of the world view of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyaya and the special meaning the novelist gave to the journey from the village to the city and sometimes to the tragic illfated and disparate attempts to return to the village from the city. So authoritative was the presence of this mythic journey that all other modes of creativity to define themselves in opposition to it, and to that extent had to remain captive to it. (Dasgupta, 1991).

It was by jettisoning Barua’s model of the hero that a new generation of commercial Hindi films. “Zanzeer” (1973) onwards supposedly made their presence Amitabh Bachchan was to typify that genes for millions of Indians in one blockbuster after another starring Amitabh Bachchan, the hero starts with a personality that is not very different from that of Barua and he is pushed against inclinations and will into becoming a tough hard hearted industrialist of violence operating at the margin of law. Circumstances and a new set of villains bring about this change. The nature of tragedy in these films is different. It is not open self destruction it is a form of active intervention in fate that turns physical, hyper-masculine violence into a new form of self destructive alcoholism and sexual engagement and makes the conjugal presence of women mostly a passive ornamental appearance in a film. It is the self sacrifice of a person who has been forced into the life of violence and who while defeating the villains in a paroxysm of violence dies with the dream of returning to his normal self unfulfilled. Thus, the journey has to end as doomed expedition into a self that has meanwhile become another country.

CINEMA AND THE POOR

Cinema has the effect which is ultimately conservative, for it glorifies poverty while holding that there is hope for a better future. (Dickey, 1993).

Cinema suggests that life is fine now, in no need to change since the poor already possess the best aspects of life (morality and strength of character) and simultaneously that present difficulties will soon resolve without effort and be replaced by abundance. Thus the image does not so much replace reality and fantasy (future) Pleasure is intensified by the simultaneous offering of contradictory utopias, by the understanding that even if everyday world does not turn out to be perfect, the future will and nice versa. Viewers are not urged by film, either collectively or individually to create a utopia in the real world rather in a medium where even the realest reality is somewhat fantastic, the activity and pleasure of the individual viewer consists of seeking out the utopian mage of self. Viewers are active participants in the construction of a spectacular image that both represents than and allows them to escape who they are.

The Hindi film or cinema as a structural whole has my myriad strands of relationship with the society. It is not an entirely autonomous space, rather made by directors acted out by stars and peopled by characters representing various norms. There is but one economy which stands an its own terms. Films can survive in public memory on their strength of their dialogue, music or single character. Thus a film is the sum of its parts when it is a hit and when it is not each part stands alone.

CONCEPT OF GOOD AND EVIL IN INDIAN CINEMA:

The concept of evil and social order have been undergoing a tram formation as a consequence of diverse social and cultural factors. Wendy O' Flaherty has pointed out, "The theodicy that is developed in Hindu mythology demonstrates a more popular, general, and spontaneous attitude towards evil than may be found in the more complex arguments of the Hindu theologians. In traditional Hindu culture, evil was perceived as an unwholesome force. In the case of India, the relationship between self and social order was not a simple one where evil was seen as negative and goodness as positive. As has been pointed out the gods were responsible for the

creation of evil for a variety of reasons: in traditional Hinduism, because dharama is only possible and valuable and adharma exists to act as a foil to it; in mythology dealing with ascetics, because the gods are afraid that human beings will acquire too much power and overcome them, and in devotional mythology because God wishes to come down to the level of evil and to participate in it with the intention of liberating mankind. So in Indian culture, while the negativity of evil was recognized, it was also valued as a force necessary for the maintenance of the social order.

It is against the background of this treatise that the three melodramas of Indian cinema, *Kismet* (1943), *Awaara* (1951), and *Sholey* (1975) are discussed. (Dissanayake, 1993). According to traditional Indian aesthetics a hero in a play had to be handsome, courageous, virtuous, of noble birth, as opposed to the villain, who presented the exact opposite set of attributes. This distinction, with minor modifications is found not only in classical theatre but in folk theatre as well what is interesting is that the heroes of the three films represent a comingling of the attributes of the hero and his antagonist, as enunciated in classical treatises and given expression in traditional works, popular and folk and classical.

Kismet (1943): The 1940s witnessed a India seeking to come to terms with the forces of modernity at a mass level, and this necessitated a rethinking of traditional values, and the morphology of cultural heritage. Produced in the year 1943 *Kismet*, in its unique way reflected the preoccupation with this issue. The social world in the film is depicted as being rapidly modernized on the one hand and on the other trying to cling to tradition and comforting cultural memory. The new forces of are seen as disruptive. The valorization of fate in the affairs of humankind also testifies to the hankering after tradition and well traversed paths of human meaning. Therefore, what we find in this film is a combination of forces drawn from tradition and modernity the way it was to be found in the wider society. The film seems to be saying that evil is undoubtedly a product of social order, but that there is a traditionally ordained higher scheme of things in terms of which evil can be explained and domesticated.

Awaara (1951): in the 1950s Hindi cinema was characterized by an outgrowth of the city that was beginning to spread out in post independence India and hence, the city became the locus of action, and the tops of narrativity in many of the film

produced in this period. The city was reflecting the rich upper classes enjoying the benefits to the newly found opulence, while the poorer classes were struggling to eke out a living in dark slums against severe odds, presented a socially generated binarity and character types that scriptwriters and film directors were quick to transform into filmic images. *Awaara* shows the social conflict through the main characters. The questioning of social order in the film such as it is does not result in challenging its basic tenets or a widening of the horizon of discourse.

Sholey (1975): The social scene and sensibilities of the people in India had changed appreciably by the 1970s. As Iqbal Masud writes, “Indian in the seventies became a good place to scope from. War in 1971, social unrest; emerging a weak coalition government, the restoration of the mainstream party; the steadily increasing inflation eroding the power base of the old middle class, the rise of the new rich – brash robber baron; the proliferation of the urban poor in the sprawling slums; their steadily growing links with the mafia – smugglers, drug traffickers and plain criminals who connected at the other end to the nouveau riche.” (Masud, 1995).

India was increasingly being caught up in the world system, the forces of late capitalism, were beginning to enter the rural societal framework. The entire film constitutes a spectacle of evil – socially grounded, self generated, and irrevocable “*Sholey*” underlie the need to reexamine the parameters of social order as a way of understanding pervasive and mindless violence, and eventually eliminating it. Hence, here we find a new dialectic between evil and social order, which urges a rethinking of the nature of society as it comes to grips with late capitalism. In this film the violence seems to invest the brutal, the vicious, and the hideous with an aesthetic values violence becomes the lynchpin of the signification system of the outsiders and the inarticulate. The sanguine faith in the existing social order is seriously questioned. Though evil they are reaching out to a new social order. The film by burning up the exiting social order to make the world a better place to live the film is reaffirming the positive function of evil insisted on by traditional Hindu mythology.

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A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF INDIA CINEMA

Films, like all arts, possesses three moments (i) of commodity (ii) of technology and (iii) of ideology. Techniques of film making are confounded with marketing strategies or audience responses, whilst both the latter are constantly jumbled up with Weltanschauung of the film directors and producers. (Purohit, 1990).

Sociology is concerned with all the three moments i.e. there is a sociality of film Technology, sociology of film as commodity and sociology of film as Ideological expression. The socioeconomic and political cultural aspects of manufacture distribution exhibition and packaging of Indian films involves analyses of the star system, of the prevalent musical operatic format of the sex and violence formula and of the narcotic masala mixture that is designed to meet mass cravings for affluence.

When considering the sociology of Indian films the first aspect to be noticed is that neither term of the equation represents a tabula rasa. Neither sociology nor Indian films are blank states on which we may begin to write anything we like. Both already exist amidst class struggles and much has been scribbled on both slates by the combatants. A new comer has to first erase before he can record his own contribution.

Common sense holds that things generally have only one meaning and that this meaning is usually obvious inscribed on the face of the objects we encounter. The world is pretty much as we perceive it and our way of perceiving it as the natural, self-evident, one "Reality is something out there a fined order of things which language merely reflects". (Kazmi, 1999).

The assumption is that there is a natural bond between world and thing, our language lays bare for us how the world is and this cannot be questioned.

STRUCTURALIST LANGUAGE

Structuralism severely attacked empiricist and rationalist view. It argued that meaning was neither a private experience nor a divinely ordained occurrence, but was the product of certain shared system of signification. The confident bourgeois belief that the isolated individual subject was the fount and the origin of all meaning was

challenged by the structuralists. They maintained that language predated the individual and was much less his or her product than he or she was a product of it. Meaning was not natural, it was constructed meaning was not something which all men and women everywhere intuitively shared and then articulated. In their various tongues and scripts, what meaning you were able to articulate depended on what script or speech you shared in the first place. Thus, as Saussure insisted language is fundamentally social. The individual can only think and speak by first situating himself herself within the language system. (Nicholas, 1985).

Now insofar as all social life every fact of social practise is mediated by language, it enters fully into material and social practise. Its distribution and usages will be fundamentally structured by all the other relations of the social formation which employ it Vygotsky therefore, insists that language like all other social phenomena is “subject to all the premises of historical materialism”.

Arising from these considerations we must bring our study of culture, mass culture and mass media, in order to undertake, what Stuart Hall calls, “a sustained work of theoretical clarification.” (Hall, 1985). This is necessary for two reasons (a) because these terms are generally collapsed into one another and used interchangeably thereby further obfuscating their real meaning, (b) because popular culture as it is defined in literature existing in this field, has been fully incorporated within the hegemonies discourse, its oppositional connotations neutralized and absorbed thereby precluding any possibility of its being used in a counter hegemonic way. For radical criticism therefore, it is imperative to extricate it from this kind of articulation and to situate it within a counter hegemonic discourse.

In conventional wisdom “popular culture, like mass culture is something which is opposed to and distinct form “high culture”. The different constituents of popular culture like T.V. Radio, best sellers magazines, pop music / art and popular films etc. still bear, to a considerable extent the lingering stigma of cultural inferiority which long prevented them from meriting any serious academic consideration.

The traditional way of treating the popular arts has been in effect to deny that they are arts at all, or at least not art in the same sense as the high arts. This perception is not something new. It goes back to Plato. In Plato’s Gorgias, Socrates

arrived at a fundamental distinction between arts which are rational methods for using true knowledge to good ends, and non arts or knacks as Socrates call them, which are capable of moving the mind through pleasure. However, these knacks are irrational because they concern not truth but what pleases. (Kazmi, 1999). Thus, they are practiced by a combination of insisted and trial and error and cannot, like arts, be taught or meaningfully discussed. As example of knacks as opposed to arts. Socrates distinguishes cookery from medicine. Both concern themselves with diet. However, where medicine prescribes not what pleases. But what doctor's knowledge tells him is the best for the body to eat, the cook seeks primarily to please irrespective of the consequences on health.

Most modern critics have adopted this Platonic distinction between art and knack to distinguish between 'high' or 'serious' art from the popular' or mass' arts. The other distinction that is sought to be made is about their patronage. High art is supposedly patronized by the 'cultured', the polite and cultivated. It is the patronage and preserve of elite. Pop art, on the other hand is accessible to liked and consumed by the masses generally used in a pejorative sense. The notion of popular arts have evoked sharply divergent reactions from critics. Some like Shils have hailed popular culture. According to him, "Many of the and stories which regale the vulgar have a long history hidden from those who tell and enjoy them-they express some thing essential in life: (Kazmi, 1999).

Before the advent of mass culture and mass media the position was fairly simple. The culture of primitive folk or feudal societies was transmitted by personal and simple contact within the framework of communities. The population involved in culture communication at any given time was invariably small, since the personal, face-to-face element was absolutely essential to it. Thus popular folk culture grew directly from the people who enjoyed it folk art was transparent and grew from below.

It is true that poplar culture understood in its original sense as "belonging to the people" and therefore as akin to folk culture is now no more sought. In the age of mechanical reproduction where the mass media occupy a dominant position the idea of a culture growing from below, transmitted by personal and simple contact growing

directly from the people who enjoy it is simply not possible. All culture is now conveyed by mass media.

CINEMATIC GENRE: Art and Conventional in reality the art cinema are not “standing outside genre” but participate in a well defined genre with its own distribution and exhibition system, from the art houses to the metropolis to the 16 mm film club circuit. There has been much hyped difference between art cinema and standard cinema consisting of action film, pornography and all else. The ‘higher’ sentiments of art films may cater to a highly schooled audience, but the audience nonetheless consumes those film in a quite conventional manner. They admire or disparage what they take to be an authoritative cinematic representation. If the film confuses them they accuse it of obscurity. Such responses are different in degree but not in kind from where millions of viewers either greedily consume or spit out the images set before them.

The standard genre film can be equated with the “readerly text” excoriated by Ronald Barthes in *s/z*. (Barthes, 1985). Such a text permits little audience mobility, as we are assigned our place in observing a spectacle unroll universally before us. The audience is merely a relay in a process that finds the text essentially reading its self. Our collusion is demanded as we put together the logic of the narrative, identify with the proper characters, invest the text with conventional values and appreciate the clever twists and turns it make on route to a satisfying conclusion in which all questions are carefully put to rest.

In Barthes break down, there are also what he calls “plural texts” seemingly coherent narratives which nevertheless invite and reward many even contradictory interpretations. Thus while the readerly texts are closed the plural texts are open to different readings from different vantage points.(Barthes 1985).

Barthes final category is the writerly text which rejects any attempt at coherence, which subverts the very project of authoritative meaning. It invites and involves the audience in the process of writing the text. Thus the films of this genre invite the viewer to judge their value and use.

Conventional cinema as contrasted to innovative or ‘art’ cinema refers to popular and commercial cinema. A conventional cinema is one which restates in an

intense form, values and attitudes already known, which stress the repetition or performance of something already known rather than the creation of something new, which guarantees that what is experienced in one film will not be very different from what has been experienced in most others. It is a cinema which has adopted a number of conventions in context and form that it has retained till today. The role of women, bliss of domesticity, the pleasures of poverty, the ability of the individual hero to effect changes in society, the nefarious deeds of the villains are some of the staple diet on which the cinema thieves. So too with form. The development of conventional patterns of composing and cutting images to create the chronologically continues spatially coherent suspenseful but finally resolved series of events is the structure of most conventional cinema.

The “classical narration” represented by this cinema is typically identifiable by tight causality, psychologically motivated, goal oriented character and the conventions of the cinema are recognized by the audience and such recognition is indeed a pleasure. They guarantee coherence by institutionalizing conventions i.e. sets of expectations with respect to narrative process and narrative closure which may be subject to variation but which are never exceeded or broken. (White, 1986).

The cinema ensures that the spectator will always know that everything will be made right in the end, everything will cohere, that any threat or any danger in the narrative process itself will be contained. (White, 1986).

However, this does not mean that all conventional films are the same. If this were true, there would not be enough difference to generate either meaning or pleasure. Hence there would be no difference. Difference is absolutely essential for the success of these films. As Laclau stressed, Repetition demands the new. However, repetition and difference are themselves not separable either as “entities” or even as tendencies they function as a relation. There is hence not repetition and difference but repetition and difference but repletion in difference or better still, difference in repetition. Some of the difference between innovation and conventional cinema are as follows: -

Characteristics of Conventional Cinema: (Kazmi, 1999).

1. Canvas is spectacular, events larger than life 70 mm.
2. Focus on heroic extra ordinary character.
3. Mode of fragmentation is to highlight the dramatic.
4. Closed world, clear beginning and clear end.
5. Artificial lighting and sets.
6. Reality trapped and closed.
7. Complete, coherent world represented.
8. Bright, glamorous lighting.
9. Unidimensional, black and white characters.
10. Movement from long short to medium short to general to particular.

Characteristics of Innovative Cinema:

1. Deals with ordinary events and ordinary people.
2. Underplays the dramatic and focusses on real
3. Open and actual film is just a frame, lots before and after.
4. Natural lighting and sets.
5. Ambiguity of reality remains.
6. Window to the world, not complete world in terms of every beginning and a happy end.
7. Interplay of light and shade.
8. Multidimensional and more complex characters.
9. Movement is reversed what is important however is to realize that there is no external valuation or inherent quality by which one might be preferred over the other.

While innovative cinema operates within the broad parameters of the narrative structures, yet in its choice of themes, in its mode of articulation, and presentation in its use of cinematic techniques, in its set of concerns it is different from the conventional cinema. Privileging one kind of cinema over the other depends on one's

worldview, the vantage point from which he/she 'sees' the films and ones ideological and theoretical construct.

DOMINANTE THEORIES AND CRITIQUE

HYPODERMIC THEORY: Views mass culture as injections of propaganda or socialization into a totally passive audience. It is the present day equivalent to Marx's "opiate of the masses".

THE SELECTIVE PERCEPTION THEORY: states people select from what they see in a way controlled by their own perceptions, prejudices and performed opinions etc what we see in a strong function of the mental set which we impose on the phenomena.

Lutze argues that commercial Hindi films cater to ideas pershaped in the minds of the public and by meeting their expectation and anticipation they do their utmost to impress a majority of people. This is a variant of selective perception theory. (Lutze, 1984) Nikhat Kazmi is supportive of the hypodermic theory. For her "cinema is the medium that shapes ideologies and fashions personalities". (Kazmi, 1996).

Anil Saari combines the hypodermic and selective perceptions theories. He believes that though mass media have the ability to introduce the common folk to new direction in life, they cannot introduce a greater rationality than which already exists within society. Indeed as he says, the media must place themselves at the lowest level at which certain mores and values are commonly accepted. (Saari, 1984).

Arjun Appadurai takes recourse to the selective perceptions theory while providing a critique of the hypodermic theory. Thus he says "contrary to the theory of mass media a as the opium of the masses, there is enough evidence to show that the consumption of mass media has produced among ordinary people; its own instruments of agency in the forms of irony selectivity of resistance". (Apadurai, 1996).

Rustom Barucha's thesis is firmly located in the Hypodermic Theory. He argues that "within the emerging malestrom of media forces in India, we find that our

thoughts are being thought for us in ways that would make the indoctrination of traditional authority figures almost mild in comparison. (Barucha, 1994).

Ideological Role of Cinema: -

Unlike innovative cinema conventional cinema is concerned with the values, attitudes and beliefs of the subordinate classes but to argue its apologists have that this is something which is positive in itself is problematic. Patronizing common sense as meaningful on its own or by condemning it as primitive and irrelevant, both tendencies lead to the same conclusion. In both case further development of subaltern consciousness becomes impossible.

That is why Gramsci rejects both the tendency to ignore the subaltern percepts or the patronize them uncritically. (Gramsci, 1973). It is this which would help us to critically evaluate the nature and social function of both innovative and conventional cinema. This brings us to Gramsci's pivotal notion of hegemony exists when a ruling class is able not only to coerce a subordinate class to conform to its interest but exerts a total social authority over those classes and social formation as a whole. This is only possible if this class renounces a strictly corporatist conception, since in order to exercise leadership it must genuinely concern itself with the interests of those social groups over which it wishes to exercise hegemony.

The other two important concepts are Althusser's concept of "interpellation" (Althusser 1977) and Laclau's concept of "populism". (Laclau, 1987). Althusser argues that Ideology acts as function in such a way that it reveals subjects among individuals or transforms the individual into subjects by the very precise operation which he calls a "interpellation" or hailing. This suggests that all ideological formation have an aspect which catch our attention or attract us; we recognize that we are being addressed, because we understand the call on our attention and realize that it is directed at us.

Laclau following Gramsci believes that a class becomes hegemonic not through its capacity for sheer domination, but through its ability to interpellate member of its own class and the members of the class is seeks to dominate. It does this by appropriating a vision of the world and diverse cultural elements of the

dominated classes but in forms which carefully neutralize any inherent or potential antagonism. (Laclau, 1987).

Conventional cinema works by reflecting and expressing the 'popular' element its feeling, percepts and "common – sense". It operates by transforming these elements at large in the culture not though inventing or imposing arbitrary materials on a stunned and passive audience. This model helps us to understand that while conventional cinema certainly plays a role in securing legitimization of the ruling class, it does not do this by luring the masses into these ideas – with or without unwitting complicity of their own unconscious processes.

Rather conventional cinema works by appropriating meaningful elements already extant in the culture at large – as its raw materials and transforming them in such a way that they express a ruling class hegemonic principle. As J. Collins succinctly puts it "Popular films is the dominant or hegemonic ideology writ in celluloid (1989) (Collins, 1989).

In other words conventional cinema helps in the establishment of the hegemony of the ruling class, not through its capacity for sheer domination or deception but because of its ability of appropriating vision of the world and diverse cultural elements of the dominated classes transforming which carefully neutralize any inherent or potential antagonism to the existing system. (Dyer, 1977).

It is precisely because of this that this kind of cinema is popular since it constantly interpellates the member of the dominated classes, both through its contents and cinematic techniques that it employs. Whether this interpellation is financial religious or political it is constantly referring to expressing and reflecting the feelings, emotion and worldview especially of the dominated classes.

Conventional cinema cannot be dismissed as trivia. To label it as escapist mere entertainment, fantasy oriented is to misunderstand its essential nature and function. It is to miss out and ignorer the reasons for its hegemonic position and the ideological role that it performs. Thus conventional films do not simply reflect the social world but actively constrict a coherent version of social reality within which ideological tensions can be contained and resolved. As Richard Dyer has argued media images are both produced by, and help to produce the sum of social knowledge

with which we map society and make sense of its. (Dyer, 1977). And since this constriction is made of “preferred reading” rather than excluded meanings it is only one-sided representation which is nevertheless projected as the only authentic reading of that phenomena.

Conventional Indian cinema though it uses popular interpellation focuses on the concerns and world view of the dominated and operates from the perspective of the subalterns speaks in their language, engages with the ideological tensions of the time, and has for long been successful in establishing its hegemony. (Prasad, 1998). Yet instead of increasing the area of freedom of the people it seeks to restrict it instead of being counter hegemonic it is fully integrated into the hegemonic discourse, instead of sharpening and developing contradiction it seeks to paper them over. In other words, through highly complex and devious, means, it privileges “preferred” meanings over excluded meanings, thereby reinforcing the “given” of system, and absorbing or referencing out all potentially oppositional connotations.

In this way conventional films strive and to a certain degree succeed in framing all competing definition of reality within their range, bringing all alternatives within their horizon of thought. They set the limits – mental and structural – within which subordinate classes “live”, and make sense of their subordination in such a way as to sustain the dominance of those ruling over them. (Prasad, 1998). Certainly much of the success of the capitalist hegemony comes from exclusivist claim to those elements in the culture that are socially meaningful, and its transformations of those elements into the basis of the continued appeal of the existing social order.

Conventional cinema constantly takes up the problem of society as its raw materials but articulates them in such a way that oppositional and subversive connotations are neutralized and absorbed so that what comes out is a sanitized valorized resolution of all contradiction. In this way, by displacing the fundamental issues, it shields the system from any kind of radical attacks, thereby reinforcing and perpetuating the status quo.

What would be the appropriate form most suitable to popular cinema Even though Brecht’s epic structure is theoretically the ideal democratic form yet the chances are that it will not be received by the people especially the subalterns sense it

is too intellectual to be easily understood. Moreover the concept of distancing in cinema is not very feasible. The experience of watching a movie inverses a spectator in a temporal sequence. The cinema, despite the importance it gives to spatial organization and visceal iconography, is an art which depends for its articulation on time: a segment of usually around two and half hours, is marked off by a very strong caesura at either end, giving the spectator a sense of closure.

It would therefore appear that in the cinema we are subjected to a particularly intense organization of time within a formal structure which is 'closed' but in a sense also circular, we are 'captured' in order to be 'released' willingly undergoing a fixed period of 'imprisonment'. (Hayden, 1986).

This means that when we are watching a film – a pressure is generated which by its very nature has a strong psychic component and which would seem to demand some form of manipulation and catharsis by way of projection, transformation and discharge.

The consequences of this are significant: communication between film and audience may depend vitally on the way this field of force establishes itself, and it may be that no communication is possible if the energy flow from the spectator finds no appropriate channel.

The spectator is pinned to his seat and only has the screen to look at causes impulses to rise which demand to be compensated transferred and managed, it at this level that style, ideational context, causality narrative sequences, plot themes points of view, identification and emotional participation enter the viewing situation.

It is because of this we feel that there is a very strong case for the narrative dramatic structure – a structure which while working with fictional dramatic or "illusionist" means would embody a very conscious manipulation of audience response. Recent theories, such as Hayden White, drawing from literary studies point to the production of narrative as the basic function of culture. He discusses the relationship between narrative and culture in broad terms, acknowledging the primary role of subjectivity and desire in the process of "making sense" of the world of constructing a sense of order that is both "out there" and needs to be fulfilled at the same time.

What wish is enacted what desire is gratified by the fantasy that real events are properly represented when they can be shown to display the formal coherence of a story? In the enigma this wish this desire, we catch a glimpse of the cultural function of the narrative discourse.

Narratives therefore make sense of the world too, but they invite the investment of the subject desire in their progressive unfolding: as scripts certain external coercive power but nevertheless require the subjects agency for their fulfillment. (Doraiswamy, 1994). Thus, whenever for some reason or other the energy and the defensive mechanism of the viewing situation are not managed by a film or when tension is not 'objectified' in terms of conflict, suspense etc. the audience often produces "fall out" reactions, such as restlessness, aggressiveness, or a feeling of boredom or claustrophobic. This suggests that such a film is at odds with the psychic matrix, and therefore fails to make phatic contact with the audience. No film therefore, encounter a neutral audience, but a tissue of expectations and potential stimuli – responses.

Realizing that cinema being a mass medium is qualitatively different from painting or poetry film makers are getting sensitized to the need of making audience friendly films. And to interpellate more and more people, they are getting wise to the need to appropriate elements of conventional cinema – use of strong narrative with its contradiction and closures, good music, songs star cast etc. but rearticulating them in opposition to the dominant discourse, thereby demystifying and dismantling it.

“CINEMA” WITHIN “SOCIAL” FRAME:

Cinema has to be shifted from its conception as a purely textual object to being a socially embedded set of practices. This is a shift away from the functionality of cinema as a formal 'text' towards its fictive quality its being made up as a form on the terrain of life, labour and language. Here we hold these various terms in tension (local/global, Bollywood/ low brow popular / parallel) concentrating instead on the social contexts within which they circulate and travel and are produced.

Arguably the cinematic form is the crucial structure of effect and mode of cultural experience within modernity. How do we start unpacking the seemingly

ubiquitous presence of the cinema in our lives? To being with we might make a distinction here” ‘Cinema’ as form of public culture is not necessarily the same thing as ‘film’. The film opens out in three intimately related directions: as a technology, as a commodity and lastly as implicated with in diverse modes of sociality. The first two modes can be said to have certain logic to them, while the last one is the hardest to grasp. Each has its own politics. (Lal, 1998).

In considering film as a technological form we came up against questions of movement, usage and regulation. Here we might look at the history of film in different parts of India: its entry as a colonial technology and its subsequent domestication, its gradual spatial establishment (in the form of the hall) in different localities and further, the ways in which these arrangements change, along with its past and present enmeshing with other technologies in the process of production and circulation (the radio, print cultures, television, internet).

At each stage these materialities are intertwined within particular discursive formations: debates on what its effects might be, how such a technology could be used or appropriated by different social actors, how it might intersect with perceived “indigenous” aesthetic forms and criteria etc. The mode of the state, as a regulatory or “visionary” body is quite crucial here.

At particular junctures how does the state envision its relations to an emergent technological form? This could be in its use as a pedagogic device in the construction of an imagined community (as for example, in the national integration documentaries and newsreels which used to be compulsory screening in the cinema halls till a few years back) or in the development of a technological national – cultural “art form” positioned against the pastiche and ‘lack of realism’ of the popular (most of the parallel cinema movement was financially supported by the state funding has all but disappeared in recent times. How do these arrangements shift as the nature of state alters?

A related question is that of policing and control as particular regimes of censorship are formed and claims to “community” and “morality” are negotiated (as certain images or narratives are classified as “obscene” or inflammatory”). In each case these relations and regulations are precarious achievements, requiring work to

produce and sustain them, liable to shift across space and time depending on the uses to which they are put.

The question of usage and regulation brings us directly to the presence of films as a commodity “cinema” as a trade involving particular forms of transaction, with difference in use and exchange values. Government Committee reports on films till us, any desire for predictability or completeness in our knowledge in this respect is resisted by the sheer size, scope of the apparatus of film production distribution and circulation in various parts of India.

On a broader terrain cinema is involved not only with representation but also ways in which people position or embody themselves. Michel Foucault calls “techniques of the self”. There is a peculiar problem when we approach the sublime, since cinema is the object of investigation, we are equally exploring ourselves. (Singh, 2003).

CINEMA AS A FORM OF NARRATIVE

The distinctive feature of the emerging academic and professional institutionalization of film study in India is the prominence now given to the popular commercial cinema, so long denied legitimacy as an object worthy of study.

In the clearest sense, popular film is treated as an entry point for understanding the legitimization of social and political power through narrative forms commanding the widest of social constituencies. Such approaches can range from an instrumentalist treatment of the popular cinema to a more generous assessment which reveals the contradictory character of the views and experience it channels.

Film study has begun to feel the need to define a coherent domain in terms of archival resources: the films themselves document on cinema production, distribution and exhibition information about the cinemas personnel at various levels, the geography of cinema in society, both its urban geography as well as the geography of itinerant cinema. (Vasudevan, 2000).

EXITING PARADIGMS:

A dominant narrative has governed this understanding of the relationship between elite and popular forms in the history of Indian cinema. The tale runs like this. Following a brief inception which the films were exhibited as a scientific curiosity filmmakers introduced the genre of mythological film to cater to popular taste. Subsequently in alliance with literary culture a middle class social cinema or reform evolved in the sound period, one at variation with other genres, such as the stunt, mythological and costume films which catered to the plebian film goer.

These currents continued with greater or lesser influence after independence and into the 1950s, the heyday of a nationalist ideology, with socialist aspiration. From this period too, a more specifically art enterprise, one attuned to cinematic language emerged, supported towards the close of the 1960s with systematic state investment in art cinema. The 'parallel' cinema emerged as the object of middle class spectatorship especially in the wake of the "massification" of the commercial form into an encompassing and alienating package or spectacle, action and titillation.

This stock account is echoed in analyses with very different agenda. A very interesting contrast is that between the writings of Chidanand Dasgupta and Ashis Nandy who could be considered the forerunner of current discussions on the politics of popular cinema. (Dasgupta, 1991). (Nandy, 1998).

The former one of the founders of the Calcutta film Society in 1948 along with Satyajit Ray, has written extensively on cinema and mode films as well with a few exceptions Das Gupta's writings were devoted to promoting a cinema of rational perception and reformist sensibility.

In his book on popular cinema "The Painted Face" Das Gupta view's the spectator of popular cinema as incapacitated by premodern cognitive features, unable to distinguish between screen image and reality. (Dasgupta, 1991). Believing what he sees, the mass spectator is eminently susceptible to a totalitarian politics founded on the image of the leader. In his understanding this weakness is dramatically underscored by the way film is put to political use in certain regional cultures as in Tamil Nadu Andhra and less successfully in Karnataka. Here the contemporary popular cinema seems to signpost an impending and parosysmic political collapse as

the political system careens away from its rationalist origins in the epoch of Nehru towards a demagogic form.

Nandy analyses the cultural conflict between the rationalist, modernizing state and traditional local communities, suggests that the commercial cinema retains the traces, however distorted of affiliation to forms of community, cultural languages and moral concerns endangered by the homogenizing imperatives of modern civilization. (Nandy, 1998). The cinema provides a fictive arena in which the homogenizing imperatives of modern civilization. The cinema provides a fictive arena in which the depredations wrought by modernity can be worked out and imaginary compensation rendered to the victim.

A shared characterization of the spectator generates two entirely different political positions, indicating that different values and theoretical inclinations do not necessarily lead to differences in mode of description. At the root of this paradox is the tendency of both writers to describe the mass entertainment film as grounding its characters in certain stable ways of organizing subjectivity. The self is not based on individual self-perception but is dependent on others and the formations for its psychological and moral coherence central to a character's subjectivity is the social form of the family and the idioms of filial duty and obedience that arises from it. In turn, the decision taken by characters derive from a larger moral frame reposed in figures outside them especially in certain iconic figures such as the mother.

The absence of the modern individual in popular cinema is, therefore central to the overlap between arguments of both. The most significant correlation here is the perceived lack of a critical outlook in the subjectivity retained by the mass film.

The categories of the traditional and the modern need to be placed more contextually against the historical and institutional condition which produce these opposition. The state as it evolves policies of censorship, taxation and institutional formation, is an influential player in the processes which define the status of cinema as a cultural institution. The government representatives, intellectuals and an interested public discussed how the cinema could be shaped to nurture desires for a "traditional" and "authentic" India while fulfilling the imperatives of a modern national identity. (Collins, 1989).

The ongoing engagement of various strands on the literary artistic and journalist intelligentsia in the cinema constitutes a rather complicated series of position a substantial part of which is yet to be identified and excavated.

In developing a nuanced sense of the attitudes of these working in popular cinema. We must nevertheless acknowledge that they accepted and worked creatively within the framework of attraction – that composes the dominant Indian cinematic experience. In this milieu, a straight forward linearization of the narrative form, into a pattern of cause and effect on the Hollywood model, did not emerge as a clear cut agenda. Here one steps down from the domain of discourses about the popular cinema to discourses within, where its conventions are inhabited and employed with a certain confidence and ease.

It is here the question of cultural recognition surfaces. In so far as there is a consensus between producers of a fairly broadranging intellectual / perceptual and ideological hue, and a continuing demand for a certain type of cinema, we may assume that there is a circuit of communication of narrative and performative intelligibility, in the relation between the film and their audience.

This is the domain of recognition which implies a focus on local cinematic cultures rather than a comprehensive and differentiated sense of what the cinema means in a society. The investigation of such a local forms has been important in films. Study at large, in acknowledgement of the cinematic experience generated outside the international coordinates of narrative film language associated with Hollywood. The cultural transactions involved in the mobilization of local forms are central: performance practices, musical and linguistic idioms, the formulation of personality types who condense social consensus about the representative image. (Angihotri, 1990).

In an extreme case, such a local culture should not be understandable outside the community or society, within which it is produced, and consumed, it should be unexportable” In practise the local inevitability attends to and assimilates the foreign norms of narration it appears in differentiate. Nevertheless, distinctive features remain. Even when such products acquire largeness in scale and reach both national

and international they still retain a strongly bounded identity address. In the Indian case, this is notable in the way popular cinema has been important to Indian diaspora.

The more cultural explanation of the 'local' characterize the popular film as repository of a traditional aesthetic that composed different rasas or moods, in live with the ancient canons of Hindu aesthetics. In a folkloristic rendering, the popular film is rooted in the persistency of Indian culture, in which music has an expressive equivalence to speech. In contrast to a literary disposition whose reading practices interiorise the reader / viewers relation to the text, such morality is said to sustain an externalized, declamation and musical form in the Indian popular cinema.

Both the ideological economic and folkloristic explanation might suggest a transitional situation which would change, whereas the notion of a "traditional" aesthetic suggests something constant and invariant. At first glance, the cinema indeed seems to produce the traditional its entertainment being organized along different registers, edifying and pleasurable on the lines of rasa theory. (Agnihotri, 1990).

While popular film does appear to have condensed an entertainment which incorporates elements reminiscent of earlier folk and urban theatrical forms, this does not mean that the mode of combination and expression of the different elements has remained static.

Ravi Vasudevan says that the notion of the 'popular' were produced within a critical discussion of the cinema of the 1940s and 1950s. (Vasudevan, 2000).

The dominant critical discussion of the cinema in this period was that it was related to the formation of an art cinema that it addressed a potential art cinema audience and in turn, was premised on a notion of a social difference. The pertinent first reference here is to Satyajit Ray, who, when introducing his essay on cinema from the 1940s to 1970s noted that the formation of Calcutta Film Society was related "willingly to the task of disseminating film culture among the intelligentsia".

FORMAL AND NARRATIVE ASPECTS OF THE COMMERCIAL CINEMA

In the Bombay cinema of the 1950s the "social film" was the genre which the industry understood to address the issues of modern life. (Dasgupta, 1987). Within

these films, and much more widely in the cinema of that time, a number of modes of staging and narrating story events are in evidence.

There is the iconic framing of an organization of the image in which stable meaning is achieved, whether of an archaic or contemporary nature. This could range from the mythic articulations of women whether by herself or in relation to a man, to mythic formation stemming from contemporary iconography such as Monroe in American culture or the Raj Kapoor-Nargis emblem of romantic love.

Another arrangement is that of the table which, unlike the icon pressure an underlying narrative structure... characters attitudes and gestures, compositionally arranged for the moment, given, like an illustrated pointing a visual summary of the emotional situation.

The relay through different visual modes is also a rhetorical strategy which makes the cinema both attractive as something new in the field of the visual, and culturally intelligible because it incorporates familiar visual address.

For Vasudevan's analysis of the popular ramifications of the commercial film narrative, what is of significance is the way in which this melodramatic routing complicates his social identity. (Vasudevan, 2000).

It is the hero's very mobility between spaces, spaces of virtue (the mother's domain), villainy and respectability (father's domain) which problematises this social identity often the street, the space of physical and social mobility is also the space of the dissolution of social identity, or the marking out of an identity that is unstable.

The mixture of codes generic and sensational elements, and a narrative undermining of social identity, makes the social film of the 1950s an imaginary space in which a popular audience of mixed social background were offered as rather fluid system of signs modes of address and social positions.

We have to understand the particular political articulation of the popular cinema of the 1950s. Nationalist discourses of that time about social justice and the formation of a new personality when the routed through familiar if modified cultural and narrational reference points. These were family dramas, iconic and tableau modes of representation. The cinema of that time communicated a popular democratic

perception which worked through some of the rationalist and egalitarian approaches of the liberal – radical intelligentsia, but on its own terms.

THE MORPHOLOGY OF HINDI FILM

The morphology of Hindi Films, there is a limited cast of characters, and they exist in relations to each other in a prescribed number of social relations: all the elements combine to yield a certain number of well defined plots. As the folktale allows variations within limits, so the cast of characters within the Hindi film stay within certain parameters. Thus, while the doctor whose advent in Hindi films serves as a barometer of the emergence of a middle class sensibility increasingly torn from its moorings in indigeneous systems of medicines and forms of treatment is a mainstay of the Hindi film, the psychiatrist is almost now where present.

On the other hand, popular Hindi films, are held together by certain conventions of narrative storytelling and ambience, among which two very pronounced ones are the stylized fight and the song and dance sequence. It suggests where the narrative provides stratification authority and masculinity of Indian society, certain characteristics have helped maintain the identity of the Hindi film. (Masud, 1987).

The first fight is very important to all action sequence in Hindi films. For a race of men whom the colonises thought of as effect, unable to protect their own women and who are constantly reminded of their physical incapacities by their failure to win medals at international sporting events, the first fight is an assertion by the Hindu male of his masculinity and a demonstration of his ability to protect his women folk. (Thoraval, 2000).

Senseless action or violence which critics dismiss as senseless, is something which is not only integral to but one of most important element in the discourse of conventional films. An interesting point is that unlike Hollywood films, there is very little effective use of the gun. The emphasis is always on hand-to-hand combat. This has important ramifications. If a gun is used the other man simply drops dead. Though the dramatic effect is untrue yet it is very short lived. The advantage with physical hand-to-hand combat is that it prolongs the fight and permits the use of

weapons ranging from iron bars to cycle chains. Moreover physical combat not only highlights the physical prowess and valour of the heroes but also help in identifying an enemy and confronting him in a hand-to-hand fair fight.

The second most unique characteristics of the popular Hindi film is the song and dance sequence, which remains indispensable to many high brow Hindi films as well, the obvious exception brings films of directors such as Shyam Benegal and Saeed Mirza, who have deliberately set themselves in opposition to the conventions of the Hindi film.

The song served as a telescoped narrative often signaling the flowering of romance, or the separation of lovers or as a vehicle for conveying existential dilemmas and the cruel power of fate or it would provide the points of transition between the two points in the plot.

The song and dance retains all these features, but the narrative styles and choreographic traditions in which it is embedded point to the emergence of a new cultural politics, the advent of a middle class consciousness not able for its aggrandizing spirit the gradual erosion of the transcendent from everyday affairs and most evidently a matrix of action and behaviour in which style acquires a life of its own and mechanistic movements predominate over the more wayward and uncertain gestures and machismo replaces the older and softer virtue of restraint.

The continuity of certain narrative and aesthetic traditions and the visible retention of what Vinay Lal terms as a family resemblance, may help to explain the longevity of popular Hindi film, and its resounding success in India and among Indian communities in the diaspora. The long run enjoyed by popular Hindi cinema is usually described as an aspect of escapist tendencies. In the conventional sociological view, poverty, drudgery and a life of unrelenting labour are the lot of Indian masses; the Hindi film offers relief from the tediousness of an impoverished life, just as it holds out the hope, however remote of a glittering and respondent future. As we least desire to see on the silver screen that which we encounter daily and in the naïve sociological view, though the popular film may be born in the slum it lives in the bellies of India's urban spaces and finds its orgasmic and ecstatic fulfillment in the pleasure domes of the rich. The argument about inherent escapism of commercial

cinema similarly seeks to account for the failure of art cinema by its hosen formula having seen enough poverty in their lives can Indian audiences be expected to queue up for it and these shatter those utopian expectation by which we all live. The Hindi film allows us to dream, and if we are free to dream that is no small freedom.

Another explanation accounting for the success of commercial cinema is rooted in narrative conventions and aesthetic norms of popular films. "It is even possible to extend this argument and view the film, "kaliyuga Avatara" of the Sanskrit drama as a representation of the ancient tradition of our times. Thus "Satyam Shivam Sundaram" could be viewed as a modern rendering of the Shakuntala of Kalidasa and in a more general way, the Hindi film could be described as a cinematic enactment of the theory and structure of action sketched out in the Natya Shastra. The more philosophical aspect of this argument would locate the Hindi film within what Ashis Nandy has described as the "Language of continuity", one of the languages which often hides the implicit native theories of oppression in many non-western traditions. Whereas the Western concept of continuity construes it, as only a special case of change", in India tradition, the language of continuity continues to occupy a predominant place which assumes that "all changes can be seen discussed or analyzed as aspects of deeper continuities". Change, in other worlds is only a special case of continuity – and this can be best exemplified in the Hindi film. (Nandy, 1998).

It is unarguably clear that that Hindi film, whatever view one might hold about its narrative traditions, is deeply embedded in certain mythic structures which have defined the contours of the Indian civilization. The doyen of commercial cinema the late Manmohan Desia claimed that all his films were inspired by the Mahabharata, and on occasion everything in the Hindi film from the archetypal figure of the mother to the antiheroic hero, appears to belong to the deep recesses of the Indian past. (Purohit, 1990).

NARRATIVES

Narrative is most intricately woven with ethics. It is narrative which determines the involvement and the alienation of the spectator director. It invites him to participate or to distance himself to change or to accept reality and -its

interpretation. It can free him from his own ideology and that of ruling class, simultaneously: or imprison him in both.

Narrative proceeds through action. The action of the narrator, author and maker, through his mode of address, shapes the world to an end that he considers to be worthwhile in itself. The interpreter bringing his history into play enriches it by his own experience. The spectator carries it back into life, elevating the repetition of desire, to affirm the realization of bring which assumes self determination.

The four ends of men are simultaneous in sequence. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha are not unconnected with the pursuit of happiness in honour, wealth pleasure and contemplation which Aristotle takes as modal points of discussion on his work on ethics. The problem of narrativity in our times has been the replacement of God by mechanical causation. The structural rigidity of a framework which underlies concepts that reduce acts to invariance excludes the participant observe. To compound the loss of agency with illusion of reality, inexorably led by its scientific natural laws, threw the spectator out into the cold, deprived of his passion, incapable of ecstasy or pathos or any form of awakening to self awareness.

The cinematographic sequence has destroyed the old condensation of drama and the avocatory description of the novel. On the other hand, by providing the visual concreteness of 'events' and 'characters' it has given a privileged position to their relationship as they constantly redefine themselves. It is the music of history, as it is of colour and form that the cinematographic event brings out where earlier the historical had articulated itself in arbitrary signs (often reducing ethics to a culture specific morality proclaiming itself a absolute). Simultaneously the visual in its earlier incarnation had to overcome its representational "thereness" by appeals to magical decorative function or to mythical condensation. With the opening out of the sciences of perception and the cinema which assimilate and grows out of these sciences, all art has been given a new lease of life since it brings to the foreground again not the existence of things and ideas separated distinguished and understood but hold together, grasped lived and restored. Or at least that is what the cinema, like all art is capable of when left to itself. (Kishan, 1981).

Yet it is hardly left to itself. The strategies for the exploration of the self have to contend not only with the profit motive and the propaganda machine obviously present as controlling force but also with the resistance of modes of thought that persist even if they no longer serve the dominant ideologue.

At a formal level the difficulty lies in transportations. From myth to music from the articulated series penetrating to an unconscious to the permeation of the entire body and mind with the rhythms and self-created world with all the immortality of time.

The visual distinctiveness of phenomena is transposed to the aural or intellectual moving towards the opposite directions of poverty of matter. Each art and each tradition of the art linking itself to history and to nature tries in despair to break itself down to re-integrate the whole of existence.

NARRATIVE STRATEGIES IN HINDI COMMERCIAL CINEMA: -

Cinema in India apart from being categorized into two blocs on the basis of language i.e. regional and all-India cinema is also notably segregated as (a) popular or mainstream cinema (b) parallel or art cinema. It is the former that we would treat here as Hindi Commercial cinema and narrative strategies there in.

The era of the persona as a sign expression of the anxieties of the time, extending over several narratives and providing the motor impulses for the development of these narratives, is over. The persona is, as such both in and out of the narrative, a part of the narrative and yet bigger than it. Over the last decade, however, the hero, heroine and villain have displayed the ability to contain within themselves more than one – if not many – stereotypic selves. Today there are villainous hero, villain in many film also carry the onus of providing comic relief in the narrative. The heroine has taken on several functions of the vamp of yester years.

As signs these new multifunctional characters do stretch their significations across several films, but they do not achieve the status of personal because they just are, the narratives they inscribed in do not offer any logic, in the form of a debate on social being, for the acts being performed. It is here that the major difference between “anti hero” and “angry – young man” image comes. Which the latter gave voice to a

debate on the path to be chose of living with or without the boundaries of law. It was this transcendent logic that defined his being in all films he acted even in those in which the spirit of carnival and excess of coincidences was the dominant, rather than a single minded desire for revenge. Such a logic is absent in the former. What is offered is an apology for villainy that even in terms of causal relationship is a weak justification. In the narrative logic of commercial cinema in the seventies and early eighties, film time is first devoted to the extenuating circumstances that cause the hero to embark on his path of revenge and only evil is dispensed with evil, thus retaining a sense of justices in the moral universe created. No sense of moral justices finally prevails in the world created by this film.

One of the reasons for the collapse of the persona is the dispersal of narrative categories. The displacement of the initial segment, normally involving childhood experience of villainy to a later part in the film's narrative has already been referred to. By imparting to this experience of villainy the status of a beginning a chain of causal relationship was established in the moral universe simulated by the film. This was true of film with accents an different generic elements: revenge centered productions in which Bachchan starred like "Zanzeer" and "Dewaar" as well as musicals like Nasir Hussains "Yadoon Ki Baarat" and Manmohan Desai's "Amar Akbar Anthony". In films today the segment providing the logic for the behaviour of the protagonist rarely occurs in the beginning: it is provided much later in the film. As such the actions of the protagonist have to be taken at their face value the spectator having no clue to the origins to the pathological behaviour. Crucial to this narrative displacement is the role of the flashback – a well worn technique in the commercial melodramas is now accorded.

The landmark film in the dispersal of narrative categories and the new deployment of the flashback is Tezab (1989). Even the love story the mainstay of all narrative: irrespective of genre is no longer necessarily an imperafive narrative ingredient. Love now in Hindi films has many nuances and shades. The hero's relationship with her, to the very end is ambiguous. Wrongs too are avenged not just by the hero with single minded avenges. (Sahahani, 1995).

With changing narrative strategies the network of signs constituting the villain has also changed. While certain actors might bank on a frightening physical appearance there is a tendency to use speech as part of the physiognomy of the villain. The recent charting of linguistic differences in the way Hindi is spoken is expressive of the silent struggles or political hegemony within the North Indian belt among various groups.

The space villains inhabit too, have undergone drastic changes. The villain's world today is in the here and now. Today's villains inhabit the same spaces that the other characters do, a few cuts all that is needed to reach him.

It is recently that the space of family has emerged as the space of villainy. It is not just physical characterization and the spaces villains are inscribed that have changed. The very factors that contributed to villainy was earlier tied up with the ethics of money today it is tied up with nexus of power that extends to the police, law and governance of the state. Its tentacles reach out to these arms of justice. The villain or his boss attempting to escape in a helicopter in the penultimate sequence of the film was a pointer to the international connections of the criminal appropriate. But as we as a nation advance technologically the paradox is that our villains seem to be able to dispense with technical gizmos. In fact the new villain is totally an indigenous product. The less modern he is, the more involved he is in the corruption as it exists in the law enforcing agencies of the state, the more convincing he is.

The fight between good and evil is now fought out not only in the arena of the family but also in the arena of the community. This is very subtly yet significant change in the topography of violence and is a contributing factor to the break up of the persona. Several films today chart out the community spatially and as a force that serves as a testing ground for the protagonist to gauge his social self. There are many factors that go into the constituting of the community: a territory is marked out with a consequent understanding of insider / outsider and inclusion / intrusion. The community gives a sense of siege.

The family has now returned with force as the central theme of commercial cinema. It is the attack on the family by the villain, a physical and disruptive invasion that "makes" the vigilante. If in the 1970s the hero moved away from the family as in

the Amitabh Bachchan film – the protagonist is now definitely enmeshed in it, even when he is a rebel. Acts of violation committed against the father, sister or mother are what are responsible for the rebirth in violence of the hero. The social space that the protagonist of the films 1950s and 1960s entered, whether they dealt with romance or gangsterism, often rested on a tension between familial and social relationships. The family has for decades stood for positive moral value. In the films of the 1970s, the family showed signs of breaking with the father getting lost either morally or physically. This loss defined the hero's being. Today it is the family and by extension the community as “territorial” nations that are to be defended at all cost.

The breakdown of institutions is what is most characteristic of our “post-sacred” world. The belief in the ability of institutions to dispense social justices was a given of the narrative of the cinema in the period immediately after independence. The man in the street, in the margins the outcaste the vagabound the petty criminal all served to affirm the power of institutions, their ability to transform and mould character into positive social values.

“Sholay” and “Deewar”, both released in 1975 represent the irreversible turn the narrative of commercial cinema took: the impossibility or at any rate the difficulty of being honest when the state and its law enforcing agencies could not guarantee social justice, now suffused the logic of these narratives from then to the current decade the police officer the lawyer, the judge and the minister have become central to the waving of the logic of villeaning in the narrative. It is this crisis of faith in institutions that has paradoxically led to the growing complexity of the representation of villainy. Villainy is today no longer involved with an ethics of money or innate evil. It has to do of necessity. With being involved in a corrupt nexus of power that extends to the police force and often even to the law and those responsible governance – the ministers or politicians.

The crisis of institutions, their break up, the communalization and communitisation of politics, the regional tension, all this is reflected, even if in a distorted way in the narratives of commercial cinema. In the films of the preceding decade, particularly those featuring the “angry – young man”, the emphasis was on the search for, or rejection of a father, the symbol of order, and the adopting of a

surrogate father, who would operate outside the pale of law. In the films of this decade the protagonist is seen as the liberator of his community, a passive community. This, commercial cinema seems to state is the only mode of social being for a middle class being pushed to the margins.

POPULAR CULTURE IN INDIAN CINEMA

A. Nandy remarks, India now has a popular culture which includes not only folk forms such as jatra, katha and Ramalila but also a whole range of products with a number of common characteristics which includes television serials commercial Hindi films, cricket ghazals and urban gurus. (Nandy, 1998).

It is the sheer size and political presence of urban India that has allowed the Indian middle class to give the country, during the past year, rather more than what other third – world societies have been given by their westernized bourgeoisies. The middle class have often provided the baseline for a critique of modernity as well as for tradition. The great thinkers and social reformers of the nineteenth and twentieth century India all separated from within the perimeters of the urban middle class. They shared an idiom and a culture, within which most creative Indians, be they from the world of art cinema contemporary art of literature operates today. All these figures can be seen as mediating between the classical or non-classical or folk, and between West and non-West or the East.

The accelerating process of social change in India has uprooted increasing numbers of people from their folk traditions. The psychological needs of these uprooted are different from the previous “middle-class”.

The middle-class partiality towards the classical made its culture less able to meet the psychological needs of the newly uprooted in the second phase of modernization of independent India. The poor man’s melting point called modern India needed a more self-confident and abrasive culture which could be analogous to the mass culture of the West. Through the emerging mass culture of the West. has taken to their logical conclusion some elements of what used to be popular middle class culture, there are noticeable differences between the two, first, the new mass culture is low culture in tow important senses. (a) It includes low-brow elements from

the dominant “universal” mass culture of the West and it tends to reject elements from the Western high culture, once so prominent in Indian middle class culture. (Nandy, 1981).

The new mass culture underplays the classical elements of Indian culture without rejecting them fully. This attenuated presence of the classic is accompanied by an indirect but clean dependence on the epic or puranic worldview.

Second, there is a sliding scale of audience participation: folk culture encourages bilateral and multi-cultural modes of communication: never is the folk artist a purely professional entertainer and the audience a passive receiver of messages. It is a model of renewal and simultaneously rediscovery for each performance absorbs something new from life and reconstructs it self as a new commentary on life.

The popular culture of the urban middle classes inherited something of this tradition. It too had about it an apparent predictability or repeatability it, too spoke of the language of continuity.

In urban mass culture, on the other hand, communication is mostly one way. “Creativity” is seen as packageable characteristic of the individual, it is the productivity of the writer, the director or the performing artist. Creativity is not seen to emerge from the interaction between the producer and consumer of art. (Nandy, 1981).

In a mass culture the artist uses his art as a vehicle for self expression and through this tries to homogenize. In India there is a felt need not to homogenize the entire culture space available to the Indian cinema. There is an imperative to have a vague tripartite division of splits among the high, middle and low cinema.

As long as modernity was only a marginal strain within Indian society, art cinema middle cinema could justify their ideological line of an over all critique of traditions and a partial critique of modernity now that modernity has become the dominant principle in Indian public life, when much of the oppression and violence in the society is inflicted in the name of categories such as development science progress and national security there has grown a tacit demand for a different kind of political attitude towards cultural tradition. However much we may bemoan the entry

of mass culture through the commercial cinema, the fact remains that it is commercial cinema which, if only by default has been more responsive to such demands and more protective towards non-modern categories.

Both art cinema and the middle cinema, on the other hand avoid facing this changed politics of culture and the newer concerns and anxieties of society. As a result such cinema is often constrained to survive in India on institutional patronage and subsidy, depending on the Indian state to underwrite its social statues and lamenting at every opportunity the aesthetic immaturity, political crudity and non-critical consciousness of Indian cinema goes. This dependence on the political establishment for survival and significance can only measure and increase over time unless the makers of art films and middle cinema fundamentally re-examine the politics of a culture of which they have become witty-nilly a part.

Nandy locates the worth of the conventional cinema in the fact that this cinema has been more protective towards tradition and native categories at a time when modernity is out to swamp traditional values and lifestyles. Commercial cinema romanticizes vulgarizes the problem of survival sector but it never rejects as childish or primitive the categories or world views of those trying to survive the process of victimization let loose by the modern institutions and again, the feelings, attitudes and values associated with the survival sector are the ones which the commercial cinema exploits but in the process unwittingly supports. (Nandy, 1981).

SIGNIFICANCE OF POPULAR FILMS:

Sudhir Kaker (1981) and Ashis Nandy (1981) believe popular films have a therapeutic effect on their audience. Thus as Kakker says, "Hindi movies are contemporary myths which through the vehicle of fantasy and the process of identification, temporarily heal for their audience the principal stresses arising out of Indian family relationships.

Ashis Nandy (1981) believes that the Hindi movie's function, in this instance, is to externalize an inner psychological conflict and handle the inner passions generated by social and political process as problems created by events outside. The vast popularity of Indian cinema has deep roots in the continuing traditional character

of Indian culture. It is, therefore, pointless for the elite to blame the cinema industry for producing sub-zero quality film.

According to Kakar, “many of the myths have a continuity which can be traced to ancient models, or in other words Hindi films are modern versions of certain old and familiar myths.

Chidanand Dsagupta (1987) believes that all of Indian popular cinema is a continuation of the traditional mythological film in different guises. This argument is that it is by nature a preoccupation destined to disappear as the socio-economic is transformed into that of an industrially developed and socially and geographically mobile society.

The sum total of all these arguments is that the most important social function of the Hindi film as Nandy puts it is “its ability to act as an interface between the tradition of Indian society and the disturbing or Western – intrusion into it. And that moreover the Hindi film gives ‘cultural meaning’ to western structures super imposed on society while ritually neutralizing those elements to the modern world which have to be accepted for reason of survival. (Nandy, 1981).

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CONCLUSION

Cinema has been a creative process combining the functions of poetry, music, drama i.e. the function of blend the various aspects of life into an harmonious whole. Indian cinema with its own film style, complicated plots within plots, the song and dance sequences, colourful costumes, incongruous location has defined itself in a unique way Satyajit Ray felt that the Indian film industry needed “a style, an idiom, a sort of iconography of cinema which would be uniquely and recognizably India. (Ray, Stayajit 1976). Cinema in India is seen to permeate every aspects of Indian life and diasporic culture too. Its nature ubiquitous as it may said is apparent in the popularity of film music, profusion of cinematic image across landscape, habit dress, speech, members, background, and foreground. This all pervasiveness of cinema and its influence upon cultural trend – setting is noteworthy.

Cinema in the life of Indians is a reference point to changing time taste, attitudes. The stars of yesteryears portrayed their historic punctuation that a generation senior identity themselves with. Today’s films no matter what they might seem to critics are nodoubt responding to change in cultural modalities. Globalization and open market, flush of goods consumerism are so evident in the cinema of Shahrukh Khan cinema has never been silent to reality, the moving image has framed the contemporary and transformed into film.

The Hindi commercial cinema is considered as the popular national cinema of India. (Dwyer, Rachel and Pinney, Christopher 2000). It is a prominent form of mass entertainment and hence distinguished from the other cinemas in India. There are distinctly hold two broad categories on the basis of popularity and production, “all-Indian cinema” and ‘regional cinema’. There are regionally defined commercial cinema of which most notable and largest in terms of production are the Telugu and Tamil language cinemas. Here cinema halls are concentrated and a large cine-going public is found. In other regions we would find repot that cinema halls and audience both have deteriorated in infrastructure and public behavirou so much so that no longer is cinema viewing in the halls a family outing. In the boundary of art-house

that we call cinema there are also Hindi-English cinema which are screened across India and is dubbed into local languages.

As Indians national cinema Hindi commercial cinema is a primary form of Indian public culture. Here the term “public culture” is seen to address the complex and fluid interaction that exists between the categories of high / elite and low/mass culture in India. (Thomas, Rosie 1985). The need to study has long been acknowledge by social scientists Singh.

The nature of engagement cinema has with the people ;and the way poplar cinema and trend setting processes are wedded to each other makes it a primary source of information. Studies on cinema have informed us of the cultural specificity of certain defining features of cinema such as the narrative structure lack of realism and multiplicity of emotional content, visual culture, film style and technique. These studies also point to the more powerful personal levels of association that the public have with specific male / female roles, and the familiar subject matter of family, marriage, social order and morality. (Prasad, Madhav 1998. Here again the social background is sun to be space within which roles and themes are evaluated and identified with. It is on this basis that there has been a classification of “lower class”, “middle class”, cinema. During the early development of cinema, genres of the 1920s such art historical, mythological and stunt films were “lower class” films primarily because they offered a visual spectacle only. Class identifications continued to shift with the emergence of new genres, which themselves reflected political, ideological economic and social changes within Indian society, thereby making Hindi film a key to India’s national culture. With the advent of sound, the new geres emerged which have been seen as “middle class” since they placed greater emphasis on the narrative and focussed on social concerns. (Dissanayake, Sahai 1995). Today Hindi cinema is distributed overseas among the Indian diapora in the U.K. USA, Canada and has attracted larger audiences in Russia, Indonesia and Middle East. There are directors as Deepa Mehta, Nair, Gurinder Chaddha, who represent a new category of filmmakers who belong to the diaspora. In our films we claim actors and actresses across nations (Lagaan 2002).

Indian cinema is opening a new chapter with sci-fi thrillers and use of technology as maple leaves falling in 'Mohabattein' (1999), parrot in 'Mein Prem Ki Dewani Hoon', (2003) and the extra-terrestrial character in 'Koi...Mil gaaya' (2003).

Along with these special effects there are new story lines, plots which are being discovered. There has been a recent interest in themes of sexuality and endorsement of the question of identity in relation to sexuality by the plot of films as 'Jism' (2002), 'Astitva' (2000). Today filmmakers as Karan Johar, Sanjay Leela Bhansali are making family dramas, on an extravagant, opulent scale, shooting in foreign location, exaggerated sets and adornments of characters, numerous song and dance sequence and lots of emotions in films like Hum Dil De chuke sanam (1999), Rishtey (2001) Kabhi khushi kabhi gham (2002), History is often revisited by cinema. A nation is famed in its moments of crisis and shift by the moving image. Indian cinema has often engaged itself with the romance of independence during the 1950s. In the recent times Indian cinema specially al-India Hindi cinema has produced period films on struggle martyrs partition, Indo-Pak crisis. These are often qusted by directors as tributes to the historical moments and an attempt at glorifying them. Some films as Lagaan (2002), Shaheed Bhagat Singh (2002), Machis (1996) Border (), LOC ().

Since its inception Hindi cinema has never been always been an integral part of Hindi cinema and comedians have no less popular then "star". Comedy has also carved a niche for itself in the form of a 'genre' and the audience nonetheless identifies directors, actors and actresses. In this class would come seniors as Johnny Walker, Mehmood, and recently Govinda, Johnny Lever. Song and dance have been considered as inescapable elements and so is the character of a heroine. These have been numerously played and replayed and at times overplayed by filmmakers. In Hindi cinema there has been a trend especially in the past year to make thrillers which have a single score of music or do not introduce any female character as the hero or heroine. In this genre would be included Kaante (2002), Darna Mana Hai (2003), Bhoot (2003).

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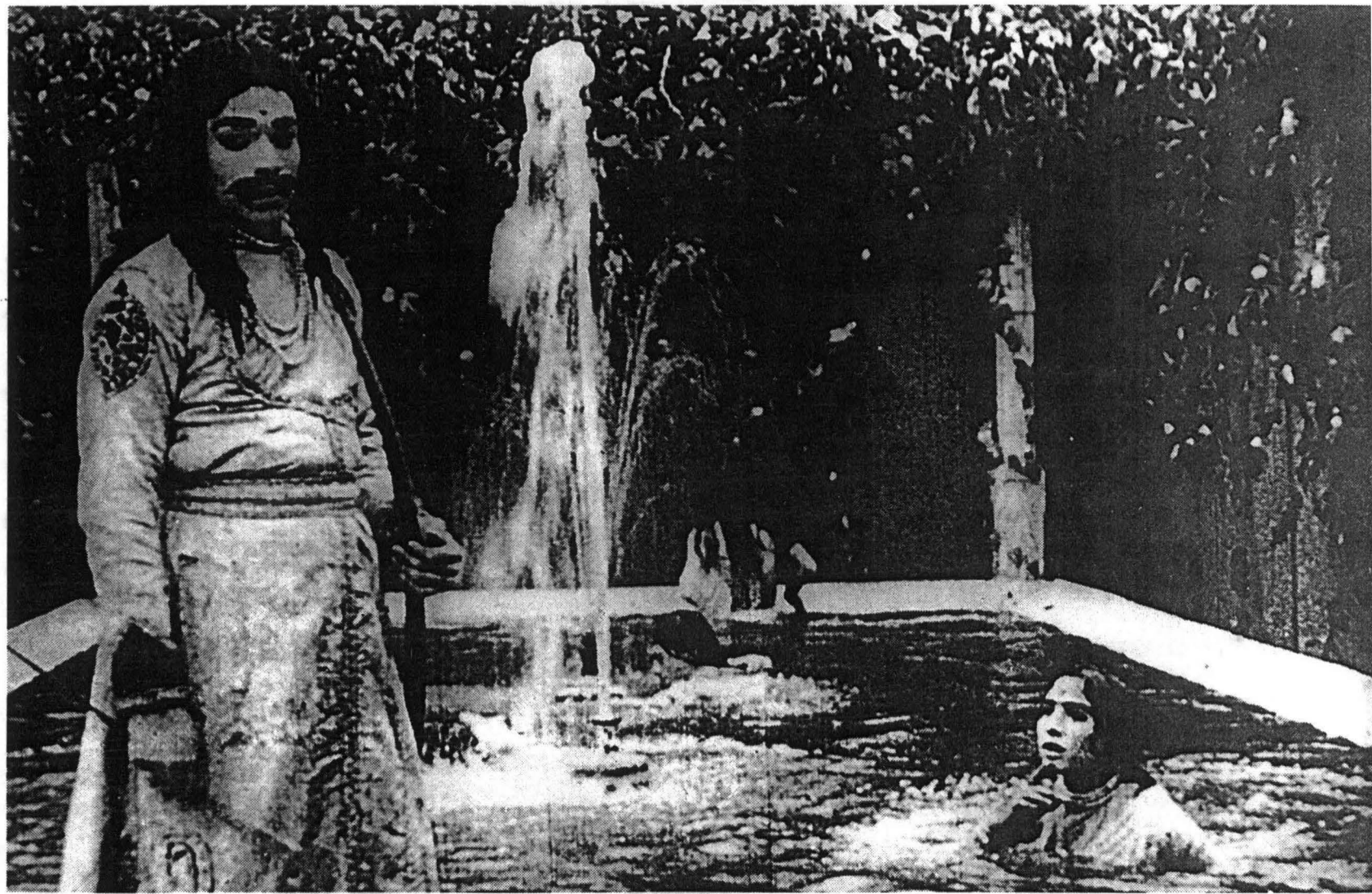
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1 The famous bathing scene from the film 'The Godfather' (1972)



2 Dhirendranath
Ganguly in the satire
on colonial culture,
Bilet Pherat, 1921.



3 The singing star K. L. Saigal as Devdas and Jamuna as Paro, in their childhood idyll in the New Theatres' Hindi version of *Devdas*, 1935.



9 Vishnupant Pagnis as *Sant Tukaram*, 1936.



46 4 Raj Kapoor as Raj, the urban migrant, in *Shri 420*, 1955.

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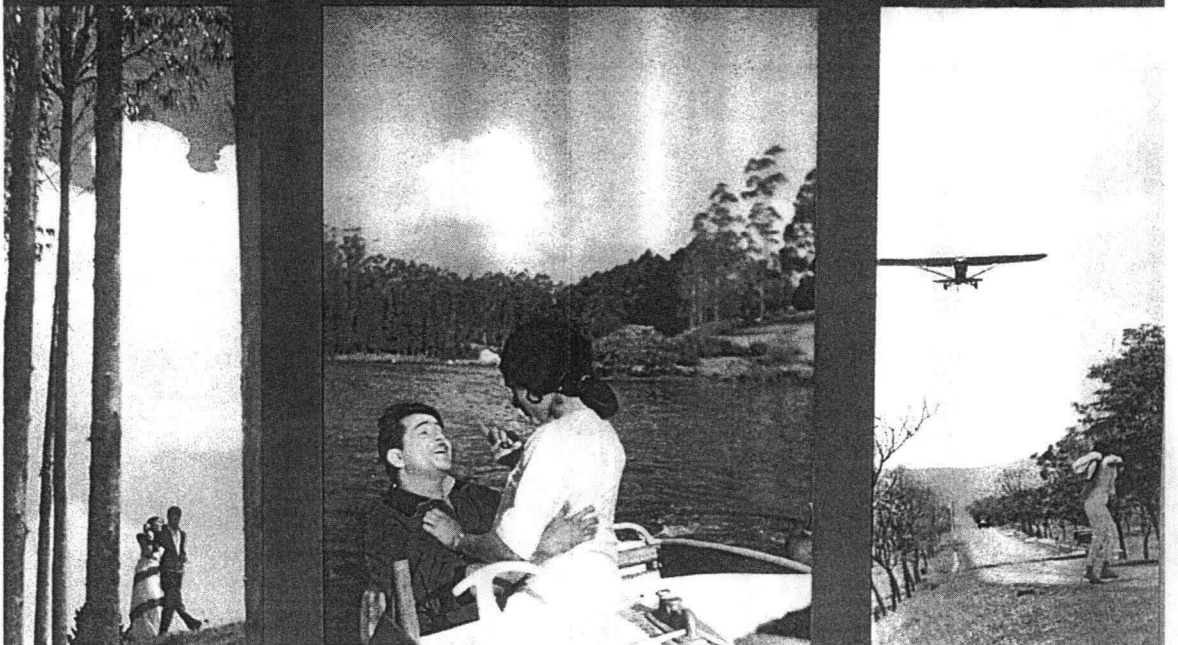
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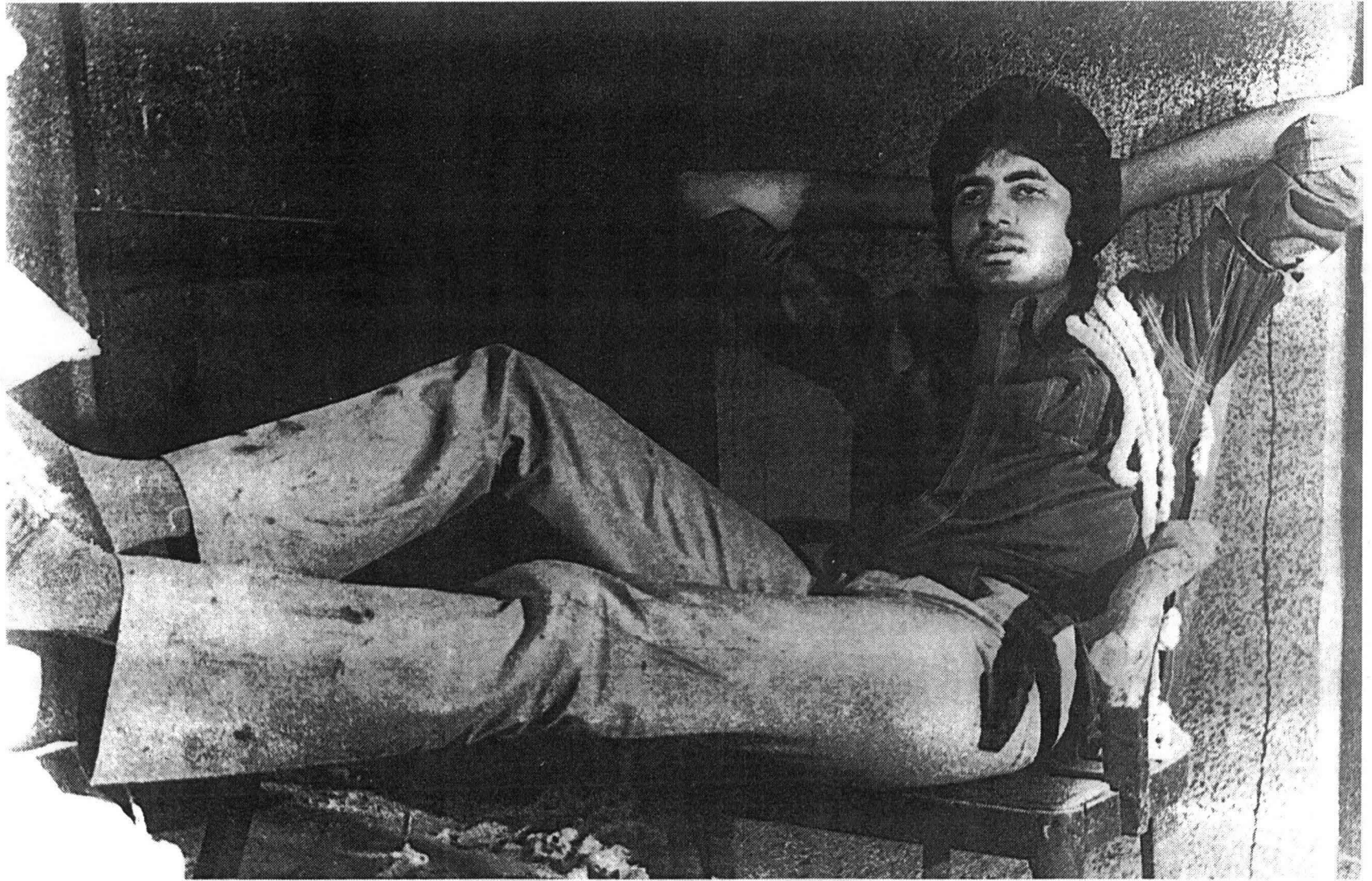
SANGAM



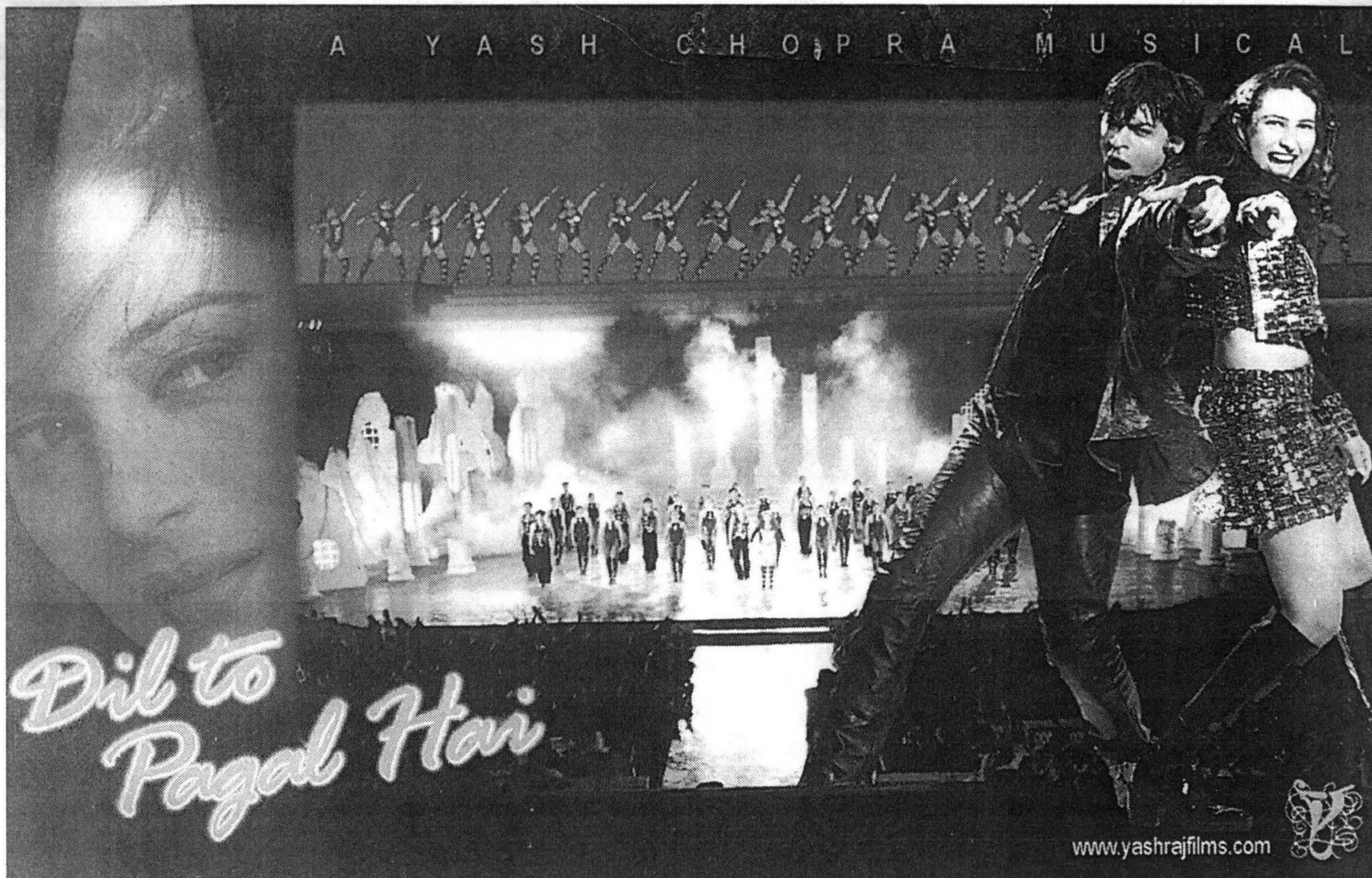
11 The first film to use European locations. The cover of the publicity booklet of *Sangam*, 1964.

MOTHER
INDIA





7 Amitabh Bachchan as Vijay, the angry young man, before a fight in the docks in *Deewaar*, 1975.



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5 The glamour of the sets shown on this publicity for *Dil to Pagal Hai*, 1997, belies the actual conditions of the Bombay film studios.