

Chapter 5

The Globalization of "Bollywood"

The Hype and the Hope

Daya Kishan Thussu

From Kenya to Kazakhstan and from Morocco to Malaysia, Indian films have found an eager audience. As India integrates further into a globalized free-market economy, Indian films are likely to have a global reach attracting new viewers, beyond their traditional South Asian diasporic constituency. In this chapter, I aim to map this phenomenon, examining the hype associated with globalization of Indian cinema and the hope that it may generate more pluralist global cultural interactions. I will examine how a combination of national and transnational factors, including deregulation of media and communication sectors, the availability of new delivery and distribution mechanisms as well as growing corporatization of the film industry, has contributed to global visibility of popular Indian cinema.

Demonstrating robust annual economic growth of 8 percent in the past few years, India is increasingly viewed internationally as an emerging economic and political power. One manifestation of this status is how India's popular culture is being perceived outside India, particularly within the metropolitan centers of the globe (Goswami 2004). "The Rise of India" was the main theme of *Foreign Affairs*, one of the world's most influential foreign policy journals, in July-August 2006, while *Time* magazine ran a cover story in July the same year on "India Inc.: Why the world's biggest democracy is the next great economic superpower—and what it means for the rest of us" (*Time*, July 3, 2006). The globalization of the mainstream Indian film industry, popularly known as Bollywood, also reflects this phenomenon.

The number of academic books and articles that have been published

in the past few years is another indication that researchers in media and communication fields are now taking the world's most prolific film industry more seriously. Film schools in the United States and Europe traditionally have only been interested in a few avant-garde filmmakers from India, notably Satyajit Ray, as part of the study of World Cinema, or "Third Cinema." In terms of audiences too, the only international viewers interested in such "high-brow" cinema were on the festival circuit. What is new and potentially an exciting development, witnessed at the turn of the century, is that popular Indian cinema (predominantly, though not exclusively, Hindi cinema) has acquired an international profile, second only to Hollywood. Hindi films are shown in more than 70 countries and are popular everywhere where South Asians live, but also in the Arab world, in central and southeast Asia, and among African countries.

India's \$3.5 billion Hindi film industry based in Mumbai (formerly Bombay), the country's commercial hub and a center of cosmopolitan culture, has witnessed extraordinary growth—Indian film exports jumped twenty-fold in the period 1989–1999 and have continued to grow since—and represents an excellent example of media flows emanating from the global South rather than from the North (Thussu 2006b). One key reason for its size is the huge domestic market among India's vast population—numbering one billion, reflecting the place that cinema has as the most popular form of entertainment, cutting across regional, linguistic, class, creed, gender, and generational divisions. Films have also contributed to the burgeoning popular music industry, as a mainstream Indian film is unlikely to succeed without a prominent musical score (Mishra 2002; Pendakur 2003; Kaur and Sinha 2005).

In terms of production and viewership, "Bollywood" is the world's largest film industry, which employs more than 2.5 million people and sells over 4 billion cinema tickets annually: every year a billion more people buy tickets for Indian movies than for Hollywood films. In addition to productions from Bollywood, strong regional centers provide films in India's other main languages, notably Tamil, Bangla, Telugu, and Malayalam, generating a multiracial audiovisual feast that circulates among the distinct geo-linguistic diasporic and national groups. For at least three decades, India has been producing more films annually than any other country in the world, including the United States (see Table 1) and, despite the globalization of the mainly U.S.-based media transnational conglomerates, this trend has not changed. If anything, globalization seems to have provided a much-needed fillip to Indian filmmakers to expand

TABLE 1
The World's Top Ten Film-Producing Nations

Country	Number of Films			
	1974	1984	1994	2004
India	432	829	754	946
United States	242	366	635	611
Japan	333	333	251	310
China and Hong Kong	146	253	340	276
France	234	161	115	203
Italy	231	103	95	134
Spain	112	75	44	133
United Kingdom	88	44	70	132
Germany	80	75	57	121
Russia	—	—	90	120

Source: Based on data from *Screen Digest*, June 2005.

beyond the national and diasporic geocultural territories and aim for a global audience through "cross-over" films (Desai 2004; Kaur and Sinha 2005). Although still very small in comparison with export earnings of Hollywood, this represents a remarkable development, given the overwhelming dominance of the U.S. film industry in global film production and distribution (Miller et al. 2001; Waterman 2005).

Even in countries with highly developed local film-production networks and markets, U.S. films dominate foreign imports, and, given the proliferation of dedicated film channels across the world, it is unlikely that the dependence on U.S. imports is diminishing. And yet India is one of the few countries where Hollywood barely gets a look in—at only 5 percent of the film market (as against 70–90 percent in European markets). This may be due to Indian cinema's relationship with its rich and complex cultural background (Vasudevan 2000). Traditionally, the cinema in India has been rooted in the "idea of India" as a pluralist, secular, and socialist country of continental dimensions with its multilayered and multifaceted society.

Globalization of Indian Cinema—The Historical Context

Cinema has a long history in India, with the first feature-length film, *Raja Harishchandra*, based on the life of a mythological king of ancient India, being released as far back as 1913. In the silent era (1913–1931), more than 1,200 films were made in India, and as India entered the sound era in

1931 with the first talkie—*Alam Ara*—the pace of filmmaking consistently increased: from 84 in 1932, to 173 in 1942, to 233 in 1952, to 315 in 1962 (Rajadhyaksha and Willemen 2000). Even before India won its independence from British colonialism, films from India were being exported to southeast Asian and African nations (Barnouw and Krishnaswamy 1980).

As for other Indian media, anti-colonialism profoundly influenced and defined Indian cinema in its formative years. Progressive organizations such as the Indian People's Theatre Association were directly involved in filmmaking, fostering a message of nation-building and social harmony. Their 1946 film *Dharti Ke Lal* (Children of the Earth), directed by well-known writer Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, was the first Indian film to receive widespread distribution in the Soviet Union, while the 1957 feature *Perdesi* (Foreigner) was the first Indo-Soviet co-production. Satyajit Ray's debut film *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Little Road), released in 1955, won international critical acclaim and continued to run for more than seven months in New York, setting a new record for foreign films released in the United States and putting Indian cinema on the world map. Raj Kapoor's 1955 film *Shri 420* (Mr 420) became immensely popular in the Soviet Union, while Shambhu Mitra's film *Jagte Raho* (Stay Awake) won the Grand Prix at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival in 1957. Indian films, especially those championing socialist themes, such as Bimal Roy's *Do Bigha Zameen* (Two Bigha of Land) and Raj Kapoor's *Awaraz* (Vagabond), were also widely shown in Maoist China, the latter being the most popular Indian film in that country (Aiyar 2006).

For audiences in other Asian countries, as well as in Africa and the Arab world, Indian films had a huge appeal, with their melodramatic narrative style and a storyline which emphasized dichotomies between the just and the unjust, enlivened with song-and-dance sequences. They tended to find it easier to relate to these themes, as Brian Larkin has shown in his study of the reception of popular Indian cinema among Nigerian audiences (Larkin 1997).

Exporting Indian Cinema to the West

The deregulation of India's media and communication sector in the 1990s enabled Indian filmmakers to promote their films to the Indian diaspora based in the West. In 1995, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (The Brave Heart Will Take the Bride), starring Shah Rukh Khan, was the first major film

to focus on an Indian family based in Britain and was a huge commercial success—the film had a ten-year uninterrupted run in a Mumbai cinema until 2005. The hitherto unexplored export potential of Indian films came to light when the 1998 love story *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (Something Is Happening), directed by Karan Johar, featured in British weekly top 10 film lists. Subhash Ghai's love story *Taal* (The Beat), and Suraj Barjatya's 1999 musical extolling the virtues of extended family, *Hum Saath Saath Hain* (We Stand United), were the first Indian films to make it into the top 20 in the trade magazine *Variety's* box office chart. Johar's 2001 family drama *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* (Sometimes Happiness, Sometimes Sorrow) exploited diasporic dilemmas effectively to rake in box office takings, making it one of the most successful Hindi films in both the United Kingdom and the United States, home to a sizable and economically prosperous Indian diaspora (see Tables 2 and 4) (Punathambekar 2005).

Advancements in digital technology and the availability of satellite and cable television have enabled the tremendous increase in the number of Indian films being shown outside India. In Europe, for example, the opening up of the audiovisual market both to pan-European and international operators changed the television landscape, with a twenty-fold increase in the number of channels available to audiences in the past decade and a half—from 93 in 1990 to more than 1,700 in 2005—with entertainment channels showing the most robust growth. Movie channels increased from just 5 in 1990 to 136 in 2005, while ethnic channels, which did not exist in 1990, climbed to as many as 51 (Thussu 2006a).

"Bollywoodization" of Television

As in Hollywood, there is a close connection between India's film factories and the small screens across the country and among South Asian diasporic communities. The changing global broadcasting environment and the availability of digital television and online delivery systems has led to the proliferation of Bollywood or Bollywoodized material on television almost to a saturation point—from soap operas to movie-based countdown and game shows, to sport and even news networks. The globalization of Indian television has ensured that Indian films are being watched by a varied international television audience, making it imperative for producers to invest in subtitled to widen their reach.

In 1999, B4U (Bollywood for You), Britain's round-the-clock digital

Hindi movie channel, was launched, which by 2006 was available on eight satellites in more than 100 countries in North America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia. In the coveted U.S. market, it was available on the Dish Network, while in Europe it was part of the Sky network and in the Middle East could be accessed through the Pehla or Al Awaal bouquet. Other major players, Zee Network (India's largest media company), Star Plus (part of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation), and Sony Entertainment Television, are increasingly using Hindi film-based programming to reach an international market (Thussu 2006a).

This unprecedented expansion of television in the early 2000s, and particularly the emergence of dedicated film-based pay channels, has given the movie industry a huge boost. Prominent among them are Zee Cinema (part of Zee Network), Max (part of Sony), Star Gold (part of News Corporation), and Filmy (part of Sahara Group). Publicizing Bollywood through television—now reaching the global Indian—has become a key marketing strategy. One indication of the Bollywoodization of television is the amount of airtime that television networks tend to give to telecasting annual film awards—which have evolved into a mini industry. Zee was the first network to recognize the advertising potential of such programs—peppered with live song-and-dance routines by top stars from Bollywood. Since their inception in 1998, the annual Zee Cine Awards have become a major showcase for Indian cinema. They went global in 2004 by hosting the award ceremony in Dubai, followed a year later in London and in Mauritius in 2006, all three places chosen with an eye on the diasporic demography. The so-called Bollywood Oscars, Awards of the International Indian Film Academy, launched in 2000, were broadcast live from London's Millennium Dome to more than 122 countries, reaching 600 million viewers. The subsequent awards have covered various parts of the globe: Sun City, South Africa (2001), Kuala Lumpur (2002), Johannesburg (2003), Singapore (2004), Amsterdam (2005), and Dubai (2006).

The Old Imperial Capital and the New Bollywood

London, the old imperial capital, has played a crucial role in the globalization of Indian cinema. It is a vital link in the global distribution of Hindi films and a center of Indian media operations in the West, besides being home to a huge Indian population, part of Britain's more than 2 million

strong South Asian diaspora. It is not surprising then that among Western nations, Indian cinema has its highest profile in Britain.

In 2001, Indian director Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding*, a light-hearted account of a wedding in a wealthy family in India, was awarded the Golden Lion for best picture at the Venice film festival, while the British-born Asif Kapadia's *The Warrior* won the London Film Festival's prestigious Sutherland Trophy. A year later, the first Indian-Hollywood co-production entitled *Kaante* (Thorns) was released, starring India's best-known actor, Amitabh Bachchan, who was voted by a BBC online poll as the greatest star of stage and screen and immortalized in wax at London's Madame Tussauds. He was the first Indian film personality to merit this accolade.

Subhash Ghai's 2001 film *Yaadein* (Memories) was premiered at the British Academy of Film and Television in London, an event organized by Star TV. The film entered the UK Top Ten in just one weekend. In 2002, the British Film Institute organized *ImaginAsia*, "a hugely successful, all-singing all-dancing masala festival" which "broke new ground on several fronts: introducing a broader appreciation and mainstreaming of South Asian film cultures to a cross over audience in the UK; launching a raft of new publications and educational materials; successful NFT (National Film Theatre) seasons and talks; new theatrical and DVD releases; young peoples events; touring exhibitions, screenings and talks around Britain" (Rughani and White 2003: 9). In 2004, a reality show on Britain's Channel 4 followed a group of British hopefuls as they underwent auditions and tests to compete for a star role in a Hindi film. *Bollywood Star*, broadcast at prime time on a major terrestrial channel, gave the Indian film industry huge exposure among the general British television audience. Indian films are regularly reviewed in major British newspapers.

TABLE 2
Top Hindi Films in the United Kingdom: 2000–2004

Film/Year	Gross Box Office (£ million)	Cinemas Released	Production
<i>Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham</i> (2001)	2.50	41	Yash Raj Films
<i>Veer Zaara</i> (2004)	2.01	60	Yash Raj Films
<i>Devdas</i> (2002)	1.74	54	Eros International
<i>Kal Ho Naa Ho</i> (2003)	1.67	38	Yash Raj Films
<i>Mohabbatein</i> (2000)	1.10	29	Yash Raj Films
<i>Main Hoon Na</i> (2004)	0.96	46	Eros International
<i>Mujhse Dosti Karoge</i> (2002)	0.80	32	Yash Raj Films

Source: UK Film Council, 2006.

This apparent mainstreaming of Bollywood is also to be witnessed in the manner in which Hindi films are released in the United Kingdom. For more than a decade now, commercial Indian films have been released not just among small "ethnic" cinemas but in multiplexes across the country, as new patterns of migration have meant that in most major British cities there is a sizable South Asian population. Given the currency exchange rate between the United Kingdom and India (at the time of writing 1£ = 80 rupees), the British market is seen as extremely lucrative. However, distribution remains a controversial issue; as Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate, the best performing Hindi films in the United Kingdom came from only two major production houses and distribution networks. Low-key distributors for small-budget films, often aesthetically more sophisticated than the average Bollywood fare, face serious hurdles to reach a wider audience as the diasporic market seems to be dominated by star-studded, big-budget films.

TABLE 3
Distribution of Hindi Films in the United Kingdom: 2000–2004

Distributor	Number of Releases	Box Office Gross (£ million)	Top Performing Title
Eros International Ltd.	80	13.94	<i>Devdas</i>
Bollywood Films	36	1.79	<i>Ek Hee Rishmaa</i>
Spark Entertainment	28	2.24	<i>Fiza</i>
Venus Entertainment	23	1.52	<i>The Hero</i>
Gurpreet Video Intl.	21	0.91	<i>Aankhen</i>
Yash Raj Films	18	12.23	<i>Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham</i>
Tip Top Entertainment	7	0.94	<i>Andaaz</i>
Shree Krishna Film	6	0.84	<i>Haan Maine Bhi Pyar Kiya</i>
Venus Films	6	0.65	<i>Dil Ka Rishmaa</i>

Source: UK Film Council, 2006.

TABLE 4
Million-Plus Grossing Hindi Films in the United States: 1999–2005

Film/Year	Gross Box Office (\$ million)	Theaters Released	Distributor
<i>Veer-Zaara</i> (2004)	2.92	88	Yash Raj Films
<i>Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham</i> (2002)	2.90	73	Yash Raj Films
<i>Hum Saath-Saath Hain</i> (1999)	1.99	60	Eros
<i>Taal</i> (1999)	1.98	44	Eros
<i>Kal Ho Naa Ho</i> (2004)	1.78	52	Yash Raj Films
<i>Salam Namaste</i> (2005)	1.43	63	Yash Raj Film
<i>Main Prem Ki Diwani Hoon</i> (2003)	1.23	60	Rajshri
<i>Mohabbatein</i> (2000)	1.07	53	Yash Raj Films
<i>Kaante</i> (2002)	1.04	29	Media Partners
<i>Yaadein</i> (2001)	1.00	56	Tips

Source: <http://www.boxofficeguru.com/fz.htm>.

Creating a Culture of Corporatization

The globalization of the Indian film industry is manifested by its gradual corporatization, spurred on by a change in perception by the Government of India, which is becoming increasingly aware of the export potential of India's entertainment industry. In 1999, it passed a law exempting film export earnings from tax. The decision of the state-run Industrial Development Bank of India to finance films has also made a difference, as producers can now receive loans from banks and do not have to depend on questionable financial sources. Financing of commercial cinema in India has traditionally been a complex operation, with funding sometimes being provided by syndicates with "underworld" contacts. Keen to launder their profits, cash transfer rather than checks was the industry norm, with little financial transparency. Despite a more liberal investment environment, only one in ten films are financed through organized institutions such as banks (Das 2006).

With the globalization of media industries and availability of new modes of delivery—through satellite and cable as well as online mechanisms—film producers can now recover costs through subsidiary rights: overseas, TV, video, DVD, and Internet download sales. The growth of the music industry and the existence of several international music corporations in India have contributed to a major new stream of revenue—by 2005, music rights for films were sold for 100 million rupees, instead of 1 million rupees in the early 1990s. Increasingly, more and more entertainment companies are listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange. When in 2000 filmmaker Subhash Ghai went public with his production company, Mukta Arts, it was hailed a groundbreaking development for the industry.

In the past five years, according to industry reports, financial institutions such as the Industrial Development Bank of India sanctioned Rs1.8 billion for movie projects, of which Rs900 million have already been distributed. Bank of India has financed Rs250 million for five movies, while since 2004, the Export-Import Bank of India has financed Rs80 million for nine movies. Though the interest rates are very low on such loans, they are offered only to well-established film companies. Many banks appear to be keen to fund such films which have a potential to earn foreign currency revenues in the overseas market (Das 2006).

Another significant contribution to the culture of corporatism has been the growing interest of nonmedia corporations in the film business.

A key example of this trend is Adlabs, part of the Reliance Infocomm, one of India's top industrial houses, which is now involved in film production, processing, exhibition, and distribution. The Sahara Group—a major presence in the television industry in India—is also making forays into film production through its Sahara Motion Pictures Division. Its deal with production house K Sera Sera to hire ace directors Ram Gopal Varma (maker of the Indian version of *The Godfather* called *Sarkar*), and Madhur Bhandarkar (whose *Page 3* received both critical and commercial success) has led to the production of several hit films.

International players such as Sony and Star are also entering the film business in India: prominent examples include the 2003 film *Ek Hasina Thi* (Once There Was a Beautiful Woman), co-produced by Murdoch's Twentieth Century Fox, and noted director Sanjay Leela Bhansali's movie *Saawariya* (Beloved), partly financed by Sony (Das 2006). With the growing corporatization of the film industry and progressive Americanization of popular culture, corporations both national and transnational, including Coke, Pepsi, and Intel, are increasingly warming up to the idea of in-film advertising and sponsorship and merchandising deals.

"Crossover Cinema"? Hype and Hope

The corporatization may help make the Indian film industry more professional and financially efficient, but how might it impact on the themes of films? Will filmmakers be tailoring their scripts to suit a global audience? How does the content cross cultural and linguistic boundaries? Though such diasporic filmmakers as New York-based Mira Nair (director of *Monsoon Wedding*) and the British-born Gurvinder Chadha (director of such crossover films as *Bend It Like Beckham* and *Bride and Prejudice*) have acted as a bridge between Western and Indian popular cinema, their films are specifically aimed at Western audiences. For a Hindi-language Indian film—with its primary audience in India—to cross over to a wider international audience is a much more daunting task.

One of the more successful of the latter was the 2001 film *Lagaan* (Land Tax), produced by Aamir Khan, which was nominated for the Best Foreign Film at the Oscars and more recently listed at number 14 among the "50 films to see before you die" in a special program on Britain's Channel 4 television in July 2006. Hollywood-style marketing, with a premiere in London's West End, made *Lagaan* (which had a British actress,

Rachel Shelley, in a leading role) a candidate to cross the cultural divide that keeps the majority of Britons from watching Indian films. The film combines the two key aspects of Indian cultural life—cinema and cricket—against a colonial backdrop and the setting of the traditional Indian village. Sony Entertainment Television Pictures released *Lagaan* globally on June 15, 2001, in 40 theaters in the United States alone, as well as in Britain, Japan, China, Malaysia, Hong Kong, South Africa, Middle East, Australia, and New Zealand, and the film was subtitled in English, French, German, Arabic, and Mandarin. In Britain, *Lagaan* hit the box office top 10 and became a talking point even among non-Asian filmgoers.

Lagaan was followed by another Indian attempt at crossover cinema. *Asoka*, an ambitious film produced by superstar Shah Rukh Khan, told the story of India's greatest emperor, the ruler of the Mauryan dynasty (322–185 B.C.), famous for waging bloody campaigns, who gave up war to become a Buddhist monk, spreading the message of Buddha across Asia. Khan criss-crossed continents as part of a publicity blitzkrieg to promote the 120-million-rupee film, the first historical Hindi-language film in nearly two decades. *Asoka* received good coverage in Western media—it was the first Indian film to employ a British publicity firm to promote it, with posters on the London Underground. The film was released in more than 80 cinemas across the United Kingdom. The book, *The Making of Asoka*, by journalist Mushaq Shiekh, published at the time of the film's release, marked the beginning of a trend in film marketing (Shiekh 2001). Since then, the marketing of films has taken on new dimensions—with online advertising and mobile publicity. Despite such efforts, Hindi films have not been able to make a significant dent into Hollywood's territory. It is still rare to find many Westerners, or for that matter, Chinese, queuing up to watch a Bollywood film.

It can be argued that corporatization and chasing crossover audiences has led to the advent of a new kind of cinema, a hybrid cultural product that fuses the language of Hollywood with the accent, slang, and emotions of India. Indian filmmakers appear to be aiming to reach the coveted Western markets, privileging scripts which interest the diasporic audience—by 2004, exports accounted for nearly 30 percent of the industry earnings (FICCI 2004; UNESCO 2005).

It is not unusual to see Indian filmmakers adapting Hollywood plots to Indian tastes, in the process refiguring the Hollywood hegemony in a hybridized product. The desire to maximise the global audience is seen in the increasing popularity of the Manhattan-in-Mumbai genre of movies,

where either the hero or the heroine is an NRI (Non-resident Indian), based in the West mostly speaking Hinglish dialogues (a mixture of Hindi and English).

The film producers appear to be primarily interested only in the "secondary" markets—the demographically desirable NRIs, reflected in the themes of some recent big budget films. The 2003 mega hit, the Nikhil Advani-directed love triangle *Kal Ho Na Ho* (If Tomorrow Comes), was the first mainstream Indian film set entirely in the United States. Yash Chopra production's 2005 film *Salaam Namaste*, which dealt with the issue of a live-in relationship, was the first Hindi film to be based in Australia. A year later, Karan Johar's *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna* (Never Say Good-bye), a film starring, among others, Shah Rukh Khan, which centered on a cross-couple romance and adultery, had virtually no reference to India at all. Most of the dialogue in the film was in English or Hinglish as the film was about young Indian-origin professionals living in New York. The film generated controversy in India as it seemed to legitimize extramarital affairs and divorce, still not socially acceptable for most Indians. Both director Johar and star Khan were defending the new value system of globalized Indians in an hour-long special program on NDTV (*We the People*, August 20, 2006, NDTV) as well as a half-hour special on CNN/IBN, another 24/7 news operation in India. Despite such controversies at home, the film did extremely well in the targeted market, generating ₹749,243 in its opening week in the United Kingdom, while in the United States it grossed \$1.5 million in its first week, according to media reports.

To attempt to reach beyond the diasporic audience may be seen in the increasing presence of Western actors in Indian films. Filmmakers want to use the hegemonic superiority associated with Western media and cultural artefacts to gain Western as well as other non-South Asian audiences. British actress Antonia Bernath had a prominent role in Subhash Ghai's 2005 film *Kisna—the Warrior Poet*, which was shot simultaneously in Hindi and English, with the English print shortened by an hour to accommodate the Western audience. Another British actress, Annabelle Wallace, played the lead role in a bilingual romantic comedy *Dil Jo Bhi Kahey* (Whatever the Heart Says), which also starred Amitabh Bachchan. British actor Toby Stephens, previously cast in *Lagaan*, had a major appearance in the 2005 historical film *Mangal Pandey: The Rising*, set in nineteenth-century India, while British actress Alice Patten starred in the 2006 hit *Rang De Basanti*.

Hollywood/Bollywood

These trends toward corporatization and globalization indicate growing convergence between Bollywood and the West. The British government sees Bollywood as a source for foreign exchange: there was a buzz in the entertainment business when it was announced that the 2007 "Bollywood Oscars" ceremony will be held in Yorkshire. In December 2005, Indian and British governments signed a joint agreement to promote film co-productions. A much more significant synchronization is taking place between the world's biggest and its richest film factories. Plans for joint ventures between Indian film producers and Hollywood giants received a boost with the decision of the Indian government to allow foreign companies to invest in the Indian film industry. In 2000, the Indian government allowed the Foreign Investment Promotion Board to approve 100 percent Foreign Direct Investment ventures in filmmaking, financing, production, distribution, and exhibition. Now major Hollywood companies such as Columbia TriStar, Paramount, and Universal Pictures are contemplating co-productions in India.

This policy shift conforms to general pro-business orientation of post-Cold War Indian governments. Both the Indian film industry and the government are keen to explore global markets, as was evident at the 2001 Cannes Film Market when private producers joined hands with the state-run National Film Development Corporation in setting up an India Pavilion to market Indian films. A delegation from the Indian film, television, and music industries, headed by India's then Information and Broadcasting Minister Sushma Swaraj, visited the United States in 2001, meeting, among others, Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Pictures Association of America, to persuade Hollywood to invest in Indian entertainment industry and also to bring Indian films into the mainstream distribution circuit in the United States and globally. Pricewater Cooper valued the entertainment and media sector in India at \$7 billion in 2004, and it was expected to grow at about 14 percent in the next five years to reach over \$10 billion by 2009 (FICCI 2004).

As a UNESCO report noted:

Indian film production is progressively catering to foreign audiences. Although small by comparison with American productions, the revenues generated by Indian movies abroad have registered a ten-fold expansion

in the last 10 years. For the estimated \$990 million earned by the Indian film sector in 2004, revenues from overseas have already reached \$220 million. Today the value of Indian cultural and creative industries is estimated at \$4.3 billion. This sector is growing at an annual rate close to 30 percent, and analysts forecast that exports may continue to grow by 50 percent in the coming years. An important factor in this impressive performance is that Indian companies are succeeding in bringing international audiences to the cinemas, in addition to the traditional diaspora communities of the USA, the United Kingdom, and the Middle East. This strategy includes expansion to nontraditional countries, both industrialised and emerging, such as Japan and China. (UNESCO 2005: 44)

Already, some indication of Bollywood's look-east attitudes are discernable: leading Indian composer A. R. Rahman, who wrote the music for Andrew Lloyd Webber's West End musical hit, *Bombay Dreams*, created the score for a Chinese film *Warriors of Heaven and Earth*. The success of the 2005 Chinese film *Perhaps Love*—the first musical since the 1950s and made with expertise from Bollywood—is indicative of the potential of media collaborations among major non-Western cultures, involving the world's two largest populations and its two biggest diasporas: 35 million Chinese, 20 million Indian (*People's Daily* 2005).

The Indian government and the corporate world see Indian popular culture as part of India's "soft" power. Bollywood stars and singers were a key part of the closing ceremony of the 19th Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006, promoting the 2010 Games in New Delhi, while during the 2006 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, a \$3 million public-private promotional campaign called "India Everywhere" included shows organized by Bollywood choreographer Shiamak Davar.

This "soft" power is anchored in India's software industry, which earned as much as \$17.2 billion in export revenue in 2005 (NASSCOM 2006). The world's largest distributor of Hindi films—Eros International—which began trading on the London Stock Exchange in 2006—has collaborated with Intel to deliver its content over broadband to consumers around the globe, and started a digital service with RTL, Europe's largest TV company, to make Indian movies available for on-demand delivery on the continent. It also announced plans to launch its content on Movielink, a leading broadband movie download service in the United States, owned by a joint venture of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount, Sony, Universal, and Warner Brothers. Commenting on these developments, Kishore

Luella, Chairman and CEO of Eros International, said: "It marks the coming together of Hollywood and Bollywood. Our visions are aligned and we are confident of being able to offer a compelling consumer proposition" (quoted in press release available at www.erosentertainment.com).

Many Indian film companies, including Yash Raj Films, have set up hi-tech studios for outsourcing work from Hollywood, while Mukta Arts has opened a film academy called Whistling Woods, to train professionals in all departments of film production and distribution. Sahara's Hindi movie channel Filmy has launched a Hollywood dubbed movie segment. As the plans for joint ventures between Indian film producers and Hollywood giants mature and materialize, Indian films are likely to become more visible in the global market. However, there is a lurking danger that with Hollywood production houses dominating film financing, Indian films might lose their cultural distinctiveness.

Indian cinema can scarcely match the economic prowess of Hollywood. Even within India, Indian media companies are relatively poorly resourced: only three media companies find a place in a survey of top 500 Indian companies conducted in August 2006 by *The Economic Times*. India's leading financial newspaper, with a market capitalization of Rs9.3 billion; the top media company was Zee Telefilms, ranked 142nd. In contrast, Hollywood giants have huge revenues: in 2004, Hollywood accounted for 80 percent of the world's film business, half of its revenue generating outside the United States (Waterman 2005). In terms of earning revenue from film exports, India is no match for the United States—India's share in the global film industry, valued in 2004 at \$200 billion, was less than 0.2 percent. India barely merits a page in the 552-page *Movie Business Book* (Squire 2006). In Britain, where Indian cinema has its best performance outside India, the Hindi film market accounted for just 1.1 percent of gross box office in 2004 (UK Film Council 2006). Economically, Indian cinema may take a long time to gain the kind of export revenue that Hollywood earns, but culturally its influence could be more tangible.

There is hope beyond the hype about globalization of Bollywood. In an era of the Pentagon-declared "long war" against "terrorism," Indian cinema and its culture may emerge as an important corrective to the excesses of Hollywood's representation of the Islamic "other." It is important to remind ourselves that had British colonial powers not partitioned India, it would have been the world's largest Muslim country. India has a long tradition of a composite culture and, with a few exceptions, mainstream Hindi cinema has projected a positive picture of Islam. It is hard to find

another culture where the recent head of state is a Muslim, the current Prime Minister a Sikh, and the leader of the ruling party an Italian-born Catholic, in a country where more than 80 percent of the population is Hindu. Most important: the biggest contemporary Bollywood star, Shah Rukh Khan, is a Muslim. Being rooted in such a syncretic culture, Indian cinema is well placed to deal with diversity in a globalized world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aiyar, P. 2006. "Bollywood's China Link." *The Hindu*, March 19.
- Barnouw, E., and S. Krishnaswamy. 1980. *Indian Film*, 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Das, S. 2006. "Bollywood Banks on Corporate Route to the Big League," March 21: <http://www.indiantelevision.com/special/y2k6/film-finance.htm>.
- Desai, J. 2004. *Beyond Bollywood: The Cultural Politics of South Asian Diasporic Film*. London: Routledge.
- FICCI. 2004. *The Indian Entertainment Industry: An Unfolding Opportunity*. Mumbai: Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
- Foreign Affairs*. 2006. "The Rise of India." July-August.
- Goswami, K. 2004. "Bollywood . . . the New Hollywood?" *Variety*, October 3.
- Kaur, R., and A. J. Sinha. 2005. *Bollywood: Popular Indian Cinema through a Transnational Lens*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Larkin, B. 1997. "Indian Films and Nigerian Lovers: Media and the Creation of Parallel Modernities." *Africa* 67 (3).
- Miller, T., N. Govil, J. McMurria, and R. Maxwell. 2001. *Global Hollywood*. London: British Film Institute.
- Mishra, V. 2002. *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire*. London: Routledge.
- NASSCOM. 2006. *NASSCOM Strategic Review 2006*. Mumbai: National Association of Software Service Companies.
- Pendakur, M. 2003. *Indian Popular Cinema: Industry, Ideology and Consciousness*. Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press.
- People's Daily*. 2005. "Musical Movie 'Perhaps Love' Hits Box Office Record." December 7, *The People's Daily* (English web edition). Available at: http://english.people.com.cn/200512/07/eng20051207_226188.html.
- Punathambekar, A. 2005. "Bollywood in the Indian-American Diaspora: Mediating a Transitive Logic of Cultural Citizenship." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 8 (2): 151-73.
- Rajadhyaksha, A., and P. Willemen. 2000. *Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema*, 2nd edition. New Delhi: Oxford University Press; London: British Film Institute.
- Rughani, P., and A. White. 2003. *ImagineAsia Evaluation Report*. London: British Film Institute.
- Shiekh, M. 2001. *The Making of Asoka*. New Delhi: HarperCollins.
- Squire, J., ed. 2006. *The Movie Business Book*, 3rd edition. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Thussu, D. K. 2006a. *International Communication—Continuity and Change*, 2nd edition. London: Hodder Arnold and New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 2006b. "Mapping Global Media Flow and Contra-Flow." In *Media on the Move: Global Flow and Contra-Flow*, ed. D. K. Thussu. London and New York: Routledge.
- UK Film Council. 2006. *Statistical Report (2005-06)*. London: UK Film Council.
- UNESCO. 2005. *International Flows of Selected Cultural Goods and Services 1994-2003*. UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Vasudevan, R., ed. 2000. *Making Meaning in Indian Cinema*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Waterman, D. 2005. *Hollywood's Road to Riches*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.