

Globalization and Culture
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Lecture - 17
Bollywood at Large

Hindi cinema has been a traveling cinema. It has been traveling for long time. And when we talk about the global flows of Bollywood, we seem to ignore these earlier flows of Hindi Cinema which have been going on almost for a 100 years. In this unit I am going to take you to the old and the new spaces exhibition spaces of Hindi Cinema and to and also Bollywood Cinema to show you that global flows of cinema of Indian Cinema pre date the flows of Bollywood Cinema beginning in the 90s.

When did these flows begin, how did the Hindi films, how did not just Hindi films how did Indian films travel before the era of globalization. Where did they travel, who was watching these films and what is the impact that they had on people who watched these films. What impact, what effects they had on different groups of people who watched these films.

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So, the question we are going to explore in this unit is who is watching Bollywood films. And we will get the answer by looking at who was watching Indian films in the past; the title is Bollywood at Large.

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Globalization, Cosmopolitanism, Mundialization

- Christianity
- Civilising Mission
- Development
- Global Market.
- Each of these "corresponds to different global designs, and, certainly originates different local histories responding to the same global designs".

- Globalization
- "a set of designs to manage the world"
- Cosmopolitanism
- "a set of projects toward planetary conviviality"(2002)
- Mundialization or "local histories *in* which global designs are enacted, or where they have to be adapted, adopted, transformed, and rearticulated"(2002)

I am going to look at the narrative of globalization, cosmopolitanism and mundialization. On one hand we have Christianity, the civilizing mission, the development of the global market. And each of these corresponds to different global designs, and certainly originates different local histories corresponding to the same global designs. We defined globalization as a set of designs to manage the world. And we have posed it with cosmopolitanism which is a set of projects towards planetary conviviality. And mundialization is defined as local histories in which global designs are enacted or where they have to be adapted adopted transformed and rearticulated.

So, I am going to summarize this once again. I am going to make a contrast between globalization which is a set of designs to manage the world, and define borrow the definition in which cosmopolitanism is understood as a set of projects towards planetary conviviality. So, one is a positive aspect of globalization and the other is a negative aspect of globalization. And mundialization is a process in which local histories in which global designs are enacted or where they have to be adapted adopted transformed and rearticulated.

And I would look at these, the movements, the travels of Indian Cinema in the past as well as those in the present corresponding to different global designs and certainly originates different local histories responding to the same global designs.

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Hindi Cinematic Travels and Bollywood's Flows

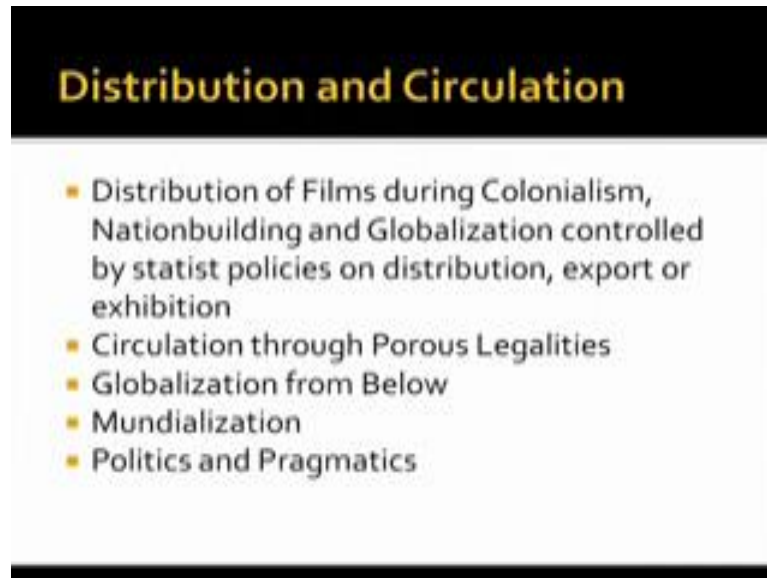
- Objective:
- To trace the different stages of Hindi cinema's movements to compare Bollywood's contemporary global flows with the Hindi film's bordercrossings in the imperial and national era.



So, as we read it in the context of the fierce about Hollywood Cinema swamping the world and driving out all local cinemas, all local Indian industries and Indian Cinema is a living example, is a shining example. Let we may say to how it has it has not only withstood the on slot of Hollywood Cinema in the era of globalization. But it has always offered stiff competition to Hollywood Cinema even in the past with audience not only in South Asia, but also in some other parts of the world preferring Indian Cinema to productions from Hollywood or from the West.

Now, the objective of this unit is to trace the different stages of Hindi Cinema's movement in order to compare Bollywood's contemporary global flows with Hindi films border crossings in the imperial and national era. How are they different?

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Distribution and Circulation

- Distribution of Films during Colonialism, Nationbuilding and Globalization controlled by statist policies on distribution, export or exhibition
- Circulation through Porous Legalities
- Globalization from Below
- Mundialization
- Politics and Pragmatics

And I am going to make a distinction between distribution and circulation. So in the first stage what I see is a distribution, not necessarily in the first stage because it cuts across both the stages. On one hand we have the formal distribution of Indian films during colonialism, during nation building and globalization and this distribution is essentially controlled by statist policies on distribution export or exhibition. On the other hand we have circulation of the same films through porous legalities. And this circulation which I would call leakage is an example of globalization from below it is an example of mundialization which marries politics with pragmatics.

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Leakage

And I guess them have used the term the metaphor leakage. A term which is often used in India to talk about to show how; I prefer this term to the term jugad which is being which is in common currency now to show how leaking is the way Indians have always gotten around bent rules, have gotten around bureaucratic procedures have crossed boundaries. And this is in appropriate metaphor for describing how Indian films have always leaked across the borders of India.

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We begin with the colonial era and the understanding of imperial territories as a global market. I am indebted to Priya Jaykumar's book where she talks about how the entire empire was considered a single territory as far as the marketing of or distribution of films were concerned. Not just the marketing and production and consumption, but also in terms of policies all imperial territories were seen as a single global market. And that bend the uniformity of imperial policies across the colonies. And the imperial anxieties so ironically imperial anxieties about Hollywood Cinema on the effects of on British authority we are talking about the British power, British Empire in crisis extremely anxious about a dwindling authority or sovereignty over native populations.

And the perceived role of cinema in reinforcing certain stereotypes and constructing a negative image of white races among the native people or white people as deprived or morally corrupt and for this reason the British imperial government adopts a policy

introduces an act which it worries anxieties about Hollywood Cinemas effects on the superiority of the white race would entail for the British empire.

Encourage the exhibition and distribution of Indian films in India and in the Indian Diaspora. And how did this happen? This happened with the introduction of the cinematographic or Quota Act of 1927 which stipulated that a certain that the only a very small percentage of the films exhibited in the empire would be Hollywood films, the majority of the films should be films produced in the empire.

Now, the renters who exhibited films they exploited the loopholes in the act for a very pragmatic rather than benevolent reasons. They wanted to maximize their profits and they found that Indian films produced in India technically qualified as empire films, but were considerably cheaper than films made in Britain. And there the renters were the people who were not necessarily Indians who were the one first who have exhibited Indian films in the Diaspora to meet the requirement of the Quota Act.

And this is how Indian films came to be exhibited in the various Indian Diasporas often with the complexity of British officials in India who believed that these films would be appropriate entertainment for Indian coolies and Indian workers in the plantations and the various; Diasporas rather than Hollywood films which would have a negative impact on the power of sovereignty of white people over native people in the perception of the native viewers.

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So, due to this act Indian films have been traveling to the Indian Diasporas ever since the 30s were talking about the Era of Silent cinema the Silent Era. And Indian Cinema began almost around it is almost co embedded with cinema and other parts of the world with the first film having being made in the second decade of the 20th Century. And by the 30s Indian films were already being exhibited in the Indian Diasporas to Indian plantation workers namely in, so it was Samikannu Vincent's Tent Cinemas want a very enterprising exhibitor who took his traveling tent cinema not only to different parts of India; I must first of all bring to your notice that films were not exhibited in cinema halls before in the 30s they were still being exhibited in open air open air theaters or in Tent Cinemas not only in India, but in the Diasporas. And it was Samikannu Vincent's Tent Cinemas which traveled to Burma Malaya and to other places and some of the earliest.

Now, the films that were exhibited since this in the Silent Era the films could have been in any Indian were Indian films rather than Hindi films even after the coming of even in the with the coming of sound not only Hindi films, but films in other languages for instance Tamil films, because the majority of migrant workers in the British Malaya were Tamil speaking. Tamil films like were also being shown. One of the earliest Tamil films was Valli Thirumanam, but it is not one is not quite sure whether this film was exhibited by Samikannu Vincent, But films like these were being shown in the plantations in British Malaya.

It was the same with Fiji and we have and a total evidence from Fijians like Vijay Mishra who talk about having watched several mythological films in the childhood. And there is more evidence of the film Bala Joban being screened in Trinidad in the Western in Trinidad 1934 and films travel to Trinidad in 1930 not only Fiji, but also to the West Indies including to Trinidad and Gayana and Bala Joban which was made in 1934 was one such film.

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Now, during the world war and the independence movements there was another market for opening up for Indian films. And this was a market for films not only in places where Indian troops were stationed, but also in other regions in which Indian Diasporas were located or places which had in earlier history of the exhibition of Indian films like British Malaya. But not only to meet the Diasporas need to connect with the homeland, obviously the plantation workers who had no hope of returning home and in that era of low connectivity had almost little connection with the homeland. The sole connection they had with the homeland were the myths of the homeland that they created in relation to the Hindi films they saw.

And as Mishra put it these became new myths along with the old myths like the Hindu epics and the other puranic myths, for these plantation workers or the Indian Diasporas the older Diasporas. But in with the Second World War they were deemed as a right entertainment for Indian troops. But it was a more interesting a very different reason which created which created a taste for Indian films in the British Malaya particularly in Singapore and that was due to the Japanese occupation of the states settlements.

When the Japanese took over the two major cinema conglomerates rather than cinema houses in the Straits Settlements Shaw Brothers and Cathay who were forced to become managers of the Japanese, owners were bit forced to become a managers of the Japanese. And the OTNs were offered a choice between watching Japanese propaganda films and

Indian films. For reasons very different from the British the Japanese also discourage the screening of Hollywood films, because they were made by Americans because they were made in America. And indirectly unwittingly encourage the viewing of Hindi films or Indian films in Singapore.

Obviously, the audience preferred Indian films which was seen by the Japanese as harmless and pure entertainment in the same manner as the British saw them as harmless and pure entertainment for the purpose of keeping the plantation workers happy. But as a result of this a new audience for Indian films emerged in the straits settlement not only the Malay people of the Straits Settlements who have always been big fans of Indian films from the beginning. Certain generations of Chinese audience also were grown up on these films they watched in theaters during the Japanese occupation and became big fans of Indian films.

Now, when we move from Singapore to Indonesia we find Indian films travel to Indonesia in 1945 with the Indian troops and they were very important in the since there was no local Indonesian film industry they were very important in the funding of the film industry both in Singapore and in Indonesia. As well as in 1940s they traveled to Sri Lanka where again it was during the Second World War and they were meant for the entertainment of troops.

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Tent Cinemas




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The cinematic assemblage was anchored to several other assemblages of older Tamil and Sikh Singaporeans and the new professional migrants, Nepali and Bangadeshi guestworkers, Malays and a few Chinese.

Now, I have an image of a Tent Cinemas. This is not really a image of Tent Cinemas in Singapore, but an image from Amit Matage Madesias Tent Cinemas. And we find that when we look at the cinema take us some which in Singapore, it is anchored to several other assemblages the contemporary assemblage is anchored to other assemblages of older Tamil and Sikhs Singaporeans and new professional migrants Napoli, Bengali guest workers, Malays and a few Chinese.

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1956-62
Distribution of Indian Films

- UNESCO Report
- West and non-west
- East Africa, Thailand, Malaya, Ceylon, Burma, Vietnam, Persian Gulf
- 100 films in the West
- Russia 0.5%
- China
- Greece 111 films
- Bulgaria

The slide features a photograph of a cinema interior with people seated at tables. A blue circular graphic is partially visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Now, 1956 to 1962 we have evidence, we have records of the formal distribution and export of Indian films overseas. This is I have taken the UNESCO Report as the support to get information about where and how many films were exported during these years. And according to this report it is only 10 percent of the total films produced between 56 and 62 were exported to the West. And the remaining 90 percent were exported to the traditional markets of Indian films in both in the West and the non-West, but mainly in East Africa, Thailand, Malaya, Ceylon and using the old names because these are the names used in the report; Burma, Vietnam and Persian Gulf which have traditionally formed the markets for Indian films since the 50s or even earlier.

Now, 100 films were exported during these years to the West, and out of these 0.5 percent share was taken by Russia. The majority Russia emerges as the major market for the Indian films during this period this was the era of the alliances that India was trying to form the Russia. And export of Indian films was dazedly and actively encouraged by

the Indian state and we have images of the film actors Raj Kapoor and Nargis accompanying Pandit Nehru on his visits to US.

And as a result of that, that export of Indian films in Russia in the 50s and the 60s Russia still remains a major market for Indian films even today. And there is an entire dubbing industry in Russia is based on Indian films. China is other market and some of the films the old Chinese still remember songs from Raj Kapoor films once again these were the Raj Kapoor films namely the film Awaara and you find Chinese singing Awaala Hun in china. There are reports that 111 films were exported to Greece, they were exported to countries of Eastern Europe such as Bulgaria.

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During the 70s we find I wanted to show I have used this picture of screening of a film in multiplex in Bangkok in the central mall in Bangkok. And the two Sikhs that you see in the picture whose faces are not visible; they are the sons of the person who was the sole distributor of Indian films in whole of South East Asia until the 70s. Now with the ending of the formal export of Indian films South East Asia, the brothers have been forced to turnover to other monocreator businesses, but out of respect for their fathers memory they are still hold viewings, they are still organized viewings of Indian films at least on one Sunday or one weekend in a month largely of the hit Bollywood films as a homage to their fathers memory.

But the reports are that in the 70s for some reason there was a decline in the export of Indian films overseas. And these reports have come from various regions from the Caribbean, from Thailand, from Africa; audiences in Africa who have interviewed recall having watched many of the films of the 70s in theaters. Similarly audiences in Indonesia remember being taken to watch Indian films in theaters in Jakarta for instance. Or in Ghana in Tanzania both diasporic Indian as well as non-Indians Africans recalls having regularly watched films in theater. Mera Naam Joker in Tanzania for instance which was screened in open air theaters in Tanzania.


And my respondent who is now based in Canada recall having watch - Sholay in 1976 in Ghana when he was a school boy and he bunked school to watch the film Sholay, so what was interesting here is that there is a complete change in the audience of Indian films from the Indian Diasporas in the old Diasporas such as Fiji, Trinidad, Tobago, the British Malaya where the presence of the Indian Diaspora also creates a taste for Indian films among other people in the places of settlements such as the Malay in the straits settlement followed by the Chinese.

And in Africa we find my respondent shared with me that she watched Mera Naam Joker 13 times in Tanzania. And those of us who watched Mera Naam Joker yes it has become a cult film today, but when it was released in 1970 it was one of the major flops of Raj Kapoor. So, I was very curious to know why anybody would want to watch 13 the film thirteen times. And the answer was the that people did not go to watch films in the Diasporas the reason why they went to watch films or watch the film 13 times in the Diaspora was that there was this was the films help them produce certain forms of sociality during the Indian thing presenting Indian, speaking Indian languages, Indian eating, Indian food I am just letting their hair down. So, this was up to the 70s.

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The 1970s Video Boom

- Informal Economy
- Decentralized, Uncontrolled Ownership,
- Challenging the Monopoly of State Controlled Media
- Absence of provisions related to exhibition in Censorship Acts



And one of the reasons which I surmise could have been responsible for the decline or almost the ending of the formal exports or distribution of Indian films overseas was the 70s video boom. So, an informal economy was shown during this period which was decentralized, which was uncontrolled, and whose ownership was also distributed. Now in this economy, this video boom is an example of mundialization because it challenges the monopoly of state control media. Because of the absence of provisions related to exhibition in censorship act it was possible for people to circulate and view films in video parlors.

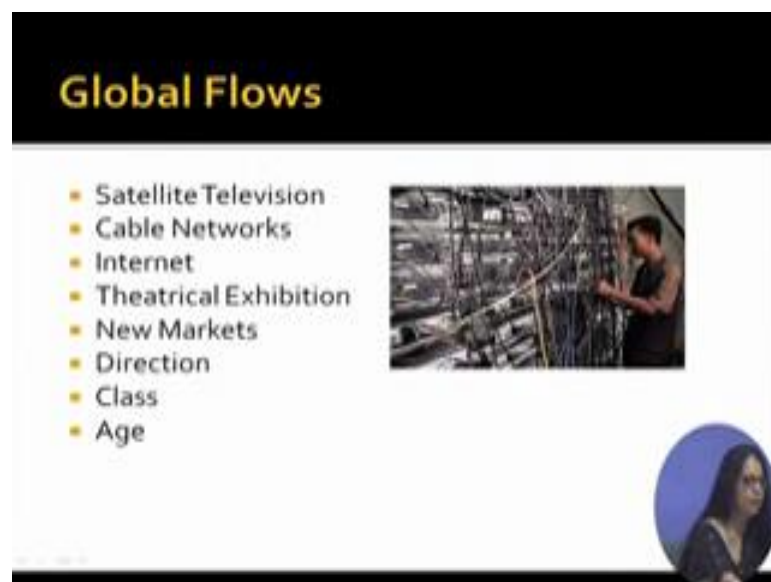
So, one is curious to know that when Hindi films were no longer being formally screened in cinema halls or they were not being exported even to there is always been in a ban of Indian films in neighboring nations like Pakistan and Bangladesh where no films were screened after 65. How is it that generations of viewers in those nations are familiar with films produced during this era? And the answer is, the video boom because copies of films were being illegally produced in Pakistan and distributed by a company based in Dubai and being circulated all across the world.

In parlors such as this, this is the image of a parlor in Bangkok of Sikh the Gurudwara in Bangkok. And it is a perfect example of the porous legalities that Ravi Sundaram and others talk about, because in technical terms it stands on the cusp of legality and illegality because it is really circulating pirated videos of the Indian films CDs and DVDs of

Indian films. But the owner's wife you see in the video does not look much like a pirate to me. And the video it is parlors like this or CD shops like this which kept alive the taste for Indian films not only in the diasporic audience the NRI audience in different parts of the world, but also in non diasporic local ethnic audience.

For instance in this video parlor I came up on several Thais working in to come and rent DVDs or buy DVDs of Hindi films of the latest Hindi films when I expressed my surprise I was told that the Thais are big lovers have been always a big lovers of Indian films. And again there is an entire dubbing industry based on Indian films in Thailand and these Thais were borrowing the dubbed versions of the films from this video parlor.

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So, the global flows which have been enabled by satellite television through cable networks, through internet, theatrical exhibition have created new markets for Indian films overseas. They have always been these traditional markets, but now we have new markets of Indian films which changes according to the direction, the class, and age of the audience. So, there is an intermixing. The new markets are in the old traditional markets of Bollywood films, but they have also spread to new areas in the West, new generations of viewers.

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Porous Legalities and Subculture of Piracy

- Sphere of Illegality
- Production, Distribution and Exhibition
- Porous Boundaries and Avenues of Participation




And these porous legalities and subculture of piracy; there is a sphere of illegality, the production distribution and exhibition, porous avenues, porous boundaries and avenues of participation they offered to viewers.

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Labourers enjoy Bollywood nights as films shown for free on wide screen

- 00:28Dubai: It's Bollywood nights on weekends for the majority of labourers across the UAE who can enjoy blockbusters on the wide screen for free.
- By Sunita Menon, Staff Reporter
Published: December 31, 2007



They allow them to watch films and allow them to perform forms of sociality which would not be available to them in otherwise. In Dubai it is Bollywood nights on the weekends for the majority of work laborers across the UAE who can enjoy blockbusters on the wide screen for free. This is Sunita Menon reporting on 2007.

We will move on in the next session. We will compare the old markets, the traditional markets of Bollywood films with new markets for Bollywood film through two case studies.

Thank you.