Inside and Outside the Law: Bombay's Anti-Hero Cinema

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What does the unconscious . . . do to the idea of legacy (from father to son, for example)? [. . .] For psychoanalysis, to be a son is to feel guilty, even when there has been no crime. Lineage is a deadly affair.

Jacqueline Rose, *On Not Being Able to Sleep: Psychoanalysis and the Modern World*, (2003)

Crime, passion, the most unbearably intense but unspeakable desire—all this is the stuff not only of Bombay cinema but, curiously enough, also of psychoanalysis. This paper emerges out of my continuing fascination with two icons from these seemingly very disparate worlds, Sigmund Freud and Mr. Amitabh Bachchan. And while the argument that I put forward here neither begins nor exhausts itself with Mr. Bachchan, he is nevertheless its most dramatic 'symptom'.[1] The point to keep in mind is that the 'symptom' (in the analytical sense), never has a one-on-one correspondence with the unconscious psychic scars from which it erupts.

The poles within which I place my argument here can be marked from roughly around the time that the 'angry young man' of Bombay dies, cinematically, till the time of Mr. Bachchan's renaissance on *television* through the mega-hit, *Kaun Banega Crorepati*. The intervening period saw radical changes both in the Bombay industry's production-base as well as its cinematic aesthetic. These changes then also found representation in distinct paradigm-shifts within Bombay's action/anti-hero genre. The imperceptible shifts in Mr. Bachchan's persona, from the primordial rage of Vijay in *Deewar* (1975) to the suave, acerbic, but (at heart) terribly romantic Buddhadev in *Cheeni Kum* (2007), are thus for us convenient markers within which to place the kaleidoscopic shifts within the Bombay industry that have been underway over the last three decades or so.[2]

Recent cultural theory has shown us that the differential formation of the Indian bourgeoisie from its Western European counterpart has meant that the 'realism' of Bombay cinema has been significantly different from both, the classical 'realist' text of nineteenth-century Western Europe as well its cinematic manifestation, the domestic melodrama of 1950s Hollywood. As the editors of the *Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema* point out, the ideological function of 'melodrama' here has in fact been to recast the aesthetic-social idiom of Anglo-America into indigenous frames:

> Defined in the Indian context mainly as a 'musical dramatic' narrative in accordance with its original generic meaning...Melodrama drew on the same sources as, e.g., the mythological but functioned as the aesthetic regime accompanying the socio-economic transition from feudal-artisanal to industrial ones, both formally and in content matter...[I]t recomposed traditional narrative idioms and themes, drawing on Western narrative forms and similarly negotiating modernization tensions. (1993: 137)

Historically, the first paradigmatic shift that the Bombay industry witnessed, from its inception in the 1910s to the post-Independence era in the 50s, was that the *swadeshi* concern over 'Indianness' of filmic representations which was gradually replaced by a new concern over their 'realism'. Generically, while the 'mythological' had emerged as the earliest genre in Indian cinema, the 40s/50s saw the birth of the Bombay 'social.' The reconstitution of the ruling bloc in post-Emergency India as well as the changed nature of 'regionalisms' of the 80s/90s have resulted in a further aesthetic and paradigm shifts in Bombay. In what follows, I lay out some of these, relating them to the anti-hero genre of Bombay cinema.

Bombay's 'Heterogeneous Mode of Production'

Independence marked the advent of a decisively new form of cinematic practice in Bombay. While the *swadeshi* movement had generated the impulse, the intervening War years had seen the indigenous bourgeoisie acquire an all-India character. Economically, this process was simultaneous with the collapse of the early studios such

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as Prabhat and Bombay Talkies and the entry into the film-industry of speculative finance.

In comparison, while studios such as MGM, Universal and Paramount in 1920s/30s Hollywood had been centres for the mass-production of films in ways analogous to automobiles, say, the nature of capitalism in India meant that as opposed to the 'vertically integrated mode of production' of the major American studios the Bombay industry adopted a 'heterogeneous mode of manufacture' where several pre-fabricated 'segments' are assembled under the directing influence of a financier.[3] The entry of speculative finance in 30s/40s Bombay then manifested itself in the phenomenon of free-lancing, eroding the authority of the producer-director of the early studios. There emerged instead a host of financiers who owned neither production-infrastructure nor personnel, but hired both. As a result, as opposed to the camera which had been its most visible symbol, the Star now emerged as the most visible symbol of Bombay cinema.

However beginning as a 'regional' centre, the emergence of Bombay into a pan-national phenomenon was moreover also crucially dependent on the transistor revolution.[4] Analyzing the politics of genre-formation Madhava Prasad has suggested that as opposed to Hollywood, the prevalence of music in the Bombay 'social' points to the continued reliance of the film-industry here on the resources of other popular-cultural forms such as the theatre; a feature contingent on the nature of capitalism in the country. (*SCH:* 251-260) The political upheavals of the Indira Gandhi era then saw a rupture of this 'classical' form of the Bombay film and the emergence of the art/ middle/ mass cinemas.

The moment I wish to focus on is that of 'liberalization' marked by what Prasad has called the 'disaggregation of the Nehruvian consensus' and the emergence into dominance of capital. As the liberalization process consolidates itself there has been, since the 1980s/90s, a congealing of the 70s 'middle' and 'mass' cinemas into a hybrid form of the 'commercial,' a new commercial cinema which stakes its credentials primarily on a renewed thrust on representationalism. Moreover, this new cinematic aesthetic has emerged as television takes over the 'cultural'/educational functions assigned to the Film Finance Corporation in the 60s/70s. My contention is that while continuing to function within conditions of 'backward' capitalism, the process of globalization has precipitated a re-alignment of dominance within the different 'segments' of the Bombay film as a mass-produced commodity. The earlier prominence of the Star has now been displaced by a new prominence of the music 'sector' of the Bombay industry.

Stars as *Signs: Of Floating Economies and 'Ordinariness'*

Prasad has most persuasively demonstrated that the ideological contradictions of the Nehruvian ruling bloc were inscribed not only in the narrative strategies of the classical Bombay film, but also structured its Star-system. Star-images of 1950s Bombay drew on feudal Hindu notions of iconicity. Not merely in terms of 'noble'/ aristocratic/upper-caste (physical) appearance, but an overarching feudal ideology was replicated in the 'glamour' of Star-images themselves, where this 'glamour' was indistinguishable from the 'innate' glamour of the feudal spectacle. (*SCH*:131-137; 247-251) In a different context he notes that due to the specific nature of state-formation in India, Hindi cinema compresses into a few decades the two hundred year-old-history of 'melodrama' in North America. The feudal melodrama of America was one where the actions of the 'noble' subject would be replicated by lesser characters such as servants/slaves who helped to encase the aristocratic subject's actions as exemplary/sublime, while providing an everyday point of reference themselves. (*SCH*; 130-137) While this feudal notion of Star as God is dramatically evident in the cinemas of the South (MGR, NTR, Raj Kumar), in Bombay too the cult identities of Stars such as Raj Kapoor and Nargis (their high-profile connections, their status as 'national ambassadors,' their sensational love affair), sought to invest Stars with a resplendence consciously distanced from the horizons of possibility of the everyday.[5]

Ideologically, however, such a notion of glamour is the opposite of that mobilised through the Star-system of Hollywood. As Richard Dyer has argued, the element of the exotic/glamorous in Hollywood Star-images functions instead as advertisements for the ostensible 'openness' of a democracy which militates against these very notions of feudal/ aristocratic privilege; as paradoxical reinforcements of the 'ordinariness' of Hollywood Stars. The paradox between extravagant lifestyles and 'ordinariness' is then reconciled through an ideology which suggests that 'human' qualities exist independent of material circumstances. Stars are constructed as 'typical' of the 'American people' who have simply had lucky breaks that can happen to anyone. Fundamentally, Dyer proposes that such a notion of glamour serves to reinforce the myth that the class-system does not operate in America. It is a system that recognises only talent and hard work. (1986: 38-51)

The decisive change that marked the Star-system of 80s/90s Bombay was that Star-images here too now began to play up a certain notion of the 'ordinary.' Underlying the changing nature of Bombay's Star-images were the

kaleidoscopic shifts marking the nation's new 'modernising' agenda. In fact my contention is that the new 'ordinariness' of Bombay's Star-images is symptomatic not only of structural changes in the industry's production-base but needs to be seen more broadly in terms of the film-industry's response to the new technologies of mass-culture that were gradually rendering both the space of the nation as well the economy of a 'national market' (the twin poles within which cinema, as technology and cultural form was institutionalised), obsolete.

Culturally, the corollary of the liberalization process was the television/video boom. By the mid-70s the 'developmentalist' role that Nehruvian policies had assigned to Bombay had already run into many contradictions. Beginning with the large-scale import of televisions and VCRs in the early 80s, the change to colour telecasting in 1982, the Special Extension Plan (1984) and a host of other initiatives indicated that there had been a decisive shift in governmental priorities. The changed agenda was, moreover, directly determined by the demands of transnational capital. As Ashish Rajadhyaksha has suggested, compatible with the economic re-definition of markets electronic/digital technologies such as television also do not require the political centralisation provided by the nation-state. What is happening now is that instead of economic centralisation, cultural production is being centralized, determined by the new kinds of consumerism made possible by TV. (1987: 1-5)

However as a cultural form, the rise to prominence of television has also affected the Bombay film-industry at the fundamental level of form. Independence had marked the advent of a form of cinematic practice premised on the Star. But the emergence of Bombay into a pan-national phenomenon had also been crucially dependent on the transistor revolution. In his classic analysis of the nature of television, as technology and cultural form, Raymond Williams notes that the distinctive characteristic of both radio and television is that as social technologies they were so developed that their networks of broadcasting/transmission existed prior to the actual content/information that these networks were then used to relay. This, Williams suggests, was because of the 'origins' of these technologies in the War years. Williams then goes on to analyse the direct and implicit connections of the broadcasting/telecommunications networks of the UK with military intelligence as well as the business conglomerates of the new industrial core. (1990: 7-44) The significant point noted by Williams as inherent in both technologies is the contradiction between the nation-state as a tightly defined geo-political unit and communication networks whose centrifugal tendencies run counter to such economic and spatial centralisation. This relates to a tendency noted by Marx himself, in the nature of movement of capital:

> Capital drives beyond national barriers and prejudices as much as beyond...encrusted satisfactions of present needs, and reproductions of old ways of life....But from the fact that capital posits every such limit as its barrier and hence gets ideally beyond it, it does not by any means follow that it has really overcome it, and since every barrier contradicts its character, its production moves in contradictions which are constantly overcome just as constantly posited.[6]

The larger contradiction that the technologies of TV/video enact is, therefore, the contradiction between the 'citizen,' the normative subject of nationalist discourse, and the new figure of the consumer, for whom the 'nation' is no longer the most meaningful category of self-description. As the economy, in the global context of transnational capital emerges as a floating signifier, this is also the primary 'objective' contradiction shaping present-day India. Yet, capital exists in history, and one of the contradictions of 'capital in history' is that we are citizens and consumers at the same time. In what follows, it is this collusive relationship between citizenship and consumerism that I will trace through the 'ordinariness' of the Star-images of 1980s Bombay.

Music, 'Televisual-realism' and the New Star-Images of 80s Bombay:

Economically, liberalisation made it more viable for local manufacturers to import components necessary for the indigenous manufacture of cassettes.[7] A thriving pirate-industry and, in general, an overall lowering of production costs subsequently saw the emergence of a host of companies such as *Venus*, *Tips*, and *T-Series*, which priced their cassettes at rates affordable to lower income groups. The more successful of these companies then not only diversified into the manufacture of video cassettes and various kinds of video-making equipment but also set up their own film-production units, reversing the earlier trend of production-companies marketing their music. Beginning as a music company, *Venus*, for instance, set up the *'United Seven'* banner which produced mega-hits such as *Khiladi* (1993) and *Baazigar* (1993). Similarly, *Time Audio* produced *Vijaypath* (1994) while *Weston* 'presented' *Yeh Dillagi* (1994). On the other hand leading industrial houses such as the R.P.Goenka group not only 'presented' Aditya Chopra's *Dilwaale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* (1995), but also diversified into the manufacture

of music cassettes in conjunction with *HMV*. The new cultural prominence of television also gave a major boost to Bombay's music sector through the sheer number of film-music based programmes on TV beginning with the venerable *Chitrahaar* onto an unending series of music-based programmes such as *Superhit Muqabla, Close-up Antakshari and Meri Awaaz Suno, Indian Idol* and so on.

Further the explosion of the cassette-industry has meant that, increasingly, the pre-release publicity of films has come to rest on its music, through sales of audio-cassettes or television-based music programs. While the Bombay-industry had always produced the 'hit' song, the music segment has now gained near-total autonomy. Already in the 1960s demands by film-producers as well as playback singers that All India Radio give credit to films/singers in its broadcasts of film-music represented 'tendencies' of the music 'sector' of Bombay for 'relative autonomy' from a purely filmic encasing. The setting up in the mid-50s of a commercial broadcasting station by Sri Lanka, airing programmes such as *Binaca Geet Mala* which had completely blanketed the nation within two years of its inception, not only pressurised All India Radio to reverse its earlier policy banning the transmission of film-songs, but in fact to launch its own commercial channel, *Vividh Bharati*. The cassette/television boom precipitated by liberalisation of the 80s not only made music the 'dominant' segment of the Bombay film, but created a cultural space for the music 'sector' autonomous of any filmic encasing.

Thus there emerged, for the first time in India, of a whole extra-cinematic realm of indigenous pop-music mediating the MTV phenomenon for the non-English-speaking Indian audiences. Beginning with Nazia Hassan's *Disco Deewane*, Bombay saw the emergence of its first 'pop-Stars': Remo Fernandes, Alisha Chenoy etc.[8] This was simultaneous with the new cult status of music-directors such as A R Rehman as well as choreographers such as Saroj Khan and now Farah Khan. Consequently, as music now emerged as the dominant segment of the industry, the earlier prominence of the Star was displaced.[9] Star-value has now moved onto the new pop-Stars/VJs who cultivate images on the lines of earlier actors/actresses.

Therefore, the changed nature of Bombay's Star-images of the 80s/90s, emphasising the 'ordinariness' of its new Stars, has to be placed vis-à-vis the new technologies of mass-culture that were challenging the Bombay film's role as the pre-eminent host of the musical spectacle. The fragmentation in the industry's production-base as a result of the TV/cassette-boom and the consequent pressures for novelty this has generated also meant that the life-span of individual actors/actresses at the box-office was now much shorter. Thus, the love-story genre in the 1980s introduced a new lead pair in each of its box-office hits from *Love Story* (1981) to *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* (1988). Similarly the anti-hero genre also introduced a string of new 'Stars' including Anil Kapoor, Sunny Deol, Sanjay Dutt and Nana Patekar, as opposed to the 70s which had been solely dominated by Amitabh Bachchan.

More significantly, the emergence of new technologies of mass-culture gave rise to a different image of the Star in 80s Bombay as compared with that of the 50s. As opposed to the feudal glamour of the Star-images of Raj Kapoor or Nargis, for example, if one looks at the media-images of 80s Stars such as Aamir Khan what is striking is the way in which the media consistently played up a certain (urban, upper-class/caste) 'ordinariness'. This emphasis on the 'ordinary' translated not only into the literal introduction of actors and actresses without prior screen-histories but also into an entirely cinematic aesthetic that foregrounded the 'everyday' as the site of significant action, an aesthetic that emerged in the context of the decisive cultural dominance of *television*.

There was on overall thrust on 'representationalism' in all the 'segments' of the Bombay-industry in the 70s. (*SCH*: 247-251) Reinforcing the general 70s emphasis on representationalism has, then, to be placed in the documentary-style truth-effect promised by television in the 1980s as well as the simultaneous move centrestage of 70s 'middle' cinema in India. The crossover of a number of directors from the 'art' to the 'commercial' industry in the 80s/90s reinforces the point. These 'art' directors have been credited with infusing a new sense of verisimilitude into the different 'commercial' industries into which they have moved. The new representationalism informs the 'hybrid' commercial cinemas of the 80s/90s at the level of editing, shot-composition, camera-work, acting-styles etc. The changed nature of Bombay's Star-images, highlighting the 'ordinariness' of its new Stars, thus points to the ways in which the Star-persona emerged as a crucial mediating category between the structural changes precipitated by liberalisation and the film-industry's bid for survival in the changed cultural space.

Bombay's Anti-Hero Cinema:

Historically, while women, as a group, have been left out of the fictive social contract on which the classical nation-state was based, so also have the lower classes, (*'the folk'*) a category equally crucial to the ideological construction of nationhood. As has been extensively documented, the ideological creation of 'the folk' was based on a systematic disciplining and transformation of the peasantry into 'citizen-subjects' by the institutional apparatuses of the

new regime of power.[10] In Bombay too, as a representative popular-cultural form, there has been a genre in which the protagonist is typically outside the institutions and practices of citizenship—the 'anti-hero'. My attempt here is to read this genre as of elite documentation of subaltern politics.

Initiated in Ranajit Guha's path breaking *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency* and followed through in the work of the *Subaltern Studies* collective, there has recently emerged documentation of a whole realm of popular mobilisation in India whose modes of organisation, notions of community, ordering of time etc. were quite independent of the political idiom of liberal democracy.[11] In the light of this new writing of history, my analysis of Bombay's anti-hero genre aims to map through it elite negotiations of these 'other' worlds — the world of the thief, the 'rowdy,' the 'outlaw'— worlds framed in counterpoint to the Law of the new state. As Michel Foucault has documented, the new techniques of 'discipline' were preconditionally linked to the very nature of state-power on which the new art of 'governmentality' was premised, one geared to maximise 'efficiency.'[12] The crucial difference however was that the institutional and conceptual transformations which in Europe performed the function of controlling the despotic powers of the prince and therefore seemed liberating, in India seemed *exactly the reverse.*

'Family Name': Inside and Outside the Law :

Thus the question of 'Law' in India has a complex genealogy. At an obvious level, the (Western) legal apparatus emerged as one of the most visible signifiers of the absolute powers of the colonial state. Consequently, nationalism as a mass-movement gained crucial momentum from popular mobilisation directed against the Law. Yet despite its ostensible anti-imperialist stance, elite nationalist discourse shared fundamentally in the worldview of colonial 'modernity'. Therefore on many instances the nationalist leadership would itself characterise popular mobilisations as 'lawless.'

The class-based contradictions around questions of law-making/law-breaking were further overlaid by the internal contradictions within the ruling coalition that assumed power at Independence. Given that it was a coalition of feudal, capitalist as well as professional groups, the legal system of bourgeois democracy could only be invoked in Bombay so long as it paid homage to feudal notions of justice/honour. It is these multiple contradictions in the Indian social formation that provided the structuring trope of Bombay's anti-hero cinema — the motif of the 'family name.' The exclusion of Bombay's anti-hero from codes of citizenship is therefore enacted through his exclusion from the feudal notion of status represented by 'family name.'

The Tramp, the City and the Critique of the Nation:

Ideologically, *swadeshi* charged categories such as 'the folk'/ 'the countryside' both as repositories of 'Indian tradition' as well as sites are opposed to Westernisation. Consequently, when set in an agrarian background, conscious disidentification with the Law in Bombay could only be located in 'outlaw' figures such as Birju (*Mother India*, 1951) or Ganga (*Ganga Jamuna*, 1961), figures who ran parallel legal systems and were literally outside the domain of the state within which the emblematic 'Indian village' was encased. Alternately, disidentification with the Law could be located within the *urban* experience of 'modernity.' While drawing on Hollywood's gangster and 'outlaw' films, it is the latter who develop into Bombay's vigilantes in the 70s/80s. Consequently in the trajectory that I propose to map it is the 'tramp,' the 'thief,' the 'rowdy,'— loners in an urban landscape — who emerge as 'others' of the normative middle-class householder.

Ravi Vasudevan has earlier analysed the 'crime film' of the 1940s/50s Bombay. (1991a:63-91; 1991b:171-185 & 1994:51-77). Placed within the overarching Oedipal triangle of the castrating father, the nurturing mother and the traumatised son, Vasudevan has read the criminality of the 40s/50s 'thief hero' as the symbolic enactment of the Oedipal fantasy of patricide. Vis-a-vis Vasudevan's analysis, I propose that these films can be read from another perspective. Going back to *Awara*, while it is true that the Law, (with the aid of romantic love), helps Raj regain his social legitimacy, we must nevertheless remember that at the end of the film it is Raj who has to serve a prison sentence while his father, the judge, stands at least 'formally' exonerated. Even while the law is invoked as a guarantor of social justice, it still punishes the victim rather than the aggressor.

The change that becomes evident when we move to the anti-hero films of the 1970s is that the father-figure has now lost this 'legitimacy' in the eyes of his son. In *Deewar*, for instance, till the end it is only the spectator who know the 'truth' about Ajay babu's 'compromise.' Disillusioned by his father-figure, the son tries to reinstate the mother in his place.[13] At this point the Law steps in reluctantly to punish the erring son.

The further shift in Bombay's anti-hero cinema of the 80s is that the father now reoccupies the space of social legitimacy. There is consequently no obvious conflict between father and son. Moreover the father-figure is also

ideologically aligned to the Law (the repression of the son is complete?), and the motif of 'family name' reinflected as the son's desire to regain the organic, upper-caste community of his father. The fundamental shift in Bomaby's anti-hero genre, from the 1950s to the 1980s, is therefore that while in the 50s the loss of 'family name' was on account of failed father-figures in the 80s it is due to the failure of sons to live up to the father's name.

Given moreover the genealogy of the 80s vigilante films in the 'mass' cinema of the 70, these films are set in urban, lower-middle-class milieus, invoking everyday problems such as lack of housing, education, employment. The father-figure here typically comes from a lower-middle-class, 'oridanary' background. Moreover the Repressive State Apparatuses are set up here as institutional manifestations of the 'idealism' of the nationalist movement. *Karma* (1986), perhaps represents the high-point of this process where a benevolent jail-warder (Dilip Kumar) transforms three convicts facing death-penalties into an anti-terrorist squad.

The 'others' of the nation are either 'corrupt' representatives of State-Apparatuses or inhuman megalomaniacs running parallel, dystopic empires. The important point about representations of villainy in the 80s anti-hero films is also that the villain is often not given a tangible motive at all. While monetary greed/political ambition is sometimes presented as ostensible reason for villainy, in several instances he is shorn of all 'human' moorings. A range of villains from Anna (*Parinda*, 1989) to Maharani (*Sadak*, 1991) can be cited as examples. As Rajiv Velicheti observes of the 'new' 80s films in *Telugu*, 'evil' appears as all-pervasive and senseless; creating an overwhelming atmosphere of danger which can randomly strike *any* person at *any* time.[14] Failing to comprehend the villain's sub-human nature, representatives of the 50s generation (the idealised fathers) of 80s Bombay, fall prey to this auto-generating violence as they uphold civic/ social/ human values in a hostile world.

But apart from reinforcing the logic of a police-state such an ethic also has disturbing implications for women. Drawing on Gandhism, women in the 50s were to be inducted into the task of nation-building as guarantors of the new nation's morality. As Rani in *Kismet* or Rita in *Awara*, they functioned as agents for the successful transfer of patriarchal authority ('family name') across generations. The idolisation of the father-figure by the 80s vigilante has not only reduced the mother-figure to relative insignificance, it has seen the heroine become the 'other' of the chaste, (potential) middle-class housewife — the night-club singer in *Shakti*, the widow in *Prahaar*, the 'pop-Star' in *Tezaab*. Forced into the public space of the market/ the profane world of labour, these middle-class women are now 'deprived' of the 'protection' of 'family.' It is to re-instate *her* within the privacy of the bourgeois home as well as to live up to the name of the father that the 80s vigilante has to transgress the law.

We have already noted the changes in Bombay's Star-system precipitated by the new dominance of music in the 80s. While the 70s launched the iconic 'angry young man,' the pressures for novelty generated by erosion of the industry's economic-base meant that Mr. Bachchan, in the 80s, had to give way to a string of new Stars. Drawing on the cultural memory of the Bachchan persona however, Star-images of 80s anti-heroes such as Anil Kapoor and Nana Patekar used a discourse of 'endeavour' to re-work, in the 80s context, the *swadeshi*-generated ideological opposition between inherited and acquired wealth, playing up the idea that instead of decadent upper-class privilege, they had made it to the top only through determination and hard-work.[15]

But the growing dominance of music meant that 80s anti-heroes had to be 'musical' stars too. And this will take us back to the beginning of our paper: the transformation in the Bachchan persona itself. Mr. Bachchan's famous *Jumma Chumma* sequence in the action film, *Hum* (1990), was an early indication of this. But the growing prominence of the music 'sector' became dramatically evident in the 90s with Mr. Bachchan starting his own music company, *Big B*. The *Aby Baby* album, (released Oct. 1996), began with Mr. Bachchan's recitation of verses from the title song of *Kabhi Kabhi* as he now re-claimed the 'musical'/sensitive persona of his 'middle cinema' days. This was in conjunction with *ABCL* (Amitabh Bachchan Corp. Ltd), a failed venture that also hosted the Bangalore 'Miss World' contest. But in hindsight, the different strands elucidated in this paper — the dominance of television, music, transnational capital — all came together most forcefully in the renaissance of the very suave, *upper class* Bachchan persona in *Kaun Banega Crorepati*. The 'angry young man' has, since then, become the millionaire, 'progressive' father of the designer Karan Johar romances, the passionate photographer of Ram Gopal Verma and now, of course, also the *chef* in Cheeni Kum. At 64 Mr. Bachchan is also one of India's most famous fashion icons inspiring, it is said, a whole new definition of 'ageing.' This new screen-image has also taken on a further dimension with the marriage of his son and the endlessly played out 'friendship' that he shares with the young couple. Lineage is now truly a closed question.

In his infamous *Totem and Taboo* (1913), infamous because it has been seen as the high-point of Freud's racist arrogance, Freud is dealing with crucial questions such

as lineage, patrimony — 'our' notions of belonging, possessive filial continuity. Written in the years of the Great War and deeply sceptical of the underlying violence of the social structures of the West, Freud is in fact arguing here that we may have much to learn from the miserable 'Australian aborigine'/ the non-Western 'savage'. In an uncanny, but strange symmetry, Bombay cinema seems to equally (and unconsciously, of course) invoke Freud? In the 2007 IIFA ceremony, Mr. Kishore Lulla was awarded as a pioneer who had helped Bombay cinema go global. Mr. Lulla's company is called, *'Eros Productions.'*

Notes

1. A different version of the paper, where I had tried to relate the changes in the production-base of the inudstry to Madhuri Dixit's Star-image, was presented at the Cultural Studies Workshop of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, and subsequently published in their *Enreca Occasional Paper Series*, no.4, 2000. My thanks to all the respondents for their comments which have helped me re-work my arguments since.
2. This is not to suggest that Mr. Bachchan's Star-image has a completely watertight division into two phases. On the contrary, in the earlier phase also Mr. Bachchan had a 'sensitive' side to his image in films such as *Anand*, *Abhimaan* and *Mili*. This continued with 'musicals' such as *Satte Pe Satta*. However his legendary status in this phase derived, of course, from his anti-hero persona. Similarly, in his post-*KBC* acting career he continues to have essayed negative roles as well in films such as *Sarkar* and Ram Gopal Varma's forthcoming remake of *Sholay*, although now the major roles are 'positive'/ romantic ones.
3. M. Madhava Prasad, "Economics of Ideology," *The State and Culture: Hindi Cinema in the Passive Revolution*, Phd diss., Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1994, henceforth abbreviated as *SCH*, pp 41-108. Prasad suggests that in the 'heterogeneous mode of manufacture' adopted by the Bombay industry is contingent on the nature of capitalism in the country. Here, the source of finance directs the structure of the narrative. While Prasad's is undoubtedly the most comprehensive analysis, introductory references include, Eric Barnouw and S.Krishnaswamy, eds. *Indian Cinema*, (NY: Columbia UP, 1963), pp.116-211; Ravi Vasudevan, *Errant Males and the Divided Woman: Melodrama and Sexual Difference in the Hindi Film of the 1950s*, Ph.D. diss. Univ. of East Anglia, 1991, Chs. 1 and the introductory chapters of Sumita S. Chakravarty, *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema, 1947-1987*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.)
4. Ashish Rajadhyaksha, "Neo-traditionalism: Film as Popular Art in India," *Framework*, 32-33. (1986): 20-67.
5. While Behroze Gandhi and Rosie Thomas, "Three Indian Film Stars," in Christine Gledhill, ed. *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, (London: Routledge, 1991), pp.108-131, locate the images of three female Stars within the changing political climate, from the 50s to the 80s, caste, as an analytical category, does not inform their interpretative framework. This is not a minor omission. Placed in context of the argument I have been making so far, it represents the inability of much of even left models of social analysis to conceptualise 'politics' in India in categories other than those derived from the classical democracies of Western Europe.
6. Marx, Karl, *Grundrisse*, Trans. Martin Nicolaus, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p.410
7. See Peter Manual, *Cassette Culture: Popular Music and Technology in North India*, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993); Anupama Chandra and Kavita Shetty, "Hitting the Right Notes," *India Today*, (30 Nov., 1993): 149-156 and Anupama Chandra, "Music Mania," *India Today*, (15 Nov., 1994): 100-107, for useful statistics.
8. See, among many others, the cover-feature by Brian Tellis and Milton Frank, "India Goes Pop," *Femina*, (Dec. 1996): 10-38.
9. As I have shown in my paper the major 80s Stars such as Madhuri Dixit would in fact make their claims to Star-status only through the space opened by the new dominance of music sector, Stars and Singers of Bombay,' *Enreca Occasional Series*, no.4, op. Cit.
10. See among many others Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London: Verso, 1983) and Peter Burke, "The Discovery of Popular Culture," in Raphael Samuel, ed. *People's History and Socialist Theory*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981): 261-226.
11. Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, (Delhi:OUP, 1983), and *Subaltern Studies*, vols. 1-8, (Delhi:OUP, 1983-94.)
12. Michel Foucault, "Govermentality," in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect*, pp. 87-105. See also the chapter, "Docile Bodies," in his *Discipline and Punish:The Birth of the Prison*, (London:Penguin, 1976), pp.135-170, for a brilliant analysis of the new techniques of 'discipline' and the form of state-power.
13. See also *SCH*, 278-282.
14. Rajiv Velicheti, "Women, Violence and Telanagana: Changing Constructions in Telugu Popular Cinema," paper presented at the Anveshi/Subaltern Studies Conference, Hyderabad, Jan, 1993.
15. I have analysed this in detail in my PhD diss, *Framing the Nation*, Univ. of East Anglia, 1997.Being Star-sons, the media-images of Sunny Deol and Sanjay Dutt had, however, obviously had to use different points of entry. But as Rosie Thomas' analysis of Sanjay Dutt's Star-image points out, there was a similar reworking of masculinity in Dutt's media-image also; one which highlighted a masculinity that was wrecking avenge on a corrupt world.

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Conjuring up the Contours of Śukra's Science of Politics:

The Problem of Method and Substance

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Ever since the publication of Lallanji Gopal's article on *Śukranīti* in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* in 1962 declaring it a nineteenth century text;[1] scholarly interest in its textual analysis has considerably declined. This is so because besides contributing to the on-going debate about the date of its composition, which was set in motion by Gustav Oppert while publishing the English version of *Śukranīti* in 1882; Gopal has by his 'nineteenth century' thesis questioned the very authenticity of the available text. Although Oppert assigned it to the period of *Smritis*, most of the Indologists considered it to be a work of post-*Smṛti* period ranging between fourth century AD and sixteenth century AD[2]; K A N Sastri and V Raghavan preceded Gopal in putting forth the view that the available text of *Śukranīti* was a work of nineteenth century.[3] However, their argument was not as forceful, rigorous and wide-ranging as that of Gopal who has accumulated massive evidence from diverse sources in order to 'prove' his point.

For one thing, Gopal's suspicion about the authenticity of the available text[4] emanates from the fact that there is not much in it which could qualify to be called *nīti* (policy) or *rājanīti* (science of politics) for which Śukra has been profusely and most reverentially quoted in several ancient Indian literary sources either by this popular name (which in fact, was given to him by Lord Siva after he adopted him as his own son) or by other names like Usana, Kāvya, Bhārgava or Bhṛgu. Apart from this general argument, Gopal's doubts rest on very convincing and well articulated internal evidence culled from the available text itself. It is not intended to reproduce Gopal's whole argument here. Therefore only some aspects of it are being mentioned.

Gopal finds, what may be called, some degree of

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