RETHINKING THE STATE AFTER BOLLYWOOD

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More on Bollywood

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

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

At a multicultural music, art and dance series at Trafalgar Square, Mayor Ken Livingstone launched the guide to 'Asian London' (http://www.london.gov.uk) that came to officially represent everything that now stood for Bollywood, 'activities including fairs, the musical *Bombay Dreams* and Channel 4's special open-air cricket screenings, as well as Asian food, clothes and street markets', even as he lamented that 'Visitors to London, and Londoners themselves, often do not know how to access the incredible range of Asian culture, shops, street markets and food that is on offer in our city.' The 'Asian London' website listed the important Bollywood clubs (Bhangra Mix, Club Asia, Disco Divane@ Bar Bollywood, Stoned Asia and Azaad) and Melas, apart from the more usual film, theatre, music and visual art. The best known of the clubs, Kuch Kuch Nights, announced several special programmes in addition to their usual evenings of 'fun, love, glamour, escapism, and having a true cinematic love affair' with DJs Ritu, Sanj, Rizwan and others, which over the year included the premier night for Deepa Mehta's *Bollywood Hollywood*, tickets for the stage performance of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* at the Barbican Royal Shakeapeare Company (and free passes to all those who could answer the question, What date does India's Independence Day fall on?'), and for the band *Sister India's* new performance, *The Catch*, at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith.

Yet other events featured Amitabh Bachchan, already immortalized earlier in the year with a wax image at Madame Tusssaud's, performing alongside Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan, Aishwarya Rai and Preity Zinta — among the local Hindi stars who have

made the 'crossover' into Bollywood — in the *From India With Love* shows at Old Trafford football stadium and Hyde Park. Of the *From India With Love* programme, the organizers said that 'the only comparable Hollywood equivalent would be if Sean Connery, Brad Pitt, Russell Crowe, Julia Roberts and Meg Ryan were assembled for the same show', and claimed further that 'The Bollywood stars have made 200 films between them and even have temples dedicated to them in some parts of India, where film dialogue is recited in the form of prayer (sic). The festival, a mixture of dance and music, with lavish costumery, will be seen by up to 115,000 people'.

As the 'Indian Summer' hype unfolded through mid-2002 and well into 2003, there were so many players involved in the commerce of it that numerous and often conflicting narratives emerged as to who was actually responsible for what this event would eventually consist of, what it might stand for, or who might be its most valid representatives. Amongst the most visible stakeholders were the big British institutions of leisure, consumption and entertainment, all heralding the much—awaited 'arrival' into the mainstream of ethnic British Indian culture industry: so BBC's Asian Life magazine programme contributed the flaming red—and—yellow 'Indian Summer' logo and title, while Selfridges provided the all—important Bollywood legend, set upon a fashionable ethnic female face, with make—up and earrings. Perhaps the largest event of the season was the Webber—Rahman stage show *Bombay Dreams*, released with much fanfare, and an attendant anxiety that, driven as it was by economic considerations, occasionally revealed an earlier genre of postcolonial cultural concerns ('After three years of production and an expenditure of over £4.5 million, how does *Bombay Dreams* fare alongside other West End classics? Does it deliver on expectations?').

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

'Today', said the report, 'the exports are more showily crowd-pleasing, arriving in the form of film-inspired fashions, home décor and foods. Once such goods were marketed mainly to Indian-Americans, whose numbers have more than doubled since 1990, to almost 1.7 million. Now they are finding an avid non-Indian audience. Style-struck New Yorkers are embracing Bollywood style, which they once might have dismissed as kitsch. "When you're living in a society that is always pushing towards homogeneity, flamboyance has an inescapable allure," said Gita Mehta. Bollywood-inspired style, she added, feeds "a tremendous hunger for everything that is over the top, rowdy, gaudy and noisy —— everything, in short, that is reflective of that mad celebratory chaos of India." These 'riches', the report goes on to identify as 'lurid movie posters; wedding ensembles crusted with spangles and gold embroidery; denim tote bags

and T-shirts irreverently splashed with Hindu deities; and a maharani's ransom of gold bangles, eardrops and chokers'. It finally quotes the man who may have been one of the pioneers of this entire tradition: '"The interest in India's spiritual side has been going on a long time," said the producer and director Ismail Merchant. The news, said Mr. Merchant, is that Americans are about to be seduced by India's exuberant secular side. "In fashion, in movies, in music and in food, Bollywood is going to hit New York with a bang," he predicted' (Ruth LaFerla, 'Kitsch With a Niche: Bollywood Chic Finds a Home', *New York Times*, May 5, 2002).

As the 'Summer' went into high gear in London and then at many other places globally, comparisons were inevitably drawn with other events marketing ethnic nationalism amid the growing suggestion that of the many efforts over the past three decades to market 'India' to the West, nothing came bigger than the turn-of-the century Bollywood marketing blitz. On counts of sheer scale and cultural as well as political visibility, these events would compare with the contemporaneous Korean Wave, a similar, if far more critically debated, cultural export market for Korean commodities first noticed in the Chinese world and then through East and South East Asia and eventually the USA. Like the Bollywood onslaught, the Korean Wave too started with a series of high-budget 'blockbuster' films, most made as multinational co-productions often with new forms of venture-capitalist backing previously not seen in its cinema (Kim Soyoung, 'The Birth of the Local Feminist Public Sphere in the Global Era: 'Trans Cinema' and *Yosongjang*', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, v 1 n 4, April 2003). But, also like Bollywood, Korean exports quickly went beyond cinema to see huge marketing successes in music, television serials, video games, cartoons and animation characters, and eventually to food, fashion, and to the marketing of pop icons endorsing mobile phones, cosmetics and electronic appliances ('Pop Culture: Boy Bands to Korean Barbecue', *International Herald Tribune*, May 31, 2002).

Whatever the constitutive elements of Bollywood culture, national essence or the celebration of hybridization, it is worth noting that although the Hindi cinema remains a central *cultural* referent to Bollywood, through the 'Summer' the domestic Indian film industry had only a marginal presence, playing an at best supporting role to a more recently assembled transnational Bollywood industry, located as much in Britain, the USA and Canada, as in India. Indeed, the Indian domestic film production sector found itself rapidly overwhelmed by the Bollywood mania being spawned that summer in London, forced to either reinvent itself or fall behind as it was challenged by a slew of new industries, some ironically indebted to the Hindi cinema itself for their existence. The difference perhaps was that these new industries and services appeared better able to handle the marketing opportunities that Bollywood had now made possible; they appeared more qualified than the cinema to negotiate the complex demands being made by the kinds of capital flowing in, for instance demands for unorthodox distribution formats such as brand building, product and process franchising, and merchandising spinoffs.

A second, and perhaps related, absence was a far more explicit one to a range of postcolonial concerns: the glaring absence of the *Indian state*. One way of making sense

of the 'Indian Summer' may have been, indeed was, its tacit invitation to be seen in comparison to the last really big cultural marketing exercise of things Indian in London, the 1982 India Festival organised by the Department of Culture and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (discussed later in this essay). In 2002, the Indian state appeared unable to exploit any of the new opportunities opened up by Bollywood, and the London season saw a pronounced absence of many of the stellar presences of 1982, of India's 'national' arts (the sole exception being the mandatory Satyajit Ray retrospective, organized by the British Film Institute) and parallelly, industries such as tourism or investment marketing. A chronicle of the two decades separating the events might well be precisely one of the state's radical repositioning of its responsibility to its national culture. Indeed, further underscoring the absence of the Indian state was the sharply contrasting high—profile presence of the *British* government in the form of Mayor Ken Livingstone and the London city administration. Britain's ability, it appeared, to expand its often-controversial 'cultural diversity' policies to take cognizance of Bollywood (cf. the report *Play it Right*: *Asian Creative Industries in London*: Greater London Authority, February 2003) once again highlighted, in comparison, the serious inadequacies of the Indian state's cultural policy in accounting for a wider definition of an 'Indian' identity.

Does the absence of the Indian domestic film industry now make another kind of sense, given the fact that its own evisceration within the newer post-cinematic culture industries apparently coincides with the absence of the Indian state? If there is a connection, can it be used to throw light on the severely undertheorized issue of Indian cinema's dependence on the Indian state to build its long-established informal apparatus of state-derived authenticity?

Films *were* of course hugely evoked on practically every occasion through the 'Indian Summer', and even sometimes shown (notably in the BFI's ImagineAsia events). However, the *Bollywood* presence revealing a newly-discovered financial muscle was concentrated on a commerce of consumption[1]. Fashion, music, entertainment and food, the representatives of Bollywood, evoked the cinema interminably but had little economic dependence on the financiers, the producers or the box office from which the cinema derived its capital. The cultural references mobilized, on the one hand, the cinema itself, or certainly the memory of cinema, and on the other hand, mobilized a clutch of 'Indianness' evocations within which the cinema appeared implicated in ways that domestic film audiences would not always recognize (as in the Dimple bedroom at Selfridges). While these seminal accessories of Bollywood were derived from a postcolonial legacy which had something to do with mobilizing an Indian nationalism, in economic terms they often existed either independent of Indian state support or, if at all in partnership with the Indian state, the senior partners. As a typical example, while the Ministry of Textiles has had a presence in sponsoring the fashion industry, its new industrial centres now include London, Paris, Dubai and New York with a few key outlets in Indian metropolitan centres, with 'offshore' export processing production facilities in Mumbai and New Delhi. The more glaring cultural instance affecting the mantra of 'state disinvestment', repositioning the state's newly fashioned 'partnership' presence with corporate initiatives, was of course Information Technology, a constituent presence in Bollywood with major investments in the 1990s dotcom boom

(*Businessworld*, 'Hot New Dot.coms', January 24, 2000) as well as with computerized animatronics and special effects producers such as Pentafour, Silicon Graphics or Maya Entertainment, or the former film laboratory-turned entertainment conglomerate Adlabs in Mumbai.

The 'Cinema-effect Outside the Cinema

Even without inscribing any larger political role to Bollywood, or its claims, it remains clear that the repudiation of authenticity in the music of Bally Sagoo, *Bollywood Funk* or in the Jani-Khosla installation in Selfridges coincides with a widespread social tendency towards evoking film mainly for purposes of re-presentation, redefinition or, even, evisceration of the cinema: of reprocessing the cinema in order to make it available for varied uses outside the movie theatre. It would also seem that many domestic Indian cultural practices have participated in this activity in equal measure and as enthusiastically as the music of the Indian diaspora. One might represent this tendency as seeking to translate, really transmogrify, the cinema into a sort of ubiquitous simulated *cinema-effect* — so that as film becomes Bollywood, it also develops a pure, evocative, de-narrativized *charge* of some sort.

The reproduction of what we are here calling the cinema-effect includes such mundane and pervasive experiences as the ever-wet Madhubala, Raj Kapoor-Nargis, *Sholay* or Govinda on MTV an Amitabh hair style in a barber's shop. They may however extend, as we speak of the reproduction of something uniquely cinematic outside of conditions of film-showing, to a more anonymous evoking of nostalgic black-and-white effects, or to an even more generalized fetish for indeterminate pasts (for example in heritage tourism). Such evocations are commonly to be seen in both low and high-end advertising, fashion, food, architecture and interior design, and paralleling their rise to ubiquity, in the astonishing rise of a new market for film memorabilia.

Indeed, as we go, we may recognize, *pace* Bollywood, that while the cinema itself has been, over the 20th C, the primary agency for the production of this 'effect', it may not by any means be the *only* agency capable of such production. Indeed, we may at this historic stage even speculate on the possibility of *extra*-cinematic productions of a particular kind of symbolic form, a cinema-effect that may even outlast the cinema itself.

At this point in history, there may in fact be good reasons for why an argument, like mine right now that is primarily about film narrative should start with looking at phenomena that are in a sense so resolutely extra-cinematic. At perhaps most superficial level, the deployment of an 'effect' such as this, casually presenting something that condenses large and complex histories, texts, conventions or practices, is a well known postmodern technique: and indeed, at this level, a sufficient explanation might well be available for the overtly po-mo references of Abu Jani-Sandeep Khosla (or Bollywood designers Rohit Bal or Manish Arora).

However, we can quickly note a second deeper level: a level that may perhaps have an avant-garde ancestry — as we find in 'thick' evocations where the embedding of

such an 'effect' as a way of making covert tangential reference to other texts or histories, or to an elusive 'idiolect' which requires knowing spectators to 'get it' (but which can allow those who are not 'in the know' an apparently sufficient and, on its own, fully satisfactory surface reading). At this level, not easily accommodated within standard definitions of the postmodern, the 'effect' celebrates what Paul Gilroy once called 'cultural insiderism' (Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, 1993:3), deployed for purposes of creating a rite of passage of some sort. This function of insiderism to create group formations has still to be analyzed in the considerable literature on the crisis—crossing of postcolonial and postmodern trajectories (Vivek Dhareshwar, 'Postcolonial in the Postmodern, Or, The Political after Modernity', *Economic and Political Weekly*, v xxx n 30, July 29, 1995).

A third, if related, level for locating what I am now trying to identify as the cinema—effect explores its socially ubiquitous cinephiliac properties, of finding some use for the cinema's mutation into an array of mediatised effects all around us, from low-end streaming video to high-definition screens in homes and in public places, as something that shows up virtually everywhere, becomes the determining experience of, say, going into work places, waiting at a railway platform, travelling in a bus or entering a restaurant or *dhaba* or simply standing on a crowded pavement of a city. Such a mediatised conception of cinema might relate to Kim Soyoung's recent proposal that we adapt cinephilia to new phenomena such as 'digital and net cinema, LCD screens (installed in subways, taxis and buses) and gigantic electrified display boards', and into spaces where 'cinema theories and criticism should intervene'. She argues for a refusal to surrender these spaces to the only use to which they are currently being put, viz. advertising, since these *are* public spaces and *do* generate a public spectatorship that can 'cut across film and digital divides' to effectively challenge, and perhaps reinvigorate, the very sense of what cinema can now be, outside of its conventionally national theatrical (and, perhaps by extension, national, transnational or local) referents. She names this emerging category 'trans-cinema', and offers as an instance the work of Korean video artist Song Ilkon, whose one-minute video *Flush* in which a teenage girl delivers a baby and flushes it down a toilet was shown alongside commercials on 43 giant LCD boards as part of the Clip City project in Seoul, 2000 (Kim Soyoung, ibid., 2003. The author names the originator of the concept of 'trans-cinema' as Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto).

In all three manifestations, the effect appears to be feeding what has been described as the 'desire for cinema' (this desire being a definition for cinephilia, cf. Willemen, 'Through the Glass Darkly: Cinephilia Reconsidered', in *Looks and Frictions*: *Essays in Cultural Studies and Film Theory,* 1994), in a way that simulates a memory of its *older* guise, of the cinema that was 'as we knew it'. This is a cinephilia simulating familiarity, but in its specific Bollywood variant, such a process appears to be discovering some radically new properties for cinephilia as a whole. It now appears that this cinephilia can have a career independent of the cinema (in its strict 35 mm celluloid sense), and may indeed have no use even for the sequential unravelling of images and sounds we associate with an internal narrative and with the projection conditions of a movie theatre. Among Bollywood's arguable contentions would be that a powerful cinephiliac evocation can actually be made to *replace* the cinema, present the 'effect' as a

perfectly adequate stand-in for the cinema itself.

Such a handing over of the properties of moving image celluloid to successor industries has of course been noted by many. Thomas Elsaesser, for example, gestures towards something similar with his view that the 'increasing predominance of technology and special effects in providing the primary audience attraction' and 'the resurgence (through television and popular music) of performative and spectacle modes, as against purely narrative modes' may still reveal the 'classical cinema' to have been nothing more than a 'transitional' stage' in some larger process ('Early Cinema: From Linear History to Mass Media Archaeology', in Elsaesser, *Early Cinema: Space Frame Narrative,*1990). The recent development of cinephilia might well be the most radical technological move in this tradition yet, one in which the 'cinema', replaced and encapsulated by a conventionalised 'cinema-effect', may have no further relation even to temporal sequence, leave alone to celluloid.

Could there be, I now ask, a connection between such a loss of cinema with the parallel loss, or abandonment, of the *authentic*, an abandonment that has become a prime trait of Bollywood? Could the supposed loss of authencity be simply connected to the replacement of ethnicity politics with ethnic chic, or is there more to this? — can lost authenticity *resurface* in some other guise, somewhere else? In exploring this coincidence of losses — of cinema and authenticity — I would like to add two other rather prominent losses that the London season especially foregrounded, usefully and spectacularly: the *political*, a prominent and somewhat unprecedented absence in the history of the British—Asian ethnic diaspora, and finally the Indian *state*, a key absence in the London festival. So: *authentic form*, *cinema*, *politics*, *state* — can we extrapolate a useful connection between these, and thus perhaps turn to our advantage a moment when a marketing move seems, in one fell swoop, to have abolished all four?

Turn-wipe: The Symbols of Authenticity-Production

It is in the light of this new development, *Bollywood* — home of the freak-show of all that was once the cinema — that I want to return to an old argument, the argument of the relationship of the cinema to the state in India: one most explicitly explored by Madhava Prasad (cf. 'The State in/ of Cinema' in Partha Chatterjee ed. *Wages of Freedom: Fifty Years of the Indian Nation-State*, 1989).

Almost exactly 20 years before the 'Indian Summer' of Bollywood, Britain had seen its last major display of Indian produce, the first Festival of India, organised jointly by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (the Indian Council for Cultural Relations) and the Department of Culture, in London, in 1982 and thereafter in Paris, New York, Moscow and other places. No two events could have been more different than were London, 1982 and London, 2002; and we might read into this difference a precise chronicle of the overdetermined presence of the Indian state in what was also a showpiece of the Rajiv Gandhi government in the first phase of economic liberalisation — and its apparently complete absence in 2002. Continuing the Summer's unstated ancestry in the India Festivals[2], this section will explore the symbolic evocation of the

'nation' by the official apparatus of the Indian state, and the state's own interpretation and use of the cinema—effect: an important legacy, we shall suggest, to the authority of Bollywood and the core of Bollywood's ability to seemingly replace the absence of the Indian state with an adequate symbolic structure of its own.

The Festivals of India were massive operations, including art exhibitions, film retrospectives, folk and contemporary theatre performances, with pride of place given to definitive exhibitions of Indian art such as the mammoth *In the Image of Man* in London, 1982, or the *Sculpture of India, 3000 BC — AD 1300* in Washington, 1985. The productions on display were only matched by the equally elaborate array of disciplines represented as the Indian state showcased the full range of its cultural and intellectual resources. The most notable disciplinary presence here, the one with the greatest burdens, was that of art history, charged with the responsibility, its specific task in the 20th century, of mediating India's civilisational legacy to the world. Also present were several other indological disciplines and, as viewers moved into the present, more contemporary critical representations around literature, theatre, music, visual art and film: staged collectively, and despite critical interventions, staged as undifferentiatedly 'Indian' and on express behalf of the Indian state.

Occupying the controversial centrestage in this entire display was the most precious of the works sent abroad during the India Festivals, the Didarganj Yakshi, a voluptuous lifesize Mauryan stone figure from perhaps the 3rd C BC, but, as Tapati Guha-Thakurta ('The Endangered Yakshi: Careers of an Ancient Art Object in Modern India', in Partha Chatterjee and Anjan Ghosh ed., *History and the Present*, 2002) shows, embroiled from the time she was discovered in 1917 in art history debates profoundly]relevant to emerging nationalism. Some of these debates were to do with the probable date of the work, where 'to be able to push back the date of an object like the Yakshi meant drawing out from Indian art at large a tradition of such free-standing monumental stone sculpture that dated back so-to-say to the "dawn of history"' (the 'dawn of history' quotation comes from Pramod Chandra's catalogue to the Washington exhibition, *The Sculpture of India*, *3000 BC - AD 1300*, Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1985). Guha-Thakurta describes the complicated process by which this Yakshi moves, from the time she is discovered by the Archaeological Survey in Didarganj and rescued from becoming 'merely' an object of worship, through the national attributions of ancientness that at the same time had to prise this figure out from colonial archaeology and into the attention of a full-blown national art historical aesthetics, and finally, in regal display in Washington and elsewhere, as a physical representative of the millennial continuities of Indian civilization.

Indeed, it is the representational *physicality* of the Yakshi, and the possibilities this figure possessed as an 'object' of a national narrative and as a means of *rendering present;* the often abstract nature of such a narrative of the nation, that appears important as we turn now to the administrative aspects of the narrative production of an 'authenticity-effect'. As Guha-Thakurta shows, there would be many ways of looking at the Yakshi, and the production of her sexualised, semi—naked presence as symbolically central to the staging of a national cavalcade was a sensitive issue that may have had

something to do with a later controversy about whether such works should ever be sent abroad again. Nations typically display their authentic cultures precisely through staging them and, while nationalist art historians sought to both primitivise as spiritualise the explicitness of this figure, they maintained intact the startling and powerful ability of this sculpture to provide the sheer 'presencing' of the narrative of the Indian nation: the objects themselves, as it were, of that nation. Few objects asserted their awesome 'thereness' than the Mauryan Yakshi could and did, in the forty-odd years in which the emergent Indian state deployed her, and a range of other such figures, in the heyday of the embodied demonstration of 'India'.

One of the purposes of the nationalization of culture has been a demonstrative one, to unambiguously define to all the meaning and purpose of cultural production, and this includes the production of the object within the protocols of its *production before us*. It is worth bearing the Yakshi in mind as we now explore the symbolic purpose of a complex institutional-bureaucratic-narrative apparatus assembled in the years leading up to Independence and certainly thereafter, an apparatus represented in all its fullness at the India Festivals, put together in order to produce the array of indigenous cultural forms — and, as we shall do next, to explore the role of the cinema in founding such an apparatus of production and display.

As we do so, we might view an art that was made in startling contrast to the symbolic displays of statist nationalism: Ravinder Reddy's gigantic gilded fibreglass Yakshis. Taking as much from traditions of Indian sculpture as from garish screen-goddesses and pop icons, Reddy's images reveal the relay of effects that the authenticity question can sometimes set off when it isn't rigorously supervised: when the question of 'what is authentic' is asked under uncontrolled conditions. Where the over-the-top civilizational symbolism of the Didarganj Yakshi's presence made it difficult to name her contractual role in the 'object' of a nationalist narrative, Reddy deploys both Bollywood and the cinema-effect to sometimes bring right back into the fray the entire question of what such figures are doing in the national arena. The irony, embarrassment even, of Reddy's Yakshis sharply foregrounds the fact that postcolonial formations too sometimes produce their own overdetermined displays to 'objectify' their conditions.

Technologies of Symbolic Nationalism: The Benevolent Encounter

Occupying a major place in the array of symbolic presentations of reality is, as Eric Hobsbawm has famously shown, the ones the modern state assembles and makes available as part of the trappings of modern rule: an assemblage that goes hand-in-hand with its authoritative imaging of the sovereign national subject. Hobsbawm suggests that the 'capitals, flags, national anthems, military uniforms and similar paraphernalia' characteristic of the modern state, and at the service of the new citizen, were first deployed in British and French systems of state governance, particularly in the French Third Republic which, as he says, domesticated the Revolution into institutions and manuals that would 'turn peasants into Frenchmen and Frenchmen into good Republicans', public ceremonies, 'statuomania' and the mass production of public monuments ('Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914', in Eric Hobsbawm and

Terence Ranger ed., *The Invention of Tradition, 1983*). Indian historians have on their part elaborately noted the production of symbolic formations in the production of the public sphere including, over the years, the Republic Day Parade pageant (B.P Singh, *India's Culture: The State, The Arts and Beyond*, 1999), the cultural displays of Indian art and performance at the behest of the state (Tapati Guha-Thakurta, 'Marking Independence: The Ritual of a National Art Exhibition', *Journal of Art & Ideas*, n 30-31, Dec 1997), the civilizational narratives charged with the purpose of stitching together into one story the diverse institutional locations of Indian culture, including famously the several *Discovery of India* narratives in art museums, on television and in film; or the elaborate infrastructure of central and state government emporia marketing their cottage industries alongside the cultural symbols of both central and regional states.

Amongst the myriad efforts of the state to assemble a symbolic nationalist culture has been to name its cultural producers — its artists, artisans, craftsmen and performers — as the practitioners that literally provide India with its national resources: the men and women who both 'stand for' and make national culture and on whose behalf the policies exist that govern national culture as a whole. The public representation for the disciplines, fields, institutions and modes for the purpose of staging the saga of Indian nationalism, and of literally producing the *objects* from the nation as the *objectives* of its nationalism, has had a crucial part to play in the symbolic component of what we earlier called the 'register of authenticity'. As we extend this perspective, we shall now encounter a symbol, a good, a product, and a producer, that is, like the Yakshi and the artisan-citizen, and eventually an important legacy of the cinema-effect, a pure representative of the 'national'.

While the fact of nationalist symbols, and their role in the cinema, has been widely noted, the *narrative* consequences of assembling and enforcing certain structures of reading upon *technologies* of meaning production, including those of cinematic meaning, have seldom been analyzed. It is clear that the specific object or condensation that a state might select, whatever its earlier history, now needs to be produced — in the full meaning of the term — so that it is recognized and read in specific ways; and read widely in these ways if it is to validly stand in for the nation and to incarnate its qualities. While many such objects and representations elected for national use are literally new in that they have been produced to order (and often sufficiently impoverished so as to mean nothing other than what the state intends them to mean), there are many other forms, like the already-mentioned Yakshi and other Mauryan icons, that long pre-date any contemporary nationalism, where the process of making them exemplars for the nation requires that they be re-interpreted in ways that also effectively eliminate, negate, de-legitimize, other readings. This is now a framed, *restrictive* reading, and implies a number of consequences both upon the symbol and its reader. Among the consequences: the production (including reproduction and display) has to enable certain kinds of signification and forbid others; force a certain degree of literalism, a privileged 'meaning', and its appropriate reading that would recognize the symbolic role of the structure, further insert and circulate that role into an appropriate set of narratives, and finally ensure, as Hobsbawm shows, the conditions for the large scale manufacture of the

carriers of the narratives.

A further dimension is added, then, to any narrative of national-civilizational resource with the introduction of technology as a key player framing the process of symbol production. Technology, often signalled and valued (by the Visveswarayya/ Meghnad Saha legacy, for example) as the very acme of the modern, stages a benevolent *encounter* with traditional practices, an encounter that also constitutes staging a smooth passage for ancient civilizational practices into modernity, signalling on the way the distinctive achievements of earlier cultural practices and productions. In India, the 'encounter' — of traditional form and modern technology — is a crucial component of the production of national authenticity, and takes place at many levels as we see 'technology' itself play a complicated role as though a character in the drama of modernity, an authenticator and guarantor of the passage and of the value of the new symbol.

Gyan Prakash shows how the conception of the independent Indian state as 'the embodiment of the technological imperative? - the 'technicist nation-state' that saw itself as a 'modern repetition of India's ancient national institutions and social needs… the nation's coming into being in modernity' (Prakash, Another Reason: *Science and the Imagination of Modern India*, 1999: 199) and saw all its operations guided under the rigorous supervision of science - how this conception builds upon a long history of staging science, literally so in the colonial museums, industrial and agricultural trade fairs and exhibitions, as though a 'wondrous spectacle' of rationality (Staging Science, ibid;34)[3]. Such a perception of modern technology, which includes the industrial quartet of railway, irrigation, telecommunications and power generation, virtually makes such technology a character in the saga: named, celebrated, ferried across, invited into the frame like an honoured guest or prospective son-in-law into an ancient family (cf locomotive engine, illus. above). Perhaps the more complex variant of this formulation would be technology as incarnating the very encounter with the legacy of tradition, and thus as the entity that will take forward the civilizational process, like the dam water that fertilizes the land comes from the blood of *Mother India*'s slain son, veritably the new benevolent patriarch impregnating the parched soil.

This argument is now moving towards the somewhat bold suggestion that the cinema was at different times and different ways through the 20th century chosen as the privileged and, at the mass level, perhaps even the only truly popular technology available for the manufacture and distribution of symbolic nationalism: that the cinema-not particular films but the cinema *as a whole*, represented by its camera-sound-projector apparatus — was attributed the right to produce not only authorized, but *authoritative*, symbols on behalf of the nation.

The argument can be made for many national film industries, most visibly those who gave a central role to the cinema within the context of a revolutionary decolonization, but it becomes complicated in India by an apparently contrary tendency of delegitimization of the film industry by both colonial as well as the post-Independence states. In fact, we shall see that the conflicts that emerge, and the reasons for why the

Indian film industry occupies the economic and cultural spaces it does, are profoundly linked to the way the state defines the cinema, defines our reading of the content of the moving image, and thereby defines its operations within a larger field of cultural technology. This essay proposes that the cinema's legacy of being a chosen *par excellence* producer of the 'national' is central to the understanding of the complicated location of the film industry after Independence as well as to any understanding of the sheer charge of a post-statist *Bollywood* 'cinema-effect'.

In working out a connection between the technologies available for the production of symbolic nationalism and the cinema's unique capabilities in a operation, we need to first work out what large-scale production of symbolic nationalism means, institutionally and technologically. The process, Hobsbawm has suggested in the Franco-British model, required at least three stages: one, which saw the selection and manufacture of symbolic representations, a second that named producers and elevated the circumstances of its production as the sites of the production of nationalism itself, and a third which imposed a specific kind of reading competence upon the symbol and its 'meaning'. What such a process may have meant in India was something that a number of major art institutions, notably in dance, music and theatre, had explored almost from the time a modern independent state had begun to be envisaged, ever since the question was raised of what a contemporary nationalist aesthetics of performance might look like. These pre-independence institutions were later joined by numerous independent art practitioners all seeking to determine what national arts policy could be, given the widespread acceptance among artists across the ideological spectrum for the need to establish a form of symbolic authenticity production for the new national art.

By the time of Independence, however, this arts policy was entirely, and somewhat distinctively, at the service of an earlier anthropological conceptualization that informed national cultural policy: the contemporary *arts*, whether urban or rural, made sense to the state only to the extent that they were perennialized into furthering the utility of *cultural resources*. Many of the historical icons of such a cultural policy including the Taj Mahal, Ajanta and Hampi, have of course been nationalized as 'heritage' under global supervisory conventions defined by the United Nations. However, they were also part of another, earlier discourse of history-in-practice, one that cast a wider net for its resources and possessed a more complex presumption of what culture could now 'do' for the nation-state and what tasks may now be assigned to it. This history builds substantially from the widely-accepted contention envisaged by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay that India's cultural resources, including civilizational ones, were not just resources but the very *substance* of the new Indian state[4] and contributes to the widely argued justification for nationalizing all culture under state control.

In 1961, the opening chapter of the Third Five Year Plan (1961), entitled 'Objectives of Planned Development' represents national culture as having specific meaning and purpose: 'Each major culture and civilization has certain distinctive features, rooted in the past, which bear the impress of that culture', it says; 'India, with thousands of years of history, bears even now the powerful impress of her own distinctive features. They are today covered up by widespread and appalling poverty, the result of a

traditional society and a static economy in the past', but, and this is the central point, 'these values are a part of India's thinking, even as, more and more, *that thinking* is directed to the impact of the *scientific and technological civilization* of the modern world' (emphases added). What now was the 'scientific and technological civilisation' which was meant to solve such deep-rooted and ancient problems? The easier answer, pointing to the technological showpieces of the modern Nehruite state, is however shadowed by a different sort of responsibility that the technologies themselves had to shoulder: a responsibility of *signification* where certain seminal acts of *transference* could be enabled, where cultural, formal or even aesthetic resolutions were provided for 'thematizing' problems that may originate from other, more intractable fields of the contemporary on more propitious narrative ground. Hence, too, the cinema.

Frames of Intelligibility: "Edenic' Digetic Space, The Citizen-Viewer and the 'Restrictive Reading'

> She sits at the dressing table, combs her hair, glances at the two love-birds in a cage and looks around the room as if it were a cage. Then she goes behind a screen and emerges in other clothes and prepares for bed. She sleeps and dreams of her life before she took the present path. The film then passes on to its previous theme of contrasts mentioned above, often repeating the earlier shots in juxtaposition as stills. *There is nothing else in the film to be noticed either by us or by the public for which it is intended*.

- (From the judgement on *A Tale of four Cities* KA. Abbas v. The Union of India and another, Respondents, AIR 1971 Supreme Court 481. M. Hidayatullah, J.Emphasis mine)

> The view of the scientist that sought to erase the past and the non-scientific is further developed in official photographs of the Trombay atomic energy complex. These photographs, especially those dating from the 1960s, centre the iconic dome of the CIRUS reactor, showing it set in the middle of carefully landscaped gardens each conforming to an imposed geometry of two dimensions: a perfect circle and a rectangular form set within a triangular space. These gardens, symmetrical in themselves, act also as a device to draw attention back to the perfect dome of the reactor at its centre. But the edges of this photograph betray the limits of transformation. The borders of the promontory on which the reactor is located are less clearly articulated in Cartesian space. They are scrublands, dry and spotted with unruly bushes. They mark the intransigence of the land, but, by the same token, denote the degree of human effort that has made this orderly and unnatural space possible

Itty Abraham (*The Making of the Indian Atom Bomb*, 1999:160).

Our proposition: a tendency of the cinema-effect to reproduce and replace the cinema itself to distil the 'cinema' to such a degree of purity that, in its pristine form, all its narrative waste is eliminated so that what remains within the effect is the evocation, the de-narrativized charge: all else shed before the pure symbol. One way of describing such a phenomenon is to call it a reading: the cinema-effect constitutes a reading of the film from which it emerges, and defines what a symbolic reading can be: a signification, a literalism, a verbalization, an interpretation of the film. As we explore the inheritances and legacies of such an effect, I think we will find that such an act receives in full measure a prior working-over, by an authority that precedes and indeed oversees the cinema's functioning —— its distillation into a series of effects that are noticed, and *nothing else*.

We have seen (illustrations) technology deployed as though it were a character in the fiction (*Mother India*), even a privileged *sutradhara* masterminding the narrative (*Mughal-e-Azam*), defining the nation in a way that only the technological authority of the cinema can. The Bourne & Shepherd cameraman push the status of technology still higher: no longer a character among many but an overseer, the producer of the narrative *record*: its authoritative spectator-witness, to be treated with appropriate ceremony[5].

In virtually all of these characterizations of technology, a central issue remained one of how to assemble and disseminate a reading competence in a particular sort of privileged record[6]. This widespread deployment of film technology by the state, including   documentary as well as feature films, from the early pre-WW2 production of educational films by the railways and social health organizations, to the wartime use of film by a number of government ministries during the War under the Defence of India Act, l942, and after Independence the history of the Films Division and later of Doordarshan making and showing films (including feature films) on commission from various component parts of centre and state governments, makes for a considerably greater degree of state investment in the cinema than is usually realized. There is a further consequence of such production upon the cinema as a whole. While a certain number of films were made that could be named as appropriately 'nationalist' in their representations, there has been the further necessity caused by the widespread use of the paradigm of the cinema itself, that *all films* be, as it were, read nationalistically: that a valid and persuasive account be provided for the cinema as a whole that would straddle and overcome, disregard, rebut, every statement about the illegitimacy of the film industry, corruption and criminal money, and the urgent need for reform, offer a way by which the entire history of the Indian cinema may be written up, and policies for its reform defined, solely along the lines of its unmatched ability to produce such symbols.

We are now faced with the characterization of the cinema by the state, of the producer of a diegetic space where the encounter takes place between the framed objects and the authorized apparatus of camera/sound: the classic circumstances for the symbolic naming. Many theorists have drawn attention to a two-level action central, to the

cinema's relation with its 'subject', and a great deal of British and French theory in the 1960s-70s has gnawed on different aspects of 'reality' in cinema: more precisely: around the problematic status of 'actual', 'physical' or 'pro-filmic' reality once the cinema has given it a working over. Many have, in addition, drawn attention to the cinema's astonishing ability to create symbolic formations, prise out and define uncontestable authority what it is that we are 'meant to notice' in a film, what Barthes once called its 'obvious meaning' as it establishes this obviousness against competing definitions (Rhetoric of the Image' and 'The Third Meaning: Research Notes on some Eisenstein Stills', in Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, 1977). 'When it comes to the 'symbolic message', the linguistic message no longer guides identification but interpretation, constituting a kind of vice which holds the connoted meanings from proliferating'. Seen as a purely 'denoted' image, the symbolic, operating in the guise of the literal, *evicts* all connotations. Eventually it arrives at a state that he calls the 'plenitude of virtualities', a 'kind of Edenic state of the image; cleared utopianically of its connotations, (where) the image would become radically objective, or, in the last analysis, innocent.'

I believe that the experience of the Indian cinema gives us a particularly sharp insight into the workings of such a restrictive symbolic production with its evictions and its productions of plenitude. We have now arrived at a yet more complicated location of cinematic technology as opening up a *site* of encounter for the recording of 'reality'. It will be claimed that technology is as much a 'character' in the fiction as it is an official court recorder for putting down legally admissible evidence of reality. More, that it opens up a seemingly unprecedented site for the inscription of reality: a site with distinctly new values and properties, pristine and unsullied by prior history, the site where the framing happens, meaning is attributed, the object is bestowed its symbolic status. This 'Edenic' and utopian state is one we can most directly name in the cinema as its *diegetic* space: the space of the edited moving image, the space 'in narrative".[7]

In his work with colonial photography in Kerala, Sujithkumar Parayil (Photography and Colonial Modernity in Keralam', in Manas Ray ed. *Space Sexuality and Postcolonial Cultures*, Enreca Occasional Papers: 6, Calcutta: Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, 2003.) superimposes a spiralling grid of expanding rectangles to propose a further register of technological presence. He suggests that a series of such internal frames draw attention to a crucial part of the process of record: one where the camera inscribes its technological presence *upon* what it is recording. Far from being a part of life captured by a neutral or anonymous camera-witness, the colonial photograph (and he nationalist film) captures a reality staged explicitly for its frame, privileged for that reason, and for having come under its (and its viewer's) gaze. Parayil uses this format to draw attention to the extraordinary detail that is now available outside of this technological impress, detail that you aren't supposed to notice since it exists on the margins of the camera's frame (and, in more recent times, outside of the field in focus), that tells us something about what's going around *within* the frame but *outside of* its consciousness and authority.

Expanding on this insight, it is arguable that the, very process of taking a photograph under such circumstances reveals an unstable and dynamic process, involving

as it were more than one frame. We have the outermost edge of the frame, the piece of masking that cuts out pro-filmic space from all else that is outside the camera's field of vision, a mechanical edge that Bazin (Painting and Cinema', in Hugh Gray ed., *What is Cinema Vol 1*, 1967) suggests moves in centripetal manner, and what we might see as a sort of coiled spring forever under pressure to open outside itself. We then have a series of inner frames, frames that mark both the fact and the process of recording the image, which we might name as frames of *intelligibility* that are inscribed upon the image.

We can now outline two potential movements: one where the somewhat chaotic edge of masking that represents the outer limit of the field of vision is *pulled into* a series of inner spaces where the 'meaning' of the image is distilled out. Here we can note that the distilling process is also one of *extricating* from the framed image its symbolic content. And a second, where the inner frame keeps pushing outward, seeking to appropriate and attribute meaning to everything in its field.

At any rate, it is perhaps important to note that the two frames we have outlined, the mechanical frame and the frame of intelligibility, do not always coincide: that the spectatorial presumption is that that they do, or at least that they should, and that their potential mismatch is a source of some anxiety, with narrative pressure being directed to force them coincide.

This tension is on its own a source of considerable anxiety, both for cinematographer and spectator, and leads to an obsessive fascination with the image in a perpetual visual and even physical search for stability. Martine Franck, well known photographer and wife of Henri Cartier-Bresson, captures an anxiety well known to photographers and cinephiles alike: 'My grandfather died after he fell from the dike of Ostende while taking photos of my two cousins. This can happen easily when one looks into the lens, a fraction of a second, nothing exists apart from the frame, and, to obtain the best frame, one moves nonstop, forwards, backwards and sidewards' (Kunang Helmi, 'Frankly Photographic', *Fables* V 4, 2002). The obsessive desire to 'get' the frame at the point where it makes the most sense, often reproduced as the pressure to get the picture 'in focus', might well be seen as the way the inner frame imposes a grid of intelligibility — a 'this is important' and 'there is nothing else to be noticed' — a circumstance where connotations are relentlessly sought to be evicted from the frame, or at least pushed to its edges.[8] This eternal search for the elusive static intelligibility, with its literalism and conviction that 'the image means this and nothing else' — the entire process by which the image is *distilled* into making sense as it arrives before us — is the first step towards its symbolic formation. It is also then the first step towards the production of the cinema-effect — the outcome of the application of the cinema to all aspects of social life. Within the movie theatre, such anxiety takes on more explicitly temporal dimensions. Phalke's work reveals a mechanical frame that keeps pushing into temporal resolution, into a *denouement*, while the frame of intelligibility offers a contrary pull into a more static spectatorial field of vision.

As it happens, and despite the pressure this places on the cameraman to get the, 'best' or 'right frame', the utopian Bressonian instant where the two momentarily come

together, it is evident that the 'inner' frame of intelligibility that makes a bid to represent the viewer's gaze can only coincide with the 'outer' spectatorial field of vision in certain *exceptional* circumstances: and that often such circumstances require extra- cinematic agencies to step in to authorize the suture. These circumstances, where the spectator is fully stitched into the narrative, are ones where, as Prasad says, the 'spectator's gaze coincides with the frame itself and operates a vertical control over the space of the narrative', and which see '(an) approximation (of) the relation of state to nation' (*Ideology of the Hindi Film: A Historical Construction,* 1998: 64). It is in the presumption that such a coincidence is *always* available to the fully narrativized state that makes for justice Hidayatullah's confident assertion that there is 'nothing else in the film to be noticed' other than its presumed 'obvious' meaning: his statement is a legal diktat of eviction. This assertion, the 'moment' of coincidence produced nowhere better than in 'Edenic' diegetic-narrative space, may well be among the founding moments of the modern nation-state: the moment when the symbolic representation of reality coincides with the viewer's recognition of his citizenship in that subjective condition. Indeed, as Jean-Luc Godard seems to suggest in his representations of Soviet, Italian and French film in his *Histoire(s) du Cinema* (1989), the cinema may well never be understood unless we first recognize the ties that bind the self-image of the modern nation-state to the cinematic definition of the *objectif*. Despite the often and widely demonstrated political consequences of the cinema's symbolic production as well as the cinema's ability to enforce a literal—symbolic way of reading, it has seldom been noted that such uses of the cinema for imagining and then assembling the cultural apparatus of the modern state might well be necessary for rethinking the history of cinema itself.

People-Nation: The Political 'Authenticity- Effect'

> Their Eternal Pity no taller than the pimp on Falkland Road
>
> No pavilion put up in the sky for us.
>
> Lords of wealth, they are, locking up lights in those vaults of
>
> theirs.
>
> In this life, carried by a whore, not even the sidewalks are
>
> ours

- Namdeo Dhasal ('Tyanchi Sanatan Daya', from *Golpitha*, Marathi, 1975, tr: Eleanor Zelliot/jayant Karve).

> There is no doubt that the fundamental problematic of the postcolonial state...has given rise to numerous ambiguities in the legitimation process. In the field of economic planning, these ambiguities have surfaced in the debate over the relative importance of market signals and state

commands, over the efficiency of the private sector and the inefficiency of the state sector, over the growth potential of a relatively 'open' economy and the technological backwardness of the strategy of 'self—reliance', and over the dynamic productive potential of a relaxation of state controls compared with the entrenchment of organized privileges within the present structure of state dominance. It is not surprising that in these debates, the proponents of the former argument in each opposed pair have emphasized the dynamic of accumulation while those defending the latter position have stressed the importance of *legitimation*... What should be pointed out, however, is...that these ambiguities are *necessary* consequences of the specific relation of the postcolonial developmental state with the people-nation.

—Partha Chatterjee, 'The National State', *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and postcolonial Histories*, 1994(emphases mine).

What happens when a presumed right is seen to be non-functional, when a citizen is denied or seen to be incapable of self-representation, when a form such as the cinema, with the full and awesome range of its apparatus, suddenly finds that its key faculty, of using that apparatus to produce authoritative symbolic representations, is found to be incapable of doing that work?

In the period between the wars and then in the first years after Independence, a certain model had been instituted by the Indian state for the Indian cinema. With the S.K. Patil Film Inquiry Committee Report of 1951 produced by the new government the year after the founding of the Planning Commission of India and before the publication of the first Five Year Plan, there was an evident effort to make the cinema qualify the film industry for state support. A new state policy on the cinema extended to the film industry the First Plan's emphasis on 'accumulation', so that the process of increased commodification under the aegis of the state was translated into the cinema as a means by which the implements of national-cultural functioning could be made widely available, in a way also as to enable a core-sector industry to emerge that might qualify for state subsidy. By this model, the cinema was to be defined as a privileged instrument for the manufacture and propagation of the state's programmes and of its self-image, that could within a larger democratic process utilize its faculty for the production of authoritative and authorized symbolic formations.

Such a model, in the larger planning impetus after the War, despite the strong presence of culture as an integral part of the mechanism of national economic development, was pretty well unique. That it didn't work as an industrial programme is well known, given the extraordinary set of crises that have beset the film industry since the War. That, like Indian democracy perhaps, in *political* terms the model may have worked almost *too well* is an argument that has been occasionally made. A number of

political theorists who have noted the spread of cinema, and its role in incarnating a mechanism of democratic functioning, show the range of the cinema's operations as national-democratic political practice, as the cinema's dissemination of contestatory forms of state identity made it an instrument of political use far more effective than the impoverished economic status of the industry might ever reveal. Indeed, the economic failure of a politically successful model, the failure in providing an industrial basis for something that otherwise demonstrates both a durability and an effectivity in a range of political—cultural practices, might have some similarity with the overall failures of development planning within a broader democratic-political context as some have perceived them. Chatterjee, for example, reinterprets Sukhamoy Chakravarty's (*Development Planning*: The Indian Experienee,1987) commentary that one reason for plan failures has been the capacity for strategic disruption of key indicators by public and private agencies, to propose that planning involves an element of 'rational self-deception', a necessary self-deception perhaps, given that the 'rational consciousness of the state embodied in the planning authority does not exhaust the determinate being of the state. The state is also existent as a site at which the subjects of power interact...'.Chatterjee suggests that 'Subject and object, inside and outside — the relations are reversed as soon as we move from the domain of rational planning, situated outside the political process, to the domain of social power exercised and contested within that process' (The National State', *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, 1994). .

This section will address a gap; a postcolonial condition surviving on the blind side of the state, a gap that we might define as *within the self-definition of the rational but outside the aegis of the state*: the condition of many practices, aesthetic as much as political, that adhered to the nationalism, but were either unwilling, simply unable to be (or were disqualified from being) a part of the Indian state. We now come to our most precise naming of everything in the frame that may 'not be noticed' by the state's diktat: all that the 'restrictive reading' eliminates. And we End, unsurprisingly, that the cinema exists here too: more, that here is where the cinema *comes into its own*.

The postcolonial has been a difficult term to pin down. 'When was 'the post-colonial', asks Stuart Hall: 'What should be included and excluded from its frame? Where is the invisible line between it and its "others" (colonialism, neo-colonialism, Third World, imperialism) in relation to whose termination it ceaselessly, but without final supercession, marks itself?' Does post-colonial refer to some people, or some societies, and not others, who can then describe their condition using that term — as something like a 'badge of merit' (Stuart Hall, 'When Was The Post-Colonial? Thinking at the Limit', in Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti ed., *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizon*, 1996) — or does it signal something more abstract? Much literature tends to effectively include as postcolonial all nations that had once been colonized, so as to 'cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day' (according to one such survey on its literature, *The Empire Writes Back*, 1989); and in the process 'collapses', as another writer has it, 'very different national-racial formations — the United States, Australia and Canada, on the one hand, and Nigeria, Jamaica and India, on the other — as equally

"post-colonial"'(Ella Shohat, 'Notes on the Postcolonial', *Social Text* 31/32, 1992).

Continuing with our inside-outside metaphor for structuring narrative, I want to present my own definition of the term: postcolonial 'India' is indeed substantially the space left behind with the end of British colonialism. However, while as geographical space it may be likely that successor national occupants can be made to fit precisely; into more or less the exact space left behind, in *cultural* terms there is a deep incongruity between what the colonial system left behind and what the new states came to. By one logic of narrative sequencing, the Indian state can be seen to form something of a *subset* of a much wider postcolonial definition of the Indian *nation*. This that only a portion of the overall content of its narrative qualifies at all for representation. This leads us to parallels between our conceptualization of the 'outer' frame of representation as a post-colonial representation of the nation, and the frame as the equivalent of the state's imposition of a regime of intelligibility upon the larger context. This paradigm also then accounts for our description of narrative pulls and pressures mentioned earlier: the state would always seek to hegemonically push outward, approximate to the scale and dimensions of the nation as a whole, the same time pulling all national symbolic meaning into its fold, make its meaning, coherent with its stamp of legibility, authority and authenticity.

A chasm however now develops between the two frames: between the developmental state that argues, as Chatterjee shows, for accumulation, and a 'people—nation' that is fighting a quite different battle of *legitimation*. Vivek Dhareshwar suggests that 'The history/ subject of Indian sovereignty...in fashioning itself as a history of sovereignty, has had to exclude and delegitimize other idioms and agencies' (Politics and History After Sovereignty', in Rajeev Bhargava, Amiya Kumar Bagchi and R. Sudarshan ed. *Multiculturalism, Liberalism and Democracy*, 1999). Whereas the possibilities for the administration of symbols of nationalist authenticity on behalf of the state allow for an apparently seamless presencing, a link between production, display and signification to be reproduced almost at will, for a 'people-nation' fighting a legitimacy battle, is often explicitly declared impossible.

A recontextualization now of what we have called the 'authenticity-effect', and our imagined successor for it, the cinema-effect, on this wider ground — something that would allow the Indian nation to be viewed as a wider entity than the territory directly controlled by the sovereign state — now throws up a far more complex legacy for the production of such an 'effect', not least because a great deal of the mainstream Indian cinema exists precisely in such a space: the space within the national but outside the state's ambit. Once we open up such a location, we are faced with complicated situations. On the one hand a new possibility opens up for replicating the mechanisms of statist authenticity production on other terrains, even name *competing* formulations for the authenticity-stakes. On the other hand, repressive mechanisms emerge that disqualify, on political, administrative and aesthetic grounds, other cultural formations from producing their own assets, their narratives of self-authentication.

What next happens is that in such a space, the symbolic encounter that we have earlier noted as virtually the birthright of the cinema, the 'pristine' diegetic space and its elevation by its privileged encounter with technology — all this is now declared both technically and aesthetically unachievable: all in stark contrast to its privileged 'dynamic capacity' to usher Indian culture into the era of modernity. In a circumstance that seems to precisely mirror the political failures of a model of planning that had in its 'rational self—deception' precisely not accounted for the possibility of such failure, we see in Indian cultural practice a widespread and serious problem as the very legitimacy of a great deal of India's contemporary art, as of its cultural democracy, come under threat at the very time when the apparatus for administration and display of national culture is being assembled. The pronounced absence of state support for contemporary art, cinema, literature and theatre, seems to go almost in tandem with the numerous aesthetic, technical, and political *difficulties* that now beset the making of such art, declare its impossibility.

> There is, so far as I know, and from films I have seen, no man in India with original ideas. The producer usually looks to his returns. He has not the finer senses to look into the Fine Arts and technique of the pictures. The directors, with the exception of a few who have some experience of the Western studios, are an indigenous product and are satisfied with the theatrical antics of the artists. The Indian director woefully lacks the instincts of originality and higher acting. The actor or actress is usually recruited from the streets and a show of hands and twitching of the face is the maximum effort they can put as actors. Their deficiency of literature makes them helplessly ignorant of the importance of the parts they rarely shows any emotion in the most serious part he acts (sic.) Scenario writers of sufficient technical knowledge there are none. They are mere copyists.

(Written evidence of D. Frenchman, former member of Bombay Board of Film Censors, Indian Cinematograph Committee 1928, Evidence V 1).

As Geeta Kapur once suggested, for two entire generations of artists the 'authenticity effect' paraded by the state has been available for use, if at all, only for purposes of *pun*, *parody* or *reversal*. A number of issues, ethical, technological, and historical, emerged that were to now be the explicit burden of the postcolonial artist, amid the widespread contention that, contrary to all that a Haldankar, a Ravi Varma, a Mehboob, a Shantaram, a Benegal, and other biographers of Susie Tharu's citizen-as-executive-authority might have thought, narrative as a means of self-determination commonly presented itself as an unachievable task for modern India. Among the questions raised were whether a mature realism could be narratively or, for the cinema, oil painting or still photography, even *technically* achieved in the face of the crippling presumption that non—Western cultural formations simply did not possess traditions of

objectivity: that the Renaissance sense of an *objectif*, a reality 'out there' that can be captured as through a lens, had no relevance to India until modern, usually nationalist anti-colonial formations assembled, even imposed, the *ego cogito* of the modern subject. The further problem that India, with other non-Western societies, did not apparently possess the one faculty determinative of the modern experience, viz. its ocularcentrism, or the system of characterizing a way of looking that is privileged by the singular eye and the 'abstract coldness of the perspectival gaze', something that Martin Jay describes as a secularizing process of 'de-eroticizing the visual order' which allows for a 'de-narrativization or de-textualization' that makes realism possible, and representable ('Scopic Regimes of Modernity', 1986), led to the further contention that if so basic an aesthetic requirement for creating conditions of objectivity itself appears to be unavailable, then how may we produce the 'object' of the nation at all? At least one theorist of this issue, filmmaker Mani Kaul, proposed in response that Indian aesthetics consisted almost entirely of the 'objectless subject' ('Seen from Nowhere', in Kapila Vatsyayan ed., *Concepts of Space: Ancient and Modern*, 1991) and sought thereafter to realize this with a system of lensing in his films that brought into question the entire status of the privileged field in focus.

In an example of the many aesthetic and technical difficulties posed before the cinema's ability to perform its tasks, Satyajit Ray asks the question — locating the Indian situation typically in contrast to Hollywood — as to whether the Indian cinema is even theoretically capable of a narrative structure, given the presumed absence of this tradition in Indian music, and given the further dependence of temporal rhythm on music, and the dependence of screenplay writing on rhythm:

> Co-existing with this admiration for the best of Hollywood (Ford, Capra, Huston, Wyler, Wilder) was a growing despair with the uncinematic methods displayed in the home-grown productions. . .
>
> The main weakness was a formal one, and about this I have a little theory of my own. Indian directors tended to overlook the musical aspects of a film's structure.
>
> The reason lies surely in the absence of a dramatic narrative tradition in Indian music. It is valid to speak of a Beethoven symphony in terms of universal brotherhood, or man's struggle against fate or the passionate outpourings of a soul in torment. Western classical music underwent a process of humanization with the invention of the sonata form — with its masculine first subjects and feminine second subjects and their interweaving and progress through a series of dramatic key changes, to a point of culmination.
>
> But a *raga* is a *raga* — with a single-pre-determined mood and tonality — that is, built up like a temple, starting from

a solid base of *alap*, culminating in a spire of flourishes on the higher octaves of the scale. Perhaps one could, with some stretch of imagination, think of a film subject that might be built up like the development of a *raga*, but I cannot think of this as a form with wide appreciation. At any rate, the vast majority of stories that provide the material for our films can only be told in a style that has already found universal application — in the style which originated in Hollywood.

The sense of form, of a rhythmic pattern, existing in time, is what was mainly lacking in our directors. This meant in effect the lack of good scenario writers — for the broader aspects of a film's rhythm are already contained in the scenario.

(Satyajit Ray, 'Film Making' (1965)).

The question this argument would foreground is not so much one of whether Ray was right or wrong, but rather one of whose problem this was. As it happens, a number of formally complex innovations in the cinema have addressed this very issue, of whether Indian classical music can allow a narrative structure, in compositions by Keshavrao Bhole for the Prabhat studio, B.R. Deodhar's efforts with film orchestration, or even entire films structured along the narrative unfoldings of the Indian music (Ritwik Ghatak's *Meghe Dhaka Tara*, 1960, or Kumar Shahani's *Khayal Gatha*, 1989). Indeed, it is astonishing in hindsight to note the number of substantially formalist works made in the years after Independence single-mindedly dedicated to the task of overcoming aesthetic barriers of legitimacy put up or endorsed by state agencies.

The hypervisible presence of the political in much post-Independence Indian art, and indeed in the cinema both in the mainstream and independent sectors, may in retrospect be explained as a possible alternative means by which symbolic representation can slice through the range of *formal* oppositions that declare such representation both impossible and illegitimate. For many radical practitioners of political art, the political alternative for symbolic representation has been mapped onto the legacy of the broad historical avant garde, of Eisenstein, Brecht, Neruda and Picasso. We might however revisit the formal charge of the political gesture, not so much within its own radical-ecstatic self-descriptions, but rather within a more complicated postcolonial crisis of spectatorial imbalance and anxiety.

For a serious imbalance is caused when the frame of intelligibility becomes static: the visual experience it presents becomes incapable of, or falls forever short of, adequate *representation*. The already anxious 'citizen-spectator' whose interpretative authority', within a realist narrative, 'brooks no challenge from within the frame of representation' (Prasad, 1998), can be faced with a series of far more damaging problems as the screen gets flattened, foreshortened, or simply incapable of interpretation.

An important instance of such a war around legitimacy took place in Bombay, contextualized by a time that also saw major militant labour movements in the region, when a number of artists were seeking to define an urban realism that could posit a new category of citizen-protagonist. For many, efforts to name a contentious objective urban reality by which to express the subjective experience of the political subject, as in Marathi Dalit poetry (Dhasal), in some of the art (Sudhir Patwardhan) or cinema (Saeed Mirza) of Bombay that emerged within this context, had to face up to the anthropologically driven question of whether the authentic 'object' of investigation was to be found in objective circumstances at all, or whether the postcolonial self could only be explored through existential inquiry since the object had become too internalized to be ever allowed objective existence. Feeding such a practice was a great deal of postcolonial theory that proposed the role of politics as almost the only way of breaching a colonial impasse around the problems posed by objectivity: the problems of defining an objective reality 'out there' in ways that overcome the risk of replaying the history of imperialism itself, where knowledge may now be seen only as knowledge of something else, breeding an inescapable structure of an ex-colonial hierarchy of investigator and object of investigation, forcing all knowledge to first theorize upon the very status of knowledge.

The widespread presentation of the political intervention as an eruptive force does draw further attention to the primarily spectatorial location of the anxiety. Gulammohammed Sheikh's ('Viewers' View: Looking at Picture', *Journal of Arts and Ideas*, No. 3 Apr—Jun, 1983) conception of the 'scanning viewer', a 'mobile vision' or a method 'corresponding to the successive opening of spatial units', explicitly accounts for this location when he notes the emergence of a viewer who is physically engaged with the narrative, through the performance of *doing* things. Sheikh's declaration of the possibility of actualizing the viewer, as an active participant and therefore as a key stakeholder in the narrative contract, precisely as an effort to address the seeming narrative and pictorial absence of the apparatus of authenticity production, makes sense only in the context of the serious threat of a delegitimation process that accompanied the process of nationalist authentication, as its invisible underside.

However, this stamp of the political upon the transgressive gesture, the symbolic *act*, the iconic site of a meaning production — all of which now become integrated into what we are naming here the cinema effect — becomes in one sense among the more difficult-to-accept consequences of the political resolution to the crisis of legitimation that the narrative faces in numerous postcolonial contexts.

Bollywood: A Last Word

What does the Bollywood phenomenon, as presented here, do to our understanding of the cinema? Indeed, is this cinema at all as we know it, or some mutant?

In taking us to a cinema-effect resolutely located outside the cinema, this essay has quite deliberately sought to expand our available definitions of the cinema beyond the confines of 35 mm celluloid, with the eventual premise that when we re-introduce these

definitions into the cinema, we would have new means by which to address cinematic textuality. In our argument, Bollywood is shown as entering, and perhaps *abducting*, the capacities that we might now — ironically as a *result* of this abduction — recognize as characteristic of the cinema; and further shown to be proliferating these capacities into an array of competing production systems far removed from celluoid. While filmmaking in any specific sense has, as we have seen, been only a very small part of the Bollywood culture industry, its use of the cinema-*effect* has remained an overdetermined hypervisible presence in the overall Bollywood show, quoted and evoked interminably in the music, the consumption, the fashion, the architecture, the art, the advertising, the fiction, that has developed under its umbrella: and has been itself a site of aesthetic inquiry, in art and photography, in the recent interest in India poster and hoarding art.

The Bollywood intervention has the capacity to remind us of a larger issue: that the 'cinema' might well be a larger term than one that covers the specific mechanics of making and showing celluloid. Historians of the early cinema have already shown that the 'cinema', in various forms, precedes the invention of celluloid by some decades; indeed, that celluloid systems might not have been invented had prior definitions of a technology of the moving image not been available. At the other end of the spectrum, a century on, it is entirely likely that the cinema may well survive the demise of celluloid. Both ends, as well as the extra-filmic use of the cinema in the era of celluloid, help us investigate with some precision, once again, the basic question of what the cinema *is*, and what then, as a subset of that critical Erst question, narrative cinema might be.

Our argument has proceeded on the fundamental premise that the cinema derives its self—definition through its capacity to produce symbolic meaning: that indeed this capacity oversees and determines every aspect of its apparatus: and that it long *precedes*, as well as *exceeds,* the cinema's ability to incorporate symbolic form into a storytelling logic. Such symbolic meaning-production is not unique to the cinema: indeed, the cinema's capacity to collaborate on such production with forms like literature, visual art and music might well provide a key explanation for the success of Bollywood-style crossovers. Nevertheless, we shall here presume on a particular and distinctive type of symbolic production, and have named this production the 'cinema-effect': a descendant category that owes to, but also incorporates, cinema's better established 'reality'—effect (SeeJean—Pierre Oudart, 'The Reality Effect', in Nick Brown ed. *Cahiers du Cinema 1969-72*: *The Politics of Representation*, 1990 and Joel Black, *The Reality Effect: Film Culture and the Graphic Imperative*, 2002).

As this argument proceeds, hopefully elsewhere, it may well be possible to view 'storytelling' as a particularly insecure subset of a far more complex narrative practice, as the narratively sutured spectator—standing in for the apparatus of cinema in all its magnificence — inaugurates a complex logic of inclusions and exclusions, of who's in and who's not in and what the rites of inclusion might look like. The cinema's ability to tell stories is a later development (as is well known: cf. the debates around the rise of storytelling cinema, most elaborately in Tom Gunning, *D. W. Griffith and the Origin of American Narrative Film: The Early Years at Biograph*, 1994), but is also a more insecure development compared to the first, that of symbolic production. Storytelling

comes as an adjunct of the need to *narrativize*, thereby to contain, to restrict, and to authorize, this symbolic production. Unlike the first, the latter ability appears to be perennially *unstable*, needing repeated reinvestigation and reinvigoration through its century—old existence, and may indeed have had a far more controversial global history than the proponents of 'classic cinema' had ever anticipated.

Despite its instabilities, the promise therefore of narrative cinema to provide not only symbolic representations, but, to utilize its formidable systems of image/sound reprocessing to further *authorize* those reproductions, needs to be seen as perhaps the most significant attribute of the cinema in its history. This attribute has fashioned the way numerous kinds of 20th C authority — typically state authority — has denied the cinema as both *carrier* and *endorser* of authoritative symbolic production under the aegis of its producers. Indeed, the cinema's capacity to authorize might need to be viewed as a key *prior* condition to its famous ability to produce what we have named, with Barthes, an 'obvious' meaning — a 'you shall see this meaning and no other' capacity of storytelling conventions of lighting, editing and sound recording/ mixing — that further underscores the attribution to the cinema of the myth of *textuality*. Textuality remains the ruling presumption for the industrial as well as cultural institution of the cinema in most national formations worldwide. Originating in Europe but relentlessly foregrounded by Hollywood, the presumption of textuality is most vividly presented by Laura Mulvey in her famous contention that 'the conventions of narrative film... deny the first two [looks] and subordinate them to the third, the conscious aim being always to eliminate intrusive camera presence and prevent a distancing awareness in the audience. Without these two absences (the material existence of the recording process, the critical reading of the spectator), fictional drama cannot achieve reality obviousness and truth' (Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen* v 16, n 3, 1975).

It is clear that textuality in the sense in which Mulvey defines it — one where the spectatorial agency is 'subordinated' to the ruling agency of the narrative, where prevention of distancing awareness equates with 'reality, obviousness and truth' — relates closely to the fictive mechanisms of democratic functioning, where 'actual' people are presumed to have been both interpellated by, and identified with, idealized citizen—types. It is also clear that such textuality succeeds only when it hides its mechanisms of functioning, when the 'heroic, Whiggish narrative of teleological, textualist development that animates the *doxa* of the humanities screen Academy' (Toby Miller, Nitin Govil, John McMurria and Richard Maxwell, *Global Hollywood*, 2001:11) prevents 'critical political economy and cultural policy concerns' from being raised, contextualizing a widespread demand to 'let screen studies 'get' real, too'. Such a tradition of textuality presents major difficulties to numerous theorists of film, as we move to events both *historically closer* to the present, as well as move *geographically further away* from Hollywood. In the instance of India too, textual theory has been discredited almost beyond recovery by its increasingly futile efforts to recover the cinema into what films are suppposedly 'about', a pale caricature of the 'instructional' cinema model with its imperial origins and the Hollywood 'film—sermon', which as it generally prevails in India seems to contribute nothing to numerous prevalent industrial practices of showing and seeing films. This crisis has created a virtual schism in film studies, defining the

rationale of a great deal of recent work on film exhibition[9].

On the other hand, however, this argument seeks to overcome what has increasingly become an intractable divide: a choice of either-or between textual work on the one hand and work on exhibition practices and economies on the other. While textual analysis appears before us unable to offer any insight into the industrial functioning of the cinema — and in its official statist form even serves to render large parts of industrial functioning invisible, even (as we shall see) *illegal* and pornographic — we also face a reverse crisis. Rarely has a critique drawn from the recognition of the cinema's exhibition or production practices in India extended to an adequate reconstitution of the cinematic text.

One way by which textuality has been understood here, as an agency mediating narrative organization around spectator rights, presumes on a history of large-scale interventions and abductions of the 'cinema-effect' (including, most spectacularly, cinematic realism) on various kinds of extra-cinematic authority. The eventual argument being inaugurated here will propose that the cinema has seen numerous interventions from the outside, as larger structures of intelligibility have been invoked to shore up both an unstable storytelling mechanism and an even more problematic textual logic of 'reality, obviousness and truth'. The first instance of this intervention in India, by the colonial state, first brought to the fore perhaps the leading instance of the mobilization of the cinema-effect including the political deployment of narrative structures as sites of negotiation, as processes of naming those who were 'inside' the narrative and the rites of inclusion, and the broad post-WW2 visibility accorded within state multiculturalism to the rights of those who could be seen to be inhabiting a condition close to and overlapping with cultural ethnicity. A second, building on the first, has been the process of producing authoritative symbols of nationalist self-definition. A third, then, impossible without the first two, is Bollywood.

Without these prior accruals, of ethnicity and the state intervention, it is unlikely that Bollywood could ever have generated the cultural force it has. Indeed, Bollywood's bid for representational authority even proposes that the cinema-effect on occasion singlehandedly provide *symbolic alternatives* that could *replace* such massive categories as authentic form, politics and state: and in the process of course, asserts its history in these categories. Or, putting it differently, if after the Second World War the cinema was historically the privileged agency for the production of the realist 'authenticity-effect' (replacing prominent pre-War forms like oil painting and the theatre), then we might well be witnessing the rise of something that may have so far been a marginal and unacknowledged sphere of cinematic production, a production basic to the cinema but ignored, an effect that's now no longer the container but the very content of authenticity.

References:

1. Recent theory of the consumption culture have focussed on a particular clutch of industries, which include food, fashion, automobiles, travel, shopping, entertainment, housing and interior decoration, in turn characterized by a set of media for propagation, including print and televisual advertising, home sales parties, hand leaflets, miniature promotional items, use-by dates and high perishability. See Chua Beng

Huat, *Life is Not Complete Without shopping: Consumption culture in Singapore*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2003. It is possible to see a distinct, and consciously developed, Bollywood influence on practically every one of these industries.

2. An ancestry also claimed by other 'national' cultural festivals, most notably the Swaminarayan Sanstha's Cultural Festival Of India, UK, in August 1985, soon after the 1982 Festival of India. The Swaminarayan Festivals blurb claims that 'Eighteen acres of the famous Alexandra Palace were transformed into a cultural wonderland which gave precious glimpses of India's music and melodies, science and spiritualism, arts and architectures... The outstanding feature was that all the gigantic structures were crafted in India, shipped to London and assembled as a large jigsaw (www.swaminarayan.org). For a commentary on their even larger Cultural Festival of India in Edison, USA, 1991, see Sandhya Shukla, 'Building Diaspora and Nation: The 1991 'Cultural Festival of India", *Cultural Studies*, V Il No 2, July 1997.

3. Most directly evident in the long colonial tradition of scientific museums and exhibitions. Prakash writes, 'If performance mixed science with magical spectacle, it also enhanced the importance of visuality. Museums confronted observers with an orderly organisation of fossils, rocks, minerals, bones, vegetation, coins, sculptures, and manuscripts. Exhibitions, on the other hand, offered a feast to the Indian eye. Depending on the scale, no effort was spared to produce an attractive spectacle: ceremonial arches, palatial structures, military bands, lakes, fountains bathed in coloured lights, food stalls, wrestling competitions, pony races, and regional theatre — all combined to impress the public eye and draw it to agricultural products, manufactured goods, machines, scientic inventions, and new methods of working and living' (Prakash, ibid.;33).

4. Eg. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's concept of *anushilan* to define culture. Sibaji Bandopadhyay (*'East' Meeting 'West'*, Calcutta: Jadavpur University, 1994) shows how in his *Dharmatattva*, Bankimchandra claims that *anushilan* not only incorporates in its entirety the Western definition of culture as defined by Matthew Arnold, but includes all else from Hindu civilization that remains outside of both the understanding and control of the West, and therefore uncolonized. Additionally Partha Chatterjee names such markers of authenticity, premised on the domain of sovereignty and displayed as such through an "essential' cultural difference', as based on language, custom, tradition, religion, and in general our 'inner' or 'spiritual' aspects, 'Nationalism and Cultural Difference', in 'The Colonial State', *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, New Delhi: OUP, 1994.

5. An everyday experience of this is the menace posed by technology-as-record to all live events. At practically any staged public event, anyone bearing an appropriate device like a still or moving—image camera can interfere with spectators' views by standing before them, can even interfere with the performance itself by intruding on stage or (if a 'Doordarshan' or 'Star News' cameraman) by switching on special lights, all in the name of the privileged record.

6. This can have strange and unpredictable demands. Eg. The sudden choice of archaeology as the discipline with which to solve the Ayodhya Babri Masjid crisis, posed extraordinary difficulties to the discipline precisely around the question of reading competence, an instance that perhaps indicates what happens when certain disciplines are prised out of their stated purposes and faced with material they may have no competence to read 'outside the frame' (D. Mandal, *Ayodhya: Archaeology After Demolition, A Critique of the 'New' and 'Fresh' Discoveries*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman Tracts of the Times-5, I993/2003).

7. Anyone who has seen the shooting of a film will have encountered the frustration of watching technicians assemble the contents of diegetic space: the minute movements of lighting, the use of cutters, the adjustment of light focus, the attention given to detail that we *know*, as viewers, will be entirely missed when the film is eventually seen. While the most notorious recent instance of 'pristine' diegetic space would perhaps be Santosh Sivan's *The Terrorist* (2000), and the most prominent the experiments by New Indian Cinema filmmakers of the 1980s, the investment in the pure, unsullied, magical, diegetic space of the cinema has existed almost from the time of Phalke. In its 'edenic' context, narrative space in cinema could be the direct ancestor to cyber space.

8. Traces of evicted matter is sometimes then found in odd spaces within the frame, on the edge, or out of focus, like the Vietnamese general standing behind Jane Fonda's expression of generic 'concern' in Godard's *Lettre a Jane* (*Letter To Jane*, 1972), or in what Barthes would call the 'obtuse' reading of a film.

9. See the issue *Unsettling Cinema: A Symposium On The Place Of Cinema In India*, Seminar 525: May 2003.