

University of Wollongong
Research Online

University of Wollongong Thesis Collection
1954-2016

University of Wollongong Thesis Collections

2005

Non-resident cinema: transnational audiences for Indian films

Adrian Mabbott Athique
University of Wollongong

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/theses>

University of Wollongong

Copyright Warning

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following: This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of this work may be reproduced by any process, nor may any other exclusive right be exercised, without the permission of the author. Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material.

Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

Unless otherwise indicated, the views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the University of Wollongong.

Recommended Citation

Athique, Adrian Mabbott, Non-resident cinema: transnational audiences for Indian films, PhD thesis, Faculty of Arts, University of Wollongong, 2005. <http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/473>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

NOTE

This online version of the thesis may have different page formatting and pagination from the paper copy held in the University of Wollongong Library.

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

COPYRIGHT WARNING

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site. You are reminded of the following:

Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

Non-Resident Cinema: Transnational Audiences for Indian Films

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

Adrian Mabbott Athique, BA (Hons)

Communications and Cultural Studies
Faculty of Arts
2005

CERTIFICATION

I, Adrian Mabbott Athique, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Adrian Mabbott Athique
29th August 2005

Contents

List of Illustrations	vii
Thesis Abstract	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
Introduction to the Study	1
The Research Standpoint	3
Structure of the Thesis	6
Part One: Indian Cinema as a Global Cinema	11
Chapter One : Flags of Convenience: The Logic of National Cinema	13
Arguments for National Cinema	14
<i>The Protectionist Argument</i>	15
<i>The Cultural Defence Argument</i>	18
<i>The Nation-Building Argument</i>	21
Studies in National Cinema	24
Historical Understandings of National Cinema and National Cultures	33
Cinema as Nation: Theoretical Implications	50
Chapter Two: How National is Indian Cinema?: Histories and Theories	55
Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture	55
The Media in Postcolonial India	69
<i>A Suitable Cinema</i>	70
<i>The New World Order</i>	79
The Literature on Indian Cinema	84
<i>The Search For Explanation in Indian Film Studies</i>	85
<i>Modernist Approaches</i>	87

<i>Traditionalist Approaches</i>	90
<i>Balancing Modernist and Traditionalist Approaches</i>	93
Indian Cinema as a National Cinema	98
Chapter Three: The Global Dispersal of Indian Films	101
Global Markets for Indian Cinema	101
Identifying Transnational Audiences for Indian Films	109
The Diasporic Audience	111
<i>Constructing the India Diaspora</i>	114
<i>'Bollywood' and Cultural Affirmation</i>	121
Imagining a Western Audience	127
Beyond the East/West Binary: Parallel Audiences for Indian Films	133
Situating Transnational Audiences	141
Chapter Four:	
Global Audiences, Media Ethnography and the Notion of Cultural Field	143
The Cultural Production of Globalisation	143
The Geopolitics of Cinema	145
Media and 'Modernity at Large'	148
Resident and Non-Resident Modes of Cinema	156
Media Studies, Ethnographic Practice and the 'Situated Imagination'	159
The Cultural Field as a Site of Relational Imagining	167
<i>Theorising the Cultural Field</i>	168
<i>Inhabiting the Cultural Field</i>	172
Part Two: Indian Films in an Australian Social Context	179
Chapter Five: Introduction to the Case Study	181
The Conduct and Structure of the Case Study	184

<i>'Online Survey'</i>	184
<i>'Professional Interviews'</i>	185
<i>'Audience Interviews'</i>	186
<i>'Screening Survey'</i>	187
The Field of Analysis	188
An Australian Social Context	189
<i>The 'Mainstream' Media in Australia</i>	190
<i>Accounting for Tastes</i>	198
<i>Migration and Multiculturalism in Australia</i>	203
<i>Bollywood Down Under</i>	212
Presentation of the Case Study	223
Chapter Six: Locating A Field of Practices	225
A Migrant Cinema in Greater Western Sydney	226
A Grocery Store in the Illawarra	233
Fox Studios Australia, Moore Park, Sydney	243
<i>Hoyts Cinema Paris</i>	245
<i>Films and Casting Temple Pty</i>	255
Hot Ashes – Representin' Australian Indian Youth	260
Local Geographies and Global Practice	265
Chapter Seven: Talking About Films	267
First Encounters	268
The Distinctiveness of Indian Cinema	272
The Reflective Nature of Indian Cinema	275
Bollywood as a Multi-Media Industry	280
Indians Films as a Non-Resident Artefact	288
A Strategic Media Community	291

Chapter Eight: Imagining Audiences	293
The Diasporic Audience	295
The Australian 'Mainstream' Audience	311
A Tale of Two Audiences	327
Chapter Nine: The Social Imagination of Media Audiences	331
The Transnational as a Relational Spectrum	332
A Community of Differences	338
A Field of Cultural Practices	346
References	351
Filmography	374
Appendix	381

List of Illustrations:

Fig. 1 Mural, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia	11
Fig. 2 Linguistic Map of Colonial India, Burma and Ceylon showing main centres of film production	65
Fig. 3 Administrative map of India 2003 showing main centres of film production	84
Fig. 4 Conurbation of Wollongong, Illawarra region, New South Wales, Australia	179
Fig. 5 Case Study Research Area	181
Fig. 6 A Grocery store-cum-playback outlet in metropolitan Sydney, New South Wales, 2003	239
Fig. 7 Electronic flyers circulated to promote Indian-themed club events in Australia.	263

Thesis Abstract:

In this thesis the popular Indian film is described as an object of global significance. It is argued that understanding Indian films on a global scale requires different governing structures to existing paradigms of national media research and that, in particular, this requires a focus upon the consumption, rather than the production, of cinema. This thesis will also argue that the Australian media environment is constituted by a complex matrix of transnational cultural flows that spread beyond the boundaries of nationalist discourse, and that understanding the social dynamics of cinema in Australia requires an intellectual engagement with the phenomenon of globalisation.

This thesis seeks to locate the cultural geography of Indian films in a global context before presenting a local case study that draws on a body of interviews and survey exercises conducted during 2003-04 with film-viewers and media professionals in the Greater Sydney and Illawarra regions of New South Wales, Australia. My immediate concern is with the manner in which Indian movies reach an audience within this social environment and how that audience is described, both by themselves and by those who seek to cater to them. Thus, a further intention of this study overall is to conduct a re-evaluation of the nature of the social imagination which has been assumed to operate around participation in communities defined by media use. This study therefore combines three major points of enquiry: Indian films as globally dispersed media artefacts, Australia as a site of complex transnational cultural practices, and media audiences as sites of relational social imagination. The theoretical framework that I advance here reformulates the conception of media audiences as 'imagined communities' by replacing a demographically constituted ethnographic model with an emphasis on surveying the diverse inhabitants of a 'cultural field' constructed around the Indian movie in a specific Australian social context.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all the study participants who helped to make this a work founded on collaboration, and were willing to do so without recompense. I would also like to thank my supervisors, Dr. Kate Bowles and Dr. Brian Yecies, who gave me the benefit of their immense experience as well as healthy doses of enthusiasm and scepticism where and when each was required. Many thanks also to Tim McDonald who responded to my many administrative queries with enormous goodwill.

I would like to acknowledge the generous support of my colleagues in the School of Social Sciences, Media and Communication at the University of Wollongong, and in the Centre for Asia Pacific Transformation Studies (CAPSTRANS). I would also like to thank the Communications and Cultural Transformations Group at the University of Wollongong for giving me a forum to share some of these ideas. For the same reason, I am indebted to the Indian Association for the Study of Australia (IASA), the Film and History Association of Australia and New Zealand (FHANZ) and the National Centre for South Asian Studies (NCSAS) who all provided me with a platform for my research. I would also like to thank Graeme Turner and the Australian Cultural Research Network for taking an interest in my work. Sincere thanks are also due to Chris Rodrigues and Phil Ellis at the University of Plymouth who encouraged me to get the ball rolling in the first place. Even with all of this help, this study would not have been possible without the financial support of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Finally, I would like to recognise the important contribution made by my friends in Wollongong who listened with patience, found time to share their own ideas with me and were too generous to remark on my atrocious bowling action.