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## Consuming Bollywood

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## Consuming Bollywood

### Abstract

Hindi popular cinema, marked with sartorial, visual and material excess, has paradoxically portrayed acquisition of wealth or unregulated consumption as inimical to the Chaturvarga philosophy, or the idea that an individual should seek four goods – Artha (wealth), Kama (pleasure), Dharma (duty) and Moksha (renunciation) - in moderation in order to lead a balanced life. While its visual imagery is largely oriented towards Artha or pleasure, Dharma, in its meaning as duty, has been the prime motivation of Hindi or Bombay cinema's characters and structures the cinematic conflict and action. However, Hindi cinema appears to have undergone a phase-shift in the new millennium in its new Bollywood avatar in which consumerist pleasure is not viewed as incompatible with altruism, or even ethical values. New millennium Bollywood cinema articulates a new esthetic of pleasure that is inscribed on the eating, drinking, singing, dancing, loving body that appears to be attuned to global consumerism. While pleasure and consumption have always been Bollywood's signature tunes, never have they been represented as congruent with Hindu family values or social responsibility as they are now. Although Dharma still wins in the end in new millennium Bollywood, it is not viewed as being inconsistent with the pursuit of wealth and pleasure or Artha (pleasure) or even renunciation or Moksha (renunciation). Traditionally, Dana (Pāli, Sanskrit: दान dāna) or generosity or giving, a form of alms as a form of religious act enjoined upon the individual has legitimized pursuit of Artha (wealth) and ensured the individual's Moksha (spiritual salvation). The new Bollywood film legitimizes the pursuit of Artha and Kama through a form of non-reciprocal giving or Dana through which Hindu philosophy has traditionally balanced the pursuit of wealth. This essay reads the new Bollywood film within the framework of Chaturvarga and Dana to argue that these structuring principles enable a cultural artifact to mediate and resist the neo-liberalist ideology adopted in the economic and political realm. In particular, it will focus on its articulation of the Hindu notion of Dana (charity) in the context of global consumerism.

### Keywords

artha, dana, dharma, bhoga, moksha, consumption, dance, song

### Author Notes

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## Introduction

Hindi popular cinema, marked with sartorial, visual and material excess, has paradoxically portrayed acquisition of wealth or unregulated consumption as inimical to the *chaturvarga* or *purushartha* philosophy, or the idea that an individual should seek four goods – *artha* (wealth), *kama* (pleasure), *dharma* (duty) and *moksha* (renunciation) - in moderation in order to lead a balanced life. While its visual imagery is largely oriented towards *artha* or pleasure, *dharma*, in its meaning as duty, has been the prime motivation of Hindi or Bombay cinema's characters and structures the cinematic conflict and action.<sup>1</sup> However, Hindi cinema appears to have undergone a phase-shift in the new millennium in its new 'Bollywood'<sup>2</sup> avatar in which consumerist pleasure is not viewed as incompatible with altruism, or even ethical values. Bollywood films beginning in the mid-1990s articulate a new esthetic of pleasure that is inscribed on the eating, drinking, singing, dancing, loving body that appears to be attuned to global consumerism. While pleasure and consumption have been dominant tropes in Hindi cinema since the 1950s, never have they been represented as congruent with Hindu family values or social responsibility as they have been since the mid-1990s. Although *dharma* still wins in the end in 'new Bollywood films'<sup>3</sup> it is not viewed as being inconsistent with the pursuit, consumption and enjoyment of wealth (*artha*) and pleasure (*kama*) in the religious meaning of *bhoga*, or even with *moksha*. Traditionally, *dana* (Pāli, Sanskrit: दानं *dāna*) or generosity or giving, a form of alms as a form of

religious act enjoined upon the individual, has legitimized pursuit of *artha* (wealth) and ensured the individual's *moksha* (spiritual salvation). The new Bollywood film legitimizes the pursuit of *artha* and *kama* through a form of non-reciprocal giving or *dana* through which Hindu philosophy has traditionally balanced the pursuit of wealth. This essay reads two 'new Bollywood films' between the mid-1990s and early-2000s, Suraj Barjatya's *Hum Aapke Hain Koun* (Who am I to You)<sup>4</sup> and Karan Johar's *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (Sometimes Happy, Sometimes Sad),<sup>5</sup> within the framework of *chaturvarga*<sup>6</sup> and *dana* to argue that these structuring principles enable a cultural artifact to mediate and resist the neoliberalist ideology adopted in the economic and political realm.

### **Hindu Nationalism, Hindu Ideology and the New Bollywood Film**

As Rachel Dwyer has argued, religion plays a critical role in Indian cinema that is not limited to religious (*dharmic*) films such as the mythological, devotional or Muslim socials but extends to secular social (*samajik*) films.<sup>7</sup> Even though only a handful of studies have exclusively engaged with the relationship between religion and Hindi cinema,<sup>8</sup> leading scholars in studies of Indian cinema have placed an emphasis on Hindu iconography, philosophical concepts, moral values and Sanskrit aesthetic principles in defining its narrative, visual and aesthetic grammar.<sup>9</sup> They have ascribed the persistence of *dharmic* codes in social films, even in post-independent secular nationalist films, to the legacies of their precursor

epic texts, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, which function as metatexts of tradition and dharmic values.<sup>10</sup> They have viewed the cinematic conflict as structured by the *dharma-adharma* dyad and the plot as set in motion with the transgression of the dharmic principle by *adharma*.

The mid-1990s mark a watershed moment in Hindi cinema with the emergence of a new kind of film named ‘Bollywood’,<sup>11</sup> ‘contemporary Bollywood’,<sup>12</sup> ‘New Bollywood’<sup>13</sup> that has been linked to the economic liberalization of the Indian economy. It engendered a new genre of films celebrating family values<sup>14</sup> designed to be marketed globally that the media dubbed Indian Family Values (IFV) or Hindu Family Values (HFV) films.<sup>15</sup> Defining Hindu Family Values as giving importance to religion and the family with new visions of domesticity and morality, T.N. Madan noted the emergence of Hindu Family Values as “a new phenomenon in cinema, though not new in religion, in which alongside strong traditions of renouncers, the householder also figures as a sustainer of religion and caste through his worship and other practices and through his pilgrimages.”<sup>16</sup> Emerging in the wake of the opening of the Indian economy to global capitalism and trade in 1991 that ushered in global consumerist ideologies and led to the resurgence of an extreme right brand of Hindu nationalism known as Hindutva, or “an ideology seeking to establish the hegemony of Hindus and the Hindu way of life,” these films unambiguously reiterate a conservative Hindu patriarchy. Although they are set in late 20<sup>th</sup> or early 21<sup>st</sup> century India and have a

modern visual, narrative and performative style, the box office success of these films that reflects the Indian middle class's nostalgia for patriarchal values, the Hindu joint family and parental authority, filial duty and feminine modesty opens them to a reading in relation to the brahminical, Sanskritic concepts of *purushartha* dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.

In *Politics After Television: Hindu Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Public in India*,<sup>17</sup> Arvind Rajagopal, connecting the shift to economic liberalization with the rise of Hindu nationalism through the Bharatiya Janata Party's [BJP's] appropriation of "the rhetorical terrain unleashed by liberalization"<sup>18</sup> asserted that "Hindu nationalism offered the cultural and ideological accompaniment to liberalization for middle and upper classes, and, at the same time translated it "into a religio-mythic narrative that would win popular consent."<sup>19</sup> Arguing that it was the Hindi popular film in the 1940s that mediated between the space of civil society and the state and between the citizen subject and that of the family, Ashish Rajadhyaksha asserted that cultural nationalism became Bollywood's instrument for resisting economic neoliberalism and consumerist ideologies in the area of globalization.<sup>20</sup> Rachel Dwyer pointed out that these films had many takers among India's rising middle classes as they allow them to enjoy the new consumerism that grew in this decade with the economic liberalization of India. She argued that these films, particularly the Yash Raj films and Dharma productions, "are set in a world of plenitude" and that "they depict religion as consumerist practice and repackage

tradition to suit this modern world.”<sup>21</sup> The appeal for these films lay, according to Dwyer, in “a new form of modernity, which incorporated religious values” to the middle classes at home as well to transnational diasporic communities.<sup>22</sup>

The roots of cultural nationalism can be traced back to anti-colonial resistance and to the first Indian film that was animated by the desire to create a swadeshi (indigenous) cultural product. Cultural nationalism in India has often been collapsed with religious and Hindu nationalism since the 1920s, but the coalescence of Hindu nationalism and Hindutva became clearly visible in the Indian political sphere in the 1990s. Scholars of South Asian cinema concur with M. Madhava Prasad that the Hindi film is strongly underpinned by a Hindu ideology.<sup>23</sup> Although the new Bollywood films eschew any explicit reference to Hindutva, they endorse Indian family values that are defined in relation to Hindu concepts and the cultural nationalism propagated in them is a thinly disguised form of Hindu nationalism. The Hindu ideology underpinning their cultural nationalism articulated through reference to Hindu Sanskritic terms, Hindu rituals and festivals, sartorial signs and visual iconography either elides the religious, class and caste other completely or domesticates the other as retainer or guest. Despite its tokenist inclusion of Islam, Sikhism, Christianity and other religious formations to reflect Indian secularism’s accommodation of religious diversity, the Muslim, Sikh or Christian is othered in the Hindi film.<sup>24</sup>

The film that ushered in this happy marriage of economic neoliberalism with Hindu nationalism was *Hum Aapke hain Koun* [HAHK] that became one of the biggest grossers ever in the history of Hindi cinema. Although noted theatre critic Rustam Bharucha expressed grave misgivings about celebrating a century of cinema in India with ‘a superhit so vacuous’, he was forced to admit that “this is a film that is obviously in tune with the ‘liberalisation’ of our times, while being thoroughly grounded in the signs of a homogenised, upper class, upper caste Hindu constituency.”<sup>25</sup> By the time *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* [K3G] was released, the Neoliberalism Hindutva dyad, as Meheli Sen called it,<sup>26</sup> had become an established trope in Bollywood cinema. In order to examine “the influence of Hindi cinema in shaping the politics of identity, of being ‘Indian’ in the US”, Aswin Punthambekar attributed its popularity in the diaspora to “an important departure that its narrative marks from earlier efforts by Hindi cinema (particularly films such as DDLJ and Pardes) to recognize and represent the expatriate Indian community.”<sup>27</sup>

### ***Dharma* and the Hindu Family Values Film**

*Chaturvarga* or *purushartha* philosophy accords primacy to *dharma* in helping an individual follow the principle of moderation in the pursuit of the four goods. *Dharma* [Sanskrit righteousness] is one of the four pursuits or *chaturvarga* [fourfold good] human beings may legitimately engage in that include *artha* [Sanskrit wealth, property], *kama* [Sanskrit love, desire], and *moksha* [Sanskrit,



release] in addition to *dharma*. While both Hinduism and Buddhism define *dharma* as “individual conduct in conformity with this principle,”<sup>28</sup> Hinduism interprets *dharma* as “the cosmic law both upheld by the gods and expressed in right behaviour by humans, including adherence to the social order.”<sup>29</sup> Although the transgression of *dharma* by *adharma* can occur in diverse ways, the selfish pursuit of *artha*<sup>30</sup> and *kama*<sup>31</sup> is presented as the primary cause in disturbing the delicate balance between the four goods. In comparison with Hindi films of the 1950s and 1960s that represented *artha* and *kama* as obstacles in the path of *dharma*, films beginning in the mid-1990s appear to exhibit an unapologetic indulgence in *artha* and *kama* reflecting the ideological shift from socialism to neoliberalism in the Indian economy and polity, a shift that was signaled by the release of the musical family romance *Hum Aapke Hain Koun*, which celebrated Indian/Hindu family values against the backdrop of a liberal, globalized India. While *dharma* still forms the *grand syntagmatique* of the Hindi or Bombay film even in its Bollywood avatar,<sup>32</sup> it legitimizes the pursuit of *artha* and *kama* in tune with the capitalist logic of neoliberalism in which consumption is viewed as leading to a good life and maximizing happiness. As opposed to the old landed and aristocratic rich, the figure of the new rich, either in the shape of the tycoon or the Non-Resident Indian (NRI) becomes the embodiment of the new Bollywood ideology of unapologetic consumption. As Heidi Pauwells noted in the context of *Hum Aapke Hain Koun*, *dharma* is redefined in new Bollywood films and narrowed down to “family

values”, which are translated as placing the interest of the joint family above one’s individual happiness.<sup>33</sup>

*Hum Aapke Hain Koun*, a film with a minimal plot strung together by 14 songs marking Hindu rituals from birth to death, became the highest grossing films of the 1990s both domestically and worldwide and inaugurated what came to be known as the wedding genre and the Indian/Hindu Family Values film. The film is about two friends: self-made, single industrialist Kailash Nath (Alok Nath), who has two nephews, Rajesh (Mohnish Bahl) and Prem (Salman Khan); and Professor Siddharth Chaudhary (Anupam Kher), who has a wife, Madhulata (Reema Lagoo), and two daughters, Pooja (Renuka Shahane) and Nisha (Madhuri Dixit). Kailash and Siddharth then decide to seal their friendship by arranging a match between Rajesh and Pooja. An unending succession of elaborate Hindu wedding rituals follow, during which their younger siblings Prem and Nisha fall in love. But before they can disclose it to anyone other than Pooja, a tragedy strikes the families in the form of Pooja dying in childbirth and the families decide to marry Nisha to Rajesh to provide the motherless child a mother. Both Nisha and Prem concur with their elders’ decision, agreeing to sacrifice their happiness for the sake of their families. Their secret is revealed to their families through the divine intervention of the Hindu God Krishna, and a pet dog called Duffy, and the couple is finally united with each other. Despite the amazement of critics as to how a film that appeared like an extended glossy wedding video featuring a romance against the backdrop of

fun, food, and games could capture the imagination of an entire nation and its diaspora, HAHK proved to be a defining film of the 1990s.

One of the ways it defined the Bollywood films of the 1990s was by celebrating the persistence of the dharmic code and the perennial influence of Hindu epic texts. As Patrica Uberoi has argued, the love story in HAHK is “inflected by mythic conflicts that typically structure the constitution of the romantic narrative in the cultural context of South Asian popular cinema: the conflicts between *dharma* (social duty) and desire, freedom and destiny.”<sup>34</sup> Barjatya’s tribute to ‘the traditional Indian joint family’ defines *dharma* as placing obligations to the family above *kama* or carnal desires or personal fulfillment. The elaborate Hindu rituals related to wedding, childbirth and death serve to reinforce patriarchal ideologies and remind each member of the joint family to fulfill the *dharma* appropriate to their stage of life. Although the film does not provide the reasons why the Nath family Patriarch Kailash did not propose to Madhukanta who he appears to have admired in his college days, it suggests that he chose to remain celibate to be able to raise his nephews following the example of Bhishma in the *Mahabharata*, who took the vow of lifelong *brahmacharya* (celibacy) in order to serve anyone who occupied his father’s throne. Despite the signifiers of modernity and globalization within which the younger protagonists are framed, the highly qualified offspring of the Hindu industrialist and academic families, too, willingly submit to parental authority in the most personal of matters, marriage, which is

valorized as their adherence to the dharmic principle. Religiously adhering to the dharmic code of Hindi cinema, the lovers in this new Bollywood film agree to renounce their personal desires, Prem wholeheartedly, and Nisha after a string of confusions, in the interests of the joint family.

However, as Pauwells pointed out, *dharma* is narrowed down to family values, which are regressively patriarchal. The film has been seen as proposing “reconciliation of the tensions between India’s economic liberalization of the 1990s” as well as “traditional Indian/Hindu values by reconstituting conventional patriarchal gender relations in the context of a newly globalized Indian middle class.”<sup>35</sup> The film upholds the power of the patriarchal family in post-liberalisation India in which ubiquitous global signs are unproblematically incorporated into a deep-rooted Hindu religiosity. Mishra views *Hum Aap Ke Hain Koun* as a narrative built around the idyllic extended family order, which “interweaves the Tulsidasa Ramayana (the Ramacaritamanasa) into the fabric of the text.”<sup>36</sup> Beginning with Prem’s white jeep scrawled all over by “I love my Family,” the film presents a happy joint family created in the image of Ramanand Sagar’s teleserial *Ramayan*<sup>37</sup> in which all members of the family, with the exception of a scheming maternal aunt, swear their allegiance to each other. The film is explicit in its allusions to the Ramayana, beginning with the meeting of the two families in Ramkhetri, the *mandir* (temple) in the family mansion, the members greeting each other with “Jai Shri Ram” (Glory to Lord Rama), Rajesh’s gifting a copy of the

Ramayana to Pooja, the Ram/Sita//Lakshman triad in the Rajesh//Pooja/Prem relationship, and Pooja's conformity to the Sita ideal.<sup>38</sup> Patriarchal authority is foregrounded through the decision of the two Patriarchs, Nath and Chaudhary, to arrange the marriage of Rajesh and Pooja—and of Nisha with Rajesh, following Pooja's death—with the girls' mother reenacting the traditional submissive function of beseeching the groom's uncle to look after her daughter.

The tagline of Karan Johar's *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*, "It's all about loving your parents," leaves no ambiguity about the family values espoused in the film, which are unambiguously Hindu. The film upholds the Hindu patriarchal family through the aristocratic, disciplinarian figure of Yash Raichand (Amitabh Bachchan) who rules his family in strict accordance with the Hindu notions of *parampara* (tradition) and *sanskara* (values) while recognizing the imperative need for exposure to western education and for being a citizen of the world. Although his submissive wife Nandini (Jaya Bachchan) and sons Rahul (Shah Rukh Khan) and Rohan (Hritik Roshan) willingly adhere to his rigid strictures, the generational conflict is triggered by his adopted elder son Rahul falling in love with and marrying Anjali (Kajol), the daughter of Bharat Halwai (Alok Nath), a confectionary shop owner from the old Delhi neighbourhood of Chandni Chowk. Disowned by his father, Rahul leaves home with his newly wedded wife to make himself a successful career in London. The film begins with Rohan graduating from high school and quietly consenting to leave for London for further studies in

accordance with the family tradition with the hidden intention of searching for his brother. Rohan invites himself to Rahul's house as a houseguest with the help of Rahul's wife's sister Pooja (Kareena Kapoor) and the two conspire to reunite the father and son, which they succeed in doing at the end.

Describing the NRI as "Hindi cinema's new aristocrat," Jyotika Virdi contends that 'in the romance genre the Non-Resident Indian provides an imaginary terrain in which to explore the 'iconography of abundance'.<sup>39</sup> However, Meheli Sen points out that the domination of the figure of the Patriarch often played by the Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan reflects the rise of authoritarian patriarchal forms of Hinduism in the India polity. Punthambekar argues that "in positioning and drawing the diaspora into the fold of a 'great Indian family', K3G articulates everyday struggles over being Indian in the diaspora to a larger project of cultural citizenship that has emerged in relation to India's tentative entry into a transnational economy and the centrality of the NRI (non-resident Indian) figure to India's navigation of this space."<sup>40</sup> The domination of the Patriarch in these films permits the postmodern translation of the principles of *purushartha* as practiced by the *grahasta* or householder in the figure of Amitabh Bachchan, who is represented as a global citizen and Hindu, suave and traditional, at home in India and the world. The spectacular opening of *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* in which the Raichand heir Rahul (Shah Rukh Khan) lands in a personal helicopter in the backyard of his palatial mansion and the senior Raichand (Amitabh Bachchan) casually remarks

that he must acquire a few more of the beautiful machines has been quoted to illustrate the establishment of the *mis-en-scene* in which Indian billionaires can reenact patriarchal authority while opening out to the possibilities of global capitalism.

### **‘India Shining’,<sup>41</sup> *Artha, Kama*, and the Culture of Consumption**

Although the generic requirements of the Hindi film are oriented towards visual excess, its ideological commitment to *dharma* configures excessive consumption as wasteful and attaches it to profligacy. In sharp contrast to the socialist ideology in films up to the 1990s that led to the representation of consumption as sinful, films since the mid-1990s legitimize consumption echoing the capitalist agenda of production and consumption as a means of ensuring economic well-being and increasing happiness. Unlike the films of the golden era of the 1950s in which the narrative conflict is complicated by economic disparity, seen as being evil and associated with wasteful consumption, the new Bollywood film legitimizes acquisition of *artha* (wealth) and its consumption almost as a *dharma* (sacred duty). Neoliberalist ideology is articulated to Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* in viewing trade or *varta* as “a means to make acquisitions, to keep them secure, to improve them, and to distribute among the deserved the profits of Improvement” and asserting that “the progress of the world depends” on the science of government (*dandaniti*) through Hindu nationalism.<sup>42</sup>

While the sanction for *artha* in Hinduism rests on the assumption that material well-being of a human being, particularly during the life stage of the *grahasta* (householder) is essential, apprehensions about the immoderate pursuit of material advantage leading to undesirable and destructive excesses necessitate the regulation of *artha* by the superior pursuit of *dharma*, or righteousness. Ever since the 1950s, Hindi films have mapped signs of *artha* (wealth) on the fabulous mansions of the rich with their carved staircases, glittering chandeliers, ancestral portraits and other family heirlooms, and fancy cars. But *artha* is not placed in opposition to *dharma* and *moksha* and “wealthy businessmen” who “were frequently the symbol of exploitation, injustice, and even criminality in Hindi films from the 1950s-80s” are represented as ethical, benevolent, family loving Patriarchs in the films beginning in the mid-1990s.<sup>43</sup> In contrast to films up to the 1990s in which consumption was articulated as profligacy and opposed to moderation and thrift, display of commodity-signs acquires new significations. The proliferation of commodity forms in the film contributes to images of cornucopia through which filial bonds and family togetherness are reiterated.

Since *chaturvarga* is intimately connected with *varna* or caste and *varnashrama* or the stages of life, each of the goods is considered appropriate for a particular caste and stage of life. According to the *Arthashastra*, “the duty of a householder is earning livelihood by his own profession, marriage among his equals of different ancestral Rishis, intercourse with his wedded wife after her monthly



ablution, gifts to gods, ancestors, guests, and servants, and the eating of the remainder.”<sup>44</sup> Since the joint family in the Hindu Values Film is invariably headed by a patriarchal figure who is either an industrialist or tycoon, he is seen as adhering to his ritual duties that include the rightful creation of wealth to fulfill his other functions of maintaining a family and providing for his extended joint family, which includes servants and guests.

*Hum Aapke Hain Koun* marks a turning point in Hindi cinema’s ethical disavowal of conspicuous consumption despite the lavishness and grandeur that has conventionally been part of its visual style since the beginning. Unlike earlier films in which deprivation of non-essential and essential goods often contributed to the dramatic conflict,<sup>45</sup> the Utopian world of *Hum Aapke Hain Koun* is marked by the absence of poverty, and wealth as a given and unproblematic. Although Nath appears to have violated the *chaturvarga* division through eternally remaining in the *brahmacharya* stage for undisclosed reasons, he is seen as fulfilling the moral obligations towards his extended family through earning wealth, raising his nephews, educating them and providing for all members of the joint family, including the nephews’ maternal uncle and aunt, guests, and servants with an exemplary generosity. The film hints that the business established by Nath has been expanded to include overseas trade by his nephews but we never see them at work. The film begins with Nath embarking on his filial obligation by arranging the marriage of his nephew among his equals. The figure of the *grahasta* is embodied

in the figure of Siddharth Chaudhary who, having taken a wife, begotten and educated his daughters, must now fulfill his final obligation to his daughters by marrying them in the right families with proportionate pomp and show. He regards the provision of a dowry befitting the Nath family's status including global consumer items as his paternal *dharma*. Although the manipulative *mami* (maternal aunt) points out the economic gap between the Nath and Chaudhary family, Nath dismisses her reservations by alluding to the Chaudhary family's ancestral wealth that establishes the two families as social equals. Despite being in the relatively low paid academic profession, wealth does not appear to be a significant issue for Chaudhary. The problem of poverty and class is resolved through the inclusion of the family retainers within the joint family and the members' generosity in dealing with them.

Shohini Ghosh pointed out that the erotic tension foregrounds the play of *kama* even in this 'clean' family film and is palpable in the interactions not only between the lovers Prem and Nisha, but also between Prem and his sister-in-law Pooja as well as older members such as Kailash Nath and his *samdhin*, Madhulata.<sup>46</sup> As opposed to the *grahasta* Chaudhary, *kama* might not be religiously sanctioned for the *brahmachari* Nath. But traditional joking relations between *devar bhabhi* (brother-in-law and elder brother), *samdhi samdhin* (male and female in-laws) and so on sanctioned through marriage songs and rituals provide the licentious play of *kama* in carnivalesque moments. Hence, the erotic charge in the song "hamare dil

me *ajab ye uljhaan hai, gane baethe gana samne samdhan hai* (There is a strange dilemma in my heart, as I sit down to sing in front of my son's mother-in-law),” in which Nath fetishizes his friend's wife and *samdhin* in the presence of the entire joint family, resonates with the joking norms of wedding songs. Similarly, the framing of Pooja and Prem's relationship within traditional *devar bhabhi* relations (epitomized in Sita's relationship with Lakshmana in the *Ramayana*) licences periodic transgressions through indulgence in mildly flirtatious exchanges including the taboo act of touching. As Karen Gabriel has argued, the love story instantiates how “desire is often assembled under the sign of the family and as inclusive of it as a demanding, ratifying and structuring construct.”<sup>47</sup>

Through a visual economy of outdoor and interior spaces, objects, pictures, and costumes that reaffirm commitment to the pursuit of *artha*, K3G provides ample room for the play of *kama*. Ritually sanctioned indulgence in *kama* and *bhoga* is dramatized in the song and dance sequences, particularly in “Everybody Say Shava Shava.” In this song, the Patriarch is given the license not only to dance with a bevy of young white women, but also to sing a paean to his son's intended under his wife's embarrassed gaze before marital relations are firmly restored through his final ‘film-i’ flirting with his wife. However, the film clearly suggests that the pursuit of *artha* and *kama* must be balanced through *dharma* to which the Patriarch reiterates his commitment through faithfully adhering to the *sanskara* or traditions established by his ancestors. The *sanskaras* might be translated as

everyday practices such as the vermilion mark he expects his wife to put on his forehead; the celebration of festivals; codes of behaviour regulating interactions with equals, subordinates, and outsiders; and finally, strictures related to the choice of a life partner. The narrative conflict in the film arises from his rigid adherence to the traditions handed down by his ancestors rather than a personal dislike for the girl chosen by his son as his partner. Although the rituals and codes of conduct that he imposes on his family have been viewed as reinstating Hindu patriarchal authority and affirming Hindu nationalism, the spectacularized rituals in the Hindu family film facilitate the unproblematic suturing of neoliberalist agendas into Hindu religious and moral codes. Despite his unabashed indulgence in *artha* and *kama*, the Patriarch is represented as a responsible householder who considers the welfare of his family, dependents and the larger community his prime responsibility. The film carefully contrasts his generosity of heart that begins with his bringing home an orphan child and raising him as his own, the space he provides for his extended family (mother and mother-in-law), his dependents (the children's nurse Saeeda) and his friends with his consciousness of social status and class difference that prevents him from accepting the Chandni Chowk girl as his adopted son's wife. In refusing to give his consent to this match, he could be seen as adhering to the scriptural injunctions related to finding a wife among equal families.

### **Wasteful and Legitimate Consumption**

Privileging the symbolic and cultural dimension of consumption, Jean Baudrillard argued that “in the logic of signs, as in the logic of symbols, objects are no longer tied to a function or *defined* need” because objects respond either to a social need or logic of desire where they serve as a fluid and unconscious field of signification.”<sup>48</sup> Defining consumption as the active manipulation of signs, Baudrillard regarded the logic of sign-value as “the final triumph of capitalism in its attempts to impose a cultural order compatible with the needs of large-scale commodity production.”<sup>49</sup> In this logic, individuals become reduced to consumers and “the overproduction of signs and reproduction of images and simulations leads to a loss of stable meaning and an aestheticization of reality.”<sup>50</sup> As “the commodity-form, more than masking the true source of value in labour and human production, becomes of critical importance in the valorization of social relations as they manifest themselves through the commodity as a social and symbolic form”, the “whole network of social and class relations in modern capitalist society”, according to him, becomes “inscribed within the realm of consumption.”<sup>51</sup> Douglas and Isherwood also held that goods function symbolically as a code of language and contended that the consumption of goods cannot be separated from their social meaning.<sup>52</sup> In postmodern society, culture, according to Fredric Jameson, is given a new significance through the saturation of signs.<sup>53</sup> Mike Featherstone coined the term ‘consumption logic’ which points to the “socially structured ways in which

goods are used to demarcate social relationships.”<sup>54</sup> In this logic of consumption, ‘conspicuous consumption’<sup>55</sup> becomes a means to gain prestige through high exchange value, particularly in those societies where the old aristocratic rich have been forced to yield power to the new rich.

Unlike Western societies, in which there is an ever-changing supply of commodities that produces an illusion of unrestricted access, stable status systems were protected in socialist India. Conspicuous consumption, therefore, fulfills the social aspirations of the newly rich to elevate their status through manipulation of commodity-signs with India’s integration into capitalism. In contrast to the easy accessibility of branded merchandise and designer labels in Western societies due to which new sign systems have to be produced to assert social difference, the restricted access to consumer durables even in liberalized India makes them function as markers of status and class.

The films between the mid-1990s and early 2000 reflect India’s insertion into global consumerism and the culture of consumption through the Indian state’s official integration into global capitalism with deregulation and liberalization of the Indian economy. This shift in the Indian economy is signified through the predominance of consumer goods with a strategic placement of global brands in the films of the 1990s. Since a number of these films are set overseas and privilege the figure of the NRI, global brands might be viewed as signposting merely the globalization of cinematic locations and conflicts, but their placement in films

based in India constructs images of a globalized India. Most scholars have framed commodity-signs and the logic of consumption against the ideological legitimization of global consumerism, and have demonstrated how brand placement in Bollywood films reflects the domination of the corporate and new sources of finance.<sup>56</sup>

Scholars have called attention to the ‘naturalization of plenitude’<sup>57</sup> and abundance that distinguishes the Bollywood film, particularly Yash Raj and Dharma productions, from the older Hindi or Bombay film. If Ashis Nandy described the Hindi film of the 1970s as ‘the slum-view’ of India,<sup>58</sup> the Bollywood film offers a penthouse view of India as it appears through ‘Designer homes.’ The popularity of this film in the diaspora is often ascribed to the diasporic desire for an imaginary home, a metonym for the nation that is produced either through an excision of real spaces or the aestheticization of the remembered home. In Punthambekar’s view, “the visual economy of films such as K3G, it can be argued, is an important source of cultural capital for those NRI families who belong in a particular class bracket.”<sup>59</sup> Although the fantasy mode in which Hindi films function facilitated the exoticization of the slum even in earlier films, the Bollywood film differs in its dispensing with outdoor locations altogether or reconstructing it in the heterotopias of the Film City in Mumbai or Hyderabad. The excision of the real street, town or city facilitates the production of an imaginary Indian space that conforms to the vision of ‘India Shining’ conceived by advertising

professionals for the neoliberal Indian state populated by aristocrats, tycoons, or villagers in designer homes, villages, or cities. While ‘the naturalization of plenitude’<sup>60</sup> in India’s first designer film (as Anupama Chopra describes *K3G*)<sup>61</sup> might befit the economic status of the aristocratic Raichand family, Johar also presents a designer version of Old Delhi’s famed Chandni Chowk area, reconstructed by the production design team in a studio at Film City of Mumbai in such a way as to sanitize the filth, chaos, and confusion of this 17<sup>th</sup> century neighborhood.

Noting the marginalization of the real Indian city in the Bollywood film with “a new panoramic interior” which “combines design techniques with architectural space to create a ‘virtual city’ in which the contemporary ‘global’ family could reinvent ‘Indianness’ and modernity,”<sup>62</sup> Ranjani Majumdar maintained that “the interior extravaganza of the family films is rooted in landscapes of fear and anxiety.”<sup>63</sup> She demonstrated that “the movement of architecture in the family films—including *Hum Apke Hain Koun* (Who am I to you, 1994), *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (Something is happening, 1999), and *Kabhie Khushi Kabhie Gham* (Sometimes happy, sometimes sad, 2001)—combines scenic interiorization through design with neotraditionalist nostalgia for ‘family values.’”<sup>64</sup> Punthambekar noted an erasure of class “through the insertion of lower-class (Chandni Chowk) space into a commodified sphere of ethnic authenticity”<sup>65</sup> and demonstrated how its encodings function as “referents of



‘tradition’ whose consumption is critical to sustaining and performing ethnicity.”<sup>66</sup> This “deployment of vast interiors, relating space and the commodity to issues of cultural identity and the family” that began in *Hum Aapke Hain Koun* develops “a spectacle of ritual consumption and religiosity” to “construct the carnivalesque utopia of the great Indian family, in which conflict is minimal and the desire to be united is powerful.”<sup>67</sup> Although vast panoramic interiors that are “lavish and ornate, spectacular and garish”<sup>68</sup> have also traditionally been part of Hindi cinema’s spatial grammar, the difference between early family films and the present ones, according to Amit Khanna, is the “spectacularization of ritual” and the performance of family through performance of rituals.<sup>69</sup> However, the articulation of consumption to traditional values through spectacularization of ritual in the Bollywood films of the 1990s facilitates the framing of the neoliberal logic of consumption within Hindu ideological structures, through the carnival of traditional values.

While speaking to the aspirational levels of their middle class viewers through a complex visual coding of commodity-signs, the films of the 1990s decommodify them through their incorporation in traditional and ritual spaces. These commodity-signs are articulated to patriarchal Hindu ideologies that embeds these neoliberal Utopias in Hindu nationalist nostalgia for *Ramrajya* or a nation ruled by ancient Hindu principles of governance and mythical narratives of the golden age in which India enjoyed the iconic status of the signifier of plenitude. In

this reinvention of tradition, consumption gets redefined in indigenous terms through the category of *bhoga* that is translated as “enjoyment” or “consumption.”<sup>70</sup> Consumption is invariably translated into the vocabulary of *bhoga*, which frames the consumption of modern luxury goods as analogous to the ritual consumption of food in Hinduism and Sikhism so as to acknowledge the material body and its pleasures.<sup>71</sup> Consumption of food after offering it to the gods in a spirit of non-reciprocal sharing in a Hindu or Sikh temple sanctifies sensory gratification as an acknowledgement of the material body. In its meaning as *bhoga*, consumption is an essential act for the preservation of the material body through which creation is sustained.

### **Consumption, *Dana* and the Economy of the Gift**

Kautilya “holds that wealth and wealth alone is important” and asserts that the saintly king “shall enjoy his desires” without “violating righteousness and economy and “endear himself to the people by bringing them in contact with wealth and doing good to them.”<sup>72</sup> Justifying the acquisition of wealth by saying that “charity and desire depend upon wealth for their realization,”<sup>73</sup> he connects *artha* with *dana*. Thus, the relationship between *dharma* and the other *purusharthas* need not be necessarily conflictual but can be “productive of artha and kama, or as elevating their pursuit, and finally as regulating them.”<sup>74</sup> Describing *dana* as “a noninstrumental and nonattached gift” which “is a sacred directive to give to

strangers scripturally regulated by *dharma* or duty,”<sup>75</sup> Erica Bornstein links *dana* and *dharma*.<sup>76</sup> Bornstein qualifies the common understanding of *dana* [Pāli, Sanskrit: *dāna* gift; alms; relinquishment] as “generosity or giving, a form of alms” by contending that *dana* (Sanskrit) and *dana* (Hindi) are “words for giving as an aspect of religiosity.”<sup>77</sup> She is of the view that *dana* “as a Hindu practice is best understood in relation to historical transformations in other traditions of religious giving”<sup>78</sup> and shows that it differs from other forms of giving through its being directed to religious specialists and by the disinterestedness in the act of giving. She points out that unlike *zakat*,<sup>79</sup> which is a gift intended to create solidarity among the faithful, *moksha* or “renunciation structures the practice of *dāna*.”<sup>80</sup> Bornstein classifies *dana* into Weber’s four ideal types of social action, ‘instrumental rational’, ‘value rational’, ‘affectual’ and ‘traditional’ and argues that regulation of charitable efforts introduces the language of instrumental rationality into *dana*.<sup>81</sup>

A gift economy is defined as a system of exchange in which valuable goods are not traded or sold but given away without any expectation of immediate or future rewards and is marked by qualitative relationships which keep the exchange partners bound to each other even after the completion of transactions. It is opposed to commodity exchange defined by quantitative relationships that enable the parties in the exchange to remain independent after the end of the transaction. Yet a distinction needs to be made between the idea of the gift as defined by Marcel

Mauss and that in Hindu religious giving. Out of the three interrelated moments identified by Mauss in gift relationship—the obligation to give, the obligation to receive, the obligation to reciprocate—the third, that is, reciprocity is significant in his understanding of the gift relationship.<sup>82</sup> As Lury points out, “the relationality between people and things in the making of persons and things is one of the most important aspects of the gift economy” for Mauss.<sup>83</sup> However, the relationality between people in *dana* is essentially governed by non-reciprocity and the obligation of certain individuals or groups to give and of others to receive.

The iconography of the gift and the gift society is reproduced in the films of the mid-1990s, particularly in the Barjatya, Yash Raj and Dharma productions, through sign-systems emerging from global capitalism that are firmly anchored in traditional codes. The logic of consumption is interrogated through the reassertion of the values of a gift society in which giving and taking of gifts regulates social relations and through its redefinition as *bhoga*. Commodity signs that announce India’s integration into the neoliberal economy are framed within the *purushartha* code in which *artha* may be experienced as i) enjoyment as well as ii) religious giving as prescribed in traditional texts. *Dharma* is productive rather than conflictual with *artha* in *Hum Aapke Hain Koun* and *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* because “wealth and material comforts are desired . . . for the sake of service and charity to ... fellow-beings and for fulfilment of ... religious duties.”<sup>84</sup> Finally, the

meaning of *dana* as cultivating a spirit of generosity is manifest in the largesse that marks the speech and actions of the characters.

*Hum Aapke Hain Koun* has been viewed as the Ur text in which pervasive anxieties about the submergence of traditional Indian identity in the global economy have been sublimated through a reinvention of tradition that permits the induction of neoliberal consumption in the economy of the gift. Most readings of the film have commented on its visual erasure of social difference through the two families to claim their citizenship in the emerging consumer culture through prominently displayed global brands. HAHK inaugurated that process of encoding in which commodity-signs were skillfully deployed to signify class, caste, gender, tradition, and modernity. While the entire film is structured by the economy of the gift in which social relations are regulated by gift exchange, the scene that stands out for its symbolic affirmation of the gift society is the one where Siddharth Chaudhary provides a range of consumer items as gifts for his daughter even though the affluence of the family she marries into makes them unnecessary. Although the word dowry is not mentioned, the father's obligation to give gifts, in addition to gifting his daughter (*kanyadan*), is translated as the householder's religious duty that is believed to absolve him of all sins.

The symbolic exchange of commodity forms through rituals cementing filial or romantic love in the family romance reappropriates them in the economy of the gift. *Joota Chupai* or shoestealing, is a fun-filled, quirky North Indian ritual,

in which the bride's sisters hide the shoes of the groom as he sits down to perform the wedding vows around the holy fire and refuse to return them until he provides them what they demand. Accompanied by a song that is couched in the language of commerce, "jooto do/paise lo (Give the shoes and take money)," the fun chase during the *joota chupai* ritual not only serves as a pretext for igniting romantic feelings in the bride's sister and groom's brother, but reabsorbs commodity exchange into the gift economy through the ritual gesture of blessing with which the groom's father pays the bride's sister. As signs are appropriated as ritual items or religious symbols, they are decommodified and acquire new meanings.

The reproduction of images of non-reciprocal giving in *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* situates 20<sup>th</sup> century neoliberalism within the economy of the 5<sup>th</sup> century gift. The scene shows Mrs Raichand (Jaya Bachchan) laying out her boxes of jewellery for her children's *daijaan* [nanny] Saeeda (Farida Jalal) to choose any of them for her soon-to-be-married daughter. When Saeeda protests, her employer insists that she must accept the gift as Nandini has a right to make a gift to her daughter as much as she has to her sons, thus including her children's caregiver in the extended Raichand family. This exchange embeds the two women in the traditional economy of the gift rather than that of economic exchange.<sup>85</sup> Raichand's implicit consent in this act of generosity confirms his commitment to the aristocrat's obligation of giving gifts and looking after the welfare of those who depend on him even though he firmly declines his wife's request to attend the

wedding. In view of Saeeda's economic dependence on the family, Saeeda fully understands that the gift must be non-reciprocal except through the reciprocity of caring and love.<sup>86</sup>

The appearance of the girl from middle class Chandni Chowk in this aristocratic space literally and metaphorically reaffirms the condition of non-reciprocity. When Anjali (Kajol) accidentally breaks a vase, supposedly a priceless heirloom, she innocently offers to compensate for it: "I broke your huge vase but I will be happy to pay for it. Incidentally, how much would it cost? [hamari vajeh se aapka itna vadda gamla toot gaya/vaisai paise dene ko taiyyar hoon./vaise hoga kitne ka ji]." Earlier her amusing apprehensions about the Raichand heir wanting to usurp her father's sweetmeat shop inserts the language of giving and taking into established relations of non-reciprocal giving. Anjali (Kajol) continues to misinterpret Rahul's (Shah Rukh Khan) intentions and warns him that her father would not give him what he has come to seek; Rahul insists that he will have his heart's desire, producing one of the most humourous scenes in the film. However, the pun on giving and taking introduces another traditionally sanctioned form of giving, that is, *kanyadan* (gift of the daughter] through Rahul's interpretation of giving. But it is Anjali's joke about the two Patriarchs—one with a big heart and the other with big bills [ik da vada dil/aur duje de wadde wadde bill]—that opens out the true meaning of giving as unconditional generosity, and that appears to characterize the actions of the majority of the characters in the film. It is this ethic

of generosity that legitimizes the accumulation of wealth in K3G and other Karan Johar or Yash Chopra films.

The binary of commodity and gift is often employed as a metaphor for market and non-market relations. Political economy theorists are of the view that gift giving, an important relationship in pre-capitalist societies, was destroyed by capitalist transformation and economic rationalization.<sup>87</sup> Through their incorporation of global commodity signs into the gift economy of *dana*, the films of the mid-1990s and early 2000s succeed in resisting the instrumental rationality of the market.

## Conclusion

Hindi cinema, despite being marked by visual excess since the 1950s, has traditionally represented pursuit of wealth (*artha*) and pleasure (*kama*) as incompatible with filial duty (*dharma*) and renunciation (*moksha*) in its translation of Hindu *chaturvarga* ethics. Underpinned by the Hindu nationalist ideologies of frugality, thrift, and asceticism, the dramatic conflict in post-independence Hindi cinema was often propelled by the opposition between the protagonist's desire for worldly pleasures and self-gratification and filial and societal responsibilities with the ultimate victory of *dharma*. In post-liberalization Bollywood films from the 1990s, conspicuous consumption and pleasure are sutured to Hindu family values and traditional Hindu core values of *dharma*, *bhoga*, and *dana* that have



conventionally regulated the pursuit of wealth and pleasure. These structuring principles enable Bollywood cinema to mediate and resist the neoliberalist ideology adopted in the economic and political realm on the cultural terrain.

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<sup>1</sup> Vijay Mishra, *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire* (London: Routledge, 2001); Patrick Colm Hogan, *Understanding Indian Movies: Culture, Cognition and Cinematic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> The term Bollywood is used to refer to Hindi popular cinema produced in Bombay. Ashish Rajadhyaksha and M. Madhava Prasad warn against conflating Hindi cinema with Bollywood and use it as a temporal marker to refer to post-liberalization films of the 1990s that demonstrate a different in subject, address and audience and engage with the transition to capitalism. Cf Ashish Rajadhyaksha, "The 'Bollywoodization of the Indian Cinema: Cultural Nationalism in a Global Arena," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 4, 1 (2010), 25-39; Madhava M. Prasad, "This Thing called Bollywood," *Seminar* 525 (2003), accessed May 15, 2020, <http://www.india-seminar.com/2003/525/525%20madhava%20prasad.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Gregory Booth, *Behind the Curtain: Making Music in Mumbai's Film Studios* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Suraj Barjatya (dir), *Hum Aapke Hain Koun* ("Who am I to You," Rajshri Productions, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Karan Johar (dir), *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* ("Sometimes Happy, Sometimes Sad," Dharma Productions, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> The concept of *chaturvarga* or the idea that proper living entails the pursuit of four goods, *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* in moderation emerged during the ancient Indian literary traditions of the *Dharmashastras* and the epics *The Mahabharata* and *The Ramayana*. As Kautilya puts it in his treatise *Arthashastra*, "He may enjoy in an equal degree the three pursuits of life, charity, wealth, and desire, which are inter-dependent upon each other. Any one of these three, when enjoyed to an excess hurts not only the other two, but also itself" (Kautilya, *Arthashastra*, Translated by R. Shamasastri (Bangalore: Government Press, 1915), 17. *Arthashastra* (science of politics) is an ancient Indian treatise on statecraft, economic policy and military strategy written in Sanskrit. Like many Indian texts, it is likely to have been composed by several authors over centuries. But traditionally, it is credited to Kautilya, the teacher of the Emperor Chandragupta Maurya.

<sup>7</sup> Rachel Dwyer, *Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2006).

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<sup>8</sup> Dwyer, *Filming the Gods*; Hogan, *Understanding Indian Movies*; Ronie Parciack, *Popular Hindi Cinema: Aesthetic Formations of the Seen and Unseen* (Routledge, 2016); Diana Dimitrova, "Hinduism and Its Others in Bollywood Film of the 2010," *Journal of Religion & Film* 20, 1 (2016).

<sup>9</sup> M. Madhava Prasad, *The Ideology of the Hindi Film: A Historical Construction* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998); Hogan, *Understanding Indian Movies*; Parciack, *Popular Hindi Cinema*; Dimitrova, "Hinduism and Its Others in Bollywood Film of the 2010."

<sup>10</sup> In *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire*, Vijay Mishra articulated these values to Hindu philosophy by asserting that the conflict in Hindi or Bombay cinema was essentially structured by the overriding principle of *dharma* (2002). Ronie Parciack draws on Daya Krishnan's annulment of the traditional hierarchy between *moksha* and the other three goals of life to describe the "Zara sa jhoom loon" song in *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) as emancipating for the young heroine (2016). Marie Gillespie, *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Mishra, *Bollywood Cinema*.

<sup>11</sup> Rajadhyaksha, "The 'Bollywoodization of the Indian Cinema: Cultural Nationalism in a Global Arena."

<sup>12</sup> Manas Ray, "Diasporic Bollywood," *Travels of Bollywood Cinema from Bombay to L.A.*, ed. Anjali Gera Roy and Chua Beng Huat (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Gregory Booth, *Behind the Curtain*.

<sup>14</sup> Patricia Uberoi, "The Family in Official Discourse." *India International Centre Quarterly* 23, no. 3/4 1996: 134-55; Tejaswini Ganti, *Bollywood: A Guidebook to Popular Hindi Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Dwyer, *Filming the Gods*.

<sup>16</sup> T N. Madan, *Non-Renunciation: Themes and Interpretations of Hindu Culture* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>17</sup> Arvind Rajagopal, *Politics after Television: Hindu Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Public in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> Meheli Sen, "'It's All About Loving Your Parents': Hindutva, Liberalization and Bollywood's New Patriarch" in *Bollywood and Globalization: Indian Popular Cinema, Nation, and Diaspora*, ed. by Rini Bhattacharya Mehta and Rajeshwari Pandharipande (London: Anthem Press, 2010), 145-168.

<sup>19</sup> Arvind Rajagopal, *Politics after Television*, 34.

<sup>20</sup> Rajadhyaksha, "The 'Bollywoodization of the Indian Cinema: Cultural Nationalism in a Global Arena."

<sup>21</sup> Dwyer, *Filming the Gods*, 155.

<sup>22</sup> Dwyer, *Filming the Gods*, 156.

- <sup>23</sup> Prasad, *The Ideology of the Hindi Film*.
- <sup>24</sup> Ravi S. Vasudevan, *Making Meaning of Indian Cinema* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- <sup>25</sup> Rustam Bharucha, "Utopia in Bollywood: Hum Aapke Hain Koun". *EPW* XXX(15): April 15 1995, 801.
- <sup>26</sup> Meheli Sen, "'It's All About Loving Your Parents': Hindutva, Liberalization and Bollywood's New Patriarch."
- <sup>27</sup> Aswin Punthabedkar, "Bollywood in the Indian-American Diaspora: Mediating a Transitive Logic of Cultural Citizenship," *International Journal of Cultural Studies*. Volume 8(2), 2005, 151–173. 152.
- <sup>28</sup> "Dharma". accessed May 15, 2020. [www.thefreedictionary.com/dharma](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/dharma).
- <sup>29</sup> "Dharma". accessed May 15, 2020. <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/dharma>.
- <sup>30</sup> Artha refers to "the pursuit of wealth or material advantage" while *kama* alludes to both "aesthetic and erotic pleasure" (Flood, 1996). accessed May 15, 2020. "Artha" <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/arpa>
- <sup>31</sup> Moksha, in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, is understood as "release from the cycle of rebirth impelled by the law of karma" or "the transcendent state attained as a result of being released from the cycle of rebirth." "Moksha" accessed May 15, 2020. <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/moksha>
- <sup>32</sup> Mishra, *Bollywood Cinema*.
- <sup>33</sup> Heidi Pauwels. *The Goddess as Role Model: Sita and Radha in Scripture and on Screen*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- <sup>34</sup> Patricia Uberoi, "Imagining the Family: An Ethnography of Viewing Hum Apke Hain Koun," *Pleasure and the Nation: The History, Politics and Consumption of Popular Culture in India*, ed. Rachel Dwyer and Christopher Pinney (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 181.
- <sup>35</sup> Gayatri Gopinath, *Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003), 117.
- <sup>36</sup> Mishra, *Bollywood Cinema*.118.
- <sup>37</sup> Ramanand Sagar, *Ramayan*, 1987.
- <sup>38</sup> Pauwells, *The Goddess as Role Model: Sita and Radha in Scripture and on Screen*.
- <sup>39</sup> Jyotika Viridi, *The Cinematic Imagination: Re-reading Romance* (Rutgers: Rutgers University, 2003), 202.

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<sup>40</sup> Punthabedkar, “Bollywood in the Indian-American Diaspora: Mediating a Transitive Logic of Cultural Citizenship,” 152.

<sup>41</sup> “India Shining” was a marketing slogan coined to reflect the general mood of economic optimism in India in 2004 and popularized by the then ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for the 2004 Indian general election.

<sup>42</sup> Kautilya, *Arthashastra*, 12.

<sup>43</sup> Ganti, *Bollywood*, 40.

<sup>44</sup> Kautilya, *Arthashastra*, 12.

<sup>45</sup> *Awaara* (dir Raj Kapoor 1951); *Roti* (dir Manmohan Desai, 1974); *Deewar* (dir Yash Chopra, 1973)

<sup>46</sup> Shohini Ghosh, “Hum Aapke Hain Koun...! Pluralizing Pleasures of Viewership,” *The Social Scientist*, Vol. 28, Numbers 3-4, March-April 2000, 83-90.

<sup>47</sup> Karen Gabriel, “Designing Desire: Gender in Mainstream Bombay Cinema,” *Translating Desire: The Politics of Gender and Culture in India*, ed. Anjana Sharma & Brinda Bose (Delhi: Katha Books, 2002), 34.

<sup>48</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society Myths and Structures* (London: Sage Publications 1998), 44.

<sup>49</sup> Martyn J. Lee, *Consumer Culture Reborn: The Cultural Politics of Consumption* (London: Routledge, 1993), 35.

<sup>50</sup> Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (London: Sage Publications, 2007), 15.

<sup>51</sup> Lee, *Consumer Culture Reborn*, 35.

<sup>52</sup> Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood. *The World of Goods*, New York: Basic Books, 1979.

<sup>53</sup> Fredric Jameson. *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke UP, 1991.

<sup>54</sup> Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, 16.

<sup>55</sup> Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study in the Evolution of Institutions* (New York: Macmillan, 1899).

<sup>56</sup> Bharucha, “Utopia in Bollywood: Hum Aapke Hain Koun;” Rajadhyaksha, “The ‘Bollywoodization of the Indian Cinema: Cultural Nationalism in a Global Arena;” Mazumdar, *Bombay Cinema*; Dwyer, *Filming the Gods*.

<sup>57</sup> Uberoi, “Imagining the Family: An Ethnography of Viewing Hum Apke Hain Koun,” 333.

<sup>58</sup> Ashis Nandy, "Indian Popular Cinema as a Slum's Eye View of Politics," *The Secret Politics of our Desires: Innocence, Culpability and Indian Popular Cinema* (London: Zed, 1999).

<sup>59</sup> Punthabedkar, "Bollywood in the Indian-American Diaspora: Mediating a Transitive Logic of Cultural Citizenship," 157.

<sup>60</sup> Patricia Uberoi, "The Diaspora Comes Home: Disciplining Desire in DDLJ". *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 32, 2 (1988), 305-336.

<sup>61</sup> Anupama Chopra "Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham". *India Today*, 24 December 24 2001, accessed May 15, 2020, <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/society-the-arts/films/story/20011224-film-review-kabhi-khushi-kabhi-gham-starring-amitabh-bachchan-shah-rukh-khan-kajol-776275-2001-12-2>.

<sup>62</sup> Mazumdar, *Bombay Cinema*, 110.

<sup>63</sup> Mazumdar, *Bombay Cinema*, 117.

<sup>64</sup> Mazumdar, *Bombay Cinema*, 117.

<sup>65</sup> Punthabedkar, "Bollywood in the Indian-American Diaspora: Mediating a Transitive Logic of Cultural Citizenship," 156.

<sup>66</sup> Punthabedkar, "Bollywood in the Indian-American Diaspora: Mediating a Transitive Logic of Cultural Citizenship," 157

<sup>67</sup> Mazumdar, *Bombay Cinema*, 122.

<sup>68</sup> Mazumdar, *Bombay Cinema*, 122.

<sup>69</sup> Amit Khanna, quoted in Mazumdar, *Bombay Cinema*, 123.

<sup>70</sup> Gregor Mahele, *Ashtanga Yoga: Practice and Philosophy* (California: New World Library, 2011), 257. "In the Vedic texts, bhoga recurs with the literal meaning of eating, feeding on" and carries "the extended sense of fruition, advantage, pleasure, delight, and sexual enjoyment" (Grazia Marchiano, "An Intercultural Approach to a World Aesthetics," *Intercultural Aesthetics A Worldview Perspective*. Edited by Antoon Van den Braembussche, Heinz Kimmerle, Nicole Note (Springer: 2009), 13.

<sup>71</sup> Arguing that "fetishised representation" in HAHK "focuses, indeed, lingers and luxuriates on the materiality of objects, which are substitutes for desire," Rustom Bharucha considers food as among the most foregrounded of these fetishized objects, which "becomes the most literal, yet resonant sign in Barjatya's world of wealth and health, family and tradition," 802. Bharucha holds that the conspicuous zooming on the global brands produces the illusion that these commodities are easily available, but the consumption of food can also be interpreted in its religious meaning of Bhoga. Bharucha, "Utopia in Bollywood: Hum Aapke Hain Koun."

<sup>72</sup> Kautilya, *Arthashastra*, 17.

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<sup>73</sup> Kautilya, *Arthashastra*, 17.

<sup>74</sup> Arvind Sharma, "The Puruṣārthas: An Axiological Exploration of Hinduism," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 27, 2 (1999), 223-56.

<sup>75</sup> Erica Bornstein, *Disquieting Gifts: Humanitarianism in New Delhi* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 28.

<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, *artha*, as the pursuit of material advantage, is closely tied to the activities of statecraft, which maintains the general social order and prevents anarchy.

<sup>77</sup> Bornstein, *Disquieting Gifts*, 28.

<sup>78</sup> Bornstein, *Disquieting Gifts*, 25.

<sup>79</sup> Zakat is a form of alms-giving regarded as a religious obligation in Islam. It refers to the obligation that an individual has to contribute a certain proportion of the wealth each year to the needy. Ideally, zakat is unconditional and unreciprocated.

<sup>80</sup> Bornstein, *Disquieting Gifts*, 28.

<sup>81</sup> Bornstein, *Disquieting Gifts*, 36.

<sup>82</sup> Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, (Trans) Ian Gunnison, With an Introduction by E. E. Evans-Pritchard (New York: W W Norton & Co Inc., 1967).

<sup>83</sup> Celia Lury, *Consumer Culture* (2nd Edition) (Cambridge: Polity and New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 34.

<sup>84</sup> Bhavabhuti quoted in Balasubramania Iyer, *Hindu Ideals* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969), 49.

<sup>85</sup> The giving and receiving of jewellery by women, the gold bangles that Nandini gifts to her daughter-in-law Anjali and the complete jewellery box that she offers to Saeeda's daughter, has a particular significance since the jewellery owned by a Hindu woman, in contrast to other commodities, is her sole property. However, since Saeeda, a Muslim, does not strictly satisfy the criteria for the donee, who should ideally be a mendicant or a needy person, and due to the affectual bond of gratitude that characterizes Nandini's relationship with her, the gift Nandini offers might be designated *dakshina* or fee.

<sup>86</sup> When Yash Raichand banishes Rahul and Anjali from the Raichand home and Nandini pleads with Saeeda to take care of her son, Saeeda feels obliged to do so as a way of reciprocating Nandini's generous gift.

<sup>87</sup> David Cheal, *The Gift Economy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 5-7.

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*Awaara* (dir Raj Kapoor 1951)

*Deewar* (dir Yash Chopra 1975)

*Dilwale Dulhania le Jayenge* (dir Aditya Chopra 1995)

*Hum Aapke Hain Koun* (dir Sooraj Barjatya 1994)

*Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (dir Karan Johar 2001)

*Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (dir Karan Johar 1998)

*Pardes* (dir Subhash Ghai 1997)

*Ramayan* (dir Ramanand Sagar 1987)

*Roti* (dir Manmohan Desai 1974)