MEDIA, CONSUMPTION AND IDENTITY POLITICS IN SOUTH ASIA: THE NEW GLOBALIZATION*

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Introduction

This paper has a dual focus: it proposes to look at the complex nature of contemporary cultural identities and the role which the visual media industries—in particular advertising and films, in tandem with an increasing consumer culture—play in the construction of these identities[1].

Toward the beginning of the 21st century and a new millennium, it is information and communication networks, rather than physical and geographical boundaries, which have become the new, permeable boundaries of our times. Audiovisual geographies have become disengaged from the symbolic spaces of national culture and reaffiliated on the basis of the more "universal" principles of an international consumer culture. The question I want to deal with in this paper is how this logic unfolds as it encounters and interacts with particular local situations. The question therefore is not one of global and/or flows of media, but how the global and local find expression in specific contexts.[2]

At a more fundamental level, this discussion obviously ties up with the issue of "modernity" as well. I agree with the view that while there is a common "modernity," rooted in the European and American enlightenment, enabled and universalized by imperialism, there are also a great variety of historical trajectories in the world, in which "modernity" is produced and engaged with.[3] In this paper, I attempt a localized entry into the discussion, with India as the point of entry. All national societies create their own ways of playing with modernity,[4] which in "particular become locations, not of pristine cultures, but rather of complex and specific negotiations between history and globality."[5] In this paper, I will try and analyze the specific context of India's particular creation of ways and means of playing with modernity, shaped within its particular conditions and power relations.

More substantively, my focus in this paper is on an urban consumer culture in India within the framework of the abovementioned issues. In regard to focusing on the Indian context: firstly, it is the case I am most familiar with. But more importantly, and my observation here is the same as Arjun Appadurai's, that India can also be viewed as "... a site for the examination of how locality emerges in a globalizing world ... of how global facts take local form ... and the processes through which contemporary India has emerged ... here my expertise and limitations are two sides of the same coin, and I urge (that) India (be seen here) as an optic, and not as a reified social fact or crude nationalist reflex."[6]

The Media Landscape in India Today

The 1990s in India witnessed sweeping transformations in the information and communications landscapes. Once liberalization of the Indian economy started up in 1991, the boom in the media industries became practically unstoppable. A few landmark events in the sphere of the media, which have resulted in an open skies policy that signaled the final break with Indian media policies dating back to the times of Nehruvian socialism, need to be mentioned here. One was the introduction of the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act 1990, which came into effect in September 1997, and which facilitates the creation of an autonomous body, the Prasar Bharati Corporation, to replace the system of government control over Doordarshan (the government television channel) and Akashvani (All-India Radio). Another was the beginning of live broadcasting of the proceedings of the Indian parliament, "wherein the saga of democracy at its best in the making and unmaking of governments was witnessed by millions of people ..."[7] A third was the Broadcasting Bill of 1997, which was designed to

replace the Cable Television Networks (regulation) Act of 1995 in order to facilitate and regulate broadcasting services.

Most importantly, after the general elections in India in October 1999, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee took two measures which clearly demonstrate the importance of the ICT (information and communications technologies) sector for the Indian economy now. First, a task force on telecom reforms, headed by the Finance Minister, Yashwant Sinha, was set up. The PM announced that this "group would look into strengthening of the regulator through amendments in the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act. It will also go into the replacement of the Indian Telegraph Act with a new law that fully reflects the revolutionary convergence of telecom computers, television and electronics... the group will also lay out a clear roadmap for the corporatization of the Department of Telecom Services (DTS), ... the implementation of the Internet Service Provider (ISP) policy on the issue of the gateway policy."[8] Second, the new IT Ministry which was set up in October with the objectives to "focus on the promotion of the Internet and E-commerce, IT-based education, electronics and software exports and all IT-related policy matters,"[9] is now headed by its new minister named on 23 November 1999, Pramod Mahajan.[10]

The media scene in India has changed both quantitatively and qualitatively as a result of these measures. Currently, India numbers more than fifty television channels, a third of which are government-owned, and the rest are owned privately, of Indian and foreign ownership. Both the state-controlled Doordarshan and private channels like ZEE, STAR, Sony, EL, ATN, etc., are vying for viewers, whose numbers have risen from 17 million to over 300 million in less than fifteen years.[11] Indeed, it is said that India's present status now ranks it as "the world's largest television network —Doordarshan — with a large number of private cable and satellite channels,"[12] which now jostle with each other for viewership ratings in the world's largest democracy, which has a population of a billion people as of 15 August 1999.[13] The national channel (Doordarshan) is facing stiff competition from both private as well as regional channels. In Chennai (Madras), Hyderabad and Bangalore, regional channels like Sun, Udaya and Eenadu are racing ahead of DD.[14] Bengali, the world's sixth most widely spoken language, has also come in for attention. In the last six months alone, Zee Alpha Bengali, ATN Bangla and ATN World have started broadcasting. Two Calcutta-based cable channels, CCCN and CTVN, launched a few months ago, are teaming up with RPG Netcom to increase their presence.[15] The Hinduja-owned IndusInd Media and

Communications (IN) have launched daily news bulletins in the regional languages of Gujarati, Marathi and Punjabi; and are in competition with WIN Cable for airing regional news broadcasts.[16]

As for the critical area of viewership preferences, the National Readership Survey of 1999 shows that "the upper and middle income urban audiences prefer ZEE TV and Sony to the entertainment channel DD2 or Metro." Doordarshan's revenues have dipped as a result—from Rs 570 crores in 1996-1997 to Rs 395 crores in 1998-1999. Channels less widely received countrywide, in the meantime, have registered increasing profits: Zee's annual revenue is Rs 325 crores; Sony's is Rs 275 crores, and Sun is touching Rs 170 crores.[17] It is well known that India has the world's largest film industry, based in Mumbai (Bombay) and popularly referred to as Bollywood.

Thus, as far as the entertainment industry goes, India now seems to be indeed working overtime. Ever since the Gulf War, when the country opened its doors to foreign satellite channels, the viewer is spoiled for choice. At the heart of everything—advertising, publicity, entertainment, fashion and films—lies the magic mantra of communication. What with Miss India beauties now regularly lifting the crown at international pageants, which are telecast live all over the world, the country has entered the portals of the worldwide entertainment industry, and an entry point for Asia. Its size is estimated at Rs 15,400 crores,[18] of which the total spent on advertising is estimated at about Rs 8,400 crores.[19]

This paper will look at the implications of such sweeping changes in India over a period of just roughly the last decade in examining the following:

> 1) the contemporary urban Indian scenario: one that has become largely colonized by a media culture, and one that has also become, in a short span of time, caught up in the throes of a consumer culture. Thus, on the one hand, an ubiquitous media culture in India today produces "images, sounds, and spectacles (which) help produce the fabric of everyday life, dominating leisure time, shaping political views and social behavior, and providing the materials out of which people forge their very identities."[20] Targeted toward a large audience, such a pervasive media culture consequently and obviously has to deal with current themes and concerns. It is thus very topical, providing the contours of contemporary social life. At the same time, consumer culture offers a dazzling range and choice of goods and services that induce individuals to participate in a system of commercial gratification. Media and

consumer culture work simultaneously in generating thought and behavior that are in line with existing values, institutions and practices. Yet, consumers/audiences can (and do) resist dominant meanings and messages, creating their own meanings and appropriations of a consumer-driven, media-based culture.

2) how, culturally speaking, it has become difficult to distinguish between "foreign" and "indigenous." What has emerged in these transnational times is an economically plausible hybrid cultural form in which the global and the local are intricately intertwined. This, in turn, leads to a modernized reinvigoration of "traditional" Indian culture. What counts as "local" is in no way fixed, but open to constant change and reinterpretation (partly) as a result of the domestication of cultural goods from the West and the Asia-Pacific region, all of which are readily available now with the proliferation of satellite and cable television in India. Thus, while on the one hand, shifts in technology and market are leading to the emergence of global image industries, on the other hand, significant developments towards local production have been observed ... **the issue is not one of global or local media, but of how global and local are articulated.**[21]

An Urban Consumer Culture

Whether as a viewer or as a buyer, the Indian consumer is in an enviable position today and is being wooed assiduously. Thanks to economic liberalization, which started in 1991, television viewing has become a veritable smorgasbord with nonstop, high-quality programs being beamed through how-many-channels-are-you-getting-now, assuring the viewers they are part of a global lifestyle market. To keep abreast of changes, even news broadcasts in India have revamped their former dull and stodgy image and have adopted the format of CNN and BBC's news broadcasts, becoming more glamorized. Rajdeep Sardesai, political editor, NDTV, says "Infotainment has created niche audiences who love watching news any time of the day ... news channels and programs have created celebrities and mini-celebrities."[22]

It is television serials, however, which account for the highest viewership ratings. This is a sea change from the days when Doordarshan's Sunday morning

broadcasts of the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* had an entire nation tuning into them to the exclusion of everything else.[23]   Given the choice on the small screen these days, it is serials like *Amanat* (Property, more in the sense of heritage), *Ashirwad* (Blessings), *Saans* (Breath), *Basera* (Shelter, thereby implying home), *Saath Saath* (Together) and others which dominate viewing time. Perhaps there is a wry truth in the observation that "today's role models are the Kaamyas, Heenas and Priyas (of television serials) who lead vicarious lives on television, and who have made matronly aunts and professional psychiatrists redundant in one fell swoop."[24]   Increased awareness has led to TV becoming more event-led and it now appears that the reach of television is such that "... those in semi-urban towns are more clued in on what's hip and happening than their metro cousins."[25]   The music industry also plays an important role. Large sums are spent on promos, star nites, music shows and cassette releases. Television channels V, MTV and Music Asia are in demand, selling out tickets for their live performances. Music concerts sponsored by soft drink majors, like Coke and Pepsi, have also jumped on to the music bandwagon and Rahul Dhawan of Coca Cola India says, "We're targeting consumers directly through music shows and cinema. These events generate publicity in and around cinema halls and within films."[26]

The consumer durables and non-durables market has also witnessed many changes. Global lifestyles for the urban middle classes in India have been made possible by the fact that almost all international brands are now available locally. Companies, spurred on by fierce competition, churn out a seemingly neverending range of products that are top quality, priced at affordable levels, and backed by prompt service. Market research data shows that as far as the Indian consumer is concerned, (s)he has never had it so good.

Simply put, liberalization has triggered a revolution, which has translated into new capacities, new technologies and new marketing mantras. The Bajaj group Chairman, Rahul Bajaj says "there is simply no debate. The consumer has benefited with the economy moving from a planned and protected environment to an open economy."[27]   With the entry of international brands into the Indian market, the strategy of the domestic players had to change with competition driving the prices now. The result has been the application of what is referred to in market terminology as the "Quadra-A model: availability, affordability, awareness and acceptance."[28]   Indian products and production processes have been upgraded, new product concepts have come in from breakfast cereals to diapers to cellular phones to suntan lotions, distribution has improved enormously and the entry of more players and products into the market firms have brought

the prices down. The satellite and cable TV revolution has helped the consumer in this sense enormously. In no time, the number of homes with television has grown to 55 million, a figure which is growing at the rate of 25 percent annually. Of these, 20 million are connected to satellite networks. In other words, over 250 million upwardly mobile viewers whose average television viewing time has gone up from two hours a day to nearly four hours now can be bombarded with information and wooed.[29] Very importantly, this carpet bombing of information is no longer aimed at benchmarks of affordability or availability, but at drawing out the latent or suppressed desire for new technology and quality. This transformation is a "paradigm shift": from license permit raj to real entrepreneurship, from shortage to surplus, from rationing to competition. The result is that the Indian consumer has become a "world-class customer" and has "gone from being a helpless customer to becoming the king."[30]

Of course, the question of the consumer being able to afford all these products is also an issue. Due to a happy coincidence, however, eleven good monsoons in a row has led to a growth in national income which, translated, means higher disposable incomes and a growing consumer base. Furthermore, since the agricultural procurement price has gone up, the demand has risen in rural areas too. The rush of multinationals to tap rural markets is an indication of future trends.[31]

Further indication of India's currently flourishing economic boom are definite signs of an overall economic revival, with the so-called "ice" (infotech, communications and entertainment) sectors leading the way by registering the highest growth and profit rates.[32] Indicative of the importance of information and communications revolution in India today is the fact that companies are not just using television slots to advertise their products, but are also using the Internet to sell and, more importantly, to service client demands. Virtually every company interested in maintaining its market share and bottom line is offering web-based service. Cutting edge technology has entered the advertising arena, as old paint on tin structures have given way to eye-catching digital imagery. Metromedia Technologies India Pvt. Ltd., the Indian entity of the US-based $8 billion Metromedia Technologies conglomerate, for instance, is at the forefront of this change in India today. Not just blue chip companies like ITC, Samsung, Titan, Tata Safari and Fiat Uno use them for advertising purposes; but also smaller, and lesser known companies like Tighter Shoes in Calcutta, have now started using them. The Hindi film industry is making the most of Metromedia's digital

technology, with films like *Badshah* (Emperor), *Taal* (Beat) and *Khubsoorat* (Beautiful), already using their services to promote the films.[33]

Coming to the question of consumer profiles, audiences and quantitative-qualitative market research data track these changes. Not so long ago, on my earlier field trips to Bombay in 1995 and '96, when I met with creative departments of advertising agencies, television companies and market research bureaus, they all, at that time, were looking at consumer profiles of the woman as the key decision maker in purchases of items.[34] By 1998, two new, important consumer profiles had been added: the New Upwardly Mobile Urban Family (aka the NUF) in marketing lingo; and the burgeoning children's market, aptly termed "pester power" by the television channel Cartoon Network. As the networked society has been spreading, and so many television channels reach Indian homes today, as global brand names are seeking local customers, the NUF "is emerging as the real microcosm of the marketplace."[36] Cartoon Network's studies indicate that "pester power" currently translates into "41% of India's toy sales (Rs 362 crores), 65% of toothpastes (Rs 642 crores) and 60% of candies (Rs 738 crores)."[36]

Enter the "Globo-Indians"

For Indians, therefore, two things are happening simultaneously: as global media flows become part of the lexicon of contemporary India, more and more films and advertising depict a material culture which plays on the aspirations of a large middle class (numbering over 250 million)[37] "who are caught in the globalization process as they swing between their Indian traditions and a transnational identity more in keeping with 'global' lifestyles."[38]

But such global lifestyles of the urban middle classes in India today are not just "imagined," but very real ones. Large numbers of them have some close family members overseas, either studying, working or in business. A substantial number of Indians also travel abroad at least once a year, whether on vacation or work. Maintenance of ties with family and friends overseas has been strengthened and facilitated by the new information and communication technologies (like e-mail, or being able to watch the same television programs and films) which allow the possibility of time and space to collapse by their sheer speed and, at times, simultaneity of transmission.

Thus, new lifestyle patterns and connected consumption patterns are produced by global flows of information and communication technologies, and

these are localized to suit domestic tastes and preferences where the need arises. In the background of such a consumption-based lifestyle (definitely in urban India, but increasingly penetrating into rural areas as well), it is important to examine how, within the country, global and local media flows have enabled a blurring of lines between "Indian" and "foreign." These have created and helped to continue the expansion of the base of an urban, middle class consumer pyramid in an increasingly market-driven scenario.

What I will try and show in the analysis which follows is how advertisers and filmmakers illustrate, via media texts, "consumerism as lifestyle." Within this framework, I shall also attempt to examine how such representational strategies are coded and appropriated/rejected by consumers in constructing a sense of identity, at the individual and collective levels. Accordingly, I will try to carry out my analysis in examining the media cultural texts of film and advertising, not simply as reflections of dominant ideology or as simple entertainment, but rather as complex artifacts which illuminate their embeddedness in political economy, social relations and the economic and cultural environment in which they are produced, circulated and received.[39]

Two points of obvious importance need to be made here before proceeding further: one, the section of society being looked at for the purposes of this paper are largely the urban middle classes in India. And two, my focus in this paper is more the relationship between the material and the cultural as mediated through the circulation of media artifacts of film and advertising, and less on the ownership of material goods, economic status and inequality. However, the latter point is important in that it shows that a significant proportion of the population cannot afford many of these goods and therefore are forced to remain outside the circle of actual consumption of many items. As Zygmunt Bauman has pointed out, "All commodities have a price-tag attached to them. These tags select the pool of potential customers ... behind the ostensible equality of chances the market promotes and advertises hides the practical inequality of consumers—that is, sharply differentiated degrees of practical freedom of choice."[40] The deprivation of the majority of the Indian population is hardly a fact which needs repeating; and clearly, monetary deprivation places very severe limits on the ability to exercise choices and buy what is so glossily marketed in India today. At the same time, however, inequality in terms of consumption patterns is experienced, as Bauman further argues, "as an oppression and a stimulus at the same time. It generates the painful experiences of deprivation, with ... morbid consequences for self-esteem

... It also triggers off zealous efforts to enhance one's consumer capacity—efforts that secure an unabating demand for market offers."[41]

One of the main cornerstones of advertising is its aspirational aspect. Contemporary advertising depictions nowadays abound, for instance, for Hallmark and Archie's greeting cards to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and, since recently, even Valentine's Day. In a country where the majority of people do not have a birth certificate, celebrations such as these play on the desire of the urban middle classes to belong to a world global culture. At one level, it is not important that the majority of the Indian population cannot afford many of these products. The important thing is that they be addressed by these ads. While economic deprivation limits the possibility of participating in actual consumption, it does not necessarily restrict participation in consumer culture.[42] Usha Bhandarkar, head of the creative department of Lintas Advertising, said to me in an interview, "Just because you cannot buy something, you should not be treated as though you have been stripped of choices, even if they seem implausible and out of reach."[43] This remark just underlines Davidson's (1992: 182-183) research on advertising when he writes, "we may not always admire the types of communication that do address us in this way, much of which is ... insincere ... but a world in which no one ever feels it necessary to cast you in the role of *aspirational consumer* is a grim prospect, just ask the East Europeans."

"Because I'm Worth It": Advertising Imagery

Studies done on advertising imagery in the West show how definitions of femininity have been linked to the development of consumer culture and the broad shifts in the ways in which women were constructed: most notably, a shift from the representation of women in terms of their roles as wife and mother to an increasing emphasis on glamor, sexuality and appearance.[44] A similar pattern can be seen in representations of femininity in Indian advertising. In my previous research, I examined the Indian woman's avatars as homemakers,[45] and an emphasis on glamor and sexuality as well.[46]

My more recent fieldwork shows how the woman, now positioned within NUF discourses, has become even more empowered, and how marketing research is targeting her differently. Significantly for the development of consumer culture, there is a process by which housework has become aestheticized, in the sense that all advertisement for food and household products now incorporate not just

"scientific" and "technical," but also those relating to style, harmony and atmosphere.[47] The young, happy couple who obviously enjoy life with "Spicy nights, weekend getaways, shower together, burnt dinners, are truly, a match made in heaven." They drink "Smart Milk ... flash boiled and sealed in a protective tamper-proof Tetra Pak pack." Sumeet's multi-grind machine underlines not just its technical superiority, but now features a woman who "loves cooking and experimenting with new food—whether it's grinding everyday ingredients or even the more exotic barks and herbs brought back from (her) trips." She is an anthropologist by profession, as the ad (also) makes it clear to us.

The wife and mother who lives for her husband and children is quickly morphing into the partner and friend who is carving out her own consumption and self-fulfillment space.[48] The NUF woman in the household space is now venturing into so-called masculine territory; motoring and banking, for instance. Modi-Revlon is building its brand through a series of profiles of professionally successful women who radiate confidence about their achievements. Maruti Udyog now markets the hugely sold Maruti 800 as the car which balances both home and career with the byline, "Helps you speed between the two worlds." Citibank has its exclusively-for-women credit card. They also care about what Janice Winship famously called "the work of femininity," by working on their appearance, manner and personal identity. The international cosmetic company L'Oreal televises hair care products with the by-now famous sound byte "because I'm worth it" with the likes of Jennifer Aniston and Andie McDowell. The Indian versions are exact replicas of those in the West with our own Miss World title holders, Aishwarya Rai and Diana Hayden doing the honors here. Consider some of the ads for *Femina*, one of the leading women's magazines. Marketed for a while now with the caption that it is "for the woman of substance," *Femina*'s new pitch headlines the magazine with phrases like: "Your space belongs to you because you create it" (1997); "Get real, beauty is not about bra size and perfect bone structure" (1998); and "The best support system you can ask for is a creche, a ma-in-law and a good maid" (1998).

As noted above, advertising now targets two other consumer profiles as well: that of the NUF man and NUF child. The NUF man is now a power-sharer and has a working woman as his wife, with the rider that the children do not suffer.[49] The rising pressures of gender equality, coupled with a genuine shift to the sharing of domestic responsibilities, is "making him move into the shopping zone, and increasingly, the cooking zone."[50] Thus, while he may not be cooking

all meals, BPL Sanyo's advertisement for microwaves has him bringing his wife breakfast in bed on a weekend. In fact, the last bastion of masculine territory may also have been successfully invaded when the NUF man also cleans with Procter and Gamble's Ariel Detergent and communicates the product's ease of use.

The NUF man's most marked characteristic may well be his image of the "new," sensitive, caring man. This persona is well-evolved from images of the authoritarian and distant paternal figure. In today's family-matrixed imagery of him, advertisers are trying to balance his consuming side with a caring side as well. The most well-known example of this may be the advertisement for Digjam Suitings, where the man's corporate half is complemented by his tender, sharing-a-sandwich half with his young daughter. The ad's byline sums it up beautifully when it says, "What you want to be?"

The NUF child and teenager, as psychographically profiled, aspire for "material gains." Reflective of a consumerist society which India is fast becoming, regardless of gender, age, income and location, the majority of teenagers surveyed said, "Money is everything in life."[51]   But with the availability of most global brand names in India now, they no longer feel that "Westernization equals the best. By extension, global brands are not axiomatic preferences ... (furthermore) there is no flouting of the family code (with) a strong attempt to secure the approval of parents and there is an aversion to risk-taking."[52] TNT Cartoon Network's New Generasians 1998 revealed that the mother is the most admired person in their lives, with 31% of the votes.[53] NUF children and teenagers wear Levi's jeans, not as a symbol of rebellion, but as a symbol of individual personality. It is in recognition of the internationalized-but-Indian moorings of the teenager that quintessentially global brands, such as Coca Cola and Pepsi, who are masters at this game, are grafting a local execution unto their global positioning.

Kuch Kuch Toh Hona Hi Tha:[54] Film Imagery

Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, 1998's biggest hit from Mumbai (Bombay), was made by the 26-year-old newcomer Karan Johar. Not only did the film's distributors make about Rs 12 crores in the first five weeks of the film's release, it was speeding towards making box office history by becoming the biggest money grosser since *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (Who Am I for You?).[55] *KKHH* has since become very popular with Indian overseas audiences as well. The film's gross earnings in its first five weeks in the UK was a record Rs 8.5 crore and it also had the distinction

of being the first full-length film to be screened at London's Leicester Square's Empire Theatre—and to a full house. The musical score by Jatin Lalit, and marketed by Sony Music India in its first foray into the world of Hindi film music, made it 1998's biggest seller in the overseas Indian market.[56] The title song was filmed with the three lead players in the Scottish highlands and has arguably been the film's biggest promo. The music finds perfect companionship with the rest of the film's hi-gloss, MTV-style packaging.

Pardes (Foreign country) and Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayengey (The Bravehearted Win the Bride), two major hits of 1997, told the story of the non-resident Indian (NRI) dream. Both films are filmed partly overseas (Pardes in America and DDLJ in England and Europe) and tell of the importance of Indian cultural values when it comes to matrimony. But before that, they underline stories of Indian success overseas. So we are taken through upscale, affluent lifestyles via their projection of villas, fast cars, lavish parties, holidays in Europe: in short, a high consumption, affluent society. More recently, Indian films like Taal (Beat) entered the UK and USA's weekly Top Ten charts.

These films marked the entrance of DKNY, Ralph Lauren, Gap and Tommy Hilfiger into the Indian teenage and Yuppie wardrobes. The "ultimate in cool," they can be found all over Janpath in Delhi and Linking Road in Bombay and New Market in Calcutta. Imitations are also widely available, thereby making it possible (and why not?) for the dhobi's young son also to be sporting a DKNY T-shirt and his daughter the famous trademark headband which one of KKHH's heroines, Kajol, wore and, as India Today famously wrote, rescued from "behnji land."[57] KKHH, largely set on a college campus (unlike any in India) seems straight out of Archie comics' Riverdale High, where the students play basketball, are attended to by cheerleaders, roller blade down locker room hallways, and attach a "Yo" or "Dude" to most sentences. This preppy, American Dream college campus does not, of course, exist anywhere in India, except in director Johar's imagination. But it sells.

However, all sweetness and light doesn't explain the runaway popularity of these films. The socialist romance of the 1960s (Aradhana [Prayer], Kashmir ki Kali [The Flower bud of Kashmir]) gave way to disillusionment in the '70s (Amitabh Bachchan's era with Zanjeer [Chains], Deewar [The Wall/The Divide]) and chaos by the '80s (Mr India). The 1990s cinema echoes post-liberalization India, with the youthful, westernized-yet-Indian-at-heart persona for whom New

York and London are nearby but whose heart is in the right place, being unflinchingly Indian, especially when it comes to the matrimonial stakes. It is this comfortable straddling across two worlds which, I argue, is one of the main underlying causes of success of this genre of films. It lies, in large measure, in their reflection of how, in today's transnational world, "questions of multiple citizenship and multicultural education have gained priority," and therefore "hyphenated identities"[5 8] (van der Veer, 1999:7) become the order of the day. So the hero can drive a sports car in America while singing *"Yeh Dil Diwana ..."* (This Heart is Crazy) and wear a chain spelling out "Cool," but he also goes to a temple every week. In *Pardes*, the innocent heroine from India (conveniently called Ganga, after the sacred river) remains unimpressed by any of the material comforts which life in America has to offer and longs for India. In *DDLJ*, the heroine Kajol may well have been brought up in London but submissively agreed to return to India to marry the boy her father has chosen for her. And in *KKHH*, it is Kajol once again who, in the first half of the film wears only jeans and wins at the basketball games which she plays with the college boys, is "domesticated" into a picture of Indian femininity in the second half of the film, where she wears saris as a teacher at a young students' summer camp, and of course she now loses at the basketball games she plays. The other heroine of *KKHH*, Rani Mukherjee, might well have returned in mini skirts from Oxford and pluck the strings of a guitar, but she can equally well sing "Om Jai Jagdeesh Hare (a devotional hymn)." Taking a layered approach, *Taal* appeals to various strands of opinions. Both in the domestic market, and increasingly in the NRI market as well, Asian mothers feel reassured when heroine Aishwarya Rai (a previous winner of the Miss World title and one of India's leading models) mouths platitudinous line: "If an Indian girl wears western clothes, it does not mean she ceases to have Indian values."

The Body Beautiful: India's Entry to the Global Stage

The one area where concessions are no longer made to older norms of Indian beauty is the body. Up until the 1980s, it was fine to be well-rounded and even voluptuous, and films and advertisements of those years reflect this. But come the 1990s, and Indian cinema and advertising both reflect the arrival of the perfectly sculpted body to meet exacting international standards. It no longer matters that the international blueprint for beauty does not match the time-honored, indigenous one: way taller than the average Indian woman, with "never-ending legs. If international beauty contests are anything to go by, then India is all set to replace Venezuela in producing lean, mean, international beauty queens: after

Rita Faria won the Miss World crown way back in 1966, India produced no beauty contest winners till the '90s." But in the past six years alone, Sushmita Sen became the first Indian ever to be crowned Miss Universe (1994), with model Aishwarya Rai grabbing the Miss World crown in the same year. This was followed by two more Miss World winners, Diana Hayden in 1997 and most recently, Yukta Mookhey in 1999.

In 1995, I interviewed Pradeep Guha and Sathya Saran, part of the *Times of India* group which hosts the Miss India contest, just after Sushmita Sen and Aishwarya Rai's success on the international scene. The *Times* group was responsible for grooming the winners to perfection before dispatching them to compete with the best from the rest of the world. Guha and Saran averred that India is a huge market with enormous potential and that they were well-equipped to produce winners from such a huge crop of young hopefuls. The only two prerequisites were to be reasonably pretty and taller than average. The rest was "positioning and packaging: two factors of utmost importance." The formula which they described to me then had (already) been worked out to a pinnacle of perfection—after an initial screening, personalized food plans, fitness workouts to shape up and lose weight from "trouble spots" like hips and thighs, plastic surgery if necessary, sartorial and physical grooming, etiquette, diction and general knowledge sessions, tossing difficult questions around and coming up with politically correct answers to be delivered while sashaying up that aisle victoriously.[59]

It is obvious that this winning formula has assumed the proportions of an industry by now. The "beauty business" which was "worth around Rs 1,500 crores six years ago, has today grown to over Rs 3,000 crores and can only spiral exponentially."[60] As in any market-driven scenario, it has to do with business and profits, the changing character of the consumer, and the shifting orientation of the market. Market research data back this up by tracking the changing profile of the Indian woman from that of the '80s to the '90s and shows that "the hedonistic woman has at last come of age."[61]

This desirable and narcissistic body is on display not just on beauty queens, but also on film stars, models and television celebrities. Not just that. Fitness centers and beauty parlors have mushroomed everywhere. Smaller Indian towns, which used to have just the beauty parlor now find themselves neighbors of fitness and workout centers. Discourses of physical appearance and body care have shifted

from the private to the public space, and if representations of the changing profile of the woman is bound up with the politics of identity, then media modes of address in India now recognize the intimate relation of appearance with identity in this portrayal.[62]

Academic writings are plentiful on the body as a socially and culturally powerful medium. The point I wish to make in the contemporary Indian context is that today's urban, media-driven, consumer culture mirrors Western ideals of the perfect body—perfectly shaped, toned and exercised. In 1990s India, this has rightly been termed as "the arrival of the professional body; a body acquired, shaped and toned like any other professional skill."[63] Nowhere is this more visible than in the case the successful stars of Hindi cinema today who are all required to be dancers and/or action heroes, in addition to being actors/actresses as well. Stars like Shah Rukh Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Aamir Khan, Karishma Kapoor, Sanjay Dutt, Urmila Matondkar and others are "… all stars for whom the display of the body and body-in-performance is integral to the spectacle."[64] The beauty contest winners become Indian ambassadresses for international brands on the Indian market today. Diana Hayden is the face of L'Oreal; Sushmita Sen for Seiko Epson computers; Rhea Pillai for Piaget; and Aishwarya Rai for Longines. Apparently, on the Longines web page, Rai "shares the honor of place with other international models."[65]

Obviously, top global brands are aware that there is a huge market in India, and even if their volumes are not always large and are priced at the top end of the spectrum, they are around because they know that a market for their product exists. So much so that the Indian beauty business has been termed "a mnc conspiracy!"[66]

Mera joota hai japani … phir bhi dil hai hindustani:[67]
The "Globo-Indian" Revisited

Following Independence in 1947, Nehruvian socialism found expression in a situation wherein Indian "traditions" were counterposed against the imperial West. This was translated not just into India becoming self-sufficient in the heavy industry sectors, but also in clothing, handicrafts, etc. Even if today, crater-less roads are a distant dream in India and uninterrupted power supply an illusion, still, now, the shops are bursting with products for almost every pocket, and newspapers and magazines are replete with success stories of Indians, especially

in the software market. As has been correctly observed, "we can't claim to be an opportunity society but there are more opportunities in today's India than ever before. The shortage economy firmly behind us, India is confronting the novelty of choice, real choice.... India has well and truly moved out of the Third World orbit."[68]

The social horizons of all these representations in contemporary Indian visual media echo Rajiv Gandhi's aspirations of "taking India into the 21st century." Gandhi himself, India's first Prime Minister to have been born after Independence, had the image of being young, handsome and had become famously dubbed by the media as the politician who sported Rayban sunglasses and Nike shoes, along with the mandatory *khadi*, while on the campaign trail. The films and advertisements examined in this paper all blend a glitzy, hi-tech look combining slick techniques with fast editing and catchy musical soundtracks. Luxury houses with state of the art equipment in their kitchens, new models of cars, international brands of cosmetics, iconic images of high rise buildings difficult to distinguish as the Manhattan or Marine Drive skyline in Mumbai—all produce images that position viewers to aspire to such successful lifestyles.

Yet for these to resonate with meaning for Indian audiences—be they in the country or increasingly, outside as well (in particular, in the UK and the USA, which host large numbers of Indians)—films, advertising and television serials have to be presented in a manner suitable both for Indian tastes, as well as for family viewing.[69] In other words, they have to do what Hindi films have been doing forever—tantalizingly mix die-hard conservatism and decently veiled desire—all within the embrace of Indian family values. This is particularly visible in the fact that while a number of global brands are now locally available—whether they be television shows, films, advertising or material goods themselves—most often, these have to be "domesticated" to suit Indian values, tastes and preferences. Thus, in the construction of a "modern" India, it is important to remember that representational strategies have to consider the resistance it might encounter.

Market research shows that Indian consumers exemplify a "hyphenated identity"[70] or a "double-coded identity."[71] By this, I am referring to two things which are happening in tandem with each other: both the producers and consumers (audiences) of the media need to feel that India "has arrived" on the global scene but at the same time, never forgetting their Indian roots. This point is perhaps best illustrated by the following remark made by Ranjiv Aggarwal of Enterprise

Nexus Communications in an interview with me, saying, "while we do try and build in the aspirational factor in advertising, we have to bear in mind social realities too. So in these global times, two things are happening: one, India is taking on Manhattan as it were; two, but at the same time, while the *joota* may be *japani,* the *dil* has to be firmly *hindustani.*"[72]

Let us examine the first point: the factor of needing to feel that India has successfully "arrived" on the global scene. Here, we see (as mentioned in the beginning of the paper), how, culturally speaking, it has become hard to distinguish between the "foreign" and the "indigenous." What has emerged is a hybrid, cultural form in which the global and the local are highly interlinked, leading in turn to a "modernized" invigoration of (urban, middle class) Indian culture. This has been referred to differently, as the "vernacularization of the global,"[73] a process of "hybridization,"[74] or "creolization,"[75] even *"chutneyfication"*[76]—all of which emphasize cultural mixtures. All three indicate a blurring of social and cultural boundaries and, in the case of India, produce a syncretic representation of Indian culture.

One of Zee TV's earliest successes was a popular Chinese serial dubbed into Hindi as *Himgiri ka Veer.* Doordarshan also screened a serial on the life of a young Japanese girl called Oshin. This proved "to be popular family entertainment and, in a true example of cross-cultural hybridization, many little girls have been named Oshin in India."[77] Other popular Indianized versions of Western programs are the *Surf Wheel of Fortune,* modelled along the lines of the American *Wheel of Fortune;* Zee TV's *High Life,* which closely resembles *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* on CNN; serials like *Swabhimaan,* modelled along the lines of *The Bold and the Beautiful,* etc. Indian films are also not far behind if Bombay film director Vijay Anand says "Michael Jackson is the father of all Indian film dances today. There is little originality, but it's great fun."[78]

As far as production goes, whether in films or advertising, while the stories told may not have changed too much, other things have. Filmmaking has been upgraded to match international standards and productions are technically far superior than earlier times. The films discussed in this paper have also set new benchmarks in terms of overseas earnings, thanks to the ever-increasing Indian diaspora. Reportedly, fifteen subtitled prints of *KKHH* released in 1998 in South Africa raked in more than *Titanic* did,[79] and *Taal* entered the US Top Ten. Thanks once again to overseas earnings, foreign locales are partly where these films, and some ads, are shot. Today's film stars and models, like Shah Rukh Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Aamir Khan, Karishma Kapoor, Salman Khan, Aishwarya Rai,

dance and perform like on MTV, wear leather jackets and mini skirts as well as *salwar kurtas* and *saris*. They are practised in the ways of the West and, at the same time, retain their Indian values. And media representations of them are that of straddling the cultural divide by appearing to have become global Indians who offer an appealing model of cultural coherence to Indians of all ages, whether within or outside the country.

It also comes as no great surprise when, for all of the people I spoke with, practically without exception, maximum recall involved those advertisements which proclaimed successful indigenous presence on the international scene. Aishwarya Rai and Diana Hayden selling make up and beauty products were more acceptable as opposed to Claudia Schiffer doing the same. Coke and Pepsi, being old hands at this game by now, use Indian celebrities like cricketer Sachin Tendulkar and filmstar Shah Rukh Khan to endorse their products and use Indian music in their background scores with imagery, such as cricket being played on Indian streets. BPL-Sanyo uses Bombay filmdom's most enduring superstar, Amitabh Bachchan, to trigger a sense of pride and purpose in being Indian in a competitive, open market world. These commercials use Bachchan in front of easily recognizable landmarks in London and Paris, for example, where he dominates the frame, implicitly suggesting a very visible Indian presence on the global scene. The commercial closes with a large symbol of BPL, overlaid on the international landmark with the slogan "Believe in yourself" underneath. As Gupta has argued in this respect, "this conjunction of success, prestige, internationally successful indigenous production with the consumer ... plays up to ... the upwardly mobile classes in India which ... would like to see India as an achiever in the international economic order."[80]

Advertising, in particular, plays upon the aspirations of the middle classes to become part of a "global elite." This is particularly visible among the urban middle class and professional groups who have internalized a transnational identity and are, in some respects, trying to become the "Other" of other global metropoles.[81] This longing finds exemplification in films such as those mentioned above and in television commercials. The "new" Indian man must now keep pace with the "new" man of global advertising who is sensitive and caring. Hence, Digjam Suitings' caring father; the Maruti 2000 father who picks up his son from school and discusses his report card with him (which even a few years ago, was clearly the mother's role); and Raymond Suitings' "Complete Man," who is shown as the caring son, husband, father, friend. Furthermore, in real terms, it is not

likely that most college students wear Gap and Tommy Hilfiger and play basketball with cheerleaders on the sidelines; nor do husbands in the Indian context generally clean up, or bring their wives breakfast in bed on Sunday mornings (more likely, given the social background depicted, there would be household help to do so). But as with most representational imagery, the literal plausibility is not as important as the ideology supplied by it. The message meant to be conveyed is that India has arrived on the global scene. It is no longer just part of the exotic, mystic Orient, but very much part of the modern global family, as defined by the West.

Coming to the second point now, that while there exists this sense of wanting to belong to a global culture, the moorings of life have to be within the wider framework of an "acceptable modernity." This may be a long-winded way of returning, as Ashis Nandy has argued, to "the proposition that in South Asia, and perhaps in much of Asia and Africa, mass culture and popular culture do not fully overlap. Elements of mass culture, disembedded from their global context, can become popular (*e.g.* denims and cola drinks). But that by itself means little; for these elements have to be processed through the local popular culture which provides, exactly for that purpose, an indigenously forged cultural sieve."[82]

In India, this has translated into weaving Indian values into westernized representational strategies, thereby making one that is acceptable in the Indian context, and therefore marketable. This has had two fallouts on the Indian media scene. First is the dialectic of regionalization of transnational television networks. This should be taken into account: the many different regional languages of India is something which spreads across the Indian media scape now. September 1999 witnessed the takeover of Rupert Murdoch's shares in the STAR TV network by the immensely popular regional languages channel ZEE TV. Channels which are just English language channels—be those the likes of CNN, BBC, or even STAR's earlier channels—consistently number less viewership than those such as ZEE TV (reportedly the most successful and also the most popular channel), Sony, EL TV, etc. The popularity of using, indeed the need to use local languages; or when using Hindi, to use a colloquial Hindi rather than the Sanskritized version which Doordarshan prefers is borne out by the simple fact of viewership ratings. This is what made a channel like NDTV run by Prannoy Roy, one of India's best known television personalities, to switch to what is referred to as "Hinglish" on the NDTV news broadcasts in Hindi.[83] Even computer courses are offered in the vernacular now. Aptech has led this campaign, followed by NIIT and Tata IBM Ltd.

This shows the importance of Hindi (the national language) and other regional language programming on television, as well as increasingly, even on

web sites. In addition, with significant multilingual viewership all over India, large numbers of programs and advertising are now multilingual[84] and tailored to suit different cultural specificities. The result, as Agrawal points out, is that "viewers have begun to talk about cultural specificities in terms of food habits, clothing, patterns of marriage and a host of other differences, leading to a better understanding of a phenomenon earlier limited to urban elites in a few metropolitan cities. This viewership pattern has now penetrated into the remotest rural parts of India."[85]

Second, representations of being "modern" are contained within an "Indian" framework, and "domesticated" to suit Indian cultural specificities and preferences. The woman may wear leotards and the body may no longer be the picture of broad-hipped fertility, now whittled down to perfect 10s of global specifications of beauty. But she still fits into the system. Karishma Kapoor may wear designer togs but she tears up divorce papers in *Raja Hindustani* (King Indian); and Mahima Chowdhury may have reached Las Vegas but refuses to sleep with fiance Apurva Agnihotri till they are married in *Pardes;* Shah Rukh Khan sleeps on the same bed with Kajol in *DDLJ* without actually 'sleeping' with her. Which is why, even when advertisers address what I refer to as the "woman-as-self" persona, they have to tie in the imagery of the woman (and increasingly so nowadays) as someone who has a career of her own or cares about personal grooming and appearance, but never to the exclusion of being a caring wife, mother and daughter-in-law. Which is why even *Femina*'s "woman of substance" despite being "worth it" and driving the Maruti 800 to "help her speed between two worlds," regards "a creche, a ma-in-law, and a good maid as the best support systems one can have." Which is why if, in the first half of *KKHH* (and most other films), the heroine wears jeans and headbands and wins at basketball with the boys, by the second half she is domesticated into a picture "acceptable" of Indian femininity. Which is why, despite living the NRI dream, when one gets married, one returns "home" to one's roots, to seek one's spouse. That is why Subhash Ghai's *Taal* has taken the approach of appealing to all sections of opinion: it winks at a younger generation with skin-tight lycra ensembles and a London-educated hero, while at the same time the heroine is Indian at heart despite her western clothes. Perhaps the last word on this comes from the profitable beauty business (mentioned above) which now follows exacting international standards in the search for the perfect body. Families of winners of prestigious beauty contests are on record saying, "Indian women...are modernizing themselves without uprooting from traditional Indian values. The Indian woman of today represents a healthy blend of the modern and the traditional."[86]

Conclusion

One central issue in which a recognition of the complex and multilayered intermingling of global and local media flows takes place is, of course, the issue of cultural identity. In this paper, I have not separately examined specific sources for the construction of cultural identity—for example, those based on gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion, politics, etc. That is outside the purview of my brief in this paper. What I have looked at in these transnational times is the construction of a pan-Indian kind of identity. In this regard, Ashis Nandy has remarked, "exposed to trans-cultural, centralized messages ... now when we talk of India ... there is a significant proportion who do constitute a pan-Indian community. There is something close to the average, not only statistically but right there to see and meet."[87]

The effects of transnational media flows can thus be characterized by the term "cultural synchronization,"[88] and it poses a different kind of problem as to the politics of identity. The Mexican theorist Garcia Canclini formulated the problem as follows: "To struggle to make oneself independent of a colonial power in a head-on combat with a geographically defined power is very different from struggling for one's own identity inside a transnational system, which is diffuse, complexly interrelated and interpenetrated."[89]

In other words, in an increasingly integrated system of media flows going both inward and outward—and in so doing closely interact—identities cannot be studied in isolationist terms. They have to be defined against something else. In Kevin Robins' pithy formulation, "what would an identity mean in isolation? Isn't it only through others that we become aware of who we are and what we stand for?... In this way, we can take up the question of dynamism versus closure in identity."[90]

The nexus of economic liberalization, an increasing urban consumer culture and a widespread media culture have created a dynamic process of openings and overlappings. As visual images move through various networks—propelled by producers and audiences alike—new forms and constructions of cultural identities take place. If there is one distinguishing feature of these times, it is just that there is now an increasing multiplicity of choices available to construct one's identity.

"In a transnational world typified by global circulation of images and sounds, goods and peoples, media spectatorship impacts complexly on national

identity, communal belonging and political affiliations."[91]   In this paper, I have tried to extend this argument further in addressing a moment in India's history, wherein identities "are not only the given of where one comes from but also the political identification of where one is trying to go."[92]

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Notes

[1] I am grateful to Professor Peter van der Veer for pointing out key issues in the conceptualization of this paper.

[2] cf.. David Morley and Kevin Robins, *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries.* London & New York: Routledge, 1995 pp. 1-2.

[3] Peter van der Veer, "The Global History of 'Modernity,'" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient (JESHO)*, 41(3):285-194.

[4] See, for example, James T. Siegel, *Solo in the New Order: Language and Hierarchy in an Indonesian City,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986; Marilyn Ivy, "Tradition and Difference in the Japanese Mass Media," *Public Culture*, 1(1): 1988, 21-29; James Holston, *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989; Masao Miyoshi and Harry Harootunian (eds.), *Postmodernism and Japan,* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1989; Armand Mattelart and Michele Mattelart, *The Carnival of Images: Brazilian Television Fiction,* transl. David Buxton, New York, Wesport, Connecticut & London: Bergin and Garvey, 1990; Tejaswini Niranjana, Vivek Dhareshwar and P. Sudhir (eds.), *Interrogating Modernity: Culture and Colonialism in India,* Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1993.

[5] Carol Breckenridge (ed.), *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995, p. 16.

[6] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 18.

[7] *Doordarshan,* Audience Research Unit: Directorate General Doordarshan: New Delhi, 1997.

[8] *IT Space,* 23 November 1999.

[9] *Computers Today,* 1-15 November 1999.

[10] *IT Space,* 23 November 1999.

[11] *Zee: Always Better Always Ahead,* n.d., Zee: Mumbai.

[12] B.C.Agrawal, "The Meaning of Hinglishness: Liberalisation and Globalisation in Indian Broadcasting," in Kevin Robins (ed.), *Programming for People: From Cultural Rights to Cultural Responsibilities,* Italy: RAI, 1997, p. 145.

[13] *H-Asia Discussion List on the Internet,* August 1999.

[14] *Business Standard Weekend Section,* 22-28 January 2000.

[15] *Business Standard,* Weekly Update on Marketing and Advertising, 7 December 1999.

[16] *Business Standard,* Weekly Update on Marketing and Advertising, 28 October 1999.

[17] *Business Standard Weekend Section,* 22-28 January 2000. Rs 1 crore is approximately equal to US$229,885 or a little less than a quarter of a million dollars, which is $250,000.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] Based on figures provided by Advertising & Marketing (A&M), in "Weekly Update on Marketing and Advertising," *Business Standard,* January 4, 2000.

[20] Douglas Kellner, *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics Between the Modern and the Postmodern,* London & New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 1.

[21]David Morley and Kevin Robins, 1995, *Spaces of Identity, op. cit.* pp. 1-2 (emphasis mine).

[22]*Business Standard Weekend Section,* 22-28 January 2000.

[23]For studies on the epics, see for example, David Lutgendorf 1990 "Ramayan: The Video," *Drama Review,* 34(2): 1990, 127-76; and Purnima Mankekar, "Television Tales and a Woman's Rage: a Nationalist Recasting of Draupadi's 'Disrobing,'" *Public Culture,* 5(3): 1993, 469-91.

[24]Ruby Dash, "Fusion or Confusion?" *Business Standard Weekend Section,* 22-28 January, 2000.

[25]*Ibid.*

[26]*Ibid.*

[27]"Shoppers' Bonanza," *India Today,* 1 November 1999.

[28]*Ibid.*

[29]*Ibid.*

[30]Interviews with Mritunjay Athreya, management specialist and Jagdeep Kapoor, Managing Director, Samsika Marketing Consultants, cited in *India Today,* 1 November 1999.

[31]*Ibid.*

[32]*India Today,* 17 January 2000.

[33]"Weekly Update on Marketing and Advertising," *Business Standard,* 4 January 2000.

[34]*P:SNAP Polls,* 1993, repeated in 1997, Pathfinders: India.

[35]*Business Today,* 1999.

[36]*Outlook India,* 1999.

[37]H-ASIA Discussion List on the *Internet,* August 1999

[38]Shoma Munshi, IDPAD conference paper, "Mera joota hai japani ... phir bhi dil hai hindustani": Visual Media, Consumer Culture and Identity Politics in India Today. Unpublished conference paper, September 1999, Hyderabad: India. See also Shoma Munshi, "Wife/Mother/Daughter-in-Law: Multiple Avatars of Homemaker in 1990s Indian Advertising," *Media, Culture & Society,* 20(4) 1999, pp. 573-591.

[39]Cf. Kellner, *op. cit.*

[40]Zygmunt Bauman, *Thinking Sociologically,* Oxford: Blackwell, 1990, p. 211.

[41]*Ibid.*

[42]Cf. Celia Lury, *Consumer Culture,* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996.

[43]Personal interview, 1995.

[44]See, for example, Janice Winship, *Inside Women's Magazines,* London: Pandora, 1987; R Dowling, "Femininity, Place and Commodities: A Retail Case Study," *Antipode,* 25 (4), 1993, 295-319; Myra MacDonald, *Representing Women: Myths of Femininity in the Popular Media,* London: Edward Arnold, 1995; Celia Lury, 1996, *op. cit.*

[45]Shoma Munshi, 1998, *op. cit.*

[46]Shoma Munshi, "Women of Substance": Commodification and Fetishization in Contemporary Advertising within the Indian 'Urbanscape,'" *Social Semiotics,* 7(1), 1997, 37-53.

[47]A. Forty, *Objects of Desire,* London: Thames and Hudson, 1986; A. Partington, "Melodrama's Gendered Audience," in S. Franklin, C. Lury and J. Stacey (eds.), *Off-Center: Feminism and Cultural Studies,* London: Harper Collins, 1991, 49-68.

[48]*P:SNAP Polls 1997,* Pathfinders: India.

[49]*Ibid.*

[50]*Business Today,* 1999.

[51]*ORG-MARG Youth Track,* 1996.

[52]*Youth P:SNAP Polls,* 197.

[53]Cited in *Business Today,* 1999.

[54]This is a slight play on the title of one of Bombay cinema's biggest hits, *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (A Little Something Happens). The film is better known by its acronym, KKHH. "Kuch kuch toh hona hi tha" would translate as "a little something had to happen."

[55]*India Today,* 1998.

[56]*Ibid.*

[57]*Ibid.* This is a colloquial college lingo in India. "Behnji" refers to a style of dressing which is not perceived as "modern." In my college days in India, the term was "BTM" (behnji-turned-mod).

[58]Peter van der Veer, "ICTs: The Political Dimension," unpublished conference paper, IDPAD, September 1999, Hyderabad: India.

[59]Personal interviews with Pradeep Guha and Sathya Saran, 1995. For a more detailed description of my interviews with them and other media organizations in Bombay, see Shoma Munshi, *Social Semiotics,* 1997, *op. cit.*

[60]*Outlook India,* 19 December 1999.

[61]*P:SNAP Polls, op. cit.*

[62]cf. Janet Lee, "Care to Join Me in an Upwardly Mobile Tango? Postmodernism and the New Woman," in Lorraine Gamman and Margaret Marshment (eds.), *The Female Gaze: Women as Viewers of Popular Culture,* London: Women's Press, 1988.

[63]Shohini Ghosh, "Local and Transnational Imaginary: Cultural Production in the Age of Satellite Broadcasting in India," unpublished conference paper, IDPAD, September 1999, Hyderabad: India, p. 8.

[64]*Ibid.*

[65]*Outlook India,* 19 December 2000.

[66]*Ibid.* "MNC" is the abbreviation of *Multinational Corporation.*

[67]These lines are from a famous Hindi film song of the 1950s, which goes (approximately translated) as follows: "my shoes are from Japan, the trousers from England, the cap on my head Russian, yet my heart is Indian."

[68]Swapan Dasgupta, "Enter the Globo Indian," *India Today,* 13 December, 1999.

[69]Samir Nair, Senior Vice-President (programming) of STAR TV in India, is on record saying that in India, "we are still a one TV set household ... which means everything is viewed by the family," cited in *Business Standard Weekend Section,* 22-28 January 2000.

[70]van der Veer, *op. cit.*

[71]Kellner, *op. cit.* p. 242.

[72]Personal intrview, 1995.

[73]Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large, op. cit., 1997, p. 112.*

[74]Marie Gillespie, *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change,* London & New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 4.

[75]Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places,* New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 65. See also James Lull, *Media, Communication, Culture: A Global Approach,* Oxford, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995, p. 149, here he refers to the phenomena of "transculturation, indigenization and hybridization"; and Ien Ang, *Living Room Wars: Rethinking Media Audiences for a Postmodern World,* London & New York: Routledge, 1996, especially pp. 154-56.

[76]Salman Rushdie, interviewed in *India Today,* 14 July 1997. Hannerz, 1996, *op. cit.,* refers to Rushdie as producing the prototype of "creole writing."

[77]Nilanjana Gupta, *Switching Channels: Ideology of Television in India,* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 69.

[78]Cited in Gupta, 1998, p. 73.

[79]*India Today,* 31 January 2000.

[80]Gupta, 1998, *op. cit.,* p. 102.

[81]Cf. *Ibid.*

[82]Ashis Nandy (ed.), *The Secret Politics of our Desires: Innocence, Culpability and Indian Popular Cinema,* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 13.

[83]For a fuller discussion of this point, see Binod Agrawal, *op. cit.*

[84]This point has also been discussed at the beginning of this paper.

[85]Agrawal, 1997, *op. cit.,* p. 149.

[86]*The Times of India,* 13 December 1999, interview with the mother of Yukta Mookhey, the winner of the Miss World title in 1999.

[87]From an interview for a BBC Open University Documentary, *Images Over India,* produced in May 1996.

[88]Cees Hamelink, *Cultural Autonomy in Global Communications,* New York: Longman, 1983.

[89]Quoted in Martin-Barbero, "Communication from Culture: The Crisis of the National and the Emergence of the Popular," *Media, Culture and Society,* 10 (4):447-65, 1988, p. 452.

[90]Kevin Robins, "Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe," in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London: Sage, 1996, pp. 61-86, p. 79.

[91]Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media,* Routledge: London and New York, 1994, pp. 6-7.

[92]Ella Shohat, "Post-Third Worldist Culture: Gender, Nation and the Cinema," in MJ Alexander and CT Mohanty (eds.), *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures,* Routledge: New York & London, 1997, p. 209.