

## The idea of nation, cultural spaces & gender in diasporic Bollywood cinema

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### Abstract

As the idea of nation is concern, in diaspora, it is a matter of consideration in shaping *how* the 'home' is remembered in Hindi films which reconfigures memory and nostalgia in diasporic world. Bollywood has evolved of its construction of the diaspora since its original conceptions of a strict dichotomy between East and West. In the beginning, anti-colonial notions of nationality projected themselves onto the female figure and prevented the diasporic films from being true texts of transnationalism. However, as Bollywood has evolved in modern times, newer films have treated the diaspora as an acceptable space- and traditional notions of morality and sexuality attached to anti-colonial nationalism have been abandoned in the these spaces. Hindi films constitute an element of public culture for the Indian diaspora and to some extent by the diaspora from the Indian sub-continent. It can be seen as a counter-flow of media products from a developing country to the more developed West. And this counter-flow of Hindi films from the homeland to the diaspora sustain itself using the same systemic structures of globalization that operate in cultural -flow from the West to a developing country. Over the years this genre also confines feminine sexuality within transnational cultural spaces in shaping of the idea of nation.

**Keywords:** Re-negotiation, socio-cultural, Indianness, identity, ethnic, transnationalism, cultural authenticity, female sexuality

### 1. Introduction

Hindi cinema especially Bollywood films, as a dominant storytelling institution in post-independence India, and possessed tremendous cultural and emotional value for expatriate Indians who grew up watching Bollywood films. Over the years, the act of viewing, Hindi films' ability is to permeate various social rituals, and interactions within the socio-cultural networks. As a result, this viewing practices not only created, but also have helped sustain expatriate Indians' desire to perform their Indian-ness and remain, at least culturally residents of India, which point to 'an everyday, concretized instance of maintaining temporal continuities with the imagined homeland' (Ram, 156).

The first major Bollywood film involving an NRI figure was *Purab Aur Paschim* (1970), which portrayed the NRI as morally depraved and in need of a "Mother India" to reinstate him with his Hindustani values. (Brosius, 353) This was the pattern of depiction that older films involving NRI characters followed: the NRI was either the Indian who had traveled west and grown rich, but sought the values and love of the homeland, or the NRI who had disowned the homeland and become depraved by Western society. (Desi, 24) Distinct changes in the functioning of the global economy have changed the East/West dichotomy since the production of these films, however. Beginning in the early 1990s, India saw the beginnings of the effects of economic globalization, the result of liberalization that began in the 1970s. (Oza, 1071).

This new NRI is an identity undergoing a constant process of re-negotiation, and much of this renegotiation occurs within the filmic space. (Mishra, 238) Physical place and space are important in constructing identity, but in the absence of a state to propagate an identity across a physical space, the cultural element of the state, the "nation" must de-couple from the state; the political alone can no longer unite a scattered nation. (Bhattacharjee, 34-5) Instead, "cultural spheres" of ethnicity

become the foundation for identity and the texts through which we can examine ethnography. (Appadurai, 54) In true Deleuzian fashion, the reality of identity becomes changeable and the site for this constant mutation is the media of diaspora. (Karim, 9).

However, it is a matter of consideration that Bombay-based Hindi cinema's output in its entirety does not reach and/or succeed in markets abroad. It is a specific kind of cinema that has re-emerged the NRI figure since the mid-1990s, 'brought the NRI decisively into the center of the picture as a more stable figure of Indian identity than anything that can be found indigenously' (Prasad, 2003) for example, films such as *DDLJ*, *Pardes*, *Kaho Na Pyar Hai* and *K3G*. Rajadhyaksha, in his recent article, describes shifts within Hindi cinema in relation to a larger conjuncture of economic, political and socio-cultural transitions in India since the early 1990s. He argues that this cinema 'refers to a reasonably specific narrative and a mode of presentation... couched in the post-information technology claims that Indian economy has been making in the past few years of global competitiveness' (28). It is this cinema that 'exists for, and prominently caters to, a diasporic audience of Indians', that can be usefully termed 'Bollywood' (29) Rajadhyaksha further clears that to understand 'Bollywoodization' as a transition that a segment of the film industry has gone through as it attempts to articulate a new sense of Indianness, 'a freer form of civilizational belonging explicitly delinked from the political rights of citizenship' (32) Rajadhyaksha not only discusses the Bollywoodization historicizes transitions in the relationship between Hindi cinema, the State, and audience communities but also raises the question of how cinema has come to occupy its crucial presence as a "cultural unifier" and a "'keeper of the flame'" (34) for the diasporic world. Films such as *K3G* enabled the creation of 'talking spaces' (Gillespie, 184) for families to reflect on their experiences and, in doing so, helped

them articulate their version of Indian-ness and how it intersected with different textual and extra textual elements of popular Hindi cinema. Another film *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* emerged as the site wherein questions of cultural identity are posed, rehearsed and gradually reworked where Julury observes that audience engagement with Hindi cinema is 'primarily a relational one, articulated in and around the notion of the family'(244).

The establishment of cinema theatres and multiplexes that screen Indian films in several cities in the US, engagement with the cultural ecology of Hindi films has become, simultaneously, highly diffuse and intense. Watching films seems 'an everyday, concretized instance of maintaining temporal continuities with the imagined homeland'. (Ram, 156).

In this respect, *Kabhi Kushi Kabhi Gham* can be situated alongside a series of films that 'reinvent tradition in easily recognizable terms to suit the exigencies of capitalist production' (Juluri, 236). *Kabhi Kushi Kabhi Gham* reconfigures the insertion of lower-class space *Chandni Chowk* into a commodified sphere of ethnic authenticity. In respect of the changes in colors, background music, dialect dressing sense lifestyle and mannerisms, the use of 'ethnic' clothes and the presence of street performers all work to mark differences between the upper-class residence of the Raichand family and *Chandni Chowk*, the lower-class neighbourhood in which Kajol as Anjali lives. Critics have reviewed bitterly of *K3G* in many newspapers, magazines and several websites. Pointing out to the extravagant lifestyles that the film's protagonists lead, critics raised question, 'is this really India?' One critic commented:

It is a chilling film. Chilling because here is India, Hinduism, and Jana Gana Mana made into glossy laughable commodities to be purchased for a high price. The film is designed to make NRIs thankful that the Old Country is as beautiful, as backward, and as resoundingly traditional as he wants it to be. (Ghose, 2001)

The visual elements in *K3G* enables the performance of identity in the diaspora is not inherently problematic. In this respect, first, the film signals that first generation Indian immigrants have in imaging an India that is no longer associated solely with poverty and corruption, but rather an India that is entering an international economic order. As Rajagopal points out, NRIs are acutely conscious of their position as 'an apotheosis of the Indian middle class, exemplifying what "Indians" could achieve if they were not hampered by an underdeveloped society and an inefficient government' (241). Second, the film *K3G*, through its visual economy can be considered as an important source of culture capital for those NRI families, belong in a particular class and status, live and work in countries such as the US.

Third, among the other NRI-themed films such as *DDLJ*, *LONDON* and many more, *K3G* depicted the conflicts surrounding the institution of marriage in a patriarchal family. Mishra argues that Hindi film consumption in the diaspora speaks to first generation Indians desperately trying to sustain a value system and inculcate the same in their children that sets them apart from mainstream society in countries like the US and UK. He says 'These differences are generally about tradition, continuity, family, and often, the importance given to arranged marriages' (236-7). *K3G* and *Pardes* also depict the august patriarchy and the conflict in the institution of

marriage. Several scenes of both the films clearly establish Mr. Raichand (Amithabh Bachchan) and Kishorilal's (Amrish Puri) position as the uncontested head of their families. In *K3G*, it clearly shows when Amitabh Bachchan delivers the lines before his son Rahul Raichand (Sharukh Khan) 'the name and respect has been given to us by our ancestors, to honour and respect them is our foremost duty. And I will never tolerate an ordinary girl becoming a hurdle. You didn't think even once about the background of the girl, her status, her upbringing. You didn't give thought to whether the girl will be able to understand our culture and our traditions (*sanskar aur sanskriti*).

Will the girl ever understand our rituals, our rites? (riti, riwaz)  
Will the girl understand our ethics and principles?

Will she adhere to the values of our family?

How did you even dare to think that she could be a part of our family?' (Amithabh Bachchan)

The argument is that this scene speaks to first generation Indian parents' fears that their son or daughter may marry a non-Indian who, in all likelihood, will not possess the cultural capital/heritage to participate in and ensure the continuance of the 'India' that they have so effortfully constructed over the decades. It denotes that this kind of rehearsal accompanied by a gradual reworking of ideas and values concerning cultural institutions such as marriage determines 'Indianness'. In *K3G* when narrative moves to London, the role that married women are expected to play in an expatriate context and rendered in no uncertain terms. In London, Anjali (Kajol) as a faithful wife and as a caring mother whose only purpose is to *be* Indian in foreignland, and ensuring that the son is well schooled in Indian traditions. In order to feel 'home' she performs an elaborate puja at the crack of dawn, wears saris and even salwar suits, prepares and serves breakfast for her husband and son. As she mills around, starts singing a patriotic Hindi film song, uses nasty words at their white English neighbor in Hindi right in front of her face; scolds her son for not being attached to India, shows her sentiments for her motherland. Turning to her husband, she says: 'He's already half English, don't complain to me if he becomes completely English'.

However, Appadurai in his overarching argument that Diasporas are cultural spaces in which transnationalism can arise. This argument may be simply considered to account for the interactions between Bollywood and the diaspora. Where Jigna Desai's interpretation is important, when he interprets cultural globalization is more focused on the politics of the Indian nation and therefore a preferable framework for understanding Bollywood (Appadurai, 45). His argument is focused that critiques and studies of post-colonial nations are characterized by a tension between creating identity through anti-colonial or post-colonial lenses; Furthermore, he defends a post-colonial critique as preferable because it allows for a deconstruction of colonial Eurocentric logic, and abandons the "binary logic... of elite nationalisms" (Desai, 10). Such type of logic can be seen in Bollywood's early construction of the diaspora, and this anti-colonialism prevents the Indian diaspora from truly engaging or creating new cultural spaces in general. In this respect, the construction of South Asian diasporic identity is not based on tangible elements of shared histories; it is essential conceptions of "some shared South Asianness... based on an Orientalist and anti-colonial

nationalist formulation of Indian or South Asian difference” (Desai, 19). By Bollywood, the manifestation of essentialism is over-fetishization of certain things deemed “Indian” or “Indian-ness”- include notions of tradition, the value of the physically of the nation-state and familial loyalty. These elements considers/supposed as “Indian culture” projects itself onto gender in a distinct way, and in the context of Bollywood film, shackles South Asian diasporic females to such notions. The question arises here whether cinematic representations of the female NRI figure have allowed Bollywood to evolve into a transnational cultural space, by reaching a post-national, post-colonial discourse, or rather if they simply re-inscribe notions of an essential and simultaneously patriarchal Indian society.

In this regard, it is very significant before dealing to deconstruct representations of the female NRI in the diaspora, it is very significant rather necessary to outline basic characteristics of Bollywood’s historical representation of women. Shoma Chatterji identifies four characteristics of what she considers to be the central characteristics of the traditional cinematic woman. She considers, ‘First and most importantly comes the value of female chastity; secondly, if the woman suffers, it must serve a metaphorical purpose to create a resultant new reality; third, her sons must fight for her, and in the absence of sons, characters who play surrogate sons must fight for her; lastly, a fight for justice usually translates to a defense of her honor and chastity (29-30). Mythological conceptions of the woman also inform Bollywood’s representation of “ideal woman” figures; these conceptions extend to interpretations of not only benign figures like Sita, Ram’s obedient and docile wife, but also the powerful (Kali; Shakti). These two extremes in Hindu notions of femininity create an uncomfortable dichotomy for women: since women are either passive or excessively powerful, meaning they have to either be worshiped or tamed (Rayaprol, 123-125).

Stuart Hall believes that cultural identity through Bollywood is important to understand the feminine as well. According to Stuart Hall, identity is the product of multiple representations, each of which are formed by unique contexts, and that these cultural identities can be thought of in two distinct ways: first, that there is “one true self” residing as a common spirit among all members of the same ethnicity, and secondly, that cultural identity is not a matter of “are” but rather of “becoming”. (Harindranath, 44-5)

However, Bollywood’s inherent essentialism, particularly in the context of not only South Asian identity but especially South Asian *female* identity, has traditionally placed it in the first camp. Such an essentialist interpretation of South Asian femininity imagines the ideal woman adorned in a sari, her forehead dotted with a red bindi and hair pulled back in a plait- beautiful but sexually constrained (Chatterji, 65). This repressed sexuality is the crux on which constructions of women in Indian cinema operate. Violation of the woman’s chastity is a violation of her honor- which implicates the male in control of her, her husband or father, rather than the woman herself (Chatterji, 136).

There are many examples like Deepa Mehta’s *Fire*, Mira Nair’s *Mississippi Masala* and Gurinder Chadha’s *Bend it like Beckham* and *Bhaji on the beach* which have pointed out many women’s experience in the diaspora and compared the reality of these women’s lives to their filmic counterparts; because the subaltern is given no place to speak in Bollywood

cinema, the true voice of the diasporic woman must, and has come, from external sources. Some scholars have noted that providing a voice to women in cinema can rupture the dominant narrative of patriarchy (Datta, 71-82). But, here in this regard it must be understood that the voice Bollywood gives to the diasporic woman is to construct of so-called “essential” Indian identity only.

The true female NRI creates her own ideas of womanhood through “private spaces” and ultimately abandons the nation-state’s definition of Indian femininity (Bhattacharjee, 38-40). However, Bollywood’s traditional representation of women relies on depictions of diasporic women in marriages, as opposed to such independent NRI women. Marriage in Indian culture is traditionally disempowering for the women, particularly in the case of arranged marriages (Palriwala, vi-ix). For most Indian women it means leaving home to serve a new family- but with the advent of migration it goes even further to imply migrating across continents for a new husband in hope of a new life (Palriwala, ix).

Bollywood traditionally prefers to represent the diasporic women: one who travels to follow and subordinate to her husband rather than one who travels independently, but now in many recent films have allowed of female autonomy in the diaspora. As for as “essentialism” is concern *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) and *Pardes* (1997) may consider as the foundational text for modern diasporic films in the 1990s. Though the film is a clear departure from original structural classifications of the NRI as either longing for the homeland or morally depraved. The film is totally concerned about the translation of values across oceans, that though Raj (Shah Rukh Khan) has adopted some “immoral” Western traits like selling beer to Baldev (Amrish Puri), Simran’s (Kajol) father. He flirts with Simran but assures that he remains morally “Indian”, and understands what an *Indian girl’s honor* means. In the sequence of a Europe trip, in DDLJ (1995) during night stay in a small town, Kajol as Simran swilling a bottle of cognac before falling asleep and wakes up on Raj’s as Shahrukh Khan bed, panic stricken and unable to recall real situation, here Raj holding the Indian values says ‘you think I am beyond values, but I am a Hindustani, and I know what a Hindustani girl’s *izzat* (honour) is worth. Trust me, nothing happened last night’, in doing so, immediately changes the story from an innocent love story, infused with the traditional values of the homeland as Patricia Uberoi rightly calls the “tyranny of tradition” into the story (322). It can be noticed that there are the two central elements of womanhood as defined by Bollywood - the nation and feminine sexuality—and Raj, in recognizing their inviolability, reinforces Bollywood’s essentialist interpretation of the woman. He protects Simran, yes, but by protecting Simran’s sexual purity, he robs her of the ability to protect herself. (Mankekar, 739)

The two scenes between Simran and her mother consider the re-inscription of patriarchy in the film. The first scene in which Simran’s mother tells her to give up on the hope of being with Raj whom she met and fell in love in the Europe trip:

When I was a little girl, my grandfather used to tell me that there is no difference between a man and a woman. Both have the same rights. But once I grew up, I understood that it was not the case. My education was stopped....I sacrificed my life; first as a daughter and then as a daughter-in-law. But when

you were born I took a vow that you would never have to make the same sacrifices as I did. I wanted you to live your own life... Women are born to make sacrifices for men, but not the other way round. I beg you, give up your happiness and forget him (the boy). Your father will never allow it.

The voice of a woman can be heard particularly in this scene; but though she speaks up against tradition, she silences herself and begs Simran to re-submit herself to august patriarchy. Some scholars argue that this scene suggests a transgression of traditional lines of morality in Bollywood, but its transgression is barely noticeable (Uberoi, 324).

In other scene, when Simran after performing *Karwachauth puja*, takes first bite and water from the hands of Raj instead of her fiancé and Raj was also accompanying with her in act of fasting. As Simran's mother felt that Simran is firm determine to her love, she grants permission for Raj to take her daughter away, wishing to give her daughter freedom that she never had. But Raj humbly ignores it and holding out for Simran's father, Baldev, to provide his blessing. Again, *DDLJ* reinforces the patriarchal authority of the Indian diasporic family. Though women in *DDLJ* are allowed a voice with which to their agency-in giving up their dreams they acquiesce to a system within which they have no other option (Uberoi, 325).

Most critics have treated *DDLJ* as a film somewhat radical for its time arguing that it treated the diaspora not as place of total moral depravation where the Indian spirit goes to die, but as a potentially new cultural space in which Indian values can be transported and negotiated by a willing NRI. However, this negotiation is only possible for the female NRI to negotiate this new cultural space, but in fact indicates that the only reason the male NRI can exist as this cosmopolitan figure is because of the suppression of the woman and the overt "protection" of her sexual purity. 2 Robina Mohammad argues this with dexterity:

Bollywood reinforces the notion that Indian men's cultural authenticity remains predicated on their ability to control their women... Baldev's control is central to his mission to keep Hindustan alive in London, which has depended on and is manifested in his ability to control his daughters. At the core of Raj's Indian values lies the notion that Indian women remain the property of men, demonstrated by his insistence that irrespective of Simran's own desires he will accept her only if and when her father places her hand in his (Mohammad, 1035).

In the diaspora on a metaphorical level, Indian womanhood represents the "nation, religion, God, the Spirit of Indian, culture, tradition, family." (Bhattacharjee, 31) The essence of India must remain alive away from the homeland, and the male NRI is the soldier protecting it. This interpretation of Indian femininity can be seen clearly in *Pardes* (1997), Ganga's (Mahima Chaudhary) character is undeniably an allegorical one, representative of the purity and holiness of the nation-represented by her name, which she shares with the holy and pure Indian river Ganges: "you wished to nestle an Indian girl; India itself- in America?" *Pardes*, meaning "Foreign Land", represents a clearly patriarchal set up. The storyline revolves around Kishorilal (Amrish Puri), an immigrant Indian who has settled in the States but whose heart yearns for India. His yearning is clearly shown through the song sequence "I Love My India". The site for negotiating the interaction between East and West is through male-female

relationship, Kishorilal wished to accept Ganga as daughter-in-law on behalf of his NRI son, Rajiv. He says, "We NRIs need girls like her very badly. We've pushed our kids so deeply in English books and manners that somewhere or the other even after seeing so much success we feel as if we're failures'. This comment swiftly negates the economic value and admires the moral center of the nation.

In *Pardes*, having lack autonomy, Ganga is given away in arranged marriage to a man whom she does not love, who sexually assaults her before they are married, and is "saved" by the man who genuinely loves her, Arjun (Shahrukh Khan) essentially Indian in values and actions. This entire sequence shows potential violation of her purity threatens the purity of the nation. As in *Mother India*, in order for the women to be the nation, she must be explicitly de-sexualized; the woman can only be represented as a metaphorical and allegorical figure, as the nation in *Pardes* or as representative of the ideals of Indian femininity in *DDLJ*. 3

As Mankekar observe that the narratives of "essentialist conceptions of nation and Indian culture converge with discourses of gender and female sexuality" (739). The implication for such allegorical representations of the diasporic woman as a holding space for the nation abroad is that diasporic Bollywood is still haunted by both essentialist notions of Indian "culture" (Appadurai, 12-15). Bollywood, then, remains trapped within a discourse of anti-colonial nationalism, even its diasporic representations and this anti-colonialism is inherently limited by the specter of the colonial (Desai, 11).

But within a diegetic space so wedded to nationalism, is there space for transnationalism? More fundamentally, is there space for the creation of new imagined cultural spaces, for the political entity of the state to de-hyphenate from the cultural entity of the nation? (Appadurai, 139-40) In the case of India, some scholars have found that internationalism manifests itself not in intermingling or integration of cultural spaces but rather in a re-entrenchment of nationalism through seeking distinct recognition of the state on an international scale (Oza, 1076). In relation to this another question arises: Is there any space for a female figure to escape the bounds of nationalist allegory and to become a cosmopolitan figure herself? Here, *K3G* appears with new cosmopolitanism that makes way for two new female figures Anjali and Pooja to appear on screen as distinct personalities from the realm of patriarchy in the diaspora. While the character of Simran in *DDLJ* and Ganga in *Pardes* both are with lack autonomy. On the other hand Anjali is colorful and spunky in ways that Ganga is not allowed to be, she remains simply a vessel for the nation in the diaspora.

As Prashad writes, 'the woman is here responsible, in large measure, for preventing the acculturation of the children, a heavy burden in a society far more complex than this simple and sexist separation of domains is a allowed to bear' (Prashad, 105). The anxiety of mothers becomes more pronounced in relation to raising daughters in the diaspora. English-language films and music, and certain markers of modes of socialization and other socio-cultural phenomena (divorce rates, single-parent households, and so on) are all sequenced as evidence of the debauched West and situated in sharp contrast to the traditional and morally superior values of 'Indian-ness' in countless Hindi films.

It is a matter of consideration how *K3G* creates a space for

viewers to reassemble and reflect on hopes and anxieties, particularly through the touch of humour in the film presenting Poo (Karina Kapoor) a younger sister of Anjali (Kajol). Poo's upbringing in London depicts clearly the difficulties faced by parents striving with their desires to preserve a real 'Indian' self. The struggle between the traditional/cultural way on the basis of their own upbringing in India, and an acceptance of the influences of the totally different cultural field that their children, particularly their daughters, face in their surroundings like schools and colleges in countries like US. The 'synecdochic relationship is between the purity/sanctity of women and the purity/sanctity of the nation' (Ram, 33). In this respect, films like *DDLJ*, *Pardes* and *K3G* are the appropriate examples. Mishra argues that Hindi film consumption in the diaspora speaks to first generation Indians desperately trying to sustain a value system and inculcate the same in their children that sets them apart from mainstream society in countries like the US and UK. He says 'These differences are generally about tradition, continuity, family, and often, the importance given to arranged marriage' (236-7).

This practicing of values and ideals become even more pointed with questions concerning marriage and the imminent threat of interracial marriage, in the process, a questioning of India's status as the sole arbiter of 'Indianness' and most crucially, a sense of confidence in their own version of 'Indianness'. The biggest challenge facing every immigrant community is to integrate harmoniously into the political, economic and social life of the host society, while preserving and cherishing its civilizational heritage. Over the years, Indians have achieved this delicate balance virtually everywhere without a contradiction between their adopted citizenship and their original Indian identity. 4

*K3G* discussed the same feeling related to a growing sense within India of the 'relocat [ion] of what we might call the seismic center of Indian national identity somewhere in Anglo-America' (Prasad, 2003). In relation to this Rohan, (Hrithik Roshan) his character can be taken under consideration. The quintessential transnational cosmopolitan, who can navigate multiple cultural spaces with consummate ease as an embodiment of a 'super-Indian', who's Indianness transcends both that of resident and nonresident Indian. His arrival in London with a remixed version of 'Vande Mataram', a nationalist song possibly invoked to remind viewers in the diaspora irrevocable link with their homeland. Furthermore, his arrival is shown in subsequent frames, like women with colourful saffron, white and green dupattas and greeted by a group of Bharatnatyam dancers (the famous classical dance form that is highly popular in the diaspora). The scene in which he was looking for his brother's address there is a song in the background 'Saare Jahan se Accha, Hindustan Hamara'. In another scene, Kajol is seen folding her hands in prayer in front of a picture of parents-in-law. In a subsequent scene, when Hrithik is sharing his experience and assuring that he got good accommodation with Indian family instead of staying in a hotel: 'They're very nice people papa. When I met them, I felt like I have known them for years, a laughing, happy, contented family, like we used to be'.

This dialogue can be understood through different levels: as a reference to the rift within the Raichand family; as an allusion to commonly held views of NRI families struggling to define a sense of cultural identity; and as a comment that India, as a family, needs to understand and include her diaspora in order

to be complete. The another scene gives hint at an impending rapprochement between India and her diaspora, Indian national anthem sung by Kajol and Sharukh's son at a school function that is the center point that legitimizes and mitigates the 'othered' status of the diaspora's version of Indianness. This covers a close-up shot of a visibly moved Kajol and Shahrukh cuts to a long shot of the kids singing, followed by pans and cuts to different parts of a surprised, yet respectful audience. Kajol overwhelmed and embrace her son and the background music reverts to 'Vande Mataram', finally fading into 'Saare Jahan se Accha'.

This entire sequence works on two levels as a reassurance for the vast majority of first generation immigrants that they can live in the UK or the US and yet *belong* and claim cultural citizenship elsewhere and as a paradigmatic moment of India embracing her diaspora. It is clear that how Hindi Films close ties to modes of imaging the Indian, and the diaspora's emotional ties to India, can be used to read families' engagement with NRI/family-centric narratives such as *K3G* and *Pardes*, particularly the articulation of cultural citizenship as belonging in the 'great Indian family'.

Unlike, *Rohan's arrival in K3G*, in *Pardes*, *Ganga's* arrival can be seen full of intensity and overwhelmed in the diaspora, watches the sights and sounds of New York City unfold around her, noticeably brighter, louder, and busier than the fields of Punjab she has grown up in. *K3G* is not only set paradigm of transporting "Indian culture" to the diaspora; the interaction is subtler-the film uses Indian national sentiment not for explicitly political reasons, but rather for moral and familial reasons. Anjali as a representative of Indian nationalism, is concerned with providing her son with Indian "values" and translating the cultural *spaces* of the nation to the diaspora, not translating the "culture" itself. While *Pardes* and *DDLJ* treat India within essentialist framings; Indian "culture" is a certain way but in *K3G*, a new space becomes available for trans-cultural flows to create their own diasporic public sphere.

Ganga and Pooja's sexuality are more explicitly implicated in their own ways rather than Anjali. But in case of Ganga, her sexuality is more disciplined than Pooja. As a new diasporic female protagonist, Pooja is introduced in the very first scene dancing in skintight, revealing clothes to the English song, "It's Rainni' Men" and a subject of disdain on account of her risqué clothing, but her sexuality is soon disciplined. The cosmopolitan male, Rohan easily imposes tradition, pushes out the modern and saves Pooja's sexuality. When Pooja attracts towards Rohan, he immediately begins to pulling her towards his cultural space; she joins with him in Morning Prayer "Om Jai Jagdish" and *Karva Chauth* festival. While certainly Pooja enjoys more autonomy and is not treated as a singular possession the way Ganga is, she is still not afforded the humanity to exist in multiple cultural spaces.

*K3G* is the logical continuation of *DDLJ's* suggestion that Indian values can find a home in the diaspora; while *Pardes* negates it. This is the major shift between *DDLJ* and *Pardes* in *K3G*: with new perception to see some acceptance by Bollywood that globalization is not merely economic. *K3G* includes at least an acknowledgement by Bollywood of the female NRI's desire to be cosmopolitan—she is given some agency, and indeed, some personality in the characters of Anjali and Pooja; ultimately, in reinforces the traditional values of familial relations, Karan Johar simply reinforces

patriarchy in a manner that is perhaps more insidious than previously but also to test her lifestyle limits within it- and then reinstates her into her “rightful” place in the family, grounding this in tradition.

*K3G*, stands between an anti-colonial and a post-colonial text: though it still recognizes elements of inherent “Indianness” and translates them to the diaspora, two major changes occur here. First, though this “culture” is essentialist and projects itself onto female sexuality, the act of projecting it into a diasporic space inherently makes the film more transnational. *K3G* allows Pooja to adopt some elements of Western society- though her sexuality is ultimately re-subjugated to the same notion of “culture” as Simran, the fact she is afforded some integration of East and west at all is a change from the essentialism of *DDLJ* and *Pardes*. Whereas *DDLJ* and *Pardes* demanded that broken families return to India to become truly whole once more, *K3G* brings the homeland to the diaspora, allowing the Raichands to unite in England.

While in other diasporic films like *Salaam Namaste* and *Love Aaj Kal* present another picture and share elements of multiculturalism and recognize transnationalism. It can be seen a multicultural logic beginning to take hold, through an endorsement of an entirely separate diasporic cultural space instead of an ideology of overt Indian nationalism. The institution of family concludes the film, but not through the logic of the nation-state: because *Salaam Namaste* is allowed to exist in a multicultural space, and more importantly, because Amber (Preeti Jinta) breaks with traditional institutions that contain female sexuality within the bounds of national morality, she is a freer character than her historical counterparts.

In *Salaam Namaste*, elements of the home land are still transported to the diaspora, and these are reminiscent of aforementioned private spaces, the sphere used by diasporic Indians to form their own communities abroad. (Bhattacharjee, 170) Like in *Salaam Namaste* and in *Love Aaj Kal* the characters are placed in a multicultural setting, but their “Indian-ness” is not essentialized. Instead, it is restricted to cultural elements of their everyday life choices – speaking in Hindi to each other, their break up and still sharing their experiences to each other and moves all around the world. In one scene, of *Love Aaj Kal* Meera (Dipika Padukon) breaks an engagement and violates the rules of the familial and marriage institution with the ease, represents an enormous change from what Simran and Ganga saw in the 1990s- but, like *Salaam Namaste*, the film must end with Indian cultural elements finally conclude the relationship on Indian soil. While, in *Love Aaj Kal*, the contrast is clear depicted by two love story –Veer Singh (Saif Ali Khan) decades earlier, fighting for his love, named Harleen, they had to win the right to be together, reaching across long distances and dealing with moral and social codes, but today, Jai (Saif Ali Khan) and Meera have only their own stubbornness and the troubles of modern communication in a huge world to blame for their problems. The double storyline of the film reminds the audience that some cultural elements of India should be transported to the diaspora to be integrated into modern life. The film recognizes Meera’s independence to live a free lifestyle, just as Jai does, but still ends the relationship on Indian soil. Though Jai and Meera give up their free lifestyle for the sake of being together, their decision is based on mutual personal choice. This is neither based on logic of nationalism nor the tyranny of

tradition. Here the fact occurs that on Indian soil it is not necessary to link with the nation with the state but rather implies that the nation in essence- though fragmented- can survive globalization.

As Sushma Swaraj points out the fact that the importance of the legitimization of diasporic versions of Indianness by cinema is not lost on the Indian state. 5 In this respect, the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas signal a qualitative shift in the states’s relationship with the NRI. Therefore, it is a state that seeks to capitalize on the work already done by Bollywoodized in reterritorializing the NRI community and defining Indianess as a ‘global *jugalbandi* (fusion) between *Bharat vasi (s)* (those living in India) and *Bharat vanshi (s)* (those who belong to the civilization of India) (Joseph, 2003) The close attention enables a re-examination of theoretical claims that the nation-state is ‘no longer the key arbiter of social relations’ (Appadurai, 4). In this respect, Hindi cinema might play a crucial role in enabling the nation-state to play a central role in interactions that are transnational in nature. Bollywood has evolved of its construction of the diaspora since its original conceptions of a strict dichotomy between East and West. In the beginning, anti-colonial notions of nationality projected themselves onto the female figure in these films and prevented the diasporic films from being true texts of transnationalism. However, as Bollywood has evolved in modern times, newer films have treated the diaspora as an acceptable space- and traditional notions of morality and sexuality attached to anti-colonial nationalism have been abandoned in the these spaces. The newer texts have achieved a degree of post-colonial transnationalism. It does not mean that Bollywood is free from the impression of a male-dominated society. The objectification of women’s bodies as sex objects, and deal with the female subject through the lens of a relationship rather than as an independent subject is still continuing in the films. These constructions are still from the perspective of the “East” including distinct elements of love for the nation. Though female has not yet found her voice in the space of Hindi cinema- but the growing transnational nature of these films has created awareness and grudging acceptance within Bollywood that a separate cultural space exists, in which elements of India can be integrated with elements of the West in a conciliatory, rather than combative execution.

## 2. References

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