ACCENTED CINEMA, THE IDENTITIES OF EXILE, DIASPORA AND THE CINEMA OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

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ABSTRACT

ACCENTED CINEMA, THE IDENTITIES OF EXILE, DIASPORA AND THE CINEMA OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

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MASTER'S THESIS, MASTER'S PROGRAM IN CINEMA AND TELEVISION

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The concept of migration goes back to the beginning of time with the underlying idea of exploration; exploration lead to discovery which lead to technological and lifestyle advancements. The impact of this continental migration has been a subject of study for decades for sociologists, anthropologists and now more recently film scholars have started to study the thematic and iconographic elements of films that have been directed and produced by immigrants as commodities of cultural trade.

This Thesis aims to explore and examine the boundaries of accented cinema with relation to international diaspora, immigration and exile and the impact on Bollywood and Pakistani Cinema. The study will be looking into the transformation of global cultures and their impact on identity, individuality and the relationship with the homeland. The chapters discuss the concepts of homelands with relation to films and the aesthetic that these accented films carry as well as the increasing call for representation in mainstream media.

Keywords: Accented Cinema, Identity, Representation, Expatriates

ÖZET

AKSENTLİ SİNEMA, SÜRGÜN KİMLİKLERİ, DİYASPORA VE HİNT ALT KITASININ SINEMASI

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Göç kavramı, altında yatan keşif fikriyle zamanın başlangıcına kadar uzanır; keşif, teknolojik ve yaşam tarzı gelişmelerine yol açan keşiflere yol açtı. Bu kıta göçünün etkisi on yıllardır sosyologlar, antropologlar için bir çalışma konusu olmuştur ve şimdi daha yakın zamanlarda film bilim adamları, kültürel ticaret metaları olarak göçmenler tarafından yönetilen ve üretilen filmlerin tematik ve ikonografik unsurlarını incelemeye başladılar.

Bu tez, vurgulu sinemanın sınırlarını uluslararası diaspora, göç ve sürgün ile ilişkisi ve Bollywood ve Pakistan Sineması üzerindeki etkisi ile araştırmayı ve incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, küresel kültürlerin dönüşümünü ve bunların kimlik, bireysellik ve anavatanla olan ilişkisi üzerindeki etkilerini inceleyecektir. Bölümler, anavatan kavramlarını filmlerle ve bu vurgulu filmlerin taşıdığı estetiğin yanı sıra ana akım medyada artan temsil çağrılarıyla ilişkilendirerek tartışıyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aksanlı Sinema, Kimlik, Temsil, Gurbetçiler

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Accented cinema has becomes monumental in the study of identity and representation with new outlets of media and streaming services becoming autonomous, with aims of catering to a variety of audiences from around the world, the categorization and development of the structures and text that they carry has become more and more intriguing in the study of film and film aesthetic. Through multiple works of the Iranian film scholar Hamid Naficy, who has coined the term accented cinema, this thesis aims to reflect, understand and explain the structure of accented filmography. In a post-colonial world, where nations have become newly sovereign, narratives of post-colonial trauma and impact have started to arise. Filmmakers are telling their own histories from their own experience in opposition to the histories that have been told by those who had colonized them, from the perspective of the white western male figure who has been a symbol of superiority in the literary world for centuries.

This thesis is structured to outline the origination, style, formation, aesthetics and narratives of closure that are produced by accented, ethnic, exilic and diasporic filmmakers. With the help of studies and critical analysis of Bollywood films, and the cinema of the displaced, this research sheds light on the hybridity and questions of identity and the conflict that arises from those questions of immigrants and their offspring. Situated between homelands, familiarity and safely. Shelter being the basic of all needs as popularized my Maslow's hierarchy structure, the absence of shelter, or the threat to shelter that displacement poses raises concerns in the literature of exile.

The accent and translation of language is another important layer this thesis covers. Language is an important communication tool. The loss of language that is a result of a loss of identity raises generational conflict for those that suffer from the loss. Another aspect is the barrier of language and communication that the exilic and diasporic identity has to cross within the adopted homeland. Language being a tool of survival in most cases. Independent politicized cinema and television often tells stories of illegal immigrants who cross borders seeking refuge from the crisis at home, only to be targeted

by the residents of their new home places. For some exiles, displacement is not permanent as they face the threat of being rehomed and abandoned, being asked to go back as the host nation is unable to carry the burden of their accommodation.

In this thesis, with the help of the texts by Hamid Naficy (1993, 1999, 2001), Laura Marks (1999), Salman Rushdie (2010) as well as Mira Nair's key filmography The namesake and The Reluctant Fundamentalist among other films by transnational and products of national cinema shot internationally are discussed to identify the production and reproduction of the semantics and paradigm of accented cinema. The issues of race, belonging and global politics and their impact on the cinematic language of these films as well as aesthetic and visual elements that establish loss, disassociation and claustrophobia are key characteristics of the cinema this thesis discusses.

The films chosen and discussed over the course of this thesis highlight different elements and pieces help piece together the fragments of literature used by the scholars into the molds the framework for accented cinema. References from multiple works of Indian and Pakistani cinema are repeated due to the nature of their thematic structure which help to lay out the significance of the directors' work towards bridging the barriers this thesis aims to tackle.

CHAPTER 2: EXILIC, DIASPORIC AND ETHNIC FILMMAKING

The origins of accented cinema arise from the rise of immigration that started in the 1950s till the 1970s, which was a result of the gradual decolonization of the Third World, motivated by the promise of an improved standard of living in contrast with the wars for liberation against the colonizers which led to internal displacement, destabilization of the economy and compromised living conditions. This motivated, rather pushed those affected, to seek betterment and safety. The West provided the incentive of foreign nationality to educated immigrants, especially doctors, engineers and scientists that could contribute to the workforce.

The second phase of immigration emerged in 1980s allowed those families of immigrants who had been granted nationalities to avail sponsorship from their family members. These were usually parents and siblings. The 80s and 90s were also a period of great political and social reform, the cold war, the rise of religious militants and Islamized and ethnic wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan. This period also saw the turbulence of postindustrial economies, which opened a gateway to social inequality. However, during this time technological advancements opened new avenues of development and creation.

Intercontinental migration created a cultural exchange, which was built on the duality of an identity associated with the homeland of origin and the adopted homeland. Immigrants, in order to conform to the west had to compromise on their customs, voluntarily and involuntarily. “Accented filmmakers are the products of this dual postcolonial displacement and postmodern or late modern scattering. Because of their displacement from the margins to the centers, they have become subjects in world history.” (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 11) The narratives that stem from displacement and conflicted identity have created a genre that deals with this duality. The iconography, aesthetics and production of which will be discussed in further chapters.

Naficy goes onto further classify accented cinema into three subdivisions; exilic, diasporic and ethnic. “These distinctions are not hard-and-fast. A few films fall naturally within one of these classifications, while the majority share the characteristics of all three in different measures.” (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 11)

2.1 Exile

Generally, the term exile refers to banishment from ones homeland, mainly due to political reasons. However, Naficy’s work on Exile, in his book *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media and Politics of Place* (1999) breaks down exile into internal and external, internal exile referring to the exile that stems from disassociation from the *homeland*, the feeling of not being at *home*. External exile, is the expulsion from ones homeland that creates an absence of familiarity, leading for a yearning to be at home. He further breaks this down by disassociating the emotional tags attached to internal and internal exile, he writes, “It is possible to be in internal exile and yet be at home. It is possible to be forced into external exile and be unable to, or wish not to, return home. It is possible to return and to find that one’s house is not the home that one had hoped for, that it is not the structure that memory built. It is possible to go into exile voluntarily and then return, yet still not fully arrive.” (Naficy, Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media and the Politics of Place, 1999, p. 3)

On the other hand, Salman Rushdie, the renowned Indian writer who was forced into exile after Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran issued a fatwa, calling for his death after the release of his book Satanic Verses; the content of which was seen as blasphemous to Islam. Rushdie was in hiding for 10 years, and unable to return to his homeland of India for even longer. “It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt.” (Rushdie, Imaginary Homelands, 2010, p. 10) The alienation that forced exile creates leads to the creation of imaginary homelands, according to Rushdie.

Writers and filmmakers want to create spaces that represent the homes of their displacement through memory, a fictional version of their home that is unaffected by the chaos that led them to relocate to a new home. “It now appears that one’s relation to

"home" and "homeland" is based as much on actual material access as on the symbolic imaginings and national longings that produce and reproduce them." (Naficy, Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media and the Politics of Place, 1999, p. 5) The idea of home is more mobile than fixed for an exilic filmmaker, which translates into the production and narrative style that reproduces the emotionality that builds up on the absence and loss of the filmmaker from their homeland. This can be seen in Shahrbanoo Sadat's 2019 film titled The Orphanage which is set in Soviet occupied Afghanistan but concludes with the fall of Soviet rule and takeover of the Taliban. While the film depicts comparative stability than what is followed later, it carries an essence of nostalgia linked to the loss depicted by the element of what-once-was versus what-it-is-now.

2.2 Diaspora

Diaspora originates from the word "Dispersion", historically referring to the exile of Jews from Babylon. However, scholars have argued that the term no longer be used to refer to the dispersion of Jews, as over the years multiple groups origination from diverse nationalities have also faced dispersion. "The term has been taken up by other displaced peoples, among them African-Americans in the United States and Afro-Caribbeans in England, to describe their abduction from their African homes and their forced dispersion to the new world." (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 13)

While both exile and diaspora appear to indicate scattering from the homeland of origination, there are indicators of distinction of diaspora from exile. Diaspora, like exile, there is a presence of an identity attached from the homeland of origin, and an extension of that identity emerges as the diasporic identity. Unlike the predominantly individualistic nature of exile, diaspora is collective, "…the nurturing of a collective memory, often of an idealized homeland, is constitutive of the diasporic identity. This idealization may be state-based, involving love for an existing homeland, or it may be stateless, based on a desire for a homeland yet to come." (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 14) Diasporic identities carry forward a sense of long term ethnic consciousness, which has to be navigated through hostility from within the state of origin as well as the state of destination. The collective nature of diaspora shapes the diasporic identity horizontally, whereas the exilic identity is vertical. "As a result, plurality,

multiplicity, and hybridity are structured in dominance among the diasporans, while among the political exiles, binarism and duality rule." (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 14) Multiplicity is embedded within the diasporic identity, as they adopt a communal style of living, trying to maintain as similar a lifestyle as possible to their state of origin. While exile identities are more two-dimensional, staying within the paradigm of their pre-exile self in the space of exile, creating an identity based on the duality and balance between both.

The formulation of a new identity based off of exile and diaspora tends to reflect in the filmmakers narratives and characterization. Diasporized narratives represent tighter knit communities, customs and culture, as Naficy writes in his book, "Their films are accented more fully than those of the exiles by the plurality and performativity of identity." (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 14) The case of the Non-Resident Indians became extremely popular in Indian pop culture in the 1980s that popularized Indian tight-knit communities in the West by designing narratives that put family and religious values first, many of these films will be discussed during the course of this thesis.

Films and narratives of exile, however, contain thematic elements of loss, absence and retrospection. These are restricted to the relationship with the homeland of origin, where the filmmaker brings together fragments from their memory to create spaces that represent the home that they seem to have lost, "…in intercultural cinema, which is motivated to use individual stories to represent collective histories. Minority cinema makes it clear, by virtue of its critical relationship to dominant languages, that no utterance is individual." (Marks, 2000, p. 62) As is the case in the 2007 Marjane Satrapi film, Persepolis that navigates the exile from Iran to Europe due to the hostile political climate and the revolution. The filmmaker becomes both an insider and an outsider within the structure of their homeland. The filmmakers' experiences although personal carry heavy resonance for their audiences.

2.3 Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identities, similar to exilic and diasporic identities operate within the real and symbolic boundaries that consolidate their collective identity as a group distinguishing it from the predominant identity of their residing homeland. Ethnic identities are hyphenated, which contain the origin and destination, as demonstrated by the hyphenation of African-Americans, Latin-Americans, Indian-Americans and so on, puts forward the duality as well as the amalgamation of the two identities. “Thus, exilic cinema is dominated by its focus on there and then in the homeland, diasporic cinema by its vertical relationship to the homeland and by its lateral relationship to the diaspora communities and experiences, and postcolonial ethnic and identity cinema by the exigencies of life here and now in the country in which the filmmakers reside.” (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 15)

While diasporic and exilic narratives are curated around the ideological construction and manifestation of the homeland, ethnic narratives are structured around the themes of identification of culture and representation within the sphere of the dominant culture. Ethnic identity filmmakers’ role in cinema and narrative construction is central to the moderation of the hyphen that they carry. Such as representing the hyphenated lives of the first-generation of the non-white, working-class families that ought to reflect generational traumas, conflict between the parent and child. The criticism of ethnic identities is similar to the narratives they produce that bring a diluted representation.

The hyphenated identity is criticized for not being native enough, for being split into the two identities that forms the singular identity that they carry forward. Ethnic filmmakers may find themselves amidst the criticism of not being accented enough, the way that immigrant carry forward the accent of their mother tongue when they adopt the language of the new home, whereas their offspring carries the accent of the home that they have been brought into while speaking in the mother tongue of their parents. “One of the greatest deprivations of exile is the gradual deterioration in and potential loss of one's original language, for language serves to shape not only individual identity but also regional and national identities prior to displacement.” (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 24) The loss of language and the loss of accent is the distinguishing feature of the first generation offspring frim the immigrant parents. This loss gives rise to conflict in narratives, as the space created by loss of language is

filled by resentment which is resolved by either a journey of self/cultural discovery or revelation of sacrifice.

CHAPTER 3: ACCENTED CINEMA AS A GENRE

The contributions made by ethnic, exilic and diasporic directors have solidified accented cinema to become categorized as an emerging genre. Films made by ‘exilic/diasporic’ subjects living in Western metropolitan centers have been recognized by several scholars as an emergent body of work and subjected to critical analysis. (Suner, 2006) The classification and hierarchical taxonomy of genres is not a neutral and 'objective' procedure. There are no undisputed 'maps' of the system of genres within any medium (though literature may perhaps lay some claim to a loose consensus). (Chandler, 1997) The culmination of genre comes from a number of shared characteristics that these filmmakers carry within the form and aesthetic of their films. Thematic similarities, such as loss, displacement, migration, discovery and struggle within the western world as well as within one’s own identity are dominant. “Access to multiple channels and types of local and transnational media and the displacement of an unprecedented number of people have challenged our received notions of national culture and identity, national cinema and genre, authorial vision and style, and film reception and ethnography.” (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 8)

This chapter discusses the Accented Cinema as a genre, and if it is fair under critical theory to categorize it as such, the shared iconography and aesthetics that culminate this category of filmmaking and the linguistics that define the accent. “Delineating a new genre is about articulating boundaries, which would mean drawing limits as well as constructing relations. What I am trying to do here is to re-imagine ‘accented cinema’ as an inspiring generic designation that could account for the changing nature of the relationship between nationhood and exile/diaspora under global conditions.” (Suner, 2006) Addressing the question of cultural specificity beyond and across national borders, ‘accented cinema at large’ will complicate the question of ‘national cinema’ as it pays closer attention to ethnic, gender and class divisions within national formations. (Suner, 2006)

3.1 Linguistics of descent

Language is a tool of communication and self-expression. Language also contains geographical data of ones belonging and origin. Languages are spoken with accents that embed those geographical locations into the verbal sphere. In linguistics, accent refers only to pronunciation, while dialect refers to grammar and vocabulary as well. (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 22) In films, it has become very easy to spot locality based on the character's accent. The reproduction of accents are used as symbols to embed into the characters backstory which is reflected in their mannerisms.

"Language is rooted in the body, its meanings inseparable from the sounds and gestures that bore it forth…where the body of the speaker opens into the text and the space between speaker and listener thickens, are fundamental to its meaning. Even in the most sophisticated representational systems, such as writing or cinema, the iconic and symbolic coexist with the indexical: representation is inextricable from embodiment." (Marks, 2000, pp. 141, 142) For the most part, classical Hollywood, as dominant cinema, has made audiences all over the world be able to identify which part of America their characters are from. However, for exilic and diasporic filmmakers, it means the adaptation of a foreign language in the accent of their mother language. For post-colonial filmmakers, who have grown up bilingual, former British, French and American colonies speak the language of their colonizers, however, they accent that they carry is of their native language. "Those of us who do use English do so in spite of our ambiguity towards it, or perhaps because of that, perhaps because we can find in that linguistic struggle a reflection of other struggles taking place in the real world, struggles between the cultures within ourselves and the influences at work upon our societies." (Rushdie, 2010, p. 17)

For the offspring of immigrant families, the accent is more natural and similar to that of their adopted homeland, and not one of their parents' native language. For the offspring, their accent is reflected in the language of their parents' native language. Gogol and Sonia in The Namesake (2006) do not speak Hindi and Bengali as fluently or with the same accent as Ashoke and Ashima do. Even though from a linguistic point of view all accents are equally important, all accents are not of equal value socially and politically. People make use of accents to judge not only the social standing of the speakers but also their personality. (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 23) For Saroo in lion (2016), which is a film about a young Indian boy who is separated

from his brother at a train station without knowing how to get back to his home because he is unable to pronounce his name or his village correctly, leads him homeless to eventually being adopted by an Australian couple, who move him across the world from a family that is still looking for him. He grows up in Australia with the accent of the only homeland that he has any memory of, however, his physical appearance is always an indicator of his locality and the land of his birth mother. The questions of his identity and descent lead him to employ resources to be able to locate the origins of his birth which lead him to a bitter-sweet reunion. While he grows up with the privilege he would not have had he remained with his family in a small slum in India, he is still overcome with feelings of loss and an unexplained nostalgia for something that he has never known.

"If in linguistics accent pertains only to pronunciation, leaving grammar and vocabulary intact, exilic and diasporic accent permeates the film's deep structure: its narrative, visual style, characters, subject matter, theme, and plot. In that sense, the accented style in film functions as both accent and dialect in linguistics." (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 23)

The accent of the film, according to Naficy is more deep-rooted than that what is verbalized. It is both explicit and implicit in the actions and movements of the film form and progression of the narrative. The accent is embedded within the interactions and customs of the individuals that speak with and without it. In opposition to accents being used as denotations of belonging employed by Classical Hollywood, accented filmmakers provide more depth and normalize the existence of such players within the society that they operate. The Simpsons (1989), which is one of the most popular TV shows in America and around the world, characters like Apu and Manjula who are Indian immigrants being voiced by white actors who imitate the characters Indian accent for comedic purposes has sparked debates on representation as well as the reproduction of ones descent by those who do not own it. Additionally, these characters are two dimensional that reinforce stereotypes without much depth.

Slumdog Millionaire (2008) is directed the British Director Danny Boyle, with British screenwriter Simon Beaufoy adapting the screenplay from Vikas Swarup's novel Q&A. The film that goes into the life of the Indian "slumdog" Jamal as he is able to answer questions that lead him to win the prize money of a question based game show.

He has been homeless, has struggled with poverty and is uneducated, however, his experiences and struggles in life have given him the answers through association in those situations that he has lived through. Jamal's struggles are surrounded by the depth that give him his pain, despite the absence of the Indian-English accent of the character.

3.2 Aesthetics and Iconography

Films are characterized into genres and sub-genres based on their shared aesthetic and iconographic elements. Typical genres include dramas, science fiction, western, comedy, horror and so on. For one to pick apart a film and term it as a horror film would be easy. Apart from the story itself, the mise-en-scene of the film, the sound design, production design and post production all would solidify the film into the genre.

Within accented cinema, these films "…embody many attributes of the accented style, including the inscription of closed and claustrophobic spaces both in the films, mise-en-scene and in the filming; ethnically coded mise-en-scene, characters, music, and iconography; multilinguality and accented speech by ethnic characters and actors; epistolarity by means of letters, video, and the telephone; tactile uses of video and technological mediation of all reality; slippery, guarded, and obsessive characters who camouflage or perform their identities and secret desires…" (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 37)

Accented filmmakers have a responsibility of reproduction of their home and homelands which is absent in Classical Hollywood. The production design has to carry the essence of the tokens of the home that they have left behind. Immigrant families, often find themselves in smaller two-bedroom apartments in less affluent parts of towns they choose to reside in, for the lack of capital. The claustrophobic implication of the small house also incorporates the claustrophobia of repressive countries that they individual has left behind. Indian immigrants, despite how small their house might be will always have a dedicated place of worship in their residence. "Part of the work of exilic popular culture, including television, is to produce a repository of symbols and a web of signification with which exiles can think and through which they may differentiate themselves from the host society. That is why exile is such an intensely symbolic and semiotic space and exilic television so integral an element in it." (Naficy, The Making of Exile Cultures, 1993, p. 91)

Despite mainstream Bollywood producing superficial visuals of affluence of Indian diaspora coming, the value system and iconography is still in place with the costumes, holy statues, worship spaces, the food that they eat, dinner table etiquette among nonverbal cues. For the affluent, border crossing does not carry the same weight as it does for those who have faced the dangers of unstable governments and ultimately exile. Naficy, however, mentions that accented filmmakers sometimes produce narratives that fetishize the idea of loss and home. It is the recognition of these multiple losses that televisual fetishization of home as an unchanging stereotype disavows, masks, and ultimately turns into pleasure. (Naficy, 1993, p.131) The association of loss that leads to the pleasure of being seen and represented in the broader spectrum of media outside of just the newsreel is an outlet of catharsis for those who have collectively experienced the pain.

Accented iconography contains paraphilia of heritage that create instant associations for audiences who can place the objects within their own houses or of their grandparents'. Specific kinds of wallpapers, lamps, table cloths, cutlery and art that carries the nostalgia of one's home and homeland despite being displaced out of it. It is also culminated in the communication and use of language, within the household. Accented characters being bilingual as opposed to the characters who are native. The interactions between families and the names that they use to refer to each other, that sometimes alienate others who do not belong to the same culture as them.

CHAPTER 4: GLOBALIZATION AND ACCENTED CINEMA

Over the course of the last decade, there has been a great shift in global trends of communication and consumption, with more focus being shifted towards minority representation in mainstream media. Global trends and markets have become more integrated and is the gist of the concept of what globalization is. To trace globalization to its roots by definition, it can be linked to the start of foreign exploration and trade that started in the 13th century which later led to colonization.

In more contemporary context however, globalization is understood within the bounds of international trade, global politics and cultural exchange. Through innovations in technology and communication especially, borders have blurred bringing the global community much closer than when international trade had originally started. However for Naficy, "…physical borders are real and extremely dangerous, particularly for those who have to cross them." (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 31) The Globalization of capital and media also globalized the local, and the fragmentation of nation-states and the massive scattering of people transformed the meaning of the global. Therefore, contemporary exiles and diasporas are structurally "glocal," at once global and local (Robertson 1995).

While it has become easier and quicker to access international commodities and share cultural anecdotes online and in person, in which every metropolitan in the world is now equipped to cater to multiple different nationalities and ethnicities, which has also led to awareness and general acceptance of cultures. The threat of physical borders that Naficy writes about is one that criticizes the romanticization of migration, as in the case of Middle Eastern displacement caused by war and apartheid that has led to the marginalization of these communities. Marjane Satrapi's biographical film, Persepolis (2007 about the Islamic revolution in Iran and how it turned Satrapi's life around when Islamic Fundamentalists are elected and the Shah is overthrown. The struggle of living in Iran as a liberal young adolescent girl who like other children the same age as her around the world, enjoys music and pop culture. She is not allowed to do so, because that is not the norm. Her parents, fearing for her safety send her away to Europe to a Catholic school

where she is also discriminated against, which is an additional layer of trauma endured to her identity.

Under the microscope of accented cinema and its aesthetics, globalization has created and curated the debate on representation and which was previously primarily linked to independent and transnational cinema to a more mainstream realm of public consumption. This has not only popularized smaller domestic cinemas of South Korea, India, Iran and Iran, this has also expanded the audiences of mainstream Hollywood in the global markets around the world. "…I see reason for hope that intercultural life will continue to produce new and unmanageable hybrids, given the volatility of sensuous experience. It seems reasonable to worry that as culture becomes globalized, sensuous experience is becoming both universal and placeless." (Marks, 2000, p. 243)

With what is the case for current popular culture and the rise of K-pop and K-drama, where South Korean celebrities have become international sensations, despite a great number of their fans not understanding the Korean language essentially established that globalization has rendered entertainment to be a universal commodity. Again, with the contribution of Netflix having provided a platform for distribution to critically acclaimed shows non-English such as Squid Game and La Casa De Papel (Money Heist) allowed them to amass record breaking numbers throughout the world. Squid Game, also having been nominated for the Best TV Show in the 2022 Golden Globes furthers the extent to which global consumption of foreign content has grown.

While categories for International content have always existed, they have been considered to be quite niche. In Bong Joon-Ho's 2019 Best Picture acceptance speech for Parasite, he encouraged audiences to break the "one-inch barrier" of subtitles which would open more varieties of content from all around the world. More so, Saudi Arabia lifted its ban on cinemas that had been in place for three decades and is now encouraging more cinemas to be opened in the kingdom, allowing films from Hollywood to be shown to the masses.

4.1 Transnational cinema

Transnational cinema takes on the hybridity and duality of filmmakers of colonized descent as they operate outside of the boundaries of their own nationality while

simultaneously creating homogenization of their origin and globalization. This take on cinema broadens the spectrum for filmmakers by allowing them to collaborate and produce films without any set boundaries of the national cinema they represent.

"Access to multiple channels and types of local and transnational media and the displacement of an unprecedented number of people have challenged our received notions of national culture and identity, national cinema and genre, authorial vision and style, and film reception and ethnography. In such a mediated world, imagination itself must be regarded as a social practice." (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 8) "Moreover, the term 'transnational' is, on occasion, used simply to indicate international co-production or collaboration between technical and artistic personnel from across the world, without any real consideration of what the aesthetic, political or economic implications of such transnational collaboration might mean – employing a difference that, we might say, makes no difference at all." (Will Higbee, 2010, p. 10)

This mode of production allows the filmmaker to narrate stories without the bounds of the paradigms of their national cinema, allowing the artist to touch upon topics that are considered blasphemous, taboo and unconventional. "Such a cinema can be defined as transnational in the sense that it brings into question how fixed ideas of a national film culture are constantly being transformed by the presence of protagonists (and indeed film-makers) who have a presence within the nation, even if they exist on its margins, but find their origins quite clearly beyond it." (Will Higbee, 2010, p. 11) Such as Changez (played by Riz Ahmed) in Mira Nair's The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2012), based off of Mohsin Hamid's book with the same name, is a Muslim-Pakistani from Lahore who goes to study in the US. The film, a product of transnational mode of production featuring actors from India and Pakistan, having filmed in the US, Pakistan, India and Turkey, contains scenes in which the Muslim characters are drinking alcohol as well as Changes and his American girlfriend having sex. Both of which are forbidden for Muslims. However, due to the transnational of the films production in an already western association, the reception was not controversial.

On the other hand, Slackistan (2010) a film made by Hammad Khan, who is a London-based filmmaker of Pakistani origin, faced heavy criticism for its depiction of

Pakistani youth. The film was made in Islamabad which is the federal capital of Pakistan. Slackistan showed a group of young elite Pakistani friends as they indulged in parties, alcohol and relationships all during a time of great political turmoil which is also mentioned in the film. The potential distribution of the film in Pakistan created great controversy when the director refused to cut out certain parts, such as the use of the word “lesbian”. The film was criticized by the viewers who felt it did not represent their culture and religion, and this was not an image of Pakistan that they would be willing to be associated with.

Similarly, Mira Nair’s Salaam Bombay (1988) featured the lives of Bombay’s street children and their exposure to drugs, gang violence, sex trafficking and prostitution. Nair’s cast in the film were actual street children who had been provided with acting lessons for the purpose of the film, as well as the plots of the film were based off of their experience, as Nair who had previously made documentaries wanted to capture the realism of the trials and tribulations these children faced. “A number of Indian scholars and reviewers, both inside and outside India, criticized Salaam Bombay! by contending that its "realistic" depiction of the desperate lives of young subaltern girls and boys living in the streets, brothels, and detention centers of Bombay was an outsider's "fantasy".” (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 68) Similarly, while Persepolis received wide critical acclaim all around the world, it was banned in Iran and Lebanon, slammed for being crude, unrealistic and Islamophobic. Although the bans were later lifted but not without strict censorship.

4.2 Accented identity and representation

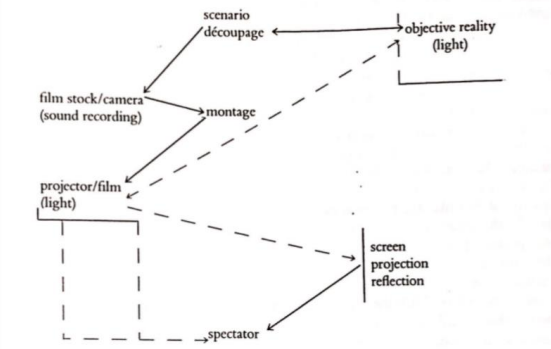
With the global network and communication having become easier, the transmission of information from one corner of the world to the other has become a matter of minutes. This has enabled international communities to come closer despite physical distances, transcending borders, creating subcultures and updating societal norms, breaking away from traditional practices by adopting more unified approaches, “As a result, accent is one of the most intimate and powerful markers of group identity and solidarity, as well as of individual difference and personality. The flagship newscasts of mainstream national television and radio networks have traditionally been delivered in the preferred "official" accent, that is, the accent that is considered to be standard, neutral,

and value-free." (Naficy, An Accented Cinema, Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking, 2001, p. 23) . Enabling the creation of intercultural audiences that are more intertwined and aware of global climates. LGBTQA+ movements, fight against racial and gender inequality, the Me Too movement, the Free Palestine movement and so much more that caused shockwaves throughout the world leading to protests held all around the world as global consciousness and awareness begins to grow. "Coalitions must result in mutual transformation if groups are not to simply come together around a joint purpose and then go their separate ways when their goal is accomplished. Intercultural cinema itself, as one of the visible traces of cosmopolitanism, carries out the process of transforming a coalition into a new cultural formation." (Marks, 2000, p. 20)

Cinema is a medium of transmission of the updated belief systems, it has been used as a tool of ideology reproduction by positioning the audiences to create links between the real and the reel. Hybrid and hyphenated identities are enabled to operate overtly under this global consciousness and create means for representation in the public sphere. Hollywood, which is the most consumed cinema around the world, is predominantly accent-free, in which although characters belonging to minority groups are all-American, bearing the same accent and mannerisms of the dominant nationality. The way in which accents are incorporated within Hollywood help viewers to identify the characters localities, such as a southern accent which is indicates the character belongs to the state of Texas. The accent is an object that signifies belonging. The current narratives around the aesthetics of belonging are culminated from a Marxist approach of cinematic apparatuses creating and illusion, in which Hollywood had for a very long time eliminated its minority groups on the side lines as background characters, in which the representation of Indian and Asian characters was as insignificant fillers typically working at gas stations and convenience stores, or the African-American community being at the center of a gang activity, Latin-Americans being involved in cartels, smuggling drugs, Italian-Americans being in the mob. "…classical Hollywood cinema was analyzed as a mode of representation that masks the process and fact of production, turns discourse into diegesis, history into story and myth; as an apparatus that sutures the subject in an illusory coherence and identity; and as a system of stylistic strategies that weld pleasure and meaning to reproduce dominant social and sexual hierarchies." (Hansen, 1999)

It can be argued that such reproductions of stereotypes in the mainstream lead to self-actualization, where it becomes a norm to play into those stereotypes. “What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of real relations governing individuals' existence, but those individuals' imaginary relation to the real relations in which they live.” (Althusser, 2014, p. 183) The Lacanian theory of the Mirror Stage that draws upon the concepts of identification of one’s own self. When a child is able to recognize themselves in the mirror without the image of their mother, the child gains a separate consciousness, which is the “I” of self. This recognition enables the individual to operate and develop, becoming more aware of the “other”.

Cinema as an ideological apparatus (Baudry) acts as the mirror, positioning the spectator in the center. Through this placement, the Marxist theorists have argued that the dominant ideology is reproduced and normalized, leading to widespread acceptance as it is already fed into the subconscious of the audience. “All these interpretations thus take literally the thesis which they presuppose and on which they are based: that what is reflected in the imaginary representation of the world found in an ideology is people's conditions of existence, hence their real world.” (Althusser, 2014, p. 183)



The disposition of elements and the broken lines indicating the ideological process are clarified in the text.

Figure 1. *Jean-Louis Baudry: Ideological Effects of The Basic Cinematographic Apparatus*

For the longest time, this had been detrimental to the growth of minority and ethnic identity in the west. Such as was the case in the narratives produced in the light of the World Trade Center terror attacks on September 11. Cinema’s depiction of the Middle

East created xenophobia and Islamophobia, creating hostility fueled by synthetic patriotism.

Transnational and transcultural devices have been working to rectify the damage to identity that classical Hollywood has done over decades, by creating new production practices and cultivating narratives that identify and represent ethnic identities. This is a result of a diversity of filmmakers that have taken charge of their own narratives and how they wish for those to be told, as opposed to classical Hollywood filmmaking which took the viewpoint of the "white man". With accented, female and LGBT+ filmmakers becoming more pronounced in Hollywood and around the world, the narratives of ethnic identities, sexual identities and racial inequalities are being discussed and fought against.

Chris Eyre's film Smoke Signals (1998) is a product of accented filmmakers producing narratives that enable representation of their culture and values. The film is written, directed and features Native American actors and was considered to be a great breakthrough in terms of Native American representation. The simplistic mise-en-scene and realism of the film allowed for empathy and resonance whereas the subject matter of grief and resentment allowed for the film to be universally relatable. "'Smoke Signals' is an important movie for Indian Country, and to see these beautifully nuanced Native American characters on the big screen was a revelation for us," says Victor Rocha, conference chair of the National Indian Gaming Assn.

Identity and representation has been the biggest discourse of the past decade with movements to ensure protection of LGBT+ groups, racial injustice and the hybridity of the two. Studies indicate the discrimination and violence that is faced by ethnic and minority members of the LGBT+ community is far more extreme than the injustice towards white members. Cinema and television has yet to normalize characters that belong to minority groups that do not conform to the "normal" sexual and gender spheres. Classical Hollywood's structure of patriarchal value inculcation have to be diluted for such identities to be able to operate within the spectrum. With the rise of transnational modes of production and filmmaking, ethnic and accented filmmakers have been able to rewrite and rectify the histories that have been present in the dominant cinema, told by filmmakers that did not go through those histories.

4.3 Globalization and Political Identity

Globalization has created political divisions and movements that have given birth to politicized identities. The politics of displacement and the refugee crisis has raised global tensions within governments and the native populations. There is a conflict between those who empathize and those who marginalize the communities that have had to cross borders due to war and government instability in their home countries. The notion being, that nobody chooses to be displaced of a permanent home. Theorists of a more settled form of identity argue that the ability to "roam through all the latitudes" (Emerson) is based in privilege—that of race, gender, class, language, nation. Not everyone has the luxury of extravagant identity; some identities are kept in their place by forces such as white supremacy, patriarchy, and capital. (Peters, 1999, p. 34) It ultimately poses a great threat in the global political realm, and questions of facilitation arise. They have accomplished this by promoting an anthropomorphized notion of the motherland as an indigent and suffering mother. The over determination of this notion in exilic media fetishizes "motherland," and chauvinistic nationalism results. (Naficy, The Making of Exile Cultures, 1993, p. 133)

Exilies are countered with repression from the population of their adopted land, based on xenophobic ideologies and threats to national security. My Name Is Khan (2010) centers upon Rizwan Khan who is an autistic Indian man living in the United States in times of great political turmoil and racist movements. His son is killed in an assault that causes him great trauma and the grief is multiplied when he is blamed for his son's death by his wife. The famous dialogue from the film, which is in English is said by Rizwan when he is waiting in line to meet President Bush, "My name is Khan and I am not a terrorist" carries the hurt and pain of all those who have been wrongfully targeted for hate crimes by the police and criminals alike under his governance, the identities that had to become collateral damage for his war on terror. The fiction of the film details the extent of racial profiling that leads to assault, and the damage that it causes both physically and mentally.

Changez, in The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2012), after being detained and strip searched because of the color of his passport, begins to question his own identity and ideology with which he had aligned himself. A part of him feels happy to see Americans grieve the loss of the world trade center the way that his people have had to grieve the loss of their land and people. He begins to disassociate with his willingness to becoming

westernized in retaliation to the damage that he has had to endure, because being wrongfully detained without as much as an apology.

Accented modes of production, where the filmmaker is free from the governing ideologies of their home countries often carry political text, whether it is subliminal or clearly demonstrated through reproduction, memory or dialogue. The liberty to critically place their history and produce media based off of it is triggering for the dominant governing bodies of the countries that the filmmakers belong to. For a film like Persepolis to face the rejection from the government of Iran but also from audiences in Iran where the repression of Satripi and her family took place is an indicator of the stronghold of state ideologies and enforcement of censorship. For those who have had to leave warzones, are responsible for writing the histories that they see have been omitted or altered from the public front by reproducing the narratives based on their own trauma and the trauma of those who have lived through war and displacement. The filmmakers politicize their history as a means of retaliation against their government.

CHAPTER 5: CINEMA AFTER 9/11

The world changed following the attack on the World Trade Center in New York in 2001. There were changes made to immigration policies, diplomatic relationships and international security. The United States declared their War on Terror on Iraq, which has since affected most of the Middle East. The American War on Terror was also ideological. It gave rise to levels of racism, bigotry and Islamophobia that were previously untapped.

Accented voices in pop culture began to be antagonized by mainstream blockbuster productions in the same way that American nationalism had become a commodity. Film productions were halted, scripts were reviewed, the Twin Towers were edited out of films, jokes regarding terrorism were taken out, and the FBI and CIA were glorified and praised as national heroes despite evidence of racial profiling, torture and abuse inflicted by them upon immigrants from Muslim countries. “Representations of September 11 as a moment of global change became the ‘ideological lynchpin’ of the war on terror, a ‘rhetorical construction that’ that promoted the idea of America as a victim and a defender of freedom, not only in its official discourse but also in the vast cultural production ranging from Hollywood films to the pop fiction and even photography.” (Awan, 2010)

Hollywood played into the rise of patriotism by cultivating narratives that positioned muscular, tall, conventionally good looking, white men as larger than life American heroes. Films like The Hurt Locker, American Sniper, Zero Dark Thirty, Lone Survivor created an extreme level of love and respect for the American hero who was deployed in the Middle East to protect the sovereignty of the United States of America. This love created hate for the Arab world which had become synonymous with acts of terrorism as the obvious byproduct of the monetization of patriotism.

The discourse regarding ideological image and cinema as an apparatus of positioning, mainstream Hollywood had a detrimental effect on the Middle East, “…the ideological effects of cinema were seen as socially uniform because they were intrinsic to its apparatus, to the historical conditions of its invention, and to all cases of its use apart from deliberate avant-gardist ruptures of its fundamental and enabling mechanism,

primary identification." (James, 1999, 2004, p. 194)The Muslim identity became vandalized by both, the outsiders as well as the insiders.

In 2007, Pakistani filmmaker, Shoaib Mansoor released a film titled Khuda Ke Liye (In the Name of God) which showcased the Islamic extremism in the East through narrative of the forced marriage and marital rape (advised by the local cleric) of a British-Pakistani woman, and the post 9/11 racial injustice in the West in which a Muslim-Pakistani student detained and tortured in Guantanamo Bay. Although the film is concluded with a virtue-loaded, spiritually embedded monologue, it plays into the ideological construction of the radicalized east created by Hollywood post 9/11. Mira Nair's film The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2012) based on the book (2007) by Pakistani writer Mohsin Hamid positions the accented protagonist under the discourse of "the other". As he, also a victim of the injustices by the FBI on Muslims, began realizing through the changes he faced post 9/11, that despite his success, his job on Wall Street, he was still "the other" and would never have remained the other regardless of how westernized he would appear. While both these films carry remains of post 9/11 and American injustice on Pakistani men, The Reluctant Fundamentalist does not feed into the sensationalist ideology. It reproduces an important discourse regarding the eastern identity and its reproduction in the west.

What Hollywood produced in the name of nationalism was highly detrimental to the Arab image. Beards, hijab, turbans, prayer caps, tan men with dark beards and big noses, with names like Hassan, Ali, Omer, and last names with suffixes like, -ullah, -uddin, became Hollywood villains. While there was a war being fought in the Middle East, the ideological war was happening in the cinemas. "Cinema, because it is an audiovisual medium, is the privileged record of the disjunctive quality of "truth" in a given historical formation." (Marks, 2000, p. 30) Hence, the greater the cinema, the more margin for disjunction is available. Minority films that operate within independent cinema would be unable to combat and rectify the damage to their identity, however, as a result there continues to be a call for more representation in the media. Shows like Clickbait (Netflix 2021), Grey's Anatomy (ABC 2005), Midnight Mass (Netflix 2021), Transplant (NBC 2020), and Tiny Pretty Things (Netflix 2020) feature prominent Muslim characters, who have jobs, families and distinguishing traits and depth. Although there is still a long

way to go in terms of rectification, Hollywood has opened up to cultural sensitivity and representation.

CHAPTER 6: BOLLYWOOD AND THE INDIAN DIASPORA

Bollywood, the Cinema Industry of India is among one of the oldest film industries that is consistently producing tens of thousands of films per year which have a global audience. The prospects of filmmaking and cinema were brought to India through their colonizers, the British Empire which ruled over India for 200 years, before which British merchants had set up the East India Company under the Mughal Empire. India was one of the first and few countries to have seen the first few films by the Lumiere Brothers and Robert Paul, which were screened for the Indian elite in Bombay. India had made its first film, credited to Hiralal Singh, by 1898, as well as the first political film which was a documentary showing protests against the partition of Bengal.

As cinema of India established itself in terms of aesthetic, technology and technique, India as an art hub that had prominent painters, poets and writers, dates back to centauries. The Mughal emperors had been known to indulge in extravagance of lifestyle and culture, which led to the promotion of art, music, poetry, architecture and literature. Emperors like Hamza, Babar Akbar maintained diaries of their stories of conquests, a depiction of their history for the legacy they wished to carry forward to their generations to come. This literature that they left behind had its roots separate from that of the dominant western aesthetic. Which is why, to date, classical Indian cinema holds its own outside of the western realm.

The extravagance of Mughal art and architecture is an embedded aesthetic in Indian culture. The exaggeration of action, vibrancy of colors, lavish costumes, dance and music is something that is synonymous with Bollywood films till date. While these luxuries are not available for everyone, it provides the same escapism to the consumer of the art.

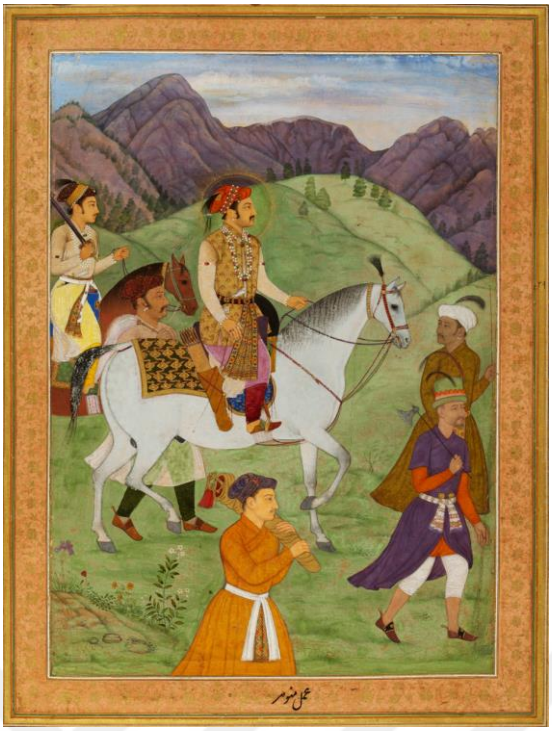


Figure 2.1. *Shah Jahan riding with one of his sons, watercolour, painted by Manohar in about 1615, alterations by Murar in about 1630, Mughal. Museum no. IM.12-1925. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London*

Figure 2.2. *Frame Grab from Bollywood film Padmavati (2018) Directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali*

Indian cinema as both Bollywood, smaller independent filmmakers have produced various films around the lives of Non-Resident Indians (NRI) who live in the west. Mainstream films, such as Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham (2001), Dil Walay Dulhaniya Le Jayengay (1995), are films shot in The United Kingdom following the lives of generations of an Indian families from the grandparents, parents and children who had migrated to

the UK. They are shown to live luxurious lives, however, while there is certainly the glorification of life in the west, the films also employ ideological devices that cultivate "Indian values" through scenes that inculcate religion and worship, family time, cultural practices, and celebrations that act as a medium of education of cultural representation in the west as well as the spectators in the east that rejoice seeing their counterparts in the west who have not been westernized and remain true to their Indian roots. "Thus it is important for many postcolonial and exile filmmakers not to attempt to represent their culture in a (mythical) former state of wholeness, for that would be speaking in the language of the colonizers who have untroubled access to these artifacts." (Marks, 2000, p. 56) These films, although shot in western settings, contain every aesthetical element of typical Bollywood cinema including heavily choreographed musical numbers, hence, creating an acceptance of these NRI back home in India. This is as an attempt to regain or rather advertise Indian culture and values within the west, which has garnered acceptance of these foreign ideologies.

Baghban (2006), takes on a different approach to the principles of family values in Bollywood. Baghban follows the lives of retired Indian parents of four sons and an adopted son, who unable to provide for themselves anymore ask their children to support them. The sons are reluctant, but decide on splitting their parents and taking care of each parent for half a year each. This treatment of elders is greatly frowned upon in Indian culture that continues to uphold the extended family dynamic, although in decline due to changing global patterns, it is still largely intact as opposed to the west. The film essentially deconstructs the paradigms of Indian family values as depicted by Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham and Dilwalay Duhalniya Le Jayengay that follow the thematic elements of togetherness associated with Diasporas. Baghban takes a more exilic approach, following the individual struggles of the two elderly displaced Indians in an unfamiliar country, with their children having been westernized, sticking to the nuclear family system, having adopted a western style of living, deviating from their eastern values and roots. This deviation breeds generational trauma, isolating the Indian roots in the process of adopting a new identity which is outside of the realms of hybridity.

The comfort of the sons as they adopt the land of their (parents') colonizers as their own, and the sadness and displacement felt by the parents in a land that is a reflection of "The end of the modern period is characterized not only by industrial ruins but also by

the dismantling of colonial power, whose ruins are perpetuated in the lives of the people it displaced. These people are "seers" in the metropolitan West, aware of violent histories to which its dominant population is blind." (Marks, 2000, p. 27) That is embedded within the subtext of the film.

6.1 Family values and Individuality

Indian culture places great importance on upholding family and cultural and religious values, instilling them into each generation with the prospects of carrying those traditions on. Such family and cultural values and moral codes impose strict gender roles align with typical patriarchal practices of male members being the dominant stakeholders of decision making and bread winning while their female counterparts take on the role of homemakers. "Popular Hindi cinema provides a look at family structures and perceived traditional roles of males and females within them. While women are shown as the backbone of the household unit, and Radha in Mother India was an exceptional example of this, the males are shown as the patriarchal heads. Their children are suitably filial and obedient, and deeply bonded with their grandparents. This is considered an ideal family situation, and perhaps explains why audiences receive these films so enthusiastically." (Kripalani, 2008)

However, for the accented identity that migrates to the western where it is normal for couples to live separate from their parents, children to be raised by nannies or be put into day care as opposed to being raised by grandparents, and practicing religion being optional, questions that create an individual consciousness arise. Individualistic identity allows for questions of ones sexuality, morals and beliefs begin to arise. "Intercultural cinema is a movement insofar as it is the emerging expression of a group of people who share the political issues of displacement and hybridity, though their individual circumstances vary widely." (Marks, 2000, p. 2)

In Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayengay more commonly known as DDLJ (1995), Simran is the daughter of Indian parents who has raised in the UK, despite having grown up in the western society, her family has always pushed the importance of staying true to their roots on to her. The notion being that you can take the Indian out of India, but you can not take the Indian out of them. She is sheltered, affluent, yet she is reliant on her father's permission for everything. Simran's mother is not the decision maker of the household.

Her job is to cook, clean and maintain the harmony, while her father hold all the authority. The patriarchal ideology is passed on throughout the film. She falls in love with a boy named Raj, who is disapproved by her elders. Her father chooses a boy back in India for her to marry, though she disapproves, she has no choice but to fulfil her father's wishes, as Indian culture dictates. Eventhough her mother warms to the idea of allowing her daughter to marry whoever she pleases and gives Raj and Simran her blessing, Raj refuses to go forward with it unless Simran's father gives the final word. This again shows how Indian cinema reproduces patriarchal values for their audiences to accept, because for there to be harmony within the family, the male authority or the head of the family has to be in favor. "This film provides a visual feast of Punjabi wedding rituals, but simultaneously provides the subtext of attitudes and mores of Indian family values. Baldev Singh portrays the patriarch, dictating the family's code of behaviour—how they dress, what music they listen to, etc. It is he who decides to marry off his daughter to his son's friend, without consulting his wife or daughter." (Kripalani, 2008) In typical Bollywood fashion, Baldev finally allows Simran to follow her heart and gives Simran his blessing towards the end of the film when he is able to see her love for Raj after he has defeated the man Simran's father wanted her to marry in a brawl at the train station. However, now it is Raj who will dictate Simran's life and keep her true to her Indian-ness. Her individuality, needs and wants are suppressed the way her mothers were and something that she has internalized over the course of her life.

6.2 Accented Female Identity

The female identity in Bollywood cinema has always taken on a supportive, nurturing and binding role despite any hardship or conflict that might arise, her duty is to her husband and her family. Filmmakers Mira Nair and Deepa Mehta, who are both Indian accented female filmmakers create spaces for their female protagonists to grow as individuals, explore their sexual identity and desires and break free from patriarchal shackles. "Nair and Mehta's women characters undergo journeys of identity. They travel from being obedient, dutiful, virtuous women who honour the family (and by implication, the country) to women who step outside of tradition to become empowered, decision-making beings. The change comes through a reclaiming of body and sexuality, as these are the aspects of the Indian woman that were governed by norms and rules that would supposedly make her an acceptable, worthy being." (Moodley, 2003)

Ashima, who is the female protagonist in Nair's The Namesake (2006), is a simple Bengali girl, moves to the United States to live with her new husband, Ashoke whom she has only known briefly, as their wedding had been an arranged one. She finds herself halfway across the world from her home, while her husband is at work for most of the day she finds herself alone in their small apartment. "For being a foreigner, Ashima is beginning to realize, is a sort of lifelong pregnancy – a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts. It is an ongoing responsibility, a parenthesis in what had been an ordinary life, only to discover the previous life has vanished, replaced by something more complicated and demanding." (Lahiri, 2003, p. 3) Ashima's growth and development through the film shows her adapting to her new normal is a journey in itself where she has to overcome obstacles and hurdles which carry the same weight as crossing physical borders. As years pass, her two children, Gogol/Nick and Sonia go off to college and become independent individuals, living away from their families as American do. The aftermath of her husband's death is another arc of her development, she decides to leave for Calcutta, she is aware that her home is now the US where she fell in love with her husband and raised her children. Accented filmmaking relies on the essence of nostalgia, memory and loss, which through Ashima is transmitted in the text.

Dramas of ethnic identity often juggle with the idea of Indian women exploring their sexuality, as is considered to be a taboo in the dominant culture, with little to none representation in mainstream Bollywood with the exception of a few films that had to face backlash from politically charged audiences. The 2013 film Queen, written and directed by Vikas Bahi sends the female protagonist of the film, after having her engagement broken off because her fiancé found her to be too typical of an Indian girl after he had returned from living abroad, to her honeymoon to Europe by herself. She belongs to a conservative Indian family, this liberties of the west are very alienating for her. Her nomadic journey of a lone female traveler is not one that is easy. She gets into trouble with the police as she continues to struggle with communication and cultural shock. Through her journey, she meets free-spirited and independent women of Indian and Pakistani descent one of whom works at the hotel where she is staying while the other is an exotic dancer at a night club. Her interaction with these women prove to be monumental in her exploration of herself, where she begins to unlearn the societal pressures and expectations of being a good, family oriented Indian girl are supposed to

be. She is free to dance, drink alcohol and wear whatever she pleases without a male counterpart telling her not to. In her hostel, she finds herself sharing a room with three men which baffles her initially but she comes to terms with it as they are become friends she even goes to a sex shop with them, normalizing the conversation around sexual pleasure for the Indian audiences, where such topics are considered unconventional and taboo.

In Gurinder Chandha's coming of age romantic comedy film, Bend It Like Beckham (2002), is the story of Jasminder Bhamra, who goes by her shortened westernized version of her name, Jess is the daughter of British Indian Sikhs who is obsessed with football and despite her parents' disapproval often plays with the boys in the park, where she is spotted by Jules, a member of the local women's amateur team spots her and invites her to try out for their team. Jess does, behind her parents' back, knowing they have already made known their disapproval. Her sister, whose wedding is being simultaneously planned in the wedding supports her and often covers for her when she has matches. Despite moving out of India, the Bhamra family is as Indian as any. They want to uphold the values and traditions of their ancestors in India and enforce the same ideologies onto their children. Jess, however, is less Indian than her parents, having been brought up and schooled in London, her identity carries hybrids of the culture of her parents and her peers. In the film, Chandhra gives Jess the courage to stand up for herself and creates her own independence, the film also touches upon topics of racism, with a scene in which she is subjected to racial slurs and insults after a match that leaves her distraught, as well as mentions of homosexuality with the introduction of a closeted gay friend of Jess and Jules' mothers misunderstanding of her and Jess having a lesbian relationship. Having such storylines in a film intended for younger audiences encouraged the conversation around topics that do not get brought up in Indian households.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This thesis after examining the multiple works of film scholar Hamid Naficy, as the author of the term accented cinema and the traces of which are found in articles of the cinematic product being produced today, specifically by Indian and Pakistani filmmakers, who have originated outside of the bounds of the dominant western aesthetics of filmmaking. After the examination of the text and research used to create the framework of this thesis, it is evident that as ethnic identities continue to tell stories of their origin and experiences, more avenues for transnational and transcultural exploration will be opened for those who wish to tell these stories, and for those who wish to consume these narratives.

For decades, classical Hollywood had dictated the norms of cinematic language that dictated the threshold for entertainment, while ethnic identity films were categorized as products of Third Cinema, that dwelled in the background as these films were independent productions with small budgets that could not compete in the market of blockbuster films. Now, due to increased globalization and audiences' consciousness and desire for new narratives, as well as increased awareness of the exploitation of classical Hollywood has opened doors for accented filmmakers to establish themselves as more than a movement or an outlet of activism. It is an outlet to tell their stories and share their culture with wider audiences rather than making films for their own national audience. To raise cultural sensitivity, and encourage acceptance of immigrants and their homelands. For a film franchise like Marvel to become more inclusive in the last decade is a breakthrough for minorities and diasporas. Films such as Black Panther, Shang-Chi and the upcoming Miss Marvel that includes notable directors, producers and actors from the Indian Subcontinent to come together to introduce a superhero of Pakistani descent is remarkable in its own way.

The way in which through years of groundwork laid by Iranian, Turkish and Indian filmmakers to establish their identity in the west has initiated conversations and studies regarding the importance of representation of ones histories from their own perspective, which was previously done by those who had colonized the nations and changes the histories befitting them. For narratives to break away from dominant structures of

ideology that had been in place by creating new codes and dialects in film has allowed more audiences to feel seen. The purpose of cinema is understood to be the creation of a form of escapism for the audiences, however, if parts of the audience feels alienated, dominant cinema has to reevaluate its narrative form. The lack of which is what I believe has given rise to inclusivity in the new age of content, with the help of platforms like Netflix especially that monetize on the number of clicks and minutes watched, have created frameworks to incorporate universal audiences.

While it is too early to say that accented cinema has established its roots within the dominant structures of entertainment, the narratives that have come out within the years of its establishment have been monumental. Conversations around inclusivity, representations and years of post-colonial trauma are happening on a bigger level and for an international student from Pakistan like me, to see characters that resemble me and my family and those that share similar cultural and religious characteristics is powerful.

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