

Desire and Repetition: The miniaturisation of the Hindi film song by Shikha Jhingan



Scene from Shikha Jhingan's 'Born to Sing'

Let us examine the contemporary popular Hindi film songs and their circulation through the convergence of new media technologies. How has the emergence of global television and digital music changed the aesthetics, the cultural codes and the formal structure of the Hindi film song by mobilizing new circuits for the consumption of popular music? In fact, the use of repetition and heightened codes of visuality have perhaps given new forms of identity to a large number of young girls on 'reality shows' based on popular film music.

In recent times, one big change in the structure of the song has been the use of a 'hook line' as a repetitive structure. This clever use of the hook line allows the song as a musical category to evoke a discernible response from the body. Popular songs like Nach Baliye (*Bunty Aur Babli*), Dhoom Machale Dhoom (*Dhoom*), Mauja hi Mauja (*Jab We Met*) rely on the repetition of words or cluster of words and rhythmic patterns that is described as the hook line of the song. This metonymical formulation completely undermines the conventional structure of the film song thus opening up the song for an 'afterlife' for its circulation in the global circuits of

value and exchange. The repetitive use of the hook line through television promos and trailers, reality shows, award nights, ring tones and advertisements of mobile phones and telecom service providers, leads to obfuscation of the original song and its emotional appeal. In this new formulation the film song not only gets unhinged from the narrative of the film but is primarily meant to evoke a response from a dancing body.

In analysing Reality Television and talent shows based on music, one would like to draw attention to the democratisation where it is possible to have greater access to these technologies not just as consumers but in recreation of the musical mode. What is interesting here is that the accent here is not just on being a good singer but a great performer. The mobilization of a unique voice along with a great performance, an energetic dancing body, go into this new form of dispersal. The creation of a certain persona, with the help of props, dress, hats, belts, gestures and other visual signs create the uniqueness of each singer. So music is providing a basis for the creation of an identity. The emphasis is on showcasing 'your own voice' in sharp contrast to the earlier phase of remixes and cover versions which relied entirely on imitation or the recreation of an 'affect'. What is even more interesting is that there is a blurring of boundaries between music and dance, between the singer and the listener, between rehearsal and performance between sound and music and between voice and sound.

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Gates, Walls and the Loss of Common Ground by Joya John



Triveni: No Meetings –
Just Eat Pay n Go!



'Khud' A Former Rehearsal
Space



Locked out – no short
cut to NSD

We live in a world that has become increasingly paranoid about security. Terror is, however, also a ruse by which public space is being taken away from the public. The private security guard, underpaid and overworked, now monitors our entry into public spaces. Unknowingly he has become an agent of a new surveillance. He is trained to recognize the insider from the outsider. The identity card has become the new passport. A number of public spaces have slowly become off limits. The porous boundaries of spaces have now ceased to exist. Gates have closed citing security risks where earlier they were open.

The gate that divides the two largest post graduate women's hostels in Delhi University was closed citing thefts. The gate was earlier open from 9pm at night till 6 am in the morning allowing personal and cultural interaction between students. Often it is the very materiality of newly renovated spaces which has made the congregation of people impossible. The garden around the Vivekanand Statue, in the Arts Faculty, Delhi University is one such example. In the past this garden embodied dissent, it was a place where people congregated, sat and discussed while the imposing statue of Vivekanand looked on. When the garden was replaced by concrete, the same space has become a barren landscape, too hot to spend time in, perhaps adding new meanings to the taciturnity of the statue that looks on. Where concrete didn't work a garden did. The Shaheed Bhagat Singh Park, near ITO, has been enclosed. The park's proximity to all the major newspaper houses is probably one reason.

The aesthetic of new spaces is the *nature* that the metropolis now boasts of. Like the serenity of nature that reinforces that all is right with the world, we now look to our sanitized worlds to reinforce our new prosperity. The swish, hip interiors of public spaces, along with new gadgets for scrutinizing who enters, have a way of enforcing etiquette of social congregation. We congregate in cafes with music too

loud to carry on any conversation and the old places of community warn us that meetings are no longer permissible

(For old frequenters of the Triveni Canteen, which was the hub for cultural groups to meet and discuss, the notice banning meetings and discussions comes as some surprise. It has become increasingly difficult to find places to perform and rehearse for free. Inside Bahawalpur House precincts of The National School of Drama, the popular depression known as the 'Khud' has been filled up and perhaps by accident, or more likely by design, is now a dump for *malba*)

The writing on the wall both literally and metaphorically, in Delhi, is clear that someone wants its walls to speak the language that endorses the new world. Wall writing has become impossible. Within a night the walls are sanitized with a fresh coat of paint. For example, in Delhi University, there are now select places for putting up posters. Ironically they are called "Walls of Democracy". Our public walls speak to us. Who decides what gets said through them? A blank red brick wall tells us there are no stories to tell. An "ugly" wall talks to us, offends us, appeals to us and asks us to take positions.

The new public spaces are built on a new exclusivity. As soon as the old dhaba is replaced by a swanky new café, the prices on the menu go up. Renovation and up gradation in every public facility like a library or a hostel has necessarily meant beefing up security and exclusivity. Often enough, our demands for privacy or unhindered access to what we *pay for* has ensured that those less fortunate cannot access the same space. We are now spending less time with those whose ugliness might offend us. We don't need to see them anymore. The polished, glass surfaces of the new spaces are our new futures. Futures with no memory of the past, of community and of dissent.

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Fourth Asian Women's Film Festival 2008 showcased "Insights and Aspirations of Women" by Jai Chandiram



Madhushree Dutta's
'Scribbles on Akka'



Anupama Srinivasan's
'Everyday'

Inaugurating the two-day Fourth IAWRT Asian Women's Film Festival in New Delhi, Dr Vatsyayan, Chairperson of the India International Centre Asia Project said that the observance of the International Women's Day had both 'deep positive and negative messages' since it drew attention to the inequities among the genders even as it had the avowed objective of empowerment. She added that the documentary had the ripeness to highlight various important issues as it had the capacity to cheer and to disturb.

Eminent film critic and historian Aruna Vasudev, who is also founder President of the Network for Promotion of Asian Cinema (NETPAC), wondered whether the pronouncements made by political leaders on International Women's Day were mere lip service. She stressed the power of cinema to inspire people to make a change in society.

In her message read out on the occasion, Jocelyne Josiah of UNESCO said women still remained highly under-represented in all fields and this was of great concern to UNESCO. She called upon the media to let women handle the editorial content of the media on the International Women's Day tomorrow, a project that UNESCO has been supporting for the last eight years.

The International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT) has been organizing this Festival for the past four years. The aim was to celebrate the vision of women through film. The festival reflects how women film makers explore reflect, negotiate, resist and document self, family religion, political, social, cultural, environment. The IAWRT is presently concentrating on two projects, under the broad theme 'Violence and Women'. One project was on "Enforced Disappearances" and the struggle of Kashmiri women for human rights and the second on 'Trafficking of Women in Nepal, India and Bangladesh'.

Around 25 films from five countries were screened in the festival being held in collaboration with the IIC Asia Project

and UNESCO on the theme 'Insights and Aspirations'. They included features documentaries and animation films from UK, Japan, Pakistan, and the United States besides India.

The festival featured, "Mortality TV and the Loving Jihad by Paromita Vohra. The film looks outside the Breaking News and covers the complex dynamics of fear of love, scrutiny and control of women's mobility and sexuality and the feudal mindsets. "Lakshmi and Me" by Nishtha Jain explores her changing relationship with Lakshmi her part-time maid, "Word Within The Word" by Rajula Shah in her film shows how Kabir, the mystic poet resonates with ordinary lives today. Madhushree Dutta in her film "Scribbles on Akka" looks at the bhakti and rebellion of the 12th century poet Mahadevi Aka. Chandra Siddan enquires into her first marriage when she was a child and many more films that inspire.

Haruyo Kato captures her mother who is dying of cancer in her film . A film that that inspires as it challenges the ravages of the disease

Each screening was well attended by students from local media institutes and colleges .

The distinguished filmmaker Paromita Vohra revealed her approach to filmmaking , she said she opened up many windows so people can go in and out without being judgmental. Academics/ professionals spoke about their concerns in popular music culture and struggles in human rights . Truly an inspiring fare . Other filmmakers shared their experiences and discussed the emerging trends in documentaries.

Some of the underlying questions during the festival examined whether women are creating a new language of filmmaking, which reflects, and explores new politics of filmmaking, and how women are widening the frame for issues concerning women.

Overall, recognizing the critical need for a forum that can

sustain the form of documentary as well as women's contribution to this unique form, the festival showcased documentary films created by women, covering a range of genres and expressive styles.

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JANAM Commemorates Safdar's Martyrdom Day



Jan Natya Manch (Janam) remembers **Safdar Hashmi** on 1st January every year by performing in Sahibabad at the very same place, where he was assassinated on January 1, 1989 by goons of the ruling party. This year too the event was remembered .as a mark of defiance to the perpeturates of the crime. Moloysree, Safdar's Widow, Sudhanwa Deshpande along with Janam's actors performed *Sangharsh He Hai Rastaa* in a packed Ambedkar Park. The street play performances were interspersed with revolutionary songs Sung by Janam actors and composed by Kajol Ghosh. The event was supported by CITU whose volunteers controlled the massive crowds and provided background support.

CPM leader Brinda Karat, a former Janam activist, was also present on the occasion. The audience was very enthusiastic and cheered all the way. Sudhanwa's hilarious rendition of George Bush dressed as Uncle Sam in *One Two Ka Four* was greeted by guffaws from the audience. The play highlighted India's weak foreign policy while negotiating the Nuclear deal with USA and other related issues, Delhi Young Artists Forum did a street play *Dilli Door Hai* on the forthcoming Commonwealth games and its impact on unorganized sector workers of the National Capital Region of Delhi

Janam also organized a ***Gadar Mela*** to commemorate the **Indian Sepoy Mutiny** when in 1857 Indian soldiers killed their British officers and tried to expel the British from India. The format of a typical Diwali Mela was used to educate the visitors about this important event. Janam volunteers cooked the food themselves. The food stalls had rare delicacies like *Shakargandi ke Khire, Bajre key Tikki, Sattu ka Paan, Tapioca* and what not. There were games for children which included, Quiz Programs, Jigsaw and Crossword puzzles. There were kids events like Fancy Dress Parade. The Sahmat Exhibition was used to enlighten the young audience about the hard won independence.