DFG Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft

Philipps
Universität
Marburg

NECSUS

Breaking Bollywood: Moving pictures on mobile screens

Kuhu Tanvir

The history of cinema is replete with instances of anxiety and disavowal of new technologies by filmmakers, cinephiles, and scholars – be it the arrival of synced sound, the shift from black and white to colour, telecasting feature films, or more recently, the adoption of digital technology, particularly as an alternative to film stock. The rise in usage of cellphone screens to watch movies has similarly been met with equal parts hostility and celebration. Hollywood director David Lynch famously aimed his virulence against this trend in a video where he says, 'if you're playing the movie on a telephone, you will never, in a trillion years, experience the film. You will think you have experienced it, but you'll be cheated.' With rising frustration, he ends with, 'you think you've seen the film …? On your fucking telephone? Get real.'[1] Lynch's indignation does not appear to be anchored to any one aspect of cellphone screens, but rather in his perception of what an authentic film-viewing experience is, or should be. Moving past Lynch's didactics, this essay will engage with the relationship between the consumption of popular Hindi cinema and mobile devices, to examine the constant activity of transmediation, translation, and exchange by which films become compatible with the structure and function of the cellphone.

At stake here, is a consideration of the changes this has brought in viewing practices and the spectator's engagement with the film, to suggest that the cellphone needs to be studied as an entirely new medium that has a politics of engaging with the film object in its own unique way.

The association between cinema and mobile media has exploded in the last decade, but this realm is still expanding, with newer ways to access cinematic content on cellphones being advertised with every new smartphone. Scholarship on this association is however at a nascent stage and is largely focused on the consumption trends in a few Western countries, particularly with official content services like Netflix, Hulu, and HBO, to name just a few, expanding their database and making formidable forays into production of television shows and films. I would propose that examining the mobile media landscape of a country like India can enrich this research by introducing an entire spectrum of unofficial and essentially illegal means of accessing film content through cellphones. Piracy is a key player in the media terrain of several developing countries like India, Nigeria, Pakistan etc. (and some developed countries like China), and arguably alters the usual channels of circulation, complicating the market's control over the circuits of entertainment distribution.

Piracy is, in some ways, a logical outcome of the drive of globalisation, which is arguably defined by an expansion of access to a multinational market, its cultural objects, cutting-edge technology, and hyper-connectivity. The glitter of globalisation and its offerings remain largely out of reach for a significant part of the population of the global south. Massive class distinctions and a visibly uneven spread of the global market in India exemplify the contradictions of globalisation; what is important however is the way in which these contradictions co-exist, albeit not without conflict. Increasingly, the visual landscape of urban India is seeing a spread of spacious stores, enormous digital billboards advertising the biggest international brands, and yet, only a small minority of the population can afford the luxury of Nike shoes or Burberry perfumes. The matrix of globalisation, poverty, and aspiration has led to the creation of a copy-culture that encompasses production and circulation of counterfeit name-brand goods – clothes, shoes, watches, software, electronic devices, etc. – and a wide network of pirated media objects, in particular films and television content.

New Delhi's central Connaught Place area perfectly illustrates the co-existence of these two worlds: the visual landscape of the sprawling marketplace, marked in its architecture by India's history as a former British colony, is dominated by retail stores of nearly every international consumer goods brand, and Indian franchises of American fast food chains like McDonald's, Subway, and Starbucks; meanwhile, existing literally underneath the same area is Palika Bazaar, the underground shopping centre that is one of Delhi's

most well-known hubs for counterfeit goods, pirated software, and movies. Large sections of Delhi's population cannot afford the branded goods being sold above-ground, but a few steps down from that market is Palika, which offers them counterfeits that look almost as good, at a third of the price. In other words, the post-globalisation spread of piracy serves to undercut the language of innovation and legitimacy that frames discourses of economic and technological development. In India, the handy and incredibly adaptive nature of piracy or '*jugaad*' as it is called locally, is a significant though under-studied force in the landscape and discourse of technological innovation. Ravi Sundaram presents *jugaad* as a postcolonial condition, as he says,

> Postcolonial cities are vibrant hubs for new media productions, spurred on by a range of low-cost urban infrastructures, mobile telephony, video and digital technologies, and parallel, informal distribution circuits … Most city dwellers in India have grown up with the rhythm of technological irregularity, the ingenious search for solutions … Urban population (has) resorted to a combination of bypass solutions, illegal sourcing from the official infrastructure for some, and private and semi-private infrastructure for most. [2]

Media piracy in India functions at the intersection of access and affordability, and this nexus is as inscrutable as it is widespread, because of the varying kinds of piracies at play. It is not just that pirated versions of films circulate as pirated DVDs and illegal downloads, but there is a growing market for cheaply produced counterfeit devices to watch these films on. The cellphone has become one of the most popular devices to watch films on, with downloaded movies as well as counterfeit smartphones being readily available and of course remarkably cheaper than their legitimate counterparts. Sellers unequivocally state that watching movies and listening to film songs is one of the main features that buyers look for in phones. The format that has gained immense popularity in India is the Secure Digital or SD card, particularly for storing popular films and film songs that can then be watched on their phone. Since most Android phones have an SD card slot, while iPhones do not, it is not surprising that Android phones – both legitimate and knock-offs – have a significantly larger market share in the country (62%) compared to the iPhone (1%).[3] Some of the most popular phones in the counterfeit market are non-smart phones with two-inch screens, that cannot connect to the internet but have a slot for an SD card and have a built in video player. Internet speeds and services in India are still not available in several villages and even small towns in India, and where they are they are prohibitively expensive; as a result, streaming content (either legally or illegally) is not an option for a large

majority of cellphone users in the country. The inexpensive, handy solution to this is provided by independent sellers who sell SD cards and for an extra sum, load movies, songs, and TV shows on it. Users buy one SD card that costs approximately Rs. 400 (~$6) and get movies loaded at anything between Rs. 50 and 100 per movies ($0.75-1.5); once they have invested in an SD card, they just need to pay for the content. This is a massive difference of expenditure compared to both movie theatres that sell tickets for roughly Rs. 300 and internet data on cellphones that give you 1GB of data per day for Rs. 500.[4] The ability to access the content you want, anywhere, irrespective of data or signal availability is not just a hallmark of *jugaad* but is also central to acclimating mobile-viewing to the Indian condition. Thus, media piracy destabilises the legitimate market of cellphones and also the official circuits of film distribution. This pirate sphere is rarely a part of any census or official statistics, and yet it is a significant arbiter of popular visual culture in India.

If one end of the spectrum of cellphones as a significant force in the consumption of popular cinema is occupied by its economic affordances, the other is occupied by concerns for picture quality and by extension, the quality of the film viewing experience. In the following sections, I will examine screen size and mobility as two key factors that are unique to cellphones as screens to watch films on.

Small screens: Scale, quality, proximity

The Hindi film industry is still overwhelmingly dedicated to using 35mm film stock, as almost no major production house or director has adopted digital photography. The primary reason for this is linked to the perception of digital photography as relatively flat and therefore compromising the look of the star on the screen.[5] The quality of the filmic image stored on an SD card and viewed on the cellphone screen is often several generations removed from its 35mm depth and resolution, since it would be a copy of a copy at best. Attrition of image quality is in some ways a prerequisite of mobility, because the cellphone screen is most compatible with the film as a light file (in terms of size – MBs, GBs), since heavier files have more trouble streaming or can slow the phone down by using large percentages of its memory. That is to say, the film can only achieve mobility if the file is light enough, which is arguably the reason clips, songs, or other fragments of a film are more popular for watching on the mobile screen.

More significant here is the miniaturisation of the image; when the image is reduced in scale to fit the aspect ratio of the cellphone screen, there is a breakdown of its spectacle that was originally manufactured for a fifty-foot screen, now being watched on a five-inch screen. The effect of this degree of shrinking of the image can itself change the film in terms of what the viewer is able to see on the screen, with the smaller details all but lost. However, I would argue that in the consumption culture of pirated films on pirated phones, this aesthetic loss does not matter, because the primary concern is access, the ability to watch something on your cellphone. It is arguably more important that the device, while being dynamic enough to screen films, is also portable so that it allows you to take the film with you nearly anywhere. With pirated media in particular, the victory lies in cheating the system by either not paying anything to get access to a film, or paying a fraction of what it would cost to watch it in the movie theatre. Embedded in piracy is also the promise of nearly instant access in that you do not have to wait until the film is aired on a television channel, or has a DVD release, or comes on services like Netflix.

In 'In Defense of the Poor Image', Hito Steyerl astutely lays out a class-system with respect to circulation and reception of the image. For Steyerl, the class division of images is based on picture quality – is the image sharp, is it out of focus, is it high or low resolution. She says,

> In the class society of images, cinema takes on the role of a flagship store. In flagship stores high-end products are marketed in an upscale environment. More affordable derivatives of the same images circulate as DVDs, on broadcast television or online, as poor images. [6]

The proliferation of media piracy and all the forms it has taken over the years – VHS recordings, VCDs, DVDs, torrents, YouTube, etc. – has trained sections of the public to either know how to get pirated copies of films, or at the very least, to know where they can get it. This training or street knowledge has adjusted expectations of pirated content, so there is a conscious understanding that if you are being able to watch a film released today or yesterday on your phone, it has been surreptitiously recorded during a screening in the theatre. In other words, most people will know to expect a poorer quality image, yet, even while knowing that they are not going to get perfect resolution, viewers are enthusiastic about pirated films – because these films are in formats light enough to be accessible through their phones while they are commuting or at their jobs, or in bed. What the film on the phone loses in

picture quality, it gains in terms of access.[7] Insisting upon one ideal way to watch films becomes inadequate as a framework to understand the syntax of cinephilia that is nearly always emergent.

The depreciation of quality and aesthetic clarity is accompanied by a depreciation of value. On the one hand, there is the more obvious kind of value in monetary terms, and pirated media for cellphones is likely to cost less. On the other hand, however, is a more complex idea of value, occupied with the film as an artefact. The sheer mundanity of piracy today has meant that even the 'cult value' that Steyerl ascribes to the poor image has diluted.[8] Charles R. Acland submits that the diminishment of value is a symptom of the informality that characterises the mobile media era.[9] It is endlessly reproducible and can therefore have thousands of copies that are available everywhere nearly instantly and at an extremely low cost if not free. The miniaturisation of the image is therefore seen as a step towards the film becoming unremarkable. Instead of being an object with a history and a future, the film becomes 'crude ephemera' that is disposable like newspapers or brochures.[10] To be sure, 'crude ephemera' is not a reference to the quality or value of the content or information that any of these media have (or have had in the past), but rather a gesture towards how mundane and unexceptional it becomes. For instance, the spatial context of the movie theatre generates fanfare for every film, it makes going to the movies a singular event; however, by the time that film reaches the mobile phone, often through pirated means, not only has it lost its sheen quite literally, but it has become a file or a link that can be discarded without a thought. This does not mean that it is not wanted anymore, but rather, that it is endlessly available, perhaps precisely because it is wanted by a large number of people.

An integral part of this on-going depreciation of the aesthetic and monetary value of the film object is the possibility of viewers/users manipulating the wholeness of the film, wherein not only does the film lose its picture and sound quality but it also breaks down into parts like songs, significant dialogues, signature gestures by the stars, action scenes, scenes of intimacy, etc. The fragments that it breaks into however may be consumed for themselves, beyond the reception context of the film, but they do remain connected with the film in some capacity. Francesco Casetti and Sara Sampietro have famously referred to this resulting in 'pill-sized doses' of cinematic content, that leads to cinema 'un-cinematizing' itself.[11] To a great extent, un-cinematizing is akin to becoming unremarkable – the scale and grandeur that is ascribed to the film when it is on an IMAX screen or even a regular movie

theatre screen is undoubtedly altered when it is shrunk more than a 150x. As that image made for the big screen is adjusted for a 5.5 inch screen, it certainly becomes less grand, but is it in fact un-cinematized? The answer to that lies in the determination of what can be considered cinematic. I would argue that the scope of that definition needs to undergo alterations to encompass these newer forms and scales of accessing cinema.

The experience(s) of cinema: Screens, mobility, distraction

Other than the size of the screen and the picture quality, what distinguishes mobile phones as screens to watch films on from older media like the movie theatre, the television, and even the computer, is of course its mobility, and the capacity to offer entertainment on-the-go and on demand. A screen that moves with the spectator indicates a fundamental shift in the configuration of the viewer and the screen, wherein the screen was always fixed. It may seem naïve to ask, why do we need the screen to move, or what do we gain from the screen moving with us? In the first instance, the answer is obvious, because then you can take the film with you and watch it anytime. However, what that in turn means is that one can watch a film while doing something else as well. Gerard Goggin points out that content on cellphones is one part of the fabric of quotidian life, wherein it interweaves with 'the rhythms, routines, requirements and pleasures of everyday life'.[12] As much as this is reminiscent of both the promise and critique of television, particularly with reference to how it would affect film watching, the cellphone is much more intertwined, not just with other activities of everyday life, but also with other media activity and more specifically media activity on the phone.

For Juan M. Aguado and Inmaculada J. Martinez this is a turning point from a 'watching oriented logic' to a 'doing oriented logic'[13] which is a reflection on the kinds of acts or activities involved in watching on a device that is made for multitasking. Aguado and Martinez frame the doing-oriented logic in terms of what the mobile device itself allows one to do while watching content – using other apps to play, read, or browse the internet. I would argue that the doing-oriented logic also extends beyond the device encompassing the analog and the physical world as well. Perhaps the evidence that underscores the 'watching as doing' while the viewer is on the move is that mobile phones are now the most dominant devices that are used to pass time. On-the-go access theoretically allows viewers to watch films on their phones

while out of their houses and in spaces not designated as theatres. Bus-stops, stations, trains, public parks, restaurants, and coffee shops all become open and conducive to watching film content on individual screens. Jussi Parikka and Jaakko Suominen argued over ten years ago that one of the most prevalent uses of mobile media technology has been 'fulfilling the uncomfortable or dull moments for individuals using public transport'.[14] Commuting within the city or even longer travel is one of the points at which using mobile phones to kill time potentially replaces reading, which has been the mainstay of content consumed while travelling. Like the book that allowed the reader to tune out the rest of the world and concentrate on one thing, the mobile screen affords viewers a personal screen that they can retreat into. Nanna Verhoeff speaks of mobile screens as a protective barrier between the viewer who is looking into the screen and his surroundings. She says, 'screens can shield the spectatorfrom the vulnerability of visual engagement or liberate from the confines of a particular situation'.[15] The shield however is not an absolute protector, because being in a social space the viewer is not relieved from performing or being observed even while not actively engaging in conversation with those around him. The train or bus is thus a public space like the movie theatre, but its viewing conditions are decidedly different with more light and more permissible social interaction. If, as Charles Acland argues, conditions of viewing structure the correspondence between people and screens,[16] does that also mean that viewing conditions impact what people are watching on those screens? What this suggests is that the mobility of the screen also impacts the relationship that mobile screens engender between the viewer and the film content they are watching.

Casetti and Sampietro have argued that the seemingly safe, personal bubble created by the mobile phone is engendered from the physical relationship between the user and device, more than between the user and the content.[17] This is a significant shift, because, as they argue further, one of the biggest achievements of the iPhone as a screen is that it gives viewers unprecedented autonomy – an opportunity to curate their consumption practices. While the VHS was the first step in viewers having control by being able to pause, forward, and rewind the film and watch the bits they liked over and over again, while ignoring the rest, the degree of customisation or personalisation the cellphone allows is altogether different. I would add that the relationship with the device is also impacted by physical proximity, and the increased involvement with the device is a significant part of the genealogy of the screen; from the movie theatre, where you can be a hundred feet away

from the screen, to the television, where you interact with the apparatus to switch it on and off, and to change channels, but ultimately have to sit back, to the computer, where you are not just very close to the screen, but likely also using the device for other purposes, to the mobile phone. The constant physical proximity and contact with the cellphone is symbolised by the faded crease marks on men's jeans pockets where they habitually keep their cellphones.

Watching videos on their phones, viewers go from one to the next to the next, often not watching any until the end, thus fracturing the narrative of each film, and possibly even abandoning it. While this fragmentation may be a condition of capitalism, it is nevertheless indicative of a shift in the Aristotelian formula of textual pleasure in the perfect assembly of a plot that has a clear beginning, middle, and end; the spectator has discovered satisfaction in watching fragments of a film, or even in watching a film in short spurts. It is important to clarify that cherry-picking preferred parts of a film and watching fragments of a film does not suggest that the viewers do not engage with the content, or that they have no agency, or that this kind of narrative fracturing and fragmented viewing practice leads to the film becoming a video rather than a film. Instead, there is a shift in the singular hold the film theoretically and traditionally had, because within the framework of multitasking as offered by cellphones, the film could be one of several things a viewer/user is doing – it could well be the primary activity the viewer is engaged in, or it could be running in the background.

The fragmentation that comes with the film running in the background while the viewer is doing something else, or watching just one part of it over and over again, is not new, and has been possible since the arrival of VHS. What is relatively new is the fragment being watched for itself, independent of the narrative of the film, outside any stable location that is dedicated to viewing activity, like the theatre or the home. Further, it is crucial to note how much film viewing as an activity changes, or can change; if film viewing is one of many things a user is doing on their cellphone, then it is more than likely that the film would be experienced primarily as audio, because the screen would be occupied by the other task. Even though doing household chores, or homework, or even having a meal while watching a film on a television set has been common practice, the mobility of the cellphone can lend a degree of continuity in watching the film even while physically moving across spaces. There is, however, a crucial tension between continuity and

rupture here, which is not unlike the principle of continuity in the filmmaking process, wherein continuity works alongside the cut – it becomes necessary to think of creating the illusion of continuity precisely because of the cut between two shots. What this means in terms of mobile viewing is that watching film content on the move changes the dynamic between the film and the viewer, not just in terms of a fixed versus a viewer in motion, but also in that in this equation, mobility takes precedence over the singularity of the experience of watching a film, because once the viewer reaches their destination they will likely pause, if not abandon, the viewing experience. In other words, it is the duration of the journey that determines the length of that experience, not the duration of the film. The attempt to pick up the narrative where they left it is a kind of splicing of the narrative and the experience, by covering up or ignoring the physicality of the cut.

The nature of the fracture of experience, and the degree to which fractured viewing experiences have been normalised, are pivotal to understand the complex negotiations between fragmentation and continuity. The transience of streaming is all too evident with its dependence on the steadiness of the signal; in the developing world in particular, signal strength and steady availability regularly experiences fluctuation, interruptions, and failure. Further, there is a lack of control on the availability of content since it can be removed by the platform, service provider, or the uploader at any time. Theoretically, downloading content and storing it for offline usage is meant to lend notwithstanding its own inexplicable corruptions and failures. The suggestion here is that with movies on an SD card, or those copied and saved on the phone's own hard drive, the viewer can watch the film on the go, irrespective of signal availability and strength – there is thus the possibility of a continuous experience, insofar as it will not be interrupted by signal fluctuation. However, even those who watch films stored offline, watch in short spells, and are as prone to abandoning content at any point. The question therefore, is not if the SD card can lend continuity (in its traditional sense) to the film-watching experience, because the answer is an obvious yes; rather the question is, does it need to? I would suggest again the cellphone has introduced a kind of cinephilia that willingly takes to fragmented and incomplete ways of watching a film, accepting in its fold the spliced iteration of continuation. The increasing normalisation and acceptance of this form of continuity in watching a film gestures towards a need to reconfigure what constitutes the filmic event or the experience of watching a film. Addressing this change with suspicion and rejection, and fetishising the imagined purity

of the movie theatre is one of the oldest templates of responding to techno-logical changes; engendered by the grip of nostalgia, obscuring the epistemic shift in visual culture, wherein it is not just reception that is changing, but also the figurations of production, exhibition, and cinematic performance.

The multitasking made possible by cellphones is often their strongest sell-ing point, however, the kind of multitasking it enables also has strong detrac-tors. The same set of activities that some refer to as multitasking is termed distraction by others. Conscious multitasking is a kind of distraction that the viewer-user enters into willingly. The other kind of distraction emerges as a natural result of the structure and functioning of the cellphone. Elizabeth Ev-ans attributes increased distraction while watching something on the cell-phone (compared with watching television, the other kind of viewing that receives the charge of being distracted) to the size of the screen, because of all the unconnected activity that goes on around the person who is watching something on their phone screen. Evans suggests 'The small screen means that a large portion of the viewer's field of vision is taken up by their sur-roundings, not the content they want to be focusing on.'[18] All these distrac-tions in the visual (and indeed sonic) field, Evans suggests, make immersion into the content nearly impossible.[19] While this is physically and techni-cally accurate, evident in this statement is a disciplining impulse indicating in no uncertain terms that immersion is the ideal way to watch a film. Addi-tionally, since the conditions of viewing, the ready and consistent availability of data, the overwhelming distractions, do not allow the viewer an adequate degree of immersion, it is impossible to watch an entire film the way it *should* be watched.

An absolutely attentive audience that is immersed in the narrative that is on the big screen in a darkened theatre has been the elusive ideal that is prop-agated by filmmakers, actors, and cinephiles, and by the first wave of film theorists. Jean Louis Baudry's famous 'Le Dispositif' (1975-76) theorised the darkness of the movie theatre, postulating that the set-up of the darkened movie theatre works to 'envelop' the spectator by the images being projected on the screen, forcing him into a state of immobility. At the heart of Baudry's argument is the notion that the spectator's 'identification' with the images that envelop him is so overwhelming that 'the separation between one's own body and the exterior world is not well defined'.[20] Perfect lighting condi-tions and pristine picture quality are determining factors in the degree of immersion, since they create the ideal conditions for masking over the fic-tion of the film to make way for identifying with the images on screen. The

absolute nature of this argument has since been challenged even in the context of watching films in the movie theatre by scholars who have warned against overdetermination of the apparatus, bringing forth the problems in positioning it as a politically and culturally neutral device.[21]

Before the cellphone, television – and movies on television in particular – was on the receiving end of denunciation due to its situation in the distracted and distracting setting of living rooms. Even in India, where popular cinema was publicly derided, television was considered to be even lower in the hierarchy; cultural critic Amita Malik sneeringly remarked that movies on television can, at best, be 'a very poor relation of Bombay cinema'.[22] The recurring anxiety and condemnation of distracted viewing is ultimately evidence of the lasting impact of Apparatus Theory whereby only the darkened movie theatre with its perception of absolute attention can be said to have ideal viewing conditions that allow the viewer to get immersed into the world of the film. The scale of the IMAX screen, and the developments in multi-dimensional modes of watching films in movie theatres, clearly indicate that immersion is still being sold as a better way to watch films. I would argue however, that it is precisely these developments that signal the inherent instability of immersion as a quality determined by market forces, because with each technological advance immersion becomes harder to achieve. In other words, the very existence of the IMAX screen underscores the poverty of the regular cinemascope screen, particularly in terms of the kind and degree of immersion it can offer. Similarly, theatres offering 4DX screening technology wherein the movement on screen is simulated experientially with motion chairs, scents, drops of water, et cetera advertise their enhanced ability to pull the spectator into the movie.[23] What this means is that technological advancement has not abandoned the pursuit of immersion into the filmic image, but at the same time, there is a proliferation of all manner of cellphones as viewing devices that undercut the theoretical need and prescribed degree of immersion – and most viewers still embrace them as viewing devices.

Assessing viewing activity on the cellphone via the theoretical framework of Apparatus Theory is misguided and deeply ironic because multi-tasking and distraction are not accidental by-products of watching film content on a cellphone; instead, the interface of applications and websites that offer this content is designed from its very origin to give the user multiple suggestions for what to watch next, what to read in connection to what you are watching, what you can buy that is ever so tangentially related to the content on screen.

The simplest explanation for this is of course that the interface of every app and website is ultimately designed as a product to make a profit, because while we may have unprecedented access to film content, information, and goods, we are still firmly embedded in the networks of capitalism. While that is true, it may be productive to think about how this shapes practices of consuming popular culture. The numerous options available to us while watching one video not only offer other products, but also fragments of multiple narrative contexts. My intention here is not to debate degrees of immersion or ideal film viewing practices, it is instead to deliberate on the visual culture that has emerged as a result of watching film content on mobile phones. The question is then, is immersion still a quality that films aspire to? I would argue that the film changes in ways that make it more amenable to the viewing conditions of mobile phones, such that immersion in the classical sense loses its ideological stronghold and seems nearly extraneous. Fragmentation of the film text is central to this alteration and to diluting the need or even the possibility of immersion. If we are to imagine the film in its entirety being a stable object, then it is precisely this stability that has to be shattered for the film to become something that is more suitable for the mobile phone.

Conclusion: Once upon a film

Nearly all major production houses in the Hindi film industry are willing to adapt their film product in order to develop aspects of it that can only be consumed on a cellphone. There are of course social media tie-ups that work as promotional activity for a film, especially early in its run in the movie theatre; what is more significant however, is the opening up of a film text to pull parts of it and adapt them to suit cellphone usage. For instance, big budget films, particularly those with a major star (usually male), have started tying up with gaming companies like 99Games, Hungama Digital Media, and Gameshastra, to develop mobile games based on characters and plotlines of the film. This aspect of the Hindi film industry's alliance with the world of cellphones started gaining attention with mobile gaming apps for films like *Dhoom:3* (Acharya, 2013) and *Krrish 3* (Roshan, 2013). The *Dhoom: 3* game is a convenient amalgamation of animation based on visuals from the film and the basic principle behind the Temple Run game series. Another mobile game called Being SalMan is constructed around characters and plot-lines from three films starring Salman Khan. The player has the option to pick one

out of three Salman Khan films –*Dabangg* (Kashyap, 2010), *Ek Tha Tiger* (Khan, 2012), and *Sultan* (Zafar, 2016); the player takes the position of the protagonist (played by Khan in each of the movies), and like the protagonist, the aim is to protect the city, the lady, the country from whatever threat they face; players get outfits, weapons, and ammunition like the character in the film. The most surprising example of a film text being deconstructed to pick it for parts is the Android game Sholay: Bullets of Justice, based on one of Hindi cinema's most iconic films, *Sholay*, which was made in 1975. When the game was still being developed, Neeraj Roy of Hungama Digital Media said the game will take sequences from *Sholay* and give the film 'a whole new creative spin'.[24] Though *Sholay* is essentially a melodrama, the game developers took the fundamental mise-en-scene of the most action-oriented scenes from the movie and constructed the game around that. One of the landscapes that the game offers is based on the fight sequence on a train, which introduces the two protagonists. The visual design of the game has clearly been done with attention to the cinematic details from the film, and this level of the game is situated entirely on the train. However, other than the visual ambience, the setting of the train, and the two characters, the game does not retain any aspect of that sequence; in other words, the game developers picked a few elements from the film and fused it with the familiar design and tasks of games like Super Mario. The relationship between the game and the film is delicately complex, because the same game could technically be situated in any other landscape with any other characters, but what makes this game worthy of attention is that it is based on a legendary film. While this kind of adaptation is sure to have to its critics who would decry the desecration of an icon, ultimately, it is the fragments of *Sholay* that attract people to this game, but it is the 'creative spin', or the deft adaptation of those elements for the game, that would make the game worth playing.

At this point in the genealogy of film screens, the cellphone is the last stage on what Casetti and Sampietro refer to as the 'two-phase journey', according to which a film needs to have an 'intermediate' stop on a television screen or a computer screen before 'securely landing' on the mobile phone screen.[25] At stake in their argument is an adaptation – or relocation as they refer to it – not just of screen size, but relatedly of the expectations of what the changed experience will be like. When films were first shown on television, the comparison with the movie theatre was legitimate. Film content on mobile phones is more in competition with its closer predecessor – the desktop or laptop, because those also offer the possibility of multitasking. This is

a visual culture that plays offense with respect to the distractions that come with it; instead of shame because of its poor quality and distracted experience, it celebrates these features and presents them as its strength. Thus, even while Hindi film content, made for more traditional screens, dominates consumption on the mobile phone, these are not just additional screens, they constitute an entirely new medium, which, as John Kelly says, needs to be considered for their own properties and potential.[26] It is absolutely essential to underscore that these screens have not and will not in the near future replace all of the existing screens, but will instead coexist, offering multiple viewing possibilities.

Author

Kuhu Tanvir is the Andrew Mellon Predoctoral Fellow at the University of Pittsburgh in the Film and Media Studies Program. Her dissertation is tentatively titled 'Fragments of Film: Hindi Cinema on Small Screens'. Her scholarly interests include media piracy, film archives, mobile media, and early Indian television history. She has previously published papers in *Bio-Scope*, *South Asian Popular Culture*, and the *SARAI Reader 08: Fear*. Tanvir is one of the editors of *Wide Screen*, a journal of media studies.

References

Acland, C. 'Curtains, Carts and the Mobile Screen', *Screen*, Volume 50, Issue 1, March 2009: 148-166, https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/hjn071.

Aguado, J. and Martinez, I. 'Feeding Digital Omnivores: The Impact of Mobile Media in Digital Entertainment' in *Routledge companion to mobile media*, edited by G. Goggin and L. Hjorth. New York: Routledge, 2014.

Baudry, J-L. 'The Apparatus', *Camera Obscura*, Volume 1, Issue 1, 1976: 104-126, https://doi.org/10.1215/02705346-1-1_1-104.

Casetti, F. and Sampietro, S. 'With Eyes, With Hands: The Relocation of Cinema Into the iPhone' in *Moving data: The iPhone and the future of media*, edited by P. Snickars and P. Vonderau. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

Crary, J. 'Techniques of the Observer', *October*, Volume 45, Summer 1988: 3-35, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/779041.

Doane, M. 'The Spectatrix', *Camera Obscura*, Volume 7, Issues 2-3, 1989: 142-147, https://doi-org.pitt.idm.oclc.org/10.1215/02705346-7-2-3_20-21-142.

Evans, E. *Transmedia television: Audiences, new media and daily life*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Goggin, G. *Global mobile media*. London: Routledge, 2011.

Parikka, J. and Suominen, J. 'Victorian Snakes?Towards A Cultural History of Mobile Games and the Experience of Movement',*Game Studies*, Volume 6, Issue 1, 2006:http://gamestudies.org/0601/articles/parikka_suominen.

Steyerl, H. 'In Defense of the Poor Image',*E-flux Journal*, #10, 2009:http://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/.

Sundaram, R.*Pirate modernity: Delhi's media urbanism*. London: Routledge, 2010.

Tanvir, K. 'Through the Digital Peephole: LSD and the Grammar of Transparency',*South Asian Popular Culture*, Volume 13, Issue 1, 2015: 31-45,https://doi.org/10.1080/14746689.2015.1024593.

Notes

[1]   Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKiIroiCvZ0.

[2]   Sundaram 2010, p. 2.

[3]   Data accessed from http://gs.statcounter.com/os-market-share/all/india.

[4]   From: https://www.ndtv.com/business/airtels-prepaid-recharge-plans-rs-199-rs-399-rs-448-rs-509-packs-offer-1gb-daily-data-1801409.

[5]   Tanvir 2015.

[6]   Steyerl 2009.

[7]   Ibid.

[8]   Steyerl's use of 'cult value' was already a reversal of Walter Benjamin's famous conceptualisation of cult value; for Benjamin, the aura of the original constituted its cult value, which gets replaced with exhibition value by the process of mass reproduction. I am suggesting that at this stage in the genealogy of media piracy, the image has lost even the cult value that Steyerl ascribes to it.

[9]   Acland 2009.

[10]   Ibid., p. 150.

[11]   Francesco & Sampietro 2012, p. 26.

[12]   Goggin 2011, p. 84.

[13]   Aguado & Martinez 2014, p. 191.

[14]   Parikka & Suominen 2006 (unpaginated).

[15]   Verhoeff 2012, p. 14.

[16]   Acland 2009, p. 9.

[17]   Casetti & Sampietro 2012, p. 27.

[18]   Evans 2011, p. 142.

[19]   Ibid., p. 144.

[20]   Baudry 1976, p. 119.

[21]   Crary 1988; Doane 1989.

[22]   Malik 1976.

[23]   Regal cinemas has a commercial for 4DX on their website that underscores the experience of immersion that 4DX creates; here, the spectator appears to be part of the action of the film and

says the words 'I am in the movie'. Available at:https://www.regmovies.com/theaters/4dx(accessed on 17 May 2018).

[24] From https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/software/hindi-movie-based-games-turn-popular-in-mobile-app-stores/articleshow/26869624.cms?intenttarget=no.

[25] Casetti & Sampietro 2012.

[26] Kelly 2006, p. 69.