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Thirsty Youth playing at Ritz theatre near the Interstate Bus Station, New Delhi, India. Summer, 2005.
(Photo: Amit Kumar)

Outside Naaz (*Dignified*), a run down movie theatre in Bombay,¹ a hoarding reads Kaliyon Ka Chaman.² With its sexual connotations the title poorly translates as “young girls bodies.” Some thirty or forty men, a little tense and a little excited, on a Sunday evening hide from each other, making sure that any familiar faces do not see them. Entering the theatre I head for the restroom. In an unbearably stinking, dingy, and unsanitary toilet, I hold my nostrils until I am done with a short call of nature. Reaching the screening hall, I wait in one of the many empty and broken seats. A man, roughly sixty years old, turns in another seat, “jara dekhna bhai ye pankha band kyun hai, bijli nahi hai kya (Would you check why this fan is not working, is there no electricity)?” I go out and ask the theatre manager whom I have already befriended. He tells, “bijli bachani padti hai, aap chalo abhi chalu karata hun (We have to save electricity, you go, I’ll see).” The fan works by the time I reach for another broken seat. The oldie smiles, “garmi bahut hai (it is *hot*).” Suddenly, the celluloid screen exhibits the national anthem.³ I ask myself. Should I stand? I do not know why, but I do stand, with a few others in the cinema hall. After a minute, united we all sit, and wait, and wait, and wait for some *nudity*. Everyone involved with the “sleaze” film industry wipes off the pre-cum with the national flag. (Field notes, Bombay, June 2004)

Such an experience is commonplace in *special* Indian theatres.⁴ Almost every city and town in India has at least one such theatre that plays “sleaze” sexploitation films and thus acquires a social reputation identical to a brothel.⁵ The sleaze films that such a theatre plays, and the female actresses in those films, have a social reputation analogous to prostitutes who stand in the silver-screen, inviting, and to some extent gratifying, the Indian male audience. Almost one-fourth of the Hindi films circulating⁶ every year are the C-grade-sleaze films “meant for frontbenchers in small towns” (Gulzar, Nihalani, and Chatterjee 141). In Indian theatres, as far and high one sits with respect to screen, one pays more, and is classified as member of a “higher-better” class. In popular imagination “sleaze” films are for frontbenchers, for those who sit close to screen, in lower-stalls, and not for those who sit in upper-stalls or balconies.⁷ In short, the sleaze films are for a “lower-class.” This popular imagination not only hints to an economically lower-class audience but as well to a no-class-aka-lowbrow-taste.

The mainstream film industry in India also makes sex-based films,⁸ but, popular discourses degrade the ultra-low-budget-starless-sex-based films as sleaze, XXX, adult, soft-porn, B, C, and Z grade.⁹ Social reputation of the sleaze films, and of the people - producers, distributors, theatre owners, and audience - associated with the sleaze films, successfully motivates me to title my object of study, “The Lower-Stall: A Sleaze-Sex

Film Industry in India.” Embracing an already “normalized” term - *Sleaze* - my research takes a holistic approach and exposes the construction of a low-class status in exhibition, audience, distribution, and production. However, in this essay, the first task at hand is to recognize, categorize, and demarcate an industry that is rampant in its scale of circulation, and yet, is completely marginalized by popular media, and scholarly studies on Indian cinema.

In an attempt to broaden the periphery of film-studies and “clean” histories on Indian cinema, I propose to include a “sleaze” study. In wake of cultural studies, some outstanding scholarships on Indian cinema have focused on film as a political and cultural document. Primary interests have been the issues of national identity, tradition versus modernization, post-colonialism, gender, censorship, and the “uniqueness” of Indian cinema. These stories on Indian cinema have either focused on “art” or “culture.” Indian cinema has been generalized and categorized broadly as Popular cinema (Bollywood), Art cinema (New Indian cinema) and somewhere in between (Middle cinema). Regional film industries have also been discussed using similar paradigms. I choose to call all these categories *mainstream*, in an attempt to locate *sleaze as the other* that is pushed aside and let to live in the margins. Mainstream films have dominated the film studies on Indian cinema, just like any other national cinema. The sleaze industry asks that the definition of Indian culture as purported by Indian film studies be broadened. My research seeks to extend this definition to better understand the role of cinema in everyday life of India, and more precisely, in the life of Indians who live in the interiors of the country, in smaller towns, and in the margins of the big cities. In an Indian context, this study on the sleaze industry raises questions and provides starting points to some alternative ways of looking at the theories and issues of spectatorship, cinema of attraction/narration, visual pleasure, public and private space, censorship, authorship, and art/aesthetics. Using ethnographic and reception studies approaches I researched this sleaze industry spending two summers in India. I interviewed a number of theatre owners, distributors, and filmgoers. I studied the local publicity and participated in a number of screenings in the theatres where these films are played. I also researched in the National Film Archive of India (NFAI) in Pune where the trade magazines were the only available source on the sleaze films. For NFAI, these films are “aesthetically-trash”

beyond any artistic or social significance. For the press, they are “commercially-trash” with insignificant producing agents and production values. Sleaze is a huge industry in terms of the quantity of films circulated each year, and in its national pervasiveness in terms of the exhibition centers. Just by the nature of its “quantity,” it deserves categorization, discussion, and attention. “Quality” is a matter of taste, and I will reveal how modes of production, exhibition, and circulation define the quality, and play a central role in the process of “othering.”

My ongoing project can be considered as a revisionist history, an addition to the stories on Indian cinema, a “bad” story, along the lines of Eric Schafer’s A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959,¹⁰ but in the Indian context. Linda Williams’ work involves looking at a large number of “body” films; spectatorship via the film-text is central to Hardcore.¹¹ However, like Jancovich, Faire, and Stubbings in The Place of the Audience,¹² my approach moves from spectatorship to film-consumption, from the object-of-viewing to the context-of-viewing and to *the place of the audience*. At some point in my research, I will do “readings” of the sleaze-sex films, but in this study the text holds importance only after traversing the context.

Now, I will map out five tangible ways in which the sleaze-sex film industry is different, and stands as an alternative to the mainstream film industry in India. These are: the theatres, the audience, the publicity, the distribution, and the films. But, before I do that I want to highlight one important feature about the sleaze-sex film industry, and that is, pornography is illegal in India. The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), a state run regulatory body, censors and certifies the films that can be exhibited in India. The CBFC do not have any separate guidelines or category for the sex films. It certifies all films under broad umbrellas of U (theme and treatment suitable for family viewing including children), UA (whether any child below the age of twelve may be allowed to see the film should be considered by the parents), and A (thematically or treatment wise the film will be adult oriented; it is illegal to take children to adult movies).¹³ The sleaze films advertise the forbidden spectacle of sex to the spectators, yet at the time of exhibition, sexual depiction might not be any more in the sleaze films than the mainstream films. However, the CBFC laws are flouted in innumerable cases and

pornographic “bits” find space in the sleaze-sex films. I will discuss this later, for right now, let’s go to the theatres.

I. Theatres the Brothels

The sleaze films are played in special theatres: dilapidated partially ruined exhibition centers. Seats are “wooden” and broken, restrooms are unsanitary, and projection facilities are so poor that even a “quality” print can end up looking bad. The working staff is small. In many cases one man multi-tasks as both manager and gatekeeper. The quality of *intermission* refreshments is unhygienic.¹⁴ A fascinating exhibition feature that exposes the pervasiveness of the sleaze film industry is that almost every city and town that has cinema theatres in India has at least one theatre that specifically caters to the sleaze films. Such theatres have the reputation of “brothels” in a society that despises the prostitute-films, and also despises the men who visit these “cheap” places to quench their “lust.” These brothel-theatres are usually located near areas of floating and mobile population near bus stands and railway stations. Some examples are Ritz in Delhi, Alankar and Maya Palace in Muzaffarnagar, and Jagat in Meerut. This practice is analogous to the fact that many prostitution centers in India are around the areas of floating population.

Pendakur sketches the distributors’ classification of theatres based on their marketability:

Distributors in India classify theatres based on their location and grossing capacity. Generally speaking, big cities such as Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Bangalore, Madras, and Hyderabad are classified “A” centers; medium-sized cities with populations over 100,000 are “B” centers, and small towns are “C” centers. (17)

Pendakur further explains, “Within a metropolitan center, theatres that are located on the fringes of the city do not get treated as A centers” (38). This classification provides a pretext for the terms “B and C grade” used synonymously for the sleaze films because these films are only circulated in the B and C centers. Noteworthy is that India has about 12000 theatres (approximately 9000 permanent and 3000 itinerant),¹⁵ and the big-budget Bollywood films each releases around 300-500 prints with an eye on the A centers. B and C centers have to wait for months before they can have a mainstream release, and by that time, under rampant piracy, the mainstream films lose most of their appeal with the

audience in small towns. In small towns, besides the theatres' run down condition and piracy-effects, cultural conditions and more "traditional" gender roles keep most women and families away from the theatres that play mainstream "family films." Every center, even big cities, has theatres (like Ritz and Moti in Delhi, Naaz in Bombay) that do not have the purchasing power for the mainstream films. And hence such theatres have to survive on "other" films: primarily sleaze films, and secondarily, old films (sometimes with original titles changed to give a new life). Also, theatres that have a poor grossing capacity are always in danger of falling into the sleaze category. In recent years, many theatres lost their high-class status to the sleaze industry. I remember, in 1994, Alankar theatre in Muzaffarnagar (a small town about 120 Kilometers from Delhi) played Hum Aapke Hai Kaun..! (Who am I to you..!, Sooraj Barjatya 1994) for a record-breaking run. It was one of the top-grosser "family films" in the nineties, and families in Muzaffarnagar thronged Alankar to watch it. In 2005, the same theatre has "fallen" into playing the sleaze for the men-only audience with lower prices than it was charging in 1994. A theatre that fits the low-class description can at anytime turn into a brothel-theatre. Different social groups experienced Alankar differently, and it has changed over a period of time, exemplifying Jancovich, Fair, and Stubbings' argument:

...places cannot be seen to have single, unitary *identities*. They are inevitably composed of internal conflicts and contradictions, and hence there are competing meanings and definitions of any place as different social groups *struggle* over it. In other words, any place will be experienced differently by different social groups and will inevitably change over time.
(Italics mine, 16-17)

Noteworthy is that the *identity* of the sleaze theatres defines a unique identity and provides a sleazier life to "art/auteur" films such as Bandit Queen (Shekhar Kapur 1994), Fire (Deepa Mehta 1996), and Kamasutra - A Tale of Love (Mira Nair 1996), and also to the mainstream-sex films such as Masti (Fun, Indra Kumar 2004), Murder (Anurag Basu 2004), and Hawas (Lust, Karan Razdan 2004). Also, Hindu fundamentalists and high-morality religious groups have often *struggled* over theatrical spaces.¹⁶ A case example is of Mathura city, located approximately 50 kilometers north of Agra, and south of Delhi. Mathura is the reputed birthplace of Lord Krishna, hence an important center for the Hindu fundamentalists. There are no theatres in Mathura that *can* play the sex based films. Whenever it has been tried the fundamentalist groups have created havoc and

disturbed the “order” of the city. The local district magistrate has sent letters to the theatre owners warning them against playing the sex films in the city of God.¹⁷

The sleaze-exhibition practices breaks away from the mainstream-exhibition practices in several ways. In big cities like Delhi, the mainstream films cost 50-70 Indian National Rupees (INR),¹⁸ while in the sleaze-theatres the tickets range between 20-40 INR. In smaller centers, the mainstream films cost around 20-50 INR, while the sleaze-theaters entertain at 10-30 INR. Smaller towns and lower-stalls are “cheaper.” The price for the sleaze films also complements the length of these films (about 60-120 min. in comparison to about 160 min. running time of Bollywood films). Usually, single-screen mainstream theatres play four shows a day, roughly at 12 noon, 3 pm, 6 pm, and 9 pm. The shorter length of the sleaze-films allows the sleaze-theatres to run more than four shows daily.¹⁹ Also, some mainstream theatres run the sleaze films in *morning-shows* (10 am-12 noon). After noon, the “regular” films can play. In northern India (and other parts of India as well), mainstream theatres that are not-yet-ready to give up their mainstream status, have once a day, taken leave from that status in playing “separate-shows” for the sleaze-films to make extra cash. The practice of “separate-shows” is an important feature in the exhibition of the sleaze films and it reveals the changing identity of a space at different times on the same day.

There is a string of cinema halls in Kerala (as could be the case elsewhere), which mostly or at times only shows *these* kinds of films. An instance is of a cinema hall called Crown in Calicut where to be seen during the 12 noon and 2 pm shows was considered to be a shame and to be seen during 4 pm, 6 pm and 9 pm shows was a matter of pride. This was because it was understood that sleazy soft porn is shown in Crown for the two early shows and that the Hollywood classics were shown for the evening shows. (Italics mine, Radhakrishnan, unpublished essay)

The sleaze-shows are *fluid*, as the pornographic “bits” might/might not be added. A sleaze film can become a different film in the next show, or on a different day, depending on what can be shown based on the “local-conditions.” The audience might leave the theatre dissatisfied and exploited. They say, “kuch bhi nahi tha yar (There was nothing in it).” But on getting “some good stuff” the expression might change to, “bees rupye main aur kya loge, ab to aur jo bhi mile vo bonus hai (What more do you want in twenty rupees, whatever comes next will be a bonus).”²⁰ The censorship violation of

adding “bits” thrives in the B and C centers, “According to the [censor] board’s statistics for last year, all but two of the 57 recorded incidents of contravention took place in small communities” (BBC News, 8 February 2001). Regulating agencies receive complaints, raid the theatres, and do on-the-spot checks. “Sources” inform the exhibitors prior to the raids, and in case they miss, theatres’ licenses are suspended and film prints are seized.²¹ On being questioned about pornographic “bits,” the exhibitors blame the distributors who blame the producers who in turn blame the distributors and the exhibitors. However, the local authorities get their “share” and the business runs barring a few incidents here and there.

Due to rampant piracy, lesser disposable income of the audience, and rare families/women audience, the B and C centers’ exhibitors find it more rational to keep the theatres in a poor state and play the sleaze films. For these second and third run theatres’ owners, renovating the theatre and buying a new projection system for the mainstream films is not a good business decision. The sleaze theatres’ worn-out condition, poor audio-visual projection systems, broken wooden seats, slow fans, and stinking unsanitary restrooms demonstrate the *classification* of the public-theatres.

II. The low-class “uncivilized” men-only audience

Gender, class status, and the expectations and behaviors of the sleaze film audience demarcate it from the mainstream audience. Social conditions segregate the sleaze theatre spaces by gender: only male audience goes to the theatre that plays sleaze films. The social “image” of Indian women is reproduced via Indian popular cinema, that is, in dichotomies. One image is of the mainstream woman: a desexualized mother, a sister/daughter, a domestic wife; the Sita/Sati/Savitri.²² The “other” image is of a sexualized courtesan, a prostitute, a vamp, a modern/bad girl. The brothel-theatres are not safe places for the mainstream woman, and by “nature,” if a woman is seen in these spaces she is labeled as the “other-prostitute” (also true for the actresses on the screen).²³ These spaces are not safe for women; hence, they are not family spaces. Even for men, telling the family about watching a sex-film is not the norm. Further, the men want to make sure that no close relative sees them in and around the sleaze-theatres. To watch sleaze-sex films, they make trivial excuses such as “time-pass” and “sex-education.”

About 75% of the Indian population lives in rural areas; the B and C centers of film exhibition provide access to cinema for this audience. Here I do not look for a Marxian (ownership based), Weberian (skill, education, race based), or any other unified class definition. What is important is that this audience derives a low-class-status based on certain parameters in the popular imagination: rural, lesser-wealth, lesser-educated, non-intellectual, non-modern, laborers, menial workers. The majority of the actual audience consists of economically poor workingmen, and, school and college boys. But there are variations that do not fit into the popular imagination, and also, the audience comes from every caste and community.

An important feature of the sleaze-audience is its lack of economic capacity to live in a private space. Porn films and clips are available on VCDs, DVDs, and the Internet. Economically poor social groups with limited disposable income live in small houses and joint families. In small towns, more people live in joint families. The sleaze films can be seen as a way of gaining access to a private space via a public space.²⁴ This audience does have access and purchasing capability to “porn-in-the-home” (TV and cable/video/VCD/DVD). But the lack of a private space, and the lack of private time in a private space, makes the “sex-theatres” an easier and cheaper choice.

The sleaze-audience and its behaviors and expectations draw certain analogies with the early cinema audience (and the sleaze cinema in many ways with the early cinema). The audience is more vocal - talking, hooting, and groaning - than the “cultured” audience of the “upper-stall” mainstream cinema. They get increasingly restless if the *wait* for the sexual spectacle is longer. They make noises, and sometimes break the seats to make their “needs” clear to the projectionist-exhibitionist. In few cases, the theatre manager has to stop the show completely, or for a while, until the audience calms down. This audience is not looking for narrative, but attractions, a sexual spectacle, which can come from a completely different narrative or non-narrative (in the case of addition of pornographic “bits”). These men ridicule a film’s attempt to impart a moral lesson; they just wait for the “scene.”

III. A Local Publicity

The unique selling point of the sleaze industry is sex and this is made clear through the way the sleaze films are publicized. The publicity promises and exploits the desire for watching sexual images.

Publicity for a mainstream film is included in the film's budget. With the help of the spicy elements of Indian popular cinema - stars, music, thrills, actions, spectacles, and a "different" story - the mainstream producers extensively uses media to publicize their films. The publicity campaign is centralized and includes press articles, star promotions, and interviews with the cast and crew. The mainstream films' music, song and dance sequences, and trailers play on TV for months. On the other hand, publicity for the sleaze films is a responsibility of the distributors, and in many cases, the theatre owners. And they cannot "afford" lavish publicity - both for the budgetary constraints, and the legal/moral problems. The only marketability for their publicity is the "promise of porn."

I wouldn't agree on the fact that we only show sex, in my view the mainline cinema shows, more sex compared to what we do, but I will agree that we do show obscenity when it comes to publicity of our films. (Harinam Singh, a sleaze film producer qtd. by Bhatt)

With no centralized campaign, no identifiable stars, and a low-budget publicity, the sleaze film industry has unique advertising practices that distinguish it from the publicity of the mainstream films. The publicity of a sleaze film is local and concentrates only in the town where it is playing and mostly around the sleaze-theatres. The publicity mainly depends on wall-posters and the self-explanatory enticing titles of the sleaze films. Some "promising" titles from recent films are Youth is Fun, Dangerous Desire, Market of Love, Lust and Desire, Open Door, Behind the Blouse, My Wife's Husband, Businessman of Beauties, Night Queen, Lust, Desirous Woman, Beauty in Your Hands, Seven Virgin Girls, Rented Wife, All that I Have is Yours, Colorful Body, Thirsty Woman, and Let Beauty Remain Veiled.²⁵ A sleaze title also suggests the secondary theme of the sleaze-sex films. Horror: Thirsty Vamp, Midnight Devil, Ghost House, Murderer Vamp, Virgin Vamp; Incestuous undertones: Wife Lame Sister-in-Law Game, Sister-in-Law in the House Means Revelry; Kamasutra or sex-education: Kamadev (God of Sex), Kama-Kariya (Sex-Performance), Kamasutra, French Kamasutra, Korean Kamasutra, Body and Kamasutra. Street walls close to the sleaze-theatres display the "suggestive" posters. A

sleaze film lacks stars and popular music but it does not lack the identification provided by the genre of “sex-cinema.” The fact that these films play in special theatres also works hand-in-hand with the local publicity, as men know where to go. In some cases, one or two small-classified type advertisements can also be noticed in the local newspapers.

Like the sleaze films, the publicity of sleaze films perturbs the morality-activists. Display of “vulgar” posters is a legal offence.

A member of the CBFC admitted that some of the distributors in association with the exhibitors and producers sometimes prepared separate posters on their own, circumventing all checks to meet their commercial ends. (Kappan)

“Obscene/Indecent” posters and titles have been a problem issue for the CBFC, and the upholders of morality. The CBFC guidelines regarding “obscenity/indecency” apply to the titles of films as well. Also, “The Cinematograph Act does not directly cover obscene posters (sic) and these come under the common law of the land relating to obscenity, particularly section 292 of the Indian Penal Code” (CBFC).²⁶ The sleaze films’ posters have often been torn apart and burnt by local high-moral religious groups.



An example of a *Title-poster* on a street wall in Meerut: “When night tortures, then I think of... Juicy Lover. Only for Adults.” (Photo: Amit Kumar)

To avoid legal and moral problems, another publicity strategy unique to the sleaze films is the use of the “written-word” in the posters more than the “visual-image.” The *Title-posters* with one-liners and no graphics becomes a kind of unique symbol, a logo, to recognize the sleaze films. They help avoid problems with the authorities, save printing

costs, differentiate from the mainstream posters, allude to sex, and rely on the fantasy of the viewer that what cannot be displayed on the streets because of its “nature” might be available in the darkness of the theatre. The “Adults Only” (A) tag is also promoted on the sleaze films’ posters; on the contrary, the mainstream films do not promote it to gather a family audience. Lines like “finally censored” also helps the sleaze publicity to arouse the interest of the audience.

Changing the original titles for re-release is also a practice associated with the sleaze-sex films (and also with the old Hindi films). The CBFC states that, “After certification, normally a title cannot be changed unless the Regional Officer is satisfied that there is very genuine reason for change of title. Even here, titles cannot be changed for a film which has already been released in a theatre.”²⁷ Under these CBFC restrictions, in some cases, the title is *legally* not changed, but the film is publicized in a way that the new and more arousing title takes the center place in the posters, while the original certified title is left out in the margins.



A poster in the theatre lobby of Heera in Agra. (Photo: Amit Kumar)

Once inside a sleaze theatre, the stills/posters of the upcoming films and the trailers are important publicity tools. Men “gaze” in the glass-windows, and in front of the posters pasted in the lobby of the sleaze-theatres. The trailer of an upcoming film works as a dual-publicity campaign. It not only promotes the upcoming film, but also

becomes an important part of the overall show, of the overall attraction provided in a particular screening. Most trailers are explicit in their pornographic content and usually more explicit than the actual content in the films. “We do not know what actual film might have but the trailer shows all. Do not miss the trailer, we can talk later,” a theatre manager/gatekeeper told me.²⁸ The audience makes sure to watch the trailers. Contrary to the trailers of the mainstream films, showing the “main-content” is the key. The “promise of more skin” brings the audience back to the theatre. Trailers also require the censor certificate, which is flouted in innumerable cases.

IV. A Small Distribution: Any Origin. Any Time.

Like the producers and the exhibitors, the distributors of the sleaze films are small operators who do not have ostentatious establishments. The distribution of the sleaze films takes place primarily in two ways: the exhibitors go to the distributors or the distributors go to the exhibitors. In the first case, in the lower-revenue-centers, the exhibitors send their agents to procure films who visit many distributors during one trip to the “distribution market” to make *the best deal*.

Film distribution in India is largely disorganized. Most operations are “father-son” shops with skeletal staff. Each circuit [mainly 11 circuits] has one major market in one major city, in which most of the activity is concentrated – Lamington road in Mumbai, Chandni Chowk in Delhi, and Mandi road in Jalandhar. This is to facilitate easy interaction between distributor and exhibitors, especially those from other towns, who can visit many distributors during one trip to the “market.” Other ancillary services such as poster printers and cinema equipment suppliers also tend to function from this one locality. (Gulzar, Nihalani, and Chatterjee 148)

Usually the “deal” in case of the sleaze films is made on *Minimum Guarantee* (MG) or *Fixed Hire* (FH), though the exhibitors often demand *Theatre Hire* (TH) or at least a *Theatre Protection* (TP). In MG, the exhibitor guarantees the distributor a minimum amount, but if the collection exceeds a pre-decided figure, the two share the additional box-office collection. In FH, the exhibitor pays a fixed amount to the distributor for a fixed run, irrespective of the box-office collection (Gulzar, Nihalani, and Chatterjee 151, for TH and TP see the footnote).²⁹

In the second kind of distribution practice, in some relatively higher-revenue-centers, the distributors send their agents to the sleaze-exhibitor and the “deal” is usually

made on MG. The distributors send a representative, a middleman, an agent who hangs around the theatre while a sleaze film is screened. This helps the distributor in two ways. One, the distributor is roughly aware of the box-office revenue so that the exhibitor can not make an “extra-cut” (Tax-evasion is rampant in the small towns. The exhibitors underreport the actual tickets sold, and the number of shows per day. They make the “extra-cut” from the government, and also from the distributors).³⁰ Second, if there is any “small legal problem” with the local authorities, the middleman can outwit (bribe) it, and inform the distributor to “get ready.”



A worker ready with the prints and posters in the Chandni Chowk film distributor's bazaar in Delhi.
(Photo: Amit Kumar)

A distributor who buys the sleaze films usually throws the producer out of the picture, once and for all, by buying a film in *Outright Sales* for the “life time rights.”³¹ He pays a one-time amount to the producer and does not have to share any box-office collection with the producer.³² As sleaze films do not have a good video market, the distributor tries to make the most out of the theatrical exhibition.³³ Bad quality and worn-down prints do not deter the distributors or the exhibitors of the sleaze films. In contrast to the mainstream distribution, distributors of the sleaze films release relatively very few prints at any given time, and the same prints travel in a cycle all over the country. For the mainstream industry, the reason for having a larger number of prints is to fight piracy and to get the maximum benefit out of the centralized publicity campaign at the time of first release. But the sleaze films do not face problems like piracy and a centralized publicity.

The sleaze films remain in release for several years. The norm is to get the maximum out of every print cost, and use the print until it tears apart.

The sleaze films are also distributed over and over again with alternative titles. *Any specific film-text* in itself does not hold much importance. No matter how “good” a sleaze film is, in most cases, it is taken off the theatres in a week. In few cases, the sleaze films are taken off the theatres after playing two or three days, which is very rare in case of the mainstream films. The sleaze-audience does not choose any specific film in advance, they just go to the sleaze-theatre; the “content” these men are looking for is the same.

The sleaze-distributors pick films of any origin: foreign, Hindi, and south Indian. The film should have the “required elements.” Hollywood films and foreign films have never been able to compete with Bollywood, but in case of the sleaze films, the foreign films/bodies are in more demand, and do better business. Like the origin, the *oldness* of the sleaze films does not deter the distributors as long as sexual images are promised. In June 2005, Naaz theatre in Bombay was playing Felicity (John D. Lamond 1980), made in Australia and dubbed in Hindi as Kaliyon Ka Chaman (Young Girls Bodies).

V. A Low-Budget Sex

The promise of sexual depiction is at the core of the sleaze films. The primary subject is sex, a subject forbidden in public places in India. Public display of sexuality is against the law and sexual morality of India. In a recent example, “An Israeli couple was fined 1,000 rupees (\$23) after an Indian court found them guilty of obscenity for kissing during their marriage ceremony in a Hindu pilgrim town.”³⁴ On the other hand, the Indian film industry has applauded, and made full use of a recent “liberal” attitude of the CBFC in allowing on-screen kissing.³⁵ The sleaze films make spectacle of a taboo subject - sex - to draw attention and audience. The plots and narratives are structured, and attractions thrown in, to display women bodies for sexual gratification of the male-only-audience.

However, the mainstream films encounter sex implicitly in sublimation of “romance,” and, in song-and-dance sequences that stand for sexual intercourse in Indian cinema. Also, the mainstream films have always dealt with sexual subjects in oblique fashion, and sometimes in the sex-as-central-theme-films. There has been a recent urge in

mainstream cinema to cater for the sexual interest of the Indian audience with sex-as-unique-selling-point films like Ek Choti Si Love Story (A Small Love Story, Shashilal Nair 2002), Jism (Body, Amit Saxena 2003), Murder (Anurag Basu 2004), Khwaish (Desire, Govind Menon 2003), and Hawas (Lust, Karan Razdan 2004). The less-sleazier reputation of the mainstream-sex films than the sleaze-sex films is derived from their comparatively higher production-values and better-known faces (cast and crew); and also, their advertising, distribution, and exhibition practices that are more slanted towards the mainstream cinema. However, some of the mainstream-sex films eventually take on a lower-stall-sleaze-sex-film life when exhibited, and advertised, in and around the “sex-theatres.” Different circulation practices, and different physical spaces of exhibition, impart a different life and reputation to a film.

The sleaze-sex films differentiate themselves from the mainstream-sex films by their ultra-low-budgets and low-production-values. The cast, costumes, sets, and locations are not of high “quality.” Art direction and the dress designer are usually not required. These films do not require many locations and certainly not the picturesque ones. A house, few rooms, one pool, and a park are usually adequate. The quality of stock, camerawork, editing, and sound is “low-class” - a product of the mode of production (labor force, means of production, finances) specific to this industry. Small, independent, anonymous operators, and some fly-by-night producers, with a dilapidated star cast, with less-classier-girls-and-aunts, and with an anonymous crew, make the sleaze films. And these makers of sleaze want to remain “anonymous” for obvious reasons. However, keeping a low profile would not be the case with the mainstream producers/cast/crew. The imported foreign films that cater for the sleaze market are also low-production value films. A certain low-budget sex is cruder and sleazier than a high-class-mainstream sex.

After defining the *otherness* in exhibition, audience, publicity, distribution, and production of the lower-stall-sleaze-sex film industry, it is important to explain where the sleaze films stand vis-à-vis *pornography*, and, what is legitimate/illegitimate in the sleaze films in terms of the state law executed via the Central Board of Film Certification

(CBFC).³⁶ In the process, I reveal problems in defining this industry using parameters of pornography and using the censor rating system.

Art Versus Porn/ Mainstream Versus Sleaze

Pornography is illegal in India. The CBFC guidelines disapprove of “visuals/words that offend human sensibilities by vulgarity, obscenity or depravity; such dual meaning words that obviously cater to baser instincts; scenes degrading or denigrating women in any manner; scenes involving sexual violence against women like attempt to rape, rape or any form of molestation or scenes of a similar nature; and scenes showing sexual perversions.” However, “if any such incidence is germane to the theme, they shall be reduced to the minimum and no *details* are shown” (Italics mine, CBFC).³⁷ Details: exposed breasts, buttocks, and genitals cannot pass through the CBFC, a state run regulatory body that formally decides what can be seen on the silver-screen in India. Bose quotes that the CBFC, in 1993, made some additions in the guidelines in an attempt to clear the confusion between “art and pornography” (143). I select a few worth mentioning additions to the objectionable-visual: “selectively exposing a woman’s anatomy; double meaning dialogues referring to a woman’s anatomy; simulation of sexual movements; man and woman in close proximity to each other, or one over the other, and making below-the-waist jerks suggesting copulation; pelvic jerks, breast swinging, hip jerks, man and woman mounting each other, rolling together, rubbing a woman’s body from breast to thighs, hitting/rubbing man with breasts, sitting on each others thighs and waist with entwined legs, lifting and peeping into a woman’s skirt, squeezing woman’s navel and waist; vulgar kissing on breasts, navel, buttocks, and upper parts of thighs; and women being disrobed” (143-144). What is not approved by the CBFC is illegal for public, and also private, exhibition. Thus, a film - sleaze or mainstream - is only certified if it does not include “such details.” However, under the same guidelines different levels of “vulgarity-and-obscenity” have been passed by the CBFC.³⁸

If the sleaze films do not violate the CBFC laws, they are not necessarily any more explicit in featuring nudity, and in sexual connotations, than the films of the mainstream industry, as the censor guidelines are same for all the films exhibited in India.

Mishra quotes, “Sex as violation of moral order is always the text, without the possibility of that violation there is no melodramatically rendered pleasurable scandal and no Bombay cinema” (59). He cruises the terrain of mainstream Bollywood and refers to a diegetic scandal, yet, his quote befittingly explains that sex, and its sublime form, romance, has been at the center of Bollywood cinema. “Symbolically,” and “in-veil,” everything is tried and tested: skimpier-wetter clothes, bad girls (courtesans, vamps, bar girls), bathing sequences, modeling sequences, “lovemaking” under-the-sheets-and-over-the-clothes, rape sequences, song and dance sequences, and behind-the-bush sequences.³⁹ In terms of style, the sleaze films look up to the Bollywood way of doing it. “Mise-en-scene” is quite similar: women’s bodies are framed, revealed, and exhibited in a similar way as we see in Bollywood. Superficially, the Indian-made-sleaze-texts give an impression of *a poor-man’s Bollywood*. It is important to understand that the sleaze films that do not break the CBFC laws are salacious and suggestive, but *not pornographic*, not sexually explicit. Private parts cannot be revealed in the public spaces of cinema. A sleaze film differs from a mainstream film in that a sleaze film structures and organizes the story, and several plots, to offer “attractions” and make a spectacle of “less-classier-girls” and “aunts” (as they are called in the case of south Indian cinema), featuring half-nudity and suggesting sexual activity, with more frequency, and in cheaper settings. And primarily for these factors along with the modes of circulation and exhibition, the mainstream industry, media, and society at large, slaps these films with the title *Sleaze*. Coming back to an already stressed aspect, the sleaze films advertise the forbidden spectacle of sex to the spectators, yet at the time of exhibition, sexual depiction might not be any more in the sleaze films than the mainstream films as both have to pass through the CBFC. Sexual depiction is more explicit in the sleaze films only in the case of “violation.”

Interpolation: The Possibility of Violation

After a film is certified, there are a number of ways the Cinematograph Acts,⁴⁰ under which the CBFC guidelines are formulated, can be violated. And, they are violated mostly in the case of the sleaze-sex films. Exhibition of a film in a form other than the one in which it was certified is a major violation, and according to the CBFC these

violations “agitate” the minds of the public. The CBFC is very well aware of the rampancy of such violations and defines them as *Interpolations*:

- (i) Re-insertion in prints of a film for exhibition those portions which were deleted by the Board before certification of the film.
- (ii) Insertion in prints of a film, portions which were never shown to the Board for certification.
- (iii) Exhibition of ‘bits’ unconnected with the certified film.

Other possible violations are:

- (iv) Exhibition of a film which was refused a certificate (or ‘banned’ in common parlance).
- (v) Exhibition of uncensored films with forged certificates of other films.
- (vi) Exhibition of films without censor certificates.⁴¹

Any of these violations are cognizable offences, and non-bailable.⁴²

The CBFC and the local authorities have always taken measures to prevent violations.⁴³ Yet, the sleaze-sex films have violated, and continue to do so. Illegally, pornographic “bits” find space in the sleaze-sex films. Violations, and more than that, the possibility of violation circumscribe the sleaze industry, and in a large way differentiate it from the mainstream film industry. This industry becomes a separate category just by the act of becoming a site of possible violations: of laws, of morality, of a uniform social structure, and a homogenous film industry. The mainstream would not violate; it has to remain mainstream, in “good-taste” and not in “sleaze.” Finding separate guidelines, regulating, and categorizing this industry - that has excessive inclination on sexual content, circulates as a blotch on society, and violates the laws - has always been a problem for the CBFC.

Another Category of Certification?

The CBFC has always recognized this “other” category of films, and in 2002, made vocal a need for separate guidelines to regulate the violations associated with it. The late Vijay Anand, then CBFC Chief, proposed a double-X certificate for the “vulgar-films” to differentiate them from other “Adults Only” (A) certified films. He also proposed that different – more liberal – guidelines should be applied for the sex-films, and, they should be legally allowed to play in “specific-theatres” (where they already

play). He was trying to take a progressive step to legitimize the illegitimate activities associated with the sleaze-industry, to avoid problems like interpolations and violation of other censor laws that are associated with the addition of uncertified “bits” in the sleaze-sex films. When asked about “other” possible forms of certification besides the A, U/A, and U (current rating certifications in India)⁴⁴ he replied:

...Ideally there should be something like a double X for *certain films*, which in my opinion, aren't fit for public viewing at all. I would also ask the government to double the taxation on such films. I'm in no position to stop *vulgar films* from being made but at least I can make sure that not too many people see them. I personally don't think vulgar flicks have a major market. (Italics mine, Filmfare, December 2000)⁴⁵

Noteworthy is that, in the same tone as the popular imagination, Vijay Anand easily categorizes these films as vulgar and not fit for public viewing. Ironically, Vijay Anand, the man looked upon as doing favor to the “porn” film industry (qtd. by Wallia and Shedde),⁴⁶ himself *brands* the low-classness-sleaziness of these films. Also, he believes that they do not have a major market, revealing that “vulgarity” in a low-economic-class market with lesser stakes than mainstream films is not much of his concern. Sleaze shall be allowed to live with a sleaze audience. The B and C centers, and their audience, are not major – therefore unimportant – for the mainstream industry, for the mainstream media, and for the administrators who hold the right to decide what should/should not reach the theatres in India.⁴⁷ In June 2002, Vijay Anand made the aforementioned suggestions to the Indian government. He was refused even a discussion on these, and other recommendations. His recommendations were not only to legitimize the “sex theatres and films” but he had initiated a thorough reappraisal of the Cinematograph Act by creating a “document of recommendations” that reportedly included a comparative analysis of the film censorship rules in twelve countries. However, in protest of not being offered even an “internal” discussion, he resigned in July 2002 (see Bose 27-33).

Categorizing the sleaze films at the level of CBFC certification is problematic. The sleaze films are usually certified “Adults Only” (A). But a number of mainstream films, with or without any sexual content, pass the CBFC with an (A) certificate. Also, as discussed earlier, categorizing the sleaze films as “sexual texts” *per se* is problematic, because, if pornographic “bits” are not added after the censor certification, the boundaries of sexual representation are blurry between the mainstream and the sleaze. The possible

violation of the CBFC laws has been central to the sleaze-sex cinema, and in a large way distinguishes it from the mainstream cinema; yet, pornographic “bits” is only a possibility, and in innumerable cases, no violation takes place. However, the sleaze film industry stands strong, and has other ways to differentiate from the mainstream industry. This industry finds its visibility, and strengthens its “otherness” in the way it circulates. It gets branded “sleaze” and “lower-stall” by the mainstream industry and media, and, it differentiates from the mainstream with the help of whatever defines it: the low-class reputation, the stories/attractions that are constructed around a low-budget-sex, the publicity that promises “erotica/porn,” the unique exhibition and distribution conditions and practices, and the niche all-men-audience.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have set forward some of the tangible ways that help dissociate, and categorize the sleaze-sex film industry, and also, help expose a construction of low-class status in exhibition, audience, distribution, and production. The sleaze films bring a socially low class disrepute to everyone associated with these films: the makers, actors, crew, distributors, exhibitors, audience, and even the common passer-by, the flaneur, who “by-chance,” glances at the “obscene” posters on the wall. The motive behind *genrelizing* and defining this industry as a lower-stall-sleaze-sex film industry is to recognize it in the category in which it has always lived and continues to live: the evil, low-class, tainted, blotched, sexual “other” of the mainstream, and to discuss it on its own and not in the shadows of the mainstream cinema.

Endnotes:

¹ Bombay city was officially named Mumbai in 1995, but “Bombay” is still popularly used in day-to-day language of its inhabitants, and in the West. Mumbai is etymologically derived from *Mumba* - the name of the Hindu goddess Mumbadevi, and *Aai* - meaning mother in Marathi.

² *Kaliyon Ka Chaman* is a famous Hindi film song. In 2002, the song was remixed, sexcitingly choreographed, and telecasted on Indian Television. The main female dancer in the rechoreographed number, Meghna Naidu, later acted, and continues to act, in mainstream sexploitation films like *Hawas* 2004 and *Rain* 2005.

The film I watched in Naaz was *Felicity* (John D. Lamond 1979, Australia). The film was dubbed in Hindi, and titled *Kaliyon Ka Chaman* (Young Girls Bodies). When “sexy” visuals came on the screen, the background score played the song *Kaliyon Ka Chaman*.

³ At present, there is a government regulation in Mumbai to play the national-anthem before the start of a film-screening; a banal and ironical exercise just before watching a sex-film (or for that matter any film). However, it strongly speaks of what the state thinks of the effects of mass-media.

⁴ Bose quotes these special theatres as “sex theatres” on p. 29 in Bollywood Uncensored 2005.

⁵ Here I am writing from my research experience of Indian cities and towns. However, in no way have I traced every town and city in India. But predominantly it seems to be the case that every film-playing-center has theatre(s) which are in “poorer” condition, and hence, have to survive on “other” films (either the sleaze-sex films or the old films). Secondly, I am writing about the centers that have theatres in India. There is a considerable lack of theatres in rural areas. For more, see Pendakur, Manjunath. “Exhibition.” Indian Popular Cinema. 2003. p.16-24.

⁶ I use the term “circulation,” and not production, because alongwith the “sleaze” films that are produced in Hindi, a large number of films are the imported foreign films, and the south Indian films, dubbed in Hindi.

⁷ Single-screen theatres in India have different seating arrangements - stalls - for different prices: Balcony, Upper-Stall, and Lower-Stall. This suits the economic class divisions. The situation is changing with more and more multiplexes being built in India. Multiplexes supposedly have only “one-class,” however, noteworthy is that the multiplexes exclude the “lower-class” by having out-of-range prices.

⁸ I choose to call all other industries besides the sleaze film industry, mainstream, because they find a mainstream face in terms of media coverage, scholarly discussions, and social reputation. On p.6-7, I discuss a recent urge towards sex films in Bollywood, and I also discuss the difference between the mainstream-sex films and the sleaze-sex films.

⁹ Reviewing Filmfare, a monthly film magazine in English, provides a good example of how the mainstream media marginalizes and degrades certain films as “sleaze.” Filmfare is one of the “respected” and widely circulated film publications in India. The low-budget-sex films find no mention in the main pages of Filmfare, however, Filmfare helps promote the mainstream-sex films, and in the process, sells more Filmfare copies.

In the last few pages of its editions, Filmfare publishes a “Box-Office” section, with general trade information. In the end of the “Box-Office” section, a five-six-liner sub-section can be found, titled “Etc. Etc.” As the name – “Etc. Etc.” – explicates, in this section Filmfare junks together the films that have insignificant commercial value compared to the mainstream films. In “Etc. Etc.,” the majority of listed films are the low-budget-sex films. Here, Filmfare will continuously report the low-budget-sex films as B, C, Z grade and Sleaze. (See “Etc. Etc.” in Filmfare 2000-2005)

¹⁰ Schaefer, Eric. “Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!” A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1999.

¹¹ Williams, Linda. Hardcore: Power, Pleasure, and the “Frenzy of the Visible.” London: University of California Press, 1999.

¹² Jancovich, Mark, and Faire, Lucy, and Stubbings, Sarah. The Place of the Audience. London: British Film Institute, 2003.

¹³ “The CBFC classifies a film as ‘U’, ‘UA’ or ‘A’. U: Theme and treatment suitable for family viewing including children. UA: Whether any child below the age of twelve may be allowed to see the film should be considered by the parents. A: Thematically or treatment wise the film will be adult oriented; it is illegal to take children to adult movies.” 20 Nov 2005. <http://www.cbfcindia.tn.nic.in/planning_movie.htm>.

¹⁴ *Intermission* is the norm in the film-exhibition practice in India as Bollywood film’s length is usually around 160 minute. Noteworthy is that even the “shorter” Hollywood films will have an “abrupt” intermission for the audience to take a popcorn/bathroom break. This goes for the shorter sleaze-films as well.

¹⁵ Dodona research qtd. in Pendakur, Manjunath. “Exhibition.” Indian Popular Cinema. 2003. p.19.

¹⁶ The Indian film industry fears and endorses the political clout, Hindu-fundamentalism, and *goondaism* (criminalism) of Shiv-Sena. Shiv Sainiks (soldiers of Lord Shiva as they call themselves), the unofficial super-censor (as they think of themselves) openly breaks the law. Shiv Sainiks assault the public that gazes at what they think should not be shown and seen. They have ravaged stage performances where women might wear bikinis (Miss World 2000 event), and have unofficially banned films by “terrorizing” exhibition centers. For an example, see Swami, Praveen. “Furore Over a Film.” Frontline. 19 Dec 1998.

¹⁷ Field interviews with the theatre managers in Mathura. Summer 2005.

¹⁸ Here I am quoting the general price range of single-screen theatres. The multiplexes are priced higher. On 25 Nov 2005: 1 INR (Indian National Rupee) = 0.02183 USD (United States Dollar). However, conversion of INR into USD would create a misimpression, and it would diminish the importance of the ticket prices in India.

¹⁹ In India, generally single-screen theatres exhibit four shows (roughly at 12 noon, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm). The exhibition practice is different with multiplexes. Multiplexes play shows at no fixed times. They also play, less or more than four shows a day, depending on how a film does at the box-office.

²⁰ Field notes. Summer 2004.

²¹ For an example, see “Licenses of 6 cinema halls suspended.” The Times of India, 28 May 2001.

²² In Ramayana, the Hindu epic, *Sita* is the wife of Rama, the humanly form of God Vishnu, and is esteemed as an exemplar of womanly and wifely virtue. In Hinduism, *Gauri* is the Goddess worshipped particularly by ladies to seek the long life of their husbands. *Sati* is one of the many names of Gauri. In a mythological story, *Savitri*, the daughter of a king, married Satyavan, a “nobody” who was doomed to die within a year. Her “single-minded love and devotion” was so that she saved Satyavan from the God of death.

²³ Field notes: interviews with the theatre owners, with the audience of the sleaze-sex films, and with the audience of the mainstream cinema. An analysis in the context of the south Indian cinema is provided in an unpublished essay by Ratheesh Radhakrishnan: “Soft Porn and the Anxieties of the Family: The Gendering of the Imagined Addressee of Malyalam Cinema.”

²⁴ For a discussion on how media and communications make the distinction between public and private *permeable*, see Jancovich, Faire, Stubbings. The Place of the Audience, 2003. p.17-20.

²⁵ Here I have quoted English translations of the Hindi titles to reveal their “explanatory” nature. Source: “Etc. Etc.” sub-section in the “Box-office” section of Filmfare (2000-2005). Also, I do not underline the translated titles.

²⁶ “A particular complaint that has often been made is that the theatres often display obscene film posters. The Cinematograph Act 1952 does not directly cover obscene posters and these come under the common law of the land relating to obscenity, particularly section 292 of the Indian Penal Code. Enforcement under Section 292 of IPC comes within the purview of the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations, particularly their law enforcing agencies including the police.” The CBFC Website, 20 Nov 2005. <<http://www.cbfcindia.tn.nic.in/posterspage1.htm>>.

“After discussion with the film industry representatives, the Govt. of India decided that the film industry would deal with this matter [of obscene posters] on its own. Thus, the Film Publicity Screening Committees were formed with headquarters at Bombay and regional chapters at Bangalore, Hyderabad, Madras and Thiruvanthapuram. The committee, which began its work in April 1990, screens films posters for obscenity and depiction of women in a derogatory manner or highlighting violence. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has decided to watch this situation for the time being to see if it Works satisfactorily.” The CBFC Website, 20 Nov 2005. <<http://www.cbfcindia.tn.nic.in/posterspage2.htm>>.

²⁷ “What is the procedure for change of title after certification?” See, FAQ, The CBFC Website, 20 Nov 2005. <<http://www.cbfcindia.tn.nic.in/faq.htm#>>.

²⁸ Field notes. Summer 2004.

²⁹ In Theatre Hire (TH), the distributor pays a fixed weekly hire to the cinema owner, irrespective of the box-office collection. In Theatre Protection (TP), a minimum hire is payable to the exhibitor, in case the box-office collection falls below a bare agreed minimum (Gulzar, Nihalani, and Chatterjee 151). For details on the methods of distribution see Gulzar, and Nihalani, Govind, and Chatterjee, Saibal. Encyclopaedia of Hindi Cinema, 2003. And also see, Kohli, Vanita. The Indian Media Business, 2003.

³⁰ See a similar discussion in Pendakur, Manjunath. “Exhibition.” Indian Popular Cinema, 2003. p.16-17.

³¹ The “life time rights” vary. There are no fixed rules; it depends on the deal. The deals range from 2-3 years to 10-25 years. The underlying logic is that the distributor makes sure that the time is good enough for recovering a “reasonable” profit out of a circulation with a small number of prints.

³² All sleaze distributors are men.

³³ However, the *Interpolated* versions of the sleaze-sex films can be found in the “pirated” video markets like Palika Bazaar in Delhi. They do not have much market in comparison to “real- porn.”

³⁴ “Israeli couple fined for kissing.” The Times of India, 21 September 2005. 20 Nov 2005.

<<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1238290.cms>>. This “innocent” kissing being fined under

Indian morality reminds of a quote from Bose: “The nation’s latest export is not bicycles, or software professionals, but *tantra*. Yet, a innocent kiss or hug between a consenting couple today can get the moral police to call foul” (199).

³⁵ Khwaish (Desire, Govind Menon 2003) was largely publicized for Mallika Sherawat’s seventeen on-screen kisses. Mallika Sherawat is a comparatively “classier-sex-symbol.” She has been at the Cannes film festival for The Myth (Stanley Tong 2005).

³⁶ “[In 1983] The Central Board of Film Censors was renamed the Central Board of Film Certification by the amendment. The change in the name indicated that the function of the board was ‘positive’ rather than ‘negative’” (Mehta 79).

³⁷ I have focused here only on the “pertinent” guidelines. 20 Nov 2005. <<http://www.cbfcindia.tn.nic.in/guidelinespage3.htm>>.

³⁸ Monika Mehta in Selections: Cutting, Classifying, and Certifying in Bombay Cinema 2001 reveals that under the same CBFC guidelines, different films have received different “treatment” from the CBFC officials.

³⁹ See Dissanayake, Wimal, and Gokulsing, K. Moti. Indian Popular Cinema: A Narrative of Cultural Change. 1998. p.79-80.

⁴⁰ “The censorship of films is governed by the The Cinematograph Act, 1952, the Cinematograph (Certification) Rules promulgated in 1983 and the guidelines issued on December 6, 1991.” 20 Nov 2005. <<http://www.cbfcindia.tn.nic.in/backgroundpage2.htm>>. For a detailed analysis of pre and post independence Cinematograph Acts see Mehta, Monika. Selections: Cutting, Classifying and Certifying in Bombay Cinema. 2001. p.46-58.

⁴¹ 20 Nov 2005. <<http://www.cbfcindia.tn.nic.in/enforcementpage2.htm>>.

⁴² 20 Nov 2005. <<http://www.cbfcindia.tn.nic.in/enforcementpage3.htm>>.

⁴³ See “India’s censors hire film sleuths.” BBC News, 8 Feb 2001. 20 Nov 2005. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/1160470.stm>>.

⁴⁴ Refer footnote 13.

⁴⁵ See BBC News articles: “India’s film censor wants to legalise porn.” 27 June 2002. 20 Nov 2005. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/2069900.stm>>, “Indian censor submit to porn.” 6 July 2002. 20 Nov 2005. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/2099470.stm>>, “India’s chief film censor quits.” 22 July 2002. 20 Nov 2005. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/2144603.stm>>.

⁴⁶ See Wallia, Kaajal, and Shedde, Meenakshi. “Vijay Anand Does Porn Films a Favour.” The New Indian Express. 26 July 2002.

⁴⁷ The B and C centers are graded based on the distribution marketability of these centers. See p.7 of this essay, and for further elaboration see Pendakur, Manjunath. “Exhibition.” Indian Popular Cinema. 2003. p.16-24, 35-40.

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