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# Representations of Indian Christians in Bollywood Movies

Ryan A. D'souza
*University of South Florida*, dsouzara@gmail.com

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Representations of Indian Christians in Bollywood Movies

by

Ryan A. D'Souza

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Department of Communication
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Mahuya Pal, Ph.D.
Rachel Dubrofsky, Ph.D.
Aisha Durham, Ph.D.
Darcie Fontaine, Ph.D.

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**Dedication**

In memory of the people whose blood coagulates the soil of this land.

## Acknowledgements

Around the time that I officially started writing this dissertation, students at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi – India organized in opposition to the Hindu Right's diabolical politics defeating the nation's hope for a secular polity. Among these students, Kanhaiya Kumar and Umar Khalid assumed prominent roles, primarily because they were arrested with a few others on charges of sedition…in a democratic republic. I was drawn to the emerging youth movement, and the politics of Kumar and Khalid because they were Ph.D. Candidates like me. But our respective approaches to politics were significantly different. They were arrested, beaten, and publicly vilified on national media while I was couched in the comforts of academic life in United States. Khalid, in particular, escaped an assassination attempt while I witnessed western academics laying on the floor in a hotel ballroom as a cutesy performance of "putting bodies on the line and words into action." I would like to say I was (and am) in solidarity with Khalid and Kumar but the risks were (and are) never the same. However, I learned immensely from these two men – my peers. They forced me to rethink the way I characterized past governments with every critique they leveled against the present Government. They illuminated with actions and words how to convert theory into a praxis for everyday life. They encouraged me to look at the continuities, intersections, and resistances to domination. They motivated me to think with belligerence as well as humor. They helped me refuse being reduced to my immediate identity. I am indebted to Kumar and Khalid for all that they taught me over the past few years. *inquilab zindabad*.

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**Abstract**

This dissertation uses discursive formation as the methodological approach to examine representations of Indian Christians in eleven Bollywood movies released during the 2004-2014 decade. The decade witnessed the exit and eventual re-entry of the Hindu Right, and the citizenry during that period experienced centrist, liberal, and secular governance. Since the present of Indian Christianity is inextricable from a colonial past, and Bollywood emerges in response to colonialism, a postcolonial intervention in methodology and theory is undertaken. A postcolonial perspective illuminates the discourses that enable the formation of the postcolonial nation, i.e., the ways a nation imagines its culture, people, traditions, boundaries, and Others. There is a suggested relationship between the representations of Indian Christians in Bollywood movies and the decade of secular governance because the analysis is approached from the position that culture and media produce and re-produce each other. The representations of Christians in Bollywood movies are a product of contemporary and historical cultural, legal, political, and social discourses. This dissertation demonstrates that representations of Christians as hypersexual women and emasculated men within an emergent Hindu modernity discursively constructs India as a Hindu nation, and Christians as the westernized Other. The theoretical contributions pertain to belonging in the nation through homonationalism and hypersexualization; the relationship between democratic representations and media; the postcolonial ambivalent identity of the Bollywood industry because of way it represents Indian Christians in response to colonialism; and the Indian Christian community's postcolonial identity as a way to make sense of their contemporary and historical identity.

**Chapter One: Indian Christians and Bollywood Movies**

**Introduction**

This dissertation examines representations of Christians in Bollywood movies released during the 2004-2014 decade (all references to Christians is with the implicit adjective "Indian"). The examination aims to contribute to the area of media studies in the field of Communication, Indian Christianity, and South Asian Studies. Since the present-day experience of Christians is inextricable from the colonial past (Robinson, 2003), and Hindi cinema (as Bollywood was previously known) emerges in response to colonialism (Wright, 2015), a postcolonial intervention guides the methods and theories. A postcolonial intervention illuminates the discourses that enable the formation of a modern nation, i.e., the ways a nation recovering from colonialism imagines its boundaries, culture, people, traditions, and the Other (Das, 2013; Parameswaran, 2002; Shome & Hegde, 2002). The Other is the negation of the Self (Chawla, 2018), and quintessence of the postcolonial nation (Suleri, 1992). During the 2004-2014 decade, eighteen movies included a Christian character; however, only eleven of those movies are selected for the analysis because the Christian characters featured in them are of some prominence to the overall movie (see Appendix for the list of movies analyzed). The decade also witnessed the exit and eventual re-entry of the Hindu Right, and the citizenry during that period experienced centrist, liberal, and secular governance.[1] I presume a relationship between representations of Christians in Bollywood movies and the decade of secular governance because the analysis is approached from the position that culture and media re-produce each other (Hall, 1992). The representations of Christians

in Bollywood movies are a product of contemporary and historical cultural, legal, political, and social discourses.

In order to illustrate the dialectical relationship between discourses, I utilize discursive formation as the methodological approach. From a Foucauldian perspective, discourse(s) refer to "ideas and practices that shape meaning" (Dubrofsky, 2016, p. 184). Discourse formation is a "pattern of discursive events that refer to, or bring into being, a common object across a number of sites" to unveil the dialectical relationship between discourses (Barker, 2012, p. 500). Said (1978) in *Orientalism*, a text foundational to postcolonial studies, utilized discursive formation as a combination of discourse analysis and textual analysis to reveal the dialectics culture and media (also see Said, 1997). Contemporary scholarship too utilizes discursive formation to analyze media in relation to contemporary and historical discourses (Alsultany, 2012; MacDonald, Homolar, Rethel, Schnurr & Vessey, 2015; Shakhsari, 2002). Therefore, the analysis points to patterns in politics of representation informed by colonial and postcolonial conditions with eleven Bollywood movies as the media text. The eleven movies feature Christian characters in roles of prominence. Though the characters may be part of the supporting cast, they appear in multiple scenes, and, therefore, provide an opportunity to be analyzed. However, since the purpose of the dissertation is to illustrate the dialectical relationship between discourses, I do not analyze the movies in their entirety. I analyze scenes that feature a Christian character. Furthermore, I arrange the analysis of the scenes into themes, and organize the following chapters accordingly.

I begin with the illustration of discursive formation of Christians in the English-language Bollywood movie *Finding Fanny* (2014). The purpose is to understand how Christians are discursively constructed as the Other in Bollywood movies through a system of representation. The movie provides an opportunity to illustrate how the patterns in the relationship between culture

and media are examined in this dissertation. I argue that the movie is an anomaly when compared to the other movies from the decade. Furthermore, the movie is unique when compared to the remaining movies from the decade because it released when the Hindu Right returned to governance, and, therefore, was consumed during a comparably different political climate. Even though not beyond critique, the discursive formation of Christians in the movie is comparably sympathetic than usual representations of the community. With the inclusion of only Christian characters, the movie to some extent provides a glimpse into Christian life in India.

The following section focuses on the Christian woman in the movie, and how representations of the Christian community is communicated through her. The subsequent section will situate the movie within the political climate in which it was released. From there, I explain how the dissertation is situated within the field of Communication before discussing scholarship on Indian Christianity and South Asian Studies. I conclude with a preview of the remaining chapters.

### *Finding Fanny*: A Glimpse of Christian Life

Angelina "Angie" Eucharistica as the narrator of the movie navigates viewers around her fictional village, Pocolim. Though the village is fictional, it is located in Goa – a location of significance for Bollywood's Christians. Well-known Christian characters from movies such as Albert Pinto (*Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyoon Aata Hai*, 1980), Anthony Gonsalves (*Amar Akbar Anthony*, 1977), Bobby Braganza (*Bobby*, 1973), and Lily Fernandes (*Ankhiyon Ke Jharokhon Se*, 1978) trace their roots to Goa, which was the bastion of the Portuguese in India. Christian characters from Goa with Portuguese surnames are Roman Catholics, and form an ethno-religious community because their culture can be linked to a specific history, location, and religion (see Omi

and Winant, 2015). Bollywood's Christians are usually good-hearted drunks (Benegal, 2006), nuns and priests (Anjaria, 2012; Jain, 2010), vamps (Rekhari, 2014), and westernized fools who struggle to speak Hindi (Dwyer, 2014). Though Angie is depicted as a Goan resident, she does not embody any of the stereotypes. Angie invites viewers to visualize Christian life different from commonplace representations.

In the opening of the movie, Angie gives viewers a tour of Ferdinand "Ferdie" Pinto's home. Off-white yellowish colored walls hold up sepia-toned photos from another era. The wooden furniture is chipped and stained, the mirrors and windows are foggy, and the metallic gate is eroded. As Angie walks through Pocolim's dirt roads, viewers see similar rustic countryside architecture all around. Of particular interest is Savio da Gama's house, which is called "Lisboa" – Portuguese for Lisbon, the capital city of Portugal. Savio's surname "da Gama" is noteworthy because it establishes a kinship with Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese trader who anchored his boat on the coast of the subcontinent, and shortly after initiated the colonization of the region. The rustic countryside architecture, and the name of Savio's house gives viewers the impression that Pocolim carries with it a colonial heritage. The storyline does not propose a connection between Pocolim and Portugal, but the village hints at a cultural history.

If the visual cues are overlooked, the background music heard throughout the movie too points to Pocolim's cultural past-present. A *fado* melody – a Portuguese music genre – accompanies Angie's stroll through her village. In one scene, Ferdie dreams about his beloved follow the prose of Portuguese lyrics. The picking and strumming of the Portuguese guitar are heard throughout the movie, and at times is accompanied with Portuguese percussions. In addition to the background music, Pocolim's cultural past-present is heard in the characters' accents. Angie's accent may be characterized as a "Catholic accent." She inflects her words with a unique

syntax (see Doshi, 2018). For example, she questions Savio by asking, "You're gone mad *or what*, Savio?" and on another occasion during an argument with Savio says, "That seems to have always been the problem *no with you*" (emphasis added in both sentences). The usage of "or what" and "no" for the purpose of emphasis is characteristic of a Catholic accent. While "Catholic accent" is a misnomer, it can be described as such because it is the accent popularized by Bollywood's Christian characters; the industry time and again misrepresents all Christians as Catholics. The characters' accents mark their difference because those attributes of speech are associated with a particular community – Konkani-speaking Roman Catholics from Goa and Mangaluru. However, the difference heard is without negative connotations because all the citizens of Pocolim speak with the same accent. In the absence of difference, Christian culture is centered without reducing the characters' everyday life to a stereotype.

The absence of difference allows Angie, in particular, to be represented as a multidimensional woman. Christian women are typically represented as mistresses, sluts, and vamps driven by sex (Rekhari, 2014). But Angie is the proverbial girl-next-door. She wears short summer dresses with floral prints, and a crucifix around her neck hanging off a thin string of jewelry. Her appearance is not excessive. The camera calls attention to her sexuality, but there is an inability to sexualize her. In her introductory scene, she is seen cleaning with a long broomstick, and the straps of her dress fall off her shoulder as she stretches out to reach the ceiling. The camera closes in on her from behind, and viewers see sweat glistening on her back. A sensual acapella harmonizes with the classical guitar and percussions to build up the sexual tension as the camera frames her as the literally smokin' hot woman. The thumping of drums call attention to Angie's sexuality. Speckles of dust fall on her face, and as she turns towards the camera to clean herself, soft light shines on her face that makes her look angelic. The raw sexiness is replaced with an

endearing smile. The camera invites viewers to gaze at her body, but pulls away when viewers reach a point of sexualization.

In addition to the opening scene that establishes Angie as the girl-next-door, the story too unfolds in a way to prop her up as the woman who should be admired but from a distance. Angie was widowed on her wedding day, and thereafter lived with Rosalina who ensured Angie remained a virginal bride for her son in heaven. Angie and Savio are estranged friends who rekindle their friendship when the latter returns to Pocolim after six years. He kisses her as they reminisce, but she smacks him on the head for misreading their friendship. As they reconcile in the subsequent scene, she sits on top of him, and teases him with her mouth close to his but still not kissing him. Angie then asks him:

> The first time I was kissed was on my wedding day, fifteen minutes before my husband choked and died…It was the first and last time, and it was six years ago…You think after waiting six years a girl would not like it to be done properly?

A woman's sexuality in Bollywood movies is expressed through the male gaze (Kazmi, 2010). As the object of the man's desires, the woman is not afforded a voice to articulate the subject of her own desires (Chatterji, 2013). A woman can never partake in sexual pleasure (Basu, 2013). However, Angie controls and speaks about her desires. She demonstrates agency over her sexuality. She lays with Savio in an open grassland, under a dark blue sky with soft opera music playing in the background. She straddles him, and undresses herself, but the camera secures them together in the frame. Viewers do not look at her through Savio's gaze. Even as she disrobes, the camera maintains a bust shot (head to chest), and contact with her facial expressions. Their moment of intimacy is framed without rendering it voyeuristic. Angie's dialogues about her desires and virginity with such camerawork erases lust from the scene. She is widowed, and, in a sense, her

sexual interaction is outside the sanction of marriage. But this encounter communicates romance more than promiscuity. Though Angie's framing as the girl-next-door minimizes her sexualization, she is also protagonist with whom viewers have connected (Joshi, 2014), and that too contributes to understanding the sexually-charged scene as intimate and romantic rather than sexual.

Angie and the residents of Pocolim are represented in a sympathetic manner. Such a representation is possible because of the absence of difference. Christian characters are seldom protagonists, and are usually scripted in contrast to ideal Indian-ness. Furthermore, perhaps since the industry came to be recognized as Bollywood towards the end of the 1990s, there has not been a mainstream movie with only Christian characters. Therefore, the movie is celebrated for "break[ing] all conventional rules" (Bollywood Hungama, 2014), and making a "brave clutter-breaking effort" (Tanwar, 2014). The critics' comments relate to the actors' performances in a dark humorous storyline. But the sympathetic representation of Christians also makes the movie brave and unconventional. Goan Catholic writer, Cecil Pinto, who was part of the production team comments that, "In *Finding Fanny* there are all Goan Catholic characters who lead their normal 'Goan' lives" (Herald Goa, 2014). The mundane representations for which the movie has been celebrated make the movie an important cultural artifact to initiate a conversation on representation of Christians.

*Finding Fanny* is an uncommon movie for the sympathetic representations of Christians. The movie presents a discontinuity in the discursive formation of Christians with comparatively inclusive representations. As Hall writes, "we give things meanings by how we represent them – the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce," (Hall, 1997, p. 3). Drawing on Hall (1997), a discontinuous discursive formation of Christians departing from typified representations involves a more sophisticated understanding of culture and

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expression of cultural difference that does not reduce communities to simple essentialist categories. The movie may be considered a rejection of, or response to, the absence of Christians in Bollywood movies. However, representations of a community so closely intertwined with India's colonial history is not that simple. Therefore, in the following section, I situate *Finding Fanny* in the political milieu during which it was released in order to point to the complexity of representations.

### *Ghar Wapsi*: A Glimpse of Political Life

*Finding Fanny* released on 12th September 2014 – four months after the India's General Elections concluded on 12th May 2014. The Hindu Right led by the Bharatiya Janata Party won the General Elections with an overwhelming majority, and appointed Narendra Modi as the 14th Prime Minister of India. Modi's constituency during his tenure as the Chief Minister of Gujarat between 2001-2014 was an experimental laboratory for crimes against ethno-religious minorities (Lobo, 2002). He is responsible for neglecting the murder of Muslims during violent riots that lasted for three days. He earned himself the reputation of a "mass murderer" for forsaking the Muslims in his constituency (Chakrabortty, 2014). Often ignored in academic and popular conversations are the crimes against Christians in Gujarat. For instance, *The Crisis of Secularism in India* marks the Emergency (of the Indira Gandhi era in 1975) and the violence against Muslims in Gujarat in 2002 as the two indelible moments in the nation's modern history when democracy and secularism failed (Rajan & Needham, 2006). But fifty percent of the crimes against Christians across the nation until 2002 were committed in Gujarat (Lobo, 2002). Nevertheless, the Christian community does not feature in the narrative of the crisis of secularism.

The Hindu Right pursued an overtly religious mission called *ghar wapsi* shortly after the Modi Government's official incumbency period began (Verschooten, Amanullah & Nijis, 2016). Keeping in mind the Hindu Right agenda, ghar (home) wapsi (return) may be interpreted as "returning to Hinduism." The idea behind *ghar wapsi* is a commonplace Hindutva propaganda: India is a Hindu land which makes every Indian Hindu by birth, those who are not Hindu were previously converted, and, therefore, non-Hindus should convert back to Hinduism (Savarkar, 1969). Such a religious mission is not a new undertaking as scholars writing a decade ago notice similar mass conversion movements (Anand, 2007; Banerjee, 2006). The agenda of *ghar wapsi* is to "finish Islam and Christianity" by 2021, as disclosed by a Hindu Right affiliate (Times of India, 2015). Such a propaganda racializes ethno-religious communities as the Other (Baber, 2004). Christians are the extra-territorial Other because of their foreign religion, and their apparent intimacy with the colonizers (Hansen, 1996). The organizers of *ghar wapsi* arranged mass conversions for Christians and Muslims, and advertised disruption of any Christmas-related celebrations (Times of India, 2014). The lack of action from the Government permitted the Hindu Right to wreak havoc on Christians and Muslims (Dikshit, 2014). An absent and silent Government emboldened the Hindu Right to pursue a Hindutva decree at large through politicized religious missions.

During these months of heightened religious tensions, the following flier sponsored by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Hindu Right's ideological foundation, was circulated in the metropolitan cities (Bengaluru, Mumbai, New Delhi, etc.), and on various social media platforms:

*Your Christianity is a samasya*

[Your Christianity is a problem]

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*So our mission is gharwapsi*

[So our mission is *ghar wapsi*]

*From now onwards*

[From now onwards]

*No Christianity, only Hindutva*

[No Christianity, only Hindu-ness]

*No Bible, only Bhagvad Gita*

[No Bible, only Bhagavad Gita]

*Either convert or else leave our Hindurashtr*

[Either convert, or else leave our Hindu nation]

*We will erase Christianity by 2021*

[We will erase Christianity by 2021]

*Hindurashtr banake rahengey*

[We will make India a Hindu nation]

Writing for *Goa News*, Dr. Francisco Colaco (2015) reports receiving the flier via WhatsApp (a popular messenger app). The same flier also featured in a news report by *Mission Network News* based in Michigan, U.S.A. (Stolicker, 2016). While the threat to Christians is for all to read, it is also printed in English, which indicates the intended audience – educated, urban, and Christian (see Doshi, 2018). A common stereotype about Christians is that they are a predominantly English-speaking community (Dwyer, 2014). Incidentally, *Finding Fanny* – a movie featuring only Christian characters – is among the few English-language Bollywood movies. However, the ideas communicated in the flier are not novel. Such ideas about Christians as an impediment to the

formation of a Hindu nation are a product of a contemporary and historical cultural, legal, political, and social discourse.

During colonialism and towards the end of colonialism, centrist, conservative, and liberal political leaders thought of Christianity as a foreign religion swaying the local converts away from native cultural values (Manshardt, 1949; Savarkar, 1969). Christians were also accused of an intimate relationship with the Europeans because the Indian Church was established with financial, political, and social assistance from the colonial administration and missionaries (Frykenberg, 2005; Oddie, 2001), These accusations matured into actions in postcolonial India, and the Indian Church, native missionaries, and Christians themselves are repeatedly incriminated for colluding with foreign agencies, and polluting local values with their seemingly western practices (Bauman, 2008; Shourie, 1994, 2000). With the rise of the Hindu Right between 1980s and 1990s, Christians across India witnessed cold-blooded murders of parishioners, priests, and nuns, destruction of churches and shrines, damages to private property, forced migrations because of threats of extermination, and rapes of nuns (Raj, Thambusamy, & Samuel, 2000). These incidents in the past give the flier validity, make those broad claims real, and communicate material concerns about Christians' present and future.

The contemporary and historical discourses within which Bollywood movies circulate complicate *Finding Fanny* as a sympathetic representation of Christians. The accents, background score, colonial homes named after a Portuguese city, Portuguese lyrics during Ferdie's dream sequence, and all the Portuguese surnames (especially da Gama) call attention to difference constructed because of and in relation to colonialism. Therefore, does the geo-televisual aesthetic of the movie contribute towards the contemporary and historical discourse of Christians as westernized? The geo-televisual aesthetic refers to affects and semiotics produced in a synergetic

global-local relationship that eventually transforms both home and world (Basu, 2010). One critic dismisses the movie for being "wickedly racist" because it is "liberally spiced with disparaging remarks on [Goan] women, portrays Catholics as perennially drunk and caught in a time warp of poverty" (Herald Goa, 2014). The critic also writes that Angie's "skimpy dresses, show of cleavage and inner wear… the cross in her neck, and doing it out in the fields...well it's quintessentially Bollywood, nothing offbeat." The critic's reading from a counter-hegemonic position offers an alternative interpretation. Nevertheless, the movie comes closest to offering sympathetic representations of Christians (in comparison to the other movies analyzed in this dissertation). However, Bollywood movies in general have failed to grapple with the sociopolitical context defining Christian experiences in India. For instance, *ghar wapsi* is/was an active campaign to exterminate Christians from India's present and future.

### A Communication Perspective

In connecting representation of Christians to the contemporary and historical cultural, legal, political, and social discourses that determine representations (and representations circulate in these discourses), this dissertation examines the way an ethno-religious community is re-presented in popular culture. The inherent interdisciplinary nature of communication, i.e., the field borrows from several disciplines to reveal the influence of various discourses on individuals and their social groups (Herbst, 2008). Studying Indian Christianity at the intersection of Media Studies and South Asian Studies offers a communication perspective on politics of representation in a non-western context, and also upholds the discipline's interdisciplinary nature of the field. The scholarship on Bollywood and Indian cultural politics is borrowed from South Asian Studies. Such

an interdisciplinary communication perspective offers new ways to think about the politics of representation.

I approach representations of Christians in Bollywood movies in Communication as an examination of the dialectical relationships between discourses that produce and re-produce the social order (Craig, 1999). The dialectical relationships between discourses acknowledge shared meanings, especially between the past and present. Discourse is not produced in a vacuum; it is the product of the past-present. Discourses materialize binary relationships (us and them), and classed, gendered, national, racial, and sexual hierarchies which are a continuation of historically-situated discourses. A communication approach illuminates some of the various discourses dictating Christians' representations, and, thereby, constituting identity of Christians as ethno-religious minority.

The communication approach is additionally informed by postcolonial studies. Scholarship in postcolonial studies engages a range of sociopolitical discourses rooted in the colonial past and postcolonial present (Shome & Hegde, 2002). The Other – and the Othering to construct Otherness – is foundational to the condition of postcolonialism.  Said (1978) theorized the representation of the Orient as the Other, i.e., an entity different from the autonomous, rational, sovereign, and superior West. However, the discursive construction of the Orient/Other invariably is in gendered language which marks the Occident as masculine and the Orient as feminine (Said, 1978). The political aim of Orientalism illuminates the Self's anxieties about the Other (Nandy, 1983). Therefore, Othering is about dominating and subordinating the Other, but it is also about understanding the Self through Otherness. Approaching Communication from a postcolonial studies perspective, I examine media discourses that Others Christians.

**Indian Christianity and South Asian Studies**

The scholarship on Indian Christianity is usually historical, and written with a bottom-up direction given that Adivasis and Dalits constitute the largest demographic (Webster, 2012). The scholarship also tends to be a study of subalternity because the religion is closely intertwined with Adivasis and Dalits (Bauman, 2008b, Gravend-Tirole, 2014; Robinson & Kujur, 2010). Another approach the historical scholarship takes is a top-down direction from missionaries' perspectives which leave out an average Christian from their own history (Hambye, 1997; Mundadan, 1984; Neill, 1984, 1985). However, Bollywood represents Christians in the middle of history. But these Christians are seldom researched (Raj & Dempsey, 2002). Christians in the middle – educated, middle to upper classes, and urban – possess cultural capital, engage in power struggles, and are not easily threatened by detrimental religious politics (Bauman, 2013; Doshi, 2018). Christians in the middle are part of everyday culture as they contribute to density, materiality, and texture of culture, i.e., their experiences are interwoven into the dominant culture as a site of difference which is inescapably related to economics (see Fiske, 1992). They produce and re-produce culture and social orders that are implicated in relations of power.

Though explicit references to denominations within Christianity are sporadic in the following paragraphs and subsequent chapters, there is a specific focus on representations of Roman Catholics. The interest in Roman Catholics is in response to popular representations. Most of the time, Christian characters in Bollywood movies are Roman Catholics, and are identifiable with their English first names and Portuguese surnames. Not all Christians follow such a naming practice; however, if characters are christened with Indian-language names (read: Hindu), they will not be distinguishable from the remaining characters. With such a naming practice, the Christian character is meant to be decoded a certain way. In addition to representation in

Bollywood movies, scholarship on Indian Christianity recognizes denominational differences only for the colonial period when recording missionaries' activities; the scholarship is indifferent to denominational differences in post-coloniality. The scholarship is also skewed as there is a lopsided focus on Adivasis, Dalits, and Protestants. Examining representations of Roman Catholics can address the lopsided denominational focus in scholarship on Indian Christianity. In doing so, I also depart from the tendency to study Christians as subalterns. Therefore, this dissertation pays attention to representations of urban middle-class Roman Catholics to provide an understanding of the everyday life of Christians. Despite the specific focus on Roman Catholics, a generic "Christian" is nevertheless written because the Hindu Right does not sympathize with any denomination. It is a safe assumption that representations of Christians (presumably) affect different denominations the same way.

Since the Hindi movie industry's metamorphosis into Bollywood towards the start of the millennium, academics have examined the cinematic universe that pedagogically and performatively narrates the nation. The then-Government's policies to liberalize (although in reality it was privatization) the economy were pivotal to the re-emergence of the industry as Bollywood because all those involved in creating the cinematic universe were finally able to overcome the governmental bureaucracies relating to procuring finances for movies and distribution rights for movies – all of which hindered creative expression (Vasudevan, 2011). Academics interested in the development of Bollywood approach the industry from various research perspectives. There is an ever-growing scholarship that performs textual analysis of movies (Dwyer, 2014; F. Kazmi, 1998; 1999; N. Kazmi, 1998; Ranganathan, 2010), and discursive formation of narratives (Basu, 2010; Patel and Dwyer, 2002; Gopalan, 2002; Kazmi, 2010; Rai, 2009). Then there is scholarship that investigates the economics of the industry (Pendakur, 2003),

and the importance of distributors, marketers, and promoters in garnering national and transnational audiences (Rajadhyaksha, 2003). To make the visual culture accessible to non-South Asian audiences and scholars, academics compile guidebooks to serve as an introduction to an industry spanning decades (Ganti, 2004; Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 2009). Scholars also conduct audience ethnographies to complement the guidebooks, and offer an insight into the consumption of moviegoers (Banaji, 2006; Derne, 2000; Juluri, 1999; Ram, 2002; Rao, 2007; Srinivas, 2002). Scholarship also explores the industry's aesthetics, conventions, and productions to argue that Bollywood is postmodern (Wright; 2015), and capable of competing in a globalized economy (Dudrah, 2012).

The scholarship generated so far is an impressive achievement for academics and the industry. Yet there are some areas of research that could be further developed. Scholarship on minority representations analyze either Muslims (Hirji, 2008; Misri, 2013), women (Chatterji, 2013; Datta, 2000; Virdi, 1999), the intersection of the two (Ansari, 2008; Lallmahomed-Aumeerally, 2014), or the diaspora (Bhatawadekar, 2011; Ranganathan, 2010; Sinha, 2012). The representations of minorities, and their intersecting identities, is an area to be expanded upon. Furthermore, Bollywood's assumption as India's most prominent popular culture was enabled by the political climate towards the end of the 1990s. While scholars have analyzed the politics of liberalization (from the end of 1990s) in relation to Bollywood (Dutta, 2013; Rao, 2007; Schaefer & Karan, 2012; Wright, 2015), the way Bollywood has evolved, matured, and transformed because of and in successive political climates remains unexamined. Therefore, this dissertation utilizes the scholarship on Bollywood generated so far, and extends it by addressing the work that still can be done.

However, Bollywood is not yet considered as a relevant media site worth researching in western academia (Wright, 2015). Wright (2015) explains that there is a difficulty in getting "Western students [and academics] to take Indian film material seriously in the first place, as they can often turn to ridicule or become confused at the lack of familiar visual cues…" (p. 48). Bollywood is indeed different, when compared to Hollywood, but it is only in the exploration of such difference(s) that media studies can be extended and theorized in new ways.

Hindi cinema (pre-Bollywood industry) emerged alongside anti-colonial movements, and, therefore, was always invested in defining a national identity through the cinematic universe (Rao, 2007). Thus, in addition to being a postcolonial media site because India is a postcolonial nation, Bollywood also possesses a postcolonial identity of its own because the industry experienced its own political shifts from colonial to post-colonial eras (Wright, 2015). Bollywood's position as India's most prominent popular culture also elevates the industry to the status of a national film industry (Rajadhyaksha, 2003). With such a status, the industry has time and again aligned with the dominant ideologies of the time, and narrativized a pro-government stance (Ranganathan, 2010). There has always been a representation of post-coloniality, especially since economic liberalization and globalization (Wright, 2015). For example, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1994) is a diasporic romance that begins in England but reaches fruition in India to underscore how conservative and traditional values do not leave Indians despite their (temporary) dislocation albeit for economic reasons. However, Bollywood's alignment with dominant ideologies altogether complicates representations the movies show. On one side, Bollywood movies narrate India's post-coloniality to a transnational audience. On the other side, Bollywood movies also represent Christian's post-coloniality as Otherness. There are levels of post-coloniality in such representations that may be understood by examining the various discourses that construct

identities and representation. Such an examination can offer a much-needed perspective to ongoing studies on Bollywood by examining the relationship between culture, representations, and post-coloniality.

The 2004-2014 decade observes the exit and eventual re-entry of the Hindu Right. The Hindu Right's exit paved the way to the Central Government for the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) led by the Indian National Congress (INC). As an opposition to the Hindu Right, the UPA led by the INC are comprised of ideologies that are "comparatively" centrist, liberal, and secular. The emphasis on *comparatively* acknowledges that the UPA's politics is always in relation to an extreme right position. If the Hindu Right aims to achieve a Hindu India, the UPA in opposition uses "the rhetoric of diversity [only] as a window dressing" (Roy, 2007, p. 3). The INC's reputation of violence against ethno-religious minorities is localized unlike the Hindu Right that tries to nationalize the rampage (Rajagopal, 2004). Nevertheless, the UPA Government was welcomed for a *comparatively* better track record (Roy, 2004). The sociocultural havoc that the Hindu Right wrecked on the polity invited academic attention, and the scholarship generated following the General Elections of 2004 continues to focus on the Hindu Right's incumbency years. Such an attention ignored the politics of the centrist, liberal, and secular INC and UPA. In situating this dissertation in a decade that experienced a considerable calm with the centrist, liberal, and secular governance, a pursuit is undertaken to show how India and Indian-ness is represented across the political spectrum.

There are only eighteen movies between 2004-2014 that feature a Christian character in a noteworthy role. From a logistical point of view, the decade provides an exact number of movies to analyze. The years preceding the decade witnessed the liberalization of the economy, and local media growing beyond governmental control (Deshpande, 2005). Scholars have discussed the

post-liberalization decade, and analyzed an assortment of movies with themes on family, gender, patriotism, and religion (Ansari, 2008; Kaur Dhillon & Gwynne, 2014; Kumar, 2013; Manavalli, 2010). These movies were responding to the effects of globalization, and providing Indians with a sense of security that their culture would not change (Deshpande, 2005). In particular, Dwyer's (2014) analysis of movies between 1991-2012 provides a narrative history of movies, and offers a glimpse of India through the lens of Bollywood. Additionally, Basu (2010) analyzes movies between 1991-2004 to offer a political analysis of the globalization of culture through the export of Hinduism via Bollywood. Though there are overlaps with the decade analyzed in this dissertation, Basu (2010) and Dwyer (2014) mention Christians only in passing.[2] Therefore, the decade is an unexamined period with respect to representations of Christians.

Attending to that timespan demonstrates how discourses of the Hindu Right permeate various avenues of public life, and become pervasive even during a secular decade. The academic aim therein is to offer a communication perspective to the burgeoning field of Indian Christianity. Situating this dissertation in the area of media studies in the field of Communication, and borrowing from Indian Christianity (part of Religious Studies) and South Asian Studies scholarship, this dissertation explores how Bollywood discursively communicates the identity of Christians – an ethno-religious minority intertwined with India's colonial history.

**Contributions to Scholarship**

This dissertation aims to reveal the interplay between various contemporary and historical discourses, and, in doing so, illustrates the power relationships between mediation, nationhood, and politics. However, the questions posed are not an India-only problem. Cultural artifacts, such as media, circulate internationally. Media that was once shaped by local conditions are now

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influenced by a multiplicity of forces extending across cultures. Therefore, in explaining the interplay between discourses, I intend to explain the meaning-making processes that facilitate representations. The purpose, ultimately, is to re-think cultural practices to imagine democratic possibilities.

Indian Christianity has been accepted as a field of study in academic circles post-2008. The acknowledgement as a legitimate field of study came with World Christianity's interest in the Global South (Bauman & Young, 2014). The interest in the Global South arrived and evolved because of the then increasing popularity of postcolonial studies (Clarke, 2014). The geopolitically differentiated subject written out of the West-dominated history invited curiosity (Jones, 2014). Indian Christianity has been studied from various perspectives – anthropology (Mosse, 2012), history (Frykenberg 2005, 2009; Raj, Thambusamy & Samuel 2000; Webster, 2012), religious studies (Bauman & Young 2014; Jones 2014; Mallampalli, 2004), sociology (Lobo 2002b; Robinson 2003). However, none of the research on Indian Christianity has emerged from Communication (at least the U.S.-based discipline). This dissertation advances a communication perspective on representations of Indian Christians, and, in doing so, includes Indian Christianity within the field of communication. More specifically, the focus on representations in relation to contemporary and historical discourses attempts to understand the way Christians are discursively communicated as an ethno-religious minority. In studying Indian Christianity through a communication lens while focusing on representations, I aim to bring to light a mundane aspect of everyday Christian life. Analyzing representations of Christians has the potential to offer new ways to theorize Indian Christianity.

Scholarship has addressed the relationship between media and the rise of the Hindu Right (Bannerji, 2006; Rajagopal, 2001). The impact of the Hindu Right, however, is not limited by

India's borders. The Hindu Right organizes on a global scale (Anderson, 2015). It has a known presence in Australia, Kenya, Myanmar, Nepal, Trinidad, United Kingdom, and United States (Andersen & Damle, 2018). For instance, Narendra Modi travelled to New York shortly after his appointment as Prime Minister, and sold out a political event at Madison Square Garden. Until his appointment as a State Official, Modi was rejected a visa to travel to United States because of the pending court cases regarding his role in the Gujarat pogrom (Mann, 2014; Yee, 2014). The diaspora located in United States applauded and cheered a mass murderer responsible for the ethnic cleansing of Christians and Muslims. Modi's fan base (and the word fan being derived from fanatic) in United States offers a sense of the global reach of the Hindu Right. It is worthwhile to be aware of the dominant ideologies that exist within the Hindu-dominant Indian diaspora, and those being promoted through cultural avenues and practices. Such organization on a global scale is possible because of Bollywood movies, initiatives undertaken by previous Governments, and the Hindu Right (Bhatawadekar, 2011; Dudrah, 2012; Malhotra & Alagh, 2004; Manavalli, 2011; Roy, 2007). Within the context of dialectical relationships between the global and local, the aim is to explore the possible influences on secular avenues such as media, and theorize the relationship between democracy, media, and secularism. The exploration is concerned with the pervasiveness of Hindu-ness in India.

The coming together of the diaspora, globalization, and a transnational media site challenges the notion that what happens in India is an India-only problem. Culture and media originate in a location, but are then enacted through circulation in an interconnected and globalized world. Therefore, this dissertation does not address India-only or United States-only questions; the research within contributes to worldwide concerns on representations of minoritized identities.

With the relevance framed so far, this dissertation attempts to address the following research questions:

- RQ1: How are Indian Christians discursively constructed in Bollywood movies?

- RQ2: How do representations of Indian Christians in Bollywood movies communicate India as a nation?


### Organization of Chapters

Indian Christianity is a well-explored field of study spread across various disciplines. A communication perspective on Indian Christianity, however, is a novel undertaking, and, specifically, the examination of popular representations. The subsequent chapters are organized in a manner to create context for the succeeding chapters, and address specific topics within themselves.

**Chapter Two** theorizes postcolonial media studies. In an attempt to define this dissertation in the field of communication, I point to the Eurocentric disposition in communication research, and how postcolonial studies extends and informs the discipline. I discuss a brief history on the development of postcolonial studies, and the intersection with the field of communication. I then discuss the shortcomings of postcolonial studies to argue that one way of furthering the field of inquiry is an adoption of a communication perspective; I also point out how the field of communication can further expand in the process. I discuss how the location theorized in postcolonial studies so far limits the field of inquiry, and also re-centers the West as central to postcolonial experience, and how popular culture is oftentimes neglected in postcolonial critique.

**Chapters Three** and **Four** analyze representations of Christian women and men respectively. There is a difference in the way women and men are represented. Osella, Osella & Chopra (2004) observe that the Christian woman is especially singled out as dangerous to India's social fabric, and, following that recognition, she is hypersexualized. The Christian man, on the other hand, does not possess a sexuality; he is emasculated. In order to identify the Christian characters in the movies, I listen for the characters' names. Identifying characters by name to decode religion is one strategy to analyze movies about certain minoritized bodies. A remarkable characteristic of the everyday sociocultural space in India is that sometimes a name is all that is required to identify an individual's ethno-religious identity. Several scholars observe this characteristic (Anjaria, 2012; Basu, 2010; Gangoli, 2005; Kalra, 2009). Such an assumption, however, establishes a connection between name and religion when names are derived from languages. Christians across India speak a variety of languages, and, therefore, are christened with names from their native language. However, the tendency in Bollywood movies to mark Christian characters with a western name (Anthony) and a Portuguese surname (Gonsalves) ignores the community's diversity, and conflates the numerous denominations with Catholicism, and Catholicism's history in India.

**Chapter Five** continues from the previous chapters, and analyzes how the discourse of westernization is reversed in the interactions between Christian and Hindu characters. There is an assumption that modernity and westernization are inseparable. Therefore, if the Christian is represented as modern, then the Hindu is backward because of the adherence to conservativism and traditions. In this chapter, I identify a new and emerging Indian modernity that is represented by Hindus and Hindu traditions. The analysis focuses on the interactions between Christian and Hindu characters to point to the pervasive Hindu-ness of/in India.

**Chapter Six** concludes the dissertation, and highlights the theoretical contributions. In particular, I argue that the Christian woman's hypersexualization makes her an eroticized spectacle such that she is different from the Hindu woman who is venerated as a mythical goddess, and it is in such constructions that the former woman belongs in the nation. The Christian man's absent sexuality emasculates him in a way that queers his existence, and, I argue that he belongs in the nation because of his non-threatening queerdom. These two arguments challenge the long-established relationship between democratic representations and media. I adopt a postcolonial perspective to highlight the arbitrary and almost non-existent relationship between democracy and media. I also discuss two instances of ambivalent post-coloniality: Bollywood's and Christians'. With respect to Bollywood, I entangle the industry's development with the Hindu Right and centrist, liberal, and secular governments to point to three moments of ambivalence: representing Christians as residuals of colonialism, linking the community to Portuguese colonialism, but reacting to British colonialism. With respect to Christians, I critique the arguments of syncretism between Christianity and Hinduism advanced in scholarship to suggest that postcolonial hybridity is a better-suited historically situated framework to understand the community's contemporary identity.

**Endnotes**

[1] The Hindu Right is headed by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteer Corps, RSS) which provides the ideological foundation, contests elections through the Bhartiya Janata Party and affiliates that arrange a political base, and establishes an international network with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council, VHP) that procures funding and sympathies from the diaspora and parliaments of different countries. The Hindu Right has two known youth wings–

Bajrang Dal and Akhil Bhartiya Vidhyarti Parishad (All India Student Council, ABVP)–that recruit students, and participate in college elections.

[2] Anustup Basu and Rachel Dwyer analyze several movies in their respective books, and such is the inclination in a lot of research on Bollywood movies. Whether books or journal articles, scholars analyze an assortment of movies to make their arguments (Gupta, 2015; Hirji, 2008; Kazmi, 2010; Prasad, 2013; Sarkar, 2013). Furthermore, a variety of movies is needed in order to advance an argument about representations (stress on plural) of Christians.

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**Chapter Two: Postcolonial Media Studies**

**Introduction**

The field of Indian Christianity started in Religious Studies, and the subsequent research from various disciplines have produced an interdisciplinary scholarship. However, Indian Christianity is yet to be studied in the field of communication. Since the focus here is media representations of Christians in the context of postcolonial India, I intersect media studies and postcolonial studies to develop a praxis, i.e., postcolonial media studies. This chapter argues that a concentration on the post-colony and its contemporary politics can engage media studies and postcolonial studies while also extending both areas of study, and the field of communication in general without re-centering the West as the object of critique.

I draw attention to the specific branch of media studies that theorizes media as a social phenomenon, and analyzes the texts created in/through different productions (Merten & Krämer, 2016). The investment of media studies in the new and now oftentimes ignores the historical (Cere, 2011); but postcolonial studies values the historical because contemporary social contexts are products of colonial discourses (Grossberg, 2002). The postcolonial perspective adopted here is a "broad rubric for examining a range of social, cultural, political, ethical and philosophical questions that recognize the salience of the colonial experience and its persisting aftermath" (Jack, Westwood, Srinivas & Sardar, 2011, p. 277). Furthermore, and more pointedly in the context of this dissertation, adopting a postcolonial perspective works towards "decolonisation of representation; the decolonisation of the West's theory of the non-West" (Scott, 1999, p. 12). However, postcolonial studies tends to overlook the potential of mass media (Cere, 2011). These

points of contention with media studies and postcolonial studies respectively inform the analysis of media representations in the subsequent chapters.

María Fernández (1999) initiated the conversation on postcolonial media studies, encouraging an analysis of the different ways postcolonial locations produce media. Fernández stresses on the need of postcolonial media studies by noting the epistemic and ontological differences in the logics between the Global North and the Global South. As an example, Fernández observes that media studies operating within European epistemologies situate identity in terms of the individual, whereas postcolonial locations construct identity in terms of collectives produced by discourses of ethnicity, gender, nationality, and other historical and social markers of identification. Writing seventeen years after Fernández's initial incentive, Shome (2016a) bemoans that the academic terrain of postcolonial media studies has not evolved nor matured. Although several scholars in the field have contributed to the conversation in recent years (Brunt & Cere, 2011; Kumar & Parameswaran, 2018; Merten & Krämer, 2016; Murty, 2018; Shohat & Stam, 1994), media studies has not entered postcolonial studies (Shome, 2016a). However, the intersection of media and postcolonial studies should not be reduced to analyzing media productions in a postcolonial location.

The intersection of postcolonial studies and media studies should honor the "hybrid methodological approaches and […] theoretical innovations […] that target the materiality and political economy of media forms and the rhetorical packaging of communicative practices in political and cultural settings" (Kumar & Parameswaran, 2018, p. 355). The idea is to not simply turn in the direction of a postcolonial location. The aim, instead, is to understand how and why the post-colony produces specific media texts. As an example, in the context of gender studies, Sinha (2012) writes:

…while we certainly have a great deal of scholarship on women's and gender history *in*

global contexts, we have not learned sufficiently from these contexts to begin to open up

the concept of gender itself to different meanings. We must distinguish between merely

exporting gender as an analytical category to different parts of the world and rethinking the

category itself in the light of those different locations. In other words, what do these

different global locations contribute to the meaning of gender *theoretically*? (p. 357, italics

in original)

The insistence on distinguishing theories for respective locations, in the context of media studies,

acknowledges that "Asiatic communication traditions and cultural models are quite different and

independent of the dominant discourse or paradigm of Western communication traditions"

(Murthy, 2012, p. 197). A turn in the direction of the post-colony will force the field of

communication to self-reflect on the methods, research issues, and theories that have informed the

discipline so far (Hegde, 1998). An exclusive focus on the post-colony will emphasize "the

concern with the particular" cultural, legal, political, and social discourses, all of which were

uniquely manufactured by the Europeans for each colony (Rønning & Johannessen, 2007, p. ix).

In order to initiate the self-reflection advised by Hegde (1998), this dissertation centers

postcolonial India as the location to theorize from, and approaches the nation's contemporary

politics through a postcolonial perspective to situate contemporary and historical discourses.

In examining the continued effects of colonialism, postcolonial studies theorists write the

post-colony in relation to the West, and inadvertently re-center Europe (Bhambra, 2014). If post-

coloniality is about rendering the colonizer irrelevant (Cere, 2016), postcolonial studies will

achieve that self-determination only when the West is no longer given undue importance in the

post-colony's contemporary politics. In this particular instance, post-colony refers to nation-states

such as India where the colonial establishments eventually departed, and transferred governmental control to the native society. For nation-states such as Australia, Canada, South Africa, United States, etc. which are settler-colonies, and "settler" being an active noun, it is impossible to not center Europe in political discussions. The continued effects of colonialism cannot be ignored. Notwithstanding, is there a way to discuss postcolonialism without re-centering Europe and the West?

In order to illustrate how postcolonial media studies can de-center the West, I will begin with an overview of postcolonial studies scholarship in Communication. The subsequent section then will discuss some of the shortcomings of postcolonial studies, and how the field of communication may address those drawbacks. I will eventually discuss a method of analysis for the succeeding chapters in a way that departs from typified analyses of media studies (in western academia), and, in doing so, argue for postcolonial media studies.

**Postcolonial Studies in Communication**

One of the earliest intersections between Communication and postcolonial studies is Shome's (1996) "Postcolonial Interventions in the Rhetorical Canon." In the essay, Shome points to the perpetuation of colonial through communication praxis. Shome encourages communication scholars to be more reflexive of their orientations, research, and traditions and take into account temporal disparities created by colonialism that academia is further exacerbating. Shome points to the inability of western academics to understand the Global South despite well-meaning intentions. Postcolonial studies would blunt its critical and political edge if it did not challenge the academic establishment and its discontents (Schwarz, 2000). At the intersection with Communication, postcolonial studies invites relentless tension with the discipline by reminding researcher of the

origins of the discipline, methods, and the general colonialist history of the University (Shome & Hegde, 2002). The postcolonial intervention into the field of communication has turned the proverbial "critical turn" further, and asked scholars to internationalize their debates, methods, and theories (Shome, 2010). Therefore, Shome (1996) announces the arrival of postcolonial studies in Communication as emancipatory, interventionist, and political.

Shome & Hegde's (2002) co-edited special issue for *Communication Theory* marks a definite moment for postcolonial studies intervening the field of communication. Communication and postcolonial studies intersect in detangling and explaining historically situated discourses because, from a postcolonial perspective, present-day cultural, economic, racial, social, and other forms of inequalities are outcomes of colonialism (Fiske, 1992; Ono, 2009). In studying Indian Christianity, the communication-oriented research gives the discourses surrounding the community's identity significance, and the postcolonial perspective situates the same discourses in their historical context. Shome & Hegde (2002) argue that impetus of postcolonial studies to situate discourses in "geopolitical arrangements, and relations of nations and their inter/national histories" offers a new direction to communication scholarship (Shome & Hegde, 2002, p. 252). Said otherwise, postcolonial studies theorizes the local within global contexts. But it is worthwhile to remember that the global exists with/in the local in a reciprocating ecology (Muppidi, 2004). Worldwide transformations initiated by globalization of the early 2000s have shaken up the otherwise west to east flow of capital, people, and technology and complicated ideas of center and periphery in relation to global and local.

Though critical scholarship in the field of communication and postcolonial studies are similarly interested in the dynamics of power in everyday life, the respective scholarship begins with different assumptions. Even though the critical strand of Communication maintains a

progressive perspective that tries to disconnect research from colonizing tendencies (Ono, 2009), it nevertheless remains imbricated in western logics that fail to understand the Global South (Shome, 2016a). West-developed theories cannot be seamlessly employed in Eastern locales. For example, the linear development of technologies is not always visible in the Global South because, with respect to media technologies, colonialism altered chronological productions such that certain technologies were devised without preceding technologies. Chatterjee (1993) discusses how Indian anti-colonial movements developed their own broadcasting systems, and, thus, two media outlets were available in colonial India: State (colonial) and national (democratic/modern). Important to Chatterjee's exemplar is that an Indian press was conceived prior to the establishment of India as a nation-state. Despite the colonial venture being a modernizing enterprise, Indians established a democratizing media while still being colonized. Communication scholars are at times too invested in European epistemologies to comprehend Global South logics of media development and production (Shome, 2016a). Therefore, postcolonial studies offers Communication scholars, based and trained in the West, a theoretical departure, and a new grounding from which to analyze power in various forms.

The crux of postcolonial studies is divided as analytical or theoretical (Jack *et al*, 2011). At the core of the schism between analysts and theorists is the utility of high theory written by Edward Said (1978), Homi Bhabha (1985, 1994), and Gayatri Spivak (1985, 1988, 1990). Even though the theorization by these foundational scholars provides the basis of postcolonial studies scholarship, it is their high theorization that runs the risk of making postcolonialism incomprehensible and, hence, inaccessible (see Eagleton, 2005). Their intellectual discourses ironically fail to reach those whom they speak about. The preoccupation with high theory is a colonial and modernist trap because the insistence on working through the historical trauma of

postcolonialism within rigid boundaries is akin to forcing the reason of European modernity on the colonized. Furthermore, and, more problematically, academic theorization from any locale is Eurocentric. Thus, the discourse of postcolonialism is Eurocentric too. Therefore, postcolonial studies should be extended and furthered into decolonization, and, in a way, break away from the shackles of Eurocentricity.

### Some Complications with Postcolonial Studies

The field of communication and postcolonial studies have distinct yet overlapping disciplinary formations, and are both concerned with the study of culture (Kumar, 2014). Yet the relationship is often ignored (Spivak in Hegde & Shome, 2002). Kumar (2014) argues that postcolonial studies scholars (not necessarily from Communication) fail to embrace the full scope of culture by ignoring the importance of mass media in the postcolonial world. As demonstrated with the example of broadcasting systems in India, mass media was essential to undermine colonial authority (see Fanon, 1967), and overlooking the role of mass media in the creation and maintenance of nations in post-coloniality is an oversight. The following paragraphs argue for developing the relationship between the field of communication and postcolonial studies by focusing on the location theorized, drawing attention to the elitism of literary studies primarily in the discipline of English that undermines the value of mass media (Cere, 2011), and understanding how the study of (mass) media is approached.

Criticisms against postcolonial studies range from accessibility (Shohat, 1992), institutionalization (Shome & Hegde, 2002), relevance in a globalized economy (Schwartz-DuPre & Scott, 2015), usage of the prefix "post" (Kavoori, 1998), and the location theorized (Chavez, 2009). The question of location is important to other criticisms (Moore, 2001). Spivak (in Hegde

& Shome, 2002) characterizes postcolonial theory as a metropolitan theory, i.e., it studies the metropolis. Metropolis refers to an urban city, and also the parent-state of a colony. In that regard, the "metropolitan theory" may be understood in two ways: London, England which is/was the parent-state of colonial India; and Mumbai, India which is the country's commercial, industrial, and most populated city, the previous stronghold of colonial Britain, and the Bollywood industry's location. London and Mumbai will offer different theorizations because the effects of colonialism are unique to locations. In arguing for the importance of the colonial metropolis in contemporary media culture, Cere (2011) stresses the need to focus on the past-present of the metropolitan center. Cere (2011) focuses on Britain to understand how ethnic minority cultures (of former colonies) influence the postcolonial mediascape. This dissertation adopts a similar exclusive focus by turning in the direction of India and its metropolitan center – Mumbai. The difference in such a turn is the inward focus such that ethnic minority cultures are not from other former colonies but products of the country's own colonial experience.

The location theorized in postcolonial studies is also important because postcolonialism unfolds in asymmetrical forms as it moves away from the metropolis. For example, Shome & Hegde (2002) use Hanif Kureshi's *My Son the Fanatic* as an exemplar of postcolonial encounters. Ali confronts his father, Pervez, and accuses him of being "too implicated in Western civilization." Though raised in liberal England, Ali is a practicing orthodox Muslim unlike Pervez who drinks alcohol, eats pork, and befriends a sex worker. Ali and Pervez encounter their postcolonial anxieties in England, and it is worth wondering if their rendezvous would remain the same if they never migrated, and remained in Pakistan? It is in such stories of migrations, generational face-offs, and my own wonderings about postcolonialism in England versus Pakistan that create a crevice in postcolonial studies. In discussions on location, Loomba (1998), Parry (1996), and

Spivak (in Hegde & Shome, 2002) allude to a problem in postcolonial studies, i.e., postcolonialism is theorized in western locales. This leaves the post-colony itself under-theorized. Furthermore, when the post-colony is theorized, scholars describe the post-colony in reaction to the West (see Dutta, 2015). In such reactionary theorizations, the post-coloniality of the metropolitan center (here Mumbai) is reduced to a relationship with the West. Some complexities of postcolonialism can surface only when there is an exclusive inward focus.

Scholarship on India's post-coloniality bolstered the prominence of postcolonial studies, and, in general, even in present-day, scholars gravitate towards analyzing India (Bhambra, 2014). The incessant focus on India/South Asia skews postcolonial studies (Ray, 2000). Such a monopoly on India/South Asia sets the agenda for what is theorized, and how is it theorized (see Loomba, 1998). The dominance establishes British-Indian relations as paradigmatic, and postcolonial studies becomes Commonwealth-centric (Stam & Shohat, 2012). While such centricity is problematic for how other post-colonial locations may be theorized, it also minimizes the varied effects of postcolonialism on India for India itself. India's decolonization is written in relation to Britain, and the other colonizers and their forms of colonization are overlooked. India gained independence from the British in 1947, but the Portuguese maintained colonies in Goa until 1961. Additionally, in the context of Christianity, the British permitted Anglican missionaries to operate in their controlled areas only post-1813 (King, 1999), while the Portuguese arrived with approval from the Holy See, and always converted the natives, sometimes through violent measures (Robinson, 2003). A noticeable difference in the way the British and the Portuguese spread their respective versions of Christianity is visible in present-day Indians. While Roman Catholics are easy to identify because of their Portuguese surnames and naming practices, Protestants (British converted) do not christen their progeny the same way, and tend to have Indian-language names

(Fernando & Gispert-Sauch, 2004). Therefore, the Commonwealth-centrism discounts other forms of colonialism even in India. This dissertation too is about India, and I cannot possibly argue against studying India. Nevertheless, these are the complications with which I attempt to argue for the relevance of postcolonial studies.

Another shortcoming of postcolonial studies is the extent to which mass media is neglected. When postcolonial studies was still developing in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the most influential theorists were from English and Comparative Literature fields – Said, Bhabha, and Spivak. Though various scholars have furthered postcolonial studies in media studies (see Mankekar, 1999; Rajagopal, 2011; Shohat & Stam, 1994), literature is still regarded as an essential cultural artifact to understand postcolonialism (Imre, 2014). This is because literature simultaneously articulates the subjective with the objective (Young, 2009). Literature oftentimes emphasizes the social mechanisms constructing the Self and the Other (Lionnet, 1995). However, it is worth asking who has access to read and write literature? With the value afforded to literature, and the elitism associated with reading and writing literature, the theory that postcolonial studies generates then is not about everyday life. A focus on mass media can reveal how postcolonial productions are imagining their past-present, and, most importantly, aspects of a decolonial world (Fernández, 1999). Without any intention to disregard literary scholars' achievements in the arena of postcolonial studies, a turn towards popular culture in postcolonial locations can extend extant theorizations of postcolonialism.

After literature, film occupy an important position as a text for critique in postcolonial studies. The intersection of film studies (different from media studies) and postcolonial studies has analyzed the relationship between global video industries and local cinemas (Merten & Krämer, 2016). An exponent of such an intersection is Ella Shohat, who moves away from the typical close-

reading textual analysis that is characteristic of film studies to give primacy to the overall narrative of the film. In *Unthinking Eurocentrism* (2014), Shohat and Stam analyze an array of movies spanning decades, locations, and do not detach film/media from broader contemporary and historical culture. Shohat (1992) encourages that postcolonial media "must be examined in a non-universalizing, differential manner" (p. 110). In postcolonial media studies, approaches, methods, and theories need to be localized, and, more explicitly, unhinged from western ways of analysis. For instance, Indian media need to be analyzed through frameworks developed with Indian thought because western theories will always be amiss (Chatterji, 2013). Analyzing Bollywood movies through "western-centric frameworks" will be "conceptually impoverishing" (Downing, 1996). Therefore, I turn to India with an inward focus to understand the representations of postcolonialism in/through the Bollywood industry.

### The Praxis of Postcolonial Media Studies

Since Fernández's (1999) encouragement to further develop postcolonial media studies, several scholars have theorized the third point of academic praxis (see Brunt & Cere, 2011; Kumar & Parameswaran, 2018; Merten & Krämer, 2016; Murty, 2018; Shohat & Stam, 1994). This scholarship is published between 2011-2017, which is indicative of ongoing trends in postcolonial studies. This scholarship also addresses all but one of the criticisms in the points of contention raised in this chapter, viz. an exclusive focus on the post-colony. In comparing and/or relating a post-colony to the colonizer/West, theorization becomes entangled in arguments on media cultures and/or media globalization. In the way of theorizing a praxis of postcolonial media studies, I return to Hegde's (1998) invitation to communication scholars to self-reflect on the approaches, methods, and theories that have guided the discipline so far. The following paragraphs elaborate on how

representations in Bollywood movies are analyzed using discursive formation as the methodological approach while utilizing practices and theories of media studies, and also being cognizant of the need to re-think our approaches.

Scholars (Fernández, 1999; Kumar & Parameswaran, 2018; Shome, 2016) in their theorization of postcolonial media studies point to *what* postcolonial media can do. I contribute to this conversation to show *how* postcolonial media does what it does. The focus on *how* forces a turn in the direction of the postcolonial location, and adopts a South Asian lens, i.e., privileges a South Asian way of watching movies. The South Asian lens watches movies from a cultural reference point. To use an example of seeing, Lutgendorf (2006) remarks that Bollywood camerawork rejects the "'invisible style' and 'centering' principle of classic Hollywood" which is only "further heightened by the use of nonsynch sound and 'playback' singing" (p. 228-229). Reading Bollywood movies using western paradigms of textual analysis will be difficult in addition to incorrect. The use of the word incorrect alludes to a general sense of wrong, but also an ethical and historical wrong. Parmesh Shahani, a media professional, criticizes the western way of seeing:

> I wish to shift the discourse away from the self-centered literary smugness of (most) Western film theory, its 'undertheorized' social and collective dimensions and the imposition of its precepts and conventions on the cinemas of other cultures towards what has been described as a 'third cinema theory', one that emphasizes 'not so much' the film texts themselves but the social contexts in which they are consumed. (quoted in Kazmi, 2010, p. xiii)

Building on Shahani's criticism, analyzing Bollywood movies through western lenses is ideological colonization at its worst because it presumes that Indians (and other formerly

colonized) cannot narrate their own stories, and imagine themselves in different ways of being. Analyzing Bollywood movies in a western academic framework of analysis privileges a historically-privileged axiology, epistemology, ontology, and teleology. Such an approach incorrectly reads the text, and perpetuates academia's colonialist tendencies. Although escaping European epistemologies is an impossible task (because arguments must be rational as per European Modernity), there are other ways to de-center Europe, and not give the West undue importance in the post-colony's contemporary politics.

However, it is important to balance this argument on ways of seeing. Uberoi (2006) writes about their confusion while watching a sensual scene in *Sahib Biwi Aur Ghulam* (1962) because the camera sexualized the female protagonist at her feet by focusing on her anklet. Such non-conventional (by western standards) sexualization through camerawork is consistent in Bollywood movies. But with the advent of item numbers ("sensuous dance-performances" irrelevant to the story, but usually integrated for the economic value, Brara, 2010, p. 68) in Bollywood movies, moviegoers are invited to gaze upon a woman who in minimal clothing shoves her breasts into men's faces, and the audiences' through the camera (Nijhawan, 2009). In such forms of sexualization, the camerawork is important. Furthermore, since the economic liberalization in the early 1990s, globalization has introduced Indian moviegoers and moviemakers to new ways of seeing as well (Lutgendorf, 2006). There are a host of ways to sexualize women on screen, and a woman's ankles, breasts, and navel may be mobilized in tandem. The camera is corporealizing a woman one way or the other, but each body part is achieving a different purpose. Looking for breasts in Bollywood movies under the presumption that it is the universal way to sexualize women will be a futile exercise. The presence of such polysemic texts justifies the use of a South Asian lens to watch and altogether analyze movies.

The analysis performed in the subsequent chapters departs from the conventional form of "close reading" practiced in media studies. Such a departure is needed because, as Lutgendorf (2006) notes, Bollywood movies are not doing the same things as Hollywood/Western movies with the camera, lighting, narratives, and overall production. To utilize the "close reading" textual analysis, practiced in film studies to understand media in Global South, means seamless application of western logics on non-West productions. Moving away from typified textual analysis to understanding discursive formations provides conditions and opportunities to develop newer methods and theories for analysis. Therefore, I focus on dialogues, and the general character and plot developments, in relation to the broader academic, political, and popular culture within which the cinematic narratives circulate. I am additionally interested in the framing of characters in terms of how one is dressed differently than the other (for example, *salwar kameez/saree* versus urban/Western attires), how and where a dance sequence takes place (for example, modernized traditional dances indoors versus libidinal gyrations at a dance club), the use of specific words in their dialogues (for example, *adaab* versus *namaste* [religiously coded greetings]), among others. I examine a constellation of discourses, imageries, and practices that authorize and simultaneously negate Christians' identity. I look at contemporary and historical connections between culture and politics to understand the discursive construction of Christians.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I highlighted this dissertation's communication perspective. In an attempt to define this dissertation in the field of communication, I pointed to the Eurocentric disposition in communication research, and how postcolonialism extends and informs the discipline. I discussed a brief history on the development of postcolonial studies, and the intersection with the

field of communication. I looked at the shortcomings of postcolonialism, and argue that one way of furthering the field of inquiry is an adoption of a communication perspective; I also point out how the field of communication can develop in the process. I looked at how the location being theorized in postcolonialism so far limited the field of inquiry, and also re-centered the West as central to the postcolonial experience, and how popular culture is oftentimes neglected in postcolonial critique. I discussed the praxis of postcolonial media studies, and elaborated on the mode of analysis undertaken in the following chapters.

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**Chapter Three: Watching the Christian Woman**

**Introduction**

The representations of Christian women do not feature on the itinerary of scholarship (Doshi, 2018), hence, I situate portrayals of the Hindu woman in Bollywood movies as the starting point for the following analysis. The Hindu woman is invariably the ideal Indian woman (Reddy, 2006). The ideal Indian woman is from the upper-castes and upper-classes who exhibits qualities of devotion to her family and husband, prudence with her sexuality, self-sacrifice, and ties to tradition (Durham, 2001; Gangoli, 2005; Gupta, 2015; Kasbekar, 2001; Ramaswamy, 2010; Ray, 2000; Rekhari, 2014; Roy, 1995). When a woman performs such qualities, she is recognized as "sati-savitri" (Chatterjee, 1990; Krishna & Da Silva, 2015). The appellation alludes to Savitri, Lord Brahma's wife, and Sati, Lord Shiva's wife. The latter is also the practice of self-immolation over the husband's pyre, which translates to devoted wife. The ideal Indian woman is indeed a patriarchal imagination (Datta, 2000). The arranged characteristics of the ideal Indian women are quintessentially Hindu as the endorsement is embellished in the likeness of Hindu goddesses. Therefore, the ideal Indian woman is the Hindu woman. A woman from any other ethno-religious background can become the ideal Indian woman as long as she too exhibits the prescribed qualities, and performs the role of a sati-savitri.

Alongside the ideal Indian woman, who is usually a Hindu woman, is the Christian woman who is Othered by similar patriarchal imaginations (Chatterjee, 1989). The Christian woman is an ostentatious woman (Dissanayake & Gokulsing, 2004). She is imagined and represented as the opposite of the Hindu woman (Sen, 2000). However, she is not casually

misrepresented. Representations of the Christian woman is a product of colonial discourse that emasculates the Hindu man.

Convening on representations of the vamp in Bollywood movies, scholars conclude that the figure is typically an Anglo-Indian woman (Basu, 2013; Chatterji, 2013; Gangoli, 2005; Kasbekar, 2001; Kumar, 2014; Rekhari, 2014; Tere, 2012). The figure of the vamp is seldom seen in contemporary Bollywood movies, yet discussions on her inform the analysis of the Christian woman. However, a clarification is needed: Though "Anglo-Indian" may be interpreted as "British"-Indian to refer to British citizens born in colonial India or of mixed racial parentage, the term in India is a misnomer for Indians with *any* European ancestry – British, French, Irish, Portuguese (Fernando & Gispert-Sauch, 2004). The term is also now colloquially used as an identity for Christians (from the Central India region). Bollywood movies, in particular, conflate Anglo-Indian and Christian with "Christian names" such as Julie, Mary, Monica, Rosie. These characters drink alcohol, dance in bars for the pleasure of a predominantly male patronage, unsuccessfully seduce the Hindu protagonist who is committed to a Hindu woman, and, in general, are sleazy women (Basu, 2010; Gangoli, 2005; Kasbekar, 2001). Therefore, Bose (2008) describes Anglo-Indians as a "strongly 'Westernized' community whose women could conduct lives unrestrained by 'traditional' Indian proscriptions" (p. 57). All the mentioned vices are considered imports of the Christian colonizer and their social habits, and, more importantly, practices a Hindu woman is unlikely to indulge in (Sethi, 2002). The wanton-like representation responds to the inaccessibility of the Anglo-Indian/Christian woman to the Hindu man during colonialism.

Hindu men could not pursue, in any manner, Anglo-Indian women as they were related to colonial officers through concubinage or marriage (Gangoli, 2005). Additionally, Anglo-Indian sex-workers were classed as they belonged to upper-castes, and reserved for the consumption of only European men (Ballhatchet, 1980). The Anglo-Indian/Christian woman

could only be seen but never touched; she was a spectacle. These boundaries changed in post-coloniality, especially as the nation and all its inhabitants came under the domain of the Hindu man.

In the context of such a history, the Christian woman is represented as an "erotic object," and "spectacle" for viewers (Kasbekar, 2001, p. 294). As a spectacle, the voyeuristic gaze is encouraged to eroticize her. The Christian woman is meant to be consumed. She is scripted in movies to satisfy the contemporary and historical lust of the Hindu man (Gangoli, 2005). Her Otherness is wanted for pleasure (Kasbekar, 2001). She is corporealized, marked, and territorialized for the pleasures of the Hindu man – the character on screen and the audience. In the following paragraphs, I analyze the various ways Christian women are represented in opposition to the ideal Indian woman.

**Watching the Christian Woman**

Movies such as *Socha Na Tha* (2005) and *Cocktail* (2012) use a similar format for their opening scenes. The movies begin with opening scenes that introduce each character with their names revealed only after their respective introductions. These opening scenes establish each character in a variety of ways – bad versus good, modern versus conservative, westernized versus traditional – and when the characters are eventually introduced by their names, their behaviors are associated and normalized through their religion.

*Socha Na Tha* opens with Aditi's introduction to the song "Zindagi" (Life). The visuals are a montage of Aditi and Viren crossing paths with Karen appearing at the end of the song. Such an opening in the absence of Karen achieves two eventual climaxes for the Hindu couple: confirms their fate as partners, and discursively constructs Aditi as the ideal woman. Aditi and Viren are at a bowling alley, where she wears a white *salwar kameez*. Her *salwar kameez* is loose-fitted that does not show her form, and her *dupatta* covers her neck, shoulders, and chest.

Her attire is significant when compared to her surroundings. She is at a bowling alley, which is presumably at a shopping mall – a location of emerging modernity (Mathur, 2010), and her cultural garment protects her in a space of westernization. The people around her are dressed in urban/western clothing, and the women wear a variety of tops (backless, sleeveless) and jeans. These people in the background are dressed "appropriate" for their modern location. Yet it is Aditi who claims centerstage in her traditional attire, especially in pure white. However, the observation here is not about the choice of clothing as modern/urban/western or traditional. It is instead about the contemporary and historical discourses that assign labels to garments and the wearers. Bahl (2005) writes about women's clothing that "what Indian women wear is often the site of unresolved cultural conflict" which eventually defines social relations – especially gender. Therefore, while Aditi is indeed dressed differently, it is her adherence to Indian culture despite her modern location that is of importance in the scene.

The subsequent scene after the bowling alley is in a discotheque. Viren and his friends bounce with their hands up in the air to the screech of an electric guitar. The camera moves through the crowd, and everyone in sight is dressed in the urban/western "appropriate" for yet another location of modernity (Mohan, 2011). But Aditi is not visible in this scene; she is in her home away from the western influences. As the music changes to the thumping of a *tabla*, she too dances, but in a more conservative and traditional manner. Her dance is (what can best be described as) an attempt at *kathak*, a traditional dance form. She flails her hands as *mudras*, moves her head side-to-side alike *dhutam* (left to right movements), and pirouettes. Her dance within the confines of her home while everyone else is at a discotheque also underscores her adherence to Indian culture. Her initial presence at the bowling alley shows her participation in modernity, and a general urban and western culture. She balances modernization and traditionalism at the bowling alley. However, the discotheque is a treacherous terrain – alcohol, drugs, sinuous dancing – that holds the potential to influence her away from traditional values.

Therefore, she remains in her home, a space that is pure and secure, and can protect her from the rapid westernization of the outside world (Chatterjee, 1989). Aditi's introductory scenes altogether position her as the ideal woman.

Karen enters the visual montage towards the end. In stark contrast to Aditi, she's wearing a black form-fitting cocktail dress. The colors that Aditi and Karen respectively wear creates binaries between them. Karen's dress is modern in comparison to Aditi's *salwar kameez*, especially when their location is taken into consideration. The contrast between the two women also illuminate the cultural differences they adorn. Karen rides an elevator, and though the camera stays stationery, there is a pan shot of her – top to bottom. The neckline of her dress is wide and deep, and reveals her neck and cleavage. The dress also stops above her knees, and as the elevator moves up, her long legs move across the screen. The camera does not necessarily corporealize her with frozen frames, yet her cleavage is part of the frame even when her face is centered on screen. These scenes sexualize Karen because the "gaze is invited to certain parts of the body selectively considered sexual" (Nair, 2002, 53-54). Her presence invites objectification. However, while her body becomes the object of attention, Aditi is covered up behind a *dupatta*. Karen becomes accessible to the gaze as Aditi refuses to be reduced to her body. Such discursive constructions through clothing and occupying certain spaces establish the two women within usual binaries of bad and good, modern and traditional.

None of the characters are introduced with their names until this point. But there are certain characteristics attributed to each. Aditi appears to be a traditional woman, and Karen arrives as a modern woman. Each character is acknowledged by their name in the following scenes, and, in the naming process, the characteristics of traditional and modern are attached to the Hindu and Christian woman respectively. Karen is a Christian character by the virtue of her name, however, she is also marked as such through dialogues. For example, in a later scene, Aditi and Viren discuss their romantic relationships, and he informs her that his girlfriend's

name is Karen. Aditi's immediate reaction is, "क्रिस्टियन हैं!" (She's Christian!). Aditi's response marks Karen as Christian to the point that the character should not be interpreted in any other way. She also reveals an anxiety about miscegenation. Karen is dating a Hindu man, and plans to marry him as well, but her designation as Christian establishes that the relationship will be inter-religious. The binaries of Christian and Hindu, modern and traditional, vamp and wife are all created through the introductory scenes constructed from contemporary and historical discourses, and where the characters' names are indicative of their adherence to a culture that is more appropriate than the other.

*Cocktail* opens with Gautam's introduction. He is not relevant to this analysis, and, so, I will cursorily describe him. He is aboard a flight to London (where the rest of the movie takes place). He is a womanizer, who manages to swoon any woman. He starts to flirt with the flight attendant, but she rejects his advances. In the following scene, he is with the same flight attendant in the galley, who is now reciprocating his advances.

Meera is introduced in the next scene. She too is aboard a flight to London. She is wearing a pink *salwar kameez* and a knitted sweater, bangles on both arms, and a *bindi* between her eyebrows. The *salwar kameez* establishes her as the ideal woman. She is literally carrying her culture on her body. She is a living embodiment of India. Ramaswamy (2010) notes that India is cartographically represented as Hindu goddesses adoring traditional attire (*saree*), and embellished with customary jewelry. In this discursive construction of Indian womanhood, Meera's body covered by her *salwar kameez* on a flight to London becomes the sight/site of nationhood (Manavalli, 2011). When a male passenger tries to talk to her, she offers short responses to avoid conversation. She squeezes herself into a corner of her seat, and pretends to be asleep. She appears uncomfortable by the presence of an unknown man beside her. She arrives in London expecting her husband to be waiting for her, however, he is not to be seen. She locates him at his workplace, and he informs her that their marriage is a sham. She received

residency (in England) through marriage in exchange for money. She travelled to London in the hopes of living conjugal life, but her marriage is a façade. As the movie progresses, Meera continues to believe that her marriage can work.

Veronica is introduced in the subsequent scene to the song "Angrezi Beat" (English Beat). The scene opens with a montage of Veronica applying makeup, extinguishing a cigarette, and drinking wine. She is then seen entering a discotheque. The camera frames her from behind, focusing on the shimmer of her dress prancing from side to side. She is wearing a translucent short green dress with her pink brassiere visible. The use of pink on Veronica is noteworthy. The clothing women wear enables them to negotiate their cultural, national, and social identities, and, more importantly, discursively constructs the nation (Wilton, 2012). If Meera's pink *salwar kameez* that covers her up is a garment that shows her commitment to Indian culture by adhering to cultural archetypes found in Hindu religion (Hegde, 1995), Veronica's visible pink brassiere is symbolic of the same culture being reduced to bare necessities, in addition to failing to follow prescriptive national gender norms (Tuchman, 2000). The visibility of Veronica's undergarments suggest that they are out to be seen. The sight/site of her brassiere, especially in a hyper-visible pink color, is an "instrumental tool of rupture which centers an active gaze that situates modernity, sexuality and erotic pleasure" that compromises her performance of ideal Indian womanhood (Begum, 2019, p. 12). In the following scene, she approaches a man, and walks him the dancefloor. She puts his hand on her derriere, and pulls him closer to her body. He leaves his jaw hanging, and runs his eyes up and down her body as if he is taken aback by her brash behavior. He cannot handle her sexuality, so she pushes him away. For the remaining song, she is seen drinking more alcohol, rolling marijuana, and dancing with her hands in her hair as if she is heavily intoxicated.

The two women are not introduced by their names until this point. But once again, there are certain characteristics attributed to each of them. Meera is conservative and traditional. She

is a devout wife despite her fake marriage. For example, she is unwilling to accept her marriage is not real, and tells Veronica in the following scene: "आई थिंक कुछ कन्फूसिओं हैं, मेरी कोई बात बुरी लगी हैं।" (I think there must be a confusion; he must have not liked something about me). Meera finds faults in herself, none in her husband. Veronica, in response, advises Meera to forget her husband, and herself engages in casual sexual encounters throughout the movie. Veronica is modern, promiscuous, and does not care for relationships. When the women are acknowledged by their names, the characteristics of traditional and modern, and faithful and promiscuous are then attached to the Hindu and Christian women respectively.

Gautam, Meera, and Veronica eventually are trapped in a love triangle. Gautam and Veronica are sexually involved, but Gautam and Meera develop feelings for each other. Gautam and Meera do not have a sexual relationship whatsoever yet they are in love. However, Meera chooses friendship over love, and leaves Gautam. It is in this triangulation, and Meera's sacrifice that her name becomes significant. Meera is the name of the Hindu Saint known for her love for Lord Krishna. Once (the mythical) Meera's husband asked her how she could be so devoted to Krishna when he is not even in physical form. Meera responds that her love does not need a body, Krishna is within her. Gautam is the name of the Buddha who is, in some circles, considered an avatar of Lord Vishnu. Lord Krishna is an avatar of Lord Vishnu. In these connections, Gautam and Meera are a story from Hinduism. The Meera of *Cocktail* and her love are created with Hindu myths. As Rao writes, Indian women embody "deeply essentialized and mythologized feminine qualities" (Rao, 1999, p. 322). Meera's love for Gautam is not physical. She does not need the sexual aspects of a relationship as does Veronica. Meera's love is eternal; it is of mythic proportions.

*Socha Na Tha* and *Cocktail* introduce characters with parallel structures. These introductions are characterized in accordance with stereotypes developed from contemporary and historical discourses about Christians as westernized. The Christian and Hindu women are

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constructed within binaries of chaste and virgin, Madonna and whore, wife and vamp. As the Christian woman enters the script with her religious difference, the Hindu woman becomes the ideal woman, as she is always already designated as such. The Christian woman cannot become the ideal woman because of her Christian beliefs that seemingly seem to be the source of her western cultural practices.

*Socha Na Tha* and *Cocktail* establish characteristics and then assign name and religion. However, other movies establish characteristics with religion instantly. In *Page 3*, Pearl is Madhavi's roommate. They are friends, and are not pitted against each other vying for the same man's attention. Yet Pearl contrasts Madhavi. In Pearl's opening scene, the camera focuses on her television which is airing Anastacia's "Seasons Change." The dancers on television dance provocatively as they body roll and drag their hands down their torsos. The way a woman dances, and, most importantly, for whom, determines whether she is liberal and modern whose "intentions are hard to judge or control" or "motherly" and domesticated" in alignment with "the national project" (Nijhawan, 2009, p. 100). Traditional dance forms do not construct a woman's body as a sight/site of sexual desire, unlike Anastacia's libidinal groove that emphasizes her sexuality. When the camera moves to Pearl, she is seen with a cigarette in one hand, a glass of wine in the other, and a grin across her face that suggests she is enjoying Anastacia's sensual moves and western music. This short scene highlights Pearl's westernization. Her approving smirk is indicative of her consumption habits. Furthermore, Ray (2000) observes that smoking, like other vices, distance women from traditional norms. This is important because in the previous scenes Madhavi is seen at a party with people drinking and smoking around her; Madhavi is not shown indulging in either vice.

When Madhavi enters the same frame as Pearl, the contrast between the two women is emphasized. Pearl's short hair is matched against Madhavi's long hair. The reading of hair is about the aesthetics of the ideal woman who is noted for her kempt long hair, while shorter hair

is a western trend (Durham, 2001; Reddy, 2006). Pearl's short and almost boyish-looking haircut does not match the prescribed aesthetic. Furthermore, Pearl's spaghetti top alongside Madhavi's long *kurta* also accentuates their differences. Madhavi's *kurta* is paired with jeans, and it tailors a traditional chic fashion with a sense of modernity. In Madhavi's presence, Pearl's spaghetti top is completely westernized. Pearl's vices and dressing sense is further highlighted with her Christian/Western name, and the crucifix she wears around her neck. In some sense, her Christian name normalizes her un-Indian-like appearance and behaviors.

*Grand Masti* features three Christian women who are introduced at different parts of the movie. These women are sexualized in a way that they become sluts – in reference to promiscuity – in a metaphorical sense. However, all the Christian women are associated in different roles with Sri Lalchand University of Technology and Science which shortens to SLUTS. Furthermore, though most of the movie takes place on campus, it is *only* the Christian women who are affiliated with the university. While the university's name offers comic relief, the Christian women are scripted quite literally as sluts. The movie altogether enhances their promiscuity through a trivial affiliation in addition to individual scenes that emphasizes their body.

Each woman's introductory scene hypersexualizes her to make her the slut. This is achieved primarily through camerawork and dialogues. Miss Rose, who is a chemistry professor at SLUTS, is the first woman introduced. She is seen wearing a fitted cocktail dress with a deep lace neckline that invites attention to her breasts. She spills ice cream on her breasts, and then leans forward into a fountain to clean herself with the water. The background score composed of seductive groans intensifies as the camera moves closer to her wet breasts. The sight of Rose's breasts brings the Hindu men to climax as their eyes rolls up in passion. Prem, one of the Hindu men, then laments, "मिस रोज़ के केमिस्ट्री क्लास में इतने सारे एक्सपेरिमेंट किये मैंने, अफ़सोस उनके साथ कोई एक्सपेरिमेंट नहीं कर सका।" (I've done so many experiments in

Miss Rose's chemistry class; sadly, I haven't done any experiments with her.). The background score, dialogues, and visuals altogether objectify Rose. It is important to note that at this point Rose has not yet spoken. Nevertheless, she is established as a sexual object. She is also identified from the onset as a Christian woman with her name.

Marlow and Mary are similarly introduced in later scenes. Marlow is seen driving a car across the campus grounds with her horn blaring. As she steps out, her voluptuous breasts move away from the horn, and the honking stops. She too is wearing a top with a deep neckline that segments her body. She drops her purse, and bends forward to pick it up. The Hindu men cannot stop staring at her cleavage, and have their eyes locked in on her. Mary is introduced in another scene, and the focus there too is her breasts. Amar, one of the Hindu men, is looking for a bottle opener for his beer. Mary enters the scene, and suggestively asks, "मैं खोल दूँ?" (May I open it for you?). Her short dialogue is delivered with heavy breathing and pauses to heighten the sexual tension. She is wearing a spaghetti top with a deep neckline that too invites attention to her breasts. She puts Amar's beer under her top and between her cleavage, and pops the bottle open. The camera frames this scene from the bottom, and focuses on her long bare torso and breasts. The three Hindu men, once again, cannot stop staring, and reach sexual gratification as the foam ejaculates out of the beer bottle.

These scenes are organized differently than that of Aditi's and Veronica's respective introductions. The Christian women in *Grand Masti* and *Page 3* are acknowledged by their names from the onset. They are instantly read as Christian characters, and all the behaviors that they demonstrate – alcoholism, consuming western culture, dressing in provocative clothing, smoking – become characteristic of their religious identity. The Christian women of *Grand Masti*, especially, are hypersexualized not only because of the way they appear (in their clothing) but also because of the way the Hindu men's libido is directed at them. Much like

Karen and Veronica, Pearl, Rose, Marlow, and Mary too are positioned as erotic objects and spectacles.

**Watching Women with their Families**

Anustup Basu (2010) observes that Christian characters in Bollywood movies are usually only baptized with first names. The omission of a surname indicates the absence of a family – estranged parents or being orphaned. The absence-presence of a family discursively constructs womanhood because women are defined in relation to their families (Gopinath & Raj, 2015). Furthermore, surnames, especially Hindu ones, hint at caste, class, and a historical presence in India (Deshpande, 2005). For example, scholars' surnames like Basu and Deshpande are derived from Indian languages. These surnames also point to a part of India to where their family lineage may be traced. Furthermore, the surnames reveal religion. A surname like Pereira (of the *Grand Masti* Christian family) is derived from Portuguese, and, therefore, puts the family outside the purview of India's (read: Hindu) cultural history, and scripts the individual as Christian/Catholic. Surnames show relation to a family, and also reveals familial dynamics.

Karen (from *Socha Na Tha*) and Veronica (from *Cocktail*) are Christian women with families, despite literature suggesting that these characters ideally would be orphaned. It is the Hindu women who are orphaned in these movies. Notwithstanding, the Hindu women demonstrate family values such as being closely-knit, and sacrificing personal pleasures for the family (Gupta, 2015). In *Socha Na Tha*, Aditi, the Hindu woman, is adopted by her uncle and his family, and they all live together with other family members under one roof as a joint family. The presence of such a big family signifies tradition, and adherence to a traditional way of life (Basu, 2010). Karen's family, in comparison, is a nuclear family. Her family is significantly smaller when compared to Aditi's Hindu family. Even though Karen has a

surname (Fernandes) that associates her with a family, the absence of a big and extended family minimizes her Indian-ness.

The way each family operates also contributes to the importance of the family in the woman's life. For example, when Viren visits Aditi's home for an arranged marriage proposal, he is greeted by her *entire* family. Women from both families are dressed in extravagant *sarees* and *salwar kameezzes*, and are adorned with flashy jewelry. These women's embellished appearances situate them as a traditional family (Basu, 2010). These women are markers of culture, tradition, and values (Chatterjee, 1989). Basu (2010) observes that tradition is richness, and these families have both – tradition as well as wealth. To celebrate a possible union of the two families, *laddus* (Indian dessert) are served with tea. This is a mundane offering, but it should be noted for the family's traditional values. A *laddu* is a quintessential Indian sweet that is usually prepared for festivities, and is also a common religious offering for Hindu ceremonies. The use of *laddus* to celebrate the occasion of marriage – which the Hindu patriarchal structure promotes (Subramanian, 2010) – highlights Aditi's family's Indian-ness which relates to their Hindu-ness. This gesture is magnified when compared to Karen's household.

Later in the movie, Viren visits Karen's family to ask her hand in marriage. The background music for the scene is scored on a pipe organ, typical of old-school church choirs. Additionally, the scene opens with a close-up of Jesus Christ's portrait. The aural and visual components of the scene work together to intensify the Christian-ness of the household, and the altogether Otherness of the Fernandes family. They are unlike the Aditi's Hindu family. When compared to the bustle of Aditi's home, Karen's home is relatively quitter. It is only Viren speaking at Karen's parents over the timbre of a pipe organ. Her parents are dressed in all black, and seated in front of an altar with candles lit in front of it. Her father is dressed in a three-piece suit, and her mother is wearing a westernized outfit that consists of pants, a top,

and a shimmering coat. There is no traditional clothing in Karen's household, and their dark and monotone outfits contrast the variety of colors seen in Aditi's home. There is an absence of tradition in Karen's household, and, therefore, a dearth of (cultural) wealth. Viren delivers a spiel about how his family will accept Karen despite her faith, and Karen's father asks him, "So then, whiskey or vodka?" The question is meant to be an offer of celebration, but underneath it is a difference between the two families of different faiths. Alcohol too is celebratory, but in western society. Furthermore, the vodka taps into the stereotype of alcoholic and drunk Christians (Benegal, 2006); this stereotype is emphasized as the scene ends with Karen's father and Viren getting drunk together.

The way Aditi's and Karen's respective families operate extend the differences between Christian/modern and Hindu/traditional binaries. Aditi's family is conservative. They are opposed to Aditi dating and having a boyfriend. Karen's family is comparably liberal. They are not disturbed with the disclosure that Karen and Viren have been dating, or that she is choosing her own life partner. Aditi's family's conservatism is traditional conduct. Their insistence on an arranged marriage is situated in historical practices related to the maintenance of caste, class, and religion (Sonawat, 2001). I argue that the obedience shown towards such traditions, especially in the presence of a Christian family, is to thwart the possibilities of exogamy, i.e., miscegenation. On the other hand, the freedom Karen's parents afford her to date, dress, and visit places as she wishes is related to Christian values, where it is assumed that dating and/or marrying outside the community is a marker of westernization (Allendorf & Pandian, 2016). Once again, there is an absence of culture and tradition for the Christian family to want to maintain any of it. These differences in the way each family operates is too on the binary of how Christian women versus Hindu women are represented. These patterns are visible in other movies too.

*Cocktail* too features an orphaned Hindu woman, and a Christian woman with a family. But there are no scenes with either woman's family. Their family ties, nevertheless, are discursively constructed through dialogues. Meera is orphaned, and is adopted by her extended family in India. Like Aditi's extended family in *Socha Na Tha*, Meera's adoptive family steps in to take care of her. However, a strong marker of Meera's familial relationships is the way she strives to save her fake marriage. As per Hindu cultural values, marriage serves as an avenue to enrich family life (Desai, 1995). In the absence of a blood-related/nuclear family, Meera's marriage is an entrance into the institution of a family. Therefore, she cannot fathom the concept of a contractual marriage, and refuses to divorce and/or separate from her husband.

Veronica, on the other hand, is estranged from her parents. She tells Meera, "अनाब-शनाब पैसेवाले, पता नहीं कहाँ हैं। पर हर महीने एक मोटा जूसी चेक भेज देते हैं। यू कनौ, पैदा होने के टाइम पे अपने माँ-बाप को नहीं जानती थी, साथ रही तोह भी नहीं जान पेयी।" (My parents are filthy rich. I don't know where they are [located], but they send me a big juicy cheque every month. You know, I didn't know them when I was born. I still don't know them even after staying with them). Veronica's family may be described as dysfunctional because, though they are alive and well, they have left her to her own devices. The monthly inflow of money also defines the relationship as materialistic, i.e., her parents' absence is compensated with money. In India, where the family is a dominant institution, individual family values improve the texture of the overall society (Sonawat, 2001, p. 178). Therefore, if there is a relationship between tradition and wealth (Basu, 2010), Veronica's family has wealth but lacks tradition. Their richness does not contribute value to traditional culture. Furthermore, Veronica's romantic relationships also lack substance. She is in a live-in relationship with Gautam, but throughout their relationship she is seen flirting with other men. When discussing her relationship with Gautam, she asks Meera, "शादी थोड़ी न की हैं उससे। अब नया हैं, मज़्ज़ा आ रहा हैं, पर कब तक - चार दिन , अ वीक, अ मंथ?" (I'm not married to him. It is new and fun, but for how long – a few days, a week, a

month?). This exchange between the two women offers a commentary on Veronica's sexuality that cannot be contained nor satisfied. Additionally, her relationship with Gautam being just a fling also shows the absence of strong relationships in her life. Her fling also alludes the difference between Indian and westernized family values such that the former upholds marriage as the ultimate possible union between apparent lovers. Again, the value placed on family and marriage in India emphasizes a permanence, i.e., relationships are meant to endure through time (Sonawat, 2001). The absence of a familial and an intimate relationship in Veronica's life discursively constructs differences between the two women. The Christian woman does not care for her family or relationships. The Hindu woman, though orphaned and in a hoax marriage, values her family and relationships.

*Ajab Prem Ki Gazab Kahani* utilizes the orphaned Christian woman stereotype (Basu, 2010). Jenny is not acknowledged with her last name in the movie, but her father is referred to as "Uncle Pinto," which gives Jenny her surname. However, later in the movie, it is revealed that Jenny is adopted, and her surname comes from her adoptive parents. Therefore, her religion too is only adopted. Altogether, Jenny's identity as an orphaned but adopted Christian woman complicates the typecast representations of Christian characters. For instance, Prem's (the Hindu protagonist) friends convince him that all Christians eat meat, and he must too in order to pose as a culturally appropriate suitor for Jenny. He violates the gastronomic tenets of his faith only to discover that she is a vegetarian. She informs him that her friends tease her saying, "तुम्हें क्रिस्टियन नहीं, पंडित के घर पैदा होना चाहिए था।" (You should have been born in a Pandit [Brahmin caste] household instead of a Christian one). The suggestion here is that Jenny is more aligned with Hindu cultural practices, and, for that reason, she is unlike other Christian women. By forgoing an otherwise typical Christian practice, Jenny automatically embraces Hindu creed. But she does not adopt any random Hindu cultural practices; she embraces practices of the highest caste. The exchange with Prem makes Jenny appear Hindu as she sheds

her Christian eating habits, but it also shows the extent to which Hindu-ness is inherent in her – a notion central to the Hindu Right propaganda. Furthermore, while the consumption of meat has been an ongoing central issue in Hindu Right politics, the centrist, liberal, and secular INC enacted a majority of the legislations (specifically) on cow slaughter and beef consumption (Sarkar & Sarkar, 2016). Such legislations are punitive, directed at Christians and Muslims who typically operate slaughterhouses, and attempts to remove them from participating in a common national culture that follows Hindu social codes (Singh, 2015). Therefore, in forsaking her adoptive religion, and embracing Hindu cultural practices, Jenny ratifies the inherent Hindu-ness in her.

Jenny's appearance is the extent to which she appears as a stereotypical Christian, i.e., she wears short summer dresses, and a crucifix is always visible around her neck (like Angie from *Finding Fanny*). Notwithstanding, her characteristics belie her Christian appearance. She demonstrates the qualities usually associated with the Hindu woman devoted to her family. In one scene with her parents, she tells her mother that she is wrong in her judgements about Prem. Her mother retaliates with anger, "यह उसकेलिये हमसे आरग्यु कर रही हैं। अपना खून होता तोह ऐसा करता? ब्लडी ऑर्फ़न!" (She is arguing with us for him [Prem]. Would our own child do something like this? Bloody orphan!). Her mother continues, "इससे पलनेसे तोह अच्छा था की तुम कोई कुत्ता पाल लेते। कम-से-कम वह तुमसे लॉयल तोह होता।" (We should have adopted a dog over her; at least the dog would be loyal). Jenny's mother believes that she should be indebted to her adoptive parents. Although her mother appears on screen for limited scenes, she provides a glimpse of a Christian household. Unlike the Hindu families in other movies, Jenny's mother does not demonstrate affection towards her adopted daughter. Their relationship is that of an obligation – they have given Jenny a life, and, therefore, Jenny owes her life to them. This obligation resembles the materialistic dynamic of Veronica's family wherein there is an expectation to give back in order to maintain the relationship. In Veronica's case it is money,

whereas in Jenny's case it is unquestioning loyalty. In fulfilling the obligation towards her adoptive family, Jenny keeps quiet during her mother's tirade, and, in a sense, upholds the wishes of her family – much like Aditi does for her family. Therefore, in her deference to her mother, despite the verbal abuse, she performs the role of sati-savitri. Jenny is ideal Indian woman in the likeness of a Hindu woman. Additionally, because Jenny is made to appear Hindu with her practices, her adoptive parents represent the shortcomings of a Hindu child being raised by a Christian family. The fears of exogamy extend into familial relationships.

Grand Masti does not focus on family life, and, therefore, the stereotypes of estranged parents and orphaned child are not scripted in the movie. Yet, there are connections to be made in the way the characters interact with each other. Prem's wife, Tulsi, is devoted to her husband's joint Hindu family. She is responsible for the cooking as well as helping her nephew with his studies. Despite being occupied with household chores, she makes time for her husband, and shows sexual inclinations, but something always comes in between them which leaves Prem sexually frustrated. Rose, who becomes Prem's object of desire, is not seen in any familial role. Rose's husband, Peter, is impotent, and sex has been absent from their marriage. Rose knows that Prem is married yet she pursues him. In one scene, Prem, Robert, Rose, and Tulsi are seated at the same table for dinner. Rose strokes Prem's leg under the table to excite him. This scene gives an insight into Rose's familial life because she is seated at the table with her own husband; nevertheless, she flirts with another woman's husband in her presence. Her sexuality cannot be contained nor satisfied. This scene, once again, demonstrates the extent to which Christian values debase the institution of marriage. According to Hindu cultural code, in addition to a social institution, marriage is also a sacrosanct union to the point that it is considered sacred (Sharma, Pandit, Pathak & Sharma, 2013). Rose does not care for the sanctity of her marriage the same way. Thus, we see two models of a family – Christian and Hindu. The Christian family is individualistic without a care for others in the relationship, and

driven by an insatiable libido. While Rose herself chooses infidelity, she also encourages Marlow (her sister-in-law) and Mary (her step-daughter) to pursue married men. Rose fails as a mother in her inability to guide Mary, a wife in her pursuit of infidelity, and as an Indian woman for snaring another woman's husband.

**Conclusion**

Gangoli (2005) writes that the vamp is located outside India because of her inability to adhere to Indian norms and traditions, and altogether racial Otherness. Given that "racial Otherness" here is marked by religion, there is no ocular difference between Christian versus Hindu women. The Christian woman's sexual promiscuity, which is underscored by her western religion, is the reason for her racial Otherness (Kasbekar, 2001). Keeping in mind that these characters are scripted by a predominantly Hindu industry for a predominantly Hindu (male) audience, and that sex is taboo for the Hindu woman (Chatterji, 2013), the Christian woman is represented as a sexual object because she is imagined outside the purview of Indianness. However, it is interesting how representations of the Christian woman continue to depict Otherness in Bollywood movies.

The figure of the vamp slowly disappeared from Bollywood movies with the advent of the "new woman" around the time Indira Gandhi rose to political prominence, and eventually assumed the role of Prime Minister (Kasbekar, 2001). Indira Gandhi was an upper-caste and upper-class Hindu woman who occupied the highest public office during a time when most Indian women were still confined to their homes. Indira Gandhi herself was a "new woman" in India, and, subsequently, birthed a new womanhood for Indian women albeit under heteropatriarchy (Rajan, 1992). The political rise of Indira Gandhi around the 1970s is interesting because the figure of the ideal Indian woman too emerged as a "new woman" under the emergent patriarchy of Indian nationalism towards the end of colonialism (Belliappa,

2013). The Indian nationalists, engaged in ideological (cultural, discursive) and material (economic, structural) struggles with the British, constructed the image of a new Indian woman to contrast "western women, traditional Indian women and low-class women" as a way of representing a "distinctively modern national culture" (Chatterjee, 1989, p. 622). This "new woman" stood in opposition to India's own feeble past and the dominating West. Indian womanhood has always been constructed in relation to the political requirements of the time (Mankekar, 1999; Rao, 1999). But what prompts the figure of the Christian woman – her liberalism, sexual promiscuity, familial relationship and altogether racial Otherness – between 2004 to 2014?

Kazmi (2010) observes that movies released during the Indian National Congress' (INC) incumbency (between 2004-2014) included a wanton character named Sonia (*Aitraaz*, 2004; *Jism*, 2003). The name Sonia does not indicate religion; however, during the INC's ascendance to political office (and the years preceding the decade) audiences were enamored by Sonia Gandhi – leader of the INC – whose racial Otherness was the topic of political debate. Sonia Gandhi is an Italian Indian (naturalized citizen through marriage) Roman Catholic who occupied the public's attention because of her foreignness. Sonia Gandhi exhibits ocular difference as well as religious difference. Sonia Gandhi's relationship with India has been ambiguous. On one hand, the Hindu Right opposed Sonia Gandhi's appointment as Prime Minister because of her Italian heritage. On the other hand, Sonia Gandhi was tokenized to celebrate the diversity of Indian secularism because she is of European heritage and Christian faith leading a country of a predominantly Hindu citizenry with a Sikh Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, and a Muslim President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. Even though Sonia Gandhi was not considered appropriate (socially not legally) to govern the country for her foreignness, quite paradoxically, she became the face of secular India. However, her prominence in the Indian political and social landscape did not seem to have any influence on representation of

Christians in Bollywood movies. On the contrary, Bollywood movies continued to represent Christian women as the racial Other. Sonia Gandhi was widowed in 1991, and has remained unmarried; she is always draped in monotone *sarees*; and has not let personal controversies influence her public image. Despite such an image of a Christian woman in political life who, it may be argued, could have influenced representations of women in movies (Rasul, 2017), Bollywood movies depicted Christian women as the opposite.

It seems as if the Christian woman on screen became the canvas onto whom to project the citizenry's racial anxieties surrounding Sonia Gandhi. The sexual nature of such representations confirms the old conviction that racial anxieties (here related to religion) are underwritten with sexual anxieties. As Fanon (1952) wrote, "a negrophobic woman is in reality merely a presumed sexual partner – just as the negrophobic man is a repressed homosexual…for the Negro has a hallucinating sexual power" (p. 135-136). The eroticized and hypersexual spectacle of the Christian woman is indeed hallucinating as it is simultaneously a fetishization as well as a repulsion of her body. Watching Christian women during the decade shows that secularism is an ideal desired only for political conversations because movies do not offer secular representations.

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**Chapter Four: Watching the Christian Man**

**Introduction**

Bollywood movies repeatedly contrast the Christian woman against the moral and prudent Hindu woman. The dichotomization is emphasized by the Christian woman's westernization that is seen in her clothes, family life, mannerisms, and sexuality. The discursive constructions call attention to her inability to be Indian. Therefore, Doshi (2018) concludes that the Christian woman fails to seamlessly assimilate with Indian-ness. Bollywood movies of the same decade, however, represent the Christian man in comparably different ways. It is important to note that there are fewer representations of Christian men in Bollywood movies between 2004-2014. Nevertheless, their presence is unlike that of the Christian woman.

Scholars insist on analyzing masculinity in relation to the nation because masculinity emerges in parallel development of modern nationalism (Mosse, 1996). I approach masculinity as that "aspect of man's social being which is gendered: which defines him as a man and links him to other men, and conditions other aspects of his identity, such as class, occupation, race, and ethnicity" in addition to caste and religion which altogether contributes to the ways he belongs in the nation (O'Hanlon, 1997, p. 3). Modern nations were metaphorically birthed from the violence of war in which only men take part because in fighting for their nation they are also defending the honor of their nation, i.e., women (Nagel, 1998). Though women literally birth the nation through biological reproduction, they are relegated to symbolic roles (McClintock, 1995). Therefore, the idea of the nation is constructed around the Other against whom nationhood is crystalized (Ranganathan, 2010). The nation requires the Other, especially in the figure of a masculine Other (Fanon, 1952).

Otherness further constructs gendered discourses which problematize masculinities of men as both barbaric and effeminate which then mobilizes the need to protect both "their women" and "our women" (Shepherd, 2006). In postcolonial contexts, narrow and reactionary definitions of nationalism establish a cultural identity at the intersection of masculinity and religious identity which exacerbates Otherness, and further determines be-longing in the nation (Ahmad, 1992; Hansen, 1999; Mayer, 2000).

According to Connell's (2005) oft-cited theorization of masculinity, there is always a hegemonic masculinity. In a worldwide context, it is the Anglo-American/Western masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position (Hooper, 2001). The Anglo-American/Western man was bestowed with such a supreme position during colonialism when the British/European man established the parameters for manliness. Indian nationalists, during and towards the end of colonialism, configured a reactionary native masculinity as heterosexual and hypermasculine that espoused values of adherence to traditional culture, monogamy, patriarchy, patriotism, and an intense libido complemented with self-control (Banerjee, 2005; Balaji, 2014; De, 2013). However, these masculine values are attached to the upper-caste and upper-class Hindu man (Gabriel, 2004). Therefore, the Hindu man's masculinity establishes the native criterion for manliness in India. He is the embodiment of India's hegemonic masculinity, but he is positioned as such in reaction to the past and present parameters for masculinity previously attached to the Anglo-American/British/European/Western man (Balaji, 2014). The past and present of the West conflates into a monolithic figure that continues to emasculate the formerly colonized.

Working with Sara Suleri's (1992) and Mrinalini Sinha's (1995) respective theorizations on colonial masculinities, Teltscher (2000) notes how the colonized Indian man was characterized as "the most effeminate inhabitant of the globe" (p. 159). Colonialism is one of the most influential factors that continues to construct Indian masculinity because the

British, in particular, imposed acceptable feminine and masculine behaviors in opposition to native practices of gender and sexuality (Birch, Schirato & Srivastava, 2001). Hence, Indian masculinity embodied by the Hindu man is a "politicized commodity bearing the weight of a country's post-colonial insecurities and its longstanding perception of mediated emasculation by the West" (Balaji, 2014, p. 6). However, the Christian man is neither responsible for the nation's emasculation, nor is he the masculine Other against whom nationhood is imagines because the Muslim man is the quintessential Other (Kazmi, 2010). Therefore, what then is the Christian man's role in India's reactionary masculinity performed by the Hindu man?

Colonial discourse categorized colonized men as either effeminate or martial (Alter, 2004). Though martial is unlike effeminacy, and was a categorization for warrior clans, it was still not masculine enough as per the colonialists (Grewal, 1996). The martial races, although possessing virile masculinity, were savages who demonstrated brute strength but lacked intellectual capabilities (Yegenoglu, 1998). Osella, Osella & Chopra (2004) thus note that "the British were hypermasculinised, scientific and progressive, a high step on the evolutionary ladder; the Indians were effeminate, childlike, primitive, and superstitious" (p. 3-4). Important to note here is that the colonial/British masculinity was termed "Christian manliness" (Basu & Banerjee, 2006, p. 478). On the opposite side of the spectrum from hegemonic masculinity in Christian manliness was the Hindoo – as all Indians were recognized (Frykenberg, 2005). When the nationalist resolve sought to define its own masculinity, it was in reaction to the Christian British man (Basu & Banerjee, 2006). While constructing their own masculine identity, the "Indian nationalists not only inverted the Orientalist epistemology, they also internalized the ontological difference vis-à-vis the West" (Hansen, 1996, p. 142). Orientalist discourse established the West as the ultimate masculine subject (Said, 1978), and the inversion of the discourse overturned the colonized nation's effeminate status to re-construct it as hypermasculine with comparably different values. In this regard, Indian colonial and

postcolonial masculinity while constructed in part in relation to women – as demonstrated in Chapter 3 – is also constructed in relation to men of other communities who have significantly impacted India's history such as the British, Indian Christians, Indian Muslims.

In this chapter, I argue that in the construction of a Hindu/Indian masculinity by inverting the Orientalist discourse, the postcolonial insecurities related to emasculation is projected on the residuals of colonialism – the Christian man. Watching the Christian man in Bollywood movies shows that he is represented unlike the Christian woman. I argue that he is allowed to shed his Otherness, through discursive constructions of Indian-ness performed in the likeness Hindu-ness, and integration into the nation (see Ranganathan, 2010). However, it comes at the cost of his sexuality. Absent sexuality in the Christian man emerges as a recurrent theme. Sexuality is ultimately integral to masculine performances (Sharma, 2009). In the following paragraphs, I analyze the various Christian men in Bollywood movies by focusing on their performance of masculinity that is invariably tied to nationalism.

### Watching the Christian Man

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's (2017) *The Khan Mutiny*, a documentary-style podcast for the BBC World Service, tries to understand how three Muslim men became the most successful actors of the post-1990s Bollywood. Alibhai-Brown interviews Rajan Kapoor, Bollywood producer, who remarks:

> A Muslim, if he is there, and he's a good Muslim, he will probably be even more patriotic than our next Hindu character. And if he is not, he will not have a mustache. He will have a long beard. He will be chopping mutton, and plotting against India, and stuff like that.

Kapoor points to representations used to defend and/or vilify Muslims. These representations tie masculinity to nationhood because the Muslim is bad or good in relation to his role in the

country (Nagel, 1998). While appearance is important to masculinity, Kapoor emphasizes the type of facial hair – beard versus moustache. These stereotypes come together in *7 Khoon Maaf* with the representation of the only Christian man, Fauji [Major] Edwin Rodriques. He is introduced on screen in his khaki army uniform, and a neatly trimmed mustache above his lip. If the mustache is a marker of patriotism, as Rajan Kapoor observes, Edwin's patriotism is heightened to nationalism with his badges of honor on his uniform. In the same introductory scene, he asks a mute stable-keeper a question in Hindi, who responds to him in sign language. Unable to interpret the stable-keeper's signs, he turns around to a butler and asks in English, "What in the devil is he saying?" Edwin's switch from Hindi to English is notable because his idiom phrase "what in the devil" is from the colonial era (the movie is pictured in the 1980s). The phrase is also quintessentially British. His colonial colloquialism may be linked to his religion because it is assumed that Christians are a pre-dominantly English-speaking community (Dwyer, 2014), and the community maintained somewhat intimate ties with the British (Oddie, 2001). However, these moments of slippages do not undermine his masculine and nationalistic performance.

Edwin's nationalism is further underscored when he is awarded the Kirti Chakra (a military decoration) for his service in the Operation Blue Star during which one of his legs had to be amputated. These decorations and sacrifices prop him up as a patriotic man. Edwin's service to India makes him Indian. However, the use of the real-life event, Operation Blue Star, in a fictional movie to celebrate a Christian man advances the Hindutva and nationalist agenda – both of which are tied to masculine performances. Operation Blue Star was a military operation to remove Sikh separatists from Harmandir Sahib in Punjab. The aftermath of the operation resulted in Hindu-Sikh violence with the then Government using all their might to subdue any Sikh resistance. Placing Edwin into a real-life event of militancy and nationalism emphasizes his masculinity. He is a brave soldier willing to sacrifice his body (parts) to

preserve the nation's sanctity from forces determined to cause havoc. The way his narrative as an army man develops shows a member of an ethno-religious community (Christians) disciplining another ethno-religious community (Sikhs) into a Hindutva and nationalist discourse. This narrative is interesting because Christians are similarly accused of practicing separatist politics (Shourie, 1994).

Edwin is a patriarchal man who believes in a traditional family unit. In a scene in his bedroom, he tells wife, Susanna, "घर में बच्चे का आना बहुत ज़रूरी हैं। एक बार माँ बनोगी, तभी तुम्हें एक शादी-शुदा बीवी होने का ज़िम्मेदारी निभाना आएँगी।" (It is important that a child grace this household. Once you become a mother, you will realize the responsibilities of a married woman). His beliefs about a woman's duties as a mother and wife highlight his adherence to traditional family values (Uberoi, 2006). But his rank in the army who is devoted to his country links such values to that of nationalism. The ideology of masculinity is inextricable from the ideology of nationalism (Nagel, 1998). Hence, his masculinity even in his household is closely associated with his duty and service to the nation. A notable example of his association between home and nation in relation to masculinity is that he is most dressed in his army uniform, except for one scene in which he wears an ascot suit – a style closely related to the aristocratic colonial British and Indian military culture. In the scene described above, in particular, which unfolds in his bedroom, he wears his military dress uniform that is embroidered with his masculine national achievements at war. Therefore, the interaction with his wife, who is a Christian (Anglican Protestant) woman, is important because in his adoption and performance of Hindu/Indian patriarchy he is working to bring her into the fold of the Indian-ness.

As the scene in his bedroom develops, audiences learn that Edwin cannot consummate his marriage. He asks Susanna if she visited the gynecologist. She responds positively, and assures him that everything is "normal" with her. He probes, "Then why can't you conceive?" She then hesitantly answers, "उसने कहा हैं की मुझ मैं कोई कमी नहीं हैं।" (They said there's

nothing missing in me). He laughs, and retorts, "तब मैं बिस्तर में भी अपाहिज हूँ।" (So I'm handicapped in bed too). He connects his impotency to his physical handicap that he sustained in war for his country. This is noteworthy because he connects nationalism and sexuality. Edwin can have only one.

Albeit a Christian character, Edwin is scripted with characteristics that enhance his Indian-ness. He is a decorated military officer, and believes in a traditional family unit. However, his ability to be nationalistic, and, therefore, Indian, is linked to his sexuality. His masculinity demonstrated through patriarchal values and nationalism is emphasized – as hypermasculine – by his role in the army. However, his hypermasculinity lacks sexual virility. It is as if Edwin's ability to be Indian comes with a handicap – first his leg then his sexuality.

*Grand Masti* features one Christian man, Robert Pereira, who is also the only Christian man in the movie. He is mostly dressed in three-piece suits topped with a beret. He also adorns a thick handlebar moustache above his lip. Such an outwardly westernized appearance belies his Indian characteristics. He is a traditional patriarch with values of monogamy, nationalism, and patriarchy (De, 2013). Upon his arrival as the incoming principal of SLUTS, he institutes sexual austerity across the campus which involves distance between female and male students, and modest clothing. The women students across campus are seen wearing *sarees* with their hair covered or *burqas* with their face covered. The students on campus also avoid each other out of fear that Robert will punish them for any form of sexual transgression. It is only the Christian women from his family – Rose, Marlow, and Mary – who dress provocatively on campus, and pursue men for sexual encounters. In his personal life too, Robert maintains control over the women in his family which includes prudence in matters of dressing and sexuality. He bemoans the Christian women's dressing sense, and complains that they should wear *sarees*. In one scene, all the men in the movie find themselves hanging off the edge of a building for their lives. The Christian women decide to tie their skimpy dresses together to

create a makeshift rope to pull the men up. Their dresses tied together falls severely short. Robert yells at them about their failed attempt, "इसीलिए कहता था, इतने छोटे कपडे मत पहना करो। अगर साड़ी पहने होती, तोह तुम सब का वस्त्रहरण नहीं हुआ होता।" (That's why I always tell you'll, don't wear such short clothes. If you'll were wearing *sarees*, wouldn't have to strip naked [word used: vastraharan]). The *saree* is symbolically Hindu (Bhatia, 2003), and Robert's complaints plead the women to shed their Christian traits for the Hindu way of life. If the Christian women were Hindu-like, he would not be facing imminent death.

Robert has an idiosyncrasy. He often quotes famous historical leaders in chaste Hindu followed by a translation in English, or vice versa. He quotes Gandhi in his introductory scene, and his conservatism is tinged with Gandhian ideologies. Gandhi is noted for complaining that "in Hindu households, the advent of a missionary has meant the disruption of the family coming in the wake of change of dress, manners, language, food and drink" (quoted in Shourie, 1994). Robert's derision of the women's skimpy clothing is alike Gandhi's grievance with the changes missionaries brought about in Hindu social life. His ability to speak chaste Hindi, furthermore, is noteworthy. Christians are typically English speakers, who either struggle to speak Hindi, or speak with a heavy accent that undermines their Indian-ness (Dwyer, 2014). Robert's ability to speak Hindi is a performance of Indian-ness. His language skills make him more akin to performing Hinduism. For example, in the abovementioned scene when the Christian women strip down to their underwear, Robert uses the word *vastraharan* for undress. The word is not colloquial. It is borrowed from an episode in the *Mahabharata* when Draupadi is being stripped naked but is saved by Lord Krishna's intervention. His Hindi vocabulary taps into Hindu mythology. He is allowed to be Indian via Gandhian ideologies and through his knowledge of Hinduism. With Robert's investment in Gandhian ideologies of sexual preservation, and Hinduism, he is allowed to be Indian.

Robert's conservatism in matters of sex, in particular, is important to his performance of Indian-ness. Despite the re-configuration of Indian masculinity with an intense libido (Valiani, 2014), celibacy is still preferred as it demonstrates control over the body and mind (Osella, Osella & Chopra, 2004). Displaying such restraint over sexuality was endorsed by Hindu albeit liberal Gandhi (Vasudevan in Osella, Osella & Chopra, 2004), Hindu nationalists Dayanand Saraswati and Vinayak Savarkar (Murty, 2009; Savarkar, 1969), and Hindu revivalist Swami Vivekananda (Baber, 2004). Dayanand Saraswati, in particular, developed his approach to sexuality from the Vedas (Murty, 2009). Altogether, celibacy as a performance of masculinity is linked to Hindu values. This form of masculinity that avoids recreational sexual encounters is performed with characteristics of honor and self-control (Uberoi, 1998). Therefore, Robert's sexual conservatism is tinged with Hindu values that let him perform a quality of Indian-ness. However, he too is sexually impotent. Rose reveals Robert's impotence to the Hindu men, Marlow, and Mary:

> छे साल पहले एक एक्सीडेंट में इसकी गाडी क्या तुखी तबसे इसका गियर न्यूट्रल में ही रहता हैं।
>
> इसने सच छुपाया और धोका दे कर मुझसे शादी की, दुनिया को अपनी मर्दानगी दिखाने के लिए।
>
> और फिर फ्रस्ट्रेशन में इस कॉलेज के हर स्टूडेंट को डरा-डरा कर अपनी तरा नपुंसक बनाया।
>
> (Six years ago he met with a car accident, and since then his gear is always in neutral. He hid the truth and married me to flaunt his masculinity. Then to remove his frustration, he scared everyone in this college and made them impotent like him).

Rose exposes Robert's conservative and traditional ideologies as a façade, and brings his absent sexuality to the fore. Robert's hypermasculinity – Gandhian ideologies, patriarchal values, and sexual preservation – is a veneer to mask his absent sexuality.

The Hindu men in the movie possess an intense libido that their wives cannot satisfy. Robert's absent sexuality pales in comparison. Robert's wife, Rose, seeks an extra-marital affair with one of the Hindu men. In one scene, the Hindu man and Rose are seen naked under

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the sheets in Robert's bed. The Hindu man usurps Robert's masculinity in his own home and in his own bedroom – both spaces being domains of masculinity. However, his performance of the other hypermasculine values, i.e., traditional culture, monogamy, patriarchy, and patriotism allows him to be Indian because they align with the way Indian nationalists configured native masculinity. Therefore, while Rose's excessive sexuality negates her Indian-ness, Robert's absent sexuality allows him to be Indian.

In *Housefull 2*, the Christian man, Max, is metrosexual unlike Edwin and Robert. He is clean shaven (no moustache), and dresses in modern/urban clothing. This difference in appearance can be attributed to the developments in cinema and the broader cultural landscape over the years wherein actors moved away from traditional masculinity towards a consumerist masculinity focused on appearance and grooming (Dwyer, 2014). As a metrosexual man, Max does not perform the role of a traditional patriarch. He also does not have a surname, and is scripted as per the Christian orphan stereotype (Basu, 2010). The absence of his family is emphasized because he is the only Christian character in an otherwise Hindu narrative, and *every* Hindu character's family is involved in the movie. All the Hindu male protagonists are metrosexual too, and stray away from traditional masculinity and patriarchy. However, these Hindu men have their mustachioed fathers in their lives. Their fathers' presence is their relationship to traditional patriarchy (Osella, Osella & Chopra, 2004). The presence of their fathers, and families in general, shows how the Hindu men remain connected to Indian values (Murty, 2009). Max, in contrast, with his metrosexual masculinity and orphaned presence remains dissociated from these values expected of Indian men.

Max is a conman hired to hoodwink the Kapoor family. He is tasked with convincing one of the Kapoor daughters to marry him. He is exceptional at what he does. In his introductory scene, he is seen walking down a street in a vest and jeans but by the end of the shot he manages to dress himself in a hat, scarf, jacket, gold watch, cell phone, and some

spending money. However, there is a confusion at the Kapoor's household, and he flirts with the wrong daughter. To fix the mistake, Sunny is approached with the same task. Sunny too is a conman, and works to fix Max's mistake. Before Sunny appears on screen he is described as "माक्स से बड़ा कमीना" (A bigger rascal than Max), "उससे बड़ा कमीना पूरे यु.के. में नहीं मिलेगा।" (There isn't a bigger rascal than him in all of UK), and "too dangerous." These descriptions set up the two conmen to compete against each other. But Sunny is already ahead of Max as the better man for the job. The former is described as the better conman, and manages to proposition the correct Kapoor daughter. Max is subordinated to Sunny even when it comes to conning people–something he does for a living. As Max and Sunny's infiltration into the Kapoor family gets complicated, it is the latter who becomes the leader among the two of the very best conmen to rescue them from the situation. For example, one of the older patriarchs is a follower of a Hindu Saint, and Sunny uses that allegiance to his advantage. Sunny chants devotional praises for the Hindu Saint to convince the older patriarch to do what he wants. Sunny's ability to use Hinduism to connect with the older patriarch builds a relationship between them, and pushes Max further away from their shared masculinity developed through a common religion. Max's failure to con the devout male patriarch by chanting devotional praises reveals his distance from Hinduism. Max's lack of Hindu characteristics coupled with the absence of his family and his metrosexual masculinity altogether distance him from a typified Indian masculinity.

It is revealed later in the movie that Max and Sunny were previously inseparable friends. They became estranged because of a misunderstanding involving Max's then romantic interest, Sonia. It is in an exchange involving Sonia that Max is stripped of his sexuality. Sonia pulls Sunny into a cupboard with her, and says to him "फाइनली मैं तुम्हारे साथ अकेली हूँ, वोह भी कप्बोर्ड में।" (Finally I'm alone with you, that to in a cupboard). He reminds her that she is dating Max, but she insists, "तुम्हारा बेस्ट-फ्रेंड तोह हॉट हैं, पर तुम होटेर हो।" (Your best-friend is

hot, but you're hotter). While Sonia is portrayed as promiscuous, the scene also discursively emasculates Max. But of importance here is that Sunny demonstrates control over his body and mind. Despite being seduced, he is able to think and interrupt Sonia's advances, and altogether values his friendship over a romp. The extent to which Sonia goes to pursue Sunny points to Max's inability to sexually satisfy her. As Sonia explains it, while Max is indeed sexually capable, Sunny is presumably better than him. Max is subordinated to Sunny in his personal life (in terms of sex appeal) in addition to his professional life (as a conman). Their competing sexualities, furthermore, become problematic when they are analyzed extra-textually, i.e., to read the real-life actors (Malhotra & Alagh, 2004). John Abraham, who portrays Max, is a muscular man whose physique has earned him the status of a sex symbol (Rajendran, 2014). He is oftentimes seen on screen in minimal clothing that reveal his chiseled and well-shaped body. In comparison, Akshay Kumar, who portrays Sunny, is not known for his sex appeal. The scene with Sonia, therefore, develops in contrary to the typical roles these actors play, and emasculates an otherwise hypersexualized man. This is important because, as the movie progresses, Max and Bobby Kapoor–the daughter of a Hindu family–fall in love. Max does not possess any redeemable Hindu characteristics, and there is no negotiation with his Christianity. However, the possibilities of miscegenation seem negligible because of Max's emasculated sexuality presented earlier in the movie. The scene with Sonia erases any sexual threat Max might possess.

In *Mr Joe B Carvalho*, Joe is not a Christian orphan–he has a last name–and his mother has a presence in the movie. Joe also is dating a Hindu woman without the fears of exogamy affecting their relationship. Nevertheless, with Joe as the only Christian man in an otherwise Hindu narrative, his masculinity is much like the other Christian characters.

Joe is a detective but so ineffectual that he is described as the worst detective in all of Bengaluru. In the opening scene of the movie, he is seen spying on drug dealers. These drug

dealers have cocaine and marijuana all over their apartment, but he thinks the drugs is flour and the marijuana is everyday plants. He eventually breaks into their apartment, fights them off, apprehends them, and then delivers their cable bill. While the drug dealers were under the impression that Joe is a police officer, he was instead hired by a cable company to deliver a receipt. He takes his menial task of delivering a receipt to extreme lengths that he uses violence to subdue the drug dealers. Therefore, from the onset, Joe is positioned as someone who believes his work is more important than what it is. For example, in the same scene, he is wearing a camouflage suit while spying on the drug dealers. A camouflage suit is usually connected to the military, but he is an amateur detective. He also spies on the drug dealers in the open which makes his camouflage suit useless. In pursuing his detective operations with more zeal than required, he appears as the fool who fails to do anything correctly.

Joe used to date a police officer, Shantipriya, who is a Hindu woman. As a police officer, Shantipriya stands in as an extension of the State (Basu, 2010). Altogether, her identity as a Hindu woman, role as a police officer, and relationship with Joe negotiates his identity as a Christian man. As argued in Chapter 3, the Hindu woman is the living embodiment of the nation, but Shantipriya further strengthens that connection between the nation and women in her role as a police officer. Additionally, her identity contributes to Joe's Indian-ness because he is in a relationship with (a representative of) the State. Their relationship is sanctioned by the State. Though their relationship eventually ends, it is not because of inter-religious differences. Joe's overzealous antics, once again, was the cause of their separation.

Shantipriya enters Joe's life again because she mistakes him to be a contract killer. The Commissioner of Police (another extension of the State) entrusts her to apprehend Joe. In order to gain insight into his apparent plans, she pretends to be in love with him, and tries to seduce him. She is unphased by their past relationship, and is only concerned with his arrest. But he is oblivious. Nevertheless, once again, a new relationship between them begins with approval

from the State – the Commissioner as well as Shantipriya's role as a police officer. In one song sequence, they are in his house, and she dances and sings to seduce him. In response to her seductive lyrics and moves, Joe sings the chorus, "आने वाली मेरी मम्मी, जो को तुम बरबाद करोगी, मम्मी माँ की आंख करेगी, कण्ट्रोल योर इमोशंस नाउ।" (My mother is going to come home, you will get Joe into trouble, My mother will create a scene, control your emotions now). He avoids her to the best of his abilities. In the process, he becomes the proverbial momma's boy. When coupled with his inept behavior, he does not appear masculine enough to pursue a sexual relationship with a woman. His sexuality too is absent. Therefore, Joe's encounters with Shantipriya, in addition to the State, occur with the understanding that he does not possess a sexuality.

The encounters reinforce Joe's sexually conservative values. Shantipriya works to seduce Joe in a variety of ways, and one tactic that she undertakes is to dress in skimpy clothing. But her seductive clothing only upsets him. For example, Shantipriya walks to the pool in a bikini top and sarong wrap. The background music slows down, and the seductive vocals emphasize her sexiness. She unties her sarong wrap, and jumps into the water. While the music and visuals heighten her sex appeal, he complains that "जहाँ चांस मिलता हैं कपडे उतार देती हैं यह।" (She undresses whenever she gets a chance). His reaction highlights his conservative values. He wishes women remained clothed and covered. He demonstrates prudence in matters of dressing related to sexuality. These values lend him a quality of Indian-ness. Therefore, though Joe is a Christian man, his conservative values assert his Indian-ness that allow him to maintain a relationship with a Hindu woman (De, 2013). Furthermore, his relationship with the State too is mandated through conservative and traditional values, i.e., adherence to Hindu principles, and prudence with sexuality.

Watching the Edwin, Robert, Max, and Joe shows that there is a specific performance from the masculine Other that is legitimated in the nation (Murty, 2009). The Christian

characters analyzed are masculine, and, in some cases, hypermasculine. Their Otherness is shrugged off through adoption of Hindu values (Calhoun, 1993). Yet, as the analysis demonstrates, they remain the Other because of the absence of their sexuality. Such a construction of Otherness is suspect, and, therefore, asks: What purpose does the Christian man serve in Hindutva and nationalist agendas?

I am reminded of a Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) rallying cry that addresses the question, "पहले कसाई, फिर ईसाई" (first the butcher [a derogatory reference to Muslims], then the Christian) (quoted in Anand, 2007, p. 258). As long as the Muslim man is alive and well, and still part of the nation, he is Hindus' and India's main antagonist (Kazmi, 2010). However, once he is exterminated completely, it will be the Christian man's turn. The Christian man until then is only dominated, and left to his own devices in a state that does not threaten the present and future of the nation. In occupying such a position, the Christian man is doubly subordinated, i.e., he is the Other, but not one that demands urgent attention. It is such Otherness that decides his be-longing. The Christian man does not belong in the nation because he is the Other, yet, at the same time, he is allowed to belong for the time being, and also longed for in order to reinforce an opposition to a Hindu/Indian masculinity.

Although a variety of discourses across the spectrum of Hindu-ness value celibacy as a "return to strength and an augmentation of power (Osella, Osella & Chopra, 2004, p. 4), the Christian man's celibacy is involuntary. He is stripped off a quality that makes him a man; he is emasculated. As Pande (2004) writes about colonial ideas of masculinity, "aggressive Western concepts of maleness, that any kind of gender equation outside the male-female binarism, in particular 'femininity-in-masculinity,' got perceived as a 'negation of man's political identity'" (p. 44). In the emasculation of the Christian man, the colonial Orientalist gaze is reversed, and the postcolonial masculine insecurities are projected onto him.

**Conclusion**

Derné (2000) research on Indian masculinity following independence from the British conclusively observes that sexuality is now an integral component of the Indian male identity; although sexuality was always intertwined with masculinity, it is now aggressively accentuated. India's postcolonial masculinity embodied and performed by the Hindu man–the ideal Indian–is a reactionary hegemonic masculinity. As noted earlier, hegemonic masculinity is a colonial construction configured to contrast the colonized effeminate Other. However, the strive to establish one's own masculinity as hegemonic did not conclude with the end of colonialism (not that colonialism ever ended) (Basu & Banerjee, 2006). Basu & Banerjee (2006) recognize that hegemonic masculinity "instead assumed new forms by integrating itself with wide political currents of diverse forms of global revolutionary movements of the early twentieth century that provided alternative methods of articulation of such masculine anxiety within the matrix of modernizing movements" (p. 478). These constructions of postcolonial masculinities coincided with the formation of postcolonial nations, and, thus, masculinity is inextricable from postcolonial nationhood and nationalism. Therefore, though India is imagined in feminine form by all sides of the political spectrum–centrists, liberal, and secularist and the Hindu Right (Ramaswamy, 2010; Ray, 2000), the "founding fathers" of the nation are all male (Gandhi, Nehru for the secularists, and Sardar Patel, Savarkar for the Hindu Right). The Hindu man is positioned as the authority, caretaker, and protector of the nation.

During an era when nations were feminized, and imagined as a woman, Savarkar (1969) referred to India as a "fatherland." Nandy (2014) claims that "Savarkar was probably the first and the last to call India a fatherland (*pitrubhumi*) and not a motherland (*matrubhumi*)" (p. 95, italics in original). Savarkar's ideas respond to the emasculation of the Hindu man by the Islamic kingdoms and then Christian European colonialism, and, therefore, the Hindu Right desires an India that is Hindu and masculine (Bannerji, 2006). Contrary to common perception,

it is not unusual for the centrists, liberals, and secularists to similarly re-represent an ethno-religious minority as the Other (Rajagopal, 2004; Roy, 2004). However, the centrist, liberal, and secularist imagination of India is undertheorized. Hence, analyzing the representations of the Christian man during a period of secular governance may provide some preliminary theorizations.

There is a growing scholarship on the demonization of the Muslim man whose sexuality is represented in excess (Osella, Osella & Chopra, 2004; Hansen, 1996; van de Veer, 1994) – the opposite of the Christian man. But how is masculinity constructed for the Christian man between the adequately masculine Hindu and the hypermasculine Muslim? Organizing Christian, Hindu, and Muslim masculinities on a spectrum between absent and in excess is troublesome because there is a repetition of colonial discourse that arranged intangible aspects of human life into neat categories. But, additionally, under-theorization of discourses of masculinities points to how the commodification, gendering (within the nation), and vilification of the male body is overlooked.

The scholarship on gender in colonial and postcolonial India tends to focus on women (Sarkar, 1996; Sinha, 1999), but has still failed to consider the Christian woman, as argued in Chapter 3. There is an emerging scholarship on masculinities that highlights different hierarchies of gender, race, and sexuality (Derné, 1995, 2000; Nandy, 1983; Sinha, 1999; Srivastava, 2001). However, the existing scholarship either falls into the trap of the Hindu hegemony (i.e., when analyzing India, there is a focus on Hindu because it is the most dominant ethno-religious community), or is caught in the conflict between Hindus and Muslims. There is also a simplification of the colonial affect on masculinity in postcolonialism. Indeed, the inferiority still lingers. But the ways in which postcolonial masculinity responds to colonial masculinity are undertheorized. Watching the Christian man in Bollywood movies shows how masculinities reverse contemporary and historical discourses.

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**Chapter Five: Watching Christians in Hindu Modernity**

**Introduction**

The Christian characters, as analyzed in the previous chapters, contrast the Hindu characters. If the Christian woman is promiscuous, the Hindu woman is prudent. If the Christian man is emasculated, the Hindu man is hypermasculine. However, the association with western values is the characteristic feature of the Christian characters that calls attention to their lack of Indian-ness. The Christian in Bollywood movies, as per contemporary and historical discourses, is westernized (Dissanayake & Gokulsing, 2004). In contrast to the Christian, the Hindu is closest to Indian culture, tradition, and values, and, thereby, belongs in India (Murty, 2009). However, if the Hindu is conservative and traditional, in opposition to the Christian, then those qualities allude to the inability to be modern (Thapan, 2004). With Europe as emblematic of modernity (Appadurai, 1996), the Christian's association with western values because of their apparent intimacy with the colonizers assumes values of liberal, modern, and progressive (Favero, 2005). However, if the Hindu is scripted to contrast the Christian, then the Hindu is conservative and traditional, and not modern.

The Renaissance, Reformation, and Scientific Revolution in Europe birthed the modern world, and, in the process conflates modernity with Europe (Bhambra, 2007). There are competing definitions of modernity, but the ideal of progress sutures the varied perspectives (Kellner, 1999; Rappa, 2002; Sang-Woo, 2008; Wagner, 2012; Wallerstein, 1995). Though progress is typically understood in terms of scientific thought and technology (Gupta, 2000), the social relationships between people is also important when defining progress as "moving forward" (Wallerstein, 1995). The advent of modernity in Europe, and the relationships

between various classes of people within European nations as well as the colonies, inspirited the formation of nations with particular arrangements of political institutions and social organizing (Jodhka, 2013). For example, democracy and liberalism are modernist ideas of political organizing that influence the social lives of people living in/under such systems. When modernity is defined as progress in relation to the institutionalization of social relationships, a question arises that asks: progress towards what and for whom? Colonialism and modernity enabled the formation of each other, and shaped cultural developments of the world (Appadurai, 1996). Colonialism was a venture in exporting Europe's modernity by forced modernization on the colonized.

When European modernity transmuted into postcolonial locations – what Chakrabarty (2000) calls provincialities – it invariably occurred alongside nationalism. Indian modernity emerged as a reaction to the humiliating experience of colonialism, as the discourses of femininity, masculinity, and nationalism discussed in the previous chapters demonstrate, and engaged in a modernizing venture while vociferously adhering to traditions – which too are reactions to colonialism (Anand, 2007; Belliappa, 2013; Blom Hansen, 1996; Chatterjee, 1989; Pollard, 2005). Alongside the desire to remain traditional, "conservativism surfaces as the corollary of modernisation" (Sharma, 2009, p. 103). Postcolonial nations are in a perpetual "derivative discourse" where they are "consumers of modernity," and incapable of formulating their own version (Chatterjee, 1993, p. 5). Therefore, Ahmad (1992) observes that postcolonial nationalism in striving to maintain traditions while simultaneously engaging in modernization inverted the discourse of modernity in an indigenist direction in order to make it compatible with tradition.

Indian modernity cannot be pinned down in an either-or dictum that forces a choice between modernity and tradition (Belliappa, 2013). India's modernity interspersed with tradition, such as the continuation of religious practices, achieved advancements in science and

technology, bureaucratic organization, among other conditions of modernization (Basu, 2008, 2010). The co-existence of religion and science is characteristic of Indian modernity because it challenges western modernity that considers religion an irrational hindrance to scientific thought (Prakash, 2003). For example, Shome (2016) shares an image of people praying in front of computers displaying stocks as if asking the gods to bless their investments. India's modernity does not consider religion and science as mutually exclusive – and such is the indigenist direction of modernity. Following colonialism, the "vision for an independent India was for it to engage on an equal footing with the more powerful nations of the West whilst also embodying a uniquely Indian modernity that was distinctive in terms of certain cultural traditions" (Belliappa, 2013, p. 55). Indian modernity after being constructed in reaction to colonialism was repeatedly reconfigured to compete in a highly globalized world. In globalization, which continues imperial legacy through innovative deployment of capitalism, the Indian woman is again positioned as the "symbol of all that is good and yet modern in the national imaginary" (Thapan, 2004, p. 416). However, as discussed in the previous chapters, the ideal Indian woman who is the embodiment of India is the Hindu woman. Therefore, the "certain cultural traditions" in Indian modernity are undeniably Hindu cultural traditions.

The theorization of Indian modernity is in invariably a theorization of Hindu modernity. However, this is not a shortcoming per se. Research in/on India is always through a Hindu lens. For example, Sangari and Vaid's (1990) monumental anthology that tries to locate women in history falls severely short in representing the diversity of womanhood as it maintains an exclusive and repeated focus on Hindu women. When the discourse of modernity aligns with the discourse of nationhood, the Christian man and woman are Othered in the nation such that their relationship with the Hindu characters re-produce an emergent and new Hindu modernity. The emergent and new aligns with western rationality while simultaneously challenging the imposition to assimilate with the western model of modernity (Prakash, 1992).

Hindu modernity can be characterized as a reactionary configuration of western modernity that is rooted in tradition. However, Hindu modernity, as is western modernity, cannot appropriate the Other "that is incommensurable with the self, and hence outside its understanding and resistant to suppression" (Prakash, 2003, p. 58). The inability to contain difference produces Otherness that challenges the culture, tradition, and values of modernity. Therefore, in discursively constructing the Christian as the Other through westernized tropes of excessively liberal, modern, and progressive, the Hindu is positioned in an ambivalent likeness of modern but not quite alike.

In the following paragraphs, I analyze the narratives of the movies and specific scenes to analyze Hindu modernity, and the Christian's interactions in/with the indigenized version. The analysis is skeptical of Appadurai's (1996) proposition that indigenized modernity "is often a product of collective and spectacular experiments with modernity, and not necessarily of the subsurface affinity of new cultural forms with existing patterns in the cultural repertoire" (p. 90). Appadurai (1996) approaches India with a macro lens that unifies fractions and sanitizes representations. I argue that India's modernity combines conservatism with liberalism, such that it can participate in an increasingly globalized world while also remaining in touch with its culture, tradition, and values. This Hindu modernity is scripted in the differences between the Christian and Hindu characters.

**Watching Modernity**

In *Socha Na Tha*, Aditi and Karen belong to comparably different families, and the distinction is most evident in the way their respective families view marriage. Aditi's family is opposed to the idea of her dating, and, therefore, also to the idea of her choosing her own partner. Her family arranges for her to meet several suitors. One of the families that visits Aditi's home with a proposal is Hindu; the prospective groom is introduced as Mahesh – a

Hindu name. The suitors invited to Aditi's home, Viren and Mahesh, indicate at the preference for a particular kinship – one that is Hindu. This form of arranged marriage to reproduce caste, class, and religious relationships is rooted in tradition (Sonawat, 2001). Such arrangements continue the traditional Hindu social life. Karen's parents are comparably progressive because they welcome Viren into their home to ask for their daughter's hand in marriage. They also wholeheartedly accept Karen and Viren's inter-religious union. As discussed in Chapter 3, her father ecstatically offers Viren vodka to celebrate a possible union. Karen's parents are not opposed to their daughter making her own decisions in matters of love and marriage. The manner in which these two families operate represents the different modernities that they inhabit.

The values of progressive and traditional are visible on the families' daughters as well. Aditi is mostly dressed in *salwar kameezzes*, whereas Karen wears an assortment of western attires – dresses, skirts. Their individual choice of clothing represents them as conservative and liberal (Bahl, 2005). Additionally, the adoption of western practices (here clothing) is related to being modern (Mohan, 2011). But Aditi has her own moments of being as western as Karen. In a scene at a mall, Aditi stands in front of a mirror, and tries on a shimmering tank top over her *salwar kameez*. She poses and pouts to reveal an alternative persona that is unlike the traditional woman devoid of any sexual expression. She calls attention to her sexuality hidden under her conservative and traditional appearance. When her sister walks around the corner, she drops the tank top, and holds up a longer top that covers her body. This incident is significant because it highlights Aditi's capability of being western too, but in an interplay between conservative and liberal (Bahl, 2005). Because she believes she is indebted to her extended family for raising her when she was orphaned, she does not act against their wishes – here, it is her clothing. Aditi has desires to dress much like her peers, but she does not pursue such choices for the sake of her family's happiness. Her conservative and traditional

appearance is for her family. She is the "long-suffering but strong Indian woman, who will sacrifice 'everything' except her virtue to defend the honor of her family and kin" (Naregal, 2004, p. 8). Furthermore, with the family as representative of the nation (Mankekar, 1999), it may be argued that Aditi's conservative appearance is a performative space of interaction between the woman and the nation (Kaplan, Alarcon & Moallem, 1999). She embodies a nationalist sentiment by covering her body in tradition. She is capable of navigating conservative and liberal, and tradition and westernization. Nevertheless, her representation articulates a Hindu modernity encoded in tradition.

The use of clothes to highlight a Hindu modernity is also visible in the way Meera and Veronica dress in *Cocktail*. Their respective introductory scenes position them as conservative and liberal with the way they dress (Bahl, 2005). Meera adorns a *salwar kameez* en route to London, and Veronica wears a short translucent dress on her way to the discotheque. Their attires in their opening scenes is significant for how they are positioned on the spectrum of Indian womanhood, but both of them undergo transformations throughout the movie which too is reflected in the way they dress. Meera is the first to undergo a transformation; however, the change is prompted by Veronica. Meera still dresses in her *salwar kameez* despite living in London for a while, and Veronica encourages her to change her wardrobe. Veronica offers Meera her clothes to wear, but Meera is too conscious of her body being revealed under minimal clothing. In one scene, Meera wears a long dress-like top with long sleeves that covers her upper body entirely, but is embarrassed with having to wear a skirt. She walks out of the closet pulling her skirt lower, which is at knee length. She is simply uncomfortable in Veronica's clothing. Bose (2008) describes such an interaction between Christian and Hindu women as a space of modernity because the westernized Christian encourages the traditional Hindu to become more feminine (by western standards) through a physical transformation. Therefore, the space of modernity that the Christian inhabits is related to urbanity (they live in

London) and sexuality (emphasized through clothing). However, the space of modernity is also affective (Nieland, 2008). There are feelings attached to being modern, i.e., to be modern in a space is also to feel modern. The manner in which Meera changes her wardrobe reveals the affective response to modernity.

Meera develops her own style that is a mix of conservative, liberal, and westernized clothing. She wears tops that cover her arms and cleavage, and is usually topped with a cardigan to cover up entirely. Her preferred bottoms are full length pants. In a scene after her transformation, she goes to a discotheque with Veronica. She dresses in what can be best described as formal casuals – a top, blazer, and jeans. Veronica, who accompanies her, wears a short dress that calls attention to the shape of her body. The contrast between the women shows how the gendered body is "essential to preserving the honour and integrity of a nation-state that is beset with the vicissitudes of globalisation [Meera migrates to London] and turns to Indian womanhood as the embodiment of respectability and national honour that must be preserved at all costs" (Thapan, 2004, p. 441). While Meera becomes modern in the way she dresses, her transformation highlights that her conservatism is adaptable such that she does not have to forgo her culture and tradition when affronted by the West – London and Veronica. Again, the Hindu woman's modernity is encoded in tradition.

A striking contrast in the competing modernities is in the way Meera and Veronica dress at the beach. The two women arrive with Gautam in South Africa for a holiday. Meera continues to dress conservatively in a romper topped with a cardigan; she covers herself up as much given the context of the space she is occupying. Veronica wears a bikini that covers her bare minimum. However, while at the beach, Meera momentarily departs from her conservatism without completely forsaking her values. While at a party on the beach, Gautam brings alcohol shots for him and Veronica, but Meera, who does not otherwise drink alcohol, takes a shot for herself. As she takes the shot, she guffaws at Gautam and Veronica to

acknowledge that she is being unlike her usual self. Gautam looks on worried, but Veronica appears carefree, and takes a shot with her. At this point, it is only Gautam who is worried about Meera, while Veronica encourages her deviancy from moral austerity. Meera eventually becomes tipsy, and dances in the midst of the party. Her dance moves, however, demonstrates how she remains connected to her Hindu and Indian values. She dances to the song "Tumhi Ho Bandhu" (You're My Friend) with movements that resemble Indian classical dances. She flails her hands as *mudras*, and moves her head side-to-side alike *dhutam*. She takes centerstage at the party, and all the partygoers (who are visibly not Indian) too imitate her dance moves. Meera, in a completely different place, adapts to the cultural requirements of the space with her clothing and drinking alcohol, but still remains committed to a sense of Indian-ness with her modern take on classical dance moves.

For the sake of comparison, when Veronica dances on screen for the first time, she dances to the song "Angreji Beat" (English Beat). She too takes centerstage amongst a crowd, but on a literal stage at a discotheque. She is propped up as a sexual object who dances for the gratification of onlookers who consume her libidinally moving body. She dances in front of flashing disco lights that highlight her silhouette in a dark room. Meera, on the other hand, dances at the beach with the sun kissing her skin, and her draped body in full view. The two women dance for different purposes. Veronica is trying to attract a sexual partner for the night, whereas Meera is enjoying herself for the first time. These differences between the two women, once again, demonstrate the different ways they inhabit modernity. Meera achieves a newfound sexual awareness through Veronica. However, her liberated presence is emblematic of a Hindu modernity that adheres to culture, prudence, and traditions.

Meera creates her own sense of modernity that competes with Veronica's liberal and westernized demeanor. But with Christian and Hindu characters scripted to contrast each other, Veronica eventually aspires to enter Meera's space of modernity. Gautam's mother arrives in

London and, taken aback by her surprised visit, introduces Meera as the woman he has been dating. Veronica is initially unfazed by Meera posing as Gautam's partner, but as she notices his mother's endearment for her, she wishes for the same. In one scene, she wears a red *salwar kameez* (the only time in the movie), and adorns her body with traditional jewelry. The following conversation transpires between her and Gautam:

वेरोनिका: अब देखो। अगर मैं ऐसे ही कपडे पहनु, अपने बाल ग्रो करून, गेट ग्रूम्ड इन थी इंडियन वे - इन शार्ट, अगर मैं मीरा जैसी बन जाऊ - दो यू थिंक माँ मुझे एक्सेट्ट करेगी?

गौतम: किश चीज़ के लिए एक्सेट्ट?

वेरोनिका: यू नो...

गौतम: नो, ई डोंट नो...वैर इस थिस कमिंग फ्रॉम? शादी-वाड़ी का कभी था नहीं हमारा यार।

वेरोनिका: पर हो सकता हैं ना? ी आई नो की तुम शादी माँ के चॉइस से ही करोगे, सो आ'इल बिकम थाट चॉइस। टफ होगा, बट आई फील लाइक आई कान दू इट।

Veronica: Now, if I start dressing like this, grow my hair longer, get groomed in the Indian way – in short if I imitate Meera – do you think your mother will accept me?

Gautam: Accept you for what?

Veronica: You know…

Gautam: No, I don't know … Where is this coming from? Marriage was never on the table.

Veronica: But it can be. I know you'll only get married to someone of your mother's choice, so I'll become that choice. It will be tough, but I feel like I can do it.

Meera is not part of this scene. Yet she influences how Veronica acts and dresses. Veronica adopts all the traditional elements that Meera previously adorned herself with to appear Indian-like. Most importantly, however, she acknowledges Meera, the Hindu woman, as an exemplar of an Indian woman. Veronica's acknowledgement delegitimizes her own Indian-ness as she

conflates Hindu and Indian as equifinal. In the following scenes, as she improves her attempts to be more Indian-like, she actually becomes Hindu. Veronica, whose religiosity is so far not discussed/shown, is seen praying in front of Hindu idols. She shows that to be Indian is to be Hindu. Therefore, as both the women undergo transformations, Meera develops her own sense of (Hindu) modernity that balances westernization with conservatism and tradition. Veronica, on the other hand, altogether disavows her westernized modernity that she begins with to inhabit the space of Meera's modernity. Veronica, however, fails to become the Indian woman for Gautam because he chooses Meera over her. This may be read as underwritten fear of exogamy which only reveals that the Christian woman can never be appropriately Indian.

*Rock On!!* depicts the Hindu characters already in a space of modernity while the Christian characters struggle to achieve the same. In *Rock On!!* four estranged musical band members reunite after a decade to perform one last time. When they reunite after a decade, it is the Hindu men who are socioeconomically well off. The Christian men, in comparison, are struggling with social class mobility. But of importance to their socioeconomic position is that the Christian men are the only band members still in the music industry. The rock genre is associated with the West, and is considered a postcolonial moment because of the way it is adopted by local artists (Kumar, 2016). The adoption of any western practice in postcolonial sites is complicated by the matrices of modernity and tradition, and, therefore, music in India reverberates in a space of competing modernities (Saldanha, 2002). However, the Christian men are in unsuccessful in their careers related to the genre. Rob composes jingles, but he is yet to secure stable employment. He works for music directors in the music industry, and is at their mercy to find an outlet for his compositions. In one scene, he is seen lying down on a bed in his apartment with Bob Dylan records around him. His apartment is dingy which indicates at his lower social class, and the Dylan records communicate a sense of his westernization. Joe owns a store that sells music instruments, and offers music lessons. He also inherited his

family's fish selling business, which his wife, Debbie, operates. But that is not a successful business. In one scene, Debbie is seen haggling with people at the market about the debt she is loaned. She is also constantly looking for other employment opportunities for Joe so that he can meaningfully contribute to their household. Therefore, despite the relationship between rock music with the western world and modernity with the westernization, these Christian characters do not inhabit that space/version of modernity that improves their social class. The lack of social mobility may be read as the absence of modernity in their lives because of their allegiance to rock music, a western practice.

In sharp contrast to the Christian men, the Hindu characters after their younger days quit their aspirations to become musicians, and acquired employment that affords them an upper-class lifestyle. Adi is an investment banker who earns a promotion and with that a lavish office that overlooks the city. Adi's home, in particular, exudes his social class. His home is spacious, with gold-accented décor. KD (Kedar, a.k.a. Killer Drummer) works for his family's higher-end jewelry business. Furthermore, the two men belong to upper-class families, and their individual lifestyles are achieved through their families' social status. The way all the characters are positioned socioeconomically reflects their competing modernities, or their "habitations of modernity" (Chakraborty, 2014). The modernities are variants of their circumstances and social contexts (Chatterjee, 1993). Therefore, the differences in social class becomes a signifier of competing modernities. The Christian men have failed to achieve progress that is characteristic of modernity. They are financially struggling, and their failures can be attributed to them pursuing a career with a genre foreign to India.

In a reversal of narratives, the Christian men are presented with an opportunity to participate in the modernity that the Hindu men inhabit. However, it is a Christian woman, Debbie, who is a hindrance. When the estranged band members reunite to perform again, Joe and Rob use the opportunity to launch their individual careers as musicians. The Hindu men

do not need the opportunity as they already have their own careers, and participate in the reunion as a recreational activity. But Debbie opposes the idea, and dissuades Joe from meeting them, and even performing with them as a band. In one scene, she asks him, "क्या तुम्हें दिखाई नहीं देता की इसमें कोई फ्यूचर नहीं हैं? आई डोंट केर। तुम उस क्रूज पे जा रहे हो, एंड थॉट्स आल।" (Don't you see there's no future in this [playing with the band]? I don't care. You're going to get that job on the cruise). The band eventually get on stage without Joe to perform. During this time, Joe is seen in a taxi heading to the airport. Debbie holds his hand as if to anchor him to the taxi, and their struggling household. Joe eventually leaves the taxi, and arrives at the venue to perform with the rest of the band. The Christian and Hindu men unite. Adi hugs Joe, and, in that moment, Joe symbolically embraces the Hindu modernity that the Hindu men have created for themselves. Adi announces Joe's arrival to the excited audience, "लेडीज एंड जेंटलमेन, प्लीज़ वेलकम ऑन लीड गिटार मेरा दोस्त , मेरा भाई , जोसफ मैस्करेन्हास!" (Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome on lead guitar, my friend, my brother, Joseph Mascarenhas!). Along with Jha (2003), Basu (2010) argues that friendships are made robust through discourses of "*dosti, yaari, or dostana*" (all words for endearing friendship), and reinforce the "mythic, masculinist vision of the national community" (p. 89). Such friendships overlook differences of caste, class, and religion. So do Adi and Joe. The seamless union between the two men is significant because of its apparent connotation that India is a modern and secular nation. Hindu modernity accepts the Other (secularism is the acceptance of difference) as long as difference can be integrated.

In the following scene, all the remaining band members (Rob passes away from cancer) and their families are seen at a lavish home with an outdoor bar that faces the beach. The on-screen text reads "Debbie retired from her fishing business, and is now a successful stylist. KD started a music company in partnership with Joe. They promote new talent." The reunion performance provides Debbie and Joe an entry into the Hindu modernity characterized by

possibilities of social class mobility that is part of progress. Though Debbie, in particular, opposed the band's reunion, she too benefited from it. But as Joe concludes the movie by improving his socioeconomic status, he can do so only with support from the Hindu men. Joe initially depends on the Hindu men to form the band, and then needs KD to launch a business.

A similar invitation into the Hindu modernity is offered to the Christian character in *Page 3* but with a different conclusion. In one scene, the police arrive at a drug party hosted by Gomes. Gomes' first name is not known, but his Portuguese last name implies that he is Christian. The police shut down the party, and collect all the guests to be arrested. A woman smoking a cigarette exclaims, "This bloody *ghati* has just spoiled our mood." In Mumbai (where *Page 3* is picturized), *ghati* is a slur used to allude to backwardness and/or lack of modern culture. Furthermore, in the movie, it is Pearl, a Christian woman, who is previously seen smoking a cigarette. The woman at the party, therefore, can be interpreted as a Christian character. The police officer walks up to her, and questions her:

> Excuse me, what did you say? *Ghati*? What do you think, we cops are vernaculars? We
>
> cannot speak English? We don't have civic sense? We are uncivilized people? And for
>
> your kind information, this vernacular *ghati* has done his masters in English Literature
>
> from Fergusson College, Pune – the best one.

As the police officer castigates the woman, a Hindu journalist smiles at this exchange. The smile suggests that the journalist approves of the officer's response. The two Hindu men work together – through the smile – to challenge the Christian woman's western modernity that assumes the Hindu man does not inhabit a space that is equally progressive. The police officer as a representative of the State calls attention to the woman's myopic worldview. As he points out, just because he is a police officer, and a Hindu man, that does not mean he cannot suture the differences between western thought and native rationality (Bose, 2008). Furthermore, with him delivering his tirade in English, and emphasizing his education in English Literature (at an

institution tied to colonialism), he demonstrates that western thought is not the domain solely of Christians. Despite his abilities and education, he remains rooted in his Hindu and Indian identities unlike the presumably Christian woman. He concludes his spiel by pulling the cigarette out of her mouth and extinguishing it under his foot, and then advising her that she should "first try to be a good cultured Indian, then try to be 'western' [in air quotes]." The police officer's move to extinguish the cigarette under his foot is a metaphor for stamping out the westernization from the woman. His dialogue already associates the cigarette with the West, and, in an attempt to emphasize his Hindu modernity encoded in tradition, he puts the West to a swift end under his feet because it is beneath him.

In the following scene, the police officer rides with Gomes in the back of the police vehicle. Gomes informs him that he sells his drugs to those in higher levels of the police administration. He thus points to how his Christian/western values have infiltrated the State. The police officer grabs him, and throws him out of the moving vehicle. The Christian's western values are literally propelled out of the State (-owned police vehicle). A truck runs over Gomes, and he dies. The Hindu journalist from the party approaches the police officer, and pacifies him, "मुझे पता हैं , कुछ प्रोब्लेम्स ऐसे ही सॉल्व होते हैं।" (I know, some problems can only be solved this way). Basu (2010) observes that these State-sanctioned killings neutralize threats to the nation posed by the endemically pathological Other. Basu (2010) discusses the Muslim terrorist as a threat, but with *Page 3* we see the Christian criminal/drug-dealer becoming a similar-like menace. In neutralizing threats, such manslaughter sanitizes the landscape so that the ethnoscape is (finally) conducive for the Hindu modernity. With Gomes hosting drug parties, and infesting the police administration with the same drugs, he poses a threat to the Hindu modernity that espouses values of purity wherein drugs are a pollutant (Saldanha, 2007). The threat the Christian man poses means that he should be outside of Hindu modernity, and cannot integrate like Joe. Thus, the police officer's extra-judicial murder is

warranted as the only way to solve such problems. Therefore, if the Christian cannot be controlled and restrained, they can be eliminated to maintain the sanctity of the nation.

In *Dum Maaro Dum*, unlike the movies discussed so far, there are no specific scenes of interactions between the Christian and Hindu characters that highlight competing modernities. But the movie develops in a way that shows the value of Hindu modernity. The movie is pictured in Goa – a location of significance for Bollywood's Christians because most characters trace their lineage to the state. In *Dum Maaro Dum*, all the characters (except for one cop) who are from Goa are Christians. These characters are named Joaquim "Joki" Fernandes, Lawrence "Lorry" Gomes, and Zoey (without a surname, as is a common stereotype about Christian women). These names mark the characters as Christians, and Goa as a space inhabited predominantly by Christians. These characters are either involved in the drug business as part of the cartels or are victims of abuse or smuggling. For example, Joki and Zoey used to be in a romantic relationship, but in an attempt to make quick money, Zoey starts smuggling drugs, and is eventually arrested. In order to be released, she agrees to become a drug lord's sexual muse. Alongside this narrative, Joki becomes involved in the drug business because a juvenile relative who decides to smuggle drugs is arrested and detained. Furthermore, there are multiple foreign cartels operating in Goa, but they all organize under one anonymous overlord, Barbosa. As the plot develops, viewers learn of the Barbosa's other aliases – Colin Coutinho, Toby Follet, Vincent Vega – all of which are Christian names. Thus, the Christian overlord benefits from the foreign cartels as well as controls all of them. Additionally, Goa is represented as a drug haven. The chaos shown in Goa can be related to the westernization for which Christians are recognized, and the associated modernity that the community inhabits. The westernized modernity has altogether corrupted a part of India.

The Indian Government appoints a rogue cop, ACP Vishnu, to eradicate the drug cartels from Goa. Here, Vishnu's name itself boasts significance. Lord Vishnu is one of three gods of

the Hindu triumvirate. According to Hindu scriptures, Vishnu's role is that of preservation and protection; he maintains life on earth. Therefore, the appointment of ACP Vishnu to Goa Police to bring order to the Christian state collides modernities in a mythic way. The Christian's westernized modernity that has torn the social fabric of India will be sutured by the Hindu bearing his modernity into a Christian location.

As ACP Vishnu penetrates into Goa's underbelly, he comes closer to uncovering Barbosa's identity. However, Barbosa has connections in the police administration, and makes arrangements for ACP Vishnu's assassination. Once again, we see how a Christian drug dealer has penetrated into the State systems, and disintegrating the whole nation. ACP Vishnu is eventually murdered, but he leaves clues for Joki to find a big stash of Barbosa's drugs. Joki locates the drugs, and then hides them in the electric crematorium prepared for ACP Vishnu. As ACP Vishnu's body burns and disintegrates, Goa is liberated from its drug problem. In death, Vishnu saves the people of Goa who are all depicted as Christians, and there is a reversal of religious narratives – Vishnu replaces Jesus as the savior, and, subsequently, the Hindu modernity characterized by purity (in the sense of eradicating the drug problem) supplants the westernized Christian modernity defined by chaos and drugs. To further this narrative: reading ACP Vishnu as an avatar from Hindu mythology, Lord Vishnu's role is to annihilate evil, protect the pious, and reestablish the (Hindu) social order. Albeit ACP Vishnu perishes in his role as the protector and preserver, his death restores life. These myths parallel Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Therefore, ACP Vishnu's death in Goa is symbolic because it replaces the westernized Christian modernity that is foreign to India with an indigenized and nativist modernity. This is not to suggest that western modernity is related to Christianity. Rather, in India, Christianity and modernity are products of the West, and are treated as equally foreign pollutants to the native culture. This hodgepodge of the West too is characteristic of Hindu modernity that conflates all the values of the Other into a monolith.

**Conclusion**

In "provincializing" Europe, Chakrabarty (2000) observes that Europe's modernity was not some spectacular event reserved to the continent. Indeed, Europe's modernity was transmitted to the colonies, but the colonies also underwent their own processes of modernization prior to the arrival of European ships on their shores (Chakrabarty, 2011). However, in mainstream academic discourse, the Global South's modernity is acknowledged only with their anti-colonial movements which inadvertently reinforces the colonialist belief that the colonized were in fact pre-modern (Fawaz, Bayly & Ilbert, 2002). In conflating and theorizing Europe and modernity, alternative discourses of modernity are excluded if not wholly unacknowledged (Bhambra, 2007). From a postcolonial perspective, Bhambra (2011) asks to "rethink modernity in the context of…a global age in which the global is now understood as the condition of the modern world, not its consequence" (p. 662). Bhambra's (2007, 2011) critiques of the scholarship on modernity draw attention to the different modernities, and, in doing so, concede to the various models of sociopolitical organizations (because modernity is about human relations). When these critiques of modernity are examined alongside the discursive constructions of (a) Hindu modernity that Others Christians, there is a challenge leveraged against the idea of modernity as progress, and wonders if the future that will be more modern than the now will also be better than the present model of modernity. Mirchandani (2005) shares the same skepticism about the past, present, and future of modernity, and, therefore, rejects the idea of modernity (or wanting to be "modern") as continuation of domination and subordination under a new guise. Hindu modernity after all is reactionary to humiliating experiences of Islamic Kingdoms and Christian/European colonialism.

In reacting to colonialism but, in the process, imitating European modernity that dominates and subordinates, Hindu/Indian modernity re-produces an ambivalent discourse that

is characteristic of colonialism and postcolonialism. Manisha Basu (2016) writes that the Hindu Right "collapse oppositions between the most intractable polarities of colonial and postcolonial thought – whether tradition and modernity, religion and reason, or east and west" (p. 11). However, such collapsing of polarities is not only the agenda of the Hindu Right. The same practice is prevalent in centrist, liberal, and secular discourses that were pervasive during the 2004-2014 decade. The constructions of modernity and tradition, after all, are not newly invented, and are the perpetuation of colonial discourses that should be decoded in context of their present-day cultural complexity (Sangari & Vaid, 1990). Writing about postcolonial masquerades, i.e., the way the formerly colonized undermine the continued effects of colonialism, Patel (2001) works through Fanon to argue that the colonized challenge their post-coloniality in a globalized world by trying to overcome the "state of 'blackness' or inferiority," "not [only] by imitating the mannerisms of 'whiteness' but by adopting the language of dominance as well" (p. xv). In Othering Christians, I argue Hindu modernity sees the community as residuals of colonialism on whom the collective angst of generations is meted out.

The manner in which the Christian is Othered in the context of Hindu modernity shows how the Christian belongs in the nation. With the Christian positioned as westernized, and thereby modern, the Hindu is positioned to challenge these notions of modern. There cannot be a Hindu modernity that illustrates progress, traditions, and values without discursively constructing the Christian as excessively liberal, modern, progressive, and altogether westernized. The Christian belongs in the nation to show how Hindu modernity exists in better ways than the European version. But the conflation of Hindu modernity with Indian modernity in part also constructs a discourse of a modern nation (see Belliappa, 2013; Thapan, 2004). The undertaking of such a modernizing enterprise shows how the nation is imagined through language (in the literal usage of English versus Hindi), rhetoric (of India versus the West),

signifiers (such as religion), and texts (the narrations that cohere the nation) that organize institutions and policies that work in the favor of certain communities, and a national identity to which only a certain communities belong (Bhabha, 1990). The nation's narrative imagined as such is pedagogic in setting boundaries of belonging, and performative in excluding despite including (Edwards & Ramamurthy, 2017). With Bollywood carrying the mantle of narrating the nation, the industry "exports Indian nationalism itself, now commodified and globalized into a 'feel good' version of 'our culture'" (Rajadhyaksha, 2003, p. 37). However, the Othering of Christians makes the "Indian nationalism" in question indistinguishable from Hindu nationalism. The manner in which gender, history, national identity, social space, and tradition are modernized in the postcolonial nation, makes modernity appear as derivate and reactionary to colonialism.

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## Chapter Six: Media and Postcolonialism

### Introduction

*My Brother…Nikhil* (2005) narrates a one-of-a-kind story about a gay man from Goa who contracts HIV. The protagonist, Nikhil Kapoor, is quarantined under the Goa Public Health Act, and is socially ostracized when his previously closeted homosexuality is publicized widely. Nikhil's ordeal with health, justice, and society is based on the life of Dominic D'Souza – a Christian man from Goa. D'Souza was Goa's patient zero for the virus, and engaged in a legal battle with the then-Government against the stigmatization of homosexuality and quarantine of patients at a time when awareness about HIV-AIDS was considerably low. D'Souza is a well-known figure on HIV-AIDS awareness in India, but his religious identity is quarantined – hidden from the public – in the movie to chronicle the story of suffering and victory. What are the consequences of narrating a story about injustice from the vantage of caste and religious privilege? Such stories are the making of homonationalism wherein the State revises the heteropatriarchal nationalist ideology to incorporate the LGBTQ community into the nation, and then justify and share its xenophobia of the Other (Puar, 2007). In visualizing D'Souza's life in Hindu drag, a Christian man is erased from a momentous part of modern Indian history. The move to change D'Souza's name in a movie based on his life is not *faux pas*. I argue that such moves, whether deliberate or naïve, when concerning Christians, removes the community from the past, present, and future of the nation.

The Christian community is repeatedly vilified from all sides of the political spectrum for harboring sympathies for the Europeans, especially towards the end of colonialism

(Bauman, 2008a, 2008b; Melanchthon, 2002; Oddie, 2001; Savarkar, 1969; Shourie, 1994, 2000). Arguing that all Christians unanimously opposed the continuation of colonialism will render the community monolithic. Some Christians indeed were sympathizers, as were some Hindus, Muslims, and members of other religious communities. For instance, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, a Muslim intellectual during colonialism, believed the country would descend into chaos if the British handed over governance to Indians, and insisted that colonialism continue (Shourie, 2000). Vinayak Savarkar, whose ideologies are indispensable to Hindutva, offered to hamper then ongoing freedom movements in favor of the British (Mukul, 2002; The Wire, 2018). However, singling out the Christian community as sympathizers becomes possible because of their deliberate repeated erasure from history.

India received independence from the British in 1947. Though anti-colonial movements were always underway in the preceding years, the Great Rebellion of 1857 is recognized as one of the earliest mass-organized crusades to overthrow any of the colonial enterprises (Shome, 2012). However, Catholic priests in Goa attempted a coup to overthrow the Portuguese seventy years prior. The priests were discontent with their lower than second-class status in Goa – their homeland, racism within the Church that hindered their ecclesiastical progress, and the extent to which the Portuguese undermined the native way of life (Borges, 1989; da Cunha Rivara, 1996; Kamat, 1989). The Conspiracy of the Pintos of 1787 precedes the Great Rebellion in addition to the American Civil War (1861) and French Revolution (1789) – two momentous events in the western world critical to the development of modern democracy. Yet the coup organized by Catholic priests is seldom mentioned in Indian history.

The Conspiracy of the Pintos is neither part of popular history nor school curriculum, and receives a consolatory mention in discussions on Indian Christianity (see Fernando & Gispert-Sauch, 2004). This snippet from Indian history dismisses the accusation that the (entire) Christian community harbored sympathies for the Europeans, and did not participate

in anti-colonial struggles. At the same time, with *My Brother…Nikhil* in context, the erasure of the coup from history points to a continuation of the discursive formation of Christians. The movie joins the other movies analyzed in the previous chapters to illustrate the patterns in the relationship between culture and media, and, most importantly, the relationship between mediation, nationhood, and politics.

Utilizing discursive formation as the methodological approach to analyze the various movies, I demonstrate how narratives of hypersexualization of women, emasculation of men, and a new and emergent Hindu modernity discursively construct India as a Hindu nation, and Christians as the westernized Other. In this chapter, I discuss the theoretical implications of representations of Christians in Bollywood movies. The following paragraph will examine representations of Christian women and men with respect to the secular decade. I argue that the Christian woman's hypersexualization makes her an eroticized spectacle such that she is different from the Hindu woman who is venerated as a mythical goddess, and it is in such constructions that the former woman belongs in the nation. The Christian man's absent sexuality emasculates him in a way that queers his existence, and, I argue that he belongs in the nation because of his non-threatening queerdom. These two arguments challenge the long-established relationship between democratic representations and media. I adopt a postcolonial perspective to highlight the arbitrary and almost non-existent relationship between democratic representations and media. I will subsequently discuss two instances of ambivalent post-coloniality: Bollywood's and Christians'. With respect to Bollywood, I entangle the industry's development with the Hindu Right and centrist, liberal, and secular governments to point to three moments of ambivalence: representing Christians as residuals of colonialism, linking the community to Portuguese colonialism, but reacting to British colonialism. With respect to Christians, I critique the arguments of syncretism between Christianity and Hinduism advanced in scholarship, and suggest that postcolonial hybridity affords is a historically situated

framework to understand the community's contemporary identity. The purpose in doing so is to offer a way to re-think Otherness.

### Democracy, Media, and Secularism

In Chapter One, I problematized *Finding Fanny* as a sympathetic representation of Christians. The movie is an anomaly when compared to the other movies analyzed as it features only Christian characters. It may be considered a rejection of, or response to, the absence and erasure of Christians in Bollywood movies. However, the release of the movie during the *ghar wapsi* campaign challenges the notion of "sympathetic." Angie is stereotyped like most of the Christian woman analyzed in the preceding chapters – she fornicates outside the confines of marriage, demands agency over her sexuality, wears short summer dresses, and, most importantly, speaks English. Her representations are sympathetic only because she is not contrasted against another woman embodying ideal Indian-ness. Nevertheless, she is unlike the conservative, pious, and traditional Hindu woman. Therefore, Angie's representations too are a continuation of the discursive formation of Christians as westernized. Representations as those seen in *Finding Fanny* during a particularly hostile political climate precariously re-present Christians as lesser Indians or not Indian at all. These representations challenge Christians' Indian-ness.

While *Finding Fanny* was released towards the end of the secular decade, the movies discussed in the previous chapters were released during the decade of secular governance. Yet the representations are problematic. The movies exaggerate the Christian woman's difference through her sexuality. She is hypersexualized. She is not to be perceived as anything more than a sexual object for consumption of the Hindu masculine nation. She is a slut, vamp, and whore whose lust for the Hindu man threatens the sanctity of the Hindu family, and, thereby, nation. Scholars address how the nation is imagined on women's bodies, and how their bodies mark

the boundaries of nationhood, yet they ignore the role of minoritized women in nation-building (Datta, 2000). Christian women are represented as westernized in the likeness of the colonial/European woman (Chatterjee, 1989). Constructing the nation and nationhood through a specific cultural identity forecloses the possibilities of belonging for ethno-religious minorities, and, in the process, Others them. As demonstrated through the analysis of Hindu modernity, the cultural identity of Indian-ness is so specific in Hindu-ness that the Christian woman has to abandon her religion in order to gain acceptance as an Indian woman. Such representations pose dire consequences for Christian women because Indian-ness is characterized in a manner that she cannot occupy. The Christian woman, at once, does not belong in the nation because she is antithetical to Indian womanhood (Doshi, 2018). At the same time, she is (sexually) longed for precisely because she is not the ideal Indian (Hindu) woman who is venerated by the nation.

Although the Christian man's difference is negotiated, and, to some extent, his difference is ignored, his sexuality too is central to his Otherness – much like the Christian woman's hypersexuality. Unlike the Christian woman, he is stripped of any sexuality. He is emasculated. This absence, or lack, of sexuality may be interpreted as a queering. But it is not a queer sexuality as much as it is a queerdom assigned to contain the Christian man's Otherness. By queerdom I am not suggesting an LGBTQ identity; it is instead a departure from heteronormativity as Christianity is not related to Hinduism, and, thereby, the Christian man is neither Indian nor masculine enough to be a man (Banerjee, 2006). The Hindu Right, in particular, assigns a metaphorical queerdom to all "designated Others of the nation [India] regardless of their sexual identity" (Bacchetta, 1999, p. 144). The Christian man's emasculation, and the interpreted connection to queerdom, extends Jasbir Puar's (2007) theorization of homonationlism into a new location to include religion – with the politics of caste. The simultaneous acceptance of Hindu queerness (with *My Brother…Nikhil*) and

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quarantine of non-Hindu queerness too produces the monster-terrorist-fag Other (see Puar, 2007; Puar & Rai, 2002). The Muslim man – the enduring enemy of India (Kazmi, 2010) – is the monster-terrorist. The Christian man – effeminate, emasculated, and queer – is the fag.

In the analysis of the Christian man, I claimed that he will continue to belong in the nation until the Muslim man is completely exterminated. I want to further that line of thought here to argue that once the Christian man's turn arrives (and the Hindu Right slogan is certain that this time will come), his apparent queerdom will be blamed for the disintegration of traditional values. For example, Major Edwin Rodrigues from *7 Khoon Maaf* cannot reproduce a progeny, and, therefore, cannot reproduce the nation despite his service to the nation. In this example, as all the movies analyzed also indicate, the institution of the family falls apart because the Christian man does not possess a sexuality to produce one. With the Christian man represented as a residual of colonialism, he becomes a canvas onto which the nation's anxieties of colonial emasculation and postcolonial (hyper-)masculinity are sketched.

The representations of the Christian community altogether are reactionary to the experience of colonialism. The impact of colonialism on contemporary India is unquestionable, but attributing such representations only to the experience of colonialism will problematically condone the way nationalist politics is pursued. I argue that the politics of the centrists, liberals, and secularists much like the Hindu Right are now about maintaining the status quo. Such representations during a decade of secular governance challenges the relationship between the democratic representations and media. It is commonly argued that democratic representations in media are integral to the formation of the nation, at least in the western world (Thomas, 2009). However, in the postcolonial world, the relationship between democratic representations and media is complex. During colonialism, state-owned media controlled by the colonizers undermined the self-determination of the people (Chatterjee, 1993; Fanon, 1994; Shome, 2016). It should be noted that the state-owned media operated by the colonizers was

for all purposes the "legal" media. At the same time, "illegal" media, i.e., those outlets operated by the colonized were more democratic as it championed the purpose of self-governance. Therefore, given the historical development of media in the postcolonial world, the relationship between democratic representations and media is more arbitrary than elsewhere.

Watching representations of Christians in Bollywood movies during a decade of secular governance, I argue that media contributes to the formation of the nation but, at the same time, undermines the potential of media democratization. Said otherwise, media maintains the potential to support social change, but that depends on how media is put to use. With the transfer of control and power to the Hindu elite at the end of colonialism (Loomba, 1998), postcolonial media productions reproduce colonial anxieties within historical hierarchies. For instance, representations of Christians in the likeness of the colonizer is situated in colonial anxieties that attempts to reverse the previously experienced domination and subordination. Therefore, irrespective of the political leanings of the government, representations in media align with a vision for a Hindu India.

The experience of colonialism complicates the relationship between democratic representations and media in the postcolonial world. In the context of such an arbitrary relationship, it is worth wondering if there is a way to represent in a balanced and sympathetic manner a community so closely intertwined with India's colonial history? For example, *Finding Fanny* is a sympathetic representation of the Christian community, but the political climate challenges the portrayals in the movie because *ghar wapsi* targeted the very difference (accents, music, names) highlighted in the movie. While *ghar wapsi* created a tense political climate, and given the contemporary and historical discourses about the community's identity, it is important to remember that there has never been an amicable political climate for the Christian community. Therefore, are secular representations of the Christian community even possible? Nandy (1988) appropriately decries the enterprise of secularism as the "by-product

and a pathology of modernity" (p. 187). India's version of secularism was invented in reaction to western modernity (Prakash, 1999), however, it is precisely such reactionary politics that has caused much of the postcolonial misery because it emphasizes our inability to imagine ourselves in different ways of being, and our surrender to the western model of nation and nationhood which dominates and subordinates (Chatterjee, 1993). The desire for a secular polity has altogether failed to provide the postcolonial nation with an adequate basis of constructing an equitable society in lieu of traditional modes of social organizing.

## Bollywood's Post-Coloniality and Representations of Postcolonialism

The Bollywood industry closely aligned with nationalist politics, and the enterprise of democracy and secularism in its infancy. The industry was formed during colonialism (Wright, 2015), but sought inspiration from pan-Indian culture of theatres and street-plays that thrived prior to the influx of European influences in cinematic storytelling (Lutgendorf, 2006). In seeking inspiration from pre-colonial cultures, surviving colonialism, and thriving in post-colonialism, the Bollywood industry possesses a postcolonial identity of its own. The industry has continued to align with nationalist politics in post-coloniality; however, in representing, rather than reacting to, a different range of issues, the industry is invested in maintenance of the status quo (Murty, 2009). I argue that the alignment with now dominant politics undermines the industry's investment in being a media site linked to democracy and secularism. The industry's shift in politics from anti-colonial to dominant altogether creates a postcolonial identity that is ambivalent.

The manner in which Bollywood movies represent Christians is reflective of the industry's ambivalent postcolonial identity. Here, I want to momentarily explain the use of ambivalent. In the colonial context, ambivalent discourse refers to simultaneous attraction and repulsion (Bhabha, 1994). For example, Charles Grant, once Chairman of the British East India

Company and member of an evangelical Anglican movement, encouraged the conversion of natives yet thought that proselytization would eventually be "turbulent for liberty" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 87). Grant, at once, wanted to share his religion with the gentile natives, but not the life of dignity and freedom that Christianity promoted. As is in Grant's example, ambivalence is a moment of contradiction. The contradiction continues in post-coloniality, especially with the Bollywood industry in consideration. I clarify the usage of the term because representations of Christians may be simultaneously interpreted in three ways: residuals of colonialism; linked to the Portuguese; reacting to British colonialism.

In re-presenting (because this is a continuation of historical discourses) Christians as residuals of colonialism, the industry represents dominant politics. There is a shift from nationalist politics which was anti-colonial that challenged domination, oppression, and subordination towards dominant politics that is invested in maintenance of the status quo, i.e., privileging Hindus of upper castes and classes. There is a continuity in the politics of the Hindu Right and the centrists, liberals, and secularists. These political ideologies only occupy comparable positions across the political spectrum. The Hindu Right practice a politics of extermination while the centrists, liberals, and secularists practice a politics of domination that similarly refuses equal treatment to difference. Therefore, though the political climate may be centrist, liberal, and secular, Bollywood movies narrate a Hindu version of India which is fetishized by the Hindu Right. The possibilities of a Hindu homeland, one that the Hindu Right wants to actualize, is imagined by the Bollywood industry – an industry that began as a proponent of democracy and secularism. The industry's ambivalent identity – the contradiction – is in the movement away from politics opposed to domination towards politics that appeases the dominant classes of society.

The association between Christians and the Portuguese in Bollywood movies continues to represent the religious community as residuals of colonialism. While movies such as *7*

*Khoon Maaf*, *Ajab Prem Ki Gazab Kahani*, *Dum Maaro Dum*, and *Finding Fanny* that are picturized in Goa establish the link between Christians and the Portuguese, other movies allude to the historical relationship with western first names (Jenny, Max, Veronica) and Portuguese surnames (Mascarenhas, Pereira, Rodrigues, Sequeira). Such a relationship is only alluded to through location and names, and demands a knowledge of the history of Christians in order to interpret. However, representations of Christians, in particular the discourses that influence the representations, are reactionary to British colonialism. The analysis of Christian women demonstrated that they are represented as an eroticized spectacle in response to the inaccessibility of the Anglo-Indian/Christian woman to the Hindu man during colonialism. Additionally, the analysis of Christian men highlights how modern India's hyper-masculinity responds to colonial emasculation caused by British Christian manliness. Why are representations of the Christian community linked to the Portuguese but reacting to the British?

There is a valid historical link between Christians and the Portuguese: The Portuguese always zealously converted the natives (Fernando & Gispert-Sauch, 2004), and Roman Catholics now share a cultural history with them. *Finding Fanny*'s sympathetic representations of Christians utilized these links with the Portuguese to give the characters their accents, historical houses, names, and religious demeanor. Nevertheless, representations of Christians in other movies react to British colonialism because much of what is known about the Portuguese colonization of India is maintained in the Portuguese-language (Boxer, 1952). Furthermore, the Portuguese contained their colonial ambitions in Goa whereas the British colonized a greater part of India. Even though Portugal controlled Goa for fourteen years after India gained independence from Britain, the nation's colonial and modern history is written in strife with the British, as is most postcolonial literature. Therefore, characters like Edwin Rodrigues from *7 Khoon Maaf* is christened with an unmistakable Portuguese/Roman Catholic name but uses British phrases in his speech. These discourses produced by Bollywood movies

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reflect the industry's ambivalence, and the contradiction therein, because of the way mimicry of the colonizer is represented. The simultaneous associations with the British and Portuguese make representations of Christians a bricolage of multiple references which suggests that the varied forms of colonialism across India is experienced and materialized the same way.

It should be noted that the connections with the British and Portuguese respectively are not explicit in the movies. The connections have been interpreted from characters' accents, locations, names, and other scripted cues. However, these interpretations require a knowledge of contemporary and historical discourses. Here, discursive formation is useful. But the method also needs to be employed as a local analysis, i.e., an exclusive focus on the post-colony. Consider the following example: Since there is no visible racial difference between the Christian and Hindu characters in the movies analyzed, the characters' respective religions become the primary markers of difference. This is a politically-motivated strategy that enables an analysis of certain minoritized bodies that would be otherwise impossible. To analyze characters in Bollywood movies within West-developed frameworks of media studies will miss the subtleties of India's cultural politics. For instance, comparing the sexualization of women without making note of their names – which signifies religion – will misread the purpose of such representation. The sexualization of Hindu women can be an eroticization as well as liberatory (Uberoi, 2006). In the case of Christian women, her sexualization calls attention to her inability to be Indian. Each woman needs to be examined within contemporary and historical discourses, i.e., the Christian woman is represented in comparably different ways because of the discourses imagining both Christian and Hindu women. As scholars have noted, Bollywood movies should not be analyzed through frameworks of film studies, and West-developed frameworks in general (Kazmi, 2010; Lutgendorf, 2006). Bollywood is indeed different, when compared to Hollywood for example, but it is only in the exploration of such difference(s) that media studies can be extended and theorized in new ways.

**Christian's Post-Coloniality in the Post-Colonial Hindu Nation**

An outstanding characteristic of Indian Christianity is the syncretism of Christian and Hindu cultural and/or theological practices (Bauman & Young, 2014). The syncretism is observed in newer communities (those converted after colonialism), but has been part of Indian Christianity, and has been noted in the development of the Church (Županov, 2005). Several scholars promote the syncretic characteristic of Indian Christianity as a way to validate Christianity as Indian (see Bauman & Young, 2014). Robinson (2003) opposes such arguments because implicit in such a proposition is the presumption that Christianity is a foreign religion in India. The origins of the religion lie outside India, but Christianity's history in India begins in 52 A.D., and is now an Indian religion.

The arguments in favor of syncretism are as problematic as those of multiculturalism, and the delectable metaphors of "ethnic stew," "gumbo," and "melting pot." Multiculturalism and the accompanying metaphors ignore differences in favor of similarities, and overlook contemporary and historical power relations between communities (Shohat & Stam, 2014). I too reject the arguments about syncretism because there is an unstated implication that the Christian community should be accepted as Indian as long as they share similar beliefs and practices with Hindus. The inverse of the same argument is that if Christianity does not retain elements from Hinduism then the violence against Christians is justified. The syncretism between Christianity and Hinduism, with the latter as the native culture/religion, also essentializes India as Hindu. For example, Veronica from *Cocktail*, in order to "get groomed in the Indian way," adopts the Hindu's woman's dressing sense as well as her religious practices. The syncretism, thereby, supports the Hindu Right's claim that Indians are inherently Hindu. Academic discourse then parallels social discourse, and inadvertently contributes to the Hindu Right's agenda. Furthermore, viewing syncretism as a relationship with Hinduism ignores other ethno-religious communities, and their histories with Christianity. For instance,

Edwin Rodrigues from *7 Khoon Maaf* receives his army decorations for his service in Operation Blue Star against Sikh separatists, but, in general, there are not many political incidents between the two communities. In this example, an inter-religious conflict is imagined to narrate a nationalist agenda. Making a case for Christianity as syncretic asks for acceptance of similarities and tolerance of differences. In rejecting the arguments on syncretism, I demand respect regardless of differences and similarities, and acknowledgment that Christians are Indians as much as any other Indian.

Instead of approaching the relationship between Christianity, Hinduism, and India through arguments of syncretism, I argue that postcolonial hybridity is better suited to understand contemporary and historical power relations, and the complexity of being "Indian" "Christian." When hybridity is deployed in the same example mentioned above with reference to syncretism, the power struggle at the intersection of Christian and Indian identity becomes evident. It is fitting that postcolonial hybridity was initially theorized in the context of a missionary priest coming across a group of natives passionately discussing a translated version of the Bible (Bhabha, 1985). Postcolonial hybridity is a condition of displacement – not just physical, but also emotional (Bhabha, 1994). Hybridity is a constant suturing of the colonizer's culture with what is left behind of native culture after colonialism (Easthope, 1998). Native culture does not exist anymore – there is no authentic culture – and the colonizer's culture will never completely accept the postcolonial subject (Pal & Buzzanell, 2013). Such an impossibility of belonging creates a sense of displacement because the postcolonial has nowhere to reside – emotionally and physically (Amoamo, 2011). Yet Bhabha (1994) argues, culture is neither unified nor unitary. Therefore, hybridity explains a postcolonial condition that discursively constructs, and mediates (in the context of media representations), a postcolonial identity.

The analysis of the Christian characters in preceding chapters extend hybridity to the level of the nation to point to the ambivalence of cultural and national identity (I acknowledge that culture produces the nation). Scholars argue that the postcolonial nation is always hybrid because an all-encompassing discourse that narrates the nation cannot be found in history or present times (Barrell, 1990; Gunew, 1990; Mulhern, 1990; Snead, 1990). Nations are complex, internally disruptive, and their boundaries are transgressive – not just physical, but also emotional in the sense of patriotism and nationalism. In this regard, the cultural, ethnic, national, and sometimes racial identification "Indian" is a postcolonial condition given the experience of colonialism, but also in the way modern India is imagined as a republic with a democratic political system – all of which is borrowed from the European colonizers. However, the cultural, ethnic, religious, and sometimes racial identification "Christian" is too a postcolonial condition given that the spread of Christianity gained momentum with colonial endorsement, and because of the way Christians continue to observe Latin rites and/or indigenize the religion. Therefore, both Indian Christians and Indian Hindus experience postcolonial hybridity, and are always already in a syncretic relationship with each other.

Syncretism through postcolonial hybridity is not about multiculturalism of similarities despite differences. Such a relationship acknowledges a shared history, and points to the ambivalence of postcolonialism. Such hybrid/multicultural/syncretic relationships call for the examination of the cultural, legal, political, and social life in the nation. Acknowledging and examining such hybrid relationships will reveal discourses of belonging in the nation, and how to belong, which is what is at stake with the present and future of the Christian community.

**Conclusion**

As the final paragraph, I want to conclude on the following note: I learned a lot about the Christian community – to which I belong – while conducting the research cited all along.

As I read various texts on the history of Indian Christianity, I shared the newly acquired information with family and friends. Their reactions to the information were much like mine, "I did not know this!" As I have argued, there is little known about Christians' history – different from Indian Christianity. This is because Christians are written out of colonial and modern Indian history. It is a monumental task to locate an *Indian* Christian in Indian history. This is not because Christians have a recent history in India – as the Hindu Right posit. Rather, it is because history is classed. Oftentimes, it is the middle- and upper-classes of society who write history that will be read and rewritten. However, most Christians of the colonial era did not belong to these classes of society; hence, their economic and social dependence on missionaries. India's post-coloniality is with the partition that brought death, havoc, and migration. But India's post-coloniality is also with existence, harmony, and stillness. India's post-coloniality is also with people who were never afforded the opportunity to speak their experiences for inclusion into history. Is there a present, and even a future, without a past to historicize?

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**Appendix**

*Page 3* (2005) follows the life of an entertainment journalist, Madhavi. The Christian character in the movie is Madhavi's roommate, Pearl Sequeira. She is a stewardess, and is not involved in the entertainment or journalism fields. She asks Madhavi to set her up on a date, and she starts to date an older businessman, and then immigrates to United States with him. A parallel narrative in the movie involves crime journalists with whom Madhavi becomes involved. In this narrative, a drug dealer, Gomes – a Christian last name, is arrested and murdered, and then a child trafficking syndicate by influential businessmen is discovered. The latter who are upper caste and class Hindu men face no repercussions for their crime.

*Socha Na Tha* (2005) is a family drama that touches on inter-community marriages within the framework of a romantic triangulation. The movie begins with Viren wanting to propose to his long-term girlfriend, Karen Fernandes – a Christian woman. At the same time, Viren's family arranges a marriage proposal for him with Aditi. Viren rejects Aditi's proposal following a mutual agreement, but the two of them remain friends. However, Aditi and Viren fall in love, and the latter has to end his relationship developing into marriage with Karen. The movie explicitly discusses the problems of inter-community marriages, and though there is reconciliation at first, the communal differences are ingrained in the characters psyche in a variety of ways that makes them difficult to ignore or overcome.

*Rock On!!* (2008) is about a rock band's reunion after a decade. The band members consist of two Hindu men, and two Christian men, Joe and Rob. After their estrangement, it is Joe and Rob who are still involved in music in different capacities, but also struggling economically. Joe owns a musical instruments store where he also offers guitar lessons, and these businesses are operated from his family home. Rob composes jingles for advertisements, and is dying of a brain tumor. The two Christian men use the occasion of a reunion to relaunch their musical careers. However, while preparing for a competition, Joe's wife, Debbie, protests against the reunion, and insists that he find himself better and gainful employment. Debbie poses as a hinderance to the band's reunion, and Joe's dreams.

*Ajab Prem Ki Ghazab Kahani* (2009) follows the life of Prem, who helps lovers elope for a fee. He falls in love with Jenny, who is a Christian woman. However, Jenny is in love with someone else – another Hindu man. On one side, Jenny's parents arrange for to be married off, and, on the other side, Jenny's paramour's family will not agree to an inter-community marriage. Prem intervenes to help Jenny. He "kidnaps" Jenny from her parents' home, and then works on achieving the same with her lover. In the process, Jenny falls in love with Prem, but their union too is an inter-community one.

*7 Khoon Maaf* (2011) is an adaptation of Ruskin Bond's *Susanna's Seven Husbands*. Susanna Anna-Marie Johannes is an Anglo-Indian woman who marries seven men throughout her life, and murders each one of them. Although Susanna is a Christian woman, she is not Catholic (she is most likely a Protestant), and is not analyzed. She also changes identities with every marriage, and adopts different religions. Her first husband, Edwin Rodrigues, is a Catholic

man, and an Army Major who serves in Operation Blue Star. He is short-tempered, and oftentimes directs his anger at Susanna. She, however, murders him for attacking and blinding a stable-keeper.

*Dum Maaro Dum* (2011) is pictured in Goa, and features several Christian characters, but none of them perform central roles. The Christian characters are related to each other through some relationship. The movie, however, follows Assistant Commissioner of Police Vishnu Kamath, who is posted in Goa to break the underground drug mafia. Vishnu is neither Christian nor is he from Goa. In uncovering the drug mafia, the different relationships are revealed. The overlord of the drug mafia is a Christian character, and the other Christian characters work with Vishnu in different capacities to redeem themselves, and their hometown.

*Cocktail* (2012) takes place in London, England. In the start of the movie, Gautam and then Meera immigrate to London for different reasons. Veronica, the Christian woman, is from London itself. Meera is abandoned by her husband who marries her to fulfill contractual obligations, and she moves into Veronica's apartment where they live together. Shortly after, Veronica and Gautam initiate a no-strings-attached relationship, and the latter too moves into the apartment. However, Gautam and Meera develop feeling for each other, and then there is a romantic triangulation that the three of them navigate. Meera leaves Gautam for the sake of her friendship with Veronica, but he is still in love with her. Veronica is still in love with Gautam, but he does not have romantic feelings for her.

*Housefull 2* (2012) develops from two sparring brothers' rivalry; both brothers are keen to marry their respective daughter into the richest family. A conman, Max, who is assumed to be Christian, is approached to penetrate the family, and marry one of the daughters. However, Max confuses the two households as they are adjacent to each other, and infiltrates the wrong family. In order to correct Max's mistake, another conman, Sunny, is solicited with the same task; he is successful. It is later revealed that Max and Sunny are estranged friends, and are still at loggerheads with each other. They eventually reconcile their differences, but are, nevertheless, caught in the midst of a family that is trying to marry their daughters to them.

*Grand Masti* (2013) is the second installment of the Masti trilogy. Three Hindu men who are frustrated with their sexless married lives decide to pursue extra-marital affairs at their college reunion. Each man chooses a Christian woman – Rose, Marlow, and Mary – for his pleasure. The Christian women, on their part, are aware that the men are married, yet they pursue the men. The Christian women are also related to each other through the college Principal, Robert Pereira. The Principal is a conservative man, and institutes sexual austerity on campus, which includes a dress code and physical distance between the genders.

*Mr Joe B Carvalho* (2014) is about an amateur detective, Joe Carvalho. He is a Catholic man. He his hired to locate a rich man's daughter who has apparently eloped with their driver. Joe identifies the daughter, but there is a confusion as the police attempt to nab, at the same time, a master of disguise murderer. Joe is mistaken to be the murderer, and finds himself caught in the midst of a police chase, and a high-profile contract killing. During this encounter with the police, it is revealed that Inspector Shantipriya Phadnis – a Hindu woman – was Joe's former girlfriend. Shantipriya tries to rekindle their past relationship in order to nab him.

*Finding Fanny* (2014) takes place in a fictional village, Pocolim, located in Goa. Ferdie receives a letter he had sent over two decades ago to Fanny in which he confessed his love for

her. Realizing that she never read his letter, him and his friends set out on a road trip to find Fanny. The friends who accompany him on the trip are Angie, Rosalina – Angie's mother-in-law, Savio – Angie's childhood friend, and Don Pedro – an eccentric artist. Everyone in the movie is a Catholic character.