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## Two Book Reviews

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### *Postcolonial Theory in the Global Age: Interdisciplinary Essays*

Edited by Om Prakash Dwivedi and Martin Kich.

Jefferson, NC: Mcfarland, 2013

Vi + 206

\$45

ISBN 978-0-786-47552-0

### *Bollywood and Globalisation: The Global Power of Popular Hindi Cinema*

Edited by David J. Schaefer and Kavita Karan

Abingdon: Routledge, 2013

Xix + 183

ISBN 978-0-415-62523-4

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Dwivedi and Kich's new collection is a welcome intervention in the field of postcolonial theory. The editors recognise that colonialism and imperialism have been operating in a different form in today globalised environment and the essays in this volume examine the complexities of postcolonial politics within this rapidly changing power dynamics. The collection is interdisciplinary in nature and covers a vast array of disciplines- literature, history, film and architecture.

Previous studies by scholars such as Hardt and Negri (cited within this volume) have argued that postcolonial theory in the twenty first century, instead of resisting and challenging structures of exploitation have complicitly aligned themselves with the capitalist model of globalisation. The essays in this collection recognise and intervene within these global structures of hegemony. The editors have also interestingly stated that the collection is 'driven by the notion of ethics' (14). The contributors respond to capitalism and reverse the tendency toward separatism 'to effectuate the ignored human rights' (ibid).

The collection boasts of a number of well known scholars of postcolonial studies alongside newer names. Bill Ashcroft in his essay 'Going Global: The Future of Postcolonial Studies' examines the current state of postcolonial studies. He questions the predominant interest in Anglophone literatures and the implications on literature in translation. Suggesting that postcolonial literature needs to be addressed through the act of reading rather than writing, he sets out a number of strategies. Janet Wilson, another

well known name within the field focuses her essay, 'From Colonial Outsider to Postcolonial Insider: Screen Adaptations from Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa' on the relationship between literature and the nation and how these ideas have reshaped screen adaptations in Australia and New Zealand. She contends that whilst literature and film operate to some degree outside nationalism, the ones that recirculate key images of the nation contribute to the renewal of national identity and thus encouraging a reflexive nationalism. She concludes that these screen adaptations reinterpret dominant core motifs of their white settler cultures to respond to social and cultural change conveying a wider relevance.

Another interesting essay within the volume is Susan Hosking's, 'Slumdogs and Dog's breakfasts: Reading Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire* and Baz Luhrmann's *Australia*'. Hosking in her comparative consideration of these two films explores the reception of these two films both within the communities it claims to represent and the wider international audience. In effect she questions why *Australia* failed to resonate with the people of the country in similar ways to the mixed response garnered by Boyle's film when it was released in India. The concluding essay by Clara A.B. Joseph, 'Global Victorians: Is Colonial Decadence to blame for Postcolonial Deconstruction' is a fitting end to the volume. Joseph draws a striking correspondence between British colonial attitudes during the Victorian period and the American neocolonial attitudes during the current era of globalisation. The essays in this collection thus reconceptualises the problems of contemporary globalised economies and imagines alternative worlds (19). The essays extend the focus and terrain of postcolonial theory drawing on the discursive interdisciplinary fields of study that this volume brings together.

The second book under consideration is David J Schaefer and Kavita Karan's *Bollywood and Globalisation*. In many ways it extends the study of the previous book. This is an interdisciplinary volume which uses qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore the relationship between soft power, hybridity, audiences and cinematic texts. The editors critically note that studies on Bollywood have so far only focused on critical/theoretical and historical approaches, however by shifting this focus, the book fills the divide between empirical and theoretical approaches. The editors approach this through three perspectives- transcultural production, cinematic content and finally audiences.

In the first section made up of three chapters focus on transcultural production. These chapters explore India's position within the international film trade and the soft power that these films attract in various markets. The author, Sunitha Chitrapu contends that the market size along with India's cultural influence within its diasporic audience base puts it in a favourable position. Mazumdar's chapter which is a comparative analysis of the Hong Kong and Indian film industry on the other hand argues that both industries have managed to attract global audiences by changing their production processes to the changing global contexts.

The second section opens with Schaefer's own essay 'Box Office and Bollywood' where he uses multiple regression to compare binary style statistical trends. (63). The

essay shows that there has been a marked turn in the box office away from earlier content such as village/rural and religious content towards depiction of urban and diasporic lifestyles. The editors follow this up with their joint chapter (Chapter 6) where they examine how hybridity influences depiction of violence, sexuality and romance in Bollywood cinema. They argue that whilst the latter two are closely associated with the home space, violence is increasingly associated with hybridised locales.

The final section of the book looks at how audiences react to popular cinema and how these reactions reinforce and challenge certain assumptions. One of the most interesting chapters of this section (Chapter 10) utilises electroencephalograph (EEG) to track viewer physiological reactions while watching a Hindi film. I found this a very interesting approach towards studying audience reactions within Indian cinema which has never been attempted before. Using quantitative and statistical analysis of the data collected the authors contend that song and dance numbers which are a staple in Hindi popular cinema fail to attract western audiences, potentially limiting its message. By eliminating such sequences the authors argue that 'Hindi film producers [will be able to] woo young Western audiences' (178).

The collection is a unique addition to Indian cinema scholarship and would be a welcome to many scholars working in the field. Both books in my opinion extend their disciplinary boundaries and illuminate on several issues and complexities of their discipline. The books will be of interest to academics working in film and media studies, social sciences as well as humanities and global politics.

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