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The Body of New Asian Dance Music

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Since the mid-eighties, a youth culture has been visible within and outside South Asia in which a genre of music dubbed 'new Asian dance music' by the British media, consisting mainly of Bhangra and Bollywood remixes, has emerged as the most important site for the production of new ethnicities.(Banerji 1988; Bauman 1990, Sharma, Hutnyk & Sharma 1996) The new hybrid music, played at parties labeled 'afternoon raves' or 'dayjams', attracted considerable media attention in Britain and news reports singled out the repressive South Asian family structure in focusing on its generational resistance angle.(Huq 1996) The emergence of a similar space in India was imbricated with the rhetoric of globalization and cultural imperialism with fundamentalist factions condemning youth's regression into 'degenerate' Western practices. While the British media identified an intersection of gender with race and class in the emergence of South Asian youth subcultures, the Indian media's singular focus on alien cultural invasion or *apasanskriti* simplified the socio-economic and linguistic divisions that fissured a deceptively homogenous youth culture.(Bennett 1997, 1999) Although Bhangra and Bollywood dancing is strongly inflected by the lived experiences of specific neighbourhoods and exhibits differences of gender, sexuality, class, caste, and ethnicity, it has been examined largely in relation to the production of a South Asian space in the Western metropolis. While British cultural studies have devoted considerable attention to the emergence of an Asian underground in Britain situating its resistance in the cultural politics of blackness, Sunaina Maira, has investigated *desi*[South Asian] parties in American universities and colleges to locate an Indian American socio-cultural space.(2002) Similar explorations, such as those of Jacqueline Warwick, have identified the presence of South Asian dance spaces in Toronto and Vancouver.(2000) While Bhangra has figured prominently in British sociology, ethnomusicology and cultural studies as music, dance and youthculture, South Asian film studies have largely overlooked the emergence of Bollywood-centred cultural practices that provide new social spaces for the performance of youth subjectivities.(Sharma, Hutnyk and Sharma 1996; Hutnyk 2000; Dudrah 2002 a, 2002 b) The cultural space constituted by Bhangra and Bollywood dancing on the Indian subcontient is complicated through the disjuncture between class, region and taste that prevents their articulation to any particular ethnicity or class. Bhangra and Bollywood dancing has now become a global cultural phenomenon and the presence of white, black and other ethnic groups at Bhangra and Bollywood related events complicates the narrative of marginality and otherness. As bodies in motion mimic the gestures and movements of dancers in the Bhangra music video and the Bollywood film, the dancing body becomes a means of performing and negotiating difference in multicultural nations. Through examining the collusion of mediatized images of the body with real bodies in dance, this paper examines Bollywood & Bhangra dance as a cultural space in which the body in motion performs both identity and difference.

Following postructuralist insights into the social production of space, physical space cannot be detached from the social or existential.(Massey 1994; Soja 1996) The understandings of space as socially produced intersect with constructionist theories of the body that have revealed the body, even the gendered, to be produced by regulatory practices and as implicated in relations of power.(Butler 1999) However, cultural theorists have lately begun to examine the performing body to redirect the sociology of the body from its preoccupation with constructivism to an engagement with embodiment.(Turner 1984) Dance scholars have supplemented its findings by viewing dance as an embodied practice offering a complete sensory experience.(Martin 1998) This return to embodiment in the analysis of dance has recovered the body from its textualization in film theory which, predicated on the image text, tends to restrict itself to the visual and to the rhetoric of the gaze.

New understandings of space, body, ethnicity, nation and multiculturalism necessitate a re-examination of the fundamental assumptions of the aesthetics and politics of art and performance, particularly the notion of universalism animating aesthetic evaluations. The universalistic theory of art collapses in view of not only space and body but also taste to be historically and socially produced through exclusionary definitions.[1] If space and bodies are socially constructed and are inscribed by particular historical memories, the question of universals in performance needs to revisited in light of the exoticization of the cultural production of others in the present phase of globalization. If aesthetic appreciation is culturally determined and requires a disposition towards certain aesthetic principles through social conditioning, how do different subjects understand otherness and difference? The notion of the universals of performance has been used to explain the affect of cultural productions across difference despite the divergence in cultural knowledge and behaviour inscribed on the body. But contemporary critiques of exotica have alleged that difference itself can constitute their source of appeal.(Hutnyk 2000) Thus, the pleasures and affects of Bollywood viewing and dancing may be attributed to universality as well as difference. Can culturally different texts with their particular regional or national memories and histories appeal to diverse ethnicities to construct a global culture that Anthony Smith viewed as essentially memory-less?(1990) To answer this question, one needs to ask what is global culture, how it circulates in virtual space and how it engages with corporeal difference.

Although it was first used by Timothy Taylor to refer specifically to World Music, the term 'Global Pop' is increasingly being used to talk about the music that crosses boundaries by being repackaged in the west and circulated globally over the new electronic media.(1997) While his lumping together dissimilar music under a homogenizing category opens him to the critique of labeling, Taylor's inclusion of the British Bhangra pioneer Apache Indian in his book was the first to transpose Bhangra from British Asian black cultural politics to that of globalization. The case for the globalization of Bhangra and Bollywood is made on basis of their ubiquity. But the restriction of the flows of Bhangra and Bollywood among South Asian diasporas raises a question as to their claim to globalization. In view of the predominantly South Asian presence at Bhangra and Bollywood related events, Bhangra and Bollywood could be more accurately described as transnational. But the increasing presence of others - curious or alternative - of all colours and ethnicities in Bhangra and Bollywood spaces holds the possibility of their eventual absorption into global cultures. Bhangra and Bollywood performers grudgingly admit that the media-hyped celebration of their mainstreaming is deceptive because they still need performers like Madonna, Jay Z or Nellie Furtado to cross over. However, the visibility provided to Indian culture and arts through their appropriation by mainstream performers creates a space for them in global culture though their meanings

[1] The Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe's grandfather is believed to have rebuffed European missionaries' attempts to convert him to Christianity on grounds of their singing sounding too mournful to his ears. Similarly, early colonial accounts of the North Indian classical dance form *kathak* are inscribed with the rhetoric of savagery through which the civilizational mission was accomplished before the noble savage came to be exoticized in orientalism and primitive art. Priya Srinivasan includes the following excerpt on the reception of the performance of *nautch* in Philadelphia 1881 to underline the ambivalence underlying the American response to Asian dance.
(April 2004. http://www.ballet-dance.com/200404/articles/asiandance.html)

> The National Theatre was crowded to excess last night to witness the genuine Nautch Dancers. The copper colored females came on the stage during the musical burlesque. It was an exceedingly grotesque dance in which they indulged, and is said to be the national dance of their country. Their movements were peculiar, their bodies swaying back and forth and their hands going through numerous gyrations, while they kept time in a number of exceedingly graceful steps. Indeed, the entire dance was graceful and very odd. The novelty of their costume and their graceful manners pleased the vast assemblage. Their reception was indeed flattering.

might be altered, if not contradicted.[2] Similarly, the tokenist presence of Bhangra and Bollywood on mainstream radio and television, the interest exhibited by international musical labels in recording Bhangra and Bollywood music and the recognition given to performers through awards and honours makes one speculate if South Asian music will eventually crossover into the mainstream fulfilling a wish expressed by the British Asian Bhangra pioneer Bally Sagoo more than a decade ago.(Housee and Dar 1996) Still confined to the South Asian margins in the global city, the increasing global visibility of Bhangra and Bollywood makes one wonder if they will follow rap in being heard by youth from New York to New Delhi. Even though their audience is primarily South Asian today, the increasing interest in youth of other ethnicities in Bhangra and Bollywood might set a global trend for the new Asian dance music in the future.

The media convergence that Henry Jenkins has noted in defining the new mediascape accounts for cultural homogenization across diverse boundaries.(2006) The internet has rightly been singled out as a democraticizing hub for the formation of global cultural networks outside state regulation. But the global circulation of Bollywood and Bhangra images is propped on the intermediality of radio, television, film, audio cassette, and CD with internet. The flows of Bhangra and Bollywood on the internet are supplemented and complemented with their parallel flows on satellite television connecting transnational youth with their local others. Compared to North America, Europe and Australia where the visual has been marginalized to the aural through new technologies, film, radio and television still play a stronger homogenizing function in developing societies than the internet that has a comparatively limited reach. This intermediality locates groups into identical listening or viewing positions that might be discordant with their social positions. The intermediality in the marketing of Bhangra and Bollywood music leads to a sonic democratization in so far as it includes all social and economic groups albeit through a differential system of consumption. Though the spaces of consumption of Bollywood and Bhangra might intersect or diverge depending on whether one views the song and dance on internet, Zee TV or ETC Panjabi, or listens to it while driving a cab, truck or a Mercedes Benz, they construct a homogeneous Bollywood Planet or a Bhangra Nation extending from Amritsar to LA and from Mumbai to New York. Irrespective of the meanings that images of Bhangra and Bollywood might possess for diverse consumers, a global sonic and visual culture is visible from Amsterdam to Sydney bringing together global ‘us’ with local ‘others’. Similarly, notwithstanding the variation in the pleasures of Bhangra or Bollywood between a white middle class consumer in mega-cities like New York or Sydney and a poor rickshaw puller’s daughter in a small town like Kharagpur, Bollywood and Bhangra’s ubiquity in diverse spaces within and outside India cannot be denied.

[2] Two examples, one from music and the other from film, should suffice to illustrate the tensions in the visible invisibility of the Bhangra or Bollywood performer in the production of global culture. Few global youth would fail to recognize the beat of the Jay Z Panjabi MC feat ‘Beware of the Boys’. But none would be able to name the Panjabi singer whose vocals contribute in a significant manner to the power of the song. Similarly, the global familiarity of the Hollywood star Nicole Kidman relegates one of Bollywood’s best dancers Urmila Matondkar to anonymity in the *chamma chamma* number in Baz Uhrmann’s *Moulin Rouge*. Even so, most western and some South Asian youth discovered Bollywood and Bhangra through their cooption in mainstream film or music catalyzing an abiding interest in South Asian musical productions.

The corporeal staging of the body politic through the body is propped on its virtual image in the music video that circulates between youth of all ethnicities on different media. Like the song in the forties and fifties, the Bollywood song and dance has acquired an independent viewership consisting largely of consumers of music television or internet users, a fact recognized by Bollywood producers through their adaptation of the song and dance sequence to the music video format. The music video decouples viewing from dancing facilitating its consumption by youth with little interest in the sentimental melodramatic Bollywood romance or the song lyrics. Though Bhangra is classified as music, the premium placed on performing the right Bhangra steps has created a synergy between the film, the music video and the audio CD. The images of bodies in motion circulated through the Bhangra or Bollywood music video provide a common sonic and kinemic vocabulary to youth dispersed across the globe. In the same way as American popular culture has dominated the body language and styles of youth globally, shared images of the body in dance in Bhangra videos and Bollywood films construct a homogenous mediascape in relation to which youth bodies are produced in the practice of dance.

Both Bollywood and Bhangra have altered their address by including the bodies of others in the song and dance. While British Asian Bhangra has been inclusive of other ethnicities from its inception, even music videos produced in Mumbai or studios in Noida take into account their global address by including black and white dancers in the background. Bollywood song and dance are often disjunctive with their narratives in the presence of white, and occasionally black, bodies in the song and dance that appears to be targeted at an international youth market. Whether the diegetic narrative requires it or not, these songs and dances depict young white females - ostensibly enjoying Bhangra and Bollywood movements -surrounding the male Bhangra performer or Bollywood actor. More than males, second generation South Asian females are invited to dance 'item numbers' in Bollywood films and diasporic musicians to sing in club type songs.[3] This integration of the diasporic or the international subject in the economy of Bollywood dance has disengaged Bollywood or Bhangra from their specific location in India and made it available for the consumption of global youth and the production of global youth subjectivities.

The ubiquity and visibility of South Asian musics through their transnational and global flows has produced celebratory narratives but also raised serious issues related to the consumption of the cultural production of others in globalization. While ethnomusicologists and dance scholars have engaged with notions of hybridity and purity, scholars in cultural and postcolonial studies have expressed their concern about the western consumption and appropriation of the music of others.[4] However, the co-option of dance in Indian nationalism and Panjabi nationalism by the post-colonial Indian state has largely been overlooked in the focus on the appropriation of Bhangra and Bollywood in the discourse of globalization. In viewing Bhangra and Bollywood as the site of the contestation between purity and hybridity, multiculturalism and diversity, the west and the non-west in the present, the significance of dance as the historic site on which the regulatory practices of the state through which gendered, caste, or ethnolinguistic bodies are produced is reiterated. The globalization, appropriation and resistance of Bhangra and Bollywood dancing must be framed against these historical contexts.

[3] Item Numbers are dances of a risqué nature often performed by aspiring starlets, which are regularly inserted in new Bollywood films to improve the box office ratings of films.

[4] John Hutnyk, for example, has criticized the appropriation of Indo-chic by mainstream white performers like Madonna and Kula Shaker that undermines the genuine resistance of South Asian diasporic production.

Bryan Turner's view of the dancing body as one that has a national script is corroborated by the production of dance in Indian nationalism.(1984) In the Indian context, the body of dance, inscribed with a transcendental materialism through invention of the sacral myth of origin, was also overwritten with a national and sub-national script. The debate on the morality of dance in the anti-nautch campaign at the end of the nineteenth century reveals the complicity of Indian nationalists with colonial missionaries in the denunciation of dance as 'decadent'.[5] The ban on dancing by the colonial state endorsed by Indian reformist movements foregrounds the body of dance as the site for the contestation of the moral with the immoral. This culminated in the abnegation of the body in the production of the spiritual-mystical Hindu nation during the nationalist movement and the reinvention of dance through its disengagement from sexuality. The body of dance was also co-opted in the production of gender, caste, and ethnic difference through the regulatory ideals of the postcolonial state.

Indian dance traditions, dating back to thousands of years, are inscribed with resistance through the originary myth about dance being created to destabilize traditional dominant structures. Dance traditions were conventionally embedded in secular and sacral systems of patronage as temple or court arts that permitted the expression of the sacred through the profane, spirituality through materiality, the soul through the body and the disciplined body of classical dance was balanced by the excess of regional folk dance. In traditional dance, sexuality was the essence of dance even in its spiritual manifestations in which a highly sexualized imagery was borrowed to depict divine union. But the postcolonial construction of national dance offers a textbook illustration of the relation between state power, power of the body and the control of life. Dance scholars have uncovered the production of classical dance in the beginning of the twentieth century through the excision of the sexual in constructing divine origins for dance.(Ram 2005, 2009; Oldenburg 1991) They have shown how the nationalist project echoed and replied to the colonialist representation of eastern dance as primitive, decadent and immoral.(Ram 2000) The disavowal of both the court tradition of *kathak* and the temple arts of *bharatanatyam* and *odissi* due to their inscription with immorality and the public debate on the hereditary *devadasi* system led to the reinvention of a sanitized dance tradition by the postcolonial state.[6](Oldenburg 1991) Other than the power of the national elite in privileging the disciplined body of classical dance and religious expressivity over sexual, the deployment of dance and music in the management of identity by post-colonial governments noted by ethnomusicologists and dance scholars is unmistakably visible here[7]. (Ram 2000; Ram 2009)

[5] Krishna Dutta and Pran Neville trace the history of the birth and demise of nautch in Kolkata and Lahore respectively. (2003; 1996)They argue that despite the passing of the first legislation against the *devadas*i system in 1929, dance continued to be performed at private events and in the homes of the rich. Amrit Srinivasan's study of the transformation of *sadir nach* into *bharatnatyam* reveals the process of the sacralization of sexualized temple dance.(1985) While Susie Tharu's Introduction to *Women Writing India* unveils the regulation of women's bodies in nationalism through a call for a ban on the *devadasi* tradition, Mahesh Dattani's *Dance Like a Man* brings out the production of masculinity and femininity through the body of the *bharatnatyam* dancer.

[6] Modern Indian dance was invented allegedly in response to Anna Pavalova's question "Where is your dance?" during her visit to India.

[7] As Kalpana Ram shows, this is evident in the reinvention of the sanskritized *bharatanatyam* as national dance through its disengagement from its lower caste origins through which it acquired respectability.

However, in the Indian context, dance was also overwritten by a regional script in addition to the national through the appropriation of regional dance genres in the construction of sub-national identity narratives. The appropriation of Bhangra in the mobilization of a Panjabi identity after 1947 is particularly pertinent to the relationship between cultural forms and sub-national identities in view of the rejection of the demand for a Sikh nation in the three nation theory in the Indian partition of 1947, the rise of Sikh separatism in the 1970s and the renewal for the call for Khalistan in the diaspora after the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. Ethnomusicologists have called attention to the production of a cult of authenticity centred on Bhangra, whose origins appear to be implicated in the struggle for power between the region and the centre after the formation of the post-colonial state.(Schreffler 2005) The birth of modern Bhangra is traced back to the accidental encounter of the then Maharaja of Patiala with a Bhangra performance by the University team through which *bhangra*, a marginalized Panjabi dance, came to be officially constructed as Panjabi dance through its staging in schools, colleges, official functions culminating in the first Republic Day Parade in Delhi. The reinvention of Bhangra in the contemporary discourses of hybridity as origins recalls its previous resignification as the symbol of Panjabi ethnocultural identity through the collusion of old aristocratic with new state powers.

The implication of Bombay commercial cinema in the nationalist project has similarly been brought out in film studies, which have regarded Indian popular cinema as the prime instrument for the dissemination of nationalist ideology.[8] However, the relation between cultural production and state control in the disavowal of commercial cinema by the Indian state in its construction of an official national culture until recently is beginning to be addressed only now. As the popular film's cultural capital was calculated in an inverse ratio to its economic capital, the genre was not deemed worthy of serious consideration. The song and dance in Bollywood cinema, which is an eclectic amalgamation of indigenous folk and classical genres with western influences in a characteristically Bollywoodesque mix, was not granted generic recognition until the coining of Bollywood dance as a category by the Western media and its performance by second generation Indian immigrants. Unlike Bollywood song that was incorporated in the national psyche for articulating emotion from its very beginnings, Bollywood dance continued to be denigrated in the wake of its association with 'decadence' in colonialism by the post-colonial Indian state.

In a reverse ascription of promiscuity to Western dance, the new post-colonial Indian state discouraged, if not banned, social dancing through the closure of elite British clubs after 1947 as part of the decolonizing project. In view of a small minority of English educated youth being permitted the privilege of joining their English friends in ballroom dancing prior to Independence, the ''English style of socialising'' could be kept alive only by the tiny Anglo-Indian population and alumni from English institutions after Independence.(Khan 2005 Npg)) Yet, with the construction of western dance as promiscuous, social dancing was displaced by the forbidden pleasures of the nightclub with female dancers made to serve male voyeuristic desires in an ironic reconstruction of the disavowed courtesan culture. Until the mid-seventies with the springing up of exclusive clubs called discotheques in metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and even Chennai where elite westernized youth congregated to perform Western modernity, dance remained a 'sinful' social space. In contrast to the dance culture of

[8] Interestingly, the sole visual documentation of Bhangra, whose knowledge was embodied by the hereditary performing community of *baazigars* exists in a Bollywood film called *Naya Daur* in which both the legendary *dhol* player Bhanna Ram Sunami and Bhangra dancer Manohar Deepak share cinematic space with the thespian of Bombay cinema Dilip Kumar.

the seventies and eighties that grew around the western genre of disco but without its sexual inflections, the nineties return of dance on the Indian subcontinent converged on a regional folk and a national popular cultural genre following their appropriations in South Asian diasporas. Their transnational origins and developments suggest a convergence on the meanings produced by the new social space of dance through divergent material conditions.

The birth of a new Bollywood centred space called the dance bar in which scantily clad female dancers perform Bollywood song and dance for the pleasure of predominantly urban working class males, the reinvention of the traditional *mujra* or courtesan dance among the urban elite, and the integration of Bollywood style dancing in traditional festivities and dancing signal a major dance return on the subcontinent. Yet, the ban on dancing and playing music in bars that serve alcohol imposed in India's software capital Bangalore and Bollywood style dancing in college fests and functions in Kanpur recently confirms the construction of dance as immoral in Indian nationalism.(2005) In view of the denigration of dance for nearly a century, it is ironic that a marginalized folk dance and a disavowed commercial genre, rather than the officially produced national classical tradition, should have acquired social centrality in the formation of global youth cultures in the new millennium.

The role of a regional harvest dance and a national popular music in the performance of youth subjectivities in and outside India can be explained with reference to the near cultic significance that social spaces and activities acquire for urban tribes as elucidated by Michel Maffesoli.(1996) As Maffesoli pointed out, any of these spaces or activities can be resignified with meanings and symbolic capital by these communities that it did not originally possess. Pierre Bourdieu's notion of identity as the effect of the location of social agents and properties in distinct and distinctive places they occupy in relation to others and of the expression of mutual exclusions or distinctions through physical space is equally relevant to the spaces of identity produced by Bhangra and Bollywood dancing. (1984)

If space is to be regarded as physical as well as social and identities to be viewed as a function of mutual exclusions and distinctions, the struggle over space - both physical and symbolic - becomes crucial to the production of youth subjectivities. Despite the symbolic significance physical spaces – nightclub, college ground, farmhouse – might acquire, these identities are not always expressed through a physical claim to space. Rather, it is the performance of the social positions of participants in relation to others through inclusions and exclusions that produces the space. In view of the historical production of the dominant space of the nation through exclusions and occlusions of South Asian minorities in Anglo-saxon societies and of certain classes, regions and castes in South Asia, the performance of Bhangra and Bollywood dance in the mega-city might itself serve as a space-making gesture. Bhangra and Bollywood dancing symbolically articulate the claims of diverse minorities to the nation space by inscribing it from ethnic, sectarian, linguistic or regional margins. Playing the Bhangra full blast in London, Toronto, New Delhi or Bangalore constitutes a symbolic claim to inclusion by linguistic and ethnic margins in the British, Canadian, or Indian nation in the same way as dancing to Bollywood music in an upscale club in Kolkata signifies Hindi popular cultural contestation with high Bengali or Western music.

In the more visible forms of resistance, the physical space might possess a symbolic significance corresponding to metaphoric claims to the dominant national space. 'Basement Bhangra', a Bhangra Nite organized by D J Rekha every Thursday in SOB's in the East Village in the heart of New York City is a metaphorical and a literal marking of a distinctively South Asian space in the exclusionary white American club culture. In other

spaces such as the annual 'Masala! Mehndi! Masti!' Festival held in Toronto or the Diwali Mela in Sydney, the official production of multiculturalism and diversity is literally superscripted on the spatial signifiers of national identity such as the Olympic Stadium in Sydney or the Exhibition Grounds in Toronto. But cramped rooms in halls of residencem the venue of *desi* parties in the US, as Maira shows, might equally suffice for the performance of homeland memories through the conflation of culinary and sonic delights, whereas school or college grounds might be temporarily licensed to tolerate excess in elite Indian institutions.(2002) Even at weddings and family functions, festivals and community celebrations, youth improvise spaces for the performance of identity often through the connivance of adults. Bollywood and Bhangra dancing on crowded streets such as that witnessed in Mumbai after the victorious return of the T-20 World Cup winning Indian cricket team offers a striking example of the claim to public spaces by the urban marginalized, which may be appropriated in the construction or crossing of boundaries. While a club, whether an upscale lounge bar or a sleazy dance bar, might reproduce structures of domination through right to admission, public occasions such as the one above or performances might actually facilitate the crossing of boundaries.

The symbolic significance of the Olympic torch doing the Bhangra at the Sydney Olympics, the honour given to a popular Bollywood actor in Malaysia, or the airing of Bhangra on mainstream television may be appreciated through understanding the meanings of physical properties in maintaining distinctions essential to the formation of national cultures. Dance becomes the site for the articulation of gender, caste, class, and ethnolinguistic claims to the space of the nation in which subjects assume social positions through mutual exclusions. *Basement Bhangra* in New York City and *Besharam Nights* in Toronto emerged from several exclusions including those of race, class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality through which the American or Canadian national culture is produced to engage with both dominant and (non)dominant hierarchical structures. While the image of a female *dhol* player on the *Basement Bhangra* poster speaks to the gendered sonic roles defined by Panjabi patriarchy, its low cover charge is calculated against the reproduction of economic hierarchies through which certain classes have been traditionally excluded from mainstream cultural production. The performance of Indian and Panjabi music on the street that is associated with the gay rights movement connects ethnolinguistic and ethnocultural exclusions with those of sexuality. *Besharam Nights* is equally explicit in defining itself as opposed to all forms of discrimination. *Bollywood Nights* in Bangalore, unburdened by the explicit political agenda of those in New York and Toronto, put to test Bangalore's claim to a global city in its self-production as a *kannadiga* capital whose exclusionary spaces occlude regional and linguistic others.

In addition to the physical spaces through which mutual exclusions are staged, Bhangra and Bollywood dancing foregrounds the image and the body in the performance of the inclusions and exclusions that structure the relations of the self with others. The body as a site for resistance and belonging has been foregrounded in the analysis of youth styles in which hairstyles and fashion can acquire deep symbolic significations. Cultural studies, in particular, focused on how the body, in its coverings and its embellishments, becomes a tactic in youth cultures for articulating identifications resisting regulative norms through sartorial choices. (Fiske 1989) The imbrication of corporeality and identity revealed by Fiske and others is most visible in the significations of the beard and the turban in assertions of Sikh identity and of the *hijab* in Muslim. But other sartorial choices such as the *bindi*, the nose ring or the anklet are equally symbolic identity assertions. While the appropriation of Indo-chic in the youth fashion industry has silenced the genuine resistance of South Asian youth, as John

Hutnyk has argued in his book *The Critique of Exotica*, its incorporation in the sartorial images of popular youth icons such as Madonna or Britney Spears has also made them available for global youth consumption.(2000) The proud display of ethnocultural signifiers at Bhangra and Bollywood nights through youth sporting traditional attire or Bollywood style glitter presents an undisguised deployment of style and fashion in the performance of identity. However, though heavily sequined outfits might add to the oriental colour and mood of the nights and while white and yellow bodies in Indian outfits might make a pretty picture, identities are essentially performed and crossed through the display of bodily signifiers and movements.

Given the corporeality through which difference – of race, caste and gender- has been historically constituted, the body, particularly the body in motion, mirrors the fissures in the body of the nation. The virtual circulation of the body in motion over the globe must encounter real bodies in specific localities, which are positioned in relation to others in different ways. The real body, in contrast to the virtual body, is located in particular habits of eating, walking, talking or dancing that differentiates it from other bodies in spite of the standardized speech, habits and behaviour through the global circulation of images. The body‘s viscerality that both attracts and repels is an instance of disjuncture in the homogenized image. Bhangra and Bollywood Nights exhibit a construction of a space within the dominant social space in which the body in motion inscribes the corporeal performance of subjectivity and difference. In dance, the reenactment of collective memory and difference occurs through the body and its movements.

The body of dance in the singular is foregrounded against Marcel Mauss’s plural techniques of the body by which he means “the ways in which from society to society men know how to use their bodies”.(The Aberdeen Body Group 2004: 50) Mauss introduced the term habitus to show that each society has its own special habits that are reflected in the simplest of activities like walking, running, eating and dancing and spoke of techniques of the body that varied not just with individuals but between societies. Bourdieu built upon Mauss’s ideas to propose his notion of bodily knowledge and the process of habitus.(1984) Defining habitus as appropriated set of dispositions some of which are bodily dispositions, he argued that physical capital(gait, posture,built) is socially produced through, say, food, sport or etiquette. He also demonstrated that social agents are endowed with habitus, inscribed in their bodies by past experiences,

D Venkat Rao’s essay on mnemocultures provides a unique insight into the corporeal inscription of cultural memory.(2007) Arguing that “mnemocultures proliferate through reiterative processes of speech and gestural learning”, Rao maintains that “what is heard and learnt appears to be a part of the body - an 'acquired character', communicated across generations by the face and hand through the rhythm of the body - intimated to the mnemo-scape”.(2007:9) In proposing his thesis, Rao privileges the dance forms of India as “the most intricate articulation of a gestural force” and argues that it is “in these intricately layered and correlated sign-forces and sense forms of the heritage that the alithic traditions/codes of speech and gesture have formed the cultural prosthesis and mnemocultural inheritances of the collective but heterogeneous parts and creative practices of the sub-continent”.(2007) The view of the body as bearing the trace of cultural memory is confirmed by the production of cultural identity and difference as a function of mnemonic repetition through sound and movement in Bhangra and Bollywood dancing.

Rao's notion of the mnemoculture may be applied to the trace of mnemocultural inheritance of the sub-continent that becomes visible on youth bodies reproduced by places of domicile and global fashions through their repetition of Bollywood and Bhangra dance. As Rao shows, despite its removal from originary habits through the process of gradual or complete acculturation, the body is a mnemonic trace on which cultural memory is inscribed. If corporeal dispositions - attire, accent, movements and habits - meet epidermal in the exclusion of certain bodies from the nation space of consumption if not production, they are also responsible for exclusion and alienation from the spaces of the home. While everyday life does not permit the performance of the original community, the hidden space of home and liminal spaces such as dance enable the temporary rejection of acquired dispositions and reintegration into the forgotten. The body of dance offers the possibility of literal performance of identities through the repetition of sounds and movements of home.

The subversive play through bodily signifiers, displays and movements converging on the profane activities of commercialized Bhangra or Bollywood dance can also be community producing through its enfolding heterogeneous youth into a new social formation to perform a ritual function. With literacy in the physical dispositions of Bhangra or Bollywood serving as sole the eligibility condition for inclusion or exclusion, the regulation of the body by the practice of dancing erases its previous inscriptions by the regulatory practices of gender, caste, class, creed, nationality and even colour. This possibility of the body to cross, even if temporarily, exclusionary social spaces in the space of dance informs it with the carnivalesque mixing of caste, gender and ethnicity in traditional ritual performance, which is corporeally produced through sensory significations. The tactility of certain ritual performances in Indic cultures in which exclusions are exercised through touch carries particular symbolic significance. The political agendas of the promoters of these events that have been specifically designed to prevent exclusions on the basis of caste, class, creed, ethnicity, gender or sexuality makes them inclusive spaces in which rustic Panjabi cab drivers might rub shoulders with South Asian or *desi* students and young urban professionals in New York or call centre workers jive with management consultants in Bangalore and scions of wealthy Marwari families in Kolkata. It is these youth spaces that also permit South Asian youth to transgress the taboos against the contaminating contact with the 'unclean' white *mlechha* or the 'infidel' black *kafi*r just as they offer possibilities for white, black and other youth to cross colour and ethnic boundaries.

The space of dance neighbourhoods, thus, constitutes a liberatory social space despite the variations in the nature or objects of resistance. But its resistance, even when it is not articulated overtly, is directed at larger social, political and ideological structures through which Bollywood and Bhangra dancing acquires a special significance in the debates surrounding questions of nation, culture and identity. While dance still reproduces mutual inclusions and exclusions through self-practiced spatial segregation and corporeal behaviour, the crush of bodies on the dance space and the shared rhythms and images of music and dance emancipates the bodies in motion from their normal dispositions.

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