Once Upon a Time in India
From Hollywood to Bollywood: A Thesis on Film Remakes
Across Cultural Boundaries

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Summary:
This thesis takes you into the exotic world of Bollywood Cinema and it aims at discovering the changes that a film must undergo when being remade across cultural boundaries. My main point of this thesis is to analyze the specific changes that the Hollywood film *West Side Story* has undergone when translated into the Hindi film remake *Josh*, in terms of setting, plot, and themes, in addition to the gender performance of the main male and female characters. My discoveries show that a film must undergo great changes when being remade across time and space. The Hollywood original film has been adapted to fit with the Bollywood film formula, the ‘Masala’ recipe, and Indian culture thereby making the remake very different from the original, but suitable for its new cultural and cinematic setting.

Dedications…

To my advisor Deborah Lynn Kitchen-Döderlein for help and good advice.

To Martin Ask Holthe, friends, and family for their help and support.

To Bollywood and all its glories.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction:

“[E]very national cinema remakes its own and other nations’ films. And every national cinema has cultural and historical traditions that engender their own generic conventions and expectations.”

Cross-cultural exchanges have developed throughout the world for centuries. One aspect of cross-cultural exchange is the film remake – a film based on another film. The cinematic remaking of other films has a long history and cinemas around the world have, as quoted by Jennifer Forrest and Leonard Koos, continually remade other nations’ films. Every cinema reflects the culture of which it belongs, and a nation’s cultural conventions, traditions, and expectations will affect the remake in significant ways. The remake is a common and important form of cultural borrowing and expression in a globalized world. According to Forrest and Koos, this is especially true in Hollywood where filmmakers have continually remade American films and “Americanized” foreign films. The remake is an important part of cinema and culture as it can give insight into aspects such as cultural differences, cinematic style, race and gender perceptions, and audience expectations. The cross-cultural remake is not only an American phenomenon. The national cinema of India, popularly known as Bollywood, has also been remaking and “Indianizing” Hollywood films for centuries.

In this thesis I will, through a comparative analysis, compare an American Hollywood film to its Indian Bollywood remake to reveal the cultural exchanges and cultural specificity that make them similar, but also set them apart, based on each culture and film tradition. Through an analysis of one original film, West Side Story (1961) by Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise and its Hindi remake Josh (2000) by Mansoor Khan, I will engage in the discussion on cross-cultural remakes, using these two films as a basis.

2 Forrest and Koos 4-5
Research Question:
My main aim of this thesis is to look at what exactly happens when one remakes a film across cultural boundaries. In the process of remaking a film from one culture to a significantly different other; what cultural changes does the U.S-original film West Side Story undergo when it is taken out of its context and placed into a Bollywood setting and remade into the Hindi-remake Josh? My primary focus in this question is to analyze how the cinematic and cultural differences will change the film’s plot, setting, and themes, and how the main character’s performance of gender will diverge from the original. My final conclusion will look at what new information this can bring to the subject of cross-cultural remakes.

Why this topic?
Film remakes have been (re)made since the beginning of cinema in Hollywood, but it is not only an American phenomenon. What most people might not know is that India’s Bollywood has increasingly been borrowing and remaking aspects of Hollywood cinema as well, though few studies have been made concerning this subject. Through globalization and immigration, Bollywood has become a world cinema. Still, many westerners have little knowledge of Hindi cinema and film theory has generally focused on Hollywood and the United States. The cinematic culture of Bollywood can therefore serve as a fascinating point for study and new research can give more understanding and appreciation, and can shape our conception of film remaking and Bollywood cinema. By comparing and contrasting these two industries and cultures, this can give us new insight into film theory and cross-cultural exchanges.

There are many reasons as to why remakes are made. One of the aspects I will focus on is the fact that film has a language of its own, and different cinemas have their own film language and cinematic style which must necessarily be translated from one culture to another in order to make the audience understand, appreciate, and take part in them. In her thesis on
film remakes, Ida Jahr argues precisely this, based on Edward and Mildred Hall’s theory, and that a film language is dependent on factors such as cultural location and time. It can create a boundary between national cinemas, but it can also present new possibilities and exchanges. An important question is whether it is necessary to learn the specific language of a given cinema or if it is easier to translate the film language into the known. It has always been common in film remaking to translate a film into a language that the audience of the given cinema and culture can understand and appreciate.  

Studying these two films to see what they express about their specific culture and film language can therefore serve an important purpose. The most fascinating question is therefore not only why remakes are made, but how Bollywood is able to take a story from Hollywood, with such a different film language and culture, and apply it to its own Hindi-film version. What can we learn from exploring and analyzing this field of study, and what do remakes actually express about culture, cultural exchanges, and film language? My knowledge of, and interest for film, Hollywood, Bollywood, and their respective cultures will help me write this thesis and answer these questions – though from a western perspective and with limited time and space.

**Structure:**

I begin my thesis by exploring the field of remake studies and give a clear definition of what remakes and cross-cultural remakes are. I then go on to explore cultural theory, Indian and U.S culture, and the terms Hollywood and Bollywood and their place in culture, before moving on to a comparative analysis of the two films. My main aim is to analyze cultural differences which include looking at cinematic structures and specificity, then use gender theory and look at femininity and masculinity in culture and film, to see how this can alter one film from the other. I will conclude with how my findings can give more insight and understanding in the field of Bollywood cinema, and cross-cultural remaking and exchanges.

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Primary sources:

The body of the thesis will be centered on the Bollywood film remake *Josh* and the original Hollywood film musical *West Side Story*. The reason for using these particular films comes from the fact that they are both musicals. *West Side Story* belongs to the Classical Hollywood era of film, while *Josh* belongs to the standard and contemporary Bollywood cinema, where almost all films are musicals. Therefore, some scholars suggest that contemporary Bollywood filmmaking can be compared to the classical Hollywood period with its specific film narrative and style, and where musicals were commonly made. Another reason is the fact that *West Side Story* can be seen as a loose adaptation, or update, of the classic love story *Romeo and Juliet*, while at the same time being a film version of a Broadway play. Shakespeare’s classic play is also itself based on an Italian love story.

**PLOT SYNOPSIS**

The main plots of the films are the same: Two rival gangs fight over control of city territories while at the same time, a boy from the one gang and a girl from the other dream of a life together.

*West Side Story:*

In the streets of New York City in 1957, we meet two rival gangs fighting for control over the city’s Westside. In contrast to the fighting, and caught in the middle of the rivalry, two lovers fight their own battle in order to find happiness. The white American gang “The Jets” is led by the rough and tough Riff, while the other gang, “The Sharks”, is comprised of Puerto Rican immigrants, with their proud and sleek leader Bernardo. The rival gangs eventually decide to stage a final fight to once and for all resolve who will have control over the streets.
Riff asks his best friend, the kind and dreaming Tony, to come back to the gang and help them out. Tony reluctantly becomes a part of the rivalry when he falls for Maria, Bernardo’s young and sweet sister. The lovers are parted by the rivalry but meet in secret, hoping for happiness and an end to the fighting. When Maria asks Tony to stop the rumble and end the rivalry, Tony is caught in the middle of the fight. He eventually stabs Bernardo in a rage when Bernardo kills Riff. Maria is informed and lashes out at remorseful Tony, but they soon make up and decide to run away together. In the meantime, Chino, a member of the “The Sharks” searches for Tony to revenge the death of Bernardo. The strong-willed girlfriend of Bernardo, Anita, eventually decides to help the lovers and goes to send a message to Tony about meeting Maria and elope with her. When Anita meets “The Jets” and asks for Tony, she is harassed and tells them in anger that Maria has been killed by Chino. Upon hearing this, Tony runs out and screams for Chino to take him too, but then Maria turns up. The encounter between the lovers sets the final, fateful scene of this love story as Chino suddenly appears and shoots Tony. He dies in Maria’s arms with both gangs standing around them. Maria blames all of them for their hatred that killed him, and they carry Tony’s body away together.

**Josh** (translates into “Frenzy” or “Energy”):

Two rival street gangs fight in the streets of Vasco, Goa in 1980 on the west coast of India. On one side there is a Catholic gang called “The Eagles” led by the rough, proud, and angry Max and on the other side a Hindu migrant gang called “The Bichoos” (“Scorpions”) led by sleek and mischievous Prakash. The two gangs fight to hold on to their own territories of the city and in the meantime, a romance between a boy and a girl from opposite sides blossoms in secret.
Prakash’s sensitive and kind brother Rahul arrives to Vasco, and he wants no part in the gang rivalry, but is unwillingly caught in the middle when he falls head over heels for rough but sweet Shirley, Max’ twin sister. The love is not reciprocated at first, but Shirley eventually falls for his kindness which for her is a stark contrast to her brother and their rough lifestyle. They keep their love hidden, but Rahul is set on telling her brother the truth. The gang rivalry escalates, and when Rahul, and later Prakash, learn about the twin’s unknowingly having a family inheritance, it leads Rahul to tell Max the truth about his love for Shirley and about their family secret. Prakash on the other hand, plots to kill Max because of this news and a fight between the two eventually leads to Max shooting Prakash in self-defense. Scared and remorseful, Max is arrested and trialed and the lovers are parted. But in Bollywood, love always wins. In the happy ending, Max is cleared of murder by the help of Rahul, the street violence ends, and the lovers reunite with the blessing of their families.

Concluding remarks:

Film is a powerful medium and an important part of culture. It acts as a cultural expression as it can reflect and shape the culture of a nation. By studying film remakes we can discover and explore these cultural expressions and reveal significant cultural differences and exchanges, and the effects these might have. In my effort to look into a film made in its specific cultural setting, and comparing it to a film remake made in another culture with its own specific film language, I seek to find and understand significant cultural differences and changes that the film necessarily undergoes in this ‘change to fit’ a new cultural setting.
Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

“Although the cinema has been repeating and replaying its own narratives and genres from its very beginnings, film remaking has received little critical attention in the field of cinema studies.”

The remake has been part of cinema from its earliest days. This also includes cross-cultural adaptations and exchanges, where borrowing and makeovers of films have opened the doors to new possibilities, exchanges, and experiences. As Constantine Verevis argues, the film remake has received little critical attention until recent research. The term is also yet to be officially defined, but used in different ways and in different contexts such as in the media, by academia, and in everyday use. According to Forrest and Koos, the remake has yet to find its proper place in film theory and criticism. They argue that the remake is a significant part of filmmaking and that it can be used for cultural comparison and give knowledge of cultural differences.

Earlier remake theory includes Andrew Horton and Stuart McDougal and their anthology Play It Again, Sam. They argue that a remake narrates “a special pattern which represents…previous narratives and experiences” and they are aesthetic and cinematic texts and ideological expressions of cultural discourse in particular times, contexts, and societies. For them, film remakes can tell us about the present and the time it was made, and they invite the viewer to enjoy the differences found between two cultures, creating a ‘double pleasure’. There are also strong cultural and historical levels in this experience. The remake therefore takes us into distinct areas of personal, sociocultural, and artistic (including narrative and style) parts of cinema.

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6 Verevis, Constantine. “Film Remakes” (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006) 1
5 Forrest and Koos 2-4
6 Horton, Andrew and Stuart Y. McDougal. Play It Again, Sam: Retakes on Remakes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) 1-7
Recent theory on film remakes includes the writing of Constantine Verevis who examines the film remake as an elastic concept, a complex situation, and as a cinematic phenomenon. By building on and critiquing previous theories, Verevis argues that we must recognize the complexity of the film remake, and that there is a need to look further into this subject. His theory states that the remake is a complex and special part of cinema, which shows us how it is possible to remake old films in new and different ways, and he divides film remakes into three categories. The first category is the “close or direct remake”, also seen as faithful adaptations, where the remake and the original are similar in both syntactic elements of plot, structure, narrative, and characters, and semantic elements such as setting, time, and names, such as Nosferatu, the Vampyre (Herzog 1979); a remake of Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror (Murnau 1922). The second category is the “transformed or disguised remake,” also seen as free adaptations, which only make minor changes to the syntactic elements, but more changes in the semantic, altering character names, gender and/or race, the cultural setting (place), temporal setting (time), and genre of the original. Clueless (Heckerling 1995) for example, can be seen as a transformed remake of Emma (1815). The last category, “the non-remake,” is films that are made with substantial differences on both the semantic and syntactic level, such as Ocean’s Eleven (Soderbergh 2001) and The Italian Job (Gray 2003). Film remakes therefore involve adapting narrative and cinematic properties to make a new film that reworks and translates an original text into another context, culture, and language and for a new audience, thereby crossing time, space, and media boundaries. 7

Although previous theory has given us relevant information on the cinematic remaking of other films, Verevis is right in his comment on the need to explore the complexity of the film remake further. What he does not stress is cross-cultural exchanges, a part of remake theory that has not been looked much into, particularly regarding the cross-cultural remakes.

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7 Verevis vii-85
made in Bollywood based on American films, which I will go further into here. This chapter will therefore focus on two central factors that are important in answering my main thesis question: Remake theory and culture theory. This will include a definition of the terms remake, cross-cultural remake, Hollywood and Bollywood, and their place in their cultural settings, in addition to a description of American and Indian culture and identity. I will begin this chapter by defining the term “remake”, and ask why remakes are made.

**Defining remakes and cross-cultural remakes**

A general definition of the film remake can be found in Forrest and Koos, who describe the remake as a film derived from a previously made film. In addition, a remake is a film which has intertextual connections with an earlier film. The term is often used in reference to a film which uses an earlier film as the main source material, but many remakes will also make significant character, plot, and theme changes from the original. While intertextually related to an earlier film, the remake will therefore “differentiate itself in terms of variation and revision of different aspects.” The relationship between remake and original may not go further than a form of loose inspiration, and share only, for example, the basic plot outline, title, setting, names of characters, etc. In this respect, a remake is a film based on an earlier film where changes in plot, characters, setting, form, genre, and language can and will generally be made. This is especially true in cross-cultural remakes. The reasons for this are many as we are in fact looking into a completely different cultural setting, with a film language and culture different from the original. There are of course degrees of variation, as many remakes of the same culture will not be changed to the same degree, and will often preserve much of its original source. The clear and basic definition of a remake is therefore a cinematic film which uses another cinematic film as the basic source material, although this source may be altered for different reasons, depending on time and place.

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8 Forrest and Koos 2-3
Remakes not only include Hollywood remaking, but remakes across culture and media. Cross-cultural remakes are also found in many other countries around the world and Hollywood narratives have increasingly become the basis for foreign films, where filmmakers make over U.S films in their own specific cultural and cinematic traditions. For Horton, this can be seen as an attempt to feel connected to a world film community and a way to tell the same story but with a different meaning, where the otherness of this meaning is what sets it apart. Horton and McDougal want to extend the definition of remakes to include films that take inspiration from, or only allude to, previous films, meaning cross-cultural remakes where cultural traditions, language, and narrative may differ greatly. Examples on remakes in this respect include the Japanese film *Seven Samurai* (Kurosawa 1954) which was remade into the western film *Magnificent Seven* (Sturges 1960). The cultural specificity of the samurais has here been translated to cowboys, showing the differences between Japanese and U.S cinema and culture. Another example that McDougal uses is *Time of the Gypsies* (Kusturica 1988), a remake that has placed the American Italian *The Godfather* (Coppola 1972) into a gypsy cultural setting. There are therefore great possibilities for big changes when films are remade across culture, where the film is made over to reflect both personal and cultural interests.  

The cross-cultural makeover has received little academic attention, only Hollywood, often seen as the acknowledged dominant cinema of the world, has been looked into in the past. In terms of cross-cultural remakes for Horton, how minority cultures appropriate and make use of this dominant cinema discourse can give us new information for film studies and cultural studies. This makeover does not suggest a direct adaptation, but a range of similarities as a remake includes a self-conscious balancing act between the familiar and the new. It can involve making significant changes to show the culture and national film traditions, with multiple cultural differences in terms of setting, themes, characters, gender, family, religion,

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10 Horton and McDougal 4-8
and ending. For Forrest and Koos, cross-cultural film remaking is about cultural translation, translating the other, the foreign cultural references, into the known. It can be compared to free translations, being generally faithful to the spirit of the text, while adapting it to the aesthetic, moral, and cultural concerns of the target culture. A remake does not always show that it is a remake or that it has taken inspiration from a previous source. The main issue lies in the translation process, as culturally specific elements disappear or change in the remake while other specific parts are kept, and own culturally specific parts are added.

**History of remakes:**

Early remakes in Hollywood include duplicates and films remade because of exhausted negatives. The studios often owned the rights to adapt old film material, and with new technology, the development in sound, color, and special effects, remaking existing material became increasingly more sought after for its economic and artistic values. In the 1980s, Hollywood turned to Europe and specifically France for inspiration, which caused filmmakers to remake films based on original French films, such as *Trois hommes et un couffin* (Serreau 1985) remade into *Three Men and a Baby* (Nimoy 1987) and *La cage aux folles* (Molinaro 1978) into *The Birdcage* (Nichols 1996). This way of plagiarizing foreign material received much critique and can be seen as an example of Hollywood’s commercialism and cultural imperialism. This is seen in how Hollywood is the dominant cinematic culture in the world, and filmmakers take material from other cinemas and make it their own. At the same time, the remake can also serve as cultural comparison, giving information on cultural differences and norms in American cinema as opposed to, for example French filmmaking. This can be achieved by looking at the Americanization of a foreign film, where Hollywood filmmakers borrow film material from a foreign cinema and translate it into a culturally American film with its specific Hollywood formula, style, and film language. Hollywood has taken

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11 Horton and McDougal 173
12 Forrest and Koos 15
inspiration from cinemas around the world,\textsuperscript{13} including European films made into blockbuster musicals such as \textit{My Fair Lady} (Cukor 1964) and \textit{Sound of Music} (Wise 1965). Inspiration has also been found in Spain with \textit{Abre Los Ojos} (Amenábar 1997) remade into \textit{Vanilla Sky} (Crowe 2001) and borrowing from Asian films such as \textit{Ringu} (Nakata 1998) remade into \textit{The Ring} (Verbinski 2002). Hollywood has also taken inspiration from Scandinavia, including the Swedish \textit{Män Som Hatar Kvinnor} (Oplev 2009) remade into \textit{The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo} (Fincher 2011) and the Norwegian film \textit{Insomnia} (Skjoldbjærg 1997/Nolan 2002).\textsuperscript{14} This borrowing and “Hollywoodization” of foreign films has proved to be of great success for the already successful and powerful U.S cinema. By Americanizing foreign films, the filmmakers erase the effects of otherness, and process it through the Hollywood institution where concerns are on what is culturally suitable and bankable.\textsuperscript{15}

Today, film remakes are common and plentiful, and the material used is often taken from successful films in Hollywood and from other cinemas around the world. The U.S film industry also looks towards other possible sources, such as plays, musicals, novels, and other written material, defined as film \textit{adaptations} rather than film remakes. Remakes are often referred to as adaptations, which can be a useful comparison as film adaptations are in many ways quite similar to film remakes. The main similarity lies in the idea of adapting to fit and make suitable for a new use, where an older source is adapted to fit a new time and place. The main difference lies in the fact that adaptations are cinematic films adapted from another source than an original film, but often literary original work such as novels like Joseph Conrad’s \textit{Heart of Darkness} (1899) adapted to screen in \textit{Apocalypse Now} (1979). Adaptation then means to change in order to fit a new medium, and is therefore different from remakes.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13} Forrest and Koos 3-8
\textsuperscript{14} See Ida Jahr’s Thesis (2009) for an extensive analysis of these films.
\textsuperscript{15} Horton and McDougal 159
Why are remakes made?

For Forrest and Koos, the remake is a significant part of filmmaking both for its economic purposes and as an art form. The re-use and borrowing of material has always been common in Hollywood at all times and film remakes, adaptations, and sequels are central components of contemporary filmmaking today. As the remake has been part of cinema from the start, the question remains as to why they are made. Hollywood has regularly been recycling films in order to create new material and to cut production costs. It is easier, less time consuming, and cheaper to produce a film without paying for an original script. It is also considered a safer choice, as the original films often have been successful in the past.

Filmmakers learn and copy from, and expand upon the works of others. In addition to cutting time and costs, a filmmaker might have personal motivations for remaking a film. This can include the artistic value a remake may have, using new technology and new possibilities to recreate earlier material in new ways, and make it suitable to the cultural and standard filmmaking style of Hollywood, which is well known by its viewers. This leads us to another possible reason; the cinema audience. The industry strives at keeping its audience satisfied, and film remakes are generally popular and will also provide them with a chance to see a story that would otherwise be unknown to them if it was not remade in Hollywood, across time and space. Horton and McDougal argue that for the ‘old’ audience, a remake of a film already seen will necessarily lead them to compare the film remake to the original. Remakes and cross-cultural remakes can then teach us cinematic and cultural differences, but it is also important to take into consideration that the audience might not know that they are watching a film remake, and the comparative viewing will then not be possible. Verevis asks whether Hollywood, with its focus on reworking safe and known material has exhausted it creative potential. I argue that in striving for economic, cultural, and creative power, there is a harsh

17 Forrest and Koos 3
18 Horton and McDougal 15
economic competition where safe choices are easier to make, prioritizing money but also to certain extent creativity. Film remakes can therefore also be examples of filmmakers constantly exploring and developing cinema in new ways, taking inspiration from each other to create successful films for the cinema audience.

**Bollywood film remaking:**

For many, a Bollywood remake may not seem to bear much resemblance to its Hollywood source. Filled with song and dance, color and melodrama, most Bollywood films are very distinguishable from Hollywood. In terms of Bollywood film remaking, it is therefore important to remember that a remake in Bollywood does not literally imply a direct remake because it has had to be so completely changed for the Indian context and the expectations of the audience. As Sheila Nayar argues, the culture, film language, stylistic preferences, and thematic barriers found in Bollywood create great differences and it can therefore never remake a Hollywood film in a direct manner. As the remake is changed to fit a new setting, time, and place, the original Hollywood storyline might be difficult to see, but nevertheless, it is still perceptible. Bollywood is selective; how remakes differ from the original and which elements the filmmakers choose to incorporate into their own version is important. The extent of the copying ranges from lifting a few scenes from Hollywood films to rewording entire plots and storylines, or placing sequences from different films into one Hindi film. Remakes continue to be made in high-concept productions with financial backing, a-list stars, and with high expectations. This is made possible as there are no ‘real’ copyright laws in India. Hindi remakes also show how filmmakers continue to maintain their Indianess in the constant transitions we see in India today. Their remaking style is all about spicing it up to their typical “Masala” style, which is the basis of every Bollywood film. ¹⁹

Research on cross-cultural remakes in India is limited. Still, there are a few theorists on this subject who draw upon previous theory, by accepting their usefulness but also seeing their limitations. Tejaswini Ganti has written several articles and books on Bollywood cinema remakes and cross-cultural exchanges, and her theory is very useful on the subject of Bollywood remaking of Hollywood films today; explaining the specificity of Bollywood’s film language and style. Ganti explains how remakes are often labeled as ‘copies’ in India, and that many filmmakers see nothing wrong with copying film plots from Hollywood films, which have been sources of inspiration for decades. Ganti further explains how Indian filmmakers are searching out and “Indianizing” suitable Hollywood films to make them appropriate for India’s diverse cinema audience. Only certain films can be remade and thereby Indianized as they must contain certain elements in terms of plots, characterizations, thematic elements, melodrama, and moral values which are suitable for Bollywood and India, and which will be approved by the Indian viewers. The audience is very important in India, and they must be able to identify with the film they are watching. The Indian audience has had difficulty relating to Hollywood films in the past, so Hollywood has not been seen as a threat or as a competitive force, only as a source for usable stories. Filmmakers therefore choose and alter suitable Hollywood films in terms of narrative, dramatic, and aesthetic choices made by what they believe the audience will accept.

After choosing a suitable film, the filmmaker can then add specific Indian elements to its plot and narrative. Indianizing a film means adding the specific formula, film language, and cinematic elements of Bollywood. This process of Indianization generates culture effects, signifying the production of Indianess – against the Other, the West, and Hollywood. For Ganti, this includes adding three central Hindi film “ingredients”. The first of these includes “adding emotion.” Hollywood is often seen as ‘dry’, but adding great and powerful emotions such as love, hate, revenge, and morals will make it more suitable in India. Another ingredient
is “expanding the narrative.” This is done by adding a pre-story, subplots, parallel stories, flashbacks, and adding twists thereby developing complexity in the narrative. Hollywood is often more clear and has a straight forward narrative, while the audience in India on the other hand, expects to see ‘everything’ in one Bollywood film, including comedy, romance, drama, and action. The third basic ingredient is of course the “song and dance” sequences, as almost every Bollywood film must include at least 6-8 songs. These three basic ingredients thereby give greater narrative complexity and specificity to the film remake which necessarily have to be included in order for the film to be acceptable and relatable for the vast Indian and global audience and their expectations of Bollywood films. Ganti argues that Bollywood filmmakers operate as cultural mediators, evaluating the appropriateness of a film according to their perception of the audience, and this Indianization continues to be a conservative process as it stays the same and keeps the risks low.20 Some of the many films that have been remade and thereby Indianized, are Dead Poets Society (Weir 1989) into Mohabbatein (Chopra 2000), Three Men and a Baby (1987) into Heyy Babyy (Khan 2007), and When Harry Met Sally (Reiner 1989) into Hum Tum (Kohli 2004). Common for all these films is the adding of content, Indian morality, stronger emotions – in particular love, and the song and dance sequences, making them suitable for India, Bollywood, and its audience.21

When dealing with cross-cultural remakes we are dealing with cultural adaptation, as we can analyze film remakes not only in their textual and structural specificity, but in a wider cultural context. The cultural analysis includes the filmic and cultural element changes accompanying this process of remaking from the American culture seen through Hollywood, with the culture of India presented through Bollywood cinema. The changes include adjusting the story to fit with the classical rules of the genre story-telling worked out in America, and the cinematic formula of Hindi Cinema.

Why are Bollywood remakes of Hollywood films made?

Bollywood is constantly searching for new talent, stories, and creative content. Using old material by remaking its own and foreign films, and adapting written material to screen are strategies used for commercial success and economic gain -- just as in Hollywood. Successful films are both attractive and safe as they have already succeeded before, and using Hollywood films as a basis lies in how their plots are easily (re)usable in India, but only when conformed to Hindi cinema conventions. Bollywood filmmakers have been adapting Hollywood films for decades, making it bigger and better to get the audience to the cinemas. This reuse and Indianization is a practice allowing us to see how Hindi filmmakers construct the typical Bollywood film, using foreign material and adding specific Indian elements to its plot and narrative, and it can also tell us how they perceive their vast and growing audience. Cross-cultural remakes are also a result of Western influence and globalization, and maybe even a sign of self-colonization -- assuming that imitating Hollywood can provide better stories and financial success in wanting to continue Bollywood’s growth and maybe give it a Hollywood status. Understanding these reasons can help bridge the cultural gap between India and the U.S. This cultural filtering also offers the audience a better understanding, accessing foreign films while conforming to a Bollywood-specific film language and formula. Although things are changing today, Indianization is still necessary, which makes it important. These cultural differences must be understood to provide us with knowledge and understanding of Bollywood’s borrowing and remaking.

Another important theorist is Neelam Sidhar Wright. She draws upon previous theory including Ganti, to explore the contemporary cross-cultural remake in India. She argues that the global cinema of Hollywood and Western culture has been a constant influence, and that remakes of Hollywood films are “products and vehicles of modernization, globalization, and

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postmodernism”. Bollywood cross-cultural remaking can be seen as a new and modern phenomenon from western influence, modernity, and globalization and as a new cultural trend embraced by the industry and its audience. The cultural adaptation of a foreign cinematic source can be a result of innovation and creative translation, when filmmakers of a culturally different cinema can translate and recreate a new culturally suitable version of a Hollywood film in India. She further argues that filmmakers seek to differentiate the cross-cultural remake through nationalistic cinematic traditions based on culture and identity, though still being influenced by the original film. Remakes can then act as translations, where we can study how originals are altered to create new meaning, experience, and perspective across cultural boundaries. The cross-cultural remake, and India’s remakes of own films, are features of the changing and evolving Indian cinema and it can shape our understanding of global Bollywood with its frequent borrowing of plots and narratives, technology, music, and culture. Repetition is a fundamental characteristic of Indian artistic culture and a central feature of Bollywood filmmaking. We can learn about Bollywood and its film language, culture, style, aesthetics, and innovation by watching a film remake where certain aspects are borrowed from Hollywood, while also continuing to maintain their own distinct Indianess.\(^{23}\)

Every cinema borrows, but it is interesting to see how this is done in Hindi filmmaking. Taking plots from American films and adapting them to Indian tastes in the world of Bollywood, where great changes are made. Wright’s writing suggests my main point of this thesis – the fact that we must learn to explore and understand the complexity and importance of Hindi cross-cultural remaking of Hollywood films, paying great attention to the cinema’s significant film language and culture. It is this specific film language and cultural specificity that is the reason for the great changes that we find in a Hindi remake, often making it almost unrecognizable from its original film source.

Originality:

A question remains whether or not we can view a film remake as an original film. Is the remake’s goal to be faithful or original, or are in fact all remakes original in themselves or only copies of original films? The criticism towards the film remake has pointed to the lack of originality in the new film versions, seeing the remake as inferior to its original source. But, if we were to look at the aspect of cultural identity and film localization which causes a remake to change in order to fit the context demanded by culture, time, and setting as we can see in Hindi film remakes, originality is very much present. Though the original plot and ideas are borrowed from an original Hollywood film, the many culturally charged alterations will necessarily make this new film an original on its own. As we can read from Horton and McDougal, the film remake “constitute a particular territory existing somewhere between unabashed larceny and subtle originality.” It problematizes the very notion of originality, but still has original features based on cultural identity and film localization. A film that alters the original for different reasons therefore invites the audience to look and read between these multiple texts.24

Concluding remarks:

Cultural borrowing and remaking has been going on for decades in both India and in the U.S. India has had close ties to the West since the Colonial Period, and globalization has developed this further. We must read films and remakes by their own culture and film language. This language must necessarily be translated from one cinema to another to make a film fit and be suitable. To be able to understand and appreciate cross-cultural remakes, we must look at the time, place, and context for which they were made. I will therefore go on to explore the countries and cultures of these two cinemas.

24 Horton & McDougal 4
Culture Theory:

Defining culture:

There are special interrelations between media, culture, and society. Media is often seen as cultural practice, and it can reflect and shape the identity of a nation. In this context, film is a part of culture and must be understood within its specific cultural, historical, and industrial circumstances. Film is a powerful medium, but I wonder if film, which belongs to popular culture, can say something about the practices, beliefs, and values of its society.

Tim Edensor explains in *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* how the term culture remains fluid, and that it is difficult to find a common definition. He argues that culture continues to suggest a host of overlapping meanings and in terms of filmmaking, we must distinguish between *high* culture and *popular* culture. Edensor refers to Edward T. Hall who highlights the ways in which culture is encoded and decoded, and is subjected to ‘preferred’, ‘negotiated,’ and ‘contesting’ meanings. In the construction of national identity, *popular* culture has been considered to be the culture of ‘the people’ and synonymous with ‘mass culture’. We distinguish between ourselves and others at a collective and individual level, and thereby express and feel a sense of national identity. Hall further argues that the nation provides us with cultural identity through history, language, and culture in the process of becoming rather than being not only “who we are, but what we might become.”

Edensor argues that national identity persists in a globalized world, although it has transformed nations and cultural relations. The nation remains the pre-eminent entity around which identity is shaped. As culture is fluid, it is constantly in a process of becoming, and emerging out of popular culture and everyday life, where people make and remake connections between the local and the national, the national and the global, the everyday and 25

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the extraordinary. The complexity of culture and national identity, and connections which exist between cultural spheres, are important in this context.\textsuperscript{26}

As C. Samuel Craig, William H. Greene and Susan P. Douglas argue in “Culture Matters”, culture has great influence on behavior. Cultural norms establish rules of conduct and shape values, beliefs, and preferences, providing a blue-print for every-day life. Cultural boundaries can act as barriers of receptiveness but in a globalized world, it is common for other cultures to emulate the lifestyle and behavior patterns of another culture. Their main argument is that culture matters for products with significant cultural content. Film for example, is a highly complex product rich in cultural meaning, and influenced by its cultural context. Films can play an important role in the transmission of cultural values and mores. They are rich and complex, and mirror the culture of which they are created. Film is entertainment that can show life and reality, but also fantasies and dreams where people can escape this reality. Many countries have their own film industry reflecting their national culture and values. Some are more dominant, like global Hollywood. U.S films can act as conveyers of American culture and values which can affect others in different degrees, adopting lifestyles and elements into their own cultural setting.\textsuperscript{27}

**U.S and Indian culture and cinema:**

Young America and ancient India are complex and vastly heterogenic countries with a wide variety of cultures and peoples. As film can provide these people with cultural content and aspects of real life, I wonder to what degree Hollywood and Bollywood might be synonymous with America and India. The United States is a young, but powerful and global nation. It is also one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world, with a wide variety of peoples, religions, and beliefs with an emphasis on the individual. Hollywood is not able to reflect this

\textsuperscript{26} Edensor vi-vii

diversity, but it remains the center of America’s popular culture, just as Bollywood in India.

In *American Film and Society since 1945*, Leonard Quart and Albert Auster argue that film is a powerful and significant art form, and it can sometimes convey and imitate society, and capture and reveal something of the reality, the dreams, and the social issues that confront American society. Although social realism may not be an important aesthetic in Hollywood, films have resonance for audiences because they can reinforce existing public fantasies and feelings. Films reach a mass audience with their cultural and social meaning. They were and are also often bound by formulas or institutional forces such as censorship and the star system which will affect the film, and the relationship between them and society therefore remains complex. Still, they argue that it is the underlying cultural patterns, not the individual artist that creates meaning in a film.  

We can therefore say that mainstream Hollywood film will reflect, and to a certain degree reveal and imitate, parts of U.S reality and also provide us with great fantasy and adventure. It cannot reflect the variety and complexity of the United States and its culture, but it is still valued by its national and global audience.

On the other side of the globe, we find India and Bollywood. Here, Hindi commercial cinema has become part of everyday Indian life. Bollywood films do to some degree reflect the reality of the growing, urban middle class in India and in the Diaspora, but this is far removed from the rest of India. India is a diverse, multiethnic country with 4500 years of cultural history and a vast population of 1.2 billion people. The culture is therefore complex and varied, even more so than in the United States, with its diverse peoples, cultures, languages, religions, and traditions. India has also been heavily influenced by the West as a British colony and today, it has become more westernized by the growth of globalization and Americanization. The middle-class and urban life-style in India resembles in many ways that of the West, while rural life stays the same. While the U.S is centered on the individual, India

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28 Quart, Leonard and Albert Auster. *American Film and Society since 1945, 4th ed.* (California: Praeger, 2011) 2-8
is centered on the collective. Therefore, family is the most important social unit, where people live under a clear order of social precedence based on gender and age, where the senior male is the family head. Indian culture is therefore patriarchal, where female discrimination and arranged marriages are common. The high versus low culture that we find in Edensor and Hall is though not applicable in India, as films are cultural forms that are both seen as entertainment and art. Indian music, dance, and cinema play an integral role in the lives of the Indian population, which is very much reflected in film. The Hindi film caters to these denominators, and helps to create a homogenized culture on screen. Film is therefore an important part of culture, and will often imitate society on many different levels. They reflect and take up the issues on national identity, gender, caste, class, and wealth, as well as unpack the fantasy, hopes, and fears of the nation. Tradition and westernization goes hand in hand in culture and in cinema. In this line between traditional culture and modernity, the ‘old’ hangs on the ‘new’ as change and continuity are parallel historical processes.

Bollywood has is many ways a monopoly on Indian cultural life. In an ever changing society, many feel that the trip to the cinema provides them with an escape from reality. Bollywood films are therefore in many ways divorced from Indian society realism, though they still express cultural norms and Indian values. For many, the escapist entertainment of Bollywood films offers an escape from poverty to a dream world, forgetting their every-day life, while also showing important parts of life such as family, love, conflicts, and the battle over tradition versus modernity. Bollywood therefore affects Indian culture and the audience in profound ways even today, and shows a constructed Indianess rooted in the reality and fantasies of India where the Masala film musical acts as a cultural unifier.

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Defining Hollywood:

The U.S. film industry is one of the largest and the most powerful and important in the world. It has from the start been a global and international cinema which has become central in world filmmaking, and popular in countries around the world. The film industry in The United States has from its beginnings been synonymous with Hollywood. This term is therefore used for the global and powerful mainstream U.S. film industry located in Los Angeles, California. Hollywood produces more than 500 films a year, catering to a vast national and international audience. It has become a powerful force in world culture and has a cultural imperialist stance with its widespread popularity. One of the reasons for this it seems, is that the visual and narrative language of Hollywood films has universal appeal.31

Although there have been great changes in cinema, most Hollywood films still follow a set of narrative and stylistic conventions. Hollywood is all about stars and story, and it still relies on its familiar generic formula, which was developed early on. The main goal of the filmmakers is to make films that are sellable and thereby providing them with a profit. The classic Hollywood film was and is committed to aesthetic unity, narrative coherence, and closure, usually centering on one or several protagonists who often receive a happy ending. The audience will also usually be able to identify with the stories and their characters. This narrative tradition, with emphasis on the patterned and predictable, usually reinforced the social status quo. The films are also built around individualism and heroism – a value that Hollywood has embraced since its beginnings, and which we also find in the U.S. culture. American cinema was not the first in the world, but it has been and is even today the most powerful and leading film industry in terms of development, innovation, and marketing. The Lumière brothers (1896) and Thomas Edison were the forerunners for this great cinema, and films were increasingly produced and developed in The Silent Film Era. The feature film was

firmly established in the U.S cinema with the introduction of sound and *The Jazz Singer* in 1927. Dialogue reconnected film to real life, so realism in the narrative has gone hand in hand with fantasy and creativeness in Hollywood, also seen in the use of color and special effects. The studio system and the star system have been powerful constituents in Hollywood, and have put their marks on the development of the U.S cinema industry. World War I was of decisive importance for Hollywood, opening the way to the global market. The 1920s and 1930s introduced sound and color in creative ways, which led to the development of the classical Hollywood musical, “All Talkin’, All Dancin’, All Singin’”. One of the most successful, *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), was adapted from a novel to reflect the reality of the Depression period. It reflects American individualism, power, and also feminine capability.32

America became the most powerful nation in the world in the 1940s, a time of national pride and optimism, which was reflected in American film. The industry was booming with 440 films a year, and this was a time of big stars and big audiences, where the studios and their talents reigned. The films became more sophisticated and realistic, but happy endings and justice often triumphed. In addition to showing realism, Hollywood worked in genres that provided comforting fantasy images such as the famous Hollywood musicals. Musicals are often considered the most escapist of the Hollywood genres, but it was embraced by the U.S audience and experienced great popularity. In the 1950s, the emphasis on religion and morals in the U.S was reflected and reinforced by the mass media. A development of a distinct youth culture, shown best in *Rebel without a Cause* (1955), was also apparent. By using color and new technology, the studios wanted to overwhelm the viewers with successful films like *Ben-Hur* (1959) and big-screen musical comedies such as *Singin’ in the Rain* (1952). The optimism of the 40s and 50s was replaced by anxiety and uneasiness about American society in the 1960s. Films were still built on emotions, melodrama, and realism, and as a result of

32 Quart and Auster 4-36
relaxing societal sexual standards, sexuality became a part of films. This “New Hollywood” was enabled by the social changes in the U.S, creating new possibilities and innovations. Classical films such as the Oscar-winning musicals West Side Story (1961) and The Sound of Music (1965) were still being made. New and successful films included Hitchcock’s film noir Psycho (1960) and Bonnie and Clyde (1967), and these focused on the young and alienated. Hollywood still maintained its traditional genres with well-defined characters and actions, and Steven Spielberg established the blockbuster with Jaws in 1976, using new technology and action to explore new possibilities of filmmaking. Hollywood was still an industry where big-budget films were dominant and stars called the shots, and it created worlds that could also hint at American social reality.

Hollywood still produced films in accord with its traditional, audience-pleasing formula and themes. By the 1980s, remakes and sequels like Superman II (1980) and Rocky III (1982) were made in the search for bankable hits. Technology and creativity were also developed further, and teen films were still a popular genre, with The Breakfast Club (1985) and Back to the Future (1985-1990). Films of war, action, and drama such as Schindler’s List (1993), Forrest Gump (1994), and Titanic (1997) were some of the most successful films of the 1990s. Hollywood has kept its filmmaking formula and continues to make diverse and audience-pleasing films. Contemporary film and society has seen great changes and it also reflects some of the important events from reality. There has been a step towards realism and socially relevant themes with 9/11 films and war films like The Hurt Locker (2008). There has also been made many block-buster adventure films such as Avatar (2009) and 2012 (2009). Remakes, sequels, and adaptations continue to be produced, including Batman (1989-2012) and Harry Potter (2001-2011), which garner large audiences and money. Musicals have also had a “comeback” with Mamma Mia (2008), in addition to remakes of Footloose (2011) and Les Misérables (2012). Hollywood has also been inspired by Bollywood, making films like
Most films made today are examples of escapist entertainment, usually appealing to the young and filled with special effects, action, and drama. The triumph of style over substance where fantasies and heroism are in focus, remain relevant even today in Hollywood filmmaking.\textsuperscript{33} This globally dominant cinema and cultural industry is integrated into many different cultures and has influenced many cinemas around the world, including Bollywood, the powerful cinema of India.

**Defining Bollywood:**

Popular cinema is the principal cultural institution in India, and it celebrates its 100 years of film in 2013, as the first full-length film *Raja Harischandra* was made in 1913.\textsuperscript{34} The Indian film industry is the largest in the world in terms of viewership and the number of films produced – between 800 and 900 films each year. The industry is vast and diverse, produced in nearly 25 languages in different parts of the country, including Mumbai (Bollywood), Tamil (Tollywood), and Chennai (Kollywood) cinemas. The heart of Indian cinema is Bollywood; considered the culturally dominant and national cinema of modern India, occupying the central position in cinema and scholarship. Although Indian cinema includes so much more than Bollywood, this distinction can often be ignored today as everything is placed into the Bollywood category, while only 20-25\% of all films made in India are Bollywood Hindi films. The term “Bollywood” was created by conflating Bombay (now Mumbai) and Hollywood. Although it remains contested, the term has come to be the globally recognized and informal appellation used for the Hindi-language film industry based in the cinematic capital of Mumbai, India.\textsuperscript{35}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{33} Quart and Auster 16-276
  \item \textsuperscript{34} *Raja Harischandra* has been remade 7 times, between 1913 and 1970
  \item \textsuperscript{35} Pendakur 423-443
\end{itemize}
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Bollywood has become the definition of a particular kind of Indian film, called the Formula or *Masala* film which, with its clearly distinguishable and significant cinematic style has dominated the mass market. *Masala* is used as a metaphor for the various ingredients used in a mixture of masala cooking, but here referring to filmmaking. The Hindi film is almost always a musical, with several song and dance sequences woven into the story. Plots are often melodramatic, filled with emotion, drama, romance, action, and comedy in a three-hour-long extravaganza.\(^\text{36}\) Most important are the big budget romance films, where at the center of the plot is a love story where love triumphs all, and a happy ending is “obligatory”. Films have a complex and epic style, and a fantasy-like and rich look. They often include unlinear plots and narrative extensions such as stories within stories, subplots, flashbacks, anti-realism, a big cast, and many events. The visual is also of great importance and it treats the audience with great visuals of colors, elaborate sets, great costumes, big dance numbers, and action scenes. Drama and feelings are of great importance and the actors almost always act out dramatic performances.\(^\text{37}\) The formula film has at least one major star as the hero and/or heroine, and the story is often written to glorify the star. This is normal because Bollywood has always been star driven and star-centered. Social and political issues have slowly disappeared from Hindi films, and an emphasis is instead placed on glamorous and more superficial conflicts between good and evil, finding love, love triangles, etc.\(^\text{38}\) Hindi popular cinema always has the intention to appeal broadly, to all people across regions and languages. It performs as a neutralizing agent for the wide variety of people that we find in India. Still, Bollywood remains complex although it is also superficial, and politically and socially censored.\(^\text{39}\)

One important element that we find in a Masala film is an emphasis on moral behavior, making the film safe for the whole family to watch. Bollywood plots are based on

\(^{36}\) Ganti (2002) 57+139-141  
\(^{37}\) Pendakur 430-443  
\(^{38}\) Skillman, Teri. "The Bombay Hindi Film Song Genre” in Yearbook for Traditional Music Vol. 18 (1986) 136  
\(^{39}\) Nayar (1997) 75-76
traditional Indian values such as family and religion, although it diverges from normal Indian life on several central aspects, such as on the issues of marriage, gender, and sexuality. Kinship relationships are always central, and the protagonist must uphold moral values and propriety. Films usually deal with the transition from adolescence to adulthood, and although *pyar* (love) is one of the key ingredients of Bollywood films, it is only a means to *shaadi* (marriage). In a culture where love marriages are uncommon, a Bollywood film will put it in the center. The first half of the film will revolve around the love building, then after the intermission, there will often be a crisis where love is being threatened. Then of course, the solution will appear. The good almost always win in Hindi Masala films, and this will include a happy ending for the lovers, with the presence and acceptance of the family. Although romance and love are basic ingredients, sexuality is not. Filmmakers are quite creative in showing romance, and intimacy between lovers is usually only seen in the song and dance numbers, where dancing, singing, and moonlight usually symbolize sex, kissing, and nudity – which are taboos in Bollywood. A defining element of Hindi films is the song and dance sequences. It might seem as though they rupture the film’s continuity but instead, they define the plot development and therefore have an important function. The narrative coherence would be lost if we were to remove them. It has become central to Bollywood filmmaking and is a natural and important part of Indian culture and therefore, a Bollywood film is not described as a musical in the same way as Hollywood musicals are.

Bollywood has been developed through many different sources. The framework for Masala films comes from great inheritance from the “Ramayana” and “Mahabharata” ancient epics, Parsi theatre, classical Sanskrit religious drama, and a borrowed western style. It draws in the rich Indian culture, with a distinct Indian look acceptable to the mass audience. The storyline and ending is often predictable, and it is seen as escapist entertainment, catering to

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40 Ganti (2002) 288-294
the needs of a vast and growing audience. The Mumbai film industry began with the first exhibition of imported films in 1896 by representatives of France’s Lumière brothers, and soon developed into a great cinema. The first full-length silent film was Raja Harischandra, released in 1913 by director Dadasaheb Phalke. In 1931 came the first ‘talkie’, Alam Ara, advertising itself as a film “all talking, all singing, all dancing.” There were many great changes in India during the twentieth century and with the end of colonialism, Indian popular cinema emerged as India’s model of national unity. Films were used as a tool for social critique, continuing into the 1970s and 80s. Indian cinema began producing multi-star Masala films and gaining global popularity, and the liberalization of the economy led to the globalization of the industry in 1993.

Contemporary film continues with its known formula in original and remade films, but there are also developments towards new filmmaking styles, genres, and themes. One of the main subjects today revolves around the Indian Diaspora, where Bollywood serves as a key cultural link offering NRI’s (Non-resident Indians) films that show a westernized Indian identity and an imaginary India. Other films include crossovers such as Monsoon Wedding (2001) and Bend it like Beckham (2002), which are generally more realistic and explore diverse themes. Bollywood has also received praise and attention at the Cannes film festival for the film adaptation and remake Devdas (2002), and received an Oscar nomination for Lagaan (2001). In the last years, film remakes and sequels of successful films have become even more popular, such as Bollywood’s version of The Godfather (1972-1990) Sarkar (2005-2008), and their Mission Impossible (1996-2011) Don (2006). The Indian audience continues to favor long, epic romances of Masala Films, now adding special effects and more liberalized ideas to its mix. The general focus is though still on conservative family values, and these topics are today presented in modern, urban settings.

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41 Wright 126
42 Ganti (2004) 6-24
Bollywood is a powerful cinema that stands on its own, although it gets inspiration from the outside. The westernized Indian cinema is the reality of India, as western culture has been part of Indian culture for centuries through colonization and globalization. Bollywood is often looked down upon as being unrealistic and escapist, meant for entertainment, with no ‘important’ context or message. I argue that Bollywood is not so different from Hollywood. The two most powerful cinemas in the world are different in many ways, but they do in fact share many of the same qualities. Both are powerful, culture-shaping businesses that make films for entertainment, for audience pleasure, for own personal interests, and for money. Films in Hollywood and Bollywood articulate a common and shared culture for their respective, diverse populations. These two cinemas are important in society and can to some degree reflect the cultures of which they stem from, and they are also symbols of an imagined culture and an imagined America and India. They act as cultural signifiers and social gatherers, making films that are suitable for their vast audiences, and giving a homogenized cinematic cultural experience, catering to their audience’s expectations. The cinemas also have their distinct formulas, and both rely on great and powerful stories, heroic characters, narrative coherence, and closure. Still, as Hollywood tends to have concrete narrative, originality, and to some degree realism, Bollywood will often diverge from these factors and rely on complex narratives, melodrama, and song and dance. Bollywood films can be compared to the classical musical films of Hollywood, which also have been sources of inspiration. Song and dance are naturally integrated and help tell the story, and the drama, dramatic performances, and complexity is similar for both musical trends.

**Concluding Remarks:**

Hollywood to Bollywood translations are never direct, and alterations must always be made to account for cultural differences. The two cinemas continue to rely on their film languages and

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43 Wright 8-23
formulas, which constitute their distinctiveness but also the similarities between them. We must understand and appreciate what makes Hollywood and Bollywood cinema what they are, selling an all-American and an all-Indian, homogenic constructed identity to their heterogenic and vast audience, providing them with great cinematic experiences. They are also both expressing nationalism in a globalized reality, maintaining and expanding their culture, power, and popularity around the world. With these factors in mind, I will now move on to analyze the two films *West Side Story* and *Josh* which in many ways reflect the cultures and cinemas of which they are made. I will search out what cinematic and narrative aspects they have in common and what sets them apart. The first chapter of this analysis will look into the basic format of the films; the setting, plot(s), and themes. I will also place the two films into the time and place of their respective cinema and culture, to see how much they reflect their cinematic and cultural traditions. The second chapter will look more closely into the main characters of the films, where the gender performances and gender relations of the main characters will be explored and analyzed. This will also include a look into the prescribed gender roles, femininity, and masculinity of the main characters in Hollywood and Bollywood films, and how much these reflect reality. I have divided the two films into main scenes in the Appendix.
Chapter 3: Remakes Across Cultural Boundaries: a Comparative Analysis

“The Hollywood films...have been transformed—or “Indianized,”...to conform with the conventions of Hindi cinema.”

The adapted “Romeo and Juliet” tragedy, West Side Story, is played out in a setting of gang wars in 1957 on the Westside of New York City; a place of poverty, restricted possibilities, and violence. It is also the place for a heterogenic population, as immigrants have settled and made their mark on the city area. The film starts with a scene introducing the city, with skyscrapers and concrete, and the tough life on the streets. It portrays the lives of a young group of people struggling to survive and find their place in a changing climate. In the film remake Josh, the culturally adapted story takes place on the western coast of India in, the city of Vasco, Goa in 1980. The city of Vasco is portrayed in the film as a rural coastal city where concrete and asphalt have been replaced by dust and old housing in this film remake. It also displays gang violence, immigration, and the tough life of living in the city. Goa was under Portuguese rule until it gained its independence in 1961. The culture of Goa has therefore in many ways been affected by colonialism, and many Goans are Catholic, have European names, and wear western clothing. Josh then, has a westernized setting, which is similar to the setting of West Side Story with respect to the western location, western look, and in how it too portrays the tough life on the streets with gang wars and a heterogenic population struggling to find their place in life.

The main plots of the two films are gang rivalry and impossible love, inspired in many ways by the classic Romeo and Juliet, though adapted to a new time and place. West Side Story displays gang life and street fights in segregated and poor New York, while in Josh this is displayed in the rural coastal city of Vasco. Both films have two gangs who fight for city territories. In West Side Story, the groups consist of a white group, “The Jets”, and a Puerto

44 Ganti (2002) 282
Rican-immigrant group “The Sharks” while in Josh, the racially different groups are replaced by religious diversity. The rivalry between the gangs is based on religion as one group, “The Eagles” are Catholic, and the other, “The Bichoos” (“Scorpions”), are Hindu. In the first scenes of each film, we are introduced to the gangs in a ‘battle’ of dance and fighting. We are also introduced to the leaders of the gangs, rough and sleek Bernardo against tough Riff in West Side Story, and proud and angry Max against slick Prakash in Josh. There is a constant battle between the groups, as the whites in West Side Story and the Catholics in Josh feel that the immigrants (the Puerto Ricans and Hindus) want to take over their city territories. The fighting in Josh eventually escalates to the point of tragedy, developed through the subplot in the film. In West Side Story, the main event of the rivalry is that the two fighting gangs decide to stage a final fight, “the rumble”, to see who gets control over the territories of the city – which also leads to tragedy.

In a stark contrast to the fighting and gang rivalry, both films also portray love – a love that is threatened by its violent setting. In West Side Story, when Maria from “the Sharks” and Tony from “the Jets” meet and fall in love, the gang rivalry separates them. This too happens in Josh as the love between Shirley from “the Eagles” and Rahul from “the Bichoos” grows. Both films display the hope and struggle for the leading couple to find happiness against all odds. Although they know the danger of seeing each other, they continue to meet in secret and dream of a life together, but the rivalry continues to make their love difficult. In West Side Story, the couple meets at a dance where the room is split with the Puerto Ricans on one side, and the whites on the other. Here, Tony and Maria set their eyes on each other and it is love at first sight. They dance, talk, and kiss before they are separated by Bernardo and the gangs. Tony, the romantic hero, sings about his feelings in “Maria” and later, the lovers reunite in secret on Marias balcony. They talk and express their feelings for each other through the love song “Tonight”. Maria is afraid of what might happen if anyone finds out, but as Tony says “I
am not one of them,” “but you are not one of us” she argues. The next day, Tony and Maria again meet and they dream about their future, acting out a wedding scene in the bridal shop, as a symbol of their dream of marriage with their families surrounding them. Maria asks Tony to stop the fight so that they can be together, a task that will lead to destruction.

In the rumble, Bernardo and Riff start fighting. Tony intervenes to try and stop them, but Bernardo goes after him and pulls out a knife. The same does Riff, and he is stabbed and killed by Bernardo. In a rage, Tony stabs and kills Bernardo and a full fight between the two groups develops, but is stopped by the arrival of the police. Tony flees, full of remorse and regret, calling out for Maria. At the same time, Anita warns Maria to “stick to your own kind”, but Maria convinces Anita about their love and asks her to go to Tony and get him to meet her so they can run away together. Anita goes to the store where the Jets are and asks for Tony, but they harass her and in anger, she says that Chino has killed Maria. Tony learns about Maria’s “death” and he runs desperately to find Chino so that Chino can kill him too. But, Maria appears and they run towards each other, but Chino shoots him and he dies in her arms as they sing “somewhere there’s a place for us”. Both groups are standing around them, and Maria lashes out at them of how they have all killed him with their hatred. The police arrive, and the two groups carry his body away together.

The film ultimately shows the danger and destructiveness of violence and race issues as members of each gang are hurt or killed in the end. As seen in the last scene, Tony and Maria would have lived happy together had it not been for the destructive hatred and revenge that ultimately kills Tony and leaves Maria to fend for herself. Josh however, ends on a happy note as the love between the couple defies all odds and the lovers marry in the last scene of the film, in coherence with the Bollywood formula, but in stark contrast to the original plot.
The lovers in the remake do not meet at a dance and there is no love at first sight. Rahul explores Vasco town and crosses “the border” into Eagle territory, where he sets his eyes on Shirley. He falls for her at once and professes his feelings through the song “The Princess of my Dreams” (“Mere Khayalon Ki Malika”), in secret. He follows her into church and tries to converse with her, but she rejects him as she does all other “suitors” and warns him about her brother Max. Later though, as Shirley learns more about Rahul and they continue to meet, she soon reciprocates his feelings and a romance between them develops in secret. They ultimately admit their love for each other by “kissing” and singing the love song ”How Lovely is this Love” (“Kitna Pyara Hai Yeh Pyar”). They realize though, that they cannot meet as long as the rivalry goes on, and they yearn for each other in secret.

The film remake Josh has a subplot that complicates the story and changes the film remake from the original. The subplot deals with family and inheritance, and there are two important temporal settings in the film, 1958 and 1980. 1958 is important as we learn about the twins’ family secret. Vasco town was under Portuguese rule, ruled by Alberto Vasco, until Goa gained its independence. The first scene of the film depicts an angry woman shouting at Alberto Vasco; “You bloody rascal, I hate you”. We later learn that the anger comes from the fact that he leaves a pregnant Indian woman behind, Max and Shirley’s soon to be mother. It is later revealed that Max and Shirley are his illegitimate children and the heirs to the land of Vasco. Rahul finds out about this, but as the news spread to his brother Prakash, Prakash plans to kill Max and take the land for himself. Later, as Max finds out about Shirley and Rahul, and also learns the truth about his family heritage, he reacts strongly and tries to kill Rahul in a rage; but Rahul manages to escape. Max later goes to visit his mother’s grave, and Prakash and Gothya follow him there. The two rivals end up in a fight which ultimately ends with Max shooting Prakash in self-defense. Max is taken to prison and trialed for murder, scared and remorseful, he regrets his past behavior. The lovers are parted by the act, until
Rahul discovers from the only witness, Gothya, the truth about what happened in the fight. He, the moral hero who believes in truth and justice tells the judge in court about the killing and about the twins’ family inheritance. Max is released, and together with his gang, they go to Rahul and ask for forgiveness. “I have always fought and hated...forgive me”, Max says. Everyone lives happily ever after as the two gangs unite, and Rahul and Shirley marry with the blessing of their families.

It is very interesting to see what these two films express, and how this differs from the original to the remake. As we can see, they are based on the same main plot but alternates on several important aspects. I will now focus on the most important themes that we find in the two films, which are love versus hate, immigration, morality, and family. When it comes to the subject of love and hate, the two films have some similarities but also many differences. West Side Story clearly has a negative tone throughout and states quite clearly that hate kills. Hatred is a destructive power that ultimately leads to death and destruction by the end of the film. The Hindi film remake Josh however, has a more positive attitude and a more complex story. It ultimately expresses the fact that love can conquer all obstacles, and how morality and family are important components in this respect. Every character of both films fight to find their place in a complex and changing world, and both clearly show the destructiveness that follows hatred and violence as it leads to great consequences. As the hatred between the gangs is contrasted by the love between the two couples in both films, one film therefore emphasizes the hate aspect, while the other the love aspect which ultimately gives us two contrasting stories, although they are also clearly similar.

The rivalry in both films is in many ways about othering, immigration, and power. The important theme in West Side Story is race and immigration, as the fighting gangs control areas of the segregated city. “The Jets” are of European descent and have blonde hair, while
“the Sharks” are second generation Puerto Rican-immigrants. These characters, including Maria and Bernardo, are made up to be Puerto Rican with their accent and looks. This creates a Euro-American versus a made up Latino culture shown through conduct and appearance, color, song, and dance. Another important component is that Maria was brought to the U.S. to marry Chino, a Puerto Rican, but finds happiness and self-esteem when she finds love in Tony, a white man. Having control of the city territories is the way in which these rival groups can show others who has the power. As “the Jets” discuss; “a gang that don’t own the street is nothing…We’re gonna clean them sharks up once and for all so they ain’t never gonna set foot on our turf again”. Riff, their leader, states that “the turf is…all we got” and they must fight the immigrants in order to keep control in the streets.

The Puerto Ricans are from families who came to America hoping for a better life in ‘the land of dreams’, and they are clearly experiencing the difficulties of racial tensions on the streets of New York City; as Anita states “once and immigrant, always an immigrant.” The difficulties these youngsters meet is expressed in the song “America”, as the women express the positive aspects of migration, while the men express negative views.

“Women: Life can be bright in America, Men: if you can fight in America. 
Women: Life is alright in America, Men: if you are white in America…
Women: you are free and you have pride, Men: as long as you stay on your own side”

The women, it seems, are more easily integrated than the men, and this can be because of both race and gender as perhaps masculinity is in the way, with anger and hostility, for the men to integrate into society. Bernardo also comments how “back home, women know their place,” but not in America. His girlfriend Anita does in fact work in the States and does not stay at home. The immigrants’ main struggle is finding their place and identity in the U.S, while still maintaining their heritage. In this environment, they find belonging and community by being part of a gang, and this also creates a safe place for them to be who they are.
In *Josh*, racial enmity is replaced by religious tensions. We learn that the immigrants in this version are Hindus and arrived to Vasco two years prior, and according to Max there has “only been trouble after that.” Religion acts as a unifier in this remake, and also what distinguishes the two gangs from each other. As in many other Bollywood films, religion is of great importance in Hindi cinema, and the groups therefore find comfort in this. Religion is not as important in *West Side Story*, but we do see Maria praying upon hearing the news about her brother’s death, just as Shirley does when her brother is arrested. In *Josh*, a priest is added to the story; a man Max shows respect to, showing us that he is also a good guy underneath his tough image. The couple also meet in church, establishing the sphere of religion as an important component, not race, as the cultural background that sets the gangs apart.

Another key issue concerning both films and plots of rivalry and romance, is morality. *West Side Story* is set in a changing climate, between the 1950s where conservative values and morals were important, and the liberal 1960s, where a distinct youth culture and sexual liberation became apparent. In contrast, *Josh* is set in a Christian Indian setting, where morals and family values are of great importance. Both films display degraded morals, as family has been replaced by violent gangs and a fight for survival is the norm. The lack of morality is depicted as destructive in both films, and as it destroys lives in *West Side Story*, having high morals results in happiness in *Josh*. In both films, the gangs display low morality in their lives filled with hatred and violence. The couples though, are kind and only want the fighting to stop. In *West Side Story*, the shopkeeper Doc acts as the moral voice in the film, expressing how wrong and destructive the gangs’ behavior is. Doc also stops “the Jets” as they harass Anita and asks “When do you kids stop...you make this world lousy.” Later, as Tony dreams about the future, Doc hits him to get his attention: “Is this the only way to get through to you? Why do you people live like there’s a war on;” expressing frustration and incapability to help.
In the song “Officer Krupke”, sung by “the Jets,” we also learn why these kids act the way they do;

“Officer Krupke, we're very upset;
We never had the love that every child oughta get
We ain't no delinquents,
We're misunderstood,
Deep down inside us there is good!”

Throughout the film we see that these young men are struggling to find themselves and their place in the world. We see how the lack of morality and family has made them act immorally although there is, as they express, good inside of them. When the rumble has killed both leaders, the men are filled with regret and barely know what to do. They clearly learn from this devastating experience and understand that their destructive behavior is wrong.

In Josh, the moral voice and moral character is clearly Rahul. Throughout the film, he expresses morality and kindness, in contrast to the other male characters. Morality is more pronounced in the Bollywood remake, where fighting and hatred is clearly seen as destructive and immoral. Rahul advocates goodness and dialogue in contrast to his brother and Max, and as his character is equivalent to Tony in the original film, we can see the similarities between them. Tony is a good guy just as Rahul is, but as Tony is more of a dreamer, Rahul is more of a doer. In several scenes of the film, Rahul speaks up against injustice. For example when he shows Shirley how kindness and a moral life is a better option than the rough life she is living with her brother Max. He also speaks up against his brother Prakash when he is threatening a land owner. Rahul reacts strongly saying that “you are out of control,” and explains how things can be solved without violence but benevolence and communication. Prakash is the immoral and evil character who is destroyed by his greed when he is killed. Max, the antihero, is also immoral and is almost too destroyed by his lack of morality, but understands in the end how his immoral behavior has almost ruined his life. His attitude changes completely by the end of the film, where he acknowledges his bad behavior, asks for
forgiveness, and earns a family, friendship, and happiness in the last scene of the remake. Therefore, morality clearly wins in Josh, as the kind and moral lovers find happiness, and Max finds peace and forgiveness. In West Side Story though, the lack of morality destroys both the lives of the immoral gang members and the kind and loving couple.

Another important theme in both films is family and the sense of belonging. Family is replaced by gangs and violence, and their destructive lifestyle clearly shows the significance that family can have. In West Side Story, this is described in “The Jets song”, where the members sing that “When you’re a Jet you’re a Jet all the way”, and when being a member of the gang, you are never alone as this becomes your family. Loyalty is therefore important in this respect, as Riff says to Tony; "Without a gang, you're an orphan. With a gang, you walk in twos, threes, fours, and when your crew is the best, when you're a Jet, you're out in the sun.” Tony shows his loyalty to Riff by attending the dance, where he meets and falls in love with Maria, which will eventually lead to his and Riff’s deaths and ensure that, like Romeo and Juliet, the story has an unhappy ending.

The two films show that if you lack family, you must seek it elsewhere. The film barely mentions that Tony is an orphan but Maria has a family, though only her brother is an important part of the film. In Josh however, family is more important. The siblings from the original film have become orphaned twins in Josh, and the male friends have become brothers with a family of their own. These changes bring the characters closer together, and express the importance of family in the Bollywood remake. As Rahul arrives, he meets his brother and family and we are introduced to their mother as well. As the brothers talk about the future, Rahul dreams of a new life in Bombay together with his whole family. When we learn about Max and Shirley’s family through the subplot, we understand how the lack of family has brought them so close together and why Max is so protective towards his sister, and also why
he bears so much anger inside. As a typical Bollywood film, the lack of family does create difficulties for the main characters but they are not destroyed by it. Instead, the family inheritance ensures their happiness. In the end of the film, Max also asks Rahul and his family to stay in Vasco, saying that “me and Shirley have no family, please do not leave”. All is well that ends well, and both families are joined together by the marriage between Shirley and Rahul, ensuring their happiness within the confines of family.

**Placing the films in their cultural and cinematic frames:**

To a certain extent, both American and Indian films must reflect aspects of their respective cultures and cinematic traditions. My aim here is to place the films within their cultural and cinematic frames to see just how much these reflect the U.S and Hollywood, and India and Bollywood.

*West Side Story* is a classic Hollywood film musical, though darker and more realistic. The Classic Hollywood film was and is committed to aesthetic unity, narrative coherence, and closure, usually with a happy ending. There is a balance between performance and realism in *West Side Story*, different from most Hollywood musicals, and the film reflects society changes moving away from the 1950s religious revival and morality. The balance in the duality of romance and realism is contrasted to the romance in *Josh*. Maria and Tony meet and fall in love at first sight, Shirley and Rahul do not. Within 24 hours, they have pledged their lives to each other and engaged in a fantasy wedding ceremony. They want to escape this dark and dangerous world together but Tony is killed, leaving Maria heartbroken.

Considering the time they have known each other and the fact that Tony killed her brother, this seems unrealistic, but the film also expresses realism in the way that violence and darkness lead to death and destruction, leaving the couple separated by Tony’s death. In addition to the romance then, the story has strong elements of realism. The story differentiates
itself from the traditional Hollywood musical with few upbeat moments; most of the film is spent in the struggle to survive. The gang members are all products of their environment and their destinies seem realistic in this way. In *Josh*, the love between the couple grows and this results in marriage. This ending seems unrealistic if we are to contrast it to the original film, but if we see the film in relation to its Bollywood setting, the happy ending is expected.

The gang rivalry and street fighting itself images some degree of reality, but not the realities concerning the Puerto Rican immigrants who are portrayed as stereotypes in *West Side Story*. This tough attitude and fighting was common among immigrant groups, as they were assertions of dominance, loyalty, and masculinity. Immigration and diversity is seen in both cities in the original and the remake. New York has always had diversity, but in Goa there was an influx of new migrants after it attained its independence from Portuguese rule. *West Side Story* deals with the society changes in New York, a place of great ethnic diversity. *Josh* reflects religious diversity in Goa, so important aspects of both cultures are here reflected with race in the U.S and religion in India. As the remake also portrays reality and cultural history of its setting just as *West Side Story*, it also diverges from reality in certain elements. Vasco is named after Vasco da Gama, not Alberto Vasco as in the film. In addition to this, Goa has religious harmony, and gang violence between religious groups is not common here. The film therefore differs from social reality in these two aspects.

*West Side Story* is darker and more violent than *Josh*. Many die and get hurt, while in the remake, only one dies of the rivalry and this is in self-defense. The Hindi remake is clearly a lighter and more escapist film. Although musicals are generally seen as escapist entertainment, *West Side Story* is a darker musical with realistic and societal problems seen throughout; fitting with the time it was made. It also fits well into the Hollywood film formula as it has narrative coherence and a simpler and more concrete story than *Josh*, but it does not
have a closing ending. An open ending is not typical in Hollywood, but it may symbolize how the two gangs come together in peace, as both leaders and Tony are now dead. Though ultimately, it symbolizes the destructiveness of rivalry, hatred, and masculinity.

*Josh* is in many ways a typical Bollywood Masala film, with its significant cinematic style. It is melodramatic, filled with drama, action, and anti-realism with a love story in the center. The film is more complex in its plot and it has narrative extensions with the subplot and flashbacks seen throughout the film. *Josh* also has an emphasis on moral behavior, family, and religion. The good always wins in Bollywood, and the happy ending is obligatory. Still, the film also diverges from the norm when it comes to religion, location, and style which have a westernized look. This can be a result of the filmmaker wanting to make the film more exotic and different for the audience, as it is based on a foreign film. Goa fits well in this respect, with its western location and western influence. The film also includes a “kiss” between the couple, although not real, it may have been shown because of the westernized and exotic setting, and translation of the original film. The Indian film audience has been unable to relate to the Goan Westernized and Christian background, because it is very different from the usual Bollywood film setting; but the film did become popular and successful in India despite of this.

Both films are at the crossroads between cultural and cinematic periods. *West Side Story* between classical and post-war/modern Hollywood, while *Josh* fits into Indian cinema between “the angry young man” period and the romantic genre that has blossomed and taken over today. The angry young man period, developed in the 1980s and 90s reflected a masculine model immortalized by the legendary Sri Amithabh Bachchan, where men would fight against a corrupt society in order to win against evil. *Josh* fits into this development as the film is a story about angry men fighting against the “evil” other, and of course the film fits
with the age of the romance blockbuster with its love story and happy ending; which is in the center of almost every Bollywood film.

**Fitting into musicals:**

The musical genre is and has been important in Hollywood and Bollywood. Musicals became an important genre in Hollywood after sound, but are not central today. In Bollywood though, almost all films include song and dance sequences. The songs’ function in the original and remake sets the mood of the stories, and the narrative would be lost without them. We do find similarities in musicality between the 1960s *West Side Story* Hollywood film and the Bollywood film remake from 2000. Although *West Side Story* is a less escapist and positive, but more realistic musical, this is relevant of the time it was made as the optimism of the fifties where replaced with a more pessimist view on life. The song numbers in both films give us important information about the narrative and the characters, and they build on and give complexity to the story. As John Belton argues, musicals serve to “direct the audience’s attention to specific characters or details, to provide information about the time or place of the action, or to establish mood.”

Another important theorist is Steven Cohan, who argues that the musical genre and its plots are escapist and that the lack of depth and its “over-the-top” feel has made many to not take these films seriously; especially the bursting into song and dance, which is considered the most alienating aspect of these films as it breaks with realism. But still, and especially today, the musical genre has been revived with more realistic plots and song sequences, where these are more naturally situated into the story. The same aspects that Cohan uses are the same that apply to Bollywood filmmaking, and with this in mind we can easily see that Bollywood contemporary films and Hollywood film musicals have many similarities. Songs give us important information and they are mostly integrated in the story. In Bollywood though, the scenes containing strong emotions like expressing love, as we see

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in *Josh*, come suddenly and they highlight and emphasize emotion and important aspects of the story. It has become central to, and a natural and important part of Bollywood filmmaking.

**The film remake:**

Hollywood and Bollywood cross-cultural remaking is similar in many ways. Both cinemas take plots from another source and translate them into their specific formulas and styles. With their own narrative conventions, they alter the film to be suitable to their cinematic tradition and culture. India is heavily influenced by Hollywood cinema and it is easy to see that *Josh* is a remake of *West Side Story* in its plot borrowing. Still, as Sheila Nayar argues, the culture, film language, stylistic preferences, and thematic barriers found in Bollywood create great differences and it can therefore never remake a Hollywood film in a direct way. The film has been Indianized, and it fits into the remake theory of Tejashwini Ganti who argues that the Indian filmmakers are searching out and Indianizing suitable Hollywood films to make them appropriate for India’s diverse cinema audience. Indianization of films includes adding emotion, complexity, and song and dance. Although *West Side Story* is highly emotional, the Bollywood remake is added even more emotion and drama and more complexity to the story, as seen through the complexity of the plots and narrative. As both films have song and dance numbers, there is no need to add this; but the songs are also adapted to fit Indian cinema. Only certain films can be remade and Indianized as they must contain certain elements in terms of plots, characterizations, thematic elements, melodrama, and moral values which are suitable for Bollywood and India, and *West Side Story* fits well with these criteria.

The film remake *Josh* can be placed in Constantine Verevis’ second category of remakes; the “transformed or disguised remake.” This is also called a free adaptation, where only some changes are made to the syntactic elements, but more changes in the semantic, altering character names, race, place, time, and genre of the original. The syntactic changes of
plot, structure, narrative, and characters are only changed to a certain degree to fit with Bollywood cinema. The plot and structure is more complex, and the characters have been Indianized to suit Bollywood standards. The semantic changes are more pronounced as the setting, time, and names have been completely changed.

Concluding remarks:

As we can see, the films have many similarities but also many differences based on the cross-cultural translation that the film has undergone to suit Bollywood conventions. The films are basically about youngsters trying to find their place in life in an ever-changing world, blaming “the other” for the problems and difficulties of society. The films also portray, quite differently, the love between two people from each rival gang and how their struggle to be together has different outcomes. The main differences are found in the semantic elements with its Indian setting, and its syntactic elements which have been Indianized to become suitable for the Indian audience. The most important changes are the adding of the subplot and the happy ending, where love wins against all odds. There is more realism in West Side Story, where the couple does not find happiness, but the hatred and rivalry keep them apart and results in Tony’s death. The alternative ending in Josh makes it less dark and realistic, but more lighthearted and escapist. In both films, the ending is expected because West Side Story is based on Romeo and Juliet while Josh, although based on the adaptation, is a Bollywood film where the hero must live and have high morals, and the lovers must find happiness. Films in Bollywood are predictable, with its complex style and its happy ending which are necessary in the Bollywood film formula.

The film language is translated to a cinematic and culturally understandable language when the film crosses cultural boundaries. The cultural differences between them in terms of structure and gender are influenced by both culture and cinema, and the remaking practices of
Hollywood and Bollywood, making the original and remake both similar and vastly different. I will now move on to the characters of the films, and through a comparative cultural analysis, look at the gender performance and gender views of the main heroes and heroines in the U.S Hollywood film and the Hindi Bollywood film remake.
Chapter 4: Characters and Gender Performance

"[T]he idea of the camera’s gaze in classical Hollywood film as a male one – that sees women as objects of voyeuristic pleasure."\(^{47}\)

Culture and film can show us what it means to be a man and a woman, depicting feminine and masculine ideals. Gender in society and film has close ties, and has developed to fit, but also rely on, development and cinema traditions. Women and men are often depicted as stereotypes and have clear gender roles in film. In film remakes, gender is also altered to fit aspects of culture and cinema, and this will be closely examined here. I will compare and contrast the gender performance and gender differences between the main characters in *West Side Story* and *Josh* to see how much these have changed depending on what gender, femininity, and masculinity mean in culture and cinema in the U.S and India. In both films, we find clear and concise characters with readily recognizable character traits; a necessity in both cinema traditions. How they are portrayed, how they act, and what they wear tell much about the characters. They express important character traits, and we learn to identify their attitudes, values, and gender performances through these factors.

There are several major differences between the main protagonists of the two films; and the characters I will focus on here are Tony and Rahul, Bernardo and Max, Maria and Shirley, and Anita. I will start by looking at the male characters and their performance of masculinity, before I go on to the female characters and how they portray femininity. In *West Side Story* and in *Josh*, the main characters are stereotypical with violent men and sexualized women. In the remake, morals and family are also added to fit with Bollywood standards. The gender performance of the two heroes, Tony and Rahul, is similar but also contrasted by these added components. They both express morality and kindness, and both express love for their women and friends/family. Tony though, is a dreamer, and what I consider to be a “passive” and tragic hero. Tony is introduced as a dreaming character from the very start as a kind and

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loving man who has gotten away from the gang life. He is therefore established as having more kindness and higher morals than the other male characters in the film. His kindness will also be his downfall as he agrees to go to the dance for Riff’s sake; “and I’ll live to regret this,” he says. Meeting Maria, falling in love, and unwillingly becoming part of the rivalry will lead to his death. The optimistic and dreaming Tony sings in “Who knows: There’s something do any day, I will know right away, as soon as it shows”, feeling that something is about to happen, expressing his hopes of happiness and a better future, in contrast to reality.

Like Tony, Rahul is the moral hero of the film remake. He is not a part of the gang at all, unlike Tony who was previously a member. Rahul throughout the film speaks against the fighting and hating. He does not want any part of the street gangs and violence, and even tries to get his brother out of it. He does though, unwillingly become part of the rivalry when he falls for Shirley. Both characters clearly possess hero qualities which are similar in Hollywood and in Bollywood with kindness, morals, and fighting for love. What sets them apart is that Tony is more passive and dreamy. He is always wishful and positive, almost naïve and even states that “from here on in, everything’s gonna be alright.” In contrast to what actually happens. He does ask for a safe and fair fight, and he wants the gangs to fight without weapons, where only the best man of “the Jets” meets the best man of “the Sharks.” Instead of being against the fighting as Rahul is, he tries to make it safer. Tony also does not care if Bernardo finds out about him and Maria. Moral Rahul on the other hand, wants to do the right thing by telling Max about him and Shirley, and he goes to talk to Max to express his feelings for her. He also asks him to search out the truth about their family secret. In West Side Story, Tony kills Maria’s brother in anger during the fight. In Josh, Max, the antihero kills Rahul’s brother in the fight, though in self-defense. It is not likely that Rahul could have been the killer because of his high morals; he instead saves them all. Rahul, the active and moral hero who believes in justice and truth eventually tells the truth about the killing and about the
twins’ family inheritance, thereby saving Max from imprisonment and insuring their happiness. Rahul therefore seems to be more the classic hero of both cinema traditions with his active heroic role, and he is also awarded in the end by getting the heroine, in contrast to Tony who is killed.

Their performance of gender and masculinity is to some degree similar, but Rahul exhibits more of the heroic qualities that are associated with masculinity, and which both cinemas and cultures value. Heroism in Hollywood implies action and an active male star. According to Quart and Auster, the classic American hero is the courageous individual who stands up for the good against evil. Although Tony to some extent tries to do this, he is unsuccessful, unlike Rahul. He is clearly a more passive hero, which gives him traditional feminine qualities with his passiveness and strong emotions. In Bollywood, the film hero must be noble and moral, innocent and gentle, and be the embodiment of traditional Indian values. This includes brotherhood, Shanti (peace), Satyagraha (non-violence), and romantic idealism (“Nehruism”), which has been of great importance in Hindi cinema. Rahul therefore can be seen as the prototype hero, embodying all these qualities. In addition, he is also a young, handsome, eligible, and family-centered hero who triumphs over evil and gains a happy ending, just like the typical Bollywood hero.

In terms of appearance and clothing, Tony and Rahul are both clean-shaven, handsome men who wear suits or jeans and t-shirts. Rahul is more nicely dressed, often in a suit and shirt, though he dresses more casually after meeting Shirley. This establishes them as nice guys, unlike the rough gangs in the two films. In contrast to the heroes then, we find the antiheros and villains. Max is the Bollywood bad boy and the anti-hero of Josh, similar to Bernardo in West Side Story. Max is in many ways the central character in the film; and a man

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who lacks the traditional heroic virtues that we see in Tony and Rahul. Max is genuinely a good guy, though his anger makes him act the way he does. The hero/villain-dichotomy, with strong opposites and simple characters, is not applicable in West Side Story or in Josh because of the characters’ and story’s complexity. It is though, to some degree pronounced in Josh, with the character Prakash who in many ways is the villain in the film remake.

Bernardo is introduced as a young man struggling to find his place in the U.S as an immigrant. This is shown in his first sentence, as he ironically says “In America, nothing is impossible”. He is a made-up Puerto Rican character who takes his frustration of not fitting in, by fighting. Throughout the film, he and his gang deal with their anger in self-destructive masculine ways through violence and hatred. He is also very protective towards his sister Maria, by controlling her moves and even the way she dresses. When Tony and Maria meet at the dance, Bernardo pushes him away and commands him to “stay away from my sister”. He also lessons Maria of his control over her, telling her to listen and do as he says; this way, he can protect her from harm. He also shows affection for his sister and his girlfriend, showing us his kind and sensitive side. Max and Bernardo are similar when it comes to not fitting in, and fighting to get their feelings out, attempting to solve their problems with their fists. Max is also protective towards his sister, often defending her honor. His ‘tough guy’ image is contrasted by the love and care he shows for Shirley. As orphans, they only have each other and they also find comfort in the street gang. Max is therefore introduced as the tough and macho leader of the gang, but is essentially a good guy as well.

Max and Bernardo fit with the typical male antihero and the tough guy stereotype that we find in Hollywood and Bollywood films. Bollywood is though also more family oriented and must include morality as well. This makes Max’ character in Josh more complex, with the Indian values that he must have including more emotions, and the moral ambivalence he
shows with his love towards the women in his life, compared to the hate for “the Bichoos.” This therefore hints at a more vulnerable masculinity behind his cool guy image. The biggest change is of course the ending. Bernardo is killed because of his actions, while Max goes from being an unconscious brute that solves his problems with his fists, to an empathetic character who finds peace and a family in the end. This happy ending seems unrealistic, but is a necessity in Bollywood cinema where morality results in happiness.

The fighting and hatred in the two films show a dark and more destructive aspect of masculinity. Strength and fighting are two signs of traditional masculinity that only create more problems, not solving them. The men’s inability to control their anger leads to even more suffering. As the fight ends badly, Bernardo looks shocked at the sight of the knife he has used on Riff, and Tony too is shocked and remorseful as he kills Bernardo in a rage. After the fight, the groups are also full of remorse and realize how their actions have gotten out of control. “The Jets” sing “Get Cool Boy”, expressing how they must learn to get control of their emotions to stay alive. We are also shown how revenge only leads to more death and destruction as Chino kills Tony, destroying the lives of the innocent lovers. The male bonding that we see in both films can be for a construction of a masculinity which only includes destructive and immoral masculine behavior, but also the feeling of togetherness. As Maria and Anita discuss all the fighting, Anita explains how the men must get rid of “too much feeling,” i.e. their masculine qualities with too much testosterone and hatred, that create a tough and self-destructive masculinity. This is a destructive force that creates the tensions that we find in both films, created by societal problems. This notion may also be what the title of the remake, Josh, stems from. “Josh” means strong emotions or feelings; it speaks to the feelings of anger and hatred expressed in the film which creates the overall theme of both original and remake.
When it comes to clothing and appearance in the two films, this is used to show the difference between the male characters. In West Side Story, “The Jets” wear light and colorful clothing with t-shirts and jeans. “The Sharks” on the other hand, wear darker clothing, with black pants and dark colored shirts. In Josh, “The Bichoos” also wear light colorful, western clothing, reflecting both their Hindu culture and their westernized lifestyles. Max, the bad boy, together with his gang wears biker clothing with jeans, black leather jackets, and shades. They also wear the sleeveless white T-shirt, or a “wife-beater,” as Per Aubry Tenden calls it;\(^{50}\) denoting a tough guy image, projecting a contemporary westernized male antihero like James Dean and the youth culture which started in Hollywood in the 1950s.

West Side Story expresses the culture and masculinity of the U.S 50s, showing strong and violent men and a destructive masculine behavior. This period is known for what Quart and Auster call the ‘male rebellion;’ a time when sensitive and anguished young men sought to discover and define their identities in a changing world. In the process, they questioned the values and behavior in U.S culture and society. For example, James Dean’s Rebel without a Cause (1955) had a profound effect on the young. The hero of the U.S cinema now expressed both a strong side and a sensitive and vulnerable side, showing a new type of masculinity.\(^{51}\) Josh though, does not reflect the reality of India but a borrowed and constructed youth culture only inspired by the ‘male rebellion’ era, as this era belongs to Hollywood, not Bollywood film tradition or Indian culture. It is also important to remember that in India and Bollywood, patriarchy and masculinity go hand in hand with emotions, morality, and caring for the family, in addition to song and dance. The cool male lead is therefore similar to a Hollywood hero but masculinity, violence, and a care-free attitude must also be included with religious and family devotion, respect and honor; thereby mutating Hollywood gender roles while still

\(^{50}\) Tenden. Per Aubry. “Male Imitations: A Look at Gender Performance and the Representation of Masculinity in The O.C.” (MA thesis, University of Oslo, 2007) 68

\(^{51}\) Quart and Auster 59
keeping its significant cultural values and film language.52

What of course makes these two films different from the ‘male rebellion’ films is the fact that they are musicals, alternating the masculine image with song and dance. Hollywood musicals show us a theatricalized production and performance of gender. As Cohan argues, the male body is put on display in musicals. This challenges the gendered division as the male characters do what is usually considered “feminine;” to express emotion, they sing and dance. In both films, we are introduced to the gangs as they dance through the streets, expressing their tough and masculine image through song and dance. Cohan argues that this is a “feminization of the male character.” It is not only objectification for the audience gaze, but also an alternative construction of masculinity. When a male star uses song and dance to show his power as a dominant male, he also expresses his “feminization” of performance and spectacle. Masculinity, power, and patriarchy are still present, but masculinity is on display with the male body, which gives us a unique representation of masculinity. It literally becomes a performance of gender.53 What we also find in the two films is how the main characters adapt to different roles, as brother (family), and as a friend and gang member (companionship), where morality and behavior will differ, giving us what Mike Chopra Gant explains as a ‘fluidity’ of identity and masculinity. This gives the characters complexity, and the audience can more easily identify with them.54

The two heroines of the original and the remake are even more different than the heroes. In West Side Story, Maria expresses in many ways female dependency and incapacity to do or change what is happening around her, similar to Shirley in Josh. Maria can be seen as a typical passive Hollywood heroine. Young and innocent Maria only went to the U.S to

52 Wright 165
53 Cohan 87-93
marry; a traditional choice for many women, seeking a better life under the protection of a man. We only learn that she was supposed to marry Chino and is under her brother’s care, showing us that the men rule over and protect the women in the film. I wonder if she, as so many women at that time in society and on film, was only a happy-go-lucky young woman anticipating marriage until she found love in Tony. In this respect, she is a familiar feminine stereotype, but by changing her destiny she could also be constructing a new feminine identity, taking active control of her life and going against patriarchal rule. This though, only leads to death and unhappiness by the end of the film.

Maria is introduced in a dress shop, a domestic sphere, while the men are shown in the public sphere. In the first scene, she speaks of the dance which will be her official entry into society as a young woman in America, displaying old ideas about the female role in society. Maria complains about her proper dress which Bernardo has decided that she shall wear, saying that “I am a woman now”. She also says that she is tired of her brother bossing her around, feeling trapped in the domestic sphere under Bernardo’s patriarchal rule. Her white dress symbolizes purity and innocence, and she dislikes it until she puts it on and realizes that it looks good on her. This can be seen as Maria finding her place as a young and innocent woman under the protection of her family. Maria is a made up Puerto Rican character who is growing into womanhood and questions the control her brother has over her. Still, she asks for Bernardo’s recognition about the dress. When Bernardo asks Chino to “have both eyes on Maria tonight in case I cannot,” Maria comments that he is “a silly watch dog” but Bernardo replies that she is “a precious jewel.” At the dance as well, Maria begs Bernardo to let her stay but he says “we are family – now go,” indicating that the men must take care of her and protect her against the harms of the public sphere and the outside world.
Shirley in *Josh* on the other hand, is an outspoken and careless young woman. She is free and can act sexual and seductive, and play on her femininity and gender. But, she also has a sensitive and innocent side to her, which she expresses to her brother and later to Rahul. She is a more independent female character than Maria, though she too is under the protection of her brother. She is introduced in church, where young men set their eyes on her, but Max as always, interferes when guys try to talk to her. She is therefore under patriarchal protection, just like Maria, but she is not controlled in the same way. Shirley is not confined in the private sphere, but is instead a part of “the Eagles” gang and joins her brother in much of the innocent action. She is though not a part of the fighting, something only the men take part in and she likes that her brother is always there for her, and often mentions this to men as she does when she first meets Rahul. She therefore finds comfort under her brother’s protection.

After the women meet their lovers, both characters change. When Maria meets Tony, she develops and gains confidence because of his love for her. In the song “I feel pretty”, she sings about her new-found confidence when being “loved by a pretty wonderful boy,” and she thereby develops and finds her identity through him. Still, Maria is powerless when it comes to stopping the men in her life from fighting. She must ask Tony to stop the fight so that they can be together; showing that men are the active characters in control; but this is also what destroys them. As Tony is caught in the middle of the fight and eventually kills Bernardo, he runs to Maria who lashes out at him. She soon realizes though, that their situation is hopeless and quickly forgives him and they find comfort in each other. The destructiveness of the raw masculinity displayed in *West Side Story* eventually leaves Maria without Tony and her brother. She stands up against the gang members in the end of the film, although powerless to prevent the fateful ending; she shouts “You all killed him! and my brother, and Riff. Not with bullets or guns but with hate”. She depicts an angry and strong woman, but also a woman full
of remorse and lack of power. Her passiveness and feminine qualities could not have stopped them, and she is left alone, incapable of saving her brother or her lover.

Shirley too changes. She does not return Rahul’s feelings at first, but soon realizes that he is an appealing, refined alternative to the tough men in her life; namely her brother Max and the gang. She develops by her feelings for him and becomes a Bollywood sweetheart when falling in love, unlike the tomboy she was before. Shirley thereby grows into a woman by the help of Rahul who makes her see how immoral street life is, and she distances herself from the gang and into his moral loving arms. In many ways, Rahul educates her. An example is when Shirley and the gang play a trick on Rahul. He confronts Shirley about her role in the prank, and she feels remorse for her actions. Shirley, who does not know anything else but the rough lifestyle and her brother’s hate, starts to recognize how his love and moral behavior is a better alternative than Max’ hatred and fighting. But Shirley too is unable to stop the fighting. She tries to intervene to stop her brother from hurting Rahul in a fight, but the fighting only stops as Shirley faints. This shows her inability to save Rahul and control her brother, as her frail and protective character and femininity cannot control the men’s “strong feelings”. The rivalry escalates and Max says that he will “bash up that Romeo”, but Shirley cannot bear to tell him about their love and thereby stop her brother from hurting Rahul. In the end, Rahul is the one who saves Max when he is sent to prison. Shirley could do nothing except pray, again depicting how the passive feminine characters are unable to actively alter the events in the two narratives. By the end of the film, Shirley marries the man of her dreams and finds her proper place through marriage under the protection of the new man in her life. Unlike Maria, Shirley has her Bollywood ending, confined and protected by family and patriarchy.

The main female characters of West Side Story and Josh are similar in some ways, but also very different. Both films have somewhat strong female leads, but who are both under
the protection of men and incapable of altering the events of the narratives. The main female characters of *West Side Story* are also two feminine opposites with sweet and innocent Maria against strong and sexual Anita. In contrast to Maria and to some degree Shirley, Anita is the strong-willed, sexual, confident, and active female character who challenges and questions Bernardo’s attitudes towards women and his protection over Maria, saying that women in America are free. Shirley has some of Anita’s strong and sexual qualities, but also the passive and feminine qualities of Maria, making her similar to both female characters. The women’s feminine identities are also expressed through their appearance and clothing. Maria wears light colored, covered dresses. Shirley too wears light clothing in contrast to their brothers who wear dark clothing. This shows us a contrast between the masculine darkness and the purity and innocence of the women. Shirley also wears a leather jacket when she is with the gang, showing us that she is a more actively involved in the public sphere. Still, she does not display innocence through her skimpy, western clothing. She wears short skirts and shorts in the start but later wears dresses and more feminine and covered items after meeting Rahul. Shirley looks and acts sexy in contrast to Maria, by playing on her sexuality and gender role. But ultimately, she is as sweet and innocent as Maria. The women therefore fit into their respective female stereotypes of the passive, pure, and loving feminine heroine, looking for love and protection, and happiness, through marriage to a man.

How women and men are expected to behave is reflected in films and through their characters. Molly Haskell argues in *From Reverence to Rape*, that throughout post war U.S films, there have only been two types of women on screen; the whore and the Madonna, and she uses Marilyn Monroe and Katharine Hepburn in her example. These two women are stereotypes and sexual objects for the consumption of a male audience, and this whore/virgin dichotomy, we can see in terms of the women in *West Side Story*. The two are distinct opposites; with sweet and innocent Maria against sexual and out-spoken Anita. For Haskell,
films also display traditional gender roles and stereotypes by showing the stronger and weaker sex in separate spheres. Women’s destiny is also only marriage, and both these aspects we clearly find in West Side Story. Hollywood has therefore reinforced old ideas about gender, promoting a romantic fantasy notion and thereby keeping women in their place.\textsuperscript{55} Shirley in Josh though, has both these feminine qualities thereby fitting with the two Hollywood and the Bollywood heroine stereotypes. Heroines in Bollywood are complex characters. They are sexualized objects in dress and appearance but in contrast, their actions and values are traditional and respectful. Shirley is both liberalized and outspoken but also innocent and maintains traditional Indian values. Deshpande argues that there is a patriarchal definition of gender in society and film, and it displays how tradition and westernization goes hand in hand in India, and Hindi cinema romanticizes and glorifies patriarchy, hetero love, and family. The liberalization of women, as a result of modernization in India, is resolved by subordinating the women within the patriarchal family, and this is also shown by Shirley’s marriage to Rahul.\textsuperscript{56}

Shoma Chatterji argues that the value of female chastity and the fight for defense of her honor is very strong in India, and this is often depicted on screen. In Josh, this is portrayed through Max’ protective attitude towards Shirley, which implicates the male in control of the woman, who holds the honor of the family within her body; but it is not for herself. Chatterji explains that in a patriarchal society, women's bodies do not belong to themselves, but to the patriarchal male. This appropriation of the woman's body is further complicated in cinema, where the woman is the object of gaze. The star system also creates an image of glamour rather than a realistic depiction of women in India. In terms of mythological conceptions of the heroine, Bollywood’s representation of the “ideal woman” is made up of two figures; Sita (obedient) and Shakti (powerful) thereby giving us two strong opposites.

\textsuperscript{55} Haskell, Molly. From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) xiii-3
\textsuperscript{56} Deshpande 97-98
Women are therefore neither passive nor powerful in Bollywood films.\(^{57}\) The women’s gendered behaviors are constructed, and Shirley definitely plays on her gender role throughout *Josh*, displaying her femininity and sexuality. This is what Judith Butler calls “performative gender”, where you actively choose to do gender depending on the situation;\(^{58}\) an act that we also have seen in terms of the main male characters that alter their performance of masculinity depending on time and place.

In terms of the cinematic constructed role of gender, the men act as subjects who drive the narrative forward, while the women are objects for masculine desire and gaze. The idea of the male gaze is found in classical Hollywood films, but also in Bollywood, and both express a patriarchal view and culture, with the active male against the passive female. Jeanine Basinger in *A Woman’s View* argues that much of the stereotyping of women in film is related to passivity; to the fact that female characters are often not allowed to take action. They then become merely an object or a victim in the story, something we clearly see in both the original and the film remake. Basinger also claims that “women’s films” often suggests that a woman should be feisty, but not too feisty; strong, but not too strong; well dressed, but not overdressed; glamorous, but not too glamorous. She should not be too much of anything as it can put her in the place of power,” while women should know their place.\(^{59}\) This fact fits with *West Side Story* and *Josh* as well, as the female characters balance these feminine qualities, creating what is thought of as the female heroine stereotype in both cinema traditions.

In culture and society, these stereotypes are to some degree still present. Toril Moi argues in *What is a Woman* that as men and women continue to behave according to gender


\(^{58}\) Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990) 141

norms, and also showing this on screen, these norms are thereby maintained and reinforced. Gender then, is something we do, not something we are, as when a man behaves in ways that are socially acceptable for men, he feels like a ‘real’ man; finding his identity and place. Moi further argues that for Judith Butler, a woman is gender, and gender is only an effect of an oppressive social power structure. If you do not behave as required, you are not a real woman. Gender is performative; we are constantly performing our gender, and this performance is also seen on screen. The main argument expressed by Moi is that we must follow the theory of Simone De Beauvoir who argues that you are a woman no matter what you do, and therefore; ‘one is not born, but rather becomes a woman.’ The role and performance of gender in culture and on film have been questioned by many. Even men and masculinity is now also discussed just as women and femininity have been for centuries, according to Tenden. The discussion on gender roles in society and film has resulted in changes and developments, but gender stereotypes are still found on screen.

**Concluding remarks**

The hero and heroine are very important in both cinema traditions, and often fit with the cinematic specificity of gender on film. Remakes are also altered corresponding to gender roles of that cinema. Gender roles in film and society has changed and developed, but common for both cinema traditions is the idea of the dominant and active male hero against the submissive and passive heroine. These stereotypes have often been considered normal, and cinema therefore represents fantasies and stereotypes of femininity and masculinity. Both women in the two films mature and find happiness, confidence, and their place in the world because of a man, while the men are almost all destroyed by their traditional and destructive masculinity. This female submission to male domination through romance and marriage keep the women in Hollywood and Bollywood in their place.

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60 Moi, Toril. *What is a Woman?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 77-103
61 Tenden 10
Chapter 4: Conclusion

Cinema is and has been an important part of culture in the U.S and India, and it remains a distinct cultural institution providing its audience with both fantasy and realism. Both Hollywood and Bollywood create a homogenized culture on screen, and often imitate society. Studying film remakes provides us with knowledge of their different cultural expressions and exchanges. In my effort to look into a film made in its specific cinematic and cultural setting and comparing it to a film remade in another culture, with its own specific film language, I have found significant cultural and cinematic differences and changes that the film has undergone to fit a new setting. As the initial quote by Forrest and Koos argues, every national cinema has cultural traditions that engender their own generic conventions and expectations. The cross-cultural film remake therefore shows us the cultural and cinematic specificity in terms of structure, content, and gender performance which I have analyzed in my thesis on the original film West Side Story and its Hindi film remake Josh.

The cross-cultural remake is used for cultural and cinematic comparison and it gives great knowledge to the differences between the original and the translated film. With many differences and adding of specific ingredients in terms of plots, setting, and themes of Indian values, moral behavior, gender, family, and religion, and of course the alternate ending, the cross-cultural remake Josh differentiates itself through the nationalistic cinematic traditions based on culture and identity, though still being influenced by the original film. We must understand how much the story has had to be changed in order to fit with the Bollywood film making style and the Indian culture. Indianizing a film means adding the specific formula, film language, and cinematic elements of Bollywood. This process generates culture effects, signifying the production of Indianess against the otherness of the original.
I asked how cultural differences affect the remake from the original film. In the process of remaking a film from one culture to a significantly different other; the cultural changes that *West Side Story* underwent when placed into a Bollywood setting and remade into the Hindi-remake *Josh*, are many. My primary focus was on the film’s plot, setting, and themes, and how the main character’s performance of gender diverged from the original. I discovered that both films expressed important aspects of their specific culture and film language. When *West Side Story* was translated into *Josh*, it was Indianized to fit with the Indian culture and with the cinematic style of Bollywood, while still having intertextual connections to the original story. This thesis therefore argues that a film undergoes significant cultural changes when being translated from Hollywood to Bollywood, as the Hindi Masala recipe has been added to the story.

The most important thing I found is that the message and conclusion of the films completely changes. *West Side Story* expresses the destructiveness of hatred and masculinity, while *Josh* is centered on the power and healing of love, kindness, and morality. This gives different meanings and experiences which are suitable for their time and place in cinema and culture. I argue that Hollywood and Bollywood do in fact share many of the same qualities and that these two stories have some elements in common, although they are also very different. They share the basic storyline and characters but in *Josh*, the Hindi cinema ingredients are added making the story and the performance of gender fit straight into the dream world of Bollywood. The remake is altered to correspond to the gender roles of this cinema. Common for both cinemas is the idea of the dominant and active male hero against the submissive and passive heroine, representing fantasies and stereotypes of femininity and masculinity. The women in the two films cannot change what happens in the stories. They are the objects of male gaze and are under the protection of the male leads; their brothers and their lovers. This female submission to male domination through family and romance keep
them in their place. Indian women are often associated with the smiling, singing and dancing heroines in Bollywood films, where their feminine roles are sexualized, glamorous, and more independent. Still, marriage and the patriarchal institution of family is always their ultimate goal, just as in Hollywood. Men are the eligible, moral, and handsome heroes who triumph over evil and gains a happy ending. Bollywood can therefore be considered as a ‘feel good’ version of Indian culture, as Bollywood triumphs over social reality. The love story between the hero and heroine is one of the most central components in both films. Although it is more complicated in Josh, the happy ending is still present and expected. The ending in West Side Story further symbolizes the destructive nature of the masculine ideal with violence, the rise of a youth culture, and lack of morals. It is therefore a less optimistic, but more realistic film musical compared to its Bollywood counterpart. My evidence states that cultural differences, cinematic style, race and gender perceptions, and audience expectations are central to the changes made. My findings therefore points to what previous theory has argued; that a film must be changed to fit with a certain time and place, and that it can give us information about the cultural and cinematic specificity, the similarities, and differences between The United States and India, Hollywood and Bollywood. The remake acts as a translation where we see how the original is altered to create new meaning, experience, and perspective across cultural boundaries.

My research gives more insight and understanding into the field of Bollywood cinema and cross-cultural remaking and exchanges. For my final conclusion, I argue that my discoveries show that cross-cultural remakes express important aspects of culture, cultural exchanges, and film language. Bollywood films are in many ways divorced from Indian society realism, promoting a dream world where people can get away from their everyday lives; though they still express cultural norms and Indian values. I found out that changes must be made in cross-cultural remaking, and Hollywood and Bollywood are similar in their
remaking processes, as filmmakers erase the effects of otherness through translation and differentiation. This means that remakes are important for what they show about cultural and cinematic specificity, and this can help us understand more about both Hollywood and Bollywood cinema. It is important to remember that a remake in Bollywood does not literally imply a direct remake because it has had to be changed for the Indian context in many different aspects. My main point of this thesis is that we must learn to explore and understand the complexity and importance of Hindi cross-cultural remaking of Hollywood films, paying great attention to the cinema’s significant film language and culture. It is this specific film language and cultural specificity that is the reason for the great changes that we find in a Hindi remake, often making it very different from the original film. It includes Western borrowing, but it also still continues to maintain its distinct Indianess and cinematic distinctiveness. Bollywood has a formula that it still follows to create its Masala romance blockbusters, which are integrated into Indian society and remains important in people’s lives even today, as we celebrate 100 years of Indian film.

Cinema is important in understanding Indian society and culture. I wonder if Bollywood’s depiction of women will change the patriarchal culture of India and its views on women, and this can be looked into in further research. As argued by Steve Derné, studying audience reception of Hindi films suggests that while films reveal alternative Indian ways of thinking, they rarely challenge dominant beliefs and often strengthen male dominance. In their daily lives, men usually distance themselves from the enjoyment of cinema, returning to their lives that are shaped by patriarchy and hierarchy.  

Another possible research theme is star power over story. Casting stars as the main hero and heroine can affect films and has caused changes in the film remake Josh. Verevis

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examines the significance of celebrity textuality in her work, and this deserves a closer look.

In *West Side Story*, the lovers whose family and gangs want to separate them have the center of the story. In *Josh* on the other hand, the lovers and the antihero Max are all central. This can be a result of the actor behind the character of Max, namely the famous star Shahrukh Khan. I believe this particular mode of remake referencing is even more prominent in Bollywood than in Hollywood because of the power that cinema and celebrities have in India.

It would therefore also be interesting to explore how the receptions of the film remake *Josh* was in India, or even more interesting – how it was received in the U.S. There have been some reactions and legal actions from Hollywood because of Bollywood’s plagiarism. Hollywood has had little knowledge of Bollywood remakes, but express little acceptance to their borrowing. This can also serve as an important research subject in the future.

On a more general basis, how Indian and U.S perceptions of Bollywood and Hollywood are, could also be a fascinating point for study. Also, it would be interesting to look at the developments of the two cinemas, and how they will develop in the future. Should Bollywood become more western for more people to appreciate it? Or will Hollywood take more inspiration from Bollywood? Will both film traditions more closely reflect or even affect their respective societies? This remains to be seen.

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Appendix A: Films scene by scene

*West Side Story*: starts with a song and introduces New York City.

**Scene 1**: Introduction of the two gangs in a ‘battle’ of dance and fighting.

**Scene 2**: Tony is introduced, recently arrived home. Sings “something’s coming.”

**Scene 3**: Maria is introduced in a dress shop as Bernardo’s sister.

**Scene 4**: The Dance: Love at first sight between Tony and Maria.

**Scene 5**: Tony dreams about Maria and professes his feelings in the song “Maria.”

**Scene 6**: “America”: The Puerto Ricans sing about being immigrants in The U.S.

**Scene 7**: The lovers reunite in secret (Romeo and Juliet balcony scene). They express their feelings for each other through the love song “Tonight.”

**Scene 8**: “The Jets” sing “Gee, Officer Krupke,” about their lives.

**Scene 9**: The gangs decide to fight in the “the rumble”. Tony asks them for a fair fight.

**Scene 10**: Maria sings “I feel pretty.” Maria and Anita talk about the fighting and how the men must get rid of “too much feeling.”

**Scene 11**: Tony and Maria meet at the shop and dream about their future and their wedding. Maria asks Tony to stop the fight.

**Scene 12**: “The Jets” and “The Sharks” sing and dance “Quintet,” getting ready for the fight. Tony, Maria, and Anita sing “One hand, One heart.”

**Scene 13**: “The Rumble”: Bernardo and Riff fight, Tony intervenes. Riff is stabbed and killed by Bernardo. In a rage, Tony stabs and kills Bernardo. Tony flees.

**Scene 14**: Maria gets the bad news and lashes out at Tony. They sing “Somewhere” and find comfort in each other.

**Scene 15**: “The Jets” sing “Get Cool Boy”; they must have control to survive.

**Scene 16**: Anita warns Maria to stick to “Your Own Kind”: Maria convinces her to tell Tony to meet her so they can run away together.
**Scene 17:** Anita is harassed by “The Jets,” tells them that Chino has killed Maria.

**Scene 18:** Tony learns about Maria’s “death” and runs to look for Chino so he can kill him.

Maria appears and their run towards each other, but Chino shoots him and he dies in her arms.

Maria screams at the two groups. The police arrive, and the two groups carry his body away together.

**Josh:** Disclaimer: All characters and events are fictions.

Goddess image and religious music starts the film and introduces the city of Goa

**Scene 1:** Subplot, Goa 1958: Vasco town is under Portuguese rule. Alberto Vasco rules, an angry woman is shouting at him.

**Scene 2:** Goa 1980: Introduction of the two gangs in a ‘battle’ of dance and fighting.

**Scene 3:** Shirley is introduced in church as Max’ sister. Max interferes when guys try to flirt with her.

**Scene 4:** Rahul is introduced as Prakash’s brother, arrives to Goa unaware of the rivalry.

Rahul dreams of a new life in Bombay for his whole family.

**Scene 5:** Rahul explores Vasco and sees Shirley. It is love at first sight and he professes his feelings in “princess of my dreams.” He tries to converse with her, but she rejects him.

**Scene 6:** Max and Rahul meet. The gangs also arrive, but Rahul stops them from fighting.

Rahul is, unwillingly, slowly becoming part of the rivalry.

**Scene 7:** Shirley starts noticing the kind and moral Rahul.

**Scene 8:** Max sings to his love interest Roseanne in “Apun Bola.” He continues to woo her, at night he comes to her house and she sees him from her balcony (Romeo and Juliet scene).

**Scene 9:** Rahul and Shirley meet, she warns him about Max. They make a bet: Rahul must talk to her in front of Max. If he wins, she must kiss him.

**Scene 10:** Masquerade Dance: Masked Rahul dances with Shirley. He reveals his face and
wins the bet.

**Scene 11:** Rahul comes to claim his prize, and Shirley pretends to like him at first, calls him Romeo but says that her brother will hurt him.

**Scene 12:** The gang and Shirley harass Rahul. Rahul confronts Shirley about her part in it.

**Scene 13:** Fight between the gangs: Shirley and Rahul try to stop them, the fighting ends as Shirley faints. INTERMISSION.

**Scene 14:** The police question them, but no one will talk.

**Scene 15:** Shirley realizes her feelings for Rahul and they “kiss”. They sing out their feelings in “Hai mera dil” (Oh my heart).

**Scene 16:** The rivalry escalates at the same time as the love between the couple grows. Max threatens to “bash up that Romeo.” Shirley and Rahul separately sing out their feelings in “Hare Hare” (I concede defeat of my heart).

**Scene 17:** Subplot: Rahul discovers that the twins own of the land of Vasco.

**Scene 18:** Rahul goes to Max to express his feelings for Shirley and asks him to search out the truth about their family. Max attacks him.

**Scene 19:** Max learns about his family and the inheritance. Flashbacks from childhood.

**Scene 20:** Liberty Day Celebration. Subplot: Prakash takes care of his brother but finds out through a letter meant for Shirley about the family secret and he plans to kill Max in order to take the land for himself.

**Scene 21:** Shirley hides Max’ gun, afraid that he will hurt Rahul. It is stolen by a member of “the Bichoos.” They plan to stage a suicide.

**Scene 22:** Max and Prakash fight. Max shoots Prakash in self-defense. The lovers are parted.

**Scene 23:** Rahul discovers the truth, Max is released from prison, and Rahul and Shirley marry.
Appendix B: Films Mentioned

*West Side Story* (Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins, 1961)

**Characters:**
Tony: Richard Beymor
Bernardo: George Chakiris
Maria: Natalie Wood
Anita: Rita Moreno

*Josh* (Mansoor Khan, 2000)

**Characters:**
Rahul: Chandrachur Singh
Max: Shahrukh Khan
Shirley: Aishwarya Rai

*2012* (Roland Emmerich, 2009)

*Abre Los Ojos* (Alejandro Amenábar, 1997)

*Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979)

*Avatar* (James Cameron, 2009)

*Back to the Future* (Robert Zemeckis, 1985-1990)

*Batman* (1989-2012)

*Ben-Hur* (William Wyler, 1959)

*Bonnie and Clyde* (Arthur Penn, 1967)

*Clueless* (Amy Heckerling, 1995)

*Dead Poets Society* (Peter Weir, 1989)

*Footloose* (Craig Brewer, 2011)

*Forrest Gump* (Robert Zemeckis, 1994)

*Harry Potter* (2001-2011)

*Heyy Babyy* (Sajid Khan, 2007)

*Hum Tum* (Kunal Kohli, 2004)

*Insomnia* (Christopher Nolan, 2002)
Insomnia (Erik Skjoldbjærg, 1997)

Jaws (Steven Spielberg, 1976)

La cage aux folles (Edouard Molinaro, 1978)

Les Misérables (Tom Hooper, 2012)

Magnificent Seven (John Sturges, 1960)

Mamma Mia (Phyllida Lloyd, 2008)

Män Som Hatar Kvinnor (Niels Arden Oplev, 2009)

Mohabbatein (Aditya Chopra, 2000)

Moulin Rouge (Baz Luhrmann, 2001)

My Fair Lady (George Cukor, 1964)

Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror (F. D Murnau, 1922)

Nosferatu, The Vampyre (Werner Herzog, 1979)

Ocean’s Eleven (Steven Soderbergh, 2001)

Psycho (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960)

Raja Harischandra (Dadasab Phalke, 1913)

Rebel without a Cause (Nicholas Ray, 1955)

Ringu (Hideo Nakata, 1998)

Rocky III (Sylvester Stallone, 1982)

Schindler’s List (Steven Spielberg, 1993)

Seven Samurai (Akira Kurosawa, 1954)

Singin’ in the Rain (Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly, 1952)

Superman II (Richard Lester, 1980)

The Birdcage (Mike Nichols, 1996)

The Breakfast Club (John Hughes, 1985)

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (David Fincher, 2011)

The Godfather (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972)

The Guru (Daisy von Scherler Mayer, 2002)
*The Hurt Locker* (Kathryn Bigelow, 2008)

*The Italian Job* (F. Gary Gray, 2003)

*The Jazz Singer* (Alan Crosland, 1927)

*The Ring* (Gore Verbinsky, 2002)

*The Sound of Music* (Robert Wise, 1965)

*The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939)

*Three Men and a Baby* (Leonard Nimoy, 1987)

*Time of the Gypsies* (Emir Kusturica, 1988)

*Titanic* (James Cameron, 1997)

*Trois hommes et un couffin* (Coline Serreau, 1985)

*Vanilla Sky* (Cameron Crowe, 2001)

*When Harry Met Sally* (Rob Reiner, 1989)