Untimely Bollywood: Globalization and India’s New Media Assemblage

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Untimely Bollywood: Globalization and India’s New Media Assemblage
Amit S. Rai
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Bollywood, argues Amit Rai, is not simply a generic Hindi-language filmic form located around a production infrastructure in the Mumbai area of India. Rather, it is better understood as part of a broader media assemblage of connected and shifting elements. These elements include – but are not by any means restricted to - exhibition spaces (single screen and multiplex cinemas, domestic settings); audio-visual technologies (Dolby sound, digital projection); pop music tie-in tracks; marketing strategies (movie posters, online viral ads); new media (internet chat-rooms, BitTorrent file sharing, mobile phones), globalised finance streams; risk management forecasting; human bodies. Earlier phases of Indian film, business and everyday culture are folded into the latest global technologies, strategies of population control and capitalist flows. Inherently unstable this is a protean mix.

Developed through the book is a complex theoretical architecture, with sources ranging from Foucault, Massumi and Simondon situated alongside commentators on South Asian cinema such as Stephen Hughes and Lalitha Gopalan. Perhaps the figure of greatest influence is Gilles Deleuze, with the ‘Capitalism and Schizophrenia’ volumes and ‘Difference and Repetition’ most drawn on (rather than the works explicitly addressing cinema). This allows for a bold contribution to the emerging discussion of non-representational theory and a challenge to a media and film studies intellectually beholden to theories of the signifier. For Rai, the key task is to diagram “non-linear processes of an assemblage that implicates bodies through their potential or capacity to mutate” (p. 3). Thus, he is interested in tracing the register of media at the ‘virtual’ or affective
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