

Sangita Shresthova (2011) *Is It All About Hips? Around the World with Bollywood Dance*. New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London and Singapore: Sage Publication. 223 pp. ISBN: 978-81-321-0685-2 (PB).

Bollywood, a name representing Hindi film industry, based on a portmanteau of Bombay (now known as Mumbai) and Hollywood, is one of the biggest film industries in the world. It has also become what Vijay Mishra calls the 'Temple of Desire', a temple where audiences transform themselves into devotees worshipping the Gods and Goddesses on the big screen. Throughout the years, many scholars have explored this film industry from a variety of approaches. Unfortunately, only few have touched upon the topic of Bollywood film dance, even though song and dance sequences are the distinguishing elements in a Bollywood film. One of the most recent works is *Global Bollywood: Travels of Hindi Song and Dance*, edited by Sangita Gopal and Sujata Moorti, who compile articles about many aspects of Bollywood song and dance elements. However, there are other aspects that have not yet been analysed, like how Bollywood songs and dances are transmitted from the film medium to the stage.

As a classical dancer and an active advocate of Bollywood, Sangita Shresthova's interpersonal relationship with her research topic is definitely visible throughout her analysis on how the live performance of Bollywood dance is becoming an active and creative process of film reception. The audience not only watches the films and enjoys the song and dance sequence, they also actively participate by taking dance classes in order to perform the choreography they saw in these films.

Throughout the book, the author has managed to systematically explain how Bollywood dance has become a participatory global dance because it has travelled all around the world, not just in the film itself, but more importantly in dance performances. The global spread of Bollywood films makes it possible for the film version to be translated into a class dance routine and then performed on stages all over the world. Her arguments have also explored the hybrid nature of both the film dance and also the staged version. These dances keep on changing in response to the narrative changes of the film and most importantly, the audience preferences, which make them unique in every location. With a combination of participant observation, interviews and institutional analysis, the author chose three different locations: Mumbai (India), Kathmandu (Nepal) and Los Angeles (USA), to conduct her research over a period of eight years (2001–2009).

First and foremost, the different social, cultural and even political conditions of each location affect the way Bollywood film dance is recreated or even reinterpreted from its previous medium, Bollywood films. However, one significant similarity out of the three locations is that there has been a high increase of professionalisation of Bollywood film dance that reflects how the popularity of Bollywood films has infiltrated not only the audiences' everyday lives, but also their professional preferences. Dance institutions have started to open new Bollywood film dance classes, attracting both professional and amateur dancers to practice this type of dance.

In Mumbai, India, the dance classes in SDIPA have mediated the students' expectations of globalisation in which they negotiate the so-called 'modern'. SDIPA has also become a benchmark that ignites the changes in Bollywood dance culture in India. Since 1997, when this dance institution did the choreography for the film *Dil To Pagal Hai*, there has been a transformation of the idealised dance bodies. Dancers must now be as fit as the heroes and heroines. The chorus line dancers, or the previous Bollywood film dancers who mostly came

from lower- to middle-class families, are now competing not only with professional dance troupes from institutions like SDIPA, but also the new elite ‘foreign’ dancers or the ‘white’ skin dancers.

At the same time, in Kathmandu, Bollywood dance exists on the unstable border between tradition and modernity: “Bollywood dance in Nepal becomes a site of conflict where notions of nation, modernity, tradition and respectable sexuality collide” (p. 103). On the one hand, it represents aspects of modern life in which students prefer to study Bollywood dance as a modern dance, rather than Western dance. On the other hand, its sexual connotation is considered too controversial for Nepalese tradition, especially for female dancers. It creates a degrading trademark for not only the dancers in dance institutions like NCD, but also for the dancers in the burgeoning Bar Dances all over the city.

The third location, Los Angeles, turns out to be the most ‘Indian’ of all the locations even though it is far away from the origin of the Bollywood film dance. The author argues that, in Los Angeles, Bollywood is a part of the nostalgic process for the Indian diaspora. Bollywood dance is used to negotiate local expectations in trying to look for what defines Bollywood as Indian. Consciously, the dance instructors of the dance institutions like NDMBDS will edit out elements that they think are inappropriate or ‘not Indian’ from the dance choreography in the films. In doing so, they sometimes integrate movements from classical Indian dance, such as *Bharata Natyam* and *Kathak*. Compared to the Mumbai context, in which SDIPA students value a more modern aspect of Bollywood dance, including its Western elements, in Los Angeles, NDMBDS tends to favour a more Indian portrayal of the dance.

The book has offered a detailed history of the transnational movement of Bollywood dance as it transforms into stage performances through the narratives of its performers, which is one of the book’s strong points. Personal narratives are used, at the beginning of each chapter and also in the appendix, not just as an enticing hook, but also as a reflection of the performer’s participatory experience in the global Bollywood dance movement. From these personal narratives, the author is able to see how local interpretations can negotiate with ideas of Orientalism, nationalism, tradition, modernity and even sexuality. However, due to limited space some of these ideas are not explored extensively, opening up possibilities for further research.

In conclusion, the book adds a new dimension to the current debates of Bollywood film culture, especially in reference to its transnational movement and how it relates to the global-local dichotomy. It will be a useful resource for those who are a part of this intellectual debate in questioning the notion of global-local authenticity and whether or not the Bollywood film culture is still ‘specifically’ Indian or what Shresthova claims as ‘hybrid’.

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