ARCHITECTURES OF MEMORY: RETROFITTED THEATERS AND FILM REMAKES IN POST LIBERALIZATION INDIA

DEBJANI MUKHERJEE

Abstract: The multiplex as a cinematic exhibition space first appeared in India in 1997. Since then, they have proliferated across the urban Indian landscape, overrunning traditional single screen theaters, and engendering thematic and aesthetic shifts in popular cinema. Indian multiplexes, as an architectural expression of modernity, express a specific spatial aesthetic. By relocating a middle-class audience to this exclusionary space, multiplexes have attached the film experience to a particular audience demographic and organized a new production-distribution-exhibition logic, thus linking exhibition space to economic power and social status and connecting cinema-going to a specific social identity. As multiplexes expand, single screen theaters are rapidly shutting down, with some getting acquired and retrofitted by multiplex chains to turn into multiplexes or high-end cineplexes. Meanwhile, remakes of old hits are being made for the multiplex screen and circulated in new networks of production and distribution. This article considers the film remake as a concurrent formation alongside the remaking of single screen theaters. Film and architecture exist within the same experiential paradigms, from the potential fluidity of their essence to the nature of their spatial and imaginative traversal. While the remodeled structures of retrofitted theaters like *PVR Plaza* and *PVR Priya* present a spatial layout that expresses a multiplex aesthetic but also activates an intensification of past linkages to their spaces, a study of two contemporary Bollywood remakes, *Don: The Chase Begins Again* (2006) and *Khoobsurat/Beautiful* (2015), reveals how audience memory of the original is used as a strategic tool to rethink and reprise the original. Memory itself is spatial, stemming from an experience of site, and this article argues that memory mediates and calibrates the affect of the film remake and the retrofitted theater, shaping the reconfiguration of these sites in the contemporary imagination by forging a simultaneous awareness of the past and the present, inducing a parallel cognizance of what has been erased and made anew at the same time.

The multiplex, the object-sign of modern cinematic practice, arrived in India in the middle of 1997, opening its doors to an audience that until then had only known single screen theatres. In articulating a difference within the previously interrelated geometries of the urban space, the multiplex has become synonymous with modernity in contemporary India. Even as it cuts into the viewing mechanics of cinema halls, creating the switch from single screen to multiple screens, analog to digital, single auditorium to multiple auditoriums, it also initiates a shift in the way that people go to the movies. In so doing, it has engineered a shift in the entire psychogeography of the spectatorial itinerary. Cinema-going now takes place within a different set of material conditions, and traversing them involves a negotiation of the spaces of a different exhibition site.

When the PVR Group, pioneers of multiplexes in India, started building multiplexes, they began by retrofitting existing single screen theaters in Delhi. Ajay Bijli, owner of Priya Cinemas entered into a joint venture with an Australian media company, Village Roadshow, and in 1997, the first Indian multiplex called Priya Village Roadshow Anupam (PVR Anupam) opened to audiences in Saket, New Delhi. Anupam was originally a single screen theater which was converted into a four-screen multiplex. As Bijli explains: "There were kilometer-long queues when we opened. And our campaign was very explicit: four cinemas under one roof, 24 shows a day, multiple cinema complex. Everything had to be clearly explained" (Majumdar 2015). PVR Anupam's success meant that more multiplexes followed in the capital city, with Priya Village Roadshow acquiring more single screen theaters like Sonia and Payal, retrofitting them, and rebranding them into multiplexes under the PVR chain. In 2001, Village Roadshow, the Australian partner, exited the partnership, leaving PVR with the brand name. Since then, PVR has emerged as the largest multiplex chain in India, with a current tally of close to 500 screens countrywide (KPMG-FICCI 2016). Other players like Inox Leisure, Carnival Cinemas and the Mexican multinational Cinepolis follow close behind, competing with PVR for a share of the multiplex business.

The multiplex and its screen is thus engineering a new experience for its patrons in terms of the nature of the physical habitation of its space as well as the imaginative traversal of its screen, effecting a break from the past of the single screen experience. This contrast – where on one hand, the multiplex is organizing a new psychogeography of contemporary spectatorial experience, and on the other, the remaining single screen theaters stand as reminders of the old way of going to the cinema – heightens a spectatorial awareness of the difference between the

two exhibition spaces, where the multiplex is everything that a single screen theater is not, whether in terms of its material conditions, its cultural and social dynamic or its screen experience. Furthermore, the single screen's contemporary transience reinforces an awareness of the passage of time between the old and the new, between then and now. Thus, as the multiplex and the single screen trace concurrent but opposite trajectories within the spectrum of the chronological before and after that the old and the new exist, we experience, in the single screen's present obliteration-in-progress, its future significance as a past event. In hovering at the edge of the now and the bygone, the single screen theater becomes, in effect, an 'anticipated memory' (Kahneman 2010).

In this context, old single screen theaters which are retrofitted to become multiplexes create an experiential encounter where the negotiation of the memory of the old with the transformed reality of the renewed building provides a new frame of experiencing and understanding the present world and our place in it. Similarly, in the changed cinematic landscape of the multiplex screen, film remakes of successful old Hindi films forge a similar negotiation where the cultural memory of the original film transmutes the experience of the remake. In both cases, memory becomes the determining factor that shapes our experience of the new. In placing the film remake as a concurrent formation alongside the retrofitting of single screen theatres, this article explores how in the transubstantiation of the old into the new, memory mediates the affect of both the retrofitted theater and the film remake.

In fact, the multiplex came to India at a time when the middle class had abandoned going to the theaters. As India entered a period of economic and political crisis in the 1970s, with the slow unraveling of the socialist economic paradigm and then the Emergency, which curtailed the civil and political rights of citizens, middle-class cinemagoers reflected the "anxiety and unease of the zeitgeist" by staying away from the cinemas (Athique and Hill 36). With the growth of television ownership and the advent of the VCR during the 1980s, this situation intensified, with the middle class finding it safer to retreat to the comfort of their homes, leaving the public spaces to the urban underclass (38). It was with the economic liberalization of 1991, which radically transformed India by opening up the economy to the forces of the global free market that the stage was set up for the entry of the multiplex and the return of the urban middle class to the cinema halls. The reforms brought about large scale economic restructuring with the abolishing of import licensing tariffs, the encouragement of foreign direct investment, and facilitating the entry of private companies into core infrastructural sectors, accompanied by a media deregulation that saw

the co-opting of the Indian media space into the global network of satellite communications and electronic information (38-50). Along with the exponential growth of radio, television and the internet, Indian cinema too witnessed a growing internationalization of its production and distribution channels, buoyed by a rising export sector and various multi-media forms of distribution and exhibition (49-50). In this scenario, the unveiling of the mall-multiplex – the middle class version of an idealized city space, with its technologically state-of-the-art digital screenings, surround sound, plush seating and sophisticated air conditioning – unfolded a space where class tensions were expunged and a different set of behavioral guidelines held sway.

Multiplexes now completely dominate the exhibition sector in India, and having saturated the major metropolitan centers are now spreading into smaller towns and cities across the country. Against this onslaught, the highly fragmented and unorganized sector of the single screen theatre is registering a steady decline. In the new economic logic of film exhibition, multiplexes with their higher box office returns are a more viable proposition than single screen theaters. The last countrywide census of single screen theaters taken in 2010 by the Film Federation of India puts their number at 10,167 (Statewise 2010), but since then there have been large-scale shutdowns of single screen theaters all over India. In the state of West Bengal, over a hundred single screen theaters have shut down between the start of 2015 and mid 2016 (KPMG-FICCI 2016). In contrast, multiplexes are increasing in number as they spread beyond the larger metropolitan cities, aided in their rapid upward spiral by tax exemptions from the government, supply of real estate, and patronization by the urban middle class.

In the two decades since it first made its appearance in India, the multiplex remains a symbol of transformation and synonymous with modernity in contemporary India. Its appearance in the urban landscape marks a point of transformation as its facades of chrome, steel and glass stage an intervention within the previously interrelated geometries of urban space. It unfolds a space of streamlined air-conditioned leisure and consumption, at a distance from the heat and chaos of the city outside, conjuring an easy alignment with the global places of urban culture. The multiplex's particular mobilisation of its space articulates a new way of seeing, representing "a symbolic break from the past" (Athique and Hill 129). The spectatorial experience it conjures is a definitive contrast from that of the single screen theater in its physical arrangement of spaces – its layout, décor, lighting, screen count and size, projection and sound technology. Its screen, coopted into the architecture of change, is also expressive of a similar variance, the configuration

of images and sounds indicating the unfolding of a new trajectory in popular cinema.

Sangeeta Gopal suggests that the films of the multiplex are entwined with its architectural imagination, its narratives exhibiting both in form and content the spatial, social and cultural logic of its space (134). The first generation of multiplex films (approximately between the years 1995-2004), geared to audiences in metropolitan cities, displayed decidedly urban themes, a Western sensibility and a formal inventiveness that reprised the phenomenology of the multiplex itself (140). The second generation, which came into being in the second half of 2000s, was less concerned with formal inventiveness and sought to stitch together "all the different fractions of the middle class together as a viewing public in such a manner that each retains its particularity even as it partakes of the ethos of a generalized consumerist culture" (140). Gopal argues that "if the single screen theaters with their thousand-plus seats, fixed show times, and hierarchical pricing relied on a heterogeneous product – the social film and the *masala*[11] – that sought to weld multiple populations into an audience," then the multiplex with its homogenizing, middle-class audience seeks to screen a range of genre-diverse narratives which effect a "display of the multifaceted ethos of middle class life" within the structure of a generalized consumerist culture (134-140).

But the multiplex is also still a phenomenon in progress, as it mutates and spreads into new territories, changing from a singularly metropolitan phenomenon to a more widely extant one, while its screen also expands its address and effects new hybridities. And as the multiplex expands to more areas of the country, the cinematic menu seems to have adopted an even more expansive address to include even wider sections of the audience, incorporating in its menu updated versions of *masala* action thrillers and a new class of films, variously called "middle cinema", "midstream cinema", "new age mainstream" and the like, all taxonomies that hint at the middle ground that the multiplex must now find in order to consolidate both its original core metropolitan crowd and the larger urban audience to which it is expanding its reach in the towns and cities beyond the metropolitan centres. But while the multiplex film is changing, the multiplex's expansion is also taking place amid the ongoing marginalization of single screen theatres, with many of them shutting down and the still-operational theaters getting pushed to second- or third-rung status. The

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[1]The term *masala* literally means mixture of spices. *Masala* films arose with the decline of the social film in the 70s, as a more entertainment-driven version of the social, freely mixing various genres in a blend of romance, comedy, action and melodrama to cater to the large heterogeneous audience of single screen theaters.

multiplex experience is thus one that is being played out among the ruins of the single screen experience, where the springing up of new multiplexes is paralleled by the disappearance of single screen theaters from the urban landscape.

Theaters of Recollection: Anupam, Sangam, Plaza

Our interaction with cinema halls, as places of fantasy and of social gatherings, is a transformative one – ensconced within the distinct architectural environment of the cinema hall, enveloped in a fantastical universe of images mapped in visual space, and experienced collectively with a large group of people at the same time. This experience of the cinema never leaves us, and our memory as spectators "experienced in a darkened movie theatre…can also emerge elsewhere, even far from the presence of a screen" (Casetti 2013). The conception of memory in spatio-visual terms has been considered since the classical times, as seen in Cicero and Quintillian's writings on the "art of memory" (Bruno 2007:20-22). Bruno suggests that the "imaginative route" of cinema and memory as "itineraries of the imagination" is similar, both arising from a narrative and mobile experience of place (4-21). This experiential similarity between cinema and memory extends into the structure of the movie theater itself, the atmospherics of which serve as an extension or a sensory remake of the mnemonic space of the temporal flow of the cinematic narrative (22-24). Descending from such spaces of public viewing as cabinets of curiosities, wax museums, *tableau vivants*, cosmorama rooms, panoramic and dioramic stages, vitrine and window displays, the movie theater reconstructs a similar "architecture of image collection for collective exploration" (17-23). It recreates a spatial, material and visual experience for the film spectator that recalls the way "places live in memory and revive in the moving image" (21). Thus, while any architectural encounter is a lived experience, the movie theatre compounds its effect by effecting a filmic-architectural synergy of a visual, aural and haptic immersion. In housing the cinematic event, it becomes entwined with it, its materiality in effect becoming an extension of the cinematic experience.

Memories of films linger on – scenes, songs, bits of dialogue, the faces of favourite actors, the sweep of locations on screen, just as memories of the material space of the cinema hall does – the box office queues, the curve of the staircase, the smell of popcorn, being with friends or family, the lights in the hallway, the darkness of the auditorium. More often than not, both are intertwined, the memories of films inextricably interwoven with the places where we saw them.

Annette Kuhn's landmark 2002 study *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory* is an exploration of cinemagoers' memories of 1930s Britain. Another groundbreaking study in 2003 involved the exploration of the cultural geography of cinemagoing in Nottingham, UK by Jancovich et al. in their book *The Place of the Audience*. In 2010 Meers et al. explored audiences, programming and exhibition practices in Flanders, Belgium in two different projects. These studies attempted "to reconstruct cinema cultures from…the testimonies of cinemagoers themselves, speaking or writing decades after the events being recalled" (Kuhn et al. 2017:6). Kuhn states that the collaborative nature of this "discursive and context-aware" research approach uses "oral and informant-generated accounts as a key research source alongside sources and research protocols of other kinds…making no presumptions as to the transparency of their accounts" (6). Recent additions to the scholarship of cinematic memory studies are Jacqueline Maingard's study of memories of cinema going from the 1920s to 1960s in a mixed-race neighbourhood of Cape Town in South Africa (2017); Jose Carlos Lozano's exploration of cinema going memories of the inhabitants of the border town of Laredo, Texas (2017); Lucie Cesalkova's investigation of the memories of two generations of film projectionists in Brno, Czech Republic (2017); Melvyn Stokes and Matthew Jones' study of the memories of British cinemagoers of the 1960s generation watching continental European films and other non-English language films (2017), and the study by Ercole et al. which maps a single cinemagoer's memories across urban space (2017).

In post-liberalization India, where retrofitted single screen theaters have shape shifted from their original versions to align with the contemporary imagination of the middle classes, their remodeled structures invite an imaginative and emotionally charged process of recollection for their audiences. Old single screen theaters and the films that were projected on their screens remain part of remembered[2] histories, signposting the passage of time, and even when retrofitted to a new form, their spaces still bear reminiscences of the past, holding personal and intimate connections and exuding a "psychogeographic return" (Bruno 2007:81). Journalist Jai Arjun Singh, reminisces about Anupam before it was retrofitted to become India's first multiplex, PVR Anupam:

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[2] International fast food chains, Nirulas and McDonalds, which first entered India in the 90s after the liberalization of the economy, quickly became popular with the middle classes, and symbolic of a new upwardly mobile lifestyle and taste.

I've lived in Saket since 1987. Anyone who's only ever seen the complex as it's been in the last few years will have trouble picturing what it was like back then. It wasn't the PVR complex in the first place – the hall was called Anupam and we never went there, it had a seedy feel about it and we were the video-junkie generation anyway. A good decade before the Nirulas and the McDonald's[2] started moving in, there were maybe just six small shops scattered around the whole complex…The description of a red-letter event in the complex's history was one muggy day when the He-Man barbershop…got an air-conditioner installed and people cheered…"

(Singh 2005)

Though PVR Anupam, which first opened in 1997, is no longer new, and has since accrued a weight of its own memories since its renovation, Jai Arjun Singh details the "sudden shift in the coordinates governing the place" when Anupam first became PVR Anupam:

Anupam shut down, then several months later we saw scaffolds and workers and large tarpaulins obscuring the building. In mid-1997 PVR Anupam opened and I went to see the first film shown there, *Jerry Maguire*, nothing of which registered because I was too busy alternately leaning back in the plush sofa-chairs and sinking my feet into the carpeted softness of the floor. Things would never be the same again in our modest little Saket which had, only 30 or so years earlier, been a forestland where men would go rabbit-hunting.

(Singh 2005)

Memory thus returns us to a seeing that while in contemplation of the present is also gazing into the past. PVR Anupam becomes a space that also speaks of another space one knew years ago, forging an experiential terrain where our horizons of perception are conditioned by a simultaneous awareness of two modes of temporality, the past and the present. The remodeled interiors of a retrofitted theater, a Hollywood movie, the new sensory delight of plush carpets and push-back chairs intersected by the memory of the remembered space add up to an internal experience, where it feels that "things would never be the same again" (Singh 2005). In this encounter, where Anupam and PVR Anupam exist in two opposing temporal trajectories, the setting and the self, fuse with memory to affect a process of experiencing both what has been lost and what is.

PVR Sangam is another retrofitted multiplex theater in Delhi which opened in 2015, after the old single screen theatre, Sangam, shut down in 2010. With two auditoriums of viewing capacities of 300 and 92 respectively, a new façade of pre-fabricated steel sheets and glass, remodeled walls, and concession stands offering a variety of fast-food choices, PVR Sangam

became part of the PVR group, India's biggest chain of multiplex cinemas. However, the comments section of a newspaper article reporting on the theater's re-opening had readers joyfully welcoming the event, but in the context of a reinstation of their remembered space of the old Sangam:

> I used to come here during my college days. Since it was very cheap at that time it was one of our favourite hangout place after Chanakya Cinema as the ticket price used to start at Rs 20. Now the tickets are costly but I am still happy to go there to recollect all the nostalgic moments I spent with my friends.

(Banerjee 2015)

Another reader commented:

> This theater has very special memories for me and my husband because after getting married most of the movies we have seen here and when it was closed we felt very sad…But today while booking tickets I have seen your name and was very excited to book there (*sic*).

(Banerjee 2015)

Thus, even as places change shape, molding themselves to what is laid out on them, re-visitation, or even, it seems the anticipation thereof, uncovers the residue of memory. Bruno's observation of our haptic connection to "textural places" like the cinema hall (2007:32), makes our return to the reconstructed retrofitted theater an occasion for excavation of everything that has been projected onto it. The memory of Sangam as a site of personal as well as public narratives thus percolates through the retrofitted walls of PVR Sangam. For Sangam's patrons, remembering specific as well as general memories connected to Sangam becomes "a topophilic affair" with a site, which still carries the imprint of what has been projected onto it, including their emotions – "a place for the love of place" (38-39). In this intense interfacing of affect and place, memory becomes a "psychic process which makes claims and demands on the site" (39). But even though re-visiting PVR Sangam propels a charged process of recollection, causing memory to stake its claim and fixate on the site, it also means being held in "the material site of loss" (40). On the occasion of the theater's re-opening, PVR Cinema's CEO observed the need "to forego the elements of the past and incorporate the latest trends" in order to "offer a new experience to the customer" (Banerjee 2015). Sangam's walls have been re-designed and the old pale blue cement

façade has been torn down and replaced with a new structure of pre-fabricated steel sheets and glass (Banerjee 2015). Thus, even as memory reclaims this space, these tangible erasures also evoke a sense of loss. It is in this vortex of topophilic emotions, of both reclamation and loss, that the retrofitted theater stands.

By contrast, in renovating Plaza, a heritage single screen theater in the heart of Delhi, great care was taken to accentuate and restore its original architecture and atmosphere. Plaza's retrofitting has not turned it into a multiplex in the conventional sense of the term. Instead it has metamorphosed into a high-end single screen theater with all the accouterments of a multiplex. On the occasion of the theater's re-opening as PVR Plaza, a newspaper reported:

> Having reopened this Friday as a single screen auditorium under the PVR banner, the place now dons an all new look that is aimed at bringing back its old glory. Combining the 1950s look and feel with state-of-the-art technology, PVR Plaza is a rare opportunity to get the best of both worlds.

(Ghosh 2015)

Plaza first opened its doors to the public in 1933, and in its heydays in the 1950s had distributors vying to screen big banner films on its screen (Ghosh 2015), before the single screen theater saw its audience disappear with the advent of the multiplex. In retrofitting Plaza, the original 1000-seater theater was reduced to a 300-seater, a reconfiguration that was tailored to conform to the approximate standard capacity of a multiplex auditorium. Morphogenesis Studio, the architects of the retrofitting project, carried out an intensive acoustic treatment of its walls and an elaborate lighting plan that combined ambient and accent lighting with a variety of fixtures of differing lux levels and colours, while retaining its original 30s art deco interiors ("Lighting and Acoustics" 2015). On the occasion of its reopening in 2004, Ajay Bijli, managing director of PVR Cinemas said:

> We wanted to restore PVR Plaza to its former glory and at the same time ensure world-class cinema viewing exhibition. The combination of art deco interiors and pristine white exteriors combined with marble flooring will evoke memories of Imperial India for our patrons.

(Ghosh 2015)

The theater's art deco interiors are enhanced by subtle but varied lighting creating breaks and transitions as one enters the building, walks through the corridors, climbs the staircases or steps into the lounge ("Lighting and Acoustics" 2015). The lounge is designed in a way that "allows people to relax…while giving them a chance to take a trip down memory lane. Dominating the

walls here are photographs of the theater over the years as well as old film posters" (Ghosh 2015). Memory is thus evoked and used to ignite recollection and re-establish connection with the reconfigured space. Plaza's incarnation as PVR Plaza is to deliberately create this memory space where audiences could walk "in the imaginary garden of memory" (Bruno 2007:24), and unravel their own stories. A newspaper report associates the specific memories of patrons with the filmic memories of premier screenings:

> Regulars remember Plaza as one of the flagship theatres along with Odeon, Sheila and Rivoli that dominated the film scene in the Capital for decades. Apart from being a popular den for Hollywood films, Plaza was also known as the chosen one for premieres of big banner films including those by Yash Chopra that have almost always premiered here.

(Ghosh 2015)

By evoking the memory of premieres of big banner films, especially Yash Raj Films, one of the biggest banners of Bollywood and which still delivers huge blockbusters at the box office, the retrofitted Plaza recalls its past premier status while also signaling its continued status in the exhibition space. A range of spatial strategies and compositional resources reorganizes and integrates the materiality of the past with that of the present, to hold the spectator within a specific experience of the theater's past.

Old but New: Film Remakes and the Mobilization of Memory

The film remake too exists within the same paradigm of the retrofitted hall, as a compressed site that both recalls the past as well as draws out the newness of the present. If our interaction with retrofitted halls as 'textural spaces' are transformative, then our relationship with film remakes as an 'intertextual terrain' of intersections between the old and the new is equally transformational. The experience of the film remake exists beyond the film text, percolating into a terrain where memories of the earlier text runs alongside in the experience of watching the new. Constantine Verevis observes that film remakes, as textual structures, 'exist always in *excess* of a corpus of works' – audience knowledge of the original and the intertextual relationships and the expectations that arise therein, placing the text within a wider discursive context (2006:2). Ramna Walia suggests that in the case of the Hindi film remake, it effects a direct connection "to the persistence of cinematic idioms in popular memory…The film text itself becomes secondary to the circulation of the aura of the past; the memory of popular reminiscence of its stars, fashion, dialogue and songs that continue to circulate within popular culture" (2014:35).

In the post-liberalization Hindi film industry, remakes and sequels of blockbuster films have acquired a greater viability and currency, freshly circulated in new and diverse networks of production and distribution. The early 90s saw Hindi popular cinema step into the larger global domain as 'Bollywood', as the liberalization of the Indian economy meant a growing internationalization of the film industry's production and distribution channels. The growth of its diasporic market and higher visibility meant a thematic and aesthetic shift in commercial Hindi cinema, which while changing to address and accommodate new audiences and markets, also found itself serving as a "central cultural referent" around which a global commodity constellation of radio, audio-visual entertainment, music, events, and shows gathered (Rajadhyaksha 2003:55). The 'Bollywood' presence thus became embedded in an economy of consumption, serving the global nation well in economic terms (Vasudevan 2011:339). With 'Bollywood' now routinely being used to denote Hindi popular cinema, Gopal observes that this evolution of its name "points to a very real process…[wherein] Hindi cinema becomes far more susceptible to the logic of capital, renounces its nation-building role, aspires to become mere "entertainment", and promiscuously embraces a range of foreign styles as it moves from a "nativist" to a globalized art form" (2011:12). Remakes of old single screen box office hits are now recast through this prism of the contemporary structure, unfolding on screens for audiences in multiplexes. The remake's emergence now takes place not only across a changed exhibition space and through changed modes of production and distribution, but also across a changed social and economic configuration of accelerated urbanization, middle class formation, consumerism and adoption of new technologies. The text articulates and makes visible this shift in its reimagining of the original to a contemporary version.

But even while articulating this shift, the remake's affect lies in the pleasures of remembrance, in the playing off of the shared memory of the original's narrative and stars with the remake's version of it. The film thus acquires its affective resonance through the negotiation that occurs between memory and the new version. Pierre Huyghe, in an interview in 2004, evocatively stated that "a film is a public space, a common place. It is not a monument but a space of discussion and action. It's an ecology" (Baker 2004). The remake, even while unfolding new images and a new vision, speaks of a familiar place, and it is through this interpretation of familiarity that the film acquires significance and meaning, revealing a new space that has the resonance of another place. In that sense, the remake's space is a more expanded place of action,

constituting a psychogeography that simultaneously activates an awareness of the past and also a return to the present environment in a split temporality. It becomes a site of recollection, of connection, and of intimate projections. In this 'ecology' of connectivity and relatedness, it is memory that binds the affective structure of the remake.

The two films discussed below – *Don: The Chase Begins Again* (Akhtar: 2006) and *Khoobsurat / Beautiful* (Ghosh: 2014) – are remakes of iconic films of the 70s and 80s respectively. On the occasion of the release of the former in 2006, a news website declared: "It [*Don* 1978], airs on television every other day; video stores report a run on copies. It is, at one time, the most watched movie of recent days [i.e., *Don* 1978] and the most eagerly awaited film of the year [i.e., *Don* 2006]…" (Akhtar ,"Farhan"). On the occasion of *Khoobsurat's* release in 2014, the original 1978 version was similarly recalled: "*Khoobsurat* is the remake of Hrishikesh Mukherjee's cult comedy which featured Rekha in the lead role and Sonam is aware that her version will draw comparisons with the old classic" (PTI).

Both the original films have lived on in collective audience memory, continuing to live on via the songs, dialogues, film trivia, re-runs on television, re-release to video distribution windows, discussions in the popular press, and on websites and discussion forums. While the original *Don* (1978) was an action-thriller starring Amitabh Bachchan, the undisputed superstar of the 70s and 80s, the original *Khoobsurat* (Mukherjee: 1980) was what was termed as a middle-class comedy made by a director who specialized in the genre. The pre-release publicity of the remakes resurrected the shared cultural memory of the original films, building an affective space of nostalgia and audience expectation. The films thus unfold within a pre-fabricated emotionally resonant space, the expectation of the audience built around an encounter with something familiar. But in telling a familiar story, the remakes invoke difference from repetition, the new emerging out of the old in a particular configuration that leverages the encounter with the familiar to introduce and amplify the effect of a new narrative space. A range of strategies stage the tension between the old and the new across plot structure, characterization, dialogue, music and star presence in ways that draw attention to the close connections between the two – highlighting, altering or erasing aspects of the original text in the new version, or creating extra-textual star narratives that link both versions in a shared commonality. But the impact or efficacy of these strategies is dependent on the circulation of the original texts in memory, of their continued pull in the contemporary zeitgeist. The two remakes bank on this shared cultural memory of their

audience, of a generation which watched the original films in single screen theatres and of a generation whose memory of the films is through watching its re-runs on television or on video, or hearing its songs and dialogues. The films thus achieve their resonance in the pleasures of familiarity that they afford, allowing their new-ness to emerge through this deliberate interaction with memory.
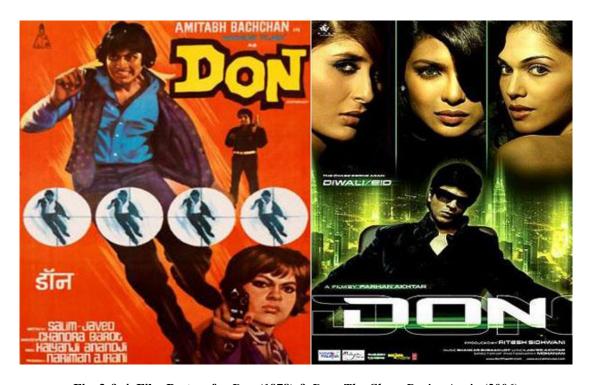
Don: The Chase Begins Again **(2006)**

Fig. 3 & 4. Film Posters for *Don* (1978) & *Don: The Chase Begins Again* (2006)

The original *Don* (1978) tells the story of a gangster on the run from the police, who dies and is replaced by his street-smart lookalike, Vijay, with only the Deputy Superintendent of Police D'Silva privy to this secret. D'Silva wants Vijay to infiltrate Don's gang and help him capture and arrest all the gang members. Vijay agrees to impersonate Don and infiltrate his gang, in return for D'Silva's help in educating his two foster children. But D'Silva's sudden death while leading a police raid in Don's den leaves Vijay in the lurch, locked into his impersonation as Don, as D'Silva was the only person who knew Vijay's secret and could have vouched for his real identity. Vijay tries to prove his innocence, even as he is on the run both from the police and the gang members who come to know his real identity. The film ends with the capture of the kingpin of the gang, Vardhan, and the establishment of Vijay's innocence.

In an interview as part of the pre-release of *Don*'s remake, the director Farhan Akhtar posited his film as a tribute to the original, "not just to that film, but to that time" (Akhtar, "Farhan"). But then again, he also asserted that *Don* is "an entirely new film" explaining that the previous "point of reference for Don, the character, is not going to be applicable to this Don, because this is a different character. He may say the same lines, but he is not the same Don…because they are two different movies that happen to begin with a common premise" (Akhtar, "Shying"). By 'different', Akhtar is referring to the twist at the end of his film, which completely subverts the central idea of the original plot. Ramna Walia says that the remake's climax "overturns the entire premise of the (original's) plot and its moral centre", with the remake exploiting "the knowledge of the original to shockingly foreground the "non-role" of the street-smart performer, Vijay (2014:46). Akhtar therefore leverages popular memory to buttress his version of the film, but again uses the same audience memory to conjure a maximum effect to his dramatic twist to the original plotline. Akhtar's contention that *Don: The Chase Begins Again* (2006) is "an entirely new film" is inaccurate, considering that the main content in his version is a representation of an earlier film. But his 'twist' – which reveals that the villain has actually been impersonating the hero, and not the other way around, as in the original version – does change the film. It disrupts the stable sense between an original and a remake, creating a different experience of narrativity, by layering the memory of the original hero as one who triumphs over the villains, with the remake's version where the hero was never a hero in the first place.

Akhtar's remake reinforces as well as subverts the original in crucial ways. As he says in an interview, "The character's dilemma is the same, the plot is the same, the conflict is the same, but what transpires across all of that is different" (Akhtar, "Shying"). Akhtar retains the chronological order of the original plotline of a criminal on the run from the police, his secret death, and then the infiltration of his gang by his lookalike who is a police informer. Key dialogues and songs from the original are incorporated in the remake, and the names of all the characters remain the same. The sameness allows the audience an imaginative trajectory across the two versions, facilitating a relation between the two narrative spaces, one remembered and the other unfolding on screen in the present. In encouraging this awareness of time, the remake allows its own integration into the narrative universe of the original film. But in this replication, the film also aspires for novelty, imagining a different possibility in its denouement. It is revealed at the end that the infiltration of the gang by Don's lookalike never really happened, as Don was

pretending to be Vijay all along, with the covert assistance of D'Silva, who was actually Don's mole in the police department. The erasure of Vijay's role obliterates the original's polarity of good and evil, and replaces it with an anti-hero, or even a villain as the center of its new unambiguously dark universe.

In deleting Vijay's role and the heroism that the character brought to the film, the remake instead becomes a singular portrait of a "twisted mind", as Akhtar describes the protagonist of the new *Don* (Akhtar, "Shying"). He is greedy and cruel, with a penchant for fast cars, the latest gadgets, and a transnational lifestyle that sees him flit from Kuala Lumpur to London to Dubai. In place of the original's explicit moral stance and delivery of catharsis for the audience with the hero's eventual triumph against all odds, a celebratory, even adulatory, air surrounds the protagonist's exploits in the remake. He is never caught by the police, managing as he does to always stay one step ahead, leading to an open-ended conclusion ready to be followed by sequels (Akhtar made *Don 2: The King is Back* in 2011 and has plans of making *Don 3*). The narrative universe is thus radically reconfigured in this contemporary re-imagining of the original.

Farhan Akhtar's fervent insistence in underlining the difference between the original and his remake acquires some significance in light of the fact that the original *Don* was scripted by his father Javed Akhtar, one half of the immensely successful scriptwriting duo Salim-Javed, whose scripts gave a new direction to Hindi cinema in the 1970s. They heralded the anti-establishment 'angry young man' films of Amitabh Bachchan whose success continued till the late 80s, anointing the actor as the biggest superstar of Hindi cinema. The original *Don,* released in 1978, was a blockbuster success at the box office, driven by the high velocity star power of Bachchan. In the joint interview that Akhtar and his father Javed give prior to the film's release in 2006, Akhtar says that the original *Don* was a very modern film, much ahead of its time, and thus the remake fit "very easily into a contemporary space" (Akhtar, "Farhan").

But audience memory of the original is not only crucial to the remake's identity in setting it apart from other contemporary action capers, it is also crucial in producing the experienced erasures in the remake's text. It is in the juxtapositions that arise between the remembered *Don* and the contemporary one that the remake achieves its desired effect. In fact, the deletion of certain characters only serves to underline the erasures that have been made, because the value of what has been added is only relative to what has been erased. The impact of the 'twist' that *Don* (2006) achieves with the deletion of Vijay's role is only possible because of the remake's

conviction of the original's persistence in audience memory. Audience knowledge of the original, of Vijay's struggle and ultimate triumph against the adverse circumstances stacked against him, is used to contrive the shock effect of the remake's complete erasure of Vijay from the narrative. Audience awareness effects a juxtaposition between his absence and the memory of his presence and it is in this contrast that the remake acquires its value and its leverage.

Audience memory is thus used as a malleable tool in the service of the remake, from the subversion of the original plotline to the mobilizing of an all-star cast. The latter enables the star-narrative to engage and reinforce a connection with audience memory of the original, even fashioning an extra-textual narrative that circulates beyond the text in the service of the remake. Bachchan's star power marked the cinema of the 70s and 80s, with his films interweaving his star persona with the figure of the action hero as urban outlaw (Vitali 2008:193). And just as the original *Don* framed itself around the phenomenal star value of its leading man, the remake too employs the value of the star-narrative, by casting Shah Rukh Khan, the present superstar of the Bombay film industry in the titular role. In so doing, the remake signaled its own importance as a star vehicle, and also underlined, at the same time, Khan's superstar status as the rightful inheritor of the Don legacy (Walia 2014:48). Khan's star power thus became the driving force of the remake's brand, just as the original rode high on Bachchan's stardom. This transference of the Don legacy within a star narrative enables Akhtar to combine audience memory and star power to affect a direct line from the original to his remake. In terms of star performance, the remake inherently holds this tension between sameness and uniqueness – the iterations of the same character played by two different stars and the unique star persona of each of the actors who play it. Thus, even though the two performances belong to two different diegetic universes, Khan's re-enactment is interpellated by audience awareness of Bachchan's original performance. It is a persistent recall, aided by Bachchan's continued referencing in the popular press as 'the original Don'.

But *Don* (2006) also involves itself in a larger star-narrative, expanding it beyond its leading star to include other actors. Top-rung stars play all the leading characters by their original names, evoking memory and nostalgia and inviting comparisons between the original stars and the ones in the remake. Farhan Akhtar himself draws similarities between Helen and Kareena Kapoor, two actors, who respectively played the same role of the femme fatale in the original and in the remake: "She (Helen) had the ability to…look sophisticated, dignified; she had that innate

sense of dignity about her. Kareena has that same quality…a certain innate sophistication she has…" (Akhtar, "Kareena"). Helen's role as the femme fatale in the original could be considered a reprise of similar roles that she played in many other films during her long career, as the seductive siren or the gangster's moll whose presence indicated the presence of the obligatory cabaret 'item' number in those films. Sangeeta Gopal notes that with Helen's rising stardom in the 60s, "the narrative rationale for the cabaret number weakened", and many films had her "celebrated dance numbers" inserted into the narrative (2011:41). But Gopal also observes that in a parallel development, with the growing Westernization of the Hindi film heroine starting in the 70s, "the heroine's migration out of the romantic duet and into the cabaret was completed in the 1980s", the foremost example of this being Madhuri Dixit's 'item number' for *Tezaab* released in 1988 (41). By casting Helen in the role, the original *Don* demonstrated that the role was peripheral, not that of the heroine. In contrast, the remake's casting of Kareena Kapoor, a top rung star in the role, while embodying the metamorphosis of the Hindi film heroine from just being "one-half of a romantic dyad" to being "the locus of visual pleasure" (41), also signaled a perceptive shift in the representation of the character on screen.

This shift across the two versions where the importance and connotation attached to the character changes according to the rubric of the actor playing the role, allows the remake to generate a contemporaneity by leveraging the image and star status of Kareena Kapoor. Without altering the archetype of the original character of Kamini, the seductress intent on murdering Don, Kareena's re-enactment of the role in the remake is altered by the narrative of her own star presence. Her star image thus becomes the locus through which the remake generates its freedom from the original, changing the perception of the character for the audience. The remake spotlights her role in the film, positioning her prominently in the film's posters as one of the three heroines, and giving her top billing in the pre-release publicity. The remake thus achieves its longed for newness not just by crafting a 'twist' in the original narrative but also by the politics of its casting. The figure of the stars, as fantasy projections, and also as a site of memory and nostalgia becomes crucial in this reconfiguration.

The mobilization of audience memory thus becomes crucial to the viability of the remake, because it is in the persistence of the counter narrative of the remembered film that Akhtar's selective engagement with the basic premise of the original gains value. He marks his version with the unforgettable elements of the original, which serve as memory grooves around which he pivots

his re-worked narrative. His remake retains all the recognizable signifiers of the original film –
from the funk-infused title track accompanying the opening credit sequence and other popular
songs from the original soundtrack, to the names of the characters and the protagonist's iconic line,
"*Don ko pakadna mushkilhi nahin, namumkin hai*" (*It is not just difficult to catch Don, it is
impossible*) – taking care to highlight them in the film's publicity. As Akhtar clearly states:

> When I started writing it, the first thing that I did was write down all the things that I
> remember very clearly, as highlights from the original *Don*. All of us have such mental
> lists, points of reference – so when someone sees the film he has to go, thank god, that bit
> that I loved in the original is there.

(Akhtar, "Farhan")

Thus, even if Farhan Akhtar's *Don* moves out from the original's hyper local Mumbai setting to
that of Kuala Lumpur, transporting itself to the glamorous environs of a globalised urbanity, with
a villainous protagonist who is the antithesis of the original's hero, the remake's tagline does not
forget to mention that 'the chase begins *again*'. The remake thus points beyond itself to forge an
experiential terrain where memory intervenes to locate an affect in the mélange of a shared
cultural memory of the original and its new version.

Khoobsurat (2014)

Fig. 5 & 6. Film Posters for *Khoobsurat* (1980) & *Khoobsurat* (2014)

In the original *Khoobsurat* (1980), the protagonist is a young woman, Manju, who goes to stay with her recently married sister. She arrives into a large joint family, bound by the strict discipline imposed by the matriarch of the family. The rest of the family, including the matriarch's husband, her four sons, and her two daughters-in-law quietly fall in line, resigned to the strict regulation of their lives, even as they secretly yearn to be free of the claustrophobic regimentation. Manju, free-spirited and fearless, rebels against the strict rules of the family by deliberately breaking them and standing up to her sister's mother-in-law fearlessly. The 1980s *Khoobsurat's* lighthearted comedy delineates with sharp insight the dynamics and value system of upper middle-class life in 70s India, its spirited protagonist articulating a desire for change and freedom from the routine set pattern of their lives. Hrishikesh Mukherjee, the director of the original *Khoobsurat*, was a doyen of 70s and 80s cinema, displaying a cinematic ethos that was a deliberate deviation from the action thriller masala genre that ruled the box office of the single screen theatres of that time. His "middle-class cinema" (Gopal 2011:134) told stories about that section of the audience that sat in the balconies and box seats of the single screen theatres, his protagonists inhabiting not the 'fantastical' world of the *masala* genre but a 'realistic' one, their modest dilemmas often reflecting broader social issues. His narratives were simple; the characters of his narrative universe were doctors, lawyers, bureaucrats and salaried office-goers, his stories delineating the travails of middle class life of the times with gentle humour, pathos and sensitivity. Mukherjee's storytelling eschewed high melodrama, flashy settings and larger than life characters, his camerawork was functional and unobtrusive, and his cinema, along with a few other filmmakers of his time like Basu Chatterjee and Rajinder Bedi, charted a course that stayed loyal to its middle-class milieu and ethos.

Shashanka Ghosh's 2014 remake of the original *Khoobsurat* (*Beautiful*, 1980), in partnership with Walt Disney Studios, reimagines and reworks it on a grander scale, complete with erstwhile royals[3] and their regal accoutrements. International studios like Disney, Warner Brothers, Fox Star Studios began to make their entry into India in the 2000s, producing and distributing films for the Indian market. While Disney, after acquiring a controlling stake in UTV, an Indian film and media company, has produced successful films like *Khoobsurat* (2014), *ABCD2* (2015) and *Dangal* (2016), it shut down its film production operation in 2016 after a series of box office losses, though it continues its distribution, television and merchandising operations (Laghate 2016). In *Khoobsurat* (2014), the protagonist, Mili, gets a professional identity, and a makeover

that is in keeping with contemporary fashion. Comparing the original's protagonist with the remake's, a reviewer[3] noted: "… the prevailing belief was that a young woman who ties her hair in braids and whose wardrobe looks like it has all been custom tailored for her by the neighbourhood *Masterji*[4] wouldn't win over today's youth. That is why the new *Khoobsurat* has as its star the funky Mili, not Manju" (Pal 2014). *Khubsoorat* (2014), prefixed by the Disney logo, is at one level a Disney romance with its heroine marrying her prince charming and living happily ever after. But at the same time, it is also a remake of a film marked by Mukherjee's signature realist treatment of a middle-class milieu and characters, and its continuance in collective audience memory. The new *Khoobsurat* thus concocts for itself a transformation by shape-shifting into a structure for contemporary multiplex screens, but its identification as a remake also induces a comparative analysis of it with the original, causing an interpretative shift in looking at the film.

In the original *Khoobsurat* (1980), romance is not central to the plot. The protagonist Manju's falling in love with the third son of the family is a subplot that is subordinate to the main plot, which is about Manju's goal to restore normalcy in the highly regimented Gupta household. The remake makes Mili's relationship with the prince the focal point around which the whole narrative revolves, which complements the brand image of its international co-production partner Walt Disney Studios. Even though the remake's heroine, Mili, a brash physiotherapist, is also on a mission to change the status quo like the heroine in the original film, in the remake the heroine is positioned as someone who marries a prince and becomes a princess and gets her Happily Ever After. To effect this transformation the remake jettisons the middle-class milieu of the original film in favour of a lavish setting of a royal palace in Jaipur, replacing the large upper middle-class family with a royal family. Thus, the dynamic of middle class life in 70s India that the original deftly portrayed with gentle humour and a lightness of touch, is replaced by a fairy-tale like setting with royal characters. In place of the original's modest urban interior setting, the remake takes place within the grand setting of a sandstone palace with ornate décor, whose inhabitants, the royal Rathores of Jaipur, maintain their lifestyle by buying up forts to make heritage hotels. This change in setting and characterization does away with the layered realism of the original and completely alters the spirit of the remake.

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[3] Royal families were divested of their royal status and other perks like privy purses in Independent India.

[4] The traditional tailor in India is often, as a sign of respect, addressed as Masterji.

In this recycling of the original to deliver a contemporary mass entertainment package, the 'middle-class cinema' of the 70s is remade into a multiplex entertainer for its primary middle-class demographic, its comedic realism converted into an aspirational fairy tale. The contrast between the original 'middle-class comedy' of 1980 and its multiplex remake two decades later illustrates the sea change in the attitudes and preoccupations of the middle-class, its targeted demographic. The ordinariness of Mukherjee's world in the original is transformed into a grander setting of the remake's royal household, the original subtext of political repression no longer relevant and necessary in the remake's globalized consumerist world. The economic reforms of the early 1990s, opened up the Indian economy, leading to increased privatization, foreign direct investment, media de-regulation and an accelerated urbanization. It turned the middle class into its main beneficiary, paving the way for their moving on to lucrative private sector jobs, gaining access to a range of services and products that was not available before, and acquiring the financial and social clout to influence the political debate and focus attention on issues that were beneficial to its own interest. In the 90s films like *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (*Who Am I To You*, 1994), *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (*Brave of Heart Wins the Bride* 1995), *Dil To Pagal Hai* (*The Heart is Crazy,* 1997), *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (*Something Happens,* 1998), broke box office records, with the drama of the extended family providing a generic format to incorporate the expanding world of newly available commodities, and make space for new narratives of desire for a freshly globalised nation (Vasudevan 2011:338-39). The mushrooming of multiplexes a few years later, which created an exclusive space for the new urban middle class, enabled the emergence of new narratives of desire framing a range of middle class subjectivities in post-liberalization India.

Sociologist Leela Fernandes observes that the term 'the new middle class' does not involve any "shift in the composition or social basis of India's middle class", but rather the 'newness' involves a new "ideological-discursive projection" (2000:90). This projection involves a movement from "the tenets of the Gandhian and Nehruvian socialistic vision of India", from the earlier principles of austerity and state protection, to the current culture of consumption (90). The two versions of *Khoobsurat* explicate this shift, holding up a mirror to this transformation. In the trajectory of Manju's transformation into Mili and the milieu she inhabits can be mapped the shifting coordinates of the social as well as the filmic landscape. In fact, in the remake's radical shift from the political and social ethos of the original to its Disney-inflected millennial multiplex version, can also be traced the trajectory of the evolution of the middle class in India. 1980s India

inhabited a different social, political and economic terrain than the present one. The suspension of civil liberties due to the Emergency from 1975-77 was still fresh in public memory, though the general elections in 1978 had democratically elected a new government. With economic liberalization still more than a decade away, the economy was driven by the tenets of Nehruvian socialism, and the middle class mostly employed in the state controlled public sector companies. *Khoobsurat* (1980) thus embodied a certain spirit, very particular to the zeitgeist of the times, elegantly incorporating into its comedic storyline serious political and social concerns of the period. Seen against the background of the 70s, the film acquires a parallel meaning in the articulation of its desire to be free from the claustrophobic regimentation of daily life. The allusion to the Emergency is obvious as Manju, the protagonist, referring to her sister's in-laws, tells her sister: "*It's like the Martial Law! How do you live here*?" In this context, this lighthearted comedy might seem to articulate a metanarrative about the loss of civil liberties and citizen rights in the late 70s under a repressive government, with its young protagonist, Manju, embodying the desire to fight and change the oppressive status quo.

But even though *Khoobsurat* (2014) molds itself into the standardized Disney template of romantic entertainers, the film's success was dependent on leveraging the instant connection it evokes in audience memory with the original. It is within these contradictory impulses that the remake locates itself, as it almost dismantles the narrative framework of the original, but relies on the scaffolding of collective memory to pique audience interest and desire to see the film. Settings, characters and plot contrivances are changed to help *Khoobsurat* (2014) morph into its millennial version but the publicity surrounding the film designed to evoke nostalgia for simpler times. As the film's leading lady Sonam, in one of the film's pre-release interview says, "where are those simple happy films…that *Hrishida*[55] made? We wanted to revive the cinema that makes you smile, makes you laugh…makes you believe in all the good things of life" (IANS "Khoobsurat"). This very cleverly insinuates the remake into that terrain of middle class memory, marked by nostalgia for the kind of cinema that a large section of the audience had viewed from the balcony sections of single screen theatres. As Gopal observes, "The proper genealogy [of multiplex cinema] would begin with the middle-class cinema of late 1960s and 1970s, as

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[5] The suffix 'da' added to a name, generally used in Bengal, is used to indicate that the addressee is an elder brother or like one, and therefore used as a sign of respect.

evidenced in the works of directors like Basu Bhattacharya, Hrishikesh Mukherjee and Rajinder Bedi…that sought to access the contemporary from the vantage of the nascent middle class. If this middle cinema did not quite take off, this was in some measure due to the absence of suitable exhibition venues" (2011:134). The multiplex's emergence and dominance now makes possible the revival of those narratives that represent the middle-class ethos on screen, celebrating the various aspects of middle class life, and their desires and aspirations, in contemporary India.

Thus, even as the remake orchestrates a radical shift from the ethos of the original, subverting its metanarrative to subsume itself into the brand image of its production partner Disney, *Khoobsurat* (2014) still uses the memory framework to evoke interest, leveraging the pull of the collective audience memory of the original to entice an audience for the film. First, it positions itself as a contemporary claimant to the original film's director, Hrishikesh Mukherjee's legacy. As Sonam Kapoor, the film's leading lady and co-producer, says in an interview, "We felt a lacuna…That space of innocent laughter that Hrishi*da's* films once occupied is now vacant…We wanted to revive the cinema that makes you smile" (IANS "Sonam Kapoor"), smoothly aligning the remake with a specific era of Indian cinema and a cinematic legacy that lives on in audience memory.

Secondly, it uses star narrative to mobilize audience memory and nostalgia to actively participate in its reconfiguring of the original. Even though no member of the original star cast is included in the remake, *Khoobsurat* still employed the star narrative of the leading lady of the original, Rekha, to construct and activate audience memory by linking it to the leading lady of the remake, Sonam Kapoor. Here, the marketing strategy created an extra-filmic narrative that went beyond the customary circuits of the film text, by arranging a special screening of the film for Rekha and publicizing her approval of the remake. Kapoor elaborated in an interview: "When I told her about the [remake of 'Khoobsurat'] she gave me her blessings. She is excited about the film" (PTI). The film publicity even positioned Kapoor, the leading lady of the remake, as being very close to Rekha: "Rekha loves…Sonam…(she) is especially close to Rekha's heart" (Jha), which Kapoor promptly corroborates: "I heard Rekha*ji* loved the film. I know she loves me. She says I'm the daughter she never had" (Jha 2015). The promotional hype thus very cleverly evokes and integrates the star power and aura of the original heroine of the film to construct and activate an extra-textual narrative, thus igniting and mobilizing audience memory in the service of the remake.

In a further innovative stunt, the trailer of Rekha's latest film *Super Nani* (*Super Granny,* 2014) preceded the screening of *Khoobsurat* (2014). This further underlined and made tangible the tracing of a cinematic lineage via a star narrative within the environs of the theatre, binding the original's star and the remake within the filmic experience of its screening. As producer Rhea Kapoor stated: "We are attaching the trailer (of *Super Nani*) and are very excited and happy to do that. It's as if everything has come full circle – Rekha*ji* had acted in the original *Khoobsurat* and now, her trailer will be attached to our *Khoobsurat*" (Upala). In this "full circle", while *Super Nani* gains some publicity mileage via its evoking of the past star power of its leading protagonist, the remake's value is amplified by the "attaching" of the original's star presence, the strategy serving to effect in audience perception a transference of the original heroine's star identity to that of the remake's. Furthermore, *Khoobsurat* also has the actor Ratna Pathak reprise a pivotal role essayed by her mother Dina Pathak in the original. This 'genetic intertexuality' (Stam, Burgoyne, Flitterman-Lewis 211) also served to pique interest, and film reviews and websites carried this interesting bit of trivia, with critics even favorably comparing her performance with that of her mother.

This mobilization of audience memory of the original was integral to the commercial viability of the remake, and *Khoobsurat's* (2014) publicity strategy brilliantly uses it to situate the audience in a favorable reception to the remake's text. In strategically collapsing the star value in the two differing bodies of work in a pre-release publicity blitzkrieg, the remake integrates itself with the memory of the familiar trajectories of the original film, even though the former charts a radically different territory than the original in its setting and characterization. This strategy apparently worked as *Khoobsurat* went on to become a box office hit, collecting USD 2.92 million in the first week itself (IANS "Khoobsurat"), ultimately grossing $5.16 million in the box office (Box Office India 2015).

Jan Assmann suggests in a vivid imagery that the fixed unchanging "horizon" of our cultural memory is akin to "islands of time [that] expand into memory spaces", fostering a capacity to reconstruct and re-form in conjunction with the present ("Collective Memory" 1995). Memory as space then can be considered as a winding topology of various forces – of accumulated images and sounds, of ineffable sensations and feelings – which produces its value by integrating and transforming the subjective experience of a film remake or a reconfigured movie theater. In this process, it opens up a field of possibilities where the experiential encounter forged by memory

spaces allows the reconfigured to settle into a new configuration in public memory. Film remakes recognize that the audience remembers, in watching the new through the scaffolding of the memory of the original, bring a simultaneous awareness of the two modes of temporality – past and present – to the experience. The remake's text therefore concedes and often leverages that memory to shape and influence spectatorial affect. It is in this explicit texturality of the remake, in the layering of the new over the old, that the movement of memory becomes most apparent – generating its affect in the imaginative trajectory that locates the past in an unfolding present. The encounter with the retrofitted theater takes place through a similar trajectory, where its material history and the subjective experience of the cinemagoer combine to activate an intensification of linkages to its space that is personal, emotional and historical. Memory gives meaning to this resurrection, recognizing the reconfigured film and cinema hall as sites where stories take place in multiple layers, whether in the narrative experiences of their spaces or in their changing materialities. But the strategies of remaking or their impact is only valid in the context of a public that either remembers the old or is told to remember the old, and whose engagement with the new ignites a memory that returns with all the poignancy of time lost and reclaimed. It is in this memory-induced complex intersection of the issues of temporality and spectatorship, that affect of the film remake and the retrofitted theater lies.

About the Author: Debjani Mukherjee received her Ph.D. in 2017 in Media and Communications Studies at the University of Auckland. Her thesis looked at how radical changes in contemporary Indian popular cinema have been engendered by the arrival of the multiplex as a cinematic exhibition space.

Contact: dmuk338@aucklanduni.ac.nz

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