Constructions of Masculinity in Bollywood Promotional Content

Alyssa Grace Lobo
Syracuse University

Follow this and additional works at: https://surface.syr.edu/thesis

Part of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons

Recommended Citation
https://surface.syr.edu/thesis/290

This is brought to you for free and open access by SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses - ALL by an authorized administrator of SURFACE. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.
Abstract

Following a growing public discussion on violence against women in India, some commentators have turned their eye upon Bollywood. The film industry’s role in perpetuating models of courtship based on the stalking and harassment of women has drawn criticism from several quarters. While there has been much said about the depiction of women in Bollywood film, there has been relatively less said on portrayals of masculinity. The research that does exist focuses on textual analyses of films, or looks at masculinity through the lens of global capital flows. This thesis instead, analyzes trailers, posters, promotional pictures and social media for the film Raees (dir. Rahul Dholakia), to examine the construction of masculinity in Bollywood film promotional material. Promotional content tends to recreate masculine tropes that were found to be prevalent in textual analyses of Bollywood films. All promotional formats continued to reiterate male dominance, stereotyped Muslim men as violent and promoted nationalism. A new theme that emerged was the appropriation and commodification of Muslim masculinity, an outcome of Bollywood’s role in driving consumerism in India post economic liberalization.

Keywords: Masculinity, Bollywood, film promotion, film publicity, film advertising, nationalism
CONSTRUCTIONS OF MASCULINITY IN BOLLYWOOD

PROMOTIONAL CONTENT

by

Alyssa G. Lobo

B.A., St. Xavier’s College (Mumbai), 2010

Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Media Studies

Syracuse University
December 2018
Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the constant help and support of my advisor Dr. Carol Liebler. I am extremely grateful for the guidance you have given me through the twists and turns in the journey – in both finishing this thesis and throughout my time as a masters student. I could not have done it without you. I would also like to thank my committee members Dr. Bob Thompson, Prof. Tula Goenka and Dr. Anne Osborne. Your time, effort and feedback were invaluable in shaping this thesis.

I would also like to thank my family and friends. To my parents, for their love, encouragement and prayers on every step of this journey. I love you, thank you for making this dream possible. A big thank you to my sisters, Edina and Danica for their love and support.

Thanks to Tanul for long distance help and listening to me whine about writing.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Sarah D’Mello. Your love is with me always.
Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction ........................................................................................................1
  A Synopsis of the Film Text ..............................................................................................3
  Raees: Box Office Results Trump Public Controversy ...................................................5
  Key Concepts ..................................................................................................................7
    Bollywood ....................................................................................................................7
    Promotional Material ..................................................................................................7
    Masculinities .................................................................................................................9
  Research Questions .......................................................................................................10

Chapter 2: Bollywood’s India: The Cultural Context of the Film Industry in Mumbai ....12
  Faith and Film ................................................................................................................13
  Economic Liberalization.................................................................................................14
  The Neo-liberal Hero .....................................................................................................16

Chapter 3: Literature Review ............................................................................................18
  Hegemonic Masculinity in India .....................................................................................18
  Hegemonic Masculinity & Bollywood ............................................................................20
  Promotional Content .....................................................................................................24

Chapter 4: Methodology ..................................................................................................27
  Data Collection ..............................................................................................................27
    Sampling Timeframe ................................................................................................27
    Sampling Site .............................................................................................................28
    Access to Data ..........................................................................................................28
  Data Analysis ................................................................................................................29
  Limitations and Threats to Validity ..............................................................................30
Constructions of Masculinity in Bollywood Promotional Content

Chapter 1: Introduction

Sandesh Baliga, a 32-year-old security guard in Australia, stood trial for stalking in January 2015. His lawyer defended his actions, saying he was influenced by Bollywood, where men woo women by relentlessly pursuing them and that this was “quite normal behavior” among Indian men (Pearlman, 2015). The magistrate agreed and adjourned the complaint against him for five years on condition of good behavior, allowing Balinga to escape conviction (Child, 2015).

There has been much discussion about Bollywood’s influence in perpetuating rape culture in India, both within and outside academia (Ramasubramanian & Oliver, 2003; Jha & Nashrulla, 2014; Tulshyan, 2014; Dwyer, 2014, p.199). The ensuing public debate has led prominent film personalities to address the issue. Bollywood actor Aamir Khan addressed Indian mardaangi (masculinity) and Bollywood’s role in normalizing sexual harassment on his television show, Satyamev Jayate (Lakshmi, 2014). Director-actor Farhan Akhtar¹ chose to get more directly involved by launching a campaign against sexual discrimination called Men Against Rape and Discrimination - MARD (http://therealmard.org).

Most research on masculinity and Bollywood focuses on analyses of film texts. Although not all people watch a given film, a greater number are exposed to film promotional material through multiple media channels. Ghaznavi, Grasso and Taylor (2017) point out that film promotional materials reach a wider audience than the film and influence viewing decisions. Given the persuasive nature of promotional materials, an examination of the male representations in their texts would add a new dimension to the study of masculinity in Bollywood.

¹ Akhtar is a producer of Raees and one of the founders of Excel Entertainment
This thesis uses a feminist, intersectional approach to explore how Bollywood constructs masculinity in promotional material. Intersectionality was developed by Crenshaw (1991; 1989) to address the marginalization of women of color, particularly those from socially disadvantaged communities, within antidiscrimination law, in advocacy and in feminist and antiracist theory and politics. Intersectionality is a useful way of mediating the tension between assertions of multiple identities and group politics (Crenshaw, 1991)

Intersectional feminism rejects the notion of a single gendered experience and instead argues that “identity categories do not act independently of one another but rather interconnect” (Kosut, 2012). Intersectionality recognizes that the configuration of an individual’s social location is based in socially constructed dimensions of identity such as gender, race, class, sexuality and nationality, that contribute to oppression (Denis, 2008; Kosut, 2012). It also stresses contextualization – recognizing that both the meaning of a social location and the salience of our various social locations is not static (Denis, 2008). Given that Raees centers on a Muslim man from an underprivileged background, that most media professionals are individuals from a higher socio-economic group and Raees is a mainstream Bollywood film aimed at “mass” viewing, this is an ideal approach to examine how different social forces intersect in the creation of these images.

For this study, masculinity is defined as a “culturally relative ideal for men” (Buchanan, 2010). It should be noted that masculinity is not an object but “a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender and the effects of these practices in … culture” (Connell, 2005, p. 71). Bollywood in this case refers to the mainstream Hindi language film industry situated in Mumbai. Promotional material consists of content produced by the Hindi film industry specifically for the marketing or publicity of a film.
This study does not analyze the film text itself, nevertheless it is important to examine the film to be able to provide insightful analysis of how the promotional material coincided, complemented or diverged from the film. The following section is a short synopsis of the film.

A Synopsis of the Film Text

*Raees* is a co-production between Red Chillies Entertainment and Excel Entertainment. The film stars Shah Rukh Khan (SRK), widely considered one of the most popular Bollywood stars. His rise in the early 90s, in the aftermath of economic liberalization led to him being constructed as the “quintessential pan-Indian hero.” (Cayla, 2008). SRK and his wife, Gauri Khan co-own Red Chillies, while Excel is co-owned by Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar. Red Chillies, founded in 2002, primarily produces star vehicles for SRK. It also acts as an umbrella company for his other business interests: distribution, VFX, production and post-production services and his franchise cricket teams, the Kolkata Knight Riders and the Trinbago Knight Riders. Excel Entertainment, on the other hand, is known for producing “off-beat” films. It did produce a few traditionally mainstream films prior to *Raees*, two of which starred SRK. Thus, above all, *Raees* is a star vehicle for SRK, that ultimately plays to his strengths in its narrative.

*Raees* is a gangster film set between the sixties and eighties in Gujarat. The film focuses on the cat and mouse game between Raees (Shah Rukh Khan), a bootlegger and Majmudar (Nawazuddin Siddiqui), an honest police officer. As children, Raees and his best friend, Sadiq (Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub) begin transporting illegal liquor in Fatehpur. Living a life of poverty, Raees’ mother tells him that there is no business too small, and there is no religion bigger than business, as long as it does not harm anyone. Raees resolves to follow his mother’s philosophy.
Some years later Raees and Sadiq are working for Jairaj (Atul Kulkarni), a liquor smuggler. They decide to leave Jairaj and strike out on their own. They go to Mumbai to raise money for their first liquor consignment. While there, a run-in with another gang leads to Raees meeting Musabhai (Narendra Jha), a gang leader who helps him start his bootlegging business. Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner J. A. Majmudar gets transferred to Fatehpur, where he cracks down on the illegal alcohol trade. Raees and Majmudar engage in a battle of wits, with Raees consistently managing to outmaneuver him. Raees marries Aasiya (Mahira Khan) and they eventually have a son. Threatened by Raees’ growing influence, Jairaj attempts to kill him, but Raees survives and kills Jairaj.

Raees helps his community by providing work to the neighborhood women – they sew the cloth bags which he uses to deliver alcohol. He also helps mill workers get their pensions by threatening the mill owner. Raees manages to get the covert support of both the Chief Minister and the opposition leader in exchange for liquor and bribes. Using his political influence, Raees gets Majmudar transferred to a desk job at the district’s control room. However, Majmudar uses this as an opportunity to tap Raees' phone conversations. A fallout between Raees and the opposition leader results in Raees causing a riot during his election campaign. The Chief Minister advises Raees to go to jail till the elections are over and promises to let him out afterwards. However, the politicians form an alliance while he is behind bars, jeopardizing his business with their prohibition platform. In response, Raees contests the election from jail and wins. He then launches a housing project and gathers money from the people in his community to fund it.

Majmudar gets promoted to Superintendent and is transferred back to Fatehpur. Communal riots break out in the state and the resulting curfews put a strain on Raees’ business.
The Chief Minister puts the housing project in green zone (agricultural use), making it impossible for any construction to take place. Between the housing project, his charity work during the riots and his dwindling business, Raees finds himself short on funds. Musabhai offers Raees money to smuggle gold for him and he accepts the job. Later, serial bomb blasts occur in north India. The police investigation leads to Raees and it is revealed that the crates of gold he smuggled contained explosives. Raees confronts and kills Musabhai for betraying his trust and killing innocent people. Majmudar gets unofficial consent from his senior officer to kill Raees and orders his officers to shoot him on sight. Raees surrenders but brings the press with him, so that he is not killed in front of his family. Majmudar confines him in a police van and they travel outside the city. Raees tells him to inform his wife of the truth and that he didn’t run away. Majumdar shoots him repeatedly in the chest, killing Raees. In his dying moments Raees recalls his mother’s philosophy and his life. The team drives away, leaving his body in the wilderness.

Given the film’s themes of religion, crime and terrorism, and its release during a tense time in India’s relationship with Pakistan, *Raees* faced considerable media scrutiny. The next section will discuss the film’s controversies and its box office success.

**Raees: Box Office Results Trump Public Controversy**

From the release of its first trailer in December 2016, the Bollywood blockbuster *Raees* was mired in controversy. The film’s publicity team handled a media blitzkrieg consisting of date clashes with other big budget movies, calls for boycott by Shia Muslims, threats of violence from a political party due to the inclusion of a Pakistani actress, a ban by the Pakistani film censor board and accusations of being “antinational” and “dishonest” by the National General Secretary of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (Bollywood Hungama News Network, 2016; Khan, 2017;
Sonali, 2017; Zee Media Bureau, 2017). This is unsurprising as the film was released in the wake of strained relations between India and Pakistan following the Uri terror attacks (Express Web Desk, 2016).

Despite the myriad controversies and box office competition, *Raees* performed well, making ₹1,02,00,00,000 (approximately $15,814,998) in its first week, in comparison to ₹58,92,00,000 (approximately $9,133,768) by its biggest competitor, *Kaabil* (Box Office India, 2017). Additionally, SRK (who is Muslim) has a history of controversies involving his religious identity, which contributed to the criticism from politicians and audiences (Express Web Desk, 2016; Kaushal, 2015). Though SRK played villainous characters earlier in his career, he is better known for his romantic hero roles. *Raees* was a departure from the “good Muslim” roles that, SRK is known for, which were characterized by “affection, humor…and most significantly patriotism” (Murty, 2009). SRK and his frequent collaborator Karan Johar, have also been credited with pioneering a new “soft masculinity” in Bollywood through the figure of the “sensitive urban man” (Ganesh & Mahadevan, 2015). In *Raees*, SRK played a gangster, supposedly based on deceased real-life smuggler and terrorist, Abdul Latif (Swarajya Staff, 2016). Even though the filmmakers denied that the film was a biopic of Latif, some right-wing publications wondered if *Raees* would white wash his crimes by glossing over his terrorist links (Express Web Desk, 2016; OpIndia Staff, 2016). In wake of this public perception, it is important to note how the film’s promotions balanced SRK (and Raees’) religious identity, his own brand of Bollywood masculinity and a nationalist public discourse in the construction of masculinity in its promotional material.

**Key Concepts**
To carry out an analysis of the masculinity in Bollywood content, it is necessary to address the wider social context. India has a complex social hierarchy governed by caste, class and religion, in addition to gender. Therefore, this study examines the products of the Hindi film industry from a feminist standpoint, using gender order theory. For this purpose, the central concepts of this study are elaborated on briefly below. These will be expanded upon in the literature chapters.

**Bollywood**

The term “Bollywood” is a contentious one. A portmanteau of “Bombay” and “Hollywood,” the term evokes an array of reactions from celebration to contempt (Deshpande, 2013). “Bollywood” has been criticized by both film theoreticians and creative professionals, who see it as derivative of Hollywood and a negation of the presence of regional cinema (Jain & Gupta, 2015). Most of this criticism stems from multiple meanings of the term: the Hindi film industry centered in Bombay (now Mumbai), the Indian film industry as a whole, a certain aesthetic style that includes elements of melodrama, kitsch and song-and-dance sequence and the cultural products that are tenuously linked to the Hindi film industry (Deshpande, 2013). This thesis refers to the mainstream Hindi film industry when discussing Bollywood and will study the products of the industry situated in Mumbai.

**Promotional Material**

Film promotion generally entails advertising, both in traditional and new media and includes trailers, posters, publicity events, billboards, etc. (Kroon, 2014). The movie industry has generally replicated mainstream advertising practices in terms of the media channels used and product features highlighted (Staiger, 1990). However, the nature of the film industry and the cinematic product means that film advertising needs to market each film competitively against
all others currently in distribution rather than using “brand name” advertising (Staiger, 1990). This means that film promotional content focuses on product features such as genre, stars, spectacle, etc. (Staiger, 1990).

While film marketing is targeted towards both the consumer and the trade, this study focuses on content that is targeted towards the audience (Kerrigan, 2017). The main function of promotional material is to communicate the essence of the film to the audience (Kerrigan, 2017). Hamel (2012), quotes Arthur James, Publicity Director for Metro Pictures in 1918, outlining four “necessities” of film advertising: “posters, lobby displays, neighborhood and newspaper advertising.” The purpose of film advertising is to position the film appropriately so that fans of the genre or star can access the movie easily (Marich, 2013, p.7). To do this, promotional material creates a lack of information through revealing some and holding back other information (Klecker, 2015). Film advertising and other promotional material, function as paratexts – textual elements that emerge from the film and impart significance to the main text but aren’t integral to the film itself and can function on their own (Kernan, 2004; Klecker, 2015; Steinhart, 2018; Gray, 2010).

Posters and trailers are the most ubiquitous of film advertising formats. However, posters do more than attract audiences to watch the film. They need to convey a taste of the film in few words, pique people’s curiosity enough for them to spend their money and appeal to them aesthetically (Rhodes, 2007). Trailers are “a quintessential cinematic practice” whose main purpose is to “conform to the other elements of a film’s ad campaign” (Ritzer, 2005). Trailers work as film samples, guiding how audiences read the film and raise expectations that are supposed to be met by the film (Hediger, 2001, as cited in Klecker, 2015). According to Hediger (2001), trailers create desire in five different ways – simulate entertainment value, arouse
curiosity with cognitive gaps, establish associations with other movies, give the impression of a virtual memory, and trigger a mimetic desire (as cited in Klecker, 2015). Though trailers are narrativizations of promotion, images are selected and combined in such a way to prioritize attracting the viewer’s attention rather than sustaining any narrative coherence (Kernan, 2004).

Another important advertising format is the promotional featurette. These video paratexts visualize the film’s production such that they not only formulate meaning for the film they are marketing, but also narrativize the production process for public consumption (Steinhart, 2018).

In addition to these classic formats of film advertising, this thesis will also analyze digital and newer visual formats such as social media.

**Masculinities**

To understand how gender roles are constructed, maintained and contested we must look at how multiple social forces operate with gender to determine an individual’s position within a social order. Connell (2014) recognized multiple masculinities and stressed the need to examine the relations between these types to gain a better understanding of how masculinity is constructed. Hegemonic masculinity is the type that occupies the primary position in gender relations. It is the “configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted… legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees… the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.” (Connell, 2014). It is important to stress that this is a currently accepted form of masculinity and is thus subject to contestation not only from women, but also subordinate men. As Donaldson (1993) puts it, the crux of hegemonic masculinity is not its dominance over women, but the control of men and the representation of it as a naturalized ideal. The types of masculinities that Connell (2014) outlines are: hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalized.
However, looking at hegemonic masculinities as purely oppositional to other masculinities is myopic. Over the years, hegemonic masculinity incorporates and subverts aspects of subordinated masculinities, achieving a hybridized masculinity that is not outright oppressive towards women, yet still forms part of a “hegemonic masculine bloc” (Demetriou, 2001). Connell’s theory is based in western standards of masculinity, hence hegemonic masculinity will differ in India. Yet changing social, global and economic forces have similarly caused notions of hegemonic masculinity to constantly evolve in India. This evolution of masculinity in India will be touched upon later in the literature review.

**Research Questions**

Current social debates in India have necessitated a discussion about representations of masculinity in popular media. Bollywood is the dominant form of popular culture and its influence cannot be understated. It is not enough to merely examine and critique these masculine representations, but to also engage with how these portrayals are constructed and deployed. Moreover, the persuasive nature of film promotional materials makes audiences more inclined to be influenced by the messages carried by them.

This thesis addresses the cultural products of Bollywood. Therefore, this study will address the following research question:

RQ 1: How does Bollywood construct masculinity within film promotional content?

The following chapters will elucidate this analysis of constructions of masculinity in Bollywood promotional content. Chapter 2 will contain a short history of Bollywood and the relationship between the Mumbai industry and the larger Indian society. Chapter 3 will further develop the concepts mentioned above and build a theoretical framework for studying masculine depictions.
in Bollywood. Chapter 3 will provide an outline for the methodology for this study. Chapter 4 will elaborate on the themes found in the promotional content, while Chapter 5 discusses the implications of this study and possible directions for research in the future.
Chapter 2: Bollywood’s India:
The Cultural Context of the Film Industry in Mumbai

Bollywood is the dominant media institution in India and plays an important role in constructing and defining dichotomies such as traditional/modern, Western/Eastern, and categories like “culture,” “nation” and “Indian” (Ganti, 2000, as cited in Ganti, 2013). Indian popular cinema is continually influenced by contemporary socio-cultural art forms and practices. Gokulsing & Dissanayake (2002/1998, pp 17-22) outline six cultural forces that have influenced contemporary popular cinema:

1. **Indian epics – the Mahabharata and Ramayana:** Their influence can be seen on the thematic, narrative, ideological and communication (i.e. oral tradition) levels.

2. **Classical Indian theatre:** Sanskrit plays were elaborate dance-dramas which emphasized spectacle. The nature and structure of Sanskrit theatre shaped the Indian idea of theatre and dramatic presentation.

3. **Folk theatre:** Regional folk dramas were informed by the style and techniques of classical theatre. These folk forms affected the sensibility of popular filmmakers in the use of song and dance, humor, narrative structure and informing melodrama.

4. **Parsi theatre:** With Mumbai as its center, Parsi theatre drew upon Western and Indian entertainment forms, in a bid to appeal to the lowest common denominator, a tendency that can be found in most popular Hindi films today. Their plays were a mixture of “realism and fantasy, music and dialogue, narrative and spectacle and stage ingenuity within the framework of melodrama” (Gokulsing & Dissanayake, 2002/1998).

---

2 Parsis are Zoroastrians who migrated to India from Persia during the Arab invasion
5. **Hollywood**: Indian filmmakers were enraptured by the technical inventiveness of Hollywood and by Hollywood musicals in particular. While Hollywood filmmakers strove to maintain the pretense of reality, by legitimizing spectacle within the narrative, Indian filmmakers made no such attempt, rather they created the impression that song and dance were natural expressions of emotion in the dramatic situation. The Hindi film industry also briefly adopted the studio system.

6. **Musical television (MTV)**: A comparatively recent influence is the emergence of music television channels during the late eighties. The influence of channels such as MTV has been seen increasingly in Bollywood films since the nineties, particularly in the use of quick cutting, dance sequences and camera angles generally seen in modern musical television.

Aside from these artistic influences, Bollywood has been influenced by various socio-cultural, historical and political forces prevalent in India. We shall examine some of these forces in detail in this section.

**Faith and Film**

Religion has tremendous influence in Indian society. Hinduism is the majority religion, comprising 79.80% of the population, with Islam being the largest minority religion, with 14.23% of the population practicing the faith (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, 2015). Perhaps unsurprisingly, religion inspired some of the earliest Indian films. After watching a silent film, *The Life of Christ* (1910); D.G. Phalke decided to make *Raja Harishchandra* (1913), a mythological film and the first silent feature film made in India (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018; Gokulsing & Dissanayake 2002/1998, p.12). Religion has been explored in Indian film in various ways- mythological films, films on the lives of religious
figures, films which incorporate religious philosophy, depictions of religious groups or critiques of religious institutions and practices (Gokulsing & Dissanayake 2002/1998, p 55-57).

It is not possible to discuss religion without discussing religious conflict in India, particularly Hindu-Muslim conflict. While India won independence from the British Raj, the celebrations were marred by the division of the country into India and Pakistan. The division of the country was done in response to demands for a separate state from the Muslim minority who feared being marginalized in independent India (Ganti, 2013). The result was one of the largest mass migrations in history and uncountable casualties, with anywhere from 200,000 to 2 million victims of riots (Talbot, 2009). The impact of Partition on the Indian film industry was far reaching. While film centers like Lahore and Kolkata lost personnel and audience, the Hindi film industry saw an influx of talent, many of whose descendants still work in the industry (Ganti, 2013). In fact, the Hindi film industry was one of the few places where Muslims were not marginalized, but achieved prominence (Ganti, 2013). Some have pointed out that that unlike Muslim actors in the 1950s, today’s stars have not had to adopt Hindu names. But Dwyer (2014, p. 121) points out that the practice was more likely due to a need to sound modern and pan-Indian and was practiced by both Hindu and Muslim stars.

Economic Liberalization

One of the most commonly cited examples of Bollywood’s cosmopolitanism in recent times is the rise of the Khans – Shahrukh Khan, Aamir Khan and Salman Khan – during the nineties, and they continued dominance of the industry (Cain, 2016). Although all three are Muslim, they embody different aspects of Indian neoliberal masculinity (Gopinath, 2017). Unsurprising, since the Khans came to prominence around the time of economic liberalization of the Indian economy; i.e. after 1991. Prior to liberalization, there were trade restrictions on
imported goods, which extended to the film industry; this resulted in Indian films, especially Bollywood, gaining a competitive advantage against Hollywood (Goenka, 2014).

Prior to the nineties, the Indian state did not give much thought to filmmaking as an industry. This was primarily because of the ambivalent relationship the state had with film. Cinema was heavily taxed as a frivolous vice yet was simultaneously seen as a tool for nation building; provided that it had artistic or social merit (Ganti, 2013). After being granted industry status by the government in May 1998, producers and exhibitors could access government benefits and institutional finance (Ganti, 2013; Goenka, 2014). It also brought in new players to the industry in the form of global media conglomerates such as Sony, Disney and 20th Century Fox who brought with them a more professionalized way of doing business and a more formal business culture (Joshi, 2015).

Economic liberalization also changed the material conditions in which Bollywood films are consumed. Traditionally Hindi films were screened in large single screen theatres with separate seating sections, that catered to people from a wide range of social classes and demographics (Joshi, 2015). Thus, a filmmaker could not make a niche film if he expected to make profits as a theatre owner needed to sell a thousand seat hall (Joshi, 2015); the goal was to make a “superhit” film that would appeal to everyone (Ganti, 2013). The early 2000s saw the development of large leisure spaces, such as malls with their attached multiplex theatres which made it possible to exhibit multiple films simultaneously (Joshi, 2015, Goenka, 2014; Ganti, 2013). The result on the production end is the development of smaller budget films, with “offbeat” stories (Ganti, 2013). The cinema audience became segmented with the emergence of the urban “multiplex audience,” along with a gentrification of the exhibition space and theatre viewing experience (Joshi, 2015, Goenka, 2014; Ganti, 2013). Consequently, with most of the
Indian population unable to afford these leisure spaces, repeated film viewings declined, putting more pressure on mainstream movies to be hits and the need for films to break into the “100 crore club,” i.e. make over 10 million rupees (Raghavendra, 2012; Goenka, 2014). Along with these changes in the industry came a growing need to target the international market, making Bollywood one of India’s chief exports (Goenka, 2014).

**The Neo-liberal Hero**

As mentioned earlier, the three Khans embodied different facets of star masculinity during the post liberalization era: Aamir is the “thinking man”; Salman, the “bad boy” and Shah Rukh, “the emotional but successful outsider” (Gopinath, 2017). Of the three of them, SRK’s rise in the early nineties led to him being constructed as the “quintessential pan-Indian hero” (Cayla, 2008). His star image is often considered a perfect blend of Indian and Western culture. Chopra (2007, p 149) explains SRK’s allure:

“…while the local Indians aspired to be articulate, designer-clad yuppies like him, the Indians abroad saw him as one of them. First-generation immigrants hoped that their Westernized sons and daughters would find the elusive cultural equilibrium that DDLJ’s³ Raj had.”

SRK’s personal narrative as the son of a lower-middle class Muslim family, his financial struggle and his rise to stardom based on his own determination and work ethic aligns with the neo-liberal individualist success story (Gopinath, 2017; Chopra 2007).

But to fully understand SRK’s star appeal, we need to examine the masculine stardom that his ascent replaced. SRK is very often compared to Amitabh Bachchan, the actor synonymous with the “angry young man” persona that dominated Bollywood in the seventies.

³ *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (Aditya Chopra, 1995)
and eighties (Deshpande, 2005). Bachchan’s stardom was based in a controlled anger; a masculinity that represented resentment against social injustice (Dwyer, 2015; Ganesh & Mahadevan, 2015). Conversely, SRK represents a modern Indian emotionality; he responds with tears and is rarely angry (Dwyer, 2015). In fact, in the movies where he does act alongside Bachchan, it is this very emotionality that opposes Bachchan’s anger; an anger that is based in reason rather than sentiment (Dwyer, 2015; Gopinath, 2017). Thus, it is clear, that SRK shifted the paradigms of hero masculinity; from vengeance, violence and hypermasculinity to the vulnerable yet ambitious, urbane middle-class man (Gopinath, 2017).

Though he has redefined male stardom and Indianness, it hasn’t come without some compromise. In the case of SRK, his religious identity has been subsumed to his image as the idealized neoliberal feeling man that was aligned with Hindu-nationalism inflected cosmopolitan neoliberalism (Gopinath, 2017). Subsequently, at the height of his stardom SRK stood for the nation and is emblematic of India’s “evolution into a global power.” (Cayla, 2008).

We can thus see the influence of global, social and economic forces in determining how masculinity and stardom is constructed in Hindi film. The next chapter will cover academic literature dealing with the history of hegemonic masculinity in India, Bollywood’s role in constructing masculinity and promotional content.
Chapter 4: Literature Review

The following literature review will cover the prevailing ideals of hegemonic masculinity in India and its depiction in Bollywood films; depictions of Muslim men in Bollywood; the role of promotional material in the marketing of film and how gender is used in film promotional content.

Hegemonic Masculinity in India

Hegemonic masculinity is the form of masculinity that is culturally exalted over other forms at any given time (Connell, 2014). Since the concept of hegemonic masculinity was influenced by psychoanalysis, particularly studies in gender identity, it is necessary to examine the psychological formulation of manhood in India (Connell, & Messerschmidt, 2005). Kakar (2012) delineated the distinctive psychological traits of Indian men through a focus on kinship. Indian mother-son relationships are intense; hence boys are required to overcome maternal dominance to acquire masculine identity (Kakar, 2012). To achieve this, they attempt to form an identification with their fathers. Thus, the formation of Indian masculine identity requires an oedipal alliance rather than oedipal complex (Kulkarni, 2014). Though Kakar’s finding are limited due to their reliance on limited clinical data and oral traditions, we can already see that masculine identity formation diverges from that under western psychoanalysis (Kulkarni, 2014, p. 55-56). In order to examine masculine representations in Bollywood, it is thus imperative to first elucidate the cultural context which informs these depictions.

British colonialism had a significant impact on how masculinity was constructed in India. British officers who were influenced by Victorian ideals of manliness, athleticism, and militarism, stereotyped Indian men (particularly the Bengali bhadralok/elites) as effeminate (Sinha, 1999). Nandy (1988) posits that some colonial Indian groups reacted to British emphasis
on idealized hypermasculinity by constructing a hyper masculinity based on hyper-Kshatriyahood (Kshatriya = warrior caste). Pre-colonial India valorized Brahmin asceticism over violent Kshatriya manhood, thus limiting martial Kshatriya masculinity (Nandy, 1988). Nandy implies that colonization warped pre-colonial India’s fluid sexual and gender identities through imposing its rigid masculine ideal (Kulkarni, 2014). The result, Nandy (1988, p. 52-53) theorized, is a new gender hierarchy that developed in colonial India:


However, later thinkers have questioned such an easy demarcation in the changing nature of Indian hegemonic masculinity. O’Hanlon (1997) historicizes masculinity in pre-colonial India by delineating the different forms of masculinity practiced in India during the Mughal period. Mughal rule prized imperial service as the only pathway to achieving successful manhood, by blending Persian courtly skill with a martial spirit (O’Hanlon, 1997). Simultaneously, other socio-ethnic groups developed their own military masculinities in response to imperial rule (O’Hanlon, 1997). She concludes that pre-colonial culture was complex, with “competing efforts to establish a hierarchy of…forms of masculinity, and shared codes which juxtaposed men as soldiers generally against the social world of women” (O’Hanlon, 1997). Sinha (1999) observes that the term ‘colonial masculinity’ (both British and native) is overdetermined by “the encounters between the colonial British elite and the Bengali Hindu middle class at a specific historical moment.” Nevertheless, the colonial image of the emasculated Indian man has had lasting impact on later constructions of masculinity, especially during the freedom movement.

Burgeoning nationalism led to multiple images of manhood during the freedom movement, which tended to be overwhelmingly Hindu and upper caste (Gupta, 2011). National masculinity was expressed in multiple forms: public figures (such as Gandhi and Swami
Vivekananda), social movements (Sanatan Dharmists and Arya Samajists), the notion of *brahmacharya* (celibacy) or reimagined images of a warrior Krishna (Gupta, 2011). These constructions of national manhood consisted of re-envisioned Hindu masculine images and gender identities that emphasized physical prowess (Gupta, 2011). Hindu tradition and Puranic legends espouse the need to retain semen as a means to achieving mental and physical strength (Chakravarti, 1998). Thus, one way that hegemonic Hindu masculinity is achieved through renunciate celibacy. Today these philosophies are expressed in the “warrior monk” ideal upheld by the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) and other Hindu nationalist organizations (Banerjee, 2006).

This image of Hindu masculinity was not only in response to British masculine dominance, but also to Muslim masculinity. The *shuddhi* (conversion to Hinduism) and *sangathan* (community defense) movements evoked the figure of the Muslim man as rapist and abductor; while prizing Hindu female chastity (Gupta, 2011). Gupta’s (2011) examination of print media from the 1920s reveals that Hindu communalists constructed Muslim masculinity as uncontrollably aggressive and lustful, while invoking Hindu masculinity to protect Hindu women from rape and abduction. This theme continued to arise in later media, especially film.

**Hegemonic Masculinity & Bollywood**

Indian society is highly patriarchal and stratified. Masculinity thus works in tandem with other social forces such as caste, class, status, religious and provincial identities to suppress both women and men (Chowdhry, 2015, Sinha, 1999). While traditional notions of masculinity are still at play, mass media also influences constructions of gender identity. Cinema halls in India are an extremely gendered space, primarily occupied by young men (Derné, 2000). Indian male
filmgoers enjoy watching male stars, making them objects of their affection. These on-screen images of male stars are objects of the filmgoers’ gaze, while also prompting a strong identification that leads male audience members to view themselves as “framed by the looks of others.” (Derné, & Jadwin, 2000). This is manifested in imitation of the stars’ style and swagger. Young men in particular copy the clothes, hairstyles and mannerisms of both heroes and villains, often memorizing whole chunks of dialogue (Osella & Osella, 2004).

Besides style and mannerisms, the focus on male stars’ looks is primarily concerned with their muscles and other physical attributes. What is being displayed is male power, seen in the hero’s control of the heroine’s body and his exercise of violence (Derné, & Jadwin, 2000). The objectification of the male star’s body only reinforces male dominance and force. In addition, sexuality is equated with the use of force, thus linking love and violence (Derné, 2000). Dominant forms of masculinity are not just reinforced in the action, but also in the music. An analysis of the lyrics of the soundtrack of a popular Bollywood film found that the lexical choices of lyricists furthered a hegemonic masculine ideal (Rizwan, 2011).

The emergence of Bollywood as an international film genre coincided with a thematic shift from macho violence and revenge to a preoccupation with romance and family, with the family evoking the nation (Ganesh & Mahadevan, 2015). With the exception of the mother-son relationship, heroes from older films were not overtly emotional (Chattopadhyay, 2011b). Depictions of men in Hindi cinema have evolved from the anti-establishment working-class hero of the “angry young man” films in the seventies and eighties, to the cosmopolitan, consumerist (yet still traditional) romantic hero of the early nineties (Banerjea, 2005; Deshpande, 2005). The films of SRK and Johar frequently featured a diasporic context which constructed the male protagonist as a “sensitive urban man constituted by intimate relationships” (Ganesh &
Mahadevan, 2015). In fact, SRK’s soft masculinity is characterized by uninhibited display of emotions by crying and making others cry (Ganesh & Mahadevan, 2015). In recent years, Bollywood films showcase heroes with muscular bodies in response to growing nationalist sentiment and a globalized film market (Balaji & Hughson, 2014; Deshpande, 2005).

A notable influence on the depictions of masculinity on screen in recent years has been the rise of the Hindutva nationalism in the early nineties. Aggressive versions of Hindu masculinities appeared in popular versions of myth and epics such as the televised versions of the Ramayana and Mahabharata (Bannerji, 2006). Films from the period following the emergence of Hindutva were found to depict the Muslim male as “other” while legitimizing the Hindu male as the national ideal (Murty, 2009). The depiction of Muslim men as either terrorists or the “depoliticized good Muslim” are narrative instances of controlling the “excessive sexuality and violent danger the Muslim masculine normally poses” (Khan, 2011). Bollywood depicts Muslims through typically Muslim attire, “purely Islamic” mannerisms and as strict adherents of codes of Islamic religiosity (Kumar, 2013).

Yet this is not a simple delineation of a hierarchy of masculinities. Following the granting of industry status to Bollywood in 1998, film makers had access to loans from banks and conventional credit sources; consequently, the Hindi film business began to aggressively market its films globally (India Abroad, 1998; Aiyar & Chopra, 1998). The post-liberalization era in Bollywood has given rise to what Deshpande (2005) calls the “consumable hero” who attracts audiences through his objectified body rather than through his persona. The rise of the consumable hero has led to most Bollywood actors (SRK included) cultivating a muscular body, thus “creating a strong heroic look” (David, 2015). Consequently, we see the cooption of nationalistic, hyper masculine constructions by transnational media and culture producers for
consumption in the global market place (Balaji & Hughson, 2014; Ciecko, 2001). In fact, Ciecko (2001) points out that the depictions of male stars in Bollywood film are “central to the re-imaging of India for global consumption.” As far as the domestic audience is concerned, these depictions must reflect dominant masculine practices (though not necessarily all at the same time), while simultaneously creating idealized versions of hegemonic masculinity (Gopinath, 2016). Gopinath (2016) refers to Bollywood’s depictions of men as “Hero masculinities,” representations of idealized masculinities that feature a larger-than-life protagonist and are embodied by a larger-than-life star. Hero masculinities embody aspirational masculinities: swaggering machismo (masculine flamboyance?), safeguarding the nation and the family, being quintessential lovers, and being appropriately emotional (Gopinath, 2016). The growth of the new hyper masculine ideal in Indian films can be traced to several factors, including the “masculinization of India’s national identity” as a response to American marginalization on the global stage (Balaji, 2013).

The recent political resurgence of the Hindu right signals a re-assertion of this masculine ideal, albeit modified for the new consumerist India. This ideal can be seen, for example, in the coverage of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the 2014 election campaign (Srivastava, 2015). While modernity allows for a new formulation of hegemonic masculinity, it should also be noted that it is a relativist concept. Symptomatic of this is the creation of alternate masculinities by newer film makers, particularly in sub genres such as independent and diasporic cinema (Rajan, 2006). Yet these formulations of masculinity do not stray too far from the heteronormative norm.
Promotional Content

Studies of promotional material in Bollywood are relatively few compared to that of film criticism or textual analysis. Yet their importance cannot be understated. According to Staiger (1990), film advertising possesses certain defining characteristics differentiating each film, advertising through several media, stressing a particular set of competitive features (genres, stars, and so forth), and advertising indirectly. However, it is still a form of advertising, and can be seen as a “discursive attempt to construct particular images of products as well as to articulate or channel consumers' desires toward those products” (Staiger, 1990). It is also a representational system that produces meaning outside of the film it advertises (Schroeder, 2002, p.26). It does this by tapping into common knowledge- symbols and connections, including those that exist in the wider society (Schroeder, 2002, p. 37). Visual consumption of film promotional content thus consists of decoding the images portrayed in the content (Schroeder, 2002, p.37). Film advertising is a visual spectacle and the conventions of various film promotional formats such as trailers, posters and featurettes encourage a narrow range of expectations when we decode the imagery in them (Schroeder, 2002, p.171).

Through heightening emotions and manipulation of its audio-visual content, trailers can create alternate narratives that diverge from the film they advertise (Jensen, 2014). Trailers are “another medium entirely” and are important in the study of film marketing, such as product differentiation, appealing to international audiences and dealing with censorship (Street, 2009).

Another important format of promotional material is the publicity still. Van Parys (2008) discusses a typology of publicity stills and outlines three types:
1. **The Invisible Lens** i.e. stills seem to be taken straight from the film, with the characters acting within the film’s setting; either shot by a photographer or taken from the finished film strip).

2. **The Publicity Portrait Photograph** created during a special shoot with the main star(s). These are taken specifically for marketing and publicity and the stars acknowledge the camera’s presence.

3. **The Actor in Character** is similar to the publicity portrait but with the actor ignoring the camera. Publicity stills essentially work as teasers for the film, enticing the audience to find out the context in which these visual appear Van Parys (2008). Yet while promotional content is a representative depiction of the film, characters can also significantly differ from how they are depicted in the main texts (Coon, 2005).

   A popular way to supplement printed materials used in the marketing process was the promotion of stars – often in the form of special activities and events involving the stars (Staiger, 1990). Following the collapse of the studio system in India, stars became paramount, often being the draw for films (Ganti, 2013, Dwyer & Patel, 2002). As such, they represented idealized forms of masculinity and femininity and their images were circulated in movie publicity (Dwyer & Patel, 2002). The portrait of the star on the poster arouses expectations; it projects the persona associated with that star, an identity that has been constructed through media texts that feature the start, including promotional activities and publicity (Dyer, 1993, p. 2). An interesting case of the interplay between promotional content and a Bollywood star’s persona is Amitabh Bachchan. While some print media such as booklets focused on his body in various aggressive or action-oriented poses, the posters focused exclusively on his face. These portraits were often hand painted by specialized poster artists; making his star persona a construction of the artists’
interpretation of his star identity as well (Dwyer & Patel, 2002). The result is an iconic image—an image where many symbolic meanings converge. This was created by three techniques—enlarging the portrait and placing it at the centre of the poster, directing the gaze of the star to meet the viewer and over-painting when rendering the portrait (Dwyer & Patel, 2002). The result is that both the design and aesthetic style (over-painting) is now closely associated with images of Bachchan, creating another layer to the symbolic meaning of the star’s image (Dwyer & Patel, 2002). Similarly, SRK’s image also carries certain symbolic meanings—individualism, emotionality and modernity, as mentioned earlier.

In recent years film marketing has become especially important due to the rise of audience segmentation in the wake of the multiplex model gaining acceptance in India (Goswami, 2016; Goenka, 2014). With film promotions becoming increasingly aggressive in Bollywood, an examination of their depiction of gender, is especially pertinent. In a recent longitudinal study of top grossing Hollywood and Bollywood film posters and trailers, it was found that Hindi trailers had more instances of physically aggressive behavior by Central Male Characters toward Central Female Characters compared with U.S. trailers (Ghaznavi, et. al, 2017).

Genre can play a role in how films are marketed to both the public and the press. Coon’s (2005) examination of Hollywood trade press during the period of the first World War, concludes that the construction of a “he-man” masculinity as “realistic,” and therefore prestigious, led to the perception and further development of war films as a quintessentially masculine film genre. An awareness of how hegemonic masculinity functions with the persuasive nature of film promotional content informs the methodology that will be outlined in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Methodology

This thesis seeks to gain an understanding of how Bollywood constructs masculinity in film promotional content. To this end, textual analysis was used to examine audio-visual promotional content for the Bollywood film, Raees. Textual analysis views texts as “cultural artifacts, material documentary evidence that is used to make sense out of our lives” (Brennen, 2013, p. 193). This study examines various audio-visual texts such as posters, videos, social media posts and film stills.

Data Collection

Data collection consisted of audio-visual promotional content released by the studios and agencies involved in the film’s promotions. It includes traditional content such as posters, trailers, promotional images, behind the scenes videos, and digital content such as the official social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube) for the film and the studios. Any content that did not feature the male characters was excluded. It also includes news stories based on press releases and events that the public relations team created. These stories were acquired from the Public Relations head of Red Chillies, one of the studios that co-produced Raees. This study did not analyze content that did not exclusively promote the film, such as the actors’ television appearances or promotional activities with consumer brands.

Sampling Timeframe

Promotional content that was released from 30th November 2016 to 15th May 2017 was gathered. This timeframe encompasses the release of the teaser trailer of Raees to the “deleted scenes” videos released online to promote the film’s DVD and Netflix release to cover the entire range of promotional content created for the film.
Sampling Sites

Posters and promotional images were gathered from the Raees page on IMDb - the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com). The websites for both Excel Entertainment and Red Chillies Entertainment were also accessed to gather additional material like film synopses and press releases. Data was collected from the official Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts of the film. The YouTube account of Red Chillies Entertainment was accessed for teasers, trailers, behind the scenes videos and deleted scenes. As of 10 May 2018, there were a total of 46 videos on the Red Chillies YouTube channel. Of these a teaser trailer that was released before the chosen timeframe was excluded from analysis, but since the footage used was not significantly different from those in later trailers, the researcher felt that it did not affect the analysis or results. Videos that did not feature the male leads were excluded, leaving 41 videos that were analyzed. The Excel Entertainment channel does not host any videos about the film. The researcher also contacted the public relations agency that was responsible for promotions of the film to confirm that the images on IMDb were indeed generated by them. Although there is bound to be overlapping in content, the different social media platforms involved could influence how masculinity is constructed in online promotional content.

Access to Data

Most promotional content is easily available online, either through social media or the film’s websites. The researcher did not face any problems in accessing data. However, to ensure that the study covered all possible forms and formats of promotional content, the marketing teams of Excel Entertainment, Red Chillies Entertainment and Spice PR, the public relations agency, were contacted. Approved press stories were mailed to the researcher by the head of PR for Red
Chillies Entertainment and a representative of Spice PR confirmed the images available on IMDb were released by them.

**Data Analysis**

This thesis adapts Creswell’s (2016) process of qualitative data analysis and is informed by a constructivist paradigm by building upon the emergent themes from the media texts analyzed (Creswell, 2016, p.38-41). An intersectional feminist approach was used to view how social class, religion and global forces work together to construct masculinity in Bollywood. According to Denis (2008), “intersectional analysis involves the concurrent analyses of multiple, intersecting sources of subordination/oppression, and is based on the premise that the impact of a particular source of subordination may vary, depending on its combination with other potential sources of subordination.”

Data was analyzed using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 11. Promotional content was gathered, viewed and analyzed. For videos, a two-column format was used for visual and audio data. Screen shots of social media posts were captured and coded for both text and embedded content.

The first cycle of coding used descriptive, holistic and attribute coding. Attribute coding was used to record information about each text such as a poster, trailer, film still or social media post. Attribute coding is used before any other type of coding to keep track of characteristics of a data set, generally as a notation before the dataset (Saldaña, 2009). It is essentially used as a means of data management. Descriptive coding, at its most basic, is a brief description or identification of a topic within a piece of text (Saldaña, 2009). This study uses multiple textual artifacts, with multiple cultural cues and references, that work in tandem to create an image of
the film in the prospective viewer’s mind. For this reason, holistic coding was also used to study “self-standing units of data” such as posters, or social media posts, for which it is not possible to extract individual elements (Saldaña, 2009).

For the second cycle of coding, this study used Focused and Axial coding. Focused Coding extracts the most significant codes in the initial coding process to develop major categories or themes in the data (Saldaña, 2009). Axial coding is the next step that involves strategically reassembling data that was split during the initial coding (Saldaña, 2009). An “axis” is a salient category that emerged during the initial coding and allows the researcher to explore how categories and subcategories relate to each other.

Analytical notes were made during coding, with codes being constantly revised. Content was coded for themes dealing with representation, traditional/non-traditional masculine traits, relationship to female characters, etc. Themes were developed from the codes and exemplars identified.

**Limitations and Threats to Validity**

*Raees* was the subject of much controversy before its release which may influence the way it was publicized and marketed. Since there is a time lag between when the promotions for the film began and when the study is being done, some online data had been deleted. While analyzing data, it was found that one video was deleted from the official YouTube account for Red Chillies, before the researcher could transcribe it.
Role of the Researcher

The researcher is a native of Mumbai with prior professional experience in the Hindi film industry. She has personal contacts with people working in Bollywood and its allied professions. She therefore has some knowledge of how the industry works. This could determine how she views the film publicity process and publicity content in general. The researcher self identifies as a feminist. This is likely to influence the way she reads the promotional content. As a member of a religious minority in India, the researcher is likely to have negative views of hegemonic Hindu masculinity, thus she may be differently disposed to other constructions of masculinity.
Chapter 6: Findings

As mentioned earlier depictions of male stars are important aspects of how Bollywood is marketed and consumed internationally (Ciecko, 2001). These depictions are essential to film promotions. This chapter of the study focuses on the depictions of the two central male figures in the film, as seen in the promotional material. Raees (Shah Rukh Khan) is the gangster protagonist, while his nemesis is Majmudar (Nawazuddin Siddiqui), an honest cop who labors to bring him to justice. There are other male characters, but they are not well fleshed out in any of the promotional material. The promotional content depicted the perspectives of either Raees or Majmudar. Raees featured more prominently than Majmudar, which is unsurprising given that SRK is a more popular actor and is also the owner of Red Chillies Entertainment.

Bollywood and its cultural products need to appeal to a wide audience. Hence depictions of masculinity are carefully constructed. As Gopinath (2016) pointed out, hero masculinities feature main protagonists who represent an idealized masculinity with current dominant masculine practices. As such, a single character can embody many facets, or masculinities simultaneously. Yet, in the case of Raees, this has been complicated as the protagonist does not embody idealized masculinity, either due to his obvious religious identity or his criminality. This section will focus on the themes that emerged from the promotional texts: religion and rebel masculinity, Hindu hegemonic masculinity, relationships with women and commodification of Islamic masculine identity. The first three themes echo findings from previous studies on masculinity in India and depictions of Muslim men in Indian media (Gupta, 2011; Banerjee, 2006; Derné, 2000; Derné, & Jadwin, 2000; Murty, 2009; Khan, 2011). On the other hand, the commodification of Muslim masculinity seems to be an outcome of the emergence of a commodity culture driven by Bollywood and the masculinity culture of film fans, particularly
young men (Wilkinson-Weber, 2010; Ganesh & Mahadevan, 2015; Osella & Osella, 2004; Derné, & Jadwin, 2000). As such, the theme of commodification was prominent in social media, rather than traditional movie promotional formats.

Religion & Rebel Masculinity

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the image of the Muslim man as the violent sexualized other has a long history in India popular culture, particularly film (Gupta, 2011; Khan, 2011; Khan 2009). The stereotype seems to have been carried into the age of new media. Azeem Banatwalla, in his comedy special, *Cometh the Hour* (OML Entertainment, 2017) describes a Muslim man:

Banatwalla: But the absolute worst types of bikers… and as a Muslim man, I have the right to say this… (laughs) are Muslim bikers.

(Audience laughter and applause)

Banatwalla: We know this to be true…You’ll just hear them whizz past you. All… all Muslim bikers, the best Muslim bikers, they ride in uniform. Ok? And the uniform is kurta, *surma* (traditional eyeliner) and skull cap… But I don’t know what it is, like, genuinely for all Muslims, like, a bike is not a means of transportation. For us, it is a means of expression. Like, even for me, you give me a bike, *mera andar ka haraami nikal aate hain* (my inner asshole awakens) …We did not choose the thug life. The thug life chose us. Go to the most sophisticated Muslim man you know. Go to Salman Rushdie, while he’s giving Malala Yousafzai a Nobel Peace Prize.

(Audience laughter)
Banatwalla: Go to him, give him a Yamaha RX-100. In 20 seconds, *woh full suit phatke, surma lage, Malala aati kya Chakala!* (he’ll tear his suit off, apply *surma* and say, “Malala let’s go to Chakala!!”) Vroom, vroom!

Ahmed (2009) describes on screen representations of British Muslim masculinity in a similar vein — Muslim men are denied power in the larger community; and hence perform a hypermasculine, yet subordinated masculinity that serves to compensate for a loss of power. Usually these media depictions portray these compensations as an assertion of power over Muslim women, and violence or protest against the wider society (Ahmed, 2009). One way to look at the construction of Muslim masculinity in *Raees* is as a counter masculinity to Hindu hegemony much in the same way that native masculinities responded to British and Mughal hegemony (O’Hanlon, 1997; Gupta, 2011). While several Muslims occupy decision making positions in the industry, Bollywood is also an instrument of Hindu cultural hegemony in India (Kumar, 2013). The interplay between Bollywood and Indian society is such that one can never be sure where Banatwalla’s social type of the Muslim man originated from: is Bollywood depicting Muslim men or are young Muslim men imitating Bollywood? What is evident is that *Raees*’ protagonist is very much cut from the same cloth as these Muslim bikers. He literally wears his religious identity (in clothes similar to these bikers), is seen a number of times riding a motorcycle and affects a devil-may-care attitude. Additionally, the first poster for the film (Figure 2), includes a mosque in the background, with the poster dominated by SRK in character as Raees. Thus, the film reinforces the fact the character’s religious identity as being intrinsic to his character.

The promotional material uses pre-existing knowledge and visual cues related to Muslims that the viewer is expected to decode in the process of consuming the visual spectacle
of the trailers (Schroeder, 2002, p.171). In the first teaser for Raees, SRK’s character is introduced to us in a series of shots that serve to highlight his religious identity. We get our first sight of our hero as he emerges from a cloud of smoke amidst a riot. On the left side of the screen, a man wearing orangish colored clothes is being attacked. As orange or saffron is a color associated with the Hindu right in India, the meaning is clear. Indian viewers would be familiar with the country’s long history of communal riots, mostly involving Hindu-Muslim conflict, and would read the first shot as indicative of a similar situation. This sequence is followed by a shot of Raees sitting on a crate, surrounded by bootlegged liquor bottles, wearing typical Muslim clothes of kurta-pyjama as he speaks in an assured voice to the viewer. Lastly, an extreme closeup of Raees’ eye shows that he is wearing surma (an eye cosmetic worn by Muslims) behind his spectacles. In a span of a mere 15 seconds of a 51 second trailer, Raees is established as violent and criminal, with both of these traits being intrinsic to his Muslim-ness (Figure 1).
A more explicit reference to Muslim men and their violent tendencies can be seen in the main movie trailer which features a sequence depicting a Muharram procession. The procession marks the martyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad’s grandson Imam Hussein ibn Ali, at the Battle of Karbala. As part of the mourning rituals, devotees sometimes engage in self-flagellation. In the instance featured we see a high angle shot of Raees with a group of other men dressed in black. He is looking angrily upwards in the direction of the camera while men around
him beat their chests. Successive shots show him in the same garb, jumping from building terraces. And in a later succession of shots we see him in the same black clothes, beating up two men on housetops. From the above instances, we see that promotional material broadly follows themes found in film texts with regard to the representation of Muslim men. Even though Raees leads the audience to sympathize with its protagonist, its trailers reiterate anti-Muslim stereotypes that originated from colonial Hindu movements (Gupta, 2011; Murty, 2009). However, given the nature of visual consumption as a process of decoding, we should not disregard how Muslim viewers would view these trailers. Since at this point in the promotions, no one could be sure of the plot of Raees, one could also see these images as constructing a rebel masculinity in response to Hindu hegemony. Although these sequences further solidify the notion in wider Indian society of Muslim men being inherently violent, they also bolster Muslim masculinity within the community by glorifying stoicism and toughness in the face of physical trauma.

While the official film synopses on the Red Chillies and Excel Entertainment websites do not mention either character’s religion, the film’s publicity calls attention to the protagonist’s religion through the tagline. Posters and trailers (Figure 2) regularly feature the tagline – “Baniya ka dimag aur Miyanbhai ki daring (The smarts of a trader and the daring of a Muslim)”’. The purpose of the tagline is to presumably highlight Raees’ character as taking the best of both worlds. But it also reinforces the stereotype of Muslim men being bold rebels, ever-ready to engage in something risky and dangerous, while having no intellect or judgement. Another tagline that features in one of the posters (Figure 3) prominently is “Apna Time Shuru (Our Time has Begun)”’. Within the film itself, the phrase is said by Raees to indicate that he is poised to take over the bootlegging business in Gujarat. But since this fact is not explicitly mentioned in
any of the promotional media it can be read as a challenge to hegemonic Hindu masculinity. It is worth noting that while the first tagline appeared repeatedly, the second one rarely featured again. It is possible that the publicity and marketing team probably felt that the tagline was inappropriate after Islamic militants attacked Indian security forces in Uri. The attacks strained Indo-Pakistan relations, and consequently heightened anti-Muslim rhetoric in public discourse.

![Figure 2: Poster- Baniye ka Dimaag aur Miyanbhai ki Daring](image1)

![Figure 3: Poster - Apna Time Shuru](image2)

News coverage makes references to both Raees and SRK’s religious affiliation. Though these stories are featured in various national agencies, they are quite similar. Of 35 articles analyzed, 22 mentioned some kind of national wire agency, five had a reporter byline and seven were attributed to the news agency’s entertainment or web desk. The articles used in the study came from major news outlets such as: Business Standard, Times of India, Indian Express, Yahoo, India Today, Mid-Day, amongst others. Since these stories were obtained from wire
agencies, they probably used press release material from the publicity team itself. We can assume that the public relations team sanctioned the content carried by these news agencies. These news stories reference the protagonist’s religious identity implicitly through physical descriptions of the character:

“His kohled eyes, rugged look, sharp avatar and killing attitude keeps the audience hooked on to the trailer.” (Business Standard, December 8, 2016).

A fan video mashup of the Raees trailer audio and the trailer for the Netflix series Narcos was covered by Indian Express, India Today and Indiatimes. It overlaid dialogue from the trailer with visuals of the drug lord Pablo Escobar as depicted in the Narcos trailer. There were even explicit parallels drawn between real life criminal Abdul Latif and Raees, with The Indian Express placing the film’s poster and a file photo of Latif side by side. Latif was described as “Ruthless and a daredevil” who “also had a Robinhood image in the society and was known for helping the poor.” (Indian Express, December 13, 2016). However, the same article made it apparent that the filmmakers were at pains to distance themselves from these comparisons by insisting that the story was completely fictional.

The publicity team also arranged an event just before Republic Day (January 26, the day the Indian constitution came into effect and a national holiday), where SRK met the 124 infantry battalion. The star sang the national anthem, saluted the flag and danced with soldiers (Figures 4 & 5). The event was an obvious attempt to counter accusations of anti-nationalism and to avoid seeming like the film was glorifying a criminal/terrorist. It was also a case of the SRK’s star text working parallel to the film publicity. His persona as a patriotic, affectionate, pan-Indian hero is used to counter allegations of being “anti-national.”
Figure 4: Instagram post – SRK posing with soldiers

Figure 5: Facebook video post – dancing with soldiers
In the above instance, we see Bollywood attempting to temper their depictions of masculinity with respect to violence, specifically criminality. Prior to the Muharram scenes mentioned earlier, we see Raees prostrating himself at a dargah (a shrine built over the grave of a revered figure). This is nothing exceptional and is par for the course when it comes to depictions of Muslims in Bollywood – in attire, mannerisms and religious practice (Kumar, 2013). However, the practice of visiting dargahs is a part of the Sufi tradition in India. Sufism is a syncretic Islamic tradition that focuses on mysticism and has a reputation of fostering Hindu-Muslim harmony, centered around the veneration of Sufi saints by both religions (Saheb, 1998).

In a deleted scene on the Red Chillies YouTube channel, Raees is seen organizing a langar (communal distribution of food, freely given), a practice common in Sufism. It is seen as an act of benevolence on his part, with him even enlisting the help of a cop to get food to the needy. The langar scene could only be seen online, a few months after the film’s release. It would not be seen by the theatrical audience, but it is possible that the publicity team saw it as a way to persuade those who had not seen the film on its theatrical release, to watch the television premiere.

The narrative of the film limited how the publicity and marketing teams could portray Raees. However, they had greater control in promotional events and the actors’ appearances. By using SRK’s good guy image the publicity campaign was able to create goodwill towards the character and the film. SRK made appearances with women from the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), a trade union that works for low-income self-employed women. The actor interacted with the union members, discussed women’s empowerment and the dignity of labor (Figure 4). The theme of dignity of labor tied in nicely with the movie’s tagline - koi dhanda chhota nahi hota (there’s no job too small). The event
played into the benevolent, Robin Hood aspect of the male protagonist’s character, while not being too far from SRK’s “soft masculinity” and image as the “sensitive urban man” (Ganesh & Mahadevan, 2015).

Figure 6: Instagram video – SRK serenades a member of SEWA

It is possible that the publicity team attempted to moderate the character’s morality in the promotional material. The publicity events also echo stereotypes of the “good Muslim,” subtly casting SRK as such (Murty, 2009). If Raees was too violent or cruel in the promotional content, he would alienate the audience. If he was too good he would lose the “bad-boy” appeal, or people would accuse the filmmakers of glorifying criminals. The way that the film and the promotional material dealt with the contradiction was to use Majmudar as a foil to Raees.
Hindu Hegemonic Masculinity

As mentioned earlier, since Siddiqui is a less popular and bankable personality than SRK, his character was given less prominence in the publicity material. The initial promotional images were generic photos of him, without giving any sense of his personality or even costume. Only one billboard/poster featured him, and even then, he was physically dwarfed by Raees (Figure 7).

While we can call Majmudar a “good guy,” he is by no means a hero by Bollywood standards. He lacks Gopinath’s (2016) aspects of aspirational masculinities that Raees possesses: he doesn’t have swagger, is rarely emotional nor has the charm of the “quintessential lover,” although he does strive to protect the nation, if not the family. The film synopses (one on Excel’s website and another on Red Chillies’) describe him simply as a “tough cop” and “a no-nonsense police officer…whose sole reason for existence is the elimination of crime.” The news stories do not carry much about either Majmudar or Siddiqui, although he was present during some of the promotional events as seen in the photos posted on the film’s official social media.
accounts. Yet, Majmudar is an important part of the film as he forms the moral center of *Raees*. The character was given more attention in the video content, especially in the post-release “Making of” and deleted scenes videos. The audio-visual content emphasizes Majmudar’s difference from Raees. A deleted scene sees him approaching a *paan* (a tobacco-based preparation in betel leaf) stall and asking for a “Calcutta 120”. Majmudar is a Hindu, and more importantly, an honest cop in a corrupt system.

The trailers show him in a bulldozer, towering over other cops in the background as he crushes rows upon rows of illicit liquor bottles. The camera repeatedly frames Majmudar in the foreground, with police officers behind him (Figure 8). He is an agent of the state, but is set apart from the system, even rises above it. Like Raees, Majmudar is also framed in low angled shots to emphasize his power, though perhaps less frequently (Figure 9).

![Figure 8: Majmudar in foreground](image)
Multiple instances highlight his leadership, persistence and allegiance to law and order. He is no pushover, very often threatening violence towards criminals, including Raees. Majmudar’s use of violence is best illustrated by a genre of pre-release videos created by the publicity team, which can best be described as “motion posters”. They are short videos (a few seconds long), that consist of a static image (often a character photo), with animated text and audio. Generally, the text consists of lyrics to songs or snappy movie dialogues that are disseminated online. The purpose of these videos is to presumably get the audience acquainted with the characters by having them identify with and imitate them through short videos on social media. The promotional team was probably aware of fan practices, particularly those of young men and their tendency to imitate movie characters (Osella & Osella, 2004). Raees’ promotions called the dialogue-based videos “#DialogueBaaazi.” Of eight such videos, three featured Majmudar, and the rest were of Raees. In all three Majmudar upholds the law, while threatening violence towards wrongdoers:
“Jisko tu dhanda bolta hai, crime hai na, crime hai woh. Dhanda band kar le, varna saans lena bhi mushkil kar doonga.”

What you call business, is a crime. Stop your business, or I’ll make it difficult for you to even breathe.

“Ek din naak mein nikal daal ke kheench ke leke jaaonga tujhe main yahan se.”

One day I’ll drag you by the nose from here.

“Aap mera transfer kahin bhi kar sakte hain, Raees ko nahi chhodunga main.”

You can transfer me anywhere, I won’t let Raees go.

In addition to these videos, Majmudar has one short trailer (46 seconds) devoted exclusively to himself titled, “Raees Ko Nahi Chhodunga Main (I won’t let Raees go).” In it Majmudar pulls a gun on Raees’ business partner during a raid on a dockyard. In the following scene, Majmudar deliberately places his gun and sunglasses on the edge of a carrom board as he confronts Raees, while he plays carrom with his friends. In neither of these scenes do the criminals have guns, or any other weapons. While Majmudar is not physically intimidating, he does have the potential for violence through his gun; echoing hypermasculine ideals usually found in Kshatriya masculinity and warrior images of Krishna (Gupta, 2011). These instances of violence on the part of Majmudar foreshadow the film’s ending. At the climax, Majmudar arrests Raees after he has surrendered himself to the police at a press conference. Rather than arresting Raees, Majmudar, with a group of police officers, takes him to an isolated place and execute him. These so called “encounter” killings are extra judicial killings supposedly
committed in self-defense by law and order officials. Encounter killings have been criticized as human rights violations due to police officers using them as an excuse to kill unarmed criminals, or even framing innocent people (Mustafa, 2018; Dixit, 2018).

The film upholds the use of violence as a means to counter terrorism. Raees himself doesn’t try to escape his fate, but sees his own killing as a righteous act that will absolve him of his (unwitting) role in abetting terrorism. In an interview, Siddiqui talks about the characters’ mental states in this scene and how they played the scene in “Making Of The Character Majmudar”:

“Shah Rukh bhai ne, woh ek dignity, character ko di... Jab main goli marta hoon Raees ke character... Aur...poore... jab khul ke aata, woh ek desert mein jaate, khade ho jaate hain. Aur wahan pe ek discussion hota hai. Toh hai ek ajeeb trance mein. Bilkul aise... aise dialogue bolte hain ki, ‘Yeh jagah tikh rehgi, maarne ke liye mujhe, Majmudar saab.’”

“Shah Rukh gave the character some dignity... When I shoot Raees’ character... Slowly when he comes out, willingly, he goes to a desert, stands there. And there is a discussion. It’s like...like he’s in a trance... He says this dialogue, ‘This place is ok to kill me, Mr. Majmudar’.”

Through these instances we see a legitimization of violence or threats of violence enacted by the Hindu man on the behalf of the state. Majmudar echoes Swami Vivekananda's concept of the warrior monk, an ideal that requires adherents to practice celibacy and “dedicate themselves to building a strong Hindu India through education and example” (Banerjee, 2006). Unlike Raees, who has friends, a love interest and other worldly attachments, we do not get any sense of Majmudar’s life outside work. The implication is that by eschewing the role of the house-holder, and thus practicing celibacy, he is able to possess concentrated masculine vigor (Chakravarti,
1998). The pre-release material thus reiterates Hindu hegemonic masculinity by constructing Majmudar purely as an agent of law and order.

However, in two deleted scenes, we get a glimpse of Majmudar’s home life, and a different take on his character. In the first, he is seen scolding someone who is off camera. He berates the person for misbehaving at odd hours of the night and compares them to Raees, saying that they are no different. The person’s behavior has tarnished his reputation as a police officer. As the camera pulls away to the next room, we see who he is addressing. Majmudar has a dog, an Alsatian pup named Bobby. He picks up and cuddles the dog, fondly using baby talk with it. Another deleted video shows him coming home late at night to feed and pet Bobby, now a full grown Alsatian. It is curious that the deleted scenes use Bobby (who is seen only in passing in the film) to portray a more emotional, almost vulnerable version of Majmudar. But it is also worth noting that the object of his affection is a large, intimidating dog that can be trained to attack.

**Relationship with Women**

In the promotional content, Raees has three notable relationships with women: his mother, his wife, Aasiya and Laila, a bar dancer. In keeping with traditional mother-son relationships in India, Raees’ mother is a major influence in his life (Kakar, 2012; Chattopadhyay, 2011b). The name “Raees” (meaning “wealthy, prominent or aristocratic”) indicates her attempt to influence his future through bestowing him with an auspicious name. The main trailer for *Raees* opens with him quoting his mother:

“*Ammijaan kehti thi, koi dhanda chhota nahi hota, aur dhanda se badha, koi dharam nahi hota.*”
Mum used to say, there is no job too small, and there is no religion bigger than business. This dialogue is spoken multiple times throughout the promotions and is key to understanding the protagonist’s world view. But the character herself doesn’t appear in the promotional material at all, despite there being two deleted scenes that depict Raees’ childhood. She is briefly mentioned in a post release deleted scene titled, “Raees - The Father” where Raees enters his new home on the day that they’re celebrating the birth of his son. The plaque on the door reads in Hindi, Aamina Manzil (Aamina’s Place). As he enters he says, “Naya din mubarak ho, ammi (It’s a new day, mum)” and invokes her blessings as he enters the house.

Figure 10: Raees invokes his mother’s blessing as he enters his home

As the scene continues, he is seen trying to quieten his infant son as he cries. He half angrily tells the child to be quiet. His wife takes the baby from him, so he can get ready. He continues to chastise the baby for crying:

Raees: Haan, main tayar ho. (To baby) Baap ho aapka. Rona dhona ban kar saheb. (Aasiya pushes him away). (To Aasiya) Baad bichare koi beech ka raasta nikalo, samjoh isko!
Yes, I’m ready. (To baby) I’m your father. Stop this crying. (Aasiya pushes him away)

Crybaby. (To Aasiya) Teach this crybaby some restraint.

Raees: Arrey wah! Wahan pyaar, mohabbat aur yahan rona dhona? Ammi aur rojehan mile hue.

Wow! There, love and tenderness and here, crying? Mummy and the crybaby are together.

Aasiya: Achcha ji, apni ammi aur apni time bhool gaya?

Really? did you forget your time with your mum?

Raees: Woh kitna achcha hota. Ammi ka naam iss ghar mein par, aur khuda ka ghar baad mein lena chata.

It would have been better if Mummy had been in this house with her name, and gone to God’s house much later.

The scene diverges sharply with how the mother-son relationship is treated in Bollywood cinema. The devotion of children towards parents, more so of the son for his mother, is a recurrent narrative trope in Bollywood cinema, particularly following Independence and is an ideal that is internalized from childhood (Chattopadhyay, 2011b). Bollywood frames devotion for the mother as an appropriate emotional expression. Furthermore, the post-independence masala films that inspired Raees have been known to draw parallels between the maternal character and the nation. Osuri (2014) argues that the melancholic mother figure of older films embodied the conundrums of law and justice in modern India. In films such as Deewaar (Yash Chopra, 1976) and Mother India (Mehboob Khan, 1957), the mother figure brings her criminal son to justice, often facilitating his death at the hands of the law. Post-liberalization, Hindi films’ are driven by a “muscular and vigorous attitude toward terrorism.” (Osuri, 2014). Though Raees
references the *masala* genre of film, the movie’s moral center has shifted from the feminine “Mother India” to the masculine protector of the nation. Additionally, Raees’ frustration at his son’s crying and his mocking attitude towards the mother-son relationship contradicts SRK’s own brand of emotional masculinity (crying and making others cry), which may be why the scene was left out from the final film (Ganesh & Mahadevan, 2015; Gopinath, 2016.)

Romance in particular, is a large part of Bollywood’s appeal and has particularly been associated with SRK since the nineties (Ganesh & Mahadevan, 2015). In the film, Raees’ most significant relationship with a woman is his love interest, and wife, Aasiya (Pakistani actress Mahira Khan). The depiction of the relationship is broadly one of partnership. However, the promotional materials reinforce gender hierarchies in subtle ways, while occasionally playing with the power dynamic in the relationship. Among the first pictures released was one featuring Raees and Aasiya in an embrace, his body enveloping hers as they both look upwards. Judging by their costumes, the still is taken from the song sequence for *Udi, Udi Jaaye*. The photo shows his body as being larger than hers, accentuating his physical dominance over her (Figure 11).

The position of their bodies on the screen vis a vis one another changes throughout the promotional content. In one of the trailers, we have a brief series of shots where Aasiya teases Raees about his spectacles. She is sitting on the table with Raees on the chair looking up at her. She calls him “Battery, sala.” (Roughly translated as “damned four-eyes”). He smiles back at her, flirtatiously as if taking her up on her challenge (Figure 12):
**Figure 11:** Promotional film still of Raees and Aasiya

**Figure 12:** *Battery sala!* Raees and Aasiya in the trailer
Besides this memorable instance, Raees and Aasiya’s courtship follows the general trajectory of romance in Bollywood films – he pursues her. Romantic songs are an important part of film promotions in India. Typically, earlier films show extended song sequences where the heroine shows irritation or actively rejects the hero’s advances before giving in after he keeps pursuing her. It should be noted that though this a consensual relationship, he is the active partner. In a short preview of the song Zaalima that was posted to Raees’ social media accounts, we see Raees grab Aasiya as she runs through a courtyard. He follows as she runs away smiling. The rest of the video shows them in various romantic scenarios as the song plays over them lip-syncing. In another short preview for the song Udi Udi Jaye, we see Raees forcibly grab Aasiya’s hand and makes her turn around to face him. This echoes Derné, and Jadwin’s (2000) view that male power in Bollywood is exercised through control of the heroine’s body. Thus, we see very little change in how male sexuality is viewed – it is still linked to the use of force and violence.

The promotional images and trailers give very little insight into the arc of the lead pair’s relationship. Hence one cannot be sure at what point in the relationship the above exchanges occur. In contrast to these scenes, one of the behind the scenes (BTS) videos, depicts a more stereotypical relationship. After Raees has won an election, he takes a victory parade through the town. By this time, they are probably married within the film. While he stands in a jeep with his arms spread wide in triumph, we see Aasiya looking up at him, smiling broadly, with her head covered (Figure 13). In the film she is instrumental in his election, helping people register to vote and campaigning for him while he is in prison. All the other videos that feature this scene do not include Aasiya in the shots at all (Figure 14).
There are other ways that the promotional material erases or minimizes Aasiya. Prior to the launch of Zaalima, four “audio posters” were released. These were similar to the dialogue posters, with photos and the song lyrics appearing on the screen against a background. The song is a romantic one and is centered on the couple. Even so, she is absent in poster 2 and her image is partially faded into the background in poster 4. In poster 3, both of the lovers are seen from a distance and so neither is distinguishable. Hence she features prominently in only one audio poster.
Figure 15: Zaalima Song | Audio Poster 1

Figure 16: Zaalima Song | Audio Poster 2
The same can be said for the theatrical posters. Aasiya appears in two theatrical posters. While one has the lovers facing each other and clearly seen, the second poster uses the far away image of the lovers, with a larger profile photo of Raees superimposed on it. SRK’s profile dominates the plane of the poster and is indicative of male dominance in the promotional images.
But there is one woman who figures prominently in the promotional material – Laila, the bar dancer. Laila (played by former Canadian-Indian porn star, Sunny Leone) is the “item girl”, a female character “whose personhood has been itemized towards a particular role—that of a seductress” (Kumar, 2017). The item girl typically does not play a substantial role in the narrative of the film. The “item number”, a seductive song and dance spectacle, is an important vehicle in Bollywood marketing, especially with regards to music sales in the MTV era. (Kumar, 2017).

*Raees* covers an older item song, *Laila Main Laila* from the movie *Qurbani* (Feroz Khan, 1980). It was used heavily in the promotional videos and narratively situated the film in a time
period by referencing the original film. In the video for the song, Laila has an important, albeit limited purpose in the plot. Aside from the actual song sequence, Raees and Laila do not appear together. Thus, Laila’s appearance in promotional material does not rely on the presence of the male protagonist. However, we do get some insight into how Bollywood reacts to women like Leone in “Making of Laila Main Laila”, specifically in the relationship dynamics between SRK and Leone. SRK appears after more than a minute into the 3.38 minute video. Leone is excited that he is here.

Leon: Guess who’s in the house?? Woohoo!!!

His appearance is accompanied by loud, thumping music and sound effects. Afterwards the video alternates between SRK on set and shots of Raees from the film. A low angle shot emphasizes his height, while the frame sets him apart physically from the other men by having him walk the edge of the room. He is also stoic throughout all the film footage, while the other men cheer and yell for Laila. Raees does interact with Laila — she embraces him, gyrates against his body and he holds her head in his hand as she sits on a table. Throughout the sequence, he shows no emotion. All the while, a group of rowdy men cheer, jump and shout around them.

![Figure 20: Low angle shot from “Making of Laila”](image)
The difference in Raees’ treatment of Aasiya and Laila is stark. He is emotive, physically intimate and tender towards his wife, but expressionless towards the bar dancer. It is possible that any emotion towards this “fallen woman” would be deemed inappropriate, unlike affection towards a love interest or family. In the film, we see that the reason for Raees’ stoicism is his imminent confrontation with his former mentor, who he learns has been planning to kill him. This is not indicated in the song, although someone who had seen the film before the making-video would know the context of the song. A person who has only seen the promotional videos would assume that Raees’ blank response to Laila’s flirtation was due to his loyalty to his wife, or more likely, that he was so confident with women, that he was unfazed by her attentions.

Additonally, Laila is a woman with sexual agency. Unlike Aasiya, she controls the pace of their interactions in the song sequence. He cannot exert his masculinity or dominance over her, which disrupts existing on-screen gender dynamics. Raees’ behavior with Laila raises questions about how men are supposed to treat women who show sexual initiative and whether they are worthy of attention or respect.
However, the on-set candid interactions between the actors and crew that were included in “Making of Laila” reinforce male dominance. This is unsurprising considering the various reports of gender differences on screen (such as screen time or number of songs) and off screen (gender pay gaps) in Bollywood (Madaan et al., 2018; Dutt D’Cunha, 2017). In the making of video we see a low angled shot of SRK seated on a chair, giving inputs to the director and other crew members. A little later he gives Leone some input as her husband stands nearby listening.

SRK: I know the words and all might be a problem. Once you get the words…

Sunny: No, I will get it.

SRK: Ok.

A little later, we see SRK give Leone a thumbs up. Over the footage, choreographer Bosco Martis says, “He wanted to see her dance. She really worked hard.”

While SRK and Leone were friendly and civil, it is necessary to view these interactions within the larger context of the Hindi film industry. It is no secret that women occupy a subordinate position in the industry. Moreover, Leone is a former porn star from Canada of Indian origin who has garnered substantial attention in India. Bollywood filmmakers have attempted to impose a narrative on Leone through “conventional gendered tropes of rehabilitating a porn star into mainstream society” (Chatterjee, 2017). Yet these attempts have been unsuccessful due to Leone’s own assertions about her career choices and filmmakers’ tendency of primarily casting her as the stereotypical “sexy girl” (Chatterjee, 2017). Though SRK was respectful towards Leone, it is not lost on viewers that Leone is a fallen woman who has to prove herself in the industry. These candid interactions, though not overtly sexist, reinforce male dominance over women.
Commodification of Islamic Masculine Identity

While objectification of women is rampant in Bollywood, the post-liberalization era in Bollywood has given rise to the “consumable hero” (Deshpande 2005). Posters and promotional images for Raees are therefore typical of current Bollywood depictions of masculinity – a male lead with a muscular body (David, 2015; Deshpande, 2005). These images are dominated by depictions of SRK as Raees in various poses that invite viewers to look at him. Rather than images of him in action (which might be expected of the crime genre), we have posters with him posed in a sitting position while he looks at the camera. In fact, four of the six posters have him looking directly at camera. The way SRK is depicted in the posters echoes the way Bachchan was depicted at the height of his stardom (Dwyer & Patel, 2002). Some of the posters even copy the overpainting aesthetic used in the seventies and eighties, a possible reference to the time period Raees is set in. The result is an image, that references masala films and the hero, while also SRK’s own star image to create the poster (and star) as a consumable product (Schroeder, 2002, p.171).

The creation of these consumable images requires a great deal of attention from the costume department. Bollywood in particular, is especially concerned with actors’ and actresses’ “look” in a film. In an interview for the behind the scenes video, “Making Of The Character Raees,” costume designer Sheetal Sharma discussed the character’s look:

Sharma: I want to keep a little more of masculine feeling. That he has to look like a man that can kill… maybe three people at a time. He should be of that kind of vibe…

A little later he describes the character’s bearing:
Sharma: A very manly…who walks in, with like a … a posture or a poise… He removes his glasses in a certain way… If there is a little thing around his neck he will adjust it while he is talking.

As Wilkinson-Weber (2014) puts it, costume does much of the work of characterization but is still intimately linked with the star’s actions and gestures, such that the character does not exist outside “the moment-to-moment embodiment that the costumed actor provides”.

Additionally, the costume department was responsible for situating Raees’ character within a specific social, regional and temporal milieu. India has long possessed a “complex system of sartorial conventions and expectations” which give a material form to social forces and their resulting inequalities (Wilkinson-Weber, 2014). Raees follows stereotypical sartorial depictions of Muslims with Raees wearing kurta-pyjamas and surma (Kumar, 2013). But Raees’ clothes do a lot more than situate him in a social milieu. Clothes are used to enhance desirability; and in the case of male stars, their toned physique. Outfits are either carefully curated from branded retailers, or (increasingly rarely) designed and stitched by crafts persons (Wilkinson-Weber, 2006; Wilkinson-Weber, 2010) Either way, the hero’s outfits are not merely a part of the narrative, but also products of global (and local) fashion and commodity goods.

Unsurprisingly, Bollywood stars hugely influence popular fashion styles in India. The new consumerist environment requires stars to be well versed in designs and look, irrespective of gender (Wilkinson-Weber, 2014). An article in the Business Standard, quotes Sharma:

"It's always a pleasure to work with Shah Rukh because he is so open for experimenting with his looks. He came up with some wonderful suggestions during trials and he tries to make the character as real as possible," he said. (Business Standard, December 9, 2016)
Unlike most commodities endorsed by stars, film costumes are a “lived commodity image” that encourages audiences to extend their agency through adopting elements from a character’s costume (Wilkinson-Weber, 2010). Promotions for Raees astutely tapped into this particular cultural practice by encouraging men (and sometimes women) to dress like Raees. The most conspicuous instance is a promotional activity involving a cardboard backdrop and a set of clothes that were similar to what Raees wore in the posters and trailers for the film. The social media pages for the film posted these images of men imitating the pose that SRK strikes in the poster.

Figure 22: A boy imitating the Raees poster (Facebook post)

This development is unsurprising since the imitation of film stars by male fans is a well-known phenomenon in India and it seems inevitable that studios would leverage it for publicity purposes (Osella & Osella, 2004). The promotions for Raees took the activity even further, by encouraging this mimicry through conspicuous consumption. Several social media posts informed people on how they could get the Raees “look” through assembling an outfit from individual clothes purchases (Figures 19 and 20). However, it should be noted that the outfits in Raees are more than filmic spectacle, they are part of a lived experience of Muslim men. The
look inscribes Muslim men in India, much in the same way that the veil does for Muslim women. Bollywood’s sartorial creations are “ripe for appropriation” by the affluent for special occasions (Wilkinson-Weber, 2010). Thus, we see a commodification of a marginalized Muslim masculinity for consumption by affluent classes (including by Hindu men).

The commodification of Muslim identity is thus a consequence of how Muslim men are depicted in film, the emergence of the consumable hero and Bollywood’s cooption of hyper masculine constructions for consumption in the global and domestic markets (Kumar, 2013; Murty, 2009; David, 2015; Deshpande 2005; Balaji & Hughson, 2014; Ciecko, 2001).

Figure 23: Instagram post showing how to assemble a Raees-inspired outfit
Figure 24: Facebook post - Getting the Raees look for women
Chapter 5: Discussion & Conclusion

This thesis has examined how Bollywood publicity campaigns construct masculinity in their promotional content. *Raees* features a Muslim protagonist who does not follow pre-existing scripts of “good” Muslim behavior; nor is he the lustful aggressor of Hindutva nationalism (Khan, 2011; Gupta, 2011). As such, in selling the film to Indian audiences, the marketing and public relations team had to carefully calibrate the representations of masculinity, both in the fictional universe of the film and in the real world promotional events and press coverage. Where Raees was violent, cunning and criminal, SRK was friendly, benevolent and charming. It was also a case of the SRK’s star text working parallel to the film publicity. His persona as a patriotic, affectionate, pan-Indian hero is used to counter allegations of being “anti-national” (Dwyer, 2015; Gopinath, 2017). To lessen the impact of the “anti-national” aspects of his character, SRK interacted with army troops, college students and underprivileged women at promotional events. Thus, even while the film itself deviated from rigid masculine stereotypes, the publicity events and their resultant texts refer to these filmic tropes indirectly.

Connell (2014) stressed the need to look at various masculinities in relation to one another, and to women as well, to be able to garner a thorough understanding of how they function. The two dominant constructions of masculinity in this film are the rebel Muslim masculinity of Raees and hegemonic Hindu masculinity embodied in Majmudar. The promotional materials and the film emphasize the fact that these constructions of masculinity are in constant conflict. They also reiterate the hegemonic view that the only defense against criminal Muslim masculinity is powerful and aggressive, but disciplined, Hindu masculinity (Gupta, 2011; Chakravarti, 1998; Banerjee, 2006). Even though SRK is the star of *Raees*, the
film’s narrative cannot permit his character’s deviant attitudes and behavior to thrive. At the film’s climax, Raees finds himself in a financial tight spot and makes a deal with another gangster to smuggle gold. Later, it is revealed that the smuggled gold consignment contained RDX, which was used in serial bomb blasts in another part of the country. Raees is grieved at learning this, and surrenders himself to the police. The film ends with Raees accepting his fate, allowing Majmudar to shoot him to death. Yet, they are also similar: both are tough, hard workers and often resort to violence to reach their goals. In fact, Siddiqui comments in “Making Of The Character Majmudar” about the characters’ and their relationship:

Siddiqui: Of course, ismein do character bahut hi strong the.

Of course, the two characters in this (film) are very strong.

Siddiqui: Woh... agar uska bach sake... woh shaayad... Raees ka dost bana liya.

He.. If he can save him.. maybe he… could become Raees’ friend.

Thus, in response to the main character’s rebel masculinity we see the construction of a hegemonic Hindu masculinity that maintains law and order. There is always the possibility of Muslim and Hindu men getting along, if only Muslim men were not so dangerous. Majmudar steps in to counter the inherent threat of Muslim masculinity towards the nation state. The implicit understanding is that Muslim men can flout social hierarchies, even be admired for it, but they have to still know their place. Raees’ flaw that brings about his ultimate downfall is not knowingly engaging in terrorist activities, but his over-ambition in his “business” that leads to him making a bad deal. Thus though Bollywood has historically been a place where Muslims found acceptance, its products often reiterate stereotypes of Muslims, or attempt to maintain the status quo.
Where Bollywood’s depictions of masculinity diverge from western ones is through the construction of hero masculinity. As we can see from the themes discussed in the previous chapter, Raees embodies different facets of masculinity – from his violent, “rebel” persona to his caring, seductive one (Gopinath, 2016; Ganesh & Mahadevan, 2015). However SRK’s persona is also a major influence on the film. Still images such as posters and publicity stills follow poster conventions, and given the film’s time period, some even recreate the over-painting aesthetic found in seventies Bollywood films (Dwyer & Patel, 2002). His emotional appeal was woven into both the film and the promotional content to attract audiences. As such, film publicity is subject to the star’s brand. This is doubly so in the case of Raees, as SRK is co-owner of Red Chillies. Hence the star’s role in the production could possibly affect the kind of content that is released, such as in the prominence given to Raees rather than Majmudar in the publicity.

Another curiosity is the post-release BTS and deleted scenes videos. While (unsurprisingly) the BTS videos practically fawn over SRK, the deleted scenes are an interesting look into how the film itself was shaped. As seen in the previous chapter, they show how even in the post-production stage, the studios had already started paying attention to what would work with audiences. Majmudar’s character was made to seem tougher, less emotional, with all traces of an interior life removed. With Raees, the film’s production had to walk a tight rope – too likable and it would seem like they were encouraging terrorism; too violent and people may not watch the film. The reasons for releasing these deleted scenes online rather than as a DVD extra is unclear. They could have used them as sharable online publicity content to garner interest in TV broadcasts of the film, though the TV premiere (June 25, 2017) and DVD (August 4, 2017)
release dates were much later. It is possible that they did not want to waste the scenes. It could also have to do with stoking the star’s ego, or just plain fan service.

Finally, while previous literature (Balaji & Hughson, 2014; Ciecko, 2001) points towards the cooption of nationalistic, hypermasculine ideals for consumerist purposes, this study shows that even marginalized or rebel masculinities are also subject to the same process of commodification. The cooption is doubly problematic given that Muslims face discrimination and violence in India. Thus, Bollywood has successfully commodified religious identity for the purpose of selling not just cultural products like films, but also consumer products such as clothing and accessories.

**Limitations**

As with any study, this one faced challenges. The film’s promotional content underwent revisions, due to several postponements of the release date. *Raees* was initially supposed to be released on Eid (July 6, 2016). Hence, it is unsurprising that the initial promotional material played up the protagonist’s religious identity. It is possible that the publicity team made revisions to the campaign since then in response to the volatile national discourse during *Raees*’ promotions. Even though most of the early key art was adapted for social media, it is not possible to know if there were significant changes, since the researcher was based in the United States at the time of the film’s release.

Despite repeated efforts, the researcher was not able to access original press releases that were disseminated to film journalists. Hence, she relied on news articles provided to her by the Head of Public Relations & Corporate Communications, at Red Chillies, several months after the film was released. Some of these articles have been since deleted online. Even
though some of these articles clearly stated that they used wire copy, they could have gone through minimal copy editing.

**Future Research**

There are several possibilities for future research based upon this thesis. The study analysed promotional content much after its release. It would be worthwhile to examine a promotional campaign as it is in motion through ethnographic research at theatres and at the workplace of public relations and marketing professionals. This would offer a better sense into how masculine representations were constructed and received during the promotions itself. It would also address some of the study’s limitations caused by the time gap between the content’s release and the researcher’s analysis.

While textual analysis was the favoured method for this thesis, it should be noted that quantitative content analysis would also be useful in examining how masculinity is constructed in promotional content, particularly with regards to the themes of violence and romance. Additionally, a longitudinal analysis of a specific type of promotional content (such as posters or trailers) would also bear insights into how depictions of masculinity have evolved in Bollywood over the years. The era following economic liberalization (1990 to present day) is especially appealing, given the developments in media and communication technology that occurred during the period, along with political and social changes that affected India.

Aside from the cultural products of Bollywood, we should attend to both the production and reception stages of the film industry. Interviews or surveys of media professionals who work in the advertising and marketing of Bollywood films would deepen our understanding of masculinity when done in conjunction with qualitative or content analysis of
texts. On the audience side of the equation, focus groups or interviews would help in understanding how audiences read and interpret promotional content. Promotional content may seek to construct versions of masculinities, but whether these depictions are truly interpreted as they are intended to be is another question (Hall, 1999). The subsequent question would then be how these representations of masculinity or femininity affect the likelihood of viewers actually seeing the films that are being promoted.

The possibilities of masculinity studies in the field of media effects should not be dismissed either. It is worth exploring whether exposure to promotional material that depicts hegemonic masculine ideals would shape individuals’ attitudes towards traditional gender roles. Studies could take the form of surveys, interviews, focus groups or even the experimental method. The growing number of women-centric films also raises questions of genre and its influence in how masculinity is depicted in contemporary Bollywood films. Since gender roles are socially constructed and ever evolving, revisiting Indian hegemonic masculinity in later years would also be appealing.

**Conclusion**

It is through an examination of current depictions of masculinity in Bollywood that we can hope to change how masculinity is formulated in the larger Indian society. As seen from Azeem Banatwalla’s comedy special, Bollywood not only shapes how other faiths see Muslim men, but how Muslim men see themselves. It is imperative to look at how both gender and religious identity is shaped in popular media and their role in perpetuating stereotypes. This study shows that constructions of masculinity in promotional content repeat long held stereotypes of Muslims, while reinforcing hegemonic ideals. While more than a century has
passed, these constructions recur in popular culture, despite Bollywood’s supposed progressiveness and the prominence of Muslim personalities in the industry. As far as depictions of minorities go, filmmakers need to go beyond a cursory depiction of religious codes, dress and practises, to a more authentic examination of the experiences of minorities in India. By starting a conversation between the academic community, film industry and civil society over these constructions of masculinity, we can hope to develop more well-rounded representations of masculinity on screen along with a healthier depiction of relationships between men and women.
Appendix – Promotional Materials

Social Media Accounts

Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/RaeesTheFilm

Twitter - @RaeesTheFilm

Instagram - @raeesthefilm
Raeesthefilm

Follow

182 posts  11.1k followers  112 following

Raees The Film The official page for Raees, a Rahul Dholakia film starring Shah Rukh Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Mahira Khan.
List of Press stories


India Today - If needed Mahira will join us for Raees promotions: Sidhwani - December 7, 2016
http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/if-needed-mahira-will-join-us-for-raees-promotions-sidhwani/1/828887.html

Business Standard - Will bring Mahira for 'Raees' promotions, if needed: Ritesh Sidwani - December 7, 2016

Business Standard - If needed Mahira will join us for 'Raees' promotions: Sidhwani - December 7, 2016

DNA – Shah Rukh Khan's 'Raees' trailer sets a new record in just 3 hours 35 minutes of its release - December 8, 2016
Business Standard - 'Raees' trailer creates history in few hours of release - December 8, 2016

Yahoo - 'Raees' trailer creates history in few hours of release - 8 December 2016
https://in.news.yahoo.com/raees-trailer-creates-history-few-061700970.html

Yahoo - B-Town hails record breaking 'Raees' trailer! - 8 December 2016

Indian Express - As Raees trailer crosses 10m views, Shah Rukh Khan gets a Bollywood standing ovation - December 8, 2016

Indian Express - Shah Rukh Khan on demonetisation: Things will genuinely get better - December 8, 2016

Hindustan Times - Will demonetisation affect Raees? Shah Rukh Khan thinks no - December 8, 2016
http://www.hindustantimes.com/bollywood/will-demonetisation-affect-raaees-shah-rukh-khan-thinks-no/story-txXj8G7uPfF2X5xDXJ2OZN.html

Business Standard - B-Town hails record breaking 'Raees' trailer! - December 8, 2016
India TV - Not one or two but SRK will be seen in three different looks in ‘Raees’ - December 09, 2016


Business Standard - Shah Rukh to sport three looks in 'Raees'(Lead) - December 9, 2016


Indian Express - Raees-Narcos trailer mash-up: When Gujarat’s bootlegger meets Colombian drug lord, watch video - December 10, 2016


India Today - WATCH: This Raees-Narcos mash-up has won Shah Rukh's heart and is going viral - December 10, 2016


India Times - Somebody Made A Kickass Mashup Of Raees-Narcos & Even SRK Couldn’t Help But Be Impressed By It - December 11, 2016


Business Standard - 'Raees' work of fiction, not based on any person: Shah Rukh - December 12, 2016

Yahoo - 'Raees' a pure work of fiction, say makers - December 12, 2016
https://in.style.yahoo.com/raees-pure-fiction-makers-173603913.html

Business Standard – 'Raees' work of fiction, not based on any person: Shah Rukh - December 12, 2016

Indian Express - Raees: Is Shah Rukh Khan’s character inspired by gangster Abdul Latif? Makers say no - December 13, 2016

Yahoo - This New Years Eve be smart not stupid: SRK - 28 December 2016

Business Standard - This New Years Eve be smart not stupid: SRK - December 28, 2016

Business Standard - Don't drink and drive around New Year's Eve, says SRK - December 28, 2016

Business Standard - 'Don't drink and drive', says SRK - December 28, 2016

Financial Express - Watch: Shahrukh Khan’s Raees gives creepy warning; drunk drivers beware - December 28, 2016
Midday - Shah Rukh Khan: Don't Drink And Drive Around New Year's Eve - December 28, 2016


Business Standards - Watch! SRK-Mahira's zaalim chemistry in 'Zalima' - January 5, 2017

Mid-day - 'Raees' Song 'Zaalima' Out! Shah Rukh Khan And Mahira Khan Share Crackling Chemistry - January 5, 2017

Mumbai-Mirror - O ZAALIMA: SHAH RUKH KHAN, MAHIRA KHAN CREATE MAGIC IN THIS RAEES SONG - January 5, 2017
Promotional pictures (source IMDb)
Posters
RAEES
1 MONTH FOR RAEES
TU SHAMA HAI TOH, YAAD RAKHNA...
MAIN BHI HOON PARWANA...

SHAH RUKH KHAN
IN AND AS
RAEES

AN EXCEL ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION

PRODUCED BY RITESH SIDHAWANI, GAURI KHAN & FARHANA AHMED. DIRECTED BY RAHUL DHOLAKIA.

25 · 1 · 2017
KYA BOLA?
EK AUR BAAR
BOLKE DEKH.

RAEES
25-1-2017
BANIYE KA DIMAAG AUR MIYANBHAI KI DARING

SHAH RUKH KHAN
IN AND AS
RAEES

AN EXCELE ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION

EID - 2016
RAEES

BANIYE KA DIMAAG AUR MIYANBHAI KI DARING

SHAH RUKH KHAN
IN AND AS

EID - 2016
3 DIN BAAKI...BOOKING KARLO AAPKI!

RED CHILLIES ENTERTAINMENT AND EXCEL ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT

SHAH RUKH KHAN
IN ANO A.S.

RAFES

AN EXCEL ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION

DIRECTED BY RAHEEM ALI IHANA
ASSOCIATE DIRECTED BY NIRMAL SAHAI
PRODUCED BY RITESH SIDHARMA, GAURI KHAN & FARHAN KHAN DIRECTED BY RAHUL DAKRA

THIS WED, 25TH JAN.
SUNA NAHI...
10 DIN MEIN
AA RAHA HOON...

RAEES

10 DAYS TO RAEES
Videos

Trailers & Teasers

Raees | Watch Trailer on 7 Dec | Shah Rukh Khan | Mahira Khan | Nawazuddin Siddiqui
Nov 30, 2016
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=4Tg1FtQLWo0&index=25&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f

Shah Rukh Khan In & As Raees | Trailer | Releasing 25 Jan
Dec 6, 2016
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=J7_1MU3gDk0&index=24&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f

Raees Ki Dialogue Baazi | Shah Rukh Khan | Releasing 25 January
Dec 9, 2016
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=ONBhD5Y1ghs&index=23&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f

Raees Ki Dialogue Baazi | Dhandhe Ka Funda | Shah Rukh Khan | Releasing 25 January
Dec 10, 2016
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=yTAtoHXAuBg&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f&index=22

Raees Ki Dialogue Baazi | Baniye Ka Dimaag aur Miyanbhai Ki Daring | Shah Rukh Khan
Dec 11, 2016
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=auWK3z9pS1M&index=21&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f

Raees Ki Dialogue Baazi | Koi Dhandha Chhota Nahi Hota | Shah Rukh Khan | Releasing 25 January
Dec 12, 2016
Raees Ki Dialogue Baazi | Fearlessly Like Raees | Shah Rukh Khan | Releasing 25 January
Dec 14, 2016
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fC9XRRn5tlw&list=PLGkwyKB0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f

Raees | Don't Drink and Drive | Shah Rukh Khan | In cinemas Jan 25
Dec 27, 2016
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFDi3LWiIPs&list=PLGkwyKB0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f&index=19

Zaalima Song | Audio Poster 1 | Raees | Shah Rukh Khan, Mahira Khan | Releasing 25 Jan
Jan 4, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Guhq5Xd4Yfc&list=PLGkwyKB0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f

Zaalima Song | Audio Poster 2 | Raees | Shah Rukh Khan, Mahira Khan | Releasing 25 Jan
Jan 4, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjlWN4ZTqRc&list=PLGkwyKB0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f&index=16

Zaalima Song | Audio Poster 3 | Raees | Shah Rukh Khan, Mahira Khan | Releasing 25 Jan
Jan 4, 2017
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuoA4OkzKH0&list=PLGkwyKB0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f

Zaalima Song | Audio Poster 4 | Raees | Shah Rukh Khan, Mahira Khan | Releasing 25 Jan
Jan 4, 2017
Raees Ki Dialogue Baazi | Shah Rukh Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui | Releasing 25 January
Jan 9, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=5AwqxsK9Esk&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f&index=14

Raees Ki Dialogue Baazi | Shah Rukh Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui | Releasing 25 January
Jan 9, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=RMvclDPGo_E&index=11&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f

Raees Ki Dialogue Baazi | Shah Rukh Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui | Releasing 25 January
Jan 9, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=5sO_XTxHtsI&index=13&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f

Raees Ko Nahi Chhodunga Main | Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Shah Rukh Khan | Raees | Releasing 25 January
Jan 11, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=huUDRX-QZfM&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f&index=11

Baniye Ka Dimaag Aur Miyanbhai Ki Daring | Shah Rukh Khan | Raees | Releasing 25 January
Jan 13, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=HaJyx31uaCI&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f&index=10
Raees Ki Taraf Se Shubh Makar Sankranti | Shah Rukh Khan | Releasing 25 January
Jan 14, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=5trFTlB55Ac&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTIJZo_f&index=9

Battery Nahi Bolneka | Shah Rukh Khan | Raees
Jan 16, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=d4vlgTdVkBAt=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTIJZo_f&index=8

5 Days To Go | Raees Ka Din | Shah Rukh Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui | Releasing Jan 25
Jan 19, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=1O1o-4uXX6E&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTIJZo_f&index=6

Sheron Ka Zamaana | Shah Rukh Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui | Raees | Releasing 25 January
Jan 19, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=MpWaXV3mq2U&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTIJZo_f&index=7

4 Days To Go | Raees Ka Din | Shah Rukh Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui | Releasing Jan 25
Jan 20, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=_1SLvQ8TZWw&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTIJZo_f&index=5

3 Days To Go | Raees Ka Din | Shah Rukh Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui | Releasing Jan 25
Jan 21, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=f2uymeFBZNU&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTIJZo_f&index=4
2 Days To Go | Raees Ka Din | Shah Rukh Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui | Releasing Jan 25
Jan 22, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=urt-aWyN8BU&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f&index=3

Koi Dhandha Chhota Nahin Hota | Harpreet Kaur | Raees | Releasing Jan 25
Jan 23, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=3srU7D4p9-4&t=33s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f&index=2

1 Day To Go | Raees Ka Din | Shah Rukh Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui | Releasing Jan 25
Jan 23, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=FILxxw2gddE&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeC1GQ9I1sU9DmCOWTlJZo_f&index=1

Behind the Scenes

Raees | Making of Laila Main Laila | Sunny Leone, Shah Rukh Khan
Feb 9, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=ucYN0zZfp9E&index=5&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeBPa5e-Du-qrjdGBz2umNuA&t=130s

Raees | Making Of The Character Raees | Shah Rukh Khan, Mahira Khan
Feb 13, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=H49xu-q51qE&index=3&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeBPa5e-Du-qrjdGBz2umNuA

Raees | Making of Udi Jaye | Mahira Khan, Shah Rukh Khan
Feb 14, 2017
https://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=A2wzbcaKCXA&index=2&list=PLGkwyKBMD0CeBPa5e-DuqrjdGBz2umNuA

Raees | Making Of The Character Majmudar | Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Shah Rukh Khan
Mar 29, 2017
https://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=uz4Tn0G-CSQ&index=0&list=PLGkwyKBMD0CeBPa5e-DuqrjdGBz2umNuA

Deleted Scenes
Raees | Gandhi Glasses | Deleted Scene | Shah Rukh Khan, Mahira Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui
April 25, 2017
https://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=ntcrcJeeqsk&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBMD0CeB2S5gIw9GlbMKuzEoHeSpQ&index=11

Raees | Fruit Market | Deleted Scene | Shah Rukh Khan, Mahira Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui
Apr 26, 2017
https://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=FslZgmGBjqQ&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBMD0CeB2S5gIw9GlbMKuzEoHeSpQ&index=10

Raees | Breakfast with Bobby | Deleted Scene | Shah Rukh Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Mahira Khan
Apr 28, 2017
https://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=kKfmIRmHRCM&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBMD0CeB2S5gIw9GlbMKuzEoHeSpQ&index=9
Raees | Health Camp | Deleted Scene | Shah Rukh Khan, Mahira Khan, Nawazuddin Sidiqqui
May 1, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=E4iNIS4PYy8&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeB2S5gIw9GlbMKuzEoHeSpQ&index=8

Raees | Tu Busy Hai | Deleted Scene | Shah Rukh Khan, Mahira Khan, Nawazuddin Sidiqqui
May 2, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=ohZc9tiIA&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeB2S5gIw9GlbMKuzEoHeSpQ&index=7

Raees | Majmudar's Raid | Deleted Scene | Shah Rukh Khan, Nawazuddin Sidiqqui, Mahira Khan
May 3, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=aS9s9ccivEA&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeB2S5gIw9GlbMKuzEoHeSpQ&index=6

Raees - The Father | Deleted Scene | Shah Rukh Khan, Mahira Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui
May 4, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=qQJziLTHRnw&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeB2S5gIw9GlbMKuzEoHeSpQ&index=5

Raees | Sanjanwala's Dilemma | Deleted Scene | Shah Rukh Khan, Mahira Khan, Nawazuddin Sidiqqui
May 5, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=6vTHF0JFnCU&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeB2S5gIw9GlbMKuzEoHeSpQ&index=4

Raees | Langar | Deleted Scene | Shah Rukh Khan, Mahira Khan, Nawazuddin Sidiqqui
May 8, 2017
References

https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=fOo7vc6amFY&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeB2S5gIw9G IbMKuzEoHeSpQ&index=2

Raees | Majmudar & his dog | Deleted Scene | Shah Rukh Khan, Nawazuddin Sidiqqui
May 9, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=fOo7vc6amFY&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeB2S5gIw9G IbMKuzEoHeSpQ&index=2

Raees | Antakshari | Deleted Scene | Shah Rukh Khan, Mahira Khan, Nawazuddin Sidiqqui
May 10, 2017
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=4gmiTALRarU&t=0s&list=PLGkwyKBM0CeB2S5gIw9G IbMKuzEoHeSpQ&index=1


doi:10.1177/006996670003400204


https://login.libezproxy2.syr.edu/login?url=http://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/galera ce/bollywood/0?institutionId=499


https://search.proquest.com/docview/216475746?accountid=14214


http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350051188.ch-003

Alyssa G. Lobo  
aglobo@syr.edu

**EDUCATION**

S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University  
Master of Arts, Media Studies | expected December 2018

Sophia B.K. Somani Memorial Polytechnic, Mumbai  
Postgraduate Diploma Social Communications Media | May 2011

St. Xavier's College, University of Mumbai  
Bachelor of Arts, English Literature | May 2010

**RESEARCH**


**MEDIA WORK EXPERIENCE**

Quadrum Content Solutions, Mumbai • June 2014- March 2015  
*Content Writer*

• Handled internal and marketing communication for Aptech Computer Education which consisted of copy writing mailers, posters, brochures, franchisee communication. Also created marketing collaterals for their student event – Evolve

• Wrote copy for brochures and mailers and created an automated phone script for Reliance Life Insurance

• Created content for internal communications for different companies under the Tata conglomerate such as Tata Global Beverages and Tata InnoVerse.

• Worked on an internal communication campaign called ‘Brewing Brilliance’ for Tata Global Beverages’ Rewards & Recognition program, which won the Best Campaign Award at Quadrum’s Q Awards

The Big Indian Picture (thebigindianpicture.com) • August 2012- May 2014  
*Junior Correspondent*

• Researched, reported and wrote on stories related to film and culture

• Fact-checked and line edited articles from commissioned authors

• Handled social networking (Twitter and Facebook), using Hootsuite
**Oijo! (Oijo.in) • October 2013- May 2014**  
*Writer/Researcher*  
• Wrote feature articles and interviews with international and Indian folk artists as the official online and content partner for the Jodhpur Riff music festival  
• Handled social media for both Jodhpur Riff and Oijo using Hootsuite

**Marvelinfomedia for The Inside Track (theinsidetrack.in) • March 2015 –July 2016**  
*Senior sub-editor*  
• Planned the monthly issue for a trade publication for the design and construction industry  
• Wrote for Home Review, an architecture and interiors magazine also owned by Marvelinfomedia  
• Wrote and edited articles on design and the building products industry  
• Adapted existing content for the website www.designowl.com

**Nandini Shrikent (Casting Director) • July 2011- May 2012**  
*Casting assistant*  
• Handled administrative work such as scheduling meetings and auditions and delivering scripts  
• Shot and edited auditions for films and TV ads.

**OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE**

**Professor Jennifer Grygiel, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY | January 2018 – May 2018**  
*Research Assistant*  
• Researched for a literature review on police use of social media, slut shaming on the internet and public shame  
• Rewrote and edited a conference paper for academic publication

**Professor Anne Osborne, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY | September 2017 – December 2017**  
*Research Assistant*  
• Researched for a literature review and wrote an annotated bibliography on sex testing in sports and the depiction of trans and intersex athletes in sports.  
• Created a database of news articles on sex testing in sports from newspapers

**Professor David Rubin Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY | August 2016- December 2016**  
*Instructional Associate*  
• Set and graded exams and tests.  
• Handled classroom technology such as document camera and projector  
• Assisted students with their questions on the learning material
**Professor Michael Park** Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY | January 2017 – May 2017
*Instructional Associate*
- Graded exams and tests
- Handled attendance records and other administrative work
- Helped students with their questions on the course work and readings

**SKILLS**
Efficient in MS Word, Excel & Powerpoint.

Trained in social media monitoring platforms such as Sysomos & Hootsuite and well versed in Wordpress and Buzzfeed Community CMS.

Speaks three languages: English (fluent), Hindi (functional), French (beginner).

Possesses basic familiarity with editing software like iMovie & Final Cut Pro.