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Terrains of Bollywood Dance: (Neoliberal) Capitalism and the Transformation of Cultural Economies

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Abstract. This article explores ways of theorizing cultural change in contexts of liberalization and rapid economic growth. I focus on post-1990s India, looking on the one hand at the emergence of a Bollywood dance craze within middle class (transnational) India, and, on the other hand, at the rise of dance bars, where girls danced seductively for a male audience, a phenomenon that was subject to a vigorous moral campaign and a ban. I explore capitalism in its ability to (indiscriminately) fuel, scale, and feed phenomena as well as its production of class and disparity. I also look at lavish expenditure and ostentatious show in contexts of music and dance, exploring the connections yet contradictions of the vast surpluses of capitalism, the use of performing arts as a medium to display this money-power as status, and ideologies of productivity and industriousness and, on the other hand, of waste. I further analyze the unevenness, unintended consequences, and powerfully moral dimensions of (neoliberal) capitalism through contextualizing it as a form of liberalism. Thus I examine the ways in which we can understand the sheer pervasiveness of capitalism and its transformational power, yet also its unevenness and unpredictability, its dystopias as well as utopias.

While the history of capitalism in India goes back at least to the East India Company, it has moved and developed through various stages over the centuries through trade, industrialisation, technology and markets. A significant watershed can be identified following the liberal reforms of 1991, a part of the larger global phase described as neoliberalism.¹ This markedly increased India's openness to global markets, and has brought about a dramatic and still sustained

economic boom, a vast expansion of the middle classes, and a vigorous consumer culture. In terms of performing arts, one of the most visible cultural changes associated with this economic liberalization has been a Bollywood dance craze that swept middle class (transnational) India by the late 1990s. While dance was always a part of Hindi films, before the 1990s only classical dance had existed in the middle class world at large as a live phenomenon. By the 2000s, live dance to film songs, often with new choreography, though in the *filmi* style, featured in, or formed the basis of, many television shows and competitions, and lavish shows were put on within weddings in North India and diaspora communities in western countries.² Thus, in addition to the well documented association of India's new and transnational middle classes with what came to be called "Bollywood" cinema, Bollywood dance also became emblematic of these classes, and post-liberalisation India more broadly.³

However, another dance phenomenon also rose to prominence in the wake of economic liberalization: the Mumbai dance bars, where girls danced seductively to Bollywood songs to entertain men who would shower them with money. The dance bars became a focus of a vigorous moral campaign, and were banned by the government of Maharashtra in 2005. The ban was somewhat surprisingly overturned by the High Court in 2006 and ratified by the Supreme Court in 2013, though dance bars have still not reopened. Thus India's neoliberal phase has produced illegitimate as well as legitimate offspring in the realm of performing arts.

That capitalism in its various phases and forms transforms not only economy, but society, life, and culture too, is undeniable. However, while some patterns of change that have emerged from neoliberal capitalism seem fairly expected and straightforward—for example, the rise of global consumer products and fashions and their prominence in cultural forms such as television, music and cinema—other changes are rather less expected or, indeed, intended, the dance bars being a prime example in India. Within a vast literature on neoliberalism in the social sciences, substantial work has explored unofficial economies and the shadow of globalization in the form of the rise in illegal trade and of course terrorism. Such work has emphasized a close intertwining of the legal and illegal, the licit and illicit, and drawn attention to ways that globalization from above has opened routes for and facilitated globalization "from below" (Mathews, Ribiero and Vega 2012; see also van Schendel and Abraham 2005 and Nordstrom 2007). Research has also focused on vast forms of disparity in the wake of neoliberal reforms (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Harvey 2006) and the unevenness or "exceptions" of neoliberalism (Ong 2006). Work also exists on non-capitalist economic activity in the global era, for example by Gibson-Graham (2006 [1996]), and following this approach, Yang's study of hybridity in global capitalism in the context of the resurgence of ancestor rituals in China after the transition

to a market economy (2000). However, in terms of performing arts, there has been little scholarship that closely examines the agency of economy, money, wealth, and profit in cultural change and globalization, though a literature on neoliberalism is developing and (albeit relatively few) important studies exist on music and capitalism more generally.⁴ Even less research has scrutinized uneven, paradoxical and hybrid change within (neoliberal) capitalism, though an exception is work focusing on the destabilizing of musical economies by changes in technology, with technology intimately intertwined with capitalist development.⁵

In this article, I explore ways of theorizing transformational cultural change in contexts of liberalization and rapid economic growth. I focus on how neoliberalization has acted on a section of India's performing arts since the 1990s and examine the ways in which we can understand, at the level of cultural forms, the sheer pervasiveness of capitalism and its transformational power, yet also its unevenness and unpredictability, its dystopias as well as utopias. Looking at the rise of both the Bollywood dance craze and the dance bars, I focus on capitalism in its ability to (indiscriminately) fuel, scale, and feed phenomena, as well as its production of class and disparity. I also look at lavish expenditure and ostentatious show in contexts of music and dance, exploring the connections, yet contradictions, of the vast surpluses of capitalism, the use of performing arts as a medium to display this money-power as status, and ideologies of productivity and industriousness and, on the other hand, notions of waste.

Furthermore, I explore neoliberalism not just as a form of capitalism but as a form of liberalism. This has received considerable attention from Harvey (2006), and work looking at the rise of NGOs, such as that of Ferguson and Gupta (2002). In this article, however, I use this angle to link the phenomena of the 1990s and 2000s to deeper histories and genealogies of performing arts and liberal modernity in India. Looking at neoliberalism as (not just economic) liberalism also enables us to explore the intensely moral conflicts and bifurcations that have loomed large in the contemporary neoliberalized world, the bar girls' debacle being just one example. In addition, given that liberalism is beset by contradictions in its political as well as economic dimensions,⁶ considering neoliberalism as lying in the bloodline of not just capitalism but also of liberalism enables a more profound understanding of its surprises and unintended consequences.

This article is based on around eighteen months of fieldwork in India between 2006 and 2014 on the Bollywood dance craze and dance in the film industry, the illicit worlds of Indian dance, such as dance bars, and earlier fieldwork on music in the Bombay film industry. It is also based on involvement in Bollywood dance classes in the UK, and various phases of study of Indian classical music and singing mostly between 1993 and 2003.

The Bollywood Dance Craze As A Textbook Neoliberal Cultural Formation

In the 1990s, a number of factors converged to give rise to a mass Bollywood dance scene outside of Hindi films. This included changes to the way dance was presented on screen, with boundaries being pushed on the restrictions on dancing for heroines.⁷ Off-screen too, shifts occurred. Traditional music and dance that formed a part of the female-only wedding ritual/celebration, the *sangeet*, became more open to film songs, and started to be performed in front of guests, rather than just by women for women. In the diaspora too, Bollywood gained far more prominence and popularity, and the overseas territories in western countries started to be a prime target for film producers due to their high ticket prices. *Bhangra* (from the 1980s) and Bollywood dance became more popular at parties and weddings, and people started teaching Bollywood dance on a formal level.

Honey's Dance Academy, for example, was launched as the first British Asian Dance Academy in 1997.⁸ In India in 1997, a point of critical mass was reached with the release of the film *Dil To Pagal Hai* (*The Heart is Crazy*) which features three jazz dancer protagonists who hang out in lycra clothes and sports wear and live and rehearse in loft-style apartments.⁹ Shiamak Davar, who had been running a small jazz dance institute in Bombay since the 1980s, provided the choreography and much of the striking new look of the film. The film was an immense hit and catapulted Shiamak Davar's institute to a new level (Shresthova 2011:45–46, 34–70). From this time, institutes started to mushroom in India (Morcom 2013:120–122). A part of these changes in India and Indian diasporas was also what can be described as a burgeoning global trend for popular dance as fitness and fun, with the immense growth of salsa classes in particular.

The widespread, live performance of Bollywood dance is a product that emerged in post-liberalization India, and indeed, reads as a model case of a neoliberal cultural formation, foregrounding ideas, aesthetics and socio-economic realities of work, entrepreneurship, mobility, success, and individualism.¹⁰ Bollywood dance can be seen as a collective institution of neoliberal governmentality and discipline (Ferguson and Gupta 2002), producing productive, energetic, fit, confident, healthy, attractive individuals with the aspiration to work hard to improve themselves, and to earn money, and the enhanced ability to do so. It has also become a capitalist industry in a fairly straightforward sense, a site of “productive labor,” to use Marx's term, of entrepreneurship and capital accumulation.

I describe these characteristics here, and highlight their neoliberal character by making some comparisons with Indian classical performing arts, which were born in their middle-class form under bourgeois-nationalist reforms of the early

twentieth centuries,¹¹ an earlier chapter of India's capitalist history associated with colonialism and emerging nationalism. Post independence, India moved into a more socialist phase under Jawaharlal Nehru, but certainly did not exist outside of the capitalist world system.¹² Bollywood dance is thus a part of the longer trajectory of the embourgeoisement of Indian performing arts that began with the classical traditions, as I have explored elsewhere (Morcom 2013).

This historical continuity is significant to the deeper genealogies I trace of both live Bollywood dance and the dance bars. India's classical traditions are currently undergoing potentially dramatic changes under the economic expansion of contemporary India. I briefly comment and speculate on this, though the study of this transformation is a project in itself, and beyond the scope of this article, as indeed is a thorough economic history of Indian classical music. I also do not explore the transformation of on-screen Hindi film dance since economic liberalization. Rather, my aim here is to highlight how live Bollywood dance represents a new, highly neoliberal middle-class cultural formation. However, at the same time, it is part of longer histories of capitalism and capitalist class structures in India.

Dance As Business And Economic Productivity

The Bollywood dance craze has become institutionalized almost entirely through entrepreneurship, with dance institutes set up as profit-making businesses. In contrast, classical performing arts, even as they were transformed into a bourgeois-nationalist phenomenon in the twentieth century, have existed largely from patronage. This included extensive state patronage and a whole network of public institutions, something absent in the Bollywood dance scene; it also included patronage of industrialists.

Bollywood dance is also a mass phenomenon, involving India's vastly expanded new middle classes that have emerged since economic liberalization. The potential to earn money and transform one's socio-economic circumstances from dance in the Bollywood dance scene thus exists on an unprecedented scale in India's modern history, and provides opportunities for large numbers of dancers to earn good salaries, often earning considerably more, for example, than call center workers. In addition, Bollywood dance is relatively quick and easy to learn and thus dancers can get on average a far better return on investment in training than classical performers. Those dancers who are able to get into choreography or establish their own dance institutes can earn very large amounts of money, and some of these institutes are on the level of not inconsiderable-sized companies. The largest dance company, Shiamak Davar's Institute of Performing Arts (SDIPA), for example, has some 20,000 students, as well as troupes that perform for high level shows and the film industry. While Shiamak Davar

would hardly be on a par with India's steel or car magnates, for dance, the scale of his institution is remarkable. Bollywood dance shows are also widely used for corporate events for purposes of brand building (something also now taking place with classical performing arts).

Attitudes towards making money in the Bollywood dance scene are also significant, with dancers proud to say they are earning well from dance and to advertise the fact that dance pays a really good income now, which some people find surprising. As one SDIPA dancer reported, people say to her "Oh you dance for a living, but how can that be, do you make enough money?" I'm like 'you know, I make a lot more money than you can ever imagine a dancer would make'" (quoted in Morcom 2013:124). Others have managed to win over friends and family who earlier criticized them for engaging in Bollywood dance rather than business or a "proper" profession (see Morcom 2013:132–135).

In classical performing arts there has not been such an easy or open relationship to earning raw money. Indeed, in South India, fees given to teachers by students or for performances are still not seen as or termed a "salary" or "wage", but *guru dakshina*, "fees similar to a priest receiving gifts from the patrons of the temple for assisting them with experiencing the divine, rather than an assertion of their ownership of the performance through monetary compensation" (Kannan 2014:278–279).¹³ Neuman describes a similar distinction made by North Indian classical musicians in his earlier study (1990 [1980]). Classical performers, in particular the relatively few stars, certainly earn very large amounts of money. However, rather than existing as a primary and unabashed means of accumulating economic capital, classical performing arts have arguably been more significant in terms of their cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984). Indeed, classical performing arts are still important in this way, with their esteem and respect in this sense certainly unsurpassed. Bollywood dance has gained legitimacy or cultural capital, and can enhance the social capital of the individual as I describe below. However, it does not feed into class construction in quite the same way as classical performing arts, which are actively used as a means of gaining status, for example, with girls from good (upper) middle-class families routinely learning classical singing or Bharatnatyam and so on to make them more competitive in the marriage market (but, crucially, not to become professional performers). This however, is likely to shift with the increasing amounts of money that are entering into classical performing arts.

Mobilization of Music's Social Agency and Productivity

Music and dance have always done socially constructive/cohesive work, as a long line of ethnomusicological research dating from classic studies, such as Blacking (1967), Berliner (1978) and Seeger (2004 [1987]) has shown. However,

in the Bollywood dance craze, there is a conscious, intentional use of music/dance for socially beneficial ends, an instrumentalized use of music. This is an important trend to be seen with music and arts across the neoliberalizing world, a sea change with complex ramifications for understanding their place in education, their funding, and also their role in development, specific social repair/healing work, and more generally, positive social (re)production.¹⁴ Indeed, it is becoming more and more important in the advanced capitalist world that the arts are actively justified as at least socially productive, even if they are not economically productive.

This importance of a given activity as grounded in its being useful and productive can be closely linked with capitalism. As E.P. Thompson writes in his famous article “Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism:” “In mature capitalist society all time must be consumed, marketed, put to *use*; it is offensive for the labor force merely to ‘pass the time’” (1967:90–91). In the Bollywood dance world, this logic is highly manifest, with dance put to work in a number of targeted ways at the social level, making it anything but just leisure; indeed, the assertion “it’s more than just dance” is common in the Bollywood dance scene. Bollywood dance is advertised widely as “stress busting” and a means to lose weight, with a number of gyms in India doing “Bollywood workouts,” and a number of DVDs released by dance institutes in the UK and US. Shiamak Davar’s Institute of Performing Arts has a high profile wing that targets underprivileged and handicapped children, working to give them confidence and self-esteem through dance, as well as an opportunity for fun in what are difficult lives. More broadly, institutes use Bollywood dance as a means of combating depression and enhancing self-esteem, with some institutes particularly involved in the therapeutic use of dance. Bollywood dance is also described as a form of spirituality and devotion (Morcom 2013:122–131).¹⁵

Classical performing arts have certainly never been seen as just entertainment; indeed, to the contrary, they are subsumed with discourses of art, devotion, and higher purpose, and historical work also shows their specifically medicinal and therapeutic use (Brown 2003). In terms of their post-reform bourgeois-nationalist incarnation, their value as just entertainment has often been downplayed (in particular with female performers), in contrast to their value as art, and this has been an important strand in their gaining legitimacy.¹⁶ Classical performing arts also became wrapped in a rational, codified, intellectual discourse through the processes of classicization in the twentieth century that distanced them from just entertainment, in particular, from “feudal decadence” (Chinchore 1990; Bakhle 2005).¹⁷

Bollywood dance encompasses ideas of the therapeutic value of music and dance that are not incomparable to those of classical music, but not of the rarified discourses of art and aesthetics. However, Bollywood dance also contrasts

to classical performing arts in that it enables the transformation of ordinary people into energetic, fit, and successful individuals on a mass scale, rather than just elite nobility who cured melancholy through classical music or an educated bourgeoisie who delighted in its sublime qualities. Crucial to this, in practical terms, is the ease with which people can gain a basic and rewarding grasp of Bollywood dance, even from the first class, unlike classical dance, which requires a far longer investment in training. Thus, with Bollywood dance, we can see a continuity, but also in many senses a gearing up, speeding up, or massification of dance as a tool of social productivity that, moreover, advertises itself as such.

Mobility, Aspiration, Individual Success, And Entrepreneurship

Bollywood dance has become a profession that offers substantial mobility, giving a white-collar salary and status without the need for high marks in school or an expensive education. There are a number of notable Bollywood dance entrepreneurs, first and foremost Shiamak Davar, but many others who have set up dance institutes and gained success significantly or far beyond a basic salary. As stated, Bollywood dance also helps people transform their mental and physical health in general, either in the form of overcoming problems or attaining enhanced levels of personhood. These are social and economic realities. These realities of mobility and change are then also manifested in and propelled by strong ideologies of self-improvement, discipline, hard work, and dance as self-realization in Bollywood dance institutes (Shresthova 2011; Morcom 2013). Thus, in a similar manner to the protestant work ethic of capitalism analyzed by Weber at the start of the twentieth century, ideological and economic aspects of neoliberalism can be seen here to be two sides of the same coin.¹⁸

Classical music has strong discourses of perfection and realization, but these are generally not seen (or expressed) in terms of raw individual ambition and success let alone blatant material gain. They rather relate more to the imperative to serve the sacred character of the tradition, transmitted via the guru, and to constitute religious devotion (though again, these ideological aspects of classical performing arts are almost certainly being altered in the current climate of increased money and mobility). Bollywood dance in many cases does have a strong spiritual angle, for example in SDIPA where classes begin with a non-denominational prayer (Shresthova 2008:136). However, this is a rather “New Age” form of spirituality connected to broader notions of individual wellbeing that can be harnessed for the realization of talent and fame. In Bollywood dance, individual realization also extends to a celebration of the body, sensuality, and sexuality (albeit within certain parameters), aspects that were strictly restrained by the reform of classical performing arts. Thus, with Bollywood dance, there is a marked shift to a modern and indeed neoliberal individualism, with the realization of individual success writ large.

Highlighting Of Innovation And Change

The neoliberal character of Bollywood dance is also manifest in terms of its flaunting of innovation and change, and rapid obsolescence through fashions. This is a distinctly market-capitalism characteristic, and of course something linked with its origins in and continued symbiotic relationship to the cinema. Again, in contrast, in classical performing arts, change produces some fundamental conflicts and tends to be underplayed, with an emphasis on continuation of tradition and looking to the richness of the past rather than to the newness of the future (Neuman 1990 [1980]:230–7). Furthermore, major changes in classical performing arts, such as the emergence of new styles and instruments have hardly happened on a seasonal basis, and classical performing arts involve now, and have historically involved, vast amounts of time in ensuring very exact transmission of knowledge from a teacher, and a strong emphasis on continuity and tradition. Creativity is certainly acknowledged and prized. However, originality, newness, and change for their own sake are not cherished aesthetics, though notable examples of self-conscious fusion projects have occurred in the twentieth century, and classical performing arts in “contemporary” or fusion forms are becoming more widespread in the neoliberal context, forming entire socio-cultural scenes in big urban areas.¹⁹

Surplus, Wealth, and Display

The expenditure on Bollywood dance displays at weddings can be immensely lavish, for example, with a choreographer and dance institute owner in the city of Jalandhar in the Punjab reporting that commonly, costs for the *sangeet* alone in the wealthy circles can go beyond a *crore* rupees (over \$150,000) and are still increasing, with each dress worn by the friends of the bride as they perform (let alone the bride’s dress) costing easily \$3,000. This is a sharp contrast to bourgeois-nationalist classical performing arts. In fact, classical performing arts under courtly patronage were a medium for the ostentatious display of wealth, with feudalism and monarchies producing vast surpluses. However, “decadent” aspects of Indian classical performing arts were attacked by Victorian British notions of utility and were increasingly seen as wasteful expenditures.²⁰ Ideas of the nobility of the poor also then arose from Gandhian thought towards the end of the colonial period, and as Independent India adopted Nehru’s version of socialism, this enhanced an official disapproval of individual wealth and ostentation. Thus, reformed classical performing arts saw the restraint or elimination of decadence, sexuality, and seduction in music and dance, and priceless costumes and the bestowing of gold and jewels on favorite musicians became remnants of the feudal past. Rather, there was a greater association of these arts with chaste (Hindu) religiosity and nationalism, though the *darbar* or courtly model for

classical performers still continued, as Neuman describes (1990 [1980]:221–23), and big stars of the classical world have commanded high fees.

In his foundational study of conspicuous expenditure, Veblen explores how with a feudal structure and leisure classes, such as royalty or nobility, visible, excessive, and even profligate expenditure is necessary and desirable in order to show and make manifest the fact of not just wealth but of non-engagement in productive labor (Veblen 1994 [1899]). For a bourgeoisie, on the other hand, where people earn their living, there is a moral imperative to restrain conspicuous consumption to some degree. There are also practical limits on available money—i.e. a bourgeois individual typically has limited income and money, as opposed to the virtually unlimited (or ideally unlimited) money of a feudal ruler. Thus it makes sense that the excessive expenditure and “decadence” of pre-reform classical performing arts were piously reined in, and in state institutions, largely eliminated. However, with Bollywood dance, there is again a culture of reveling in ostentation and expenditure, but here among middle classes.

A number of factors can be identified at being at play here. First, the middle classes of India who form the core audience and performers of classical performing arts in the twentieth century (and indeed the post-independence Indian state itself), generally did not have large surpluses as India remained poor with very low growth rates; it is since liberalization that large disposable wealth has come to a broad mass of people. Culture involves activity, doing, labor, and thus in order to happen, requires time, energy, and material resources, of which money is a major form. Thus, with the large amounts of new money, a very clear kind of economic growth in cultural form has been possible, giving rise to the Bollywood dance phenomenon (again, I would add that the new surpluses of India’s economic boom will almost inevitably have an effect on contemporary, neoliberalized classical performing arts, though this is as yet unexplored).

Furthermore, after liberalization in India and the emergence of consumer capitalism, different socio-economic logics influence the legitimacy of expenditure. In non-leisure classes, as Veblen states, unnecessary expenditure can be seen as waste in a way that even vast expenditure by kings and nobles is not. Indeed, restrictions on wasteful expenditure within a capitalist framework are strongly evident in Weber’s famous study of the protestant ethic of hard work and frugality that maximized reinvestment of profits, leading to the growth of capital and capitalism (2002 [1905]). However, capitalism may be supported by the very opposite of frugality, and in consumer capitalism in particular, growth rests precisely on a production and consumption of unnecessary goods (as well as necessary ones).²¹ Thus, in consumer capitalism, an unnecessary expenditure and lavishness is acceptable, which would not be acceptable under a protestant-type capitalism; in fact, it is necessary. Thus the notion that spending is good exists in India now to a degree that it did not during the bourgeois-nationalist

and post-independence (quasi) socialist phases. Similarly, the notion that earning lots of money is good is also prevalent, and as already stated, Bollywood dancers are generally not awkward about acknowledging a very good income. It could be said that Bollywood dance has a more direct relationship to wealth and wealth-related status (as opposed to cultural and social capital) than classical performing arts (Bourdieu 1984).

Various other theorists have explored expenditure in terms of acts of emulation and competition for status, where displaying money has its own importance. Graeber analyses money as a specifically invisible form of power, something that affects the potential for future actions; visible displays of wealth, on the other hand, are able to control or influence the behavior of others (2001, chapter four). Thus expenditure on ostentatious performing arts is a means of transforming money power into another form of power: status. Veblen points out that “unnecessary” conspicuous expenditure is something poorer people do, even if it constricts basic needs (1994[1899]), and indeed, people in India not infrequently take on debt to fund weddings, and the Bollywoodized sangeet is a large additional expenditure. Frank has somewhat similarly discussed the role of “positional goods”—goods whose utility lies in how they compare and compete with similar goods of others and thus display status rather than fulfill basic needs (2005). In fact, large amounts of the surpluses of the neoliberal era worldwide have gone into expenditure on positional goods, property being a prime example in the US, UK, and other parts of the world. Indeed, with the unequal concentration of wealth, more expenditure goes into what he terms “positional arms races” amidst classes that have wealth, and those who strive to emulate them, something ultimately inefficient for society (Frank and Cook 2010 [1995]). The lavish sangeets certainly exist in this paradigm, and have escalated considerably in a matter of a decade or two.

Bollywood dance is a display that performs and makes visibly manifest the sheer wealth and vitality of market liberalization and those individuals, families, and social classes that have benefited from it. With its unashamedly ostentatious expenditure, it can be seen as a positional good. It is almost inevitable that some kind of major change in the terrain of performing arts would have had to take place in order to display the vast amounts of accumulated wealth of India’s hugely expanded middle classes and to embody the rapid economic development and conspicuous consumption that are the realities of neoliberalizing India for this sector of society.²² Indeed, the use of surpluses of capitalism to fund (and in the process, transform) the arts goes back to capitalism’s early history in Renaissance Italy. Classical performing arts, for the reasons and legacies outlined above, have been arguably limited in scope in this regard, and did not serve as a widespread means of displaying middle class monetary wealth, though this will almost certainly change.

However, it would be wrong to say that Bollywood dance is just a means of displaying wealth and thereby creating status. The sangeet should be lavish, but this expenditure is also aimed at creating an event that is full of explosive energy (*dhoom dham*) and intensely enjoyable and social (*mast*). This is a system of hospitality that is ultimately reciprocal, and more in the framework of gift exchange, even the “agonistic prestations” known as potlatch, which I discuss more below (Mauss 1954 [1925]). Expenditure on music and dance has long since performed such functions in India. In such a context, rational and efficient exchange of social/symbolic/cultural/economic capital for overall gains in productivity, as according to Bourdieu, is not the ultimate logic, and, as Frank and Cook point out, positional expenditure, as it escalates, does not maximize social utility, and in fact leads to waste (2010 [1995]).

In Bataille’s thinking, surpluses have an energy that demands they be put to use in some way, but it is impossible to entirely absorb the excess of life itself into further biological or social productivity, let alone the financial wealth that capitalism has produced. If not put to use, and wasted, surpluses are destructive (1991 [1949]). Thus Bataille’s work gives a sense of the limits to the rational and productive use of surpluses, and of the lack of control over their use, which counters capitalism’s emphasis on productivity. His analysis, inspired by phenomena such as potlatches, where wealth is destroyed, shows also that “waste” of wealth and energy is a good thing, something that creates stability.²³ Thus we can see in the Bollywood dance craze the agency, embodiment and display of new wealth brought by neoliberal (consumer) capitalism, and, as I have outlined, overall, a very “textbook” neoliberal character. However, at the same time, the economic logics of this phenomenon go beyond rational exchange and productivity.²⁴

Contradictions and Conflict: Less Pure Neoliberal Zones of Performing Arts in Neoliberal India

Bollywood dance (and Bollywood cinema more generally) have become writ large on the face of the new, economically booming India as a vivid embodiment of success, energy, confidence, wealth, and consumption. The Bollywood dance craze embodies entrepreneurial spirit and the will to succeed, to make money, and to relish in personal fulfillment and health. In these ways, it represents a remarkably concentrated and pure (or, more accurately, ideal) neoliberal cultural formation. However, another side of Indian popular dance is found in its shadow—one of bar dancers and private parties, as well as increasingly eroticized performances in local theatrical genres. In this world, non-middle class female dancers exist in a paradigm of eroticism and (in theory) sexual availability. Dance bars grew to great prominence in Mumbai in the 1990s, riding the same wave of neoliberal socio-economic transformation as the Bollywood

dance revolution, but fuelled by money more at the lower end of the expanded middle classes—the vernacular middle classes. Bollywood dance and dance bars were certainly related, but in a way that would indicate some kind of a mishap (at least in the eyes of the state and those middle classes fronting the new global India), a bastard (neoliberal) modernity rather than a legitimate and ideal one.

Bars, Non-Domestic Illicit Spaces, and Negative Social Productivity

Dance bars involved conspicuous and ostentatious expenditure, with customers showering sumptuously dressed female dancers with money. However, there were key differences in the forms of ostentation the dance bars represented that made them far more of a conflict with a spirit of neoliberal capitalism than the ostentation of Bollywood dance. Significantly, lavish dance displays at middle class weddings are seen with pride and as entirely worthwhile, whereas, in fact more modest displays in dance bars were seen as waste. Moral arguments against dance bars have deep roots in liberal discourses and histories as I explore below. There are also factors of class antagonism. However, the sense that dance bars were a waste also arose in terms of how they were positioned vis á vis social productivity.

With Bollywood dance, ostentatious displays now take place at events grounded in the middle class family, including weddings. In a bourgeois society, as mentioned above, the place of “productive labor” (as Marx termed economic productivity) is work, and outside of the home. The domestic sphere is the core and most legitimate space of social (re)production.²⁵ In dance bars, however, the displays took place in an illicit space, neither public nor private, and fundamentally opposed to the family. Indeed, the showering of girls with money by audience members had direct connotations of and connections with extra-marital sex and eroticism, and was a way in which customers bid for the attention of dancers, pleased them, enjoyed flirtatious and romantic friendships, and sometimes would end up sleeping with them, though showering of money was not by any means a sure way lead to sex, contrary to what the moral panic reported.²⁶ Thus this illicit nature of bars made it impossible for money showered on dancers to be a rational investment in social/cultural capital according to Bourdieu’s theory (1984; 1986). To be in a dance bar and shower girls with money brought about harm in terms of class, with not just disrepute but money spent away from the family, so it is not appropriate to describe it as social capital. It can, rather, be described as a peer-prestige system, status-oriented and positional, but not lying within a rational logic of social/cultural capital accumulation.

For the bar dancers themselves, dancing in bars was seen by the majority of the general public as a sign of failure, of destitution and desperation, as “against the dignity of women,” “prostitution,” and as “ruining the fabric of society.” As

stated, it was banned in 2005. Crucially, bar girls were seen as not working, but gaining “easy money” (though this discourse was dramatically undermined by the anti-ban lobby, as I discuss below), or doing prostitution, which is not recognised as legitimate or genuine work (Kotiswaran 2011:22). Thus, dance bars had nothing to do with legitimate social reproduction, but rather, were linked to the private pleasure of some *at the expense of* their families; it could only be a negative social reproduction of wastrels—what the pro-ban lobby described as “boozier men” and women of ill repute—in short, a social evil. Bollywood dance, in contrast, with its strong link to the family, is now very much a part of the production of confident, healthy, hard-working young men and women.

It was a cruel irony that in fact, bar dancing was a very significant form of social mobility for the bar girls, and the ban that sought to save girls from “exploitation” led to ruining their livelihood and curtailing future choices for their children, for example, with them being taken out of school due to financial constraints. It is also important to point out that dance bars were a sizeable industry, with the dancing a key part of this due to the way it made customers spend longer in bars and spend more money on drinks and tips. The anti-ban lobby pointed out the role of dance bars in numerous livelihoods, as well as their economic productivity. However, their illicit nature made these arguments difficult.

Dance Bars, Feudal Erotic Cultures, and Irrational Expenditure: The Specter of the Potlatch

Dance bars also clashed with the neoliberal vision and ethos in elements of their culture and systems of material exchange. With Bollywood dance, dancers and choreographers are paid a fee, a wage, which is worked out in advance, and is in carefully considered proportion to the labor of the dancers and choreographers (the time to be spent, the scale of the performance etc.) and of course, their skills and prestige. In dance bars, dancers got a basic flat wage. However, more significant was the money that audience members would shower on them (of which they got 70%).

This showering of money was sometimes in vast profusion and excess, in notorious cases, amounting to millions, and some *crorepati* (“millionaire”) bar girls emerged, though most were earning what can be described as a modest, middle class salary. Thus, in dance bars, customers did not simply pay for a service at a rationally decided market rate, but spontaneously sank undetermined sums of money into the dancer, displaying wealth in a profligate manner like a feudal patron. This was not just aimed at gaining sexual services from the dancer.²⁷ Hence “good money” was wasted in the sense of it being an irrational and excessive expenditure, in addition to being an expenditure on something

illicit. The levels of excess were at times extreme, even to the point of ruination of customers, and there was also an addictive quality to tipping in dance bars, though these aspects were vastly exaggerated to caricature dance bars as a whole.²⁸ These levels of, albeit occasional extreme excess, and also loss of control, fuelled the image of dance bars as places of waste and degeneracy.

Rather than rational, capitalistic self-advancement and accumulation, bars and the showering of money conjure up the image of the potlatch, with money and wealth being showered on dances, but lost or destroyed for the giver. Potlatch was a phenomenon of the Northwest coast Native Americans originally explored in the work of the anthropologist Franz Boas. It involved the competitive giving and sometimes outright destruction of vast amounts of property and wealth and became paradigmatic of what Mauss termed “agonistic” gift exchange (1954 [1925]). It appalled colonialists and was banned by the Canadian government.²⁹

The conspicuous consumption and positional nature of Bollywood dance events certainly have a potential potlatch quality: they are not strictly necessary expenditure, weddings are competitive and sometimes extremely lavish shows of prestige, and there is a sense in which they are a joyful, excessive use of surplus wealth (or borrowed money that can give the illusion of surplus wealth). However, this is offset by the discourses of social productivity in which Bollywood dance is wrapped, and thus they are seen as entirely legitimate and good events. With dance bars, in contrast, the very focus of the display was crude money being showered on a dancer, rather than money spent to hire dancers and choreographers in a behind-the-scenes payment. The loss of money from potential accumulation and productiveness in dance bars was thus particularly raw, and impossible to mitigate with “good” social purpose (in a context of bourgeois, nuclear family-based morality), despite the good they brought to the communities of dancers.

However, the capitalist-but-non-capitalist quality of dance bars is more specific than these forms and styles of expenditure. Although a phenomenon of neoliberal India, dance bars in fact had as much or more in common with the old paradigms of female erotic performers like courtesans and dancing girls, with audience members behaving like princes and nobility. Audience members consciously enjoyed acting out a fantasy of being a *nawab*, one of the former nobility who wiled away their times with courtesans (Dalwai 2012). The showering of money, giving at least an impression of an unmeasured and uncounted expenditure, also projected an image of the nobleman who must display not just his wealth but that he does not work, and therefore accumulates wealth effortlessly (Veblen 1994 [1899]). It was this kind of prestige the customer gained (or thought he gained), a kind of royal right to women and entertainment by women. Again, this is not in the logic of Bourdieuan social capital. It also hints at the dubious ancestry of dance bars.

It is important to note that while dance bars themselves were a capitalist industry, bar dancing on its own was not. Bars originally made money through liquor sales; having dancing in the bars was able to greatly increase profits, since more customers came (to see the girls), drank more (in their enjoyment, with aesthetic, erotic and alcoholic intoxication conflating), and stayed longer. Also, a proportion of the tips that customers showered on girls went to the bar owners. Some bar girls became extremely successful through dancing well and being beautiful, seductive, and clever with customers. However, bar girls did not become entrepreneurs, setting up businesses, and gaining surplus value from others' labor. Thus this aspect also represents a different connectivity to neoliberal capitalism of bar dancing than Bollywood dance, and a less singular creation of a (socially and economically) productive dance industry.

Furthermore, in terms of dance style, bar dancing is a long way from the tightly executed and carefully-planned-to-impress choreographed routines of the Bollywood craze. It was improvised with anything from seductive strutting and hair-tossing to more elaborate dancing and acting out the words of the song (in particular to please audience members who gave attention and money), all laced with intense eye contact (for certain customers). In bar dancing there was an emphasis on seduction and an implication of sexual availability, whereas with Bollywood dance, the focus is rather on choreography, energy, and skill. Again, Bollywood dance has a quintessential rational, neoliberal quality that bar dancing lacked.

Neoliberalism, Capitalism, and the Transformation of Culture

How can we explain this phenomenon of bar dancing that was so seemingly discordant with neoliberal capitalism in key ideology and aesthetics, but that emerged as a part of the neoliberal changes of society and economy, just like the Bollywood dance craze? How can we understand these two opposite, opposing sides of performing arts cultures that flourished under the era of market liberalization and rapid economic growth in India?

India's market liberalization has brought about dramatic, sweeping changes, as neoliberalizations have in countries across the world. However, capitalist economic exchange does not reach a totality in a capitalist society, but rather a hegemony.³⁰ Other economic logics always exist. Thus, to see a cultural phenomenon arise under the intensively capitalist transformative process of neoliberalization that is not cleanly neoliberal or capitalist in character should not be any surprise or contradiction; rather, it can be generally seen as in line with the contradictions, unevenness, and limits of capitalism's presence in society.

But, to be more specific in understanding the incompleteness, we need to look organically at these performing arts phenomena, their history, their

embeddedness in social classes, and their relationship with the circulation of money and capital. David Harvey, in his theorization of uneven geographical development under capitalism, discusses nature, the environment, and their dialectical relationship to man—the “ecological” and social side of capitalist history and transformations. He states: “. . . we have to understand how the accumulation of capital works through ecosystemic processes, re-shaping them and disturbing them as it goes. Energy flows, shifts in material balances, environmental transformations (some of them irreversible) have to be brought thoroughly within the picture” (2006:88). While his discussion focuses on nature and the environment, this notion of ecology is equally appropriate to considering social and cultural changes in the wake of transformations under various phases and kinds of capitalism: How have ecosystems of dance been reshaped and disturbed in India due to capital accumulation prior to and since neoliberal reforms? What are the energy flows, the shifts in material balances?

In the most direct sense, it can be said that new money fuelled the world of bars in a similar way to how it has fuelled the Bollywood dance craze, re-vivifying an old, pre-modern, deep-structure concerning female courtesan performers and male patrons, but in an expanded, intensified, and once-again prominent form, with prominent shows of new money. Thus, the indiscriminating nature of markets and money was able to feed the very antithesis of what modern India has (hegemonically) stood for, an aberrant form—in many ways—of an un-modern modernity, the nightmare rather than the dream. In a similar way, economic growth, deregulation, and the expansion of trade have seen vast illicit and unofficial economies emerge across the world (van Schendel and Abraham 2005; Nordstrom 2007; Mathews, Ribiero and Vega (eds) 2012). Thus, in addition to the well-documented consolidation of middle and elite class power (Harvey 2006), neoliberalisation has led to burgeoning realms beyond the control of these classes.

Yang, drawing on Gibson-Graham (2006 [1996]), describes a case in China with similarities to the dance bars of how the progress of economic development and the wealth it generates is used to fund “backward” traditions, in this case, elaborate and lavish rituals to ancestors, some of which even involve the burning of money in prestations to the ancestors (2000). This clearly represents the potlatch model of conspicuous consumption rather than a neoliberal, rational, socially productive, progressive form, and needless to say, these vast expenditures on ancestors, rituals, and temples are seen in a very dim light by the Chinese government as waste and “backwardness.” Potlatch was in fact itself similarly escalated and transformed under colonialism, money, and new surpluses from capitalist trade. While it retained the entirely anti-capitalist logic of accumulating wealth in order to ostentatiously destroy it or give it away, it was also fuelled by capitalism. Thus, as Yang describes, global capitalism (and colonialism before it)

inevitably produce hybrid economies, as they mix and merge with pre-existing phenomena (2000). There is no such thing, for this reason, as an entire takeover of capitalism or of capitalist logics of exchange. As Yang writes, “. . . indigenous economies are not always plowed under with the introduction of capitalism but may even experience renewal and pose a challenge to capitalist principles . . .” (ibid:477). Similarly, as Graeber has written on the encounter of a number of pre-modern systems of exchange and value with colonialism and money: “a vast flow of new resources is put to the task of pursuing traditional forms of value” (Graeber 2001:147–8). As Braudel has theorized particularly clearly, capitalism is about the existence and overarching control and influence of the “anti-market” of accumulation, and not a totality of market exchange (1982).

Further Contradictions: Neoliberalism As Liberalism

The Bollywood dance revolution can be seen as an expansion, fuelling, and scaling up of the far more muted or even nascent capitalist characteristics of bourgeois-nationalist classical performing arts throughout most of the twentieth century. In addition, Bollywood dance is born of the song and dance sequences of Hindi cinema as well as forms of learning dance in classes for leisure in the west, such as jazz dance or salsa. This is a parentage that produces a reasonably pure neoliberal character, since once state patronage, some patronage from industrialists, and modest financial backing of bourgeois-nationalist classical performing arts are changed for the vast surpluses of capitalist growth in middle class contemporary India, raw individualism, and corporate money using Bollywood dance for branding purposes, the other aspects of the institutionalization and respectability of classical dance help structure Bollywood dance in a way that has no practical conflict with (official) ideologies of neoliberal capitalism.

The dance bars, on the other hand, represent a re-vivification of an older deep structure of feudalistic value and also morality, indeed, one that classical performing arts in modern India and modern India in general were very much built in opposition to. In fact, the opposition of the Bollywood dance craze and bar dancing is not just a factor of uneven development of neoliberal capitalism generated since the 1990s. Rather, it is a longer ecosystemic process rooting back to an older bifurcation of performing arts under India’s bourgeois-nationalist reforms of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Here, moving from the power and logic of money to the trajectory of liberalism and notions of “progress” and, later, the rise of human rights, we can analyze how morality has come so strongly into the mix, beyond the conflicts of domestic and illicit spaces and legitimate and non-legitimate sites of social reproduction.

The dance bars did not just resemble earlier feudal practices of nobles and princes showering money on their favorite courtesan; the bar girls themselves

were actually largely from lineages of (disenfranchised) courtesans and dancing girls. These performers had been intensely stigmatized by moral campaigns of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and excluded from the new, reformed classical performing arts, which became appropriated by the upper class/upper caste bourgeoisie. The courtesans and dancing girls descended into lower status forms of performing, which have on the whole become increasingly sexualized, and many stopped performing altogether, entering into sex work. Thus, an illicit world of Indian performing arts was brought into being (Morcom 2013). With the dance bars, this illicit world was able to gain prominence fuelled by the money and the leisure industry of the new vernacular middle classes.

But, the story did not end there; as stated, bar dancing was banned. This is a typical case of the concomitant rise of neo-conservatism and neoliberalism, seen across the world (Harvey 2006). Neo-conservatism is at its core a product of liberalism's central contradiction: that freedom and rights cannot be strictly universal since different people's freedom and rights clash; thus it is something that grows out of liberalism, a paradoxical opposite twin. Once bars were seen by the neo-liberal/neo-conservative middle classes as bringing about the ruin of society, the right of bar dancers to dance was attacked (in fact, it was declared to be not a right, but a violation of a right, or exploitation). However, what is important to realize in the context of the dance bars is that this neo-liberal form of neo-conservatism was a replay of the earlier conservatism of colonial and bourgeois-nationalist liberalism. The purity campaign paralleled and repeated the older reforms that saw the establishment of an overarching moral bifurcation of performing arts in India, where courtesans, dancing girls and *devadasis* were stigmatized and their performances boycotted. However, the courtesans and devadasis, existing in lineages, did not disappear, but rather went underground, below the radar of legitimate culture. The dance bars were an opportunity that brought the North Indian dancing girls into prominence again.³¹ Thus, the dance bars were a bastard modernity, the emergence of a still unrecognized illegitimate child from a long-forgotten world, the past alive in the present, a past that was meant to be past (Morcom 2013: chapter five).

However, while the courtesans and devadasis were suppressed and excluded by the social campaigns, the outcome was very different for the bar girls, who contested the ban and won in the Bombay High Court in 2006 and then in India's Supreme Court in summer 2013, despite widespread opinion against them. This dramatic change can be seen, paradoxically, as emerging from the intensification and continuity of trajectories of liberalism through the class consolidation brought about by neo-liberalization. Bar dancing was the antithesis of new India, a mirror image of the Bollywood dance craze. But at the same time, it was far less of an antithesis to neo-liberal middle class India than courtesans had been to the bourgeois-nationalist India of a century or so ago. Bollywood dance, and

middle class society, had come far on a trajectory of liberal ideas, including forms of social and sexual liberation. Hence, many middle class dancers and transnational, open-minded Indians could sympathize with the bar girls, and also admire their risqué glamour and verve. The opposing worlds had started to run into each other and the bar girls gained some vociferous support. As I have argued, the trajectory of liberalism has thus a rather more moebius than binary/linear quality to it, with opposite sides able to start to run into each other (ibid:208).

Further tessellations with the values of the present day emerged as the bar girls contested the ban. The pro-ban lobby accused the bar girls of earning “easy money,” of doing prostitution, of not working hard—a powerful criticism in a neoliberal capitalist climate. But this discourse was refuted with arguments centering on work as a bar girls’ union was formed (incidentally, a very un-neoliberal phenomenon). This was, of course, a way of appropriating bar dancing into neoliberal legitimacy through discourse. It was asserted that the bar girls were working hard, supporting families, sending children to school, and this was their livelihood; moreover, they were not doing prostitution (as stated, defined as non-work). The very real destitution of the bar girls after the ban was well documented. The courts ruled that bar dancing was a profession, and the ban violated their constitutional right to practice a profession. This was a landmark change, though the dance bars have still not reopened at the time of this writing, with the current government delaying in reissuing performance licenses and the middle class public largely against them. Thus, unlike the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, in the (albeit uneven) neoliberal climate of the twenty-first century, there has been a focus on materiality rather than just morality; this is certainly a sign of neo-liberalism as a form of liberalism that is centered in and generally subordinated to the priorities of the circulation of money and capital, one that can respect wealth and earnings, even in vulgarized, lower class forms.

Concluding Thoughts

Through this exploration of albeit just a small section of India’s post-liberalization cultural transformation I have looked at the agency of (neoliberal) capitalism in the form of new levels of surpluses and logics of accumulation and productivity, and explored its dimension as liberalism in the production of moral imperatives. I have also examined the transformations of neoliberal capitalism in terms of both the progressive and linear aspects of liberalism and capitalism, as well as their contradictions and unpredictability. New money can energize, intensify, and fuel phenomena, expanding and enlarging them. These may be modern or modernized pre-existing phenomena—thus the massified, middle class, productive, rational, and highly neoliberal Bollywood dance phenomenon derives from

the bloodline of bourgeois-nationalist classical performing arts, as well as dance sequences in the commercial cinema and leisure-oriented dance, such as salsa or jazz dance classes. However, new money can also feed older, pre-modern and unwanted phenomena, such as the dance bars that mushroomed from the excluded, underground world of feudal, erotic, female performers. Here the parentage is derived from erotic female performance traditions and on-screen Bollywood dance. Thus, the dance bars trace ancestry to the parts of classical performing arts that bourgeois-nationalist reform cast aside and denounced as opposed to the parts that were kept and constructed: the traditions that continue today in middle-class India, and which are themselves undergoing a new phase of capitalist transformation in the neoliberal climate. Looking at the rise and fall, and following the contestation of the ban, the potential rise again of dance bars, it is possible to see how cultural phenomena may be transformed in sometimes paradoxical ways, as amoral forces of markets and money-power mix with the moral directives of liberalism and progress, as defined by hegemonic groups.

This exploration of terrains of Bollywood dance enables us to look into the (il)logics of capitalism and neoliberalization in a number of ways. As capitalism indiscriminately fuels pre-capitalist as well as capitalist phenomena through its surpluses, we can see in a very obvious and direct way how and why society and culture under capitalism are, paradoxically, unable ever to be entirely “capitalist”, and thus capitalism is inevitably an uneven phenomenon. Thus capitalism’s advance is assimilation as well as fundamental transformation of exchange and society. Graeber describes colonial contact and money as having brought about a “cultural renaissance” in pre-modern economies, from renaissance Italy to potlatch to Highland New Guinea. However, he sees these phenomena as temporary, as being overridden in about half a century by a more dense capitalist modernity (2001:147–8). Looking at the contemporary world and revitalized ritual and household economies Yang describes, the neo-feudal dance bars I describe in this article, and the processes involved, it is debatable whether pre-modern forms will truly suffer demise. It is also important to emphasize that these processes have not occurred due to any resistance to capitalism, a fighting back, as in Polanyi’s “double movement” (2001 [1944]). Rather, these pre-modern phenomena have grown (and have been transformed) because of capitalism.

In terms of performing arts and capitalism, there is a fine balance between the need or importance of spending money on positional goods of competitive prestige and social capital on the one hand, and on the other, the avoidance of expenditure that is excessive and wasteful. The usefulness of performing arts has come under scrutiny under some forms of neoliberalism in particular as non-essential and non-productive. However, neoliberal logics have also been effective in closing this inconsistency of performing arts and (economic) non-productivity through a focus on the indirect economic potential of creative

activities, and their potential for social productivity, reconstruction, and repair. This is also a way to neutralize the lurking potlatch potential of ostentatious, amoral/immoral conspicuous consumption, or imperatives to use, spend, or destroy surplus and excess that are beyond rationalization in terms of efficiency, that are arguably inevitable where large surpluses are being produced.

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Notes

1. Gupta and Sivaramakrishnan (2011). India's economy had been liberalized in various ways from 1980 and before, and caution should be taken in identifying a clean-cut move to a "neoliberal" era (Maiorano 2014; Neveling 2014). The appropriateness of this term to India could be debated. However, I use it here to identify India's entry into the liberalizing trends across the globe that started with Reagan in the US and Thatcher in the UK (see Harvey 2005).

2. An exploration of film dance itself and its significant changes in the neoliberal era is beyond the scope of this article; I focus here on the dance scene that emerged in society at large, rather than in the films.

3. Dwyer describes the embracing of Hindi films by India's new middle classes (2000). See Prasad (2003) and Vasudevan (2011) on the rise of the term "Bollywood".

4. For example, a special issue of the journal *Culture, Theory, and Critique*, edited by Javier F. León, on the theme "Music, Music-Making and Neoliberalism" (2014). Theorists working on popular music have produced some of the most focused work on music, capitalism and commodification (e.g. Taylor 2007 and 2012), but important work also exists on the historical transformation of patronage and professional music making in Europe with the growth of commercial entertainment and the advent of audio-visual technology (e.g. Ehrlich 1985; Olmstead 2002). Qureshi's edited volume *Music and Marx* was also groundbreaking in its focus on music, capitalism and Marxism (2002). In ethnomusicology, capitalism or neoliberalism have more commonly been implicit rather than explicit aspects of analysis of contemporary musical cultures.

5. This includes Manuel's work on cassette technology (1993) and more recent work on digital economies (e.g. Baym 2011; Anderson 2014). It also involves research that explores other major disruptions of musical economies, such as the transition from silent to sound film (Ehrlich 1985; Kraft 1996).

6. Gray (2004) and Mehta (1999) both explore these.

7. Kasbekar (2000) and Pinto (2006) explore the problems of female dancers in Hindi films, and the compromises and solutions film narratives produced to incorporate dance without compromising the respectability of the heroine. Morcom explores the historical trajectory in Hindi films towards acceptability for even very erotic dance by heroines (2013).

8. <http://www.honeysdanceacademy.com/background.php> (last accessed 27 February 2014). See David (2007) and Shresthova (2011:105–142) on Bollywood dance in UK and US Indian diasporas respectively.

9. Even the heroine wore lycra much of the time, though, significantly, she also wore the more traditional respectable heroine fare of chiffon saris and *salwar qameezes*.

10. Ong (2006), Gershon (2011), Mankekar (2012). In the context of these qualities and music, see Butterworth (2014) and Whittaker (2014).

11. Higgins (1976), Neuman (1990[1980]), Post (1987), Kippen (1988), Subramaniam (1999 and 2006), Qureshi (2002), Bakhle (2005) and Weidman (2006).

12. See Wallerstein on the still systemic nature of socialism, even in far more absolute forms than in India (2014)

13. Mason similarly describes the use of the word *dakshina* for money received by South Indian ritual “folk” musicians from their traditional feudal service to patrons, as opposed to money received as “wages” (*kuli*) or “salary” (*shambalam*) for performing further abroad or further afield (geographically and socially) from traditional patrons (2013:458–459).

14. This derives from the advent of the notion of “creative economies”, occurring most markedly under New Labor in the UK in the 1990s, which saw the economically productive nature of music and other “creative” activities recognized in direct forms (cultural industries) as well indirect forms (e.g. teaching children skill sets for the workforce such as teamwork, creativity and discipline) (Tremblay 2011; D’Andrea 2012). Music therapy has also seen an extraordinary growth in this time. Increasingly, music and performing arts have become involved with NGOs, linking or overlapping development, ethnomusicology and music therapy. Whittaker explores the specifically neoliberal context of music, NGOs and development (2014). It should also be noted that not dissimilar logics of (western) music as a force for building civilization were common in the colonial world.

15. Bollywood dance, however, is still a commercial world, though SDIPA’s charity work shows the potential for a formal, NGO or not-for-profit, ‘social’ use.

16. Neuman describes the devotional (*Bhakti*) and courtly (*darbar*) models of Hindustani music public performance, the former where ostentation is eschewed, and the latter where there is a sense of richness (1990[1980]:221–223). Neuman describes male performers, and presumably, few if any female performers would venture far into the “courtly” image, for fear of evoking the courtesan. I have witnessed female performers wearing good quality silk saris, but not looking different from a respectable housewife from an upper middle class family.

17. See Williams (2014) on North Indian classical music and discourses of decadence.

18. Weber (2002[1905]). See Mankekar on the work ethic of call centers and ties with Hindi films, and neoliberalism in its ideational and economic aspects (2012:2–12).

19. Higgins provides an excellent exploration of this phenomenon in Karnatic (South Indian classical) music, in the context of socio-economic change (2014). Comparably, Miramon-Bonhour describes fusion bands playing in pubs in twenty-first century Delhi (2011).

20. Williams (2014). In terms of lavish patronage of courtesans and the sexual relationships that went with them, this was seen as morally degenerate.

21. The drive to maximize profits by lowering wages undercuts the demand for consumer products, and forms a contradiction of capitalism, identified by Marx (Harvey 2006[1982]:24–35, 74–85).

22. In a short article, Dwyer traces a parallel embracing of ostentation and wealth in Hindi films in the neoliberal era, in contrast to films of the 1950s till even the 1980s (2014, <http://www.openthemagazine.com/article/voices/the-death-of-coolie-no-1>, last accessed 28 October 2014)

23. In fact, his analysis of the need for industrial society to gain a philosophy of giving rather than producing to avoid catastrophe is similar to the understanding of an Achilles heel of capitalism as being over-accumulation leading to crisis (Harvey 2006[1982]). This is an appealing argument for those who want to see more money spent on the arts, though not one that it is going to be realistically considered for the foreseeable future.

24. Indeed, as Braudel’s layered model clearly demonstrates, capitalism is not about markets, though these are a part of it; it is about the existence of an upper layer, an “anti-market”, of predatory accumulation (1982).

25. Wallerstein 2014:loc 217. The designation of only economically productive labor as “productive labor” by Marx is immensely problematic, and has been most thoroughly critiqued through feminist scholarship, with the notion of “social (re)production” (see, for example, Young, Wolkowitz and McCullagh, eds, 1981).

26. Dalwai (2012). However, the money showering is not just sexual. For example, when I went to *mujras* (the bars were closed) with a female companion, we “showered” or gave tips to the dancers and were expected to do so as *bagshish* that was seen as reward and appreciation.

27. See Dalwai’s ethnographic work on bar girls and the customers. The pro-ban lobby characterized bar dancing as prostitution. However, it generally did not involve customers having sex with dancers, but a different kind of status-related game, subsumed with eroticism and forms of non-sexual intimacy with attractive girls that were impossible to attain for men of the classes that went to dance bars (2012).

28. Dalwai describes this through interviews with customers (*ibid*).

29. Significantly, it informed to some degree Veblen’s work on conspicuous consumption and excess, and more strongly, that of Bataille.

30. Braudel’s model is a clear illustration of this (1982). Marxist and non-Marxist scholars have explored this, too numerous to list here.

31. The devadasis were not involved in the dance bars. Their modern and contemporary history is described by Soneji (2012).

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