The Politics of Black Representation in the film 'Race' (2008) directed by Abbas-Mustan

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Table of Contents

. **Introduction**

Objective:

The Bollywood industry is popular Hindi film industry worldwide, with its headquarters in Bombay, India. The films of this industry born in the 1930s have been economically successful and far-reaching, across South Asia and especially the South Asian diaspora. Bollywood films are reflections of social, cultural, and economic hegemonies and expectations within India that are projected onto different audiences worldwide. The ways in which these films depict peoples of African descent and marginalize or distort Black power into demeaning but familiar western stereotypes are one of the many ways in which these hegemonic social, cultural, political, and economic hegemonies are maintained.

The objective of this thesis is to examine the politics of Black representation in the Bollywood film 'Race' (2008) directed by Abbas-Mustan. In order to holistically understand the construction of Black persons in this film, the thesis considers the construction of Black identity, White identity, Indian identity, and the visual imaginings of South Africa. It also considers the relationship between White, Black, and Indian communities in South Africa from pre-apartheid times to contemporary relations as rationales for certain choices the industry has made with respect to this film. These choices include who the intended audience is, how South Africa and different racial identities are depicted, and to what ends.

Inspiration:

I grew up watching Bollywood films with friends and family. I remember my father would drive to the local Indian supermarket every week to rent the DVDs for the newest Bollywood releases. These films were educational tools in my imagination - teaching me Hindi and orienting me to the culture of India that was otherwise physically distant to me as an

immigrant citizen to the United States. Growing up, I read these films purely as entertaining and heartwarming stories. Some of my favorite films when I was younger - *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, and *Kal Ho Na Ho* were memorable to me for their romances, actors, and the visual depictions of extended families living in what seemed like bliss. Bollywood offered to me what my own life did not - ideal heroes, happy families, and aspirations to be beautiful and dream to achieve whatever I wanted. I never saw myself in these films and often envied the actresses for looking like I did not. However, each Bollywood film I watched did make me feel patriotic towards my homeland and this homogeneously depicted "Indian culture". I saw these patriotic messages when the Indian heroes chose to commit to heroines who were "authentically Indian" and not depicted as Indians who had lost touch with their culture. Images of India were always associated with the image of Gods, of prayer, and devotion. These Indian heroes and heroines who I became attached to did not drink, commit adultery, or have sex. At a time when the people I was surrounded by in middle and high school made me feel ashamed of being Indian, the films of the Bollywood industry was my befitting reply. In terms of filmic representation of identity, I focused only on the White and Indian characters of the film. I paid attention to how elements that were coded as "Whiteness" - alcoholism, sex, adultery, and skimpy clothes, were pitted against the actions of the Indian characters. Since most of the students who bullied me in my community were White, I was very happy to see the Indian heroes and heroines emerge victorious over the White. So, I had learned how to read Race from a young age. I had learned how to read racial differences in film - with one exception. My imaginations of race gave no thought to Black people. I likely gave no thought to Black representation in Bollywood films because I was always encouraged to stay away from Black persons. My grandmother was vehemently opposed to me being friends with them. Thus, I grew

up associating the same attributes to them that circulated in the TV around me, as Blacks being underachieving, criminal, and promiscuous --as inferior to White and Indian peoples.

I did not give much thought to Black representation or the filming of Bollywood films in Africa until I came to college. When I had discussions with other peers who also identified as Indian - and yet spoke different languages, practiced different religions and participated in different customs and rituals as myself, I began to realize that the "Indian" hero and heroine of Bollywood films was not the only Indian. I began to think more about why I never saw myself in Bollywood films, despite being lighter skinned, Hindi speaking, and Panjabi like most of my favorite characters in Bollywood films. These discussions prompted me to look closely to how other races were constructed in films in order to project a certain type of Indian.

At the same time as these discussions and introspective reflections, I began to learn more about contemporary racial issues in America, which was impossible to discuss without considering the condition of Black people in America today. It was shocking to read and realize from Black friends and class discussions how dehumanized they continue to be in contemporary American society, whether that was through their displacement, lynching, police brutality, and having some of the worst health outcomes. In this White vs Black paradigm that was set up in these discussions, I began to question what space the 'Indian' occupied, especially Indian-American immigrants like my own family who were also minorities. I also felt guilty for having the stereotypes of Black people that I did and wanted to understand the roots of such stereotypes. When I went back home each winter break and re-watched the scores of Bollywood films that were once my favorites, I began to see them differently. With some films, such as Fashion (2008), Hera Pheri (2000), and Mr. India (1996), I was shocked at how obvious the dehumanizing representation of Black peoples was. Black characters had the spotlight - for more

than thirty seconds - and were either sexually vulgar or criminal. 'Race' (2008), directed by Abbas-Mustan, caught my attention during this time. Despite having watched it atleast three times already, it was only during the fourth time that I realized it had been entirely filmed in South Africa. It was the first time I realized that Black people were missing from Africa.

The politics of Black representation in the film 'Race' are not exceptions to the ways these politics operate in other Bollywood films. Certainly there are elements to this film that are unique, such as its exclusive setting in South Africa. However, Black people in 'Race' occupy a positionality that is not different from the vast majority of Bollywood films. When they are visible (which is rare), they are not depicted in desirable ways. The Black characters are manipulated in ways that brings the attention back to the Indian characters. This phenomenon operates to some extent to the White people in the film too. However, White people are given status and power, albeit limited, in ways that Black people do not get.

The racial realities of Durban and Cape Town are also much different than the film 'Race project'. This was astounding to me, knowing that this has been filmed entirely in South Africa. According to the 2017 Census reports, the largest ethnic and racial group in Durban, where the majority of 'Race' has been filmed are Black-Africans. In Cape Town where the second highest number of scenes have been shot, Black-Africans comprise a roughly 39%, trailing second in demographics behind "coloured" peoples at 42%. 'Coloured' is a significant yet separate racial category that is comprised of mixed-race peoples, largely those who are mixed between European (White) ancestry and African (Black) ancestry but are not White-passing. By contrast, Black-Africans are the darkest skinned and the darkest in the White to Black pigment range. The Indian diaspora in South Africa has its own ethnic category as Indian/Asian and are the second largest demographic in Durban behind Black-

Africans. Persons of exclusive European ancestry (White) make up less than 15% of Durban

and Cape Town (http://www.statssa.gov.za/). The realities of this film were much different than

the demographic realities of South Africa, prompting an investigation.

This project was also inspired by a recognition that Durban is known as the largest

Indian city outside India – and home to the largest Indian diaspora outside of India. The

history of this Indian diaspora, not only in South Africa but in multiple countries across

Africa dates back to colonial times. There was also an interest in studying the racial politics

that have governed South Africa and the positionality of Indians in this space that has

occupied much attention globally for its racial tensions between Blacks and Whites.

Intended Audience:

First and foremost, this project, much like Bollywood films, is intended for specific

national and diasporic Indian audiences, upper class White people, and for those who depict

Black people in demeaning ways without consciously recognizing that they have. It is imperative

for these groups to recognize the privileged spaces that they occupy not just in film but in wider

society. This project is also intended for Black audiences - regardless of whether or not they

reside in countries with sizeable Indians. This is because Bollywood is popular among a wide

diversity of African audiences (Ganti; 2012, pg 5). Despite the negative ways in which Black

people are projected in films, Bollywood films are incredibly popular among African audiences.

Moreover, all of the Black viewers who were interviewed after watching this film expressed

more familiarity with this industry than expected, their likeness for Bollywood films they had

seen, and how they had seen more than one Bollywood film prior to 'Race'. While this

information does not imply that these viewers do not care about Black representation in this film

or have somehow ignored it, it does compel us to acknowledge the relationship between Black

audiences to an industry that makes no positive space for them.

The hope of this project is that these viewers will deepen their knowledge of this film industry and the ways in which it intentionally manipulates identities for Indian interests. The hope is that viewers will not watch any film after 'Race' passively, seeing it as pure entertainment. Rather, they will consider what their dismissal of the film as 'pure entertainment' does to encourage Bollywood producers and directors to reinforce and help reproduce these kinds of demeaning representations of Black people - and also of White and Indian people whose constructions make Black representation more invisible. Furthermore, it is hoped that viewers will seek to learn more about minoritarian politics as they operate in India and the diaspora, politics that exclude not only Black people but also those who do not fit the profile of the Bollywood hero and heroine. These politics are operating on a day to day basis in India and the diaspora, and the condition of minorities is deteriorating. Films can serve as powerful educational tools to reconstruct the ideologies that make the lives of minorities more difficult.

Structure of the Project and Rationale:

This thesis is organized in three parts. The first part is research that synthesizes the scholarship on the history of the Indian diaspora and of Bollywood in South Africa, the values of the Bollywood industry, the racial politics of the pre and post-apartheid era, and the relationship between South Africa and India at the time of the film's release. This historical context is necessary to understand so that the ideologies of the Bollywood industry and the historical relationships that different racial groups in South Africa have had with each other and with Bollywood can help us find rationales for the ways in which Black representation is found in this film.

The second component is a video that summarizes the film and walks the viewer

through specific scenes and characters in the film that expand on a discussion of the Black representation in the film. Knowing that this thesis is based on a film, it is important to be able to visually see the ways in which different identities are created. This component allows for that visual engagement to take place and for the reader to consider how their own identity and life experiences impact their understanding of Black representation in the film – central to an understanding of why this film was not successful in South Africa. It is also necessary to physically take a look at the scenes of the film in order to deconstruct and un-learn the ways of viewing this film that distract us from reading race.

The third component of this thesis is a written analysis of a series of fifteen interviews conducted with Black, White, and Indian viewers who watched 'Race' and described their experiences. These viewers shared their insights on everything from their perception of different racial identities in the film, to who the intended audience was, the depiction of South Africa, and whether or not they would consider the film anti-Black. It is necessary to acknowledge these experiences because Hindi films are not produced in a vacuum. Bollywood directors and producers mobilize certain ideas about audience taste, along with societal norms and attitudes among their own biases to create films. Furthermore, multiple scholars of Bollywood have interviewed Indian audiences of the diaspora to understand how the industry seeks to maintain relations with its diaspora. However, few have asked Black and White identifying persons about their experiences with the film, even though their identities are also entangled in Bollywood projects. It was important for me to change that.

This project is a multimedia project because a detailed, deconstructed analysis of any film is incomplete without an engagement with the histories that inform the identities and relationships in the film, without direct viewer experience of the film, and without the receipt of

viewer responses to a film. This project, at its core, is about uplifting the otherwise marginalized narratives of Black people in the Bollywood industry. A multimedia project is imperative to allow readers to acknowledge the severity of this problem and the critical care that an analysis like this deserves. This can only be accomplished when the reader is brought into the experience of watching this film, learning about the history between Indian and Black peoples in South Africa, and finding resonance or difference with the viewer responses discussed in Part III.

Outcomes and Reflections from the Research:

Conclusion 1: The depiction of Black persons in the film 'Race' is dehumanizing. The film upholds Western stereotypes of Black people that have also existed in Hollywood and in mainstream media in the West, that of the Black man as criminal, the Black female as sexually promiscuous, and the Black person in general as economically deprived. Possible reasons why:

a) As some of the viewers of this film along with scholars have articulated, this film can be categorized as a "typical Bollywood film". As a typical Bollywood film, it seeks to reify and sustain the hegemony of a BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) Centric, Hindi centric, Hindu centric, heterosexual national, which by definition is exclusionary.

b) Another reason for such depictions is the influence of Eurocentric ideologies which have negated the powerful presence of Africans in India and has projected an image of them as being filthy, poverty stricken, and a racially inferior group of people. These Eurocentric ideologies have been indoctrinated by the British in both India and South Africa to Indian elites who have been used as pawns. The image of the Black in South Africa as a threat has been promoted to ensure the division of races and keep colonial authority strong. In being anti-Black, Indian elites in South Africa have also been more economically prosperous and certain apartheid laws aimed at

limiting their own opportunities have been reversed. The Indian elites opposed to colonial rule have articulated their opposition using movements like 'Satyagraha' which call for equality without contesting European hegemony. In being anti-colonialist more generally, they have not supported the Black struggle or acknowledged rightful ownership by Blacks of the land.

c) During the time of this film's release as well as through contemporary times, both South Africa and India are navigating a positionality whereby they want to be among the developed democracies of the world. In order to reverse long-standing perceptions of poverty and underdeveloped statuses, both countries are seeking to be favorable in the White gaze. So the Bollywood industry cares about filming in South Africa for its exotic destinations and will choose to make invisible Black people while the South African government does not oppose this, since a large part of the national economy is fueled by tourism and the Bollywood industry's filming projects.

d) Although Indian directors and producers decided to move away from catering their Bollywood films in South Africa to a niche conservative Indian elite audience, the "mainstreaming" of Bollywood films is an illusion. In reality the intended audience does not include Black people – or rather does not make space for the Black identity. The intended audience(s) of this film are likely both upper and lower-class members of the Indian diaspora in South Africa, who are linked to the original homeland/nationalist Indian discourse through Saif Ali Khan as a consumable, morally righteous and upper class and caste Bollywood hero and the use of the Hindi language. Another potential audience is the Hollywood industry and its supporters – the White – so that the power of the Bollywood industry and its validity can be established in the White gaze and their support may be received.

Conclusion 2: This film is or is not 'anti-Black' depending on who you ask The scholars whose research contributes to this thesis would call this film Anti-Black for the reasons discussed above. Viewers on the other hand would differ. The invisibility of Black people is not sufficient cause for some, including Black viewers. What viewer responses reveal is that it is not right to assume that Black folks will find this film to be anti-Black just because they identify as Black. This is as much the case for African audiences around the world who watch Bollywood films with much interest even though long held biases in opposition to Black people operate ubiquitously.

Conclusion 3: Even though the ruling party of South Africa and the government is comprised largely of Black individuals, their power is in constant threat from the hegemony of White and Indian communities. The Bollywood industry is a powerful tool that poses one such threat largely for the future of the social relations between Black African and Indian communities.

Contributions to Existing Studies:

There is little to no academic scholarship that discusses the depictions of 'Black people' in Bollywood films at any length. The scholarship that is written about the perception of Bollywood films among African audiences, whether or not there are Indian diasporas in those countries, are centered on how the films find cultural relevance with these communities. This project not only asks Black viewers about their reactions to this film, but also seeks to center the discourse on 'Black representation' throughout the project. This project also seeks to be the first to consider such scholarship for a film that has been set entirely in an African country and thus consider not just how Black representation is coded through the characters or plots of the film but also its location.

Part I: The Necessary Historical Context

Bollywood as a National Form:

The Bollywood industry dominates the discourse of Indian cinema nationally and internationally though Hindi films comprise only 20% of total film production in India (Ganti, 2012, pg.5) The industry has come to have this dominant status with its viewership, numbering in the billions and seeking to reach its NRI (non-resident Indians) audiences in every corner of the world, from India to West Africa to Russia (Ganti, 2004, pg.1). Understanding the history of the industry and who the target audiences of Hindi cinema are is incomplete without exploring the construction of the 'National' and the position that Hindi cinema seeks to occupy on the global stage (Kaur and Sinha, 2005, 14).

DadaSaheb Phalke is regarded as the 'Father of Indian Cinema' who began, in the early 1900s to envision the creation of an indigenous film industry that India could claim as its own. Growing up in a sociopolitical context that was influenced by anti-colonial struggles against the British, Phalke sought to develop an industry that could be the flagbearer of Indian politics and statehood, imbibed with a national character that would unite the colonized masses of India (Ganti, 2004, pg. 7 & 9; Punathambekar, 2013, pg.33) In the following decades, the growth of this indigenous industry was met with interest from who would become the independent nation's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru saw the Hindi film industry as a tool to preserve the nation's traditional cultures and values in the wake of global modernization (Ganti, 2004, pg.47; Punathambekar, 2013, pg. 26).

The industry's major wave of growth in the early 1990s witnessed the emergence of a Hindu and Hindi centric chauvinism supported by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the bureaucratization of the industry that gave anyone with large sums of money the rights to

produce a film. The industry evolved from being not formally recognized and independently operated to achieving national status by the BJP government in response to major waves of migration of Indians across national borders. The Ministry of Culture and Foreign affairs sought to link the diaspora of India to the "original" homeland primarily to reap economic benefits from the partnership and saw the Bollywood film industry as having the potential to bridge the gaps (Punathambekar, 2013, pg.80; Ganti, 2012, pg.42, 51).

It is also during this period of the 1990s when Bombay officially became the home of the industry given Phalke's associations with the city from the start. Hindi and English became the primary languages of the Bollywood medium - English so that the industry could be on par with Hollywood and establish itself as an industry of global power, and Hindi to stay in line with the nationalist, Hindu centric agenda that gave the industry the support it needed from the BJP, especially in its earlier years (Punathambekar, 2013, pg.42; Ganti, 2012, pg. 60). The Bollywood industry has looked to the Hollywood industry as its role model from its earliest years in the 1900s to the 1990s. This has been evident from the purchase of sound and light technologies to looking to films for examples of plot creation and cinematic development. At the same time, the industry has tried to distance itself from Hollywood by adapting certain elements that Ganti refers to as imbibing the industry with sole elements of "Indianization". These three elements are: dramatic fluctuations in plots so as to involve and play on an audience member's diverse range of emotions, songs interjected into the film, and the extension of elaborate familial networks and connections in the films (Ganti, 2004, pg.80) Core values of 'family', 'nation', 'love', and 'togetherness' became the mantra for the most successful Bollywood films during and post 1990s, nationally and transnationally.

` To promote these core values and make them uniquely 'Indian', directors and producers

have constructed the 'west' in Indian cinema as an "emblem of exotic decadent otherness ripe with uncontrolled sexuality, lack of respect for elders, and immoral activities" (Kaur and Sinha, 2005, pg.13). Not only has this been a political move to contest the colonial hegemony of the West, but has also served as a way to remind diasporic audiences in the West of their true homeland in India (Kaur and Sinha, 2005, pg.64). Indian filmmakers have traversed a delicate balance of presenting exotic western locations as having power, money, wealth, and status without having a set of morals and culture. In doing so, it has sought to attract both the middle-class average Indian consumer looking for an "escape" from his status as an average/poor man as well as the diasporic Indian audience believed to have a longing for the moral and culture values of the homeland (Kaur and Sinha, 2005, pg.63; Ganti, 2012, pg.236).

There is no scholarship that lays out the view of Black - African persons in the Bollywood industry. However, scholarship does make clear the prejudices within the industry that favors "fair" skin (Ganti, 2012, pg. 15). Bollywood films have also projected Black persons in shameful ways dating back to the 1960s, from the use of Blackface in the 1964 film *Karuppu Panam* to the 1987 film Mr. India, to depictions of Black persons as criminals and members of violent gangs (ex: Hera Pheri (2000), Mardaani (2014)) and Blacks as promiscuous and sexually vulgar (ex: Fashion, 2008).

History of the Indian Diaspora to South Africa:

People of Indian descent have had a long and complicated historical relationship with Black and White communities in South Africa. The first South Africans of Indian origin were indentured laborers who were brought to South Africa by the Dutch via ships from the Indian subcontinent in 1684. According to Ravin Ramdass, they were brought there in response to the inability of the British to lure indigenous Black tribes into providing labor (Ramdass, 2017,

pg.121). In the Cape at the time, White and 'coloured' communities were present. The Whites were the Dutch or British occupants, and the 'coloured' were the Black indigenous Zulu community of South Africa (Hofmeyer, 2011, pg.15, sahistory.org). The British inherited the cape as a prize following the Napoleonic wars of 1805 and established themselves as the supreme authority in the colonies, lessening the authority of Dutch rule. Under British domination, the practice of slavery and of bringing indentured laborers from India to the colony was maintained till the 1850s (Patel, 2012, pg.45).

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, popularly regarded as the founder of the Indian Independence movement and a preacher of nonviolence made his way to South Africa in 1893 in the wake of heated tensions between the British and indigenous Africans. Gandhi arrived as a newly qualified lawyer to defend an Indian trader seeking to navigate territorial disputes. He quickly realized that the issue of immigration was a hot topic in this period and became aware of the racial discrimination directed at the Indians living in Cape Town and Durban. Scholars contend this period of the late 1890s as the beginnings of the apartheid legislation of the British. Even though the National Party was only established in1948, waves of anti-Black and anti-brown laws were in effect throughout the colonies (Gandhi.SouthAfrica.net). Indigenous Africans laid claim to territories that White Boer (Dutch) communities and Indian communities lay claims to, and this sparked waves of discrimination within these different communities amongst one another and with the British. The British enacted the first discriminatory legislation directed at Indians (Law No.3) in 1885, applied to "coolies" as they were called. Under this law, Indians were not allowed to be owners of fixed property in the Republic except in specific locations permitted by the government. Their trading and commercial enterprises would be taxed and strictly controlled by the government. Under the Registration of Servants Act of 1888, Indians

became "members of an uncivilized race" and were forbidden from registering for employment. In 1890, Indian businesses were forced to shut down and Indians were forbidden from farming (sahistory.org).

Gandhi himself became a recipient of this discrimination as he was also one of the thousands of 'passenger Indians' - traders, artisans, teachers, shop-assistants, who came to the cape at their own will (and with British interests in their labor) for the lure of the diamond industry (gandhi.SouthAfrica.net). In response to colonial authorities, Gandhi was only concerned with Indian interests. He was disinterested and did not mobilize with Black people for the Black liberation movement in South Africa. He was revered by the Indians as a man of great power and potential, who used his friendship with the British and his expertise as a lawyer to stop some of these laws from going into effect, largely siding with and for passenger Indians, in South Africa and in India (Patel, 2012, pg.72).

In this period, indigenous Black Africans and members of the Indian community were both treated as "others" by the Dutch and the British, first and foremost on the basis of their color. Blackness and brownness was considered to be defiling. Second, passenger Indians were gradually viewed as a threat to the economic supremacy of the British, sparking waves of discriminatory laws. However, in a period of time when the solidarity between Black and brown bodies was expected, given the shared subjugation under the White man, the politics that the Indian community led by Gandhi promoted did not seek to threaten White domination. Rather, the movement, also known as Satyagraha, sought to accept colonialists as human beings and as "brothers and sisters" who were just deluded by power. Gandhi referred to Satyagraha as a "soul force", saying "there is no difference between us and the others [the Whites], there is no "other" (Ramdass, 2017, pg. 125).

Racial Politics during Apartheid:

The 1940s was a crucial moment for Indians in South Africa. Once apartheid became the official and legal ruling ideology of the White national party, Indians were viewed as alien to Africa by the White ruling elites who sought to Whitewash the region. Official apartheid legislation coded the country in four distinct racial groups – Whites, Indians, Coloured, and Blacks. Apartheid legislation reserved opportunities and facilities specifically for Whites – and then everyone else. Under the apartheid legislation, Blacks and Indians faced a similar fate. However, in the White gaze, passenger Indians were also seen as an economic threat in a way that Indigenous Black Africans weren't (Ramdass, 2017, pg. 125). During this time, indigenous Africans believed that these passenger Indians were conspiring with the ruling party against the Black struggle. Serious riots broke out in Durban, where the majority of the Indian community resided in 1949 in response to increasing tensions, killing more than 100 people and displacing thousands of Indians from their homes (Hansen, 2014, pg.243). These waves of ethnic violence between the Indian and the indigenous African communities continued through the late 1950s. What is important to remember here is that these tensions gradually became strategic ploys used by the national party to exploit the labor of these racial groups while keeping them physically separate and making it difficult for them to resist colonial rule.

The physical separation of race groups and of their separate governance was systematically and carefully implemented following these waves of ethnic tensions. Indians and indigenous Africans were governed through culturally specific institutions (Hansen, 2014, pg.243). The national party segregated the Indians into the merchant and working classes, with descendants of the Gujarati and North Indian passenger class occupying the merchant class, and the darker skinned, lower caste indentured laborers comprising the working class. Hansen states explicitly that the merchant class were indoctrinated with notions of "cultural and social

supremacy" over the working class Indians and the indigenous Africans. According to Hansen, this was an intentional move to create a conservative Indian elite that could act as a junior partner to the Whites and push back against what was seen as the "Black threat" (Hansen, 2014, pg. 246). This indoctrination served to further separate the Black and Brown communities. It created divisions within the Brown Indian communities as well, making solidarity difficult.

Vashna Jagarnath, in "The politics of urban segregation and Indian cinema in Durban" adds a nuance to Hansen's discussions of the conservative Indian elite as a pawn in the hands of the White national party. She discusses how these seemingly "conservative" Indians in Durban and elsewhere in the country were suspended between contradictory desires. On the one hand, there was a desire to be accepted by the White gaze, compounded by a long standing fear of the violence and aggressive sexuality of Africans. On the other hand we are not to forget those who opposed apartheid and resolutely "de-ethnicized" themselves, joining the African National Congress and seeking to align themselves with the colonial struggle. While the group of supporters to anti-apartheid struggles were mostly indentured laborers, there were also a minority of these Indian elites in this group. For this group of Indians, the reproduction of Indian ethnicity was an embarrassment because 'Indianness" became coded with the majority of the conservative Indians who supported the rule of the national party. They rejected membership into the Indian diaspora to avoid delegitimizing the contributions of Indians to anti-apartheid organizing (Dickinson, 2015, pg. 83; Jagarnath, 2004, pg.45). The refusal to claim "Indianness" also operated among the former indentured laborers who were vocal in anti-apartheid movements and also did not want to associate with being "Indian' because that was a term associated with higher class and caste status (Desai, 2000, pg. 126). The distinction between these two types of concerns made it very difficult for these conservative Indian elites and the poorer Indians to

articulate what it meant to be of Indian origin in the country (Hansen, 2014, pg.245). What made

identification even more difficult was the influence of classical Indian cultural elements -

religious texts, music, theatre, and the rise of Bollywood in South Africa, which sought to lure

Indians in South Africa to identify with the original homeland and not with the land of the

colonizers (Hansen, 2014, pg.243, Jagarnath, 2004, pg.63).

Racial Politics Post- Independence and Post-Apartheid

Independence from British rule was formally acquired in South Africa in 1910 when the

African National Congress was granted the power to take control of legislation by the UK

commonwealth. Apartheid legislation also began a reversal process in the 1960s.However, even

during this time, South Africa can be best described as becoming increasingly fragmented both

racially and culturally. Durban and Cape Town become two urban centers with increasing

numbers of Indians and Blacks living in segregated communities, operating with their own

languages and cultures (Hansen, 2014, pg.248). With a government slowly overtaken by African

elites and leaders in a wave of nationalist independence movements, most Indians did not know

what the new nation expected of them (Jagarnath, 2004, pg.101). Most Indians believed they had

a rightful claim to citizenship (until 1961 they lived only with resident cards or visas) because

they too were non-White and oppressed by apartheid. Former conservative Indian elites and

White communities who remained (largely Boer Whites) leveraged the land, wealth, and assets

they had to stake claims on certain lands. These Indians worked closely largely with White

communities, and according to Jagarnath, retained fears and phobias associated with Indigenous

Black Africans (Jagarnath, 2004, pg.120). However, during this period, both conservative Indian

elites and the former laboring masses sought to strengthen their links to diasporic networks to

maintain some sense of a national Indian identity as they navigated the uncertainties of the new

Black African ruling elites (Hansen, 2014, pg.248).

In this period of political transition, ties to the Bollywood industry provided a crucial link and validity of "Indianness" to multiple Indian communities but especially to the conservative Indian elites, largely North Indian and upper caste. (Hansen, 2014, pg. 246). Bollywood films provided cultural avenues for Indian urbanites navigating the murky waters of racial politics to find themselves in positions of power and control (Jagarnath, 2004, pg.27). For Indians who were former indentured laborers, Bollywood films provide more of a nostalgia for the Indian homeland than a threshold for exerting dominance over other racial groups (Hansen, 2014, pg.254).

To the African political elite and masses, there existed little difference between the Indian conservative elites whose history dated back to being passenger Indians and the indentured laborers who were forced into slavery. In response to apartheid policies, the foremost agenda of the independent South Africa was to advocate for the Black cause. The stereotypical place that Indians occupy then in the history of the Black struggle is as supporters of the nationalist regime. This is not to say that there aren't exceptions. Gandhi is revered as an exception for his outspoken criticism of colonial rule just as there are members of the African National Congress as well as South African Indian athletes and filmmakers who are known for their anti-apartheid vocalization. However, among the African masses and political elite, neither can Gandhi nor other vocal anti-apartheid speakers be equated with Nelson Mandela, for instance, who remained committed first and foremost to the Black struggle before the more general colonial struggle (Hansen, 2014, pg.252).

The new millennium brought increasing cultural flows between different racial groups in South Africa along with the reversal of additional apartheid policies that sought to maintain the

segregation of White, Black, Coloured, and Indian communities. African and White audiences were exposed to Bollywood films and have contributed to the economic success of the industry. The ideals of a 'democratic' South Africa promoted by Mandela have circulated far and wide. At the same time, the nationalist rhetoric of South Africa that stems out of the political elite seeks to counter the threat of Indian and White hegemony in the land. Freedom songs exist in African languages but not in English or Indian languages. Zulu newspapers and radio channels will find amongst them anti-Indian content such as lyrics that accuse Indians of being oppressors and worse than Whites (Mbongeni Ngema's song lyrics "When will new Indian be born from the womb of a Zulu woman"). (Hansen, 2014, pg. 250-253).

Just as mainstream Black African congregations have sought to reinstate their claims of ownership to South Africa, the Bollywood industry has done the same. As a critical anchor orienting Indians in South Africa to a sense of community, national identity, and power, the construction of the Black person within these films will be as discriminatory as the construction of the 'Indian' has been in popular African discourse. The relationship with the White person on the other hand is more complicated.

History of the Bollywood Industry in South Africa:

Haseena Ebrahim makes it clear that Bollywood is more than just a film industry in South Africa. Indian films occupy a space finds relevance and links with Black, White, and Indian communities in South Africa without bringing them closer to a shared existence of being 'South African' (Ebrahim, 2008, pg.321).

The history of Bollywood cinema in South Africa dates back to the 1930s when the White National Party controlling the colonies under apartheid laws instituted independent governance systems for different racial communities. Allowing for cultural flows between India

and Indians in South Africa allowed Indian producers and directors to establish a cinema market

in South Africa. Avalon Cinema was the first to open in 1939 in Durban. Conservative Indian

elites, largely North-Indian and upper caste, were the wealthy collaborators that invested in the

constructions of these cinemas in South Africa (Ebrahim, 2008, pg.323). From 1930 to the

1980s, the films that emerged were almost exclusively viewed by Indians of the middle to upper

classes. In the mid-1980s, the once thriving Indian film scene began to decline in response to

India's boycott of South Africa's apartheid policies - activism that was not in harmony with

the majority view of the conservative Indian elites (Ebrahim, 2008, pg.324). Indian filmmakers

and producers responded with the 'mainstreaming' Bollywood in South Africa. In other words,

they sought to expand their audience beyond these elites to former indentured laborers and to the

masses of indigenous Black Africans. A series of moves to make this mainstreaming possible

came with the democratic policies of Mandela and his interest in de-segregating South Africa.

Media outlets became much more open to including content that was not Zulu. The national

public broadcaster, SABC began airing Bollywood films on popular South African channels,

including Saffron Tv (Ebrahim, 2008, pg.326).

According to Gwenda Vander Steene, the screening of the first ten films saw a 700%

increase in Indian-descent audiences, 20% increase in Afrikaans and Zulu speaking audiences

and a 115% increase in English speaking audiences, indicating its greater success (Steene, 2014,

pg.303). Steene cites the reason for the success of these films as being their unique ability to

appeal to multiple racial audiences without forcing them to find shared existence and even

whilst catering the film to niche audiences. For Black African and African Indian audiences,

the films offer "a way of being modern without being Western." In preserving some forms of

cultural values - whether they be through dress, rituals, or morally righteous actions, these films

become "foils" against which a post-colonial identity can be fashioned and the domination of

Hollywood (and the West more broadly) can be contested. At the same time, the West is seen as

a benchmark for success, and the inclusion of Western images, people, and ideas satisfies the

expectations and desires of the Western viewer, along with portrayals of Indian culture that many

White communities in South Africa exoticize (Steene, 2014, pg. 314). Steene argues that Black

and Indian identities do not find shared existence or feel more closely connected to one another

through the Bollywood industry because the Black Africans realize that the niche audience for

Hindi films remain Indian viewers and those Indians who are not in solidarity with the Black

struggle (Steene, 2014, pg. 321). I would argue that the reason shared existence is not found also

has to do with the lack of Black representation and/or the type of Black representation in

Bollywood films, although there is no scholarship that suggests this may be the case.

Relationship between South Africa and India in the time of 'Race':

Tourism from India to South Africa between 2005-2010 pumped close to five hundred

million Rand into the local economies of Durban and Cape Town, the two most visited cities.

Some of this tourism came alongside filming by Indian directors in South Africa. Isabel

Hofmeyer refers to South Africa as an "anomaly in the subcontinent" in the gaze of the Indian

director and producer. Unlike the images of Africa that circulate popular Indian media discourse,

with the image of the starving child at the forefront, images of South Africa are almost

exclusively of beaches, Western women in bikinis, or of Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela

(Hofmeyer, 2011, pg.125). One of the reasons for the successful collaboration between South

African distributors and Bollywood producers has been the lucrative market of Indian tourism

that this partnership provides via use of the cape's locations (Steene, 2014, pg.333).

Between 2008-2010, multiple memorandums of understanding were signed between

South African media conglomerates and the Indian film industry. These conglomerates, controlled by both Black and White South Africans, made provisions for long term collaborations between India and South Africa not only in areas of co-production but also in areas of cultural exchange (Ebrahim, 2008, pg.328).

The Consulate General of India in Durban, Johannesburg, and Cape Town are additional sites that have emerged in post-Apartheid South Africa that have sought to strengthen the relationship between the two countries in the new millennium. Jennifer Dickinson talks about a series of policy initiatives in the new millennium which sought to engage with colonial-born Indians in South Africa who were erased from discourses during Nehruvian-Gandhian nationalist sentiments. In seeking to engage with indentured laborers and their successive generations, the consulates have re-defined 'diaspora' to include them (Dickinson, 2015, pg.81).

It is important to acknowledge that the relationship between India and South Africa has veered away from earlier discourses that opposed Apartheid and was vocal against colonial rule, including the plight of indigenous Black Africans. These discourses were most prominent during the colonial struggles in India as well as during the independence movements in both South Africa and India. The discourses have slowly veered toward the sustenance of economic partnerships. In 2010, South Africa and India formally joined a consortium of five rapidly developing nations - called BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) to strengthen their already growing economies and compete with the strongest economies of the West (http://brics.itamaraty.gov.br/). The reasons for this shift can be attributed to multiple factors related to globalized trade, consumption, and the desire to be seen as "developed" countries, especially in the Western gaze. This desire, along with the desire to retain a sense of indigeneity in the wake of globalization are two core reasons why Black representation takes its

contemporary racist and discriminatory forms in Bollywood films.

Part II: 'Black Representation' in Race: Video

The film 'Race' (2008) directed by Abbas-Mustan is the only film to have been almost entirely filmed in South Africa. However, unlike its popularity in the global North and India, it was not commercially successful in South Africa. In order to consider why this was the case, as well as explore what this film adds to our understanding of racial politics between White, Black and Indian communities in South Africa as well as what stakes Bollywood has in the construction of these politics, it is necessary to look to the film directly.

The film 'Race' revolves around the lives of four characters, Ranveer Singh (Saif Ali Khan), Rajiv Singh (Akshaye Khanna), Sophia (Katrina Kaif), and Sonia (Bipasha Basu). Ranveer, a wealthy, fair-skinned, Hindu and Panjabi man, owns a horse ranch for a living. He earns his livelihood by breeding horses and preparing them to compete in races. His brother, Rajiv, is a vagabond who drinks alcohol and likes to spend Ranveer's money. Sonia, an upcoming model, falls in love with Ranveer who loves her back. Sophia, Rajiv's personal assistant, loves him while he pays her no mind. One fine day, Rajiv develops an attraction for Sonia. Ranveer decides to sacrifice his love for the wellbeing of his brother who he hopes will improve his habits after marriage. Sonia, upon being ignored by Ranveer, falls in love with Rajiv and the two get married. After marriage, Rajiv reveals his true intentions to Sonia - that of usurping his brother's property by killing him. Sonia agrees to work with him to implement this plan. They both work together to kill Ranveer. In a series of many plot twists that subsequently unfold, it is discovered that Rajiv was actually working in concert with Sophia to execute this plan. It is also discovered that Ranveer is alive and had been plotting with Sonia from early on. In a final road race between the two brothers, Rajiv is killed. Ranveer and Sonia live somewhat

happy lives.

The following is the link to the video created that seeks to identify and analyze the scenes in which Black representation operates in stereotypes familiar to Bollywood and in mainstream western media. To do that more effectively, this video takes a closer look at the ways in which the White and Indian characters have been constructed in addition to what visuals we see as representing South Africa. The transition from writing to video at this point seeks to help readers take the historical context they have just learned to the film itself, watching the film with the backdrop of this historical context. There is no such thing as a 'neutral' showing of this film. In other words, the video itself is subjective and carries my own biases as the director of this project. However, in ways that the video will show, my own biases function to expose the biases that operate within this film.

Link to the Video: https://tufts.box.com/s/fsxklsqltjjwiavd9vq91hcs5ntbxri3

Part III: Viewer Perceptions and Experience of 'Race"

Introduction:

The success of the Bollywood film industry and its projects is incomplete without an understanding of the relationship between the viewer and the viewed (Kaur and Sinha, 2005, pg.209). Unlike when filmmakers often claim that they have little idea of audiences' perception of films prior to their release, filmmakers always have an intended audience and make use of certain assumptions of audience taste when designing a film. Prior commercial successes serve as role models of social sensibilities, norms, and attitudes as well as the support or casting of popular actors in these films (Ganti, 2012, pg.62). In the act of catering Bollywood films to specific groups of people or audiences, there is inevitably the question of who is excluded. It is in spaces of the audience and audience perception of films where a unique discussion of 'Black representation' and its visibilities or invisibilities can take place.

This component of the thesis seeks to analyze the experiences of fifteen different persons on their independent viewing of the film 'Race' to consider how Black, White, and Indian representation is visualized through the lens of the film in their eyes, ultimately considering whether or not viewers would call this film 'anti-Black'. In interviewing persons from different racial/ethnic groups (5 who identify as White, 5 as Black, and 5 as Brown South Asians), this part of the research seeks to understand how the viewer perceives their identity to be created and navigated in a film where Black, White, and Indian people are present, albeit to varying degrees. How does their racial background and lived experience influence how they perceive other racial identities to be constructed in the film?

The importance of collecting this information is further established through the notion of "identity in film-viewing"' that Shakuntala Banaji describes as an unbounded and amorphous

process through which viewers do not watch any film twice from the same identity position. As Banaji notes, "the politics of representation and the politics of viewer experiences collide...making different aspects of identity come to the fore or become active at different times' (Banaji, 2006, pg.167). How do viewer experiences of this film construct the Black individual in ways that add to our understanding of how this film may be operating?

The transition from the video into this interview method compels us to open up our discussion about race, representation, and identification. If identity is so centrally linked to the experience of watching and engaging with the film, it is absolutely imperative to speak to these diversity of identities. This interview method, in speaking to viewers who identify as Black, and White, in addition to those who are of Indian descent forces an expansion of this project. By comparing these responses, we can make perceptions on intended audiences and question whether or not there exists a link between a viewer's racial identity and the process of viewing a film. In other words, does the film compel the viewer to introspect on their racial identity? In transitioning to the interview method, we also acknowledge the differences between scholarly theories and perspectives on Black representation in this film to viewer reactions. While South Asian viewers are concerned about the portrayal of the 'Indians' in the film, and speak to their personal experiences finding resonance or not with "culture" in the film, Black and White persons do not have the same qualms.

Methodology and Reasoning:

Viewers, all college students between the ages of 18 - 28 were asked to watch the movie "Race" (2008) directed by Abbas-Mustan even if they had seen it before, along with a set of guiding questions in mind as they watched the film. These guiding questions were meant to orient the viewers to the subject matter of this thesis without the relevant background

information and scholarship on politics of Bollywood. These guiding questions were:

1) Where do you see visible Black representation? In what ways is Black representation

conceptualized and manipulated?

2) Where do you see visible Whiteness? In what ways is Whiteness conceptualized and

Manipulated in terms of White representation and ideas linked with White peoples?

3) What are the Indian characters doing in this film - where do they fit into this picture

of constructing certain kinds of racial narratives?

4) What do the physical spaces the characters occupy tell us about them?

5) Anything else you notice that is of interest?

All fifteen viewers participated in a one-on-one interview where they were asked more

specific questions. Each of these questions was chosen intentionally and modeled after

some questions scholars have used in the past who have studied Bollywood and seek to

understand the relationship of the viewer to the viewed. Below are the list of questions

asked in this interview and the reasoning behind asking them:

1) Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?

Predisposition to Bollywood films prior to 'Race' may make certain aspects of the film

less surprising than others. Exposure to this industry may make the viewer step into the

experience of viewing with certain assumptions or expectations. Asking about a favorite film

provides somewhat of a context for the kinds of films the viewer enjoys, opening doors to what

kind of portrayals of characters may be apt for their liking and what 'Race' falls short of.

2) Have you seen 'Race' before?

For those who have seen 'Race' before, it is very interesting to notice if they find

similarities/differences between what they saw when they first watched it and now. Since identity is amorphous and shifting, it is likely that viewers have a completely different experience engaging with the film, especially if it was previously watched earlier in childhood. It is also possible that viewers have seen the film in cinema halls or larger groups before. The social context of the cinema audience would reveal different things about engagement with the film than an individual viewing.

3) What are your general thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the film?

Viewer enjoyment or dislike of a film is a strong indicator of whether or not they felt the film was intended for a viewer like them. Viewer like or dislike also brings to the forefront the successes or failures of the film, which may touch on aspects of racialization of different groups in the film, the characters, cast, and plot, all of which are embroiled in the construction of Black persons.

4) Did you skip any of this film when watching it this time? / did you skip any of this film?

The songs of the film 'Race' are an important site where Black individuals are found. For those who have seen Race before, other Bollywood films before (and do not enjoy songs), or for those who are new to this industry, skipping songs may very well be likely. It is important to take note of this so that it is not assumed the viewer did not notice Black characters in the dance sequences.

5) Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

The aim of this question is to consider whether the viewers place themselves as part of the intended audience for this film. If they do not, why is that the case? Is this film seeking a niche audience, or is it targeted at a mass group of people? If it is a niche audience, is that

audience racialized?

6) Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

Unpacking depiction of Black persons in this film is incomplete without situating the film in South Africa itself. Most commercially successful Bollywood films filmed in the diaspora have involved locations that have been carefully chosen. The Bollywood formula for filmmaking in international locations is to find "exotic settings and locales" (Kaur and Sinha, 2005, pg.168). How do the images shown of South Africa challenge or support a viewer's ideas about Black, White, and Indian representation in the film?

7) With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

This question concerns the focal subject matter of this thesis. In leaving the question open ended, viewers are invited to talk about Black representation in terms of people seen and also 'Blackness', or the ideas, words, and other images that they associate with the term. This question may also give insight as to who the intended audience of this film may be.

8) With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Whiteness? How are White characters represented?

In order to understand and begin to unpack Black representation through the lens of this film, it is imperative to have a discussion of how the other racial categories in the film operate. In leaving the question open ended, viewers are invited to talk about representation of White people and of Whiteness - ideas, words, and other images that they associate with White. This question may also give insight as to who the intended audience of this film may be.

9) With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words what is Indian about this film? How are the Indian characters depicted?

This question seeks to analyze what the viewers consider to be aspects of "Indian" culture or "Indianness" in the film. How does the construct of the "Indian" identity make visible or Invisible White or Black representation in the film?

10) This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

The answer to this question is an indication of who the viewer perceives as the intended audience in South Africa and whether they believe that certain racial representation/politics in this film have anything to do with its failure to be a commercial success in South Africa.

11) Would you consider this film to be anti-Black? Why or why not?

This question intends to expose the many nuances or degrees of "anti" that there may be for different viewers. It is also interesting to notice whether there are patterns to the responses for different racial groups of viewers as well as the justifications provided for the answer given.

Familiarity with Bollywood:

Even if there were viewers who had not seen an entire Bollywood film prior to 'Race' from start to finish, all of the viewers had seen clips or trailers. All had heard about the Bollywood Industry. Scholars who have studied the Bollywood film industry, especially Tejaswini Ganti have written a lot about the hegemony of this industry within India, South Asia, and the South Asian diaspora as discussed in part I. All of the viewers were citizens of countries with a vast Indian diaspora or citizenry, which is correlated with where the industry and its films find greatest popularity (Ganti, 2004, pg.3).

All five South Asian students had grown up watching Bollywood films. Four of the five South Asian students cited movies as their favorites that were "not like other Bollywood movies", "different", and "not trying to make you feel a certain way". One student described the "typical" Bollywood movie as the "song and dance, romance, and hero-heroine kind of thing". Kaur and Sinha describe the average and commercially successful Bollywood film as having the same elements expressed by this viewer, especially of charismatic heroes and heroines, romance, melodrama, music, and spectacular dances (Kaur and Sinha, 2005, pg.168). The South Asian students also cited "progressivism" as a factor in their selection of favorite films. One student referred to *Dangal* as her favorite movie as it tells the story of two powerful women in the otherwise patriarchal state of Haryana, while another spoke of *Kapoor and Sons* as an example of a film that transgresses usual expectations of characters. One viewer commented that films like *Kapoor and Sons* step out of the "Bollywood formula". It was clear from the responses of all but one viewer to this first question that there was a distinction between films with the Bollywood formula and their chosen favorites.

What becomes interesting to analyze under this distinction that adds to our understanding of 'Black representation' in the film 'Race', is that films that transgress the Bollywood formula offer unconventional plots according to the viewers, plots that seek to reverse stereotypes that have long existed in Bollywood films. For example*, Kapoor and Sons* was commercially successful despite the presence of a gay character. *Dangal* sought to revert patriarchal stereotypes of women having no space in wrestling. The parallels these viewers draw between progressivist Bollywood films and those that do follow the "Bollywood" formula is relevant to a discussion of this film, Race, which did not occupy a space among their favorites. As one participant put it bluntly, it is a part of the typical "Bollywood formula". What then are the

stereotypes that 'Race' is not reversing? It seems likely that racial constructions are a part of that discourse.

Many notable scholars have written extensively about the facets of the "Bollywood formula" or mainstream commercially successful Bollywood films. While none of these facets explicitly mention their aversion to Black persons, they construct ideas of appropriate and respectable identities that have no place for the Black individual. Ganti describes these films as operating on clear binaries between traditional and modern, western versus eastern, or masculine versus feminine (Ganti, 2004, pg.3). These binaries operate between the west and the east in ways that center the discourse on White and brown bodies. Kaur and Sinha further the funneling of the industry by referring to commercially successful Bollywood film as ones that are comfortable with entanglements that are global or Western, with all kinds of foreign products and exotic locales without undermining the strength of Indian patriotism and a production of a Hindu-centric nationalism (Kaur and Sinha, 2005, pg. 12).

Black representation is not found in the construction of the Bollywood hegemony. Haseena Ebrahim refers specifically to the lack of South Africans, of Indian descent or otherwise, as characters in Bollywood films. While explicit references to being against or for Black persons has not been made, its active exclusion is made clear when the typical Bollywood film seeks to present dichotomies that center around Indian and White, western constructions. All five viewers who identified as Black had seen atleast one Bollywood film in their past. Two viewers in particular, who identify as Ghanaian and Kenyan spoke of the extent of Bollywood's popularity in their home countries. One viewer mentioned how her family has hundreds of CDs of Bollywood movies and songs, while the other viewer described the popularity as being "crazy".

Gwenda Vander Steene, in "Bollywood Films and African Audiences" mentions how Bollywood films have been popular in many African countries since the 1990s. For most countries, such as Fiji, Mauritius, Kenya, Uganda, and Guyana, the reasons for this popularity is strong South Asian presence in these countries. Steene also discusses however, why Bollywood films find popularity even in countries without a large Indian diaspora. Her discussion centers on an Indophile discourse that is dominant in these communities, centered on similarities between "parallel modernities" and "cultural proximity". Parallel modernities is the idea that countries, especially post-colonial nations, can become modern without becoming "western" and that Bollywood offers an alternative to Hollywood's domination (Steene, 2014, pg.302). This is a very interesting construction since it confers an identity on Bollywood that is not 'Western' but "modern. Cultural proximity refers to the similarities that many African audiences find between their local cultures and what they perceive as "Indian culture" through the films. Steene refers specifically to Kenyan and Senegalese audiences as examples, having spoken to Africans in these communities who find reassuring familiarities between Bollywood films and their social customs and cultures (Steene 2014, pg. 303). These perceptions, while not speaking to South Africa specifically, still find relevance to our discussion in Part I. The increased viewership of Bollywood films by Black South Africans in the past two decades may be attributed to the erception that Bollywood films are contesting White hegemony.

Among the White viewers, four had never seen a complete Bollywood film before 'Race'. However, according to all four, the Bollywood film industry was popular around the world and the second largest to Hollywood. The viewer who was the anomaly had lived in India for some time and had watched dozens of Bollywood films. The differences in film perception between the four viewers who had never seen a Bollywood film and the one viewer who had

seen many became apparent and intriguing as additional questions were asked. This first question allowed for those subsequent differences to find a possible root cause.

General Reactions:

There was no common reaction or point of alignment between all fifteen viewers. That said, as Ganti describes, Hindi films are not replete with an infinite number of meanings. Rather they "make specific claims on viewers' emotions by appealing them to think of certain issues in certain ways" (Ganti, 2012, pg.169). There were certain emotions that resonated with a number of viewers across different racial groups. Many described the film as being "fast paced" and having multiple "plot twists" which they either found annoying or interesting. Many participants commented that this film reminded them of Western elements, either Hollywood's 'Fast and Furious" or the "fast pace", "action", and "sexy heist" tone of the film which is common in other Hollywood films. Equating elements of this film to Hollywood made the answers to question 9 particularly interesting. A discussion of that question will follow later.

None of the five South Asian viewers described enjoying the film. Some of the explicit comments were "silly actions, silly songs", or "so much wrong", "cheesy, one dimensional characters", and it being "Not my kind of film". 6 Four out of the five had seen 'Race' before at the time it was released. All were young, between 11-13 years of age. One viewer was surprised that they were even allowed to watch the film at that age because of "the sexual scenes". Another viewer was surprised that they enjoyed the film as a youngster. This viewer also commented that they saw the film in a crowded audience in a mainstream cinema hall in Singapore, packed with Indians, and how "it was a big deal" when it came out. The reasons for this dislike became apparent in the subsequent questions, which included the film's portrayal of women and of Black persons. However, what is also worth taking notice here is that the films all five South Asian

viewers cited as being their favorites all had elements that constructed some type of nationalist or patriotic discourse that tried to find ties to the Indian homeland despite transgressing views of being the "typical Bollywood film".

In contrast to the Indian/South Asian viewers, four of the five Black viewers enjoyed some aspect of the film. For two of these viewers, the plot twists and heightened suspense was the main reason. For both of them, the similarities between the film and 'Fast and Furious' was the reason for their enjoyment. The only Black viewer who did not express any enjoyment with the film 'Race' had not grown up in the US or watched multiple Hollywood films. For that viewer, 'Race' was unlike any of the other Bollywood films the viewer had seen back in Kenya. It was not favorable to the viewer because it didn't have any of the elements of "Indian" culture that the viewer was used to seeing in the other Bollywood films. The culture that this viewer found association to, or proximity with, was not represented in the film. By contrast, the other four viewers who enjoyed the film had grown up in America, watching and exposed to Hollywood films from a very young age. They enjoyed this film because it was like other movies they had seen. Based on these responses, I was intrigued to examine who these viewers would then see the intended audience of the film as. I would expect that the three Black viewers who enjoyed the film would most likely find themselves to be part of the intended audience while the other Black viewer would not.

The differences between these Black viewers may find roots in the socialization processes in the environments they grew up in that influenced their liking and taste for specific kinds of films. It validates the necessities of understand how racial politics will operate differently in countries where both Black and brown bodies were subjugated in slavery – countries such as Kenya and South Africa as opposed to countries where the majority of Indians

are wealthy passenger Indians, immigrants, or expats. At the same it is interesting to note that none of the Black viewers cited the lack of their enjoyment to be related to the ways Blackness is depicted in this film. This brings to mind the possibility of how Bollywood, and Hollywood have made invisible the viewer's 'Black' identity or sought to repress a consideration of it by forcing them to find cultural relevance with other identities or by intentionally excluding Black persons. The fact that this is true for both viewers who grew up with the dominance of Bollywood vs Hollywood industries suggests that an appeal to Black viewer's identity is not part of the agenda of these industries. This means that the mainstreaming ploys by the Bollywood industry to bring back popularity of Indian cinema to South Africa in the 1990s was a move that did not care to change the ways that anti Blackness manifests in such films – that it is not necessary to do so in order to appeal to different racial groups.

Two of the five White viewers had a strong affinity towards the film, describing the songs and the plot to be the driving factor. These viewers had never seen Bollywood films before and found the interjecting songs to be refreshing and entertaining. One White viewer strongly disliked the film, saying he was fooled by the title 'Race' and wanted a film that discussed racial prejudices in Bollywood. The remaining two viewers did not have strong opinions on the film but commented that they either expected a happier resolution in the ending or found nothing that felt like "cultural ties" were made to Bollywood. In all of these reactions, the viewers came with a set of assumptions and expectations that were either surpassed or unmet. These assumptions paint a picture of Bollywood where the elements for them that signify "Indianness" are the clothing and customs for instance, happy endings, and entertaining songs - elements of the "typical" Bollywood film. What is relevant here to our discussion of Black representation is to consider whether the likeness for a "typical Bollywood film" influences their perception of

whether or not the film is anti-Black? In other words, if the "typical Bollywood film" as described in Part I carries prejudices and long standing stereotypes that are not reversed, is anti-Blackness one of them?

Intended audience:

Seven of the fifteen viewers answered this question with barometers of age and likeness for this genre of films. These viewers pointed to a "young", and "straight male" audience and those who are interested in "Fast and Furious", "action", "urban locations", "wealth", "women", and "horse-riding'. These reactions add little to our discussion of this film's entanglement with Black persons. However, there is an insightful dichotomy to be found in the comparison of responses of the majority of Black and White viewers to this question. Three of the five White viewers explicitly mentioned "Indian" as the intended audience of this film, from one viewer saying "Indian audience wherever they are", to another saying "average Indians or Indian middle class", and the third saying "NRI Indians and Hindi speaking people in South Africa". In contrast, three of the five Black viewers, in addition to mentioning an Indian crowd as the intended audience, also added a "White" audience to this film, given the frequent use of English, or the large presence of White persons in the film. Certainly, both sets of White and Black viewers described the intended audience in racial or ethnic terms. This in itself is surprising since these Black viewers found this film to be entertaining given its genre that resonated with their favorites, leading me to expect that they would find themselves among the intended audience. However, the fact that these three Black viewers also included Whites into this discussion suggests not only that they were thinking about intended audience in racial and ethnic terms, but also that they stepped out of the bounds of seeing Bollywood as exclusively meant for the Indian community. In mentioning Indian and White but not Black, they hinted at their exclusion in this

film. One of these Black viewers went so far as to describe the intended audience as "an Indian audience that wants to be White".

Tejaswani Ganti writes that seeing the intended audience for a Bollywood film in terms of age or sex is "broadly encompassing and highly imprecise" (Ganti, 2012, pg.63). A commercially successful Bollywood film has an audience that is forecast with incredible accuracy and boils down not only to age or sex but ethnicity, race, and class status (Srinivas, 2016, pg.131).

The history of the success of the Bollywood industry is incomplete without a discussion of how its intended audience has expanded from a national, Indian in India only audience to a transnational audience which includes not only the Indian diaspora, but also the White gaze (Kaur and Sinha, 2005, pg.14).

Many scholars describe Bollywood cinema as integral to Indian cultural heritage. They describe the industry and its products as the lynchpin of cultural authenticity, nationalism, and successful markers and protectors of "Indianness" (Ganti, 2012, pg.52, Kaur and Sinha, 2005, pg.21, Gangoli, 2005, pg.144, Larkin, 2009, pg.310). As discussed in Part I, this claim and desire for indigeneity of Bollywood films is in response not only to condemnation of prior colonial rule but also the dominance of neoliberal rhetoric of free markets and competition (Larkin, 2009, pg.315). The majority of profits that have come from commercially successful Bollywood films of the 1990s and beyond are from transnational South Asian audiences that are rich - largely Punjabi and upper caste (Deshpande, 2001, pg.193, 194). The consumable hero of Bollywood who appeals to these transnational audiences is a man of high class, disposable income, a jet setting lifestyle, and with the capability of vacationing (Deshpande, 2001, pg. 194). The consumable hero is someone who comfortably navigates between the Western world ruled and

dominated by the White gaze and the Indian world which is everything the West is not (Kaur and Sinha, 2005, pg. 227). The intended Indian audience member of a transnational locale yearns to be anchored in some way to his homeland, whether it is through the reminder of physical spaces within India, rituals, attitudes, or through language (Ray, 2014, pg.311).

'Race' satisfies the criteria of a consumable hero, Saif Ali Khan, as discussed in Part II. However, there are no indications in the film that the characters are anchored or linked to their homeland beside the use of Hindi as a primary language. This is a possible reason why this film has not been successful in South Africa among Indian who seek to solidify their connections to the Indian homeland in order to counter the threat of Black domination. It complicates the possibility of a transnational audience being the desired audience of this film.

As three viewers explicitly referenced the White man as an intended or desired audience, the White man is central to the Bollywood project. Both the Anglo-Indian and the fully westernized White man are constructed as the "other" in Bollywood film. This however, is not always a negative connotation. The Western, White man either becomes the antagonist to which the Indian man is deemed superior to, or helps lay the foundation for a successful Indian that the Indian can then surpass (Gangoli, 2005, pg.145). This relationship with the White gaze is carved as such for two primary reasons. Firstly, Whiteness is an emblem of Hollywood and thus of an internationally successful industry whose power must be countered by Bollywood in order to be unique and successful. Second, Whiteness is an emblem of power, wealth and a reminder of India's colonial past. In response to this history, the Bollywood industry must be shown as capable of not only being modern and matching up to the standards of Hollywood, but also shown to be a moral, righteous, independent, and culturally authentic industry despite former colonial oppression (Karan and Schaefer, 2009, pg.240).

The view of these scholars supports the claims of the three Black viewers who find this film to be directed to the White gaze or involving the White gaze. In giving physical space and spotlight in the film 'Race' to White persons in the backdrop of a rich, upper caste, Punjabi hero who always emerges victorious, the film seems to utilize Whiteness and White representation for the production of a respectable Indian. It is a projection that does not undermine White power and superiority - it only makes the Indian slightly more superior.

Both constructions operate in 'Race' as discussed in the video. Linking back to our discussions in Part I, they find relevance to the racial politics of South Africa in that there is a desire by both Black and brown communities for Bollywood to counter the hegemony of Hollywood. At the same time, the fact that White persons are given stature in ways that Black persons are not suggests the closer ties that Bollywood and the Indian government seeks to have with White power, as evidence of contemporary relationships between India and South Africa that are centered purely in economic terms.

None of the viewers indicated that Black persons may be members of the intended audience. Bollywood scholars do not differ. The primary audience in international locations with Black majority populations are still members of the Indian diaspora. In such contexts, the Black majority is actually seen as threatening and in similar ways that the White gaze configures the Black (Kaur and Sinha 28). The reasons for this relationship will be expanded upon under the section 'Black representation' and has also been introduced in the first part of this thesis. The video project also lays out the ways in which Black presence has been coded according to White stereotypes. Are such depictions of Black persons the reason why the film was unsuccessful in South Africa? We will take a look at this phenomenon next.

Imagining of 'South Africa' and the Failure of this Film:

Viewers were asked to share the images, ideas, and associations that came to mind with South Africa, as well as provide their input as to why this film was not a commercial success in South Africa (or any other African country for that matter) as it had been in Europe, The Americas, and South Asia.

Nine of the fifteen viewers thought of Cape Town, beaches, tourism, and vacationing when asked to picture South Africa. Ravinder Kaur, in "Viewing the West through Bollywood", discusses how the image of the developed West - its ethereal architecture, hip metropolis, and natural landscapes become exoticized in the eyes of a middle-class Indian consumer who has likely not traveled far outside of his country. She discusses how there is a liberty and sense of autonomy associated with these exotic destinations that attracts Indian audiences in India. The freedoms associated with the West, access to fair-skinned men and women, nightclubs and drinking, and the independence that comes with making such choices being among those freedoms. (Kaur 2002, pg. 204, 205).

Although South Africa is not situated in the global west, the destinations that are used for Hindi filmmaking purposes, largely Durban and Cape Town are projected through the same kinds of images used for the exotic West. Jaspal Singh in "African Indians in Bollywood" speaks of the "Insidious nature of Eurocentricism" to describe this phenomenon. He says that Eurocentric ideologies have negated the powerful presence of Africans in India and projected an image of them being filthy, poverty-stricken, and a racially inferior group of people long since India's colonial past (Singh, 2008, pg. 281,276). Even when Bollywood cinema at one point in time provided the space for a positive construction of Africans in India through the story of Razia Sultan directed by Kamal Amrohi, it failed to change perceptions of Black Africans among

Indian audiences because it could not negate the prior European construction of negating

formerly colonized cultures. Singh comments that the non-existence of positive representation of

Africans strongly exists in Western culture and in Hollywood which has also been a model for

Bollywood (Singh, 2008, pg.275). Linking back to the racial politics in South Africa's history

outlined in part I where conservative Indian elites were indoctrinated by the colonial authorities

to see Black bodies as a threat to their success. It also links to contemporary relations between

India and South Africa where both countries desire first and foremost to not be projected in the

global sphere as underdeveloped nations. This inherently involves assimilation of some

sort to a Eurocentric discourse.

Five of the fifteen viewers said that the film's setting in South Africa added nothing

to their experience of the film. The viewers said that the skyscrapers, beaches, and horse racing

grounds shown as physical evidence of South Africa are landmarks that can be found in many

other urban cities, especially in the West. One viewer also said that South African culture was

lacking in the film. While these viewers cited this representation as hindering their experience of

the film and of knowing what the true South Africa looked like, Haseena Ebrahim says that the

projection of South Africa as being similar to other exotic destinations in Europe and the

Americas is intentional to attract Indian audiences to a continent they would otherwise not

affiliate with. The South African government is eager to allow the Bollywood industry to use

Durban and Cape Town as filming locations because it pumps hundreds of millions of rand into

the local economy. Even though all of the Bollywood directors who have filmed in South Africa

have sought to capture images that do not present the country as being unique to other exotic

destinations in the world, they remain eager to film there because of the low tax rates, wider

profit margins than other exotic destinations in Europe, and the average Indian middle class

consumer in India who is eager to escape from their everyday reality regardless of where the exotic destination is or whether the destinations they have seen look fairly the same. (Ebrahim, 2008, pg. 330-331; Ray, 2014, pg.274).

However, this intentional, Eurocentric "Whitewashing" of South Africa was cited by a few viewers as a possible cause to the lack of its commercial success in South Africa. Since the early 1990s, the overseas market became one of the most profitable consumer audience for Bombay filmmakers. Some films, such as 'Race' enjoyed greater success abroad than in India. However, unlike other commercially successful films of this genre, such as the Dhoom series, 'Race' was not successful in South Africa (Ganti, 2012, pg. 8 and Ganti appendix). One viewer summarized the reason for this in their opinion by saying "if a movie tries to depict a certain community and location and does not do it the right way, others may be ok with it but the community living in the location they are trying to depict..would be more critical of it". In this case the viewer was referring not only to the way South Africa as a location was projected on the silver screen as being nothing different from other western exotic locales but also the projection of White and Black communities in the film that added to this existing failure.

Whiteness and White Representation

When Ravinder Kaur said that "the West is to be found where White power and popularity is to be found", she was referring to a "west" that does not have to be geographically bound in the Western hemisphere but exists through White domination and power. This West, considered attractive to audiences in India was evident to all fifteen viewers through the White presence in the film, which was found not only on bodies, but through class and clothing. All fifteen interviews made it clear that the White presence as clearly dominant to the Black

presence in the film.

Nine of the fifteen viewers explicitly used the words "richness", "wealth", or both to describe the "Whiteness" that they associated with this film. For these nine viewers, the first indicator of Whiteness was the class status of the White people in the film. The imagery that marked high class status were the clothes worn by White people, described as "Western", "skimpy", or "like a tourist" by certain viewers and the presence of White people during the horse races where visible images of wads of cash were accompanied by Ranveer placing bets in millions of dollars on horses of choice.13 For the other viewers who did not explicitly use the terms "rich" or "wealth", the use of other words like "pride", "cars", "luxuries", and "power" all alluded to class status and a materialist consumer culture. For two viewers, the status of White hegemony through class was not done as simply a favor to Whites or to be "desirable" in the White gaze. Rather, as two participants put it aptly, "the Whites showed us where the Indians were in terms of class". As discussed in the section 'Intended audience', the White gaze was used as a platform to uplift the Indians onto a more superior status in ways that Black presence or Black gazes cannot.

In order to understand how Whiteness and White presence invisibilizes Black representation and uplifts the Indian, Teresa Hubel in "Yaari with Angrez - Whiteness for a new Bollywood hero" argues that Whiteness must be unpacked in its nuances. White representation is not homogeneous and is also exclusionary to working class Whites - poor Whites who are "insufficiently White" on the Bollywood stage. The poor White man does not threaten the construction of a nationalist Hindu or Indian masculinity in ways that a rich White man does. In order for the superiority of the nationalist Hindu man to be made evident in the film, it must be pitted against its equal - which is not just any White man but an elite White man (Hubel, 2014,

pg. 297). The intentional use of this White privilege across the film 'Race' to pit the Indian

characters on a level platform not only satisfies what Bollywood directors believe are the desires

to see the White and exotic West by audiences in India but also projects the Indian characters as

being superior to Whites. One of the ways this superiority is shown is by making the Indian hero

and heroine sexually attractive to both White and Black persons in the film but inaccessible to

them - a concept that is explored in the video project of this thesis.

One of the White viewers of the film had an interesting take on White representation in

'Race' that did not place any distinction between "White" and "Indian". In other words, this

viewer saw all characters in the film besides Black persons as being "White". Having been to

India, he commented that he was referred to as "gora" (White) in the same ways that light

skinned Indians were referred to as gora. According to this viewer, the White persons in the film

are not used to elevate the Indians. Rather, both White and Indian persons work in harmony and

the desire of the Indian is to assimilate to the White gaze. The responses of the viewers to where

they found "Indianness" presented in this film points to two sets of opinions, one that confers

White persons as working in harmony with Indians to demean Black bodies and one where

White persona are stepped on to uplift Indians and Black bodies are used to further validate this

hegemony. Both of these sets of views will be discussed in the next section.

Indianness and Brown Representation:

Tejaswini Ganti describes the three main elements of "Indianization" of Bollywood

films that set the industry apart from Hollywood as being: a) a range of emotions that fluctuate

throughout the film, b) the expansion of the narrative to include an interconnected web of

extended families and other relationships, and c) the addition of songs. The film 'Race' has all

three of these elements - in the plot, the relationships between the characters, and the songs - as discussed in the video. Most of the viewers would agree that the film 'Race' would satisfy this criteria of Indianness. Some viewers would equate these three elements as being under the purview of the "typical Bollywood film" (Ganti, 2012, pg.77). Shakuntala Banaji argues that these components of the "typical Bollywood film" inherently operate on prejudiced ideologies of race, gender, and religion. In seeking to adhere to the "Bollywood formula", the films do not attempt to reverse any expectations on gender or race. Under this model, directors may not be consciously projecting Indian persons in certain ways or projecting Black persons as inferior to the White and Indian gaze. Rather, they are subconsciously following a pre-existing formula and basing their success off of other films that have profited from displaying Indians and Indianness in these particular ways (Banaji, 2006, pg. 127). Eight of the fifteen viewers described seeing one or more of these elements of typical Bollywood films described under Ganti's model in the film 'Race'. However they did not classify this as examples of "Indianness". Apart from the songs, most viewers thought that the Indian characters could be substituted for White characters without any difference to the film. Thus they saw the Indian characters as seeking to assimilate into the White gaze and treating Black persons in the film as the White characters would, with the stereotypes that Whites have long used in Hollywood, from the sexualizing of Black female bodies, the hypermasculinity of the Black man, and the Black man who is of lower class status. These examples are discussed in the video component of the thesis.

Unlike Ganti, Manas Ray describes the "Indianness" of a Bollywood film as being its ability to retain its cultural superiority and authenticity as Indian even when characters are physically located outside of India (Ray, 2006, pg.220). This "Indianness" can manifest in multiple ways - through the wearing of Indian dress, the enacting of Hindu rituals such as

wedding ceremonies the presence of extended kin, the projection of Hindu masculinity, the longing of the Indian characters to return to the original homeland, and the ability of the Indian to resist Western temptations (Ray, 2006, pg.252).

Seven of the fifteen viewers saw the Indianness displayed in this film as falling under the purview of this criteria. Three of the viewers cited the creation of a Hindu masculinity that used wealth, greed, and competition to stifle out any White domination to Indian control. More specifically, the murder of Jockey Mondo Gibbs, a White man who worked for Ranveer and betrayed his trust was cited as one example of the hypermasculinity and domination of the Indian man over the White man. One viewer cited the connection to the Indian homeland as examples of this "Indianness". They discussed Bipasha Basu's need to escape from India after a threat to her personal safety as the reason for her arrival in South Africa - an indication that she longed to remain in India unless absolutely impossible to do. The viewer cited this example as an indication of her faithfulness to her culture. Another viewer cited Ranveer's sorrow at the loss of his brother at the end as an example of his deep-seated relationship with his brother, one that was founded on love. His moral righteousness was upheld as "Indian" when he did not plant any bombs in his brother's car despite lying to the brother that this was the case, unlike Fast and Furious and other Hollywood films where the characters act according to their own selfish needs. All of these examples seek to differentiate the Indian characters as morally superior to their White counterparts in the film. However, what does this add to our understanding of Black representation?

Firstly, the need to project a status that is morally superior to Whites but not Blacks who occupy the majority of South Africa's population upholds White power and presupposes a White connection to the South African land that must be contested. In other words, these examples seek

to uphold the NRI Indian in South Africa as belonging to and deserving of this nation, perhaps even more deserving than Whites. Excluding Black persons from this discussion does not give them any belonging to the South African land. Second, while the construction of White persons in this film may have been done in concert with depictions of Whiteness and White persons in other commercially successful Bollywood films, the projection of Black persons is somewhat atypical of other Bollywood films that have represented them in particular ways.

Black representation. Is Film Anti-Black?

All fifteen viewers described the film 'Race' as underrepresenting or invisibilizing Black persons. Eight out of the fifteen viewers cited the lack of Black representation as the reason for the film's commercial failure in South Africa, saying that the failure to show significant numbers of Black persons in one space for more than a few seconds was an intentional move to undermine Black representation and ownership of land in South Africa.

Two participants described the film as being anti-Black because of this intentional move to exclude Black persons in a country where over 70% of the population is Black. Two viewers described the film as 'anti-Black' because of its adhering to the typical Bollywood formula described by Ganti that automatically made not just this film but numerous other films inherently "anti-Black". These viewers explained that anti-Black attitudes do not need to manifest through the exclusion of racially Black bodies. Rather, the power given to White bodies and the western gaze along with favoritism towards lighter skin are some of many examples of the ways in which Bollywood is inherently anti-Black, even if the directors of Race may not have intentionally or thoughtfully promoted an anti- Black agenda.

Shakuntala Banaji supports this view when she argues that typical Bollywood films have

conservative politics only when there is "already in existence great ignorance or prejudice on the issues" in the community. These prejudices, she argues are inseparable from the societal context of film production and part of viewer belief systems from the very start (Banaji, 2006, pg.174).

Ten of the fifteen viewers noticed Black presence most strongly during the dance sequences when Black male or female bodies were shown in sexualized ways. One viewer described the use of the Black persons in the dances as serving the "convenience" of the Indians and seeking to uplift their moral superiority when these Indians either refuse to succumb to the lures of others or distance themselves very early from those dancers. This relationship, which operates between the Black, White, and Indian persons in the film, is described in more detail in the video project. The other instances where viewers noticed Black presence were the use of Black security guards and stable handlers, instances that are also discussed in great length in the video. What is unique in terms of viewers' responses is that despite the similarities in perceptions of Black persons in the film, only 8 participants were comfortable using the term 'anti-Black'. The 7 participants who chose not to use this classification defined 'anti' as being opposed to the Black struggle, Black persons, or Black culture. Invisibility of Black persons was not sufficient cause. The use of Black persons for dancing, stable, handlers, or as security guards did not seem intentionally demeaning since White bodies were also found engaging in similar roles.

Haseena Ebrahim suggests that a film may be prejudiced against Black persons if it is marketed and distributed only among the South Asian diaspora in a community replete with Black presence. In other words, the early history of the Bollywood industry in South Africa (summarized in the first part of the thesis) involves Bollywood producers distributing shares for their upcoming film and copyright rights only to Indian distributors despite there being a demand from other groups, especially Black persons engaged with film distribution. (Ebrahim, 2008,

pg.323). While this trend gradually began to change, there are other ways this prejudice has come across. For instance, South Africans of Indian descent have not appeared as characters in Bollywood films, not even as minor or secondary characters until recently. Diasporic protagonists who are NRIs are largely from the US, Canada, Australia, and the UK. Ebrahim posits that this choice is linked to class biases of Bollywood that cannot equate South Africa's modernity to these Western countries. While physical locations in South Africa may be used and the country may be Whitewashed to project similarities to Western countries, the fact remains that South Africa is located in Africa, not the West (Ebrahim 2008, pg.334). Ebrahim also discusses prejudice against Black persons to be evident in the administration of the Miss Bollywood IPL South African Beauty Pageant, an annual scholarship competition arranged between personnel in the Bollywood industry and relevant distributors in South Africa. The pageant provides the winner, a South African female with a chance to star in a Bollywood film in return for entry fees and extended marketing of upcoming Bollywood films as the pageant airs on TV. In 2009, the first year of the pageant, all the finalists selected were White. The winner also admitted to never having seen a Bollywood film. While the pageant came under criticism, the practice was kept the same and since then has continued to result in fewer women of color receiving the prize, even though hundreds of Black and Indian women have participated (Ebrahim 2008, pg 327).

Although only two of the five Black viewers explicitly called 'Race' anti-Black, they all expressed their frustration with the relative invisibility of Black persons in the film or the stereotypes that were used in their presence. One participant said they "felt uncomfortable" when they saw the Black woman take center stage and shake her ass in between Ranveer and Rajiv. Another found it frustrating that RD visited an orphanage and the child shown in poor conditions

was White even though Blacks occupy the lowest economic class in South Africa. Another

expressed how "shocking" it was to see maybe 1-2 Black persons in a sea of Whiteness in a

country that ought to have Black people walking around everywhere, including in Cape Town

and Durban. For these viewers, the lack of any meaningful projection of Black persons on the

silver screen felt somewhat like a personal attack on their racial identity. Their comments served

as a reminder of how personal the project of viewing films and how films actively participate in

the projects of racial manipulation to serve their own ends. Whether or not this film is anti-Black

is contested, both by scholars and viewers alike and depends on what 'anti' is defined as and

whether or not Bollywood films are believed to have a record of prejudice against Black persons.

Conclusions:

The perspectives that the viewers added to this discussion of the Black persons in the film 'Race' were refreshing and thought-provoking. While there remains a number of unresolved differences, such as who is and isn't a part of the intended audience or whether or not this film can be classified as anti-Black, this project opened up and unpacked White, Indian, and Black representation in a myriad of its forms. If this project were repeated, participants would be asked to watch the film together, in a collective social environment with the presence of other racial groups alongside them. As Ganti describes, the act of viewing Hindi films with other people has a profound impact on the nature of spectatorship. It "colors the experience of film viewing and the interpretation of particular sequences in the film" (Ganti, 2012, pg.176). It would be interesting to see how participant responses change when viewing the film collectively. If a focus group were the model for the interview instead of a one-on-one setup, it would be interesting to examine the differences in viewer responses. If the project was repeated, participants would be explicitly asked to comment on whether they felt any particular way about their identity being embroiled in the conversation and in the film so as to understand further how the relationship between the viewed and the viewing becomes deeply personal.

Database of Raw Interview Data:

Name: NIH
Race/Ethnicity: Brown, Indian

1. Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?

[I] grew up watching Bollywood films at home. One of my favorite films is Dangal. Typical Bollywood movies are the usual song and dance, romance, hero-heroine kind of thing. But this film is different. Haryana is known for its violence against women so portraying two strong women doesn't follow the Bollywood formula.

Follow-up: Does 'Race' follow the Bollywood formula?

Yes, 'Race' does follow the Bollywood formula. There is a love triangle, lots of song and dance in very inappropriate locations, and rich Indians in a tourist location. It also came out in the Dhoom era which was an era of thrill and action. So for it to come out at that time, it must have been following some formula.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?

Yes, I watched it the first time on TV around the time it came out, I think in 2008.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film watching it now?

I do not like this film. You are inspired to think of characters in one way and then they tell you that you are wrong. So many twists..and the portrayal of females is terrible. Really silly action and silly songs.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it this time?

I skipped some songs when watching, skipped all of the songs. The plot is not being forwarded by the songs. The songs were super hits when they came out but they are pointless.

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

I would think the middle to upper class Indian male. I mean you have three beautiful and scantily dressed women. I think it is marketed for young males, or for the young person more generally.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

I've never been there. I saw that one rugby movie that is set in South Africa. I think of the liberation struggle, and even before that Gandhi's relationship to South Africa, the birth of the Satyagraha movement and the ongoing apartheid at that point. I think of the African national coalition and of Nelson Mandela. I also think of Cape Town's scenic views and beaches just from pictures my friends shared online. I don't think South Africa is on the average Indian mind.

The only time we think about them is when it comes to cricket. I don't think the average Indian is aware of the huge Indian diaspora and relations between them [the diaspora] and India.

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

I think of underrepresentation. I only caught glimpses of Black people at the darbys where there are horse handlers. None of the jockeys or audience or spectators were Black. They were not present in any of the parties that the rich Indians throw. Their absence is conspicuous.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I saw Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

I think the film shows a typical representation of White person, someone who is wealthy, who is at all of these fancy events, almost always dressed like a tourist or wearing skimpy clothes, in the background showing richness. at the poolside, beach, blending into the scenery. They are used to sort of show that this is South Africa and that this is richness.

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

I think of the main characters. Everything revolves around them. They use the death of that jockey who is White as a moment to show how ruthless and conniving the main character is. They are very aggressive and hyper masculine and just laughing about it. They are also using other races and also women to project this hyper masculine Indian man who is in competition with others, even the competition between Dilip Tahir and Saif Ali Khan. It is all about presenting a particular aspect of those characters, not nice aspects. It is about saying "I can be cruel and I can be conniving. I can be clever". As for the women, they are pawns in the hands of the men. Bipasha Basu's character is always asking Akshaye Khanna "what's the plan". It makes it seem like she is at his beckon call. He says go sleep with my brother and she just goes. The women's bodies have been used to move the plot forward.

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

I think it is because of the number of Indians in the film compared to the number of South Africans and then how that contrasts with the population. It could also be because South African Indians have different taste.

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?

Anti Blackness is representing Black people in negative ways or using them as points of humor...laughing at them..which is what Blackface is in Indian cinema. But Indian cinema is so anti everything...anti darkness...anti caste unless film is particularly about caste. It invisibilizes a lot of real people and it is the same pattern with Black people. Indian cinema has a problem with darkness. Bipasha Basu is the exception. She was presented as a "Black beauty" but even that was very stereotypical as being a rare "bengali bombshell".

Name: RIC
Race/Ethnicity: Brown, Singaporean-Indian

1. **Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?**

I grew up watching Bollywood films. One of my favorites would have to be '3 Idiots' because it is not like other Bollywood movies, not like fluff stuff and really has an important message because things like suicide and because of stress in Indian universities. It is a big problem but people do not talk about it that much. I am really glad they made it into a movie. The movie made everyone more aware of it. Hopefully it will help stop these tragedies.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?

I have seen 'Race' before, but a very long time ago. I saw it in theatres with family. There were loads of people at the theatre. It was a big deal when it came out. I saw it in Singapore in 2008.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film watching it now?

I mean when I watched it when I was young I enjoyed it. But now I watch it and there is so much wrong with this film. I don't know how I enjoyed it so much. It reminds me of Hollywood films, very fast paced, thriller.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it this time?

No, I watched the entire film.

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

I think it is geared toward younger people because of the thriller aspect of it, because of the races and everything, I don't think older people would enjoy it as much. When my friends and I watched it, I watched it three times in the first month that it came out whereas my parents were not that crazy about it.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

I think of a clear divide between races. There are a lot of White people in South Africa, especially Cape Town. I know of couple of people who are White from South Africa and they don't have an accent either. It is normal and it is a bit American I guess. But they have lived in South Africa their whole lives. So that was interesting to see that they didn't see culture in very visible ways. I also think of how beautiful Cape Town is. I have seen pictures. It is crowded but the beach area is really beautiful.

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

The Black people are props in the dances. I think they are shown to just prove that we are in

South Africa. There are otherwise mostly light people in the background. In the song itself there is rapping going on and I think it was only then where I saw a few Black folks.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I saw Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

I think wealthy. I think White people are also used as props. They are always in the backgrounds, in all of the songs. Bollywood is always like that. They are very careful when they film outside. I mean, there was a crew filming in London during Easter Holiday. It was Judwaa 2 and they sent an email out to students to participate as extras. The crew was so racist against the Indians. They did not want Indians to be visible. They got the Whitest people they could find. One lady who looked like she was in her 40s..they had her playing a college student. They wanted the White stereotype, like the cheerleader and the jock making out, asking for where the "kissing" couples were. They were also looking for lighter- haired people. When a girl asked them if she could join, they treated her poorly. I was sitting at a table in one of the scenes next to the actors table and I am pulled out of the scene where I was told I would be casted in the next scene. I was the only brown person before they kicked me out. It is sad to see how much internal racism exists in India. It has been 70 years since Independence but they are still favoring Whites.

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

Definitely internal racism is Indian about this film. Because there wasn't any Indianness shown at all. The principal actors could have been any race and it would not have made a difference. Nothing about the background of the characters was shared apart from the fact that they were speaking Hindi. They could have been anyone. They were dressing very western and were acting rich. They were basically like the wealthy White people in South Africa. The female characters were like typical Bollywood actresses. They were always side kicks, and followed along with the male characters. Females have no say in anything. The detective's assistant in particular was so annoying. She was portrayed as an airhead. They clearly picked her for her looks because she accompanies him like a barbie doll.

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

I would think a lot would want to go see it because it was set in South Africa. But maybe it's because they didn't really film in South Africa, I mean, they didn't show any kind of culture, South African culture. The fact that it was set in South Africa that wouldn't have made a difference to anything...because horse racing is a big thing in a lot of countries. When I started watching the movie after like 10 years..I had no idea it was set in South Africa when I watched it first..Also it didn't seem like an important factor as a kid because there are no cultural aspects that make you think it is South Africa. So that was a big surprise. So that's probably why people in South Africa didn't think it was success. Because they thought you're using our country's name for exotic purposes maybe but you're not showing anything about the culture.

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?

I wouldn't say its anti but it is definitely mis-representing them. Its like kind of making them invisible so it's not really against them, it's just erasing them or ignoring them from their own country. When I started looking closely I was so surprised at how many few Black people there are and they don't have speaking roles..they are just there in the background in songs.

Name: JAA
Race/Ethnicity: Brown, Indian-American

1. Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?

Yes. Some of my favorites are Dil Chahta Hai and Kuch Kuch Hota Hai and K3G. I also like Dostana. KKHH is a cute old favorite. It has a very innocent quality to it, reminds me of childhood and I love Kajol...and she is a sweet person on camera and I like the relationship between Rani and her daughter.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?

No, I have just heard the songs before.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film?

The film's songs are catchy, but it was not really my kind of movie. 'm not a big fan of action movies. It seemed like a little cheesy with the sound effects. It felt like the characters were left a little one dimensional and simplistic. I just want to know the characters in a deeper way and some parts did not feel realistic or flushed out to me. In terms of the role of women in the movie I think physical appearance and sexual attractiveness were like really big tones to the movie. Just looking at Katrina Kaif, Bipasha basu, and the secretary... they were all portrayed in a sexualized way at some point in the film.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it?

No.

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

I think it is the general consumers of Bollywood films, the general Indian audience. I could see young women and men especially enjoying it.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

I think of British influence there, the British accent. I visualize it or rather associate it more with the presence of Black people whereas other regions like Cape town I associate it to be more heavily populated by Cacausian people. I also think of its natural beauty and its bungalows and such.

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

It is very complex because at one point Blackness might refer to one's physical appearance but the truth is that there are many biological meanings. Blackness is not synonymous with African and it doesn't have to be. In terms of people, I didn't see too many Black people. I saw them at

the club and in dancing scenes and at the derby. A couple of the security guards were also Black. But they were not really involved in the main plot. There were just their physical presences but they were not really like involved in the more kind of happenings and interpersonal goings of the movie.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I saw Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

Whiteness can be affiliated with many different european countries. People often tend to narrow down the people and erase the many nuances that are there. I picture it now in the US as a force of being more mixed in with new people that are coming. In the film I saw a lot of Caucasian back up dancers. I saw a lot more Whiteness than Blackness in this film. And I noticed that the horse was also called White lightening, and there was a regal tone to it. The West is also seen as more permissive and liberal with clothing. I saw this spread to the Indian film industry and a lot of the Indian characters were also wearing Western clothing.

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

There are lots of layers and there is tension between the two brothers. Everything was an amalgam of intricate plot twists. So many plot twists.. It felt detached from India. I didn't get a strong close sense of India or what it means to be Indian. It seemed like where they were, i know the physical spaces were just very neat and opulent and separate like bungalows and races, and it wasn't the beautiful chaos that you often see in India. Ofcourse there are very wealthy sections of India. But I didn't see the down to earthness, I didn't see any references to Indian food. It felt super detached. It felt kind of like westernized. Far away from their roots. Apart from the fact that they were speaking Hindi, It's almost like the cultural identity wasn't really strong.

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

I didn't get a feel for what it was like in South Africa by watching the film. It was very character focused. The history of the people, and the true culture were cast aside and Black people were just used as background dancers. I feel like the movie could have been [filmed] anywhere and aside from Hindi the characters could have been of any ethnicity. It didn'tseem culturally strong. I can see understandably why it didn't do very well. Maybe the South African audience did not feel connected or well represented by it.

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?

I wouldn't go as far to say anti, because that feels strongly as saying we are against this, but explicitly by not including them, they were pushed aside. I don't think I heard any Black person talk either. I don't know if it was anti but it certainly wasn't intentionally pro. The true people and the history weren't really there. They were silenced.
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Name: SRI
Race/Ethnicity: Brown, Indian-American

1. Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?

Yes, have seen them before. I grew up watching Bollywood films. Piku would be one favorite film of mine. It tells a story of a family and a father-daughter relationship like I haven't seen before because it is honest and truthful and not trying to make you feel a certain way. It just is.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?

Yes, I saw it when it was released, at home.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film watching it now?

It is stylistically trying to combine elements of western cinema. It has twisted plots and intense action. There are elements of spy thrillers. It is a very sexy heist film. Those elements are combined with typical Bollywood elements, like item songs.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it this time?

I normally would, but this time I did not.

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

I don't think the desired audience is any particular target. Probably urban people though, and the diaspora audience could even be general audience.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

I think of apartheid, a majority Black population and how the country is led by a Black political elite. I am reminded of Nelson Mandela and the Boer War. I = also picture vast rural areas and different tribal areas with control over respective land. I picture beautiful beaches. I think of segregation between Whites, Blacks, and asians. .

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

Black presence was visibly seen during various dance sequences where there was presence of lots of Black dancers. I also saw security guards at the bank who were Black as Katrina Kaif was carrying out large wads of cash. I saw stable handlers who were Black. When Ranvir was at the hospital, you had a Black female doctor in the background scene treating a White patient. That image really threw me off, as it was inconsistent with the other images.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I saw Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

I think of wealth and pride. I also think of the tone of the film which was very White with its sexy/wester/crime/thriller sort of ideas. Whiteness is used to achieve these tones.

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

I don't think of anything. This film is not making overt commentary on 'Indianness'. The "Nation" is not even discussed.

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

I think the idea of the Indian diaspora desiring to be in connection to the homeland is different for Indians who are settling in colonial or post-colonial nations like South Africa versus in Western countries. This film, in being largely Western did not meet those demands for a connection to India and to other South Asians.

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?

I really don't frame or analyse art along those lines. Making Black persons invisible seems to have a greater priority than having Black stereotypes. But I would conclude that it is anti- Black. I'll use those words.

Name: APU
Race/Ethnicity: Brown, Indian

1. Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?

I grew up watching Bollywood films. I also studied film in college and for the longest time I wanted to get involved in the Bollywood industry. I would say among my favorites are Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara and Kapoor and Sons, with mainstream larger than life characters that have their own quirks. I thought they were both progressive films.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?

I did see it in 2008 and I was 10 years old at the time and I never watched it after that and this time when I watched it, oh boy this was way different.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film watching it now?

The film was very different for me when I watched it this time. I thought, who let me watch this film as a youngster and why were these sexual scenes put in. It is not my kind of film.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it this time?

No.

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

I think it is targeted towards the adults and there's a bit of rich and elite sort of life to the whole movie. So it was made for people of that strata to relate to it. The directors want to make money off of people who would relate to that life.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

I think of cricket players and I also think of Gandhi because that's first contact point. I think of Nelson Mandela's and I think of looking into the country so I know more about it. I also think of Cape Town and I want to go there someday, there is so much beauty to the country that we don't get to see. The only thing known was that Gandhi studied there. All the racial tensions and the movements that we hear about are also a little bit of what I know.

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

When I was young I had no idea and paid no mind to the cowboy song where the Black woman shakes her ass for Saif Ali Khan's pleasure. I kind of noticed that after that dance sequence they were really in the back burner. I noticed a Black man handling a horse somewhere in the background. It was weird because even when police were called they made it possible for Indians to be working but all the other policemen were White. I would think there was more to it. Most

Blacks were in the back burner.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I saw Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

Outside of the police group, all the other White peoples were there to congratulate Saif Ali Khan. They were mostly there as these rich folks. The Indian characters were being put into the strata of the rich White people. A lot of White people in the film were used to set the ideal for who the Indian characters were.

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

I noticed this the first time I saw RD's assistant. She could be replaced by a lamb. Watching it now I think that outside of Bipasha Basu no female had any substantial role. Bipasha and Katrina Kaif's bodies had more control than the assistant. But the movie really relies on the weakness of the female characters. That sexism is typical for a lot of Bollywood films.

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

If I was watching a non- Indian movie not set in India and the setting did not add to this film I would not go watch it. No matter where you living I probably wouldn't recognize this was in South Africa. I just wouldn't buy it--the story or anything that is happening.

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?

I mean they make anti-Black perspective movies all the time in Bollywood. As a general idea I would say yes, it is anti. It feels like they went out of the way to not have predominantly Black extras especially in a Black majority country, I mean Whites are minority according to statistics. I would call it anti Blackness then.

Name: CAM
Race/Ethnicity: Black, African-American

1. Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?

Yes I have seen other Bollywood films. Some of my favorites have been Queen, Bride and Prejudice and Bajrangi Bhaijaan. I liked them because they were emotional. I liked Queen especially because it was super feminist.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?

No, it is my first time watching 'Race'.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film?

It was cheesy and it made me laugh. If somebody had not told me it was filmed in South Africa, I would not have known that it was in South Africa. I would have thought it was a European country. It reminded me of Fast and Furious and other Hollywood films.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it?

I skipped all of the musical numbers except for the "Rock the dance floor" where they were imitating country/western style?

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

Either Indian people or White people are the audience. I would think Indian first since the cast is primarily Indian.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

When I think of South Africa, I think of parallels with America. I think of complicated race relations. I don't automatically think of Black people when thinking of South Africa...also people who are native to South Africa are subjugated by White South Africans. I mean just recently I watched a Trevor Noah video where he said his mother was growing up in 90s in South Africa and she pretended to be a nanny so she could walk around with him. The perception has gotten into fearing White South Africans....but even White South Africans are not equal. But that is a generalized perception of White persons.

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

It is invisible. Black people are only there when it is convenient. The only time I saw a Black person taking center stage was when a Black South African woman was shaking her butt. This made me really uncomfortable. It also made me sad that we saw horse races often but Black people were only the horse handlers.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I saw Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

I think the movie did a good job of centering Indians in a position of power and equated Whiteness to that. If they were in a elite club there were a lot of White people there. Even during the horse shows it was largely Indian and White people. Whiteness is wealth and it is power and access. It is absolute privilege.

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

I wonder why they are in South Africa of all places. If the Indian population is so largely represented, why not just cast more Indian people in the background? I did not find much of the characters to have substance. I was also curious whether the characters were born in South Africa or if they came here. The only idea we got was of Bipasha Basu whose biodata suggested she had a story in India before she came here. It suggested that she wanted to stay in India until she absolutely had to leave. Perhaps that was her faith in India keeping her going? The idea of competition was so strong, especially between the brothers. But they achieved their 'wins' in capitalist means with their wealth and their privileges. Iike the main guy [Ranvir] bribing the jockeys to take revenge over the other businessman [Kabir].

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

I think it is because it did not appeal to a large Black population. Representation is important especially in film. I can understand why few Black Africans would want to see it if you are seeing subjugated images of yourself. Like a sliver of a voice where a woman twerks. The story does not move forward with Black persons.

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?

Anti is a strong word and whenever it is heard most people think of hatefulness. But it is also important to consider, even if there is Black presence in some way, if it is tokenized then that is giving wrong messaging. So it does have anti-Black themes, the film. I would call it anti-Black. There are so many things wrong.

Name: TIF
Race/Ethnicity: Black, African

1. Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?

I grew up watching Bollywood films. It is the largest industry after Hollywood.My mom and my grandmother idolize Amitabh Bachchan and Bollywood movies are super popular in Ghana. My family has hundreds of CDs, I have seen countless films. Naagin and Aitraaz are among my favorites. The storylines are unique and the acting is really wonderful. It is believable. My favorite movies are the ones from the 60s and 70s because you see the least elements of Westernization.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?

No, this is my first time seeing Race.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film?

The film has a crazy storyline. One loves the other, one hates the other, and there are so many plans that happen behind each other's backs. Sophia turns out to be a conniving lady throughout the whole thing and that was unexpected. I never settled with the idea that the movie was over because of the way the movie was proceeding.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it?

No, I watched it at 2x speed though.

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

The audience is definitely the Indian community. It could be for the White community too since they are everywhere in the film.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

I definitely picture Black people. I don't think of horse racing or ranches like the ones shown. I think of city life and African owned businesses. I really did not get that they were in South Africa. I did not get that the main character's home was in South Africa. I mean even when they got to the hotel the guy working there was also Indian. In terms of visible representation I saw one Black lady among the Black dancers. There were definitely no other Black people.

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

There were no other instances where Black persons were seen except for the lady in that dancing scene. She was dancing and I was thinking ok, the song sounds good. I didn't feel any particular way about it.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I saw Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

I think of the ranch but that isn't even a White thing either. I just picture a lot of White people doing horse racing and all the things that wealthy White folks do..

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

Most Indian movies that I would consider to be "Indian" have traditional elements like praying, idol images. But this was totally westernized film. It was so close to the soap operas with the dramatic storyline. In terms of what was "Indian", the language was the only thing I picked up. Also the guy who was at the hotel who was wearing a turban. Some Indian men wear turbans but that is the only thing.

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

It's likely because there weren't any Black people. I mean come on, the country is majority Black.

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?

The storyline had nothing to do with race as we know it, so no. It is more a story of two brothers and their competition with each other. I wonder why they would choose a setting like Cape Town or South Africa, but Black persons have nothing to do with it I feel. You would certainly expect to see people represented in some way but the main story was about two brothers.

Name: LAUc
Race/Ethnicity: Black, Filipino, of African Descent

1. Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?

This is not the first Bollywood movie I have seen. I haven't seen many though. My favorite is one of the few I have seen, Kal Ho Na Ho. The music was very nice and this man was living to his fullest. I know the Bollywood industry is really big everywhere though.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?

No, it was my first time.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film watching it now?

There were a lot of twists and turns. It was quite a ride. It was an interesting film, and really reminded me of Fast and Furious you know.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it this time?

I fast forwarded certain love scenes and skipped over the song where Ranvir is making love to Katrina Kaif.

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

I think of people through their teens and also late forties. This is for like a fast and furious audience. I think that because it was definitely more of like a fast paced action film. It had fast pace, action, romance, murder, all those elements. So it is meant for those who like that kind of stuff, mostly young adult males.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

Apartheid is the first thing that comes to mind, the Dutch, Africaners, the World Cup, Johannesburg, Prattoria, Cape Town beaches. Mostly just White and Black citizens.

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

I think of suits, clothing, cars, possessions. I wasn't really thinking about Blackness in terms of people because I don't recall any Black presence in the film at all.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I saw Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

I first think of the Indian women in the film and how light skinned they are. I also picture the folks at the race horses and most dances. They were all White.

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

Nothing that they were doing was particularly 'Indian'. Well, I would say that the relationship between ranveer and his brother was very close. It reminds me of Indian friends and families. It is very close and it is very playful but it is not any different than any other family I guess. It did remind me friends and families that I have seen. I mean in the end he didn't plant a bomb in the brother's car, so he did love his brother, and that's not like the Hollywood films will show you. But other than that, if the current cast just swapped out with American actors and actresses it wouldn't really make a difference. Also the Bollywood industry puts emphasis to the music for marketing and the songs were really catchy so that was Indian as opposed to Hollywood where the plot really drives the film.

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

I don't know. Maybe because there is no Black representation in a Black majority country?

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?
The fact that all of the main characters were light skinned...that was my only problem..but that's my problem with every film in general Hollywood or Bollywood is that there is this implicit association with beauty and lighter skin and straighter hair. Even at the beach I didn't see Black people. I mean come on, In Cape town on a beach you would expect to see Black people. But I still wouldn't call it anti-Black. I mean it is a gross misrepresentation, but I wouldn't call it anti.

Name: NIC
Race/Ethnicity: Black, African-American

1. Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?

Yes, have seen several. One of my favorites would have to be 3 Idiots because of its unique storyline, the songs, and the message. It had a powerful message.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?
No.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film watching it now?

It was wild. There are so many plot twists. I liked the action overall and the plot, but then to think about the film in the context of your guiding questions was kind of interesting to think about.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it this time?

I skipped the last two songs, but listened to the first two songs. I just needed to know what was going to happen at the end. In the heat of the moment, there was a song. Songs were interesting and were there to show the entanglements of love interests.

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

Because of the content matter, even though it was not very Bollywood, it is intended for the Indian crowd, possibly even even the South African crowd, although that is not reflected in the film. So maybe for South African Indians especially those who want to be White?.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

I know that there is a significant Indian population there. I know Cape Town has a lot of White people left over from colonialism. I know South Africa is in Africa and has Black South Africans and mixed South Africans or "coloured" folks. The White South Africans are more european in culture.

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

I was aware of where I saw Black people, but again a large portion of the population is Black and that was not reflected in the film. I saw Black people in the background. No Black characters had any lines. In the beginning scenes there were a team of Black folks racing a horse. In the dance scene there were Black people used for entertainment scenes. There was a Black woman featured dancing. In the rest of the film, Black people had peripheral characters, like security guards. There was a scene where RD visited an orphanage. Ofcourse they featured a White child but also like I know economic dynamics wise, Blacks are the lowest. So this didn't make sense

conceptually. I did not realize that the film was based in South Africa until I looked up where Durban was. When they went to Cape Town for a weekend visit, that is when I realized they weren't going from India to South Africa but were already in South Africa.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

White people also played peripheral roles. They were more so apparent in the background and in the foreground. There were a few White people with lines. The Whites served to show us where the Indians were in terms of their class. For example, the woman collecting money for the race and also the woman processing money in the bank were White women. In certain clubs I saw Black presence. In country clubs or elite, fancy looking areas, there were loads of White peoples.

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

Compared to other Bollywood films I have watched, considering this was based in South Africa, Indians were more reflective of 'western', 'europeanized' culture, especially considering what they were wearing. So nothing other than their Hindi was pointing to Indianness. This Indianness was not even projected in their wedding. The women were 'sidekicks', but it was more of a partnership between the male and female characters in the end than the beginning. The male characters don't think made me think of any Indian stereotypes, just the whole idea of the power and male dominated society.

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

I think it is a matter of referencing population and how it wasn't representative of the majority of those who live in South Africa. Representation is important to draw audiences in. A line that stood out to me during the film was when the murder scene happened and the police officer showed up at the end of the "tragedy" and spoke to RD saying, "i knew they were going to send you because this is an Indian community matter. That made me feel like there is a specific whole different functioning of the body and politics in South Africa for the Indian community.

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?

I wouldn't call it anti-Black because there are very specific ways of being pro and anti. When I think about South Africa and specific places that people were in and class dynamics unfortunately in really rich areas I would expect to see Black people in serving positions or not there at all. The film didn't explicitly show any caricatures or stereotypes of Black persons but completely excluded them. In the dancing scenes, there were stereotypes of Black woman as entertainment but I don't think that there were other instances where I viewed it as stereotypes. I wouldn't use the words anti-Black, but when i reflect on a film filmed in African country and not featuring Black characters I wouldn't call it anti Black but i don't think it is doing anything for Black persons either. It makes me go back to question who this film is intended for and why it may not have done well.

Name: DAN
Race/Ethnicity: Black, African

1. Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?

I have mostly seen the dancing parts or unrealistic parts of the many Bollywood films. I have seen numerous trailers as well. But no movie I can think of in full. But the Bollywood industry is so popular in Kenya, it is crazy.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?

No, first time.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film watching it now?

It had so many plot twists, and it was so fast paced. They kept fooling me. Also when I saw the Title of the film, I really thought it was going to be about racial politics, not the actual horse races or the competition between brothers.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it this time?

No.

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

Teenagers, because of the wealth, the urban locations, the women.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

I think of a country that is developed in a way but some parts aren't developed and the focus tends to be on the under-developed part which makes us think it's a poor country. There is still separation of races till this day just in terms of career opportunities and segregation such that White minorities live in areas that the Black people do not live in. This is a country with a lot of problems. I also think of Nelson and Winnie Mandela and their services towards a democratic and more peaceful South Africa.

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

There was almost no visibility of Black people in most of the film like almost no visibility of Black persons first of all because saw only two Black peoples in the film one was dancer and second one was stable manager.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I saw Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

I noticed that most of the sexist or the most intelligent people of the movie were talking in English. I do not know what the goal was and also most of characters are light skinned Indians.

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

The choreography of the dance was very Indian. Stunts were very Bollywood and also even subtle things where camera moves slowly and reaction is slow mo. It was a very Indian movie. People in Kenya would rather watch Hollywood to Bollywood though. In nigeria Bollywood films are watched mostly by kids less than 15 or those above 40 years of age.

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

I think it is because of the mis-representation of how they portrayed Black versus White people, and teh underrepresentation of Black peoples. Also with regards to the title I thought it would be about 'racial politics' but it confused me. So I get why others would be confused too and not want to see the film.

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?

Not particularly, but you can't overlook this fact especially because of high number of Black Indians in South Africa. What does anti-Black mean? Obviously hate for Black is one version but then there are things you can't call hate because that's too extreme. but they are and can be construed to be against Black struggle or Black persons in other ways. So there are levels to it.

Name: ADA
Race/Ethnicity: White

1. Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?

I have never seen Bollywood films before. But I know the industry is a huge thing in India and everywhere else globally, second to Hollywood I think.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?

No, since no Bollywood films seen.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film watching it now?

I really enjoyed watching the songs. There was also a lot going on and the plot went all over the place with so many different plot twists which made it interesting. It was fun to break it up with song and dance. I felt the film was also a lot about relationships with people and intentions and that's what I got out of it. I was also shocked that the title is called race and I was thinking the film was about ethnicity and race between people, but it was about an actual 'race'. Although it is a pretty "modern" film based on what was physically there...it was antiquated because it didn't seem very progressive to me.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it this time?

No, did not skip anything.

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

I think Indian communities regardless of where they are.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

I don't know a lot about South Africa. I only recently learned that Durban has the biggest community of Indians outside of India but that certainly adds to my database of knowledge. Apartheid also comes into mind as well as Nelson Mandela. I also think of Cape town as a vacation spot with its beaches and all the ways it is depicted exotically, like in the film with the man eating fruits and coconuts. I think of Durban as a metropolis and having lots of clubs.

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

I did not sense much of a presence of Black persons in the film. I saw some back up dancers who were Black but I mostly noticed the Indian people because they were the main characters. It was strange not to see so many Blacks because it was set in South Africa but then this is a Bollywood movie so they would focus on Indians.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I saw Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

I noticed more of a presence of White folks around the main Indian characters. I also saw Whiteness in ways when people were dressing and the cars and the luxuries.

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

There was a lot of sexism but I don't know if that has to do with them being Indian..a lot of times i saw men objectifying women but maybe that is a comment between characters. I think these just happened to be Indian characters but anyone could have taken their place and it would not have made a difference. I do not have any preconceived notions of what it means to be Indian but what I saw in the film definitely did not feel Indian to me. It also wasn't clouding my view of me thinking that this is exclusively what I think of Indians.

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

Maybe it wasn't marketed well in South Africa. Also, if word got out that it wasn't very representative of the community at large or even the Indian community in South Africa. I feel like if a movie tries to depict a certain community and location and doesn't do it in the right way, others might be cool with it but that community living in the location they are trying to depict might definitely take up interest and be more critical of it. Like the Black community.

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?

I think so. Just because it is in South Africa and there wasn't a huge presence of Black persons.

Name: CAS
Race/Ethnicity: White

1. Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?
I have seen one film, one in which some foreigner goes to India [movie title unknown]. But that is the only one I saw and it has been a while. I know the industry is huge and people all over the world watch Bollywood films.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?

No.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film watching it now?

It was a good film as far as film cinematography goes. Obviously you could tell that they were trying to emulate some of Bollywood's themes and stereotypes, like the luxuries where they seemed like they weren't in India or America but I certainly couldn't tell it was South Africa. The movie depicted a lot of 'sterile' wealth that doesn't have any cultural ties really.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it this time?

No.

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

I think that average Indians, or the Indian middle class, trying to show how wealthier people live and the luxuries of having money.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

I don't know a lot about South Africa. I think of Britain having heavily colonized them at one point and the racial tensions between Black and White in the country. I also picture Cape town which is a coastal city and where many people go to vacation.

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

I only really noticed visible Black persons in the night-clubs where people were dancing. There was a weird tailgate party where there were random Black dancers.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I saw Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

 I think of the horse racing area, of few American cars, and the lifestyle which seemed very Hollywood like with multiple vacation houses and the ostentatious show of wealth.

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

The women looked more "Indian" than the men, perhaps because they wore more vibrant colors than the men did. The police officer was also obviously Indian because he weirdly just ate fruit the whole time. Also the females in the film were sexualized so much.

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

I think it is because of a different film making style. Even I could tell during the whole plot that it was very entertainment based. I think we try to be cohesive in Hollywood and have pre-set plots but Bollywood likes surprise plots. No hints of it before.

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?

Based on that there were really no other Black people in South Africa i wouldn't call it inclusive ; i don't think they are actively or covertly discriminating against Black people but by leaving them out yes. Cuz obviously there is a community of Black people there.

Name: STE
Race/Ethnicity: White

1. Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?

I have seen plenty of Bollywood films before. Can't think of one favorite but I've seen loads of good ones, the really big blockbusters like KKHH and DDLJ and KHNH and also films like Mission Kashmir, Mother India.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?
No.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film watching it now?

I did not enjoy this film. I really thought we would talk about a different topic, about race and really expected this film to touch on that. I did not enjoy it though. Even in English I don't want action films anyway so I understand how others could like it but I didn't like it.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it this time?
No.

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

That is not obvious to me. It is for Hindi speaking Indian people because it was in Hindi, but I think for those Indians who know English too because a lot of the dialogues are in English, so it wasn't really meant for the average citizen. It is fit for a group of niche people. Then I thought maybe it was for NRI folks living in South Africa. It is definitely not for old people. It's for a younger audience, or for those who are studying, those who could understand this film.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

I think of the difference between what I know and what I see. I know of Nelson Mandela and I think of apartheid. I think about the Zulu language. I used to live in the Netherlands so I know a bit about the Dutch colonization. It is one of the only countries that has three sort of separate provinces..and distinct racialized groups. What we see is beaches, vacations, loads of White people and what is considered to be an "anomaly" of the continent.

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

I did not see very many Black people. There were not any African characters. I saw a few during the dance sequences. Although there are Black people in Africa this film is not about them and does not talk to them. It was obvious. There was a dancing Black girl. I did not see any other Black people in the film. But if we go to South Africa, you will see a majority of Blacks.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I saw Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

The word for White in Hindi, "gora" can mean different things. Light skinned Indians could be considered 'gora' or White in India too. In America there is a distinct racial category but in Indian culture, gora often refers to the color of the skin and the "fairness" of it. Those who are fair skinned are called White. When I think of Saif Ali Khan I think of him as 'White, or fair skinned'. The skin of every principal character under this definition was "gora". When I was in India in Maharashtra, people would say that I am White and would refer to another darker skinned Indian as Kala (Black). Children on the street in some areas would refer to me and my friend (who was Indian) as gora. When i think of Indian culture, I don't think of color first. I think of food, language, etc. So I certainly see goras like me in the films but I also see other Goras.

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

The four main characters are not good people-- they lie, they are greedy, they think of themselves. If they were real I would not want to talk to them. They are elitist, they are really wealthy and they don't really care about people who are not wealthy. I thought there is one character who I might like (katrina) but then after she turned out to be a weird. Bad people. Almost unrealistically so. There is a lot of colorism in Bollywood, just like we were talking about White favoritism in Bollywood. I like tollywood more than Bollywood, even though I cannot understand it. But I like it more. There's a lot of sadness and extreme happiness in the film so because of that it's definitely different from Hollywood films. I was also laughing - are there that many Hindi speaking Indians in Durban? How are people speaking in so much Hindi? I don't know much about horse racing, but I thought it was weird that rich people are partaking in horse racing...I don't think of very rich folks partaking in horse racing. I thought it was for "poor" White people.

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

This film was not about people who were living in South Africa. It is for the NRI and so that is why the people who are South African did not like it, because it is not representative. And this film gives a bad gaze on the NRI in South Africa...nobody is a "good" character.

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?

I don't think the director or writers think about race and give it much importance, I can say it with a lot of guarantee. I don't think they care about the racial problems in the world. We can see it obviously. I can also say that perhaps they weren't thinking about Black people or the people of India either. They weren't thinking about anyone's problems. So we don't even need to think of Blacks, we can think of others as well. Similar to that, because it is set in Africa and there's no Black people, I would say that they are not showing the Black situation. I can't say it in simple terms. I don't think they were actively against Black people (the filmmakers), but the lack of any Black characters and giving White people voice..I can say though that it's not the right thing to do. This film did not show us stereotypes so we can't call it anti Black since they didn't show us stereotypes. With some change this film could be better.

Name: MAR
Race/Ethnicity: White

1. Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?

I have not seen another Bollywood film in its entirety. I have only seen clips. That being said, I know others who have talked about the industry and how big it is, producing hundreds of films each year I think.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?

No. Not even clips.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film watching it now?

It was a little over the top with so many twists that there were so many surprises. They kept doing surprise and twist upon twist. It was more funny than it was a drama to me. I was sad that the brother would end up dying at the end. I expected them to work something out but they very much did not. I was wondering if their [the main characters] motto was sort of that all people are very greedy and that anyone who got in their way ended up dead. The Inspector got off ok because he respected authority and he took his share and left. But I was surprised at that resolution.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it this time?

I stopped watching five minutes before the end, so I did not listen to the close out song.

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

I was reminded to a degree of the movie Fast and Furious as a cool action film. I think straight men are the intended audience. It seemed to be for a male audience that likes horse riding and it is probably for like any age group from like 18 or up, so late teens through older.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

I think of apartheid, Nelson Mandela and now Trevor Noah. I don't know anything about South Africa post apartheid or how Gandhi spent some time there which was always a surprise to me, because he was revered as a peacemaker but he was anti Black. That surprised me when I found out. It is a big piece of history I did not know about.

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

Bollywood films tend to focus on very light skinned Indian people. The main characters definitely seemed like light skinned. I mostly saw White and Indian characters and less than a handful of Black dancers. I assumed they cast lighter skinned actors because there's a lot

colorism.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I saw Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

There were lots of White dancers and it confused me where the movie was supposed to be set. I kept thinking about whether their dress was typical for Bollywood movies, and I have no idea because I have nothing to compare it to, but I certainly got an early 2000s Southern US themes to that song "Rock the dance floor". I also thought of Britney spears.

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

The motivations of the Indian characters were unclear other than greed. The part that stood out to me as a clear example of this is how Ranvir wanted to screw his competitor in the horse race. I mean he even said [Ranvir] to the competitor, i don't care about the money I just want to crush his pride. The whole thing between Rajiv and Ranvir confused me - their relationship was confusing. Sonia and Sophia played people just for greed as well. I don't know if anyone loved each other. The inspector was corrupt and helped him [Ranvir] get away with the theft. The inspector was weird, kept eating all the time and kept trying to teach Minnie who was just along for the ride. I haven't watched other Bollywood films so I don't have anything to compare it to but this movie doesn't feel of substance and of depth which is what I would have expected. I also think of light skinned characters who were casted- don't know if that is true for all of Bollywood but wouldn't surprise me considering that's a problem in Hollywood too.

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

I cannot think of any reason. Perhaps because there are no "White" actors?

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?

I did not see any strong sentiment for or against. If anything, I don't think the film is against Black people but maybe Black culture. I think implicitly it is anti but not overtly.

Name: LAUh
Race/Ethnicity: White

1. Have you seen Bollywood films before? If yes, do you have a favorite and why?

I went to India 3 years ago with a friend and I was staying at family's house. I did watch parts of one Bollywood film but I do not remember what it was and do not remember anything from it. I have seen clips and trailers though. I know that Bollywood films in general love a lot of singing and dancing and emphasis on a kind of theatre part of it because I know some of the actors don't sing their actual parts and yeah I kind of think of it some like a musical and soap opera and its kind of extra. Like the plots would not really make sense in reality. I know the film lasts for a long time in theatre and going to the movies is an outing for the whole family. The industry is huge and has a lot of influence.

2. Have you seen 'Race' before?

No, not even trailers.

3. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the film watching it now?

I liked the film even before the drama started and all the twists. Because I feel like in the beginning it made you feel like there was going to be a lot in the plot. But I really do like theatrical drama and those kind of films so I think that kind of, I mean sometimes I couldn't take parts seriously you know but it was very entertaining.

4. Did you skip any of this film when watching it this time?

I did not skip anything. I watched the whole thing. I even watched the credits.

5. Who do you think is the intended audience of this film?

I think that people who are into this kind of action, drama, and heist would be interested. Perhaps youngsters.

6. Without the film in mind, what do you think of when I say 'South Africa'?

I did a project on the Black consciousness movement in South Africa three years ago. There are lots of racial categorizations that are kind of different than how we have in the US. I remember learning about these pencil tests where they put a pencil in your hair to determine your race and even like White people who had curly hair were considered Black I think. I remember they started this movement in schools with a reaction to having to learn Africaans and there was a lot of pride in being Black. When we think of South Africa we often think of the huge event that was apartheid but it is kind of ironic when we say that because it is not like we are much different. I had a conversation recently about Charlize Theron, the actress. The title of the youtube video was called "not speaking Africaans anymore". For a second, I thought it was such a colonizing language and it is much involved in all the racial dynamics. For a sec I thought that

it should be a language that people should not want to speak anymore but then I thought about English and how it is so wrapped up in colonization. Oh and another thing on South Africa. When the Indian community were brought over to work as indentured laborers, they were above Black people in status.

7. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Blackness? In other words, how are Black characters represented? Where did you see them and in what roles?

Specifically in regards to race and people in this film, there were clearly barely any Black people other than in positions as I remember seeing a few as dancers. Thinking about Black persons in the film really got me thinking about how White people are often involved in crime in films in a sort of intellectual sense - they are projected as intellectuals, atleast in Hollywood. When we have films involved with Black people, it is very much about violence and not about the intellectual side of how to get revenge. Made me think about that. The film wasn't specifically talking about Indians in South Africa. Athletes or dancers these are some of the only positions in which Blacks can fit into White worlds. Also was thinking about how they [Blacks] were sexualized in the film but then I also didn't think it was out of the ordinary just because all the female dancers were being sexualized so I do not think it stuck out as anything. I did think it was interesting though how it was clubs versus parties where Black folks came in and how music and race and dance come together.

8. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I sa Whiteness? In other words, how are White characters represented?

It was interesting how the background characters were mainly White. The White characters did not interact with each other much and not to the Indian characters either. It is interesting how you could have easily put White people in the roles that Indian actors were in and it would not have been the same film. I didn't see this film as commenting on how Indians fit into the role of being in South Africa at all.

9. With the film in mind, what comes to mind when I say Indianness? In other words, what is "Indian" about this film? How are Indian characters depicted?

It was very interesting to see Bipasha Basu transition from a position of asking Rajiv to take pity on her to having confidence and sort of getting on same power level as him. But otherwise the main characters were using the women to profit and make their own selfish ends meet. Nothing, from their costumes to their relationships felt "Indian" to me.

10. This film was a commercial success in the UK, US, Europe, Canada and in India but did not do well in South Africa. Why do you think so?

If they had not mentioned twice in the film that they were going to cape town, I would not have known we were there. It was a pretty generalized film. Nothing about it felt like oh South Africans will identify with it in some way or that it was explicitly South African.

11. Would you consider this film to be anti-Black?

I would yes that it is anti-Black. That's how I feel about most films where you might have one or two Black characters in the background and it is part of the systemic discriminations in film industries. I don't think intention matters. You don't have to be intentional for something to be wrong. It's such a weird film, a mind boggling film when you think about it and when you ask if they intentionally did this or if it is literally just an action film without any thought really given about race or about whether Black persons are actively disliked.

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