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## **THE IMPACT OF INDIAN FILM IN TRINIDAD**

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### **Abstract**

This paper considers the historical development of cinema in Trinidad, with particular emphasis on the dramatic impact that was created by the importation of Indian films to the island. The paper begins by exploring the general pattern of cinematic growth in Trinidad, from its earliest beginnings in the 1900s through to its dramatic decline by the close of the twentieth century. From a slow but steady rate of development throughout the first twenty years of that century, a subsequent rapid acceleration in the number of cinemas took place that was to continue from the early 1930s right through to the mid-1970s. The paper demonstrates that one of the main contributory factors to this lengthy period of expansion was the exhibition of Indian films. The latter part of the paper addresses the role of the Indian film in Trinidad in greater detail and provides statistics on the increasing numbers of cinemas exhibiting such films. The paper also examines the main types of Indian films that were shown locally, both in terms of language and genre. It then illustrates how the changing nature of the popular Hindi film of the 1970s helped to prolong its appeal to a younger sector of the local audience until the early 1980s. The paper concludes by considering reasons for the later decline in popularity of the Indian film in Trinidad, together with more general factors that subsequently affected all cinema attendance throughout the island.

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## **THE IMPACT OF INDIAN FILM IN TRINIDAD**

There is evidence to suggest that a very early interest in the concept of 'moving pictures' was to be found in Trinidad, at least amongst the wealthier (white) population who lived in the capital at that time. One of the earliest references to what were initially referred to as 'animated pictures' appeared as an advertisement in *The Mirror* newspaper during February 1900. A nightly programme of live entertainment was provided in Prince's Building, Port of Spain, which also included Professor R. Montval's 'Projectograph': "Introducing a number of animated pictures...including

'*The Man In The Moon*' and '*The Haunted Castle*'.<sup>1</sup> By 1905, Ireland Brothers were giving regular exhibitions of 'moving pictures' in Prince's Building providing a spectacle that was alleged to be: "...thrilling, beautiful, pathetic, mysterious, startling, inspiring [and] interesting...".<sup>2</sup> The price of entry was, however, prohibitively expensive at one shilling for Gallery seats and two shillings for Front Seats. This would have prevented all but the most affluent from experiencing this new form of entertainment.

By 1910 Prince's Building was still in use as the main venue for 'cinematograph' exhibitions in Port of Spain. However, even at this early stage in cinematic developments it appears that there was already an awareness of the growing need for a purpose-built theatre in the capital. Prince's Building was host to all the major theatrical and operatic productions that took place in Trinidad and this clearly limited the availability of space for exhibitions of films. Proposals for the building of a new theatre had already been discussed in open letters to *The Mirror* from as early as 1905,<sup>3</sup> although they would not actually come to fruition until almost six years later. According to Michael Anthony<sup>4</sup>, Marcus and Reginald Davis were responsible for opening that purpose-built theatre, the London Electric, on Thursday 2 February 1911. A full-page advertisement appeared in the *Trinidad Guardian* on that day, providing details of the initial programme of nine short films including '*Leopard Queen*', '*Abduction Of Louis XVI*' and '*Dream Of Toyland*'. Seat prices ranged from eight to twenty-four cents<sup>5</sup> and programmes were available twice daily – at five p.m. and eight thirty p.m. respectively.

By 1915, St Ann's Hall had been leased and re-opened as the New City Cinema in Oxford Street, with a cost of entry that was competitively priced at a range of between twelve cents to twenty-four cents for the best balcony seats. For matinee performances the range of seat prices was significantly lower – as little as two cents for the pit,<sup>6</sup> – suggesting an early appeal to a far larger and less affluent audience base. 1915 was also to see the opening of the first cinema outside of the capital - the Palace Cinema in San Fernando – providing three shows per week on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. By January 1916 the (New) City Cinema had already closed and then re-opened under the management of a former employee of the London Electric Theatre and that same year was to see the opening of another outlet – the Olympic Theatre in Belmont. A further Port of Spain cinema - the Electric Central Theatre - was in operation by 1919, whilst two more outlets were to open outside the capital: The Palladium in Tunapuna and Princes Theatre in Princes Town.

The next ten years were to see only a slow increase in the number of cinemas throughout the island. The first tented cinema had already been operating in Port of Spain and a permanent building was then constructed in front of this tent and subsequently opened as the Empire Theatre on 25 September 1920. The Gaiety Theatre in St Joseph Road was to follow in July 1924, once again offering highly competitively priced seats. In the rest of the country two additional cinemas were operational by 1920 in Sangre Grande and Couva, followed by a second outlet – the New Theatre – in San Fernando in 1921.

If the 1920s were a period during which cinematic growth was of a strictly limited nature, the next decade was to see a number of significant developments that caused a dramatic reversal to that tendency. In 1931 William P. Humphrey and a small group of partners formed The British Colonial Film Exchange Company Ltd.<sup>7</sup>, which was responsible for building the St. James<sup>8</sup> and the De Luxe<sup>9</sup> cinemas that both opened during 1937 in Port of Spain. 1933 was another significant year for the industry with the opening in March of the Metro cinema – subsequently renamed The Globe - that, with as many as one thousand seven hundred seats, made it by far the largest cinema in Port of Spain.<sup>10</sup> Two other large cinemas were to open in the capital during that same decade, The Roxy which had a seating capacity of nine hundred in October 1934 and the even larger Royal Cinema (one thousand two hundred seats) in May 1937. As far as developments in the rest of the island were concerned, the 1930s also saw a steady rise in the total number of country outlets. One of the main contributory factors to this lengthy period of expansion, as I shall discuss in greater detail later in this paper, was the introduction of Indian films to the island. By 1938 there were as many as fifteen outlets,<sup>11</sup> with a combined seating capacity of over eight thousand (compared with six thousand seven hundred in Port of Spain during that same year)<sup>12</sup>. Seating prices tended to be somewhat cheaper than in the capital, although there were clearly different pricing policies between some of the cinemas, particularly when several were located within the same town, such as San Fernando.

Trinidad continued to enjoy a period of steady growth in the construction of cinemas throughout the 1940s and 50s. The presence of the US military undoubtedly played a key role in this factor as by 1943 their Army and Navy alone had erected a total of sixteen outlets on the island. By that same year the number of civilian cinemas in Port of Spain had increased to eleven whilst the country outlets had also risen again to twenty-two. The number of outlets was to increase still further after the war. By the early 1950s Port of Spain had fourteen, the first drive-ins appeared in the latter half of the decade and the number of local cinemas also underwent a further dramatic increase to as many as forty by 1959. It is important to note, however, that most of these cinemas located outside of the capital were devoted almost exclusively to the showing of Indian films.

This upward trend in the total number of cinemas was to continue right through the 1960s to the middle of the following decade. By 1976 it was estimated that there were a total of seventy-four<sup>13</sup> cinemas throughout the island, including four drive-ins. Of these, sixteen were in the Port of Spain area and a further eleven cinemas were based in San Fernando. Whilst the rise in the number of cinemas was undoubtedly excessive throughout this period, it should be noted that the island's population had also undergone a significant increase since the mid-1940s. The 1960 census – the first to be conducted since 1946 – showed a total population of just under eight hundred and twenty-eight thousand,<sup>14</sup> an increase of approximately forty-eight per cent over the earlier census. In that same period, the number of cinemas had, in comparison, more than doubled. This disparity inevitably proved to be unsustainable and, whilst it was by no means the only factor involved, led to the onset of a decline in the number of cinemas throughout the latter part of the century.

In the mid-1970s a serious outbreak of cinema vandalism was to hit the island following the showing of the film *Victory At Entebbe* (1976). The Empire in Port of

Spain was completely destroyed by fire whilst bomb threats were received by both the Strand and Empire cinemas in San Fernando.<sup>15</sup> These violent attacks contributed towards the downward trend in audience numbers that had already begun to impact the industry prior to these particular events. By the middle of the 1980s the total number of cinemas in Trinidad had dropped to sixty and that steady decline was to continue until it was estimated that only approximately one-third (twenty-six)<sup>16</sup> of the outlets operating in the 1970s remained open by the close of the century (1999). As in other countries the advent of local television stations – first transmitted in 1962 in Trinidad<sup>17</sup> – and the subsequent introduction of videocassette recorders dramatically affected the numbers who regularly attended the cinema. By 1988, more than nine out of ten households were estimated to have a television set in their home, whilst around half that number also had a videocassette recorder.<sup>18</sup> Since the 1960s cinema attendance had steadily dropped from an average of ten visits per head of the population per year, to a situation in the late 1980s where less than half the population<sup>19</sup> **ever** claimed to visit a cinema. As a bizarre example of the dramatically changing nature of public entertainment, the oldest cinema in Port of Spain - the Astor (previously the London Electric Theatre) - was closed down in 1995 and converted into a church.<sup>20</sup>

I have dwelt at some length on the general development of cinema in Trinidad because it is necessary to understand the overall pattern of growth and later decline in order to appreciate the role that Indian films played in the island from the 1930s onwards. Hollywood had enjoyed a monopoly in terms of filmic distribution throughout the early years of expansion, but by the mid-1930s it was no longer the only major source of films for the island. With around one-third of its population comprising indentured Indians and their descendants<sup>21</sup> - many of whom spoke insufficient English to thoroughly understand the new American ‘talkies’ - Trinidad was in many ways the perfect market for the importation of films from India. Throughout the 1930s India’s filmic output had been rapidly increasing, from twenty-eight sound features in 1931 to one hundred and sixty-four by 1939.<sup>22</sup> Whilst it initially lagged behind Hollywood<sup>23</sup> in absolute numeric terms, the gaps in both availability and audience interest levels were undoubtedly narrowing. The move to bring the first Indian films to the island in the 1930s therefore coincided with an increase in both supply and local demand that Hollywood alone was unable to fulfil.

It has been previously documented elsewhere<sup>24</sup> that 1935 was the year in which the first Indian ‘movie’ - *Bala Joban* (1934)<sup>25</sup> - was exhibited in Trinidad, but there had, in fact, been a handful of other films shown before then. Two silent works directed by the German Franz Osten – *Prem Sanyas* (1925) and *Shiraz* (1928) – had been shown as well as the Anglo-British production of *Karma* (1933). The earliest of these silent films – *Prem Sanyas* - was exhibited in January 1930 at the Palace cinema in San Fernando. Significantly, the film was advertised under its English title of ‘*The Light Of Asia*’ yet described as a ‘superb production of Oriental Splendour’<sup>26</sup>, suggesting an appeal more to the ex-patriate population of Trinidad than to those of Indian descent. The later sound film: *Karma* was exhibited at the Empire cinema in Port of Spain for just two performances on the first of November 1933.<sup>27</sup> With advertising that promised ‘a glimpse of another world’, it also appeared to be aimed at the more affluent sector (i.e. white Europeans) of the potential viewing audience. Strictly speaking, none of these films were wholly Indian despite their use of Indian actors and (in the case of the former two) epic narrative styles. Both of the Osten films were essentially German productions<sup>28</sup> whilst *Karma* was actually shot in London and used

English dialogue and songs throughout. *Bala Joban* was therefore the first feature film in an Indian language i.e. Hindi to be introduced to the island and enjoyed an extensive run in both the Globe in Port of Spain and the Gaiety cinema in San Fernando. An article in a December issue of the *Sunday Guardian* of 1935 speaks of its popularity as the 'Indian Talking Film Success'<sup>29</sup> and outlines the plans of the importer Ranjit Kumar<sup>30</sup> to begin distributing Indian films in earnest throughout the West Indies.

As the 1940s drew to a close, so the full extent of this pioneering work became apparent. The numbers of cinemas showing (at least occasional) Indian films had now increased to three in Port of Spain, two in San Fernando and a number of other local cinemas. By 1941, just six years after their first introduction to Trinidad, Indian films were to account for as much as twenty-two per cent of all imports to the island in terms of linear footage.<sup>31</sup> Throughout the 1940s and 50s the market for Indian films steadily grew, as did the number of cinemas exhibiting them, particularly in the south of the island where most of the Indian population lived. By 1944 it was possible to find at least four different cinemas showing Indian films at any one time, increasing to seven by 1950 and rising to as many as fifteen<sup>32</sup> by 1959. In addition to these exclusive cinemas, a number of other outlets throughout the island would also show Indian films on an occasional basis.

By 1960 Indian films had further increased their share of the total market in Trinidad and accounted for just less than thirty per cent of all imported film stock in terms of linear footage. During this period, the numbers of outlets offering Indian films also continued to rise throughout the island. In March 1965, for example, as many as twenty-one cinemas were offering Indian films – all different – for viewing on the same day.<sup>33</sup> A similar newspaper advertisement in July 1969 offered twenty-four different choices in twenty-six cinemas.<sup>34</sup> The late 1960s were, however, the pinnacle in terms of growth for these exclusive Indian film outlets and the following decade was to see a significant reduction in their overall numbers.

By the middle of the 1970s, the number of cinemas showing Indian films on any one day had declined to less than half that recorded at the peak in 1969. In May 1976 just nine cinemas<sup>35</sup> were offering Indian films and, in contrast with earlier years, five of these were actually showing the same film *Deewar* (1975). In mid-July 1978 only seven cinemas were showing Indian films<sup>36</sup> and as many as six of these were carrying the same title – *Khoon Pasina* (1977). This steady decline in outlets was to continue during the 1980s, both in the overall number of cinemas throughout the island, as previously considered earlier in this paper, and particularly in those only offering Indian films. By the mid-1980s only three or four cinemas were regularly advertising Indian films in the newspapers. Statistics on Indian film exports to the 'West Indies' during that decade demonstrate just how dramatic that decline was. In the years 1980 - 81, ninety-two films were recorded as being exported to the region, whilst by 1984 - 85 it had declined to just ten in total.<sup>37</sup> This downward trend was to continue throughout the 1990s and by the end of the century just two **exclusively** Indian cinemas remained – the Metro and the New Deluxe in San Fernando.

Earlier in this paper I touched upon the more general reasons for a decline in cinema attendance in Trinidad – over supply of outlets, the fear of violence, the advent of local

broadcasting and the rise in ownership of television and videocassette recorders. However, in order to understand the more specific reasons for the decline in popularity of Indian films, it is important to consider the **type** of works that were usually exhibited in Trinidad. In the case of Indian films, 'type' not only refers to genre but also encompasses the language of the films shown. Language is a factor that must be taken into consideration as it has, I believe, played a major role in determining the level of popularity of Indian films in the island. The vast majority of works that were shown in Trinidad were actually Hindi language films, although it is important to note that the actual output from India was by no means exclusively confined to this one language. As an example, in 1960 slightly less than forty per cent of the feature films produced in India were in the Hindi language and by the mid-1990s this proportion had dropped to just over twenty-two per cent overall.<sup>38</sup>

The indentured labourers who originally came to Trinidad had been drawn from a number of regions in India and spoke, therefore, a whole range of different languages. According to Ramdin, however, 'many' of the younger Indians whose main language was now (creolised) English, spoke at least some Hindi and/or Urdu by the 1950s. This was primarily in order to communicate with the older generation that had adopted Hindi as a '*lingua franca*' when they first arrived in Trinidad.<sup>39</sup> The Hindi film was thus more likely to be understood by a greater number of its potential audience than any of the other Indian language films, at least during the early years of its introduction to the island. However, by the middle of the 1960s the proportion of this population who thoroughly understood Hindi was necessarily in decline as younger descendants turned increasingly towards English as their main, if not only, language of communication. In response, the importer Kumar took a significant step in trying to widen the appeal of the Hindi film by the introduction of English sub-titles in 1965.<sup>40</sup> Within a short period of time, all the Hindi films imported into Trinidad were similarly sub-titled. Whilst it is unlikely that the introduction of sub-titles encouraged many of African descent to experience Indian cinema, it undoubtedly helped to extend the appeal amongst its primary target audience, albeit for a limited period of time.

Whilst the advent of English sub-titles in 1965 had been a major development in the exhibition of Hindi films in Trinidad, it should also be noted that another significant change had taken place at around that same time. Several of the more recently released films that were imported from India had finally moved into the use of colour. Before the middle of the 1960s black and white film stock had been the norm for the majority of Hindi films and the first colour prints were only shown on the island shortly after the introduction of sub-titles. The majority of Hindi films exhibited in that decade still remained, therefore, in black and white. By way of contrast, more than eight out of ten US feature film releases were in colour during that same period of time.<sup>41</sup> It would appear likely that this late move into colour was a further factor influencing the steady decline in popularity of the Hindi film that subsequently took place.

In terms of genre, the films shown in Trinidad largely reflected the mainstream (popular)<sup>42</sup> trends that developed in Hindi film, as might have been expected. Initially film production had been dominated by mythological or religious subject matters, inspired by the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* epics. Dharap estimates that mythological subjects accounted for "...more than forty per cent of the [Hindi film] production..."<sup>43</sup> during the years 1931 - 34; and whilst this proportion was eventually to decline in

relative importance, it still remained a significant element in Indian film production right up to the early 1960s. In Trinidad a considerable number of such films were shown throughout the 1940s and 50s. Apart from mythological works the other major genre to develop in the early years of sound was that which has subsequently become known as the 'social'. In Sarkar's definition, the 'social' film was essentially a melodramatic romance, placed in a modern setting where the boy and girl are illogically matched (i.e. very rich/very poor, high caste/low caste etc.), thus highlighting the nature of prevailing social conventions.<sup>44</sup> Some of the most famous examples of this genre that were shown in Trinidad include *Achhut Kanya* (1936), *Duniya Na Mane* (1937), *Andaz* (1949), *Daag* (1952) and *Devdas* (1955).<sup>45</sup>

As the use of colour spread to encompass almost all new Hindi releases during the early 1970s, so a significant shift also took place in a rapid movement away from the 'social' melodramatic genre with its familiar pattern of song and dance routines. Instead of yet another variation on the romantic theme with its naive, passive hero, audiences were suddenly confronted by the dubious world of the thriller, complete with its violent anti-hero whose sole motivation was either money or revenge (or occasionally both). The parallels between the changes that took place in Hollywood Westerns during the 1960s and this particular development in Hindi cinema are strikingly similar. In fact, the thematic preoccupations of these Hindi thrillers had little to distinguish them from the Hollywood (or Italian 'Spaghetti' Western) model and it is therefore hardly surprising to find that levels of interest in both these genres declined concurrently. In addition to this startling move into a violent world a further significant shift occurred in the decreasing usage of song and dance as an integral part of a film's narrative structure. Instead of the eight or more songs and dances that typically featured in a 'social' film, the new thriller genre used only three or four. Furthermore, these songs no longer functioned as a fundamental component of the film but were now mere embellishments that, if anything, diverted attention away from the main narrative thrust. It is not difficult to see how such dramatic changes in format would, therefore, be less appealing to an older audience, whilst younger viewers could find similar visual thrills in the Hollywood 'blockbuster' or the increasingly popular martial arts film.

The actor most often associated with the 1970s thriller film was, of course, Amitabh Bachchan. A great deal of critical analysis<sup>46</sup> has already been written about both him and the films in which he starred so it is not my intention to repeat similar material here. What is interesting to note, however, is the extent to which the films in which he starred were popular in Trinidad. From the mid-1970s onwards, almost every film he appeared in was exhibited in the island and many such as *Deewar*, *Sholay* (1975), *Adalat* (1976) and *Don* (1978) played in five or more cinemas at the same time whilst also enjoying lengthy repeat runs.<sup>47</sup> The 1970s, it should be remembered, were the years in which the general popularity of the Hindi film in Trinidad was already in rapid decline. The similarities between the type of character portrayed by Bachchan – amoral, violent and reticent – with the immensely popular Clint Eastwood persona of the 'Spaghetti' Westerns does help to explain his (otherwise) almost unique appeal.<sup>48</sup> In 1981, when *Suhaag* (1979) was playing at the Kay-Donna drive-in at Curepe, Bachchan actually visited Trinidad to give four shows and, according to newspaper reports was "...mobbed at Piarco [airport]..."<sup>49</sup> Even his later works such as *Coolie* (1983) were still being shown in three different cinemas<sup>50</sup> consecutively, at a time (1984) when only two other cinemas were still regularly exhibiting Hindi films. Without the advent of these Bachchan thrillers it is, in fact, difficult to see how the

Hindi film could have continued to attract mass audiences in Trinidad much beyond the early 1970s.

In conclusion, although I have pinpointed a number of specific reasons for the decline in popularity of the Indian film in Trinidad, it must also be viewed within the context of the overall changes in the nature of popular entertainment that have taken place throughout most of the developed world. The impact that the Indian film had upon both the cinematic development and a large proportion of the population of Trinidad was, as I hope this paper has demonstrated, undoubtedly profound. It not only succeeded in disrupting the monopoly enjoyed by Hollywood but, for a period of approximately forty years, also became a major viewing force in its own right.



## Endnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> *Mirror*, Port of Spain, Thursday 15 February 1900, p.13.
- <sup>2</sup> *Mirror*, Port of Spain, Saturday 1 April 1905, p.6.
- <sup>3</sup> See *Mirror*, Port of Spain, Thursday 13 April 1905, p.13, for example.
- <sup>4</sup> Michael Anthony: *The Making of Port of Spain, Volume 1* (Trinidad & Tobago: Key Caribbean Publications, 1978), p. 178.
- <sup>5</sup> From this point in time onwards prices in advertisements were always quoted in Dollars and Cents, rather than Sterling as used earlier in the century.
- <sup>6</sup> Cinemas in the region were usually divided into these three separate sections with the front pit area being the cheapest but also the least comfortable section of the cinema.
- <sup>7</sup> The formation of this organisation was front-page news in the *Trinidad Guardian* of Wednesday 13 May 1931.
- <sup>8</sup> This cinema was sold in the early 1940s and renamed the Rialto.
- <sup>9</sup> This particular cinema was still in operation in 1999 and remained under the ownership of the Roodal family, who bought out the Humphrey business in the 1940s following the death of William P. Humphrey in 1941. (Interview by the author with Dr. Yvonne Morgan (granddaughter of Timothy Roodal), De Luxe Cinema, Port of Spain, Trinidad, 20 October 1999).
- <sup>10</sup> Its nearest competitor at that time was The Empire that had one thousand, two hundred seats.
- <sup>11</sup> The complete list for 1938 was San Juan, Tunapuna, Sangre Grande, Arima, Chaguanas, Couva, Princes Town, San Fernando (3), Fyzabad, Siparia, Penal, Point Fortin and La Brea.
- <sup>12</sup> *Trinidad Guardian*, Friday 11 February 1938, p.13.
- <sup>13</sup> J. Black, H. Bultstein, K. Johnston & D. McMorris (eds.): *Area Handbook For Trinidad & Tobago* (Washington D.C., USA: American University Press, 1976) p.182.
- <sup>14</sup> *Trinidad & Tobago Yearbook July 1968 – June 1969* (Port of Spain, Trinidad: Yuille's Printeries Ltd., 1969) p.113.
- <sup>15</sup> Indra Ramnarine: 'The Cinema: Role & Content in Trinidad', unpublished BA English and History Thesis, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, 1976/77, pp. 15-16.
- <sup>16</sup> Interview conducted by the author with Mr Rasheed Ali of Goldmine Pictures, Port of Spain, Trinidad, 20 October 1999.
- <sup>17</sup> Trinidad was actually the first English-speaking Caribbean country to introduce television technology, according to Lashley. (Lynette M. Lashley: 'Television and the Americanization of the Trinbagonian Youth: A Study of Six Secondary Schools' in Hopeton S. Dunn: *Globalization, Communications And Caribbean Identity* (New York, USA: St. Martin's Press, 1995), p.84).
- <sup>18</sup> Ewart C. Skinner: 'Mass Media in Trinidad and Tobago' in Stuart H. Surlin & Walter C. Soderlund (eds.): *Mass Media And The Caribbean* (New York, USA: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1990) p.49
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p.50
- <sup>20</sup> *Express*, Port of Spain, Tuesday 22 August 1995, p.7.
- <sup>21</sup> According to Ramdin, one hundred and forty-three thousand, nine hundred and thirty-nine Indians were indentured to Trinidad and Tobago between the years of 1845-1917. By 1921 the Indian population of Trinidad comprised one hundred and twenty-two thousand, one hundred and seventeen individuals out of a total population of three hundred and sixty-five thousand, nine hundred and thirteen (thirty-three percent). (Ron Ramdin: *Arising From Bondage – A History Of The Indo-Caribbean People* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2000) pp. 16 and 159).
- <sup>22</sup> Ashish Rajadhyaksha & Paul Willemsen (eds.): *Encyclopaedia Of Indian Cinema* (London/New Delhi, India: BFI/Oxford University Press, 1994) p.31.
- <sup>23</sup> The major Hollywood studios released an average of approximately three hundred and fifty films per annum during the same time period. (Joel W. Finler: *The Hollywood Story* (London: Octopus Books Ltd., 1988), p.280).
- <sup>24</sup> For example Brinsley Samaroo: 'The Indian Connection: The influence of Indian Thought and Ideas on East Indians in the Caribbean' in D. Dabydeen & B. Samaroo (eds.): *India In The Caribbean* (London/Warwick: Hansib/University of Warwick, Centre for Caribbean Studies, 1987) p.44.
- <sup>25</sup> It should be noted that the spelling of many Indian film titles is not necessarily standardised and newspaper advertisements, which provided the basis for many of the references used herein, often utilised somewhat unusual transliterations. Accurate dating of an individual film can also be problematical, as there is no uniform method applied – some works refer to completion of production, other to actual release date. Wherever possible I have used both the spelling and the dates as given in *The Encyclopaedia Of Indian Cinema*. For further details see *Encyclopaedia Of Indian Cinema*, pp. 14-15.
- <sup>26</sup> *Trinidad Guardian*, Wednesday 29 January 1930, p.8.

- <sup>27</sup> *Trinidad Guardian*, Wednesday 1 November 1933, p.16.
- <sup>28</sup> Whilst this was true at the time, Osten eventually joined forces with Himansu Rai and formed the famous Bombay Talkies film studio in 1934.
- <sup>29</sup> *Sunday Guardian*, Port of Spain, 8 December 1935, p.26.
- <sup>30</sup> According to Basdeo, there is some dispute as to whether Kumar was actually responsible for importing *Bala Joban* in to Trinidad. Another Indian businessman, Sayed M. Hosein from San Fernando, also claims to have brought the film to the island, although Kumar is officially credited with this event. (Amrita Basdeo: 'Indian cinema in Trinidad: role and impact', Unpublished BA Department of Languages Thesis, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, April 1997, p.3).
- <sup>31</sup> This figure compares with seventy per cent for US films and five per cent for British during that same year of 1941. (CO 875 10/3 – 'Cinema Propaganda, West Indies', 1942).
- <sup>32</sup> The complete listing of cinemas at that date was as follows. The Mars Eldorado, Jubilee Chaguanas, Revue Couva, Zenith Gasparillo, State Princes Town, Universal Fyzabad, Plaza Siparia, Flavian La Brea, Cameo and Tyrol Barrackpore (all ten operating under the auspices of International Traders Ltd.) The remaining five were outlets for India Overseas: Sunset California, Carib Couva, Empress Princes Town, Sunbeam Penal and Embassy Port of Spain. (*Trinidad Guardian*, Saturday 23 May 1959, p.5).
- <sup>33</sup> *Trinidad Guardian*, Monday 1 March 1965, p.4.
- <sup>34</sup> The cinemas in question were The Starlite, Hi-Way and Twilite Drive-ins, Empire Fyzabad, Silk Sangre Grande, Plaza Siparia, Reno Couva, Princess Arima, Rex Diego Martin, Radio City San Fernando, Venus La Romain, Pax Carapichaima, Phoenix La Brea, Sunset California, Astor Port of Spain, Metro San Fernando, Sanz San Juan, Metro Couva, Sunbeam Penal, Universal Fyzabad, Tivoli Cedros, Crown Rio Claro, Hummingbird Debe, Zenith Gasparillo, Diana Arouca and Tyrol Barrackpore. (*Trinidad Guardian*, Saturday 5 July 1969, p.4).
- <sup>35</sup> *Trinidad Guardian*, Thursday 27 May 1976, p.4.
- <sup>36</sup> *Trinidad Guardian*, Saturday 15 July 1978, p.4.
- <sup>37</sup> Dr. Ram Awatar Agnihotri: *Social & Political Study Of Modern Hindi Cinema (Past, Present And Future Perspectives)* (New Delhi, India: Commonwealth Publishers, 1990) p.160.
- <sup>38</sup> *Encyclopaedia Of Indian Cinema*, pp.32-33.
- <sup>39</sup> *Arising From Bondage*, pp. 207-210.
- <sup>40</sup> Some years prior to this introduction of sub-titles, the English-language film *The Court Dancer* (1941) had enjoyed several extensive runs in Trinidad as the 'First all-English talking picture produced in India'. (*Trinidad Guardian*, Wednesday 16 December 1942, p.6 and Thursday 12 October 1944, p.4).
- <sup>41</sup> *The Hollywood Story*, p.281.
- <sup>42</sup> There appears to have been little or no demand in Trinidad for less mainstream works such as the films of Satyajit Ray or the later 'New Cinema' directors whose films were mostly of a more artistic nature.
- <sup>43</sup> B.V. Dharap: 'The mythological or taking fatalism for granted' in Aruna Vasudev & Philippe Lenglet (eds.): *Indian Cinema Superbazaar*, (New Delhi, India: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1987), p.81.
- <sup>44</sup> Kobita Sarkar: *Indian Film Today – An Analysis* (New Delhi, India: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1975) p.19.
- <sup>45</sup> The latter three works all starred the same actor Dilip Kumar in similarly melodramatic roles, although only *Devdas* had an untypically tragic ending.
- <sup>46</sup> For example, Ranjani Mazumdar: 'From Subjectification to Schizophrenia: The 'Angry Man' and the 'Psychotic' Hero of Bombay Cinema' in Ravi S. Vasudevan (ed.): *Making Meaning In Indian Cinema* (New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 238-264, Fareeduddin Kazmi: 'How Angry is the Angry Young Man? 'Rebellion' in Conventional Hindi Films' in Ashis Nandy (ed.): *The Secret Politics Of Our Desires – Innocence, Culpability And Indian Popular Cinema* (New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 134-155 or K. Moti Gokulsingh & Wimal Dissanayake: *Indian Popular Cinema – A Narrative Of Cultural Change* (Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire: Trentham Books Ltd., 1998), pp. 104-106.
- <sup>47</sup> *Sholay*, for example, was already being advertised as enjoying its fourth consecutive week of exhibition in June 1977. (*Trinidad Guardian*, Wednesday 8 June 1977, p.4).
- <sup>48</sup> It should also be noted that the narrative of films such as *Sholay* was essentially that of a Western reworked into an Indian setting ('Curry' Westerns, as they became colloquially known).
- <sup>49</sup> *Trinidad Guardian*, Tuesday 20 October 1981, p.16.
- <sup>50</sup> The Twilite drive-in in Marabella, the Metro in San Fernando and the Central in Chaguanas (*Sunday Guardian*, 1 January 1984, p.10).

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