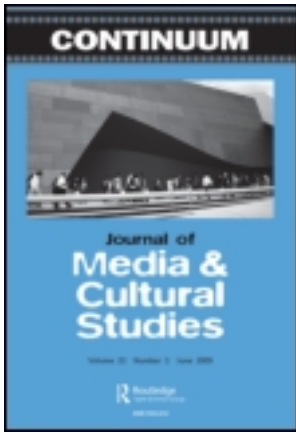


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Yahoo! Shammi Kapoor and the corporeal stylistics of popular Hindi cinema

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The article argues that Shammi Kapoor (1931–2011) revolutionized and forever altered the corporeal stylistic of popular Hindi cinema by breaking away from the soft masculinity of the golden era films. Whereas the golden era films, which were predominantly films of social criticism, put stress on the body as the repository of socio-political values and ethico-economic concerns, Kapoor's dancehall dramas ushered in a new aesthetics of the masculine body in which blood life – i.e. life as an expressive and a-causal principle of vitality – exceeds all socio-political frames and references. By virtue of this innovation, Kapoor altered the manner of performing the masculine in popular Hindi cinema and influenced a whole cadre of male heroes who followed in his wake.

Introduction

Shamsher Raj Kapoor (21 October 1931 to 14 August 2011), or Shammi as he is universally known, cuts an intriguing figure in the story of popular Hindi cinema. Working in an era awash with truly exceptional talents such as Guru Dutt, Waheeda Rehman, the smouldering Madhubala, Dilip Kumar and brother Raj Kapoor, he comes across as moderately skilled. Rare it is indeed for his screen personae to induce in us the kind of hushed admiration we reserve for a number of his distinguished contemporaries. If asked what is it that defines skilful artistry, we might point to Dutt's gift for the lingering penetrative gaze that sees through double standards and hypocrisy, Rehman's uncanny knack for nuance in the slow tilt of the head or the unexpected flutter of an eyelid, Kumar's studied restraint whereby more is intimated than uttered and Raj Kapoor's ingenious handling of slapstick in the service of tragic revelation and social critique. Shammi Kapoor's signature trait, perhaps because of an apparent lack of deliberate art in his presentation and delivery, is less easy to pin down. Yet, in a career bridging the golden 50s and the swinging 60s, he had the kind of impact no one, neither he nor his illustrious contemporaries, could have possibly foreseen. Kapoor introduced to celluloid a new aesthetics of the moving body that departed so fundamentally from the corporeal stylistics of the golden era as to constitute a significant rupture. His singular, intuitive and bold intervention broke ranks with a certain mode of corporeal representation popularized by his peers and led to a transformation in cinematic norms. The effect of his innovation on an array of female actors (Asha Parekh, Ameeta, Sharmila Tagore, Rajashri, Mala Sinha, Nutan, and Saira Banu, to name some), by virtue of a kind of reciprocal adjustment of the body, was just as perceptible and revolutionary. Kapoor's corporeal break with the past may be summed up as follows. In contrast to the classical golden era actors, who as a

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general rule employ the body's expressive capacities to evoke signs of otherness, 'high' (body as the locus of virtues: spiritual fortitude, *prema*, primal innocence, moral candour, social conscience, honest labour, etc.) and 'low' (body as a signifier of moral degeneracy, elitist hubris and national betrayal), Kapoor privileges *kama* or frank sensuality and celebrates the body for its own sake. The performing body is no longer the over-determined locus of socio-political values: degeneracy, transcendence, enlightenment, social responsibility, etc. Somewhat like a proper noun, it auto-signifies and is intensely spectacular. Kapoor's self-referential sensuality decouples the body from moral judgements and ethical concerns, and emancipates it from the overbearing weight of social allegory. The titles of at least four films allude directly to the blood principle that resists incorporation into social norms: *Junglee* (Savage, 1961), *Janwar* (Animal, 1965), *Badtameez* (Shameless, 1966) and *Pagla Kahi Ka* (Lunatic from somewhere, 1970). Rather than provide a comprehensive overview of the films, numbering some six score, this article sets out to describe the nature of Kapoor's accomplishment with reference to the 'turn' he instituted in the 'corporeal stylistics' of popular Hindi cinema.¹

The golden era

The golden era films of the 1950s conceive of India's relationship with the west and capitalist modernity in terms of a structure of not-becoming other. Golden era films entomb the west and capitalist modernity in the crypt of the national imaginary with the object of reinvoking them in a dynamic of avowal and disavowal. Summoned from the crypt, the values associated with these repressed entities are disavowed in order to set in train the avowal of Nehruvian politics, socialist modernity, homespun spirituality, Gandhian austerity, self-sacrifice and integrity, heteropatriarchal cultural norms and ethical poverty. The technologies of modernization, delinked from capitalist modernity and western cultural systems, constitute a part of the logic of incorporation that naturalizes the relationship between revolutionary democracy, socialist economics and indigenous cultural forms. The corporeal stylistics of the golden era films comprise an important element in the overall critique of market economy, libidinal individuality and competitive forms of human association.² Representations of corporeal vitality and excessive vigour are discouraged, even suppressed, because of an inferred complicity with aggressive capitalism and its libidinal economy. The not-becoming other logic of the films gives rise to a corporeal stylistics that frowns on unchecked expressions of *blood life*. By blood life, I mean the bodying forth of life *as life* over and beyond any system of interpellation. The phrase refers to those corporeal impulses and gestures in which life bodies forth as animal-life, as that which lives *vitally and self-purposefully*, regardless of any economy of mediation and socialization. In the films of the golden era, the acting body is seldom seen as a self-referential signifier of animate life disengaged from political concerns. Blood life is domesticated and even encrypted within the domain of the social; the body's vitality is seldom the vitality of life as such. In these films, there is little interest in pre-symbolic blood principles and biological drives. The raw, tactile and visceral facts of blood life are kept in check to foreground forms, gestures, signs and postures of acculturation. Emphasis falls on the body's signifying function as a participant in political, ethical and social life, and its brute and pulsing corporeality made subordinate to studied forms of expressivity. The body, in short, is allegorized to the point that the body qua body forgets the primary conditions of its own being, its blood life. Viewed predominantly in terms of a complex biopolitical domain (which includes ethical choice, economic relations, moral responsibility, duty of care, historical

becoming and so on), the body resists signs – and the paradox is unavoidable – of its own pre-symbolic otherness to social modes of interpellation. When blood life is unleashed, as it is in villains and vamps, it is characterized as a perverted form of the social, destructive of ethical principles, political ideals and the common good.³ The corporeal production of heroic masculine ideals is, accordingly, aligned to a certain history of not-becoming other in the golden era films. These films are predominantly concerned with serious political and personal matters: the micro-politics of national development (*Naya Daur*; *The new way*, 1957), individual sacrifice as ethical responsibility to the beloved (*Aah*; *The sigh*, 1953), the pernicious hypocrisies of the status-conscious gentry (*Awara*; *The vagabond* 1951), the betrayal of the post-independence dream by a criminal petit bourgeois class (*Jagte Raho*; *Keep awake*, 1956) and the damage done to the creative life, and to social relations rooted in kinship, care and affection, by capitalism's relentless pursuit of self-interest, competition and accumulation (*Pyasa*; *Thirsty*, 1957). Corporeal stylistics is of course central to the work of characterization and characterization to the critique advanced by the golden era films, whether of unconscionable capitalism, narcissistic individuality, systemic persecution, unjust ostracism, social pretence or mercenary behaviour. Expressions of blood life, of wild sensuality and uninhibited passion, rarely play a part in the sanctioned version of the masculine as captured in these films. Certainly mob violence and villainous energy are not precluded from characterization, but they feature as perverted manifestations of the social, or, if you like, deviations internal to the normative political, ethical and cultural order. Strictly speaking, they are inverted categories of the same and do not qualify as eruptions of blood life. Even in *Jagte Raho*, in which the plot concerns the search for water to sustain the biological needs of the body, Mohan's thirst becomes indistinguishable from the quest for ethical and symbolic liberation from a corrupt dispensation. The overall point is that the range of corporeal styles employed in engendering cinematic versions of the masculine keep faith, more or less, with the cultural ideals and political ideologies of Nehru's India.

This is not to suggest that the outcome is a uniform stylistics of the body, male or female, but rather that the *repertoire* of corporeal expressivity is delimited by a number of factors, including plot requirement, culture-specific gender norms, strategic camera angles, pans, cuts and shots, directorial initiatives and behavioural ideals associated with India's revolutionary heroes: Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore. These factors work in unison to minimize revelations of blood life in the performances of the key male actors of the period. We rarely see, for instance, the full-frontal shot of Guru Dutt in *Pyasa*, and, when we do, the long-shot is employed to underscore his character's moral distance and spiritual difference from the calculating world. When Vijay turns up unexpectedly at the anniversary of his death, the long-shot zooms out to show him from afar, frozen in the threshold to the palatial hall, arms outstretched, as he launches into a searing critique of deceit, inconstancy and the substitution of human worth by market fetishism. Light streams from outside to irradiate the ascetic figure crucified in the doorway, enshrining his otherness to all forms of material life. Deploying a combination of iris-shot and facial close-up, *Pyasa* responds to the market's debasement of social relations by transforming the drab physicality of the protagonist into loaded signs of resistance, anguish, fortitude and protest. It is not degraded corporeality that violates the rules of some sanctioned polity; rather, it is sanctioned corporeality that cannot abide the violations of a degraded polity. Hence the necessity for a complete rupture from society as depicted in the final scene. Expressions of blood life could have been incorporated in the sub-plot concerned with the relationship between the poet and prostitute, but even here the film does not waver

in its representation of an idealized corporeality. Gulabo is not drawn to some indescribable blood principle in Vijay. She actually rejects him when she mistakes him for a penniless client and only succumbs when it dawns on her that he is the author of the poems in her possession. She falls in love with embodied poetry and not some bearer of pre-symbolic blood life.

The other dominant actor of the era, Raj Kapoor, also understates the visceral aspects of blood life. In *Aah*, where he plays the son of a wealthy industrialist, the restrained corporeal stylistics is fundamental to plot development as it pertains to the love story between Raj and Neelu. Like Kundan's father in *Naya Daur*, Raj is an exemplary industrialist. A champion of the mixed economic mode and of socially responsible modernization, he forsakes the comforts of city life to oversee a dam project of benefit to the nation. When accosted by a doubting friend, Raj justifies his self-imposed exile in the idiom of high Nehruvianism: he is drawn, he contends, to the courage and beauty in human effort, to man's ability to outwit fate and obtain freedom from hunger and to the satisfaction that comes from eating the *namak* or salt of one's own labour. Kapoor captures the idealistic, self-abnegating and poetic disposition of his screen character by fabricating a corporeal manner that includes soft hand movements, languid gestures, scholarly portraiture (palm supporting the chin) and defensive body language (hands between knees); he completes the representation with a discernible feminine lilt in his tonal delivery. Raj embodies the Nehruvian ideals of masculinity inasmuch as he combines social dedication, as it pertains to national progress and development, with poetic sensitivity and the attributes of fidelity and self-sacrifice. Later in the film, when told he has contracted a fatal form of consumption, he employs these same bio-ethical qualities in his failed attempt to rid Neelu of her doomed love. *Aah* cleverly exploits a popular myth associated with tuberculosis. Raj's affliction is not ascribed to any fault of nature but to the studied excesses of culture and creativity. The man of cultivated tastes and sensibility is susceptible to a malady that ratifies his status as a representative of civilization. Ill health is a sign, in other words, of an absence of savage vitality. The film plays on the classical link between the consumptive body, melancholia (associated with black bile), personal dedication and artistic self-sacrifice to generate a vision of the masculine that leaves little room for raw expressions of blood life.⁴

Another actor who helped fashion the corporeal stylistics of the golden era is Dilip Kumar. Kumar's use of the body is rarely austere, deprecating or histrionic. He neither seeks to renounce it nor makes it an object of buffoonery. Stockier in physique than either Dutt or Raj Kapoor, Kumar excels in roles that involve active resistance to the landed gentry (*Madhumati*, 1958) or to the forces of an incursive capitalism (*Naya Daur*, 1957). His body language, although admittedly more assertive than that of his male contemporaries, is clearly bound up with the ideological concerns of the period. The physical robustness of the cart-driver in *Naya Daur*, to take an example, serves a biopolitical end in that the film mounts an argument for the continuing relevance of human labour power in the changing social relations of an industrializing India. Tough but deferring, intelligent yet unassuming, Shankar embodies several key characteristics of post-revolutionary cinematic masculinity. He is an organic intellectual and progressive thinker who takes pride in manual labour and inherited cultural practices. He understands that the substitution of labour by machine power will eventually reduce workers to a dismal form of subsistence and put at risk the social relations of the village community. Shankar's entreaties to the capitalist, his deft argumentative counterstrokes, his gestures of defiance and resistance, his work ethic, and his expressions of care and compassion for the village folk – all testify to his role as an exemplary figure of socialist modernity. Shankar

does not so much seek to obstruct technological advancement as to forge a third way where labour and machine power complement each other in the emergent social relations. Indeed, it is possible to argue that the entire film is essentially a polemic mounted in defence of socialized forms of labour power in the project of national development. Depictions of pre-symbolic forms of existentiality do not feature in *Naya Daur*. Blood life is not excluded; rather, it is included in the form of an exclusion or exception that may not be invoked. It is exactly this concern with invoking blood life from within economies of interpellation that marks Kapoor's difference from his predecessors and contemporaries.

Astride the golden 50s and the swinging 60s

Shammi Kapoor began his career in Calcutta as a stage actor in the family-owned Prithvi Theatres. He broke into Hindi cinema at the age of 22, making his debut in Mahesh Kaul's *Jeevan Jyoti* (Life's light, 1953), followed quickly by *Rail ka Dhaba* (Train compartment, 1953) in which he starred alongside the leading heroine of the day, Madhubala. His early films include *Chor Bazaar* (Market of thieves, 1954), *Rangeen Raatein* (Lovely nights, 1956), in which he plays second string to Mala Sinha, and *Memsahib* (1956). These formative films provide little evidence of the celebratory physicality and visceral energy that became the hallmark of his corporeal style in the decade that followed. These early performances fail to break free from the influential shadow of brother Raj, and, consequently, fall in line with the general masculine stylistics of the golden era. By turns bashful and diffident, comic and camp, Kapoor's body is the subject as well as the object of ideological arguments and wrangles, its uninhibited, visceral and tactile dimensions kept firmly in check.⁵ *Jeevan Jyoti*, for instance, advances a critique of calculating behaviour and its ruinous impact on relationships founded on natural affection, fidelity and respect. The final tragic outcome is unavoidable largely because an idealized masculinity, sensitive and romantic, compromising and non-assertive, is powerless against the machinations of an extended family. Even in the less dour scenes, Kapoor's demeanour projects a sanctioned type of masculinity built on the traits of comic mimicry (he is, in one segment, compared to Raj Kapoor), candour of speech and poetic sensitivity. For all its dissection of the dark side of the extended family, *Jeevan Jyoti's* engagement with India's macro-political domain, and its relation to heteronormative ideals of masculinity, remains largely embryonic.

By the late 1950s, in films made against the backdrop of the global rock-and-roll culture which was beginning to show up in the recalcitrant habits, hairstyles and attitudes of young urban elites, whether in Nairobi or Bombay, Manilla or Suva, Kapoor starts to evolve a corporeal style that departs perceptibly from the masculine ideals of the golden era. During this transitional phase, which spans from 1957 to 1960, he walks a fine line between the expectations of the golden era producers, directors and scriptwriters, with their preference for allegorical masculinity, doctrinaire ethics, nationalist ideology and socio-economic concerns, and the new cinema seeking to capitalize on the aesthetic possibilities opened up by the rock-and-roll culture industry. The proponents of the new cinema, it is critical to note, were not interested in jettisoning the logic of not-becoming other that distinguishes the films of this era. Instead, they sought to replace the extended miseries of self-avowal in the epic struggle to disavow the other (capitalist modernity and its alien ethical and cultural practices) with the libidinal enjoyment of the other (via the mechanism of mimicry) by *deferring* the avowal of a home-grown cultural identity. Whereas the first type of cinema is concerned with the self's everyday resistance to incorporation by the other summoned from within the national crypt, the second shows no

such anxiety, taking sensual delight in impersonating the other for long periods. Disavowal – and the inevitable return of the other to the crypt – is put off until the very end and forms a convenient political concession rather than a dialectical feature of plot, narrative and argument.

By the late 1950s the ‘soft’ social realism of the classical golden era films, with their legion of subaltern heroes (cart-drivers, peasants and vagabonds), had started to lose ground to escapist courtship dramas – featuring motoring journeys, exotic hill stations, art deco nightclubs and private dancehalls – whose exemplary representative was the bohemian cosmopolite. Unlike the classical golden era films, in which the song sequences are purposefully worked into the diegesis and seldom function as stand-alone or gratuitous episodes, the courtship dramas focus episodically on spectacularized pleasure (often internally referenced by extras assembled around the romantic duo in the *mise-en-scène*) at the expense of narrative continuity and plausibility. The plots of these films are thin, instrumental and serve to hold together the song-and-dance episodes in which the spectacle is emperor. The disjoints in progression, ethical volte-faces, inexplicable epiphanies and rapid denouements result directly from the stress placed on the pleasure principle in the arrangement of spectacular episodes. Considered in the light of this new hedonistic cinema, consuming and consumed by an audience alert to the rock-and-roll culture industry, it is no accident that of the three memorable films Kapoor starred in between 1957 and 1959, *Tumsa Nahin Dekha* (Not one like you, 1957), *Dil Deke Dekho* (Give the heart and see, 1959) and *Ujala* (Dawn, 1959), the first two, both courtship dramas, were runaway hits.⁶ The intellectually robust and ideologically driven *Ujala* failed in comparison, spelling an end to an era dominated by the cinema of social criticism.

Kapoor deploys paradoxical corporeal logics during this crucial transitional period. In films that remain faithful to the ideology of the time by challenging established social relations (without offering viable alternatives), he adopts a political understanding of screen masculinity. Corporeality is socially marked and expressive of ideological conflicts and wrangles. In *Ujala* and the Ralhan-directed *Mujrim* (Felon, 1958), the body is the site of material and psychic quarrels pertaining to economics, ethics, individual judgement and the law. The hero’s recourse to crime is a matter of social compulsion and his deviation from legitimate social relations is seen as a temporary lapse of judgement. Both films purport to be redemption dramas that set out to expose serious injustices in society. In essence, though, since they are unable to furnish alternative revolutionary scenarios, they do little more than provide rhetorical apologies for criminal behaviour. Redemption is actually a reversion to the status quo. The hero’s self-recognition in the mirror of existing social relations is followed by remorse, submission, atonement and reincorporation. Kapoor’s corporeal style apes this logic exactly. The body, wedded indissolubly to the spirit of social conscience, not to mention the soul of petit bourgeois ethics, progressively rejects itself in the mirror of self-recognition. Social and juridical violations manifest themselves in the drama of recoiling flesh, masked horror, folded palms, facial contortion, self-revulsion, abjection and sudden physical prostration before national symbols of the ethical life. Submission to individual conscience as manifested in the internalized superego entails submission to the general cultural superego.⁷

When it comes to the new cinema concerned with the leisurely spectacle of petit bourgeois romance, Kapoor presents a drastically different account of the body. *Tumsa Nahin Dekha* and *Dil Deke Dekho*, both courtship dramas directed by Nasir Husain, shun social issues vis-à-vis the three staples of life: *roti* (bread), *kapada* (clothes) and *makaan* (shelter). Although the plots feature revenge and the attempted expropriation of property (and the virgin that accompanies it) by the antagonist, there is no clear social motive

driving the action. Economic explanations hardly feature at all. If anything, cupidity and unnatural malice provide causal motivation. Since the needs of basic existence have been met (clothing, food, shelter, etc.) and the social question is not as pressing, sexual desire, as domesticated in courtship rituals, finds outlet in a different kind of corporeal signature. Where Kapoor stamps his singular difference from his contemporaries – and I am thinking here of Ashok Kumar in *Howrah Bridge* (1958), Dev Anand in *Kala Pani* (The black waters, 1958), Joy Mukherjee in *Phir Wohi Dil Laya Hoon* (I come with the same heart again, 1963) and Biswajeet in *Mere Sanam* (My beloved, 1965) – is in his refusal to observe propriety by restricting corporeal expressivity to socialized forms of sexual desire. Indeed, Kapoor invokes the codes and rituals of the courtship drama in order to exceed them corporeally. The body becomes the site of an unmanageable libidinal excess through which blood life finds outlet and expression. If sexual desire as manifested in the ritual of the courtship remains tethered to the ideological arena, signalling the triumph of the social in the guise of the musical romance, unassimilable libidinal urges and impulses breach prescribed rituals and social limits in expressive forms that attest to those aspects of blood life that evade socialization. At precisely this point of evasion a connection is established between the body as the locus of passion and the animality of madness. A further point to note here is that the surplus libidinal charge is not directed at a love-object (heroine) *per se* in which it is dissipated; rather it is directed at the inaccessible other – or what Slavoj Žižek calls the lady-thing as representative of ‘the hard kernel that resists symbolization’ (Žižek 2010, 2408) – for which the love-object is an essential double and unsatisfactory substitute. The tangible love-object stands in for the lady-thing, but cannot take its place as the latter ‘functions as a kind of “black hole” around which the subject’s desire is structured’ (Žižek 2010, 2412–13). Just as a symptom announces the existence of a malady that may not be sourced in the symptom, so the love-object is the material emissary of another figure (lady-thing or love-image) which desire can never hope to encounter. In this scheme the love-object turns into a sign *for* an absent signified, the love-image, the real. There is a revealing scene in *Dil Tera Diwana* (My heart is yours, 1962) when Mohan (Kapoor) tells his beloved that the image in the rear-vision mirror is the distant and untouchable object of his desire (‘Me usko chubhi nahin sakta: I can’t even touch her’), while the person in the car, by dint of her presence and proximity, is a tactile surrogate for this spectral real. Such futile striving for an unobtainable ideal habitually turns on itself and is expressed in moments of auto-erotic entrancement. Time and again, Kapoor exploits the moment of genre-sanctioned code repetition to generate libidinal surpluses that inaugurate a new corporeal style.

An explanation for the innovation might lie, to some degree, in the popularization of the pleasure principle by the rock-and-roll culture industry. It is no secret that Kapoor reproduced certain norms of masculinity favoured by his counterparts in the west, and Elvis, whom he vaguely resembled, is said to have been an influential model. It could hardly have been otherwise with the global diffusion of western popular culture. It is rare indeed to find a courtship drama of this era that does not owe something to the popular culture of the west. When western idols are not being emulated or impersonated (and Elvis plays godfather to many a scene in *Dil Deke Dekho*), they are subject to gentle parody. There is a priceless moment in *Brahmachari* (The bachelor, 1968), for instance, in which a couple of Buddy Holly clones twist and shake with Mumtaz to the delight of the assembled crowd. Moreover, while the lyrics are mostly home grown, the tunes are usually borrowed. Hindi renditions of Lennon and McCartney’s ‘I want to hold your hand’ (*Janwar*) and Richie Valence’s ‘Diana’ (*Dil Deke Dekho*) are cases in point. There is no denying that the new corporeal style owes a significant debt to the masculine

ideals of the 60s as mediated by the superstars of western popular culture. But that is only part of the story. That Kapoor aped Elvis at a formative stage in his career is beyond dispute. Unlike the latter, however, he was born into the industry and trained from a young age in theatre. Even in films of questionable merit, Kapoor's performances are not wanting in audacity, screen presence, intuition and a sense of theatre. Presley never quite grasped the spectacular dimensions of the medium and his performances are deficient in exactly those qualities that distinguish Kapoor's performances – raw energy, impeccable timing and libidinal vitality. Indeed, it is his instinctive understanding of corporeal dynamics vis-à-vis the continuity of action, character and narrative that sets him apart. Kapoor introduced to Hindi cinema a new masculinity that was neither home grown nor strictly imported; it came about as a result of the decline of the cinema of social criticism and the rise of the courtship drama which spectacularized pleasure and took immense delight in the *laissez faire* attitudes found in western popular culture. In these films the anatomy as the privileged locus for ideological skirmishes and social moralizing recedes in importance as the plot begins to exert less and less influence on the song-and-dance sequences; eventually, there is a reversal in the cause-effect equation as plots become secondary to the spectacular arrangement of song-and-dance numbers. One immediate outcome of the new arrangement is that the body is no longer exclusively the convergence point for complex social and political signs or for progressive civilization generally; rather, it is the organic domain in which an untameable form of blood life announces itself in mad ejaculations and in celebratory excesses, and, in so doing, attests to the limit of the social as well as the presence of a mode of being that evades social incorporation.

Interestingly, even as he assumes a new corporeal style in the courtship dramas of the transitional phase, Kapoor delivers – with the exception of *Ujala* – average performances in the parallel cinema of social criticism. The requirement to tone down the visceral and libidinal aspects of the body, to make it a medium for social commentary, contributes to moments of embarrassing indecision and uncharacteristic awkwardness. In one song-and-dance scene in *Mujrim*, namely 'Do nigahe teri, do nigahe meri' (Your two eyes, my two eyes), he hesitates – and this, incidentally, is not *in* character – to put his arms around the courting heroine (Ragni) who is the more forthright and active partner. Kapoor strives to play down the body so as to align it to the soft masculinity of the golden era hero, but what the camera captures is a structure of repression, disorientation and self-estrangement. Instead of a socially marked body skilfully negotiating the ideological arena mapped out by the plot (such as, for example, the abject social conditions that produce the criminal subject who bears on his body the marks of a criminalizing hegemony), we witness a disengaged and self-conscious protagonist plainly at odds with his own corporeality. In the courtship dramas we encounter a very different Kapoor. The primary reason is that the courtship drama is not predicated on a link between corporeality and social critique. If anything, corporeality goes its own merry way while the plot, usually at the point of denouement, resolves the political, economic and ethical aspects of the argument. The shift in corporeal style one detects in *Tumsa Nahin Dekha* and *Dil Deke Dekho*, although not sundered from the soft masculinity of the golden era, is, at the basic level, revolutionary. This transformation might be explained in the language of psychoanalysis. The aggression directed by the heroic ego of the golden era film towards an internalized superego (progenitor of guilt and social conscience), and its external referents (state apparatuses, legal entities, etc.), is redirected in the courtship drama to an amorous object in whom the ego achieves temporary, gratuitous and spectacular sublimation of primordial drives that issue from the libidinal realm of blood life.⁸ This assertion might also account

for the relative autonomy of the song-and-dance numbers from plots obsessed with the domestication of powerful drives and the summary punishment of code violators.

The blood life: hyper-corporeal dynamism; libidinal aggression; a-signifying acoustics

It is precisely because the plots of the films of the transitional phase seek to domesticate and socialize the libidinal drives of the hero (villains are driven by money; revenge and women are means to an end rather than ends in themselves) that I want to focus on segments in which drives and desires announce the becoming-animal of the social organism as distinct from the becoming-social of the animal organism. In these segments a new corporeal style emerges that upends the logic of the golden era films (albeit the logic endures at the mechanical level of the plot). This dynamic may be described as the libidinal enjoyment of the other in the delayed avowal of a socially sanctioned cultural identity. The combined force of such segments, in any event, has the effect of generating a stylistic repertoire that heralds a new kind of cinematic masculinity. The key elements in the emergent masculine style are *hyper-corporeality*, *libidinal aggression* and *a-signifying acoustics*. Hyper-corporeality describes a performative condition in which the body's dynamic field (made up of limb, head and eye movements, gesture, posture, facial expression, etc.) exceeds the social-symbolic sign it paradoxically spawns. Instead of capturing the becoming-social of the animal, it does the reverse. Consequently hidden drives associated with blood life find symptomatic expression in hyper-corporeal dynamism. Libidinal aggression, by implication, describes an erotic drive directed at a love-object (as the material repository of the elusive love-image) or at whatever hinders its attainment. The aggression reveals itself whenever the protagonist comes up against obstacles in the ritual of conquest or experiences betrayal or a lack of reciprocity on the part of the beloved. Libidinal aggression originates in the pleasure principle and manifests itself whenever enjoyment is thwarted, or, conversely, given free reign. On occasions the body forgets its own material presence in the contemplation of the love-object – a condition that has the effect of releasing it from social prohibitions and cultural norms, resulting in spontaneous and vigorous displays of blood life. When this does not occur, there is a loss of the love-object in contemplation of the love-image, the lady-thing. This, in turn, induces the state of auto-erotic entrancement. A-signifying acoustics pertain to sounds and noises that decline to turn into meaningful signs. An a-signifying sound cannot be supplemented. Unattached to any signifying chain, it honours itself in the moment of expulsion. It is stubbornly auto-referential. The a-signifying sound cannot transcend the raw acoustical condition of its coming-into-being and harks back to the animal that calls it forth as testimony to its brute existence. If socialized sounds are meaningful signs that testify to an otherness in which the human forgets its animal status (I think, therefore beast I am not), blood life sounds, as pure sonic categories adrift from signification, attest only to the primal corporeality of the beast that I am.

Kapoor does not entirely jettison the soft masculinity of the golden era in *Tumsa Nahin Dekha* and *Dil Deke Dekho*, but his frequent recourse to hyper-corporeality, libidinal aggression and a-signifying acoustics indicates a real shift in corporeal logics. The first of these films announces the new hyper-corporeal style in an early scene in which Shankar (Kapoor) spots his uncle (Chacha) and, with a jubilant cry, dashes several yards before leaping over a table to join to him. In the tomfoolery that ensues – and at this point the camera pans from behind Chacha towards Shankar – Kapoor reinforces his elevated position (he is ensconced on the table) in a series of rapidly alternating movements and

gestures that make for a unique masculine dynamism. After dragging his hands through his hair, he cradles the back of his head, leans forward with an upturned palm, prods the void to clinch a point, shrugs, bunches his shoulders, nods ruefully, clenches his fists, lays an assured arm on the lintel in a show of aggression, pulls out a wad of rupees from his jacket, cocks a remonstrative finger, seizes Chacha violently by the *chaddar* (wraparound blanket), commandeers the newspaper and, finally, with a table-clearing flourish, executes an abrupt and dramatic exit. The duration of the entire scene is 43 seconds. The general point about such acts of hyper-corporeality is that the raw physicality of the body-in-motion is brought into relief at the expense of its communicative function. Other conspicuous examples of hyper-corporeality in the film include the encounter at the railway station when Shankar runs up to the ticket office with swinging luggage and almost delivers Meena (Ameeta) a glancing blow; the dispute over the bullock-driven cart in which he pre-empts Meena by lofting his luggage over her head; the interlude at the Colonel's where he runs after the coach and throws a playful stone at the taunting thief; the scene leading up to the charade where he grabs the *adivasi* (tribal) girl, Seema, with the peculiar cosmopolitan cry 'That's the spirit, c'mon woman!' after she agrees to play along; and, lastly, the picnic episode in which Shankar trips over in his overzealous pursuit of the heroine. These displays of hyper-corporeality are reinforced by scenes dedicated to libidinal aggression and a-signifying acoustics. A memorable example of the former is contained in the episode relating to Meena's discovery of the telltale photograph and the subsequent arousal of Shankar's libidinal aggression as a result of her distrust. As Meena collides with Shankar (and Marshall Braganza's camera moves vertically then pans right to time this shot perfectly), Kapoor cuts a dark and menacing figure. He stands his ground and punches the palm of his hand repeatedly – a gesture he employs throughout to express the libidinal hostility his character feels at the conscious level for his various antagonists (father, rival) and at the unconscious level for sexual substitutes (*adivasi* girl, mother). In a scene teeming with tumultuous sexual energy, Shankar seizes his lover and drags her violently across the room. Meena attempts to resist but is disabled by a vicious arm-twist and yields up the photograph as she is hauled back across the room into a waiting armchair. A towering, intimidating and resentful Shankar berates Meena for her lack of faith and throws her out. A furious kick to the door, which stands in for the love-object, now the source of an ambivalent arousal, terminates the scene. Another conspicuous moment of libidinal aggression is captured in an angry Oedipal encounter with sexual rival, Sohan (Pran), over the ownership of his mother's letters. With Meena and his father looking on from behind a curtain, Shankar accosts Sohan (who, unbeknown to the former, has stolen his identity) and threatens him with violence for laying claim to the letters. This scene differently orders the triadic combination of the primal Oedipal scene (here the impersonating double wants to usurp the son's place in the primal equation), which is played out at various stages of the film, providing numerous occasions for libidinal aggression, and culminating finally in the father's predictable death.

A counterpart to libidinal aggression, but which too has its genesis in the sex drive, may be found in instances of a-signifying acoustics. In the major films of the swinging sixties, such as *Junglee*, *Dil Tera Diwana*, *Bluff Master* (1963), *Kashmir Ki Kali* (Flower of Kashmir, 1964), *Janwar*, *Teesri Manzil* (The third storey, 1966), *An Evening in Paris* (1967) and *Brahmachari*, Kapoor turned the a-signifying sound (and its association with madness, bestiality, biological drives and uninhibited behaviour) into a distinguishing feature of his performances, but employed the strategy as early as 1957 as part of the new logic of hyper-corporeal dynamism. In the squabble over the cart in *Tumsa Nahin Dekha*, Shankar yells 'yahoo' before lofting his luggage over Meena's head. Kapoor is on record

as having said that he coined the expression to mark the celebratory joy felt by his character in the game of courtship (Shammi Kapoor: The original yahoo man, BBC News).⁹ Such acts of interpretation, however, are concerned with supplementary explanations that seek to bring the unnameable within the orbit of the name. The contrary view holds that a-signifying sounds escape the naming process because they are, in the end, auto-referential. They constitute no more than acoustical ejaculations of pure drive or desire inside the animal-being. To read these acoustical eruptions as linguistic signs open to supplementation is to miss the point about the becoming-animal of the social organism. The minute we try to make sense of a-signifying sounds, and 'yahoo' is a case in point, we run into difficulty. 'Yahoo' is exclaimed on three separate occasions in the film. The first, which I have described above, might be construed as a taunt. The second occurs just before Shankar breaks out into song during the journey by gharry, and might be understood as a cry of defiance at Meena's injunction against singing. Shankar emits a third 'yahoo' at the scene of the charade upon learning that the spying Meena is jealous of the attention he is lavishing on Seema. It is possible to describe it as a yelp of victory in the war of conquest. Indeed, we would be expanding the cache of possible meanings if we included the mighty roar he lets out (which sounds very much like a truncated version of yahoo) to rouse the driver seconds before the gharry veers off the track. Or, for that matter, if we enlisted the scene from *Dil Deke Dekho* when Raja (alias Roop), misled by Nita into believing that she is betrothed to someone else, reacts with typical libidinal aggression only to discover that she means Roop, whereupon he screams yahoo. A-signifying sounds can mean many things precisely because they cannot mean anything. They do no more than attest to the bare existence of the body responsible for emitting them. What is bodied forth acoustically is nothing other than the body itself. A-signifying acoustics are not confined to singular noises. They are present in an exemplary way in the song-and-dance numbers in which they work in unison with hyper-corporeality and libidinal aggression to generate the new masculinity. In the heady climax to 'Sar Par Topi Lal' (Red hat on your head), Kapoor supplements his vigorous callisthenics with rhythmic acoustical noises (although the playback singer, Rafi, might be the real author of these sounds). We hear haarr, kapit, bum-chiki-chiki-bum-pa, ooh-aah, ooboo-boo-boo, takat-takat – noises that attest to the loss of semantics in the becoming-animal of the social entity.

The box office success of *Tumsa Nahin Dekha* and *Dil Deke Dekho* signalled the arrival of the courtship drama as the dominant genre in popular Hindi cinema – a state of affairs that prevailed for at least the next 15 years. Kapoor's swashbuckling masculinity found a natural home in the plot of the picaresque romance and the sub-culture of rock-and-roll. Together they appealed to an audience that had grown weary of the genre of the social critique. In response to this expectation, Kapoor set about consolidating the new persona. By the time the drum-playing Rocky mesmerized the class of 1966 at the height of Beatlemania, he was the undisputed superstar of Indian cinema. In the courtship dramas that succeeded *Tumsa Nahin Dekha* and *Dil Deke Dekho*, namely *College Girl* (1960), *Singapore* (1960) and *Boyfriend* (1961), Kapoor deliberately moulded a transferable persona around the emergent corporeal style. *Junglee* actually honours the new style and persona in the film's title. The trend of making titular references to the actor's corporeal style continues in films such as *Janwar*, *Badtameez*, *Laat Saheb* (Leisured dandy, 1967) and *Pagla Kahi Ka*. *Junglee*, in any case, is a remarkable film for one primary reason. It takes Kapoor's hyper-corporeal style and its connection to unrepressed desires and turns it into an organizing principle.

The plot pivots around the embargo placed by familial injunction (as articulated by the spectre of the dead father via the living mother) on subconscious drives and desires, and their internalization by the son charged with maintaining the embargo through acts of repetition.

The scion of a wealthy businessman, and made to follow in his father's footsteps, Shekhar (Kapoor) succumbs to the law of the father to the extent that he turns into a stiff, inflexible disciplinarian obsessed with punctuality, propriety (dress and dinner codes) and social status. When his sister, Mala, flouts this law by entering into a sexual liaison with a lowly worker, she is rusticated. Shekhar accompanies her to Kashmir and, isolated from the social terrain of the injunction, runs into another law-violator, Raj (Saira Banu), who inspires in him disturbing feelings of ambivalence. The libidinal aggression he feels towards this love-object for her naive acts of social transgression is turned on its head during a stormy sojourn in the mountain wilds. Shekhar recognizes, and provisionally disavows, the superego whose injunctions, externally enforced by the mother and internally upheld by the ingested father, contributed directly to the repression of his sexuality. There is a fascinating moment in the alpine cottage, immediately prior to their declaration of love for each other, when Shekhar, maddened by sexual desire, contemplates raping the sleeping Raj, but opts instead for sublimation in the activity of chopping wood.¹⁰ This scene constitutes a watershed moment in the film as corporeal impulses are starting to break through social injunctions. The pleasure principle's eventual victory over the superego is marked by a palpable change in corporeal logic. The viewer, kept in a state of high anticipation by director Subodh Mukerji, finally sees the blizzard clear, the new day dawn and the hero shed his inhibitions with an earth-shattering yahoo. Shekhar roars a second time, rouses Raj and slaps her in an uncontrolled hyper-corporeal frenzy. Executing an ape-like courtship manoeuvre with clenched fists, he races outdoors and dives headlong into the snow-covered slopes before erupting into song. The song, 'Yahoo', is prefixed by another primal roar. In this song-and-dance number there is no trace of the languid masculinity of the 50s. The androgynous textures and studied inflections have vanished. The hyper-corporeality is now accelerated, libidinal aggression accentuated and an added emphasis placed on a-signifying ejaculations. The upshot is that there is a hardening of screen masculinity, signaling a radical break from the golden era. The lyrics to the song directly equate the yahoo cry with the idea of pre-linguistic savagery ('so what if someone calls me a savage, yahoo!'). One hand-painted poster of the film actually attempts to capture this moment phallically by having Kapoor stomp between the outspread thighs of a *firangi* woman. The screenplay, in fact, is littered with comic references to lions, flies, mosquitoes, apes, monkeys and crows. If the shoving, flapping, stomping, plunging over slopes and the very risky cartwheel at the end (no stunt doubles were used) are anything to go by, hyper-corporeal dynamism is clearly bound up with the unrepressed and libidinal savagery of blood life. At this point in the film, an interesting reversal occurs which corrects an earlier reversal. Raj has thus far associated Shekhar's inability to relate to people in an informal and non-coercive manner as a mark of his savagery (i.e. as a social distortion of natural bonds and affections), but in the song, while embracing the charge of savagery, Shekhar links it unequivocally to the discovery of tempestuous animal drives. Undone by primal cravings and careless of the trappings of civilization, lovers, he remarks, cannot be counted in the species of human beings. Shekhar's declaration draws a correspondence between unbridled passion, bare animality, madness and corporeal frenzy. It also attests to Roland Barthes' assertion that love's craziness consists of a severance from all forms of sociality and symbolization (Barthes 1990, 121).

Jungle was the second most successful flick of 1961 and films starring Kapoor featured heavily among the list of chart-toppers for the next decade. In 1962, *Professor*, *Dil Tera Diwana* and *China Town* were ranked three, six and nine, respectively, at the box office.¹¹ Kapoor responded to his rising status as superstar by playing up the becoming-animal of the social being. The post-*Jungle* Kapoor commences to test the limits of

hyper-corporeal dynamism, libidinal aggression and a-signifying acoustics to the point where we start detecting a regressive operation subversive of the very idea of the human as *Homo erectus*. The director of *Dil Tera Diwana*, B.R. Panthalu, makes the turn clear by introducing his hero in a song-and-dance number that starts with an unambiguous canine bark. ‘Woof woof’ is the song’s refrain and Kapoor impersonates a rabid dog to drive home the point. Here the becoming-animal of the social being is extended to the point that it becomes a sign of beastly possession, and the erasure of the distinction, playful and farcical though it is, between reason–unreason, man–beast and nature–culture. In an anatomical signature that comes to dominate the 60s, several elements come together: sexual excitement, loss of upright gait, social rebellion, momentary madness and counter-narcissism (as manifested in physical signs of dishevelment). Counter-narcissism is not synonymous with anti-narcissism, but rather describes the loss of subjectivity (ego sense) in the mirror of the love-image in which the subject projects his narcissism (Žižek 2010, 2408). It is to Freud that we owe the insight that the history of civilization is inseparable from man’s adoption of an ‘erect posture’ and the concomitant repression of the dominant ‘olfactory stimuli’ that characterized the human quadruped (Freud 2010, 41–2). Our sense of shame is most likely derived as a result of a rupture from this primitive animal condition. The loss of the upright posture may be read as a reversion to a condition of blood life prior to the interruptive moment of civilization and a release from the state of repression in the rediscovery of a shameless sensuality. One does not have to venture beyond the song-and-dance items in such films as *Dil Tera Diwana*, *Bluff Master*, *Kashmir ki Kali*, *Janwar*, *Badtameez* and *Brahmachari* to discover how acts of quadrupedalization (sprawling, rolling, sliding, crouching, etc.) add a further dimension to a performative style distinguished by hyper-corporeal dynamism, libidinal aggression and a-signifying sounds.

The titular song of *Dil Tera Diwana*, set in the season of rains and crackling with the erotic electricity the culture ascribes to *sawan* (monsoon), has Mohan (Kapoor) sliding, crawling, wallowing and dancing through a flooded catchment in aggressive pursuit of Seema (Mala Sinha) – an aggression that is reciprocated on at least one occasion, thereby reversing the subject (active)–object (passive) relations in the amorous play. In the ‘Govinda Alaa Re’ scene from *Bluff Master*, on the other hand, the moment of quadrupedalization is related to a structure of displacement in that the object of a religious quest turns into a substitute for the absent sexual object. The occasion is the anniversary of Krishna’s birth (Krishna Janmashtami) which coincides with the heroine’s birthday. Ashok (Kapoor) leads a band of *govindas* (playmates) on a *matki* raid in a re-enactment of the Lord’s childhood pranks.¹² In the film the quest for the *matki*, and the prize money that accompanies it, is linked to the attainment of the love-object (Seema, played by Saira Banu) through another substitute – the gift. Singing and swinging his way towards the *matki*, Ashok, in a moment of shameless sensuality, writhes and swoons deliriously on the ground as bystanders throw buckets of water on him.¹³ Religious, economic and sexual interests, inasmuch as they supplement one another in pursuit of an identical end, are different aspects of the same libidinal stimulus. Indeed, *matki* and money, gift and lover, are equivalent and exchangeable terms in a libidinal economy incited by the forever-elusive real, the lady-thing.

Quadrupedalization is also a feature of *Kashmir ki Kali*. In the amorous play that accompanies the song-and-dance number, ‘Tarif karoo kiya uski’, Kapoor squirms, rolls, leans over the rushing water, rests on his haunches, lies supine, stands up only to plunge back into the boat, claps wildly while on his knees and, finally, in his desire to reach the love-object, and forgetting the volume of water between him and his beloved, steps

comically into the lake. Rajiv's failure to reach Champa (Sharmila Tagore) attests to the fact that the love-object is an unsatisfactory double of the spectral love-image. The loss of spatial coordination occurs when the love-image, the locus of a perpetual vanishing, an eidolon no less, is seen to be directly accessible in the love-object. The concrete woman disappears at the very instant the love-image holds Rajiv's attention, and with that he loses all sense of material ground. Hindrances, such as the lake water, 'conceal...the inherent impossibility of attaining the object (Žižek 2010, 2412)'. The distance between the love-object and the love-image is analogous to the distance between a figure and its figuration in a mirror. I, as figuration, am there where I am not. I cannot be anything other than an image of the figure that I am. Yet, since the impossible image attests to the figure I am, the man in front of a mirror, the lack of spatial coincidence between figure and figuration declares itself. I cannot, as figure, inhabit the locus of figuration (where I am nonetheless present *in absentia*), and become alert to the insurmountable distance separating as well as connecting the two points: one where I escape the image and the other where I am nothing except image. At one stage, Rajiv admits that he is searching for a destination when his destination stands before him ('meh khojme hu manzil ki/aur manzil pass he mere'), unwittingly acknowledging the paradox that the love-object materializes the love-image that simultaneously eludes it, just as a figuration fails to coincide with the figure that engenders it. In his hyper-corporeal paean to the love-image, culminating in a frenzy of handclaps, Rajivi oversteps the mark by mistaking the love-object for the mirage his song conjures up counter-narcissistically. The upshot is an attempt to collapse the impossible distance between figure and figuration, resulting in a wet epiphany.

It is widely observed that Kapoor's career peaked in 1966 with the release of the whodunit, *Teesri Manzil*. The film adds no new element to the corporeal style developed over the course of a decade, but it does put on display Kapoor's extensive performative repertoire. The trademark traits of hyper-corporeal dynamism, a-signifying acoustics and libidinal aggression find their correlates in sexual exhibitionism, quadrepalization, rebellion against social norms, feigned madness and counter-narcissistic behaviour. The hyper-corporeal dynamism (rapid hip-swinging, head-shaking and energetic pirouettes) displayed in the song-and-dance number, 'Aaja aaja meh hu pyar tera' ('Come, come, I am your love'), set in a rock-and-roll club on a hill station, accentuates the idea of sexual titillation and climax that forms a vigorous refrain to the song: 'O aaja unha aaja, o aaja unha aaja, o aaja unha ah.' The structure of paronomasia evident in the quavering repetition of 'aaja, aaja' ('come, come') gains in urgency and culminates in an orgasmic 'ah'. The entire song, to be sure, is an exercise in a mass orgiastic ritual and builds in carnal excitement at the end. It finishes off in a scene of collective exhaustion and the collapse of an unlikely participant.

This scene, best described as conspicuous erotic foreplay, is quickly followed by another song-and-dance number. Set against the backdrop of the hill station, 'Diwana mujhsa nahin is umbar ke niche' ('A lover such as I cannot be found under these skies') downplays sexual courtship in which the love-object is focalized so as to play up the condition of the *diwana*, that is the lover lost in contemplation of the love-image. Here the hero, Anil, forgets his ego-self, hence the dishevelled appearance, not to mention the actual presence of the love-object (Sunita, played by Asha Parekh), in counter-narcissistic absorption in the love-image. Insofar as the love-image renders the subject *diwana*, that is one who is exclusively immersed in the image-ideal (the hero shuts his eyes by the song's end to focus on the love-image), there is a suggestion that the lover, as in *Junglee*, is outside the condition of humanity and clock time. The love-object, Sunita, attentive to the act of infidelity in the *diwana*'s condition of entrancement, proceeds to

explode the timeless time of the love-image by blowing on a whistle – that instrument of a shrill awakening.

The abrupt reversion to disenchanted time, and sudden loss of the love-image, contributes directly to a scene charged with the dark urges of an equivocal libidinal drive. When the couple take a wrong turn and become hopelessly lost with the night approaching, Anil makes the sensible suggestion that they rest in the jungle until daybreak. Visibly agitated, Sunita accuses him of manufacturing the incident in order to rape her, and flees into the darkness. The scene that unfolds is laced with deliberate ambiguity. Anil, now a menacing presence, pursues her and eventually catches up. When she makes a feeble attempt at self-defence by casting a stone, he throws her on a shoulder and strides back to the car. Dumping her in the backseat, he leans over suggestively to wind up the window. After securing the doors, he exits the vehicle and, through a slit in the glass, drops the key into the car. Anil's intentions are plainly edificatory. Up to the point where he gives up with the key, he assumes the role of the potential rapist imagined by the heroine and she becomes the clear object of his libidinal aggression. He regards himself through the eyes of the heroine as the other he is not, but in so doing yields, in an enactment of serious play, to the very drive that renders him other. The thwarting of libidinal aggression at the edificatory moment when he surrenders the key does not alter the serious nature of the play or neutralize the libidinal aggression displayed in the masquerade. Anil's thwarted aggression finds sudden release when strangers turn up and he has to defend the love-object from *their* unrepresed sexual urges. The misdirected libidinal aggression has the paradoxical effect of legitimating Anil's desires and drives in the eyes of the love-object. By saving her from others, and exclusively for himself, he socializes his libido while presenting himself as a champion of intra-class interests.

Andaaz (The estimate, 1971), directed by Ramesh Sippy, was Shammi Kapoor's last successful film and by the early 1970s his career as a hero was virtually over. Posterity is unlikely to remember him for the depth and subtlety of his acting, but he will go down in film history as the first superstar to demonstrate how a radical break in corporeal style may change the course of a genre as well as the mood of a generation. Kapoor saw the body as the locus of an expressivity that exceeded social signs as well as signs of socialization. By virtue of this fact, he opened up the possibility of spectacular pleasure in which the blood life, wild, tumultuous and ungovernable, was no longer an already-marked aspect of socio-political mediations. While it is not easy to summarize his legacy in a broad sense, Kapoor's contribution to redefining screen masculinity was both singular and revolutionary. It is a legacy that has endured. Every major male actor since the 1970s has included in their repertoire something of the hyper-corporeal frenzy and libidinal aggression of the a-signifying savage.

Notes

1. The phrase 'corporeal stylistics' refers to the artful manipulation of the human body for the purpose of spectacle, pleasure, critique, instruction and narrative. The ensemble of the body – that is the vocal, ocular, gestural, sartorial and muscular components that make up its unity – is fundamental to the cinematic production of social, ethical, aesthetic, libidinal and even economic values. The body-in-performance generates value because it is the bearer of meaningful marks that may be deciphered and understood. The significance of somatic or anatomical marks depends enormously, of course, on the context of reception. It is, for instance, possible to imagine the Indian nod being completely misconstrued by an audience made up of non-Indians. Whatever the culture or context, the body is a site where expressive marks turn into value of one type or another. How we read comic or malign figures, evaluate spiritual worth or moral turpitude, yield to cathartic laughter or despair, interpret states of privilege or penury and

grasp amorous destiny or gendered oppression depends fundamentally on the successful harnessing of corporeal expressivity. We know that stock figures of villainy, for instance, are more likely to don dark clothing, betray their inner malice in behavioural idiosyncrasies (sidelong glances or twitching eyes) and expose their tarnished souls in addictive practices and recurrent habits. Cecil B. De Mille, for instance, turned the chain-smoker into an archetype of moral depravity. More recently, Ridley Scott, director of *Blade Runner* (1982), discovered in the origami enthusiast the potential for incalculable menace and augury.

2. For an extended discussion of this dynamic, see Mishra (2009, 315–44).
3. In B.R. Chopra's *Naya Daur* (The new way, 1957), Krishna's sexuality does not so much represent a biological impulse as its socio-political distortion. Coveting the village belle, and jealous of his friend, Shankar, who stands between him and the voluptuous Rajni, he turns turncoat with the result that he forfeits his ethical and social place in the community. Manipulated by the forces of ruthless capitalism, Krishna's libido is not only shown to be a narcissistic and destructive form of insanity, but a manifestation of the competitive social relations encouraged by that economic system. His actions put at risk not only his friend, the village community and core cultural values, but also the social contract between labour and capital and the road to national progress predicated on a pace of modernization that allows for gradual social adjustment. Krishna's return to reason and his readmission into the village community and the national project of Nehruvian socialism occur after he relinquishes his dangerous libidinal claims.
4. Raj Kapoor is clearly a versatile actor with an admirable performative range. Where in *Aah* he plays the tragic son of a powerful industrialist, in *Awara* he appears as a vagabond on the periphery of normative social relations. The masculine features are recognizably less soft and more robust in the second film, but the corporeal style remains very much within the ambit of the ideological as manifested in debates about wealth and penury, legitimacy and illegitimacy. Kapoor's body language, alternating between instructive clowning and reasoned aggression, is an integral part of the plot which takes up the issue of existential destiny. Is individual fate the outcome of genetic predisposition or social determinism? The film makes the point that the malfeasance of the lumpenproletariat is a by-product of inflexible class relations established by bourgeois society. It may even comprise an unlawful mirror-image, as Raj reminds Rita, of the legalized social relations of capitalism. Legitimacy, in other words, is obtained through the calculated exercise of institutionalized, class-based power. Vagabondage manifests itself as an effect of biopolitics that determines which subject is incorporated into or ostracized from legitimate social relations.
5. In *Jeevan Jyoti*, in which he plays the part of a widower kept awake by recollections of his dead spouse, bodily gestures and movements serve to underscore the protagonist's helplessness in the face of adversity. Large segments of the film consist of therapeutic flashbacks in which the insomniac, Shyam Sundar, narrates to a physician the tale of his foredoomed marriage. When we first encounter the protagonist, he is scarcely more than a ghost: thin, wan and emaciated. Unable to cope with his wife's loss and the memory of her relentless persecution at the hands of his kinsfolk, Shyam Sundar finds no rest.
6. *Tumsa Nahin Dekha* ranked fifth at the box office and took a net profit of Rs 10,000,000; *Dil Deke Dekho* ranked sixth and drew a net profit of Rs 8,000,000; *Ujala* is not listed in the top-earners at the box office. See <http://www.boxofficeindia.com/showProd.php?itemCat=165&catName=MTk1OQ==>.
7. Sigmund Freud distinguishes the internalized individual superego from 'the super-ego of a cultural epoch' which 'rests upon the impression left behind by the personalities of great leaders, people who were endowed with immense spiritual or intellectual power or in whom some human striving found its strongest and purest, and hence often one-sided, expression' (Freud 2010, 78).
8. The love-object is the figure of sublimation precisely because it stands in for but cannot take the place of the impossible figure of desire, the lady-thing, the real.
9. See 'Shammi Kapoor: The Original Yahoo Man' at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6203237.stm.
10. Freud defines sublimation as the capacity to redirect the sex drive into non-sexual activities and objects without the loss of the original psycho-sexual intensity (Freud 2010, 90).
11. See <http://www.boxofficeindia.com/showProd.php?itemCat=168&catName=MTk2Mg==>.
12. A clay pot containing buttermilk, the *matki* is hung high above the ground. *Makti*-raiders form a human pyramid around the *matki* to enable their leader to reach the sacred pot.

13. Water is thrown on the *makti* raiders to obstruct them from their goal; it is possible that cow urine was used to achieve the same effect in antiquity and led to the sudden rediscovery of repressed olfactory powers.

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Selected Filmography

- Awara*. Directed by Raj Kapoor. Bombay: R.K. Films, 1951.
Aah. Directed by Raja Nawathe. Bombay: R.K. Films, 1953.
Jeevan Jyoti. Directed by Mahesh Kaul. Bombay: Musical Picture, 1953.
Rail ka Dhaba. Directed by Prem Narayan Arora. Bombay: All India Pictures, 1953.
Chor Bazaar. Directed by Prem Narayan Arora. Bombay: All India Pictures, 1954.
Rangeen Raatein. Directed by Kirdar Sharma. Bombay: Ambitious Pictures, 1956.
Memsahib. Directed by R.C. Talwar. Bombay: Talwar Films, 1956.
Jagte Raho. Directed by Amit Maitra and Sombhu Mitra. Bombay: R.K. Films, 1956.
Tumsa Nahin Dekha. Directed by Nasir Hussain. Bombay: Filmistan/Sasadhar Mukherjee Productions, 1957.
Naya Daur. Directed by B.R. Chopra. Bombay: B.R. Films, 1957.
Pyasa. Directed by Guru Dutt. Bombay: Guru Dutt Films, 1957.
Madhumati. Directed by Bimal Roy. Bombay: Bimal Roy Productions, 1958.
Howrah Bridge. Directed by Shakti Samanta. Bombay: Shakti Films, 1958.
Kala Pani. Directed by Raj Khosla. Bombay: Navketan Films, 1958.
Mujrim. Directed by O.P. Ralhan. Bombay: Eagle Films, 1958.
Ujala. Directed by Naresh Saigal. Bombay: Eagle Films, 1959.
Dil Deke Dekho. Directed by Nasir Hussain. Bombay: Filmaya/Sasadhar Mukherjee Productions, 1959.
College Girl. Directed by T. Prakash Rao. Bombay: Rawal Films, 1960.
Singapore. Directed by Shakti Samanta. Bombay: Eagles Studios, 1960.
Boyfriend. Directed by Naresh Saigal. Bombay: Naresh Saigal Films, 1961.
Junglee. Directed by Subodh Mukherji. Bombay: Filmistan, 1961.
Dil Tera Diwana. Directed by B.R. Panthalu. Bombay: Padmini Pictures, 1962.
Professor. Directed by Lekh Tandon. Bombay: Eagles Films, 1962.
China Town. Directed by Shakti Samanta. Bombay: Shakti Films, 1962.
Bluff Master. Directed by Manmohan Desai. Bombay: Subhash Pictures, 1963.
Phir Wohi Dil Laya Hoon. Directed by Nasir Hussain. Bombay: Nasir Hussain Films, 1963.
Kashmir Ki Kali. Directed by Shakti Samanta. Bombay: Shakti Films, 1964.
Janwar. Directed by Bappi Sonie. Bombay: Ruhi Films, 1965.
Mere Sanam. Directed by Amar Khan. Bombay: Sippy Films, 1965.
Badtameez. Directed by Manmohan Desai. Bombay: Filmistan/Varma Brothers, 1966 or is it Budmateez as twice in text? I have corrected the variations in spelling to Badtameez.
Teesri Manzil. Directed by Vijay Anand. Bombay: Nasir Hussain Films/United Producers, 1966.

An Evening in Paris. Directed by Shakti Samanta. Bombay: Shakti Films/United Producers, 1967.

Laat Saheb. Directed by Hari Walia. Bombay: International Enterprises, 1967.

Brahmachari. Directed by Bappi Sonie. Bombay: Sippy Films/United Producers, 1968.

Pagla Kahi Ka. Directed by Shakti Samanta. Bombay: Mars and Movies Productions, 1970.

Andaaz. Directed by Ramesh Sippy. Bombay: Sippy Films, 1971.