CHAPTER FIVE

SHOW BUSINESS: A NOVEL
One of the primary sources of generating and telling ‘fiction’ in India is watching and making a movie. We are the largest producers of celluloid fiction in the world, churning out hundreds of fantastic and escapist films packed with protagonists (performing the most ludicrous actions, stunts, and songs with the straightest of faces) who are not less than super heroes. These dazzling and absurd creations are lapped up by the masses each year, of the dozen odd hits. What is it that makes these stories compelling to so many Indians? And what do they tell us about ourselves as individuals and as a society? Shashi Tharoor (Interview:1999) admits that his novel Show Business, published in 1992, is born when he was seeking to understand ‘stories,’ he asked himself the following questions about the world of cinema and its nostalgic concern about India:

What do these stories tell to Indians? What do they tell about Indians? What can we know about the world from which these stories come? That is, the world of the filmmakers and the actors who make these films. And in turn, what does this all reveal about India as a society today?

Since, film is the recent phenomenon and manifestation of literature in today’s TED age; it has borrowed a great deal from other forms of literary expressions. It is a form developed markedly than the older forms of prose, poetry and drama. There is nothing wrong in this development; since film is a medium of combining complex ways. Many great characteristics that other forms exhibit in particular and specific ways, for example, painting represents through images; whereas novel through words and drama through dialogues and scenes. But the recent digital form of literary expression, i.e. film combines images, words, dialogues and scenes simultaneously to empower the fantasy with real touch. Film differs utterly from theatre. In theatre, there are no retakes. But film has certain correspondences and affinities with other forms of literature. It largely shares an impulse towards narrative with fiction and towards the telling of a story in a linear term. It also establishes affinities with the poetry in the form of songs. In this regard Robert (1991:1452) asserts:

...analogy between shot and word breaks down when we realize that any language has a more or less finite numbers of words, while the number of shots is literally finite. There will never be an oxford dictionary of shots.
In a true sense, India is a land of stage shows. About seven lakh villages in India have local fairs, festivals, tamasha (folk theatre) and variety of dramatic celebrations. There are also pertinent villages inhabited by particular groups of performers, gymnast, animal trainers who bring their troupes for regular street-shows in cities and towns. Besides, thousands of caste sub-groups have their own festival calendars, in which dance, singing and drama play a significant role. In another sense, some Jatras (fairs) have also cultural shows. There are plenty of organised performing arts evolving their own grammar of culture and manner of celebration. Each major temple in India has its own annual or yearly celebration of presiding deity with music concerts, melas, rath (chariot) pulling, animal shows, sacrifices etc. for example, Ganesh festival and Durga festival in India. All this has been going on for centuries to celebrate Indian culture. However, modernised towns and cities in India do not have a fraction of the immensely diverse traditional mass entertainments, which the countryside witnesses round every year. Indian films, i.e. Bollywood, with all its limitations and outright stupidity, represent part of the hope of India’s future, in a country that is still almost fifty per cent illiterate. Film is the prime vehicle for the transmission of popular culture and it reflects the diversity of pluralist community with all its diverse cultural traits. Though the stories they tell, are often silly, the plots formulaic, the characterisations artificial, the action predictable, they are watched and entertained by members of every Indian community in India. Muslim actors play the roles of Hindu heroes; whereas Indian heroines are chased by North Indian rouges around trees. To bring out communal harmony through mass communication, representatives of some communities are stereotyped and virtue as well as vice is shown at the every facet of life in every community. Tharoor in this connection (Hindu 2: September, 2001) avers:

...1970s mega hit ‘Amar Akabar Anthony’, for instance, was an action adventure film about three brothers separated in infancy who are brought up by different families- one a Christian, one a Hindu and one a Muslim. As adults, one is a smuggler, one a street fighter. How they rediscover each other and turn on the villains is why the audience flocked to the film in their millions; but in the process they also received the clear message that Christians, Hindus and Muslims are
metaphorically brothers too, seemingly different but united in their common endeavours for justice.

The Bollywood, through the movie, embodies the very idea of India’s diversity in the way in which it is organised, staffed and financed. Hindi movies are made for escapist entertainment. They serve to communicate the diversity that is the basis of very Indian heritage, by offering the audience a common world to dream with their open eyes. The popular entertainment can unite our diverse communities. Once, Tharoor admitted candidly his Indo-nostalgic apprehension, in one of the columns of Hindu that:

...American scholars Susane and Lloyd Rudalph once recounted a story that they had heard from an Indian Muslim friend who, as a child, was once asked to participate in a small community drama about the life of Lord Krishna, dancing as a Gopi around the Lord. Her Muslim father forbade it. ‘In that case’, said the drama’s director, ‘we will cast you as Krishna. All you have to do is stand there in the classic pose, a flute at your mouth, and the other girls will dance around you.’ And so the Muslim girl played Krishna. That is the popular Indian culture from which so many of us have emerged.

Shashi Tharoor, an exceptional writer, being read eclectically and indiscriminately, with a bull’s eye for detail and novelty has hardly left any untouched subject of discovery and scrutiny in the Indian social and cultural milieu. His wide range of stunning and refreshing experiences delved into anecdotes and characters with his inimitable style of writing. Being lived, thrived and blossomed in the modern India, he has successfully pained a kaleidoscopic mosaic of Indo-nostalgia - in its cultural richness, its poverty, its backwardness, diversity, cultural particularity of each state especially his beloved and cherished state of Kerala and a multilingual Babul of languages.

Tharoor glorifies and lampoons the very idea of an Indian’s existence in the sense of reality and fantasy. He absorbs the observation of T. S. Eliot that ‘human beings cannot bear much reality.’ He perceives that an average Indian flees from the shackles of reality into the cinema halls and finds not only solace and pleasure but also contentment by gifting away small amounts of money to the entertainment industry i.e. Bollywood. The highly sensational world of Bollywood and the
improbable and unrealistic stories, with which its formulae-pictures are involuntarily and successfully produced, recommend a clear contrast to a common Indian and the socio-political truth amidst which he lives. At the same time, an average Indian is fatally attracted towards films and often stimulated by them; his impossible dreams and unattainable nostalgic ambitions find its vivid fulfilment in celluloid. Thus, the major part of his mental life is coloured and occupied by a pseudo world of make-believe. From this perspective nothing appears more intrinsic to the Indian psyche than the cinema. This dual status of the popular film which is distinctly contrasted with, yet strangely analogous to commonplace life makes possible the concurrent exercise of a dual method within the same discourse. The illusion created by the film and sustained by people’s ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ and ignorance finds its way into their hearts to expose nostalgia and becomes a dominant influence; whereby the distinction between reality and fantasy becomes rather shaky. In this connection, Shashi Tharoor (Interview: 1999) questions himself.

...I also looked at stories...in two cases, of the popular film industry. Why? Because...films still represent the principal vehicle for the transformation of the fictional experience. Other than your grandmother telling you the stories on her knee, you go off and get your fiction by watching a movie. So, I ask the question, what do these stories tell to Indians? What do they tell about Indians?

He has replied this question in his novel Show Business:

...in all Hindi films there is only one theme- the triumph of good over evil. The actual nature of the evil, the precise characteristics of the agent of good, may vary from film to film. The circumstances may also change, as do the stories in our Puranas. The songs vary, as do our religious bhajans. But there is no duality between the actor and the heroes he portrays. He is all of them, and all of them are manifestations of the Essential Hero. Therein lies the subconscious appeal of the film to the Indian imagination and the appeal, along with it. (p.213)

The swarming millions of Indian society that crowd the movie temples lustily look for three hours of ‘reel’ life unlike ‘real’ life to men and women with beautiful faces and provoking bodies so Bollywood sells nostalgic dreams just as Raj Kapoor has exclaimed once: ‘nobody wants to see reality and so I am selling
dreams.’ Raj Kapoor sold the complete blend morality with *masala* (spices), as in his most famous movie *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*, he puts religion at the side of sensuality and presto. The result was a three-hour Bollywood illusion with numerous nostalgic dream sequences:

…the bulk of the people are deeply influenced by the films they have (seen)…they believe in these dreams more uncritically than any other audience in the world. To forget the squalid reality of his own life, a poor man will visit the cinema every day. (takharjennifer.com)

The hundreds of popular Hindi films belched out of the numerous Bombay studios provide the purest form of entertainment for the hundreds and thousands of Indian viewers; who watch them each year. Many of these films are the stuff of nostalgic dreams with their impressive storyline and highly impractical peripetia. Tharoor compares Hindi movies with the religion to go through his Indo-nostalgia:

Indian cinema has many remarkable affinities to Indian religions…Hinduism…is agglomerative and eclectic: it embraces and absorbs the beliefs and practices of other faiths and rival movements. It co-opts native dissenters-Buddha, Mahavira and plagiarizes foreign heresies, finding the protestant work-ethic, for instance, in the *Karma-Yoga* of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The Hindi film is much the same: it borrows its formulae from Hollywood; its music from Liverpool and its plot lines from every bad film that Hong Kong has ever produced…(pp.211-212)

The world’s largest film industry is not established on the Western littoral of the United States of America but can be found, a couple of oceans away, in India- in Bombay:

The Bombay film industry is a prolific dream-machine. Bombay, that super-epic motion picture of a city’s (Moor’s Last Sigh, 129) a microcosm of India, is the teeming film capital of the country. According to Vijay Mishra, more than 700 films are produced per year, making ‘Indian cinema (rank) among the country’s top ten industries.’ (takharjennifer.com)

To put it briefly, popular cinema in India is the home of the non-rational; it is a collective fantasy, a nostalgic dream, a bridge between desire and dream, reel and real, a vehicle of hope and a healer of nostalgic pains; besides cleanser of the soul. The function of cinema in Tharoor’s text is not merely to reveal the film
world, but to draw upon the paradigms of Indo-nostalgia, which define the relationship between the cinema and the country and the Indo-nostalgic identity of the country men, defined by the cultural desire of the masses for fantasy against realism. He *Bookless in Baghdad*, 2005:230) defends his choice of the film metaphor as an apt vehicle to explore the Indian condition thus:

...the social and political relevance of popular cinema in India, for instance, has been dealt with surprisingly little in Indo-Anglican fiction. And the whole process of the manufacture of our modern myths on celluloid is one that I found fascinating as a creative issue in itself. My concern was both with the question ‘what do these stories reveal about ourselves?’ And with a distinct second set of questions: ‘how are these stories told? What do they mean to those who make them and those who see them? How do they relate to their lives?

He maintains further:

...Hindi cinema consists of endless repeated variations on a few basic themes. The Indian film is the idealized representation of the Indian attitude to the world. (p.212)

*Show Business* deals with an analytical accuracy, with the central socio-cultural feature of the life of the common Indian. In a real sense, he parodies the Indian film industry for its hypocrisy and superficiality, the frames have stuck into a rich boy meets poor girl or vice-versa or boy meets girl...or sometimes love at first sight:

...It’s impossible: all these rich girl-poor boy fantasies the Hindi films churn out fly in the face of every single class, caste and social considerations of the real India. ‘Just giving the lower classes the wrong ideas,’ Dad growled, not entirely in jest. After all, the dramatic rise in what the papers call ever teasing, which is really nothing less than the sexual harassment of women in the street, isn’t entirely unconnected with Hindi films...the lout thinks he’ll get the rich girl just as you do in the movies. Except that in real life, the rich girl won’t look at him, let alone sing duets with him. (p.248)

But in Bollywood this love at first sight meets with societal disapproval, strenuous fighting sequences follow and finally all is well that ends well. The song sequences make the sweet nostalgic dish ready for public consumption, this is a
never die formula that motivates scores of Bombay producers. A new definition of entertainment has emerged from this Indo-nostalgic theme.

...artificial? I asked incredulously. “What do you mean, artificial? Isn’t all acting artificial?” you know, all that running around trees, chasing heroines, singing songs as you walk through parts. You know what I mean, ‘that isn’t artificial, that’s mass entertainment.’ (p.6)

Cinema is the opium to the masses; their senses are opiated by the breaking formula. Tharoor tumbles down on Bollywood like a falcon surveying the scene. In Show Business, Tharoor deals with the glitterati of the Bombay’s tinsel town, the glamour, the gloss of breasts and curves matter more than their acting expertise. In this regard, Ramanan Mohan (1997:118) comments on the novel:

...Show Business is a shorter effort but still long enough and it is built on their air, Bombay film world is its focus. The celluloid city is famous for what is called Bollywood. Cinema is big business and this tinsel town is well-known for its big spending, its creation of huge illusions, its escapist entertainment and its yellow journalism, scandals and hypocrisy. Tharoor chooses to satirize this world.

Fareeduddin Kazmi (Nandy: 134-157), observes the conventional movie as the most effective medium in India since:

The cinema is the cheapest, most accessible and effective medium of mass communication and image building. Psychologists, politicians, scientists, sociologists, anthropologist, folk-lorists, structural linguistics, for long cocooned in their disciplinary orthodoxies, are now being forced to come out and take note of this ‘strange’ and ‘curious’ medium ...

The identity of the Indian city of Bombay has been inextricably clubbed with the identity of the film industry i.e. Bollywood. Tharoor places his narrative in ‘Bombay, the filmi capital of India.’ (p.7) He is conscious of the omnipresent effect of the urban philosophy upon the rural masses through the medium of the film. The organisation of the cinematic techniques of intercutting monologues, film editing, pastiche, arrangements and songs as the fundamental part of the typical Bombay film music. Tharoor reveals how the Bombay film song has been an important node for assimilating the nostalgic emotions and desires of Indians:
...and everywhere I went on street corners and wedding receptions, in holiday processions, I kept hearing that wretched song...it was played everywhere...at every imaginable public festivity. (pp.62-63)

Tharoor (2005:173) states of the title of the Show Business, in ‘From the Bathtub to Bollywood’ that:

Thus even the name of the book, Show Business, is an allusion not only to the cinema world but also to the pretences of politicians and the superficialities of god men.

The cinema is seen as an abusive device to shape the reality of the class struggle by endorsing a fantasy of class mobility. Tharoor pictures the contrast between the cognizant divergence of the actor’s public and personal life with that of the rural masses, which identify with the possibility of the success of the poor boy-rich girl relationship. In his narrative, the rise in sexual harassment of women in the street is attributed to ‘all these rich girl-poor boy fantasies,’ churned out by the Hindi movies, which are impossible:

...in the face of every single class, caste and social consideration of the real India. (p.248)

The prime concerns of Tharoor are in the interplay of the cinema and the conventional belief systems. The culture of Bollywood is carried into Indian politics. In ‘The Double life of Shashi Tharoor’, Field Michele (1994) sees the interplay between politics and cinema thus, “This idea of the two-streamed life is at the centre of Show Business: Bombay film stars who venture into politics and politicians who act as if they’ve been cast as ‘stars’. This interface between the political world and the cinematic becomes relevant since Varma Rashmi (2004:74) avers:

Bombay has been in fact experienced as much in and through cinema as cinema in India has been about Bombay.

The concept of impersonation is a subversive and nostalgic factor by which characters in cinema substitute real men and women. The cinema, in impersonating, does not simply mask, but also reveals the disguised image of national identity. Tharoor applies the fantasy and Bollywood as a metaphor, to study the reality bites of India through Indo-nostalgic narration. However, Bollywood impersonates the country and in doing so, subverts the authenticity of
singular reality of the nation. The concept of impersonation has been propounded by Chakravarthy Sumita’s (1996:57) comment as:

That the state in a newly independent nation establishes itself as a major actor need hardly be emphasized.

Apart from the socialistic rhetoric, the ideological involvement of the state continues to be capitalistic. The Indian cinema despite its indigenous spirit seeks to fit the tradition within a colonialist enterprise. The culture pretended by the Bollywood industry is the result of contemporary myths invented by popular Hindi cinema:

The next couple of movies made a star out of her and a prophet out of me...she was everyman’s sister or daughter, every woman’s ideal... (p.63)

Tharoor contends to reveal how these myths as a form of impersonation in the cinema coincide with the multiple identities and the perspectives within India. The doubling technique, which is a feature of Indian cinema, serves to show how a character playing double roles can convince the audience into accepting the impersonation as the real:

Ashok-another Ashok, but the audience does not know this immediately... (p.92)

At the superficial level, Show Business is a satirical attack on the life of a movie star in the Bollywood industry, but Tharoor explores the way mass-market films, the lowest form of culture, protect and reinvent the stories of people or national histories. Though at the face level, the novel unfolds a story of the film star Ashok Banjara, who is unmistakably a nostalgic caricature of the long reigning Hindi film star Amitabh Bachchan. It points out how heroes are created and how follies are ignored in order to create a history and thereby a historical record of India through Indo-nostalgic perception.

The structure of Show Business duplicates the worlds of politics and cinema. The novelist employs the film montage of shooting scripts and monologues to arrive at deeper concerns within a fictional context. Speaking of Show Business in ‘In Defense of the Bollywood Novel’ Tharoor (1996:34) discerns the political concerns of the novel. “The connection between politics and films in India is one of the themes the novel explores, within, of course, its
fictional parameters." He further intercepts the personal stitch with the very political voice:

In our country, elections are a popular *tamasha* that occur every five years, a spectacle, an entertainment for the bored masses...that's one hope: your appeal as a film star may reach deeper into people's personal voting intentions than their leader's instructions... (p.208)

Author's distress over the ideological rupture between the individual and the country presents itself in the fashioning of the consciousness of the subject by the country through the introduction of Indian cinema. He perceives the film as Indo-nostalgic opium of the individual which the country employs to make the subject forget the tyrannical social order. Tharoor (2005:229) demonstrates the relevance of the Indian cinema as the medium to reveal contemporary facts that shape the identity of the subject within the national experience:

...in a country of widespread illiteracy...cinema is a particularly useful vehicle for this exploration.

The cinema is one among other ideological institutions of state which endeavours to circulate and mobilise the ideology of the subject and the country. The cinema serves to characterise and replicate prevailing myths and beliefs to persuade the consciousness to inculcate consent of the Indian national identity. The power of cinema further becomes visible, it is more popular than the novel but this is an Indo-nostalgic power that thrives on the illiteracy and the desire for fantasy among the masses. It is of significance that *Show Business* is more successful in its filmic version titled 'Bollywood.' The Indian cinema becomes an effective pulse of imagination for the poorest Indian men and women because:

They see and hear stories too, in the lights of the thousands of the cinemas in our land, where myth and escapist intervene and moral righteousness almost invariably triumphs with the closing credits. (p.220)

The ideological production of Indian national identity is seen in the illogical gap formed by the rural urban division, the rural and Indo-nostalgic image associated with Mother India persuades the rural individual to face
subjectivity when his/her psyche is convinced of the omnipresent ideology of the country as estimated by the cinema.

Though Tharoor’s fictional text revolves around the rise and fall of the filmic hero, its major concerns include the fears, lusts, deceits, needs and frustrations of the urban as well as the rural life. He parallels the tinsel world with the power of the illusions foisted by the power of urbanised knowledge over the unconscious psyche of the rural masses subject to intuition formation. The urban knowledge acquires an edge over the rural, since the urban psyche is aware of the illusions it creates or in other words, of how strategies of knowledge work to create an order of power to contain the resistance of the other. Tharoor’s central character, Ashok Banjara acknowledges this cognizant Indo-nostalgic contrivance:

I have kept India awake by telling the nation it can dream with its eyes open. I have given each Indian the chance to reinvent his life, to thrill to the adventurous chase, to chase the unattainable girl, to attain the most glorious victory...I gave the ordinary people, the ones in the twenty-five paise seats, a truth more valuable than the tattered truths of their tawdry lives.(p.305)

Besides, Tharoor acknowledges that the rural masses crowded outside are only drawing out the relief of a reaction. The conflict of the urban and the rural life is a result of the way ideology is perceived by either. On the contrary, the urban resists identification with the ideology contrived by the ideological institutions of the state - the cinema in the recent context - the rural identify as one with the ideology propagated on the screen. The disillusionment voiced by the successful hero of the Bollywood highlights the circular movement from the corruptness of urban life back to the rural:

Bollywood may still be a meritocracy but it is a meritocracy tempered by genes. (p.295)

Tharoor employs Bollywood as a metaphor to study the all-embracing aspects of Indo-nostalgia ranging from the personal lives of the actors to their public screen image that is inculcated by the masses into their personal codes. He contributes this idea in the bafflement of the actor at discovering the dishonesty of the experienced actress:
She must be dreaming, as millions of her countrymen do in the cinema theatres of our nation except that they dream with their eyes open. (p.20)

In *Show Business*, the hero of the Bombay talkies is depicted as a complete failure in personal life. But the formula movies, which reveal him as an indomitable crusader of vice forces, facilitate the country to capitalise on the aspirations of the rural masses since:

The Indian film industry is built on their ignorance and on their willing suspension of disbelief. (p.28)

The rural psyche mobilises itself into the cinema in the faith of economic betterment as they witness it materialising on the silver screen. Moreover, with the discovery of its concretised nostalgic dreams and desires in the cinema, the rural psyche translates the clean image of the hero of the tinsel world into its entry in the political sphere.

On the other hand, when the hero is identified as a part of the establishment, the adoration in the psyche of the masses tentatively fades until the return of the hero as the supporter against evil appears on the silver screen. Therefore, it is a prejudice that the rural psyche is conscious of the impression formation of the actor as hero does not change. It is only when the hero is cast against the established institution that the rural psyche loses its thrill of urbanised knowledge. Therefore, it is the power of the subjectivity consciously lived by the rural psyche especially in its awareness of the ideology created by the cinema that the urbanised familiarity undergoes insurrection.

Moreover, the entry of the hero, Ashok Banjara, from the tinsel world into the politics turns the rural masses into the conflict between illusion and reality, with the power of their first impression dominating their newly gained perception. However, when the rural psyche gets an inner conflict with the urbanised knowledge it foregrounds the creators of ideology in the city. So, urbanised ideology does not shape rural constituents into a forced subjectivity.

However, Tharoor is objective on revealing how the rural psyche is subject to cinema, an ideological machinery that serves to represent the hero on his return to the cinematic world. His chief concern lies with the urbanised masses whose nostalgic illusions appear as reality to the rural masses, but he does not hold the
urban people responsible for broadcasting illusions. He ascertains that certain institutions of the city such as the cinema capitalise and mobilise the rural into the urban.

The frustrations and aspirations that will fuel the masses struggle for justice is sidetracked by being focused on the screen success of a movie-star. (p.254)

He observes the circular movement of Indo-nostalgic power relations from the tinsel world into the political and vice-versa and strives to demonstrate how similar strategies inform both the political and the cinema worlds:

And yet, I suppose, our worlds are not far apart after all. You function amidst fantasies, playing your assigned role in a make believe India that has never existed and can never exist. As a politician, I too play a role in a world of make-believe, a world in which I pretend that the idea and principles and values that brought me into politics can still make a difference. Perhaps I am performing Ashok in an India that has never really existed and can never exist. (p.118)

Ashok Banjara posits an Indo-nostalgic fulcrum to parallel the cinematic and the political discourses. In the 1970s, a crisis fermented up due to the desertion of the ecstasy of the post-independence epoch and the authenticity granted to incongruent agencies of the country such as the government, magistrates and management. The consumerist decline the forced capacity of the ruling class to solve societal conflicts and fiscal problems. Bombay was a significant central point of such action since the slum population were displaced and marginalized from the city.

In the social and political context, the mutinous protagonist of Tharoor’s cinema, in this novel, is significant. The image of the hero as one who takes the law into his own hands and protects the subjugated from official tyranny serves to circulate power between the centralised city and the marginalised sector. The device of the cinematic code appeals to the rural imagination; and accounts for its popularity among its most enthusiastic audience from the marginalised sector. Though Tharoor engages in the unraveling of this phenomenal success of the hero as a wronged but rebellious individual, the ideological scheming of the medium is also fore-grounded.
The sedition in these films does not examine the structure of institutions of the state but, it satirises the workforce operating these institutions who are sufferers through whom the power of the system is made theoretical. Moreover, the villain as a transgressor of the normalised order is shut down thereby ensuring the restraint of sedition. The ‘anti-establishment’ films of the 1970s and 1980s attack the state and its institutions for their corrupt ways of functioning. However, in their attack on the organisation, the institutionalised rules of law under which the police operate, contain ambiguity to release the powerful criminal in the guise of the politician.

In the contemporary movies, since the 1980s, the villain is stereotyped as the politician in close cycles with the police and the mafia. In this context of the nexus of politics, law and criminality, the protagonist as a hero is revolutionary of the anti-establishment film and reproduces the conflict in its fictional world but ascertains the refraction of any subversive potential that might pose a threat to the coherence of the structure of the system itself. The process of encouraging the identification of the spectator is achieved of the institutions of the state. However, the solution that is proposed is upon the sedition of the bureaucracy by the mythic independence of the hero.

The centered interest upon the individuality of the hero is ideologically powerful in the displacement of collective action. Besides, the individual’s disagreement with either of the bureaucracy or the personal trait of the member of society creates the intuition that the solution lies in the liquidation of the person and not with the structure of the society. However, the overt criticism of the institutions of the state acts as a safety-valve. Tharoor’s novel develops the formula by which initially the existing order is exposed of its insufficiencies. The villains who transgress and create disorder are shown to have personal flaws and the hero with extra human abilities forms an alternative to the ineffective state and restores the social order. However, the hero functions within the discourse of ‘law and order’ whereby the films reassert the naturalised ideology of the system as well as emphasise the Indo-nostalgic power of the system.

The spectator’s recognition is not with the crime but with the production of a contravention. Indian cinema incorporated the criminal discourses that had
entered the politics of the country. However, the tangible images of the villain ...as smuggler, as mafia leader, corrupt politician and conspirator ...are being depicted as a transgressor who becomes a vehicle for the re-establishment of the order assigned by the system. Tharoor’s Indo-nostalgic portrayal of the villain in the cinema of his text is a case in point.

Tharoor demonstrates the persistent theme of the hero as a vigilante who fights against the enemies of the nation. His novel reflects a clear understanding of the way; the established government encourages the motive of protecting the nation against anti-national elements. The resulting notion is that, the legal state was not as powerful as the alternative state. However, the restoration of order by the surrender of the hero or his imprisonment by the legal state ensued that the state had the power to restrain the sedition by the parallel government represented by the film in the present context. On the other hand, this notion is also suggestive of the fact that the state makes its power visible by producing transgressors (the villains in the film) and by containing the vigilante (the heroes). In the representation of this persistent thematic format, the Indian cinema forms a parallel to the nostalgia of the Indian ethos and India as a homeland.

In spite of the freedom of expression, in India, films function as the most affective medium to reach the majority of the people who remain the victim or rather are under the control of the censorship officiated by the government as Chakravorty (2005:72) affirms:

In India, the postcolonial state, while against censorship in art and literature, saw film as a separate case altogether, primarily because of its wide reach and potential influence. The power to censor films was an official weapon the national government thought fit to retain.

Tharoor does not miss to recognise the power of the censorship, which curtails an exposition of veracity.

At this point the film skips and jumps, scratches and crosses of light appearing in the upper corners of the frames. The censorship have added to their achieves of forbidden pleasures, leaving their symbol-an isosceles triangle, the inverse of the national symbol for contraception-on the certificate that precedes the movie. (p.234)
Show Business emphasises the nostalgic circulation of the social energy between the real life and the cinema. The hero of the novel and the representative of the film, Ashok Banjara, distinguishes the interplay between politics and cinema. Tharoor exposes the wide gap between cinema and politics; though within the Indian context they work on a parallel structure.

My India is periodically torn apart in outbursts of communal and sectarian violence but communal awareness only enters your films if the producer wants to obtain an entertainment tax waiver for ‘promoting national integration.’ (p.117)

At one level, the novel Show Business recounts the narrative of an imaginary actor, Ashok Banjara, who ventures to fame in India’s booming film industry, whereas on another level, Tharoor’s concern lies in exposing the leading actor’s unsuccessful disposure to trade his fame in politics when entry into it leads him to the downfall and public dishonour of the actor. At every stage of his narrative, the hero and other protagonists of the novel are involved in different stories. The story in the novel, despite of its cinematic concerns is an Indo-nostalgic reading of political histories within India at metaphorical level:

Opportunity-wise, I mean, look at these Southie guys, MGR, NTR, you know. Big-time Tamil, Telugu movie stars and when they entered politics they were like unstoppable everywhere their movie played. (p.200)

Tharoor models his protagonist Ashok Banjara on the Indian idols MGR, N. T. Rama Rao and Amitabh Bachchan. His accident on the site and his ultimate comeback into cinema is an apt parallel to the blurring between stage role and political role of M. G. R. and Rama Rao, former Chief Ministers of Tamilnadu and Karnataka through Indo-nostalgic mode:

It’s sort of like what happened in Madras, in 1967, when the fading screen hero MGR, swashbuckling of hundred Tamil films, was shot, really shot by the established film villain-and former mentor-M.R. Radha... (p.250)

Moreover, the theatrical and fictional scene of Ashok Banjara’s hospitalisation and the consequent visit paid by the Prime Minister is paralleled on the real event in the filmic career of Amitabh Bachchan:

The whole country is praying for you, Ashokji. Really there are open air prayers in mosques and temples...I even hear the
Prime Minister is planning to break an official journey tomorrow to visit you in the hospital . . . but the Prime Minister just doesn’t do that for everyone, you know . . . (p.188)

On the other hand, Tharoor is acquainted with the power of the viewers over the success of a movie star either as an actor or a politician, “Did you ever wonder why you were so much more popular as a filmi hero than a politician? Why the mass adulation you enjoyed as an actor failed to translate into mass political support when you needed it?” (p.294) The conservative screen image of an irritated and mutinous young man becomes an oddball in the political ground, as Tharoor states:

But when you become a politician, you were revealed as what you were—the opposite of your screen image. A part of the establishment. The son of a politician. The Prime Minister’s man. The people who cared for you as a hero couldn’t care for you as a leader. You no longer meant anything to them. (p.294)

If we consider Show Business as a novel about the slice of Indian society, still there are extended historical metaphors in the novel. For example, the novel contains whole plot as an allegory for the emergency in the chapter entitled Kalki. It shares a common concern with its precursor The Great Indian Novel, in its role as a political satire. Tharoor employs satire to recast and reinvent the great stories and the grand historical narratives in the ways that immediately provoke not only a fresh and novel but also an Indo-nostalgic perspective of their authenticity:

The past is always there with me anyway, he says, what I am is the result of the past as it shapes itself into the future, which in turn immediately becomes the past. The present, he says, is an illusion. (pp.194-195)

Tharoor raises the question as to how Indianness, in other words, yearning for Indo-nostalgia, is a phenomenon to be understood through the tastes and attitudes of Indians:

The Indian film is the idealized representation of the Indian’s attitude to the world. (p.212)

Through the power of cinema in formulating the ideology of the nation, Tharoor proves the nature of truth in history, in fiction, in reality and in the contemporary cinema:
...Yes, truth: for what I have done is to take a part, a situation, a line of dialogue, an expression, a gesture and made it more than that...in my acting as in my opportunity; and in so doing. (p.305)

In terms of the relationship between cinema as an institution and the country, it becomes essential to accommodate the identity of cinema as an economic and cultural institution. This relationship becomes intricate within a series of discursive practices, producers, distributors, artists, a series official, representatives of the press and the spectators. The cinema in terms of its monetary level is directly controlled by it and hence emerges formulaic. The economic alternative can also be observed as creating a motivation for resistance by a few artists who challenge to fabricate a work of art but do not reach a large accepted demand.

On the other hand, it is not possible to negate the power of the political economy over the cinema since the cinema in achieving the popular response gains an ideological association with the economy. This blurs the line between film texts which are compartmentalised as ‘devoted’ and those as ‘fiscal’; since commercialising the cinema to generate more films is a positive condition of power, a source of establishing commitment to action as Chakravarthy Sumita S. (1996:79) reiterates:

> Any form of widely disseminated culture is an interface of history and politics, contingency and compromise, implicitly held and stubbornly contested views and values.

The novel is written in ‘Takes’ of the Bollywood style. These takes are the stories centered on the protagonist to express India with all its rich diversity of cultural and Bollywood traits. The author has told the stories of Bollywood within the story of the novel. These stories are marked with a bent of Indo-nostalgia exposed through the Bollywood films. The author (Interview: 1999) confesses his Indo-nostalgic yearning while writing these stories for Show Business:

> ...in looking for one more metaphor to explore Indian condition, I took cinema as a natural one...the novel that intercuts extensively the stories of the formulaic films of Bollywood...The story is about the stories, at the same time, these stories are about India...they are about the kinds of stories that India is telling itself today.
In first Take, *Godambo*, an engrossing thriller presents a world even more fantastic and imaginary than an isolated castles haunted by witches in fairy tales. The dark castle of fairy tales is replaced by a resplendent, gaudy and brightly lit 'cavernous hail' of Godambo, the villain. Gold, black and red stand out in jarring contrast. 'The massive pillars, eerily lit, in red and gold.' (p.23) are secured by 'black-clad commandos' and each commando has a badge with 'black Cheetah' embellished in gold thread. The huge pool in the centre of the hall is 'flanked by ornamental fountains, its waters also illuminated in red and gold.' At the press of a button, the floor opens up, to reveal hungry sharks, moving dangerously in the pool. A close up of a hapless victim can be seen on a large screen with the press of another button. The concealed buttons are on the 'jeweled throne' of the villain, who is also 'attired in black, red and gold,' holding a live baby cheetah on his lap. The eerie silence is broken by the rising tempo of music, each note indicating danger. A world certainly far removed from reality. The camera centers on family scenes and romantic scenes, with Ashok, the CID inspector, as the affectionate son, brother and lover. The scenes are complete with songs, dances and adoring, loving glances. The camera shifts to the nightclub whose 'dazzling mosaic of multicoloured minors,' and 'rainbow colours' make it appear as gaudy as Godambo’s hole. The rolling drums sound dangerously as the dancer is introduced. Secret doors and passages open up in Godambo’s den, as the fight between the forces of good and evil begins. Celluloid policeman and black commandos fire indiscriminately, with unearthly weapons. The fight ends with the spectacular and dramatic drop of Godambo and his pet into the sea.

In second Take, *Judai*, the camera moves on to the evil ‘feudal Thakur.’ (p.85) The scene shifts from the chandeliered hall with its mosaic floor, to the birth of twins, the conspiracy to put them to death, their safe escape by being placed in two baskets, with talisman around their podgy wrists, for future recognition and reunion; the servant running with one basket, the other floating down the river, while the water turns red with the injured mother’s blood and sound of the horses hooves, fade as the ‘director’s name fades from the screen. (p.88) And the camera shifts to a pavement on inspector – performing the role of the twins. The search for the father by the twins, the unintentional meeting with
the mother, the prison scenes and finally the arrest of the Thakur once again the triumph of virtue over vice puts an end to the story. All along, the sound track is dramatic, powerful, suspenseful and nostalgic as the scene demands.

The plot of the story makes us to feel the partition of brothers a very popular theme for almost four decades. Besides, the story of the film embraces another popular theme of\textit{ Zamindar}. Abha plays a role of mother to Ashok, who casts a double-role as an inspector and the other as a slum hero and monkey-man; a man with monkey to play tricks. Between them they slice up the Thakur or landlord, played by Pranay, who has been guilty of sending their blameless father to prison and of separating two brothers. The feminine interest in the movie is the role of Mehnaz Elahi, who falls in love with inspector Ashok, and the monkey-man brings them together after a grand reunion of the family and the destruction of the villains...such movie scripts are described in between which hold parallels to the life of Ashok Banjara.

...it is strange, isn’t it, how so many of the events of your life seemed to parallel your films and vice-versa. Life imitating art, perhaps – if Hindi films can be called art. The most astonishing thing was your doing that film in which you played a pair of twin brothers, precisely when Maya was delivering your own triplets! Your mother and I never stopped marveling about that. (p.122)

In the original and revised versions of \textit{Dil Ek Qila}, the camera ‘pans across azure sky, verdian slopes, technicolour flowers.’ and lingers on the poor heroine running, laughing in a gay mood across the screen to the ‘strains of an electric mandolin,’ while Ashok pursues. He embraces her and they both roll down the hill. The camera focuses on a domestic scene: Ashok’s pronouncement of his love for Mehnaz, the father’s anxiety and the mother’s request to meet the girl leads to the next scene: an auditorium. The girl dances and sings with loving glances at Ashok. The ‘rage and outrage’ of Ashok’s father disappears when the scheming, deceiving scene is quickly followed by Ashok’s marriage to Abha. A couple of domestic scenes follow: Ashok is shown in the company of his ‘dutiful wife and beautiful children.’ In the meantime, Mehnaz rises in fame and Ashok unaware of her success learns music from a maestro. An unintentional meeting between the two flares up the old relationship and the next few scenes follow its success. The
early happy dramatic scenes turn into one of pain and sorrow with the unhappy wife pleading the hero to give up Mehnaz. Ashok miserably expresses his inability to do so. The inevitable takes place. Abha pleads with Mehnaz. This meeting quickly leads to the climactic scene. During the performance, Mehnaz is shot dead. Ultimately, Ashok, Abha and the villain mourn her sudden death.

The revised version introduces most of the nostalgic scenes of romance and love. The romance is between the poor hero and the rich heroine. The Kashmir scene is repeated, followed by songs in the palm grove, complete with their joyous expressions. The beach scene follows. The running, chasing and embracing culminates in their wedding. The poor hero continues to sing while the beloved of the original script dances to his songs. A domestic scene shows Maya, the wife learning to sing from a maestro. She is launched as a singer. She goes from success to success in a series of quick cuts. Ashok’s career in the meantime shows a downward curve. He performs in “nondescript theaters before dwindling crowds, his name set in increasingly smaller print in shabby notices.”(p.175) and in a state of depression, he goes to his stage partner for solace and comfort. His wife decides to give up her career for the happiness and peace of her home. The climactic scene: Ashok is shot by the villain, but fortunately escapes death. At a performance, he announces his wife as his new stage partner.

In third Take, Mechanic, Tharoor represents Ashok as a nostalgic car mechanic, who through quick camera cuts, meets the heroine and her evil, powerful, politician father, who has ordered the demolition of huts in the slum area where he lives. The camera hangs on the slum-dwellers’ march to the palatial house of the politician and soon shifts to the bull-dozer scene. The “monsters of destruction and development” (p.234) come to a screeching halt before the human barrier. The scene shifts to the struggle for political power between the forces of evil and good. The election campaign has striking improbable scenes. The powerful politician has a fleet of cars loudspeaker equipped, while the righteous hero “stands on Ashwin’s shoulder at street-corners, making his passionate entreaties without the benefit of a microphone.” His supporters move about with ‘palm folded sincerity.’ While the opponent addresses huge gatherings, where his “minions distribute rupee note to the trucked in participants.” His ‘glossy posters
and gigantic hoardings’ (p.235) stand in contrast to Ashok’s symbol of a ‘spanner’ scrawled with charcoal by street urchins on every wall available. Ashok’s printed leaflets and brochures are scattered on the streets and sold by bickriwallahs to be made into peanut packets for the street vendors and street plays are performed by supporters to expose the prevalent evils of corruption and black-marketing. The climactic scene: the camera moves swiftly from the political debate to the abduction scene and then lingers on the impatient crowd and dance scene to shift to the freed Ashok reaching the scene in an autorikshaw. The final scene: “a kurta-clad Ashok, newly elected is garlanded in triumph.” (p.242) The camera hangs on as the scene takes a long shot of the palm-folded Ashok, the applauding crowd and the poster of Ashok’s election symbol. The stains of the national anthem bring the film to the end through Indo-nostalgic exposure.

Shashi Tharoor builds up the theme of Show Business through the reel that runs in Ashok Banjara’s mind and the voices that he hears. The novel runs at two levels: the political and the reel level. At the political level, a chaotic and complex democracy emerges whereas at the reel level, a highly fantastic and exaggerated India emerges through Indo-nostalgic narration. The novel tends to raise the questions like - what is the role of films in the country like India. Is it a pure entertainment or a means of mass escapism? Or does it have a more significant role to play? The answers to these questions become explicit when both the worlds are explored by the author. The technicolour fun in Ashok’s mind, introduces him as a nervous, embarrassed and ordinary actor, shooting for his debut film Musafir. He attempts to perform the absurd role of chasing the heroine, an aging actress who runs, ducks, dances and deftly evades his dive. She blinks and picks up the wet pallu of her soaked sari and covers half of her face in ‘practised coyness.’ (p.34) The scene is shot a number of times, unsuccessfully, as he dances like a ‘paraplegic’ to the utter annoyance and fury of the director. Ashok’s own embarrassment mounts with the sense of the ridiculousness of the role. The shooting for the day ends with the hero’s finding that the famous personality of the heroine, which had once caused a ‘celebrated traffic jam’, was that of a ninety-year-old woman. The scene satirically exposes the false celluloid world of Bollywood.
The reel election campaign turns into real one. By grounding Ashok Banjara, the superstar and heartthrob of millions of Indians into the political arena, Tharoor captures the psyche of the entire nation. The satirical vein is clearly evident when Cyrus broaches the subject and tries to motivate Ashok to enter politics:

Now you, man, your movies play everywhere. You’re not a regional actor, like. Only real handicap’s your initials…AB lacks something, ya know?…call yourself ABR and you could be bloody Prime Minister one day, big guy? (p.200)

The opposition fields a rebel from the congress – Pandit Sugriva Sharma. He is a learned man but unscrupulous. He is predictably the ablest defender of the slum-dwellers, untouchables, Muslims and the left. The Congress has held this particular seat since independence and its loss could be fatal for the party. Ashok Banjara is an ideal candidate, who can help the party win the seat. Through sheer force of satire, Shashi Tharoor, ridicules the reasons for the choice of Ashok Banjara:

Popular, especially, among the underprivileged, whose fantasies he embodies; potentially as effective a campaigner as the experienced Pandit, and demonstrably a better speaker; and as a bonus, heir to the family’s long connection to the constituency. (p.202)

Ashok Banjara trudges for miles through the countryside in chappals, a part of his nationalist attire and his feet take a pounding from the hard, unrelenting soil, from the slushy muck of the fields, from the grimy dust in the street. He finds himself engaged in the “The rituals of campaigning – talking, questioning, ducking, into thatched huts…sitting on charpoys with hookah puffing farmers…standing on the back of the flatbed Tempo to harangue the bazaar through a megaphone.—a hectic punishing schedule.” (p.206) The election campaign includes a strategy session which Ashok’s uninitiated mind finds utterly confusing. The consensus of the professionals on the Brahmin factor, the minority factor, the poverty factor, the Madurai effect and the “endless cups of over-sugared tea” (p.207) complete the election scenario.

Shashi Tharoor projects his Indo-nostalgic views regarding the gap between real India and reel India, through Ashwin and Pranay. These two characters
express similar views though they have different experiences in life. Ashwin belongs to the younger generation of sincere political workers. Whereas, Pranay, an actor works his way up still identifies himself with the underclass.

Tharoor’s another Indo-nostalgic character is Kulbhushan. He is a senior politician with vast political experience dating from pre-independence days and father of the protagonist, who enters politics during the ‘Quit India’ Movement. He has been functioning in the real India for years. To him, celluloid India bears no relation to real India. He points out that India is periodically torn apart in outbursts of communal and sectarian violence; but films generally do not treat this theme. It is only treated in terms of promoting national integration to extract a tax-waiver from the government. Further, he points out that caste and class distinctions are undeniably alive and important in real India. In fact, ‘a man’s surname alone can frequently’ indicate his political affiliations. In films, caste and class distinctions are generally ignored. Pranay, in fact, opines that:

Romantic love is used to cast a veil over the classic contradictions inherent in these situations. It is an exploitative device to blur the reality of class struggle by promoting an illusion of class mobility. (p.255)

The marriage between the poor hero and the landlord’s daughter or vice-versa is actually capitalist camouflage. He also points out that ‘rich girl-poor boy fantasies, the Hindi films churn out fly in the face of every single class, caste and social consideration of real India.’ (p.248) In real life a rich girl will not even look at a poor boy. To Kulbhushan, poverty in India means:

Distended bellies and eyes without hope. (p.117)

In Kulbhushan’s view, the poor in films change their costumes for each verse of their songs; which is a much distorted picture of the poor in India. In Kulbhushan’s India, evil pervades an entire social and economic system. In films evil is personalised in a wicked Zamindar, a cruel smuggler or embodied in a wicked politician, as in Mechanic. Commenting on the duplicity of life, he satirically avers:

In your Hindi films, there is nothing beyond the surface; everything is meant to be exactly what it is shown to be. There are no hidden meanings, no inner feelings, no second
layer to life. All is big, clear, simple and exaggerated. Life is black and white, in technicolour. (p.118)

Pranay reiterates the same view when he remarks that evil is personalised in the villain, rather than in the system which makes victims and ironically Kulbhushan points out, it is the villain, the smuggler of real India who helps the common man to fight against the capitalist. The Indian industrialists produce inferior goods without the fear of foreign competition and protect their own interests by donating liberally to the various political parties. The ironies don’t end here. The anti-national smuggler, is the most avidly sought after for campaign contributions and votes. The political parties, in reality, get support from both the beneficiaries and the violators. Mechanic is a disastrous failure. Even the twenty-five paise audiences fail to appreciate it. Pranay and Ashok both are cast in very unconvincing roles. They both enact roles which go against that of a real politician. As Kulbhushan points out:

A real-life Pranay would never support slum demolitions…in fact the slums exist because of the Pranays, who give them political protection by making populist speeches about squatters rights, and who thereby assure themselves both the votes of the grateful slum-dwellers and the financial support of the mafia dons who really run the slums, and collect the extortionate rents for a few square feet of public property. (p.247)

Ashok’s clean image as a politician is also improbable. Ironically, the proletariat (the twenty-five paise audience) prefers a real Pranay who even though evil protects their interests. Kulbhushan is angry that films make no attempts to change or challenge the existing corrupt system. In fact, Pranay finds every hero counter revolutionary. They dissipate the innate desire to overthrow injustice is vicariously fulfilled in the hero’s defeat of the straw villain, thereby making the masses forget the injustice prevalent in the society. They forget that the ownership and control of the means of production remain unchanged. The films fail to project a real India which grapples with its real issues. This art media fails to stir and inflame the minds of the people to challenge a corrupt system. The films project a ‘make believe India, that has never existed and can never exist.’(p.118)
According to Kulbhushan, politicians have failed to change the corrupt system. In fact, they have helped to build the corrupt system. The politician is also an actor. He also plays a role in a world of make-believe pretending that his principles will bring about change. Further, "politicians make speeches in which they pretend that their actions and positions are motivated by policy, principle, ideology, the interests of their constituents, and their vision of India." (p.120) and they pretend that they win elections and receive money on these grounds. In a satirical vein, he says:

Issues and values determine little of their actual actions, and less of the support they really get: they win on caste calculations, they get money for suborning laws...they switch parties and abandon platforms at the dangling of a lucrative post or a ministerial berth. (p.120)

The rickshawallah, 'epitomes of the common man,' who are one of the many, have poured into Bombay to pray and wait anxiously for Ashok’s recovery, raises him to the status of ‘avatar of God’, as one who had upheld the moral order of the universe. Once again, Ashok has become the most popular man in the country, and as Ashwin feels, the masses could perhaps make him political leader if he survived the accident. Through this, Tharoor captures the specific Indo-nostalgic prejudiced Indian mind and blind devotion towards the man, as the avatar of God, they love and worship.

Moreover, Tharoor maintains the satirical note when a parallel is drawn between MGR and Ashok. In 1967, when MGR was hospitalised for a serious bullet wound, the whole of Tamil Nadu came to a halt. He fought his elections from a hospital bed and won "by the largest majority in the electoral history of the state." (p.251) He remained the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for a decade and continued to rule the state from a hospital bed. Once again, when he was severely crippled by a stroke and he couldn’t speak, a recorded tape of one of his utterances was played and for the first time India had a played-back politician. Ashok’s accident could perhaps be his rebirth as a politician. He has massive public support. Prayers being held for his recovery throughout the country, show their nostalgic sentiments. The emotionally charged masses wait for their God to rise. This unfortunately is one of the greatest tragedies of Indian democracy. The films,
far removed from reality, fail to rouse the masses, which are trapped in their own emotional state. Tharoor has taken up the challenge to stir the minds of the Indian masses through Indo-nostalgic narration in this novel.

Furthermore, the story of *Show Business* registers the career of a socially well placed but impoverished theatre actor Ashok Banjara, who determines to discard his earnest attempts to bring Samuel Becket and Harold Pinter. He succeeds at once with his second film *Godambo* which launches him into the role of a dashing matinee idol virtually overnight. He stars *Judai, Dil Ek Qila*, and *Mechanic* etc. In his last movie *Kalki*, he is critically ill, fighting for his life in the intensive care unit of one of Bombay’s hospitals. He revives his career by narrating his nostalgic reverie as:

...Me Ashok Banjara, best-educated actor in the Hindi film world, former member of Parliament, man of action gave both ‘man’ and ‘action’ a new definition. Bollywood’s first megastar and most articulate of interviewees, lying in a hospital bed festooned in tubes and drips and bandages, listening to the hate and frustration and regret of a motley cast of characters from my life. (p.303)

There is nothing real in Bollywood; what it seems. Ashok’s imagination is the slave of Abha- his first heroine and his first and foremost contact with the world of Bollywood. Abha incited Ashok into the realities of Hindi Cinema, the lobbying to get roles, the false pretences, the casting coach, are all elements of Bollywood life and the world.

Ashok Banjara has personified a new kind of hero and lover in Bollywood. He reflects the psychological changes in the vast number of people, who are placed in a half-way house-the transitional sector. He is neither emotional like *Manju* nor like Krishna-lover; he is an ultramodern hero with his novel appearance on the set. The Hindi movies stir a combination of comedy and tear-jerker situations, the emotional catharsis for the viewers is so complete that one feels cleansed. The widowed mother, making carrot halwa and offering tea is a popular Indo-nostalgic stereotype...when inspector Ashok comes home to his widowed mother. He calls her *Amma* with love and warmth. His mother is intensely nostalgic towards him.
mother asks son to quickly wash his mouth and hands since she has made him-gajar ka halwa. (p.25)

Ashok Banjara has dominated for the last fifteen years of Indian cinema overwhelmingly. His successful films have spawned a brand new genre which though strongly influenced by Hollywood action movies such as those of Clint Eastwood, is neither typically western nor traditionally Indian. Ashok happily works on three films simultaneously. The day is divided into shifts and the leading actors run from set to set, film to film, blithely indifferent to story line or even script.

The Banjara hero is the publicly committed hero who lives on the margins of his society. Though his connections are few, they are strong as well as silent. Prone to sudden brutality and to brooding periods of withdrawal, the hero is a natural law-breaker, yet will not deviate from a strict private code of his own. He is often a part of the criminal world but shares neither its vicious nor its physical excesses. If cast in the role of a policeman; he often sidesteps burdensome bureaucratic procedures to take the law in his own hands, dealing with criminals by adopting their own ruthless methods. His badness is shown as intrinsic or immutable but as a reaction to a deprivation of early childhood, often a mother’s loss, absence or violence towards the hero in a nostalgic way.

...Today we have with us a man who has sampled kama, accumulated artha and seeks to fulfill dharma of service to the people. (p.216)

From this, we can assert that, a hero is both a product and a response to the pressures and forces of development and modernisation taking place in Indian society today. It is the society from where the immensity is drawn for the movie. The virtue-vice features of the hero can be directly correlated with the major psychological difficulties experienced by the transitional sector during the course of modernisation.

In the opinion of Tharoor, the character of Ashok Banjara was invented in 1972 by a sub-editor at JS magazine in Calcutta, Narayan Ojha. The protagonist Ashok Banjara is an allusion to the Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan. He came on to the screen during the cult of ‘angry young man’ a wave that brought in the forceful young hero, a messiah of the subjugated, socially acknowledged
‘Robinhood’ who deprived Peter to pay Paul. The extreme reputation of this type of fictional character created a new wave in cinema and swept the ground below the feet of every section of cine-goers so much so that all young budding heroes began to imitate the likes of Amitabh Bachchan.

The film hero Ashok Banjara is an evident reference to Amitabh Bachchan but the novelist refrains from confirming it. Ashok Banjara has a dual sides to his personality we abstain from using the word ‘spilt’ but prefer to say that Ashok Banjara lives two distinct types of life: the real and reel life. These overlapping modes of survival of a hero create in him conflicting tensions, which could very well lead to psychological anguish. He projects larger-than-life reflections on screen but the same person after removing the fat paint he has to tackle a reality so different and this could lead to a bewildering sequence of events.

...you are not real. None of you is real. This is not real, only the pain is real. And me, I am not real either, and I will never be real again. (p.306)

In the event, Ashok whose stage aptitude is not too good becomes the star of near about fifty successful films and superstar of Bollywood. He marries to his co-star Maya, who has three successful movies to her credit but as a compromise and on Ashok’s request she quits her career for the family and Ashok. Tharoor captures the very conventional Indian considerations of marriage and wife making the dominance over feminine psyche. He also focuses on the Indian wife’s sacrifice for her beloved husband:

...Ashok Banjara, you deprived India of its most cherished celluloid daughter, you deprived the Hindi film industry of its finest actress...once she agreed to marry you, and she gave up her career for you. You made her to do it, of course. (p.64)

It is, in fact, unprofessional to do so but Tharoor points out the emotional pressure on women artists; whereas the male artist would have successfully concealed the emotional fissure. In Show Business, what Tharoor points out that, in glitter city, there are two values, one for the heroes and other for the wives. On the other hand, Ashok beds any person who takes his fancy. He even marries his favourite, Miss India, co-star Mehnaz Elahi:
...just bang away at me when you need me and pretend in public I don’t exist ...remember that first time, when I was practically melting in your arms, and I said, as a feeble last attempt at resistance, ‘but you’re a married man?’ And you said, in that voice of yours, God, that voice, ‘A married man is still a man.’ (p.186)

Exposing the life in Bollywood the novelist has employed irony and satire as selective and distinct literary devices to achieve his purpose. The issues of love, sex and morality are given in the lives of the inhabitants of the glamorous celluloid world. Films in India are subject to Draconian censorship. Until very recently, not even the chestiest kiss is allowed on screen.

...Indian screenplays did not require it, and if they did our Indian censors would not permit it. Nudity is a commonplace in our countryside of course, where many women cannot afford much to wear, but it is banned on our screens; whereas fisticuffs and homicide, which are illegal, energetically portrayed. (p.12)

Sometimes, a scene could be set in a bar, but the hero is never to be seen actually drinking anything, it reflects badly on his character, they can become controversial issues but the codes change from generation to generation. Every decade in Bollywood comes out with new enunciations of love, sex and morality. The man-woman relationship undergoes chameleon alterations in evolution from one epoch to another. The unstoppable invasion from foreign films to great extent its influence on Bollywood. In the glamour of arch lights, psychedelic effects of light and sound, the romantic scenes recreated in alien locales, all these develop the emotional level of the actor, so we find Ashok Banjara loving and doing his screen ideal.

In cinema, to get faultless movie, so many retakes have to be perfected. Moreover to get sensuous image, the director has to do a lot of efforts. These sensual scenes are meant for awakening of libidinal desires in the audience. The fictional locales in the song and dance sequences arouse not only the audience but also the hero and the heroine to a certain level of physical magnetism. Mehnaz Elahi, a sex siren of the film industry and the top heroine of Bollywood has acted opposite Ashok in most of his movies, is given identical treatment by the author to
expose the reel of Bollywood which seems real to the nostalgic and thirsty eyes of audience:

...The rain falls, my enthusiasm rises, her blouse falls and rises and we sing-dance...I am still holding her when the whistle blows. I take her face in my hands, and in full view of the entire unit, kiss her full-bloodedly on the mouth. She does not pull herself from me; I can feel her nipples harden against my shirt. Her tongue darts between my teeth and my hands caress the small of her back, pressing her body into mine. Our need is so urgent we might have gone on, but...reminds us of our audience. (p.136)

In Bollywood, the heroes could have liaisons with a number of heroines and starlets. In the film industry, the hero interacts emotionally with a number of leading ladies. Ashok’s first encounter with Mehnaz was in close sexual immediacy through a sensuous figure and beautiful face. Ashok reveals his proximity with her as:

...for the car door opens, just as it is supposed to, and out steps the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. I am at a complete loss for words. (p.80)

In fact, outrageous attire can stimulate desires more than nakedness. Mehnaz on the other hand gets emotionally attached to Ashok and treats him like a virtual God but Bollywood relationships are highly transitive and if one does not understand this fact then one could be in real pain. Ashok is a professional actor, who sees his heroines as stepping stones to stabilising his own future.

...you treat most women alike, whether they’re sleeping with you, co-starring with you or merely writing gossip columns about you...the casual observer would find it difficult to tell just from your conduct which woman is actually your lover and which is the bitchy columnist your are trying desperately to avoid without showing it. (p.218)

With a buxom beauty like Mehnaz, Ashok flaunts his image as a play boy, so being with her is a kind of publicity stunt which fosters his image of a young romantic hero. Fed up of all this Maya, Ashok’s wife one day stages a come back to Bollywood. Tharoor takes a vital clue from the Hindi movie Abhiman and fits his plot. Scared of the responsibility and effort involved in active wooing, of positivity and dependency upon a woman urges from the earliest period of life, which love brings to the fore and intensifies the withdrawn hero would rather be
admired than loved. The film *Dil Ek Qila* became super hit for Maya. The mother of triplet daughters breaks a new ground in believing that her only existence is as a wife and mother.

...'My life is committed,’ Maya says nobly. ‘There is no waste in fulfilling my dharma as a wife. But I do not intend to sit idly and let my husband drift away from me. I must have done something wrong. I shall undo it now, and win my husband back. (p.179)

Ashok rakes up in destiny as he rides the apex of celebrity in the film industry but on the political side something else is infusing. His father, an aged politician has lost his dynamic grip over his constituency; the party is anxious about his victory and expects one of his sons to be an heir of the constituency. Actually, Ashwin, the younger brother of Ashok, remains unmarried only to serve his father’s constituency. In all truth, Ashwin should have taken over the shroud from his father but the political wizards thought; otherwise, after a poll survey that the vote bank would be theirs only, if a magnetic leader led the party to the polls. The answer is instant. Ashok fits the description of the popular man with a local appeal therefore Ashok is chosen to take over the political stick from his father:

...after growing up in your shadow all these years, doing all the things you rejected, and finally watching the biggest prize of my life fall easily into your lap when it was at last within my reach? (p.246)

Thus, the transition of Ashok from a reel world to the real world, from romantic hero to the leader of the masses finds Indo-nostalgic echoes in India’s political history. Tharoor reminds us of the great Indian fact that film stars in India have turned into political wizards, for example, Rajesh Khanna, Amitabh Bachchan, Hema Malini, Rekha, Shatrughan Sinha, Chiranjeev, Vinod Khanna, to mention a few. So, Ashok becomes messiah for the common Indian masses. But it is the blind belief of the common man that, the political avatar is often the hypocritical man. Taking into consideration, Ashok’s film career and political aspirations, politics leaves Ashok frustrated and empty handed. His seeds of downfall are sown with his entry into politics. So, he makes an awful film *Mechanic* to cast and dramatise his newfound piousness and proper humanitarian principles. Yet the film turns out to be a flop. He stands as an ineffective back-bencher. Soon
the party chiefs use him to stash away funds in his Swiss accounts, which end in his resigning from the politics. Tharoor imitates the famous Bofors case and related financial scandals where Indian politicians and actor Amitabh Bachchan were caught up:

Ashok’s return to films is low key he tries to revitalize his film career but discovers he cannot get a part. So Choubey had called me for an appointment in the morning with every intention of keeping me waiting till he had woken up. That’s the way you treat aspiring actress and perspiring journalists, not superstars. I feel a deep surge of anger and humiliation well up within me. (pp.280-281)

During his Bollywood career, no producer wants to help Ashok. In desperation, he agrees to comeback in an even lower rung of the Indian film industry by starring in a quasi-religious film, a mythological, playing the God Kalki, an avatar of Vishnu, who has come to judge right/wrong and punish the corrupt and evil. In the course of filming a crowd scene, Ashok’s flaming sword causes his horse to bolt. He is thrown down, the flames ignite some costumes and the entire set is touched, with dozens of fatalities resulting:

...The crowds outside the studio were great ...Ashok, proud of his record of never having employed a double for any of his stunts began his canter ...a flame seemed to spurt from the sword ...singeing the horse - out of its rider’s control ...Ashok Banjara fell ...when it was all over, the destruction was complete. The smoldering remnants of the set turned up twenty-seven bodies, including that of the producer-actress and twenty-three were admitted to hospital. (pp.291-292)

Tharoor throws light on the act of ‘double acting’, to act out the dangerous stunts, which is one the perceptions on the art of film making. In a real sense, the double is of no sequence even the hero does not recognise his survival on the sets. Ashok did all his stunts on his own as that of the western Hollywood actors. This incident is evocative of a near total tragedy that shadowed Amitabh Bachchan during the shooting of a film Coolie. An exhausted, badly injured Ashok lies in a hospital, visited by family and friends and as a result, Kalki remains unfinished. The portrayal of Ashok at the incident is explored affectingly and fiercely by the author in the novel. He is rarely prepared, when demanded, to act in a film that includes both his wife and mistress, his relation with the disgusting talk magazine
columnist for *Showbiz*, in the interest of getting his name mentioned more recurrently:

...My lips remain locked on hers and I am aware of the pressure of her teeth: there seem to be about two thousand of them, each as large and strong as a key on Gopi Master’s harmonium. She must chew *neem* twigs before breakfast, and unfortunate actors after. As I try to move she half rises, mouth still glued to mine, and pushes me down with a firm hand. Boy, she’s strong. The other hand is pulling my teeshirt out of my waistband. Christ, this is serious. (p.71)

Tharoor explores the fashionable effect of bedroom journalism on the private life of the stars in Bollywood. The natural outcome of this activity is the friction in the family life of the film stars. In the opinion of the author, these stars are also human beings who are entitled to private life but once they are rich, the press shall not leave them alone. Another baffling feature is that, the star wishes to hog the limelight and receive all kind of media hype just to be in the news. The magazine *Showbiz* is the creator of Ashok Banjara. And at the same time, he is a careful creation of the magazine. The filmy press always remains uncertain. It can create a hero and can disown him. In Bollywood, there are extremes of characterisations. Tharoor makes an innovative use of music, dance and sound tracks to explore his Indo-nostalgia found in Bollywood. Generally, the Bollywood movie revolves round family tragedies, the hero’s sister, hero’s poor mother and perhaps his innocent wife. This is the only ‘Bollywood Masala’ which Tharoor wants to expose through his fiction. The action hero, Ashok, appearing in a larger than life on set, is a total deviation from the reality. In real life, we cannot find a man crashing against the adversity and injustice every time, but for the cine-goers, Ashok comes out as a rescuer for their Indo-nostalgic yearning:

...the triumph of right over wrong, he said. The victory of *dharma*. The reassertion of the moral order of the universe. Ashokji was the upholder of Right: for this reason, he was like an *avatar* of God. The other *avatars*, Rama, Krishna, maybe even Buddha and Gandhi, are all worshipped, but they lived a long time ago and it was difficult to identify really with any of them. Ashok Banjara, though, lived today: his deeds could be seen on the silver screen, for the price of a day’s earnings. And it was as if God has come down to earth
to make himself visible to ordinary men. For me, sahib, he said, Ashokji is a God. (p.256)

Moreover, Tharoor analyses the various dimensions of film such as making directors, producers, costume designers, makeup artists, wardrobe attendants, sets, light boys etc. but what one actually finds is the misdirected youth in the staple of the Bollywood diet. The sophisticated hero, as a champion of the masses, is a great deception on the real life of the masses. In respect of the Bollywood heroines, the tenure of the leading lady is very short. These heroines constantly face the psychosis of being replaced by younger and more entrants in Bollywood. After achieving a peak point in Bollywood, Abha has to play the role of mother to Ashok to keep on going, in the film industry.

...when the (Brahma) created women- yes, the female human. He craved her out of his own body, not from a spare rib, you see, we are a vegetarian people. Now in those days, Brahma had only one head, that’s all he had need of at the time. But he admired his own creation, this first woman, so much, and looked at her so ardently, that she felt obliged to hide in embarrassment from his desire. This she tried to do by running away from his line of vision, but if Brahma could create a woman, he could certainly create an extra pair of eyes. So in order to be able to see her wherever she hid, he grew a head on each side, another one behind and even one on top, to complement his original single head. Is this not like the ubiquitous camera of the Hindi film? (p.213)

Thus, the novel Show Business reveals a painted picture of Bollywood, the Bombay film world with its tinsel opportunities and shallow relationships and ends with voices, such as Kulbhushan, Maya, Abha, Mehnaz, etc. Ashwin is Tharoor’s mouthpiece, a deep Hindu at heart. However, it proves itself as a palimpsest text in exposing camouflaged Indo-nostalgic truths of the reality bites of the Indian cinema. In palimpsesting the various histories behind the hero’s success story, Tharoor locks his justification of mass market taste into an intellectual context. It is many books rolled into one. It is a story about the telling of stories, it is a tale about the power of cinema, it is a fable of our time, which conveys that illusion is the only reality and nothing is what it seems. Mohan Ramanan’s (1997:120) a critique on Show Business will be significant in this regard:
...This is the story, at times entertaining, and usually funny, but after a while it all gets tedious and one wonders what the point of all is why expend so much ink over so little?...We take the point that illusion is reality and reality is illusion...Politics is like films a tissue of lies. Cinema is politicized and there is no innocence. To say this Tharoor takes 307 pages. It was not necessary. One final comment: Tharoor’s writing is part of a fictional culture in India where clever writing seems to be the order of the day. There is money in it, witness Vikram Seth’s huge profits. There is fame in it, but ultimately it is all show and we feel cheated. Fiction must be made of sterner stuff.

The encounter between the discourse of the country as projected by Indian cinema and the reading community of differently placed, politically as well as socially, viewers of Indian cinema, has resulted in the evocation of the possibilities of the power of cinema to create subjectivity in individuals. The ownership and control of cinema by the country works within the power, fostered by power relations the following expression holds an utmost truth to prove Indo-nostalgia:

Films in India are truly the opiate of the people; by providing an outlet to their pent-up urges, the Bombay films make them forget the injustice of the oppressive social order. Evil is personified in the villain than in the system, which makes the victims, not heroes, of us all. The ownership and control of the means of production remain unchanged. (p.254)

Thus, the novel stands as the political crisis of the 1970s in Indian politics, intervened through the hero with extraordinary human powers who takes the law in his own hands to participate in vicarious violence against criminals. However, the formulaic movie, upon which Tharoor explicates, encourages the audiences to identify with the hero who subverts individual criminals, but never the system, which produces them.

The adoption of the film metaphor to explain and explore Indian condition is not just an imaginative exercise but it is also a more Indo-nostalgic vision of the author; since the Indian cinema plays a vital role in the transmission of the prevailing ideology. Ideology, when perceived as ‘lived experience’ is naturalised in the psychosomatic structures of the people not through oppression but by the strategies by which ideology shapes the dominant structures of society through which the subject constructs a naturalised sense of reality. In the light of this
naturalisation, process of ideology, the conservative cinema performs specific ideological functions since they naturalise the overriding ideology of the period. In this perspective, Tharoor’s study of the cinema is an assertion of Kazmi’s observation:

Any serious study of popular cinema in India must first acknowledge its multi-dimensional structure. No mass medium is simply a sum total of all the actions it portrays or the messages it beams through these actions. It includes layers of meanings superimposed on one another, all of which contribute to its effect. In fact, some of the hidden messages may be more important than the overt ones, since such hidden messages often escape the controls of consciousness, they can less perceptibly sink into the spectator’s mind. (p.135)

As viewer of the cinema, the subject is caught between both power and powerlessness. The viewer holds power over the cinema by his gaze upon the cinema and becomes powerless in his being a part of a larger reality and as a mute witness to the ongoing events of the cinema. The power of politicians on the screen is subverted by the resistance of the spectator-subject who either rejects the positive image of the government or accepts the reality of the cinematic image of the politician.

The concept of spectator-subject is applicable to the reader of the text, who is situated through Ashok Banjara in the narrative of Show Business. The spectator-subject is a forged identity since the subject-spectator-subject is given an identity under the narrating authority of cinema as well as is an agent who sees the cinema as a resource of knowledge. The spectator who is powerless against the system wields power by resisting the dominant narrating authority of the system such as the country. Moreover, the power of the viewer becomes visible since the commercial success of the film is dependent upon the criticism of the audience.

The subjectivity of the viewer of the cinema can be seen to draw parallels with the subjectivity of the reader of the literary texts. In both positions, the subject undergoes the experience of being a product and producer of the ideology of the country. In permitting the silence of his knowledge to be overridden by the loudness of the ideology on the screen/text, the viewer or the reader does not
expose weakness but reinforces his/her power over the efforts of the ideology on
the screen/text.

Tharoor applies the cinematic technique of ‘Stitching’ through which
Indian film and India are perceived as narratives involving subjectivity. The
employment of suture by the writer is to compensate for the historical lack and to
replace it with narrative pleasure for the reader. Stitch in the cinematic or in the
literary text conflates the viewer or reader with subject through the process of
identification. Stitching as a technique serves to confer subjectivity upon the
viewer or reader. The significance of ‘stitch’ is that, subjectivity is achieved in
discourse through stitch. The concept of stitch involves, on the one hand, the
pleasure of the subject’s imaginary identification with a signifier, while on the
other hand the symbolic lack structuring the nostalgic desire of the subject
necessitates conscious stitching.

In terms of the cinema, the viewers delight reimburses for the lack induced
by unstructured desire. The stitch as a cinematic and literary technique is highly
regarded; since the production of a film involves disregard for narrative continuity.
On the other hand, in the final version, the cinematic text stitches the celluloid
frames to achieve an illusion of the presence of textual continuity, thereby
inducing subjectivity in the viewer. The stitch aligns the gaze of the viewer or the
reader with that of the speaking subject of the text and thereby masks the function
of the camera or the author. The narrator of the fictional text acquires significance
through the process of stitching. In the opinion of Silverman (1983:204):

All the attributes of the mythically potent symbolic father:
potency, knowledge. Transcendental vision, self sufficiency
and discursive power.

The cinema through the cinematic technique of obliterating the diverse
segments, thereby, establishing the viewer’s point of view, stitches the spectator to
the discourse of the invisible camera. But the camera which makes the viewer’s
absence at the narrative site noticeable, also compensate for the lack by stitching
to perceive visual coherence despite the cutting of a film. Tharoor, apart from the
reverse-shot segments captures this stitching method in the cinematic format of
Show Business:
Our hero looks at the girl on the stage, the girl on the stage looks at him, the camera looks at her looking at him, the camera looks at him too. (p.28)

However, this confers subjectivity upon the reader since the stitch emphasises the lack or the absence of the real camera in the fictional text. This sense of lack created by the ‘stitch’ is applicable to the simultaneous absence and presence of the reader of the literary text.

Tharoor employs a medley of first person narration, synopsis of Banjara’s films and accusatory monologues by the supporting cast to add the factual touch but applies the fictional narrative format to his exploration of India’s unique film structure and culture as a version of the concept of nationess. He begins his novel with a first person narrative, “I can’t believe, I’m doing this.” (p.3) The reader’s unconscious speculation in the narrative is sutured with the reader being addressed in the second person. But it is in the suggestion of a gendered antecedent for the pronoun that the stitch creates subjectivity in the reader and speaks for both the lack of the ‘I’ and the ‘you’.

The Indian cinema in adopting the family metaphor to play and screen India can be perceived as the vehicle to transmit Indo-nostalgia in the construction of the subjectivity of the viewer. The family norms portrayed in the cinema involve such watertight relations that make the viewers reconstruct their identity and become subjects of the larger order of the country. In the process of identification and misidentification with the screen images through knowledge of family norms, the viewer exhibits confrontation to the construction of subjectivity but remains constituted within the discourse of the cinema.

In self-fashioning one’s own familial norms, by watching the family metaphor played on the screen, the viewer converts the cinema into a panoptical work. The viewer self-fashions his/her family norms by watching the actors on the screen, who play roles that serve to construct the popular imagination and hence are, in a sense, conscious of being watched. Tharoor’s ‘Takes’ in his novel represent certain traditional family norms that are naturalised by the viewer through a strategy of identification and misidentification. The metaphor of the family becomes a stitch that, it helps to create a collective identification by
conflating gender roles, cultural motifs and national histories by projecting Indo-
nostalgia.

Tharoor, in making his text imitate the methodology of the cinema employs
the shot/reverse shot technique to stitch the reader to the first person narrative of
the protagonist. The second narrative which includes the cinematic song, dance
and inter-cutting monologues reveals the process of stitching of the viewer to the
cinema, thereby disrupting the delight of the reader of the text when the absence of
the cinema makes the reader a stand-in:

The cinema audience sees this, but the dance goes on. (p.109)

The third narrative which involves the second person monologues of
diverse characters and the second person address, withholds the reader from
identifying with the narrating subject and away from the site of the production of
the text, which involves the act of writing. In doing so, the pronoun ‘you’
encourages the reader to make an imaginary identification with the subject of
narration, thus bringing the reader into the indo-nostalgic site of the text’s
consumption; the act of reading. Nevertheless, this process of identification and
misidentification is constantly disrupted whenever the reader is made conscious of
the ideological implications of the stitch.

...The way you see yourself is the way others see you ...you
are the role each time, or may be the role is you. But what
that ‘you’ is nobly knows. I wonder sometimes about those
scriptwriters who write roles ‘for’ you – what ‘you’ do they
base it on? The screen you, of course – they write a part that
is as much as possible like the other parts they’ve seen you
play. And so you are what you’ve been on the screen, and the
screen continues to let you be you, and no one knows the
difference, if there is one. (p.190)

The interface of the country and the cinema is situated at the site of political
and cultural economy. The production, distribution and the reception of Indian
cinema and particularly its conventional formula of fantasy and glamour clearly
relate to the notion of political and cultural economy. In this context, the power of
the aesthetics of the cinema is subverted by the power of the culture, which is also
the driving force of Indo-nostalgia.
Thus, in *Show Business* Tharoor paints Bombay’s celluloid world through a pastiche of film sequences, magazine stories and newspaper headlines and the discontinuity in the narrative parallels the discontinuity at the site of production. His experimental and literary use of ‘stitching’ is to persuade the reader imagine a textual continuity out of this discontinuity. But for the foreign readers, the novel is a study of Bollywood, the Hindi films, which hold the mirror to Indian culture and traditions on the atlas of the world (*Bollywood Review*: 1992):

...what makes *Show Business* particularly impressive and accomplished its elaborate structure, a mix of first person narration, synopses of Ashok’s dreadful Hindi films and resentful and accusatory monologues by the supporting cast. The effect is to fragment and rearrange the chronology of the rise, fall and rise again of Ashok Banjara in a way that replicates the crazy razzle-dazzle of the Hindi film world, but that also permits Mr. Tharoor to comment, with telling irony and insight, on the curious parallels between India’s unique film culture and the swarming, baffling and beguiling variety ...the vivacity and corruption, the serenity and chaos, the sophistication, and naïve self-delusion of India itself.

Being extremely conscious of Indian culture and identity, Shashi Tharoor finds his novels as an expression and embodiment of Indo-nostalgia, every time he has taken a novel and experimental technique to suggest his love for India. *Show Business* is not an exception to his creed of writing and experimentation. He himself explores about the book in his article ‘The Novel Entertains in Order to Edify’ published in the reputed journal (*Littcrit*: 1994) as:

My second novel, *Show Business* deals with the stories Indian society tells about itself – except that, instead of the older myths, I have seized on the contemporary myths invented by modern Hindi cinema. One is always looking for new creative metaphors to explore the Indian condition and in a country of widespread illiteracy, where popular film represents the primary vehicle for the transmission of the fictional experience; cinema is a particularly useful vehicle for this exploration. In addition there are some interesting issues that emerge from the subject itself. The social and political relevance of popular cinema in India, for instance, has been dealt with surprisingly little in Indo-Anglican fiction. And the whole process of the manufacture of our modern myths on celluloid is one that I found fascinating as a creative issue in itself.
For Tharoor, as a writer, the way he tells the story is as essential to him as the story itself. The manner in which the narrative unfolds is as integral to the novel as the story it tells and as essential, he hopes, to the experience of the reader. He has always believed that, as the very word ‘novel’ suggests, there must be something innovative about every book, he sets out to write. Speaking of his innovative technique of Indo-nostalgia with multiple truths of India and Indian identity, he (Littcrit: 1994) avers:

I have tried to do; with Show business, too, the way novel unfolds is vital – the three interlocking narratives in each of the sections of the book, or ‘takes’ as I’ve called them. The first is the first-person narrative of the Bombay film star himself, recalling episodes from six different points of his life. The novel begins with him shooting his first film, and ends with him on his deathbed. The second narrative is the story, complete with tongue-in-check lyrics, of the formula movie he is acting in at time, along with other characters from the novel.

Thus, in a nutshell, from the above thematic analysis of Tharoor’s Show Business, it can be affirmed that, the book not only satirise the glamorous Bollywood world with its reel impressions seeming us to be real but also at the same time holds a clean mirror to Indian politics, culture and power paradigms through Indo-nostalgic mode. As a reader, one should be conscious of the real picture of rich culture of India to realise Tharoor’s reel and fictional picture of Show Business. In a true sense, it is a movie-cum-novel about realities of Indian phenomenon. Therefore, through this analysis it would be appropriate to contend that, Shashi Tharoor uses his setting and his characters to explore Indian condition and concerns. His fictional figures contend with confused identities; they suffer the painful longing for a nation, a religion, a race, a gender to which they can, with conviction and comfort, belong.