The Choli Blouse and Representation of Seduction in Bollywood Item Numbers

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Abstract: The trope of the song-and-dance routine is globally recognized as a characteristic marker of popular Hindi cinema in Mumbai widely known as Bollywood. The cinematic song is a text expressed through lyrics and portrayed through choreographed dance with the potent capacity to intensify the viewing experience. The genre of dance characterised by a spectacular and excessive nature, performed within the musical space of commercial cinema is popularly known as an item number. This dance is usually portrayed as the visual embodiment of desires and fantasies communicated by seductive facial and bodily expressions of the item girl. Dance costume is mobilised as a signifier of dramatic expression in sartorial code. In this context, the focus is on relationship between item numbers and costume with particular reference to the *choli* blouse. As a garment of pre-Vedic origin, the choli is a garment archetype with historical antecedents that extends itself to cinema costume serving as visual shorthand for expressing the hyper-femininity and nuanced portrayal of seduction by the screen character. By analysing the semiotics of three select song-and-dance performances where the intention underlying her appearance is manifested through costume and body language, this article analyses the *choli* blouse as a garment archetype that adapts to cinematic expression of seduction through item numbers.
Key Words: Bollywood, choli blouse, item number, item girl, seduction

I. Introduction

The cultural genealogy of popular Indian cinema – be it romance, action thriller, historical, devotional, or family melodrama – is the trope of the song-and-dance routine that is globally recognised as a characteristic marker of Hindi cinema in Mumbai (erstwhile Bombay), widely known as Bollywood[1]. Integral to and occasionally even dominating Bollywood movies which film and cultural theorist Ashish Rajadhyaksha refers to as the 'Bollywoodization' of fashion (Rajadhyaksha 2003:25), is the preoccupation with spectacle and costume in dance numbers. The song and dance sequence may emerge naturally from the narrative, interrupt it at a strategic juncture as an entertainment break, or alleviate cinematic tension. This may take place in a variety of situations, occasions and contexts that enable shifts from the narrative to the musical space. This often provides an arena for the depiction of panoramic emotions such as love, heartbreak, jealousy, passionate desire or seduction. Emotions that are repressed on the narrative plane, often find the opportunity for dramatic expression through Hindi cinema's trademark song-and-dance routines that engage audiences across linguistic barriers. Located in the realm of popular entertainment, these routines are characterised by explorations of movement while also focusing on the display of the performing body through virtuoso dancing to the cinematic song, as well as other aspects of appearance and costume.

The cinematic song may be considered as text expressed through lyrics and portrayed through choreographed dance. At the heart of the popular Hindi cinematic experience, the musical number may be potent enough to even become the *raison d' être* of the film (Prakash, 1983: 114). Unlike classical Western convention where a song is recorded in the actor's voice, contemporary Indian cinema uses the professional singers for vocal rendition of the soundtrack while the on-screen character lip-synchs the song. It is significant that in Hindi cinema, selection of the playback singer is determined by the nature of dance to be performed on screen. Therefore, the desired dance vocabulary may 'precede and influence the conceptualisation of the song' which may 'share or even subsume its primacy to the visual attractions of the dancing body' (Iyer, 2014: 29). This creates the possibility of employing more than one playback singer for the individual actor in the movie, depending on whether the song has a romantic mood requiring a soft melodious voice, or a seductive mood requiring a sensuously husky with deeper vocal timbre**.** Once the song is recorded, its visualisation and choreography follow suit. Analysing the Hindi film song sequence, ethnomusicologist Gregory D. Booth observes that the term 'song picturisation' indicates that songs are recorded first and 'picturised' later which, in turn, suggests the primacy of the song which determines the agenda for the visuals (Booth, 2008:143). Cultural

anthropologist Clare M. Wilkinson-Weber observes that Hindi cinema provides the space for the expression of emotions and intentions through the unity of 'visual and aural' layers (Wilkinson-Weber, 2014: 48) enabled by technology. At the same time, the differentiation of the musical space from the narrative space enables the cinematic medium to convey and fulfil varied emotions ascribed both to the character(s) and the spectator. This separation is not perceived as unnatural by the audience but is, in fact, a source of auditory pleasure. In the context of Bollywood cinema, sociologist Ronie Parciack observes that musical numbers may differ in 'thematic foci, temporal and spatial designs' (Parciack 2016:57) and that the musical plane constitutes a 'bounded frame, perceived as somewhat separate from the narrative flow and protective enough to display upheaving emotional-sexual content' (ibid:63).

The Item Number and the Item Girl

The item number[2] is a genre of cinematic dance that is differentiated from other song-and-dance routines that are associated with romance, camaraderie or introspective reverie. This dance number can be identified by its spectacular and excessive nature, and suggestive movements that visually embody desires and fantasies communicated by facial and bodily expressions of the dancer. It adheres to a 'consistent set of visual conventions that imply sexual availability through the presentation of a dancing female body represented as actively desiring, rather than passively serving as an object of male desire' (Dwyer and Patel, 2002). This dance form is a site of struggle for effacing differences between the stereotypical *Bharatiya nari*[3] and the 'public' woman. It does so by portraying a screen persona of overtly seductive femininity who does not prescribe or adhere to the meta-language of conservative respectability widely upheld in Hindi cinema. The performer known as the item girl[4] is usually an actor with exceptional dance skills featuring in a 'guest appearance', or may even be the female lead essaying a central role. While performing item numbers, the movement vocabulary of the heroine changes dramatically, marking the collapse of the 'coy heroine/salacious vamp divide' (Shreshtova, 2008). The item girl has often been portrayed as a vamp, cabaret dancer, night club dancer, bar dancer, *mujra*[5] dancer, prostitute, or courtesan who performs such dances usually in less-than-respectable locations such as a brothel, bar, or hotel. Extending feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey's canonical concept of coding women for 'strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness' (Mulvey: 2009:19) to Hindi cinema, the attributes of actual or implied promiscuity associated with the item girl are related to her primary role of soliciting the attention of a specific man or an all-male audience (Weidman, 2012). Attracting the male gaze is central to the 'pleasures of heterosexual scopophilia' (Kasbekar, 2001:287). The item girl ensures that as the object of the gaze, she is not only identified as being overtly feminine but replete with the implication of seduction. Film-maker and film critic Chidananda Das Gupta has observed that unlike the romantic mode of song and dance associated with popular Indian cinema, the dance of this 'disreputable woman is ascribed with an orgasmic-erotic function' (Das Gupta, 1991: 67) with a potent capacity to intensify the viewing experience. Through visual conventions and ritual gestures of dance she draws attention to the eyes, lips and to the erogenous zones particularly to the bosom, curve of the waist, hips and legs. She portrays herself in a way that her body evokes and articulates desire through suggestive movements.

Costume and Characterisation

The cinematic experience is heightened by mobilising costume as a signifier of dramatic enunciation through sartorial code often serving as visual shorthand of the character even in a single scene. Clair Hughes draws on Roland Barthes to examine how the dress 'reveals the self but also intersects with the social – conforming, rejecting, deceiving or seducing' (Hughes 2009:11). Stella Bruzzi argues that when costumes are noticed as themselves, rather than their role in the larger picture, the 'element conventionally prioritised is their eroticism' (Bruzzi 1997: 247). The duality of costume lies in the simultaneity of its tangible reality and intangibility of its essence. It has the attribute of creating and communicating images of the wearer and therefore functions as a form of fiction. Roland Gérard Barthes theorises that dress is always abstract, requiring either verbal or schematic description which would include, among other aspects 'those dress phenomena which are artificially re-constituted in order to signify (theatre and film costumes)' (Barthes 1959: 27). The imaginary aspect of fashion constitutes elements of 'mass culture like pulp fiction, comics and movies' (Barthes quoted in McNeil *et al.* 2009: 1). While scholarship underscores the importance of characterisation and performance, the demeanour of the clothed body also contributes to the viewer's understanding of the character through multiplicity of signs. Costume becomes the language of the clothed body through signifiers whose meaning lies in the 'functions, opposition, distinctions and congruences' (Sennett, 1977: 28), and further adding that they 'appear to have something to do with the character of the person wearing them' (ibid:72). Intention embedded under the outer appearance is manifested through body language and costume. Constructing a character through costume asserts its presence as 'simultaneously material force and symbol' (Miller 1997:45). Portrayal of the on-screen body through costume as a tangible indicator of intention becomes intrinsic to the way the character is conceptualised, portrayed, interpreted and perceived. In popular Hindi cinema, costumes are central to the

intermingling of 'the realist and the utopic' (Gopal and Moorti 2008:5). The complex role of costume within the realm of cinematic fiction lies in the interplay of narrative, character and the viewer's gaze. Mulvey's concept of 'to-be-looked-at-ness' is applicable to costume and also to other cinematic conventions including the role of make-up and lighting to stylise and sexualise the female dancer-actor (Mulvey 2006:317). In song and dance numbers, the interplay of costume and physique which conceals, restrains or reveals the actor's body affects kinesthetic movement. Design components of colour, texture, cut, fabric and fit affect the visual relationship between body and costume so closely that there is permeability between both. The 'bodies take on the adjustable, mutable qualities of costume, and costumes in turn become like bodies, re-inscribing the shape of the wearer's unique body in the cut and finish' (Monks 2010:11). Indian garments which traditionally have normative modesty, are then re-designed for conveying sensuality for cinematic purposes.

This raises questions of how a garment archetype can be interpreted and expressed in terms of the *work* undertaken by the wearer in cinematic narrative. How does costume highlight the embedded intention of the character and thereby, how does it influence the way the cine-viewer perceives and interprets the intentions of the character? Therefore, in examining the intersection of dance and costume, it becomes necessary for movie scholarship to move beyond the cinematic narrative and consider the ways in which costume contributes to characterisation.

II. Methods

With the objective of analysing the interplay of costumes and item numbers in Hindi cinema, I use a predominantly visual approach to costumes in general and the choli blouse in particular. As a garment archetype, functioning both as spectacular intervention and visual narrative, the traditional choli blouse is recontextualised to construct an alternative, non-historical expression. This is done through an examination of Bollywood item numbers which have been identified for their 'hit' status in terms of popular requests and frequency on music channels on radio and on television in the twenty-year period between 1993-2013. The list was narrowed down to three songs, each one in three commercially successful movies over a span of 20 years, where all the female dancers wore different versions of the choli blouse. The first is *Choli Ke Peechhe* ('Behind the Choli') in *Khalnayak[7]/* Anti-Hero (Dir: Ghai1993), the second is *Ooh La La* in *The Dirty Picture[8]* (Dir: Luthria 2011), and the third is *'Ram Chahe Leela'* ('Ram desires Leela') in *Goliyon Ki Raasleela: Ramleela[9]* ('Dance Festival of Bullets: Ramleela') (Dir: Bhansali 2013). Through socio-semiotic analysis of dance performances by the clothed body in these item numbers—both as a subject and a visual object—I explore how the construction and cinematic portrayal of seduction and sexuality is articulated and negotiated through the female body-covering, specifically the *choli* blouse. To this end, I examine the relationship between this garment and its on-screen wearer. With references to the historicity of the choli blouse as a traditional garment as well as costume for a cinema character, I discuss the ways in which the re-iteration and modification of this costume archetype adapts to cinematic representations of seduction in item numbers.

III. Historicity and Characterisation and the Choli Blouse

The earliest blouse worn in parts of ancient India was made of unstitched fabric pieces of varying sizes and worn in a variety of draped styles. Art and costume historian B.N. Goswamy elaborates on the wrapped and/or draped blouse called the *choli*, etymologically deriving from the Sanskrit *chola* or *cholaka,* that traces its origins to the pre-Vedic period (c.2200-1500 BCE). It was worn as a breast band and fastened at the back with a knot (Goswamy 1993:185) has been eloquently expressed in traditional Indian literature. Evidence of paintings from the Gupta period (c.4-8 CE) reveals variations in the design and structure of the choli, which has metamorphosed from its original longer and fuller version to its abbreviated contemporary form of an upper garment tied with a knot or strings at the back. The pattern of the choli blouse derives from the basic sari blouse. The most common version of the choli has a deep neckline both at the back and front, darts or curved seams on a midriff yoke to contour the shape of the bust on the principles of a brassiere fit, similar to the western corset. Variations include the midriff yoke, narrow strap or strings at the back for fastening to leave the midriff bare (Roy and Nilesh, 2013). The choli is not an undergarment though it was traditionally worn as a breast band directly on the body. This manner of wearing the choli still continues, with or without bust pads inserted under the cups. This is in contrast to the brassiere which may be deliberately made visible to public view or worn on top of garments according to post-modern fashion trend of 'inside as outside'. The complexity of meaning embedded in the choli makes it a versatile garment that, in spite of its traditional origins, can be re-contextualised to express seductive femininity in different settings including cinema.

Costumes for item numbers are required to be more spectacular than in other scenes in order to create a flattering image for the actor; therefore, they often exhibit a stronger visual identity than those in other scenes to inscribe themselves in the viewers' memories. In such dance routines, the choli blouse is generally designed for impact through extravagant cuts in variations of eye-catching and novel designs, colours and ornate fabric embellishments that are reflective of a flashy aesthetic rather than fashion. This can be read as an index of body-

centered clothing driven by cinematic requirements. However, the choli is always given a customised fit to underplay or exaggerate the dressed body to create the illusion of near-perfection for the actor. The heroine's choli is 'in essence tight carapace bolstered with padding that mold and literally flesh out the body to desirable hourglass shape' (Roy and Nilesh, 2013: 80). I argue that even when acting may be limited to performances in song-and-dance numbers, the seductive intent of the character is evidenced by her body language and costume typified by the choli blouse.

Choli ke Peeche

The song-and-dance number *Choli Ke Peeche*[10] ('Behind the choli') from the movie *Khalnayak* (Anti-hero) is an example of integration between the narrative and musical layers of the item number. At the time of movie's release, the song had faced strong criticism for its suggestive lyrics. Sung by Alka Yagnik and Ila Arun, the contrast between the voices of the two female playback singers is reflective of the contrast between the on-screen roles of the lead character (Madhuri Dixit) and her dance partner (Neena Gupta) respectively. Yagnik's sweet melodious voice is the perfect foil to Arun's breathy, low-pitched voice with its come-on quality and raw folk vocals punctuate the lyrics with sighs of desire. The music mediates between the aural representation of urban and rural, romantic and seductive with a pounding rhythm echoing the heartbeat.

The dance number takes place at a pivotal juncture of the film's narrative when the chaste Ganga (Madhuri Dixit) an undercover police officer masquerades as a *nautch*[11] girl to entrap and capture the negative protagonist Ballu (Sanjay Dutt). The reference to Ganga as the most holy river in India revered by Hindus that is believed to wash away all impurity and sins, is indicative of the lead character's inherent potential to reform Ballu. In reference to the song *Choli ke peeche kya hai,* it 'establishes and then transgresses upon the divisions between virtuous praiseworthy sacrifice and despicable moral decay' (Shresthova, 2008). Though the setting for the dance is disreputable, the narrative underlying the performance makes it acceptable. The explicit intention underlying her flirtatious coquetry and provocative body language is that of seduction even though the audience knows that this subterfuge is in the line of police duty. She becomes the embodiment of deceptive illusion, a femme fatale whose beautiful 'exterior' [read appearance] belies her 'interior' [read intention]. To lure the anti-hero with rustic and crude mannerisms, she dons a body-enhancing choli with a deep neckline fastened with two strings leaving her back uncovered, her legs hidden beneath the calf-length *lehenga*[12], and her face veiled by the *odhni*[13] - a look which typifies the traditional ensemble of village women. However, the partial concealment of her face while revealing her heaving bosom portrays her body as a field of conflict enfolding a barely disguised expression of desire while simultaneously indicating her *laj*[14] (Tarlo 1996:160-164). By concealing the body, the choli evokes 'curiosity and creates in the viewer the desire' (Steele, 1985:42). When the other dancers pose the repeated query encoded with innuendo *Choli ke peeche kya hai* (What is behind the choli), a question that intuitively evokes the implication of the nude body, she coyly sings *Choli mein dil hai mera* (The choli contains my heart). This establishes a sort of equivalence between the body and heart both contained by the choli but differentiated by contextual interpretation.

Ooh La La

The item number '*Ooh La La*' in *The Dirty Picture* is based on the life of late Silk Smitha, a dancer-actor of Tamil and Telugu cinema of the 1980s and 1990s associated with extremely sensuous and titillating dances that were guaranteed to draw audiences for repeat viewings. In fact, the overwhelming engagement of the audience with her dance numbers characterised by explicit representation of seduction was found to be more compelling than the spectators' interest in the narrative (Iyer, 2014:26). The aural quality of the song stems from the lyrics sung in the sweet yet sensuous voice of playback singer Shreya Ghoshal. Foregrounded by reverberating sound effects, the song has a 'brash timbre' that is 'enhanced by digital reverb and echo effects that seem to further signal public-*ness*' of the sensuality index (Weidman, 2012). The vocals and delivery associated with the of the item number alienates Silk from the norms of ideal femininity and accordingly serves as a 'potent sonic signifier of lower-class and immoral femininity' (ibid.). What makes the dance number memorable is that it is not merely an *insert* for spectacular distraction from the cinematic narrative but is inextricably bound with it. The character's body is recruited for visual pleasure and as an unforgettable low art form that is deliberately directed at commercial success. It is a bricolage of fantastic sets and costumes with a focus on entertainment of the masses. Silk (Vidya Balan) states that the 'public' [read audience] wants "entertainment, entertainment, entertainment"[15] and that she embodies their desire. Her dance style is seductive, spectacular and fast in movement, a mixture of glamour and tinsel leaning towards vulgarity. Within the compressed time frame[16] of the dance number, Silk exudes surfeit of desire and seduction encapsulated within the aural narrative and underscored by her body language. The gyrating movements of her heaving bosom, curvaceous waist and full hips presenting her as a visual commodity and positions the dance '*Ooh la la*' at the opposite polarity of respectable performance. Choreographed with angled shots that primarily appeal to the eye and act as visual embellishment in her on-screen movie for purpose of box-office appeal. On celluloid, the

viewing pleasure of the audience attracted primarily from the lower socio-economic strata, is evidenced by their repeat viewings of the movie only for this item number, attributable as much to the energetic choreography as to the visual lure of the sensually-charged dance. The movements are accentuated by the costumes that emphasize her exotic and eroticised body, desirable in its voluptuousness and objectified both on screen and off screen to draw the primarily male audience *en masse* to the cinema theatre for repeated viewings only of her dance numbers as the primary attraction instead of sitting through the entire movie.

There are twelve costume changes during the course of this item number. Clare M. Wilkinson-Weber (2014: 48) notes: A change in costume can be read in several ways – as a marker of passing time, as a clue to inner states, or as an indicator that the characters are enjoying the imaginary pleasures of embodying different kinds of people, with all the implications that may have for the relationship that is in the focus of the song.

Each change in costume is more revealing than concealing, designed to encase her body as a symbol of hyper-femininity and enhance her erotic image. All the costumes are flashy and excessive in ornamentation that are 'thinly-euphemized codes for vulgar' (Osella 2013:121). Interestingly, the lower garments vary from calf-length draped lower garment inspired by the *dhoti*[17], multi-paneled ankle-length skirt, mini-skirt, sari and even tennis whites. What remains constant however, is the choli blouse albeit with design and colour variations ranging from an elaborately shirred choli with pearl strings, fitted blouse knotted at the center front, sweetheart neckline and scooped neckline with crisscross strings across her bare back. Some choli designs echo the western corset, others are quintessentially Indian - all signifiers for metaphorically representing feminine sensuality. The erotic potential of the choli blouse is heightened by the pattern deliberately cut a size smaller with substantive amounts of cleavage emphasised by the plunging necklines maximised by strategic padding to enhance her voluptuousness. The invasive camera angles also focus on the bare expanse of the midriff creating a fetishistic effect. The revealing dance costume reinforced by her body language places her aesthetics and respectability at a lower level. The combination of dance choreography and costume recreates her on-screen image as an actor-dancer whose facial expressions reveal her seductive intent during the dance routine. Silk is repeatedly typecast in the same roles as *femme fatale* as evidenced by her body language and provocative costumes including the omnipresent choli blouse. The more authentic the portrayal of her sexual availability, the more dubious her reputation is perceived to be. Consequently, Silk's on-screen image detracts from her ability to command respect from the film industry and drives her to suicide.

Ram Chahe Leela

The popularity of the item number '*Ram Chahe Leela*' in the movie *Goliyon Ki Raasleela: Ramleela* is in no small measure, attributed to the lyrics set to an energetic dance. The song narrates the love story of Ram (Ranveer Singh) and Leela (Deepika Padukone) through the lyrics '*Ram Chahe Leela chahe Leela chahe Ram*' (Ram desires Leela and Leela desires Ram). The vocal quality by female playback singer Bhoomi Trivedi characterised by its low pitch timbre and power in rock pop style of cosmopolitan modernity is synchronised with the attitude of the lead dancer (Priyanka Chopra). Though the film is set in Rajasthan, the costumes obliterate conventional regional affiliations and yet provide extra-textual information about the dancers. The costume of the lead dancer is usually designed to stand out against the backdrop of group dancers called *extras*[18] who wear replicas of the same costume but in a relatively muted colours. This creates a uniform-like quality, rendering the other group dancers largely 'invisible' and thereby drawing attention only to their synchronised curtain of movement. This also makes their presence non-threatening, as contrasted with the unwavering camera attention to the screen space of the main dancer. In this item number, the visual appeal of the costume of the lead dancer is in its radical departure from the norm in terms of colour and design. Against the panoramic scene dominated by the lavish spectacle of locale, dramatic lighting and costume in an exotic palette of deep red, saffron, yellow and indigo, she wears pristine white, a colour not usually associated with the image of an item girl. She is framed in a well-fitted choli cut low at the back revealing the midriff but with full-length, fitted sleeves teamed with a calf-length, draped *loongi*[19] knotted low on the hips where the bare expanse of her midriff is further emphasized by a sparkling crystal tucked in her navel. The deliberate act of fastening the top button of the choli at the commencement of the dance suggests that she is a professional whose allure does not lie in titillation or seduction but in the intensity and mystery of her gaze as well as the energy of the dance performance. The lyrics establish her as a narrator who apprises the on-screen and off-screen audience of the legendary love story of Ram and Leela. While her dance and   costume albeit sensuous, are on view she maintains a physical distance from the on-screen viewers.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed the representation of the on-screen characters in item numbers through the deliberate construction of appearance expressed through the synchronicity of gestures and details of costume with specific reference to the choli blouse. The predominance of female dancers in Bollywood item numbers

often leads to discussions on embodied performance that revolve around questions of seduction posed by the item girl who does not so much perform the dance as make use of it for multiple intentions. With reference to the three song-and-dance numbers that have been referred to, dynamic figurations of the dancing body and costume contribute to the construction of the cinematic narrative. In cinema, costumes draw from the premise that clothing has its own language and syntax (Calefato, 2004:5) guided by norms where interpretation depends on the context. The fact that costume is consciously synchronised with the 'social position (and by extension the moral position) of the character' (ibid: 53) is evident in the fact that recognition and understanding of the character emanates almost instinctively from the wardrobe. Costume is instrumental in 'crystallizing character' (Wilkinson-Weber 2014: 45). With reference to the choli blouse in particular, these routines contribute to the suggestions of other qualities including reconfigured narratives of seduction. Whether teamed with a *ghaghra*[20], *loongi* or sari, it is the choli that is both the subject and the object of the cine-viewer's gaze, both concealing and revealing physical allure to convey the intention of seduction but not necessarily that of promiscuity. In conjunction with facial expressions and body language as non-ambiguous indicators, the choli becomes a non-textual marker of the character's intentions. By intertwining the item number with body covering, the choli blouse as a garment archetype functions as a parallel text which gives it the same value as the visual narrative evidenced in its wearing. While retaining its traditional essence, the choli adapts to representations of seduction within the cinematic story.

Notes

[1]   Nicknamed in 1970s by the conjoining of Bombay (erstwhile Mumbai) and Hollywood, it is a popular reference to the Hindi film industry. It is the largest and most influential motion pictures industry in India.

[2]   Popularly refers to sensuous song and dance sequences often with sexually suggestive vocabulary and movements in popular Indian cinema

[3]   Hindi word for the Indian woman with traditional value systems

[4]   Female actor who performs an item number on celluloid or live stage shows

[5]   Dance performed by a courtesan

[6]   Design variation of the traditional sari blouse with multiple shaped panels usually with cap sleeves or short sleeves

[7]   A Hindi movie directed by Subhash Ghai under the banner of Mukta Arts

[8]   A Hindi movie and directed by Milan Luthria under the banner of Balaji Motion Pictures. Vidya Balan won the National Award for Best Actress in 2013 for this role.

[9]   *Goliyon Ki Raasleela: Ramleela* is a Hindi movie directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali under the banner of Eros International

[10]   *Choli ke peeche* is a popular song in the Hindi movie *Khalnayak* with Madhuri Dixit as the lead actor.

[11]   Also *naach* meaning dance

[12]   Ankle-length full skirt

[13]   Also called *dupatta* or *chunri* meaning veil

[14]   Sense of coyness/shame associated with modesty

[15]   Dialogue of *The Dirty Picture* by the lead actor Vidya Balan essaying the role of Silk Smitha, scripted by Rajat Arora

[16]   Average duration of an Indian film song is about three minutes

[17]   Traditional lower garment with bifurcated drape for men

[18]   Colloquial phrase referring to other dancers in the background

[19]   Garment usually worn by men wrapped around lower body

[20]   Long gathered skirt

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