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English Composition 2

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Title: **Bollywood as a whole**

**Part 1- General:**

**Social impact and history:**

There are many genres that exist whether it's genres in books, movies and/or music. Thinking about all the genres in the world, there are more than can be imagined. I chose Bollywood because people don't really know much about this genre. Bollywood has a variety of genres within the category itself. This genre is important to our society because it brings diversity, gives people a view of another culture. Bollywood originated in Bombay which is now known as Mumbai, India. The term Bollywood was a play off of the word Hollywood but instead of the 'H' it was a 'B' for Bombay (Grant). Bollywood can have up to four different meanings one is the referral to the film industry center in Bombay. Another meaning is the film industry as a hindi cinema. When they produce hindi movies, they refer to it as *Bollywood* to identify that it is a hindu spoken movie. Third meaning is the "certain aesthetic that, in the context of film, incorporates the song-and-dance sequence, an over-the-top melodramatic sentimentalism, visual garishness, kitsch, and an eclectic hodgepodge of cultural borrowings" (Deshpande). Last meaning of bollywood, it refers to the culture more than the films.

There are numerous famous or well-known people in this whole industry. There is a recent movie that came out called "Ram-Leela", the two main characters are Leela who was

played by Deepika Padukone and Ram who was played by Ranveer Singh. Since that movie came out, Deepika and Ranveer have been performing in many movies. In addition, there are many dances and songs they have to sing as well. Ranveer is well-known for his dancing; it's very unique and brings the movie to life. Deepika's voice and amount of enthusiasm is wonderful in the movie. Another person you have is Madhuri Dixit, Madhuri is known for her dancing. She has been dancing for a while. She's been in many movies and performed in many shows around the world. Another famous person is Shahrukh Khan, he has been in many movies since 1992. Many of his movies have been popular because of the romance in the movies and how he reacts to the songs.

### **Discourse Communities:**

Bollywood can fall into many discourse communities. It would be defined what kind of bollywood you are referring to, you have music, movies and culture. There are three discourse communities that I can think of right now associated with Bollywood; movies, dance and religion. Each of these discourse communities matter to bollywood.

For movies, the people are always trying to complete a goal. The film industry follows many different genres when thinking about finishing movies. The movies all have a plot and based on the plot, many people worldwide fall in love with the movie. Since 1980's the movies are known for their songs and the meaning it plays. Music and movies kind of go hand in hand; the majority of the movies that are produced are known to have multiple songs to help keep the person remembering the movie. According to Martineau, "filmmakers, failures through a film's lack of stars or lack of robust and effective plot – that is, through stories about what India's audiences really want. These fictions shape filmmakers' choices as they seek to limit the risk of

failure, leading to a conservatism in film style, such as the continuation of song-dance sequences even when the filmmaker does not want them.” This quote is saying how it takes a process to put together the story for the audience to enjoy. The films are made for the audience to enjoy and maybe to entertain their family.

For Dance, a lot of people find joy within the songs. People tend to relate to the music if they can understand the songs. The languages in the songs are majority spoken hindi and punjabi. Bollywood is from South Asia, therefore there are many languages that the music or movies can be spoken in. Lastly for dance, the whole Bollywood dance industry has multiple meanings. There are specific styles of dance and within each style there are meaning to the specific moves.

Religion is a huge discourse community because any religion in India, has a numerous number of people following it. Religion has traditions for certain people to follow it. Religion relates to the culture of Bollywood and shows the diversity of the world. Culture and religion goes together because in order to show the diversity to the world, people follow their traditions. Traditions are so important in religion, whether it's when they are at their holy house or in a wedding.

For any of these discourse communities, you can easily join them. For movies and music you would have to know the language; hindi, punjabi urdu and etc. On the other hand, to dance you don't specifically have to know the language but to know the style that goes with the specific song. There are many ways to join all these DC's. You can be part of a club and then learn more in depth.

**Rules and Message:**

There aren't any specific rules or forms of this genre. Bollywood is a very open genre once you understand the meaning to certain things. The culture itself has certain meaningful things; for example a wedding. A Bollywood wedding follows certain traditions and those traditions must be followed according to the religion. There are different religions in Bollywood. You got Hinduism, Islam, sikhs, Christianity, Jainism, Zoroastrian, Guru Nanak Dev, Lord Mahavira, Adi Shankaracharya; all these religions because India is such a large country. Each religion has their own traditions. Throughout all my examples, the message I would say is that you would have to follow certain rules depending on what you are trying to accomplish. An example would be for dancing if you are doing classical, you would have to understand that each movement you choreograph has a meaning, Or in a movie the plot has a meaning, or in the religion; specifying which are thinking of, there are certain things to follow. In hinduism, you can't eat beef due to cows being sacred.

Throughout the research I have done I've noticed that the messages are different but somehow connect. Bollywood was to have everyone unite. The producers and directors of movies try to make movies that can gain a certain amount of audiences. Gaining a certain amount of people to be aware of the type of cultures throughout Bollywood makes it more diverse which is the goal. Bollywood is a wonderful genre that is filled with many other genres within itself.

### **Part 2 Focus:**

To focus on a specific subcategory of Bollywood, I chose Bollywood dancing. Bollywood dancing has a lot of different styles to follow. Like all kinds of music genres you have the same for Bollywood. Instead the dance moves have a lot of meaning to them.

Bollywood dancing has evolved over the years. In the 50's and 60's, the first style of dance was folk dances. The folk dances were all over the cinemas in India to then in the 70's the choreographers started to change. It became more of a disco time period. The message and/or goal of bollywood dancing is to bring entertainment to anyone who is curious to learn about a different culture.

The intended audience is everyone who might enjoy some diversity and perspective into another country and culture. The only constraints in Bollywood dancing is being cautious about the movements towards classical and folk songs. According to Linucy Townsend " These are hand movements that act as a form of sign language to help to tell a story or demonstrate themes such as weather, animals or places." This quote was explaining the movements toward the hands. In addition you have head and neck movements, "It looks really beautiful, but actually it's probably more helpful to the dancer than the audience. It helps them to become expressive. If you feel free in the neck, you are able to be more emotive, to have stronger facial expressions." This quote elaborates on the thought of moving your head and neck. Along with head and neck movements you have facial expressions, you have two types of facial expressions; Nritya and Abhinaya. Nritya is shown through rhythm and physical movements to match the musical lyrics and tones, it shows dance in the purest forms. Abhinaya is a type of facial expression that is rooted in the emotions. Your eyes and expressions are telling the story behind the dance. "The eyes should follow the hands," says Mehta. That means they can move a lot. "There are a few main facial expressions to show, such as anger, sadness, happiness and love. It should be mainly in the eyes and the eyebrows". Lastly you have foot movements. "Bharatnatyam is where you turn out your legs and sit in a demi-plie in first 'ballet feet' position," says Mohan, who won

television talent show Dance India Dance."Arms are on the waist with the fingers facing back. In Bharatnatyam you bang the feet on the floor, and as you do so, lift up your foot all the way to your glutes and then - bang. These are the basic principles that I learnt as a beginner when I was seven years old." This quote is explaining clearly the meaning of foot movements in Bollywood dancing. You have specific styles and certain constraints on the styles when learning.

Bollywood dancing is important to me because of my childhood. I have been a Bollywood dancer since I was five years old. I learned numerous styles, traveled to different competitions and developed a variety of understanding of the meaningful movements. Towards other discourse communities, this would be important because of the different styles and meanings you may not have known that matter. When dancing, it's a form of expression to tell a story, you can be hurt and in order to feel better you tell a story throughout the movements. The discourse communities would gain a second thought and learn about different perspectives. The terms and concepts that are important in this example is that there are certain words for a movement. People don't realize how the wrong movement towards the song can throw off the entire story. However, you don't just have those qualities you also have costumes. Costumes help show the importance about bollywood to others that they may have not shown themselves.

Another important thing about the movements and the meanings of the dance styles is that they know who the 'God of Dance'. The 'God of Dance'; Nataraj is a depiction of Shiva. According to Townsend, "Many of the poses in Indian dance are inspired by this image, with its up-turned hand and elegant fingers, bent knee and raised left leg." This quote is saying that the bollywood movements were all inspired by how Nataraj is formed. It is important to pray to this god or understand the meaning of Nataraj because when you know the purpose of Nataraj, you

most likely will succeed as a dancer. Many famous people have at least one nataraj in their house to help them pursue their dancing career.

To learn a specific bollywood style of dancing, takes dedication. Some people who have been learning the styles have taken years to have mastered it and taught others. In my example of the different styles of bollywood dancing, there are a lot of places to develop the special skills. Many dancers in the movies have to have dancing experience or atleast practice alot for the movie to become well known and successful. Even the back up dancers in the movies; they got to know specific styles in order to learn the new choreography.

According to the article written by Townsend, it states that even though there are individual styles of dancing, they all connect throughout the hand movements and the meaning behind the story. Bollywood dancing is an amazing thing to learn because even if it looks easy it is complex in a way. There are a variety of ways to express these styles but when you fully understand the movements and how it may affect and demonstrates the story, you will fully understand Bollywood dancing styles.

All in all, the meaning of bollywood dancing is so important. You learn about what the meaning means for the story and how you wanna tell it. There are different things you would have to learn, but once you learn you would accomplish that specific style.

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