

‘Tu Hai Meri *Fantasy*?’: ‘Hinglish’ in Indian film song lyrics.

Indian cinema has always embraced a creative, playful and experimental approach to language, particularly through Hindi film song lyrics. Catchy melodies require catchy and engaging lyrics, and these have increasingly tended to include English words, phrases and expressions that, on closer analysis, can be found to have antecedents within and associations to a broad range of social, cultural, political and historical contexts. ‘Code-switching’ hybridises these languages in a variety of ways, but most commonly English words are peppered through predominantly Hindi lyrics; such examples of mixing is popularly referred to as ‘Hinglish’: a portmanteau of Hindi and English.

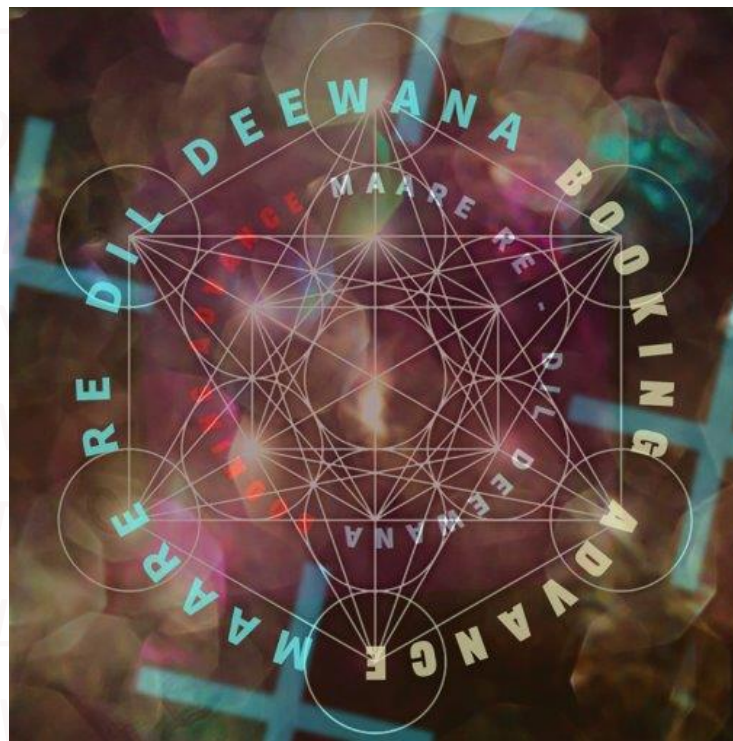
This project began with an attempt to ‘historicise’ Hinglish in the context of Indian cinema through a content analysis of the use of English words in Hindi song lyrics. Common and recurring words, similarities and differences, patterns and trends were identified through this process. Some words have been increasingly incorporated into lyrics over a long period of time: ‘boy’, ‘girl’, ‘future’, ‘love’, ‘left’, ‘right’, ‘crazy’, ‘fake’, ‘fraud’, for example, and other words and expressions more recently becoming popularised: ‘social media’, ‘breaking news’, ‘confusion’ and the use of English words for various colours, ‘pink’ and ‘blue’ in particular. Some words are more challenging to decipher because so many English words have, over time, become domesticated in India. The English words and expressions used in song lyrics reveal much about changing trends and lifestyles in India and its diasporas, the influence of mass and new medias on language, as well as how the mixing of languages in song lyrics can be seen to reflect the hopes, aspirations and desires of a changing film viewing audience.

I remember, growing up in the UK, both thinking and speaking through a combination of English with Punjabi and/ or Hindi, far more than I was aware of at the time. It was more a case of mainly speaking English but slipping in the occasional Punjabi or Hindi word. This is something I still do subconsciously, and so I started to think creatively about how languages interact when they run alongside each other, whether spoken or through thought. On reflection, I would use certain words in Hindi because of how they emphasise or express an idea or feeling in a more specific or nuanced way and would therefore adopt them as a substitute for their nearest equivalent word in English. Similarly, in Indian film song lyrics, English words often serve as a way of emphasising a mood, feeling or expression, but also sometimes as a mode of reappropriation, a form of parody, satire or humour; a reference to how these words are commonly or increasingly used in India (and its diasporas) within everyday vernaculars. Most of the songs that use Hinglish are upbeat, hip and entertaining. Far fewer examples were found of Hinglish being used in songs that were more emotive, ‘serious’ or melancholic.

The main outcome from this process consists of a series of digital collages, each referencing a different lyric from a broad range of film songs spanning the 1940s - present day. Most works in the series include collaged imagery from the song sequence in the film, as well as visual references to the time period the film was released. Design inspiration has been drawn from music videos, album covers, film posters but also contemporary new media cultures such as memes, Instagram tiles, social media advertising and NFTs.



The entire world calls me a joker
Mera Naam Joker [1970]



My crazy heart is making an advance booking
Tashan [2008]



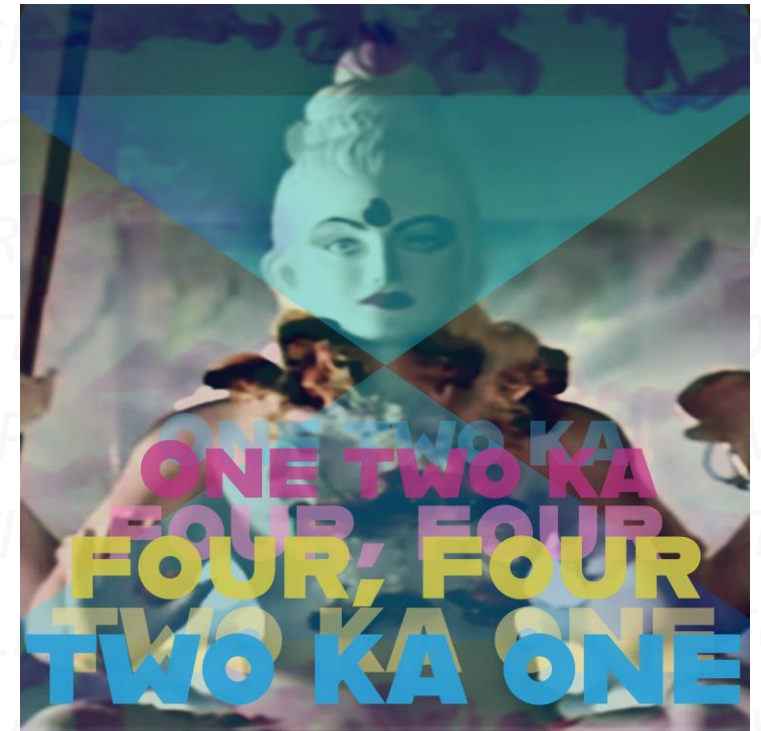
Everyone else seems fake to me
Street Dancer 3D [2020]



No one knows what our future holds
3 Idiots [2009]



My name is Chin-Chin-Chu, night, moonlight, me and
you, Hello Mister How Do You Do?
Howrah Bridge [1958]



One two turns into four, four two turns into one
Ram Lakhan (1989)



There's tension in eating chocolate, there's tension in drinking milk, tension, tension, tension
Rangeela [1995]



When life is out of control, Let your lips roll
3 Idiots (2009)



You are an absolute idiot
Khuddaar (1992)



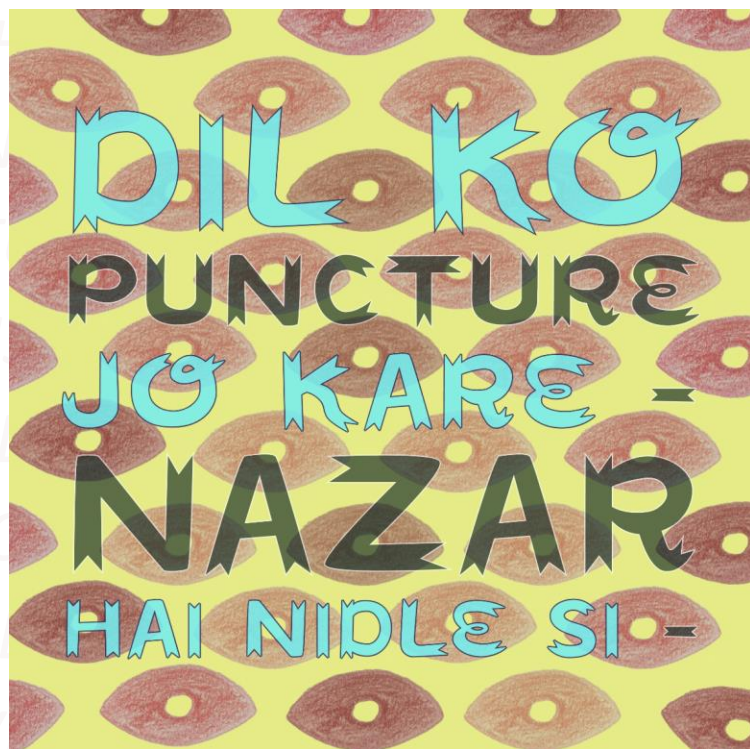
They ask me personal questions
Bunty Aur Babli [2005]



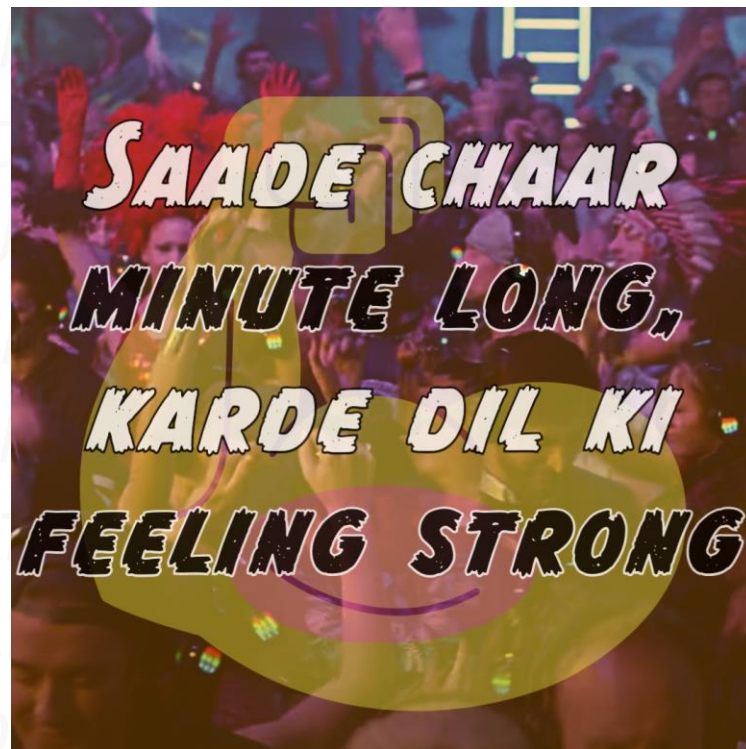
Is this a comedy, or a tragedy?
2 States [2014]



Oh My! Your charm, I like the way you move
Karthik Calling Karthik [2010]



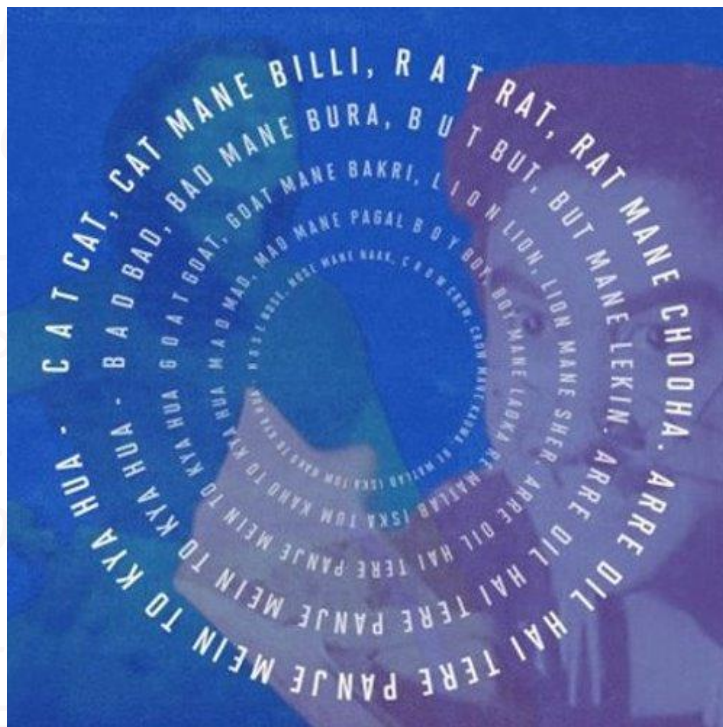
The eyesight is like a needle, that punctures the heart
Hindustani [1996]



Make the feeling of the heart strong, It's 4 minutes 30 second long
Ae Dil Hai Mushkil [2016]



Whose departure causes a bomb to blow off, an atom bomb to blow off
Ishaqzaade (2012)



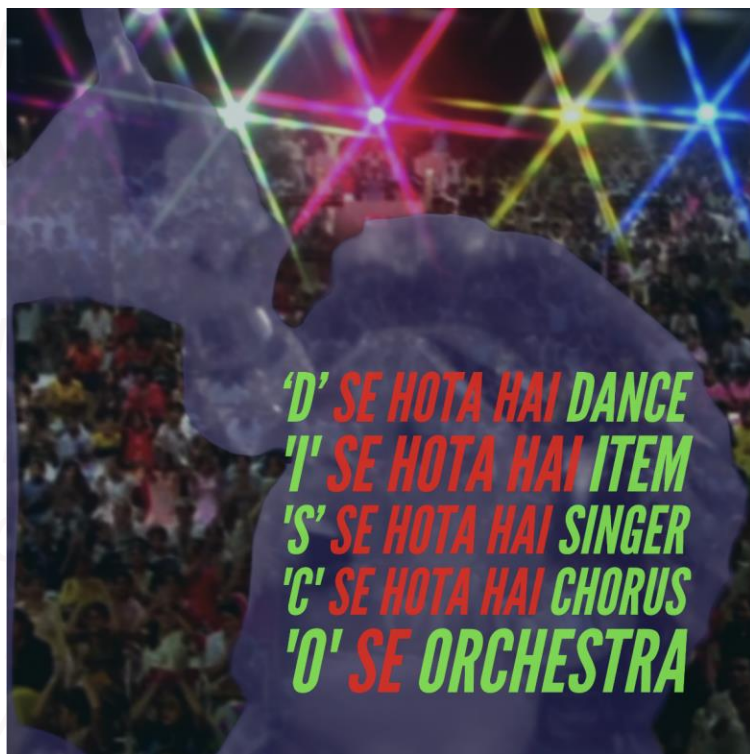
C-A-T cat ... which means a cat, R-A-T rat ... which means a rat, so what if my heart is under your control
Dilli Ka Thug [1958]



The boy is a little offbeat
Baar Baar Dekho [2016]



Holding someone's wrist
Love Aaj Kal [2009]



'D' is for dance
'I' is for item
'S' is for singer
'C' is for chorus
'O' is for orchestra
Disco Dancer [1982]



What are the strawberry eyes thinking?
Sapnay [1997]



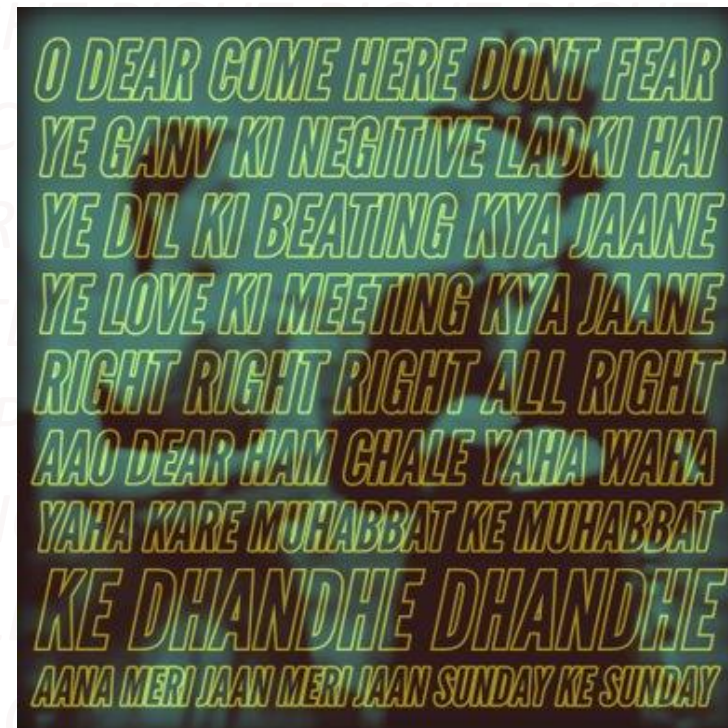
Don't fight like this, I'll make your mood light
Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani [2013]



You'll have your honeymoon inside a woolen blanket
Queen [2013]



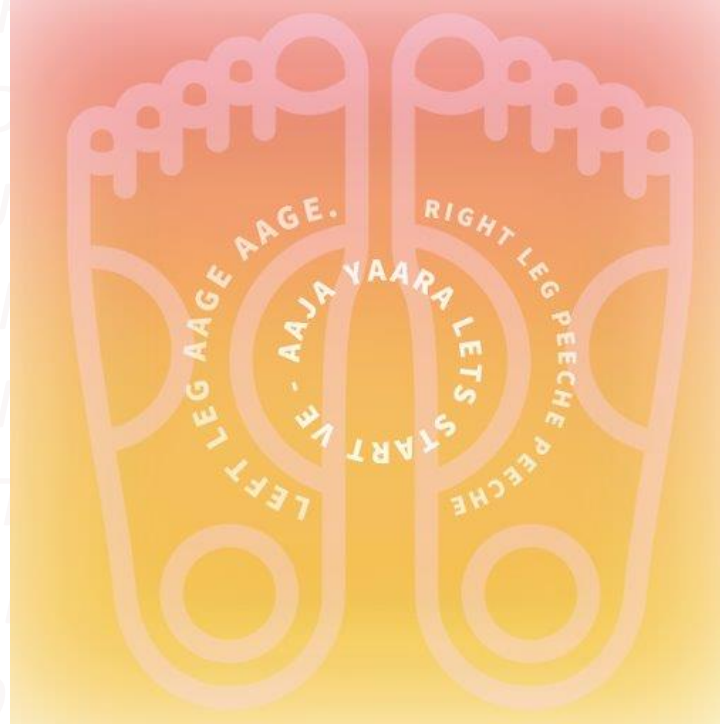
I'm the light, I'm a beautiful lady
Ishaqzaade [2012]



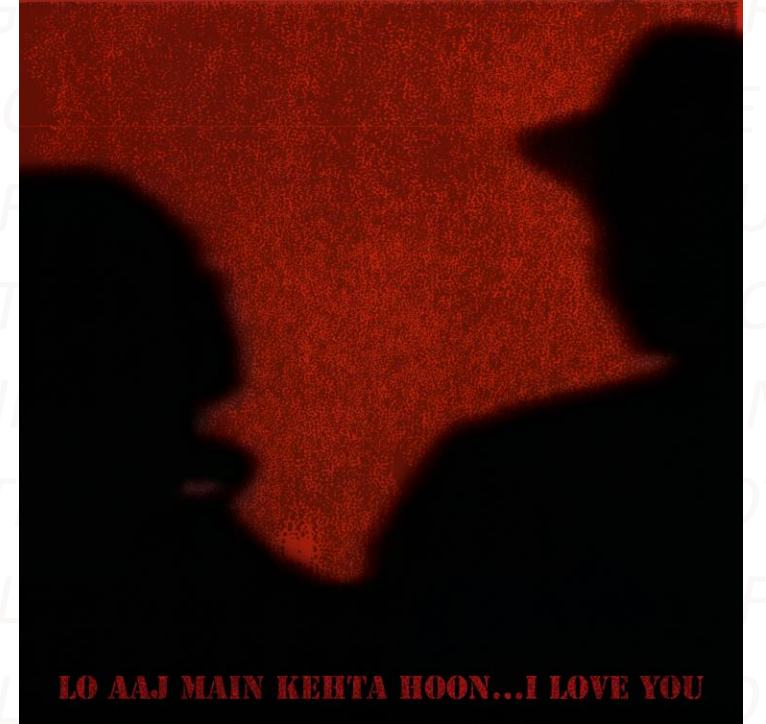
Lyrics to 'Meri jaan meri jaan sunday ke sunday'
Shehnai, [1947]



You're my (x5) hero no. 1
Hero No. 1 [1997]



Take your left leg in the front, Take your right leg to the
 back, Come on friend let's start now
Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi [2008]



So, I'm saying it now ... I love you
Mr India [1987]



Everybody's heart is in critical condition
Ae Dil Hai Mushkil [2016]



Large rockets and satellites have been sent up
Daud [1997]



But I'm for you only, this is guaranteed
Baar Baar Dekho [2016]



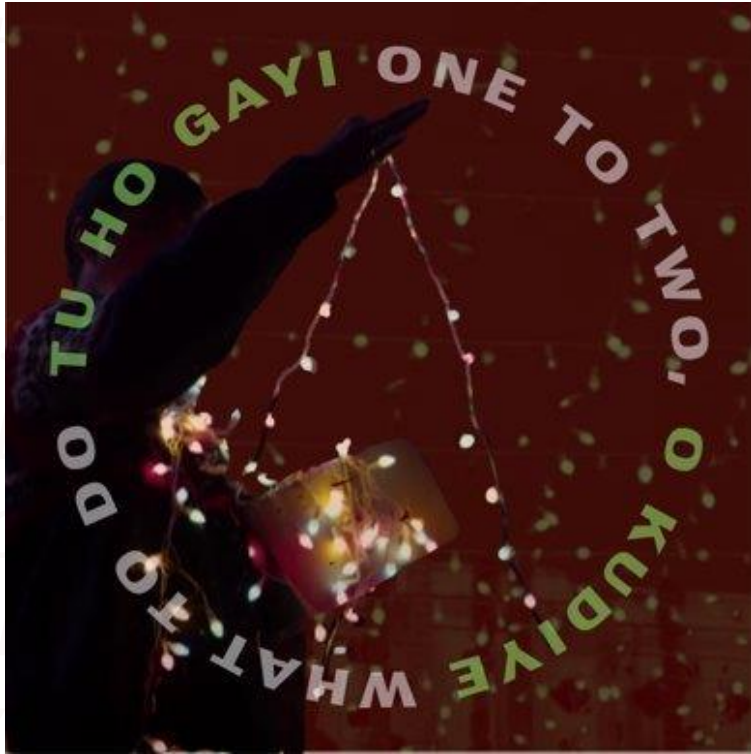
Looking at the white faces, My heart beats fast and hits on them. Oh very, oh very, oh very happy in my heart, my heart is dancing
Tashan [2008]



Happiness has multiplied with butter
Hasee Toh Phasee [2014]



It's total confusion
3 Idiots [2009]



You've gone from one to two, O girl what to do
Queen [2013]



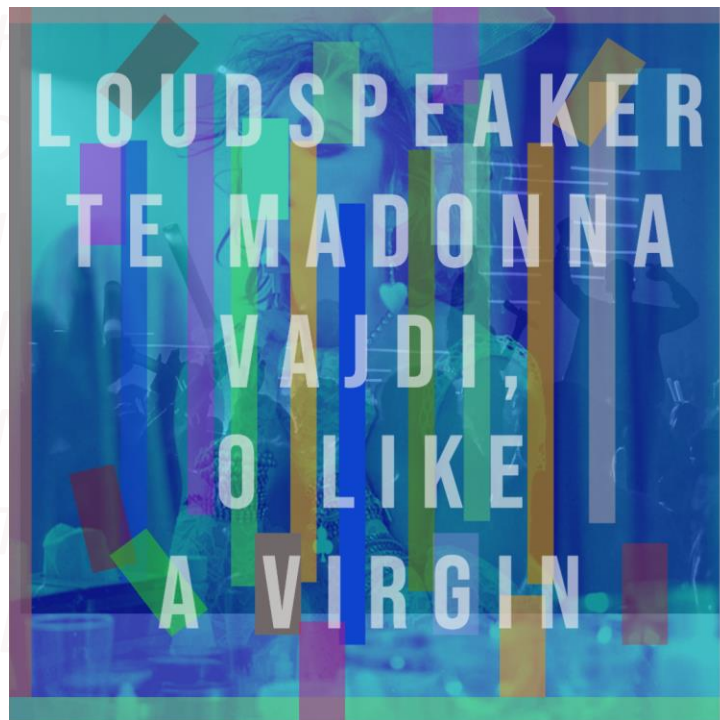
Now throw your hands up and say 'Disco Lovers' aa ha aa ha
Student of the year [2012]



I caught up with my friends from college, I sent a WhatsApp text to those I couldn't meet
Ae Dil Hai Mushkil [2016]



I'm crazy for your style, love, I'm in love with you
Barsaat (1995)



On the loudspeaker Madonna plays, Like a Virgin
Queen [2013]



Do it my way or take the highway
2 States [2014]



Bye bye Miss good night, we'll meet again tomorrow
Prem Nagar [1974]



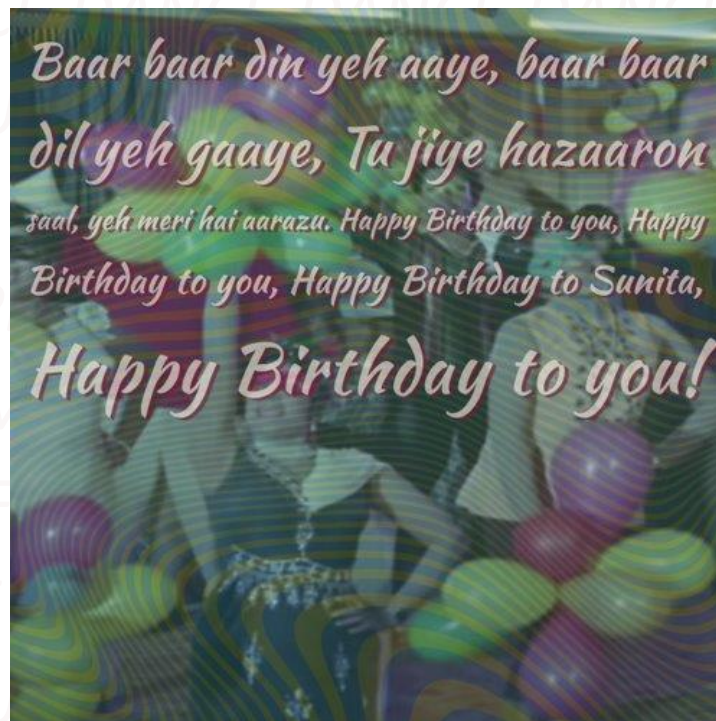
In Jurassic Park, beautiful couples are singing jazz music together. Hold a painting of Picasso and sit behind me, we'll dance together in Texas. Cowboys look at me, playboys tease me. There's lust in my body, there's mixture of emotions in my heart. My lover is like pop music, her eyes are like a strawberry. Let a love story develop, let a kick get me on a high.
Hum Se Hai Muqabala [1994]



We've seen millions of foreign girls,
ain't nobody like my desi girl
Dostana [2008]



Ooh la la, you are my fantasy
The Dirty Picture [2011]



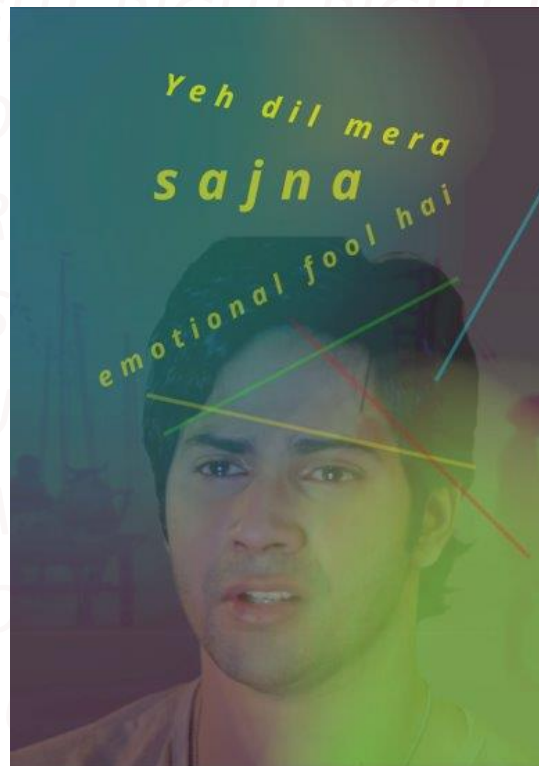
*This day arrives time and time again, you live a
 thousand years, this is my wish, happy birthday to
 you...happy birthday to Sunita*
Farz [1967]



*The breaking news on the TV Is my skirt ... haai, from
 Baghdad to Delhi via Agra*
Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani [2013]



*And how can one think that
Everything's gonna be okay*
Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na [2008]



My heart O beloved, is an emotional fool
Humpty Sharma ki Dulhania (2014)



*I don't know why my heart knows that,
If you're there then I'll be alright*
Dostana [2008]



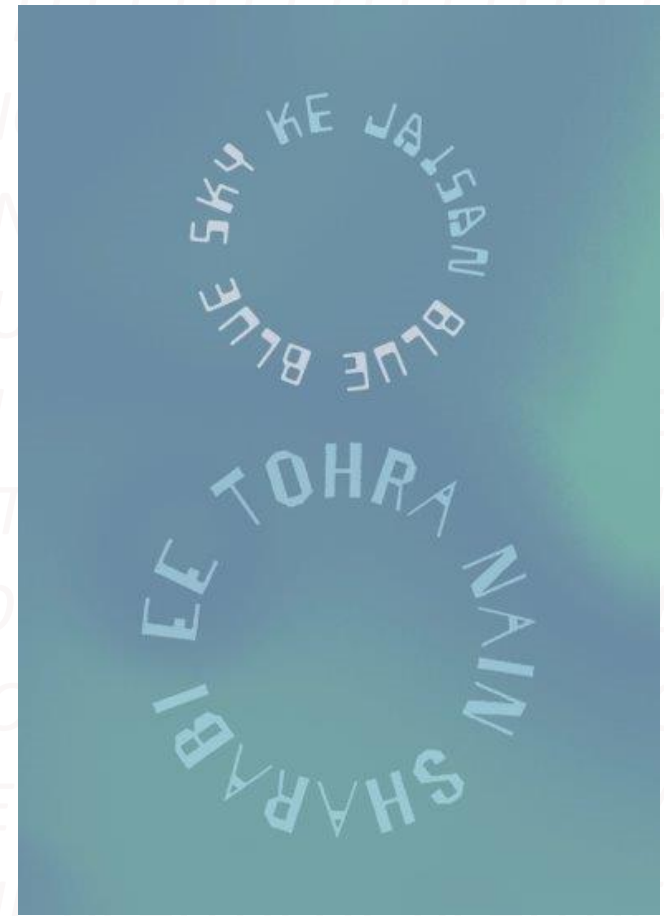
Your innocent face is like the moon
Tashan [2008]



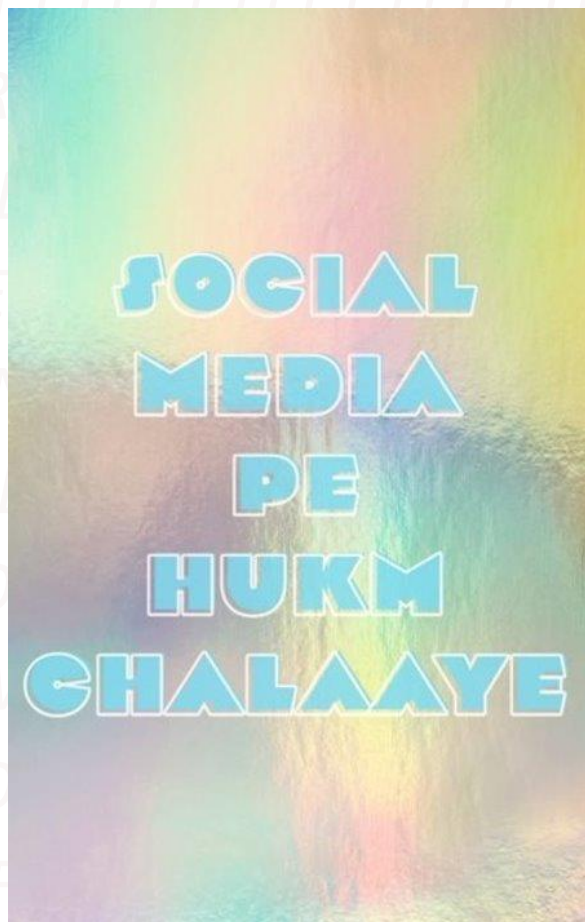
This tweet has gone viral
Baar Baar Dekho [2016]



You talk on the phone with your left hand, and apply mehndi to your right hand
Ae Dil Hai Mushkil [2016]



Your intoxicating eyes are blue like the sky
Tashan [2008]



You give orders on social media
Ae Dil Hai Mushkil [2016]



O dear take a chance on this dance
Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi [2008]



My cheeks are pink like the rose
Tashan [2008]

[illegible]