**Questions for *Swades: We, the People***

Note: These are meant to guide your viewing of the film, though they aren’t necessarily the only questions you’ll have to choose from when you write about the film as homework for class #3.

1. Mohan makes more than one journey in the film. Does it seem that he is being fundamentally changed by his travels? If so, in what ways? If not, what signs are there in the beginning that point toward what he will decide in the end about what path he wants his life to take?
2. “Swades” or “Swadesh” means “one’s own country”—“motherland,” as it’s sometimes translated. As you can tell from the title and subtitle, this is a film with both a personal and a political dimension. Like the main character, Mohan, it has one foot in America (hence the subtitle) and one in India.
3. What values that you could call “American” does the film seem to be promoting? How does the film illustrate those values? (Be as specific as you can.)
4. What values, traditions, and beliefs from India does the film also seem to support? Again, how does the film illustrate this?
5. I’ve posted the lyrics (translated) for some of the key songs in the film. Study one of these as if it were a poem (that is, reading it closely for patterns of imagery, symbols, etc). The translations were all posted online without capital letters or punctuation, and there’s no rhyme scheme in the English. Still, do what you can with the language. Consider the song also as it appeared in the film—how the words were illustrated by the scene and the way the singer performed the lyrics. What did all this contribute to the film’s message? How did the song affect you emotionally? Note: If you’d rather analyze one of the other songs, feel free to avail yourself of YouTube and the Web in general.

Songs from Swades (the bolded ones I have posted translations for)

* **"Yun Hi Chala Chala"** (traveler)
* **"Yeh Taara Woh Taara"** (stars)
* "Aahista Aahista" (flashback lullaby—not in film)
* "Pal Pal Hai Bhaari" (Celebration of Ram)
* "Saanwariya Saanwariya" (Gita’s love solo)
* "Dekho Na" (Gita declares her feelings)
* "Yeh Jo Des Hai Tera" (motherland calling)

**Yeh Tara Woh Tara** (stars in the sky song—movie night)

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| yeh tara woh tara har tara | This star, that star, every star |
| dekho jise bhi lage pyara | whichever one you see looks lovely |
| yeh tara woh tara har tara | this star, that star, every star |
| ye sab sath mein jo hain rat mein | when all these gather together in the night, |
| toh jagmagaye asman sara | the whole sky shimmers |
| jagmag tare do tare nau tare sau tare | shimmering stars, two stars, nine stars, a hundred stars |
| jagmag sare har tara hai sharara | they glitter as one, but each is a separate spark |
| tumne dekhi hai dhanak to | if you have seen a rainbow, |
| bolo rang kitne hain | then tell me how many colors there are in it |
| sat rang kahane ko | there are seven colors to speak of, |
| phir bhi sang kitne hain | but they’re so closely associated |
| samjho sabse pahale to | just think, |
| rang hote akele to | if these colors all dwelt separately, |
| indradhanush banta hi nahin | how would a rainbow ever form |
| ek na hum ho paye to | likewise, if we couldn’t manage to unite |
| anyay se larne ko | to fight injustice, |
| hogi koi janta hi nahin | then your people would not be a nation |
| phir na kahana nirbal hai kyon hara | so don’t ask why we are so weak and defeated |
| tara tara | stars, stars |
| yeh tara woh tara | this star, that star |
| bund bund milne se banta ek dariya hai | individual drops, by joining together, make a river |
| bund bund sagar hai varna yeh sagar kya hai | every drop makes the sea otherwise what is a sea? |
| samjho is paheli ko bund ho akeli to | understand this puzzle a drop existing on its own, |
| ek bund jaise kuch bhi nahin | just as a drop, isn’t anything |
| ham auron ko chhore to munh sabse hi morein to | were we to forsake others and turn away from everyone, |
| tanha rah na jaye dekho hum kahin | then we would end up feeling incredibly lonely |
| kyon na milke banein ham dhara | why don’t we join together and become a current |
| hmm tara tara | star star |
| yeh tara woh tara | this star, that star |
| jo kisan hal sambhale | the farmer who ploughs the land |
| dharti sona hi yougaye | brings forth gold from the earth |
| jo gauwala gaiya pale | the cowherd who tends to the cattle |
| dudh ki nadi bahaye | is rewarded with a river of milk |
| jo lohar loha dhale | the blacksmith who shapes the iron, |
| har auzar dhal jaye | every tool of his shines |
| mitti jo kumhar youtha le | the potter who shapes the clay -- |
| mitti pyala ban jaye | for him, the clay becomes a pot |
| sab yeh rup hai mehanat ke | all these are faces of labor, |
| kuch karne ki chahat ke | a desire to do something |
| kisi ka kisi se koi bair nahin | no one has enmity with anyone else |
| sab ke ek hi sapne hain | all have the same dreams, |
| socho to sab apne hain | all are the same |
| koi bhi kisise yahan gair nahin | no one is a stranger to another |
| sidhi bat hai samjho yara | this is a simple matter you understand, my friend |

<http://www.ardhamy.com/song/yeh-tara-woh-tara>