Contemporary Directors of Note	
DIRECTOR	Mani Rathnam (born 1956), *Roja* (1992)
DIRECTOR	Shekhar Kapur (born 1945), *Bandit Queen* (1994)
DIRECTOR	Aparna Sen (born 1945), *Mr and Mrs Iyer* (2002)

Bollywood SPECTACULARS

PRIYA JAIKUMAR

Hum Aapke Hain Kaun (1994), directed by Sooraj R. Barjatya, set the trend for several family-oriented romances. (Postcard by Roli Books, India)

AS A THREE-YEAR-OLD MEMBER OF THE FILM AUDIENCE, I was transfixed by the irrepressible Mumtaz in *Dushman* (1970). As a "bioscope *walli*"—a village woman with a bioscope showing views of Indian cities—she sang, "Dilli ka Kuttub Minar dekho . . ." (see the Qutub Minar of Delhi), which I memorized and repeatedly staged for hapless adults. I was reminded of this performance oriented, socially gregarious cinophilia of India on my visit home last summer. My mother and I sat in a cramped train compartment as a Sikh family erupted into dance to a song from the year's hit film, *Gadar, Ek Prem Katha* (2001). In our cubicle, swaying to a blasting boom box and the train's motion, a young boy moved fluidly to "Ik Mod Aaya, Main Uthhe dil chhod aaya" (I came upon a turn on the road, where I left my heart). Little surprise, I thought, that Hollywood's transnational muscle remains unable to dislodge India's film industry on its home turf.

Film in India is a prolific and inundating medium. Film stars' faces adorn fruit-juice stands, and film music reverberates in shops, public buses, taxis, and auto-rickshaws. Gossip magazines about actors and actresses fill roadside newspaper stalls. Popular music and television shows draw on films for inspiration. Film calibrates the lives of Indians who have followed it for years, marking their decades and moods with fashions, dialogues, and lyrics spawned by the mammoth industry. Indian film directors and actors continue to use the spectacular, visceral, and social appeal of Indian cinema to their economic advantage. And the Indian film industry continues to hold its own despite Hollywood's aggressive globalization, which frequently means the erosion of autonomy and self-determination in developing markets.

A purely celebratory narrative, however, misses many things. Review the domestic trade press in India, and you learn that the industry is facing a cash crunch, with few films making money at the box office. Consider film industries in the rest of the subcontinent, in parts of Africa, the Middle East, Fiji, Mauritius, or Malaysia, and Indian cinema is too dominant a force to fit descriptions of David facing off Hollywood's Goliath. Discuss censorship and funding options with filmmakers interested in alternative forms of Indian cinema, and they will tell you of struggles with the Central Board of Film Certification or the National Film Development Corporation of India. Briefly misplace your cultural-studies lenses that illuminate the complexity of textual contradictions or reception contexts, and the Bombay film industry begins to look startlingly like an ideological behemoth.

Gadar, the film that so enraptured our train's dancing child, was about an Indian Sikh battling impossible odds to be reunited with his Muslim wife, kidnapped by her evil Pakistani father. Coinciding with a rise in sectarian politics in India, we live in an era in which technological expertise, increased foreign investment, and state interest in the industry are coupling with conservative nationalism and reactionary social values. With broad strokes, in what follows I wish to introduce some key analytic frameworks through which film scholars have approached this cinema and to delineate some of the complexities of the contemporary Bombay film industry.

Formative Influences

EXULTING OVER THE RECENT SUCCESS of the Indian film *Lagaan* (2001), nominated for an Oscar in the best foreign film category, the *New York Times* ran an article on what it called "Bombay's over-the-top film industry, Bollywood."[1] We might argue that Hollywood's style of filmmaking contains its own

Lagaan (2001), directed by Ashutosh Gowariker, reached international audiences and was nominated for an Oscar in the best foreign film category.

brands of exaggeration (unless someone wants to convince me that Spielberg is understated). Nevertheless, what strikes anyone fed on a diet of mainstream Hollywood films encountering an equally mainstream Hindi film for the first time is its high emotionalism and apparent lack of subtlety (or the prominent display of artifice) in sets, acting, narrative, and music. In this sense, *Lagaan*'s transnational success may be attributable to its adaptation of Hindi cinema's formal and thematic elements (such as song and dance, Indian values versus a mercenary modernity) to familiar Western tropes (of a single-stranded narrative and psychologically motivated characterization). Typically, Hindi film refuses to play by Western norms of realism. If Hollywood has techniques that permit its fictional world to appear internally coherent and invisibly put together, Indian films are orchestrated by another sensibility of coherence and reality.

This relationship to Hollywood cinema is incorporated in the epithet "Bollywood," a parodic and cheeky echo of the North American film industry, a mimicry that is both a response and a dismissal. Undeniably, Hollywood (and now U.S. television shows) serve as a source for story and plot ideas for some Hindi films and television programs, but they are one of multiple theatrical, popular, epic, and folk traditions from which Indian cinema's traditions of representation have evolved, each mediated and transformed by domestic social and market pressures. A historical perspective is critical to an understanding of the formal particularities of contemporary Indian cinema.

Theorists and historians observe that Sanskrit theater, Parsi theater, folk theater, and Hindu epics (the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*) have been significant influences on mainstream Indian cinema.[2] While no director worth his or her weight in box-office tickets today reads the Sanskritic *Natya Shastra*, some of the formal elements of Hindi cinema—such as the ritualistic opening of several films with a prayer before the credit roll; the inalienable relationship between drama, music, and dance; an actor's direct address to audiences with a consequent frontality to staged action; a preponderance of burlesque routines integrated with dramatic, tragic, and action-oriented episodes—may be traced to older texts. Stressing the antiquity of their theatrical form distracts from the ways in which they became prominent during the nineteenth century, in conflict and confluence with colonial European theater and art.[3] Formally, influential theatrical, dance, and pictorial representations in precinematic India emphasized episodic narratives, epic structures, spectacular confrontations, and melodramatic and somatic expressiveness, and early Indian cinema drew from this dramatic palette.[4]

India's first features were *Pundalik* (1912; directed by P. R. Tipnis et al.) and *Raja Harishchandra* (1913; directed by D. G. Phalke). Mythological films with a national flavor were popular with Indians because such films distinguished themselves from foreign imports. However, the "local" in India was diverse and divisive. If the largest population spoke Hindi, an equally significant segment spoke Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, and Telugu. To some, the visual or linguistic potential of cinema did not seem to reside within such domestic cacophony. The notion of silent film as a simultaneously nationalist expression and a "universal" language, with an ability to transcend linguistic boundaries in terms of reception, underwent a very particular crisis in India with the inception of sound technology.

Despite these concerns, as early as 1927 it was evident that Indian films were profitable at the box office, even though they were fewer in number than imported films and the raw film stock required for indigenous production was levied with a high imperial customs duty. Mythological films like *Lanka Dahan* (1917) and *Krishna Janma* (1918) yielded ten times their cost of production as profit to the producers.[5] In part, this success was attributable to the fact that Indian films developed a *visual* language and formal qualities that were simultaneously distinctive from Hollywood cinema and broad in their appeal.

Masala Films

THREE KEY STUDIOS formed in the 1930s—New Theaters in Calcutta, Prabhat in Pune, and Bombay Talkies in Bombay. Several smaller production companies also emerged, such as Imperial Film Company (which made India's first sound film, *Alam Ara*, in 1931), Wadia Movietone, Ranjit Movietone, Minerva Movietone, and Madras United Artists Corporation. Filmmaking in India began to attract the attention of independent producers and directors with its promise of profit. For the film industry, this meant that emerging producers would hire stars and facilities for single-film projects, which undermined the studio system and the "genre" film. Historically, the 1940s are seen as the point at which the "formula film" or "masala film" came into its own.

Masala here refers literally to a blend of Indian spices that adds flavor to food, and metaphorically to the necessary

combination of filmic ingredients that best guarantees high returns on investment. Masala films were a consequence of producers and directors trying to ensure that every film had a fighting chance to reap good profits—in the absence of a studio infrastructure—by incorporating something in the film for everyone. Each film had a little action and some romance with a touch of comedy, drama, tragedy, music, and dance.

Indian films make little sense when viewed from the perspective of American film genres. No Indian film is a musical or action film because *every* mainstream Indian film is a musical and has some action sequences; such categories of differentiation can no longer apply here. Opening the pages of an Indian video collection guide on my bookshelf, I find films listed under the familiar descriptors of "Romance," "Social," and "Family Drama." I also find films under the headers "Dacoity," "Offbeat," "Good Music," and "Tragic Love Story," which are as useful and legitimate as any other genre grouping![6]

Still from *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (1994), directed by Sooraj R. Barjatya.

Indian films are best understood through a discernment of the gradations and historical shifts *within* polyvalent, layered narratives. In the 1970s melodramatic crises frequently revolved around tropes of brothers separated at birth, as in *Yaadon ki Baaraat* (1973) and *Amar, Akbar, Anthony* (1977). Invariably, the brothers also had conflicts of interest. In *Yaadon ki Baaraat*, the eldest of three siblings central to the story is coerced by gangsters to kidnap his younger brother's girlfriend. In *Deewar* (1975), a smuggler battles to death with his cop brother, leaving their mother with an awful choice and one dead son. Though no longer popular tropes, filial love and conflict appear in different ways today. In the sweeping hit *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (2000), younger siblings prepare to sacrifice their romantic love for family responsibilities until fate (and divinity) intervenes to assist them. All these films are melodramas, combine song and dance routines with romance, and contain plots with incredible coincidences and deus ex machina devices. When held in relation to each other, however, *Amar Akbar Anthony* and *Deewar* are action films whereas *Yaadon ki Baraat* and *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* shade off in the direction of romantic and musical dramas. Tracking any single element of these texts yields synchronic similarities and diachronic variety in terms of form, content, and ideology.

Insightfully, film scholar Madhava Prasad suggests a connection between Bombay cinema's omnibus aesthetic form and its production process. The dominant film industry in India, he argues, is akin to the "heterogeneous mode of production" described by Karl Marx, wherein every component is manufactured separately and assembled into one product at the final stage rather than developed from the same raw material through successive, progressive stages of manufacture. In an affiliated manner, the constituent parts of the Hindi film—its stars, its dialogue sequences, its song-and-dance numbers—have a stand-alone quality with a heterogeneous range of appeal within the film's loose narrative framework.[7] Narrative has less significance when a film is shot to showcase competing elements, such as the song-and-dance sequences that are marketed prior to a film's release. Whether or not a song has narrative justification, these primarily visual and aural segments have the capacity of reaching a cross-linguistic audience, and directors aiming for box-office success *create* occasions for them. Formal conventions as well as audience anticipation have been built around such occasions over the years. Predictability, as Rosie Thomas points out, is part of the pleasure offered by Hindi films.[8]

Resisting "Westernization"

RECENTLY, the film *Dil Chahta Hai* (2001) brought together a cast of three well-known male stars (Aamir Khan, Akshaye Khanna, and Saif Ali Khan) to play urban, upper-middle-class single men who are buddies despite having different attitudes to relationships. Aamir Khan's character does not believe in love, preferring casual flings. Saif Ali Khan's character is incurably romantic, getting attached to the wrong women. Akshaye Khanna looks for a meeting of minds and finds his ideal in a divorced woman several years his senior (played by Dimple Kapadia, whose 1973 breakthrough film, *Bobby*, was a phenomenal hit in its time).

Though a majority of Hindi films in recent years have been romances dealing with young lovers and their tribulations, *Dil Chahta Hai* stands out from similar releases. The young men are rich, but not in the manner of recent Hindi films that depict industrialists with politicians in their pockets and marble staircases in their mansions. They have comfortable relationships with their parents, who are not portrayed as complete autocrats. (Autocratic parents are familiar characters in Hindi films, with the dictatorial father typically played by Amrish Puri and the good-natured father by Alok Nath. Films thus operate by repetition and variation.) The men do not entertain the archetypal do-or-die approach to friendship, family, or love. The film explores some shades of gray in relationships, allowing them to have conversations (and sing songs) about their varying attitudes to romance. A few factors make this toned-down version of Hindi cinema's moral universe permissible. The stars' appearances are westernized. Aamir Khan sports a soul patch,

Typically, Hindi film refuses to play by Western norms of realism. If Hollywood has techniques that permit its fictional world to appear internally coherent and invisibly put together, Indian films are orchestrated by another sensibility of coherence and reality.

which made that small tuft of hair under the lower lip popular among urban Indian youth. There are also enough denim jackets, sunglasses, and hair gel in the film for a spiky, youthful jauntiness.

Second, whatever alternative lifestyles are flirted with, the inveterate playboy Aamir Khan wants a married life when he meets the right woman, and Akshaye Khan's unconventional love is terminated by the alcoholism of the older woman, who conveniently dies of a bad liver. Although appearances change and Aamir Khan's character is able to travel between India and Australia with ease, the values ratified by the film are those of familial relationships, male brotherhood, matrimony, and entrepreneurial upward mobility. Thus, it incorporates the ideology of traditional and mainstream Hindi (and dominantly Hindu) films with a more liberalized and westernized contemporary India.

The film's style, treatment, and narrative resolution are symptomatic of the challenges Hindi films face today: a viewership that watches MTV and Channel V (India's music channel) and desires the VJ's and DJ's attire and lifestyles; a newly privatized marketplace in which Indian films have to compete, in terms of technique and popular appeal, with youth programming from all over the world; and a growing, upwardly mobile, and young audience that seeks compatibility between their need for conspicuous consumption and the dominant consensus on "Indian values." *Dil Chahta Hai* contains stylistic and thematic maneuvers to accommodate norms that are upheld as "Indian" along with lifestyles of excessive consumerism, which have been hitherto associated with the industrial West. These negotiations are most explicit in films that depict "Non Resident Indians" (NRIs or Indians living abroad), who constitute an important part of the Indian box office today and who have appeared as a new character type in Hindi films. In films such as *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) and *Yaadein* (2001), NRIs are portrayed as incredibly wealthy yet faithfully in possession of the essence of "Indianness," which is equated with devotion to family, hospitality, loyalty to friends, modesty amid extreme wealth, piety, and an adherence to the rules of patriarchy and monogamy.

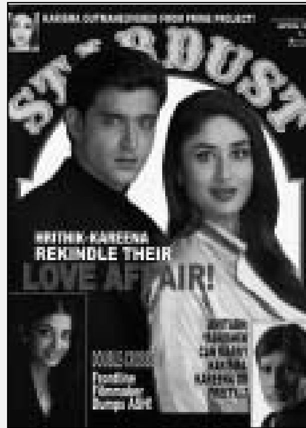
Watching these films, one experiences a sense of déjà vu. They are reminiscent of similar periods when the nation encountered the market forces and fashions of the West, when popular Hindi films responded with narratives where "Indianness" was defined against a corrupt "West," with the abstractions frequently embodied in female characters and their choices. In *Indira M.A.* (1934), the educated central female character, Indira (Sulochana), marries a westernized man in preference to a traditional one. She is punished by a life of misfortune. In *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* (1973), the hero's sexually liberated, bell bottom–sporting sister (Zeenat Aman) becomes the center of a hippie cult, advocating drugs and free love. She meets an untimely death while her brother's supportive, sari-wearing girlfriend (Mumtaz) is rewarded with a married life.

With every threat of cultural importation, mainstream Hindi films have found different ways of exorcising the onslaught by asserting their Indian identity with the latest technological or market trend. They incorporate new themes without straying too far from conservative ideologies of sexual behavior or social relations in order to consolidate their nationalist appeal, narrow the potential for controversy, and repulse foreign competition. To state it more strongly, the evocation and creation of "Indianness" has been a corollary to India's economic liberalization, which has frequently produced an ultraconservative and reactionary notion of the "indigenous." Current advertisements for the ICICI Bank (the self-proclaimed "Indian face of global banking") in the North American edition of the *Indian Express* provide a succinct visual prototype of such a cultural maneuver. The advertisements depict a "Western" object with an "Indian" touch, such as the front bumper of an imported car with a lime and green chilies hanging from it, to evade the evil eye. "Modern, yet Indian," states the advertising copy.[9] To read the advertisement perversely, that is, interpreting it against its intent: consumerism and obscurantism *can* find a happy coexistence in the upwardly mobile Indian middle classes.

Local and Global Varieties

Films that have not had to depend entirely on the market for their funding, on the other hand, have had a strong tradition of social and political interrogation. Typically, there has been a significant distance between filmmakers who cater to the box office and those attempting to deviate from the formula and explore new forms of aesthetic expression or ideological critique. Since India's independence from British rule in 1947, government funding has been one source for such projects. Satyajit Ray's internationally acclaimed film *Pather Panchali* (1955) was partially funded by the Home Publicity Department of the government of West Bengal (though this was more a consequence of the Bengal chief minister's acquaintance with Ray's family than due to any consistent government policy). Of various government initiatives, the one to have the most enduring impact was the Film Finance Corporation (1960), established to provide low-interest loans to independent projects. The effects of this were not felt until the late 1960s, as the government grew increasingly more

interventionist in film aesthetics and production, deviating from previous policies of limiting their involvement to the production of instructional documentaries. By the 1970s, the government actively assisted in the production of what was deemed "good cinema." This dovetailed with the establishment of a film institute in Pune (Film and Television Institute of India, or FTII), where prospective filmmakers, actors, and technicians were exposed to several international cinemas. Students were trained in an environment that fostered socialist intellectual traditions and encouraged an evolution of styles outside the commercial mode of Indian filmmaking.[10] The FTII came to be the home of several actors and directors associated with the "New Indian Cinema."



Film in India is an inundating medium, and film-gossip magazines fill newspaper stands, as seen in this April 2002 issue of *Stardust* (www.stardustindia.com).

In opposition to the mainstream film industry, cinema in this mode follows a primarily realist tradition of filmmaking, with affinities to the styles of Renoir, De Sica, Bresson, and Tati. The two films that are recognized as the beginning of this movement—*Bhuvan Shome* (1969; directed by Mrinal Sen) and *Uske Roti* (1969; directed by Mani Kaul)—were both financed by the FFC. While realism is the dominant style of this form of "parallel" cinema (so named for the alternative it offers to mainstream films), modernist sensibilities are also present, as in the work of Ritvik Ghatak and those influenced by him.

It is usually considered easy to discern the differences between mainstream and alternative cinemas, as they deviate along the lines of aesthetics, politics, funding, and ambitions. However, certain factors complicate this bifurcation. In mainstream films, the prominence of songs can permit spaces that are not "policed" as vigorously. Attention to film lyrics and mise-en-scène show that they reach for sentiments that are narratively unexplored or repressed. Meena Kumari's "Ajeeb Dastan Hai Yeh" in *Dil Apna Aur Preet Parai* (1960) is a song of her unfulfilled and illicit desire for a man engaged to marry another woman, whom she barely dares to look at in the narrative sequences. Critically acclaimed actor and director Guru Dutt's films feature some of the most powerful and socially subversive songs. Not surprisingly, many of his lyrics were written by progressive poet and songwriter Kaifi Azmi, who was also actively involved in India's Communist Party and the Indian People's Theater Movement (IPTA). Created in 1943, IPTA was an association that aimed to make art a focal point in struggles for economic justice and democracy. The movement started in theater, but several people associated with it came to be actively involved with cinema. The presence of creative personnel who crossed over from political theater and art has been one reason for stylistic and thematic experimentation within mainstream Bombay films. Another important source has been film industries outside Bombay that have produced distinctive cinemas, with histories, narrative traditions, and fan followings that run parallel and in competition to Bollywood cinema.

The devoted fan base of Telugu and Tamil film stars and the rich filmmaking traditions of Kerala and Calcutta have always provided a counterpoint to Bombay cinema. As the dominant industry, Bombay has consistently drawn upon the creative talent of popular actors and directors working in Madras and Calcutta to increase its appeal to national audiences and capitalize on regional box-office successes. The most recent success story is of the South Indian director Mani Rathnam, who has earned a popular following as well as critical acclaim in both south and north India. Mani Rathnam is among the few Indian directors who started making films in Tamil and released dubbed Hindi versions after their regional success. His films *Roja* (1992) and *Bombay* (1995) were successful in Tamil, Hindi, and Telugu. Along with *Dil Se* (1998), these films constitute part of a trilogy, dealing with themes of terrorism and communalism, Indian masculinity, femininity, urban-rural as well as north-south Indian relations, all with a unity of artistic vision. Rathnam's high production values and his films' unusual soundtracks, composed by A. R. Rahman (now a leading name in Indian music), set new standards for Hindi popular cinema.

The regional crossover to the national arena has been echoed on a more global scale as Indian filmmakers have begun work on foreign collaborations. A. R. Rahman's music is more global than national today. He has composed music and sampled Bollywood soundtracks for the new Broadway show *Bombay Dreams* by Andrew Lloyd Weber and Shekhar Kapur (director of films such as *Bandit Queen* [1994], *Elizabeth* [1998], and, most recently, *Four Feathers* [2002]). Moreover, the recent international success of films such as *Fire* (1996) and *Earth* (1998; both directed by Deepa Mehta), *Monsoon Wedding* (2002; directed by Mira Nair), and *Bend It Like Beckham* (2003; directed by Gurinder Chadha), from the South Asian diaspora in the United Kingdom, United States, and Canada, reinforces the notion that Indian cinema is reaching Western audiences. Categorizing the diaspora films alongside popular Indian cinema misses their cosmopolitan nature, in that they are made by directors who live outside India and are informed by Indian as well as Hollywood and European styles of filmmaking.[11] Their mode of address is self-consciously international: they are produced as English-language films and shot with a transnational production unit. Nevertheless, these new films have given non-Indian audiences a whiff of India's popular film aesthetic.

More salient to a discussion of mainstream Indian cinema's global outreach is the fact that, as of March 2002, the government of India allowed 100 percent foreign direct investment (FDI) into the advertising and film sectors in India. Prior to this, the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) had to approve projects with foreign investment in excess of 74 percent.[12] With the relaxation of protectionist policies, it has become easier for foreign capital to enter India, and foreign businesses are more invested in selling India to their global customers as a prepackaged commodity. Thus, unsurprisingly, to accompany the opening of the musical *Bombay Dreams*, Selfridges sold Bollywood-influenced music and fashions, MAC (the U.S. cosmetics company) introduced "Indian" colors in nail polish and kohl eye pencils, and salons in New York reintroduced henna body painting, this time studded with Swarovski crystals.[13]

Media professionals in India have largely accepted this as a good sign. In their opinion, it creates worldwide publicity as well as more consumers and viewers who are amenable to Indian products and goods, whether these be cosmetics or media programming.[14] Still, Indian filmmakers are faced with the choice of either making high-investment films that anticipate a release in the domestic as well as international market, even though such large-scale coordination frequently delays the film's Indian release and risks heavy losses, or making films on smaller budgets that appeal to specific markets within India. Based on the past decade, the indication is that films combining slick production values, conservative messages, family-oriented dramas, good music, and strong prerelease publicity receive reasonable returns at the domestic box office.

A recent cover story on Indian cinema in the *L.A. Weekly* is optimistic about the crossover potential of Indian romantic melodramas in the United States. In the article, itself as clear an indication as any of the increasing North American awareness and interest in Bollywood films, the author notes that "one can easily imagine some of the more mild-mannered family-oriented Bollywood films catching on with the older, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* crowd (my parents love Indian musicals), or even with opera queens and Broadway-musical fans."[15] In my perception, it is only when we take the recent resurgence of family-oriented Bollywood melodramas out of their context that they appear mild-mannered. Within India, their ideology reinforces a conservative, patriarchal, and repressive family ethic in the face of economic liberalization and social change. While it is impossible to predict whether mainstream Indian films will acquire a niche audience in the United States in any enduring way, the increased global initiatives and influx of foreign monetary and technological facilities in India have contributed to more rigidly nationalist definitions of cultural identity in mainstream Indian cinema. WLT

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[1] Ruth La Ferla, "Kitsch with a Niche: It's Bollywood Chic," *New York Times*, May 5, 2002, 9.

[2] Parsis are Zoroastrian Persians who emigrated to India during the eighth century, fleeing to protect their religion after the fall of the Sassanian Empire in Iran. They were primarily given refuge in the Indian region of Gujarat. Examples of folk theater include *Ram Lila* and *Krishna Lila* from U. P. Maharashtra's *Tamasha*, Rajasthan's *Nautanki*, Bengal's *Jatra* and others. For further details, see Erik Barnouw and S. Krishnaswamy, *Indian Film* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). In *Indian Popular Cinema* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1998), K. Moti Gokulsing and Wimal Dissanayake provide an introductory discussion. In "Towards a Theoretical Critique of Bombay Cinema," *Screen* 26, no. 3–4 (May–August 1985): 133–46, Vijay Mishra considers the structural influence of Indian epics on its films.

[3] See M. Madhava Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film: A Historical Construction* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998). In his introduction, Prasad offers a concise summary of recent arguments that relate India's popular cinematic aesthetics (such as those of frontality, spectacle, iconicity, and so on) to modernity and nationalism rather than to antiquity.

[4] See Suresh Chabria, ed., *Light of Asia: Indian Silent Cinema, 1912–1934* (New Delhi: Wiley Eastern, 1994), especially Ashish Rajadhyaksha's essay, "India's Silent Cinema: A Viewer's View" (25–40).

[5] *Evidence*, vol. 1 of *Report of the Indian Cinematograph Committee 1927–1928* (Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1928), 348.

[6] *Dacoit* is the Indian-English word for a bandit.

[7] Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film*, especially pages 42–51.

[8] Rosie Thomas, "Indian Cinema: Pleasures and Popularity," *Screen* 26, no. 3–4 (1985): 130.

[9] *The Indian Express* (North American edition) 3, no. 38 (February 28, 2003): 3.

[10] For details, see Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film*, especially part 2; and Sumita S. Chakravorty, *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema, 1947–1987* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).

[11] Gurinder Chadha, in particular, is a black British filmmaker and not a first-generation immigrant.

[12] "Government Clears 100 Percent FDI in Films," *Screen*, March 22, 2002, 1.

[13] Ruth La Ferla, "Kitsch with a Niche," 9.

[14] In the words of the CEO of Jain TV, one of India's TV channels: "Now that many of the foreign channels are becoming India-centric, money for software export will be easy to come by for Indian channels" (quoted by Nivedita Mookerji and Krishna Gopalan, "Finally, There's No Biz Like Show-Biz," *Screen* 27, October 2001 [www.screenindia.com]).

[15] *L.A. Weekly* 25, no. 16 (March 7–13, 2003): 31.

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