
BOLLYWOOD'S INDIA

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A Public Fantasy

PRIYA JOSHI

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For Orfeo

*love is a deeper season
than reason;
my sweet one
(and april's where we're)*

There is one more state in this country, and that is Hindi cinema. And so Hindi cinema also has its own culture. . . . Hindi cinema's culture is quite different from Indian culture, but it's not alien to us, we understand it. . . . As a matter of fact, Hindi cinema is our closest neighbor. It has its own world, its own traditions, its own symbols, its own expressions, its own language, and those who are familiar with it understand it.

JAYED AKHTAR

[Fantasy is] another name for that world of imagination which is fuelled by desire and which provides us with an alternative world where we can continue our longstanding quarrel with reality. . . . Fantasy is the mise-en-scène of desire, its dramatization in a visual form.

SUDHIR KAKAR

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WRITING A BOOK ABOUT BOLLYWOOD is a bit like making a Bollywood film. There's a substantial time lag between idea and execution. Editing takes forever. Producers are hard to find just when they're most needed. And the stars—those ideas that glittered so enticingly in the dark screen of the mind—become hard to pin down just as the schedule for completion nears. The only reason the book and the film are ever completed is the willing collaboration of many who throw themselves into the project in which they passionately believe.

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All the films I write about in this book were blockbusters because families went to watch them across generations, often together. Mine was no different, though the opportunities were sparsely doled out in our family during the 1970s. When a film was considered too violent or risqué, my mother Kusum Joshi's gift for storytelling narrated it in real time, so I knew *Sholay* well before I actually saw it, thanks to her. My sisters, Chaya Nanavati and Priti Joshi, embody middle-class responses to Bollywood in their total indifference and total immersion in it. (But when Chaya's playlist suddenly went from three songs to ten, we knew she was finally getting it.) My aunts in Delhi were unfailing resources with material often irretrievable from traditional archives. Kumud Pant's gift with translations is unmatched, and Mrinalini and Lalit Pande could recite forgotten lyrics on demand. Thanks to Rishabh Pande and Swetha Ramakrishnan for their frequent hospitality in Bombay.

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*I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing
than teach ten thousand stars how not to dance.*

Thank you, my love. This book is for you, and if you'll share it, for Nestor and Amal as well.

PREFACE

THE SOCIAL WORK OF CINEMA

EVERY NOW AND THEN, A film leaves the screen. Not once during its almost five-year first run did I watch the 1975 curry western, *Sholay*. It didn't seem to matter because the film was everywhere when I was growing up in India in the 1970s. We heard the songs on the radio, the dialogues were echoed in conversation, tailors speedily copied the film's fashions for every size and wallet, and thanks to my mother's formidable gift of narration, I felt I had seen the entire film with its larger-than-life characters shooting each other from steam locomotives and water towers.

A number of studies of this iconic film have grappled with what might be considered the *Sholay* effect, namely, the special status this blockbuster enjoys, often abstracted from its particulars, by "viewers" like me who might never have seen the film at the time. Returning to the primal scene as a scholar, my research affirms that *Sholay*'s outsize success was created in no small part by its formidable production that made it India's first 70mm film marshaling a multi-star cast with imported talent for shooting stunts and editing fight scenes. *Sholay*'s meticulous production transformed a four-line story to more than three hours of action-drama repeatedly reenacted by fans far from the large screen.

For some, the technical details of production and the institutional context of cinema in the 1970s remain the best approach for studying *Sholay*. For others such as myself, the film is best approached by studying its narrative strategies, their cultural contexts, and their combination in a *mise-en-scène* that exceeds the sum of its parts. The study of Hindi cinema has grown in the last decades to the point where both approaches can prosper productively without engaging in fratricidal warfare. The Thakur and Gabbar,

arch enemies in *Sholay*, are both alive, although they don't live in the same village.

Bollywood's India analyzes the social work of popular Hindi cinema by focusing on the narratives of some of Bollywood's most iconic blockbusters. Tropes preoccupied with crime and punishment, family and individuality, vigilante and community, have persisted in the cinema across half a century despite dramatic changes in the industry's production and distribution practices. Attentive to the practices of the industry, I focus on analyzing the narrative content in the cinema and apply a range of interdisciplinary methods to understand Hindi blockbusters in the context of India's public culture. In this public culture, the stories *in* the cinemas, their shifting emphases, and their forms of attraction play a major role in capturing audiences. *Bollywood's India* focuses on these narratives of the cinema.

I analyze blockbusters produced during three tumultuous decades when the idea of modern India was made, unmade, and remade. During the 1950s, the 1970s and the 1990s, popular Hindi cinema played a major role in Indian public culture as it captured the diffuse aspirations of the nation as well as challenged them. Rather than being consonant with the interests of the state and a conduit in its production, popular Hindi film has served as a contact zone between the state and the nation. At times the blockbusters of the cinema have corroborated and at other times contested the formation of both nation and state in the construction of an ever-shifting narrative of "India." These often contradictory narratives condense around certain aspirations that I call public fantasies. *Bollywood's India* analyzes the public fantasies captured in the blockbusters of Hindi popular cinema and studies the political work they undertake as they travel the globe.

Well before the study of popular Hindi cinema was formalized in the academy, scholars were writing about the cinema. The bibliography lists essays such as "Imran Khan, Sherlock Holmes, and Amitabh Bachchan" (Nandy 1987) that regard the appeal of Hindi cinema in India as a mania akin to that for cricket and detective fiction. In playful, sparkling prose, these essays develop a core claim: that popular cinema is popular because it "works" for its audiences and addresses their psychic lives. Written by scholars often trained in the social sciences who leaven their disciplinary methods with those borrowed from the humanities, these studies consider

consumption broadly without being freighted by counting consumers; they “operationalize” narrative and its procedures using interpretive methods borrowed from psychoanalysis, history, anthropology, political theory, sociology, and literary analysis. Above all, their respect for popular film is propelled by an evident affection for it. Their work advances the study of popular Hindi cinema by inviting its diverse publics in. These studies have opened the party to all revelers for whom film is part of a vital public culture as it is in modern India.

As Hindi cinema has become an object of academic study with departments, peer-reviewed journals, scholarly book series, and conferences dedicated to it, the sparkle of its earlier analytical language and its intellectual accessibility have often been replaced by a specialist vocabulary and an occasionally strident insistence on the “proper” way to analyze the cinema. Scholars of Hindi cinema sometimes appear like Raj Kapoor after the release of *Mera Naam Joker* (My name is Joker, 1971). The cerebral, self-referential *Joker* virtually bankrupted Kapoor who had no idea that its language and treatment had isolated the film from its publics and cost him the magic that had hitherto been his at the box office. According to the biographer Bunny Reuben, Kapoor was only “faintly aware” of the changes around him, “sitting as [he was] in the ivory tower of Chembur.”¹ It took an Archie comic and a plunge back into popular culture for Kapoor to leave the ivory tower and make a comeback with *Bobby* (1973).

Bollywood's India celebrates an area of study that has taken off because of scholarship by “outsiders” whose interdisciplinary approaches to cinema have placed it in broader contexts and ventilated the field in language accessible to the common reader and scholar alike. The study was inspired by the immense pleasures of the cinema and written to share them. Its methods are interdisciplinary and the language is straightforward. My intention is to celebrate popular Hindi cinema and welcome others to participate in its pleasures.

BOLLYWOOD'S INDIA

BOLLYWOOD'S INDIA

THE BLOCKBUSTERS OF HINDI CINEMA have played a prominent role in managing the euphoria and crises that confront the modern nation. In the decade following Independence and Partition, the period surrounding the Emergency, and the immediate aftermath of economic liberalization when the idea of India underwent considerable scrutiny, Bollywood's blockbusters vitally captured dispersed anxieties and aspirations about the nation that converged on the thing called "India." *Bollywood's India* names these aspirations public fantasies and analyzes the social work that popular cinema has done for the nation even as the cinema has challenged fundamental practices of the nation and the state during critical moments. It studies the ways in which the idea of India has been fabricated, critiqued, and revised in some of the most popular films of the post-Independence period.

During three notably turbulent decades, popular Hindi cinema played a major role in public culture as it undertook raw conversations with and as politics. The cinema's encounter with political culture is not new, nor is it confined to the periods of this study. It is, in fact, broadly constitutive of popular Hindi cinema and evident in a variety of ways in earlier and later decades. What differs across the historical periods is the kind of nation being envisioned in the cinema, the kinds of public fantasies to enhance and contain it, and the degree to which the nation constitutes the core fantasy of the cinema. What also differs across the historical periods are the narrative procedures by which the fantasies are deployed and the forms that convey them. Most prominently, what differs across the decades are the economics of film production and interpellation. The decline of studios, emerging financial instruments, alternately neglectful and interventionist state support, the arrival of new hardware for filming and screening, an expanding media ecology, and corporate partners with global marketing ambitions

have all shaped popular Hindi cinema's practices and sometimes even its product. Each of these fundamental elements was reconstituted during the decades of this study, most vigorously during the 1970s when the very idea of "India" appeared to be in crisis, and the economic and political challenges confronting the state were magnified in an industry that was still not recognized as such.

The term *Bollywood* emerged during the 1970s in part to describe this unruly cultural site and its compact between popular and political culture that has been alternately embraced and rejected in the periods following. In using "Bollywood" in its title, the present study underscores the prominent role of the 1970s in constituting modern India. Beyond serving as a historical marker, "Bollywood" conveys a general tendency in the cinema toward social preoccupations and public fantasies. At its broadest, Bollywood conveys a cinema in which popular and mass, politics and pleasure are inextricably linked and are discernible far beyond, and even before, the moment of naming. The ruptures to the social contract that combusted the 1970s were not new. An analysis of the 1950s, for instance, reveals the decade's optimism and despair over the idea of India, rival sentiments that 1950's blockbusters nonetheless appear to have skillfully contained. Viewing the earlier decade from the perspective of the 1970s—when despair had fully trumped optimism, and containment was nowhere possible—reveals fissures and disappointments in the cinema of the 1950s that have been largely overlooked in extant accounts of the decade.

Bollywood's India uses the prism of the long 1970s to analyze the public fantasies of periods that lead up to and followed it into the present one. It is a study of popular blockbusters released during the 1950s, the 1970s, and the 1990s, three decades when the idea of modern India was made, remade, and unmade.

MAKING INDIA: NATION, STATE, AND PUBLIC FANTASY

The India that Hindi film addresses is no more real than the vagabond Raj or the dacoit Gabbar Singh. Yet, like the fictional characters from *Awara* (The vagabond, Raj Kapoor, 1951) and *Sholay* (Embers, Ramesh Sippy, 1975), Bollywood's India is a creature of fantasy and fiction that gestures toward that special version of reality that all fantasy and fiction simultaneously mask and reveal. To speak about India through Bollywood is akin to speaking about London through Dickens. Recognizable by physical locations, topical events, and perhaps even language, Dickens' London of Newgate

and Lincoln's Inn conjures the metropolis through a set of preoccupations closer to—and perhaps more indicative of—Dickens than they might be of London or perhaps even the age. Yet one learns of *a* London and *a* Dickens in the process, each throwing the other in relief even as both remain partially shrouded. The promise of relief overcomes the reluctance at shadows and underwrites the study of an age through its cultural products. *Bollywood's India* develops a similar promise: it examines the cultural product alongside the nation of which it is part.

Within months of the Lumière brothers' invention, the cinematograph arrived in India in 1896, and the country began a love affair with film that continues to this day. The arrival and development of the medium coincided with the articulation and consolidation of the new nation. Held at arm's length by some early nationalists such as M. K. Gandhi of whom it was noted by an aide that "[as] for the Cinema Industry he has the least interest in it and one may not expect a word of appreciation from him," early film enjoyed the admiration of many others such as Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who actively inspired and cultivated the film world in numerous ways.¹ Recalling the early years of the nation, Raj Kapoor (1924–1988), one of Bombay's most popular and commercially successful filmmakers, observed of the 1940s and 1950s:

It was the post-Independence era. There were a lot of factors that influenced young minds, and they influenced me. Pandit-ji [Nehru] said that he wanted every Indian in this country to do something for the nation, to build it up into the beautiful dream that he had. He was a visionary and I tried to follow him, to do my best, whatever I could, through films. Despite all problems, despite all obstacles, you go ahead towards the horizon which you have seen. It is there in your eyes and in many other eyes. Very many people want to reach that horizon — and if I can help them through my work, I think I have done something for humanity.²

Kapoor's characterization of the nation as Nehru's "beautiful dream" was more than a poetic flight. In 1947, "India" was a horizon and a dream in many eyes, enacted into statehood by caveat on August 15. Standing before the Constituent Assembly, Nehru delivered the 500-odd word oration that remains one of the most quoted in modern Indian history:

Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we

step from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.³

As a speech, Nehru's was both celebration and caution of the work that remained in building a nation even as it was being torn apart by Partition. "That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we may fulfill the pledges we have so often taken and the one we shall take today. . . . And so we have to labour and to work, and work hard, *to give reality to our dreams*," he warned the millions of newly made citizens of independent India (Nehru 2, emphasis added). The specific task that Nehru outlined was presented in language that combined a Protestant ethic ("incessant striving," "labour," and "work") wrapped in Freudian terms ("to give reality to our dreams").

Freud's terms were necessary because so much of what constituted the Indian nation for Nehru and his audience was the stuff of fantasies and dreams, and not just the collective dream of a large polity, but the inchoate and unarticulated fantasies of millions of very different and differently motivated people that had to be shaped, named, and comprehended within a single and unifying "reality." Unlike popular nationalisms in Europe and the New World that imagined the community before it became a nation, quite the opposite was the case with India. Independence created a state in 1947 after which it had to be imagined as a nation in the hearts and minds of its citizens. "Giving reality to our dreams" was, therefore, not just a matter of building dams and developing foreign currency reserves. It was equally a matter of managing the dispersed and intangible desires for the nation that incorporated, and exceeded, its institutions, customs, cultures, and ideals. Nehru was asking for an act of public fantasy.

But nation and state were comprised of very different desires. One was a cultural fantasy with social aspirations (an "imagined community" with the emphasis on "imagined");⁴ the other was a political fantasy with economic and judicial aspirations. Ideally, both kinds would converge on the entity called India. Yet, as it turns out, nation and state embarked on very different destinies, at times inimical to each other despite their shared investment in the "dreams" that Nehru invoked. It could be argued that the nation prospered exactly when—and perhaps because—the state descended into crisis, as it did before and during the 1975–1977 Emergency. During this period, popular cinema persistently pursued the cultural work of recalling the nation and retrieving its ideals. In retrospect, through the many crises confronting India, the blockbusters of Hindi cinema have remained one of the key places where the dueling desires fueling the nation's collective fantasies are indexed, shaped, and challenged. These blockbusters

speak to and about the nation, for and against the state, and they serve as a space where the logic behind both is captured and contemplated in a language accessible to a large majority. These blockbusters constitute the core of *Bollywood's India*.

A number of scholars have posited popular Hindi cinema as a site that produces and reinforces the ideology of the state, a point developed in an influential study by Madhava Prasad, who regards popular Hindi cinema "a site for the ideological production . . . as the (re)production of the state form." A host of books with "nation" in their titles or subtitles make similar claims that regard popular cinema as a space consonant with the interests of the state and unproblematically a conduit in its production. Like Prasad, these studies sometimes appear to condense all possible "Indias" under the term *nation*. The cinema is read as "impersonating" the nation in Sumita Chakravarty's term, suggesting the nation and state as homogeneous entities indistinct from each other.⁵

In contrast to studies that regard the nation as singular and largely interchangeable with the state, *Bollywood's India* distinguishes between two formations that it regards as fundamentally different and even at times divergent. The state refers to those political and administrative components of modern polity that have the power and authority to govern.⁶ The nation, in contrast, is the set of imaginative constructions that, ideally, are congruent with the enterprise of the state and underwrite its governance, but more often contest and correct the practices of the state. The nation, in this formulation, is both more and less than the state. It is the repository of ideals and ambitions—all far from homogeneous—that precede the formation of the state. The nation can create the state, but it also contests it, or coalesces into it on some issues and diverges from it over others. The nation thus embodies a broad set of desires. It is the "soul" that Nehru proclaimed at Independence to which the state is the answer, however incomplete. "We have to labour and to work, and work hard, to give reality to our dreams," urged Nehru, clarifying the difference between the two concepts at stake. The state marks a "reality" that is often compromised; the nation, its "dreams" that are also possibly its nightmares.

In this act of collective dreaming, popular cinema plays a role that is both a revision of reality and a restoration of its originary impulses. Its social work is not to maintain the state but to contain it and, where possible, to regulate it by writing the social contract in language that inspires broad assent. Popular cinema neither fully represents the state nor the nation. It is a contact zone *between* the two entities. It provides a space for engagement, enchantment, and possibly reenchantment if not with the nation itself then with the stories that undergird all acts of collective fantasy of

which the nation is but one example. At best, it is a third space that fabricates and filters the experiences of politics and modernity for its viewers.⁷

Psychoanalysis, with its focus on interpreting desire and narration, provides a powerful apparatus for investigating the public fantasies embedded within popular cinema. In Freud's analyses, desire and the conflicts it spawns are related to narration in two ways. Subjects fabricate narratives in order to render the world amenable to their desires. Analysis sifts through these narratives, retrieving the subject's desires and conflicts which it returns to consciousness through another narrative. The analyst's task of "transforming hysterical misery to common unhappiness" in Freud's memorable phrase is accomplished by interpreting the double roles that stories play in simultaneously masking and revealing desires.⁸

Freud's basic framework for analyzing narratives has so shaped interpretive practices far outside the clinic that psychoanalysis has been called "the most influential and elaborate interpretive system of recent times . . . whose model and terms drawn from it are to be found strewn at great distance from their original source."⁹ Disciplines such as folklore, literature, history, philosophy, politics, religion, film studies, and sociology use the general framework even when their focus may not be the subject but culture, or what the theorist Fredric Jameson termed its political unconscious. Concepts such as fantasy and the family romance initially developed in psychoanalysis to understand individual behavior have proved insightful in uncovering cultural and historical processes that might have remained invisible otherwise.¹⁰ Many of *Bollywood's India's* core terms such as public fantasy as well as its exposition of latent meanings behind a narrative's manifest content come from the interpretive framework developed in psychoanalysis and long at the center of narrative analysis in film and other media.

REMAKING INDIA I: THE 1970S

The social work of imagining India remains ongoing (a "daily plebiscite," as the philosopher Ernst Renan anticipated),¹¹ occurring in numerous places, not just in film. In the 1970s, as in the two decades immediately following Independence, political life dominated public culture and was the organizing topos for approaching much that occurred in India. Taking a cue from the political theorist Sudipta Kaviraj, this study conceives of the 1970s beyond the Emergency as the decade of Indira Gandhi. In this reading, the 1970s "begins" in 1966 with Mrs. Gandhi's appointment as prime minister and concludes in 1984 with her assassination. The political and economic

context of a long 1970s exposes the waning of Nehruvian ideals, Mrs. Gandhi's centrist consolidation of power with its skillful division of the working poor and the middle classes, and the eventual fracture of Nehru's unifying vision. The Emergency so defines the decade that it remains the core point of orientation, though as chapter 2 elaborates, many of the long decade's convulsions were already apparent as early as the 1950s.

During the 1970s, when the very idea of India seemed to disintegrate, popular cinema more than any other form engaged the political unconscious of India in vital ways. Blockbusters from earlier decades such as the 1940s and 1950s also directly engaged in this project, but in these pre-crisis decades, public fantasies appeared largely consistent with the public and its conscious aspirations.¹² Observing India through these moments of optimism is one thing; grappling with it during a period of crisis is quite another. The India of the 1970s fundamentally transformed the future, but also, paradoxically, its past. After midnight, nothing looked the same again, neither the day that followed nor the one that preceded. The cinema of the 1950s could never again be regarded as it had been before, and one of the unintended legacies of the 1970s is that it changed utterly how the past was read.

"India" today is a product of conflicts and compromises between nation and state that occurred in the formative 1970s, underscoring just how profoundly the decade *made* India. Each chapter of the study anchors its core questions from the perspective of the 1970s. Each rethinks other decades from that vantage, as ways of understanding their future, but also as prologue to an inevitable if unforeseen crisis. Thus, chapter 2 on Nehru's presence in a triptych of films by Raj Kapoor is as much about the elation following Independence as about the anxieties bordering that elation that only become evident if read through eyes that lived through and insist on remembering the 1970s.

Despite the Emergency's dominance over the 1970s, silence about it—initially originating in official circles—has produced an elaborate mythology of the period but not much scholarly analysis.¹³ In studying the decade, as the anthropologist Emma Tarlo discovered: "too recent to be of interest to historians yet too distant to have attracted the attention of other social scientists, it has somehow slipped through the net of academic disciplines."¹⁴ *Bollywood's India* returns the decade to academic scrutiny in several ways. First, the book regards the decade's anxieties and aspirations—its public fantasies—as expressed in a number of popular blockbusters and exposes how fundamentally the decade created the terms that have come to define the idea of "India." Second, much of what followed the 1970s in political, social, and even economic culture is evidently an effort either to repress the

decade altogether or to rewrite it. If the 1970s was a period of “India Falling” and “Garibi Hatao” (“Abolish poverty”), the 2000s and beyond are known for India Rising and India Shining, referencing election slogans that have been deployed at different post-liberalization political moments. If the cinema of the 1970s is dominated by images and preoccupations of the poor and indigent, the sunshine cinema (as Anupama Chopra ironically called it) of the nineties and noughties diegetically erases those figures altogether. The fasts in *Jai Santoshi Maa* (Hail, Goddess Santoshi, Vijay Sharma, 1975) have given way to *karwa chauth* feasts in *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (aka, *DDLJ*, The man with the heart gets the bride, Aditya Chopra, 1995), and the poor and indigent are completely excised from the glittering cinema that purveyed India Shining to itself and the world (see chapter 4). The BJP’s (Bharatiya Janata Party) 2004 electoral defeat surrounding its India Shining campaign was no surprise to a generation that had lived through the 1970s and still lived there in spirit if not in flesh. “Shining” for whom was the riposte, as working voters recoiled from the orgy of self-congratulation that ignored and eliminated them altogether.

Third, the 1970s saw a cleavage in the Nehruvian contract uniting middle with lower classes. Up to this point, there was a broad consensus among the classes to stand behind the idea of the nation promulgated at the center. But with two wars following Nehru’s death in 1964 (with China in 1965 and Pakistan in 1971), a global oil crisis, 1 percent growth, widespread shortages of staple foods, runaway inflation, and trouble meeting debt payments, the consensus frayed. In blockbusters throughout the 1970s, the villain was always rich, Teflon-coated from prosecution, and often had some contact with the West. In short, he was everything the middle classes wanted to be in the dire decade. The poor, on the other hand, were everything the middle classes wished to disavow, by rejection, demonization, and eventually by betrayal. With a skillful sleight, Indira Gandhi’s 1971 political slogan to exterminate poverty (“Garibi Hatao”) became a practice to exterminate the poor (“Garib Hatao”). If the screen villain was the rich, the everyday problem was projected on the poor, and the real challenge was not a matter of “Garibi Hatao” but possibly “Garib Hatao.” When the poor would not move, they would *be* moved as they were through slum relocations and forced sterilizations. Absent the protections of a constitution, these exterminations took place in plain view during the Emergency where they were conducted with the tacit consent of a middle class observing its own security and future evaporate in the desperate economic climate that surrounded the Emergency.¹⁵

The cinema of the 1970s was the last moment when the compact between the classes is still evident, though its rupture is equally evident in the

period as blockbusters such as *Sholay* amplify (chapter 2).¹⁶ This was still a decade when a middle-class policeman and a homeless knife sharpener could unite in common cause against a local crime boss (*Zanjeer* [Chains], Prakash Mehra, 1973) or when the slumdweller of Bombay unhesitatingly donate blood to a genteel woman injured in an accident (*Amar Akbar Anthony*, Manmohan Desai, 1977). The cinema, like the society, gentrified shortly thereafter. Both became suffused with the preoccupations of the middle and aspiring middle classes with the poor almost entirely disappearing from mainstream screen attention.¹⁷ “Much of India’s upper-middle class,” wrote the social theorist, Ashis Nandy, “is simply a lower-middle class with more money.”¹⁸ Through the 1970s, when money was in short supply, the social compact across the classes was still visible in the cinema as a set of shared cultural, social, and political solidarities. In the decade following economic liberalization in 1991, as chapter 4 elaborates, the “slum solidarity” that Nandy rhapsodizes gives way to a cinema screened far outside India’s urban slums in suburban “malltiplxes” that disowned the poor as less amenable images of themselves and of India’s modernity.¹⁹ In this later cinema that I dub “Bollylite” (chapter 4), the angry hero of the 1970s becomes the affluent hero quite literally as Amitabh Bachchan is seamlessly refashioned from a renegade youth intent on destroying the social order (chapters 2 and 3) to a reactionary elder intent on upholding it (chapter 4).

REMAKING INDIA II: BOLLYWOOD

The tensions over class and class aspiration get condensed in a new term that came into being during the Emergency. Like the unruly economic and political order of the decade, the culture industry was remarkably unruly as well, though in contrast to the former, the film industry’s turbulence was accompanied by a renaissance evident throughout India’s cinemas. Observing the superficial chaos of this informal “industry,” the British crime novelist H. R. F. Keating (who had never to the point visited the Subcontinent) coined the term “Bollywood” in an Inspector Ghote detective novel, and it started being used in the domestic Anglophone film press.²⁰ Other genealogies for the term have more recently been proffered, including one crediting a U.S. journalist and another an Indian for it.²¹ The term was received with immediate opprobrium by figures within the Hindi film industry because it seemed to condemn the industry for being derivative. However, as the term got used more and more into the 1980s, the cinema itself increasingly became the object of condemnation by India’s urban elites, without a

sustained analysis of its popularity or social work.²² Had Hindi cinema died the death augured in this condemnation, the term would likely have died as well. But with the influx of new capital and talent following economic liberalization in the 1990s, popular Hindi cinema was renewed, and the term “Bollywood” was revived as well. It now became used to designate not just the popular cinema of Bombay from the 1970s with its signature commitment to social and cultural politics, but any cinematic product associated with India. Writers using the term today have to remind readers of its reference to Bombay’s Hindi cinema and not to “Indian” cinema more generally. Yet the slippage between the two is revealing, and “Bollywood” is often misunderstood to designate not a regional product but a national one. As the scholar Ashish Rajadhyaksha observes, a lot went into “nationalizing” this term—in having it represent India’s global aspirations, but also having a singular cinema from Bombay stand in for a far larger and diverse set of cultural products that were never intended in the term.²³

Today the term “Bollywood” has mutated considerably from its origins, as has the industry that gave rise to it. In the new millennium, the term “Bollywood” has risen alongside post-liberalization Hindi cinema both in its widespread usage as well as in the designation for an industry with renewed financing, energetic distribution, and global ambitions. Its current usage no longer refers to signature elements from the cinema of the 1970s such as a passionate commitment to pleasure and politics. Where current usage largely references form, *Bollywood’s India* uses “Bollywood” to underscore content. It recalls the term’s origin in the 1970s when the concepts of nation, class, and social solidarity were still widely shared, and the compact between them was still evident. “Bollywood” in this study refers to the tendency toward social responsiveness embedded in public culture. The term is not just limited to a historical phase as the scholar Sangita Gopal suggests in her taxonomy.²⁴ Rather, “Bollywood” includes both the popular cinema that predated its arrival in the lexicon and that succeeded it when those cinemas share its social tendencies. Chapter 4 elaborates on *why* Bollywood matters, and what happens when its social and political commitments are sheared from it. The term, thus, is as much about the formal qualities associated with the cinema as well as the political ambitions and public fantasies that these elements convey.

UNMAKING “INDIA”

Under Western eyes, Nehru and the early nationalists had seemingly few tools at hand for the task of publically imagining India. Print, which had

been so powerful in shaping European nationalisms in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, seemed relatively irrelevant for India where literacy rates ranged between 3.5 percent in 1881 and 16.5 percent in 1947, a period of roughly seven decades that coincided with the most important phases of the nationalist movement. This is not to say that the newspaper and the novel, *pace* Benedict Anderson, were not important for imagining India's new national community. Rather, the literacy rates allow one to emphasize how unimportant print may have been to large parts of the Indian electorate. Despite this, India's large illiterate and semiliterate population has been and continues to be an avid participant in the nationalist project as it exercises its right to vote in far larger numbers than elsewhere in the democratic world.²⁵ Bracketing print, this book is about a more widely accessible cultural system that coincided with Indian nationalism, out of which as well as against which it came into being.

At no point can one claim that popular Hindi cinema created the nation. Rather, the blockbusters of the age are testament to some of the public fantasies that accompanied the national project. Their omissions and commissions occasionally converge upon broad public questions of the day; at other times, they diverge spectacularly from and even appear to reject the national imaginary. *Bollywood's India* examines India through film and film through the notion of "India."

"India" in particular bears some scrutiny. The impulse to fabricate a homogeneous entity has inevitably characterized its nationalist narratives and has persisted for good reason as the political theorist Sudipta Kaviraj elucidates:

By its nature, this [early] conception of nationalism had to be homogenizing: what I mean by this inelegant term is that although these scholars were often conscious that people opposed the British with ideas that were differently inflected, grounded, expressed, coloured, stylized, motivated, the major purpose of the concept of nationalism was to point to their level of historical similarity. This does not necessarily deny the presence of other strata in these ideas or other possible and appropriate descriptions. But, clearly, what got emphasized (and not unwittingly, because this point was written into the historiographical programme) were the points of similarity, the sense in which all these Indians were doing the same thing with these ideas.²⁶

Kaviraj's scholarship cautions against regarding the nation as a common destination to which all modern actors, regardless of origin, proceed with a common agenda, a prefabricated set of tools, and unvarying historical conformity. His insights help recall the many, often chaotic, strands that

comprise “India” and its national narratives and also help clarify the discontinuities that persist in the fabrication of a national culture after the putative “triumph” of Independence. Not only are there varieties of India, much as there are varieties of capitalism or modernity or globalization, these varieties persist both geographically as well as historically within India.

The geographical variation—the internal distinctions between north, south, east, west, and center toward the nation—is tellingly thematized in Mani Ratnam’s 1998 film, *Dil Se* (From the heart), in which Amar (*literally*, eternal), a New Delhi reporter for the state-sponsored All India Radio, interviews a separatist leader in an unnamed Northeastern state during the fiftieth anniversary of India’s Independence. (Italicized text indicates words spoken in English during the exchange.)

AMAR: What do you think of the last fifty years of India’s freedom?

LEADER: What freedom? We have no freedom.

AMAR: Has free India made any progress?

LEADER: No. The central government threatens us and keeps us cowed down. Atrocities are inflicted on the poor and the innocent. And you say we are free! Is this what freedom means?

AMAR: What’s your aim?

LEADER: Freedom. *Independence*.

AMAR: From whom?

LEADER: Your government. Hindustan.

AMAR: Why?

LEADER: Fifty years ago, when India became independent, many promises were made to us. Not one was kept. We have been oppressed. You think Delhi is India. The states in the far-flung areas have no meaning for you. Because they are small not big. The center is concerned with big vote banks.

AMAR: *Terrorism* . . .

LEADER: We are not terrorists. We are revolutionaries.²⁷

The leader’s insistence that each term Amar uses has an entirely different meaning for his people comes through powerfully in the exchange. *Freedom*, *Independence*, *liberation*, even *terror*, occupy vastly different registers in the gulf separating the man from the center who thinks “Delhi is India” and the man from the Northeast who holds Delhi responsible for the oppression of his people. Much later in the film, Amar has the point condensed even further when the revolutionary with whom he has fallen in love retorts, “it’s your nation, not mine,” as she heads off to blow up the president during Delhi’s Republic Day parade.

Geography, in the separatist's world, creates the chasm between a nation that can broadcast itself as "All India" and a state far removed from it. Geography for him creates not just spatial distance from the nation, but a linguistic and ideological one as well, a distance that renders unintelligible the fantasies put out by the state. Ironically, the national fantasies put out by the state, and even their pre-Independence acts of resistance, are reborn in Mani Ratnam's version of the Northeast conflict. Even as the leader disputes Amar's use of terms, they are some of the very ones he embraces for his cause.

LEADER: We have no freedom . . . Is this what freedom means?

AMAR: What's your aim?

LEADER: Freedom. *Independence*.

Ratnam's film, perhaps more sharply than most, plays out the varieties of nationalism conveyed in the term "India." Not all nationalisms converge, nor do they all convey the same fantasies. Some, such as the one from this exchange, seek out alternatives to the geographical entity current around the state.

Beyond the variations in space, there are the variations of "India" played out across time. The exchange from *Dil Se* focuses on two historical strands: the radio reporter sees the Independence jubilee as a celebration of accomplishments visible today while the leader recalls the present as evidence of betrayals from the past. His "today" is shaped by what did not take place in the fifty years of Independence; the reporter's "today" by what did. Like the blind man's elephant, the "India" one sees both in film and in discourse changes shape and identity depending on where and when and who touches it. The discontinuities often coexist, and the cinema captures them.

By the 1970s, the India one encounters in popular Hindi cinema is largely preoccupied with problems internal to it such as labor unrest, poverty, urban decay, economic stagnation, and political corruption. By the 1990s, another "present" arrives with irrational exuberance, initiated by economic liberalization and the return of a muscular Hinduism. The West is not only no longer an object of oppression or fear as it was in the long 1970s (*Around the World in Eight Dollars*, S. Pachhi, 1967, captures this trepidation in its title). It is now a source of renewed economic wealth and ideological certitude supporting both economic and religious ideologies of the post-liberalization state.

A more recent present might be "India Now," the banner announcing the country as a global economic powerhouse at the 2006 World Economic

Forum in Davos that launched an “India Everywhere” campaign to draw attention to the country as a destination for foreign investment.²⁸ The new millennium has seen India’s economic muscle evident in an unmistakably public way with multinational corporations such as Reliance Media bailing fabled Hollywood icons such as Steven Spielberg’s DreamWorks and MGM, and the Tata Group acquiring British marquee brands such as Jaguar. If predictions by Goldman Sachs and the *Financial Times* prove accurate, India’s growth is poised to rank it with elite G6 producers by 2025.²⁹

Alongside the creation of multiple Indias off disparate temporal strands is inevitably the presence of different attitudes toward the past. Hindi film with its insistently “modern” technologies of production symbolically elicits and projects different modernities of content at different moments. Watching hits from the 1950s such as Raj Kapoor’s *Awara* (1951) and *Shree 420* (The gentleman cheat, 1955), or Guru Dutt’s *Mr. and Mrs. 1955*, the Indian “modern” is revealed as a confidently cosmopolitan and sophisticated figure, at ease with Western-style nightclubs and clothing, automobiles, and forms of address. The coexistence of “India” with a West, however fictional, is neither a problem nor a source of tension. By the 1970s, cosmopolitanism may have become acceptable but the West had not, and most screen villains from the period were figures recently returned from the West or headed to it. To be “modern” was to be largely suspect by the small-town core bent on capturing the metropolis itself. By the 1990s, however, cosmopolitanism gets refashioned as does the West. Neither is quite rejected though both are considerably indigenized. The West by this point exists as a space conquered by the diasporic Indian who confidently commands its economic resources in the form of brand-name material acquisitions. In a faintly ironic form of reverse colonization, “foreign” in these modes is largely a scenic backdrop, almost exclusively populated by Indians all in tune with a homogeneous homeland and its elaborate dance steps.³⁰ India in this narrative fantasy provides unblemished “values,” and the non-resident Indian (or NRI) returns “home” frequently to imbibe from this well, usually by wedding an all-too-willing beauty among Punjab’s abundant mustard fields, a theme played out most prominently in Aditya Chopra’s *DDLJ*. In this iteration, to be “modern” is to assimilate “traditional” social values seamlessly alongside “contemporary” values of economic accumulation and conspicuous consumption.

In the very brief sketches of some “presents” that have come to constitute India’s “pasts,” two matters become evident. First, different histories constitute “India.” At different junctures India constitutes itself by eliciting and projecting different notions of its modernity that themselves braid different attitudes toward the past and future. In this chutney of representa-

tions developed both internally and externally across and within time and space, it becomes abundantly clear that no monolithic dream can capture "India." Nehru's insistence on the plural—"to give reality to our dreams"—attests in a small but revealing way to his recognition of the complexity of the process. Bollywood's blockbusters viewed in the dark by over twelve million Indians a day purvey not a single dream but multiple ones, and some of the thematic clusters around which they constellate are the subject of this book.

THE BOOK IN HAND

This is a book about Bollywood's India. Its main preoccupation is with the iconographies of the nation embedded in the cinema's blockbusters. It does not argue that Bollywood created the political entity that is India. Rather, its focus is on Bollywood's *commentary* on the entity that is India, a commentary on an India both fictional and real, mythic and palpable whose contours resemble those of a political and social entity recognizable to social scientists and historians. No story of India could begin better than the nation-state's. Created by pen on August 15, 1947, it is a myth that the novelist Salman Rushdie describes as "a fable rivaled only by the two other mighty fantasies: money and God."³¹ The blockbusters of this study engage with some of India's public fantasies. Many others (such as sexuality, terror, and devotion, to name a few) find only passing mention in the chapters. This silence is not meant to signal that these issues are insignificant but simply that they are parts of conversations occurring elsewhere.

The pages that follow acknowledge that making, unmaking, and re-making the idea of India echo similar currents occurring in the Bombay film industry as well. Thus, the 1950s were not just a period of Nehruvian adoration. The decade also observed the post-studio era of independent producers and the arrival of rogue capital. Meanwhile, any account of the 1970s as a decade of political crisis would need to acknowledge that this degraded political moment occurred alongside an extraordinary revitalization in India's cinemas with the consolidation of a state-supported alternative cinema; an energetic middle-cinema that flourished alongside the commercial industry; the arrival of graduates from the Film and Television Institute of India (founded in 1960) who brought new talent in acting, directing, cinematography, and writing to all India's cinemas; and the arrival of television, to name some major currents.³² In the aftermath of economic liberalization, the 1990s were characterized by the state's recognition of cinema as an industry in 1998; the influx of corporate capital; new forms

of digital filmmaking and editing; the incursion of the multiplex in 1997 and its rapid expansion into large and medium cities; a burst of new media platforms and formats that revolutionized funding, production, and distribution; and global marketing strategies that interpellated overseas viewers through narrative content and language. Recent scholarship on Hindi cinema that researches industry practices—notably, labor, hardware, distribution, and financing—supports the core arguments of this book, but the present study is not fundamentally about the workings of the industry.³³

Bollywood's India focuses instead on the narratives embedded in popular Hindi cinema. With their dense and layered mise-en-scènes, the stories *are* the cinema, even as new cameras, locations, editing, and financing enable core “stories” to be shot, edited, distributed, and screened differently in the present moment than they were half a century or more ago. The genres of these stories, the modes in which they are narrated, the performance of song and the substance of their lyrics convey layers of meaning that this study's interpretive practices analyze. The multiple texts that constitute this cinema are read closely alongside the material conditions that accompanied their production and consumption. The focus at all times is on the narrative structures within the cinema and on procedures and cues inscribed in these structures. A number of well-studied films such as *Awara* and *Deewaar* (The wall, Yash Chopra, 1975) are paired alongside those less frequently analyzed such as *Ab Dilli Dur Nahin* (Delhi is not far now, Amar Kumar, 1957) and *Shakti* (Power, Ramesh Sippy, 1982).

Chapter 2, “Cinema and Public Fantasy,” explores the shifting grammar of public fantasies captured in attitudes toward crime and punishment in a triptych of Raj Kapoor's films spanning the period of Nehru's administration till his death in 1964, and *Sholay* (1975), one of Hindi cinema's biggest grossers at the box office. In the representation of crime and its punishment, the new nation most visibly revealed its ideals and its idealism. In selecting and depicting a particular kind of crime, in fashioning and eventually reforming a particular kind of criminal, post-Independence Hindi film did much in articulating the fantasies of a newly created citizenry over a social contract still under review.

In chapter 3, “Cinema as Family Romance,” the biological family and the symbolic nation-as-family become sites of mutual threat in 1970s Hindi cinema, each destabilizing the other in cinema's representation of the period. The chapter analyzes *Deewaar's* (1975) tensions at narrating and containing an incendiary critique of the decade, and it exposes the revisions to this film's master plot as they were rescripted in *Trishul* (Trident, Yash Chopra, 1978) and *Shakti* (1982). Through a reading of these blockbusters, the chapter explores the extent to which the traumas of the decade were

displaced on the family and the crisis in political culture was recast in social terms as a Family Romance in popular Hindi film. In this inversion, the oppositional culture of political life is represented as infecting private life as well, and both are rendered combustible. Freud's concept of Family Romance allows one to probe the work that particularly popular narratives do in a specific cultural moment and to ask what traumas they mask, what "reality" they seek liberation from, and what kinds of fantasies a culture develops in the process. Above all, the scrutiny of Family Romance in a society enables one to uncover the structure and function of narratives that were particularly popular and to ask what kinds of unconscious they convey and conceal.

Chapter 4, "Bollywood, Bollylite," reckons with Hindi cinema's global ambitions and analyzes what gets lost when Bollywood's politics are sheared from it in anticipation of its travels westward. It begins by asking if *Slumdog Millionaire*'s (Danny Boyle, 2008) commercial and critical success in the U.S. market might have created a wider appetite for the Oscar winner's "ancestors" from Bollywood. In an effort to address the question of Bombay cinema's penetration into the U.S. mainstream, the chapter argues that the germane issue is not the influx of Bombay cinema *en masse* onto America's screens but rather the *specific* forms from Bombay that have been able to capture the interest of mainstream audiences in the United States. This form is such a major departure from the internal conventions of Bollywood that it is more properly understood as a separate concept I identify as "Bollywood Lite," or Bollylite. Bollylite, I argue, is a relatively recent fabrication that heavily pillages formal characteristics from the Bollywood cinema that *Slumdog Millionaire* honors while shearing much of that cinema's fabled social substance and political edge. Thus lightened, Bollylite travels—though, in contrast to Bollywood—with a remarkably limited commercial and critical half-life. Observing Bollylite's fortunes and the material conditions that produce it allows one to capture the stubbornness of Bollywood's cultural product. The chapter contrasts the narrative logics separating Bollywood from Bollylite and offers remarks about their respective futures, recognizing that Bollylite is a commercial as well as industrial phenomenon tied to forms of financing and distribution that are undergoing considerable transformation both in India and globally.

"Epilogue: Anthem for a New India" outlines the extent to which the book's core arguments continue to resonate with the industry as it is developing. It sketches current trends in the cinema and acknowledges some of the challenges of speaking about "Bollywood" and "public fantasy" when both are ongoing phenomena. Notwithstanding the mutations in cinema enabled by twenty-first-century technologies, Bollywood cinema's

core impulse toward social responsiveness remains. As in the previous half century, today as well certain films easily penetrate the firewalls of a carefully niched marketplace to reach viewers. Bollywood blockbusters in the new millennium rescript the social purpose of popular cinema through unexpected means, including the unlikely figure of M. K. Gandhi. As an illustration, Rajkumar Hirani's blockbusters, *Lage Raho Munnabhai* (Keep at it, Munnabhai, 2006) and *3 Idiots* (2009), depict an India characterized by land-grabs and global corporate ambition run amok. The cinema selectively retrieves past Gandhian practices against the colonial state in order to articulate alternatives to the ongoing vortex of social and economic neoliberalism. Abstracted from history, both Nehru, who frames the body of this study, and Gandhi, in the "Epilogue," serve as devices for the cinema to address a "New" India that both resembles and restores the "Old."

NOTES

PREFACE: THE SOCIAL WORK OF CINEMA

1. Bunny Reuben, "An Open Letter to Raj Kapoor," *Star and Style*, April 30, 1971, 10. Chapter 2 further addresses Raj Kapoor and his funk in Chembur following the failure of *Mera Nam Joker*.

1. BOLLYWOOD'S INDIA

1. In 1938, to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Indian film, M. K. Gandhi was asked for a message to congratulate the film industry, to which his secretary responded as above, noting: "As a rule, Gandhi gives messages only on rare occasions—and these only for causes whose virtue is ever undoubtful." From *Dipali*, June 16, 1939, as quoted in Erik Barnouw and S. Krishnaswamy, *Indian Film*, 117n63.

Interviewed a decade earlier (in 1927) by the Indian Cinematograph Committee, Gandhi primly voiced his objections to the cinema: "Even if I was so minded, I should be unfit to answer your questionnaire, as I have never been to a cinema. But even to an outsider, the evil that it has done and is doing is patent. The good, if it has done any at all, remains to be proved." Indian Cinematograph Committee, 1927–28, v. 3 (Calcutta: Govt. of India Central Publishing Branch), p. 56, as quoted in Rachel Dwyer, "The Case of the Missing Mahatma: Gandhi and the Hindi Cinema," *Public Culture* 23.2 (2011): 349. Dwyer notes that Gandhi only saw part of one feature film during his lifetime, Vijay Bhatt's devotional *Ram Rajya* (1943). Prime Minister Nehru meanwhile took an active interest in Indian film, dashing off letters on official stationery to filmmakers whom he personally admired, cultivating others such as Raj Kapoor, and serving, on occasion, as unofficial consultant to films such as Mehboob Khan's *Mother India* (1957), to which he advised adding more songs and shooting a new beginning to celebrate industrial India besides the rural. Chapter 2 develops these themes.

2. Raj Kapoor as recorded in Siddharth Kak's documentary, *Raj Kapoor Lives* (Bombay: Cinema Vision, 1987).

3. Jawaharlal Nehru, "Tryst with Destiny" (1947), in Salman Rushdie and Elizabeth West, eds., *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing, 1947–1997*, 1, 2.
4. Benedict Anderson develops the role of "imagining" national consciousness, which he locates in two transformative innovations of print capital: the novel and the newspaper. In the case of India, neither form of print was likely to reach more than the 16-odd percent literate at Independence in 1947. Other forms of public transmission in India have more vitally played the role of "imagining" that print did in European nationalism. As Anderson acknowledges in a revised edition of his foundational work: the advent of broadcasting and what he elaborates as "advances in communication technology, especially radio and television, give print allies unavailable a century ago" (135). Film was one such ally in imagining modern India which, in Anderson's evocative language, "helped give shape to a thousand inchoate dreams" (140). See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.
5. See M. Madhava Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film: A Historical Construction*, 9; Sumita Chakravarty's pioneering, *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema, 1947–1987*; and Jyotika Virdi, *The Cinematic Imagination: Indian Popular Films as Social History*.
6. In Max Weber's memorable phrase, the state has "a monopoly on legitimate violence" that it affirms through institutions such as the army, the civil service bureaucracy, the judiciary, and elected representatives. See Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills.
7. The concept of third space was developed by Ray Oldenburg in *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts, and How They Get You Through the Day*. The historian Bryant Simon has a powerful chapter on Starbucks' claims over Oldenburg's concepts; see Simon, "It Looks like a Third Place," in *Everything but the Coffee: Learning About America from Starbucks*, 82–121.
8. Freud's analytical project has tended to be remembered by this phrase alone, and not by the equally important sentence that follows which underscores how crucially narration enables the "transformation" of misery to unhappiness: "With a mental life that has been restored to health, [the patient] will be better armed against that unhappiness." Sigmund Freud, "The Psychotherapy of Hysteria," in Josef Breuer and Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud, 305.
9. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as Socially Symbolic Act*, 61–62.
10. Chapters 2 and 3 elaborate on these themes more fully. Consider two titles (of many possible) that use concepts developed in psychoanalysis to understand very different historical phenomena: Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, and Françoise Vergès, *Monsters and Revolutionaries: Colonial Family Romance and Métissage*.
11. Ernst Renan, "What Is a Nation?" (1882), trans. Martin Thom, in Homi Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration*, 19.
12. The political theorist, Sunil Khilnani, has called Bombay with its cinema industry India's "cultural capital . . . permanently lodged in the popular imagination as a totem of modern India itself." See Khilnani, *The Idea of India*, 137.
13. It is remarkable how little scholarship there is on the Emergency in contrast, for example, to the aftermath of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination in 1984 or the destruction of the Babri Mosque in December 1992. Until recently, those interested in studying the

Emergency had to turn to fiction (which added to the mythology of the period). Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) has a dark chapter on it called "Midnight"; and Rohinton Mistry's novel, *A Fine Balance* (1995), is more centrally focused on the period. Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us* (1985) is set during the Emergency, but it focuses on a set of social and domestic crises for which the period seems a backdrop.

Even recent scholarly works seem to echo this strange diplomacy toward the Emergency: the index to Ramachandra Guha's *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* provides no listing for the Emergency, whose events are instead indexed under Indira Gandhi, "authoritarian methods." Popular film, meanwhile, has addressed the period as an inscribed absence: never quite frontally, but always with presence and persistence in works as widely different as *Sholay* (1975; chap. 2), *Deewaar* (The wall, Yash Chopra, 1975; chap. 3), and *Roti Kapda aur Makaan* (Food clothing and housing, Manoj Kumar, 1974). In contrast to Bollywood, the New Cinema of the 1970s that addressed political topics of the day more frontally "appears, in hindsight, relatively marginal" contends Ashish Rajadhyaksha in "The Indian Emergency: Aesthetics of State Control," *Indian Cinema in the Time of Celluloid: From Bollywood to the Emergency*, 241. Meanwhile, the pogroms that followed Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984 rapidly received serious scholarly attention by figures such as Veena Das and Amitav Ghosh; and the riots of 1992–93 have an entire library call number devoted to them. Neither popular cinema nor fiction have been reticent on these latter moments either; both powerfully contributed to the public conversation as films such as *Bombay* (Mani Ratnam, 1995) and *Zakhm* (Wounds, Mahesh Bhatt, 1998) among many others show. The Emergency period is an anomaly for its dearth of scholarly analysis, one that this study along with other works cited throughout attempts to redress (see Rajadhyaksha, Tarlo, and Vitali for notable contributions). For an elaboration of some of these themes, see Priya Joshi and Rajinder Dudrah, eds., *The 1970s and Its Legacies in India's Cinema*, and also Joshi and Dudrah, "The 1970s and Its Legacies in India's Cinema," in a Special Issue of *South Asian Popular Culture* 10.1 (2012): 1–5.

14. Emma Tarlo, *Unsettling Memories: Narratives of the Emergency in Delhi*, 2; see also Arvind Rajagopal, "The Emergency as Prehistory of the New Indian Middle Class," *Modern Asian Studies* 45.5 (2011): 1003–1049.
15. Indira Gandhi's Twenty-Point Programme, instituted during the Emergency, was ostensibly initiated to eradicate poverty, but it equally skillfully set up mechanisms to further class divisions. Items #1–12 of the Programme were pro-rural poor (involving land redistribution, housing, the elimination of bonded labor and rural indebtedness; more delivery of power, water, etc.). Items 12–16 leaned toward an anti-wealthy platform (#12: "special squads for . . . conspicuous constructions and prevention of tax evasions"; #13: "confiscation of smugglers' properties"; #14: "action against misuse of import licenses"). The last four were reserved for middle-class interests (#17: "income tax relief for the middle classes"; #18: "essential commodities at controlled prices to students"; #19: "books and stationary at controlled prices"; and #20: "new apprenticeship scheme to enlarge employment."

On paper, the revolutionary socialism of the Programme looks assured: to help India's poor and working families by pursuing conspicuous excesses of the rich. In

practice, the Programme underscored Mrs. Gandhi's fabled divisive tactics: to regulate the rich by fear (of confiscation of property or prosecution for corruption) and to placate the poor by programs designed to capture their votes. (Ironically, even after Mrs. Gandhi's electoral defeat in 1977, the TPP, as it is called, remains in effect, and a 2006 version eliminates the anti-rich and pro-middle-class points for a program almost entirely targeting rural poverty.)

16. Valentina Vitali's *Hindi Action Cinema: Industries, Narratives, Bodies* usefully connects the economic environment of the 1970s with films that were produced during the decade. See esp. 184–229.
17. The notion of cinema “gentrifying” has been developed with nuance in Tejaswini Ganti, *Producing Bollywood: Inside the Contemporary Hindi Film Industry*.
18. Ashis Nandy, “Indian Popular Cinema as a Slum’s Eye View of Politics,” in Ashis Nandy, ed., *The Secret Politics of Our Desires: Innocence, Culpability, and Indian Popular Cinema*, 5.
19. The term “malltiplex” is Amit Raï’s; see his chapter “On the Malltiplex Mutagen in India” in *Untimely Bollywood: Globalization and India’s New Media Assemblage*, 133–78.
20. See H. R. F. Keating’s *Filmi, Filmi, Inspector Ghote* (1976), credited in the *OED* for first using the term “Bollywood” in print. It bears mentioning that film was obliged to function through informal networks of accounting, distribution, and finance since it was denied industry status that would have allowed access to low-cost bank loans and other forms of secured financing. All this changed in 1998 when the state conferred industry status on film, and much changed again in the new millennium (see chapter 4).
21. See Madhava Prasad, “This Thing Called Bollywood,” *Seminar* (May 2003). Sangita Gopal cites an Indian journalist, Bevinda Collaco, for using the term in 1978, a few years after Keating’s coinage. See Gopal, *Conjugations: Marriage and Form in New Bollywood Cinema*, 11.
22. Amitabh Bachchan’s discomfort of the term has been widely recorded. “Today when I go abroad, and I am introduced . . . they refer to me as a Bollywood star. Why? For a country that produces the highest number of films, why must we carry a Hollywood crutch? Why *that* word? Why not something else? Don’t we deserve better? In the final analysis, it all stems out of a deep-rooted complex.” Recorded in Bhawana Somaaya, *Amitabh Bachchan: The Legend*, 197 (emphasis in original).
23. Ashish Rajadhyaksha, “The ‘Bollywoodization’ of the Indian Cinema: Cultural Nationalism in a Global Arena,” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 4.1 (2003): 25–39. Rajadhyaksha’s work serves as a reminder of other preoccupations and productions from the 1970s that the term “Bollywood” neither captures nor coincides with.
24. The ideological commitments associated with the cinema called Bollywood have been propelled to a new level by an influx of capital. And with this influx, as the anthropologist Tejaswini Ganti shows in her decade-long ethnography of the industry, the cinema underwent a process of what she calls “gentrification” which displaced “the poor and working classes from the spaces of production and consumption” (Ganti, *Producing Bollywood*, 4; also her chapter, “From Slumdogs to Millionaires: The Gentrification of Hindi Cinema,” *ibid.*, 77–118). Sangita Gopal’s schema of Hindi cinema identifies the cinema following liberalization as “New Bollywood,” claiming it a “radically new *art*

form that must be analyzed on its own terms." See Gopal, *Conjugations*, 14, emphasis added. For Gopal, aesthetics ("art") rather than ideology differentiates the cinema following liberalization from what preceded it. In short, she sees ruptures in the cinema where others see continuities.

25. In a vivid ethnography of Indian elections, the anthropologist Mukulika Banerjee documents: "The electorate [in the national elections of 2009] has nearly 715 million voters, 1 million voting machines, nearly 7 million polling stations, and 543 constituencies in a country of enormous linguistic, cultural, and physical variety. Two million people serve as officials to conduct the elections and the results are declared within less than 12 hours of the final vote being cast, and with negligible instances of recount." See Mukulika Banerjee, "Elections as Communitas," in *Social Research* 78.1 (Spring 2011): 88–89 (in a Special Issue titled *India's World*, ed. Arjun Appadurai).
26. Sudipta Kaviraj, "The Imaginary Institution of India," in Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey, eds., *Subaltern Studies VII: Writing on South Asian History and Society*, 2.
27. Mani Ratnam, *Dil Se* (From the heart, 1998). Author's translations.
28. As reports concur, "India Now" was a major branding exercise involving a \$5 million budget with key support from business and political leaders. See "Delhi in Davos: How India Built its Brand at the World Economic Forum," Knowledge at Wharton, February 22, 2006 (<http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article.cfm?articleid=1394>).
29. In a widely cited paper from 2003, Dominic Wilson and Roopa Purushothaman argue: "If things go right, in less than 40 years, the BRICs economies together could be larger than the G6 in US dollar terms. By 2025 they could account for over half the size of the G6. Currently they are worth less than 15%. Of the current G6, only the US and Japan may be among the six largest economies in US dollar terms in 2050. . . . India's economy, for instance, could be larger than Japan's by 2032." Following the 2008 economic crisis, growth stalled in most G6 countries. India, on the other hand, has seen a "downturn" in growth from almost 9% to 5% in 2013, a figure that would be enviable in the United States as well as other G6 nations. Thus, while the Goldman Sachs paper predates the economic crisis, its conclusions about India's growth prospects have yet to be obviated by the aftermath of the 2008 global collapse. See Dominic Wilson and Roopa Purushothaman, "Dreaming with BRICs: The Path to 2050," Global Economics Paper #99 (Goldman Sachs, October 2003) (see www.goldmansachs.com/ceoconfidential/CEO-2003-12.pdf).
30. Rachel Dwyer makes a similar point about Shobha Dé's novels where "'foreign' is a place without foreigners for it is always peopled exclusively by South Asians" (as cited in Christopher Pinney, "Public, Popular, and Other Cultures," in Rachel Dwyer and Christopher Pinney, eds., *Pleasure and the Nation: The History, Politics and Consumption of Public Culture in India*, 13).
31. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 130.
32. For a fuller elaboration of these themes, see Joshi and Dudrah, "The 1970s and Its Legacies in India's Cinemas," 1–5.
33. For key examples of research primarily focused on industry practices rather than on narratives of the cinema, see Ashish Rajadhyaksha, *Indian Cinema in the Time of Celluloid*; Valentina Vitali, *Hindi Action Cinema*; Tejaswini Ganti, *Producing Bollywood*; Adrian

Athique and Douglas Hill, *The Multiplex in India: A Cultural Economy of Urban Leisure*; Amit S. Rai, *Untimely Bollywood*; and Swarnavel Eswaran Pillai, "The 1970s Tamil Cinema and the Post-Classical Turn," *South Asian Popular Culture* 10:1 (2012): 77–90, with Pillai's especially useful discussion of how the arrival of the lightweight Arriflex 35-2c camera enabled location shooting and loosened—literally—the studio's "hold" over Tamil cinema and its stars (see Pillai, pp. 82–85).

2. CINEMA AS PUBLIC FANTASY

1. Raj Kapoor, "Self Portrait," *Filmfare* 15.24 (November 23, 1956): 7.
2. Some researchers such as Firoze Rangoonwalla observe that "Nehru brainwashed Mehboob Khan to make *Mother India* [1957, a remake of Mehboob's 1940 *Aurat*]. He was looking for a more positive vision of Indian nationalism, not a grim reproduction of Indian rural life." What Nehru got was an extended opening sequence with its docu-realist paeon to 1950s agricultural hardware (tractors and earth movers) sutured on to a rural life whose grimness even lavish color could not redeem. (Rangoonwalla interview with the author, Mumbai, June 2003.)
3. Raj Kapoor, "My Films and I," *Filmfare* 9.22 (October 21, 1960): 51.
4. Khilnani, *The Idea of India*, 137.
5. Ashis Nandy, "The Popular Hindi Film: Ideology and First Principles," *India International Centre Quarterly*, 92.
6. "One must analyse the *particular illusion* that the serial novel provides the people with and how this illusion changes through historical-political periods." See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings*, ed. David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, trans. William Boelhower, 376.
7. Derek Malcolm, "Monarch," *The Guardian*, June 4, 1988, 34.
8. The third major hit of the 1950s was Mehboob Khan's *Mother India* (1957), which is discussed later in this chapter and figures again in chapter 3.
9. See "Raj Kapoor and the Golden Age of Indian Cinema," Toronto International Film Festival (June 2011), at <http://tiff.net/filmsandschedules/tiffbelllightbox/2011/201104270054032> (accessed June 2011). Kapoor's fame following *Awara* (1951) brought him to the United States and an audience with Harry Truman and another U.S. president in the making, Ronald Reagan, then president of the Screen Actors Guild.
10. Madhu Jain, *The Kapoors: The First Family of Indian Cinema*, xvi. Jain reports that Indira Gandhi once sought the hand of Raj's daughter, Ritu, for her son, Rajiv, a match that never took place (xv). "While the political family impinges on our public lives, the show business originals inveigle themselves into our intimate lives and fantasies, feeding our notions of romance, and even our notions of history," she concludes (xvi).
11. Raj Kapoor's penchant for spectacle had its origins in *Awara's* fabled 9-minute dream sequence that transformed the film from a family melodrama to passionate social commentary. For a discussion, see Gayatri Chatterjee, *Awara*, 81–88; and Wimal Dissanayake and Malti Sahai, *Raj Kapoor's Films: Harmony of Discourses*, 44–45. Later Kapoor films such as *Sangam* (1964) included an hour-long honeymoon sequence in Europe,