6 Indian Shakespeare Cinema and the Active Audience

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The vast archive of Indian Shakespeare films dating back to the 1920s surpasses cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare in any other individual non-Anglophone country, thus proving the existence of a substantial appetite for Shakespeare on film among Indian audiences.[1] Indian postcolonial literary criticism has delved into the relationship between India and Shakespeare quite exhaustively, with scholars such as Gauri Viswanathan, Jyotsna Singh, Harish Trivedi, and Ania Loomba mapping and analyzing the influence and absorption of Shakespeare within indigenous performance traditions across India.[2] Recent scholarship in adaptation and film studies has also examined the "Indianization" of Shakespeare, as well as the profound resonances between Shakespeare's craft and Indian forms of entertainment.[3] Considerations of the Indian Shakespeare film, however, frequently focus on reception as interpretation and meaning making, and on the absorption of Shakespeare within traditional forms of indigenous performance styles and genres. Christine Geraghty argues that "studying how we watch films … is an important part of understanding what films mean within a culture."[4] According to Henry Jenkins, "the difference between audience research and other film theory is not whether or not we discuss spectatorship, but how we access and talk about audience response."[5] Thus, instead of asking how Shakespeare films affect audiences, the remit of this chapter is to investigate how audiences shape Indian films and specifically Indian Shakespeare films.

The absence of a tradition of empirical research—particularly in the case of Indian film audiences—has meant that received understandings of spectatorship are largely speculative and rest on the personal views, tastes, politics, and ideological leanings of analysts rather than on the perspectives and experiences of actual audiences and their social reality.[6] Experts speak for audiences and tell audiences what they are seeing, feeling, or thinking, or how they should be reading or interpreting films in a condescending, top-down approach.[7] The anthropologist Sara Dickey observed that in the mid-1980s, when she began her study of popular film and its significance in South India, the idea of talking to audiences about their responses to a film was not common.[8] The emphasis in study on Indian Shakespeare film and its sources and assimilation techniques within

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indigenous narrative practices has meant that current studies of film reception narrowly hypothesize how film audiences interpret or respond to (or *are meant to* interpret or respond to) Indianized Shakespeare films.[9] Such understandings of reception, however, which neglect the group character of the social and interactive audience, are at odds with how audiences in India experience film. In terms of methodology, however, there are practical difficulties with regard to assessing how audiences influence a Shakespeare film. Audiences are transient, dispersed, and unstructured collectivities, and are therefore difficult to access and decode.[10] Audiences of Indian films tend to be vocal and participatory, interacting with the screening experience as a group rather than as individuals. Adapting Lakshmi Srinivas's methodology, my research will thus include my own observations of and interactions with audiences at film screenings in Kolkata and London; these experiences are supplemented by conversational interviews with moviegoers and film-business insiders as well as film reviews, social media, blogs, and online forums.

It is important to note that there is an enormous disparity between film spectatorship in the West and in India. Chris Matthews, when praising *Argo* (2012) on Hardball, wondered at the spontaneous applause at the end of the screening, given that it was a film and not a live performance.[11] The question would not arise in India, where cinema is embedded in performance culture. The generalized experience and expectation of film-viewing in public settings at Western cinema theaters is that audiences are silent and immobile; film-viewing is seen as an individual experience with audience attention directed away from one another and toward the screen, the sole source of light and sound. The culture surrounding film reception in India, however, is social and participatory, closer to the experience of outdoor theater audiences at venues such as Shakespeare's Globe in London, which invites audience participation as part of the production:

> People talk throughout the film; piercing whistles, yells and cheers from boisterous "front benchers" punctuate the screening … Young men shout out improvised dialogue, make "catcalls" and lewd comments, people sing and hum along with the songs, and some may even dance. Audiences are known to import ritual practices of (Hindu) worship to the cinema hall as they propitiate the stars on-screen with incense … and throw coins and flowers at the screen in appreciation.[12]

Film culture is not restricted to within the theater but permeates outside to everyday spaces. Popular cinema is a national passion and influences every aspect of public life. Film music, designed to be appropriable, is heard in shops, restaurants, taxis, and at festival celebrations and political rallies, and *filmi* dialogue inserts itself into the vocabulary of the people. Public walls are plastered from top to bottom with colorful film posters,

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huge billboards dominate city skylines, and cutouts of stars garlanded by worshipful fans loom above city streets. New releases are celebrated like festivals, with bands and fireworks, and theaters are decorated like temples. Films influence fashion and trends and provide content for television, radio programs, and magazines.[13] Thus, the impact of a film is shaped by the broader ways in which the film enters everyday life and is consumed and appropriated by its audiences. For the sake of brevity, I will focus in this chapter on three areas of influence that audiences have on the creation of a Shakespeare film in India, made possible by the country's unique filmmaker–audience relationship. I will first discuss how crowd response is anticipated by and pandered to by filmmakers, and how this has affected *Romeo and Juliet* adaptations in Bollywood. I will then discuss the nature of selective or episodic viewing by audiences in India, a practice that shapes Shakespearean film adaptations, indeed, the majority of films, in India. Finally, I will examine the participatory nature of Indian film audiences by exploring the role that songs and dialogues play beyond the confines of the cinema theater and how this, in turn, influences the mainstream Indian Shakespeare film.

Most Hindi films are romantic musicals about doomed lovers and a *Romeo and Juliet*–style story is often based on the legend of Romeo and Juliet, or similar legends of star-crossed lovers, rather than Shakespeare's play. For example, in *Josh* (2000), Mansoor Khan's adaptation of *West Side Story*, the lyrics of the song "Apun bola tu meri Laila" ("I said you are my Laila") are subtitled in English as "I said you are my Juliet," thereby indicating that the Romeo and Juliet fable is interchangeable for many Indians with the Laila–Majnu story of star-crossed lovers. The star-crossed lovers trope is used in one way or another in most Indian films, and there are several variations of it in all the different film industries in India. The twenty-fifth anniversary in 2013 of the most commercially successful adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* in India—*Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* (1988)—coincided with the release of a cluster of *Romeo and Juliet* adaptations: *Ishaqzaade* (2012), directed by Habib Faisal, *Arshinagar* (2012) by Aparna Sen, *Issaq* (2013) by Manish Tiwary, and *Goliyon Ki Raasleela: Ram-Leela* (2013) by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. Thus, for purposes of field research, I have focused my study on appropriations of *Romeo and Juliet* in Indian cinemas due to the opportunities available to observe audiences in cinemas.

Crowd Response

Commercial cinema in India has evolved in the context of the need to appeal to audiences differentiated by religion, class, regional cultures, caste, rural–urban tastes, and varying levels of education and literacy. According to Srinivas, "the relationship between filmmaker and audience displays shades of a patron–client relationship; filmmakers are dependent on the audiences' patronage and are willing to compromise and craft

the film to appeal to audience expectations."[14] Filmmakers and critics have spoken about the demands of the public and what they would be willing to pay for. Mishra describes audiences voicing exuberance at the appearance of a favorite film star, or displeasure if the film fails to live up to expectation or if there are technical difficulties, by taking out their frustration on their surroundings and ripping the upholstery with razor blades and knives.[15] Rosie Thomas notes that filmmakers "operate with an explicit concept of their audiences' imposing constraints on their filmmaking" and that "a central preoccupation … is whether or not the audience will accept certain representations or narrative outcomes."[16] In multiple interviews and discussions of script development with Bollywood directors in the course of my research, phrases such as "our audiences will not accept" or "they'll burn down the theaters if we show that" were common.[17] Audiences talk to each other, take on the role of narrators, applaud the resolution of dramatic tension, and hiss, boo, or shout advice, providing instant feedback. As one director put it in an interview by Srinivas: "Ultimately people have to judge. There in the auditorium only that will take place."[18] In 1995, when I attended a screening of *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (1994) with an extended family group of twenty-five people, the entire audience gave a standing ovation to Tuffy, the on-screen family dog who played deus ex machina at a particularly tense juncture in the film. Similarly, when audiences went to see Nana Patekar, an actor admired for his "dialogue delivery," they were disappointed to find him cast as a deaf-mute character in *Khamoshi* (1996). According to Sanjay Leela Bhansali, the director, who watched the film with the audience at the Liberty theater, Mumbai, the audience at first implored the actor to speak and then resorted to booing and shouting.[19] Shankuntala Banaji describes how, during screenings she attended of *Astitva* (2000) and *Lajja* (2001), "young women broke into spontaneous and prolonged applause during 'feminist' speeches by screen characters."[20] Moreover, dialogue writer Richard Louis claims that "the audience will slap you" if it is not happy with the story, thereby suggesting an interactive relationship between the filmmakers and the audience.[21] As a result, audiences are regarded as collaborators rather than consumers whose tastes and preferences may be manipulated—a view that parallels live theater production. Filmmakers, consequently, view a film less as a commercial product on the market and more as a performance, which may be accepted or rejected.

This is borne out by the conflicting reception of *Qayamat se Qayamat Tak* (*QSQT*) and *Arshinagar* (2012). Stage productions of Shakespeare adaptations in the colonial era were resistant to tragic endings, as evidenced by the rampant Tate-ifications of Shakespeare appropriations in the Parsi theater: Rajiva Verma describes how Agha Hashr Kashmiri had a distaste for tragic endings and "did not like the idea of the audience going home in tears at the end of a show."[22] The staging of death, moreover, was considered inauspicious; *Ramavarma Lilavati* (1889) by Anandrao, a version of *Romeo and Juliet* in Kannada, ended with

Friar Lawrence praying to the gods to restore the young lovers to life whereupon Vishnu descends, revives the lovers, and the play ends in a marriage.[23] *QSQT* was scripted with a happy ending by the screenwriter Nasir Hussein, Mansoor Khan's father. However, Khan shot and screened both endings for his father because he was convinced that a formulaic happy ending would not be artistically true to the film:

> Unlike Dad, I did not want a happy ending to the story, which would have been simplistic and unconvincing. The hatred was so intense that I had to show its futility with the death of the youngsters … I liked the beginning of my father's script, but thought that I could add my own new take on a storyline inspired by "Romeo and Juliet" and similar stories even in Hindi films of lovers from warring families.[24]

In essence, it was the decision of the young cast (representative of the young audience that decided the fate of the film) that led to the retention of the tragic ending:

> [M]y father was very sceptical and insisted that I shoot a happy ending too … Both the endings were screened. Aamir [who played Romeo/Raj], Nuzhat [Khan's sister] and Farhat [Aamir's sister] rooted for the tragic ending whereas the elderly audience liked the happy one. Finally, the younger generation won.[25]

QSQT was a runaway commercial success and began to be termed a "cult film" when it unexpectedly turned into the biggest film of the year, with some teenagers having watched it over a hundred times by the end of 1988.[26]

On the other hand, Aparna Sen, who is popular as a filmmaker in Kolkata, struck out with audiences when she adapted *Romeo and Juliet* because she experimented with form in a way that disrupted audience collaboration at reception. *Arshinagar* got mixed reviews when it was released at the end of 2012, with some people embracing the musical genre Sen worked within while others thought it too avant-garde. Not only do the characters repeatedly break the fourth wall, they also speak in dramatic verse. The riskiest move as a mainstream filmmaker, however, was Sen's imaginative use of painted backdrops: "I have experimented a lot with form in terms of production design," Sen affirmed in a NDTV interview. "This film has borrowed heavily from theatre, which is a genre that was hitherto unknown."[27] While Indian audiences are used to creative flights of fancy, with sequences that are patently unrealistic, they are used to the approximation of reality that Indian films depict, which allows them to participate in the action. For instance, according to a news report, during the one-year run of *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (*HAHK*), "Women in the city of Jaipur are known to have gone back to see HAHK in the clothes and jewelry they wore when they got married."[28]

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One young woman who attended the film six times explained that she liked it because it was like going to a family wedding."[29]

On the way home after watching a film, audiences interactively and retrospectively reconstruct shared experiences, and films can be buoyed or destroyed by word-of-mouth reviews. I saw *Arshinagar* at a multiplex with my mother in Kolkata in December 2015. While the rhyming dialogue led to audiences trying to anticipate what characters would say, some of the audience members loudly asked the characters on-screen to "speak like a normal person." This elicited laughter and comments from other members of the audience who loudly voiced their dislike of the theatricality and "unrealism" of the film. Srinivas observes, "movie talk often involves sharing details about the number of times one has seen a film or plans to see it and is a topic for online musings on films."[30] At the end of the screening I went to, as people were filing out, they declared the film to be too *antel* (pretentious) and there seemed to be agreement that, though *Arshinagar* certainly merited one viewing because "it is an Aparna Sen film after all," older audiences and children would not be interested and repeat viewings were not warranted. Sen is consequently often relegated to Parallel film maker status with limited appeal and shunned by mainstream pan-Indian audiences who are more likely to indulge in participatory film-viewing practices.[31]

Selective Viewing

Madhava Prasad has described film production in India as "a heterogeneous form of manufacture," a process similar to watchmaking in that it involves an "assemblage of pre-fabricated parts."[32] Rather than being delivered to audiences as a standardized and finished product with a stable set of meanings, films are reassembled in encounters with audiences and at reception. Robert Hardgrave, having studied the culture of Tamil cinema, observes that most audiences "see the film as a sequence of scenes – fights, romance, songs, cabaret."[33] At a screening for *Ram-Leela* on December 1, 2013, in Kolkata, after the *holi* song sequence, a viewer jokingly told his partner, "I've got my money's worth, now we can go home."[34] Similarly, when Jisshu Sengupta (playing the Tybalt character), who has a solid fan base among young female audiences, died in *Arshinagar*, a group of schoolgirls behind me discussed leaving for a meal now that Sengupta was dead.[35] Vivian Sobchak observes that film, though objectively presented to viewers, "may be subjectively taken up in a variety of ways, not only in its entirety, but also in its parts."[36] Accordingly, moviegoers are drawn to the cinema for various reasons, be it the fights, the spectacles, or the costumes. At a screening in Kolkata on July 20, 2002, of the lavishly produced *Devdas* (2002), a woman said she had heard the costumes were very nice, so she came to see the saris and the jewelry. Another moviegoer who had heard the film's music on the radio volunteered that his sole purpose in watching the film in

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the theater was to see how a song was choreographed and where it fits in the story. Realizing that audiences watch a film piecemeal and that "selective viewing" is located in a broader aesthetic of watching film as spectacle and amusement, filmmakers invest a great deal in providing the expected ingredients. As early as 1935, Phanibhushan Majumdar listed "a pretty heroine, a few thrilling and comic incidents, and a few lighthearted tunes to fill the gaps" as the ingredients for a box office success, and Shakespearean tropes, plot lines, and characters frequently fit this format.[37] People also go to the cinema to see a favorite performer, the attraction of the film's plot often being secondary. For instance, the real-life couple Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone proved a draw for audiences of *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela* (henceforth *Ram Leela*) with Pinterest boards, chat groups, and entertainment news articles dedicated to moviegoers discussing their desire to watch the film in order to view the chemistry between the couple.[38]

The organization of screenings in India creates the conditions for such piecemeal viewing. The intermission, for instance, which is unusual in modern films in the west, lends itself to selective engagement by Indian audiences.

> In what appears to be a strategy that can garner a broader audience, the pre and post intermission "halves" of the popular film are often designed like two separate films. Following the break there is a shift in the story, which is frequently accompanied by a change of location, and that satisfies the expectation that the film provide travelogue.[39]

QSQT, for instance, is set in Dhanakpur for the prologue and then Delhi for the rest of the film. An outing with friends to Mount Abu in Rajasthan is the setting for the first meeting of Rashmi/Juliet and Raj/Romeo. *Dhadak* (2018), one of the newest adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet,* sets the first half of the film in Jaipur and the second half in Kolkata. Selective viewing is such a big part of the reception aesthetic that film reviews underscore audience reactions to the two halves of a film. A review of *Dhadak* describes the two halves of the film in this manner: "the fresh innocence of the first half ends with an explosive scene coming right before the intermission and then you never get to see that again in the rest of the film."[40] Similarly, another online review describes the two halves of the movie: "Before the intermission, the movie is all love, drama, romance and gives you clean family entertainment. After the intermission, if you leave for a bathroom break, the story won't move!"[41]

Moviegoers do choose breaks in action to "leave for a bathroom break" or to head out for a snack. They walk in and out of the theater in an ambulatory viewing style much like the spectators of the *Ram Lila*, performed in the open in North India. As Srinivas describes, "using their bodies to carve out routes through the film, ambulatory audiences reinvent the film; their mobility and its 'rhythms and gestures' shape film

experience while making visible the ongoing process of constructing a bricolage."[42] These movements have a similar effect on audiences to hitting the fast-forward button on the remote, allowing them to avoid scenes they think of as optional, thus reshaping their reception of the film. People frequently exit the theater before a song-and-dance sequence or a dramatic scene and return ten minutes later anticipating a shift in scene. This is similar to the experience at Shakespeare's Globe, where audiences can leave the theater and return during a performance as long as they have their tickets on them. In Kolkata, ushers are equipped with flashlights to seat late arrivals and people frequently miss the pre-interval or post-interval halves of the show. Indeed, the traditional masala film, with its introductory song-and-dance sequence, appears to accommodate late arrivals. The prologue set in Dhanakpur in *QSQT*, which introduces the feud, runs for about ten minutes before the opening credits of the film, and cast and crew members have reported repeat audiences arriving just after the opening credits, when the story resumes after fourteen years have elapsed. Srinivas also describes audiences frequently attending a movie in sections, either arriving late or exiting early to accommodate other commitments such as school timings, meals with friends, or family commitments.[43] An understanding of audience behavior, and consultation with scholars and dramaturgs familiar with local viewing cultures, is thus imperative to understanding the way Indian films are structured.

Song and Dialogues

Filmmaking in India is frequently informal and improvised; Emmanuel Grimaud observes that a film is frequently launched based on title, independent of script or theme.[44] Bollywood superstar Akshay Kumar claimed to have decided to sign onto *Chandni Chowk to China* (2009) based on a poster, and after he heard the story.[45] Thus, actors are approached and funding is secured based on a summary of the story and the people involved in the project, rather than the actual script. Then, a music company is approached to buy the song rights and market the music and the project is announced to the media once all the players are in place. It is only after the music director has been finalized that a writer, or a team of writers, construct a detailed screenplay showing how the story will unfold, including the arrangement of the film into scenes and the locations and sets, with input from the director or producer. Songs are written while the screenplay is being developed and recorded before shooting for the film begins, as the music is released several months before a film is completed in order to market it.[46] Songs are thus designed to be "appropriable" for daily life in India and have an extra-cinematic life through radio, TV, weddings, ringtones, nightclubs, and the internet.[47] Music is intrinsic to all Indian performance traditions: pre-cinema, recordings of songs from Parsi theater were made and these circulated independently of the plays.[48] In the silent film era, live musical performances accompanied screenings,

attesting to the importance of song and dance as part of performance.[49] Music from films became socially important with the launch of the Hindi entertainment radio program *Vividh Bharati* in 1957; the roles of the playback singer, composer, and lyricist became significant, with films being pre-sold for distribution based on their musical appeal. This meant that the audience expected *paisa vasool* ("money's worth") from not only multitalented actors who could dance, sing, and fight, but also music directors who could produce a song for every possible storytelling device and dialogue writers (different from script writers) who specialized in *dialoguebaazi* (the art of penning/delivering dialogues that are memorable and appropriable).[50]

Audiences also frequently select a film to watch on the big screen based on its soundtrack and wish to "see the songs" ("picturized" song sequences). In the pre-digital age, audio cassettes came with songs and dialogue, which, as mentioned earlier, are designed to be appropriable in everyday contexts. Shakespeare adaptations consequently convert lines directly from the play texts to create memorable dialogues. In *QSQT*, for instance, when the lovers run away and set up house in an abandoned temple, Raj/Romeo has to go get food. As he tries to leave, Rashmi/Juliet says, "*Kal chale jaana, abhi mat jao*" ("Go tomorrow, don't go now"), in a poignant echo of Juliet's "Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day" (3.5.3). Growing up, Rashmi's dialogue was coded flirtation among my school friends. Similarly, the lines from *Ram-Leela* "*Marne ki sau wajah hai jeene ki sirf ek*" ("We have 100 reasons to die, and just one to live") and "*Jab Ram naam ka raag lagey, Toh paani mei bhi aag lagey*" ("when one begins to sing Ram's praise, then even water becomes flammable") were common parlance in 2013. In terms of music, unlike most films of the time, *QSQT* had only four full-length songs and a short song fragment; the songs are all unconventionally diegetic. In the 1960s and 1970s, audiences had become used to spectacular non-diegetic song and dance sequences that had the sole purpose of showcasing the dancing talents of actors like Helen or Shammi Kapoor. Each of the songs in *QSQT*, however, has a purpose in moving the plot forward and the lyrics are conversations between the lovers; in fact, lyrics and dialogue are interchangeably used throughout the film.[51] In 1988 the format of recording was transitioning from mono to stereo and *QSQT* was one of the first films with stereophonic sound. In the beginning, distributors had a lukewarm response to the film's music, but during the trial shows, audiences were appreciative of Khan's experimentation with sound. Retrospectively, critics acknowledge that *QSQT* signaled a clear transition from one era of music to the next.[52] "*Ghazab Ka Hain Din*" ("What a Wonderful Day"), with its mix of country and rock ballad reminiscent of Neil Diamond's "Play Me", introduced an arrangement that was new to Hindi music, and "*Ae Mere Humsafar*" ("Oh My Love") has a fusion feel to it with its mix of Western elements, such as the violins and

electric guitar, blended into Indian percussion, such as the dholak and tabla, in a departure from familiar and established patterns. The music of *QSQT* is considered one of the factors leading to the revival of Hindi cinema and its popularity on TV film channels more than twenty-five years after its release.[53] Similarly, "*Zingat*", the viral song from *Sairat* (2016), the Marathi adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, was remade for *Dhadak*, which was an adaptation of *Sairat*. When I went to watch *Dhadak* with friends at Wembley, London, there were people dancing in the aisles during the song sequence and it appeared to be a major reason why the mostly young audience had come to watch the film on the big screen. *Bobby* (1973), *Ek Duuje Ke Liye* (1981), *1942: A Love Story* (1994), and *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela* (2013) all share music in common as a factor contributing to their popularity. The music from all these popular culture adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* can still be heard on radio and on televised music shows.

Conclusion

To borrow from Susan Bennet, as a cultural commodity, film (like theater) is best understood as the result of its conditions of production and reception.[54] This chapter has sought to provide some insight into the localized film practices and audience behaviors currently missing in scholarly criticism of Indian Shakespeare on film. The overt engagement of audiences in India makes visible the collaborative "finishing" or reworking of the film in the theater; moviegoers craft entertainment out of the "raw material" of the film.[55] Embodied practices such as singing or humming along with the songs and providing "sound effects" to accompany visuals or to take on the role of narrator for companions allow audiences to move closer to the film and to amplify its "effects." Audiences even edit the film in theater, such as when repeat viewers warn companions of something horrible about to happen (as when I went to watch *Dhadak* at Wembley) or when they leave during certain sequences. *Omkara* (2006), a recent adaptation of *Othello*, was reported to have kept families away from screenings of the film at the beginning because of the nonfamily-friendly language modeled on Iago's lines from the original Shakespearean text.[56] The television broadcast of the film for a general audience, however, had sanitized the dialogue: "anticipating problems, Vishal [Bhardwaj, the director] had already re-dubbed potentially offensive lines, particularly Iago/Saif's dialogue, replacing obscenities with innocuous expressions."[57] Thus, rather than receiving a finished product, audiences of Indian Shakespeares participate in the filmmaking process, where film is remade and transformed through interaction. As collaborators in the entertainment, moviegoers overcome the status of being a distant and passive viewer while illuminating the artificiality of the distinctions between widely held notions of production and consumption.

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Notes

1 Poonam Trivedi, Paromita Chakravarti, Koel Chatterjee, and Thea Buckley, "Shakespeare Films in Indian Cinemas: An Annotated Filmography," in *Shakespeare and Indian Cinemas*, ed. Poonam Trivedi and Paromita Chakravarti (New York: Routledge, 2018), 317–27.

2 Gauri Viswanathan, "The Beginnings of English Literary Study in British India," *Oxford Literary Review* 9, no. 1/2 (1987): 2–26; Jyotsna Singh, "The Postcolonial/Postmodern Shakespeare," in *Shakespeare: World Views*, ed. Heather Kerr, Robin Eaden, and Madge Mitton (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), 29–43, and *Colonial Narratives/Cultural Dialogues* (London and New York: Routledge,1996), chapter 4; Harish Trivedi, "The Anglophone Shakespeare: The Non-Anglophone Shakespeare," in *Shakespeare without English*, ed. Sukanta Chaudhuri and Chee Seng Lim (New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley, 2006), 192–208; Ania Loomba, "'Local-manufacture made-in-India Othello fellows': Issues of Race, Hybridity, and Location in Post-Colonial Shakespeares," in *Post-Colonial Shakespeares,* ed. Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 143–63, and "Shakespeare and the Possibilities of Postcolonial Performance," in *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance,* ed. Barbara Hodgdon and W. B. Worthen (Malden: Blackwell, 2008), 121–37.

3 See Craig Dionne and Parmita Kapadia, *Bollywood Shakespeares* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), Trivedi and Chakravarti, "Shakespeare Films in Indian Cinemas," and Jonathan Gil Harris, *Masala Shakespeare* (New Delhi: Aleph, 2019).

4 Christine Geraghty, "Cinema as a Social Space: Understanding Cinema Going in Britain, 1947–63." *Framework* 42 (2000): 1.

5 Henry Jenkins, "Reception Theory and Audience Research: The Mystery of the Vampire's Kiss," in *Reinventing Film Studies*, ed. by Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (London: Arnold, 2000), 166.

6 See Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 23, on feminist theory and distaste for the messiness of "empiricist research," and Gopal Guru and Sundar Sarukkai, *The Cracked Mirror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) for a discussion of the ethics of theorizing and representation.

7 See, for instance, Manishita Dass, *Outside the Lettered City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), chapter 4.

8 Sara Dickey, *Cinema and the Urban Poor in South India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 416.

9 See, for instance, Bruce A. Austin, *Immediate Seating* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1989), and Annette Hill, *Shocking Entertainment* (Luton: University of Luton Press, 1997).

10 Lakshmi Srinivas, *House Full* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 17.

11 Srinivas, *House Full*, 225.

12 Srinivas, *House Full*, 1. While Srinivas's research was conducted in the 1990s, before the multiplex boom in India, the film culture she describes resonates with my personal experiences visiting both single screen and multiplex film theaters in Kolkata, India, and in Wembley, London. Wembley is one of the few places in London to regularly screen Indian films for a predominantly South Asian audience and I would frequent the theaters in Wembley in order

to partake of the full cinema-going experience: the shared comments with strangers before, during, and after the film, the Indian snacks, and the shared understanding of filmic codes.

13 See, for instance, Tejaswini Ganti, *Bollywood* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), Rachel Dwyer, *Bollywood's India* (London: Reaktion, 2014), and Ravi Vasudevan, "The Meanings of 'Bollywood,'" in *Beyond the Boundaries of Bollywood,* ed. Rachel Dwyer and Jerry Pinto (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3–29.

14 Srinivas, *House Full*, 57.

15 Pankaj Mishra, *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana* (London: Penguin, 2006), 69. This is, of course, more difficult in multiplexes that have stricter security checks and bag-scanning facilities, but, as Srinivas describes of cinemas that cater to a larger population of male viewers belonging to the lower classes, "theatres anticipate audience's actions and have made the seats close to the screen out of hard plastic. In one Bangalore theatre, the seats are made of cement." See Marc Abrahams, "Indian Cinema—Where the Audience Joins in the Action," *The Guardian,* June 28, 2010, www.theguardian.com/education/2010/jun/28/improbable-research-indian-cinema.

16 Quoted in Robert L. Hardgrave, *When Stars Displace the Gods: The Folk Culture of Cinema in Tamil Nadu* (Austin: Center for Asian Studies, University of Texas, 1975), 101.

17 Interviews conducted by the author with Vishal Bhardwaj, Mansoor Khan, and Robin Bhatt in July 2012 and 2016, and Aparna Sen in December 2015.

18 Srinivas, *House Full*, 60.

19 Sanjay Leela Bhansali, interview with the author, March 26, 2013.

20 Shakuntala Banaji, *Reading "Bollywood"* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 44.

21 Srinivas, *House Full*, 61.

22 Rajiva Verma, "Shakespeare in Hindi Cinema," in *India's Shakespeares*, ed. Poonam Trivedi and Dennis Bartholomeusz (New Delhi: Pearson, 2005), 243.

23 Poonam Trivedi, "Shakespearean Tragedy in India: Politics of Genre—or How Newness Entered Indian Literary Culture," in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespearean Tragedy*, ed. Michael Neill and David Schalkwyk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 885.

24 R. M. Vijayakar, "25 Years of 'Qayamat Se Qayamat Taq." *India West*, April 28, 2014.

25 Shreerupa Mitra-Jha, "Mansoor Khan, the Accidental Farmer," *Governance Now,* August 4, 2014, www.governancenow.com/news/regular-story/mansoor-khan-the-accidental-farmer.

26 See Simran Bhargava, "Teenybopper Heart-Throb," *India Today,* December 15, 1988, http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/bollywood-dreamboat-qayamat-se-qayamat-tak-makes-aamir-khan-a-teenage-sensation/1/330097.html.

27 "Filmmaker Aparna Sen: Ahead Of Her Times Or Out Of Touch?", NDTV Movies, January 2, 2016, https://movies.ndtv.com/videos/filmmaker-aparna-sen-ahead-of-her-times-or-out-of-touch-397299.

28 Quoted in Srinivas, *House Full*, 175.

29 Lakshmi Srinivas, "The Active Audience: Spectatorship, Social Relations and the Experience of Cinema in India," *Media, Culture & Society* 24, no. 2 (2002), 168.

30 Srinivas, *House Full*, 171.

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31 India is primarily known for Bollywood and other regional mainstream films in the melodramatic and spectacular style, which continue to be the primary output of all film industries in India. In the immediate aftermath of Indian Independence, however, film makers in the 1950s began to make socially conscious films portraying the average person's struggles and triumphs in newly independent India. These films are categorized as Parallel or art house cinema and cater to a niche market in India and film festival audiences abroad. Tula Goenka observes that, until recently, "Indian art-house film makers were the only ones whose work was lauded at international venues, because their realistic sensibilities hewed most closely to those of Western audiences." *Not Just Bollywood* (Delhi: Om Books International, 2014), 14.
32 Madhava Prasad, *Ideology of the Hindi Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 43.
33 Hardgrave, *When Stars Displace*, 114.
34 Filmmakers incorporate song sequences set during national festivals, which will then generate more audience interest through radio and TV broadcasts of the song. Holi songs are an example of this phenomenon, and many popular films use Holi songs as romantic meet cutes in mainstream films. See, for instance, Shikha Singh, "10 Holi Songs for Your Playlist," *Book My Show*, February 25, 2019, https://in.bookmyshow.com/entertainment/music/concerts/10-holi-songs-playlist/.
35 See, for instance, "Jisshu U Sengupta Starrer 'Mahaprabhu' to have a Rerun," *Times of India,* May 12, 2020, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/tv/news/bengali/jisshu-u-sengupta-starrer-mahaprabhu-to-have-a-rerun/articleshow/75694595.cms.
36 Vivian Sobchak, *The Address of the Eye* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 252.
37 Phanibhushan Majumdar, 'Chalachitra o Darshak Samaj', *Cinema and the Community of Viewers, Nachghar,* 29 (1935), 1934–1954. Translations from Bengali are my own.
38 See, for instance, Vedanshi Pathak, "10 Pictures of Ranveer Singh & Deepika Padukone from the Sets of Ram Leela," *Filmfare*, November 15, 2019, www.filmfare.com/features/10-pictures-of-ranveer-singh-deepika-padukone-from-the-sets-of-ram-leela-37415.html, which discusses the pair's growing relationship on set.
39 Srinivas, *House Full*, 166.
40 Bobby Sing, "Dhadak—When Just One Change Simply Ruins an Otherwise Watchable Film," *Bobby Talks Cinema*, July 20, 2018, www.bobbytalkscinema.com/recentpost/dhadak--when-just-one-chang-1956.
41 News Desk, "Dhadak Review—A Great Family Entertainer," MovieShoovy, July 23, 2018, http://movieshoovy.net/dhadak-review-a-great-family-entertainer/.
42 Srinivas, *House Full*, 170.
43 Srinivas, *House Full*, 171.
44 Emmanuel Grimaud, *Bollywood Film Studio* (Paris: CNRS, 2003), 63.
45 Srinivas, *House Full*, 36.
46 See Heather Tyrell and Rajinder Dudrah, "Music in the Bollywood Film," in *Film's Musical Moments*, ed. Ian Conrich and Estella Tincknell (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 196.

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47 Anna Morcom, "Film Songs and the Cultural Synergies of Bollywood in and Beyond South Asia," in Dwyer and Pinto, *Beyond the Boundaries*, 166.
48 Mishra, *Butter Chicken*, 15.
49 For a more detailed history of the Hindi film song, see Sangita Gopal, "The Audible Past, or What Remains of the Song-Sequence in New Bollywood Cinema." *New Literary History* 46, no. 4 (2015): 805–22.
50 For a more detailed description, see Diptakirti Chaudhuri, *Written by Salim-Javed* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2015), 267–76, and Abbas Tyrewala, "Dialogues and Screenplay, Separated at Birth," *Hindustan Times,* December 12, 2014, www.hindustantimes.com/brunch/dialogues-and-screenplay-separated-at-birth-abbas-tyrewala/story-EfS1ol8YDFZ6dTv6XnyqGJ.html.
51 For a more detailed discussion of the music of *QSQT* and how it changed the way music was used in films in the Hindi film industry, see Vijayakar, "25 Years."
52 Gautam Chintamani, *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* (New Delhi: HarperCollins India, 2016), 83.
53 Chintamani, *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*, 83.
54 Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1997), 106.
55 Srinivas, *House Full*, 177.
56 TNN, "Families Stay Away from *Omkara*," *Times of India*, August 1, 2006, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/bollywood/news-interviews/Families-stay-away-from-Omkara-/articleshow/1833494.cms?referral=PM.
57 Stephen Alter, *Fantasies of a Bollywood Love Thief* (New Delhi: HarperCollins India, 2007), 239.

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