

Politics 215, Autumn 2007

COLONIAL LOVES—cultural politics, colonialism and after

Room 11, MW 2:00-3:30

Films on Mondays at 3:30 (or earlier) in the Lecture Centre

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Popular Indian cinema (aka “Bollywood”) provides the locus for this exploration of the cultural lifeworlds of colonial peoples, as it manifests itself through history, during and *after* (or so some say) colonization. Cinema in British India serves as an accessible and visible live component of a “culture industry” whose actions and political history under and beyond colonialism can shed light on the dynamics of old and new colonialisms, as manifest in big events and everyday life, at play and at work, in the public and private spheres, alike. There are many ways of imagining what is produced, distributed, consumed, laboured for, within this industry. One aspect to which this course will be explicitly attentive is the domain of the most ordinary, organic and “natural” of human interactions and relations involving love, affect and desire are mediated, framed and signified within a colonial and post-colonial setting, and how popular cinema makes those available to us and others.

The course will converge from various directions on the organic and inorganic relations between love, affect and colonial power within the experiences of coloniality, postcoloniality, neocoloniality, globalization, both within and outside the geographical confines of South Asia, as illuminating not only the colonization of a life-world, but also exposing colonization as a lifeworld. We will explore how time, and not merely space, is present and functional in cinematic landscapes—timescapes—and what this can tell us about dominant narratives of liberation, partition, development, growth, violence, memory, forgetting, loving, losing, being, becoming, etc. that are thus produced in the South Asian subcontinent (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka) and shape the region’s current realities and its role in world politics and economy.

Select Bollywood films produced over the past 95 or so years will at times be the object of our analysis, providing themes for discussion of South Asian history and politics, and at other times serve as conduits into larger questions applicable to a world affected by colonialisms of various kinds. We will see how films made in the postcolonial era are typically critical of colonialism to varying degrees, but also bear traces of a colonial legacy insofar as they capitulate to certain imperialist tropes and racialized fantasies. The course hypothesizes that love, romance, desire—and the subjects and objects of these emotions and experiences—are produced within intersections of class, religion, language, sexuality, gender, caste, race, etc., informed by histories and structures of capitalism, colonialism and imperialism. It also supposes that however contrived our “experience” of another, different, culture, it may allow us to see aspects of our own cultural realities that may otherwise be obscured by entrenched familiarities. It is agnostic about answers, hoping to find some moorings over the semester.

TEXTS

Required

Jaikumar, Priya. *Cinema at the End of Empire*. Duke, 2006

Mishra, Vijay. *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire*. Routledge, 2001

Virdi, Jyotika. *The Cinematic Imagination: Indian Popular Film as Social History*. Rutgers, 2003

Dudrah, Rajinder, *The Presence Project*, <http://presence.stanford.edu:3455/Collaboratory/9>

Various other readings will be assigned, which may be accessed via electronic reserves (password abb-215)

Recommended/Reference Texts

Dwyer and Patel. *Cinema India*.

Eagleton. *The Idea of Culture*

Grossberg, Nelson, Treichler. *Cultural Studies*

Kaur and Sinha. *Bollyworld: Popular Indian Cinema through a Transnational Lens*. Sage, 2005

Orsini. *Love in South Asia*

Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands*

Tharoor. *India: From Midnight to the Millennium*

www.britishtempire.co.uk

www.learningcurve.gov.uk/empire

EXPECTATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Preparation

You are required to attend class having done the assigned reading for the day. Please bring the texts to class. Active class participation is required. We will follow the college attendance policy. Two unexcused absences will earn you an official warning. Three unexcused absences shall result in suspension.

You will also be required to choose one optional reading and present it to the class the day for which it is assigned.

Films

Every week on Mondays, an Indian film, from the list at the end of the syllabus, will be screened at 3:00 pm in the Lecture Centre. Viewing this film is mandatory. The readings assigned are not tightly pertinent to only the same week's films, thus it is necessary that you keep pace with the reading and the viewing.

Written Work

We will be viewing no less than 14 films over the semester. You must submit a two-page response, on the Wednesday of the week, to 10 films over the course of the semester. This response must place the said film in a three-way conversation with (1) texts read for class, and (2) an element of contemporary American culture.

A final paper, 8-10 pages long, that develops/consolidates themes of your inquiry from your shorter responses, following the same schema as above.

A final group multimedia presentation (15-20 minutes long) that picks (1) a cultural form other than film in India, or (2) the cultural form of film in a formerly colonized country other than India, at a given moment in history or around a particular local or global political event, and offers a guideline for exploring that topic to an audience of your choice. We will come up with, and go over, details in class. Creativity and imagination will be rewarded, but without sacrificing ethical or historical rigour. A proposal will have to be submitted by October 15, 2007.

Over the course of the semester, every student will choose an optional reading, as mentioned in the syllabus, to present to the class.

READING SCHEDULE

All readings marked with an asterisk are available on electronic reserve

Date	Readings
M 27 August	Introduction

W 29 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Williams, "Culture" and "Popular" from <i>Keywords</i> *Chaudhuri. "Introduction," "South Asian Cinema," and "Indian Cinema" Virdi, pp. 1-25 *Lal, "Bollywood Ain't World Cinema" *Dwyer, "Kiss or tell? Declaring love in Hindi films"
M 3 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Stam and Spence, "Colonialism, Racism and Representation: An Introduction" *Sartre, "From One China to Another," "Colonialism is a System" *Stoddart, "Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire"
W 5 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Sartre, "You are Wonderful," "The Wretched of the Earth," "Albert Memmi's <i>The Colonizer and the Colonized</i>" *Hariharan, "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall" *Scott. "Culture in Political Theory" (optional)
M 10 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jaikumar, pp. 1-12, 13-37 *Sircar, "Of 'Metaphorical' Politics: Bombay Films and Indian Society" *Barendse, "Trade and State in the Arabian Sea" (optional)
W 12 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jaikumar, pp. 65-103 *Symposium on Cultural Studies (optional)
M 17 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gikandi, "Colonial Culture and the Question of Identity" Eaton, "Nostalgia for the Exotic"
W 19 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virdi, pp. 26-43, pp. 114-120 Mishra, pp. 61-88 *Chatterjee, "Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women" *Najmabadi, "The Erotic Homeland as Beloved and Mother" (optional)
M 24 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Singh, "The Blind Age: discovering a postcolonial nation" *Harrison, "Cultural Boundaries"
W 26 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jaikumar, pp. 135-164 *Gikandi, "Beyond Empire and Nation: Writing Identity After Colonialism" (optional)
M 1 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Ray, <i>Our Films, Their Films</i>, pp. 1-24, 72-75 *Arora, "Devdas: India's Emasculated Hero: Sado-masochism and Colonialism"

	*Rajan, "Constructing-Contesting Masculinities: Trends in South Asian Cinema"
W 3 October	Mishra, pp. 89-124 *Joseph, "Culture and Political Analysis in India" (optional)
BREAK	
M 15 October	*Hai, "Border Work, Border Trouble" *Kumar, TBA *Lal, "Partitioned Selves, Partitioned Pasts" *Rajagopal, "Comparative Studies in South Asian Culture and Society" (optional)
W 17 October	Virdi, pp. 121-144 *Cullity & Younger, "Sex Appeal and Cultural Liberty"
M 22 October	*Bagchi, "An Orientalist in the Orient" *Baucom, "Mournful Histories" *Longman, "Post-colonialism or Post-imperialism?" (optional)
W 24 October	*Sen, "The Savage Family" *Reddy, "The Ethnicity of Caste" *Price, "Ideological Integration in Postcolonial India" (optional)
M 29 October	Mani, "Beauty Queens" Hoad, "World Piece"
W 31 October	*Sieg, "Indians: The Globalized Woman on the Community Stage" *Lukose, "Consuming Globalization" (optional)
M 5 November	*Rushdie, TBA *Dalmia, "The spaces of love and the passing of the seasons" [Downel Lecture by Salman Rushdie]
W 7 November	*Davis, "(Love Is) The Ability of Not Knowing" *Kaviraj, "Tagore and transformations in the ideals of love" [Diversity Day]

M 12 November	Mishra, pp. 203-233 *Verges, "The Age of Love"
W 14 November	*Gupta, "'Us' and 'Them': Anxious Hindu Masculinity and the 'Other'" *Mody, "Kidnapping, elopement and abduction: an ethnography of love-marriage in Delhi" (optional)
BREAK	
M 26 November	*Mazumdar, "Urban Allegories," "Gangland Bombay" *Patke, "Benjamin in Bombay: An Extrapolation" (optional)
W 28 November	Young, "Colonialism and the Desiring Machine" Dudrah, <i>The Presence Project</i> (http://presence.stanford.edu:3455/Collaboratory/9)
M 3 December	Virdi, pp. 178-204 *Salon article (http://dir.salon.com/story/ent/movies/review/2004/06/17/ddlj/index.html?pn=1) Mishra, pp. 235-269 *Roy, "Reading Communities and Culinary Communities"
W 5 December	*Desai, "South Asian Diasporas and Transnational Cultural Studies" *Desai, "Sex in the Global City" and "Conclusion"
M 10 December	Mazumdar, "The Panoramic Interior" *Shohat, "From Eurocentrism to Polycentrism"
W 12 December	Presentations

Pool of Films for Monday screenings at @ 3:00 in the Lecture Centre

...(this list is not exhaustive, is presented in alphabetical order, and we will collectively decide what to watch when)

Andaaz
Awaara
Bazaar
Bombay
Chokher Bali
Devdas

Dil Chabta Hai
Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge
Don
Gangster
Hey Raam
Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam

Jagte Raho
Lagaan
Maqbool
Mother India
Namaste London
Pinjar

Rang De Basanti
Rudaali
Salaam-e-Ishq
Umrao Jaan
Viraasat