Introduction: Bombay Cinema's Islamicate Histories

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Bombay Cinema's Islamicate Histories gathers together a group of leading and emerging scholars of Indian history, literature, cinema and the arts, to explore traditions of Islamicate culture in the subcontinent and the ways in which they permeate and inform the Hindi-Urdu language cinema of Bombay, which has recently come to be known as Bollywood. We use this title to indicate the subject of the book which is the historical forms of Islamicate culture that influenced Bombay cinema and the Islamicate imaginaries and histories of Bombay cinema itself. We will reserve use of the term 'Bollywood' to refer specifically to contemporary Bombay cinema from when the character of the industry changed after the economic liberalization of 1991.[1] We use the term 'Islamicate' here, following Marshall Hodgson, to refer not to the Islamic religion per se but to the aesthetic and cultural forms 'historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims' (1958: 59). As Bruce B. Lawrence (2008) has argued, 'Islam in civilizational discourse must be viewed as a cultural variable, linked to but exceeding religious connotations', and it evokes 'a larger geo-cultural grid than would be defined solely by loyalty to Islam as creed, liturgy and law' (n.pag.). Islamicate culture, he continues, should not be viewed 'as part of some inherent or deterministic world system', and furthermore, it 'cannot be understood apart from the other civilizations with which it interacted, both shaping and being shaped by them, in its long historical trajectory' (n.pag.). Thus this volume investigates Islamicate cultural and aesthetic forms not in isolation but as they permeate Indian culture and cinema while in dialogue with and sometimes fused with elements that have their origins in different religious and cultural frameworks, including that of Hinduism. The book is designed as a 'reader' in the field that will be of value above all to the student of cinema who wishes to understand not only the way in which Islamicate idioms inform Bombay

cinema but also something of the background and origins of those idioms. In this introduction we will provide a brief exposition of the history of Islam in India, defend the use of the term 'Islamicate' in the Indian context, in spite of the pitfalls and blind spots it gives rise to, summarize the Islamicate idioms discussed in this volume and how they are partly constitutive of Bombay cinema and finally provide the reader a guide to the contents of this volume.

Islam in India

Islam has a thousand-year history in India, and even before the first Muslim kingdoms were established in the twelfth century, an Arab invasion of Sind had taken place in the eighth century which led to a productive encounter with Indian astronomy and to India's contribution of the numerical and the decimal systems to mathematics. However, it is with the Ghaznī invasions from the end of the tenth and the early eleventh centuries that India became a destination for different Central Asian Turks – Muslim adventurers and invaders – which led to the establishment of the first Muslim kingdom in India in the early thirteenth century with the foundation laid by Muhammad of Ghor in 1192 (Embree 1991: 384–85). Five dynasties – the Mamluks, the Tughlaks, the Khaljīs, the Sayyīds and the Lodīs – formed the subsequent rule of the Delhi Sultanates for over three hundred years until the defeat and death of Ibrāhīm Lodī by Bābur at the Battle of Panipat in 1526 and the establishment of the Mughal Empire. During this period, under the different sultans, the Delhi Sultanate ruled over much of India, though over time parts of the empire broke away and independent Sultanates were established in these regions. While this history is politically volatile and violent, the different Sultanate kingdoms were extremely significant for the development of social and cultural life in India. Not only was Islam established in the region but Muslim scholars who found refuge in India also codified religious and legal principles, and the Sharia became the basis of jurisprudence that impacted all aspects of social, economic and personal relations (Embree 1991: 386). Persian was the official language of these kingdoms, and Arabic was significant for all Islamic religious and ritual practices.

At the same time as the top-down establishment of political and religious authority by the Sultanate courts, the arrival of Sufi mystics initiated a contact with ordinary people that enabled the wider acceptance and spread of Islam (Embree 1991; Qureshi 1986) and yielded a complex conversation between cultures (Flood 2009). Sufi thought and practices resonated with the ideas, customs, festivals and languages of the local population, which in turn influenced the philosophical discourses and the poetic compositions produced by the Sufis and their disciples, as

the work of Amīr Khusrau in the thirteenth and fourteenth century attests (Sharma 2006). This process of mutual influence that brought different cultural and aesthetic forms together is evident also in the emergence during this time of what is known as Indo-Islamic architecture. The monumental buildings of this period – the mosques, forts and Rajput palaces – demonstrate the coming together of different architectural styles – the Central Asian and the local Indian – engendering the syncretic form that became the basis of the architecture that was to follow during the Mughal age (Michell 1986; Asher 1992; Merklinger 2005). Also during the Sultanate period, a distinctive style of miniature painting emerged as manuscript illustrations of Awadhi epics like the *Ćāndāyan* and the *Mirigāvatī* drew on indigenous traditions that were both folk and courtly (Chaitanya 1982). The language and literature of the time also significantly reveal the interaction of different linguistic forms and traditions. It is during this period that Amīr Khusrau used Persian, Hindavi and Braj, spoken in and around Agra and Mathura, for his poetic compositions (Sharma 2006). This practice of linguistic syncretism continued with the emergence of Rekhta and Urdu, which brought together Persian, Arabic and the different Hindi and other vernaculars of various regions. This led to poetic compositions in these languages that were both devotional and erotic in nature (Sharma 2006; Bangha 2010; Petievich 2010).

The productive symbiosis of cultural forms and practices continued and was heightened during the Mughal period. Bābur's victory in 1526 laid the foundations of the Mughal Empire which, after successive military campaigns, had grown by the end of Aurangzeb's rule in 1707 to become a vast imperial power that held sway from Kabul in the west and Bengal in the East to the Deccan plains in the South. The period of the great Mughals – Akbar (1556–1605), Jahāngīr (1605–27) and Shāh Jahān (1628–58) – was marked by exceptional achievements in the fields of the arts, literature, architecture and the performing arts, and the Timūrid Empire was unusually ecumenical and open to cultural influences from the regions it ruled. Akbar and Jahāngīr married Rajput princesses, and all the Mughal rulers appointed Rajput commanders and nobles to the court, accepted Hindu religious practices and had a vibrant interaction with Hindu saints and Muslim Sufis and mystics, as well as with artists from different parts of the world. An efflorescence of vernacular literatures was a significant feature of the Mughal period, when the encounter between Sufism and *Bhakti* (devotional) movements (see Chapter 10 by Bhaskar in this volume) led to intensely emotional and charged devotional and philosophical articulations, as Sufi writers absorbed local influences and found points of connection with the Vaishnavite Krishna-worshipping cultures of the Braj and Bengal regions.[2] A whole range of *Bhakti* literature in the different vernaculars of North India was produced during this period (Schelling 2011). Storytelling traditions also evolved through cultural cross-pollination as the Persianate *maṣnavī*

was transformed into the Punjabi *qiṣṣa* (see Chapter 2 by Sharma in this volume). At the same time, vibrant Sanskrit textual production continued under the Mughals and Sanskrit was incorporated into the Persianate world (Truschke 2016).

There was also a renaissance of Indian painting, architecture and performing arts under the Mughals which drew upon a wide range of Indic practices. The different regions of India had rich visual cultures evident in the sculpture and painting traditions that came down from the ancient period onwards. There were robust indigenous histories of cave and mural paintings from Jain, Buddhist and Hindu traditions, and visualizations of *Bhakti* imaginaries, especially from the Vaishnav Krishna traditions from the medieval period, were extremely popular. Beginning in the Sultanate and intensifying in the Mughal period, these traditions interacted with the Persian traditions of miniature painting and illustrated manuscripts which had been taken up in the Indian courts. Courtly painting practices were further modified in response to European Renaissance prints that the Jesuits brought to the Mughal courts, especially those of Akbar and Jahāngīr (Singh 2017). The hundred-year reign of these three great Mughal emperors also witnessed the building of extraordinary monuments like the Humāyūn's Tomb, the Agra Fort, Akbar's city in Fatehpur Sikri, I'timādu'd Daula's tomb in Agra, the Red Fort in Delhi and of course the crowning jewel of Mughal architecture, the Taj Mahal. These are some of the well-known examples of Mughal architecture, but there are scores of others, all of which were built by artisans and craftsmen of Indian origin – both Hindu and Muslim – as well as those who travelled to India from different parts of the Persianate and Arab world. Cultural historians of the Mughal period have looked at literary, historical and visual sources to demonstrate 'the gradual Indianization of Persianate musical culture' (Wade 1999: xlix) which in interaction with vibrant indigenous musical traditions created a cultural synthesis of different forms. Katherine Butler Brown has demonstrated that even Aurangzeb, the allegedly repressive emperor who is supposed to have prohibited music, was actually a patron, evidenced by the 'number of dhrupads composed in [his] Aurangzeb's honour still preserved in oral and written forms' and by the fact that there was a virtual 'renaissance of musical life' during his reign (2007: 86, 104). Similarly, the dance form of Kathak, which arguably drew on earlier traditions, became, in the Mughal courts and their satellites, highly refined and was performed by courtesans as *mujrā*s (dances) in courts and in their salons. It subsequently became redefined in the post-independence period as a 'classical' dance of India (see Chapter 11 by Lutgendorf in this volume). The history of Islam in India is thus marked by a profound cultural syncretism that is also evident in the development of Urdu.

Urdu emerged through the interaction between Hindavi, Persian, Arabic and Khari Boli and was also known as Rekhta in the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries. It came to be written in the *Nasta'līq* script which it drew from Persian and its vocabulary is derived from the above languages. Hindavi was also significant for the development of Dakhani, which had already developed as a poetic language in the south in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Dakhani had similar origins and character to Urdu but also drew on the local vernaculars of the Deccan region – Marathi, Kannada and Telugu (Rahman 2011). It was the influence of literary Dakhani that led to Urdu's development as a literary language in the Delhi courts with the arrival, in 1700, of Walī Dakhanī (1665–1707) from Aurangabad in the south (Faruqi 2010). In the compositions of Urdu poets of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries like Mīr, Ghālib, Dāgh, Momin and Zauq, who also wrote in Persian, literary Urdu reached its height of sophistication.

In the meantime, Hindustani had evolved out of Khari Boli and Urdu as the spoken language of the ordinary people of North India. In the political struggles and the language wars of the early twentieth century, the emergence of Hindi as a language that claimed descent from Sanskrit denied the shared heritage of Urdu/Hindustani as the language spoken by both Muslims and Hindus. In its spoken forms both Urdu and Hindi were essentially the same language as Hindustani though written in different scripts with Urdu using the *Nasta'līq* and Hindi the Devanagari script (King 1994; Orsini 2002; Rahman 2011). Within the recitational tradition of poetry, aesthetically refined Urdu and the song forms that grew out of it were also part of a shared cultural heritage between Muslims and Hindus (see Chapter 9 by Jhingan and Chapter 10 by Bhaskar in this volume).

After Aurangzeb's death, the Mughal Empire began to break up under a series of weak emperors and assaults from several directions: Delhi was sacked by the military conqueror Nāder Shāh, the shah of Iran, in 1739, while in the west and south, the Maratha Confederacy had grown in power, and in the eastern region of Bengal, the East India Company had established a foothold. By the time of the last Mughal emperor, Bahādur Shāh Ẓafar (1837–57), the Mughal kingdom was limited to the old city of Delhi and its surrounding areas. In 1857, after the brutal suppression of the Great Rebellion against British rule, Bahādur Shāh was exiled to Burma and the British Crown took over complete control. With the weakening and break-up of the Mughal Empire, regional centres began to grow in power and influence. One such centre was Awadh in central north India, which had gained autonomy from Delhi in the early eighteenth century and, with Faizabad and later Lucknow as its capital, had become a rich and vigorous cultural nucleus of poets, litterateurs and painters who produced a distinctive Islamicate culture in this region. While Awadh fell under the indirect control of the British after their victories over the Mughal armies at Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764) (Keay 2000), it continued to flourish as a centre of Urdu and Islamicate courtly culture until its annexation in 1856. After the failure of the Great Rebellion of 1857

and the sacking of Lucknow by the British, Lakhnawī culture subsequently came to denote all that was lost in the cultivation and taste of courtly life, in which the figure of the *ṭawā'if* or the Islamicate courtesan had played a central role (Oldenburg 1990). However, in spite of the destruction of the *ṭawā'if* culture, the idioms of poetry and performance it had cultivated, though dispersed, lived on and evolved through the popular medium of Urdu poetry collections, the growing professionalization of *ṭawā'if* performance (see Chapter 4 by Jha in this volume), Parsi theatre (see Chapter 1 by Hansen in this volume) and the emerging mass media of radio and recording, finally leading to cinema itself (see Chapter 9 by Jhingan in this volume).

With power passing from the East India Company directly to the English queen after the Indian Rebellion of 1857, India became part of the British Empire and imperial control over India was consolidated. The earlier convergence of cultures began to break apart. Although tensions had periodically erupted between different religious constituencies under Islamic rule, these differences hardened into communal allegiances only within colonial modernity. The reasons for this were complex. In part, this was due to the oft-cited British strategy of 'divide and rule' that was most evident in the partitioning of Bengal by Lord Curzon in 1905, but it was also due to the pressures of negotiating an abrupt and peremptory modernity that required staking a claim in the newly emerging public sphere. Muslim and Hindu elites were at once anglicized and increasingly self-conscious about their respective religious traditions, both of which underwent 'reform' and revival. In 1828, the Hindu *bhadrolok* (gentry) of Bengal established the Brahmo Sabhā (forerunner of the Brāhmo Samāj), a Hindu reform movement founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Debendranath Tagore. The Muslim aristocracy, led by Sayyid Ahmad Khan, founded Aligarh Muslim University in 1875, which combined Muslim religious studies with a western curriculum and was the seedbed for the formation of the All India Muslim League in 1906. By the turn of the century, in spite of the prevalence of Urdu in Punjab, Delhi and Awadh, a new Hindi public sphere emerged that sought to purify Sanskritized Hindi from a Persianized Urdu (Orsini 2002). Hindi was championed as the 'mother tongue' of an imagined common Hindu culture from which the debased and decadent language of Urdu was to be excised. Muslims responded in defence of the Urdu language and with purification campaigns of their own (see Chapter 3 by Knapczyk and Chapter 11 by Lutgendorf in this volume).

By the end of the nineteenth century, Indian elites had begun to demand reform and rights from the British. This led to the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 with co-founders W. C. Banerjee and A. O. Hume as the president and secretary respectively. The initial demands of the Congress in the first decade were civil rights, the appointment of Indians to administrative positions and elected

Indian representatives on legislative councils, and the right to suggest economic measures. However, in the second decade of its existence, the Congress began to demand a greater role in the governance of India, and with the arrival of M. K. Gandhi from South Africa in 1915, it launched a fully fledged anti-colonial agenda for self-governance. The Congress had members from all religions, including the Muslims, and as a multireligious and multicultural country, it was very important for Indians to be united against the British. In this context, inspired by Gandhi, a distinctively Indian conception of secularism evolved that embraced religious plurality and equality and respect for all religions in the nation without state interference. This was enshrined in the Constitution of India under Ambedkar's leadership in January 1950. What secularism meant in practice was fluid, and the Congress accommodated a wide range of political positions which were not always so accepting of this constitutional ideal (Gould 2004); nonetheless, it remains the case that throughout the independence movement from 1915 onwards, the Congress remained officially committed to Indian secularism.

The Muslim leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who had trained as a barrister in England, joined the Congress Party in 1906 but left it in 1920 in protest against Congress support for Gandhi's campaign of *satyagraha* (non-violent protest) in the same year. He became a member of the All India Muslim League in 1913 and initially worked for Hindu-Muslim unity. He fought for self-governance with the Home Rule League and initially accepted that the rights of Muslims could be protected in a united India. While Jinnah was himself non-religious and an atheist, he did believe in the distinctive cultural identity of Muslims, and by the end of the 1930s he had come to support Muhammad Iqbal's proposal, first drafted in 1930, for a separate state for Muslims in the Indian subcontinent in order to ensure that Muslims in a democratic India were not exploited under Hindu majoritarian rule. The new separatist aspirations of the League initially had support only in the northern states where Muslims were in a minority but lacked support in the Muslim majority states in the west where Muslim political elites already held sway. Ironically, it was the democratic reforms of the India Act (1935) that granted greater autonomy to Indian provinces, as well as direct elections, which brought the interests of these two opposed constituencies together in a common cause, and at the Lahore Conference of the Muslim League (22–24 March 1940), the demand for Pakistan, a separate nation for Muslims, was made (Nasr 2010). The period between 1940 and 1947 witnessed terrible communal conflicts between Hindus and Muslims, and finally the Congress and the Muslim League accepted Lord Mountbatten's hasty Partition Plan of 3 June 1947, and two new nations of India and Pakistan came into being on 14–15 August 1947. Independence was accompanied by the traumatic division of the subcontinent that led to large-scale killings (1 million), the rape and abduction of women (75,000) and mass migration

(16 million) (Nandy 2001: 110; Butalia 1998: 3). Hindus and Sikhs moved across the border from the new state of Pakistan into India and Muslims from India moved to Pakistan. Approximately 35 million Muslims forming roughly 10 per cent of the population according to the 1951 census, mostly relatively poor and uneducated, were left behind in India.

Within the new post-independence, post-Partition India, Muslims were now placed in an unenviable position. While the new Indian nation was cast as secular and embraced religious pluralism, it was a country which Hindus could implicitly or explicitly claim as their rightful inheritance. Muslims, on the other hand, were not only marked as a minority but the Hindu right wing from the very beginning questioned their loyalty to India (Pandey 1999). This had profound implications for the representation of Islamicate culture in post-independence India. In the cinema of the pre-independence period, the Mughal rulers, with the exception of Aurangzeb, were seen as the embodiments of justice and the ideals of love, and as patrons of the arts. This celebration of the Mughals was directed against a compromised colonial legacy and offered a justification for self-rule (see Chapter 6 by Haider in this volume). During the Nehruvian period, a celebratory portrayal of the Mughals was directed against the Hindu right wing's hostile responses to the presence of Muslims in India. However, with the recent political ascendancy of the Hindu right, their ideology and their definition of India as a Hindu nation whose mythical foundations are cast in a pre-Islamic past has come to be widely accepted. Consequently, the thousand-year history of Islam in India is conveniently erased and perceived as antithetical to the core spiritual and cultural identity of the nation. In this context, while the idealization of Muslim-Hindu amity may itself serve as a welcome antidote to the erasure of common history, it may also appear naïve in relationship to the reality of Muslim experience in the present. Most distressing, however, is the emergence in the recent past of stridently Islamophobic historical films like *Padmaavat* (2019) in which a Muslim sultan, Alāuddīn Khaljī, is crudely represented as a rapacious marauder, hell bent on destroying the noble Hindu heartland of Rajputana (see Chapter 3 by Knapcyzk and Chapter 7 by Ahmed in this volume). However, before we address the nature of Islamicate idioms in Bombay cinema that have continued into Bollywood, we need to understand more clearly the history and use of the term 'Islamicate'.

Debating 'Islamicate'

As already mentioned, the term 'Islamicate' was first coined by Marshall Hodgson, the western scholar of Islamic history, in his seminal three-volume work, *The Venture of Islam*, in contradistinction to the term 'Islamic' and alongside another term

'Islamdom'. 'Islam', like 'Christianity', refers to a religion. 'Islamdom', by analogy with 'Christendom', is 'the society in which the Muslims and their faith are recognized as prevalent and socially dominant, in one sense or another' (Hodgson 1958: 58). It does not refer to a geographical region as such but to a complex set of social relationships that are found in Muslim societies even as they vary from region to region. The purpose of the term 'Islamicate' is to signify 'of or pertaining to' the society and culture of Islamdom. It might immediately be objected that we do not use the term 'Christianate' to describe Christian culture; however, we do use the word 'Occidental', and in a vaguer sense 'western', to describe the society and culture of Christendom. There is no cognate term to describe the society and culture of Islamdom. For this reason, the term 'Islamicate' is a useful addition to our vocabulary.

Some take the distinction marked by Hodgson to be essential and obvious. Kevin Reinhart writes that failure to observe it constitutes 'a kind of intellectual sloth that requires justification by those who would choose not to take pains to speak precisely' (2003: 24). Kathryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi point out that the use of the term 'Islamicate' offers a corrective to the universalizing and reductive tendency of western scholarship prior to Hodgson of distinguishing world cultures on the basis of religion alone (2008: ix). The advantage of the term is that it isolates and characterizes the aesthetic and cultural forms of 'Islamdom'. It is an umbrella term that encompasses the wide variety of different cultural traditions that issue from the Islamic world, such as the culturally specific Persianate tradition or a widely distributed aesthetic form like 'arabesque' design. Furthermore, as David Gilmartin and Bruce B. Lawrence write, it opens up 'the space between reductive religious orientations and mobile collective identities' (2000: 3) and it allows a way of characterizing cross-cultural interactions not only within the Islamic world but beyond it. This is especially important for understanding the influence of Islamic culture within a society like India, in which Islam is not the dominant religious formation, and where Islamicate forms circulate independently of their religious context and enter into complex mutual influence with other cultural forms. Nonetheless, several objections can and have been raised against the idea.

One objection is precisely that it hives off considerations of culture from considerations of religion, whereas the term 'Islamic' encompasses both. For example, *pardā*, or the seclusion and veiling of women, is a social practice that historians believe pre-existed the emergence of Islam in West Asia (Keddie 1991: 2–3), and in Northern India, after the arrival of Muslims, the practice extended beyond Muslims to upper-class Hindu households. At the same time, *pardā* is clearly a religious practice that is sanctioned in the Qur'an (Khalidi 2008: 24, 31). However, the term 'Islamicate' is not intended to exclude religion but to emphasize the way that social and cultural practices within Islamdom are not simply (or only)

religious in nature and may have a role that is not reducible to religious explanation. As Hodgson argues, this is essential for understanding Islamic culture in contexts where Islam is not the dominant religion and where Islamicate idioms are shared and embraced by non-Muslims. In a persuasive article on the courtly culture of the medieval South Indian state of Vijayanagarā, art historian Philip Wagoner (1996) substantiates Hodgson's view by demonstrating how courtly dress and deportment were profoundly influenced by Islamicate cultural norms, though not by Islam as a religion.[3]

A second objection pertains to origins. While defending the term, Babayan and Najmabadi note that it does tend to 'reproduce a tradition of equating the Islamic world with its initial Arabo-Persian Center' (2008: ix). In this centre-periphery conception of history, the Islamicate tradition in India might be seen as merely derived from or a copy of some more authentic original and its distinctive cultural contribution diminished. Furthermore, in the Indian context, it supports the view of the Hindu right that Muslims are outsiders, whether on religious or cultural grounds (see Chapter 7 by Ahmed in this volume). Islamicate society and culture spread with Islam from its base in Arabia and Persia, east across the steppes of Asia, west into the Magreb and south-east into the Indian subcontinent. Maḥmūd of Ghaznī's raids on the northwest of India in the eleventh century, the expansion of the Ghurid Dynasty across the Northern Plains of India in the twelfth century and Khaljī's subsequent conquest of the Deccan in the thirteenth century brought a Persian-flavoured Islamicate high culture to India. However, the spread of Islamicate society does not exclude the emergence of regionally distinct cultures or render them mere copies of an original. Later iterations of Islamicate cultures may echo ancient forms; equally, they may be both regionally distinct and indigenous, like the Urdu literary and musical Islamicate cultures of India (see Chapter 4 by Jha; Chapter 9 by Jhingan; and Chapter 10 by Bhaskar, all in this volume) or Kathak dance (see Chapter 11 by Lutgendorf in this volume). Most significantly, it is in the interaction with local literary, performative and cultural practices like the different *Bhakti* traditions and rituals and festivals like Basant and Holi that Indian Islamicate cultures acquired a distinct and unique identity.[4] Indian Sufism is an example. Thus, distinguishing these idioms as Islamicate certainly does not mark them as foreign; the imputation of foreignness to both Islam and Islamicate culture in India is simply a denial of the Indianization of Islam in its millennial history in this region.

A third objection to the usage of the term to describe Islamicate cultural forms is that it potentially occludes what precedes it. Thus the use of the term 'Islamicate' to describe Arab-Persian culture after the coming of Islam might appear to subsume the Arab and Sasanian cultures which existed prior to Islam and to some extent continued under it into an Islamicate mould. There is some merit to this

objection, but it pertains to all classification and reference by historical epochs. We must simply acknowledge the extent to which the culture we might call 'Islamicate' may have absorbed aspects of pre-Islamicate culture, just as the Persian culture that became the centre of Islamicate civilization after the collapse of the Caliphate in Baghdad absorbed elements of Arabic high culture into the Persian idiom. Arabic love poetry and classic Persian stories in the oral tradition, like that of Shīrīn-Farhād, pre-exist their absorption into Islamicate culture and Sufi idioms (see Chapter 2 by Sharma and Chapter 10 by Bhaskar in this volume), and we should acknowledge the Arabic and Persian origins of certain stories within Bombay cinema (Roy 2015), while recognizing their overall contribution to Indo-Islamicate culture.

This worry is closely related to a fourth objection: namely that the term 'Islamicate' homogenizes patterns of cultural variation and difference; it assumes similarity where there is diversity and variation. Presumably to combat such homogenization, the recent reopening of the galleries that used to house Islamic art at the Metropolitan Museum in New York are labelled not as Islamic or Islamicate art but according to the countries or regions in which the art was made. This bracing revisionism has its value, but so, too, does a category that allows us to recognize the commonality across diversity. For example, it can scarcely be denied that what Hodgson labels the 'arabesque', a non-representational idiom of elaborately patterned, geometric lattices and surfaces, which is often also informed by elaborate Arabic calligraphy, is a cultural idiom found across the Islamicate world from the Alhambra in Seville, to Humāyūn's Tomb in Delhi, to the mosques and Sufi shrines of Africa and Southeast Asia. At the same time, as we have already suggested, within Islamicate culture we can also recognize the distinctive contribution of the Persianate tradition to the development of the Urdu *ghazal*, for instance, even as we see the constitution of the Urdu language from different linguistic sources in India.

A fifth objection, less explicitly stated but salient to the themes of this book, concerns the nature and character of Islamicate culture. Hodgson identifies Islamicate forms with high culture, particularly the social conventions of politeness and etiquette which he calls '*ādāb*', and with the literary and poetic traditions distilled by Persian culture out of the Arab tradition in the eleventh to the twelfth centuries. There is good reason to identify the Islamicate tradition with high culture because it was through the courts and courtly language, particularly what Sheldon Pollock (2003: 11) refers to as the 'cosmopolitan' languages of Arabic and Persian, that commonalities of custom and cultural expression were spread among diverse peoples and geographic regions in a way that justifies speaking of Islamicate traditions. At the same time, to think of Islamicate culture as a uniquely high cultural tradition is insufficient, as Hodgson himself is dimly aware in his

brief references to the *Tales of Arabian Nights*. These stories of adventure, mystery, love, sex, magic, intrigue, deception and narrative invention form an irreverent counterweight to the elevated social and spiritual aspirations of the poetic tradition, and although not especially popular in Arabic-speaking countries, they gained tremendous currency elsewhere, particularly in South Asia. If we are to take Islamicate traditions seriously, we must understand the influence and mediations of both high and low cultures. High-brow and low-brow were mixed together in the literary print cultures of Indian modernity (Roy 2015; see Chapter 4 by Jha in this volume), and this was especially true of the mass medium of cinema in which the 'Oriental' genre influenced by bodies of Islamicate narratives such as the *Tales* was of central importance (Roy 2015; see Chapter 8 by Thomas in this volume).

The putatively high-brow associations of Islamicate culture in the North Indian context are troublesome in a different way. There is a tendency to associate the Muslim cultures of India with the legacy of the Sultanate and Mughal Empires and the cultural aristocracies that precipitated from them, including and most notably, late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century Awadh. One difficulty here is that these cultures may present a fetishized, idealized view of Islamdom as an exotic other that has little to do with the lives of ordinary Indian Muslims (see Chapter 7 by Ahmed in this volume). Furthermore, glamorized representations of particular aspects of this culture, for example, courtly courtesan cultures, are mistakenly taken by some as evidence of the essential corruption, decadence and 'otherness' of Islam in general (see Chapter 11 by Lutgendorf in this volume). All films, of course, carry ideological baggage, and these representations are especially charged, given the position of Muslims in India. It is a question of who is speaking, what is being said and the context in which these idioms are being used. However, we do not see these challenges of representation as grounds for abandoning 'Islamicate' as an analytical category; rather, it forces us to diagnose the complexity of its manifestations.

The seventh and final objection is that any attempt to isolate or identify Islamicate culture in a region where Islam is not the dominant religion is bound to raise questions about differentiation and delineation. The risk here is of being reductive, and the challenge is not simply to differentiate putative Islamicate idioms and motifs but to recognize and understand the complex cultural dialogue and syncretism between different cultures. From the earliest arrivals in India of Muslims from different parts of the Islamic world, Islamicate cultures evolved to create distinctive Indo-Islamicate forms, such as the Sufi romances of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, for example, Maulānā Dā'ūd's *Ćāndāyan* (1379), Shaikh Quṭban Suhravardī's *Mirigāvatī* (1503), Malik Muḥammad Jāyasī's *Padmāvat* (1540) and Shaikh Mīr Sayyid Mañjhan Shaṭṭārī Rājgīrī's *Madhumālatī* (1545), written within the Sultanate courts in the Indian vernacular languages of Hindavi, including Awadhi. These famous romances combine Sufi ideas about human perfectibility

through the absorption in Divine Love, with Indian *rasa* aesthetics, in which the spiritually attuned emotional response of *rasa* elicited through poetry invokes both the relation of the lover to the beloved and of the believer to God (Manjhan 2000; Behl 2012; see Chapter 10 by Bhaskar in this volume).

As we have emphasized, the identification of Islamicate motifs and idioms in cinema and elsewhere thus cannot take place apart from an understanding of the broader context in which Islamicate idioms were renewed and transformed in interaction with other Indic traditions which along with the Sufic included *Bhakti* traditions of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism as well as a whole range of classical literary and folk performative, cultural and ritual forms. Hence, we see the term 'Islamicate' as not in any way an exclusionary or a ghettoizing one but rather one that enables the recognition and valuation of forms that have non-Hindu histories, as well as an acceptance of the circuits and flows of ideas and emotions that are indicative of a generous and open interaction of cultures and influences that were mutually enriching and generated multiple constellations of cultural meaning and senses of self-identity. It is these circuits of cultural exchange and interaction that are constitutive of the Indian traditions of literature, poetry, the visual arts, architecture, the performance arts and, in the twentieth century, cinema.

Islamicate idioms of Bombay cinema

It was Mukul Kesavan (1994) who, in a pioneering essay 'Urdu, Awadh and the tawaif: The Islamicate roots of Hindi cinema', first identified Bombay cinema as a critical repository of Islamicate culture. He identified three Islamicate features that permeate it: the Urdu language, including especially but not exclusively poetry; the culture of *nawābī* Awadh, centred on Lucknow as 'the last bastion of a beleaguered Islamicate culture' (1994: 251); and the figure of the *ṭawā'if* (courtesan) and the iconic role of her *mujrā* dance and song performance. In our book *Islamicate Cultures of Bombay Cinema* (Bhaskar and Allen 2009), we sought to expand Kesavan's triple lexicon to include song forms like the *ghazal* and the *qawwālī*, architectural idioms like cusped or multifoil arches and what are sometimes called the 'arabesque' motifs of Islamicate architectural decoration, and the storytelling forms that are derived from the Persian-Arabic tradition, like the *maṣnavī*, which was instrumental in shaping the portrayal of romance in Bombay cinema. Similarly Anjali Gera Roy (2015) has argued for 'Perso-Arabic genealogies of the Hindi Masala Film', which she asserts are essential for understanding the storytelling forms, character types and notions of romance in this cinema and which forms an 'alternative aesthetic' tradition within Hindi popular cinema. In addition to these varied idioms, Bombay cinema also developed distinctive Islamicate genres and

subgenres that were both contemporary and historical in their emphasis (Dwyer 2006; Bhaskar and Allen 2009).

The Muslim Social, the 'marked form' of the social genre, consolidated in the 1940s by Mehboob Khan in films like *Najma* (1943) and *Elaan* (1947), focused on the problem of how to maintain and renew traditional values in the face of modernity and the need to reconcile desire with duty. The lineaments of the genre developed in the 1940s with recognizable character types of the decadent *nawab*, the long-suffering *begam*, the educated young professional hero and the courtesan with a heart of gold. The genre was then transformed in the 1960s under the impact of the modernizing forces of Nehruvian India in films such as *Mere Mehboob* (1963) and *Bahu Begum* (1967). In addition to the Muslim Social we should also note the importance of what Yousuf Saeed (2009) and Rachel Dwyer (2010) have identified as the 'Muslim devotional film', such as *Mere Gharib Nawaz* (1973), *Dayar-e-Madina* (1975), *Madine ki Galian* (1981) and others. These films are often set in Bombay rather than the old centres of Muslim culture, and their focus is upon how to maintain religious practices in a context where traditional values are threatened by modern life.

The Islamicate courtesan film and the Muslim-themed historical represent historically focused subgenres. Islamicate courtesan films like *Pakeezah* ('The pure one', 1971) and *Umrao Jaan* (1981, 2006) are centred on the figure of the courtesan who, while subject to the lustful gaze of men, is at once a source of value in her essential purity and integrity and a repository of culture in her mastery of the performing arts. In the Islamicate courtesan film, the resources of the cinema are used to imaginatively recreate the ambience of Lakhnawī courtesan culture and, in particular, the *mujrā* performance of the courtesan within the *maḥfil* (salon entertainment), where patrons gather to watch her perform.

The traditions of Muslim-themed historical films such as *Pukar* (1939), *Humāyūn* (1945), *Shahjahan* (1946), *Taj Mahal* (1963), *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960) and *Noor Jehan* (1967) celebrated the legacy of the Mughal imperium (Bhaskar and Allen 2009). They emphasized an indigenous tradition of justice, iconically embodied in the figures of Akbar and Jahāngīr; portrayed amicable relations and a powerful political alliance between Mughal rulers and the Rajputs; celebrated the atmosphere of religious respect and tolerance for other religions bequeathed by Akbar's court; and depicted Mughal rulers, especially Akbar, Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān, as patrons of the arts and culture. Equally, Muslim Historicals celebrated love across religious and class boundaries as a symbol of a unified nation that is ideally enshrined in Akbar's love for Jodhaa and in the myth of Prince Salīm's love for the slave girl, Anārkalī. As we have already suggested, the genre performed a crucial ideological function in the period of the 1940s to the 1960s: first, by supporting the anti-colonial struggle with its powerful representation of indigenous

systems of politics and justice; and second, by articulating the central role of Muslims and Islamicate culture in the formation of the nation under Nehruvianism. In this period a certain critique of authority and centralization was also present that is evident in the authoritarian and rigid portrayal of the aging patriarch, Akbar, in *Mughal-e-Azam*.

A final genre which is distinct from all of these is the Oriental genre. This genre of films was very popular in the silent period, in part, no doubt, because it afforded not only fairy-tale romance in exotic locales but also, through special effects, the imagined embodiment of these fairy-tale worlds on the silver screen. As Rosie Thomas points out in Chapter 8 of this volume, the Oriental film drew on two main sources. The first was the *Tales of the Arabian Nights* with its canonical stories such as 'Alibaba and the Forty Thieves', which was retold numerous times in silent and sound cinema. The second was the oral storytelling tradition of the *dāstān* from the eleventh century onwards, perhaps the most influential of which were the stories of Amīr Hamzā that Akbar commissioned as an illustrated manuscript, the *Hamzānāma*, in 1562. These stories were published in 46 volumes in the late nineteenth century as the *Dastān-e-Amīr Hamzā*. Another well-known *dāstān* was Mīr Ḥasan's eighteenth-century love story of Benazīr and Badr-e-Munīr (Suvorova 2000), which featured fairies and flying carpets and was popular both in Urdu theatre and silent cinema.

In *Islamicate Cultures of Bombay Cinema* (2009), we explored the rich and varied Islamicate idioms of Bombay cinema through the lens of the Muslim Social, the Historical, the Courtesan Film and what we termed the New Wave Muslim Social since we took what we consider to be the reasonable view that these genres or subgenres tended to showcase Islamicate idioms in the most sustained and elaborate way. However, for our critics (Saeed 2009; Taneja 2010), this decision seemed to confound the motivation of Kesavan's intervention, which was to demonstrate that Islamicate culture has determined the 'very nature' of Bombay cinema and not just some 'marked' Muslim components of it (1994: 49). While we believe that these criticisms of our genre-based perspective in *Islamicate Cultures of Bombay Cinema* are misguided (Bhaskar and Allen 2010), in this complementary volume we maintain a focus on the idioms, contexts and histories of Islamicate forms that were ubiquitous in Bombay cinema and are present in Bollywood cinema as well. The idioms are diffuse and occur in both Muslim and non-Muslim contexts and not just in Muslim-themed films: the Urdu language, for instance, and its usage particularly in the songs of these films. Furthermore, the musical forms of the *ghazal* and the *qawwālī* were present widely in Bombay cinema, as were also the poetic idioms of these forms that drew from a larger social and cultural repertoire of different vernacular language traditions of North India. In the current political context it is especially important to indicate the culturally defining significance of

Islamicate traditions for India as a whole and their constitutive role in the history of Bombay cinema, as well as their presence in the films of Bollywood.

Islamicate cultural forms have been absorbed into the warp and woof of these cinemas in such a way that their influence is no longer readily apparent. The reason for this lies both in the thousand-year presence of Islam in India and the cultural convergence that issued from it, and in the heterogeneous and syncretic nature of popular culture itself. One broad and pervasive example of this is the way that the Sufi 'love-in-separation' story, which leads to the perfection of self in an ecstatic union with the other, combines with the Hindu idea of perfect love as being the realization of a timelessly reincarnated union. This fusion occurs early in Hindavi romances, like the *Madhumālatī*, where, uncommonly, ecstatic union is achieved without the intervention of death (*fanā*) (Suvorova 2000). More commonly, however, the star-crossed couple perishes in order to realize their love. In post-independence cinema, this fusion of tradition occurs in what may be termed the 'reincarnation romance', beginning with *Madhumati* (1958) and leading us through countless subsequent exemplars to the present (Allen 2022). Here the star-crossed lovers are separated through the intervention of a feudal (often colonial) patriarch and perish. In the *maṣnavī* tradition, *fanā* is associated with the river, sea or the whirlpool of love in which the two lovers die and are united, and films like *Madhumati* and *Milan* (1967) explicitly invoke this Sufi idiom. At the same time, the lovers also find their true love validated in rebirth as a timeless love according to Hindu belief systems. In this cycle of films, so fundamental to and exemplary of Bombay cinema, the Islamicate tradition clearly helps to inform and define the larger whole.

The question remains, however, about what role 'marked' genres like the Muslim Social, or 'marked' elements like the de rigueur Muslim cap for men, play in representing Muslim social life. The realist project of New Wave Muslim Social films, which we discussed in our earlier volume, embedded Islamicate idioms within a Muslim social context. Similarly there are several Bollywood films which feature Muslim characters, where the social world of these characters is similarly realized, for example, in *Maqbool* (2003), *Khakee* (2004), *Chak De! India* (2007), *My Name Is Khan* (2010) and others. At the same time, the issue of stereotyping Muslim characters and culture through the use of Islamicate idioms remains. It goes without saying that the design features of popular cinema as a mass art involve simplification of the phenomena they depict in order to seduce, entertain and appeal to large numbers of people in ways that may distort and misrepresent. This is true even of popular songs idioms like the *ghazal* and the *qawwālī* which have been streamlined and 'simplified' for the purposes of mass entertainment (see Chapter 9 by Jhingan and Chapter 10 by Bhaskar in this volume). Popular cinema that 'marks' Muslim cultures in certain ways may

typecast Muslims in certain roles, freeze the depiction of Muslim cultures in a timeless nostalgia for *nawabī* regimes and otherwise stereotype Islamicate culture through its most spectacular emblems, such as the Taj Mahal or the *maḥfil*, at the expense of the representation of the everyday lives of Muslim peoples. Furthermore, some of the conventions that emerge within a genre like the Muslim Social, such as the drama of mistaken identity, have little to do with Muslim culture and everything to do with the conventions of Bombay cinema as a whole (see Chapter 12 by Allen in this volume).

And yet, a certain level of typification allows for the identification, representation and self-recognition of social groups. Muslim Socials and Muslim Devotionals arguably played an important role in representing their own experience for Muslim audiences (Bhaskar and Allen 2009; Dwyer 2010). Furthermore, the reduction of type to stereotype may be unavoidable in a popular cinema like the one produced in Bombay, where storytelling trades in simplified formulas, and the audience, until the recent past, has been largely illiterate.[5] The lesson is that Islamicate idioms cannot be taken simply at face value. They must be understood symptomatically in terms of what they occlude or misrepresent, as well as what they enable with respect to the articulation of Islamicate cultures more broadly and the place of Islam within Indian society as a whole. Stereotypes invariably diminish, distort and caricature their subject. At the same time, as Richard Dyer (2009) notes, even stereotypes may have a value depending on how they are used. Khalid Mohammed's film *Fiza* (2000) features Hrithik Roshan as a terrorist, but the film examines seriously the reasons for a young Muslim's turn towards terrorism.

Popular cinema in India, as elsewhere, is a highly syncretic and heterogeneous medium. It both borrows from a multiplicity of narrative and aesthetic traditions and makes overt appeals to cultures and contexts of everyday life. The Islamicate forms and idioms that infuse popular cinema necessarily mimic the heterogeneity of popular cinema as a whole; they are in many ways as different from each other as they are from other aspects of the cinematic tradition of which they form a part. They may directly inscribe tradition (the 'arabesque' motifs of architecture), they may be invented forms (the 'Muslim Social') or they may transform the tradition they borrow from (the 'cine-*qawwālī*'). They may be pervasive and diffused throughout popular cinema like the Sufi ideal of love or very specific and defined such as the Taj Mahal as a synecdoche for the Mughal imperium. They may be primarily fantastical, like the idioms of the 'Oriental' genre, or primarily concerned with representing forms of Islamic religious life, as in the Muslim Devotional. They may share motifs with other cultures, like the *Tales of the Arabian Nights*, or they may be culturally specific like the dance form of Kathak. They may be 'marked' forms like the 'Muslim Social' or they may be 'unmarked' forms like the *qawwālī*. We must recognize that to explore Islamicate idioms and cultures in

Bombay cinema is not to explore one thing but an irreducible multiplicity that is reflected in the contributions to this volume.

Given the complex relationship between representations, the societies they represent and the ideological refractions and distortions that enter into Islamicate imaginaries, it is important to acknowledge that those imaginaries do not encompass everything there is to say about the representation of Muslims in cinema. Three of the most notable male stars of Bollywood cinema are Muslim: Salman Khan, Aamir Khan and Shah Rukh Khan. The fact that they are Muslim has implications for how their star personae are deployed and understood in cinematic storytelling (see Chapter 13 by Ghosh in this volume). There are narrative idioms that develop around Muslim characters such as the mistaken identity plot in the Muslim Social (see Chapter 12 by Allen in this volume) or the conspiracy plot in recent films about Islamic terrorism (see Chapter 14 by Mazumdar in this volume), which are in no measure specific to Muslim culture but are important to understanding the representations of Muslims on screen. In contemporary Bollywood cinema, the portrayal of Muslims as mafia dons and terrorists has increased exponentially, and under the impact of an ascendant Hindutva ideology such representations are indicative of Islamophobia or at least of states of anxiety and fear caused by the figure of the Muslim (see Chapter 14 by Mazumdar in this volume). Cinema responds to stereotyping and scapegoating within the culture at large, and here we need to be both aware and critical of the deployment of cinematic idioms that contribute further to the stereotyping and othering of Muslims.

Inevitably, the question arises as to whether Islamicate cultures and idioms have run their course in contemporary Bollywood cinema in the sense that they have become conventions which have lost their life, like dead metaphors. On this question, the picture is mixed. Genres like the 'Oriental' and the 'Muslim Social' now seem old-fashioned and form the subject of parody and pastiche. Beginning as early as *Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977), and more recently in films like *Dedh Ishqiya* ('One and a half parts passion', 2014) and *Gulabo Sitabo* (2020), the courtship conventions and the world of manners that defined the Muslim Social have been parodically subverted (see Chapter 12 by Allen in this volume). The 'Oriental' has been the subject of pastiche. For example, in *Love Story 2050* (2008), Zeisha (Priyanka Chopra), a heroine of the future, has her music studio decked out as a self-designated gold and blue 'Alibaba Room' complete with an oriental flying carpet and columnar arabesque motifs, at the centre of which is situated a gigantic chaise longue in front of an immense moon-like window with lights evoking stars, which recalls in a hyperbolic pastiche the *mise en scène* of *Chaudhvin ka Chand* ('Full moon', 1960).

Muslim-themed historicals have continued to be made with interfaith romance integral to the imagination of the Indian nation as in films like *Jodhaa Akbar*

(2008) and *Bajirao Mastani* (2015). At the same time, it is also true that in the contemporary moment, the mere suggestion of interfaith passion, albeit one-sided, generates hysterical Muslim hatred, as in a film like *Padmaavat* (2018). Clearly, a genre that once celebrated Muslim culture is marked today by Islamophobia, which is undoubtedly a sign of the times. At the same time, a small number of other Bollywood films depict interfaith romance in contexts which invariably are coded with Islamicate conventions like the *ghazal*-spouting poet-lover in *Teri Meri Kahani* ('The story of you and me', 2012) or the hyperbolic arches and arabesque motifs associated with the home base of the Muslim heroine Sakina (Sonam Kapoor) in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's lushly romantic confection *Saawariya* ('My love', 2007). Quite how much the Islamicate milieu has become merely a feature of art design is evident when the faithful who have heeded Eid-time call to prayers in an implausibly large and 'nearby' mosque enter into the Hindu hero's song performance as back dancers. Narrative forms, like the *maṣnavī* in the reincarnation romance, remain salient in popular cinema, in part no doubt because they articulate Sufi ideals of love and offer rich possibilities for narrative and stylistic invention. It is equally clear that musical idioms, like the *qawwālī*, are firmly implanted in popular music and hence in popular cinema and continue to provide some of the finest examples of the song form (see Chapter 10 by Bhaskar in this volume).

The thriller, a popular genre that has responded to urgent contemporary issues of today like the impact of terrorism on India, is another idiom of Bollywood cinema in which Islamicate imaginaries and idioms are understandably integral, as in films like *Kurbaan* ('Sacrificed', 2009), *D-Day* (2013) and *Phantom* (2015). *Qawwālī*s like '*Shukrān Allāh*' ('Thanks to the Lord', *Kurbaan*), '*Murshid Khele Holī*' ('My Lord plays Holi', *D-Day*), the *qawwālī*-inspired '*Nachdā ve Merā Auliyā*' ('My Lord dānces in joy', *Phantom*) and Sufi-inspired songs such as '*Alvidā*' ('Farewell', *D-Day*), '*Sāware*' ('My beloved', *Phantom*) as well as several songs in *My Name Is Khan* (2010) – '*Sajdā*' ('Worship'), '*Tere Nainā*' ('Your eyes') and '*Noor-e-Khudā*' ('The light of the Lord') – are just a few examples that indicate how widely Islamicate imaginaries, particularly of a heightened conception of love, where the human meets the Divine, are integral to Bollywood cinema. Of course, these forms are not related just to Muslim-themed films but also to non-Muslim romances like *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi* (2008), *Rockstar* (2011) and *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* (2012) whose conceptions of love are similarly inspired by Sufi ideals which are evident in their songs.

We have noted earlier the distinctive engagement with Muslim themes and milieu by new wave filmmakers where Bombay cinema engaged with Muslim social life in a manner that was shorn of the stereotypes that govern popular cinema. In contemporary Bollywood cinema a group of films exist with stories and *mise en scènes* which are reminiscent of these works. Some are small-budget 'indie' films

and others are more mainstream, but in contrast to the terrorist thriller, these films dramatize social lives of ordinary Muslims who face physical and psychological violence on a day-to-day basis. Three recent films, *Shahid* (2013), *Mulk* ('Country', 2018) and *Nakkash* ('The craftsman', 2019) are powerful explorations of the serious ontological crisis of the idea of India and its polity today where the politics of hatred and fear have been normalized.

Thus, like other popular cultural forms, Islamicate idioms are part of the social context to which they are also a response. Heterogeneous and widely ramified, they are subject to historical change and transformation both as conventions that become worn out or transformed, renewed or parodied, but also as potent vehicles of a wider Islamicate culture and social life whose histories they make reference to and whose contemporary manifestations they evoke, sometimes only obliquely, sometimes only in a grotesquely distorted fashion but sometimes, also, in ways that are profoundly affecting. Whether they seem worth only parody, or whether they are deemed to be highly expressive, Islamicate forms and idioms are not only constitutive of Bombay cinema's past but continue to resonate in the mainstream Bollywood and independent cinemas of today.

Content and chapters

This is a volume that focuses on the Islamicate cultures and idioms that were historically crucial for the development of the cinemas produced in Bombay. The first section of the book, 'Islamicate Histories', explores aspects of the historical contexts, and the poetic, performative, art historical, cultural and political-ideological forms that led to the development of different Islamicate idioms that, in various ways, contributed to the textures of Bombay cinema and the continuities of these idioms that are evident in contemporary, Bollywood film. Here the focus is not mainly on cinema but on the Islamicate forms that impacted the cinema. The second section, 'Cinematic Forms', focuses on cinema itself and discusses the genres, imaginaries, aesthetic forms and ideologies of Bombay cinema in which Islamicate cultures have had a constitutive role. The volume cannot claim to be comprehensive; however, we do hope to have conveyed the range and depth of the Islamicate traditions in Bombay cinema and also the continuing significance of Islamicate idioms in Bollywood cinema today.

The first section of the volume comprises seven chapters which explore different histories, traditions, idioms and imaginaries of Islamicate culture in India which subsequently influenced and informed Bombay cinema from a wide variety of critical and historical perspectives. These chapters discuss the role of the Urdu language in Parsi theatre that has been a foundational basis for the idioms

of Bombay cinema; Persian romance tales and Urdu poetic traditions that have been crucial for the romance imagination of this cinema; the significance and the history of the courtesan figure; Mughal painting and the fantasies of history; the concept of Mughal justice and its significance for films of the historical genre; and the political implications of the memory of Muslim invasion that has currently been circulating in popular culture.

The Parsi theatre, a secular form that thrived between 1860 and 1930, is known to have had a profound influence on Bombay cinema. It supplied capital, producers, scriptwriters and actors and also furnished some of the major genres and idioms of the emergent Bombay film industry. In her vital contribution to the volume, 'Passionate refrains: The theatricality of Urdu on the Parsi stage', Kathryn Hansen shows how the aesthetic sensibility of the Urdu language, cultivated by Parsi theatre playwrights and performers, shaped the Islamicate forms of Bombay cinema. Hansen describes how Urdu storytelling traditions entered Parsi theatre through the popularity of the Lakhnawī Urdu drama *Indar Sabhā* ('Indra's court'), where the poetic and musical traditions of the Indo-Muslim romance offered an attractive alternative to the then dominant folk traditions of Gujarati theatre; how the rhythmic cadences and rhymed prose of Urdu poetry were integrated into the emerging rhetorical style of delivery influenced by proscenium theatre and European melodrama; and how the Parsi theatre 'became a repository of the Urdu poetic tradition' with its conventions of love ('*ishq* and *muḥabbat*) and the vocabulary of separation and despair that accompanied them. Hansen concludes with a discussion of the works of the prolific Urdu playwright Āg̲hā Ḥashr Kāshmīrī, whose plays recast Shakespeare into an Indo-Islamicate milieu and who translated the idioms of Urdu theatre into the cinema. She discusses in detail his allegorical play *Yahūdī kī Laṛkī* ('The Jew's daughter'), a tale of love between a Roman and a Jew in the context of religious persecution, which was adapted in 1955 into a film starring Sohrab Modi, Meena Kumari and Dilip Kumar.

Sunil Sharma's chapter, 'The Persian *maṣnavī* tradition and Bombay cinema', points out that the Persianate tradition remained a distinctive one within Islamicate culture, even as Urdu replaced Persian as the language in which these stories were told. Sharma describes how stories drawn from the *Shāhnāma* and the Persian romances, such as those of Lailā-Majnūn and Shīrīn-Farhād, were a staple of Parsi theatre and shows how the latter were widely adapted in Bombay cinema. He explores the relationships between the different adaptations of the romances, the degree to which the Persian elements of the tales were emphasized or attenuated in favour of a more diffused oriental or Islamicate idiom and the way in which the Persianate idiom of star-crossed lovers fused with the indigenous *virahiṇī* tradition (see Chapter 3 by Knapczyk in this volume). Sharma also discusses a series of films indirectly inspired by the *Shāhnāma*, often involving the famous Parsi actor and

director Sohrab Modi, as well as the widely adapted story of the folk hero Rustam who tragically kills his son Sohrāb in battle where, unknown to him, he is fighting for the opposing side. Since these films focus on the courtly environment of ancient Persia, they attempt typically to evoke an imagined Persianate world. The chapter concludes by comparing the popularity of these stories in India and Iran and speculating on the causes of the decline of the Persianate tradition in the recent past.

Peter Knapczyk begins his chapter, 'Reflections from Padminī's Palace: Women's voices of longing and lament in the Sufi romance and Shiʿi elegy', by considering the irony of the controversy over *Padmaavat* (see also Chapter 7 by Ahmed in this volume). While Islamophobic Hindu critics railed against a love scene between a Hindu princess and a Muslim sultan that they imagined to be in the film, the film itself is actually deeply Islamophobic in its portrayal of the rapacious Muslim sultan. Yet what both the film and its critics alike have forgotten is the way in which the original story, by the Sufi poet Jāyasī, grew out of a syncretic Hindavi cultural tradition that often deployed the trope of the woman (*virahiṇī*) who, in separation (*viraha*), longs for her loved one. Seeking to recover this shared tradition, Knapczyk analyses in detail two genres of Islamicate literature. The first is the *premākhyān* or Sufi romance to which *Padmāvat* belongs, wherein male poets writing in women's voices developed elaborate emotional topographies of love-in-separation that may be understood allegorically in terms of separation from the Divine. The second is the *marṣiya*, or Shiʿi elegy, a narrative poem memorializing the martyrdom of Husain, grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad, which features the lamentations of womenfolk, separated from the beloved men of their family who are in battle, and employs the trope of *viraha* in the mode of elegy. Knapczyk demonstrates the way in which zealous reformers, both of Urdu and Hindi, who had internalized the colonial critique of oriental decadence, sought to purge what they perceived as an effeminate and decadent literature of longing and lamentation. He concludes by observing that while this shared tradition survives in the films of classical Bombay cinema, it is, nonetheless, threatened with erasure in the doctrinaire environment of the present.

Similar to the aforementioned chapters, the next one also elaborates on an important literary genre – Urdu poetry produced by *ṭawā'if*s. Although the eponymous heroine of Ruswa's novella *Umrao Jaan* (1899) is celebrated as a poet, the extent of actual *ṭawā'if* poetry is not widely appreciated. In her chapter, 'Situating the *ṭawā'if* as a poet: Nostalgia, Urdu literary cultures and vernacular modernity', Shweta Sachdeva Jha sets the stage for understanding courtesan poetry by describing the popular Urdu literary culture of what she terms 'vernacular modernity', including the dissemination of cheaply reproduced *taẕkirā*s or poem collections that moulded public taste. After discovering the works of Māh Laqā Bāi 'Chandā's, Jha uncovered the existence of *taẕkirā*s that were solely devoted

to women's poetry and where more than half the contributions were by *ṭawā'if*s. These works were compiled by men who forged their own literary careers through the celebration of women's poetry. Jha reconstructs the lives of two of these poet-courtesans, Zohrā and Mushtarī from Lucknow, as well as the story of Adeline Hemmings or Malkā Jān from Benares, who became *ṭawā'if*s in order to achieve upward mobility. All these courtesan performers became renowned as poets who fashioned their own distinctive styles of writing the Urdu *ghazal*. Jha suggests that even as earnest reformers sought to excise their contributions to tradition in the latter half of the nineteenth century, their works continued to circulate among appreciative audiences. It is this poetic tradition that created the alluring imaginary in popular Bombay cinema of the beautiful tragic figure of the *ṭawā'if* or the courtesan, skilled in the literary and performative arts as well as in the art of seduction but unlucky in love and condemned usually to a life of loneliness. Not only was the *ṭawā'if* central to the courtesan genre of films like *Pakeezah* and *Umrao Jaan*, but also, as a staple figure of popular cinema, she has enabled sharp critiques of patriarchy and gender inequities as well as embodied ideas of romance – both devotional and erotic – that are so central to Sufi-*Bhakti* imaginaries.

Moving from the literary to the visual arts, the next contribution to this volume, 'Mughal chronicles: Words, images and the gaps between them' by Kavita Singh, explores the relationship between texts and images in Mughal paintings. Akbar had established a tradition of commissioning paintings alongside texts to illustrate courtly life, but in the case of illustrated manuscripts we discover intriguing examples where the interpretation offered by the painting is at variance with the history told in the text which it is supposed to illustrate. How are we to understand this discrepancy between word and image? Singh explores in detail three different examples, one each from the times of Akbar, Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān. In the painting *The Death of Khān Jahān Lodī*, whose story is told in the *Padshāhnāma*, the al fresco battle and execution scene of the rebel governor, Lodī, is arranged to reflect the structure of the *darbār* (court) with the absent Emperor Shāh Jahān symbolically presiding over it as the *chinār* tree. The figures are realistically rendered with Lodī's face drained of blood, his head half severed from his body and his eyes reflecting the horror of his own execution. In a painting from *Jahāngīrnāma*, a witness is included in the picture who was not actually there because, although a suspected rebel at the time, he was subsequently rehabilitated. Finally, a painting from the *Akbarnāma* illustrates Akbar in a demeaning posture, venting his fury upon his loyal courtier Mān Singh who has just prevented him from madly falling on his own sword. The picture frankly depicts Akbar's erratic behaviour, while the text wraps the image in the myth of his divine inscrutability. Singh concludes that the discrepancy between text and image in these works demonstrates that

they were not intended simply as documents but as invitations to the reader to interpret and understand them.

There are two further points that we can draw out from the chapter as being relevant for the concerns of our volume. At the beginning, Singh clearly indicates how the naturalism of Mughal paintings and the minute details of everything rendered in the paintings were clues to the forms of life during the Mughal period and have formed our imagination of the period. It is not surprising that the Mughal miniatures that circulated among the elite of the time, which have subsequently been collected in museums and in private collections and are valued legacies of the Mughal period, would be significant sources for the *mise en scènes* of the historical films of Bombay and Bollywood cinema. Ashutosh Gowariker researched the *Akbarnāma* paintings for his film *Jodhaa Akbar* just as others before him had also used Mughal miniatures for their films. But there is another significant point about the representation of history itself that is relevant here and that we can extrapolate from Singh's chapter on paintings for cinema. Mughal paintings and historical films are not 'realistic' records of the past; they are interpretations of the past. Historical films, like Mughal paintings, intervene in the ideological force field of the time they are made in by refracting contemporary events through the political complexities of the past, which they dramatize in accordance with present concerns (Bhaskar and Allen 2009: 24–43).

The next two chapters of this volume also take up issues of historical memory and the significance of the circulation of these memories in the present. Najaf Haider's chapter, 'Justice, love and the creative imagination in Mughal India', describes how the ideals of justice and love were represented through texts and pictures in the Mughal imperium under Emperor Jahāngīr and how these two ideals came into conflict in the story of Jahāngīr's love for Nūr Jahān. He begins by exploring how, during the reign of Jahāngīr, the ideal of justice as an overarching value served to legitimize and delimit kingship and was expressed through his fabled 'chain of justice'. Designed to overcome the bureaucratic hurdles faced by ordinary people who were seeking redress, the legendary chain became invested with miraculous powers that reflected the quasi-divinity of the emperor himself. Subsequently, Haider charts how the myth of Jahāngīr's great love for Nūr Jahān, one of his many wives, arose as a way to resolve factionalism within his court and how, in the later chronicles of Muḥmmad Shāh, this love story became entwined with the legend of Jahāngīr's justice. The story goes that when Nūr Jahān killed a stranger who had the temerity to look at her, Jahāngīr handed her over to the plaintiffs for punishment, thereby demonstrating his willingness to sacrifice even his most beloved in order to uphold the principle of equality before the law. Haider concludes with a discussion of how this legend of Jahāngīr's justice was

the occasion for a critique of British colonial rule in India, first in the poetry of Shiblī No'manī and then in Sohrab Modi's film *Pukar* (1939).

From the memorialization in popular culture of the memory of Jahāngīrī justice, the pernicious circulation and implications of an ideologically constructed and hostile memory of the Muslim invasion of India is the focus of the next chapter in the volume. In 2016, as we have already noted, an extraordinary controversy erupted, led by a little-known Hindutva or Hindu fundamentalist party known as the Shree Rajput Karni Sena (SRKS), over an alleged love scene between a Rajput princess and a Muslim sultan in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's film *Padmaavat*. In his chapter titled 'The "Muslim presence" in *Padmaavat*', Hilal Ahmed develops the concept of 'Muslim presence' in order to diagnose the ideological construction of Muslim identity that informed the SRKS's assault on the film. According to Ahmed, the concept of 'Muslim presence' involves three crucial components: the belief that the Muslims of India belong to a single pan-Islamic community; the inference that Muslims, unlike others, are defined by their religiosity; and the assumption that Muslim culture is the remnant of a royal Islamic past. For the SRKS, the Padmāvatī legend demonstrates that Muslims are outsiders, defined by an alien religion that licenses the brutal invasion of the Hindu heartland and the rape of women who enshrine its values. The only recourse that Hindu women have in the face of this dire threat is committing *jauhar* (righteous mass suicide) as an act of patriotic resistance. In spite of the SRKS's opposition to *Padmaavat*, this ideology turns out to be exactly the message conveyed by the film. However, such a sacrifice is also a mark of historical defeat, one that is still to be rectified and overcome in the here and now; hence, Ahmed argues, the paradoxical need to affirm, through protest and political agitation, the fact of 'Muslim presence' again and again.

The second section of the book, which is also comprised of seven chapters, is entitled 'Cinematic Forms'. Here, the writers focus specifically on the permeation of Islamicate forms of cultural expression within Bombay cinema of the past and in Bollywood cinema of the present and the distinctive cinematic conventions that have arisen from them. The first of the chapters in this section is a detailed exploration of three Alibaba films and their constitution of an imaginary of the Orient so popular in early Bombay cinema. The next three chapters focus on musical and dance forms: the first of these analyses the history and journey of the *ghazal* in cinema, the second examines the relationship of Sufi mysticism to the Bombay film song through the idioms of the *qawwālī* and the third critically examines how a popular film by V. Shantaram, *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baaje* ('The ankle bells ring', 1955), reimagines the figure of the *ṭawā'if* and Kathak dance. The cluster of three chapters that follows these examines the poetics of *pardā* in the Muslim Social film, the implications of the deployment of a Muslim star in contemporary

Bollywood and the transformed imagination of the figure of the Muslim from the earlier social films to recent Bollywood cinema.

Rosie Thomas's contribution, 'Alibaba's Open Sesame: Unravelling the Islamicate in Oriental fantasy films', anatomizes the elements of the so-called Oriental genre through a close examination of the three earliest tales of Alibaba to have survived on film: Modhu Bose's 1937 Bengali version, Mehboob Khan's 1940 Hindi and Punjabi version and Homi Wadia's 1954 Hindi version. She argues that set in a Persian or Arabian never-never land somewhere west of India and combining international orientalism with Indo-Islamicate language and motifs, the oriental film could be at once cosmopolitan and modern, and national and traditional. Thomas tracks how the Alibaba story made its way onto the sound screen via British Victorian pantomime, Parsi theatre, the Bengali stage and a series of silent movie versions, and she describes in detail the different kinds of cultural syncretisms that inform each of the sound versions. Bose's film combines the highbrow cosmopolitan oriental exoticism of the Ballet Russe and Diaghlev with Islamicate architectural idioms and middle-class Bengali theatre. Khan's film draws on the lowbrow orientalist tropes of European and Hollywood cinema, including Walter Ford's regressive 1934 British film *Chiu Chin Chow*, with an Islamicate touch and turns the story into a melodrama of good and evil. Wadia's film, in contrast, situates lowbrow European and American influences within the idioms of an Urdu Islamicate romance, cementing the shift of the Oriental genre from a mishmash of styles to what Thomas terms the Islamicate Oriental.

The *ghazal* is a genre of Persian and Urdu poetry formed from couplets in which love, in particular, love-in-separation or *viraha*, plays a central role. Shikha Jhingan, in 'The textual, musical and sonic journey of the *ghazal* in Bombay cinema' notes how, within the performative context of *mujrā*s and *maḥfil*s, the musical genre of the *ghazal* was consolidated, and she traces its refinement and dissemination through gramophone recordings, broadcasting and cinema to become a truly 'intermedial' genre. She describes in detail the historical significance of three contrasting *ghazal* performers. K. L. Saigal was a successful actor-singer who developed an influential mellifluous baritone voicing of the *ghazal* in the streamlined 3 minute 20 second format of gramophone recording. Begum Akhtar, from Faizabad, worked closely with poets and lyricists of the time and, as an experienced performer, disseminated a more improvisational style in her broadcasts for All India Radio in Lucknow. Talat Mahmood inhabited the soft, soulful style of Saigal in the era of the playback singer and transitioned seamlessly from the broadcasting and recording studios of Lucknow to the vocalizing of *ghazal*s in film, especially for the star actor Dilip Kumar. In the final part of her chapter, Jhingan explores in detail the forms and functions of the *ghazal* in film, contrasting the *maḥfil*-style *ghazal*, in which the performance of the song is staged for an audience within the

film, with the melancholy *ghazal*, in which an isolated performer laments his or her anguished condition of love-in-separation for the audience of the film.

Similar to the *ghazal*, the *qawwālī* too is a significant aural form of Bombay cinema that has been very important in expressing its devotional and romantic imagination. In her chapter 'The Sufi sacred, the *qawwālī* and the songs of Bombay cinema', Ira Bhaskar demonstrates that Sufi ideas and traditions of poetry, music and performance have been important for this cinema from the very beginning of the sound period. She characterizes in detail the devotional imagination of the cine *qawwālī* and sees it as an articulation of Sufi philosophical ideas that are fundamental to the imagination of both love and faith in this cinema. Critics have suggested that unlike the *qawwālī*s performed in *dargāh*s (shrines), the film *qawwālī* was, through 70 years of its history, an entertainment form oriented towards romance and that the *dargāh qawwālī* has been dominantly present in Bollywood cinema only after 2000. Bhaskar claims that, on the contrary, the *dargāh qawwālī* arrived in cinema with the coming of sound and demonstrates through film examples the presence, function and significance of devotional *dargāh qawwālī*s in the history of Bombay cinema. Furthermore, she argues that the devotional imagination is present not only in the *dargāh qawwālī* but also in the romance *qawwālī* since the central Sufi idea of single-minded devotion to the loved one simultaneously references both the human and the Divine Beloved. This idea has formed the core of many iconic songs of Bombay cinema in the past as well as of Bollywood songs in recent times. The expressive reservoirs of Sufi thought have thus been inspirational for a new kind of 'Sufiana' feel to recent Bollywood film songs that circulate widely, even independently of the films. In that sense, the celebration of love, human and divine, that we witness in the inspirational impact of Sufism on Bollywood film music, has a significance for our understanding of Islamicate culture that merits scrutiny.

In his chapter 'Avoiding Urdu and the *ṭawā'if*: Regendering Kathak dance in *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baaje*', Philip Lutgendorf analyses the narrative and representational strategies of V. Shantaram's influential film from 1955 as a symptom of the profound ambivalence in post-independence India towards Islamicate culture, particularly towards its musical legacy. He describes how, at the opening of the film, the heroine's sensual dance performance in an Islamicate setting is lambasted by a 'classical' Kathak dance teacher and his son, who seek to tutor her in the correct ways of performance, in preparation for a dance at the Shaivite temple of *Naṭeśvar* ('The Lord of dance [Shiva]'). The father then suspects her of trying to seduce his son, and she flees into exile as a female ascetic, only to finally return, anguished and ill, to perform with him a Shiva-Parvati dance duet. Lutgendorf argues that *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baaje* performs the ideological work of at once glamorizing the Muslim roots of Kathak, in the exotic sensuous dance of the Islamicate *mujrā*,

while at the same seeking to show that it is a debased version of an authentic, purified, 'classical' (read Hindu) dance form that has, perforce, existed from time immemorial. The work of the film is thus to discipline the supposedly debased, feminine, sensuous excesses of the Islamicate idiom with the robust, masculine and spiritually pure performance style of a Hindu classical idiom.

The final chapters focus on the Social film both in Bombay cinema and in the contemporary period. Within the genre of the 'Muslim Social', *pardā*, the practice of veiling and seclusion within the family, plays a central role in maintaining the values of traditional patriarchal culture, which are dependent on preserving the purity of women from the intrusive gaze of male strangers. In his chapter 'The poetics of *pardā*', Richard Allen explores a group of films, beginning with M. Sadiq's and Guru Dutt's *Chaudhvin ka Chand*, in which the risks of public unveiling are dramatized through Bombay cinema's trope of mistaken identity leading to incipiently tragic results. He argues that by the 1960s, the institution of *pardā* had become a site of ambivalence. On the one hand, the values it upholds were considered sacrosanct; on the other, the veiled woman is dramatized as a source of allure and enticement. He explores how the moment of unveiling and love at first sight is staged; the dramatization, through poetry and song, of love-in-separation that *pardā* affords; the convoluted plots of mistaken identity that issue from love at first sight once the woman's face is again covered by the veil; and how the medium of film itself both maintains and transgresses *pardā* in a manner that is, in part, thematized in the role played by photography as a modern technology that, like cinema itself, publically represents and disseminates the female image.

Shohini Ghosh's contribution analyses the cultural significance of a single individual, the Muslim Bollywood box-office superstar Salman Khan, widely condemned by the liberal press for his off-screen infractions and lampooned for his on-screen, larger-than-life, muscle-bound persona, yet beloved by the subaltern masses. In 'Transfigurations of the star body: Salman Khan and the spectral Muslim', Ghosh argues that by always falling short of the law off-screen, and by inhabiting, in his heroic roles, the liminal, disenchanted underworlds of Bombay, Khan holds particular appeal for the underprivileged Muslim community, and his films are carefully calibrated for an Eid release. As Ghosh points out, with the emergence of blockbuster films like *Dabangg* ('Fearless', 2010) and *Ek Tha Tiger* ('There was a Tiger', 2013), Khan also captured the imagination of a broader middle-class audience without losing his core constituency. In the body of her chapter, she undertakes a close analysis of Khan's persona and roles in four films from two different periods: *Tumko Na Bhool Payenge* ('I will not be able to forget you', 2002), *Garv: Pride and Honour* ('Pride', 2004), *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* ('Brother Bajrangi', 2015) and *Sultan* (2016). She demonstrates that in a period that is communally polarized and 'haunted by the spectre of the "dangerous" Muslim', Khan's

films are far from the simplistic action films they are sometimes assumed to be and instead offer a complex and evolving meditation on the 'visibility' of the Muslim and on being Muslim in a Hindu majoritarian society.

Some of these concerns continue in the last chapter of this volume. In 'Terrorism, conspiracy and surveillance in Bombay's urban cinema', Ranjani Mazumdar argues that the omnipresent threat of Islamic terror in the urban landscape, cultivated by the mass media in the wake of the demolition of the Babri Mosque in 1992, yielded a new idiom for Bombay cinema that represented the everyday urban landscape as a space of incipient paranoia and conspiracy, which the investigatory camera, framed in a narrative of suspense, seeks to map and ultimately contain and control. Mazumdar explores three films that deploy this conspiracy motif in detail, beginning with Anurag Kashyap's *Black Friday* (2007), an unmasking of the conspiracy that resulted in the Bombay bomb blasts of 1993. She argues that the film deploys the aesthetic of an 'X-ray' vision that penetrates the dense and multiple layers of the cityscape in order to reveal the identity of the perpetrators and in this way aligns itself with the point of view of the police. In Rajkumar Gupta's *Aamir* (2008), the protagonist is a Muslim who must himself plant a bomb in order to secure the release of his family from Islamic terrorists. Here Mazumdar points out that it is the terrorists, not the state, who surveil the city through their control of cellular technology. Finally, in Neeraj Pandey's *A Wednesday* (2008), a vigilante film, the hero is a common man who masterminds a series of blasts in order to have the police deliver Muslim terrorists to him for summary execution. Here the street-level view gives way to the bird's-eye panorama of rooftop surveillance. Thus all three films, in different ways, construct the city as a site of conspiracy and seek to evoke, through the apparatus of cinema, the deployment of technology as a means of social control in the face of Islamic terror.

We hope that this collection of chapters will demonstrate the deeply constitutive nature of Islamicate traditions for Indian culture as a whole, which have evolved in dialogue with other cultural forms and are certainly as important for Indian identities as non-Muslim social and cultural practices. This is not surprising since Islam has been in the subcontinent for a thousand years and has, in this period, become an Indian religion with which Indians are deeply familiar. The aesthetic forms of Islamicate cultures, as articulated in literary narratives, poetry, music, architecture and cinema, have not only made Indian culture what it is but are forms that are inseparable from Indian identities. Today, when these identities are facing the threat of violently being cast in one mould, that of Hinduness, it is extremely urgent that we acknowledge the constitutive cultural and affective traditions that form identities in India and celebrate both the multiplicity and syncretism that make India what it is. We hope that, taken together, the diversity of chapters in this volume constitutes such an acknowledgement.

NOTES

1. In Indian film studies, 'Bollywood' is used to describe the globalization of Bombay film that happened after the liberalization of the Indian economy in 1991. While first used in the 1970s, the term 'Bollywood' did not enter wide usage until the 1990s (Rajadhyaksha 2008; Vasudevan 2010; Ganti 2013). Thus it is appropriate to use the term only to describe Bombay cinema of the recent past.
2. *Vaishnavism* refers to cults around the worship of Vishnu and his incarnations. Ram and Krishna are both considered to be incarnations of the Hindu god Vishnu, and Krishna cults were very important during the *Bhakti* movement. See also note 2 in Chapter 10 of this volume for a brief discussion of *Bhakti* movements.
3. Thanks to Philip Lutgendorf for this reference and for his comments on an earlier draft of the introduction.
4. Basant, also known as Basant Panchami, is an extremely popular festival of North India. It is celebrated on the fifth day of the month of Magh in the lunar calendar and occurs either in late January or in early February. It marks the arrival of spring and is celebrated by flying kites, eating sweets and wearing yellow-coloured garments. In the Punjab region – both in Indian and Pakistani Punjab – this is an extremely important festival which is not religious in nature. As a festival celebrating spring, joy and new life, it has been commemorated in poetry and performances from the thirteenth century onwards as evidenced in the work of the poet Amīr Khusrau. Khusrau has also memorialized the other festival of spring, Holi, the festival of colours and the festival of love, which too figures in his well-known compositions. Holi is celebrated on the full moon day of the month of Phagun or Phalguna in the Hindu calendar and usually falls in March. This festival is observed all over North India and people smear colour on each other – both dry colour and with water – accompanied by lots of singing and dancing. There are different myths associated with this festival, especially about Krishna and Radha playing Holi, and this is a very popular theme in Rajput miniature paintings as well as in the different classical dance forms of India. Bombay cinema and Bollywood films often feature Holi sequences.
5. According to the Census of India website (n.d.), Indian adult literacy was 9.5 per cent in 1931, 16.1 per cent in 1941, 18.3 per cent in 1951, 28.3 per cent in 1961, 35.5 per cent in 1971, 43.6 per cent in 1981, 52.2 per cent in 1991, 64.8 per cent in 2001 and 74 per cent in 2011.

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