



The Melodramatic Public: Film Form and Spectatorship in Indian Cinema

By R. Vasudevan

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What does it mean to say Indian movies are melodramatic? How do film audiences engage with socio-political issues? What role has cinema played in the emergence of new economic forms, consumer cultures and digital technologies in a globalizing India? Ravi Vasudevan addresses these questions in a wide-ranging analysis of Indian cinema.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Here, finally, is the definitive and authoritative study of melodrama we have been hoping for. The *Melodramatic Public* is not only the most comprehensive book to redirect our understanding of Indian popular cinema, carefully tracing its manifold roots and conducting a painstaking archaeology of the genre, but Vasudevan also redraws the map. He proceeds from a genuinely global perspective, while nonetheless persuasively making the case for regionally specific and local factors in the history of modern popular culture." - Thomas Elsaesser

"One of the pioneers of film studies in India, in this long-awaited book, locates Indian popular cinema in a world context and offers a thoroughly revised understanding of melodrama as a global aesthetic with a rich Indian history. The author's deep familiarity with world cinema traditions shines forth and illuminates local questions and challenges prevailing theories." - M. Madhava Prasad

"Vasudevan's innovative concept of the imaginary public, developed across these essays through close analysis of Indian cinema's melodramatic practices and the socio-cultural conditions of their operation, recasts our understanding of the relation between text and context and offers a welcome new approach not only to the application of melodrama to Indian filmmaking but to theorization of cinema itself." - Christine Gledhill

About the Author

RAVI VASUDEVAN is Professor at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, India, and co-initiator of Sarai, the Centre's programme on media and urban research. He has taught Film Studies at universities in India and the USA, and held fellowships at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, the School of Oriental and African Studies and Princeton. His articles have been widely published, anthologized and translated. He is editorial advisor to *Screen*, founding editor of *BioScope*, a journal of South Asian screen studies, and edited *Making Meaning in Indian Cinema* (2000).

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