

Abstract

This thesis is a study on the representation of the Muslim community through the cinematic imagination of their modernity. It looks into the emergence of the Muslim Social of Bombay cinema as a popular genre that forms a repository of Muslim society and the Islamic way of life. Through this dissertation I have tried to capture a community's attempt at negotiating with their internal dilemma and their resistance to accept the representation of the actual discrimination through an imagination of the real that is couched in the nostalgic past. These arguments are based on a close study of how cinema could be looked upon as a social archive of history as well as memory. The negotiation with history and memory has shaped my argument to classifying popular Bombay cinema into two categories, one representing a more or less majoritarian outlook (Cinema A) within a heterogeneous public space and another representing a minority community (Cinema B) within a homogeneous private space. In other words, the study has split popular cinema along a fault line of how two primary set of films are negotiating with contemporary history and modernity. In this thesis, Cinema B is my focus of study where I have shown that it portrays the same society that Cinema A engages with but in a completely different light because of the community that it represents. In other words, Cinema B is not a constant critique of the majoritarian (Hindu) nation. Rather it is endorsing a culture that is imagining itself as sacrosanct with the modern idea of the nation. It is how this imagination evolves over the fifty years (which forms the scope of my study) that I have presented here. I have studied this evolution by proposing three *moments of imagination* moving from the classical Muslim Socials to the New Wave Muslim Socials. The study is pertinent in the context of the current social scenario where we are constantly being forced to negotiate our position within the larger imagination of the modern state. The role of cinema as an archive of history becomes equally important.