

## NOTES FROM THE LECTURE – WEEK THIRTEEN

### **‘Peepli Live’ (2010) by Anusha Rizvi**

#### **Using Satire for social and political critique**

- This film was Anusha Rizvi’s directorial and writing debut, as she had never written or made a film before and was originally a journalist who worked for television stations. She had to teach herself how to write a script and even, allegedly, googled “How to write a script”.
- She wrote and directed the film herself and it was an impressive and ambitious attempt for a first film.
- She shot a shot pilot to pitch the film to producers, but jumped straight into making the film.

### **Indian Cinema**

- India has a long, rich history of film making that has gone through many transitions due to changes in political and social context. Specifically, the impact of British Colonisation and the rule of the British in India; through to Independence; and the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947.
- Scholar Chekrovali (spelling?) comments that:  
“Indian films cannot be analysed without the context of Indian politics, history, language and religion.”  
Basically, each film needs to be considered in their respective social, political context as they are so varied.
- The Indian film industry is prolific with dozens of regions and dozens of languages involved and featured in the industry. There is no “one” Indian cinema.
- After the British rule, a new wave of Indian cinema emerged. The most famous were Bengali films such as that of director Satyajit Ray who directed: **The World of Apu** (1959)

- The New Wave ran parallel with more popular forms of cinema, and in that period there was a distinct growth in the industry. The bulk of films produced in this time were Hindi (different to Bengali) and became known as “*Masala Films*” due to their mixing of genres - action, musical, drama.  
Masala means to mix.
- This style of film making really took off, and led to the development of *Bollywood*. Bollywood originated in Mumbai (which is called Bombay, hence the name). It has become a certain style of film making so the moniker is not so much just a place-based name.

< Film Trailer showed in class as an example of Bollywood >

e.g. **Singh is Bling** (2015) by Prabhu Deva

This film is entertaining and over the top - a style that is synonymous with Bollywood.

- Independent parallel cinema continues.  
It isn't just Bollywood that flourished in this time; a parallel cinema of directors who focus on social themes and are experimental (more arthouse) exists and flourishes.
- A lot of these directors are women.  
e.g., Deepa Mehta, Mira Nair, Aparna Sen, Kalpana Lajmi.  
They focus on some heavy themes, particularly the oppression of women.
- These female directors have risen as a kind of resistance in their home country. In particular, Deepa Mehta's films have caused a lot of controversy in India and have even been physically threatened by certain religious groups for her depictions of religions and lesbianism.
- Also, a genre of gritty crime dramas called *Mumbai Noir* that came out in the late 1980s-1990s also gained popularity. They are more social realist type films.