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Understanding Indian Movies: Culture, Cognition, and Cinematic Imagination (Cognitive Approaches to Literature and Culture Series)

Patrick Colm Hogan

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Indian movies are among the most popular in the world. However, despite increased availability and study, these films remain misunderstood and underappreciated in much of the English-speaking world, in part for cultural reasons.

In this book, Patrick Colm Hogan sets out through close analysis and explication of culturally particular information about Indian history, Hindu metaphysics, Islamic spirituality, Sanskrit aesthetics, and other Indian traditions to provide necessary cultural contexts for understanding Indian films. Hogan analyzes eleven important films, using them as the focus to explore the topics of plot, theme, emotion, sound, and visual style in Indian cinema. These films draw on a wide range of South Asian cultural traditions and are representative of the greater whole of Indian cinema. By learning to interpret these examples with the tools Hogan provides, the reader will be able to take these skills and apply them to other Indian films.

But this study is not simply culturalist. Hogan also takes up key principles from cognitive neuroscience to illustrate that all cultures share perceptual, cognitive, and emotional elements that, when properly interpreted, can help to bridge gaps between seemingly disparate societies. Hogan locates the specificity of Indian culture in relation to human universals, and illustrates this cultural-cognitive synthesis through his detailed interpretations of these films. This book will help both scholars and general readers to better understand and appreciate Indian cinema.

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