
How Are The Nation And Nationalism Constructed In Indian Cinema?

This paper aims to emphasize the cinema's role in building and reconstructing a state's nationalism. The paper is divided into three sections. In the first section, with the help of academic sources, I will conceptualize the conceptions of nationalism and popular culture and then attempt to formulate a relationship between these two concepts and examine how they are associated. In the second part, I will clarify the role of cinema within the building and reconstructing the values, behaviors, and artifacts identified with popular culture and how they are incorporated into a nationalistic discourse. In the final section, in order to highlight my previous debate, I will discuss a movie called *India Dil Se* (1998), arguing that cinema acts as an instrument of nationalism through its devices by shaping audience perception and contributing to nation-building.

Andrew Vincent defines nationalism as an ideology that places national self-awareness, racial or linguistic identity at the core of a philosophy seeking political expression (Vincent, 2010). Ethno-linguistic identities are components of a nation's culture, so the nation as an entity is a mixture of culture and psycho-political factors. Nationalism, therefore, has a relation to society and to be more relevant to popular culture. Popular culture has its origins in folk or traditional beliefs, practices, and objects rooted in local traditions as well as in population beliefs, practices and objects created from political and commercial centers (Mukerji, Schudson, 1986). Sanjeev Kumar describes popular culture as a collective experience of a society that reflects a symmetrical sense of common taste (Kumar, 2013). Therefore, these cultural tastes give rise to political ideas as many scholars believe popular culture plays a crucial role in mobilizing political action (Mukerji, Schudson, 1986). Thus, it can be characterized as a projection of nationalist sentiments or nationalism. In his modernist theory on nationalism and country, Ernest Gellner asserted the importance of shared common culture in formulating a particular nation's nationalism by eroding 'rigid social structures' and claimed that 'nations are the result of nationalism, not vice versa. (O'Leary, 1997) Similar arguments can be found in the constructivist viewpoint of a nation that sees nations as constructions (Walicki, 1998). A nation is therefore not a material, but the result of a historical process, and an economic, political, and cultural framework that reflects a nation's collections, and the nation's collective consciousness is known as nationalism. It is important to note that it is not necessary to base historical facts on the assumptions that make up the rhetoric of nationalism. Since many scholars believe that 'misrepresentation of historical facts' plays an important role in creating a country, 'national identity is often based on false or, worse still, deliberately misleading beliefs' (Tamir, 1995).

There's nearly a national film in every state, 'making movies for those of that particular status. These films take popular culture into consideration Cinema like other forms of mass media carries meanings and signs that not only reflect values, traditions, and artifacts of a particular nation-associated popular culture but also structure. This cycle leaves an impression on the audience's psyche and thereby affects the nation's nationalisms collective consciousness. Therefore, by national cinema, 'internalization' of these concepts and symbols into the discourse of nationalism (Walsh, 1996). One way of understanding this trend is by reflecting on a nation's identity politics. Identity is a sense of belonging to a specific group that can contribute to a nationhood possibility. Through this distinction, a nation's individuals differentiate themselves

from other nation's individuals. Therefore, by identifying others as alien, a group's collective identity is established. This process can also be used within a state against minority groups. Sanjeev Kumar describes this as the 'othering' phenomenon (Kumar, 2013). As he further emphasizes with the aid of an Indian cinema case study, the role of cinema in offering Muslim minority is vital. Cinema plays a transformative role in the development of identities by reconstructing the values, traditions, and artifacts identified with national identity. Thus, a 'national imaginary' is created in which certain meanings and symbols are promoted and some are subordinated to the definition of identity. In addition, cinema with its tools also defines and reconstructs a nation's geographical, ideological and cultural boundaries. And through psychological effects on the peoples' collective consciousness, these reconstructions are internalized. As Shohat and Stam (1994) argue with psychoanalysis that cinema plays an important role in accepting this recreated imaginary by 'efficiently mobilizing desire in ways that respond to nationalized and imperialized notions of time, plot and history.' However, they conclude that cinema 'homologizes' the country because of the communal absorption by the masses and, with the aid of the statement of Benedict Anderson, they claim that 'the citizen is not a good entity, of course, but a fictional identity forced on an aggregate of individuals, and national narratives are portrayed as if they represented the continuity of the subject-writing' (Shohat, Stam, 1994).

Dil Se

After 50 years of independence, this movie aims to rethink India's political roots. The film begins with two extreme positions: Indian nationalism and sub-nationalism. To order to understand what the reason behind insurgencies and the separatist movements in these areas is, the narrator is the program manager for All India Radio, who wanders across North-East and Kashmir and heard about the reality that the Indian Government is blameful for inequality and human rights abuses and thus justifying militant autonomy steps. In the meantime, he falls in love with a girl dressed like a terrorist and chases her throughout the movie. The climax of the movie is the scene where the hero knows the real identity of his lover, who will strike the parade on the 50th birthday of the Republic Day. The girl reveals that she was a victim of rape in a Kunan Poshpora and that her soul is finding salvation via her Republic Day her suicide assault. At this level, he says, 'you can't kill innocent people because some people have been incorrect.'

It is notable that India used violent army forces against pro-independence movements when this film was released and was very critical of internationally. Instead of ideologic, cultural or historical issues, the film tries to limit the whole issue of pro-Independence movements as governance, as the director says at the beginning of the movie. The adversary, therefore, is 'some men' who misuse their status and compel poor Indians to take up arms. He often puts the responsibility on 'Some people' rather than the Indian government. I mentioned it earlier as 'the misrepresentation of historical facts.' This removes also the idea of terrorism and encourages peace because the suicide bomber girl chooses compassion over aggression in the closing scene. The Indian identity is therefore re-established through separating men. The movie often seeks, through the creation of 'global imagination,' to describe aboriginal regional spatial, ideas and social borders. The film depicts several areas such as Ladakh, Kashmir, North East, Delhi, Kerala, Bengal, etc. in order to define regional borders. Ideological boundaries are established in the movie as the spiritual roots of violence are not discussed or seen in the whole film. For example, there is no mention of the religious identity of terrorists. The oath they recite is secular in nature even throughout the movie. This movie, therefore, underlines Indian nationalism's

secular nature. The songs, music, and choreography, from the Bullay Sha' to Mirza Ghalib's job, and exotic dance in South India by gypsies in moving trains, describe cultural boundaries. In this manner, the film gives the notion that this realm and its preferences, amid rebellion and separatist movements, constitute India and thus seek to invoke the sense of belonging to the world in the consciousness of the people. Therefore it is claimed that films build and restructure the notion of citizenship of a country, and by the establishment of national imagination, mobilizing nationalist aspirations, they identify and rebuild a nation's physical, political and cultural boundaries.

As a consequence, film functions by manipulating the psyche of viewers as a tool of patriotism. This claim is reinforced by the review of the movie. In addition to supporting military operations against insurgents, the movie ' Dil Se' presents insurgents as the killers of innocent people through the 'mixed portrayal of historical facts.' The movie also seeks, by subordinating the notion of aggression to the idea of love, to the restoration of India's culture. It also aims, by developing the national imagination, to establish the physical, political and social limits of the Indian nation and to invoke a sense of participation in the society.

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