

**Mr. Capra Goes to Mumbai:
Class, Caste and Karma in Indian Remakes of Frank Capra's Films**

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Critical assessments of director Frank Capra have tended to focus on what is perceived as the particularly American quality of his work. In his text *American Vision*, Raymond Carney, for example, states, "I believe the power of Capra's work, especially for American audiences, is a result of the fact that he was – unconsciously, no doubt – making films that explore certain prototypical imaginative situations that are deeply ingrained in the American experience."¹ Leland Poague, in *Another Frank Capra*, calls the filmmaker "the most familiarly *American* [emphasis Poague's] of the generation of Hollywood directors who got started in the silent era and came of artistic age in the heyday of the 1930s."² Implicit in these discussions is the belief that there is something inherently and uniquely American in the values Capra's films espouse, and this extends to the director's recurring use of reporter characters as representatives of a free and democratic press.

How, then, to account for the popularity of Capra's work as a source for remakes by filmmakers in India? To date there have been at least four direct remakes of *It Happened One Night* (1934) in three languages and numerous reworkings of its working class hero/privileged class heroine formula, as well as a Hindi adaptation of *Meet John Doe* (1941), and variations on *Lost Horizon* (1937), *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), and *Lady for a Day* (1933)/*Pocketful of Miracles* (1961). Even the tongue-in-cheek title of the

Indian black comedy *It's a Wonderful Afterlife* (2010) suggests the continuing recognition of Capra's work as a cultural reference point (although the production itself does not have any direct connection to Capra's film).³

The Capra adaptations are, of course, just one manifestation of the common, if controversial, practice in Indian cinema of remaking Hollywood films. This is evident even in the journalism genre in such unlikely examples as *Call Northside 777* (1948) being remade as *Post Box 999* (1958), and, more recently, Otto Preminger's *Laura* (1944) providing the basis for *Rog* (2005). In typical Bollywood fashion, when the detective hero in *Rog* becomes obsessed with a picture of the allegedly dead heroine in her apartment, he breaks into song; and unlike the abrupt ending of the Preminger version, *Rog* climaxes with a prolonged fight between the hero and villain that adds a nod to *Fatal Attraction* (1987) as the killer pops up again after seemingly drowning in a bathtub. The same year as *Rog*, *The Front Page* was Bollywoodized as the broadly comic *Khabardaar* (2005), which draws largely on the 1974 Billy Wilder version though it also adds a variation on the gender switch in *His Girl Friday* (1940) by making the editor rather than the reporter a female character. In some cases Indian remakes have added journalist characters that did not appear in the original films, as demonstrated by the inclusion of a reporter in *Chocolate* (2005), the Indian version of *The Usual Suspects* (1995); or the title character in *Reporter Raju* (1962), which incorporates elements of both *The 39 Steps* and *The Man Who Knew Too Much*.⁴ Regardless of how one feels about the ethical or even legal issues of this practice, the remakes of films by Capra, that "most American of directors," raise questions as to what it is about his work that is so appealing to Indian filmmakers and audiences. An examination of the *It Happened One Night* and *Meet John*

Doe remakes offers insight into the similarities and differences between Indian and American culture, and it also suggests the need for a reassessment of the perception of Capra's work as an expression of a particularly American sensibility.

Hollywood has had a pervasive impact on Indian cinema almost from its beginnings. Historian Raghunath Raina claims that "[b]y 1927, almost 85 per cent of all cinema houses in India were showing American films,"⁵ and even after the establishment of a full-scale film industry in India, American films continued to account for a large percentage of the market. Director Shyam Benegal noted that while growing up in a small town in Hyderabad he was able to view a wide range of American films, from Errol Flynn and Tyrone Power action pictures to Orson Welles's *The Stranger* (1946) and *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947); he also watched productions from other countries, such as *The Bicycle Thieves* (1948).⁶ Capra himself was one of the first Hollywood directors to visit India as part of an international exchange program sponsored by the film industry in the early 1950s.⁷ Although Raminder Kaur and Ajay J. Sinha state that "[f]or Gandhi and many other freedom fighters, cinema was associated with the hedonistic ways of the West,"⁸ they add that others recognized the potential of film as an instrument of social change. As Raina notes, the independence movement in India developed alongside the emergence of a film industry there, and while it might be regarded as an oversimplification, it is perhaps not inappropriate to suggest that the reinforcing of the ideals of democracy and equality on which the United States was founded would have particular appeal to a country in the process of gaining its own independence from British colonialism.

The particular attraction of *It Happened One Night* may have as much to do with its affinities with established narrative traditions in India as with its ideological aspects. While the idea of a relationship between members of two separate economic classes had obvious appeal at a time when the country was seeking unification and the breaking down of imposed barriers of class and caste, the plotline also echoed a common theme in Indian cinema. In describing the evolution of the Indian film hero up through the 1990s, Subhanva Deshpande observes that “[e]arlier heroes were either poor and had the rich girl fall for them...or were rich and fell for the poor girl....In any case, there was a threat – or promise, depending on how you look at it – of violating or transgressing social and economic boundaries.”⁹ Even the basic set-up of Capra’s film, in which the heroine runs away because of her father’s opposition to her marriage, reflects a common pattern in Indian films. Sudhir Kakar, writing about father-daughter relationships in Hindi films, notes that it is common for the father to be a widower and the daughter his only child so that their relationship is free of the contaminating presence of a mother and other siblings. The father is also often a very rich man and the daughter a self-willed “spoilt princess,” but the relationship becomes strained when “the daughter falls in love (as she invariably does) with a man whom the father initially considers quite unsuitable.”¹⁰ Kakar connects this narrative to the myth of Daksa [aka Daksha], who had a great attraction to his daughter Sati and opposed her marriage to Siva (though it is highly unlikely the creators of *It Happened One Night* were thinking of, or even knew about, this when they established the premise of the film).

The first Hindi version of *It Happened One Night*, *Chori Chori*, appeared in 1956, the same year that the last official Hollywood remake of Capra’s film, a musicalized

adaptation entitled *You Can't Run Away from It*, was released. While *Chori Chori* draws much of its basic storyline from Capra's film, it also serves as an example of many of the elements of mainstream Indian cinema in the 1950s. The film's mix of romance, comedy, melodrama, and music is typical of the Bollywood style, and the leads are two of Bollywood's biggest stars at the time: Raj Kapoor (Capra's "common man" hero providing a perfect fit for the types of roles for which he had already become known), and the actress known as Nargis. Omar Ahmed in *Studying Indian Cinema* indicates that Kapoor, who founded his own studio in 1948, was greatly influenced by Capra's sentimentality, as well as by the work of Charlie Chaplin and Orson Welles.¹¹ Adding to *Chori Chori*'s populist appeal was the casting of beloved comic supporting player Johnny Walker (essentially taking on the role performed by Roscoe Karns in Capra's film), who is even showcased in one of the film's nine musical numbers performing with a chorus line of children.¹²

The class conflict that is central to Capra's film here is extended to emphasize urban/rural distinctions. At one point the heroine Kammo asks the reporter hero Sagar¹³ to find her something better than corn to eat, and Sagar responds, "What could be better than that? It feeds millions." When Kammo complains about being tired from walking, Sagar lectures her on the poor villagers who have to walk fifty miles every day and tells her that now she knows what poverty is. In contrast to the nobility of village life, the urban environment is presented as immoral, as demonstrated when one character comments that in the city single boys and girls act as if they were married. Yet for all of Sagar's professed support of the working classes, it is Kammo who is seen interacting with them in the musical numbers, first with the members of a flotilla as she swims away

from her father's yacht and later with a group of field workers. Kammo's gradual rejection of her privileged state is exemplified in a scene in which she and Sagar come to a crossroads, with one path leading to a poor village and the other to the city of Bangalore, where Kammo is planning to meet her lover. As they stand at the crossroads, Kammo acknowledges that she loves the simple life of the village and that the glitter of the city holds no attraction for her. After she returns to her father, she asks to be served corn at dinner, symbolizing her transformation toward an appreciation of the rural classes.

Yet Kammo also defends her privileged class against Sagar's charges of being inhumane. She criticizes Sagar's liberalism by condescendingly referring to him as "Mr. Mankind," and late in the film she accuses him of being unable to admit he's falling in love with her. Sagar claims that it is because poverty and wealth create different emotions, but Kammo responds that the wealthy are human too and a heart beats in them as well. When Sagar insists that the rich cannot feel another's pain, Kammo responds that he is incapable of understanding life. A more subtle statement on class distinctions is provided by Kammo's father and her would-be husband (the most negative character in the film) speaking both Hindi and English, equating the latter with wealth as well as with racial impurity. Kammo's fiancé even comments that he writes Hindi incorrectly but not English, implying his corruption by outside influences.

A direct connection between the country's struggle for independence and Kammo's defiance of her father is established at the outset when she stages a hunger strike because her father opposes her marriage plans.¹⁴ Following her escape, Kammo buys a set of birds at the first bus stop, then releases them from their cages to signal her

own independence. The seemingly subversive defiance of family and traditions by the female character is brought under control at the end of the film, however, when she admits to her father that she knows what a sin it is to run away from home and disobey her elders. She adds that times were good when a woman only left home twice, to get married and to die.

In addition to its focus on rural and urban distinctions, *Chori Chori* uses its supporting characters to emphasize male-female conflicts. The reward offered for Kammo's return draws the attention of a constantly battling comic relief couple, and at one of the inns where Kammo and Sagar stay, the proprietor's wife continually browbeats him. Physical violence, or at least the threat of it, is presented as an expected and accepted part of marital relationships. At the first hotel where Kammo and Sagar stay, the innkeeper comments that husbands today spoil and pamper their wives too much, and he suggests that Sagar slap Kammo into submission. Later Kammo and Sagar stage a fake fight, implying that it includes physical assaults, to create the impression that they are married. At the second inn, the proprietor pulls Sagar's nose and hair, then tells his wife that Sagar and Kammo must be married because Sagar didn't scream when he did this so he's obviously used to being beaten. Later, while arguing with his wife, the innkeeper tells her not to beat him in public, implying that this is acceptable in private. At the end of the film, Kammo and Sagar start arguing after they have been reunited, and her father suggests that Sagar smack her. When Sagar hesitates (only, he claims, because he is in her father's house), Kammo slaps him and then the two of them embrace.

The various supporting characters and comic asides are largely dropped in the more modestly-scaled Bengali version, *Chaowa Pawa* (1959), released four years after

Chori Chori, and emerging more as a romantic melodrama than a comedy. *Chaowa Pawa*'s main distinction is that it uses the basic premise to challenge the longstanding concept of arranged marriages. Whereas in the Capra film and in *Chori Chori* it was the heroine's father who objected to her marriage plans, in this version the heroine Manju objects to her father's intention to marry her to a man he hopes to make a partner in his printing business. She sneaks off the train while being taken to meet her prospective in-laws. Another deviation from the previous films is provided by the character of the journalist hero Rajat, who actually pursues Manju to collect the reward money that he wants so he can start his own newspaper.¹⁵ Eventually Rajat arranges to turn Manju back over to her father, telling her that the money is important to him because he is a vagabond and homeless. But he returns the check her father gives him when he realizes he loves Manju, and the two are rather quickly reconciled, without the aborted wedding ceremony that had appeared in the earlier films.

The plot again allows for criticism of the upper class, with Manju having to learn humility. Throughout the film crockery becomes a symbol of Manju's willfulness and her arrogance toward the lower class. She is first introduced as the camera tracks across a floor strewn with broken dishes, and then tilts up to show her dressed in a decidedly modern wardrobe. After she first meets Rajat, he buys her a cup of tea, but she objects to it being served in a "dirty earthen cup." Later she throws a vase at Rajat during an argument at the inn where they are staying. He tells her that when he was a child he threw a glass like that and his grandfather punished him by placing coal in his palm. Rajat shows her the permanent scar it has left. The next morning when the innkeeper serves

them tea, she again complains about the cup and starts to throw it, but is stopped by a withering look from Rajat.

Of all the Indian remakes of *It Happened One Night*, *Dil Hai Ke Manta Nahin* (1991) adheres most closely to Capra's original, even incorporating lines of dialogue from the film (at least based on the English subtitles on the viewed copy). Unlike the more conciliatory reporter hero of *Chori Chori* or the opportunistic male lead in *Chaowa Pawa*, the journalist in *Dil Hai Ke Manta Nahin* returns to the brash, wisecracking style of Clark Gable, and the film duplicates the scene in which he tells off his editor from a phone booth in front of a crowd of supportive onlookers. The film also includes what is perhaps the best-known moment from Capra's film, the hitchhiking scene. That scene had not appeared in the earlier Indian productions, presumably because it was considered too risqué for the 1950s, but also possibly because the use of cars as a means of transportation in rural areas was less common at the time. The appearance of the scene in the 1991 film perhaps serves as a sign of growing prosperity and the emergence of a middle class in India.

The film also draws on elements from *Chori Chori*, however, particularly in the opening scenes (which follow the earlier production closely) and in the placement of the musical numbers. Like *Chori Chori* it also reflects the style of the popular Bollywood cinema of its time, most notably in the oddest deviation from any of the earlier versions of the story, an elaborate action interlude in which the hero and heroine are chased by gangsters and have to fight them off. Although the class issues are not as pronounced as in the earlier Indian versions, the heroine is again taken to task for her upper class arrogance, most obviously in a scene in which she has to be told that the bathrooms are

outside at the hotel where she and the hero are staying. When she tries to barge past a line of women waiting to use the facilities, they put her in her place both figuratively and literally. While the subplots involving supporting characters are not retained from *Chori Chori*, the concept of physical violence being an accepted part of male-female relationships is indicated when the hero tells the heroine's father near the end of the film, "Your daughter needs a man who will thrash her day and night. If you had any sense you'd have done this a lot earlier."

By the time of the most recent version of *It Happened One Night*, the Kannada-language production *Hudugaata* (2005), it is difficult to determine how much the film owes to Capra's original and how much it has been influenced by the earlier Indian productions. The film is presented largely as a showcase for comic actor Ganesh, with many scenes designed to emphasize his broad humor. Unlike all previous versions, the film opens on the hero, Balu, rather than the heroine, and it begins with a fantasy sequence as he imagines himself exposing a gang of terrorists single-handed and winning a major journalism award. The "meet-cute" with the runaway heiress Priya is basically the same as in Capra's film, with the heroine stealing the hero's seat on a bus while he is arguing with another passenger. Since the heroine first appears in Muslim garb, the scene raises the possibility of addressing religious distinctions the way earlier versions dealt with class divisions. But her wardrobe turns out to be just the disguise she has donned to make her escape, and her appearance is played for obvious humor as Balu initially assumes Priya must be a terrorist because of the way she is dressed.

The film also includes the hitchhiking scene from Capra's film (though in this version Priya does not show her leg but simply stands in the road looking seductive), as

well as a scene from the original film in which the heroine insists that the hero carry her on her back, which was not used in earlier Indian versions. This is, however, the only version that does not employ the blanket-as-room-divider concept from Capra's film (though the previous Indian films drop Capra's Biblical reference to the "Walls of Jericho," which presumably would have less resonance with non-Judeo-Christian audiences). *Hudugaata* also borrows the incongruous action subplot from *Dil Hai Ke Manta Nahin*, though the emphasis is on the hero's comic attempts to fight off gangsters.

As in the earlier versions, the heroine is criticized for her privileged class arrogance, this time in a scene in which she is chastised by Balu for washing her face and hands with bottled water and then throwing the bottle away in front of her thirsty fellow passengers. *Hudugaata* also carries over the use of food as a symbol of class distinctions from *Chori Chori*, in this case with corn replaced by ground nuts (described as "the poor man's almonds"). Although Capra's film and the previous Indian versions had allowed the hero to demonstrate his economic integrity by refusing to take the reward money for the heroine's return, those films had ended at the point at which the couple is reconciled and thus had conveniently sidestepped the issue of whether the couple would continue to reject their upper-class social status once they were married. *Hudugaata* is more explicit in its support for the working class, with Balu insisting that he will only agree to marry Priya on the condition that they not live off her father's money, and the film ending on a shot of the couple outdoors eating groundnuts together. The fact that Capra's film was still regarded as a valid subject for a remake in 2005 suggests that class divisions and conflicts have not changed significantly in the nearly fifty years since *Chori Chori*, and that the film-going public in India clearly is on the side of the lower classes.

Even more direct in its championing of lower class causes is the 1989 remake of Capra's *Meet John Doe*, *Main Azaad Hoon*.¹⁶ Capra's common man hero proved an appropriate subject for Bollywood's biggest star at the time, Amitabh Bachchan, while continuing the tradition of angry young man roles that Bachchan had perfected throughout the 1970s and '80s (though the film was a disaster at the box office and was the superstar's lowest-grossing successful film at the time). As Bikram Singh has observed of Bachchan's roles during this period, "It is not too-far-fetched to believe that the violently rebellious Amitabh persona and his stereotypes in other incarnations, is the desperate fantasy of a nation wishing for and dreaming of a strong, uncomplex, dynamic person who can snap his fingers and set things right – a sort of *deus ex machine*...."¹⁷ These attributes are evident in *Main Azaad Hoon*, which plays up the common man appeal of Bachchan's character (the rather unsubtly named Guru) but also suggests his mythic, almost God-like qualities.

The opening scenes follow Capra's film rather closely. A female journalist, Subhashini, is about to be fired. She writes a column in which she contrives a fictional letter from a man named Azad (which means liberated or free) who threatens to commit suicide to protest the greed and corruption of those with money and power. When the story catches on with the public, the reporter has to find someone to play the part of her fictional creation. Even in these early scenes, however, deviations from Capra's film are introduced that establish *Main Azaad Hoon* as a product of the country and time period in which it was produced. Most notably, the building from which Azad threatens to jump to his death is identified as the unfinished Suchita Hospital, the incomplete status of which serves as a symbol of political corruption. In addition, the date selected for the suicide is

not the Christmas Eve of Capra's film, but January 26th, "the day India got a new Constitution." In the backstory Subhashini creates for Azad, she calls him a "true Indian" and claims his parents participated in many fasts during the freedom struggle. Subhashini also suggests Azad's mythic nature when she writes that although he has no fixed home, he belongs to every city and every village – and yet no place.

The film draws on a wide range of mythologies to emphasize that Azad does not belong to any one caste or religion. The protagonist's God-like stature is suggested when Subhashini first sees him debating whether to pick up a half-eaten apple off the street, presumably a reference to the story of Lord Ram receiving half-eaten fruit from Shabari. Guru is clearly uncomfortable, however, when a farmer compares him to a god and a crowd swarms around him asking to be blessed. After the story has been exposed as a fake, Guru is subjected to a stoning by an angry mob, and at the end of the film he adopts a seemingly Christian crucifixion pose on the top of the hospital as he prepares to jump to his death.

Like D. B. Norton in Capra's film, the publisher of Subhashini's newspaper plans to exploit the impoverished and illiterate for his own political gain, and a clear contrast is drawn between his attempts to manipulate the poor and Guru's efforts to help them. At his first public appearance as Azad, Guru rejects the speech that was written for him and he improvises by extolling the value of common men such as himself. He unites with students to have them teach the illiterate farmers and factory workers, and eventually leads a strike against the corrupt mill workers. (One can only wonder what Capra, who took credit for saving the Indian film industry from communist infiltration, would have made of using one of his plots for this socialist message.) Although Guru is established as

a champion of the impoverished, the characterization owes less to Gandhi than to the iconic Bachchanian hero, who was often willing to resort to sometimes aggressive methods to achieve his ends. A cut from workers chanting that India believes in non-violence to Guru going to the hospital to visit students who were badly beaten in an assault on a village clearly intends to indict the mill owners and police as not true Indians, since they do not respect the culture's peaceful traditions. But it also ominously suggests that non-violence may not be a practical method of dealing with corruption.¹⁸

While the various remakes of *It Happened One Night* used the romantic comedy format to challenge such traditions as arranged marriages and caste and class barriers, *Main Azaad Hoon* expresses reverence for an earlier generation of freedom fighters and criticizes the current generation for not carrying on their ideals. Like the journalist heroine in Capra's film, Subhashini apparently bases her concept of Azad on her father, who used to tell her stories about the freedom movement. Although she claims things are different now, Guru insists that she hasn't changed and still has a feel for the common man, or she would not be able to write about them as well as she does. Later, when she admits that she has sold out to the publisher to build up Azad's image, Guru tells her that she is only playing the role of her father's daughter, while he has become Azad and the mask she gave him to wear is now his face.

The climax of *Main Azad Hoon* presents the greatest deviation from Capra's original. Capra claimed that he never found a completely satisfactory ending for *Meet John Doe*, but the Hindi remake provides a finale that suits both the main character's commonality and his mythic stature. After a badly beaten Guru makes his way to the unfinished hospital and announces to the various officials who have converged on the site

that he will not let Azad die, he jumps from the roof to his death.¹⁹ Although the *AFI Catalogue* and some other sources suggest that the hero's suicide was one of the possible endings Capra tested for his film, Charles Wolfe in his introduction to the published screenplay claims that there is no evidence in the files on the film to indicate that such an ending was ever filmed or even considered, and it seems unlikely that it would have been approved by either the Production Code or the studio, which doubtless would have objected to such an action being taken by a star of Gary Cooper's stature.²⁰ In a culture where belief in reincarnation is a basic tenet of many religious groups, however, such a conclusion affords no such problem for the hero, since it is only by allowing Guru to die that Azad can be born. In the final scene Subhashini tells a crowd gathered at a stadium that the death of the body is not the death of the man. She shows them a videotape Guru made shortly before he died in which he announces that he does not want to tell who he really was, what caste or religion he belonged to, or what village he was from because he was no one. But Azad *is* someone, and every man who dreams that there should be no hunger, sickness or hatred in the world is Azad. As he sings the protest song²¹ he taught a group of students earlier, the crowd at the stadium sings along and raises their arms in a show of unification.²²

Writing about the box office failure of the film, Maithili Rao states,

This was the one instance when Bachchan tried to answer the growing number of voluble critics that he never dared to be different in the choice of roles and themes. The film, written by Javed Akhtar and directed by Tinnu Anand, walked the razor's edge between populist narrative and self-reflexive criticism, of the complex relationship between the projected image and hidden reality, in the sphere of forming public opinion. Despite a dazzlingly brilliant, often self-mocking performance, the self-consciously wrought ambiguity of the film's protagonist was rejected by a disillusioned public, which saw all too clearly the cleavage between the screen persona (idealistic) and private individual (tainted by proximity to corruption). The resounding rejection of the Hindu film hero's

flirtation with contemporary political reality defines the limitations of an industry whose sole purpose is “seen” to be entertainment. The influence of the mainstream Hindu film is permitted to be subliminal but not overtly political.²³

Rao’s observations might apply equally well to Capra’s Hollywood and the problems that plagued *Meet John Doe*, both in production and on its release.

While it might be easy to dismiss the Indian remakes as just rip-offs of Capra’s work, the manner in which they incorporate elements of the original films but also deviate from them offer valuable insight into Indian society and its relation to the West. Just as Capra used the lighthearted cross-country romance of *It Happened One Night* to comment on the class disparity in Depression-era America or the more serious tone of *Meet John Doe* to warn of the dangers of media control and the rise of fascism, the various Indian versions of his films employ the trends of popular Indian cinema to challenge class and caste barriers, traditions such as arranged marriage, and corrupt power systems. They also call into question American society’s rather monolithic beliefs and demonstrate that the ideas and ideals expressed in the work of what film scholars have declared the most American of directors are more universal than has previously been acknowledged.

Endnotes

¹ Raymond Carney, *American Vision: The Films of Frank Capra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), xi.

² Leland Poague, *Another Frank Capra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), vii.

³ Although the focus of this article is on Indian versions of Capra’s films, the director’s influence is evident worldwide, including *Lady for a Day* (1933)/*Pocketful of Miracles* (1961) serving as the basis for the 1989 Jackie Chan film *Miracles* (aka *Black Dragon*). There also are two Turkish versions of *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936): *Halk Çocugu*

(aka *The Common Guy*) (1964) and *Çarikli Milyoner* (1983). Allowing for the opportunities to showcase its star's trademark acrobatic action stunt sequences, the Chan film adheres to the plot of the Capra films, even retaining the original's subplot involving kidnapped reporters. Although there currently appear to be no available copies of the Turkish films with English subtitles, a viewing of the available prints suggests that, despite the change of setting, they also employ the basic incidents of the Capra film. Although there are some variations - such as the heroine jumping in the water rather than fainting to meet the Deeds character in the 1964 film, and the hero playing the drum rather than the tuba in the 1983 version - both films appear closer to the spirit of Capra than the abysmal 2002 Hollywood remake with Adam Sandler.

⁴ Although it contains various Hitchcockian touches, the film seems to owe as much to Ralph Thomas' 1959 version of *The 39 Steps* as to the 1935 Alfred Hitchcock original, and to Hitchcock's 1956 remake of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* more than to the 1934 film.

⁵ Raghunath Raina, "The Context: A Socio-Cultural Anatomy," in *Indian Cinema Superbazaar*, eds. Aruna Vasudev and Philippe Lenglet (New Delhi: Vikas, 1983), 6.

⁶ Shyam Benegal, "Interview," in *Indian Cinema Superbazaar*, eds. Aruna Vasudev and Philippe Lenglet (New Delhi: Vikas, 1983).

⁷ In his typically modest style, Capra in his autobiography gives the impression that he was almost solely responsible for uniting the entertainment and political spheres in India and nearly singlehandedly prevented Communist infiltration of the Bollywood film industry.

⁸ Raminder Kaur and Ajay J. Sinha, *Bollywood: Popular Indian Cinema through a Transnational Lens* (New Delhi: Sage, 2005), 12.

⁹ Sudhanva Deshpande, "The Consumable Hero of Globalized India," in *Bollywood: Popular Indian Cinema through a Transnational Lens*, eds. Raminder Kaur and Ajay J. Sinha (New Delhi: Sage, 2005), 194.

¹⁰ Sudhir Kakar, "The Cinema as Collective Fantasy," in *Indian Cinema Superbazaar*, eds. Aruna Vasudev and Philippe Lenglet (New Delhi: Vikas, 1983), 96.

¹¹ Omar Ahmed, *Studying Indian Cinema* (Leighton Buzzard: Auteur, 2015), 16-22.

¹² Although the inclusion of elaborate musical numbers as an inevitable part of most Indian films seems to be the most alienating aspect of this style for Western audiences, the incorporation of these numbers in the various versions of *It Happened One Night* seems no more incongruous than the musical performances in the two Hollywood remakes of the story, *Eve Knew Her Apples* (1945) and the aforementioned *You Can't Run Away from It* (or for that matter the various moments when characters break into

song in Capra's original film, including the performance of "The Man on the Flying Trapeze" by the passengers on a crowded bus).

¹³ Character names in India films often have specific meanings. The name Sagar, as we are told more than once in the film, means ocean, and the inevitability of the relationship of the hero and heroine is implied even before they meet as the heroine swims away from her father's yacht past a flotilla on which a young woman is singing about being torn between her lover and the ocean.

¹⁴ Interestingly this connection would also have been made in the original film if a line that appears in the published screenplay for *It Happened One Night* but did not end up in the finished film had been retained. In that line, while Ellie is on a hunger strike to protest her father's objection to her marriage, he sits down to eat a lavish meal in front of her and comments, "If Ghandhi had a chef like Paul, it would change the whole political situation in India." In *Chori Chori*, the heroine's father makes a reference to the warring opponents Rana Pratap and Emperor Akbar while sitting down to eat (see the published version of Robert Riskin's screenplay in *20 Best Film Plays*, eds. John Gassner and Dudley Nichols, New York: Crown, 1943).

¹⁵ Again the names in the film have particular resonance. Manju means pleasant or sweet, but also refers to rain or clouds, which is echoed both in the reference to a storm in the lyrics of a song Rajat sings and in a literal storm that arises while they are staying at a hotel. Ragat means silver, implying his desire to acquire money by turning in Manju for the reward.

¹⁶ According to the Internet Movie Database, the film itself served as the influence for the Telugu film *Azad* (2000) and Tamil film *Velayudham* (2011), both of which featured journalists as main characters.

¹⁷ Bikram Singh, "The Commercial: A Reality Disturbed," in *Indian Cinema Superbazaar*, eds. Aruna Vasudev and Philippe Lenglet (New Delhi: Vikas, 1983), 32.

¹⁸ This is a point made in a number of Bollywood productions of the period, which often featured heroes who espoused Gandhian ideals until the last reel, when they indulged in a prolonged and brutal fight with the villains.

¹⁹ This conclusion actually is closer to the original short story that served as the basis for Capra's film. In that story, the hero resorts to suicide to preserve his reputation.

²⁰ Charles Wolfe, ed., *Meet John Doe* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 3-29.

²¹ In a deviation from the common Bollywood practice, this is the only song in the film, although it is heard throughout the film in a variety of circumstances.

²² Although this image is clearly intended as a positive statement about how the spirit of Azad lives on, it actually looks disturbingly like some of the images in Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*.

²³ Maithili Rao, "1976-1989: Rebels without a Cause," in *Encyclopedia of Hindi Cinema*, eds. Gulzar, Govind Nihalani, and Saibal Chatterjee (New Delhi: Encyclopedia Britannica [India] Pvt. Ltd., 2003), 97-98.