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THE STUDIO-ERA IN INDIA: INTERROGATING SPACES AND NETWORKS

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Studio based filmmaking presents two possibilities for the historical studies of cinema. The first is that of mitigating the enormous creative and cultural energies to a particular institution. The second is to attribute an ontology for forms and practices that are seen to be projective evolutions of what has preceded them. Inherent in these prospects is the question of ascribing a historicity to cinema, its social anchoring, and filmmaking practices. These consider the studio as a kind of institutional space that, after about a century, seems ensconced in its own peculiarities, and therefore has defined its own temporal provenance. It might seem therefore that studio-filmmaking, which was the dominant mode of film production till about the 1950s in India provides for its own periodization; and therefore explains-off pertinent questions of form, film circulation, censorship, social acceptance, stars, and the economics of cinema. The intent here is to interrogate this inheritance, and propose an analytical perspective that wrests open the linearity (as well as some settled notions) of studio histories in India. This deliberation is presented in three parts: the first one deals with the specific problem of historicizing film studios in India; the next section outlines the issues of networks and the vernacular as two spatial ideas that inform studio histories of Indian cinema, and the last section presents an overview of this special issue of *Wide Screen*.

First, however, I want to present a brief note of acknowledgement: for Kuhu Tanvir who readily agreed to this issue and was supportive throughout the journey. Much gratitude to the reviewers whose time, suggestions, and recommendations made this issue possible. The contributors of this issue need a special mention for sticking to the time-lines, and making the process enjoyable with the researches.

Periodising Studio Filmmaking

A number of recent studies on early Indian cinema, and the studios in particular, have emphasized the difficulty of defining the object of study (a specific studio or its practices) as a clearly demarcated field, encapsulating a set of peculiarities and therefore providing direct access for the film historian. One of the significant problems identified has been that of the competing and contesting forces at play in the period when the film studios were first established, and the subsequent transitions they went through as sound technology supplanted earlier practices, and the socio-political scenario was evolving towards the imminent independence of the country in 1947. The play of tradition and modernity is often singled out as the overarching historical tendency within which the general drive for instituting an Indian system of cinema can be placed.¹ This gets further rearticulated when scholars have deliberated on the fashioning of certain genres, their formal attributes, and more importantly their direct inscription and relevance for the pre-independence contexts of the freedom struggle.² More importantly, though one can identify the primacy of ascribing a stage, a historical time, to the studios, and thus read onto them the nuances of cultural specificities that have come to define Indian cinema over the decades. The contestations that were evident when industrialization of the cinema took shape, between 1920-1950, are seen to get resolved in the emergence of a national film form. A different set of inquiries, however, have approached the contests marking cinema in this period from the notion of historical layering – an archival excavation that reveals the stratifications of numerous simultaneous drives of public entertainment forms interceding one another and informing the cinema-society-culture triad. In this trajectory, the works of Kaushik Bhaumik,³ and Neepa Majumdar,⁴ underscore the necessity to rethink the period of the studios not just for the kind of cinema it produced, but also for the various factors ordering the film-making enterprise to resonate with the social contexts of the times. This layering then reveals that as much as the filmic product can be located within a temporally linear frame, the post-filmic objects (sources like the ICC report, film magazines, journalistic reports, film posters, and stills) carry a weight of being turned into substantive recourses for periodising the studios.

I want to dwell on this peculiar situation, and explore the possibilities of historical layering, for un-layering a more nuanced dimension of film studios in India. In the numerous studies on film studios, especially those of Hollywood studios, we observe an almost unproblematic conflation of the source material and historical developments. Newspaper reports, magazine articles, reviews, film production notes, publicity materials, along with

extant copies of films are the archives that the film historian seems to simultaneously construct and access to give credence for interpretive readings on the cinema. Scholars of Indian cinema have alluded to the danger of reducing these artefacts as some inviolable objects. For instance, the coalescing of various cinematic drives into an indigenous genre, derived from mythic sources is often re-affirmed, when *Raja Harishchandra*⁵ is singled out for its profound singularity as the first 'Indian' film. Or, the beginnings of Indian film culture are thought of as the next logical step in the advancing regime of modernity. Indeed, the harking back to modernity needs a deeper rethinking, and in the context of the studios requires a further re-evaluation.

The general idea of modernity is a period that instituted a radical break-away from earlier socio-political, economic, and belief systems. However, we must evaluate how the studios, and cinema, contained and embodied this period through various manifestations. This presents a picture of multiplicities of modernity rather than a singular idea that defined the context and forces of a historical period. Bhaumik alludes to, and elaborates on, one of these when he queries the 'traditional roots' of Indian cinema, to suggest that the trivializing (even repudiation) of the adventure romance genre (the action films) by middle class critics and commentators was a desire for a reproducible stable Indian 'tradition' on screen.⁶ The deployment of non-Indian actors in this genre was therefore thought of as being incongruent with the imaginations of the 'national' that were being circulated in the press, and the nascent freedom struggle. This *bazaar* form, as Bhaumik proposes, indeed encapsulates the double-irony of identifying the precisely palatable and acceptable version of the modern, and replicating it for social acceptance. Closely associated with such disquietude about the directions that Indian cinema was moving towards, is the acceptance of technological modernity by the respectable middle classes. Cinema was seen as an extension of this modernity till about the 1920s, and later too, when the rudimentary Indian film form assumed prominence in the exhibition circuits. The novelty regarding the moving pictures, along with the numerous vernacular explications of how these pictures are made possible, encapsulate modernity as determined by technology, scientific inquisitiveness, and its potentialities for social progress.⁷ A third kind of modernity is discerned in the institutional response towards the cinema. The ICC reports, and several attempts to regiment the sites of film exhibition in cities and towns, capture the paradoxical situation of the law, policing, and legal institutions seeking a common denominator for the cinema to be a risk-free, manageable, but also equally attractive mode of public entertainment. In this sense, modernity was more to do with building a facilitative policy regime, that could accommodate the demands of the middle-classes as well

as satisfy the requirements of curbing anti-colonial sentiments. Thus, municipal, and other taxes, import of equipment, taxes on film trade, and so on, were the pre-conditions against which the cinema symbolized the modern turn of public institutions. Another visible aspect of modernity, especially in provincial centres of princely towns, was the co-existence of a monarchical system mediated by the colonial ruler and the vestiges of feudal social hierarchies. Kolhapur, which in many respects emerged as the nodal princely town for film production, was facilitating the setting up of industries, crafts-based trading, and an educational eco-system that provided equal opportunities for its residents. The rulers of many princely provinces had taken a keen interest in the cinema, and seemed to be deeply aware of its social and political potentialities. These towns were, as mapped by many scholars, on the cusp of a vernacular capitalist modernity that could accommodate not just newer forms of labour and production, but also the reformist energies of the literary middle classes.⁸

By the time that the first film studios were built in the 1920s, therefore, modernity could be attributed to any or a combination of these aspects. The reformative drive, that one often singles out as the common denominator of competing modernist forms and practices, in the case of the cinema, becomes evident from the second generation of filmmakers onwards. The production of a number of action-based films, until the coming of sound in 1931 is an indication that studios were not just interested in replicating some Hollywood films, but were also capitalizing on the influx of stage performance forms in the cinematic sphere. It might therefore be appropriate to identify, and trace-out individual strands of the modern from the intertwined, co-existing, and often competing discourses which together comprised modernity in the Indian context.

Having said this, the problem of periodising the studios becomes even more formidable. Simply put, we are faced with the question of attributing one to the other: should we approach the studios as illustrations of modernity, or should we consider their unique contributions as defining some historical events of cinema in India? There is an oversimplification of the idea that the studios emblemized the modern as an exclusive ideology of the early twentieth century. It reduces the numerous upheavals through which the studios invented and sustained their production practices, distribution networks, and efforts at attracting audiences under an overarching historical idea that, unsurprisingly, corresponds with colonial notions of the modern. Consequently, the individual trajectories of the studios are traced as a kind of extension of the modern.⁹ On the other hand, the films that were produced by a particular studio are often read as containing some unmistakable institutional mark. And this unwittingly conflates the ideas of modernity, which consequently suggests that more than a definitive

tendency, modernity could also be the interceder that anchored Indian film culture through the evolving legacies of the studios. Such an argument then points to valvate contingencies of a temporality that was gearing towards a national articulation, but was equally rooted in transforming what has been termed as the pre-modern, through a modern frame.

Multiple modernities, and their historical articulations, can be observed in the manner that filmmaking was anchored in locale-specific social contexts. The vernacular, industrial modernity of Kolhapur and Pune intersected with the provincial colonial structures to produce the spaces for cinema to take root. In Calcutta, the cinema was shaped by the *bhadralok* lending it credibility as an extension of the scientific temperament. The south-Indian cinema enterprises however unfolded through a curious remapping of Hollywood derived studio films, and as products of a prevalent literary atmosphere.¹⁰ The Madras Studios also inform the interplay of bilingual and multilingual filmmaking within the confines of the same studio setups. The modernity that south-Indian cinema points towards is more rooted in the contexts of Dravidian social politics, than aligning with the neo-capitalist film culture of Bombay or Calcutta. Another interesting development that has only been recently mapped is the film industrial concerns in the princely city of Hyderabad. Here modernity was one that the princely Nawab ruler thought it to be, and therefore was inherently mediated by a deferential confirmation of patriarchy. The Lahore based studios were tied to the Bombay studios through an extensive distribution network as well as through the inter-exchange of artists, writers, producers, and musical talents.¹¹ While such locale-specificity points to discrete units of filmmaking practices, it also nevertheless affirms that modernity, more than a singular uniform idea was in fact a work-in-progress. Its periodicity, so to say, was not the episteme against which we can branch-off our historical inquiries of the studios. The epistemic aspects of cinema during the 1920s-1950s must therefore account for the expansiveness of cinema where the studios were institutional containers of multiple modernity. It is this derivation that alerts us to the dangers of stripping studio histories down to a certain period, for such multiple expressions of the modern assumed a radically altered function when India became independent, and policies for harnessing its potential for nation-building really took shape.

Persistence of the Vernacular

A number of studios during the 1920-1950 period were enmeshed with a transforming vernacular cultural realm. The Parsi theatre, for instance, which is often cited as the ontological proto-form of the ensemble aesthetics and dramatic aspects of the Indian film, was as much a

cosmopolitan entertainment space, as it was rooted in the productions of specifically localised narrative traditions.¹² The local rootedness of studios like Prabhat and New Theatres is well documented, and provides an insight into the unfolding of nationalist overtures through regional expressive forms. The south Indian scenario from the advent of sound was a little different. As commented by Madhava Prasad, it “finds itself thoroughly entangled in the prevailing larger assembly of cultural faculties.”¹³ This helps us to acknowledge the continuities of theatre, drama, and song and dance public entertainment practices as manifested in the cinema via female singing-dancing performer-entrepreneurs. In this geography, the period when cinema entrenched itself is marked by a certain synchronicity of entwined cultural formations¹⁴—an indication of how the vernacular was not a single well-formed identity, but one that was expressed dominantly in a variety of transitory moments and spaces. I am not suggesting that the vernacular was the only mode through which the studios acquiesced to meet the demands of local markets. But, that the studios indeed generated the interceding spatial conditions for the vernacular to acquire cinematic expressivity.

The local traditions of song and dance were certainly instrumental in forging the initial years of the sound period. Despite the wider access, variety, and standardisation that Hindi films made possible, Marathi, or Tamil and Telugu films produced by the studios carried an unmistakable link to their respective ‘traditions’ of singing and performance. To single out a case Keshavrao Bhole has detailed the nuances of music as used in *Sant Dnyaneshwar*¹⁵. Here he singles out the use of certain instruments whose sound gets intricately embedded through the situational demands of the scene. In the song *Amhi Devache, Devache Shetkari*, Bhole has used a rudimentary stringed instrument that is played by a rural community to produce the ‘twang’ that makes the song rooted with the character of a poor farmer who is singing it.¹⁶ Sourcing local expressivity is also discernible in the south Indian film industry. Swarnavel E Pillai brings this out to suggest the transformative agency of the studios, and consequently the cinema, for remapping locally available narratives, or poetic forms. His analysis of *Ponmudi* formulates the regional (sub-national) assertion exercised by Dravidian writers when they accessed Bhartidasan’s poem *Ethir Paaratha Muththam* for constructing the narrative of the film.¹⁷

The institutional spaces of studios, however suggest a more intricate web that consistently reinforced the vernacular. In Kolhapur, and Pune this web was fashioned out of close familial links, as well as a shared (communitarian) affinity that takes shape due to commonality of language and its attendant societal aspects. Shantaram Athawale has recalled how in Prabhat a film’s Marathi script was first completed, and then a Hindi/Urdu scriptwriter

would be employed to prepare the Hindi version.¹⁸ A curious case that Athawale narrates is the song writing of ‘Kashala Udyachi Baat,’ from *Manoos*.¹⁹ The song is rendered in five languages, where each stanza talks of a sense organ, and is aptly sung in that language. So, the description of eyes is sung in Bengali, the sense of taste is talked about in Gujarati, and so on. To execute this song, Athawale was deputed to Bombay in the offices of Famous Pictures (the distributor of Prabhat’s films owned by Baburao Pai), where various lyricists came and wrote the Gujarati and Punjabi versions. The language of everyday transaction in the studios was certainly rooted in the geography where it was located. New Theatres was thus steeped in the Bengali cultural milieu, as much as it was instrumental in producing a cinema that could be consumed across the nation. But more than the use of a specific language, the vernacular network intersected with the second and third wave of modern literary production in places like Pune, Calcutta, and Madras. This eventually led to a certain heteronomy that determined which vernacular practices were rearticulated in the cinema. It also consequently fed into the necessities to make the cinema respectable. Further, the eclecticism that marked such a selective harnessing of vernacular forms seems to have been a major factor in overcoming social hierarchies. In this sense, the studios valorised the performative agency of actors, singers, scriptwriters, musicians, and cinematographers, rather than fostering the sharp differences of caste and religion. But this cannot be confirmed about the differential conduct towards female actors, and performers.²⁰ Notwithstanding the sordid suggestiveness of relationships, the studio spaces maintained the gender hierarchies which came to fore in certain singular instances, for instance when Shanta Apte refused to work over disparities of pay.

We can now be assertive about the influential role of the vernacular. This also perhaps leads us to recognise the studios as institutions with a dominant position vis-à-vis some minor modes of privately financed filmmaking enterprises. Besides the visible performative links, therefore, the vernacular is also a competitive cultural arena. While we have been made aware of the national address of the Hindustani films produced by studios, we have only recently explored the differences that set off specifically regional addresses of some landmark films. The competitive aspect especially informs the markedly local articulations of everyday modes and practices of certain studios. While it eventually shapes and aligns with the crisis of linguistic sub-nationalism that threatened the composite imaginary of the nation; its versions for instance in the Dravidian DMK film, the tamasha-film in Marathi, and the prominence of the social genre in Bengal, highlight the fact that the studios emerged out of the second world war period primarily by falling-back on the local markets. This was shrewdly achieved by conceding to the economic clout that Bombay Hindustani filmmakers had generated.

Embedded in the juncture of the war, therefore is a kind of repositioning of filmmaking social energies, that on the one hand assimilates into the allures of Bombay film world (as signalled by the migration of stars), and on the other hand reinvents local narratives through the social genre.

Why does the vernacular assume the mantle of regional representation? And how do the studios become complicit in creating regional power-centres that define the cinemas of India? The generally accepted idea that regional cinemas did not become relevant till after 1950s, is in need of a reassessment. While the 1960s is usually cited at the decade when ‘territorial fatalism’ relegated the film industries to their respective linguistically bound geographies,²¹ our discussion so far has indicated that the vernacular was more than a formal strategy of narrative filmmaking. S V Srinivas has elaborated on the social, economic, and cultural framework evinced by the filmmaker Ramabrahmam, which succinctly articulated the necessity to imagine a socially rooted cinema.²² The ideological realignment that Ramabrahmam initiated through Sri Sarathi Films Pvt. Ltd. and the film *Mala Pilla*,²³ is an apt illustration of the vernacular cultural realm intersecting with the cinema to provide regional expressivity. The relevance of such vernacular articulation though is informed by particular films contributing and reflecting the anti-colonial context of the 1930s and 1940s. In the case of *Mala Pilla* the regional expression is deftly routed as a nationalist announcement in the first sequence that depicts a prabhat-pheri by workers carrying the Congress flag. Similarly, in *Shejari*²⁴ the specific context of the village is constructed as emblematic of communal harmony in the midst of tensions arising from the ‘national’ project of building a dam. The national is therefore an interpellation that aligns the vernacular towards not just enabling an inclusive address to the masses, but also towards reproducible cycles of production and consumption. Despite such predominance, however, it is in the 1950s that regional cinematic concerns become analogous to national representational dominance. This is precisely the period when the studios start dissipating. The networks of production and circulation, however, persist over the next decade or so, and are in turn crucial for thinking about the vernacular as a performance in itself.²⁵

The (Social) Archive and the Studios

This issue of WideScreen has avoided a voluminous engagement with the studios, and therefore carries three original articles. While providing a brief overview of the articles, I intend to read the emerging work that can be called as the social archive. The contributions by Madhuja Mukherjee, Hrishikesh Arvikar, and Yamini Krishna share the commonality of highlighting

the role of archival sources, which are seen to emanate not from the confines of institutions, but from the living social archives of biographies, advertisements, government policy documents, and the hitherto untapped sources of vernacular print culture.

Mukherjee's article initiates with a timely observation of how the Indian studios, their businesses, and personnel did not necessarily reflect the Hollywood system. The historical questions of why a studio-era? and how it got shaped? are central to Mukherjee's arguments about the shaping of a Bengali cultural realm in the context of a coexisting film culture of silent and talkie filmmaking. Expanding on her earlier seminal research on the New Theatres Ltd. this paper, however, also opens up the field towards addressing the "transitions" embedded in the makeover of the studios from the silent to the sound period. Numerous studies have highlighted the reconfiguration of territories, and the ascendancy of a social genre after the coming of sound. Mukherjee's research, however delves into the intricate discursive layers of public responses, magazine advertisements, and film reviews, to unravel the "divergent" routes of silent films, and the talkies. In the later part the article also deliberates on the specific textual significances of female stars, especially when Eurasian actresses were being replaced by particularly Indian performers. This mapping of the transition, so to say, is therefore posited for further critical exploration, wherein the archive can again be instrumental to unravel its societal linkages.

An area of critical oversight, and therefore some amount of speculation, is that of the economics of film studios. While we have intricate and well-substantiated researches on the Hollywood studios, such as that by Douglas Gomery,²⁶ in the context of Indian cinema the economic axis is prone to several slippages. This has also been due to the lack of direct access to well-kept accounts, or detailed records of film distribution and exhibition incomes. Furthermore, these absences have also contributed to the enormity of the task, as well as valorising the cultural containment in the filmic text. Arvikar's article elaborates through a nuanced critique of these concerns. Prabhat Studios, the focus of the article, has had an illustrious history in Indian cinema. Its eminence, as the studio that initiated the Marathi film industry, produced some of the landmark films like *Sant Tukaram*,²⁷ *Kunku*,²⁸ *Manoos*, and *Shejari*, and had a considerable national presence, has received a fair amount celebratory critical attention. Arvikar's article, however, posits a crucial intervention in the manner that studio histories should be sceptical of adopting an overcoat of polemical terms of national or regional cinema. The article asserts the social and economic intricacies within which studios such as Prabhat operated. This included the conflictual but imbricated political/administrative mechanism of the British province, and the princely state; which further cascaded on the nature

of law, its execution, taxation, and bestowals enjoyed by industrious artists like Baburao Painter, Shantaram, and Pendharkar. The economics of the studio are therefore not just the bare numbers and figures that one portends it to be, but more importantly it is an economics being shaped by evolving institutions – both cinematic and political. The spatial focus of this article therefore, lends crucial clues to what I have earlier discussed as the persistence of the vernacular. However, it also seeks to revise certain well-established methodological formulations of the studio becoming the object of inquiry. It is not so much the physical, extant space of the studio which opens up to historical analysis, as much as the liveliness of the archive, where its societal networks require exploration. An illustration of such (social) layering is Arvikar's presentation of the article as discreet scenes of a historical narrative.

The archive is replete with references to filmmakers, actors, and technicians visiting or migrating to work in the south Indian studios. However, the Hyderabad princely state presents a unique space that is landlocked in the midst of a cosmopolitan Bombay province to the north, and the Madras province in the south. The article by Yamini Krishna is one of the first to engage with the history of cinema in Hyderabad. The Lotus Film Company is perhaps the earliest known filmmaking enterprises in south India, which illustrates the centrality of cinema for perceiving a modern public culture. Dhiren Ganguly's enterprise in Hyderabad is in this sense crucial to complete the map of Indian studios, as we encounter the import of cinema into Hyderabad, the princely whims of taxation and banishment, as well as the spatial gentrification of audiences of early cinema. However, the notion of "patrimonial modernity" that Krishna arrives at informs the underlying social and technological relationships of cinema in Hyderabad. Moreover, such an argument provides us with a crucial entry-point to untangle the complex intersections of films, especially in the absence of the original primary material. The case of Hyderabad has to be understood also in relationship to the dominant filmmaking spaces in pre-independence India. If Kolhapur was a princely state poised at the tipping-point of capitalist modernity, then places like Hyderabad were encapsulated in a princely culture of what can be called as the 'adab' (politeness), that was a public display of patrimonial hierarchies. The early cinema in Hyderabad, however also needs an exploration of the cross-currents with other vernacular forms, specifically the Telugu theatrical troupes. Krishna's research is indeed a value-addition to the expanding terrain of Indian film studies.

A common concern that bounds this issue together is the assertion that any historical inquiry of cinema in India is inextricable from the social issues at hand. The class hierarchies at play during the 1920-1950 period provide for a rich source of discourses. The *bazaar* configuration therefore is amply evident as a prominent frame of reference for situating the

hierarchies within a matrix of social spaces. However, this, as highlighted by the articles in the issue, requires a close attention to identifying various conflicting forces shaping multiple notions of modernity, the public culture, and economics of the cinema. The vantage point of the vernacular puts us in the midst of a spatial practice in progress, virtual moments in transition, that both confirm and revise later temporalities of Indian cinema.

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Notes

¹ This has been a dominant theme for some seminal works on early Indian cinema. See Ashish Rajadhyaksha, "The Phalke Era: Conflict of Traditional Form and Modern Technology," in *Interrogating Modernity: Culture and Colonialism in India*, ed. P Sudhir Tejaswini Niranjana, Vivek Dhareshwar (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1993); and Ashish Rajadhyaksha, "Neo-Traditionalism-Film as Popular Art in India." *Framework* 32 (1986): 20.

² See Geeta Kapur, "Mythic Material in Indian Cinema," *Journal of Arts and Ideas* 14, no. 15 (1987).

³ Bhaumik has developed these ideas in Kaushik Bhaumik, "The Emergence of the Bombay Film Industry, 1913-1936," (Oxford: Oxford University, 2001).

⁴ Neepa Majumdar, *Wanted Cultured Ladies Only!: Female Stardom and Cinema in India, 1930s-1950s* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009).

⁵ Raja Harishchandra (Directed by Dadasaheb Phalke, 1913).

⁶ Kaushik Bhaumik, "Querying the 'Traditional' Roots of Silent Cinema in Asia," *The Journal of the Moving Image* 7 (2008).

⁷ Sharmistha Gooptu has discussed how in the early period, film and cinema was construed and disseminated to the Bengali publics as a technological, scientific advancement. See S. Gooptu, *Bengali Cinema: 'An Other Nation'* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010).

⁸ For an elaboration on the emergence of capitalism in small towns of western India see Douglas E Haynes, *Small Town Capitalism in Western India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁹ See for instance M. Dass, *Outside the Lettered City: Cinema, Modernity, and the Public Sphere in Late Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹⁰ Swarnvel E Pillai, *Madras Studios: Narrative, Genre, and Ideology in Tamil Cinema* (New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2015).

¹¹ Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Paul Willemen, "Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema," (London: Routledge, 1999).

¹² See S. Gupta and K. Hansen, *The Parsi Theatre: Its Origins and Development* (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2005).

¹³ Madhava Prasad M, "Film History as Cultural History," *Journal of the Moving Image*, 13 (2015).

¹⁴ Madhava Prasad M, "Film History as Cultural History," 15.

- ¹⁵ *Sant Dnyaneswar* (Directed by Govind Damle, 1940).
- ¹⁶ Keshav Bhole, "'Sant Dnyaneshwar' Che Sangeet," *Satyakatha* (1963): 29.
- ¹⁷ Pillai, *Madras Studios: Narrative, Genre, and Ideology in Tamil Cinema*, 70-73.
- ¹⁸ Shantaram Athawale, *Prabhat Kaal* (Pune: Proficient Publishing House, 2016), 85.
- ¹⁹ *Manoos* (Directed by V. Shantaram, 1939).
- ²⁰ See Sarah Niazi, "Teen Deviyani: The Prabhat Star Triad and the Discourse of 'Respectability'," in *Prabhat Studios*, ed. Hrishikesh Arvikar (Sahapedia, 2016).
- ²¹ Ravi Vasudevan, "Geographies of the Cinematic Public: Notes on Regional, National and Global Histories of Indian Cinema," *Journal of the Moving Image* (2010).
- ²² S. V. Srinivas, *Politics as Performance: A Social History of the Telugu Cinema* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2013).
- ²³ *Mala Pilla* (Directed by Gudavalli Ramabrahmam, 1938).
- ²⁴ *Shejari* (Directed by V. Shantaram, 1941).
- ²⁵ See Hrishikesh Ingle, "Marathi Cinema: Notes Towards a Liminal History," *Asian Cinema* 28, no. 2 (2017).
- ²⁶ Douglas Gomery, *The Coming of Sound a History* (NY: Routledge, 2005).
- ²⁷ *Sant Tukaram* (Directed by Damle-Fattelal, 1936).
- ²⁸ *Kunku* (Directed by V. Shantaram, 1937).