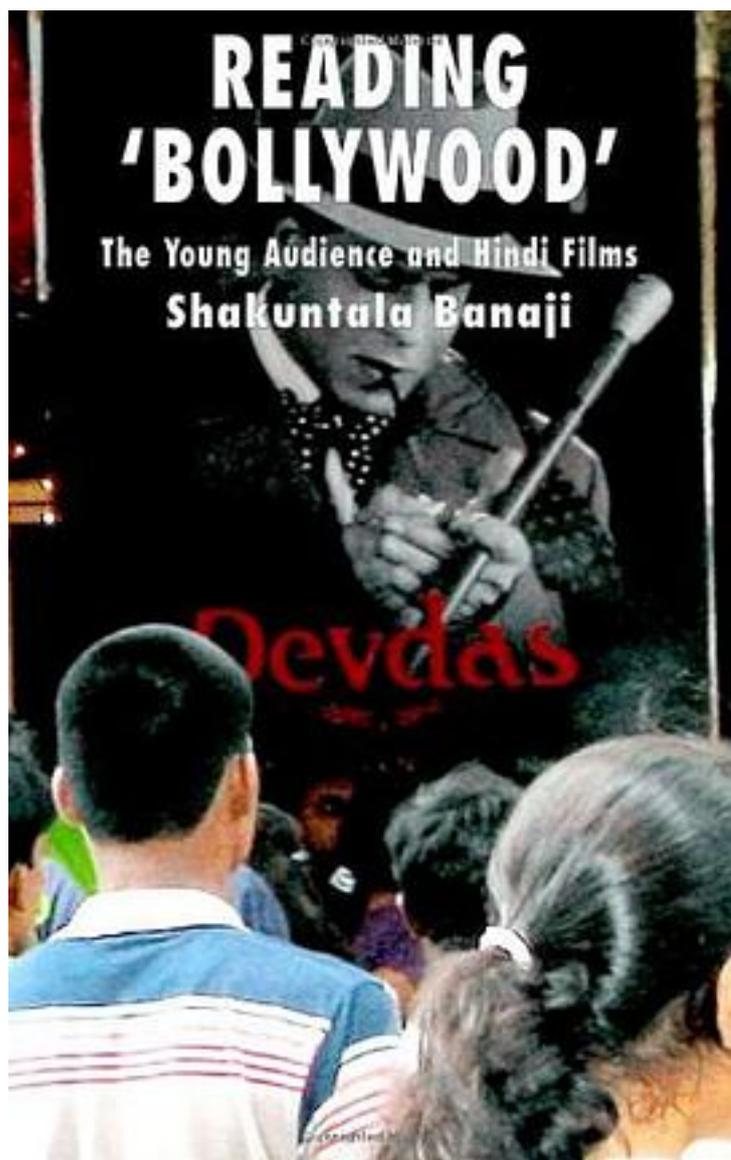


Reading 'Bollywood'



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Do most Hindi films and their audiences have a tendency to be socially conservative, aesthetically naive or even politically authoritarian? Are some audience members more than others queuing up to see patriarchal family romances and xenophobic nationalist heroics? What are the connections between what people are viewing on screen and their off-screen beliefs and behaviours? Reading Bollywood pulls together a range of ideas and theories on Hindi films and audiences, connecting these to the contexts in which the films are watched and to the individual interpretations of young urban filmgoers in London and Bombay. The connections between socio-political contexts, film representations and viewers' constructions of gender, and of sexual and ethnic identity are explored via in-depth interviews, where young people talk frankly about the connections between their lives and the meanings they make from Hindi films. Original photographs and excerpts from cinema-hall observations provide unique material for comparison with interviewees' talk and academic textual analyses. Side by side, these urge a sense of both Hindi films and their audiences as imaginative, diverse and inconsistent, motivated by a variety of understandings and experiences.

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