

**“I Wish Gandhi ji Were Pakistani”:**

**The World-Making Tool of Stereotypes in Hindi Cinema**

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***Abstract:***

Hindi cinema has long been instrumental in defining the boundaries between the “self” and the “other,” often by providing stereotypical representations of the other’s different religious, linguistic or ethnic affiliations. It was often Pakistan that played the role of the other, especially in films dealing with international terrorism or war. However, certain recent films focus on the lives of everyday people and emphasize the possibility of redefining the India-Pakistan relationship by portraying cross-border friendship between everyday Indians and Pakistanis. In this article, I look at two such films, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* (Khan, 2015) and *Happy Bhag Jayegi* (Aziz, 2016) and investigate whether these films provide a more nuanced portrayal of Pakistani characters than previous war or spy films. Throughout the paper I suggest that this is not the case and that these films, despite their wholesome message, employ a variety of stereotypes related to gender, religion, and nationality, which have been crucial in delineating the cultural boundaries of the Indian nation.

***Keywords:*** India, Pakistan, Hindi cinema, Bollywood, Border, Stereotype, Gender, Religion, Cricket, Urdu