

Bollywood and Hindu Nationalism

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Abstract:

Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela* (2013) offers an example of how Bollywood cinema continues to reap success at the box-office by tapping into the Hindu viewers' familiarity with Hindu gods, mythological tales, and religious performance traditions. The film employs the Hindu epic *Ramayana* in ways that celebrate and consolidate Hindu identity through the visual representation of Hindu religious rituals and performances. The hugely popular song-dance sequence "Tattad tattad" plays a significant role in this context by integrating popular aspects of the Hindu gods Ram and Krishna to represent the cinematic hero and male protagonist Ram, played by the actor Ranveer Singh. An examination of the song lyrics, dance moves, and the mis-en-scène of "Tattad tattad" demonstrates how *ramlila-raslila* performance traditions, which enact episodes from the mythological stories of the Hindu gods Ram and Krishna, respectively, get reworked in the context of contemporary visual media. The film's success reveals the intertwining of Bollywood and Hindu nationalism in India that produces both devoted Bollywood spectators and Hindu Right supporters.

Keywords: Bollywood; Hindu nationalism; song-dance sequence; item number; Bhansali; Ranveer Singh; *Ramayana*