

## [Call for Book Chapter Proposals - Queer Visuals: Gender, Sexuality and Indian Cinema](#)

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### **Call for Book Chapter Proposal**

Title: **Queer Visuals: Gender, Sexuality and Indian Cinema**

Edited by: Srijia Sanyal, Research Scholar, Ronin Institute, USA

How society represents its gender and sexual minorities, and whether the visual media should, at all, bear the responsibility of fair and equal representation, form two crucial discourses for a broader discussion in the field of gender studies at present. While ancient Indian society treated sexuality as a fluid concept, homosexuality eventually acquired the label of being a sin or crime primarily during the British Raj. However, the Indian society, as a whole, attempted to engage in constant historical, social and political struggles, the result of which was the decriminalization of the Act 377 terming it as 'unconstitutional' in 2018 by the Supreme Court of India. In the post-independent era, the cultural representation of gender identities had undergone a drastic transformation in various forms of visual media. Indian Cinema, one of the most common and easily accessible mediums of entertainment to the common mass, represented gender discourses not only through its stories, but also the songs that it incorporated and which served very much to forward the narrative of the plot, unlike its Western counterpart.

While commercial Hindi cinema, popularly known as Bollywood, has come a long way in its depiction of diversified gender identities, the stereotypes of comical relief and voyeurism still remain its dominant feature. Since songs play a crucial role in facilitating the narrative of the plot, the lyrics used also form a crucial space for critical investigation in the field of gender studies, and to understand in what ways Hindi songs uphold or subvert traditional gender roles. Though in non-Hindi Indian cinema, gender representation in commercial films and songs has often paralleled their Hindi counterparts, there has often been acclaimed efforts by Indian filmmakers who handled the subject and presented the story with a sense of ingenuity, along with sensitivity and sincerity, thus making a

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mark of socio-cultural significance. The discourse of 'queer gaze' received further attention as a space of scholarship with the online mass media in the forms of proliferating on-demand entertainment and OTT platforms. With a wider viewership across languages and cultures, the digital forms of visual media currently stand as an emerging free space, untouched mostly by the restrictive censorship apparatus of the Indian media. Thus, the medium has become a space wherein cultural discourses associated with gender minorities - identities and relationships, can be represented and explored. This, in turn, has also enabled the creation of a social locus of challenging the dominant heteronormative understanding of gender and sexuality. In the past two decades, films, along with short series released on digital platforms, across various Indian languages, have witnessed critical cultural investigations on gender and sexuality. Faraz Ansari's *Sheer Qorma* (2021, English), Rituparno Ghosh's *Arekti Premer Golpo* (Just Another Love Story, 2010, Bengali), Onir's *I am* (2010, English/Hindi), and Jayan Cherian's *KA Bodyscapes* (2016, Malayalam), among many, stand as key examples of gender explorations with respect to queer identities on the Indian celluloid. Along with these films, webseries such as Amazon Prime's *Made in Heaven* (2019), ZEE5's *377 Ab Normal* (2019), and JLT Film's *The Other Love Story* (2016) emerge as the offerings of the digital India that attempts to fill the lacuna of 'negotiated' spaces of gender and sexuality through the 'forbidden' tales against the backdrop of metamorphosing sociopolitical landscapes, thereby transgressing didactic boundaries within the intersection of globalization and postcolonial practices, in confluence with the ever-transmuting scenario of queer activism in the country.

The proposed volume will be an attempt to build upon and complement existing theories and literature associated with the discourse of gender and sexual representation in visual media, particularly in films and in the emerging digital space, across Indian languages. Critical explorations of the following will construct the cynosure to establish a multicultural understanding of queer visuals and the consumerist ideals that dictate such mass media production:

- Evolution of queer representation in films in Indian languages - both commercial and parallel cinema
- Queer representation and ideology
- Queer discourses - socio/political battles and cultural representation
- Linguistic dominance - does the viewership/mass acceptance vary with regards to the language in which the film/webseries is made? What are the socio-cultural/political factors lie behind such an attitude?
- Digital space - censorship-free space or facilitator of misrepresented/distorted narratives

Original, scholarly, and unpublished research papers of around 5000 to 6000 words (including Endnotes and Works Cited sections) are invited from scholars from all over the world.

Kindly keep in mind the following points while submitting your paper:

1. Pages should be of A4 size.

2. The title of the paper should be in sentence case and centre alignment.
3. The main body of the essay should be in left alignment.
4. Times New Roman font size 12 should be used.
5. Double spacing should be used between lines.
6. The MLA Handbook (Eighth Edition) should be followed for references and citations.
7. Please do not use Foot Notes. Use End Notes instead.
8. Each paper must be accompanied by:
  - i. A declaration that it is an original work and has not been published elsewhere or is under consideration for publication.
  - ii. An abstract of the paper in no more than 500 words, along with 5 keywords.
  - iii. A short biographical note about the contributor/s indicating name, institutional affiliation, brief career history, postal address, contact address (both personal and office) and e-mail id as a single attachment.

**Mode of Submission:**

Contributors are requested to send their abstracts with brief bio-notes as to both [srija.sanyal@gmail.com](mailto:srija.sanyal@gmail.com) and [srija.sanyal@roninstitute.org](mailto:srija.sanyal@roninstitute.org) with subject line "**Submissions - Queer Visuals**".

Please do note that while the deadline for the **submission of Abstracts** is **30th November 2021**, the deadline for the **finished paper** is **30 April 2022**.

Only the **notification of acceptance** will be sent post the Abstract submission deadline. The final decision will be conveyed after the submission of final papers by 30 April 2022.

**Selection Procedure:**

Final selection of the papers will be made by the editor. Details about the selection of papers will be informed through e-mail. The editor reserves the right to make editing changes in the papers selected for publication for the sake of conceptual clarity and formatting, if needed. Please indicate "**Queer Visuals**" in the subject line for all e-mail correspondences.

**Publisher:**

We are in talks with a couple of international/national publishers who have shown keen interest in publishing this volume based on the initial standing of the contributors.

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