



Bombay (BFI Film Classics)

Lalitha Gopalan

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In January 1993 sectarian rioting left two thousand Hindus and Muslims dead in Bombay. Only two years later Mani Ratnam's audacious Tamil film *Bombay* (1995) used these events as a backdrop to a love story between a Hindu boy and a Muslim girl. *Bombay* was condemned by Muslim critics for misrepresentation and was embroiled in censorship controversies. These served only to heighten interest and the film ran to packed houses in India and abroad.

Lalitha Gopalan shows how *Bombay* struggles to find a narrative that can reconcile communal differences. She looks in detail at the way official censors tried to change the film under the influence of powerful figures in both the Muslim and the Hindu communities. In going on to analyze the aesthetics of *Bombay*, she shows how themes of social and gender difference are rendered through performance, choreography, song and cinematography. This is a fascinating account of a landmark in recent Indian cinema.

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