



INDIA CANADA FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

...forging close ties among Canadians with an interest in India

announces its lecture event

on Sunday, 31 May 2015, 3:00 – 5:00 PM (Registration from 2:45 pm)

Bollywood: in the West and amongst the Indian Diaspora

Dr. Chandrima Chakraborty and Dr. José Sánchez

Following the liberalization of the Indian economy in 1991, Bollywood cinema emerged as a key ally that could assist the Indian state to court Non-Resident Indian capital. Studies have demonstrated that, from the mid-1990s, Hindi film directors and producers increasingly geared their films toward Indian diasporic audiences. But why and how did Bollywood films (*DDLJ*, *Pardes*, *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, *Kal Ho Naa Ho*, among others) create new notions of national belonging? Why was there a shift in the portrayal of diasporic Indians in 1990s Bollywood? What is the significance of cinematic representations of Indian underdevelopment and the associated call to diasporic audiences to invest in India's social and economic development? What are the obligations of the diaspora to the land and the people that have been left behind? How do

Bollywood films mobilize shame to prompt diasporic audiences to re-evaluate their relations with India? These questions will be discussed using Ashutosh Gowariker's *Swades* (2004).

During the last three decades, Indian popular cinema is becoming better known around the globe, especially in the Western hemisphere. Although initially the purpose of the Indian film industry was to attract and court the Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) for economic and political reasons, Western audiences are becoming more familiar and interested in this phenomenon called Bollywood. Indian films are playing in suburban cineplexes along with the latest Hollywood blockbusters; Hollywood films add Bollywood-inspired musical numbers; and Bollywood musicals have been developed for Broadway and West-End London theatres. What is the appeal that Bollywood has for Westerners? Are the films and their themes understood in the same ways as Indian and NRI audiences? Is this just another example of the West appropriating the "exotic" or is this something different? We will explore some of these questions by using personal experience as a starting point for an open discussion on how non-Indians may perceive and understand Bollywood in the West.

About the Speakers: **Dr. Chandrima Chakraborty** is an Associate Professor in the Department of English and Cultural Studies and Co-Chair of the Asian Research Working Group at McMaster University, Hamilton. She specializes in the literatures and cultures of South Asia and its diaspora. Publications include, *Masculinity, Asceticism, Hinduism: Past and Present Imaginings of India* (2011), *Mapping South Asian Masculinities: Men and Political Crises* (2015), and *The Art of Public Mourning: Remembering Air India* (forthcoming). She teaches courses on South Asian literature and culture, colonialism and migration, and Bollywood. Her current research is on the 1985 Air India bombing for which she is conducting interviews with those who lost loved ones on AI Flight 182, and collaborating with creative artists working on remembrances of the Air India bombing.

Born in Barcelona, Spain. **Dr. José Sánchez** was a teacher in elementary and intermediate schools until he moved to Canada in 1995. He graduated from Carleton University with a MA in Film Studies and continued his Doctorate in Film at the University of Ottawa while involved in different roles with the arts and film communities in Ottawa as well as nationally and internationally. While currently working full time as a public servant for the Federal Government, José has maintained his passion for education by teaching Film Studies part-time at Carleton for the last 15 years. His interest in Bollywood began more than a decade ago and since then, he has delved into past and present films to learn and better understand Indian culture. His interests focus on spectatorship, gender representation, representation of the trauma of partition and the globalization of Bollywood. He has taught an *Introduction to Bollywood* course at Carleton on various occasions.

Location: Rockcliffe Park Community Centre Hall, 380 Springfield Road, Ottawa

About India Canada Friendship Circle

India Canada Friendship Circle (ICFC), a non-profit Canadian organization, operating in Ottawa since 2004 and conducting lectures by prominent speakers, encourages dialogue on India in a non-religious, non-partisan and harmonious environment. The words "friendship" and "circle" in its name, convey an explicit desire to forge and maintain close ties among Canadians with an interest in India.

ICFC's mission is to promote an intercultural relationship between India and Canada in the areas of philosophy, history, literature, the arts and sciences through prominent speakers.

For further details and online registration, please visit our website:

<http://icfc.ws>