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| Kapoor, Raj (1924-1988) |
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| Raj Kapoor was an Indian film actor, director, and producer. Born into the famous Kapoor family, Kapoor started his career in his father’s film studio as a child actor. Founding R. K. Films in 1948, Kapoor came into his own in the 1950s and 1960s, and became a key figure in Hindi Popular Cinema during the Neruvian post-war/liberation decades. Kapoor’s films were heavily influenced by Hollywood studio filmmaking, as demonstrated in the actor’s tramp character appearing in *Awara* (1951), *Shri 420* (1955) and *Jagte Raho* (1956, directed by Amit Maitra and Sombhu Mitra). Kapoor’s association with the left-leaning IPTA (Indian People’s Theatre Association) and his regular collaboration with IPTA members also resulted in Italian neo-realist aesthetic influences throughout his films. Particularly with *Awara*, Kapoor received international recognition in the USSR, Middle East, and in communist China. In Kapoor’s directorial works, conflicting aesthetic programmes create thematic tensions — a typical feature in the works of forerunners of the ‘New Cinema Movement.’ These works and tensions exemplify the problem of defining ‘classical’ as both a point of reference and of departure for modernist Indian cinema. Kapoor’s later works including *Sangam* (1964), *Bobby* (1973) and *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* (1978) were more sexually explicit and sensational, resulting in repeated comparisons with American director and producer Cecil B. DeMille. |
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