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| Nihalani, Govind (1940--) |
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| Govind Nihalani is an Indian film director and cinematographer, regarded as one of the key figures of the so-called ‘Indian Parallel Cinema’ and ‘New Cinema Movement’ of the 1970s and 1980s. He is well known as the cinematographer for his famous colleague Shyam Benegal — in *Ankur* (1974) and *Bhumika* (1977), in particular — and through his own directional ventures, including his debut *Aakrosh* (1980), and *Ardh Satya* (1983). Nihalani’s early works as director are marked by social criticism and psychological introspection within genre formulas, and by his collaboration with playwright and scriptwriter Vijay Tendulkar. *Ardh Satya*, a cop-drama often compared to *Dirty Harry* (1971), illustrates the major departures from Popular Indian Cinema within Nihalani’s work. While operating with a largely linear narrative, Nihalani is not interested in attractions, and disregards (physical) action and song-and-dance sequences, instead opting for the Academy aspect ratio, and a deliberately slow but relentless narrative pace to explore forms of institutional and mental violence inflicted upon his protagonists. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Nihalani made a string of theatrical adaptations including works from Ibsen [*Jazeere*] (1989), Strindberg [*Pita*] (1991) and Lorca [*Rukmavati Ki Haveli*] (1991). His masterpiece remains the TV mini-series *Tamas* (1986), a highly controversial television event from the 1980s. An adaptation of Bhisham Sahni’s novel of the same name, it stands as one of the major cinematic studies of Partition. |
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| Further reading:  (Bandyopadhyay)  (Doraiswamy)  (Hood)  (Rajadhyaksha and Willemen) |