INTRODUCTION

The Lahore Effect

CINEMA HAS AN IMPORTANT HISTORY WELL BEFORE 1947 IN Lahore, and the close relation between Bombay and Lahore from the early period has been most significant. Many actors, music directors, and film directors from Lahore, Punjab, and regions west of Punjab had gone on to have prominent careers in Bombay and Calcutta during the thirties and forties. With the coming of sound to Bombay cinema in 1931, the need for actors and playback singers with facility in Urdu/Hindi/Hindustani was needed in Bombay, as this diction consolidated itself as the linguistic register of the Bombay film subsequently.[1] Speakers of Urdu, the official provincial language of Punjab, spoken by and written by its residents—whether they were Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh—thus possessed an important advantage in Bombay cinema, as did the residents of the Hindko- and Pashto-speaking regions west of the Punjab, who were familiar with Urdu.[2] Another important lubricant in the relays between Lahore and Bombay was the rise of speculative and informal capital during the thirties and forties. During this period, financiers from the Punjab who were unable to legally invest in agricultural land now turned to other ventures, including backing cinema productions.[3]

In Lahore, the Bhatti Gate location in the old city has been nicknamed "Lahore's Chelsea" because it produced a remarkable number of writers, poets, and singers, as well as cinema professionals, many of whom had moved to Bombay in the thirties and forties to work in its growing film industry.[4] Prominent examples include the director Abdul Rashid Kardar (1904–89), who had directed a silent film in Lahore in 1929 before moving to Calcutta during the thirties and subsequently moving permanently to Bombay, and who mentored important actors, writers, music directors, and playback singers, many of whom migrated to Lahore after 1947.[5]

Lahore had produced numerous films in Urdu and Punjabi before 1947.[6] Historian Ishtiaq Ahmed notes that "Lahore's reputation as a filmmaking centre was established firmly when Roop Lal Shori . . . began to produce films such as *Qismat Ke Her Pher* [The twists of fate] (1931). . . . Later,

D. M. Pancholi, a Gujarati, set up a studio in Lahore, and suddenly the Lahore industry began to be viewed as an up-and-coming competitor to Bombay."[7] During the early forties especially, commercially successful productions included *Khazanchi* (The treasurer, 1941), *Khandan* (Family, 1942), and *Dasi* (The maid, 1944). The singer and actress Noor Jehan (1926–2000), the writer Saadat Hasan Manto (1912–55), and music director Khurshid Anwar (1912–84) are among the major figures from Lahore or the Punjab associated with Bombay cinema who moved during or after 1947 to Lahore, where they made vital contributions to its cinema.[8]

POST-1947 DEVELOPMENTS

The studios in Lahore before 1947 were owned primarily by Hindu families—the Pancholis and the Shoreys.[9] Their exodus to postcolonial India in 1947 along with many experienced personnel, and the violence and chaos at the time, left the infrastructure of film production in the city in shambles. It took some time to again furnish its studios, train technical personnel, and promote a new ensemble of actors and actresses.[10] While Bombay had many recognized film stars whose charisma and media presence resonated with a large and loyal film audience, in Lahore in the early years after 1947, there were hardly any recognizable stars, the exception being the celebrated actress and singer Noor Jehan.[11] The fledgling Lahore-based filmmakers lacked access to the scale of capital that the Bombay filmmakers enjoyed, nor could they draw on a pool of experienced field personnel with expertise in camerawork, editing, sound, lighting, and publicity.[12] All of these needed time to develop, namely about a decade after independence.

The city's film industry post-1947 was primarily developed by migrants with experience in the film industry of Bombay and Calcutta.[13] The directors W. Z. Ahmed (1916–2007), Sibtain Fazli (1914–85), Anwar Kamal Pasha (1925–87), and Shaukat Hussain Rizvi (1914–99) are among the pioneer directors of the postindependence era.[14] They were supplemented by those already in Lahore, including "talented people like Hakim Ahmed Shuja, Imtiaz Ali Taj, Qateel Shifai, Baba Alam Siaposh, Shatir Ghaznavi, Deewan Sardari Lal, Asha Posley."[15] Noor Jehan and her husband, director Shaukat Hussain Rizvi, set up the first postindependence film studio in Lahore, and "Anwar Kamal Pasha rose as the country's first total film maker who scripted, produced and directed his own films. He also had his own distribution office at Lahore. The son of dramatist Hakim Ahmad Shuja, Anwar Kamal was . . . cultured and cultivated. He . . . promoted young talent.

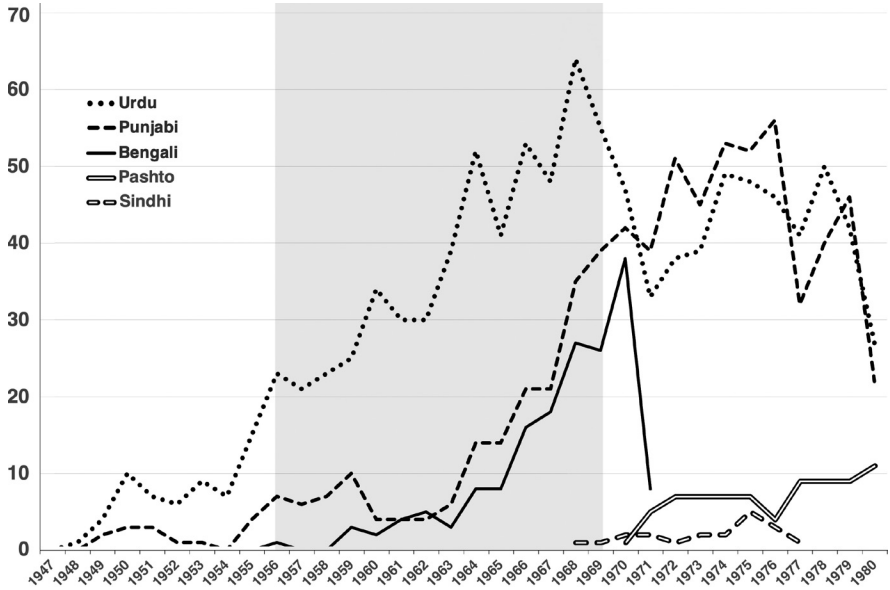

FIG. I.1. Films released in Pakistan in the major languages, 1947–1980. The shaded area demarcates the long sixties (1956–69). Data from *Pakistan Film Magazine*, https://pakmag.net/film/, accessed October 25, 2021. Films released in two languages are added to both graphs.

Dozens of assistant directors, actors and composers graduated under his guidance."[16] Agha A. G. Gul (1913–83), owner of Lahore's Evernew Studios, emerged as the "first mogul of Pakistan," while Jagdish Chand Anand (1922–77) became an important producer and distributor.[17]

Notable Urdu films made in the first decade include *Beqarar* (Restless, 1950, dir. Nazir Ajmeri), *Do Aansoo* (Two tears, 1952, dir. Anwar Kamal Pasha), *Dupatta* (Scarf, 1952, dir. Sibtain Fazli), *Roohi* (1954, dir. W. Z. Ahmed), and *Qatil* (Murderer, 1955, dir. Anwar Kamal Pasha).[18] The first decade produced few major works in Urdu, but notably many important films began to be released from 1956 onward. From a mere seven films in 1954 in the country in all languages, the number multiplied to no fewer than thirty-two just two years later, in 1956 (figure I.1).[19]

Local production was helped by movements against the showing of Indian films in West Pakistan that came to a head in 1954 in what has been termed the "*Jaal* agitation," as the film in question was the 1952 Bombay production *Jaal*, directed by Guru Dutt.[20] Members of the West Pakistani film industry objected to the showing of this film in West Pakistan, where

it was being screened by exploitation of a legal loophole for Indian films intended to be screened only in East Pakistan.[21] As Indian cinema imports came to be more restricted from the midfifties on, local cinema saw an analogous rise in the number of productions and improvement in their quality. New Indian films were banned from being imported in 1962, but films already in the country were allowed to be screened, leading to continued demonstrations by the local industry.[22] Indian films were eventually completely banned in 1965 as a consequence of war between India and Pakistan that year. The restriction on the import of Indian films helped producers and directors to develop local cinema, but as film historian Mushtaq Gazdar underscores, it also enabled plagiarists to work more brazenly.[23]

The *Jaal* issue and the larger question of how to compete against Indian imports divided local filmmakers. Directors W. Z. Ahmed, Sibtain Fazli, and Shaukat Hussain Rizvi led the *Jaal* demonstrations in favor of restricting Indian imports.[24] However, in his reminiscences, the music director Khurshid Anwar, who also began producing films in 1956 and directing in 1962, notes:

> I can assure you that I took absolutely no part in that agitation. It was a conspiracy hatched by the producers and other vested interests to have a free hand to commercially exploit the home markets. With the Indian films out of the way it was left to these ignoramuses to dish out fifth rate plagiarized films to a choiceless audience. Some suffered from an unnecessary inferiority complex and thought that banning of Indian films for a certain period would give a chance to our industry to stand on its own feet. You and I have seen the results of course. The correct thing to do was to have signed a barter agreement with India so that a film could be exchanged for a film.[25]

Mushtaq Gazdar's indispensable survey of cinema in Pakistan is based on periods he identifies by decades since the independence of Pakistan. For Gazdar, the years 1957–66 constitute the "Decade of Reformation," while the website cineplot.com labels 1956–66 "The Golden Era." Production and circulation of commercial cinema began to acquire density and coherence during this period.[26] The chronology followed in this book focuses primarily on Urdu cinema from Lahore from c. 1956 to c. 1969, which I propose as constituting *the long sixties*. A degree of political stability created favorable conditions for cinema to flourish. A set of recognizable stars during this period gained recognition, such that by 1956, eleven films "ran long enough

to celebrate silver jubilees."[27] The total number of films released in all languages continued to grow during the long sixties and by 1969 was no fewer than 118.[28]

Technological and infrastructural transformation are important factors in cinema's development in this era. In addition to the overall Ayub-era state-led modernization, and the promotion of capitalist industrialization, the cinema and its audience were facing continuous structural, institutional, and perceptual changes. In Dhaka, the first full-length feature was released in 1956, and good state facilities for film production were set up. In Karachi, Eastern Film Studios was established as a well-equipped studio, and a well-produced English-language film magazine, *Eastern Film*, began to be published regularly from 1959 (figure I.2).

The influential annual Nigar film awards commenced in 1958.[29] Industry observers remark that by the late sixties, Lahore films of possessed a quality of swiftness in their narrative unfolding, enacting modernization in the very temporal structure of the film. For example, on the film *Devar Bhabi* (Brother-in-law and sister-in-law, 1967, dir. Hassan Tariq), Yasin Gorija remarks, "The screenplay was written to create a very brisk narrative [*nihāyat chust likhā gayā thā*] and to maintain the pace, much of the interpretation was entrusted to the audience."[30]

The sense of a more informed audience in 1967 that possessed the ability to understand the cinematic language of the commercial film—with its various genres and techniques such as temporal ellipsis, montage editing, the song-and-dance sequence, and realism shot through with elements of fantasy—is in marked contrast to the comment by another industry observer, Zakhmi Kanpuri, on the early serpent film *Nagin* (Serpent, 1959, dir. Khalil Qaiser), whose theme, Kanpuri notes, was made for the first time in Pakistan: "In those days, people's critical faculties were not fully formed [*logoṇ kā shuʿūr bhī us daur meṇ ziyāda puḳẖta nahīṇ thā*], they naively believed what they read or saw on screen."[31] The ongoing modernization of consciousness and sensibility, the acceleration of temporality, and their manifestation in art, architecture, interiors, fashion, and bodily comportment gathers pace in Pakistan throughout the sixties, and this is both palpable and spearheaded in the cinema.

Color film stock is among the major technological changes that began to be used more widely in films during the sixties. The first movie in full color was an Urdu film from Dhaka, *Sangam* (Confluence, 1964, dir. Zahir Raihan). By the end of the decade, blockbuster films in color such as *Andaleeb* (1969, dir. Farid Ahmad) and *Zerqa* (1969, dir. Riaz Shahid) were

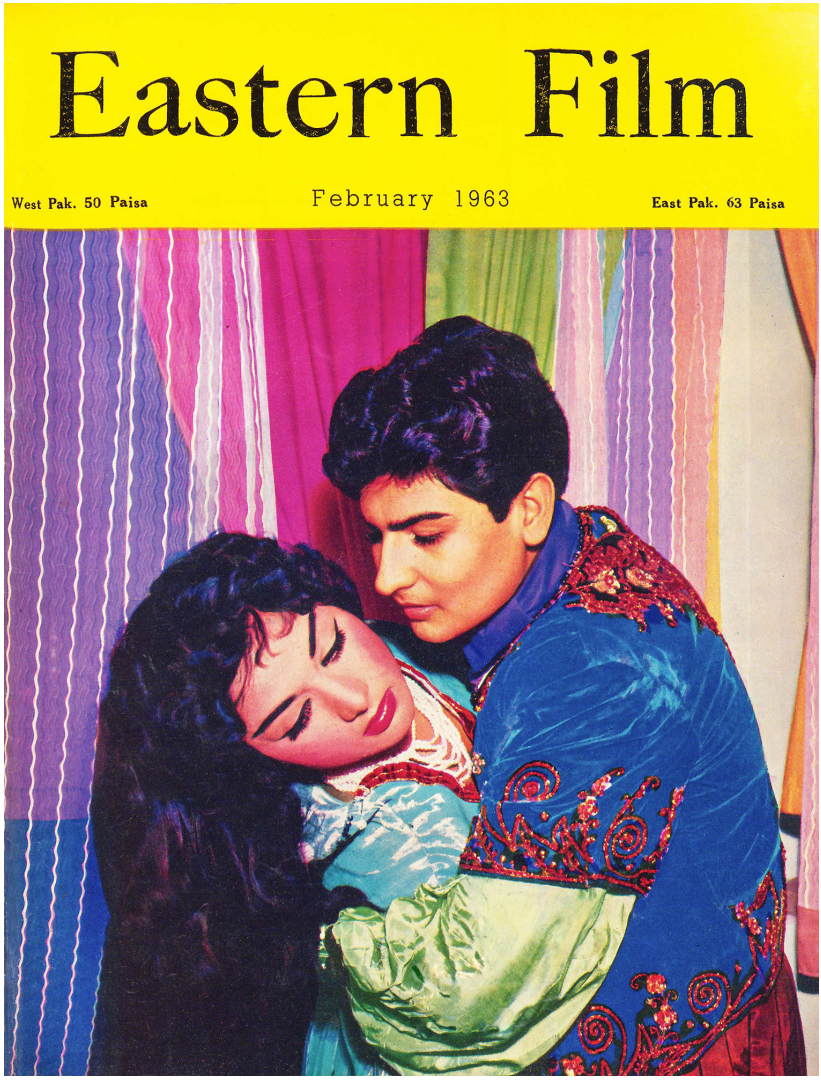

FIG. 1.2. Actor Rattan Kumar embracing Neelo on the cover of *Eastern Film* 4, no. 7 (February 1963).

being released. The shift to color is an important facet of the aesthetic and thematic transformations in the post-1971 context during the government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, whose populist rhetoric and relaxation of censorship codes also meant that new themes, regional motifs, and a more kinetic body language began to transform seventies cinema.[32] Post-1971, Punjabi-language productions also overtake Urdu cinema in the number of films

produced.[33] The cinema of the seventies thus merits a separate examination, which falls beyond the scope of this study.[34]

THE FILM SONG AND THE SOCIAL FILM

The centrality of the film song constitutes a distinguishing feature of commercial South Asian cinema between 1940 and 1980. Indeed, songs are so pivotal to movies that the few films made without songs during this period are the exception that prove the rule and are usually ones that aspire to noncommercial values and select audiences. Viewed from an avant-garde perspective, especially by many Western critics, the film song in South Asia is often a puzzling and unwelcome presence, as it disturbs many of the assumptions attached to narrative coherence.[35] For many critics, the presence of the film song also places these films unfavorably against experimental and even Third Cinema.

With its intensified affective charge, the romantic and imaginative ethos of the film song has a decisive place in the social melodramatic film from Bombay and Lahore, as it most intensively imbricates realism and fantasy and inseparably weaves together evidentiary history and utopian aspirations. While these films may be characterized as melodrama, or as musicals, these terms do not begin to capture the most distinguishing characteristics of this cinema that departs also from normative Hollywood expectations. The significance of songs in the dramatic traditions of South Asia long predates the arrival of the talkies in India, beginning in 1931. The *Natyashastra*, a Sanskrit aesthetic text on the dramatic arts, includes a discussion of the song as being central to dramatic narrative. Folk theater and oral performing traditions in many parts of South Asia include songs. In the Krishna, Bhakti, and Sufi traditions from the early modern era onward, devotional poetry has been set to music, creating a rich repository that poets and music composers could draw from in cinema.[36]

Incorporating song into urban theater is a major development in Parsi theater, which flourished in Bombay after the 1860s and was performed in cities across South Asia well into the twentieth century. The first Urdu-language play in Bombay was commissioned in 1871.[37] Subsequently, plays in Urdu and Hindi became standard repertoire in Parsi theater, along with those in Gujarati and other languages.[38] Another important lineage is the opera *Indar Sabha*, written in Lucknow by Agha Hasan Amanat in 1853 and performed "with special lighting and musical effects" in Bombay in 1873.[39] From the mid-nineteenth century onward, Parsi theater included songs as

part of dramatic performance.[40] The technological apparatus and various ruses deployed in enhancing the theatricality of Parsi theater would subsequently morph into the magical effects early cinema rendered through editing and special effects. Several Parsi theater plays were made into films, including the *Indar Sabha* in 1931 as an early sound film. The theater scholar Kathryn Hansen notes, "[*Indar Sabha*] returned to its viewers a spectacular, romanticized vision of its collective past, it facilitated the very production of spectatorship within the new environment of the public commercial theatre. Even in the modern trappings of the proscenium arch, the figure of Indar surrounded by his court of admiring beauties constructed a visual icon that synthesized religious, erotic, and political modes of self-identification. . . . The implantation of performative song and dance sequences before a pictorialized audience remained a defining feature of the narrative structure of Indian cinema."[41]

Many other plays written in Urdu for the Parsi theater were also realized later as films. These include several plays by the celebrated playwright Agha Hashr Kashmiri, who also wrote screenplays for films.[42] Even though Parsi theater started with Gujarati and English-language productions, after the 1870s, a significant number of plays were performed in Hindi and Urdu. The turn to Urdu expanded the appeal of Parsi theater to other communities and allowed for Parsi theater to travel to other cities. The language also enabled playwrights to draw upon Urdu's vast repertoire of poetic and rhetorical resources in writing dialogue and songs. "Urdu poetic art and public speech were highly esteemed," notes Hansen, adding, "By adopting Urdu, the Parsi theater embraced more than a language or community. It gained an entire vocabulary of pleasure, and one that had the advantage of lacking a territorial boundary."[43]

Silent film had a benefit in addressing the vast linguistic diversity of the audience, although this was by no means a straightforward issue even during that era.[44] With the coming of sound in 1931, the question of language became absolutely central, because audiences whose primary familiarity was with Bengali, Marathi, or Tamil, for example, could not be expected to fully understand a film not made in these languages. Arguably, the song, with its musical and lyric character, helped overcome these linguistic divisions, despite being rendered in North Indian language registers. Until today, audiences from across South Asia and even internationally, who may not understand much Hindi or Urdu, nevertheless fondly recall film song lyrics and tunes. This also helps to explain why Bombay—despite its lack of a native community whose members speak these languages as their mother

tongue, but being a capitalist city full of migrants from across India—became the most important center for the production of Hindi and Urdu cinema.

Early sound films typically included dozens of songs. For example, the first talkie, *Alam Ara* (1931) had no fewer than thirty songs. In these early sound films, the songs were recorded live, and therefore actors performing in the film also had to be good singers and musicians. Improving technology made possible the transition to playback singing.[45] Cinematic mise-en-scène also suggested to the filmmakers creative possibilities for expanding the spatial domain of sound during the song sequence, far beyond the immediate environs of the actors singing the songs. In an insightful essay on the actress and singer Noor Jehan, Ashraf Aziz has observed that her vocal collaboration with music director Master Ghulam Haider during the forties created a kind of a soundtrack for the accelerating modernity in urban South Asia: "Whereas earlier songs were constructed around melody, Ghulam Haider based his songs on rhythm and percussion."[46] Haider deployed the "dholak, the Punjabi folk drum . . . often played at a brisk pace, brought a sparkling fluidity to the song," and "the dholak-driven, bubbly popular song documented the gathering pace of Indian history better."[47]

Gregory Booth has analyzed how the film industry addressed challenges and possibilities during the first fifteen years since the coming of sound, paving the way for creating a position of centrality of the song to the film. According to Booth, while the Bombay film song witnessed a number of significant aesthetic and professional transitions between 1931 and 1946, its place in the golden-age music of the fifties and sixties was consolidated right after independence: "From roughly 1948 through 1952, many of these incremental changes and other, still more recent developments coalesced into a set of sonic, stylistic, industrial, and cinematic norms that came to define the music of the Hindi cinema over the subsequent 20 or more years."[48] Khurshid Anwar began his career in films as a Bombay-based music director in 1940 and continued working there till 1952, which means that he would have been intimately familiar with the way music and song was becoming integral to melodramatic cinema in this formative period. While earlier scholarship had claimed that the film song had a contingent and modular relationship to the film narrative, recent scholarship has stressed its inextricable centrality to the films of the forties through the seventies.[49] Anna Morcom elaborates:

> Hindi films have a narrative style and structure that is designed for songs, and similarly, film songs are able to fit around cinematic scenes. The

> Hindi film narrative has a number of devices for incorporating songs. It is non-linear and the story usually pauses, though not always completely, whilst song sequences take place. The stories themselves assimilate songs by having scenes which take place in musical surroundings . . . film songs incorporate Hindi films in a parallel way to how Hindi films incorporate songs. They contain interludes during which movement and action can take place, they are often "gapped" or have "add-ons" in their musical idiom that negotiate changes of point of view, location, emotion and action, Furthermore, they employ conventions for the musical expression of character, location, emotion, action, and for the perceived grandeur of the cinematic medium itself.[50]

In terms of circulation, marketing, aura, and afterlife, the song has far wider effects than only its being viewed on the screen inside a theater. As much as the film song occupies a central place in the movie, it also constitutes the dominant aspects of popular music when it is detached from the film and saturated across public and private domains. "Popular music in the Indian subcontinent is unique because it consists almost completely of *filmigit*, that is, songs originally featured in the movies," notes Biswarup Sen.[51] Thus songs made for the cinema also achieved the status of becoming the dominant popular music in South Asia. Constantly heard in humble cafés, markets, the workplace, and the domestic sphere, as well as in buses and rickshaws, it overflowed national borders, class divisions, and linguistic, ethnic, and gender divides. The widespread circulation of the film song on radio, vinyl, and cassette tapes from the forties through the seventies meant that the film song assumed an importance that constituted no less than the soundtrack of modern life in much of South Asia.

CULTURAL POLITICS OF THE AYUB KHAN ERA

The long sixties (1956–69) in Pakistan incorporates the era of the regime of President Ayub Khan, beginning in 1958 and continuing until his abdication from rule in 1969. The period from the early fifties already established trends in political economy and culture that the Ayub Khan government would build upon. Pakistan was under authoritarian rule from its very beginning in 1947 and soon after independence became closely aligned with the United States during the Cold War. The nation was saddled with antipopulist and fundamentally antidemocratic regimes that continued under Ayub Khan's rule. The decade of the sixties ended with a period of great

political instability: the disturbances of the late sixties led to the overthrow of the Ayub Khan government and soon after that, in 1971, war with India and the breakup of the country with the loss of half of the population. Bangladesh's founding in 1971 was preceded by atrocities on a massive scale by the Pakistan army against the residents of East Pakistan. The independence of Bangladesh radically truncated Pakistan, which had been composed of an East and a West wing since 1947.

Mostly, the Ayub Khan era was primarily a time of centralized political stability and governance, rapid development of institutions, and generally bourgeois liberal values.[52] The fissures and contradictions of this period of authoritarian rule need to be underscored, as filmmakers had to negotiate this matrix of constraints and possibilities. Gazdar's assessment on the ethos of the period is apposite: "The way in which Ayub Khan manoeuvred to assume total political control over the country is questionable, but his outlook towards economic and social reforms undoubtedly was modern and progressive. He was a tolerant person with a secular outlook. The Censor Board during his reign reflected the President's attitude when films like A. J. Kardar's *Jago Hua Savera*, Saifuddin Saif's *Kartar Singh*, Hassan Tariq's *Neend*, Zia Sarhadi's *Rahguzar*, Khalil Qaiser's *Clerk*, Danish Dervi's *Aur Bhi Gham Hein*, and Raza Mir's *Lakhon Mein Aik* were allowed general release in the country."[53]

The elite liberal values that characterized the Ayub Khan era must be contextualized with Pakistan's close alliance with the United States in the Cold War, in which direct production and control of culture by state apparatchiks would have been seen to be closer to the opposed Soviet paradigm. This is evident in the *Report of the Film Fact Finding Committee, Govt. of Pakistan, Ministry of Industries, April 1960–April 1961*, which stressed that it is "problematic whether aesthetic values can be induced into any form of artistic expression by precept or regulation alone."[54] Published in 1962, this 410-page document is, to my knowledge, by far the most comprehensive report on the state of the industry undertaken by any Pakistani government, and an important resource for understanding infrastructural conditions of the era. Its approach to the desired relationship between the government and the private sector is summarized as follows:

> The film industry has so far been subjected to, little or no control by Government on its production side and having operated as a free enterprise it has achieved a production rate of approximately 35 films a year at Lahore and Karachi and 5 to 7 films a year at Dacca where the East

> Pakistan Film Development Corporation has been instrumental in initiating film production. While free enterprise must have its full play in its field, Pakistan cannot ignore the demands of higher national interest. We have, after carefully considering the evidence placed before us and the example of the film industry of other countries, concluded that the stage has now reached where Government must play its part in helping the development of the industry and bringing to it an atmosphere of security and reasonable prospects of commercial success.[55]

Its considered policy recommendations included regulation reform, better tax incentives, infrastructural support, and multiple other ways for the government to support private sector filmmaking. This included availability of financing, access to better technology, training of cinema personnel, and improvement of public taste by creating institutions modeled on the British Film Institute.[56] These recommendations, however, were not implemented, due to a shift in focus by the government after the 1965 India-Pakistan war, according to Mushtaq Gazdar.[57]

While the Ayub Khan regime was unable to intervene much in the commercial film arena, the Department of Film and Publications became very active, producing short films, newsreels, and propaganda.[58] The News Pictorial was a newsreel showcasing the regime's achievements. It was required to be screened in all theaters before a commercial film, but eventually, "the audience became disgusted with the conscious manipulation of events . . . [and] would enter cinema halls after the end of government newsreels and documentaries."[59] A notorious work was the feature-length "documentary" glorifying Ayub Khan as the enlightened new savior at the beginning of his rule. *Nai Kiran* (A new ray of light, 1960) was made in five languages, and leading actors such as Noor Jehan were coerced into participating. Gazdar has provocatively compared *Nai Kiran* to nothing less than *Triumph of the Will* (1935, dir. Leni Riefenstahl).[60]

Nai Kiran was based on a short story by Qudratullah Shahab, who became a powerful bureaucrat in the Ayub Khan regime. The contrast between the government's approach to literature and cinema is instructive, as unlike literature, commercial cinema never fully came under the state's ambit. Shahab was himself a writer of some distinction, and his autobiography *Shahabnama* provides much insight into the cultural politics of the era.[61] *Shahabnama* is written in elegant and accessible Urdu prose and makes for compelling reading. His account of the Ayub Khan era is fashioned to portray Shahab himself as endowed with integrity, even as he led or was a

front-row participant in consequential actions by the government to control the press and organize literary writers.[62] The press was muzzled by the takeover in 1959 of the Progressive Papers, which published major newspapers in English and Urdu, and with the formation of the National Press Trust.[63] And Shahab himself led and organized literary writers in the government-supported Pakistan Writers' Guild (PWG), founded in 1959, with annual literary prizes underwritten by major private business groups.[64] Shahab justifies forming the PWG as a way to support struggling writers irrespective of their ideology. He narrates his own role as being a sole voice against other senior bureaucrats who "repeatedly tried to influence Ayub with the idea that under the government's patronage, the PWG is cultivating undesirable and dangerous persons, leading with Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, Shahidullah Kaiser [brother of director Zahir Raihan], Shaukat Siddiqui, Abdullah Husain and others." By contrast, Shahab notes, "Opposing this view, I was the only one close to the President who stressed that among the 1,200 members of the Guild were loyal and capable members."[65] In Shahab's recollection, he even heroically resisted US pressure exerted on Pakistan in this regard, despite the country's being an impoverished and dependent American ally in a charged Cold War context: "We had made a rule not to accept foreign funding [for the PWG], because at that time our country was in the shackles of American aid. . . . [Because of this refusal] the Americans became suspicious that we are troublemakers and may be accepting Russian support, as our bureaucracy was signaling that the PWG is protecting reds."[66]

Needless to say, Shahab's critics have a less rosy assessment of the objectives behind the formation of the PWG and the role it played during the sixties.[67] The PWG was clearly an influential institution promoting and shaping the course of literary production during the sixties. Such institutional initiatives need not be understood as being solely repressive, however. Rather, as Foucault might remind us, they are productive and have to reckon with new social and aesthetic trajectories that inevitably arise as a consequence of rapid modernization. Possibly for this reason as well, many leftist writers had become affiliated with the PWG, despite its compromised status.

By contrast, the "people's poet" Habib Jalib emerges as an exemplary resistant figure during the long sixties and beyond.[68] Jalib has characterized the Ayub Khan era as a terrifying period because he trampled over human rights and deployed all manner of antidemocratic measures to extend his rule.[69] On the collaboration of many writers with the establishment, he

notes, "My fellow poets, from whom I expected support, had instead become self-serving and pro-dictatorship to an alarming degree, and had become merely *careerists* [the English word transcribed in Urdu]."[70] Jalib was a key participant in the film industry, writing lyrics for numerous films, and many of the songs based on his verse have become wildly popular.[71] He perhaps achieved even greater renown as an uncompromising political dissident, repeatedly jailed by the Ayub Khan regime and subsequent governments for publicly reciting poetry critical of official policies.[72] His poem "Dastoor" (Constitution) from 1962 against the Ayub Khan regime remains among his most powerful and influential political poems.[73] Its fame has crossed borders, and it was recited in protests against the government in India in 2019 and 2020, some six decades after its original public recitation.[74] Writer and filmmaker Ahmad Bashir underscores the public appeal of Jalib's dissident verse during the sixties: "During Ayub Khan election campaign [in 1962], when Jalib's movement was restricted, tape recordings of his poetry were nevertheless heard by groups of people numbering in the *lakhs* [hundreds of thousands]. Among writers and poets who took upon themselves to raise public consciousness, hardly anyone can be compared to Jalib who achieved such a thorough and embracing effect in such a short time."[75] Jalib himself explained the wide appeal of his political verse as due to them being suffused with *lyric-ism* (the English word transliterated in Urdu): "Why are my poems so popular? One reason is that I deploy lyric-ism in them. I learnt this from earlier public political rhetoric . . . at Mochi Gate [in Lahore]. So, I resolved that I would write poems on important public issues, and subsequently my poems assumed greater public significance than merely making speeches in prose."[76]

The literary domain was consequently a charged field during the long sixties, crosshatched by the political tensions of the era. However, as seen above in the failure of the film report's recommendations to be implemented, commercial cinema largely escaped coming under the purview of Ayub Khan's bureaucrats, but equally, it "involuntarily" has "always remained apolitical in its response to the country's internal state of affairs."[77] Apart from cinema being subject to the Censor Board, a colonial-era arrangement that long predates the Ayub years, it continued to flourish as popular entertainment in a bazaar mode. And for the entire twentieth century, commercial cinema in South Asia has been associated with shadowy and informal financing and has been disparaged for being lowbrow and melodramatic, which does not accord well with attempts at top-down manipulation.[78] Unlike literature, commercial cinema was essentially considered as being

too trashy to come under the oversight of state institutions.[79] That may well be another factor inhibiting implementation of the film report's recommendations.

Although primarily the cinema remained overtly apolitical, critique of the Ayub era did develop in some films, especially by East Pakistani filmmakers, who were also opposed to West Pakistan's domination.[80] This finds a most significant realization in the Zahir Raihan–directed *Jibon Theke Neya* (Glimpses of life, 1970), ostensibly a melodrama of family dynamics but also a powerful and formally innovative allegory of dictatorial oppression.[81] In Lahore, Riaz Shahid's *Zerqa* (1969), discussed in chapter 3, has been understood as critical reflection on Pakistan's internal power dynamics of the era.[82] In an interview, Jalib himself characterizes his work for the cinema insightfully: "When I entered the film industry, the environment was very favorable. . . . There was not much remuneration in writing poetry for films, but it fulfilled me in other ways. My ideas received publicity and reached millions of people. In my poetry, I would include verses on anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism. Often, producers couldn't comprehend what I was doing. But I worked with good producers also, such as my friend Riaz Shahid, who would urge me on saying, 'I'll picturize the biggest insult you can level against existing society.'"[83]

Overall, the sense of stability through the majority of the Ayub years, even if ultimately illusory and ending very badly, has arguably never been repeated in Pakistan's history. It also means that this period of about a dozen years is marked by a sense of coherence of institutions within a relatively stable political order, which allowed commercial filmmakers and other cultural workers to position themselves in relation to it.

REVERBERATIONS IN BOMBAY AND LAHORE

The intimate and shared aesthetic tropes between Bombay films and the Lahore productions rendered it easy for Lahore-based filmmakers to simply lift stories from Bombay productions. On occasion, even dialogue, song lyrics, and shot compositions were borrowed almost verbatim. Industry observers in Pakistan from the very beginning have drawn considerable attention to this charged and controversial issue. Films that were manifestly copied or plagiarized were termed as *sarqa* or *charba*.[84] The issue divided the film community between those who saw this as a viable way to make local films based on commercially successful predecessors and others who decried the reliance on piracy and emphasized instead the need to develop

original stories and films.[85] During the fifties, Indian films were also available to Pakistani audiences. Their circulation had divided the film community between distributors who benefitted financially and local producers and directors who felt that their own productions were at a considerable disadvantage against this formidable competition.[86]

Plagiarism, even in commercial cultural forms, is a serious concern, and it is not my intention to justify the work of those who resorted to copying. And it must be underscored that since the early fifties, a number of thoughtful Pakistani filmmakers persisted in developing original work.[87] The *charba* can however be diagnosed as a symptom and manifestation of shared lineages as much as being an ethically questionable shortcut to commercial success. The question of similarity and even of direct drawing of stories, themes, dialogue, and lyrics from Bombay productions by the Lahore industry is a deeper issue whose ramifications go beyond the question of mimetic plagiarism or even imaginative borrowing.

Filmmakers who had previously worked in Bombay and had now moved to Lahore would remake a film in Lahore that they had made or contributed to in Bombay earlier.[88] And apart from the many direct instances of *charba* in Lahore productions, it is the case that Bombay itself had drawn many of its stories and themes from Hollywood, as well as from the Parsi theater, in which Urdu playwrights have played an important role, including the celebrated work of Agha Hashr Kashmiri and Imtiaz Ali Taj, who were associated with Lahore for part or most of their careers, for example. Urdu writers such as Manto wrote for Bombay cinema, and Urdu poets provided lyrics for its songs before and after 1947. Indeed, the leading Indian film scholar Ashish Rajadhyaksha has provocatively characterized much of Bombay cinema of the forties and thereafter itself as being "diasporic": "The resettlement in Bombay of a seminal tradition, the 'Lahore school' of Hindi filmmaking . . . also draws our attention to the profoundly diasporic nature of the Bombay-based Hindi cinema. The Bombay cinema, articulating a Sindhi–Punjabi–Pathan diaspora, is a cinema with no state. Its tremendous impact upon modern Indian culture forces us to speculate on the considerably wider domain of the deployment of minority history as a displaced popular culture."[89] These correspondences between Bombay cinema and Lahore cinema form the bedrock for expression in new cinematic works, as they both draw from and elaborate on a vast and shared reservoir of cultural legacies even as they create new works addressing their present. This is especially the case for Lahore cinema during the long sixties.

The Partition engendered an affect of truncation in the psyche of the generation of filmmakers who traversed it. Was the partial loss of the self compensated for by a compulsive recourse to repetition not only via rampant and open plagiarism but also in original works? This observation becomes more salient when one notes that it is precisely a "symptomatic" film blatantly propagandizing Pakistani nationalism that is guilty of the greatest degree of plagiarism. This is *Bedari* (1957), which Gazdar terms a "carbon copy" of *Jagriti* (1954), and both even starred the same child actor in an identical role, namely Rattan Kumar, who had migrated to Pakistan in 1956 (see figure I.2).[90] Even at the other end of the spectrum, in works that are original, such as in the films of Khurshid Anwar examined in chapter 2, uncanny doubling is a persistent leitmotif. Anwar's films can be understood as Partition allegories, in which characters often play a double role and are often mistaken for each other, as in *Intezar* (1956), or a present fraught relationship between a husband and a wife is haunted by the specter of previous Hindu lovers, in *Ghoonghat* (1962).[91]

Pakistani audiences were already habituated to the marked use of Urdu diction and rhetoric in Bombay films of the 1940s–70s, and familial associations of key Bombay personnel with the territories of West Pakistan also kept these imaginative linkages alive: these include the families of the Raj Kapoor dynasty and actor Dilip Kumar's family, which were both from Peshawar; poet Gulzar, who hails from the Jhelum District in the Punjab; Dilip Kumar's brother Nasir Khan, who acted in Lahore cinema in the early years after 1947; the distributor J. C. Anand, who is related to Indian actress Juhi Chawla; and so on.[92] Indeed, the scale of interconnections between Lahore and Bombay before 1947 defies summarization. And after 1947, many film personnel from India who had a background either in Lahore or in the Punjab made a move to Lahore and settled there. Significantly, this phenomenon did not simply occur only during 1947, but the migration of field personnel to Lahore, and sometimes the reverse migration from Lahore to Bombay, continued throughout the fifties, and even into the early sixties. Later migrants from Bombay to Lahore include the directors Zia Sarhadi and S. M. Yusuf, for example.

The relation between Lahore and Bombay cinema is not confined to the film itself but extends into a wider field of meaning and signification through the production and circulation of charged extrafilmic domains. These include star texts, the widespread leakage of the song into everyday life, and interfilmic and intermedial citations, as well as the political connotations

of cinema. None of these are confined to national borders. Rajadhyaksha consequently suggests the need to rethink the cinema of South Asia as participating in this immense realm of signification, which he terms "cinema-effects."[93] Cinema-effects reverberate across many domains. In theme, they echo cultural forms from the past and prefigure future productions. They are inherently interfilmic in this regard, across a *longue durée*, sometimes venturing far back to oral and mythological tropes, Parsi theater, folk forms, novels, Hollywood, Victorian Gothic literature, and most importantly, other South Asian film productions. This is the case, for example, in the serpent film genre, which draws from Hindu and Buddhist mythology and folk motifs and has also been made in Lahore a number of times post-1947, even when the vast majority of Pakistan has been Muslim.[94] In characterization and typage, films in various genres draw upon sedimented figurations and unsettle them toward new ends. Through legal and informal distribution, they constantly spill across geographic bounds and medias. For example, cinema stars from both India and Pakistan find themselves on calendars, posters, and postcards and in magazine images that have very wide circulation in Pakistan, as decor in people's homes, in *pān* (betel leaf) shops, and on vehicles and in restaurants.

The audio of song-and-dance sequences travels exceedingly well, creating ubiquitous sonic and aural fields in public and private spaces across South Asia. Its appeal was used to great effect by Radio Ceylon, for example, which broadcast Hindi film songs regularly when these songs were banned at All India Radio in the early 1950s for about half a decade; these songs found eager listeners in Pakistan as well.[95] Apart from radio audiences, Bombay film songs circulated in Pakistan on vinyl, and with the coming of the cassette, which enabled inexpensive reproduction of music, films songs arranged in various collections by individuals and small-scale entrepreneurs became a ubiquitous feature of Pakistan's urban sonic fabric, being played constantly in homes, buses, restaurants, and other private and public spaces.[96]

THE LAHORE EFFECT

The polysemic correspondences and resonances between Bombay and Lahore has led Rajadhyaksha to further propose that a "Lahore effect" characterized major Bombay films during the forties, both before and after the Partition of 1947. In his essay titled "The Lahore Effect," based on a presentation delivered in Lahore for the Lahore Biennale 01 in 2018, Rajadhyaksha

takes as his focus the theme of Anarkali, the mythical story set in the early seventeenth century of the dancing girl who fell in love with the Mughal prince Salim (who later reigned as Emperor Jahangir between 1605 and 1627) but who was finally immured alive in a wall by Emperor Akbar as a punishment for the transgression of daring to desire his son. This romantic and tragic tale was first written up as a theater play by the Lahore-based playwright Imtiaz Ali Taj in 1922. It was then made into cinema repeatedly in Bombay and in Lahore, culminating in the film *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960, dir. K. Asif), which is among Bombay cinema's most lavish and extravagant productions to this day.[97] The recursive draw of this cinematic story for filmmakers in India and Pakistan is only one influential example of the Lahore effect. What this modality accomplishes is the extension of affiliation of memory across time and space, without regard to genre fidelity or even thematic or narrative coherence: "We may be able to track a specific history, with a backstory and an afterlife, that may turn out to be nothing less than the history of subcontinental cinema itself, now viewed as a particular kind of production machine. We would see this cinematic machine as an apparatus that had been anticipated in literature and theatre, incarnated in its most famous version in celluloid film, continuing into a multimedia and multi-industrial post-celluloid afterlife."[98]

Rajadhyaksha further suggests that the Lahore effect instantiates the survival of "cultural memory . . . links to several strands that return in film after film: often in the placement and framing of characters, notably the dense close-ups, flaring light-effects, casting, cinematography and sound, and perhaps above all of set design."[99] What this mode accomplishes, in my understanding, is the reproduction and inhabitation of a cultural fabric, a texture that is striated and palpable to the senses and is shaped rather like a Möbius strip, on which one can traverse endlessly, sometimes oriented upright and at other times upside-down. Multiple reverberations emerge from this journey across temporal gaps, and from both the formal and narrative resonances of this circuit. Rajadhyaksha puts it this way: "On this level, it is as though the *making of a film is itself the anthropology of cinema* as films quote one other, fold inside each other, or hover over each other. Every film, thus seen, becomes a history of the cinema. Remakes, along with other forms of a haunting cultural survival, e.g., in the music or in other forms of the cinema-effect, become crucial here."[100]

This mode prevents cinema from being assimilated as *national* cinema, in both India and Pakistan, because each individual film recalls its predecessors not just in cinema, but as artifacts, memories, and mise-en-scène

from theater, orality, and even architecture. Its hauntings reverberate far beyond national space and its disciplinary concerns.[101] The Anarkali mythos is exemplary in this regard, as in Lahore there is a Mughal-era tomb named after Anarkali, but the identity of who is immured there has never been ascertained. Moreover, the tomb houses official archives of the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and records of Bhagat Singh's trial (see chapter 2), conflating and imbricating the myth of Anarkali's revolt for the sake of romantic love with the actual revolutionary history of colonial South Asia. Realism and fable, history and myth, narrative and lyric, and past and present, all are inextricably entangled across resonating aesthetic and political sensibilities.

NATIONALISM, PARTITION, AND THE SOCIAL FILM

The social film of midcentury South Asia was thus never comfortably associated with elite respectability and with the nation-state project. The populist bazaar mode of commercial cinema created additional impediments for it to be aligned with nationalism. Manishita Dass has argued that the role of cinema in late colonial India marks a tension "between the professed desire for a 'national' cinema and elite perceptions of a divided audience . . . visible in anxious elite discourses about a cinematic public sphere facilitating the circulation of a contagious modernity and the unrefined tastes of the masses through the national body politic."[102] Official discussions on commercial cinema right after Indian independence denigrated its vulgar aesthetics as well as its opaque and personalized financing and production arrangements.[103] In Pakistan during the early years, Gazdar has quoted the federal minister of industries, who asserted, "In principle Muslims should not get involved in filmmaking. Being the work of lust and lure, it should be left to the infidels."[104] Commercial cinema's insidious recourse to degraded values was routinely disparaged in Pakistan and was a perennial subject of much hand-wringing and pearl-clutching, as the substantial official report from 1962 notes:

> The average film has no story worth the name and is made to cater to the entertainment needs of the masses. . . . The formula of a specific number of cheap songs and dances injected without regard to story or situation into melodramatic episodes of love making is corrupting the taste of our people. . . . No attempt has been made to reach out to literature or history for good themes and even the music of our films tends to follow set

> popular patterns in which cheap melodies blended from oriental and occidental sources sometimes satisfy but never enthuse or inspire the masses.[105]

Thus, in neither country was commercial cinema in its existing form seen as being able to bear the responsibilities of articulating a responsible *national* cultural project.

Social reform, however, was not absent in commercial cinema. In his essay on the Muslim social film of 1935–45 as it developed in Bombay and Lahore cinema, Ravi Vasudevan has argued that this genre arose as a response to increasing communalization in India, and partly as a result by Muslim filmmakers countering the denigration of the Muslim community, which was viewed as being socially retrograde.[106] Before this period, the social film primarily evoked the world of bourgeois Hindus and the dilemmas of reform in their universe. By contrast, Muslims had been depicted in this earlier commercial cinema as living in the past in historical stasis, preoccupied with decadent elite *nawabi* pastimes.[107] Another segment of film production catered to other genres and markets, with films based on Arabian Nights themes, Oriental fantasies, and legendary stories (*qiṣṣa* and *dāstān*) of unfulfilled love: "The world of *paris* (fairies) and evil *amirs* (chieftains), genies, and itinerant adventurers who could traverse worlds . . . such cultural forms were critical to the way Bombay cinema was organized from an early period, and through its links with phenomena, such as Parsi theater, the traditions of Urdu romance narrative and poetry, and to the fabulous worlds derived from Arabian Nights and dastan performances."[108]

Vasudevan makes the important observation that such films depicting and deploying "the Punjab, and the Urdu narrative and performance culture it generated," appealed to audiences of "a larger territory that went beyond the subcontinent to include North Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, straddling Arabic, Persian, and even Malay and Indonesian cultures."[109] Apart from the business angle of "film trade" and export markets in comments in the influential magazine *Filmindia*, from a nationalist standpoint, these films obviously could also not have served the end of bearing the burden of national cinema. Indeed, the fantasy genre is considered as being even lower than the social film, and it came under persistent criticism for forestalling "the cultivation of a realist aesthetic that would do away with fantastical narrative and miraculous enactments."[110] There were also films in other lower genres being produced in Bombay, such as stunt films. All these B-genres were intended to cater to specific audiences and

geographic regions, as comments in *Filmindia* make evident. *Dastanic* films continued to be made during the long sixties in Lahore, but from the elite and official view, they were even more unworthy as national cultural exemplars, even more damning as indictments of the allure of fantasy worlds with a "Muslim" inflection.

Vasudevan argues that in the period 1935–45, the Muslim social film finally emerges and grapples centrally with questions of modernity and reform in Muslim communities. Its films include *Najma* (1943, dir. Mehboob Khan), *Elaan* (Proclamation, 1948 dir. Mehboob Khan), *Qaidi* (Prisoner, 1941, dir. S. F. Hasnain), and *Masoom* (Innocent, 1942 dir. S. F. Hasnain).[111] Among the "most suggestive of all" is *Khandan* (Family, 1942), which was a production by Dalsukh M. Pancholi from Lahore.[112] Vasudevan stresses that "the genre was also crucially representational, inscribing a contemporary Muslim presence (whether modernizing or otherwise) on the screen where it had earlier been absent."[113] Their narrative is set among Muslim characters, but these films also addressed wider publics. Here, it needs to be underscored that the All-India Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) was also organized in 1936, and in this association Muslim and Urdu writers and poets played an important role.[114] The Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), which was formed in 1943, brought together key writers, poets, filmmakers, and music directors from across India to create cultural forms such as theater and cinema in a progressive register. Manishita Dass has argued that during the forties and fifties, "several of the figures associated with or influenced by the PWA and the IPTA movement turned toward the Bombay film industry, partly in order to make a living—but also in the hope of both reaching and creating a mass audience through the medium of cinema."[115] These included the writers and directors "K. A. Abbas, Bimal Roy, Chetan Anand, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Zia Sarhadi, Saadat Hasan Manto, Ismat Chughtai, Shaheed Latif" and poets Kaifi Azmi and Sahir Ludhanvi.[116] Without this development, the Muslim social film would have been inconceivable.[117] And because the writings of Lahore-based leftist writers and poets like Habib Jalib and Faiz Ahmed Faiz traverse the registers of high cultural forms as well as writing stories, dialogue, and lyrics for song-and-dance sequences in popular films, the division between elite culture and mass genres is productively troubled also in Lahore cinema of the fifties and sixties. The ethos in Lahore during the long sixties is thus comparable to developments in the fifties in Bombay, where "cinema was still an emergent formation, a site of unprecedented transactions between 'high culture' and 'low culture' and of widespread experimentation."[118]

Vasudevan is interested in seeing how this genre addresses the dilemmas of Indian nationalism at a time when that nationalism is being pulled apart by communal and centripetal forces of the Hindi/Urdu divide, and also how this cinema engages with questions of material and psychological hybridity brought about by modernity.[119] Building on this analysis and expanding its scope to think about larger Bombay cinema of midcentury, Rajadhyaksha observes for the later forties cinema, films that instantiate the Lahore effect emerge as among the biggest hits in India at precisely the time when communal strife and nationalism attendant to the Partition of 1947 was most pronounced:

> The blockbusters of 1946 are Mehboob Khan's *Anmol Ghadi* [Precious watch], A. R. Kardar's *Shah Jehan*, and the Ranjit Studio's *Phulwari*. The top hits list of 1947 lead with Shaukat Hussain Rizvi's *Jugnu* [Firefly], two films by Filmistan (*Do Bhai* [Two brothers], directed by Munshi Dil, and *Shehnai* [Trumpet], directed by P. L. Santoshi), and A. R. Kardar's next hit *Dard* [Pain]. The 1948 list features Filmistan's *Shaheed* [Martyr] at the top, followed by Gemini Studios' *Chandralekha* (S. S. Vasan), Wadia Films' *Mela* [Festival] (S. U. Sunny), *Pyar Ki Jeet* [The triumph of love] produced and directed by O. P. Dutta, and Bombay Talkies' *Ziddi* [Stubborn] directed by Shaheed Latif.[120]

Many film personnel who had worked with A. R. Kardar in Bombay over the years moved to Lahore after 1947, including music director and later film director Khurshid Anwar. It is instructive to compare the quotation above with another film that did very well in the Punjab in 1947, the year of the Partition and terrible large-scale violence. The blog commentator Harjap Singh Aujla narrates his father's memory of living through that era in urban Punjab. Released in 1947, *Parwana* (The moth), whose music director was Khurshid Anwar, was extensively viewed during this period of widespread brutality: "All songs of this movie [*Parwana*] became hit[s]. . . . 1947 was not a good year for the film industry, in spite of that *Parwana* did a roaring business, not only in the Ganges Basin states, but in the most disturbed Province of Punjab. Lahore and Amritsar were witnessing bloodbaths of the worst order, but the film *Parwana* was doing great among the Muslims of Lahore and Sikhs and Hindus of Amritsar. Both cities . . . were drawing packed houses."[121]

When society is confronted with political impasses and violence, and exacerbated divisions by ethnicity and faith, it is the melodramatic social

film—with its romantic songs embodying aspiration and fantasy—that affectively addresses publics that were being forged in midcentury South Asia. These films proposed an affective counterinterpellation and sought to constitute new mediatized publics beyond the existing ethnic, regional, and communal divides, and the claims of the consolidating nationalisms of the period. The social film greatly flourished in Pakistan during the long sixties for analogous reasons, informed by its rich lineage, and across the terrain shaped by the forces of political economy and the social fissures of modernity.[122]

ARCHIVE AND MEMORY

The liminal status of Pakistani cinema in official cultural policies is underscored by the absence until today of an archive or repository for the vast body of films produced in multiple languages from Karachi, Lahore, and Dhaka, as well as production and distribution records, scripts, screenplays, lobby cards, posters, booklets, journals, magazines, criticism, et cetera. Unlike India and Bangladesh, which have constituted national archives that enable scholars and researchers to have stable access to such materials, and even to view the original celluloid prints, in Pakistan all of this presents an insurmountable challenge in many respects.[123] This lack has created major gaps in our understanding of the historical development of Pakistani cinema. Timothy Cooper, Salma Siddique, and Vazira Zamindar have stressed the need for thinking about the Pakistani media archive in unconventional ways.[124] They have looked at dealers who sell film memorabilia, private collectors who have amassed materials in informal ways, film enthusiasts and fans who have put up a considerable amount of material on the Internet, and publishers and contents of the film magazine *Nigar*, for example. Cooper's and Siddique's analyses propose that while the archive for Pakistani cinema is not formally constituted institutionally, it is nevertheless assembled in fragments by cinephiles in various quirky and popular formats.[125]

On online platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo, fans and cinephiles have placed digitized copies of many films. Much of this material has been drawn from video formats and converted into digital versions. During the eighties and nineties, the Shalimar Recording Company in Islamabad had transferred many films from celluloid to VHS format. Films were also broadcast on television in Pakistan and in the United Kingdom and recorded by fans. Some films on VHS were exported to the Arab world and other regions and were subtitled in Arabic or French. Most of the films that one

now finds online are based on these VHS transfers or recordings from TV reruns by aficionados. Many films of potential critical or artistic importance, but which were commercial flops, are likely lost, unless a copy of them on celluloid can be found, which is unlikely after all these decades. A small number of well-known films have been packaged as branded DVDs and have been available in bookstores, but the majority of these transferred films are available informally in bazaars like the Rainbow Center in Karachi from only a few dealers, who press hand-labeled individual copies by request.

All these platforms have many technical problems, however. There is no certainty whether the film one watches online, or one purchases on DVD either in packaged form or in more informal ways, is complete or has missing footage. Another problem is severe quality degradation. Informal entrepreneurs often encrust the screen with their logos, phone numbers, and advertisements, which block parts of the screen and compete for the viewer's attention. Digital copies made from VHS transfers include blurring, distortion, scratches, tracking and formatting errors, muffled audio, errors in sound synchronization, and generally speaking, a much lower level of resolution, sharpness, and contrast, thus rendering any judgment on the aesthetics of the original film provisional and suspect. Kuhu Tanvir discusses an analogous ecology in India of unofficial archives, small-scale physical and digital exchange of cinema and media, and the degradation of the image in this realm. The modality of media exchange and the assembly of materials by amateurs and aficionados she traces share much with initiatives-from-below of popular archiving of Pakistani cinema. Tanvir's focus, however, is on how this growing realm sidesteps issues of legality and challenges the accuracy and probity of the state's archival initiatives. It needs to be stressed that for Pakistan the latter does not exist, and as for the former, the larger ethos is one of immense neglect rather than copyright concerns.[126]

Of concern here is the larger relationship between the partial and degraded archive that one is forced to work with and the subject of memory and history of this important cultural form. Overwhelmingly, the fans of Pakistani cinema of the fifties through the seventies are individuals who were exposed to this cinema when they were growing up. Because of the decline of Urdu cinema from the early eighties onward, and the attraction of television serials from the seventies onward, younger audiences who came to consciousness during this later era have little or no memories associated with the cinema of the long sixties, notwithstanding that older films continue to be rescreened on private TV channels.[127] Many individuals below

the age of forty, for example, may never have watched an Urdu film from the period and may have no awareness whatsoever of its significant milestones. But these same individuals may well have some familiarity with famous Bombay films from the fifties onward by directors such as Raj Kapoor, Mehboob Khan, and Guru Dutt, and would have likely watched the Amitabh Bachchan films of the seventies, not to mention the cinema of Bollywood's globalization from the nineties on, the era of the likes of Shah Rukh Khan's stardom. There is thus a profound generational absence of memory and recollection when it comes to the significant films made in Lahore, Karachi, and Dhaka during the long sixties.

One way to understand the work (or the lack thereof) that this amnesia does is to contextualize it with reference to the Lahore effect, which was manifest in Bombay cinema after the Partition of 1947.[128] While Urdu cinema in Pakistan went into decline from the beginning of the eighties—this has lasted several decades and production has never recovered to the levels seen in the midseventies, for example—Bombay films have remained extremely popular in Pakistan, as they largely used language registers and narrative tropes that resonate with the Pakistani Urdu social film. This is no surprise when one considers that many of the scriptwriters and poets in Bombay cinema through the seventies worked with Urdu rhetoric and diction and deployed it in cinema as a kind of shared linguistic register. In terms of theme, Pakistan's Urdu cinema also is segmented in genres that are analogous to the Hindi film, such as the Oriental fantasy, the social film, and a smaller number of productions of the detective film, the horror film, the serpent film, and so on.

In general, Bombay cinema has always enjoyed a higher working budget and could draw on a much larger and deeper infrastructural ecology with far more experience than its counterpart in Lahore. This meant that when the videocassette recorder (VCR) became commonplace in Pakistan from the late seventies onward, audiences could watch Bombay productions in their homes, to the tremendous disadvantage of support and patronage of the Urdu film. The authoritarian regime of General Zia-ul-Haq, which seized power in 1977, also began implementing policies of overt Islamization in the country, with strictures against exhibitionism and the display of women's appearance in media, which further dampened the appeal of local Urdu films for many audiences.[129] Memory and amnesia are therefore instantiated in the makeshift and partial archives that older fans have constituted but which do not transmit their cinephilia to the next generations.

The question of amnesia is, however, larger than the historical and technical reasons provided above. First of all, one must stress that Pakistan's "New Cinema," which has developed since around 2010, does not offer a continuation of industrial practices from the seventies. Although some older studios are still around, such as Evernew Studios in Lahore, they are reportedly in terrible shape.[130] Many of these studios have not converted to digital technology, for example, which prevents their productions from circulating easily to theaters that now only have digital projection. By contrast, the so-called New Cinema is being developed by a new breed of filmmakers whose lineage is largely not from the commercial cinema or older studios. Instead, many of them have worked for advertising firms, private media houses, NGOs, or corporate patrons, or they have been associated with the growing number of television serials—as the liberalization of the media since 2002 has resulted in the proliferation of dozens of private channels with twenty-four-hour programming. The mediascape is thus far larger than during the twentieth century and requires far more content than the single-channel government-owned television station that broadcast only for a few hours during the seventies. Arguably, cinema no longer assumes the most central place in Pakistan's crowded, mediatized public sphere today.

This presents important quandaries for the present study. As most of the films discussed do not have subtitles, or are not yet easily available in good quality formats, will the analysis offered here remain a hermetic academic exercise? Are the readings presented here merely yet another foray in irrelevance and obsolescence, and will they fail to elicit interest in questions that the films examined here raise, whether from the scholarly community internationally or from wider audiences in South Asia and its diasporas? While any prognosis is a risk in gazing at an imaginary crystal ball, one must stress that this study is not the only project that has encountered these dilemmas. The film *Zinda Bhaag* (Run for life, 2013, dir. Meenu Gaur and Farjad Nabi), discussed in chapter 4, is an ambitious attempt to address precisely such questions through practice, and in doing so, it returns to play with reflexivity of form and the recursiveness of cultural memory. *Zinda Bhaag* draws on the Lahore effect, citing multiple references from orality, theater, and cinema across South Asia, from the golden age of the social film from the forties to the seventies in India and Pakistan as well as the aesthetics and characters of the Punjabi film. Moreover, *Jago Hua Savera* (A new day dawns, 1959, dir. A. J. Kardar), discussed in chapter 1, is also a project that

encompasses multiple narratives and marshals themes and personnel from across South Asia.

This book, therefore, traverses an arc that argues, above all, that cinemas of Bombay and Lahore, and indeed of the wider network of Bombay-Calcutta-Dhaka-Karachi-Lahore films, have never existed in hermetic linguistic, thematic, and nationalist bubbles—indeed, the very concept of the Lahore effect instantiates precisely the opposite valences. A proper theoretical recognition of the multiply faceted universes Lahore cinema has inhabited is overdue—it has emerged from premodern orality and moved into the digital realm, and it has drawn promiscuously from Hindu mythology, Bengali performance traditions, Islamicate legends, Punjabi and Sindhi oral narratives, Urdu lyric poetry, Sufi conceptions of the self, progressive writing, and historical, social, and magical realism.[131] It has also drawn freely from Hollywood and world cinema, the psychological and sensorial stimulus of modernity, and much more—to recast these in commercial productions that imbricate realism with imaginative fantasy and address multiple publics far beyond the capacity of other cultural forms.

An understanding of this reverberative cultural field can offer important insights for reconsidering questions of affiliation and belonging during the fraught present, when official relations among many South Asian nations are not in an encouraging state and their internal majoritarian dynamics are increasingly hostile to values of multiplicity and plurality. The question of the adequacy of cultural forms to address these quandaries cannot be limited to avant-garde, experimental cinema or documentary approaches but has been more influentially instantiated in the social feature film. Compared to all other artistic forms and despite all of its shortcomings, it is arguably commercial cinema that played the most influential progressive role in South Asia during the twentieth century. It has done so by constituting publics beyond existing social divides, in forging a shared and expanded experience of modernity that extends beyond regional, ethnic, and sectarian affiliations, and in affectively challenging the selective amnesia of nation-state ideologies.