Cinema of Enchantment

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Perso-Arabic Genealogies of the
Hindi Masala Film

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Contents

Introduction: *Bhakti* or *Ashiqi*?[1]

> We are told that at the bottom of the untold past, a group of sorcerers met to create a tilism or magical world by using occult sciences to infuse inanimate matter with the spirits of planetary and cosmic forces.
>
> In the tilism, the sorcerers exercised powers that defied the laws of God and the physical world. They created illusions, transferred spirits between bodies, transmuted matter, made talismans, and configured and exploited the Earth's inherent physical forces to create extraordinary marvels.
>
> Once the tilism was created, the sorcerers named it Hoshruba. ('Of the Tilism called Hoshruba and the Master of the Tilism, Emperor Afrasiyab'. Jah 2009: xxxiv).

FROM *QISSA KHWANI BAZAAR* TO BOMBAY

The origins of three legendary figures of Hindi cinema have been traced to the narrow alleys of *Qissa Khwani Bazaar* [Market of Storytellers], 'the liveliest part' of Peshawar (Ali 2013), casting an aura of Hindi 'film-i' romance, glamour and adventure on the fabled 'City of Flowers' or 'City of Grain' that serves as the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in modern-day Pakistan. 'Tragedy king' Dilip Kumar was born in Mohalla Khodadad; 'Baadshah of Bollywood' Shah Rukh Khan's father Taj Mohammad was born in Shah Wali Katal; and 'the showman' Raj Kapoor's ancestral house still stands in Daki Naal Bandi.[2] William Dalrymple, who has thrown considerable light on this 'erstwhile camping ground for caravans and military adventures' where 'bearded Afridi, Pashto, Tanoli, Shinwari tribesmen' still 'bargain with merchants from Samarkand, Bukhara and Afghanistan' (Dalrymple 2008), reports that 'the professional storyteller, or *dastango*, would perform

nightlong recitations' of the *dastan* 'from memory' in the 'street of the storytellers' (Dalrymple 2008).

DASTAN, QISSA AND HINDI CINEMA

William L. Hanaway, who has made a close study of Persian dastans, describes them as popular 'orally recited' prose romances 'created, elaborated, and transmitted' by professional narrators called dastangos (Hanaway quoted in Pritchett 1991: 1).[3] Frances Pritchett explains that 'the narrative genre' to which dastan and *qissa* 'refer goes back to medieval' Iran and adds that 'to these terms could be appended either "-go" (go), "teller," or "-khvan" (khvān), "reciter, reader," to refer to the narrators of the tales' (Pritchett 1991: 1). The terms dastan and qissa, denoting specific genres in the original Persian, travelled to India in the eleventh century AD (Schimmel 1975: 204) and 'were used interchangeably, with the latter term predominating' and came to mean 'story' (Pritchett 1985: 1). The Perso-Arabic genres were indigenised though their incorporation of local practices that culminated in their co-option in Mughal narrative, visual and performing arts and the consequent emergence of an Indo-Islamic tradition of the dastan. Pritchett points out that, 'One narrative in particular, the Qissah-e Hamzah or *Dastan-e Amīr Hamzah* [DAH],[4] became far more popular in India than it had ever been in its homeland' (1985: 1). She produces convincing evidence to demonstrate that it was narrated at the Qutabshahi court of Golconda in addition to being a favourite of the Mughal emperor Akbar who would narrate it himself. With the demise of the last dastango Mir Baqir Ali in 1928, *dastangoi*, which had developed into an extremely sophisticated tradition in North India, became extinct. However, as Dalrymple maintains, 'the story [dastan] had had huge influence, not least on Indian drama and cinema, as well as on the development of the Urdu and Persian novels, early versions of which were often derived from the *dastans*' (2008).[5] Philip Lutgendorf agrees that a reader of the *Hamzah* would notice 'similarities of its repetitive episodes, its themes of love, honour, and heroism, as well as its sheer scope and narrative profligacy, both to earlier Indian genres and to the

dastan-like narratives of popular cinema' (2006: 247). Mahmood U. R. Farooqi, who has recently revived the ancient art of dastangoi[6] in India, names Hindi cinema as one of the descendants of the Persian derived performing art (quoted in Mita Kapur 2012).

Farooqi and others trace the dastangoi influence on Hindi cinema to its immediate predecessor, the Parsi theatre, the last in the line of company theatres which began in the middle of the 1880s. Kathryn Hansen's examination of the staging of *Indrasabha*[7] in Wajid Ali Shah's court in 1855 and of the Parsi theatre that emerged soon after confirms its Urdu antecedents (Hansen 1992, 2005). In his Introduction to the translation of Muhammad Husain Jah's redaction of 'Tilism-e Hoshruba', Musharraf Ali Farooqi narrates how Mir Ahmed Ali and fellow dastangos Amba Prasad Rasa and Hakir Asghar Ali Khan of Lucknow reinvented the Persian dastan in the *lakhnavi* tradition by introducing local practices to produce a new and distinctively Indian chapter of the Dastan-e Amir Hamzah, which Ali credited to an imaginary dastango named Faizi in Emperor Akbar's court (2009: xii). This book borrows the title of that best known *daftar* or chapter of the forty-six volume Dastan-e Amir Hamzah called 'Tilism-e Hoshruba', or 'enchantment that steals away the senses', as a metaphor for the affect popular Hindi cinema produces in its audience.

While Hindu narrative and visual genres provided Indian cinema its iconography that facilitated the formulation of the sacral aesthetics of *darshan*[8] and *dharma* (Mishra 2002), it was 'Urdu which provided a language for cinema' (Kesavan 1994: 248) and the Perso-Arabic narrative tradition of dastan or qissa inspired its plots (Lutgendorf 2006: 247). Despite the unmistakable trace of a strongly Islamicate strain in Hindi films, as identified by Kesavan (1994), the exclusive focus on Hindu performing and narrative arts, particularly the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana,* and the notion of dharma[9] (Mishra 2002: 15) in several studies of Hindi cinema has relegated alternative traditions derived from the medieval Perso-Arabic and the Turkic speaking world to the background (Lutgendorf 2006: 245). Hindi cinema's inherent syncreticism implicates the Islamic into the Hindu and the Sanskritic into the Perso-Arabic so deeply that it would be erroneous to isolate meta-principles based on any specific aesthetic or sacral tradition to

define it. Tracing the disruption of dominant Hindu epic narratives by the Perso-Arabic qissa or dastan, this book argues that if the narrative conflict in the Hindi film is structured by the Hindu ethic of dharma or the gaze defined by the religious practice of darshan, the romance or the romantic sub-plot is invariably patterned according to the conventions of the Arabic qissa or Persian dastan, particularly the *Qissa-i-Laila Majnu*. As opposed to the lens of fantasy through which the illusionism of Hindi cinema has been traditionally perceived, the book suggests that tilism [enchantment] might provide a demotic framework for examining its magical universe.

GENEALOGIES OF THE *QISSA* AND *DASTAN*

According to Annemarie Schimmel, dastangoi dates back to the eleventh century AD beginning with the Ghaznavid invasion (1975) and intersects with the transformation of the Persian into the Punjabi qissa (epic length verse romances) during the same period (Mir 2006). However, owing to the elision of their generic difference in Persia, the qissa and the dastan were conflated on the Indian subcontinent and understood to mean story in Urdu (Pritchett 1985: 1). Farina Mir has traced a complex genealogy of the qissa in Indian vernacular literatures to the Persian qissa (2006). She points out that qissa, used in north Indian languages to mean story, is of Arabic origin and is derived from *qassa*, to tell a story, to narrate. Used in Islamic literature to refer to tales told by popular religious storytellers, its meaning expanded over the years to allude to tales of non-religious character and the term qissa came to mean story in general. Similarly, the Persian lineage of the term suggests biography, usually the biographies of religious figures or pseudo-biographies such as the *Hamzanama*, which was disengaged from religion by the end of the second millennium to refer to stories in general and to romance in particular.[10] Citing Amir Khusrau's *Majnun Laila*, composed in the *masnavi* form, as evidence of the incorporation of qissa in the Persianate literary culture of the fourteenth century, Mir shows that these romances were gradually incorporated into Indian vernacular oral and textual traditions. She

effectively demonstrates that several *qisse* were already circulating in Persian as well as Punjabi vernaculars by the seventeenth century, spawning a new genre that married the local with the extra local. This genre deviated from the masnavi rhyme scheme while introducing tales situated in the local landscape and social relations. Mir concludes that by the end of the nineteenth century, qisse became central to Punjabi cultural life owing to the immense popularity they enjoyed both in literary circles and as oral texts.[11]

Frances Pritchett defines qissa as stories derived both from *The Thousand and One Nights* and *Kathasaritsagar*, thereby locating them in the syncretic cultural space that existed at the village level in India until the end of the nineteenth century. Pritchett (1991) testifies to the presence of qissa in *dakhani* Urdu[12] as early as the seventh century AD and argues that qisse and dastan survived in India largely as an oral storytelling tradition for centuries. But the written forms of qisse became available, according to Pritchett, only in 1780 after their publication by the Fort William College, whose Hindustani department included a *qissukhaun* [*qissa khwan*] (1985). Quoting Rāz Yazdānī, Pritchett shows that the Urdu qissa, that was now replaced by the term dastan, began in Delhi around 1830 (1985: 2). 'For about a century, from 1830 until 1930, *dāstān* narration (dastan goi) reigned in North India as an enormously popular, highly sophisticated "art of extemporaneous speech"', Pritchett concludes (1985: 3). The transcription of Urdu qisse began with the establishment of the Munshi Nawal Kishore Press in 1858 in Lucknow and the production of the forty-six-volume Dastan-e Amir Hamzah between 1893 and 1908. Pritchett is disheartened to discover that the flourishing qissa publishing business which she had meticulously documented in the 1970s was nearly extinct when she returned to India in the 1990s.

Although Pritchett was right about the oral narrative art of north India dying due to the seductive power of the Hindi film, her pessimistic view of the printed qisse as displacing the oral narrative tradition is not altogether accurate because they have been successfully incorporated as the narrative or lyrical component of Hindi cinema. Mahmood Farooqui, who has been trying to revive the traditional art of dastangoi, confirmed that 'these stories have influenced the earliest writers of Hindi cinema. The masses are

therefore familiar with the plots and characters of these dāstāns' (Farooqui 2006b). He reiterated this in another interview when he said: '[i]ts modern day equivalent would be Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, or even Hindi cinema' (Farooqui 2006a). The imaginative fantasy, the dreamlike power of the narrator's vision, the 'eerie, sensuous elegance of the Enchantment' structured by magic that Pritchett identifies as the essence of the dastan (1985: 4) appears to sum up the pleasures of the Hindi film.

BHAKTI OR *ASHIQI*

South Asian film scholars' examination of Indian epic, narrative, visual and theatrical traditions underpinning the cinematic text has gone a long way in elevating Hindi cinema from a 'bad copy' of Euro-American cinema to an alternative cinematic genre with a distinctive visual and narrative grammar, revealed to have been derived from diverse indigenous ancient and modern sources (Rajadhyaksha 1987; Chakravarty 1993; Prasad 1998; Vasudevan 2000/2001; Mishra 2002). Ashish Rajadhyaksha, in his essay 'The Phalke Era', was the first to call attention to the Hindi film's continuity with Indian epics by viewing Dhundiram Govind Phalke's *Raja Harishchandra* (1913) as a visual translation of the epic narrative (1987). In 'Hindi Cinema through the Ages', arguing that Indian cinema's storytelling devices came from mythological ones, Saibal Chatterjee traces them to the epic traditions of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* and the cinematic idiom to the ancient Sanskrit treatise *Natyashastra* (Chatterjee 2003). Sumita Chakravarty, in her book *Nationalist Thought in Popular Hindi Cinema*, foregrounds the centrality of the two epics in thematic conflicts and narrative conventions in Hindi films (1993). Viewing Hindi cinema within the framework of national cinema like Chakravarty, M. Madhava Prasad reveals the co-option of the epic narratives within the ideological construction of the Hindi film (1998). Vijay Mishra goes as far as to claim that all Hindi films were different versions of the *Mahabharata* (2002).

In addition to locating its narrative origins in Sanskrit epics and myths, these pioneering scholars have also formulated an

indigenous aesthetic for Indian cinema predicated on Hindu religious practices (Geeta Kapur 1987; Rajadhyaksha 1987; Srinivas 1996; Prasad 1998; Mishra 2002). Geeta Kapur's notion of frontality in Indian visual arts has been applied by several scholars, including Kapur herself, in their analysis of cinematic texts in the formulation of a mystical aesthetic for Hindi cinema (1987: 80). Rajadhyaksha's borrowing of her concept of frontality in his analysis of the mythological and saint films of the Phalke era and the gaze of Hindi cinema (1987) was given a specifically Hindu slant through its formalisation in Prasad's concept of darshan (1998: 75), an aesthetic that has been largely accepted, even if critically in some, in studies that followed (Vasudevan 2000; Mishra 2002; Jaikumar 2006). Mishra, in *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire*, took the analogy further in his translation of Lacanian desire into Hindu religious practices by elucidating the *dharmic* principle, which he regards as 'the grand syntagmatique' of Hindi cinema in relation to the *Mahabharata* (Mishra 2002: 15). The iconography of the temple, gods and deification is reiterated by Ravi Vasudevan in his foregrounding of the imagined Hindu subject of the Hindi film (Vasudevan 1996: 63), and in S. V. Srinivas' examination of fan cultures in the South (Srinivas 1996). As a consequence, Hindu religious imagery employed to describe the subject, effects, gaze and spectatorship of the Hindi film has become completely naturalised in the analyses of Hindi cinema over the years.

While existing studies of Hindi cinema engage in great depth with the ancient legacies of the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* and with more recent ones like Parsi theatre and calendar art, their privileging of its Hindu Sanskritic sources produces a homogenous discourse of indigeneity. Their emphasis on Sanskrit narrative and aesthetic traditions in the theorisation of Indian cinema has been interrogated for its globalising sweep. A clear genealogical shift has been visible since the publication of Mukul Kesavan's essay 'Urdu, Awadh and Tawaif: The Islamicate Origins of Hindi Cinema' in which he argues that 'while the house of Hindi cinema has many mansions, its architecture is inspired by Islamicate forms' (1994: 246). He borrows the term 'Islamicate' from Marshall G. S. Hodgson, who was 'driven to invent' the term to '*refer not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex*

historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves, and even when found among non-Muslims' [italics mine] (Hodgson 1974: 59). Philip Lutgendorf, in 'Is There an Indian Way of Filmmaking?', questions 'grandiose claims' made by film critics about the classical tradition and especially about the two Sanskrit epics constituting 'the great code' of popular filmmaking which is reiterated by filmmakers (2006: 229), and 'corrects certain imbalances and omissions' in this genealogical material by 'presenting material (for example, on the Indo-Islamic romance tradition)' that has been omitted (2006: 230).

Rachel Dwyer attributes film scholars' privileging of the Hindu Sanskritic lineage of Hindi cinema to the prominence given to the mythological in India 'as its founding genre and because of Phalke's eminence (and the survival of so much of his output)' (2006: 14). She points out that 'many other genres were popular during the silent period in Bombay including the stunt or action film, the historical, the Arabian Nights Oriental fantasy and the social' (Dwyer 2006: 14). Similary, in their book *Islamicate Cultures of Bombay Cinema* (2009), Ira Bhaskar and Richard Allen trace the Islamic connection 'to beginnings of cinema' (Verjee 2009) and assert that 'in early cinema, historicals (Sultanate and Mughal) were very popular, so too were oriental films or Arabian Nights fantasies' (ibid.).

Rosie Thomas complicates the widely circulated triumphal nationalist tale about a Hindu mythological as the first Indian film and Phalke's anointment as 'the founding father of Indian cinema' (Thomas 2014: 8) by suggesting the possibility of an earlier *Arabian Nights* fantasy called *Alibaba and the Forty Thieves* produced by Hiralal Sen that has 'been mostly either quietly ignored or dismissed' for 'the past hundred years' as '"just" a film record of a Bengali stage hit' (Thomas 2014: 31–32). Thomas speculates about the intriguing implications of a 'confusingly cultural-hybrid tale from the Arabian Nights, set within an Islamic fantasy world' (2014: 9) being considered Indian cinema's foundational text. Interrogating the elevation of the Hindu mythological as the earliest Indian film and the privileging of socials subsequently, Thomas has underlined the need for 'a nuanced picture of India's earliest films and filmmakers' that 'represents the true balance

between mythologicals, stunts, fantasies and other genres within that early history' (2014: 3) and called for 'a reassessment of B- and C-circuits throughout Indian history'. Her pioneering work attempts to redress the imbalance in Indian cinema histories by telling 'Indian cinema history through the fantasy film' (2014: 3) and by tracing the history of the *Arabian Nights* fantasy film from Hiralal Sen's *Alibaba* and *Gul-e-Bakawali* in the silent era and *Alam Ara* in the era of sound to the B- and C-grade costume and fantasy films like *Hatimtai* in the 1950s. Following the history of Indian cinema from below, Thomas argues that the B films of the 1950s and 1960s 'were arguably the place where the idealized Nehruvian "nation" became messy and porous' (2014: 16) and 'embodied a somewhat different vision of nationalism and modernizing India from that of the mainstream elite' (Thomas 2014: 17).

Hansen has attributed the naturalisation of Urdu as the register of romance in Hindi cinema to the migration of Urdu *munshi*s and poets to Bombay before and after the Partition of 1947 (Hansen 1992: 81) and to their co-option, first in Parsi theatre and subsequently in the film industry, as scriptwriters, lyricists and directors. Dwyer and Patel speculate that the change in Hindi films of the 1930s might have been partly due to the shift in cinema from being just a visual to an audio-visual medium with the addition of sound, in particular the creation of a musical cinema where songs[13] and melodramatic dialogues soon established themselves as a major 'attraction'. But they are of the view that these changes were taken from Parsi theatre, which 'drew on a rich repertoire of fantasy and historical romances from the Persian Shahnameh and Indo-Islamic romances as well as Shakespeare and Hindu mythologies' (Dwyer and Patel 2002). Tracing a link between the decline of Parsi theatre and the emergence of what they call the 'Islamicate film', they ascribe the latter to the migration of talent from Parsi theatre to the Hindi film.[14] Bhaskar and Allen, too, relate the transformation of the range of expressive idioms to the coming of sound, which they believe led to the emergence of the Muslim Social in the 1940s and its transformation into the dominant genre in the 1960s (Bhaskar and Allen 2009).[15] Dwyer traces the Urdu invasion of Hindi cinema back to the end of the silent era and the birth of the talkies, arguing that the coming of

sound to Indian cinema meant that Hindi cinema needed stars with the right accents (Dwyer 2006: 101). As the first talkie *Alam Ara* (1931) demonstrates, when the Hindi film began to speak, it spoke not in Hindi but in Urdu, which was not surprising in view of Urdu's dominance as the official language during the British Raj. However, it continued to speak in Urdu even after the propagation of a Sanskritised Hindi via state-owned media such as All India Radio (AIR), Doordarshan and educational institutions. Due to the dominance of Urdu writers and poets in Bombay cinema, the Hindi film continues to serve as the syncretic space destroyed by the partitioning of the nation in which Hindi and Urdu, Hindu and Muslim are deeply implicated with one another.

Hiralal Sen's unreleased *Alibaba and Forty Thieves* (1903) and Ardeshir Irani's *Alam Ara* (1931), separated by nearly three decades, gesture to a different pre-history of Indian cinema that has been erased in the construction of a unitary history of national cinema (Gera Roy 2010). If one were to advance the history of Hindi cinema to *Alibaba and Forty Thieves* or to begin with the history of sound films, it would foreground the qissa and dastan tradition derived from *One Thousand and One Nights*, the *Panchatantra* and the *Jataka* tales, which produces a syncretic history of a genre. Instead of focusing on the specifically Islamic influence on the theme, genre or song and dance of Hindi films, it would be more appropriate to explore an alternative aesthetic of the Hindi film that emerged from the other dominant Great Tradition on the Indian subcontinent, namely the Perso-Arabic.

The generic distinction between India's first silent film and talkies foregrounds differences other than those between the mythological/saint film and romance. This pre-history is grounded in the gap between the visual and the aural, Hindu religious iconography and Parsi theatre, Sanskrit and Perso-Arabic, Hindu and Muslim, bhakti[16] and *ashiqi*. While the mythological framework of the silent film demanded a Hindu iconography, sound returned it to the speech community of Urdu and the qissa/dastan tradition. Not discounting that Hindi cinema reveals visible traces of both classical and folk narrative and performative traditions of India, 'The Indian Talkies inherited its basic structure from Urdu Parsi theatre and so the talkies started with Urdu. Even the New Theatres

in Calcutta used Urdu writers' (Javed Akhtar quoted in Kabir 1999: 50). If the silent era reproduced a bhakti aesthetic through the expression of divine love, the talkies inaugurated the genre of romance structured by the secularisation of the Perso-Arabic tradition of ashiqi that has provided the idiom of romance in Hindi cinema for nearly a century. Although mythological and saint films of the silent era were dominated by a Hindu iconography, legitimising their Hindu readings, the release of the first talkie *Alam Ara* by a Parsi director, Ardeshir Irani, introduced a disjuncture in the Hindu tradition of filmmaking. When Wazir Mohammed Khan sang the first song of Indian cinema *De de khuda ke naam par* in the garb of a *faqir* [mendicant] in Irani's film, the subcontinent's syncretic *sufi* heritage was reaffirmed.

Defining the legacy of the Islamicate Empire 'as a shorthand for the impact that the practice of the Islamicate state and its ruling elite had on the colonial middle classes' and 'for the cinema they made', Kesavan points out that 'Islamicate culture bequeathed to Hindi cinema much more than a medium and a vocabulary; it provided it with the images of a good life, a model of the man about town, a stereotype of cultivated leisure and the ingredients for rentier decadence' (Kesavan 1994: 251). Borrowing Hodgson's notion of the Islamicate culture, Bhaskar and Allen maintain that 'from its very inception Bombay cinema, via the influence of Parsi theatre, has been informed by Islamicate culture and the Urdu language, the Persian love stories of Laila-Majnun and Shirin-Farhad, poetic forms such as the *ghazal* and the masnavi, and song traditions such as *nazms*, *ghazals* and *qawwalis*' (Bhaskar and Allen 2009: 3). In an essay 'Bhakti and Ashiqi in Hindi Cinema', Gera Roy throws light on the Perso-Arabic lineage of Hindi cinema by focusing on the concept of ashiqi as defined in the *Qissa-i-Laila Majnun* (Roy 2010).

Mukul Kesavan argues that 'the relationship between Hindi cinema and the Islamicate culture is a subject larger than the Muslim social as a genre or the stock Muslim characters that live in Hindi films' and that 'Urdu, Awadh and the tawaif have been instrumental in shaping Hindi cinema as a whole' (Kesavan 1994: 255). While agreeing with Kesavan that 'forms and idioms of the Islamicate cultural imaginary have been constitutive of

and permeate Hindi cinema as a whole', Bhaskar and Allen assert that 'they are most intensely realized in the distinctive Islamicate inflections of the larger genres of the Historical, the Courtesan and the Social, to yield subgenres' that they name 'the Muslim Historical and the Muslim Courtesan film along with the genre of the Muslim Social' (Bhaskar and Allen 2009: 3). While examining Hindi cinematic history through the lens of fantasy, Thomas points out that the *Arabian Nights* fantasies, orientals, historicals, costume and stunt films continued to enjoy huge popularity despite their demotion to the B- and C-circuit in the 1950s and 1960s and that the fantasy mode was carried over in the masala films of the 1970s (Thomas 2014).

This book unravels the Perso-Arabic lineage of Hindi cinema that has been relegated to the background by following and complicating the syncretic Islamicate trail that has been revealed in the studies mentioned above. Through tracing the cinematic reinscription of formulaic conventions of the Indo-Islamic qissa and dastan that disrupts the dominant Hindu Sanskrit epic narrative and the 'grande syntagmatique of *dharma*' (Mishra 2002) and darshan (Prasad 1998), it proposes that Hindi cinema be viewed as a cinema of enchantment. Following Thomas's argument that the *dastanic* genre and tropes are directly borrowed in the structure and narrational form of Orientalist genres of the silent period and the stunt film and costume dramas that continued to be popular into the early and later sound periods, this book explores the continuity of these features in the 'masala' film of the 1960s and 1970s. But it also demonstrates that despite the absence of overt fantastic features of the dastan in the modern forms of the historical and the social, they exhibit strong generic, narrative, visual, musical affinities of the qissa and dastan. It claims that not only 'Urdu, Awadh and the tawaif', which have been identified by Kesavan (1994) as an integral component of the Islamicate cultural tradition, but also Islamic metaphysical concepts underpinning the Arabic qissa, Persian dastan and the Urdu ghazal have been synthesised with Hindu mythological and religious concepts in almost all genres of Hindi cinema, except perhaps the mythological and devotional.

To avoid the dangers of a monolithic theory of Hindi cinema that is generically varied and historically layered, the term

'Hindi cinema' has been employed in this book to denote popular Hindi commercial cinema produced in Bombay or Mumbai, and primarily engages with the films from the 1960s to 1980s while cross-referencing Hindi films of the 1950s and the 'Bollywood' films that have emerged since the 1990s. In particular, it refers to the strange concoction known as the 'masala film', which is routinely prepared by mixing ingredients such as song and dance, the comic sub-plot, fight scenes, costumes, happy endings in the right proportion to ensure a film's success at the box office.[17] It contends that although new Bollywood films beginning in the mid-1990s significantly differ in their subject, content, and address from mainstream Hindi films between the 1960s to 1980s, they continue to invoke their formulaic conventions, even if with a parodic intent. In attempting to isolate Hindi cinema's generic debt to the Perso-Arabic tradition, this book does not dwell on the transformations in its basic template necessitated by alteration in modes of production, distribution and consumption. Instead of drawing on the received grammar of film theory, it borrows from the film industry its own jargon to examine its ideas of storytelling, time, space, characters and language.

THEY DO IT DIFFERENTLY IN THE CINEMA OF ENCHANTMENT

The twin tropes of darshan and dharma same here derived from Hindu religion and philosophy have been effectively employed to elucidate the structure, movement and gaze in Hindi cinema and to construct an alternative aesthetic for Indian, not only Hindi, cinema (Rajadhyaksha 1987; Prasad 1998; Mishra 2002). Darshan and dharma have undoubtedly served as an ingenious critical category that have been borrowed without reservations for eliciting illuminating readings of individual films as well as for founding a theory of Indian cinema. However, the overwhelming dependence of film scholars on the twin concepts has resulted in the production of a hegemonising rhetoric that has prevented the emergence of competing concepts and theories. Their exclusive focus on the Hindu performing and narrative arts, particularly the epics, the

Mahabharata and the *Ramayana,* has relegated alternative traditions to the background. While acknowledging the contribution of the dominant Hindu Sanskritic and other narrative traditions to the shaping of popular Hindi cinema and sensitive to the dangers of formulating monolithic theoretical constructs, this book aims to explore alternative narrative influences that have governed storytelling in Hindi films, particularly the Perso-Arabic legacy of the qissa and dastan that has been erased or marginalised in the construction of Hindi cinema as national cinema.[18]

Agreeing with Kesavan that the Hindi film, 'the last stronghold of Urdu in independent India, its lost haven in a sea of linguistic bigotry' (1994: 246), the opening chapter demonstrates the syncretic heritage of Hindi cinema. Through its retention of Urdu that resembles spoken Hindi, the Hindi film remains one of the last significant spaces in which the eclectic *ganga-jamuni tehzeeb* [composite culture], that prevailed in the Indian public space until the end of the nineteenth century, continues to survive. The dominance of Urdu in Hindi cinema has been explained through the large-scale migration of Urdu munshis [clerks, writers, accountants] to Parsi theatre from north India following the withdrawal of royal patronage and the cross-border migration of Urdu writers and actors from Lahore to Bombay after the Partition of India in 1947. Since the writers as well as actors were more conversant with the Urdu language and culture, Urdu became the preferred idiom of Hindi cinema. The preference of Urdu terms over Hindi ones in the translation of key concepts of Hindi cinema such as *ishq* [love], *waqt* [time, destiny], *izzat* [honour], *daulat* [wealth], *qanoon* [law] and so on naturalised Urdu as the lingua franca of Hindi cinema. Despite its displacement by 'all kinds of Hindi', over the years (Trivedi 2006), Urdu continues to serve as the register of romance and intense emotion in Hindi cinema even in the present.

Chapter Three '*Qissa-i-Laila Majnun* and Romance in Hindi Cinema' argues that the dharma aesthetic of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* is disrupted by the trope of ishq as defined in the qissa of Laila-Majnun in the romance plot. Tracing the journey of the qissa from Persia to North India and Bombay over several centuries, it argues that the qissa has been appropriated as the

idiom of pure romance in Hindi cinema since the silent era in preference over the alternative Hindu trope of Radha-Krishna. It demonstrates that the cinematic conflict in Hindi cinema emerges as a result of the conflicting demands of ishq and dharma. The disruption of the dharmic principle through the hyperbolic language of ashiqi in the Hindi film shows the deep implication of the Islamic in the Hindu. The chapter argues that while dharma forms the overarching principle of Hindi cinema, the provision for extended romance and courtship in narrative and song and dance sequences in the typical masala film facilitates the insertion of the Perso-Arabic trope of ishq in the feudal family melodrama. However, unlike *Udhri* poetry, which elevates *pak ishq* that is pure, unburdened and unsullied by the union of lovers or domesticity, Hindi cinema integrates ishq within the social economy of the Hindu family through juxtaposing the competing pressures of ishq and dharma in the narrative conflict; this conflict is resolved usually by the valorisation of ishq as a higher form of dharma in tragic romances, or by its expansion through the inclusion of the lovers' filial obligations in others.

After tracing the influence of the *Qissa-i-Laila Majnun* on the plot and characters of Hindi cinema, Chapter Four locates the origins of its stereotyped characters, often denigrated for their lack of development, in the two-dimensional characters of the dastan who exist only to fulfill a function. The handsome *shehzadas*, *paris*, *divs* and *ayyars* of the dastan reappear in the shape of incredibly handsome heroes, impossibly beautiful heroines, villains, vamps and comedians of Hindi cinema. The function of the characters is to polarise the moral conflict between good and evil through their reenactment of the dastan trope of the prince releasing his kingdom or people from inhuman monsters. The description of the Hindi film heroine fits that of the *houris* in Persian texts. Like the houris, the heroine of the Hindi film is a virtuous seductress who titillates through her innocence. She is contrasted with the seductress vamp who is represented as a Zuleikha-like character who leads men astray by displaying her body, thus reenacting the opposition between the faithful *Mihr Nigar* and selfish *Asman Pari* in the Dastan-e Amir Hamzah. The most important character in the dastan, the ayyar, is reborn in the Hindi film as the comedian

whose role is to aid the hero in his romantic and/or heroic quest in addition to providing comic relief through wit and trickery.

Chapter Five, 'Ajeeb Dāstān Hai Yeh [It is a Strange Tale Indeed]: Storytelling in Hindi Cinema' engages with the way stories are told in Hindi cinema. Attributing its verbosity to the influence of storytelling traditions such as the dastan, it attempts to tease out the difference between *sunna* [listening] and *rachna* [drawing; creating] in the dastan's reinscription within Hindi cinema. It demonstrates that Hindi cinema's fragmented structure that has been connected through the syntagmatique of dharma is loosely arranged in a paratactic fashion following that of the dastan. Further, it attempts to construct a morphology of the Hindi film through its being structured by the defining features of the dastan such as *husn-i-ishq* [beauty and love], *bazm* [love], *razm* [warfare], *ayyari* [trickery] and *tilism* [enchantment]. It demonstrates that the formulaic plot and conventions of the Hindi film have been broadly derived from the dastan. The appeal of its formulaic plots that reiterate familiar tropes for its audience lies in the pleasure of repetition and detail rather than suspense and originality. In proposing the plot of Hindi cinema as being structured by the laws of possibility rather than those of causality as in the dastan, it suggests an alternative mode of telling stories in which the pleasure of infinite expansion far exceeds that of originality through the device of *dastan rokna* [stalling the dastan].

Chapter Six '*Waqt ki Har Sheh Ghulam* [Everything is Subject to Time]: Time in Hindi Cinema' expands the cinema's disregard of the laws of causality predicated on a homogenous, logical, disenchanted time through the invocation of an untranslatable temporal otherness in which the time of Persian mysticism is incorporated in the Hindu notion of time. The chapter connects Hindi cinema's violation of the logic of cause and effect by providing a glimpse of an enchanted world in which human action is determined by *kismet* or destiny. The central argument of the chapter is that Hindi cinema articulates an alternative temporality that interrogates the homogenous, clock time of the West. Although the Hindu cyclic time and the theory of *karma* form the overarching framework within which events occur, Hindi cinema's preference for Urdu terms for time such as *zamana*, waqt and *hal* embed it

within the cosmological time of Persian mysticism. The notion of a personal time or waqt governing human destinies is demonstrated as dominating the universe of Hindi cinema. While the karma theory is invoked to explain sorrow or happiness in the present life, events occurring in the empirical world are elucidated through the Perso-Arabic notion of *zaman*. Love is viewed as transporting the lover into a mystical moment called hal experienced by sufis during which the distinction between past and the future is dissolved. Finally, Hindu cyclic time is articulated to the repetitive time of the *ta'ziyeh* in the idea of reincarnation.

If the representation of time in Hindi cinema challenges linear, homogeneous, disenchanted time as reflected in the causality of modern Western narratives, it also produces a space that is altogether enchanted. Chapter Seven 'Filmistan' addresses the utopian space of Hindi cinema, which is a world of dreams that shuts out all troubles, and traces its escapist orientation to the escapism of the dastan that constituted the prime source of the genre's appeal. Contesting the widely held view of the space of new Bollywood films as a fabricated, designer space that moves the Hindi film out of real locations, it maintains that space in Hindi cinema has always been constructed and organised in a dyadic fashion; it does not exist in any real space but has a heterotopic dimension that resembles the space known as *alam al-mithal*, the world of analogies or *alam al-khayal*, the world of imagination. It demonstrates that the division of space is patterned after Persian cosmological space through its binary divisions of *jannat* and *jahannam*, the city and the country, and the slum and the mansion. The description of jannat as a green expanse in Persian texts is translated into the mountains, rivers and lakes that form the visual backdrop of romance in the Hindi film. On the other hand, the description of jahannam is literally reproduced in the habitation of the villain in Hindi cinema. If the mansions of the rich approximate the description of the Sheesh Mahal in *Anarkali* (1922), the slums are aesthetised versions of real slums. The city-country dyad forms another important opposition—if the city is the metaphor of modernity, the village is the signifier of tradition and innocence.

The concept of the cinema of attractions has tended to conflate types of cinema that may be considered divergent. The construction

of an orientalist anti-mimeticism to elucidate Hindi cinema's turn from reality by invoking the non-mimetic order permeating Indian performing arts can homogenise what are in fact disparate performative traditions. The consensus among folklorists that folk genres should be defined in relation to structural features has led to a confusion between the specific differences between the related genres of fairytale, fable, legend and folktale. Even though fantasy and fairytale are generically discrete, Sudhir Kakar conflates the two categories in comparing them to Hindi cinema. Whether or not the modern idiom of fantasy or the postmodern one of magic realism used to describe the Hindi film or the dastan is appropriate for defining a premodern genre or not is another matter. Neither magic realist nor hyperreal, nor conforming to postmodern Western categories invented to interrogate modernist investment in mimetic realism, Hindi cinema borrows the tilismic mode of representation to construct an enchanted space that suggests that the world itself is an illusion. The concluding chapter therefore proposes that Hindi cinema should be viewed as a cinema of enchantment.

NOTES

1. This chapter draws on 'Bhakti and Ashiqi: The Syncretic Heritage of Hindi Cinema' by Anjali Gera Roy, which first appeared in *Studies in South Asian Film and Media* 2(1) in 2010, and was subsequently published as '*Qissa* and the Popular Hindi Cinema', in *Storytelling in World Cinemas. Volume 2: Contexts*, edited by Lina Khatib, in 2013. New York; West Sussex: Wallflower Press Book, Columbia University Press.

2. Hindko, the language Dilip Kumar speaks and is also spoken by Shah Rukh Khan's family, was the language of Hind, the sixth province of the ancient Persian empire. It is rumoured that Dilip Kumar would address Raj Kapoor as *laale* [the Pathan term for Hindus] who would respond by affectionately calling him *laale di jaan* [the Lala's life]. Percy Sykes, drawing on Herodotus, states that, 'we find that out of the twenty provinces into which the Persian Empire was divided, six practically composed what is the Afghanistan of today' (Sykes 2014). 'Hindko is the term locally used to cover the heterogeneous northern dialects spoken in the hilly areas above the Salt Range', which includes the districts of 'Abbottabad, Haripur, Mansehra, Attock of Pakistan, while there are a substantial number of

speakers of Hindko in cities like Peshawar, Nowshera, Swabi, and Kohat of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan and both parts of Kashmir' (Shackle 1980). Hindko speakers are sometimes also referred to as Punjabi Pathans because many of those who consider Hindko as mother tongue in Peshawar and Kohat are Pashtuns by origin (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindko_dialect).

3. 'He mentions five as the principal ones surviving from the pre-Safavid (i.e., fifteenth century and earlier) period: those which grew up around the adventures of the world-conqueror Alexander, the great Persian king Darius, the Prophet's uncle Hamzah, the legendary king Fīroz Shāh, and— an interesting counterpoint—a humbly born trickster-hero named Samak the Ayyar. Only a few translations of these texts into Western languages have ever been made' (Pritchett 1991: 1).

4. The *Dastan-e Amir Hamzah* deals with the adventures of Hamzah ibn Abd al-Muttalib, a historical figure who was the Prophet's paternal uncle. While *Hamzah* might have been historical, the magical and romantic adventures of the tale were appended during the gradual transformation of the historical tale into a secular romance.

5. Dastan had a huge influence on the development of the Hindi novel as well, particularly on the writings of Devakinandan Khatri's *Chandrakanta* (1888).

6. Dastangoi is defined as the narration of dastans by professional storytellers in the *kehwa khane* or tea shops of Persia, which became extremely popular in India.

7. 'Urdu theatre grew out of a spectacular production of *Indrasabha* ("The Heavenly Court of Indra"), an operatic drama written by the poet Agha Hasan Amanat and produced in 1855 in the palace courtyard of the last nawab of Oudh, Wajid Ali Shah' (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2011).

8. *Darshan* (Sanskrit: auspicious viewing), also spelled *darshana*, in Hindu worship is the beholding of a deity (especially in image form), revered person, or sacred object. The experience is often conceived to be reciprocal and results in the human viewer's receiving a blessing (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/151828/*darshan*.

9. *Dharma*, Sanskrit *dharma*, Pali dhamma, is a key concept with multiple meanings in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. In Hinduism, *dharma* is the religious and moral law governing individual conduct and one of the four goals of life, to be followed according to one's class, status and station in life (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). Vijay Mishra argues that 'a transcendental principle of *dharma* (the Ultimate Hindu Law), a decentred notion of genre, and a mode of heterogeneous manufacture combine to

create the sentimental melodramatic romance that is Bombay Cinema' (2002: 14).

10. Focusing on one particular *qissa*, Farina Mir shows how the romance tradition was refined by the Persian poets Gorgānī and Ansari and was perfected by Nezāmi by borrowing from both Persian and Arabic *qisse*, leading to the evolution of a new poetic *masnavi* or epic poem in rhymed verse. Mir contends that Persian and Arabic romances travelled to South Asia with court poets, merchants, traders, sufis and mendicants in the medieval period, and were incorporated into the oral and literary traditions (2006).

11. *Majnun Laila*'s Indian connection is established by a Rajasthani legend that has it that Laila and Majnun, originally from Sindh, sought refuge in the Rajasthani village of Sriganganagar before breathing their last, and a two-day fair held there annually in June is attended by lovers and newlyweds to commemorate the legendary lovers.

12. *Dakhani* arose as the Muslim court language of the Deccan Plateau around 1300 AD in ways similar to Urdu. It is defined in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as a variety of Urdu that 'shows more affinity with eastern Punjabi and Haryanvi than with Khari Boli, which provides the grammatical structure of standard modern Urdu' (http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/150019/*Dakhani*).

13. English translations of all Hindi film songs and dialogues cited in the volume are by Anjali Gera Roy, unless mentioned otherwise.

14. However, Iqbal Masud argues that 'the Muslim ethos in Indian cinema was not represented by "Muslim" artists alone' and points out that 'a host of non-Muslims like Sohrab Modi, Guru Dutt or Shyam Benegal can well claim to be part of the "Muslim" ethos of north India' (2005).

15. The Muslim Social is a genre in Hindi cinema popular in the 1950s and 1960s that portrayed and critiqued Islamicate culture. Allen and Bhaskar have divided it into two categories: 'classic Muslim socials' that depict the famed nawabi culture and focus on upper class/elite Muslim families, and 'new wave Muslim socials' that portray the socio-economic travails of middle-class Muslim families (Bhaskar and Allen 2009: 91–92). Lawrence Babb and Susan Wadley mention that Urdu poetry and musical genres commonly associated with Islam were an integral part of the Muslim Social (Babb and Wadley 1998: 151).

16. 'A path to achieving salvation through loving devotion to a particular deity, open to all persons irrespective of sex or caste' (Free Online Dictionary). Bhakti (devotion to a deity constituting a way to salvation in Hinduism) is defined as a 'Southern Asian devotional

movement, particularly in Hinduism, emphasizing the love of a devotee for his or her personal god. In contrast to Advaita, bhakti assumes a dualistic relationship between devotee and deity' (Webster).

17. Although the culinary term masala was first applied by film critics to refer to the films of Manmohan Desai, who successfully exploited the formula in the 1970s and 1980s, the mixing of genres—action, comedy, romance, musical, melodrama that defines the genre has been in use since the 1950s and persists till date. Not only 'feudal family romances', as M. Madhava Prasad describes the films of the 1950s (1998: 30–31), but also new Bollywood films of the 1990s invariably fall back on the time-tested formula of six songs, romance, side comedy, fight and melodrama that characterises the masala film. Masala film is not interpreted here only to refer to the genre Manmohan Desai is believed to have inaugurated in the 1970s but the entire gamut of films that display a similar mixing of genres.

18. *Qissa* and dastan that have a specific lineage in Persian tradition have been conflated in India to refer to story in general.

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The Urdu *Sha'ir* [Poet] , *Sha'iri* [Poetry] and the *Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb* [Ganga-Jamuni Culture][1]

FILM-I ZUBAAN

As a cinema defined by a language that is not its language, Hindi cinema presents a conundrum posed by one of its best known scriptwriters and lyricists Javed Akhtar: 'What is the language of what we call Hindi films? We have always called them Hindi films but what is the language?' (Akhtar 2007: 266). Akhtar answers the riddle himself while sharing his own compositional practices, 'When I write the dialogue, my basic concern is to reach out to as many people as possible' (Akhtar 2007: 266). Viewing purity of culture or language as an impediment to communication, he explains that he switches between Urdu-Persian and Hindi guided by their familiarity to the average filmgoer. Similarly, renowned Urdu poet, lyricist and filmmaker Gulzar states that 'the language that we use in films' is perhaps 'the most appropriate, and speakable without any pretences', and that it is 'the right language of the people' whether one calls it 'Urdu, Hindi or Hindustani' (Gulzar 1999). While Akhtar considers the language of Hindi films as 'a language in its own terms' and insists that 'we do not use the word Hindustani for it' (Akhtar 2007: 266), Gulzar names his language 'Hindustani', the 'Hindustani that Gandhi wanted', taking care to add that this language is 'not only a mix of Urdu, Hindi and Persian—it also features Panjabi and Bangla words' (Gulzar 2012: 184).

Considering Urdu as one of 'the most obvious examples of Islamicate forms', Mukul Kesavan states that 'the Hindi film has been shaped out of the rhetorical and demotic resources of Urdu' (1994: 246). Calling attention to the Urdu titles, lyrics and dialogues of Hindi cinema that are replete with Perso-Arabic loan

words, he argues that stock emotions of Hindi cinema are evoked through Urdu, which 'didn't simply give utterance to the narratives characteristic of Hindi cinema, it actually helped to create them' (Kesavan 1994: 250). Against Harish Trivedi who contends that the language of Hindi cinema has evolved to incorporate 'all kinds of Hindi' (Trivedi 2006) ranging from Urdu-Hindi and Sanskritic Hindi to *Bambaiyya* and Hinglish, the presence of the culture of '*nazm*, *ghazal* and qawwali in the use of poetry or *sha'iri*', according to Bhaskar and Allen, results 'in the use of Urdu lexicon in dialogues' (Bhaskar and Allen 2009).

GANGA-JAMUNI TEHZEEB

Examining the relationship between Hindi and Urdu by comparing the commonalities between literatures in the two languages, Trivedi verifies the existence of 'a "composite" literary culture', mentioned by a number of scholars (Trivedi 2012: 2). By studying the work of writers who code-switched between Urdu and Hindi with consummate ease, Trivedi decouples Urdu from Islam and demystifies the myth of Hindustani as a mix of Hindi and Urdu. He traces the evolution of Urdu from a common pool of Braj, Awadhi and Khari Boli through its encouragement as an official language by the British and the closure of the overlapping boundaries between Hindi and Urdu through the Persianisation of Urdu, following the example of *Vali Dakhani* and the Sanskitisation of Hindi at the end of the nineteenth century. Owing to this thickening of boundaries between Urdu-Hindi following the emergence of different linguistic and sectarian nationalisms at the end of the nineteenth century, this '*Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb* as it is routinely called' (Trivedi 2012: 2), was destroyed. However, while the ideological imperatives of the nation state split Hindi-Urdu in the public sphere with the designation of a Sanskritised Hindi as the official language, the boundaries between the languages continue to overlap in real language use—a truth that is acknowledged and reproduced in Hindi cinema.

When did Hindi split from Urdu and how did it destroy the composite Hindi-Urdu space, if there was one? How does Hindi cinema continue to perform and reproduce this composite culture

and identity which has vanished from other spaces? This chapter suggests that despite the erasure of 'the *Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb*' in the political space of the Indian nation state, this composite culture and aesthetic has structured the vocabulary and grammar of Hindi cinema. Due to the migration of Urdu poets and munshis before and after Partition to Parsi theatre and cinema and the cross-border migration of filmmakers and actors from Punjab to Mumbai after Partition, Hindi cinema has served as one of the last significant spaces of this famed syncretic culture that prevailed until the end of the nineteenth century.[2] The chapter argues that the Perso-Arabic conventions of dastan and qisse are syncretised with Sanskrit epic tropes and the sufi and the *tasawwuf* discourse of ashiqi, *fana* and *nazar* is inserted into the Hindu ethic of dharma and darshan through the Urdu titles, dialogues and lyrics of Hindi cinema that draw on Perso-Arabic loan words and imagery and metaphors of Persian, Arabic and Indian Urdu poetry.

HINDI IN URDU, URDU IN HINDI

Their implication in Hindu or Islamic nationalisms and in the production of nationalist identities has complicated the issue of whether Hindi and Urdu should be considered one or two languages. Linguistically, Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani are believed to display great similarities, particularly in their spoken form. Arguing that the Urdu/Hindi divide is artificial, Abdul Jamil Khan explains, 'Urdu, Hindi, and Hindustani are three names for one speech/language, the *lingua franca* of the Indian subcontinent or undivided India' (prior to 1947) (Khan 2006: 13). Khan holds script to be responsible for the wedge between Urdu and Hindi: 'Written in Arabic-Persian script (APS), it is popularly known as Urdu, and in Devnagari script (DNS) as Hindi' (Khan 2006: 13). Contending that this was 'the official language of British India since 1835' under 'the names Urdu and/or Hindustani (in APS)' and is 'currently the official language of Pakistan', he appears to suggest that the dichotomy between the twin languages is merely a matter of semantics by stating that 'it assumed modest significance after 1900, mainly among Hindus' under 'its second

name Hindi, in DNS', and 'replaced its twin by taking the official status in divided India after 1947' (Khan 2006: 13). Arguing that 'an image of an increasingly dichotomized Hindi Urdu' is not demonstrable in real language use, Christine Everaert concludes that 'it is impossible to trace separate roots for Hindi and Urdu' (Everaert 2010: 2–3). According to Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, 'Early names for the language now called Urdu were (more or less in chronological order) "Hindvi", "Hindi", "Dihlavi", "Gujri", "Dakani", and "Rekhtah"' (Faruqi 2003: 806). He, too, maintains that no discussion on Hindi against Urdu today can miss the point 'that there *are* two claimants to a single linguistic and literary tradition, and that the whole issue is more political than academic' (Faruqi 2003: 806). Through a detailed historical account of the origin myths and realities of the terms Hindi and Urdu, Faruqi focuses on the British invention of names and points out that Urdu—as the name of the language—came to be used for the first time around 1780 through the British confusion of '*Zuban-e Urdu-e Mualla*' [literally, language of the exalted army or camp], with the language Urdu. Examining poetry in Rekhta,[3] a mixed language, Imre Bangha, however, avers that the Persianised script version of a form of Rekhta poetry was developed in the sixteenth century from the Nirgun Sant tradition, which mixed Persian words and phrases into a Hindvi grammar, and was written in Devnagari script, which later developed into the literary language known as Urdu today (Bangha 2010: 81). The excision of Urdu from Hindi has been attributed to the British Divide and Rule politics, particularly through its academic legitimisation by John Gilchrist, Professor at Fort William College, Kolkata. It was Gilchrist who inaugurated the identification of languages with script and religion by describing the speech of Muslims written in the Arabic Persian script as Urdu and that of Hindus transcribed in Devnagari as Hindvi.

Trivedi dwells on the intimacy between Urdu and Hindi as the 'other' of each other and shows that the two have 'existed in a state of mutual contestation and rivalry' beginning 'in the latter half of the nineteenth century and right up to Partition if not beyond' (Trivedi 2012: 1). Arguing that 'language and religion have been among the major symbols of group identity in South Asia during the past century' (Brass 1974: 3), Paul Brass explains 'the Muslim

movement on behalf of Urdu' in which 'language was involved along with religion' as 'a conscious process of symbol selection' through which 'a people creates its own history' (Brass 1974: 121). Brass shows that objective differences between ethnic groups such as language and religion are not givens but can be altered and that political elites choose one symbol as primary and strive to bring other symbols into line in what he terms a 'multi-symbol congruence', and that political organisations do not merely reflect group consciousness but also shape it by deliberate manipulation of symbols. Brass has identified three major reasons for the increasing divergence between Hindi and Urdu, the first being Muslim rulers' choice of the Persian Arabic script to write Urdu; development of the Hindi movement in north India in the late nineteenth century that promoted the use of Devnagari script in administration and education (Brass 1974: 128); and finally, reinforcing the tendency to identify Urdu as the language of Muslims and Hindi as the language of Hindus (Brass 1974: 136).

Christopher King expands on the relationship between language, religion and nationalism and the way ethnic groups transform into communities, and then into nationalities as revealed by Brass. He demonstrates that the Hindi movement of the nineteenth century in north India was 'Led by Hindu caste groups whose close association with Hindi and Sanskrit handicapped them in the increasing competition for government service' and that 'the essence of the movement lay in efforts to differentiate Hindi from Urdu and to make Hindi a symbol of Hindu culture' (King 1994: 10–11). King views the movement

> as part of a process of multi-symbol congruence in which Hindu supporters of Hindi strove to transform the existing equations of Urdu = Muslim + Hindu and Hindi = Hindu + Muslim into Urdu = Muslim and Hindi = Hindu … [which] expressed a Hindu nationalism whose essence lay in the denial of existing assimilation to cultural traditions associated with Muslim rule and an affirmation of potential difference from these traditions. (King 1994: 15)

Trivedi agrees that Hindi 'began to fashion itself comprehensively and assert vigorously its new identity', in relation to 'its sister

language Urdu' in 'the last quarter of the nineteenth century' (Trivedi 2003: 958). He argues that through its adoption as the national language or *rashtrabhasha* by Gandhi and the Congress, Hindi 'became not only the medium but also one of the major planks of anticolonial nationalism, which led to its installation after Independence as the *rajbhasha*, the official language of the nation-state' (Trivedi 2003: 958).

AWADH TO BOMBAY, LAHORE TO BOMBAY

A number of reasons have been attributed to the retention of this shared language, Hindvi, Hindi, Hindustani, in Hindi cinema such as the decline of the Urdu publishing industry after the introduction of Hindi as the official language of several provinces in 1853, the influx of Urdu munshis [clerks, writers, accountants] to Parsi theatre in the 1880s, the migration of *tawa'ifs* [courtesans] from Lucknow, the exodus of Punjabi filmmakers, musicians, lyricists, singers and actors from Lahore and other districts of Punjab and of Urdu writers and poets to Bombay after Independence. However, the choice of this language is equally dictated by the film industry's desire to communicate with a wider audience, and its perception of Urdu as being more appropriate for evoking emotions in melodramatic plots. Thus, Urdu travelled both indirectly and directly to Hindi cinema through Parsi theatre and the migration of Urdu-speaking writers, poets, actors, filmmakers and directors to Bombay before and after Partition.

Parsi Theatre

Hindi cinema appears to have inherited the Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb from Parsi theatre, a modern theatre form that emerged in Bombay in 1850 and is perceived as its major pre-cinematic influence. Kathryn Hansen argues that 'the Parsi theatre was produced by a cosmopolitan entertainment economy at a time when linguistic and communal identities were fluid and overlapping' (2003: 59–60). With its ownership in the hands of Parsis and with actors,

writers, musicians, painters, stagehands and other personnel drawn from Hindus, Muslims, Anglo-Indians and Baghdadi Jews, she considers the theatre 'a unique site of communal harmony' (Hansen 2003: 43).

While its origins in Parsi theatre have been related to Hindi cinema's preference for Urdu, particularly as the register of romance, over English or Gujarati, the reason for Parsi theatre's adoption of the stylised structures of language, thought and feeling associated with the Urdu language are far from clear. Hansen shows that the turn in Parsi theatre from English and Gujarati to Urdu was motivated by complex considerations including the objective of extending its viewership through the use of a lingua franca, which happened to be Urdu in the nineteenth century, and to draw from Urdu and its Indo-Islamic heritage its rich legacy of poetry, music and narrative. She asserts that Parsi theatrical companies 'embraced the poetics of the Urdu *ghazal* with its declarations of ishq (passion) and recurring radifs (refrains)', which she regards as 'the contribution of Urdu *munshis* (playwrights), who, together with their more illustrious actor-manager employers, co-created a distinctive Parsi-Urdu theatrical style' (Hansen 2010).[4] Hansen also suggests that conventions of melodrama required a more forceful rhythmic style of delivery to which actors trained in Urdu were more attuned (Hansen 2010). However, since 'knowledge of Urdu was lacking among playwrights, actors, and spectators when the language was first introduced on stage', as Hansen points out, the theatric public consolidated by Parsi theatre did not comprise the Urdu speaking north Indian Muslims, *Kayasths* and Punjabis (Hansen 2003: 385). Interrogating 'the notion that the linguistic medium of popular culture is defined by a preexisting group of speakers who are presumed to constitute its audience or public', she argues that 'the circulation of linguistic forms through popular media itself articulates social boundaries and enables the consolidation of linguistic identities' (Hansen 2003: 383). She concludes that by 'adopting Urdu, the Parsi theatre embraced more than a language or community', and that it gained 'an entire vocabulary of pleasure, and one that had the advantage of lacking a territorial boundary' (Hansen 2003: 402).

Urdu Writers

Urdu as the 'vocabulary of pleasure' introduced in Parsi theatre was carried over in Hindi cinema through the presence of Urdu writers.[5] Lalit Joshi explains the exodus of Urdu writers to Bombay to the decline in Urdu publishing industry due to the declaration of Hindi as the language of administration in Bihar and the Central and United Provinces (current-day Uttar Pradesh) in 1900 (Joshi 2009: 29). Rachel Dwyer and others have attributed Urdu's dominance in Hindi cinema to the arrival of Urdu writers and poets such as Agha Hashr Kashmiri, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas and Sa'adat Hasan Manto in Bombay (Dwyer 2006). All the major writers of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s wrote in Urdu. Some of the best known figures of modern Urdu literature and members of the Progressive Writers' Movement such as Manto, Krishan Chander, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Kaifi Azmi, Jan Nisar Akhtar, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Ali Sardar Jafri, Majaz, Meeraji, and Khwaja Ahmed Abbas were closely associated with Hindi cinema as script writers and lyricists (Naqvi 2003). Drawn from undivided Punjab, Delhi, United Provinces and Bihar, these writers included non-Muslims such as Prem Chand, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Krishan Chander and Upendranath Ashk. Mohan Kumar, who directed a string of box office hits like *Ayee Milan Ki Bela* (1964) in the 1960s to *Avtaar* in 1983, wrote in Urdu and recalls that most scripts were written in Urdu until Partition when the number of Hindi words increased and the trend of writing the script in Urdu continued until the 1970s (as quoted in Kothari and Behrawala 2011). Commenting on this trend before Partition, Hindi nationalists such as Umesh Joshi had, however, derided the appearance of Hindi in a 'distorted form' in Hindi films in which difficult Persian or Arabic words were promoted in the name of Hindi and attributed the decline of Hindi to Urdu munshis who considered themselves to be the 'linguists of Lucknow' (quoted in Joshi 2009: 28). Subsequently, after 1947, a large part of the Lahore-based Punjabi film industry also migrated to Bombay. As Hindi cinema eschews both the Sanskritised Hindi and Persianised Urdu, the language used in Hindi cinema, whatever it may be called, is closer to spoken Urdu in Pakistan than filmmakers are willing to acknowledge (Rahman 2007) due to the presence of writers who had a strong connection with the language.

Raza Mir contends that 'the influence of Urdu poets on Hindi film music not only ensured that the language continued to have a performative presence in the linguistic landscape of India, but also that Hindi film music transformed Urdu poetry, keeping it in tune with the contemporary cultural milieu in India' (Mir 2000: 315). Mir classifies the influence of Urdu poets in Hindi cinema in three categories of film songs: the use of classical Urdu verse in cinematic situations, compositions by Urdu poets specifically for films, and the insertion of phrases from well known Urdu writers in film songs. He argues that the exigencies of the medium such as the three-minute song format, censorship and composition of the audience led Urdu poets to create a simple, de-Persianised vocabulary which could be understood by a larger audience that 'could be said to have become part of the dominant linguistic mosaic of the Subcontinent' (Mir 2000: 319). Mir shows that as these poets drew on Urdu poetics, they introduced a variety of metaphors into the Hindi language that have become an integral part of Hindustani usage[6], particularly 'metaphors that convey romantic love, erotic passion and sexual desire' (Mir 2000: 319).

Mukul Kesavan argues that the origins of Hindi cinema lie in the Islamic culture of feudal, decadent, aristocratic Muslim centres of rule epitomised by Lucknow (Kesavan 1994). Veena Talwar Oldenburg explains that the courtesans of Lucknow were not only recognised as preservers and performers of the high culture of the court but actively shaped developments in Hindustani music and Kathak dance styles, and that their style of entertainment was widely imitated in other court cities (Oldenburg 1990). After the collapse of the Mughal culture and dissolution of the princely states, many of the former tawa'ifs such as Gauhar Jan, Malak Jan, Zubeida, Shamshad Begum and Jaddan Bai migrated to Bombay and found alternative employment as singers and actors in Parsi theatre, and then in the emerging film industry. Their daughters Naseem Banu, Suraiya, Nargis and Meena Kumari became the reigning stars of the 1940s and 1950s. Early actresses of Hindi cinema trained in the high aristocratic culture thus carried over to Hindi cinema that famed Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb that is best expressed in the Urdu language.

Punjabi Migration

While the majority of these writers migrated to Bombay in the absence of publishing avenues and started writing for films in the 1930s, paradoxically, the Partition of India disproportionately increased the Urdu quotient in Hindi cinema due to large-scale migration of talent from West Punjab whose literary heritage was Urdu. Unlike Bihar and United Provinces, Punjab had retained Persian as the language of administration that was subsequently substituted by Urdu. Mahmood Farooqui asserts that Urdu, rather than Punjabi, was made the official language of Punjab in 1854 due to the colonial officials' familiarity with Urdu, which also became the chief language of instruction in education in addition to administrative usage. To this effect, 'for a hundred years, until partition, Punjab became a fertile ground for Urdu language and literature' and 'the world of Urdu literature becomes so dominated by people from the Punjab' such as Iqbal, Faiz, Meeraji, Rashid, Bedi, Manto, Krishan Chander in 'a span of fifty years, beginning circa 1900s' (Farooqui 2011).[7] According to Joshi, Urdu came to be privileged in Hindi cinema because many actors in Bombay cinema belonged to Urdu-speaking districts of Punjab and whose inability to pronounce Hindi words fluently naturally led filmmakers to expunge Hindi words and replace them with their Arabic and Persian equivalents (Joshi 2009: 28).[8] As opposed to Joshi, other film scholars attribute this predominance of Urdu to factors such as the migration of Urdu poets and writers to Parsi theatre (Hansen 2013: 21) and subsequently to Hindi cinema (Dwyer 2006: 106). Unlike Raj Kapoor, whose parents had migrated to Bombay in the 1930s and who attended the Colonel Brown Cambridge School, Dehradun in the 1930s, the entire generation of writers, filmmakers, actors, music directors and lyricists migrating from Punjab to Bombay were literate in Urdu and had no knowledge of the Devnagari script. For instance, Dharmendra, leading star of the 1960s, is penning his memoirs in Urdu not only because he thinks that 'Urdu is a very beautiful language' but also because he has been educated in Urdu: '*Aur kyunki maine Urdu padhi hai, mujhe lagta hai ki jo main kehna chahta hoon, woh main iss bhasha mein asani se keh sakta hoon* [Since I have been educated in Urdu, I

feel that what I wish to share can be expressed more easily in this language]' (as quoted in Sharma 2011). The practice of writing Rekhta in Persian Arabic, Devnagari, Gurmukhi and other scripts that Bangah mentions appears to have continued in the Hindi film industry that communicated in a shared lingua franca irrespective of the script. 'Raj Kapoor didn't know Urdu, and I wasn't familiar with Hindi, so my assistant would write out the dialogues in Hindi, and cyclostyle copies were handed out to the cast and crew', recalls Mohan Kumar (as quoted in Kothari and Behrawala 2011). Lekh Tandon, the director of *Professor* (1962) and *Amrapali* (1966), whose basic education was in Urdu, had his film scripts, whether transcribed in Hindi or English, in front of him in Urdu. Yash Chopra, part of the generation that embodied the Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb as it was translated in Lahore, signed off his swan song *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* (2012) in an Urdu verse[9] composed by his son Aditya Chopra, even though the film included what Trivedi (2006) has called 'all kinds of Hindi' to appeal to the new generation.

In addition to the historical accident of the survival of the administrative and literary traditions of the Islamicate empire into the colonial period and the erosion of traditional patronage systems in the post-colonial period, Urdu was adopted as the language of Hindi cinema due to the advantages it enjoyed as compared to the synthetic Hindi invented in conformity with nationalist agendas and ideologies. While investigating the reasons for Urdu as the language of Hindi cinema, Kesavan maintains that in addition to being the lingua franca, Urdu had an advantage over Hindi 'as it possessed an array of narrative conventions in a standard idiom' (1994: 248). Not only did its status as the language of administration and official discourse make it 'the most plausible and credible idiom in which to render the public context of any situation' (Kesavan 1994: 248) but also as the dialect of everyday speech, it was most suitable for referring to everyday objects and events. Correcting the widespread idea that Urdu was adopted as the language of cinema due to its proximity to 'natural' speech by pointing out that Urdu was 'highly wrought', even 'overwrought in its Farsified form', Kesavan argues that its 'ability to find sonorous words for inflated emotion suited the purpose of stylized melodrama' (Kesavan 1994: 249).

The practice of using Urdu in titles of Hindi films has been carried over in the new millennium even though they may not be transcribed in Arabic script, as was the convention until the 1960s. Not only colloquial rhythms but also the long declamatory dialogues of historical films require the rhetorical flourish of Urdu, which also lends itself to the stylised, hyperbolic language of melodrama. 'Dialoguebaazi', one of the main attractions of the Hindi film, was synonymous with formal Urdu, until the duo of Salim Khan and Javed Akhtar changed the rules of scriptwriting in the 1970s with short pithy lines delivered in simple Hindustani. Yet the power of Urdu in oblique expressions of love and emotion continues to be exploited till date. Hindi film songs reflect the influence of Persian poetry and mysticism on Urdu poets in the imagery and metaphors used by Hindi film lyricists, which borrow the conventions of Persian poetry. Even new Bollywood films that reflect contemporary speech in dialogues resort to the sufi idiom in song and dance to express the intensity of love.

ISHQ, FARZ, DAULAT AND TASAWWUF

As a consequence of the dominance of Urdu script and lyric writers, directors, actors and musicians in Hindi cinema, Urdu is the instrument through which complex conceptual categories originating in Persian and Arabic metaphysical traditions, particularly sufi, are formulated. Urdu terms such as ishq, izzat, *farz*, qanoon, waqt, kismet are preferred over their Hindi equivalents in articulating key concepts in Hindi cinema. As Tejaswani Ganti points out, the words for 'love [*pyar, ishq, mohabbat*], heart [*dil*], law [qanoon], justice [insaaf], honour [*izzat*], duty [farz], blood [khoon], emotion [jazbaat], crime [jurm], and wealth [daulat]—all central concepts in Hindi cinema—are from Urdu's Persian and Arabic-derived vocabulary' (Ganti 2004). Although the Hindi equivalent of ishq, *prem*, exists in formal usage, it is rarely employed in declarations of love in the Hindi film that switches between multiple Urdu terms. Similarly, the doctrine of divine determination is articulated through the notion of kismet or the sufi concept of waqt rather than Sanskrit *bhagya*. Surprisingly, the

key trope of dharma is also expressed through the invocation of the Urdu *usul* [principle; ideal] or farz [duty, especially religious/moral duty] rather than *kartavya* or dharma in dialogues. However, words such as waqt [a moment; an instant; a portion of time; a particular condition reflected by specific sufi behaviour in a specific moment], *maqām* or hal [station and state] and fana [to pass away; termination of being; disappearance; non-being; non-existence; abolition of individual consciousness; loss of ego; self-negligence] are some of the key terms of tasawwuf, an Islamic esoteric discipline (Gačanin 2012: 277). Similarly, metaphors such as wine [*sharāb/mey/bāde*], drunkenness [*mastī, sukr*], drowsiness [*khomār*], tavern gang [*rindān*], idol [*bot*] require 'a deeper understanding of its symbolic structure and knowledge about the fundamental characteristic' [of *tasawwuf* literature] (Gačanin 2012: 279).

These concepts that often have a Perso-Arabic heritage are most unambiguously reiterated in the Urdu titles of films, a convention that has been established since the first sound film *Alam Ara* (1931). Khan cites the names of some of the best known Hindi films *Awara* (1951), *Andaz* (1949), *Aadmi* (1968), *Aurat* (1940), *Aah* (1953), *Afsana* (1951), *Deewaar* (1975), *Safar* (1970), *Silsila* (1981), *Parwarish* (1997) to demonstrate that the titles of at least seventy per cent of Hindi films have been Arabic-Persian derivatives (2006). The switchover of the Indian Film Censor Board constituted after 1947 to the new generic Devnagari for all Urdu film titles did not erase Urdu as the convention is followed even in present titles such as *Fanaa* (2006), *Kurbaan* (2009), *Ashiqui* (1990), *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna* (2006), *Bachna Ai Haseeno* (2008), *Yeh Jawani Hai Diwani* (2013).[10]

Vijay Mishra (2006) has pointed out that Urdu is used in Hindi cinema to signpost the trope of romance. Although Hindi equivalents of love such as pyar and prem are used frequently, romance in Hindi cinema slips into the Urdu register for the expression of emotions that sound banal in Hindi. The Urdu terms mohabbat and ishq have been naturalised in the articulation of romantic desire over the prosaic pyar or Sanskritized prem through centuries of the circulation of the qissa of the *Majnun Laila* through recitations, ghazals or Urdu poetry. Khan claims that Urdu has several words for love (Khan 2006: 321): prem, pyar, mohabbat,

ulfat, ishq, *yaari, dosti, lagi* or *lagan*[11], that makes it 'infinitely richer' than any other Indian language. Although ishq or mohabbat refers to fervent love for any object, person or God, Hindi films have been largely instrumental in popularising the notion of romantic love or *ishq-e majazi* [love of God's creation, that is, a human being]. The cinematic conflict between love (*ishq*) and duty (*farz*) has been conventionally expressed in Urdu right from *Jugnu* (1947) to *Veer Zaara* (2004).[12]

The other binary structuring the cinematic plot and theme of social difference finds expression in a word of Arabic origin, daulat or *kedaulatan* [vicissitudes of fortune].[13] Another key concept that complicates the cinematic conflict is the Urdu word izzat derived from Arabic *'izzah* [glory] that can mean dignity, honour, or reputation, or social rank that plays a significant role in the social and political dynamics of South Asia through the notions of reciprocity in both friendship and enmity and the control of women's bodies. A word that has no Sanskritised equivalent is the Hind**i** Urdu word qanoon that is reiterated in Hindi films**.**

Mishra (2002) convincingly argues that dharma is the grande syntagmatique of Hindi cinema but fails to mention that the Hindu code of conduct is invariably formulated in a colloquial Urdu word farz, which in Islam refers to duties by not discharging which a human being is deemed guilty and fallen. Introduced to the readers of Hindi fiction by Premchand, the father of Hindi and Urdu writing, in his short story 'Rajhat ', it became the preferred term for articulating the Hindu ideology of dharma in the cinematic idiom.[14] Other than the mythologicals, the trope of the duty-bound Rama and his faithful wife Sita is articulated to everyday Urdu rather than Sanskritised Hindi. The loyal wife who sacrifices love for duty connects two films *Gumrah* (1963) and *Murder* (2004) separated by almost four decades. Although their titles reflect the cinematic switch from Urdu to English to target a global audience in the new millennium, Urdu dominates both dialogue and song. While the dialogues of *Gumrah* written by Akhtar-ul-Iman, a major Urdu writer, contributed to the Urdu flavour of the 1960s' film, the smooth glide from Sanskritised Hindi to Urdu in the same sentence in the bold new 'Bollywood' film carries over the convention of switching between Hindi and Urdu established in Hindi cinema

since the birth of the talkies; '*Agni ke saat phere toh sabhi lete hain ... Lekin zindagi ki aag se guzarkar jo rishta qayam hota hai ... usse pavitra, usse sacha bandhan aur koi nahi*' [Everyone takes the seven rounds [of marriage] around the fire ... but the bond that is forged by passing through the fire of life ... there is no bond purer or truer than that] (Subodh Chopra, *Murder* 2004). The articulation of dharma in Urdu has become so naturalised in Hindi films over the decades that in the modern retelling of *Ramayana* in *Main Hoon Na* (2004), Ram, the embodiment of dharma, announces his arrival in a Hindi-Urdu verse: '*Kiska hai yeh tumko intezaar/Main hoon na/Dekh lo idhar to ek baar/Main hoon na*' [Who is it that you wait for/I am here/Turn around once and look/I am here] (Javed Akhtar, Abbas Tyrewala, *Main Hoon Na* 2004).

Similarly, the key trope of darshan is articulated through the Urdu term nazar, which originates in the notion of gaze in sufi discourse. Woodman Taylor maintains that a second notion of vision, with its associated modes of visuality, employed in popular Hindi cinema is what is known as nazar, an Arabic word for gaze, in addition to the mutual looking and reciprocal visual activity of darshan and the conceived potentialities of *drishti* exploited by filmmakers in religious films (Taylor 2002). Asserting that 'a visuality dependent on *nazar* proliferated when the Persianate court culture formed by Muslim rulers at centres such as Delhi became the cultural paradigm emulated by courts throughout South Asia', he states that 'a visuality dependent on *nazar* is most often employed to heighten themes of love' (Taylor 2002: 302). Taylor believes that the intense drishti form of South Asian visuality was appropriated from mythologicals by the romantic genre, which came 'with its own visual conventions including the role of the gaze as a conveyor of love, rather than as a vehicle for physical interaction with the divine' (Taylor 2002: 308).

However, arguing that the Sanskrit vocabulary of *drs* does not exhaust the vocabulary of seeing in South Asian, Lutgendorf points out that 'the word "*nazar*" ("look" or "glance") imported from Arabic and Persian has similar connotations of tangible exchange' and is 'common in everyday speech' as well as 'in religious Indo-Islamic discourse' (2006: 232). Viewing darshan/nazar as a minimal pair, he maintains that their ideology and

practice has contributed to a cinematic aesthetic of 'frontality' (Lutgendorf 2006: 232). This elaborate exposition of the gaze in Arabic poetry explained by Lutgendorf compels a reassessment of the scopic regime of Hindi cinema, which has been conventionally elucidated in terms of the Hindu notion of darshan.

'FILMI' DIALOGUEBAAZI

Hansen's observations on the adoption of Urdu in Parsi theatre as the language of emotion more suited to the conventions of melodrama (Hansen 2001) may be extrapolated to understand the internal forces that naturalised the Persian-Urdu theatrical style in Hindi cinema. As Kesavan points out, 'its systemtatic appropriation of Persian models created a self-consciously literate audience responsive to literary utterance and allusive cues' (Kesavan 1994: 248). Prasad agrees that 'after 1947, Hindi cinema borrowed the discourse of love elaborated in Persian/Urdu poetry and superimposed it' on the film song (Prasad 1998: 111). Ganti asserts that 'it is hard to imagine film songs or dialogues without the vocabulary, metaphors, and idioms derived from Urdu language and literature' (Ganti 2004: 23).

Hindi film script writers claim to be motivated by the desire to be intelligible to their audience. Javed Akhtar believes that the story, the characters and the genre determine the choice of language; 'a realistic feel needs realistic, everyday lines, a larger-than-life drama has different needs' (Akhtar 2011). He points out that Urdu and Hindi were both used in a very expedient manner in Hindi films and that his own language choice is dictated by the desire to communicate with everybody. 'If I am writing dialogue, I will not use "Kya tumhe ye haq hai?" because I feel that people will not understand 'haq'. So, I'll say, "Kya tumhe ye adhikar hai?" Yet, I will not say "Kya tumhe ye avashakta hai?" I will write, "Kya tumhe ye zaroorat hai?"' (Akhtar 2005). Since language that will be understood by everyone is language in use, Akhtar's choice of the Urdu *zaroorat* [necessity, need] instead of the Sanskritised *avashyakta* merely captures the speech patterns of the average Hindi speaker. Similarly, Gulzar, in an interview with Sukrita Paul Kumar

responded that the language of his feeling, his thought, and writing was 'Urdu, that is really Hindustani, the spoken Urdu!' (Gulzar 2012: 112). Significantly, the poet, writer and filmmaker, also told Rita Kothari that, 'The language that comes into films comes from its use in society—not the other way round' (Gulzar 2011: 184).

Hansen's view of the metaphorical extravagance of Urdu making it well disposed to stylised melodrama needs to be critically examined in relation to writers' counterclaim about its being suitable for inventing a simple, everyday idiom. Kesavan explains that while Urdu is close to everyday speech, 'its users often revelled in its difficulty and its conscious artifice', making it immensely suited to 'the mannered literary idiom' of the early talkies (Kesavan 1994: 249). He believes that 'it is worth hazarding the argument that the operative abandon of the Parsi theatre and Hindi cinema is a function of the metaphoric abundance of Urdu' (Kesavan 1994: 251). Influenced by Parsi theatre, Hindi cinema has developed a unique theatrical style of delivery, rhetorical flourish and bombast that differs from the way people speak in everyday life but contributes to the emotional charge of the films until the 1990s. This language is best described in the neologism dialoguebaazi [literally 'speaking in dialogue'], comprising the English word *dialogue* and the Persian-Urdu-Hindi word *baazi*, used to describe dialogues in films like *Mera Gaon Mera Desh* (1971), *Zanjeer* (1973), *Yaadon Ki Baraat* (1973), *Deewaar* (1975) and *Sholay* (1975).[15]

Hindi films did not have a culture of screenplay writing, which appears to have been coterminous with the linguistic transition to English. 'Unlike films in the rest of the world, the script writer was largely marginalized in the collective compositional practices of the informal Hindi film economy, until the arrival of the writer duo of Salim-Javed in the 1970s who brought the screenplay to the fore' (Rajabali 2003: 313). As a consequence, writing for films is a collaborative exercise with the screenplay produced through a clear division of labour between the story writer, the scriptwriter and the dialogue writer, with the dialogue writer playing a significant role in an industry dominated by Bengali, Marathi and Parsi screenplay writers. Due to its origins in storytelling and theatre, Hindi cinema tends to be overtly verbose, depending as much on words as on imagery to produce meaning. Consequently, dialogues, even long

dialogues that might strike an outsider as disrupting the flow of narrative, account for cinematic pleasure and play an extremely important role in a film's success. Farhad, of the Sajid-Farhad duo who are one of the most sought after writers, states that 'besides the staple music and dance, Bollywood films are incomplete without dialogues', which 'contribute a lot in a film's success', and that films 'work because of dialogues' (Sheth 2012).

While one can understand that dialoguebaazi was the generic requirement of melodrama, as Akhtar explains, it does not explain the appropriateness of Urdu rather than Hindi to emotionally charged melodramas (quoted in Vijayakar 2011). Kesavan believes that 'the melodramatic character of the Hindi film could be best captured through Urdu's ability to find sonorous words for inflated emotion' (1994: 249). Ali Asghar Seyed-Gohrab focuses on the theory of figurative speech, or *ilm-al-bayam*, in classical Persian literary theory to explain that at the heart of Persian poetry are metaphors, used for a variety of purposes across different genres (Seyed-Gohrab 2011: 4). Its borrowing from Persian and use of syllabic repetition makes Urdu the preferred idiom for melodrama rather than Sanskritised Hindi. This rhetorical Urdu was nowhere as conspicuous as it was in courtroom dramas at the climax of many a Hindi film until the 1980s that began with the ritualised swearing on the *Gita*, the lawyer addressing his client as *mere muakkil* and his opponent as *mere qabil dost*, the proceedings punctuated by commands of 'Order! Order!' in English, and ending with the judge invoking *Tazirate-e-Hind* before delivering his verdict with an *umar qaid* [life-term] and/or *baizzat bari* [honourable release].

The pleasures of highly dramatised chaste Urdu delivered in a stylised fashion by actors like Dilip Kumar or Raj Kumar that drew audiences to theatres for repeat views of a film perhaps ended with the long confrontation between Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan in *Mohabbatein* (2000). Dilip Kumar's perfect enunciation, his way of drawing out sounds, voice control and measured pauses in dialogue delivery, as unforgettably rendered in *Devdas* (1955) would leave his fans asking for more: '*Kaun kambakht hai jo bardasht karne ke liye peeta hai? Main to peeta hoon ke bus saans le sakoon*' [What wretch on earth drinks to be able to bear pain? I drink just so I can breathe] (Rajinder Singh Bedi, *Devdas* 1955).

The cinematic tradition of having the legendary actor deliver poetic prose in flawless Urdu before breaking into song is perhaps best illustrated by the couplet '*Aaseer-e-panja-e-ahad-e-shabab kar ke mujhe kahan gaya mera bachpan, kharab kar ke mujhe*' [Where has my childhood gone, having left me in ruins] that precedes the song '*Huye ham jinke liye barbad, woh hamko chahe karen na yaad*' [For the one for whom I ruined my life, though she may not ever remember me] in *Deedar* (dialogues/script Azm Bazidpuri; lyrics Shakeel Badayuni, 1951). It is alleged that the recitation of sha'iri or Urdu poetry ended with the golden era in Hindi cinema. But through the 1980s, Amitabh Bachchan continued to render his audiences speechless with dialogues delivered in his rich baritone voice and flawless diction. The son of eminent Hindi poet Harivanshrai Bachchan, Bachchan is credited with the most memorable dialogues in Hindi cinema in 'all kinds of Hindi' and English. His rendition of an Urdu verse as a poet's ode to his absent beloved in *Silsila* (1981) remains permanently etched in his fans' memories: '*Main aur meri tanhai aksar yeh baatein karte hain/Tum hoti to kaisa hota …*' [I and my solitude often talk about these things/How would it be if you were here …] (Javed Akhtar, *Silsila* 1981).

While some have argued that the Hindi film adopted the Lucknowi Urdu, Dwyer argues that Manto 'developed a modern, "secular" Urdu far from the *nawabi*, Lucknowi style' (Dwyer 2006: 106) that set the trend for a realist style in Hindi cinema. Nevertheless, the modern, 'secular' Urdu developed by Manto for Hindi cinema, as visible in the 'understated' but 'intense, punch-laden lines' of writers like Salim-Javed, has none of the melodrama producing rhetoric (Akhtar 2011). Akhtar clarifies that from the beginning Hindi films maintained a balance between florid and realistic dialogues by pointing out that 'if many films of the '40s, for example, had flowery lines, there were movies from New Theatres that kept the lines short and subtle' (Akhtar 2011). Dialogue writing was made more colloquial at the instance of Manmohan Desai who commissioned Kader Khan to write dialogues free of 'proverbs and muhaavras and similes' favoured by Urdu writers in his film *Roti* (1974). Akhtar might have refrained from rhetoric in producing dialogues that enjoyed cult popularity like '*Mere paas Ma hai*' [I have Mother] (*Deewar* 1975) and '*Yeh haath mujhe de-de Thakur*'

[Give me these hands, Thakur] (*Sholay* 1975). Nevertheless, Urdu remained the preferred idiom of dialoguebaazi until *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* (2001), even in a decade where multiplex films like *Dil Chahta Hai* (2001) had set the trend for realistic dialogue like: '*Ek kagaz pe mohur nahin lagegi to kya Tara Singh Pakistan nahin jayega?*' [If a piece of paper is not stamped, will it stop Tara Singh from going to Pakistan?] (Shaktiman Talwar, *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* 2001). Dialoguebaazi returned with a vengeance in *Dabangg* (2010) although the dialogues were in simple Hindi in keeping with the film's rural setting: '*Thappad se dar nahin lagta sahib, pyar se lagta hai*' [I am not afraid of being slapped, sahib, I am afraid of love] (Abhinav Kashyap, Dilip Shukla).

Since the 1990s, Hindi cinema has been dominated by actors, directors and scriptwriters whose primary language is English and who conceptualise and execute the film in English. These include promising young directors like Zoya Akhtar (*Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* 2011*)* and Nupur Asthana (*Mujhse Fraaandship Karoge* 2011), writer Niranjan Iyengar and actor Preity Zinta (Kothari and Behrawala 2011). The majority of films in Hindi have been made by highly anglicised upper middle class or upper class filmmakers who do not speak the language they make films in. Claiming to write dialogues that are closer to real life than the dialoguebaazi of the past, scriptwriters who admit to writing in English transliterate their dialogues in Hindi or Urdu to create a real life language that exists only in the imagination of these filmmakers and their multiplex audience. Similarly, several actors like Preity Zinta, Katrina Kaif, Kalki Koechlin, Nargis Fakhri, Tara D'Souza are more comfortable speaking in English and cannot read the Devnagari script (Kothari and Behrawala 2011). Although the three Khans—Aamir, Shah Rukh and Salman—are the last of the generation that was fluent in Hindi-Urdu, the rising stars in Hindi cinema who speak English and demand their dialogues in Roman script are still expected to take lessons in the right enunciation of Urdu words to clean up their dialogue delivery *(zuban saaf karna)*. Despite the popularity of films that use transliterations from scripts and dialogues first written in English, diction trainers like Vidur Chaturvedi, Vikas Kumar, Vinod Tharani and others are hired to help non-Hindi speaking actors perfect their Urdu talaffuz or diction

for playing characters who speak Hindi. Urdu words like *zindagani*, *qayamat*, *qadradaan* and *zalzala* appear to be indispensable to the language of emotion in Hindi cinema going by a list prepared by Vidur Chaturvedi for his star students who include Katrina Kaif. Farhan Akhtar's recitation of his father Javed Akthar's poetry in *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (2011) makes one wonder if the relation between Urdu poetry and emotion in Hindi cinema is indissoluble.

GHAZAL, SHA'IRI AND THE HINDI FILM ROMANCE

Hindi cinema's indebtedness to the discourse of love in Persian/Urdu poetry, particularly to the ghazal, has naturalised Urdu as the idiom of romance (Mishra 2002). Prasad points out that Hindi cinema has evolved stock 'images and tropes for themes like romantic love, separation, rejection' and identifies some of the recurring tropes such as 'mehfil, *shama/parwana*, chaman, bahar, nazare' (Prasad 1998). Petievich views the Hindi film song as clearly inspired by the ghazal (Petievich 2004: 124). Peter Manuel maintains that the Urdu ghazal, while retaining 'the stock imagery, metaphors, and formal elements of the Persian *ghazal*', developed its own identity and that cinema created a new platform for the modern ghazal (Manuel 1993). Debjani Chatterjee points out that '*ghazals* abound in such traditional symbols and images as: the teasing—even cruel—beloved, the moon, the firefly, the rose, the thorn, the garden, the desert, the caravan, the caged nightingale, the gallows, the candle, the moth, and so on' (Chatterjee 2003: 124). Anna Morcom holds that Hindi film lyrics 'have drawn mostly on the Urdu poetic tradition' and 'still draw heavily on the imagery and vocabulary of Urdu poetry for a language of emotions and love' (Morcom 2007: 28). Urdu poets like Sahir Ludhianvi produced a new grammar of romance in the award-winning lyrics of 'Chalo ik baar phir se ajnabi ban jayein hum donon' [Come let us become strangers once again] (*Gumrah* 1963) that became the template for expressing love in the Hindi film.

One of the most commonly used equivalents for love in Hindi cinema, pyar, remained a four-letter word in real language use where descriptions of people falling in love (*pyar ho jana*) would

be couched in the euphemism '*woh ho gaya*' [that/it happened] until arranged marriages remained the norm. With love considered an illicit emotion, Hindi cinema resorted to the formulaic idiom of the Urdu ghazal, which deals specifically with illicit and unattainable love. Rather than Sanskrit poetry, 'the convention of having the "idea" of a lover or beloved instead of an actual lover/beloved' in Urdu love poetry 'freed the poet-protagonist-lover from the demands of "reality," or "realism"' (Faruqi 2004: 7). It offered Hindi cinema a vocabulary for romance in an era in which explicit declarations of love were forbidden. In Urdu, Hindi cinema found an oblique language for expressing not only romantic love but also forbidden emotions such as sexual desire (Mir 2000), a convention that has been retained even in the song lyrics of contemporary Hinglish films with English titles. To the extent that other than occasionally, barring uncommon instances where Sanskritised Hindi has been deliberately used to great comic effect—like in a song in *Hum, Tum Aur Woh* (1971), or in the song '*Pritam aan milo*' of *Angoor* (1982) which parodies an older film song—the expression of onscreen love in Sanskritised Hindi has come to be considered not merely unthinkable, but banal, even ludicrous.[16]

> *Priye, priye*
> *Priye praneshwari, hridayeshwari*
> *Yadi aap hamein aadesh karein to*
> *Prem ka ham shri ganesh karein*
> My dearest
> My beloved, my life, my heart
> If only you would permit me
> I would auspiciously initiate the act of love (Verma Malik, *Hum Tum Aur Woh* 1971)

In Urdu poetry, 'the lover-protagonist and the beloved-object both' exist 'in a world of extremes: supreme beauty, supreme cruelty, supreme devotion' (Faruqi 2004). Faruqi's point about Urdu love poetry being 'about love', and not 'love poems' in the Western sense is illustrated in the lover's entreating the spring to shower flowers upon the arrival of his beloved.[17]

> *Baharon phool barsao, mera mehboob aya hai*
> *Hawaon ragini gao, mera mehboob aya hai*
> *S*pring*,* shower flowers*,* my beloved has arrived
> Breeze, sing a melody, my beloved has arrived (Hasrat Jaipuri, *Suraj* 1967)

As in the Urdu love poem, evocation, rather than description, as Faruqi asserts, is the rule of the Hindi film song (2004: 12).

> *Kabhi kabhi mere dil mein khayal aata hai*
> *Ke jaise tujhko banaya gaya hai mere liye*
> There are times that it comes to my mind
> That perhaps you were created for me (Sahir Ludhianvi, *Kabhi Kabhie* 1976)

Sufi poetry has lexicalised stereotyped metaphors and archetypes that are decoded as recognised pairs such as shama/parwana, *jam/saki, ashiq/mashooka* and so on. In sufi poetry, love is compared to a fire that burns down everything except the object of desire, symbolised by a moth circling a candle flame, which is the beloved's heart, and burning on it (Gačanin 2012: 283). The shama/parwana pair predictably recurs in Hindi film song time and again.

> *O parwane shama ko apni ruswa na karana*
> *Tuney mera yaar na milaya, mai kya janu teri ye khudayi*
> Oh moth do not disgrace your candle flame
> You did not unite me with my love, what do I make of this selfishness (Majrooh Sultanpuri, *Shama Parwana* 1954)

Hindi film lyricists frequently borrow metaphors of the sun and the moon from sufi poetry to describe the *beloved;* 'the Sun symbolizes the immersion and the arrival into God's vicinity or woslat' while the moon 'symbolizes beauty of the Beloved or the face as the reflection of God's instruction' (Gačanin 2012: 283). The lover asks his beloved: '*Chaudhvin ka chand ho, ya aftab ho'* [Are you the moon of the fourteenth night, or are you the sun] (Shakeel Badayuni, *Chaudhvin Ka Chand* 1960).

Peter Manuel maintains that 'the beloved in *ghazal* is often portrayed as cruel, disdainful, and generally heartless, occasionally even wielding a scimitar with which to behead her lovers, who offer their necks in meek abnegation' (Manuel 1989). *Sabk-e Hindi* or Urdu poetry of the eighteenth century deploys metaphors to represent the beloved as one who 'kills—with a look', whose 'eyes therefore are daggers, or swords, or a weapon of killing' (Faruqi 2004), or at least, who inflicts wounds on the lover through her coquetry. In sufi poetry, the beloved is often depicted as one who can cause death or inflict wounds metaphorically through a mere glance with her dagger-like eyes, tresses [*zulf*] and curls [*gīsū*]. Hindi film songs are replete with these images.[18]

> *Masoom chehra yeh qatil adayein*
> *Ke bemaut maare gaye hum bichare*
> *Sagar se gehri tumhari nigahein*
> *Dubo na dein hamko yeh lakar kinare*
> This innocent face, these devastating charms
> Poor me, I have died already
> Your eyes deeper than the sea, I pray
> Having guided me ashore, won't drown me
> (Shailendra/Hasrat Jaipuri, *Dil Tera Diwana* 1962)

The lover's fate is to suffer and the beloved's is to cause suffering in sufi poetry. The metaphor that is reiterated in Hindi cinema is that of dying for someone [*kisi par marna*] or to give one's life for someone [*kisi par jan dena*], extolling a love in which the lover loves the beloved more than his/her own self that persists from *Devdas* (1935) to *Fanaa* (2006).

Contemporary Hindi films continue to conform to the Urdu template and generic requirements of romance through sufi inspired tunes. The sufi idiom of love makes an entry even in the contemporary Westernised middle class milieu of the Mahesh Bhatt films through the recurrent imagery of ashiqi in songs. The young viewers of Bhatt's films repeat and dance to songs like '*Aashiq banaya aapne*' [You have turned me into a mad lover] (Sameer, *Aashiq Banaya Aapne* 2005), '*Ek baar aja jhalak dikhla ja*' [Come, let me have a glimpse of you] (Sameer, *Aksar* 2006),

and '*O jaana, aake dekh yeh mera ishq inteha*' [O my love, come and witness the test of my love] (Sayeed Qadri, *Murder* 2004). The sufi strains of the song *Ya Ali raham Ali* in the film *Gangster* (2006) are probably due to its being plagiarised from the same song in Arabic by Guitara. '*Kaho na kaho*' in *Murder* (2004) also did not conceal its plagiarising of Arab music by retaining the original stanza from the 2000 hit single '*Tamally maak*' performed by the Egyptian heartthrob Amr Diab.

CONCLUSION

The invention of a Sanskritised Hindi has settled the Hindi Urdu divide through the splitting of languages along the official public and personal intimate space. While Sanskritised terminology might have become mandatory in official usage, it is as unintelligible to the common Indian as English and its use in informal situations is often greeted with amusement if not ridicule, not only in urban centres but also in a hamlet in Uttar Pradesh or Bihar. Predictably, Sanskritised Hindi figures in Hindi cinema, if at all, to produce comic effect. Unlike written Hindi that has been heavily Sanskritised after the emergence of Hindi nationalism in the late nineteenth century, spoken Hindi seamlessly moves between Hindi and Urdu that is mirrored in the speech of Hindi film characters.

Film scholars who regard the Sanskrit epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* as animating the ideological meanings of the Hindi film have not engaged with its paradoxical propagation of Hindu ideologies through Urdu dialogue and poetry. Challenging M. Madhava Prasad's reading of the Hindi film as constructed by the ideological masternarrative of Hinduism (Prasad 1998), Philip Lutgendorf's detailed analysis reveals that the effect of the Urdu Hindi 'dialogue is at times precisely to fissure the surface ideology of a film' (Lutgendorf 2006: 236). These concepts make the cinema the site for the contestation between its explicit and implicit meanings. The constitution of the rhetoric of Hindi cinema by the Persian lexicon embedded in Persian mystical poetry through its adoption of Urdu poetry disrupts the metaphysical concepts of

dharma, darshan and other Hindu concepts that have been seen as structuring its narrative conflict (Prasad 1998; Mishra 2002). This has produced an internal logic through which Urdu can do the ideological work of 'Hindu family values' or alternatively disrupt it to reproduce the composite Hindi Urdu space.

The following chapter argues that due to the deep implication of the Islamic in the Hindu in the Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb, the dharmic principle is disrupted by the hyperbolic language of ashiqi in the Hindi film.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this chapter was published in 2014 as 'Filmi Zubaan', in *Defining the Indefinable: Delimiting Hindi*, edited by Agnieszka Kuczkiewicz-Fraś, 137–160, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, and is reproduced here by kind permission of Agnieszka Kuczkiewicz-Fraś.

2. Whether the imbrication of Urdu with Hindi in Hindi cinema is a generic convention that needs to be attributed its origin in the Urdu dominated Parsi theatre or a reflection of the real language in use, Hindi cinema has evolved a formulaic idiom that displays a clear preference for Urdu in verse and a de-Sanskritised Hindi in dialogue. In Hindi cinema, Urdu is not articulated to Muslims and Hindi to Hindus but both are distributed unevenly along with a number of other registers in dialogue and songs.

3. Bangha argues that 'although the normal templates of Rekhta were that of Persian and Khari Boli and the languages used are Hindvi and Persian, there was a wide range of possibilities within Rekhta, including Braj or Punjabi templates and the mixing of more than two languages or dialects' (Bangha 2010: 81).

4. The introduction of Urdu in Parsi theatre has been attributed to Dadabhai Sohrabji Patel, or 'Dadi Patel M. A.', who took over Grant Road Theatre from Kaikhusro Navroji Kabra (1842–1904) in 1869 and revolutionised it. However, the writers of Urdu plays in this decade such as Behram Fardun Marzban (*Sone ke Mol ki Khorshed* 1871), Aram (*Jahangir Shah aur Gauhar*) and Raunaq were non-native speakers of Urdu. Although the 1853 operatic version of *Inder Sabha*—considered to be the first complete Urdu stage play—by Agha Hasan Amanat of Lucknow was performed by the Elphinstone Company in 1873, and by the Victoria Company in 1874, a new generation of Urdu playwrights from parts of

Uttar Pradesh, trained in classical languages to which Urdu was heir, including Karimuddin 'Murad' of Bareily, Amanullah Khan 'Habab' and Hafiz Muhammad Abdullah of Fatehpur, altered the linguistic flavour of Parsi drama in the 1880s. With the collapse of the court of Awadh, and Parsi theatre companies actively soliciting northerners to join them, a large number of writers, poets, musicians, actors turned to Parsi theatre as a lucrative alternative (Hansen 2003).

5. A verse by the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, a devout sufi and an accomplished Urdu poet, has featured in Hindi cinema:

> *Na kisī ki ānkh kā nūr hūń, na kisī ké dil kā qarār hūń*
> *Jo kisī ké kām na ā saké, méń woh ék mūsht-é-ghūbār hūń*
> Not the light of any eye, nor the balm of any heart am I
> Of no use to any one at all, just that fistful of dust am I

6. Even though Hindustani was eliminated from the Census as a possible language by 1961 (Mir 2000: 316), colloquial Hindi speech is close to Hindustani.

7. 'Urdu is not just a language; it is a way of life. It teaches us discipline and how life is lived. I developed intense love for the language since my childhood days when we were taught this language as the first subject,' says Betaab, the author of two collections of Urdu short stories (Majeed 2011).

8. Prithviraj Kapoor (born 1906 Faisalabad; *Sikandar* 1941, *Mughal-e-Azam* 1960); Balraj Sahni (born 1913 Rawalpindi; *Insaaf* 1946, *Kabuliwala* 1961); Pran (born 1920 Ballimaran, Delhi; *Yamla Jat* 1940; *Ziddi* 1948); A. K. Hangal (born 1914 Sialkot); Dev Anand (born 1923 Narowal); Sunil Dutt (born 1929 Jhelum); Rajendra Kumar (born 1929 Sialkot); Dilip Kumar (born 1922 Peshawar; *Devdas* 1955, *Mughal-e-Azam* 1960).

9. *Teri aankhon ki namkeen mastiyan,*
   Teri hansi ki beparwah gustakhiyan,
   Teri zulfon ki lehrati angraiyan,
   Nahin bhoolunga main
   Jab tak hai jaan, jab tak hai jaan
   Your salty eyes full of mischief
   The insolence of your carefree laugh
   The dancing waves of your hair
   I will never forget
   As long as I breathe, as long as I live (Aditya Chopra, *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* 2012)

10. Khan avers that the political switch to Hindi was pursued most aggressively in the 1950s, but one of the most popular films of the

1960s, *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960), that used a highly Persianised Urdu was classified as Hindi, as compared to *Mere Mehboob* (1964) that was granted an Urdu title.

11. To qualify this assertion somewhat, it should be noted that *prem* and *pyar* are also Sanskritic Hindi words; *lagi* and *lagan* are Hindi words; and that other Indian languages also possesses multiple synonyms for love.

12. '*Na hi hamari mohabbat kam hogi aur na hi hamare farz adhure rahenge*' [Neither will our love diminish nor will our duties remain unfulfilled] (Aditya Chopra, *Veer Zaara* 2004).

13. '*Aaj aapke paas aapki saari daulat sahi, lekin aapse bada garib maine zindagi mein nahi dekha*' [You might possess all the wealth today, but I haven't seen anyone poorer than you all my life] (Salim-Javed, *Deewaar* 1975).

14. '*Beshak veh riyaya ke sath apna farz nahin ada kar rahe thhe*' [Without doubt, he was not fulfilling his duty towards his subjects.] (Premchand, 'Rajhat', published in the Urdu journal *Zamana*).

15. Speaking about contemporary directors' derision of dialoguebaazi, Trisha Gupta considers it 'A portmanteau word that's itself a superb example of the composite English-Hindi linguistic culture we have inhabited for years, *dialoguebaazi* (literally 'speaking in dialogue') suggests a language of theatricality, rhetorical flourish, bombast and melodrama: in short, it suggests the kind of speech that would only appear in an old-style Hindi film, not in real life' (Gupta 2011).

16. *Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram* (1978).

17. Faruqi explains that 'since the convention of having the "idea" of a lover or beloved instead of an actual lover/beloved freed the poet-protagonist-lover from the demands of "reality", or "realism"', love poetry in Urdu from the last quarter of the seventeenth century onwards consists mostly—if not entirely—of "poems about love", and not "love poems" in the Western tradition (Faruqi 2004: 4).

18. *Zulfon ko hata lo chehre se* [Remove those tresses from your face] (Shamsul Huda Bihari, *Sawan Ki Ghata* 1966);

Na jhatko zulf se pani [Don't brush the drops of water from your hair] (Rajendra Krishna, *Shehnai* 1964);

Teri zulfon se judai to nahi mangi thi [I had not asked to be parted from your tresses] (Hasrat Jaipuri, *Jab Pyar Kisi Se Hota Hai* 1961);

Jab usne gesu bikhraye, badal aayaa jhoom ke/Mast umangein lehraeen hain rangeen mukhda choom ke

[When she unfurled her dark curls, clouds gathered in the sky/Many desires arose at the sight of her lovely face] (Majrooh Sultanpuri, *Shahjahan* 1946).

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Qissa-i-Laila Majnun, Ishq and Romance in Hindi Cinema

MAHABHARATA, RAMAYANA AND *QISSA-I-LAILA MAJNUN*

Sudhir Kakar and John M. Ross in *Tales of Love, Sex and Danger* (1986) isolate two dominant elements in Hindi cinema that they name Radha-Krishna, the divine lovers in human form in Hindu mythology, and Laila and Majnun, the passionate but doomed lovers in Arabic and Persian folklore and literature. According to Kakar and Ross, 'the Radha-Krishna tradition is an evocation and elaboration of here-and-now passion, an attempt to catch the exciting fleeting moment of the senses, not tragic but tender and ultimately cheerful' (quoted in Masud 2005). On the other hand, love is the 'essential desire of God; earthly love is but a preparation for the heavenly acme; the challenge to rights of older and powerful men to dispose of and control female sexuality; the utter devotion of the women lovers to the man unto death; loving in secrecy and concealment, yet without shame or guilt' in the Majnun-Laila tradition (quoted in Masud 2005). The Perso-Arabic idiom of ishq made an incursion into the dharmic narrative of Hindi cinematic plots through the migration of Urdu poets to the film industry and their incorporation of Urdu poetry and dialogues in the verbal and visual economy of Hindi cinema. If the Hindu Bhakti tradition has formed one strand in formulating the idiom of romantic love in Hindi cinema, the sufi concept of ashiqi, of which Majnun-Laila is the prime example, forms another.

The terms for love in Hindi cinema, mohabbat, ulfat, ishq and so on establish the Perso-Arabic provenance of the romantic sub-plot. Agnieska Kuczkiewicz Fraś explains that in Urdu, mohabbat means 'love between parents and children and between God and the believer, and love for honour'; while ishq is 'love exceeding

the former and held in particular for the beloved' (though the mystical sense was introduced as early as the eight century CE) (Fraś 2010: 205). '*Ishq*', a non-Quranic term that 'denotes excessive or passionate love but also connotes moderate love (mahabba)' (Abrahamov 2008: 332), is 'frequently deemed an illness, and is only a worthy trait when directed to praiseworthy acts' in Arabic literature (Abrahamov 2008: 332). In Ibn Dawud's (d. 297/910) tome on the psychology and pathology of love, *Kitab al-Zahra* (The Book of the Flower), he describes 'human love (*ishq*) as a disease for which doctors have no cure, a noble malady of the soul that has no higher therapeutic end' (Abrahamov 2008: 513). This medical definition of love as 'a baffling ailment', 'a delightful malady' and 'a desirable sickness' is retained by the Andalusian scholar Ibn Hazm (d. 456/1064) in his delightful treatise on love *Tawq al-Hamama* (The Ring of the Dove), which describes the essence and nature of love, its causes, symptoms and affects. Holding that 'the union of souls is a thousand times more beautiful than that of bodies', Ibn Hazm defines love as 'a conjunction between scattered parts of souls that have become divided in this physical universe, a union effected within the substance of their original sublime element' (Hazm 1994, 'Of the Nature of Love', para. 5).

Thomas points out that the idea that love and dharma must be made to cohere conforms to one of the imperatives of Hindi cinema: 'the heart (*dil*) is valued and is a sine qua non for the hero and needs to be brought into harmony with duty and principles' (*kartavya, usul*; Thomas 1995: 75). The Hindi film demonstrates a tension between the obsessive love expressed by young lovers and the call of duty that ends with either the death of the lovers or their submission to law. Rather than prem, ishq, a form of violently passionate love conceived as a form of madness helps to polarise the opposition between romantic love and filial obligations that catalyses the dramatic conflict. Irrespective of the end that desire must meet, its seductive power, not just over the actors but also the viewers, cannot be denied. Even as the spectator is seduced by the power of the images and the melodies to 'live and die by love', reminders about the call of duty to a parent, the family, society and/or the nation interrupt the pleasure of viewing. As the Hindu ethic of self-restraint in the observation of *dharma* is disturbed by

the excessive desire of ashiqi, the young lovers must ultimately submit to the higher authority of law. This chapter argues that the conflict in the Hindi film is produced by the gap between the dharmic principle as outlined by Mishra (2002) with the codes of ashiqi. It demonstrates that while dharma forms the overarching principle that structures Hindi cinema, its provision for extended romance and courtship in narrative and song and dance sequences facilitates the insertion of the Perso-Arabic trope of ishq in the feudal family romance that valorises Hindu codes and practices. Although the courtly cycle of love inaugurated by the Zahiri poets, Ibn Masud and Ibn Hazm are sometimes perceived as making a departure from the Bedouin poetry of the Udhri, Udhri love poetry, the Laila-Majnun qissa and the treatises of courtly love poetry are unproblematically synthesised by Hindi cinema with Sanskrit love poetry to formulate its conventions of romance.

UDHRI LOVE

The dominant note in Hindi cinema is struck by Udhri love, 'which is unfulfilled and nurtured by perpetual suffering rather than gratification' (Shuraydi 2014: 97). Udhri is a corpus of love tales, 'known for their portrayals of ostensibly chaste and thwarted love affairs, in which a poet lover loses his beloved precisely because of impugning her chastity' (Khan 2008: 81). Udhri love (*al-hubb al-'Udhri*) is essentially a self-destructive, unrequited, consuming passion in which the unattainability of the beloved in pre-Islamic *nasib* is intensified further as the poet is driven mad and perishes out of love for the beloved (Sells 1996: 69). The lover, chaste, ardent and passionate, is enamoured of a beloved who is either unaware of his existence or spurns his advances so that he slowly wastes away. According to Richard C. Martín, the beloved 'becomes the unreachable projection of the poet's love from which he can only suffer and then wither away from passion' (Martin 2004: 65). Daniel E. Beaumont summarises a typical Udhri love story as follows:

> A man from the tribe of Udhrah falls in love at first sight with a woman. For some reason, the love is impossible—perhaps she

initially spurns his love or perhaps her father has promised her to another. In any event, the lover falls ill with lovesickness. Fearing for his life, his friends plead his case with her. She relents and visits him. When he sees her, tears flow from his eyes and he recites poetry. Now she falls in love with him, but it is too late. The disease has progressed too far, and he dies. Then, deprived of the object of her passion, she too dies from lovesickness. (Beaumont 2002: 67)

David Cook points out that,

the story focuses upon a true romance that for structural reasons cannot be consummated. Either the father of the beloved is unwilling to allow her to marry her lover, who is inappropriate for his daughter for various reasons—mostly low social status or an imbalanced personality—or she is already in a loveless marriage. The lover is not deterred by these impediments and continues to express his love in extravagant ways, sometimes to the beloved's delight, sometimes to her embarrassment. (Cook 2007: 99)

The most famous Udhri poets were Qais ibn-al-Mulawwah (688 AD), who became known as 'Majnun Layla' [mad for Layla], and Jamil (701 AD), whose public declaration of love for Buthayna drove him to destruction. The most notable example of Udhri love poetry recorded by a Baghdadi courtier named Abu l-Faraj al-Isfahani in his *Kitab al-Aghani* [The Book of Songs] is 'Layla and Majnun' composed in the seventh century in which 'the inability of Majnun to unite with his beloved drives him to madness and death' (El-Ariss 2013: 124). The notion of love-death, the fate of many Udhri lovers (Giffen 1971: 424), is reiterated in the courtly love cycle such as in Ibn Masud's idea of the love martyr 'who loves and remains chaste and conceals his secret and dies, dies a martyr' and Ibn Hazm's Chapter on Death, in which the experience of lovers is no different from the fate of Majnun and Laila. Giffen points out that despite his professed refusal to 'repeat the tales of Bedouins' and 'of lovers long ago', Ibn Hazm's '*Tawq* was part of an ongoing tradition' (Giffen 1971: 423, 425) and that the Udhri ideal of chaste love and faithfulness to death continues to live on in his work through the emphasis on fidelity and loyalty

in his love ethics (Giffen 1971: 423). Ibn Hazm remarks that 'among the laudable instincts, noble characteristics and virtuous habits by which men may be adorned, whether they are engaged in lovemaking or any other activity, Fidelity ranks high' (Hazm 1994, *Of Fidelity*, para.1).

QISSA-I-LAILA MAJNUN

The qissa of Laila-Majnun originated in the Middle East and circulated in anecdotal forms in Arabic *akhbars*[1] and *divans*[2] and was also known in Persian at least from the time of Rudaki and Baba Taher before it was adopted and popularised by the Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi, who consulted both secular and spiritual sources to create an incredible tale of love that inspired all later versions. The popularity of the romance following Nizami's version spawned several imitations including Amir Khusrau Dehlavi's *Majnun-o-Leyli* (completed in 1299), and Jami's version, completed in 1484 and those by Maktabi Shirazi and Hatefi (1520). Although different versions of the legend disagree on details, they converge on the main points of the qissa. Laila and Qais appear to have met early in life, in school in some versions, and desperately fallen in love. His obsessive love for Laila earns Qais the name of Majnun (in Arabic, one crazed) and his composition of verses on Laila that repeatedly mention her name meets the disapproval of Laila's family as she grows up. In some versions, it is a family feud that is cited as the cause for the lovers to be separated; in others, it is Majnun's obsessive behaviour that leads to her family's rejecting him when he goes to seek her hand. Laila is forced to marry another man while Majnun wanders about the desert repeating her name. In some versions, Laila dies of heartbreak and Majnun meets his death in the desert; in others, she herself sets off in search of Majnun and both perish in the desert. The most important consequence of the legend's popularity was its appropriation by sufi mystics and poets such as in *Bahá'u'lláh's* mystical writings, the *Seven Valleys,* to illustrate mystical concepts such as fana (self-annihilation, to cease to exist), *divānagi* (love-madness), self-sacrifice. Laila (in Arabic, 'night' or 'one who works by night') is borrowed in sufi thought

to express the concept of the beloved and Majnun to refer to the possessed soul. In sufi thought, Laila-Majnun describes the story of the love between the divine and the divine aspirant symbolised by Laila and Majnun respectively that serves as an allegory of the union of the human soul with God. Majnun's renunciation of his wealth, kin, name, and even sanity, for the sake of his beloved symbolises the sufi quest for annihilation and subsistence in God. Fana is defined as 'the complete denial of self and the realization of God, that is one of the steps taken by the Muslim Sūfī (mystic) toward the achievement of union with God' (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). Hellmut Ritter explains that, 'The lowest, ethical level of *fanā* is giving up egotism, renunciation of all selfish impulses, the merging of the individual's will with the will of the beloved. The next level is the disappearance of the lover's characteristics which become replaced by those of the beloved' (Ritter 2012: 427). Ritter asserts that in Majnun 'were found traits that corresponded to the ideal of the mystics: the soul's being completely filled with an object of extreme love and the internalization of the emotion of love, i.e., detachment from everything "external"' (Ritter 2012: 384).

Exploring the reasons for the transformation of the doomed lovers from social deviants to cultural icons, Hansen suggests that 'the predictable answer, in Indo-Islamic scholarship, would be to refer to the mystical allegory of earthly lovers as seekers of the divine' (Hansen 1992: 150). She points out that stories like Laila-Majnun, Shirin-Farhad and Hir-Ranjha 'come out of the mystical tradition of Sūfīsm, which identifies the lover with the seeker for eternal truth and the beloved with God' (Hansen 1992: 150). The Perso-Arabic *Qissa-e-Laila Majnun* gradually came to be naturalised as the trope of pak ishq [pure love] in Hindi films with the eclipse of the mythological films by *Arabian Nights* fantasies in the era of sound. However, the spiritual sufi dimension of the legend, in Hansen's view, was diluted in *nautanki* theatre in which it became the template for earthly love that appears to have been carried over into Hindi cinema.

The reason for Hindi cinema's privileging of the Laila-Majnun legend as the metaphor for pure or intense love is the strong eroticism of the Radha-Krishna tale. While the hero may be seen performing the *raas lila* with his *gopis* in the song and dance

sequences, the Radha-Krishna legend cannot be adopted to translate the notion of pure love or pak ishq because Krishna's relationship with Radha, who is another man's wife, carries suggestions of illicitness. While the divine lovers are equally viewed as embodying the idea of devotion in Bhakti mysticism and Radha's relinquishing her dharma for the sake of love is elevated to the metaphysical level, the Radha-Krishna love story would not have met social approval at the level of lived experience in traditional Indian society. In Hindi cinema, Krishna bhakti that stresses upon aspects of eroticism and *sringara* might be given full play, but it has to be finally reigned in through the idea of *maryada* or conventional morality (Pauwels 2008: 75).

QISSA-I-LAILA MAJNUN AND HINDI CINEMA

The self-destructive, unrequited, consuming passion for an unattainable beloved with whom the lover is unable to unite and is driven mad, as derived from the Perso-Arabic qissa has been successfully incorporated in the lexicon of Hindi cinematic romance since the eclipse of the mythological film by the historical and the oriental fantasy. Tales of unrequited love and doomed lovers, a romance that cannot be consummated due to familial opposition or the beloved being betrothed to another, and the travails of the love martyr have been immortalised in the classic romances of Hindi cinema. However, rather than Prince Salim's destructive love for Anarkali, that would have been the most logical development of the Perso-Arabic qissa, Majnun's travails are mirrored in Devdas, the eponymous hero of a popular Bengali novel by Sarat Chandra, who is driven insane by his love for his childhood companion Paro.

As Iqbal Masud points out, '[t]he first dominant note of the Muslim ethos was struck not in any specific Muslim film or by a Muslim director but in the film *Devdas* directed by P. C. Barua (Bengali 1935) based on a novel by Sarat Chandra Chatterji' (Masud 2005). According to Masud, 'both [Radha-Krishna and Laila-Majnun] elements are fused in *Devdas*. The Radha-Krishna element dominates the first half; the Laila-Majnun element the second' (Masud 2005). But Sarat Chandra's tragic novel of doomed

love and the tragic hero that Nandy (2001) views as defining the Hindi film appears to have emerged from the Perso-Arabic tradition rather than the Bhakti lineage of *Gitagovinda.*

Like Laila, Paro is married to another man when Devdas' zamindar father rejects her for her low caste, and Devdas, who had surrendered to his father's will as an obligation to the family, leaves home but is plagued by Paro's memories, turns to alcohol and returns to die at her doorstep. Even the revelation of his love is expressed through the conventions of Arab love poetry and the Udhri code in which 'the entirety of the body—with the flesh falling away, pallid skin colour, bony look—is deemed a sign of love and, therefore, the secret's disclosure' (Khan 2008: 88). Despite the reversal in social status and the complication of the tale through the insertion of the dancing girl, Sarat Chandra's tale articulates the story of ishq driving lovers insane in a dharmic conflict between passionate love for the beloved and duty to the family. However, in the process of upholding Hindu social hierarchies, it glorifies relationships that challenge the existing social order by flouting all social laws.

Ashis Nandy's biographical reading of *Devdas* in relation to the life of its director Prathamesh Barua frames it against the impending demise of a feudal aristocratic Bengal shared by both the protagonist and the filmmaker (Nandy 2001). Nandy contrasts the magnanimous excess of the zamindari system with the gross instrumentality of capitalism that destroys the hero as well as the director. However, the text that *Devdas* returns to is the one that juxtaposes Devdas' consuming love for Paro against social rules and norms as embodied by his authoritarian father. Although both the novel and the film end tragically, warning against the dangers of obsessive love, they present love, however obsessive, as infinitely desirable. Irrespective of the tragic end of love, the entire nation, we are told, cried after viewing P. C. Barua's *Devdas* (Hindi 1936). When K. L. Saigal, hero of the Hindi version of the film released a year later, died tragically at the age of 42, the coincidence of his reel life with real life made the nation weep once again.[3] It continued to weep when Bimal Roy provided a new model of Devdas in Dilip Kumar's 1955 version, and more recently when Sanjay Leela Bhansali made Devdas enter the global imaginary in the image of Shah Rukh Khan in 2002.

If Sarat Chandra's classic Bengali novel has provided the template of the Hindi film hero since its translation into the Bengali *Devdas* (1935), the Persian Laila-Majnun qissa has framed the romance articulated in Urdu, particularly in the song and dance sequences. If the Bengali popular writer provides one model of the hero, Majnun provides the other. In addition to two versions of the romance in 1953 and 1976, the underpinnings of the Persian legend of Laila and Majnun are visible in song lyrics, visual imagery, characterisation and thematic conflict.

Noorel Mecklai believes that Muslim socials emerged from Perso-Arabic themes of doomed lovers like Laila and Majnun (Mecklai 2011: 148). Majnun's unfulfilled love for his dark beloved that has inspired poets for centuries forms a dominant trope not only in Muslim socials but also in a large number of Hindi films either directly, through dialogue or through song and dance. Several cinematic translations of the qissa have been attempted over a century of Hindi cinema beginning with two in the silent era between 1922 and 1927. While the 1922 version, produced by Madan Theatres, failed, the 1927 version, produced by Excelsior Pictures, directed by Manilal Joshi and starring Zubeida, Vakil and Shehzadi, turned out to be a box office hit. Two more screen versions emerged with the coming of the talkies. While the one produced by Krishnatone and directed by K. Rathod did not perform well at the box office, the version directed by J. J. Madan for Madan Theatres, featuring the singing stars Master Nissar and Jahan Aara Kajjan in the lead roles, created an uproar. In 1945, Hind Pictures presented another version with Swarnalata and Nazir in the lead roles, and All India Pictures produced another Hindi version with Shammi Kapoor and Nutan in the role of the legendary lovers in 1953. Similarly, the 1976 version made by H. S. Rawail was a resounding success, turning Ranjita Kaur Jhajjar, who starred opposite the reigning romantic hero Rishi Kapoor, into a celebrity overnight, a success the teenage actress was not able to match in any of her films that followed. The highest grossing Hindi film romances of every decade repeated the Majnun-Laila qissa in their depiction of love thwarted by family feud, social inequality, societal norms, or disease.

Tales of doomed love echoing the yearnings of the poet-lover Majnun have underpinned several iconic romances on the Hindi

screen and the tale of tragic love in the Hindi film follows a Perso-Arabic trajectory, from *Devdas* (Bengali 1935) to *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* (2012). The unproblematic translation of the Majnun-Laila *qissa* in Kamal Amrohi's courtesan film *Pakeezah* (1971), which took him fourteen years to complete, made it the most enduring tale of love in Hindi cinema, partially due to the demise of the female lead Meena Kumari within two months after the film was released. Although Dev Anand's *Guide* (1965) is deeply steeped in the Hindu milieu of the *devdasi* dancer and the trope of the *guru*, the film submerges the minimalism of R. K. Narayan's English novel with its hyperbolic excess of Urdu and the sensuality of the Islamic qissa through its dialogues and numerous songs. Its ambiguous positioning of its protagonist as both trickster and obsessive lover brings strong shades of Majnun in Anand's portrayal of Narayan's loveable character, particularly after the failure of his relationship with Rosie. In both films, the dancer's marginality provides the narrative conflict, with the lover severing filial relations to consummate the union. Majnun's ghost returns in *Bobby* (1973) when the young scion of a wealthy Hindu family, educated in a missionary school, breaks into an Urdu ghazal on setting his eyes on the virginal Bobby at his birthday party: '*Main shayar to naheen/ Magar ai haseen/Jabse dekha maine tujhko/Mujhko shayari aa gayi* ' [I am not a poet/But oh beautiful one/The day I set my eyes upon you/Poetry began to flow from me] (Anand Bakshi, *Bobby* 1973).[4] Notwithstanding the Hindu setting of the narrative, romance in Hindi cinema, is deeply entrenched in Perso-Arabic codes and conventions even when enacted through Western rituals of amour and norms of courtship in films right up to the 1990s, and of dating in post-liberalisation India.

The Udhri code finds a literal translation in films such as *Fanaa* (2006), *Kurbaan* (2009) and *Ashiqui 2* (2013) in which the lover selflessly sacrifices his life for his beloved's happiness. The unfailing appeal of the longing and pain of separated lovers and love that remains unconsummated, or can be consummated only after prolonged suffering, accounts for the unparalleled success enjoyed by Yash Raj films from the 1970s to 2012, including *Daag* (1972), *Kabhi Kabhie* (1976), *Silsila* (1981), *Veer-Zaara* (2004), *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* (2012). Unlike *Veer-Zaara* in which the hostility

between India and Pakistan prevents the lovers from uniting until the end, the lovers are forced to suffer the pangs of separation in *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* due to the beloved's irrational fear that her union with her lover would cause his death. The sufi idiom of destructive love returns literally in the title and theme song of the film *Fanaa*, the big hit of 2006.

> *Chand sifarish jo karta hamari deta woh tumko bata*
> *Sharm-o-haya ke parde gira ke karni hai hamko khata*
> *Zid hai ab toh hai khud ko mitana, hona hai tujhmein fana*
> If the moon were to speak for me, he would tell you
> I would shed all veils of shame, I'd commit an indiscretion
> I have resolved to erase myself, to be annihilated in you
> (Prasoon Joshi, *Fanaa* 2006)

The title of the film refers to the sufi concept of fana. The song, and the film, play on the dual meanings of the term for the male protagonist, Rehan, an extremist whose willingness to annihilate himself for the cause of jihad conflicts with his love for his beloved Zooni, who is literally destroyed by love. The motif is introduced through Zooni's confessing her love to Rehan through the couplet '*Tere ishq mein hona hai fanā*' [I wish to annihilate myself in your love], and Rehan expressing cynical astonishment at anyone wanting to love anyone else in the world, leave alone him, in that manner. In the end, however, it is Rehan's love for Zooni, which he keeps denying even to himself, that illustrates the meaning of fana when he dies at the hands of his beloved, thus embodying the notions of death, love and love-martyr as defined by Ibn Dawud and Ibn Hazm. The tropes of death love and love-martyr are reiterated in *Kurbaan* (2009), another stereotyped portrayal of the educated, suave Muslim as terrorist in Ehsaas[5], whose love for his Hindu beloved Avantika, ultimately triumphs over his ideological commitment to jihad when he shoots himself after ensuring his pregnant wife's safe departure. In *Ashiqui 2*, in which a failed alcoholic star rescues a talented singer from a bar and transforms her into a singing sensation before committing suicide in order to ensure her success, we see another poignant translation of the love martyr. The lovelorn Majnun's grief at being parted from his

beloved is hauntingly articulated by the song '*Judaa ho gaye hum/ Woh lamhe, woh batein/Koi na jaane*' [We have been separated/ [But] those moments, those conversations [we shared]/No one knows of them] in Mohit Suri's *Zeher* (2005).[6]

THE MAJNUN LOVER

In contrast to Ashis Nandy, who singled out Prathamesh Barua and his hero Devdas as shaping the aesthetic of the Hindi film and the male protagonist, Sudhir Kakar has proposed the notion of the 'Majnun hero of the Hindi film', who reappears in various incarnations, Hindu and Muslim, time and again in Hindi cinema. The shades of Majnun and Laila are visible not only in their screen avatars but also in the star personas created for yesteryear reigning actors of Hindi cinema, and tragic trajectories of whose doomed romances contributed to their star power. According to Kakar, 'the *Majnun*-lover', labelled 'after the hero of the well-known Islamic romance, has his cultural origins in a confluence of Islamic and Hindu streams', whose home is as much in the Indo-Persian ghazal as in the lover's laments of separation in Sanskrit and Tamil poetry (Kakar 2000). Devdas, the Bengali hero consumed by his love for Paro, is a Hindu avatar of the Udhri poet Qais who is driven mad by unrequited love and becomes possessed. The other legendary lover who competes for space in the Indian romantic imaginary is Prince Salim whose compulsive love for a slave girl Anarkali led to her incarceration by Mughal emperor Akbar. Along with the film *Anarkali* (1953), *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960) has immortalised the tale of the prince who was willing to die for the beautiful slave girl. Like the Hindu zamindar's son who leaves home for the sake of his beloved, the Muslim prince Salim who is ready to die to rescue a slave girl and the slave girl who sacrifices her life for her prince lover emerge from the same tradition. In an interesting play of dharma in its Islamic guise, the film director has Emperor Akbar punish his own son and his beloved, only to reverse his harsh judgement by sparing Anarkali's life at the end. The isomorphism of the Islamic context of this legend with the Perso-Arabic qissa and the near-perfect fit of Muslim actors to play the legendary lovers

produced an iconic image by which Dilip Kumar came to represent the Majnun lover in Prince Salim in addition to embodying Devdas. The meeting of the Perso-Arabic Majnun with the Bengali Devdas in the person of the Muslim actor foregrounds the blurring of the two heroes and two great traditions in the visual regime of the Hindi film. Dilip Kumar's biography, that paralleled that of the characters he played, imprinted him in the Indian imaginary as Majnun and as Devdas. His much publicised love for Madhubala, who played Anarkali in *Mughal-e-Azam* and married singer actor Kishore Kumar, and her untimely death, dissolved the boundaries between the Majnun characters Dilip Kumar played on screen and the persona created for him by the media.

Similarly, the actor Guru Dutt and the characters he played in *Pyasa* (1957), *Kagaz Ke Phool* (1959) of a poet smitten by his muse and his destruction by an apathetic social order offer direct translations of the Majnun lover. Like Dilip Kumar, Dutt the actor/ director's cinematic career and relationships mirroring those of his characters follow Majnun's doomed route to failure and eventual death brought about by frequent bouts of depression and alcoholism. The dark, brooding artist driven by passion for his love and muse that Dutt played in both his films was in line with the anonymous poets, who, identifying with Majnun, took on his name.

While the Krishna lover appeared as a serious contender to the Majnun lover in the 1960s, as Kakar has brilliantly argued, the appeal of the Majnun lover for Hindi film audiences remains undiminished in view of the top classics of Hindi cinema featuring Majnun lovers in pursuit of the unattainable beloved (Kakar 2000). If Dilip Kumar and Dutt essayed the Majnun hero of the 1950s, the legendary lover was reincarnated in the tragic figure of Rajendra Kumar who was rechristened 'Jubilee' Kumar after he sacrificed his love for the sake of friendship in a number of 1960s' films beginning with Raj Kapoor's *Sangam* (1964). With his intense looks, perfect Urdu delivery and sombre persona, Rajendra Kumar formed a perfect foil to the effusive, flamboyant and effervescent Raj Kapoor, camouflaging his unfulfilled longings in the imagery of the Urdu ghazal. Singing for Rajendra Kumar in *Mere Mehboob* (1963), Mohammad Rafi's elegant rendition of Shakeel Badayuni's ghazal '*Mere mehboob tujhe meri mohabbat ki qasam*' has formulated

ghazal etiquette in the Hindi film. Kumar made a mark as the silent lover who fails to declare his love for the beloved only to die for love in films like *Sangam* (1964) and *Dil Ek Mandir* (1963), thus introducing a new twist to the Majnun-Laila qissa. Although he does not die in *Arzoo* (1965), he conceals his disability from his beloved and denies his love so that she can lead a happy life with another man.

The 1970s' version of Majnun, Rajesh Khanna, transformed romance by repeatedly dying on screen due to accident, illness or alcoholism. After his debut film *Akhiri Khat* (1966), he played characters who redefined tragedy by losing the beloved in a number of ways. In *Aradhana* (1969), the film that shot him to fame, his death in action separated the lovers; he had to die in a motorcycle accident in *Andaz* (1971) to improve its box office ratings; in *Kati Patang* (1970), he turned to alcohol after he was betrayed at the wedding altar, and in *Amar Prem* (1971), he drank himself to death after his wife's betrayal. In *Anand* (1971) and *Safar* (1970), Khanna's death by cancer deprived the lovers of blissful union. In *Daag* (1973), *Roti* (1974), *Namak Haraam* (1973) and *Aap ki Kasam* (1974), the lovers were separated by circumstances, social pressures or political reasons.

Amitabh Bachchan, with whom the Majnun hero of the Hindi film gave away to the Angry Young Man, according to Kakar, began his career as the conscientious doctor of *Anand* and the troubled poet of *Mili* (1975), played the reticent lover to perfection in *Sholay* (1975) and sacrificed his love for duty in both *Kabhi Kabhie* (1976) and *Silsila* (1981). Although Kakar's typology classifies Amitabh Bachchan as another kind of hero whose hypermasculine space elides or marginalises the female (Kakar 2000), the Bachchan phenomenon, whether in its shy, reticent avatar or that of the angry young man, was produced through the incorporation of features such as solitude, taciturnity, intensity and passion that characterised the Perso-Arabic lover. In his pre-*Zanjeer* (1973) phase, Bachchan's character as the shy doctor Bhaskar in *Anand,* the obsessive poet in *Parwana* (1971), the brooding alcoholic in *Mili* (1975), the remorse stricken scion in *Namak Haraam* (1973) carries unmistakable shades of the intense, silent Majnun or other Perso-Arabic lovers that is carried over in the angry young man films like *Zanjeer,*

Sholay, *Deewar* (1975), *Muqaddar Ka Sikandar* (1978) as well as in Yash Chopra films like *Kabhi Kabhie* and *Silsila*. Irrespective of whether it is occasioned by unfulfilled romantic or socio-economic aspirations, one may find in the characters played by Bachchan the classic illustration of melancholia, the malady distinguished from madness, that the lover is alleged to have suffered from. In all his films, the actor communicated with the intensity of the gaze or with a single glance the emotions, whether filial or romantic love or existential angst, which the tongue failed to express. But Rishi Kapoor, the actor who filled the Majnun hero gap after the decline of the 1970s' superstar Rajesh Khanna, excelled in teen romances in addition to playing Majnun in films of the 1970s.

Majnun returned with a vengeance with Shah Rukh Khan, who started his career by playing the obsessive lover. From *Baazigar* (1993) to *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi* (2009), Shah Rukh Khan has introduced so many shades into the Majnun figure of the Hindi film that the actor has become one with the characters he plays on screen. If he put duty above love in *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) and *Pardes* (1997), unusual circumstances forced him to decide in favour of love in *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* (2001); in *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), he played a bereaved husband unwilling to enter another relationship; in *Kal Ho Na Ho* (2003), he sacrificed his love for his beloved's happiness; in *Veer-Zaara* (2004) he remained in solitary confinement for twenty-two years to protect her honour; and in *Om Shanti Om* (2007) he died for her. By the time Shah Rukh Khan was cast in the new *Devdas* (2002), the gap between Devdas and Majnun had closed completely. Irrespective of the lover he played, the dark, brooding Majnun was visible beneath his Bengali, Punjabi and other avatars. The Muslim actor's real life relationship with his Hindu wife Gauri, likewise, entered media lore as another tale of undying love merging the actor's identity with that of his characters.

Their adherence to the main elements of *Udhri love,* passionate devotion to one woman, chastity and faithfulness until *death,* makes Hindi film lovers modern incarnations of Majnun. The theme of fidelity and devotion to one love, including one separated by death or other circumstances, runs through Hindi films across several decades. Devotion to an absent beloved connects the

bereaved hero of *Heera Panna* (1973) to other Majnun avatars such as Shankar in *Shor* (1972), Ranbir in *Dharmatma* (1975), Rajesh in *Janbaaz* (1986), Lalit in *Chandni* (1989) and Viren Pratap Singh in *Lamhe* (1992), Rahul Khanna in *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), and culminates in Raj Aryan Malhotra in *Mohabattein* (2000) whose beloved Megha exists only in his memory. The lover's exemplary fidelity to the beloved, from whom he is separated by family or fate, forms the leitmotif of films like *Prem Pujari* (1970), *Hero: A Love Story* (2003), *Veer-Zaara* (2004) and *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* (2012). The lover's obsessive passion or *junoon*, usually caused by the beloved's disappearance, coincides with his public declaration of love and desire in violation of the code that forbids contact between sexes.

THE LAILA BELOVED

Annemarie Schimmel states that Laila, 'as well as other women cast as the beloved in classic Arabic literature, such as Hind and Salma, turn up in Arab mystical poetry as chiffres, or as metaphor for the Divine Being the poets so ardently yearn for' (Schimmel 2003: 99). Hindi cinema borrows from Udhri poetry the idealised chaste beloved who must always remain unattainable. Nizami describes Laila as an angel, 'like a full Arabian moon set against the bright starry sky', 'slender as a Cypress tree', with 'the bright and innocent eyes of a young gazelle', a jasmine bush in spring, who could bewitch with one glance from beneath her dark hair and the flicker of whose long eyelashes could have 'set the world aflame' (Nizami 2002: 6). The typical chaste and virginal Hindi film heroine who remains naïve and innocent despite the visual titillation she provides the male voyeur displays unmistakable features of Nizami's Laila.

Laila, or Layla, christened after her black hair as dark as the night (*layl*), serves as the antithesis of the fair-skinned Radha. While Nizami describes her complexion as that of roses, Laila is represented on the subcontinent as dusky, and the site of forbidden desire. Shemeem Burney Abbas asserts that by the time the Laila-Majnun legend travelled to the subcontinent, Laila had become

'black' and that 'a whole discourse of a dark-complexioned Layla emerged in indigenous literatures', speculating if her dark hair got transformed into her dark complexion (Abbas 2002: 105). Although the Laila of Hindi cinema is not necessarily dusky, she serves as the object of the Hindu Majnu hero's desire.

The schizophrenic split between the mother/wife and beloved is translated in the chastity of the maternal Sita and the Laila beloved in Hindi cinema. Sita has been rightfully viewed as animating portrayals of the virtuous heroine of classic Hindi cinema who, like Rama's devoted wife in *Ramayana*, demonstrates her legendary loyalty to her husband even when abandoned by him and his family. However, while Sita provides the model of the chaste wife and is valorised for her sacrifice and contribution to conjugal harmony, Hindi cinema invariably turns to the legendary Udhri heroine as reinterpreted by courtly Arabic and Persianate Urdu poets in its representation of the virginal beloved. The unconsummated desire of Udhri love is a trope that has been appropriated by Hindi cinema in the enactment of romance between lovers. Until the advent of globalisation, the virginal heroine remains the exemplar of purity and innocence and the lover submits to the code of chastity even when transported to Western settings, as in *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* (1995) (Uberoi 1998).

While Laila as imagined in the sufi tradition is the Divine into which the sufi can annihilate himself, Hindi cinema's representation of her builds on Amir Khusrau's suggestion of a physical contact between Laila and Majnun. Love poetry in the Bhakti tradition is no less erotic than sufi; however, the articulation of sensual desire in the Hindi film, targeted at a family audience, turns to the Muslim beloved whose racialised otherness serves as the perfect site for the voicing of repressed desires forbidden by dharmic law. Although the sensual imagery of sufi verse represents a spiritual longing in a manner similar to that of Bhakti poetry, the Hindi film polarises the sufi and Bhakti into languages of desire and worship respectively. The dark-skinned Laila of Persian poetry, in whose darkness the sufi poet sought to dissolve himself, becomes an object of male desire in the Hindi film. Unlike the Hindu mother goddess who cannot be sexualised, sexual desire can be mapped onto the figure of the fetishized Muslim beloved, sexualised through costumes,

choreographed dance movements and carefully angled shots that heighten scopic pleasure.

Hindi films right until the late 1960s employ a visual aesthetic to communicate the unattainability of the beloved through a scopic poetic of looking that forbids touching.[7] Despite the adoring gaze of the lover that imbues the face of the beloved with aching sensuality, the absence of tactility through injunctions related to physical contact in Udhri love and Indian society transform the beloved into an ethereal being beyond the reach of both the voyeuristic lover and the audience. The object of Majnun's desire as well as that of billions of viewers, she remains unsullied by physical contact and, therefore, unattainable except in male fantasies translated into songs and dances. The viewer is invited to follow the gaze of the besotted lover transfixed on the beloved's visage and lovingly linger on each part of her countenance to a soulful ghazal that lists the beauty of individual attributes in conventional metaphors and formulae.

The literary practice of *ada bandi*, which means something like 'depiction and narration of the beloved's coquetry, dress and manners, speech and body language' ensures that 'the beloved in the eighteenth century *ghazal* is not the passive, hiding-behind-the-purdah, slightly tubercular, recoiling from the slightest physical contact, shrinking-violet type of little girl much touted by modern critics as the optimal beloved in the *ghazal*' (Faruqi 1999: 21–22). The convention of ada bandi is carried forward in Hindi cinema not only verbally through incorporation of the ghazal but in its visual translation in the dress, manners, speech and body language of the beloved. More significantly, the ada bandi convention of love in 'Indian style' (*sabk-e Hindi*) ghazal facilitates the transformation of the virginal and divine Laila of Nizami's poem into an object of profane love.

The fetishization of the Muslim woman as Laila in the Hindi film is partially due to the historical positioning of the actress in Hindi cinema. In absence of women performers in Hindu performative arts where cross-dressing enabled men to play women's parts and the stigma attached to women entertainers, top female artistes of Hindi cinema until the 1960s like Noorjehan, Meena Kumari, Madhubala and Nargis had a courtesan past. They

transported to their screen portrayals the sensuality and desire associated with the Muslim courtesan, an aura magnified by their unfulfilled romances off-screen. Their tragic pasts, unfulfilled relationships and untimely deaths produced a sensual mystique around the Muslim heroine of the Hindi films that translated into the Laila stereotype.

Like Majnun, Laila is named only in direct cinematic adaptations of the Majnun-Laila qissa, but is visible in all images of male desire, not necessarily Muslim. Heroines of the 1940s and 1950s like Suraiyya, Madhubala, Meena Kumari and Nargis, produced the Laila stereotype in the male imaginary despite their Hindu names and even the characters they played on screen, largely through the overwriting of the cinematic romance with their own autobiographies. Their relationships with their male co-stars were the stuff of Perso-Arabic legends. The dark-skinned Suraiyya[8] was prevented by her grandmother from marrying the actor Dev Anand, who was smitten by her, and died a spinster. Meena Kumari's tortured relationships with her exploitative directors and co-stars, her alcoholism and premature death turned her into a living legend. The romance of Madhubala and Dilip Kumar was cut short by her marriage to the singer-actor Kishore Kumar, and early death. Nargis's relationship with Raj Kapoor and Sunil Dutt is the stuff of Bollywood romance. While her relationship with the already married Kapoor resonates with the unfulfilled love of the Majnun-Laila qissa, her miraculous rescue and marriage to her younger co-star in *Mother India* (1957) is straight out of *One Thousand and One Nights*, with the tale ending tragically with her death by cancer. But possibly the most celebrated romance on Hindi screen in the 1980s was that between Rekha and Amitabh Bachchan, who became the object of the nation's desire as also the superstar of Indian cinema.

Like Majnun, the word Laila has become synonymous with the beloved irrespective of her ethnicity or religion. Apart from the number of songs composed in her honour by lyricists of Hindi films, dialogues written by Urdu writers and poets evoke the Laila stereotype more often than that of Radha. The Indian male's adoration for Majnun's beloved is perhaps best summarised in the song from Feroz Khan's film *Qurbani* (1980).

Laila o Laila, aisi hoon Laila
Har koyi chahe mujhse milna akela
Jisko bhi dekhoon duniya bhula doon
Majnu bana doon, aisi main Laila
I am Laila, I am the kind of beauty
Whom everyone wants to meet alone
Whoever I look at, I make him forget the world
And become a Majnun, that's the Laila I am (Indeevar, *Qurbani* 1980)

PERSO-ARABIC CONVENTIONS OF EXPRESSING LOVE

A Tongue that Conceals and Eyes that Reveal

Ruqqaya Yasmin Khan mentions the juxtaposition of 'the tongue that conceals and the eyes that reveal' in Arabic literature and lists various traits associated 'with love—holding the tongue, denial by the lover if he is interrogated, and feigning a show of perseverance' (Khan 2008: 84–85) of which two are directly due to the tongue's concealment. The concept of the tongue or heart that conceals and the eyes that reveal is the etiquette that regulates Hindi cinematic romance from *Mahal* (1969) to *Love Aaj Kal* (2009). In *Mahal*, the beloved begs her lover not to reveal their love to the world by repeating Majnun's indiscrete acts of chanting Laila's name and drawing her images on walls.

Main to yeh raz chhupa loongi
Tum kaise dil ko sambhaloge
Dil kya tum to deewaron pe
Meri tasvir bana loge
Dekho yeh kam nahin karna
Mujhko badnam nahin karna
I can well keep this secret
[But] How will you restrain your heart
Why heart, you would even paint
My picture on the walls
Look, please do not do this
Do not sully my good name (Anand Bakshi, *Mahal* 1969)

Major complications in cinematic plots of the films of the 1950s and 1960s are caused by the lover's inability to voice his emotions for the beloved, who is nonetheless able to fathom them by looking into his eyes that give away the secret. Gopal (Rajendra Kumar), in Raj Kapoor's *Sangam* (1964), refrains from expressing his feelings to his childhood sweetheart Radha (Vyjayanthimala) when he discovers that his childhood friend Sundar (Raj Kapoor) is also in love with her. In his silence, his steadfast denial of his love for Radha when Sundar confronts him, and his feigning indifference to prevent Sundar from suspecting Radha's fidelity, Gopal appears to fit Ibn Hazm's description of the lover (Khan 2008: 85). In *Arzoo* (1965), Sarju alias Gopal denies his meeting with Husna in Kashmir when his best friend Shekhar discloses that the woman he met and fell in love with was none other than Husna. Later, when Husna confronts him directly, he hides behind dark glasses to conceal his true feelings and identity but is betrayed by his body language, convincing Husna that he is indeed Sarju. The story of cross-border love in Yash Chopra's *Veer-Zaara* (2004), in which Veer Pratap Singh, the Hindu hero of the film, prefers solitary confinement in a Pakistani jail to betraying his Muslim beloved Zaara, is summarised in the award-winning lyrics of Javed Akhtar.

> *Tere liye, ham hain jiye, honton ko siye*
> *Tere liye, ham hain jiye, har aansoo piye*
> *Dil mein magar jalte rahe chahat ke diye*
> *Tere liye, tere liye*
> For you I have lived with my lips sealed
> For you I have swallowed every tear
> Yet the lamp of my love burns bright in my heart
> For you, just for you (Javed Akhtar, *Veer-Zaara* 2004)

Unlike Majnun whose indiscretion cost him his beloved and his impugnment of female chastity constituted the unacceptable, Veer conforms to the Udhri code of secrecy by not revealing the name of his soon-to-be-married beloved to protect her honour for twenty-two years. Veer follows Ibn Hazm's love treatise to the letter by holding his tongue [*al kitman bil-lisan*] (Hazm quoted in Khan 2008: 84).[9] Explaining this code of honour to the new generation lover Jai

(Saif Ali Khan), Veer (Rishi Kapoor) in *Love Aaj Kal* (2009) explains how he stopped following his beloved to her college because she begged him not to let people cast aspersions on her good name.

Eyes that Reveal

While lovers are expected to follow the Udhri code that forbids the overt expression of love, their feelings towards one another are betrayed through corporeal transformations. Arab poetry places a strong emphasis on the key role played by the gaze in falling in love. Udhri verses were often quoted in love treatises and influenced the grammar of sufi poetry. While Ibn Dawud devoted the first chapter of *Zahra* to this theme, Ibn Hazm regarded the brooding gaze as one of the signs of love and states that 'you will see the lover gazing at the beloved unblinkingly; his eyes follow the loved one's every movement' and dwelt at length on the 'honourable part' played by the glance by means of which 'the lover can be dismissed, admitted, promised, threatened, upbraided, cheered, commanded, forbidden' (Hazm 1994). He elucidates an elaborate code used by lovers in the chapter 'Signalling with the eyes' to express their love.

> To make a signal with the corner of the eye is to forbid the lover something; to droop the eye is an indication of consent; to prolong the gaze is a sign of suffering and distress; to break off the gaze is a mark of relief; to make signs of closing the eyes is an indicated threat. (Arberry 2013)

Ibn Hazm's privileging of the eye as a semantic code appropriate for hinting and allusion is reiterated in the advantage of the gaze in the concepts of allusion [*ishara*] and secret [*asrar*] central to sufi thought. The lover's unblinking gaze that follows every movement of the beloved described by Ibn Hazm finds its mystical articulation in Rumi's verses in which 'To love is to open the window of the heart, reflecting the beauty of the one we love. We must gaze steadily into our beloved's face to open the path into our inner self' (Arberry 2013). Most significantly, it is the eyes that betray

'the subtle secret' that the tongue conceals as 'the flames of passion raging in the lover's breast will be glimpsed in his gestures and in the expression of his eyes' (Arberry 2013).

The expressive power of the eyes in communicating what cannot be articulated verbally, particularly in the context of restraint and prohibition, makes it the preferred vehicle in the production of the scopic aesthetic of the Hindi film. Hindi cinema's almost literal adherence to the elaborate code of 'Signalling with the Eyes' as elucidated by Ibn Hazm, particularly in signposting romance reaffirms its Perso-Arabic lineage. The Hindi film romance is invariably inaugurated by the lover sighting the beloved and gazing at her while she remains unaware of his gaze, the meeting of gaze and communicating through the eyes. The voyeuristic gaze of the male lover that fetishizes the beloved for the consumption of the male viewer has been counterpoised by the female gaze fixated on the male actor in a number of Hindi films. Following the furtive glances exchanged by lovers [*aankhon hi aankhon mein ishara*] after the first meeting of the gaze [*nazrein milana*], the iconic images of lovers intensely gazing at one another have produced a complex coding of romance in Hindi cinema borrowed from Perso-Arabic sources.

In the absence of the possibility of direct expressions of love in traditional Indian society, hinting with the eyes is complemented by the oblique vocabulary of song and dance that is understood by the producers and viewers as the emotional state of the lovers. In view of the centrality of the gaze to romance in Hindi cinema, song lyrics are shaped by the language of the eyes to articulate the various stages of romance. From the Arabic exclamation *māshāallāh* to express appreciation, joy and praise at the glimpse of the beloved, the eyes and the gaze play a significant part in articulating the intensity of the lovers' emotions. The lover who begs for a sight of the beautiful beloved [*mera haseen nazara de de*], or entreats her to speak to him with her eyes [*zara nazron se keh do ji*], make eye contact [*kabhi to nazar milao*], or whose gaze is fixed upon the beloved's face [*tere chehre se nazar nahin hatti*] have constructed a sophisticated vocabulary of the nazar in Hindi cinema. The penetrating gaze, as employed in Hindi popular cinema, is understood by producers and viewers alike, according to

Taylor (2002), to signal the blossoming of romance and moments of peak emotion. Shaila Bhatti adds that it is the visuality of nazar that permitted the public declaration of the forbidden sentiment of love in South Asian societies (Bhatti 2012).

Singing Praises of the Beloved

Although Majnun is bound by the Udhri code to seal his tongue, he is also provided the license to reveal it in form of a poem, illustrating the coexistence of secrecy and revealing. Pointing to the connection between poetry and courtship in early Arab culture, Khan holds that 'pre-Islamic ode's love prelude is suggestive of a model of masculinity in which men cultivated the art of composing and publicly reciting poems and odes praising women' (Khan 2008: 78). In the Arab version, Majnun is described as 'the most comely, elegant and brilliant in the poetry of the Bedouins' (Khan 2008: 77) and is believed to have sung Laila's praises (*Kathir al dhikr lahd*) when he first fell in love with her. Besides, these romances portray Bedouin women as 'celebrating and capitalizing on the acquisition of such a rhapsodizer' (Khan 2008: 79). Hindi cinema has inherited from the Urdu ghazal or Indian style (*sabk-e Hindi*) Urdu poetry the imagery of the beautiful but cruel and unattainable beloved of Udhri poetry who slays the lover with her incomparable beauty. One of the most memorable odes to the beauty of the beloved has been immortalised by Mohammad Rafi singing Shakeel Badayuni's award-winning verses for Guru Dutt in the classic *Chaudhvin Ka Chand* (1960).

> *Chaudhvin ka chand ho, ya aftab ho*
> *Jo bhi ho tum khuda ki qasam, lajawab ho*
> *Chaudhvin ka chand ho...*
> *Zulfein hain jaise kandhon pe badal jhuke hue*
> *Aankhen hain jaise mey ke peyale bhare hue*
> *Masti hai jis mein pyar ki, tum woh sharab ho*
> Are you the moon of the fourteenth night, or are you the sun
> Whatever you are, I swear to God, you are beyond compare
> Your hair falls like clouds upon your shoulders

Your eyes are like goblets brimming full
And the wine of love that fills them is you (Shakeel Badayuni,
Chaudhvin Ka Chand 1960)

In *Sangam* (1964), Gopal observes the Udhri code by expressing his
love for Radha in a letter that creates misunderstandings between
Radha and Suraj and lead to his tragic death. But his unspoken
love for Radha is articulated in a song: '*Yeh mera prem patr padh
kar/Tum naraz na hona/Ki tum meri zindagi ho/Ki tum meri bandagi
ho*' [Having read my love letter/Do not be annoyed with me/For
you are my life/For you are my prayer (Hasrat Jaipuri, *Sangam*
1964). Despite Hindi cinematic vocabulary having acquired a
more Punjabi overtone since *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995),
the legend of Majnun-Laila continues to complicate the cinematic
narrative through the sufi invasion of Bollywood song and dance.
If ghazal was the mode of inserting the qissa until the 1980s,
Bollywood's sufi invasion with imitations of Nusrat Fateh Ali
Khan's *qawalis* and *Sufiana kalam* reinserts the qissa into Hindi
cinematic narrative.

CONCLUSION

If the *Ramayana* offers a template for the idealised marital union in
the figures of the duty abiding Rama and his loyal wife Sita, Hindi
cinema must turn to the lore of the divine lover Krishna and his
infinite gopis to normalise the romance of young lovers cavorting
on the mountains and seas. The portrayal of pak ishq or pure love
is however facilitated through a turn to the fantasy of the desiring
and desired Other, the Muslim, and through the language of the
Other whose florid flourish is preferred to the cadence of an arcane
tongue. The romance plot in the Hindi film must choose between
the two divine idioms that Kakar isolated: Krishna and his gopis,
and the sufi merging of the self with that of the divine lover as
represented through the legend of Laila and Majnun (Kakar 2000).
Whether guided by the love of Radha-Krishna or Majnun-Laila,
the typical Hindi film romance is invariably embedded within the
Ramayana myth, and the flagrant violation of social norms disturbs

the familial and social order that must be restored either through marriage or death.

Hindi cinema introduces a Hindu moral twist to the Udhri code by beginning with the familiar Udhri motif of the lover being rejected by the beloved's family as inappropriate due to family feud or class, caste or religious difference, that is further complicated by the lovers sacrificing love in order to fulfill familial duties. The brooding Majnun lover of *Kabhi Kabhie* (1976) and *Silsila* (1981) is produced through his voluntarily choosing filial obligations to self-gratification by sacrificing love. From *Devdas* (1935) to *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (2002), the lover torn between family and the beloved initially opts for family, but his intense and undying love for the beloved either compels him to abandon his family or the world, bringing the Udhri code of ishq as religious duty into conflict with the Hindu code of dharma as filial or communal duty. Thus the narrative conflict in Hindi cinema is produced through the classic confrontation between the Hindu Sanskritic ethical code of dharma with the Perso-Arabic sufi mystical code of ishq, and the lovers' failure to reconcile the two leads to tragic consequences.

NOTES

1. *Khabar* (plural *akhbar*) is an Arabic genre, usually a short anecdote, resembling the short story of modern times that often has a pretension to truth (Jayyusi 2010).

2. *Divan* is a collection of inspirational poems composed and compiled in the imperial courts of various sultanates (Jayyusi 1977).

3. The fact that in all the Hindi versions of the film, Devdas was played by a Punjabi singer-actor and two Muslim actors may also have contributed to the unmistakable shades of Majnun in the Bengali lover.

4. Masud points out that 'till 1947 even ornate and ornamental Urdu was understood by a section of the masses. Their number gradually declined. In the 1980s the Persianised dialogue of Kamal Amrohi's *Razia Sultan* was understood by very few' (Masud 2005).

5. A relatively low-key but mainstream Hindi film which subverts this stereotype effectively and powerfully is *Aamir* (2008), in which the protagonist also dies, for his family, and the nation.

6. Song lyrics by Sayeed Qadri, Pritam Chakravarty and Shakeel Azmi; sung by Atif Aslam.

7. The idiom of romance continues to be defined by the injunctions related to physical contact in Udhri love even in films like *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) or *Pardes* (1997) in the mid-1990s. Although touching, or even erotic contact, is licensed in the fantasy space of song and dance sequences, overt expressions of sexuality began to be voiced only with *Bobby* (1973).

8. Bhaichand Patel mentions that those who knew Suraiyya were surprised that 'the dark, simple girl teasingly called 'Kalu' by Raj Kapoor' should have become the reigning queen of Hindi cinema (Patel 2012: 59).

9. 'One of the traits of love is holding the tongue [*al kitman bil-lisan*]; the lover will deny everything if interrogated, feign a show of perseverance and make it seem he is extremely continent and a bachelor' (Ibn Hazm quoted in Khan 2008: 84). Ibn Hazm demonstrates that the male lover's conscious enterprise of concealing the secret paradoxically fails because his bodily signs reveal it (Khan 2008: 85).

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Shehzadas, *Houris*, *Div*s and Djinns

Scholarly debates on characterisation in Hindi cinema have focused on its recycling of mythic and legendary figures like the noble Rama and his faithful wife Sita or the playful god Krishna and his consort Radha from the Sanskrit epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. These readings are derived from privileging the origins of Hindi cinema in the mythological and saint films of the silent era and the persistence of these tropes over a century of Indian cinema. Hindi cinema's indebtedness hybrid Parsi dramas, which freely borrowed from both Persiante dastan and masnavi traditions as well as from Hindu mythological sources' complicates their reinscription of Hindu/Sanskritic tropes (Geeta Kapur 1987; Anuradha Kapur 1993). This chapter argues that while Rama, Sita, Krishna and Radha are presiding deities in the celestial sphere of Hindi cinema, they are reincarnated through their Perso-Arabic avatars as such as Laila, Majnun and other dastan figures like shehzadas, paris, divs and ayyars.

Asserting that the general theme of the dastan is 'the struggle of noble heroes against the powers of evil', Annemarie Schimmel points out that 'there is little characterization in the figures' who are 'rather stereotyped: good and bad, friendly and inimical' (Schimmel 1975: 203). Muhammad Umar Memon argues that, the dastan, because of its flair for exuberant fantasy and the supernatural, used plot and *character* in fundamentally different ways and that it 'purposely left its *characters two-dimensional*' (Memon 2007: xi) in order to polarise the division between good and evil, in which the good is very good and the bad is very bad. Since dastan characters are flat, *two-dimensional* figures, they are static and lack in development and complexity. Frances Pritchett believes that instead of representing the conflict in the central character's mind, they represent the polarity in two different figures. Ulriche Marzolph argues that 'Persian literature relies on a standard register

of protagonists with their stereotypical functions of requisites and actions' (quoted in Haase 2008: 501). According to Kathryn Hansen, paris and divs (or devs) were borrowed from the dastan in the 1853 Urdu play *Inder Sabha* that travelled to Parsi theatre and subsequently to Hindi cinema in Bombay (Hansen 1992: 361). In addition to the shehzada or prince, the most common character, it includes secondary characters both human and superhuman such as the hero's standard helper, envious stepmothers and aunt, the malevolent and stupid div or demon (Haase 2008: 502). Rosie Thomas has argued that Hindi films can be regarded as 'a moral fable that involves its audience largely through resolving some (apparently unresolvable) disorder in the ideal moral universe' and 'are structured according to the rules of melodrama, which requires a universe clearly divided between good/morality and evil/decadence' (Thomas 1995: 163). The binary of good and evil, in her view, is represented by the mother and the villain respectively and the hero's role is to mediate between the two. Pritchett defines the dastan as a kind of parable, which also defines melodrama; Hindi cinema's melodramatic element could thus also be seen as emerging from cinema's dastan roots.

The stereotype of handsome and righteous *heroes and* ethereally pretty and virtuous heroines originates in classical Indian texts and gestures to beings described as *yakshas*, *kinnar*s and *apsaras* in Hindu mythology and houris and paris in the Islamic tradition. Although the representation of characters in Hindi cinema equally borrows from prescriptions in classical Sanskrit drama—such as *nayika-bheda*, *ashta-nayika* [eightfold] classification [of the female protagonist], *nakh-sikh-varnan* [head-to-toe description] and *solah sringar* [sixteen adornments]—its celebrated hybridity reveals its indebtedness to the Perso-Arabic traditions and two-dimensional dastan characters such as shehzadas, paris and djinns who can be both friendly and unfriendly. The Persian dastan draws heavily on Islamic cosmology as described in Islamic religious texts.

The Hindi film hero, like the hero of the dastan, desires to win the hand of the celestial beloved by destroying a number of monsters and restoring order in the kingdom. He competes with the villain for the beautiful pari's affections. His chivalry connects the Hindi film hero to the dastan hero rather than to Hindu epic figures

such as Rama. In the typical dastan plot, the hero is rewarded for liberating the community from the evil demon by his marriage to the pari, the object of his affection and often the prime motivation for embarking on heroic quests. Happy endings in Hindi cinema are signified by the marriage of the hero and heroine or with the hero walking away with the heroine. Films that end sadly have the lovers dying together, signaling the triumph of love.

The difference between the character of the heroine and the vamp is based on the polarised characters of Mihr Nigar and Asman Pari, in Dastan-e-Amir Hamzah. According to Frances Pritchett, Mihr Nigar, though a princess, has two brothers, and there is never any question of her inheriting the throne; she lives for the most part an irreproachably secluded life. 'Āsmān Parī, by contrast, seizes power even during her father's lifetime, takes the throne, and drives him into a life of seclusion' (Pritchett 1991). Unlike Mihr Nigar who, like a good Indian wife, 'always does as Hamzah wishes', Asman Pari 'does exactly as she herself wishes' (Pritchett 1991: 7). Mihr Nigar is the epitome of the good mother whose upbringing makes her son Qubād respect his mother, unlike Asman Pari, a self-centred mother whose daughter Quraishah, 'frequently abuses her mother' (Pritchett 1991: 7). Pritchett concludes that 'the dāstān shows us, in short, that Mihr Nigār plays by the rules, while Āsmān Parī breaks them; in a way, Āsmān Parī can almost be seen as Mihr Nigār's alter ego' (1991: 7). Like Hamzah who 'has nothing but trouble with Āsmān Parī', the typical Hindi film vamp 'is simply too strong for' the hero who 'cannot control her'.

This dichotomy is unambiguously played out in cinematic representations of the good wife and the bad wife. Both the good wife and mother and the bad wife and mother are derived from the stepmother Kaikeyi in the *Ramayana*, but also the evil stepmothers of the dastan. In the family dramas of the 1960s and 1970s, the selfish mother and the evil mother-in-law had a striking resemblance to Asman Pari. The evil mother-in-law was usually a greedy stepmother who prevented the lovers from coming together and wanted to control the family property, as exemplified by the dominant matriarch played by Lalita Pawar in so many of her films, such as *Junglee* (1961), *Kashmir Ki Kali* (1964) and *Neel Kamal* (1968). In some films, it was the scheming stepmother or

avaricious sister-in-law, as played by Bindu in *Joshila* (1973) and *Do Raaste* (1969), who disturbed family harmony and invariably broke it up. Finally, the bad wife, usually a rich and spoilt woman who did not fulfill her domestic responsibilities but caused a division in the family, played the role of the vamp.

PRINCES

Dean Miller, in *The Epic Hero*, asserts that the term 'hero' is used as if it referred to a single cognitive image that conveys its complexity (Miller 2000: 1). Joseph Fontenrose defines the hero as a type of supernatural being, 'a demi-god, godling, daimon, or spirit' and even powerful ghost (quoted in Miller 2000: 3). Even though the concept of the hero has grown more complex from its earlier understandings of a 'demi-god', 'a man who distinguishes himself in war by extraordinary acts' and, finally, as 'a man who on some occasion betrays the marks of great pride' or 'of a remarkable nobility', the hero continues to be perceived as a celestial being (Miller 2000: 2). However, the older, outmoded notion of heroism that has been interrogated in the contemporary West persists in Hindi cinema.

Wimal Dissanayake believes that the hero in a classical Indian play conforms to the description as prescribed by Indian aestheticians: 'The hero in a play had to be handsome, courageous, virtuous, of noble birth, and so on' (Dissanayake 1993: 191). However, the traits of the hero as described in *Dasharupa*, the classical treatise on Indian drama (Dhananjaya 1878), also strongly resonate with those of the dastan hero. *Pritchett states that 'dāstān heroes* are always *handsome*, virtuous, gallant, and nobly born; they are almost always princes' (Pritchett 1985: 7). Musharraf Ali Farooqi concurs that they 'are brave, chivalrous and stunningly *handsome'* (2009). The trace of the 'typical, two-dimensional *dāstān hero – handsome*, brave, intelligent, talented, a great lover (though at the same time, of course, purity itself), and a great champion of the right' (Russell 1992: 87) is visible *in the first Urdu novel, Ratan Nath Sarshar's Fasana-i-Azad* (1880). The one feature that distinguishes the dastan hero from the Hindu epic heroes is that he is also a great lover, the Majnun crazed with love.

As opposed to Mukul Kesavan, who argues that the Hindi film hero is invariably ugly (Kesavan 2007), a number of people find him extremely handsome. American actor Kristen Stewart is reported to have said, 'I'd love to work with Hrithik Roshan. He's such a wonderful actor and so good-looking … In fact, if I have a boy, I would want him to look like Hrithik, but with Rob's (Robert Pattinson) eyes' (quoted in PTI 2012). Women young, middle-aged and old, from Australia to Zambia swoon at the mention of Shah Rukh Khan. In his novel *The Interpreters* (1965), Nigerian born Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka has one of his characters inquire why Hindi film actors had to be so handsome. The prevalence of the tall, light-skinned Aryan male protagonist produces the myth of the popular Hindi film hero as belonging to a category of creatures between human and divine.

Such a hero fulfills the dastanic condition of being of noble birth even though his lineage might be concealed from himself and the audience right until the end. Since he is generically required to be of noble birth, his descent must ultimately be established in films that feature the good-hearted criminal or poor slumdweller as protagonist. From *Awāra* (1951) to *Laawaris* (1981) and beyond, the hero's impeccable lineage is confirmed in the final scene where his real identity is revealed. Raj in *Awāra* turns to petty theft due to his being raised by his father's enemy, the dacoit Jagga, but his identity as the son of the judge who sits in judgement over him is finally revealed to him in the courtroom drama. The lineage of the hero compelled to turn to crime such as Raja in *Waqt* (1965), Shankar in *Yaadon ki Baraat* (1973), or Amit in *Suhag* (1979) is never in doubt to the audience even though it may remain concealed from the hero himself. This motif is reiterated with a difference in *Laawaris* when Vijay discovers that he is the son of the wealthy man whom he has been hired to kill. In 'poor boy marries rich girl' films where the hero is economically underprivileged, his noble status is never in doubt. Whether in *Do Raaste* (1969), *Betaab* (1984), *Laadla* (1994) or *Saathiya* (2002), the hero's high birth is demonstrated through his comportment and character.

Like the dastan, the Hindi film dramatises the struggle of the noble hero against forces of evil (Dissanayake 1993: 203), and what distinguishes him from his opponent is his moral uprightness.

However, the virtuous hero is usually viewed as reminiscent of epic or Puranic *heroes* (Boisvert and Johnson 2012: 18), particularly of Rama, 'the virtuous hero' of the Ramayana (Bhattacharya 2012: 110).[1] Dissanayake points out that the presence of evil is explained in the Hindi film either in terms of a transcendent fate or the social environment in which human beings find themselves (Dissanayake 1993: 199). Contradictions between his essentially virtuous character and immoral acts are attributed either to a turn of fortune, a misunderstanding, or an external agent. In films featuring a criminal as hero, either the circumstances that lead him to pursue a life of crime or the liberatory function he plays in the community redeems his acts of violence. A majority of Hindi films are premised on the unambiguous virtuousness of the hero even though such virtue might be defined and tested in multiple ways.

Virtue is largely defined in terms of the fulfillment of one's duties, to the family, the community and the nation, and the cinematic conflict usually arises when one set of duties clashes with others. In the hierarchy of duties, the nation comes first, then family, and the beloved last. Therefore, classic Hindi films feature lovers sacrificing personal happiness for the sake of family harmony or the nation, or mothers killing sons and brothers killing siblings for the greater common good. The hero's evil turn is inevitably traced to necessity or an injustice, inequity or wrong perpetrated by society or external agents that he tries to correct, often through unlawful means but always without sacrificing his essential goodness. Raj's transformation into a petty criminal in *Awāra* is attributed to the unjust treatment of his father, society and the dacoit Jagga, a story that is repeated over the next five decades with social conditions or individual acts turning the good hero to a life of crime from *Waqt* (1965) to *Deewar* (1975) and *Rowdy Rathore* (2012). The motif of the poor good boy turning to crime is also reiterated as the motivation of gangster films like *Company* (2002), *Gangster* (2006) and so on. The dark side of underworld dons, if they are the heroes, is redeemed through their being perceived as protectors and liberators of underdogs, victims of circumstances, injustice and crime.

Although the dastan includes different kinds of heroes, as in the popular Hindi film, the male protagonist is essentially a function

who must liberate his people from the forces of oppression and evil. As an anti-hero, he often resorts to unlawful means to realise his goals, but the dastan mission—to free his land and people from oppressive giants—redeems his actions. Their shared objective of restoring peace and justice and vanquishing evil demons occasionally brings the morally upright hero and the anti-hero together. At times, the morally upright hero resorts to unlawful acts due to a real or perceived injustice, but order is restored either through his death or reintegration into the community. As the end justifies the means in popular Hindi cinema, the hero who robs the rich to help the poor or takes to violence to protect the weak is permitted to rise above issues of morality and immorality. Thus, the hero is compelled to take matters into his hands in the event of the breakdown of law and order and to resolve issues by means that might lie on the cusp of legality and illegality, right and wrong. Whether it is Raj in *Awāra*, Vijay in *Deewar* (1975) or Munnabhai in *Munna Bhai MBBS* (2003), their fighting on behalf of the underprivileged makes them heroic despite the infractions they commit.

The Hindi film comes closest to the dastan in positing the hero's emancipation of his people and neighbourhood from evil monsters as his prime function. The characters played by Amitabh Bachchan in his angry young man avatar in the 1990s capitalise on the appeal of the dastanic hero who liberates his people from oppressors. As the brave, honest and incorruptible police officer who took on villains like Samant who had terrorised his neighbourhood, he followed the dastanic route to purging the area under his jurisdiction of crime. Despite the questionable means he adopted to settle scores in *Deewar* and *Sholay* (1975), his heroism was celebrated through his elimination of larger crime and criminals. If he turned into the messiah of the dockworkers in *Coolie* (1983), he championed the cause of abandoned orphans in *Laawaris*. Irrespective of whether he was on the right side of the law or wrong, Bachchan's role as the destroyer of evil redeemed any acts of violence he might be compelled to perform in fulfilling this function of liberating his community.

The superhuman, the encounter with monsters, crude interventions of gods, magical flights and other world adventures, the heroic defiance of physical laws that has been questioned by the rational

scientific paradigm of Enlightenment still dominates the universe of mainstream popular Hindi cinema. In order to battle otherworldly monsters, the hero is bestowed with superhuman powers, permanently or temporarily, for the purpose of destroying evil. The lone hero annihilating an army of opponents that is predicated on the willing suspension of disbelief on the part of the audience is a trope derived from dastanic texts in which a single individual can defeat mighty enemies through supernatural powers. While these superhuman abilities are permitted to manifest directly in adaptations of folktales like *Hatimtai* (1990), *Dharam Veer* (1977) or science fiction films such as *Mr. India* (1987) and *Krrish* (2006), the transformation of the mortal human into an immortal is a standard practice in action films or the fight sequences of others. Therefore, Tara Singh in *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* (2001) can take on the entire Pakistani army and Rowdy Rathore can mow down scores of hoodlums effortlessly.

DIVS

Over the years, while the villain in Hindi cinema has certainly evolved as a suave charming manipulator or a complex psychopath with shades of good, the return of the larger-than-life villain in sequels like *Agneepath* (2012) reflects the perennial appeal of the stereotypical Hindu film anti-hero who is all bad. The origins of this monstrous villain are usually traced back to the *rakshasa*s and *asuras* or demons of Hindi mythology, particularly the demon king Ravana who forms an antithesis to the heroic figure of Rama in the *Ramayana*. However, the villain's portrayal in Hindi cinema inevitably collapses the Hindu rakshasas into the divs of the Perso-Arabic dastan.

The *div* is a demon who appears in the form of a monster and battles with humans. Christopher Fee is of the view that 'the term div in Persian may be rendered along the lines of "demon" and appears to be descended from the Avestan "daeva", usually taken as "false deity"' (Fee 2011: 198). Farooqi defines divs as 'a species of gigantic, powerful, and occasionally cannibalistic giants who inhabit the mountain of Qaf in Tilism-e-Hoshruba' (Farooqi 2009).

The *div-i-safid* or white div in the *Shahnama* is described by Firdausi as 'a mountain that blotted all within, with sable face and hair like lion's mane' like the rakshasas of Hindu epics, who are depicted as dark-skinned monsters. However, Hastings suggests that the white div is believed to be a personification of the Mazandaranians, who have 'an unhealthy pale color' (Hastings 2003: 507). This facilitates casting light-skinned or wheat complexioned North Indian actors (Prem Nath, Pran, Prem Chopra, Feroz Khan, Vinod Khanna and Arjun Rampal) in lead villainous roles, as well as dark-skinned South Indian actors who conform to formulaic descriptions of the dark-skinned, flat-nosed, thick-lipped *danav* or monster in the roles of the villain's henchmen. Francisca Leoni examines the pictorial representation of Rustam killing the div-i-safid in Muhammad Juki's *Shahnamah* (Brend 2010; Herat, circa 1440) and asserts that the div, 'the prince of all demonic beings' is 'portrayed in all his exuberance and decadence' (Leoni 2012: 167). She calls attention to the div's abnormal 'mountain-like size', clawed feet and a 'misshaped, disproportioned horned head' and a face 'contracted in a pained grimace' (Leoni 2012: 166). She maintains that the div's hybrid body is 'an unpredictable blend of human, animal, and grotesque features' whose 'unnatural combination communicates his perverse nature' (Leoni 2012: 167). The *sufaid div* in *Tilism-e-Hoshruba* is similarly imagined as 'the towering fool of hideous form and amorphous shape' (Lakhnavi and Bilgrami 2012: 296).[2] Akvan is an important Persian div 'with unlimited powers and incredible strength' who is depicted with 'a wide mouth, fangs and horns' and 'curved, clawlike toenails on his wide flat feet' (Mack and Mack 2011).

Even though some handsome actors like Vinod Khanna, Feroz Khan, Sanjay Dutt and Arjun Rampal have played negative roles, the classic Hindi film villain is represented as a 'towering' hideous giant. This transformation of the villain as a grotesque monster is often brought about by a combination of outrageous multi-coloured wigs, hats, even a shaven head, costumes, make-up, accessories, sets and camera angles. For instance, the villainous Teja of *Zanjeer* (1973) was created through his golden wig and flashy night gowns. Clawed feet were substituted by different-sized feet in *Yaadon Ki Baraat* (1973) and a limp in *Omkaara* (2006). The demonic

character of Shakaal in *Shaan* (1980), a man with his own island, shark and crocodile tanks, played by Kulbhushan Kharbanda, was created through surroundings and sound effects. Megalomaniac Mogambo of *Mr. India*, Hindi's cinema's iconic villain, lives in a silver and white den, wears outrageous black and gold outfits and rings on each finger and wields a sword.

Ajit's blond wigs, beard and dark glasses made him a sinister larger-than-life figure who delivered the most vicious lines in the most charming manner. Although the villainous characters played by Pran in all his films exuded an aura of sophistication, his menacing eyes, sardonic grin, scowl and snarl made him appear like a caricature. Pran's curling lips, Madan Puri's sadistic leer, Jeevan's mean eyes, Prem Chopra's lecherous grin and so on were the hallmarks of their villainy. Some actors like Ajit and Prem Chopra adopted *mannerisms* and speech that exuded lust and greed to suit the villains they invariably played. The hirsute Prem and Ranjeet, who usually had a locket dangling on his bare chest, personified the hairy monster. While Amrish Puri's towering built, booming voice and fierce features might have easily lent themselves to villainous portrayals, the swashbuckling Sanjay Dutt was also turned into a bald monster with a beefed-up body, shaved eyebrows, tattooed biceps in the character of Kancha Cheena in Karan Johar's *Agneepath* sequel (2012) represent evil at its most grotesque and sinister.[3] Dutt is reported to have begged for breaks after performing the role as he himself was frightened by the character he played.

Unlike the dastanic narrative that uses transferred epithets like the mountainous div or the white devil to define monsters, cinema deploys a single powerful visual image to sum up the villain's dominant trait. The villain's characterisation through one particular physical feature, trait or catchphrase contributes to their dastan-like character. Visualised as a one-dimensional giant, the villain is identified by a single physical feature, trademark mannerism or catchphrase. Gabbar Singh's maniacal laughter in *Sholay*, Chhedi Singh's popping eyes in *Dabangg* (2010), Shah Rukh Khan's stutter in *Baazigar* (1993), Kancha's rubbing his bald pate in *Agneepath*, and Mogambo's pressing the globe in *Mr. India* became the villain's signature. Pran was allegedly offered his first film role in *Yamla*

Jat (1940) by the writer Wali Ahmed Wali when he was chewing *paan* in a paan shop in Lahore. He used this habit to great effect as the paan-eater Banné Khan Bhopali in *Adhikar* (1971), who had different fingers for *chuna* [slaked lime] and *katha* [catechu paste] for adding flavour. But it was his blowing of smoke rings in *Badi Behen* (1949) that became his signature mannerism in many of his films. Pran's Naurangi Lal in *Khandaan* (1965) had a habit of 'superciliously twitching his nose'; in *Pathar ke Sanam* (1967), he would finish his sentence, puff his cigarette, inhale a pinch of snuff and then say: '*Kyon? Theek hai na theek?*' [Tell me, It's all right, isn't it?]. Sometimes it was the voice that created the pitch perfect villain. Pran confessed that he 'changed his voice to sound like a real Pathan' in *Zanjeer* and did 'as many as eighteen retakes to get the pronunciation of a word precisely right' (Pran, interviewed by Sayani 1970). Shekhar Kapur explains that the megalomaniac's character in *Mr. India* was created around a single one-liner '*Mogambo khush hua*' [Mogambo is pleased] that went on to become one of the most memorable signature lines in the annals of Hindi cinema (Shekhar Kapur 2010). Arguably Hindi cinema's most iconic villain, Gabbar Singh, inimitably played by Amjad Khan, is identified not so much through his outlandish costumes but his uncouth looks, wild hair, mannerisms, maniacal laughter, and of course, the catechism: '… *Kitne aadmi thhe?*' [How many men were there?] (Salim-Javed, *Sholay* 1975).

The Hindi film villain's hyperbolic declaration of his own power and prowess appears to have its origins in the dastanic confrontation between the heroic warrior and his formidable opponent triggered by the brag. 'Lionhearted chieftain', Esfandiyar begins, addressing Rustam most politely in the *Shahnama*, 'I have heard … that *Dāstān* [Rustam's father] was of evil stock, born of a *Div*', and then proceeds to insult his opponent's antecedents in some detail (Miller 2000: 234). Ajit's self-introduction: '*Sara shehar mujhe Loin ke naam se janta hai*' [The whole city knows me as the Lion] (Jainendra Jain, *Kalicharan* 1976) that has acquired a cult status belongs to this tradition of brag. Gabbar Singh kills three of his men in cold blood for compromising his formidable reputation after his boast: '*Yahan se pachas-pachas kos door gaon me jab bachcha raat ko rota hai to ma kehti hai beta soja … so ja*

nahin to Gabbar Singh aa jayega' [In villages fifty miles from here when children cry at night, mothers tell them, go to sleep quickly, son, go to sleep, or else Gabbar Singh will come] (Salim-Javed, *Sholay* 1975). The strong association of Prem Chopra's name with villainy ensured that just the declaration: '*Prem naam hai mera. Prem Chopra*' [My name is Prem. Prem Chopra] signposted trouble for the eloping teenagers in *Bobby* (Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Jainendra Jain, V. P. Sathe, *Bobby* 1973). Sher Khan's boast in *Zanjeer* is relatively understated: '*Is shehar mein naye aaye ho sahib. Nahin to Sher Khan ko shehar mein kaun nahin janta* [You are new to this town, sahib. Or else who doesn't know Sher Khan here] (Salim-Javed, *Zanjeer* 1973). Shakti Kapoor's character in *Aag Hi Aag* (1987) diabolically declares: '*Main mard ki aulad nahin hoon. Main Shaitan ki aulad hoon*' [I am not a child of man. I am a child of Satan] (Faiz Saleem, *Aag Hi Aag* 1987).

A div is defined as an evil spirit whose intent is to do harm to humans, spread lies and destruction for the sheer pleasure of it. The Sufaid Div explains that 'It is the custom of *devs* to reward good with evil. Now tell me, what is your pleasure—shall I throw you into the sea to drown or smash you against the mountains below?' (Lakhnavi and Bilgrami 2012: 298).[4] Gabbar Singh is unique in his sharing with the div of the dastan the religion of evil and cruelty for its own sake. The banality of the Sufaid Div's query can only be matched by Gabbar asking his henchmen how they would like to be rewarded. Through being Shakaal does not have to step out of his high-tech den, with a shark infested water tank and underground ponds hosting a crocodile hungry for human flesh to inflict similar tortures. He subjects the two erring brothers in his employ to the classic tortures of being fed to the monster or smothered to death by a poisonous gas. Mogambo has no qualms about subjecting his henchman to hellish punishments such as jumping into acid water merely for his entertainment. It is his unambiguous delight in inflicting suffering and tormenting others that makes the Hindi film villain the epitome of evil. Gabbar Singh who decides his henchmen's fates by gambling with the number of bullets underlines the villain's belief that the world exists only to satisfy his whims. The villain's task as the instrument of evil is to torment others and to kill, maim and

butcher without compunction. Therefore, Gabbar who chops off the Thakur's hands, Prem Chopra who threatens to break the young hero's legs so that he cannot escape, Rauf Lala who drags a virgin by her hair to auction her to the highest bidder, Kancha Cheena who thrusts a dagger in Vijay's chest and smiles triumphantly are incarnations of evil that produce infinite terror. Although the evil villain of the classic Hindi film is so evil that he sends shivers down the spine, his hallmark cruelty, his naming of stock tortures, his undisguised delight in his own powers are often so exaggerated that they transform him into a comic book villain. Like the villain of comic books who is drawn with such bold strokes as the antithesis of good that he ceases to be frightening, the villain in Hindi cinema can come across as a caricature. It is the villain whose anachronistic costumes and makeup locate him in a bygone world. Shekhar Kapoor stated that the look of the character of Mogambo and the set design with him seated on a throne pressing a globe was created to give him a mythic as well as comic dimension in the film that he had visualised as a fantasy.

But the villain's function in Hindi popular cinema, as in the dastan, is to bring out the hero's heroism. The polarisation between good and evil requires that the villain be presented as an alterity to the hero both visually and psychologically. The encounter between the hero and the villain is depicted as the epic battle between good and evil. As in the dastan, the narrative contrasts the difference in size, demeanour and nature of the hero and the monster to represent them as the embodiments of good and evil respectively. The villain's job in Hindi films is to get beaten up by the hero in order to demonstrate the hero's physical prowess. This was epitomised in the mandatory climactic 'tiger or Shetty fights' in any of Dharmendra's high action dramas of the 1960s and 1970s to foreground the action hero's manliness and heroism. With *Singham* (2011), the old-fashioned confrontation returns and Singham's well-toned body is set in sharp relief against the gross physique of his opponents whom he is able to vanquish despite the difference in size. In the new version of *Agneepath* (2012), as Kancha walks menacingly towards Vijay who rises to confront him, the camera highlights the villain's abnormal size and the smallness of the hero. While Vijay appears civilised, calm and elegant, Kancha is savage,

uncivilised and vicious. His allusion to the Shaitan gestures to his personifying the Satanic figure in Persian lore despite his chilling recitations from the *Gita*.

*HOURI*S

Derek Bose argues that popular Hindi film heroines 'with their huge kohl-rimmed eyes, chubby cheeks, long tresses and *voluptuous* figures' conform to 'the classical principles of *Indian* beauty' (Bose 2005: 48). J. Manschot and Marijke De Vos believe that the ideal of the *heroine as* 'almost always fair-skinned, wide-eyed and long-haired' has originated in 'the *voluptuous nayika* (*heroine*) of ancient sculpture' (Manschot and de Vos 2005: 55).

> *Chehra hai ya chand khila hai*
> *Zulf ghaneri shaam hai kya*
> *Sagar jaisi ankhon waali*
> *Ye to bataa tera naam hai kya*
> Is this a face or the full bright moon?
> Are these tresses the falling dusk?
> Oh girl of the oceanic eyes
> Won't you tell me your name (Javed Akhtar, *Saagar* 1985)

But the *nayika* of ancient Indian sculpture and Sanskrit poetry also shares her attributes with houris who are described as light-skinned or 'of white color', and are 'Virgins as fair as corals and rubies' (Quran 55: 70–77). It is also possible, therefore, to trace the dark-eyed Hindi film heroine back to the houri.

> 22. And (there will be companions) with beautiful big and lustrous eyes.
> 23. Like unto pearls well-guarded.
> 24. A reward for the deeds or past (Life).
> 25. No frivolity will they hear therein, nor any taint of ill.
> 26. Only the saying "Peace"! "Peace"!
> 38. They will sit with bashful, dark-eyed virgins, as chaste as the sheltered eggs of ostriches (Quran 37: 40).

Jannat or paradise as described in the Quran is inhabited by a special category of beings known as houris (companions in paradise). The word houri (also *huri*, *hoori*, *hoor*) is derived from the Arabic adjective *hur* meaning 'women who have wide eyes with a marked contrast of intense white and deep black' (Leaman 2005: 487); or *haura*[5] signifying a 'woman with dark eyes' or one having eyes characterised by the quality termed *hawar*[6] (Ali 1994: 222). Al-Tirmidhi's[7] description of the houri in the *Jami`at-Tirmidhi* supports the common understanding of the houri as a virgin.

> A houri is a most beautiful young woman with a transparent body. The marrow of her bones is visible like the interior lines of pearls and rubies. She looks like red wine in a white glass. She is of white color, and free from the routine physical disabilities of an ordinary woman such as menstruation, menopause, urinal and offal discharge, child bearing and the related pollution. A houri is a girl of tender age, having large breasts which are round (pointed), and not inclined to dangle. *Houris* dwell in palaces of splendid surroundings (Al-Tirmidhi, *Jami` at-Tirmidhi*).

Some definitions, however, suggest that houris could be both male and female.

> '35. We have created (their companions) of special creation.
> 36. And made them virgin pure (and undefiled)
> 37. Beloved (by nature), equal in age.
> 38. For the companions of the right hand' (Rustomji 2008).

Dick Davis points out that 'the topos of the powerful *seductress* is absent from the *Ramayana*' (Davis 2002: 96). Unlike apsaras who, of all creatures in Hindu mythology, are defined by their sexuality and are understood as seductresses who lure ascetics away from their disciplined focus or meditation in the *Mahabharata* (Dhand 2008: 132), houris are defined by their innocence. Although apsaras are also represented as the acme of heavenly delights offered to heroic men, it is the houri who is unambiguously translated into the Hindi film heroine, both in the choice of actors playing the female lead and their representation in the cinematic text. In *Aman*

(1967), she is specifically called *husn pari chehra*[8] or hoor Pari: '*Ai husn parī chehra/Kyon itni dard mand ho/Duniya ki manzilon par/Tum hi mujhe pasand ho*' [O beautiful fairy face/Why do you grieve so/On the pathways of this world/It is you I choose] (Hasrat Jaipuri, *Aman* 1967).

The beloved is described as a celestial being created by the gods with special care.

> *Zamane-bhar ki masti ko nigahon mein sameta hai*
> *Kali se jism ko kitni baharon mein lapeta hai*
> *Hua tumsa koi pehle na koi doosra hoga*
> *Khuda bhi aasmaan se jab zameen par dekhta hoga*
> *Mere mehboob ko kisne banaya sochta hoga*
> A world of intoxication contained in your eyes
> Your blossoming body enwrapped in spring
> There has never been one like you, nor will there be
> Even if He should look upon the earth from the skies
> He would wonder, who created my beloved (Rajinder Krishan, *Dharti* 1970)

Shoma A. Chatterji believes that 'Ravi Varma's nude and semi-nude paintings of voluptuous Indian goddesses reflected in calendars' provided a reference for the image of woman as 'an erotic object' in Hindi cinema (Chatterji 2013: 182). However, the houri epitomises the ideal of voluptuousness as evident in Indian calendar art's depictions of *voluptuous* and virtuous goddesses. However, unlike in the West, where voluptuousness might be at variance with the ideals of chastity, it appears to be 'concomitant with the mythological view' (Duran 2012) as with the Islamic view of the houri. Houris could equally have been derived from *Riti Kal* poetry, which, according to Charu Gupta, 'followed certain rhetorical and stylistic models which allowed the liberal use of Perso-Arabic words and even folk elements, signifying a somewhat syncretic culture, composed of the residual Vaishnava mysticism and Muslim sufi ethos, combining to form the medieval high art tradition' (Gupta 2000: 99). The description of the nayika in this poetic tradition reproduces the voluptuous houri: 'Wearied after climbing her breast-mountains, my glance went on, desiring her

mouth; but couldn't move again, just lay there fallen into the cleft of her chin' (Verse from Biharilal's 'Satsai', Snell 1991: 135).

The difference between the heroine and the vamp in the Hindi film is her virginal comportment even though she exudes sensuality.

> *Yeh reshmi zulfein*
> *Yeh sharbati aankhein*
> *Inhe dekh kar jee rahen hain sabhi*
> *Jo yeh aankhen sharam se jhuk jayengi*
> *Sari batein yahin bas ruk jayengi*
> These silky tresses
> These liquid eyes
> We exist just by gazing at them
> When these eyes drop with modesty
> All conversation would come to a halt (Anand Bakshi, *Do Raaste* 1969)

The answer to the contradiction between the trope of the chaste, virginal heroine and her titillating voluptuousness is to be found in the song and dance sequences through 'the controlling look' of the camera (Derne and Jadwin 2000: 243) 'and carefully angled shots that heighten scopic pleasure' (Virdi 2003: 146). The erotic appeal of the heroine for the male viewer is produced through her feigned 'unawareness of [her] sexualized body and the camera's voyeuristic gaze' (Virdi 2003: 146). Unlike the sexualised woman who craves male attention 'by inviting their gaze upon herself, her body, her eroticized gestures and movements' (Virdi 2003: 258), the heroine appears to be oblivious to the male gaze. The virgin becomes desirable through her male lover's scopophilia that is enacted for the vicarious pleasure of the male viewer. However, as Steve Derne and Lisa Jadwin argue, 'While films construct women characters who are made to "expose" themselves to men's looks, the most popular films also highlight the modesty of other (more Indian) women characters' (Derne and Jadwin 2000: 254). Their fieldwork among North Indian men revealed that 'men's taste in heroines is consistent with their preference for modest, traditional women who protect themselves from being looked at' (Derne and Jadwin 2000: 257). The particularly Indian virtue of

sharam (shyness, shame), which is mapped on the desired body of the virginal heroine, echoes with the features of the houri.

> *Simti si sharmayi si*
> *Kisi duniya se tum ayi ho*
> *Kaise jahan mein samayega*
> *Itna husn jo tum layi ho*
> Shrinking and shy
> From another world you have come
> How could this world possibly contain
> All this beauty you have brought (Kaifi Azmi, *Parwana* 1971)

*ZULEIKHA*S

Jerry Pinto deplores the Hindi film's tendency to reduce the figure of the bad girl to a caricature and feels unhappy that her story in the film is shown as 'the progress of the Harlot' (Pinto 2006: 85). But the suggestion of the harlot in the vamp's character points to the Qu'ranic narratives surrounding Zuleikha (Persian poetic name for Potiphar'a's wife) and those constitute women as beguiling seductresses capable of greater sexual desire than men, and men as susceptible to seduction. In all the categories in which the vamp is classified in Pinto's schema, such as the white goddess, the debauch, the commercial sex worker, or the gangster's moll, her seductive function is dominant. As a beguiling seductress who leads the hero astray, the vamp is part of the binary representation of women as love objects or obstacles to be overcome, such as seductresses who stand in the way of masculine ideals of heroism and loyalty.

The tradition of the beautiful seductress who leads the hero astray goes back to the description of 'rosy-faced beauties', *chehrehgan-e laleh 'ezar* (probably male), [who] poured wine, and 'melodious singers and dancers, *motreban va moghanniyan* (probably female), [who] entertained the guests', as mentioned by Iskandar Beg Munshi[9] in his description of a banquet organised by Shah 'Abbas Jalal, Shah Abbas's astrologer, during a festival in Kashan where women with beautiful faces, *zanan-e motreb khush surat*, performed dances (Matthee 2000: 139).[10] In the *Shahnama*,

Isfendiyar meets an enchantress described as 'a beauteous woman' who approaches the hero most piteously and claims to have been seduced from her home by the monster with deceit (Reed 1893: 273). However, Isfendiyar is too cunning to be seduced by the beautiful temptress beaming with smiles and dropping words of flattery with her crimson lips, and instead attacks her, thereby forcing her to reveal her true identity of a black demon (Reed 1893: 273–74). The angels Harut and Marut were seduced by the beautiful Nahid and engaged in singing, drinking wine and merrymaking on their way to help mankind. The classic Hindi film trope of seduction, of the hero by the vamp, is cast in the pattern of the song and dance sequence that can be traced back to the wine pouring, dancing *Zuleikhas* of the dastans, and signifies the threat or descent into evil that is repeated in almost every film.[11] The polarisation between the seductress who lures the hero away from the path of virtue and the good woman who leads him back is dramatised in the song '*Mud-mud ke na dekh*' [Don't keep turning around and looking back] in *Shree 420* (1955), where Raj has to choose between the glitter of lucre and the simplicity of knowledge embodied in the figures of Maya and Vidya respectively. Hindi films contrast traditionally modest Indian heroines with 'Westernised' Indian women who are too immodest and forward, a difference expressed sartorially through 'the salient distinction' between 'the salwar kameez and sari which protect the body from men's gaze, and mini-skirts, bikinis, and form-revealing jeans' (Derne and Jadwin 2000: 256). As Shilpa Shirodkar, a heroine often criticised for exposing, puts it, 'the fight is invariably between a mini and a sari' (Iyer quoted in Derne and Jadwin 2000: 256).

However, the seductress in Hindi cinema, except in the exalted figure of the courtesan, is represented as a white Anglo-Indian or a Westernised Indian woman. Unlike Asman Pari who gets away with her behaviour because she is a Pari, 'a creature of fire, not bound by human norms' (Pritchett 1991: 7); the vamp gets away with behaviour that would not be pardonable in the heroine because she is represented as the Anglo-Indian or Christian other. Before the erasure of boundaries between the heroine and the vamp in the 1990s, the films of the 1960s and 1970s often included an Anglo-Indian, Westernised, female character whose liminality underlined

her transgressive sexuality. *Eve's Weekly,* an Indian magazine for female readers, in an article titled 'Lily, Hi Lily', described the Hindi film vamp of the 1950s in this manner: 'For ages, film producers have formulated the prototype of the vamp: She is fair, curvaceous and provocative: she smokes, drinks, and reveals her cleavage (and more). And she is very bad in contrast to the heroine who is very good. In short, she is an Anglo-Indian' (Williams 2010: 216).

Hindi cinema essentially drew on the stereotype of the Anglo-Indian woman in India produced through the British rhetoric that 'focused disapprovingly on the sexual charms and allures of the Anglo-Indian woman' and of the Indian male's perception of them as immoral and promiscuous who go after men and money (Williams 2010: 216). Blair Williams believes that the difference in the representation of Anglo-Indian women and other Indian women made them the subject of non Anglo-Indian men's fantasies and that their friendliness and Western dress was construed as evidence of loose morals (Williams 2010: 216). In a repressed society with limited social contact between the sexes, the visual stimulus of exposed flesh sustained the false myth of Anglo-Indian sexual promiscuity. The stereotype was further reinforced by the strong presence of Anglo-Indian women in Hindi cinema during a period when women who worked in films were considered disreputable. The willingness of heroines of Jewish origin such as Sulochana (Ruby Myers) and Nadira (Florence Ezekiel) to be portrayed as Western women facilitated their transformation from the good Indian girl to the bad Westernised Indian girl in early films. It also cleared the space for the arrival of the Westernised vamp in the films of the 1950s through the dancers Cuckoo Morey and Helen Richardson. Although the dancer's function was appropriated by non-Anglo Indian actors like Bindu, Padma Khanna and Faryal in the 1970s, the cabaret dancer's name and sartorial representations constructed her as Anglo-Indian or Christian.

The arrival of a new generation of Westernised heroines in the 1970s, particularly Zeenat Aman and Parveen Babi, demystified the myth of the Hindi film heroine through their screen roles as well as their bohemian life styles. The characters played by Aman and Babi in films like *Deewar* (1975), *Qurbani* (1980) and so on who smoked, drank, wore gowns with long slits and deep necks and indulged

in pre-martial sex blurred the distinction between the heroine and the vamp by the 1980s and led to the demise of the vamp. Despite the vamp's disappearance, the character of heroines who played negative roles, such as Priyanka Chopra in *Aitbaar* (1985) or Bipasha Basu in *Jism* (2006), took on the features ascribed to the vamp in the classic Hindi film. The near extinct category of the classic vamp of the films of the 1950s to 1970s has been displaced by the heroine in the 1980s who dons the same costumes, and the 1990s' heroine or supermodel who gyrates to in skipy costumkes in item numbers. The dance of seduction is now performed by aspiring starlets, models, NRI and white women, and, even the heroine, in a sexually charged song and dance sequence titled the 'item number'. The item number has generated considerable debate with some viewing it as an objectification of the female body and others as an expression of sexuality, but none denying its titillating function.

The dichotomy in the portrayal of the woman in Hindi cinema needs to move between the Madonna and the vamp to the houri and the seductress (Virdi 2003: 60). In contrast to the pari, whose sexuality is sublimated through her innocence, the overt sexuality of the vamp who smokes, drinks and exhibits her body for her own pleasure is represented as threatening the moral universe. Pinto, calling attention to the caricaturing of the bad girl in Hindi cinema who smoked, drank, danced, smuggled and died, argues that she existed not merely to provide visual spectacle but also played 'a significant function as an alternate moral pole in the cinematic universe whose centre was the hero' and that as an epitome of 'destructive feminity threw into prominence the virtue of the other woman' (Pinto 2006: 56). Jigna Desai concurs that the vamp 'represented the corrupt Westernization and modernization of the Indian woman whose sexual impropriety, greedy consumption and immodest (jeans) clothing mark her as the counterpoint to the chaste, selfless, sari-clad woman of tradition' (Desai 2004: 171).

AYYAR, DOST, SAHELI

One of the most exciting characters in the dastan is the ayyar (a man who practices ayyari is an ayyar while a woman is an *ayyara*).

The word is derived from Persian 'ayyārī, "an untranslatable word referring to adherence to a sort of chivalric code for tricksters" (10), which in turn derives from Arabic and has a long history in Persian and by extension in Urdu literature' (Dudney 2009: 11). Dudney points out that 'the earliest reference to the ayyār may be found in Persian local history from the fourteenth century called the *Tarīkh-i Sīstān* [History of Sistan]', in which 'ayyārs apparently figure as mercenaries-cum-city constables' (Anonymous 1987: 329–330 quoted in Dudney 2009). From their origins as young adventurers who joined military service, the ayyar comes to acquire a range of meanings having to do with trickery (Orsini 2004: 448). Steingass's *Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* defines the *aiyār,* fem. *aiyāra,* as a cheat, knave, impostor, charlatan, conjuror, juggler; sly, mischievous; a horse curveting or prancing from sprightliness; one who travels much, 'a rover, vagrant, vagabond'. According to Pritchett, the ayyars

> specialize in reconnaissance, espionage, disguise, commando tactics, and other forms of guerrilla warfare, thievery and dirty tricks. Ayyārs are not really part of the courtly elite, and so have less dignity to uphold; they are tremendously given to playing practical jokes, especially vulgar ones, on each other and their enemies. (Pritchett 1991: 40–41)

Part sorcerer, part huckster, equivalent of the fool or jester in Western romances, the ayyar is defined by a moral ambiguity that defies bourgeoisie morality. According to a contemporary description of a nineteenth century Delhi-based dastan narrator, 'Ayyārs are more complex characters than either villains or heroes in the *dāstān*, because "they are never innocent, yet they are innocent of villainy"' (quoted in Pritchett 1991: 151). The ayyar who possesses the qualities of wit, humour, courage, trickery, disguise and adventure forms a perfect foil to the hero, offering both friendship and servitude. The hero in the dastan is able to overcome his formidable monsters with the help of the figure of the ayyar, a trickster and a magician, who bestows magical powers on him and helps him realise his goals in every possible manner. Although helpers in Hindi cinema might not possess magical powers, they

pervade the cinematic universe as also popular imagination as an alterity to the evil villain. The ayyar's function in the Hindi film is usually performed by the *dost* [male friend] or the *saheli* [female friend]. But some films feature a character who would conform to the category of the helper or benefactor who aids the hero in overcoming the monster.

In the romance plot, the role of the dosts and sahelis is largely that of helping the lovers meet by removing obstacles from their path. Unlike films in which the plot is complicated through the love triangle between the lovers and the friend, the dost or saheli invariably plays cupid to unite the lovers. The Hindi film family was not deemed complete in the 1960s and 1970s without the presence of the devoted sister who would support her brother. Nazima, described as the Hindi film's resident sister, played this role to perfection in the films of the 1960s and 1970s. Whether as the gentle nurse in *Aaye Din Bahar Ke* (1966) or the sister in *Arzoo* (1965), she played a key role in resolving misunderstandings and bringing the lovers together. Unlike the character of the jealous Bahaar in *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960) who betrayed the lovers, the trope of the saheli who falls in love with the hero but sacrifices her love to unite the lovers was best illustrated by Nazima in the song '*Ai kash kisi diwane ko hamse bhi mohabbat ho jaye*' [Wish that a mad lover would also fall in love with me] in *Aye Din Bahar Ke* (1966). Although she continues to facilitate the lovers' union in new Hindi films by making a graceful exit as in *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), the trope is reinscribed with the saheli 'stealing' the hero in *Bodyguard* (2011), and with the heroine sacrificing the hero for the sake of the saheli in *Cocktail* (2012).

In similar fashion, the dost plays a significant role in uniting lovers and forms part of the love triangle if he falls in love with the same woman. Beginning with *Sangam* (1964), the dost who removes all obstacles that prevent the lovers from uniting, including sacrificing his own love (*Arzoo*), is a trope that recurs in Hindi cinema, often ending tragically with the suicide (*Sangam*, *Safar* 1970) or death of the dost (*Kal Ho Na Ho* 2003). The dost sacrificing his love for the sake of the hero is often analysed against the strong homoerotic bonding in Hindi cinema and viewed as interrupting the heterosexual romance. Sundar's obsessive attachment to Gopal

in *Sangam* that explains his bizarre request to Gopal to join him on his honeymoon, or Shekhar's flying to Srinagar to get a glimpse of his friend's beloved in *Arzoo*, culminates in the homoerotic subtext of *Sholay* in which the female love interest gets completely erased. This trope is playfully repeated in Farah Khan's *Main Hoon Na* (2004) in which Omi's friend Pappu Master continues to extend his support to the hero even after his death and helps the reborn Om expose the identity of his killer.

   In action films, the helper-friend's role extends beyond serving the love interest and comes closer to the aid provided by the ayyar in the dastan. The benefactor in Hindi cinema is often an evil man who is struck with remorse and changes his ways to help the hero. The character of Sher Khan in *Zanjeer*, played by Pran, who abandons his gambling den and becomes the hero's ally in defeating the forces of evil best exemplifies the benefactor who guides the hero in accomplishing his goal of destroying the monster. The trope is repeated more than three decades later in *Chandni Chowk to China* (2009) in which Dada, Mithun Chakravarty's character travels to China to help his bumbling ward. When Dada is brutally killed by the villain, the hero turns to a Chinese martial arts master to train him in the secret art so that he can avenge his benefactor's death. In a number of films, the hero is able to destroy the monster when accompanied by the benefactor. In *Shaan* (1980), Rakesh, played by Shatrughan Sinha, lends support to the heroes in identifying the villain when the villain murders his own wife and they are able to defeat the villain with Rakesh's help.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the characters of Hindi cinema are patterned after the gods and demons, not only of the Hindu epics but also the celestial beings and inhuman monsters who inhabit the world of the dastan. Traces of the godlike prince of the dastan are identified in representations of the Hindi film hero who is always handsome, noble, highborn, brave and virtuous. If the virtuous hero is a personification of good, the ugly villain is the embodiment of evil. The villain of the Hindi film, even when played by handsome men, is a literal

translation of the incredibly cruel and ugly monster or div of the dastan, made possible through costumes, accessories, make-up and his characterisation. The epic battle between the prince and the monster in the dastan, as also the classical opposition between good and evil as personified by the virtuous Rama and evil Ravan of *Ramayana*, is represented as the confrontation between the hero and the villain of popular Hindi cinema.

The stereotyped representation of the ideal virtuous wife, modeled after Sita of the *Ramayana* is equally derived from the description of loving Mihr Nigar in Dastan-e Amir Hamzah who is opposed to the self-seeking Asman Pari. The chapter shows that the Hindi film heroine has been specifically modeled after descriptions of the houri and husn pari in Persian texts. The Zuleikha-like vamp is invariably represented as a Westernised, promiscuous woman who delights in her own sexuality, unlike the sari-clad heroine who, despite her voluptuous charms, remains virginal. The comic sidekick of the Hindi film is derived from the ayyar of the dastan, who, though deprived of his tilismic knowledge, aids the hero in his quest.

NOTES

1. 'Sometimes the dāstān heroes even take part in the competitions of musicians and ashugs' (Ali and Deemer 2000: 92).

2. The Sufaid Div appears to have been derived from the Great White Div, a demon who inhabited the realm of the wizard king of Mazandaran in the tale of Rustam and Sohrab (Fee 2011: 196).

3. Director Karan Malhotra is believed to have expressed a desire to cast 'an actor who could portray a larger-than-life character and yet retain an element of charm' (Joshi 2012).

4. In the *Shahnama*, it is Akvan who offers this choice to Rustam.

5. 'A woman who is of white colour and whose white of the eye is intensely white and the black therefore intensely black' (Ali 1994: 222).

6. 'Purity is the prevailing idea of the term *hawar*, and therefore *hawari*' (Ali 1994: 222).

7. Abu `Isa Muhammad ibn `Isa at-Tirmidhi (Al-Tirmidhi) 209 AH (824–892) was a medieval collector of hadiths, some deemed controversial and unreliable. *Jami`at-Tirmidhi*, popularly and mistakenly

also referred to as *Sunan at-Tirmidhi*, is a collection of hadiths compiled by Al-Tirmidhi (rahimahullah). He began compiling it after the year 250 A.H. and completed it on the 10 Dhu-al-Hijjah 270 A.H. His collection is unanimously considered to be one of the six canonical collections of hadiths—the *Kutub al-Sittah* of the Sunnah of the Prophet. It contains roughly 4400 hadiths (with repetitions) in 46 books (Wikipedia).

8. Rosie Thomas points out that old hands in studios used the term 'pari films' to refer to Arabian Nights fantasies in the silent era (Thomas 2014). Since the first sound film *Alam Ara* (1932), was a fairy tale based on a popular Parsi play by Joseph David, the Hindi film has featured actors who conformed to the notion of the *husn pari*. The actors cast in lead female roles in Hindi films were also expected to conform to the idea of the *pari*. This ideal was embodied by Naseem Banu, the acknowledged beauty queen of Hindi cinema in the 1940s who earned the sobriquet of 'Pari *Chehra*' [fairy-face] for her large, expressive and heavy-lidded eyes. A number of Hindi film actors beginning with Madhubala, Naseem's daughter Saira Banu, Dimple Kapadia, Poonam Dhillon, Madhuri Dixit, Aishwarya Rai and Katrina Kaif have embodied the idea of ethereal beauty signified by 'pari *chehra*'. It is appropriate that the song in *Aman* should have been filmed on Naseem's daughter Saira Banu, considered the acme of feminine beauty in the 1960s.

9. Iskandar Beg Munshi (ca. 1560–ca. 1632) was the court historian of the Safavid emperor Shah Abbas I. Iskandar wrote one of the greatest works of Persian historiography, *Tārīkh-i-Ālam-ārā-yi-Abbāsī* (Alamara-i Abbasi) (Wikipedia).

10. Rudolph Matthee examines three kinds of women—prostitutes, courtesan and public women—who danced for the entertainment of others (Matthee 2000).

11. The mandatory cabaret performed by Helen in films of the 1950s and 1970s was the standard setting for seduction that alternated with *mujra* sequences.

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Ajeeb Dastan Hai Yeh [It is a Strange Tale Indeed]: Storytelling in Hindi Cinema

NARRATIVE, NARRATION AND NARRATIVITY

While defining mainstream and art cinema, Suzanne Speidel warns that her 'definitions of both "mainstream" and "art" in cinema are admittedly western and "first-world centric," since the former is conceived in terms of Hollywood and the latter in terms of Europe' (Speidel 2006: 3). Viewing this as a reflection of 'Hollywood's global domination of the film industry, and the powerful influence American and European cinematic traditions have had world-wide', she acknowledges that 'there are a number of other powerfully influential national and transcontinental cinemas which offer their own art and commercially-oriented conventions', among which 'the cinemas of India and Japan most obviously come to her mind' (Speidel 2006: 3). Concurring with David Bordwell who conceded that 'in non-Western cultures, following a story does not take the exact forms it does in' Western cultures (Bordwell 1985: 34), Speidel proceeds to analyse 'how films tell stories, and what kinds of stories films tell' (2006: 2). What kind of stories do Hindi films tell and how do they tell them? What are the conventions through which Hindi films organise stories and how are these understood by viewers?

Ravi Vasudevan has called attention to 'the disaggregated nature of the popular form' of Hindi cinema, 'the various "niches" and forms of address which compose it' but do not necessarily reinforce each other, resulting in the 'often suggestive tapestry of images and types' (Vasudevan 2000: 10). In Madhava Prasad's view, 'the fragmented and episodic nature of the Hindi film' (Prasad 1998: 43) reduces the status of the narrative to being simply one among the many segments that constitute the cinematic text, such as the fight scene, the song and dance sequence, the comedy sub-plot and so on.

Lalitha Gopalan has considered Indian cinema's departure from the seamless linear plotting of Hollywood films and episodic structure with 'sudden explosions into song-and-dance sequences, half-time intermissions, and heavy traces of censorship' as a 'cinema of interruptions' (Gopalan 2002). By demonstrating that Hindi cinema's interruptions, which are an integral part of the narrative that possesses an aesthetic coherence, Gopalan reveals a uniquely Indian structure in the Hindi film.[1]

Filmic expression has been viewed 'as combining a mixture of practices which are unique to narrative cinema with those that it has borrowed and developed from other media' (Speidel 2006: 2). Although Hindi cinema's borrowing from indigenous visual, narrative and performing arts has been extensively acknowledged, the impact of pre-cinematic influences on its narrative structure has not been examined in depth. Hindi cinema is often differentiated from other cinemas through its excessive verbosity, manifested in its reliance on long declamatory dialogues that evince a continuity with Parsi theatre (Vasudevan 2000). While a number of film scholars have identified Hindu epic tropes in the progression of the Hindi cinematic plot, the influence of the Perso-Arabic dastan has largely been overlooked. This chapter attempts to unpack instances of disaggregation, episodicity and interruptions isolated by Prasad (1998), Vasudevan (2000), Dwyer and Patel (2002), and Gopalan (2002) that differentiate Hindi cinema from other cinemas. While agreeing with Gopalan on the narrative logic of Hindi cinema being structured by interruptions, it argues that narration or the order of events in Hindi cinema is shaped by the formulaic conventions— razm [warfare], bazm [assembly], husn-i-ishq [beauty and love], *tilism* [enchantment], *aiyyari* [trickery]—and paratactic structure of the dastan and traces the esthetic of interruptions to dastan rokna [stalling the action], a device used by the dastango, during which the action comes to a complete halt but the narration continues.

THE *DASTAN*S HINDI FILMS TELL

Drawing on Ghalib Lakhnavi, who, in his Introduction to *Tarjuma-e Dastan-e-Sahib-Kiran* declares, '…this dāstān has four features:

warfare, assembly, enchantment, and trickery…' (quoted in Farooqi, *Dastan-e-Amir Hamzah* 2000: 39), Musharraf Ali Farooqi considers enchantment, trickery and warfare as central features of the dastan (Farooqi 2000: 120). Pritchett states that although dastans drew on the national epic *Shahnama*, they incorporated a wide variety of folk material into it and that their 'ultimate subject matter was always simple: "*razm o bazm*", the battlefield and the elegant courtly life, war and love' (Pritchett 1991: 1).

Anna Oldfield Senarslan elaborates that dastans are characterised as either romantic or heroic. In her view, 'the romantic plots involve the quest of the ashiq and his beloved to unite after they have been given to each other in a dream' and 'the heroic dāstāns follow the battles and adventures of a warrior or outlaw and his wife and companions' (Senarslan 2008: 46). Paksoy sums up the dastan's plot in the following manner:

> A young man meets a beautiful girl, they fall in love, they desire to be married. However, either the parents do not give their consent, or the girl is betrothed to another. The prospective groom may undergo a series of tests or have to overcome monumental difficulties, enduring severe hardships to prove his love. Success brings a happy ending and the lovers are finally united in marriage, although the "happy ending" is by no means always assured. (Paksoy 2001: 18)

These dastanic conventions are literally mirrored in the narrative conventions of the Hindi film, as succinctly summed up by Amitabh Bachchan: 'Hindi films are really very simple. Boy meets girl, boy rescues girl from a sexual assault in a magnificent fight scene, the two fall in love, sing many songs and live happily ever after' (Bachchan quoted in Kasbekar 2006: 182). Hindi films, like dastans, are inevitable tales of undying love in which lovers perform impossible feats to win the hands of their beloveds, including fighting monstrous villains, family opposition, social, economic and religious difference. As in the dastan, the hero's adventures in the Hindi film begin with his falling in love with a beautiful woman who appears to him like a pari [fairy]. Like the dastan hero, he wins the hand of his celestial beloved by destroying a number of monsters and restoring order.

The dastan plot is primarily structured through a series of quests the hero prince undertakes, with the end of each superhuman quest signifying the beginning of another. The heroic quest weaves the personal and communal in so far as the hero's quest for identity and self-fulfillment is strongly imbricated with his emancipatory function. Although its object might diverge in scale and purpose, the quest motif forms a recurrent framing device in the Hindi film as it does in the dastan. The quest in Hindi cinema might be the hero's personal journey to avenge an injustice perpetrated on the family or the self and might be fruitfully combined with the emancipation of a particular community from an oppressive monster. It might equally be a romantic quest for the beloved, for identity, or even a generalised quest for something unknown. The opening song sung by Samar in Yash Chopra's *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* (2012) begins by his vocalising this unnamed, existential quest in Gulzar's sufi inspired lyrics.

> *Challa ki labhda phire*
> *Challa ki labhda phire*
> *Yaaron main ghar keda*
> *Lokan toh puchhda phire*
> What are you looking for
> What are you looking for, they say
> Friends, where is my home
> I ask people (Gulzar, *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* 2012)

As the song progresses, however, the young man's Rumiesque angst is provided a rational explanation—loneliness—and the object of his quest is specified as the perfect companion, who, in true dastan fashion, appears to him in a dream.

> *lokon supne vich mile da vaada usda*
> *saari saari raat na aankh lagdi*
> *mere soa vi thode thode katti honde*
> *meri nabaz vi thodi katti vajdi*
> *challa ki labha phire*
> *logaan to puchhda phire*

She promised to meet me in my dreams
I couldn't sleep all night
My breath comes harder now
My pulse, too, skips a beat
What am I looking for
I ask people

It is significant that as the camera zooms in Samar busking on the streets of London to supplement his meagre income, Meera, the woman of his dreams, floats into the audience's view as she glides past him in slow motion to drop some coins into his collection box.

The dastan plot of the prince dreaming of the pari and setting out in quest of her is reinscribed in the Hindi film with the hero setting his eyes on the heroine and resolving to win her love against all odds and overcoming many obstacles to reach her. The action invariably begins with the hero encountering his beloved, falling in love with her at first sight and madly setting off in her pursuit. In *Chalte Chalte* (2003), a small town transporter, Raj, gives a ride to a wealthy urban fashion designer Priya, who has a flat tyre. He follows her all the way to the city of Mumbai and succeeds in tracking her down in one of the world's largest and most densely populated cities through an ingenious device that can work only in a Hindi film. In *Dil Se* (1998), Amar Verma, a programme executive working for All India Radio, meets a mysterious young North-eastern woman at a railway platform and is so smitten by her that he follows her home, only to be beaten up by her kin. Rehan, a terrorist masquerading as a Delhi guide in *Fanaa* (2006), meets a visually impaired Kashmiri girl on a visit to Delhi, breaks into a song to praise her ethereal beauty and resolves to annihilate himself in her. Middle-aged Veer Singh in *Love Aaj Kal* (2009) patiently educates the young cynical Jai in the true meaning of romance in his youth by narrating his pursuit of his beloved whom he runs into while filling air in a cycle repair shop in old Delhi, and who he religiously follows every morning, resolving that he would make her his *voti* [wife] one day. A number of films (*Devdas* 1935, *Awara* 1951, *Parvarish* 1971, *Muqaddar Ka Sikandar* 1978, *Munna Bhai MBBS* 2003)

engage with the theme of a lost childhood sweetheart whom the hero meets again by coincidence in adulthood and pursues relentlessly, in the hope that she would show some signs of recognition and perhaps love.

The quest motif is explicitly articulated in the action plot in which the hero's quest usually begins with his moving to the town/city where the villain is based. The trope of the child who witnesses a parent or parents being physically and psychologically abused and/or murdered and grows up to seek vengeance on the perpetrators recurs in Hindi cinema from *Mother India* (1957) to *Baazigar* (1993). The orphaned Vijay is haunted by the nightmare of a white stallion in *Zanjeer* (1973) that serves as a supernatural clue, which eventually leads him to his parents' murderer. Although Vijay's anger in *Deewar* (1975) is directed against all those forces that criminalised him, his target becomes more specific after his girlfriend Anita's murder. Shankar, in *Yaadon Ki Baraat* (1973), vows not to rest until he has hunted down his parents' killers. Ajay's quest to destroy his father's fraudulent business partner and recover his lost assets turns pathological in *Baazigar* (1993).

Youth and coming-of-age films engage with the hero's quest for identity and self-realisation. These films usually begin with a confused young man floundering aimlessly, per chance meeting a singularly focused young woman, and setting off in quest of a goal to win the love and respect of his beloved and family. A number of films such as *Lakshya* (2004), *Wake Up, Sid* (2009), *Ajab Prem Ki Ghazab Kahani* (2009) belong to this category. Many of these films portray the hero or the heroine in pursuit of some form of success. Although they are very different from one another, *Bunti Aur Babli* (2005), *Band Baaja Baaraat* (2010), *Fashion* (2008), *Page 3* (2005), *Iqbal* (2005) converge in their focusing on a young man or woman's quest for success. Some youth films such as *Rang De Basanti* (2006) and *Yuva* (2004) locate youth as agents of social reform and emancipation, but others like *Dil Chahta Hai* (2001), *Three Idiots* (2009) and *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (2011) confine themselves to tracing a personal quest for identity, which finds its most poignant translation in *Udaan* (2010).

DASTAN ROKNA

Gopalan maintains that 'the most persistent narrative form found in Indian popular cinema includes several interruptions bearing a more or less systematic relationship to the narrative' and that 'our viewing pleasure arises from these interruptions' (Gopalan 2002: 18). She argues that this unfamiliar tendency towards digression might appear redundant and superfluous but 'assists in the construction of a distinct visual and narrative time-space' (Gopalan 2002). However, the interruption of action in Hindi cinema carries the trace of a technique called dastan rokna [stalling the dastan] in dastangoi employed by the storyteller or dastango 'to keep his audience awaiting the end' (Jain quoted in Farooqi 2000: 131). 'The technique for it', as Jain explains, 'was to stop the action at a particular point, and to prolong the narrative from that point' (quoted in Farooqi 2000: 131).

While the term dastan rokna conjures the image that narration has stopped, it is action rather than narration that comes to a standstill. Therefore, Farooqi translates it as 'stalling the action' and asserts that the main purpose of such stalling is to demonstrate 'the linguistic virtuosity of the narrator' and his command of vocabulary (Farooqi 2000: 163). The dastango has the license to suspend action and prolong the narrative indefinitely, with 'the only condition being that despite the extraneous descriptions, the charm of the story is not compromised' (Jain quoted in Farooqi 2000: 131). As dastans were tales well known to the audience, the narrator was relieved of the responsibility of constructing an original plot or a linear cause-and-effect sequence. Instead, every plot had the possibility for continuous expansion through the narration of tales by different dastangos. Unlike the West where the storyteller's skill lies in constructing original plots and suspense, the dastango's art lies in the extent to which he can stall the action without boring the audience. Dastangos would often compete on their ability to stall the action, particularly at a climactic moment, compelling their audience to return to the narrations the following day and after. Jain narrates the following incident.

Once in Lucknow two master *dastan-gos* decided to match their skills, so as to see who could stall the *dastan* longer. One of them stalled the *dastan* at the climactic point where the lover and the beloved were all but brought together and only a curtain separated their craven hearts and hungry eyes. Once the curtain was parted, they would meet. The listeners were anticipating the lifting of the curtain and the meeting of the lovers to proceed, but with his deep knowledge and eloquence, the *dastan-go* kept learnedly expounding on the emotions on the two sides, and the veil that hung between them. Quite a few days were spent in this exercise. Every day the audience came hoping that of a certain the curtain would be lifted that day, as conceivably nothing else had remained to be described. However, as they returned home each night the parting of the curtain had not yet taken place. In this manner, the past-master kept the *dastan* stalled for more than a week…This art was confined to oral dastans. One did not see its display in the written dastans. (Jain quoted in Farooqi 2000: 131)

H. S. Rawail's *Mere Mehboob* (1963) replicates this aborted meeting of the lovers in the encounter between Anwar and Husna. Anwar bumps into Husna as she comes out of the Aligarh Muslim University but cannot see her face hidden behind a *burqa* [veil]. At the University's annual function, Anwar sings a ghazal describing his encounter in the wild hope of meeting her. Although Husna realises that he is referring to her, and unveils her face, he is unable to recognise her. She tries to meet him after the function, but they are again driven apart by his many admirers. Anwar moves to Lucknow where he is hired to tutor Husna, but is unable to see her as they are separated by a screen. He describes the woman of his dreams to her, not realising that Husna is the woman he seeks. After several misunderstandings, when he mistakes her friend to be her, Husna's identity is finally revealed to him. In a fashion similar to the Lucknow dastango, Rawail uses a screen to prevent the lovers from seeing each other in a manner that contributes to rather than diminishes the pleasures of the audience, who, unlike the hero, are able to glimpse the beloved constructed as almost ethereal.

MORPHOLOGY OF THE HINDI FILM

Ashis Nandy asserts that 'one could speak quite easily (after Vladimir Propp) of a morphology of Hindi films' for they are 'held together by certain conventions of narrative, storytelling, and ambience' (Nandy 1998: 229). Cultural theorists define parataxis as a device in which certain works of art or 'cultural texts' in which a series of scenes or elements are presented side by side in no particular order or hierarchy. Observing 'the paratactic structure of the dāstān' and the 'endless string of seemingly haphazard, repetitive, randomly ordered adventures', Frances Pritchett inquires: 'does it not hold within itself subtle progressions, developments, meanings?' (Pritchett 1992: 35). According to Pritchett, 'Parataxis involves simply "one fact laid end to end with the next"—but there are always "silent intervals," in Vinaver's words, between the facts' (Pritchett 1992: 36). She concludes with a question: 'What mysteries, what relationships lie in the "silent intervals" generated by parataxis?' (Pritchett 1992: 36). Nandy answers Pritchett by identifying two pronounced conventions, 'the stylized fight and song-and-dance sequences' (Nandy 1998: 229) that support his thesis about the possibility of talking about the morphology of Hindi films. Gopalan looks at 'three different kinds of interruptions that brand the narrative form of Indian cinema: song and dance sequences, the interval, and censorship' (Gopalan 2002: 18). Thus, songs and dances, intervals, censorship and other interruptions in the Hindi film may be viewed as an instance of dastan rokna through which linear time is effectively arrested in order to capture moments of breathtaking beauty, intense emotion or incisive insights. This section demonstrates that interruptions in the Hindi film typically follow the tradition of dastan rokna by stalling the action through the insertion of razm, bazm, and *husn-i-ishq* in the silent intervals.

HUSN-I-ISHQ AND SONG AND DANCE

The most important function of dastan rokna, in Musharraf Ali Farooqi's view, is the description of husn-i-ishq [beauty and love].

Songs in Hindi cinema that are decried for their disruption of the cause-and-effect progression of events have been revealed by Gopalan to be an integral aspect of Hindi cinema that she has appropriately named 'the cinema of interruptions' (Gopalan 200 2). Anustup Basu views songs as special sequences that 'remove bodies from the propositional flow of narratives, transport them to spatial and temporal orders that are outside a determined milieu of storytelling, and endow them with magical resources and playthings' (Basu 2010: 162). But the song and dance sequences are largely used to stall the dastan and perform the function of expressing *husn-i-ishq* while conforming to the Udhri code in which secrecy was the essence of love. Since direct expressions of love were forbidden in Indian society, except in the conventionalised vocabulary of the poem or ghazal as in the Arab,[2] song and dance interludes provide the lover the license to serenade his beloved through songs that describe and extol her husn [beauty] and express his ishq [love].

The sight of the beloved invariably transports the lover into a heightened state of ecstasy and makes him break into a song, describing her incomparable husn, that halts the action but holds the audience spellbound in anticipation of the lovers seeing each other. In a most spectacular version, Sanjay Leela Bhansali has a mesmerised Raj spontaneously break into a panegyric as he watches Sakina in *Saawariyas* (2007).

> *Allah...Allah*
> *Gum-sum chandni ho nazni ho*
> *Ya koi hoor ho*
> *Dil nashin ho, dil kashin ho*
> *Ya jannat ka noor ho*
> *Masha Allah, Masha Allah, Masha Allah*
> By the grace of Allah
> A beautiful belle, a houri divine
> Or are you the pensive moonlight?
> You intoxicate, you please the heart
> Or are you a heavenly light?
> Allah wills it so, Allah wills it so (Sameer, *Saawariya* 2007)

Song and dance sequences are also inserted to expound on the nature of love in general. Love is imagined as a form of devotion

based on sufi poetry with the lover willing to do anything for his beloved, including giving up his life.

> *Jo tumko ho pasand*
> *Wahi baat kahenge*
> *Tum din ko agar raat kaho*
> *Raat kahenge*
> Whatever pleases you
> I would say, I would do
> If you should call the day night
> Night I shall call it, too (Indeevar, *Safar* 1970)

In addition to articulating beauty and love, Hindi film songs, composed by some of the Subcontinent's most accomplished poets, may also be read as a parallel text that forms an independent commentary on social, political and existential issues. For instance, Sudipta Kaviraj has identified a number of film songs from films of the 1950s that may be excised from cinematic narratives and read together as complex negotiations with existentialism as also with the nature of Indian modernity (Kaviraj 2002). This song from *Gharonda* (1977) penned by Gulzar voicing urban angst, alienation and loneliness has been hauntingly rendered by Bhupendra.

> *Ek akela is shehar mein, raat mein aur dopahar mein*
> *Aab-o-dana dhoondhta hai, ashiyana dhoondhta hai*
> *Din khali khali bartan hai, aur raat hai jaise andha kuan*
> *In sooni andheri ankhon mein ansoon ki jagah aata hai dhuan*
> *Jeene ki wajeh koi nahin, marne ka bahana dhoondhta hai*
> Alone in this city, by night and by day
> He searches for subsistence, he searches for a home
> The day yawns like an empty vessel, the night is a bottomless well
> In these dark desolate eyes rises smoke instead of tears
> There is no reason to live, he searches for an excuse to die (Gulzar, *Gharonda* 1977)

Basu also points out that song and dance are not interruptions in Gopalan's sense but 'sometimes bring to the fore endemic crises in dominant imaginations of history and their temporal orders' and argues that they are 'not simple moments of representation' but

'complex movements of power, tribulations on the battlefield of constitutive languages and errant vernaculars' (Basu 2010: 175). Urdu poets' appropriation of film song for the purpose of providing social commentary is in consonance with the dastango's strategic deployment of dastan rokna to enthrall his audience, praise his patrons, share his personal travails, appeal to specific members of the audience and provide his views on contemporary social and political issues. Thus, the song and dance sequences, viewed as disruptive and extraneous to the narrative flow, contribute to the charm of the story and invite the audience to enter the fantasy world conjured for their pleasure.

Bazm [Romance]: Falling in Love

In *The Ring of the Dove,* Ibn Hazm provides a detailed description of 'Falling in Love While Asleep' through the strange experience of Abu '1-Sari 'Ammar Ibn Ziyad, the freedman of al-Mu'aiyad. 'I saw in a dream a young maiden, and on awaking I found that I had completely lost my heart to her, and that I was madly in love with her. Now I am in the most difficult straits possible, with this passion I have conceived for her' (Hazm 1994). 'One of the strangest origins of passion is when a man falls in love through merely hearing the description of the other party, without ever having set eyes on the beloved' (Hazm 1994). Speaking of 'Falling in Love Through a Description' Ibn Hazm states that 'this kind of romance usually takes place between veiled ladies of guarded palaces and aristocratic households and their male kinsfolk' (Hazm 1994). In Nezami's *Khosrow o Shirin,* Khosrow first becomes enamoured with Shirin on hearing his painter friend Shahpur sing her praises, and then Shirin becomes equally enthralled with Khosrow after seeing drawings of him made by Shahpur (Matringe 2006: 8). Similarly, the young Prince Munir Shami in the dastan *Hatimtai* falls helplessly in love with Husnbano on accidently discovering her picture. Devakinandan Khatri's *Chandrakanta* (1888) carries over this motif by portraying Bikram Singh falling in love with Chandrakanta after being shown her painting. In true dastan fashion, the first cinematic encounter between the hero and

his beloved is represented as the encounter between the shehzada [prince] and the pari [fairy].

The dastan trope of the beloved or the pari appearing to the shehzada in a dream and the prince falling hopelessly in love with her is reiterated in many Hindi films with a difference. Ibn Hazm defines this class of love as 'a pure fantasy of the mind, a nightmare illusion', which falls into 'the category of wishful thinking and mental hallucination' and describes it in a verse (Hazm 1994):

Ah, would I knew who she might be,
And how she walked by night!
Was she the moon that shone on me,
The sun's uprising light?
A mere conjecture of the mind
By cogitation wrought?
An image that the soul designed,
Revealed to me by thought? (Hazm 1994)

While the beloved might not actually appear in the hero's dream, the hero, and sometimes the heroine, are represented as fantasising about their dream woman or dream man.

Kisi shayar ki ghazal, Dream Girl
Kisi jheel ka kamal, Dream Girl
Kabhi to milegi kahin to milegi
Aaj nahin to kal… Dream Girl
The muse of a poet, Dream Girl
The lotus of a lake, Dream Girl
Someday, somewhere I will find her
If not today then tomorrow, I will find her… my Dream girl (Anand Bakshi, *Dream Girl* 1977)

Explaining the idea of 'Falling in Love at First Sight', Ibn Hazm declares that it 'often happens that Love fastens itself to the heart as the result of a single glance' and he classifies this love into two categories. Hazm's description of the first category in which 'a man will fall head over heels in love with a mere form, without knowing who that person may be, what her name is, or where she

lives' applies 'to more than one man' (Hazm 1994). It also fits the trajectory of numerous lovers in Hindi cinema.

The dastanic trope of the hero driven to distraction by a glimpse of the beloved is translated literally in a Muslim social *Mere Mehboob* (1963) in which Anwar bumps into a burqa clad young woman at the Aligarh Muslim University, causing her to drop her books. The glimpse of her beautiful hands leads him to fetishize her in a ghazal describing his encounter with her at the farewell function for outgoing students, without realising that she is present in the audience.

> *Mere mehboob tujhe meri mohabbat ki qasam*
> *Phir mujhe nargisi ankhon ka sahara de de*
> *Mera khoya hua rangeen nazara de de*
> *Mere mehboob tujhe meri mohabbat ki qasam*
> My beloved, I swear upon my love
> Return the solace of those beautiful eyes to me
> Return my lost vision of splendour
> My beloved, I swear upon my love (Shakeel Badayuni, *Mere Mehboob* 1963)

After graduation, he leaves for Lucknow but continues to be haunted by the glimpse of the mysterious young woman. He is subsequently introduced to her as the sister of a well known gentleman, but the *purdahnasheen* [veiled] discourse prevents her from revealing her face to him, with the result that Anwar's hand fetish continues to drive him insane until the final disclosure of her identity.

But, as Madhava Prasad puts it, 'what begins as an accidental encounter between two individuals turns out to have been predestined' (Prasad 1998: 110). In both tragic and comic romances, the Hindi film reiterates the dastanic notion that their destiny would bring the shehzada and the pari together. The lover's belief that his beloved has descended on earth only for him is aptly captured in Sahir Ludhianvi's lyrics sung by Mukesh in *Kabhi Kabhie* (1976):

> *Tu ab se pehle sitaron mein bas rahi thi kahin*
> *Tujhe zameen par bulaya gaya hai mere liye*

Before now, you dwelled far among the stars somewhere
You have been brought down to earth just for me (Sahir Ludhianvi,
Kabhi Kabhie 1976).

On the other hand, Anthony sings a cheerfully optimistic song in
Bambaiyya Hindi in *Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977) about meeting his
fantasy woman, who is seen floating past him in an open sports car.

> *My name is Anthony Gonsalves*
> *Main duniya mein akela hoon*
> *Dil bhi hai khali ghar bhi hai khali*
> *Isme rahegi koi kismat wali*
> *Hey jise meri yaad aye jab chahe chali aye* (2)
> *Rup Nagar, Prem Gali, Kholi Number 420*
> My name is Anthony Gonsalves
> In this big wide world I am all alone
> My heart is empty and so is my home
> Some day will dwell here a lucky woman
> Anyone who wants me, come anytime you please
> To the Beautiful City, Lovers' Lane, Room Number 420
> (Anand Bakshi, *Amar Akbar Anthony* 1977)

Razm [War]: Hero Defeats the Monster and the Fist Fight

The fist fight, routinely included as an assertion of the male
protagonist's masculinity in the Hindi film, enables the insertion of
the narrative conventions of the dastan in the cinematic diegesis.
Zanjeer (1973) offers a textbook illustration of several dastan
narrative conventions. A young Vijay is haunted by the nightmare of
a man on a white stallion who murdered his parents. Twenty years
later he joins the police force to discover that the neighbourhood is
being terrorised by a petty criminal called Sher Khan. Sher Khan's
taunt that Vijay's position of authority gives him an advantage
over Khan provokes Vijay to challenge Khan to a fist fight in the
stylised fight convention. However, after this incident, Khan turns
a helper and joins Vijay in his quest for the notorious criminal Teja.
Several stylised fight sequences follow, concluding in the hero's

final encounter with the evil Teja, who, incidentally, turns out to be Vijay's parents' assailant. In *Amar Akbar Anthony*, Anthony, a petty criminal, tells police officer Amar, 'I have not raised my hand merely out of respect for your uniform', which incites Amar to remove his shirt and engage in a physical duel. The trope of the hero taking off his official uniform or shirt to challenge or accept a challenge from a formidable opponent is strongly reminiscent of the dastan hero's encounter with demons and monsters.

Since the 1990s, Salman Khan has become the icon whose mandatory removal of his shirt in all his films to expose his perfectly sculpted torso is designed to appeal to the scopophilia of his female viewers but also to signal the fight scene. In Salman Khan and Akshay Kumar starrers, appropriately named *Dabangg* (2010) and *Rowdy Rathore* (2012) respectively, the story mainly consists of a series of fight sequences strung together by a thin narrative. *Dabangg* features the shirt tearing and falling off an enraged Chulbul Pandey's body as he proceeds to confront the villainous Chhedi Singh. But even Shah Rukh Khan romances make room for the romantic icon to display his physical prowess before he can win the hand of his beloved. Raj is permitted to take away Simran in *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) only when he is able to stand up to her rustic Punjabi suitor's raw machismo.

In Hindi films, as in the dastan, the prospect of a single hero combating a large force is not placed outside the realm of possibility. The fight scene in *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi* (2009) satirises the Hindi film fight sequence in which the common sight of the hero vanquishing an entire army of goons and criminals single-handed has been so naturalised that it has ceased to invite the incredulity of the average filmgoer. Even the bespectacled, 'nine-to-five' office goer Surinder Sahni accepts and wins a Sumo wrestler's challenge to win a chance to take his newly wedded wife Tani on a belated honeymoon to Japan. His gesture elicits the visibly moved Tani's concern, who asks him, 'Tumne aisa kyon kiya? Tum hero nahin ho. Office mein baithne wale ek aam aadmi ho' [Why did you do this? You are not a hero. You are an ordinary man who sits in his office' (Aditya Chopra, *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi* 2009). And Surinder tells her that he believed he would be able to 'defeat the giant' with his cleverness. Like the mortal hero of the dastan, the Hindi film hero

is able to overcome a monster with superhuman powers as much by his wit, intelligence and strategy as by supernatural powers.

While Hindi cinema has always drawn on the trope of the supernatural helper, or object/device, to endow the hero with supernatural powers, the genre of *Koi Mil Gaya* (2003), a complex mix of science fiction and dastan, permits the helper's direct intervention in form of an alien called Jadu. An autistic young man Rohit, mocked by his 'normal' classmates, can defeat the school bully in a basketball game thanks to the miraculous powers bestowed by his friend Jadu and is able to miraculously transform into a gifted young man who wins the love of the beautiful Nisha.

The fist fight is a standardised convention in Hindi cinema deployed for the performance of machismo as well as for the display of exposed male bodies that might contribute to the development of the diegesis but also performs the extra-diegetic function of providing thrills for both the female and male audience. If Hindi cinema is to be viewed as a cinema of attractions, as Vasudevan proposes, the fight scene constitutes one of its major attractions. It is carefully choreographed by the employment of a specialised category of actors/stunt artists called fight masters who often participate in the fight. Fight sequences are crucial to the appeal of the action film but are also inserted in the romance film to attract male viewers. The gratification provided by the fight scene for the predominantly male audience of certain film genres evidently exists independent of the diegetic conflict, as repeat viewings of films solely for their fights in the past or uploads of the same on YouTube in the present would testify. As Steve Derne's ethnographic study of male viewers in North India revealed, the all-male audience of Hindi films in B and C grade theatres or in the stalls in A grade theatres reacts enthusiastically to depictions of male strength—even when wielded by a villain—and takes vicarious pleasure in the violent combat between the hero and the villain (Derne 2000).

Ayyari [Trickery] and the Comic Sub-plot

Ayyari constitutes an important component in the development of the dastan plot. While the trickster is the central figure in the

Western picaresque novel, 'the trickster of the dāstān, however, differs from these conventional characters in a very fundamental way' (Farooqi 2000: 150). While the ayyar 'remains a very prominent character in the dāstān, one who influences the course of the dāstān in a very substantial way, and one without whose presence the dāstān would be a dreary read indeed, he remains throughout a pawn' (Farooqi 2000: 150). The ayyar is a complex and cunning character who uses his wit, intelligence and knowledge of tilism to assist the hero in his impossible quests. Although many scholars (Narwekar 2005; Dwyer 2012) have traced the comedian character of Hindi cinema to the figure of the *vidushak* in Sanskrit drama, the trace of ayyari is distinctly visible in the comic sub-plot and the comedian. Significantly, the Hindi film curtailed the ayyar's function by dispossessing him of tilismic knowledge but permitted him to retain wit and resourcefulness. Unlike the ayyar who practices his cunning and deceit against the magic of sorcerers and warlords, the trickster in the Hindi film practices it on gullible people for providing amusement. Unlike the ayyar, who guides the hero through his adventures with his superior knowledge, the comedian is made to play the hero's sidekick, whose primary function is to play harmless pranks along with the hero, run errands and mediate between the hero and his beloved.

Like the song and dance, the comic sub-plot is an established convention in Hindi cinema whose function is primarily to provide comic relief. The routine insertion of comic interludes even in extremely tragic dramas by Hindi filmmakers is in deference to the expectations of the audience who come to the cinema hall to be entertained. Sanjit Narwekar points out that comedy is only one of the elements of the story in Hindi cinema rather than the story itself. Narwekar identifies various kinds of comedies in Hindi cinema and is of the view that gag-related comedy, in which a kind of visual (and often a verbal ad-libbing) routine is developed between the hero and his comic sidekick (all through the 1950s and 1960s), or two comedians (often a pair of servants) who are woven into the story for comic relief and generally have a separate track unrelated to the main story, is the most common (Narwekar 2005). He also identifies situational comedy arising from a character being placed in the wrong situation, or complications arising from a lie

or deception as well as the comedy of manners in Hindi cinema, but he is unable to discern any comedies of character because of the largely stereotyped depiction of comedians in Hindi cinema (Narwekar 2005).

The history of this subplot began with Johnny Walker alias Badruddin Qazi, a cult comedian who often played the hero's comic sidekick or a friend with a second love interest and regaled Hindi film audiences for more than three decades. Unlike the stereotyped sidekick in Hindi cinema who indulges in slapstick comedy or visual or verbal gags, Walker, and later, I. S. Johar, became known for their sharp wit and subtle humour. Yet seasoned practitioners of slapstick such as Rajendranath, Om Prakash, Mukri, Mehmood, Asrani performed the trickster to perfection by aiding the hero in his quest, a tradition that is being carried forward by Johnny Lever, Paresh Rawal, Boman Irani, Arshad Warsi and Rajpal Yadav in the present.

The relationship between the hero and his comic sidekick is epitomised in the characters of the poetically inclined Anwar and his wannabe poet friend in *Mere Mehboob* who adopts the pen name *Ghayal* [wounded] to fulfill his poetic aspirations. Played by Johnny Walker, *Ghayal* encourages his friend Anwar to seek his beloved and reveal his identity to her before the university closes down for vacation, introduces him to his wealthy friends so he can find employment, and continues to think of clever ploys to bring the lovers together. In *Munna Bhai MBBS* (2003), the trope of the hero and his comic sidekick finds a most sophisticated treatment in Munnabhai and his sidekick Circuit who serves as his most loyal accomplice. Circuit is chiefly instrumental in helping Munna not only gain admission in a medical college but also pass the MBBS exam with flying colours. In its sequel *Lage Raho Munna Bhai* (2006), Circuit arranges to have all his friends call in the radio station at the same time so that Munna can get a chance to ask his beloved, a radio jockey, a question. Like the ayyar, Circuit performs villainous acts but is not a villain because these acts of villainy are performed as a service to a dear friend.

But the comic subplot performs the additional function of commenting on or even developing the action with the comedian wittingly or unwittingly serving as the hero's accomplice. The

comedian, unlike the ayyar, indulges in lower forms of trickery that might be used by the filmmaker to seek information that can expose the villain. Although the Kashmiri houseboat owner Mangloo's role in *Arzoo* (1965) is to provide comic relief through his strongly accented Hindi and his humorous pursuit of his love interest, he arrives just in time in Delhi to reveal that Sarju and Gopal are indeed the same person to Gopal's friend Ramesh and beloved Usha, and so brings the conflict to a favourable conclusion by uniting the two lovers. Haldiram in *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (2001) performs a similar role by bringing Rahul and Anjali together in the initial scenes and then concealing their whereabouts from Rahul's family out of a sense of loyalty to Anjali.

Although the comic character in the Hindi film is unable to attain the heights of trickery practised by the ayyar that helps the hero prince vanquish monsters and surmount obstacles, he performs the useful function of bringing information from the enemy camp by disguising himself. As the comedian alone has access to the hero's secrets, he becomes crucial to the resolution of the conflict and the lovers' union. The assumption of fake identities by the hero and comedian largely figures as a harmless prank played by the lover to gain access to forbidden spaces. Disguise is exploited to both comic and disastrous effects in *Arzoo* (1965) in which Gopal fakes his name and profession to come close to Usha whom he meets on a trip to Kashmir. As Usha's father does not approve of his daughter's frequent meetings with an unknown skiing instructor, he disguises himself as an elderly physician to tend to her as she fakes an illness and even serenades her on her birthday in his old Muslim doctor-poet avatar. The comic disguise anticipates the theme of appearance and reality as Usha arrives in Delhi to seek Sarju who is none other than Gopal.

But the hero, aided by his comic sidekick, also resorts to trickery to nab the villain, much like the hero prince and the ayyar defeat the monster in the dastan. Some films feature the hero, usually a police officer or a CBI officer, assuming a fake identity to win the villain's trust and joining his gang before exposing his crimes and bringing him to book. In others, the elaborate masquerade is inserted as a song and dance sequence in which the hero, and sometimes the heroine, entertains the villain in order to gain access

to his den and elicit his secret plans. The hero might disguise himself to rescue his adopted sister from the clutches of a lecherous villain, to prevent his beloved from being forced into marrying the villain, to release his mother or siblings held captive by the villain, or to prevent the villain from fulfilling his evil plans against humanity. The motif of disguise or masquerade gives maximum scope for the play of ayyari in the Hindi film.

ENCHANTMENT

Enchantment does not figure directly in Hindi cinema as tilism except in the spectacles of miracle in devotional, stunt films, supernatural thrillers and science fiction films, but indirectly as divine intervention. While marvelous occurrences are associated with certain genres and a former era of cinema, Linda Hemphill observes that the motif of the mythological constructed on 'the trope of the wondrous spectacle' persists even in films set in the real (quoted in Nandi 2011: 76). Similarly, Gregory Booth argues that 'religious content is used in even explicitly secular and non(ritualistic) narrative' within 'a worldly plot structure and performance context' (Booth 1995: 175). He asserts that 'modern commercial releases abound in miracles … such as interventions by the gods and in some cases Allah' (Booth 1995: 175–176). Divine intervention in Hindi cinema reveals the syncretic boundaries of worship that exist at the village level in India that is mirrored in the diversity of gods, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian that intervene to help the good and punish the evil.

Hindi cinema constitutes an enchanted world in which impossible things happen and are accepted by the miracle seeking consciousness of both its producers and consumers. Proximity to any shrine or holy place is a cue for divine intervention and spectacles of miracle. In *Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977), an elderly woman blinded in an accident, flees her pursuers to enter the shrine of Shirdi Baba where her lost son Akbar happens to be singing a qawwali in praise of the seer, and miraculously recovers her sight. While viewers do not interrogate the convoluted logic of the same mother not being able to recognise the sound of her

infant's wail in an earlier sequence when she was rescued by a man who was also carrying her lost son home, the spectacle of miracle is unconditionally accepted as an affirmation of the miraculous powers attributed to the seer. *Deewar* (1975) exhibits a collapse of the Hindu idea of God with that of Allah through two figures—the Hindu mother who has an abiding faith in God despite her terrible misfortune and a Muslim porter who educates Vijay in the sacredness of the token number allotted to him. Divine intervention is upheld through the mother's instant recovery following the prayers her confirmed atheist son Vijay offers at the same temple his mother frequents, and by his succumbing to gun wounds when he accidentally drops his magical token. It is perhaps only in a Hindi film that a man or woman seen falling into a stream or ravine can emerge after a convenient gap as he or she would have been miraculously rescued by human or divine intervention.

Umair Ahmed Muhajir points out that: 'the dargahs and mandirs that dotted the landscape of Hindi movies in decades past have all but vanished; to the extent any divine intervention is needed today, the more "modern" confines of a church—almost always abroad—have become Bollywood's preferred houses of worship, at least since 1995's *Dilwaale Dulhaniya Le Jaayenge*' (Muhajir 2009).[3] In NRI films like *Kal Ho Na Ho* (2003), prayers offered to a Christian God bring benediction to the devotee such as the troubled Naina's prayers that are answered by the arrival of an angel from India in the shape of Aman Mathur. Meera in *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* (2012) regularly prays to Jesus for the fulfillment of her prayers and her firm belief that one has to give up something to get something affirms the notion of *mannat*. In return for Samar's life, who is injured in an accident, she decides to sacrifice her own happiness in the belief that if she does not practice what she had promised, he would not survive.

Swaralipi Nandi hails *Mr. India* (1987) as a true science fiction film 'where the Bollywood tropes of divine miracle, supernatural presence, and magical powers' are not only 'debunked' but also 'rendered ludicrous' (Nandi 2011). If *Mr. India* is a bold attempt to challenge the common perceptions of the supernatural and its mythological possibility in Hindi films, *Koi Mil Gaya* (2003) hesitates between a natural and supernatural explanation of Rahul's

miraculous powers that are bestowed upon him by the extraterrestrial Jadu. However, rational logic does not diminish the popularity of supernatural thrillers such as *Raaz* (2002) and reincarnation films like *Om Shanti Om* (2007), which reaffirm the Hindi film's penchant for the wondrous spectacle and divine intervention.

HAPPY ENDINGS

In the typical dastan plot, the hero is rewarded for liberating his people from the evil demon with his marriage to a beautiful pari, the object of his affection and often the prime motivation for his embarking on heroic quests. Deepa Gahlot, in an article titled 'Why the World Loves Hindi Movies' posed an important question: 'Where else do you get a permanent promise of happy endings? In a Hindi movie, almost always, the boy and the girl live happily ever after' (Gahlot 1999). As in the dastan, the audience's comforting knowledge that *everything* will turn out well in the end—the hero will defeat the villain, marry the heroine, and lost families will reunite—intensifies their appreciation of sudden turns in fortune, fights between the hero and the villain, misunderstandings and family opposition. Films that end sadly have the lovers dying together, signaling the triumph of love. The hero's death is necessitated by the moral order, which dictates that good must triumph over evil and that evil must be punished.

The notion of happy endings in Hindi films needs to be investigated in relation to the historical understanding of this form of closure in dastan literature. The audience's identification with the hardships suffered by the protagonists or the monumental difficulties they must overcome in order to prove their love comes from a foreknowledge that everything will turn out well in the end. Their emotional investment in the lovers' travails, their participation in the action sequences, the prolonged fights, the car chases, the scenes of torture and violence is contingent on the comforting knowledge that the protagonist will definitely be rescued by a *deus ex machina* before the song and dance ends. Director K. Asif altered the original legend of Anarkali with a happy ending in *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960) by letting Anarkali

escape. Like Anarkali, the best known Indo-Islamic qissas such as Laila-Majnun, Heer-Ranjha and Sohni-Mahiwal end tragically with the death of the lovers, a denouement that, going against the convention of happy endings, has also been borrowed in some of the most memorable Hindi cinematic romances right from *Devdas* (1935) to *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* (1988), *Fanaa* (2006) and *Ishaqzaade* (2012). Tales of star-crossed lovers as well as those of unrequited love abound in Hindi cinema. Some of the most popular and landmark Hindi films such as *Mother India* (1958), *Sangam* (1964), *Deewar* (1975), *Sholay* (1975), *Kal Ho Na Ho* (2003) feature a love triangle in which one of the protagonists is killed.

Happy endings explain the audience's surprising equanimity at the sight of dangerous and violent events. As the hero or heroine find themselves in nerve-racking situations, the audience's foreknowledge that the hero cannot die prevents them from speculating about the outcome while permitting them to indulge in the vicarious pleasure of participating in cliff-hanging suspense and thrills. When the protagonists find themselves in life-threatening situations, such as falling off a precipice, caught in a fire or imprisoned by the villain, the audience follows them, fully aware that they will ultimately to be rescued through the intervention of a deus ex machina. Therefore, if the hero is reported dead in action or lost, the audience's interest mainly lies in when and how the hero would re-emerge in the plot. When the heroine is held captive by the villain, the audience surrenders to the pleasure of the song and dance she is made to perform at the villain's command in the firm belief that the hero will arrive before the end of the dance to rescue her. When siblings are separated at birth or subsequently, the audience is made to follow their journey as an assurance that they will eventually find each other and be reunited with their parents. As Gahlot explains, 'When characters go through inhuman suffering and emerge victorious, and, mysteriously unscathed, there is a sense of collective catharsis that even the most slickly made Western film cannot guarantee' (Gahlot 1999).

Nowhere is the comfort of the happy ending as conspicuous as in the fight scene where the hero is made to encounter an innumerable number of formidable foes, is about to fall off the edge

or be killed but is saved just in the nick of time by an accident or the timely arrival of a friend. Rather than suspense, the audience's firm belief in the hero's invincibility and ultimate victory augments their vicarious pleasure and enables them to concentrate on the fine moves through which the fight sequence is orchestrated as the hero ploughs through an army of villains to finally engage the chief villain in a duel that foregrounds his prowess while portraying the villain as a formidable rival. Before the hero's arrival, the audience patiently watches the villain subject his prisoners to the harshest verbal and physical abuse, because they are perfectly aware that the hero will arrive and defeat the villain and free his loved ones.

Similarly, irrespective of the trials and tribulations suffered by the hero and the heroine, the optimistic belief that they will ultimately be united enables the audience to get involved in the details of the obstacles that prevent them from coming together. In fact, the cause for the opposition—class, caste, religious difference, family rivalry or enmity, hero's criminality or heroine's past, the love triangle, malicious parents and siblings, and, finally, the villain who desires the heroine—becomes the filmmaker's cue to the exploration of larger social, political, psychological or ethical questions. Although the audience's familiarity with socio-political and cultural contexts makes them appreciate the objections that families might possibly have to the lovers' union or the complex motivations that make them separate the lovers, the audience secretly sides with the lovers in what are amicable, but often simplistic or idealistic, resolutions of complex problems possible more in the discursive rather than the material domain.

Happy endings conform to the utopian fantasies associated with the dastan and the Hindi film. The pleasures of both the Hindi film and the dastan derive from their feel good factor in their promise of an ideal universe that is free of conflict and disharmony, where one can achieve what one desires and can be guaranteed of eternal love and loyalty from the loved one, family and friends. Misfortune and misunderstandings are perceived through a retrospective gaze that positions them as temporary and cyclic impediments in the path of happiness. The conviction that tribulations and travails only serve to affirm filial and romantic attachments and restore ethical order enables the complication of the cinematic conflict as

well as the unpacking of the journey that leads the protagonists to live happily ever after.

CONCLUSION

Hindi cinema draws on time-tested formulae such as lost and found, rich boy, poor girl or rich girl, poor boy, love triangle, infidelity, revenge, mistaken identity, separated lovers and motifs that do not detract from the pleasures it provides. For an audience habituated to listening to narrations of well-known plots, Hindi cinema's apparent disregard of originality poses less of a problem than the filmmaker's creativity in retelling well-known tales. In viewing oft-repeated tales, the audience is less interested in viewing what happened than knowing the details of *how* it happened, particularly the twist given to every known formula. Since the formula is familiar, the filmmaker is freed from the task of constructing a linear cause-and-effect sequence to produce picturesque song and dance digressions, comic interludes, stunts, verbal displays and so on. Equally conspicuous is the eclipse of narrative originality by star power with each actor's interpretation of a familiar function, the actor's physical attributes, the exotic location, the power of the dialogues and so on.

NOTES

1. Borrowing from Gopalan's description of Hindi cinema as a 'cinema of interruptions', Martin-Jones demonstrates that Indian cinema expresses both the time and movement image as part of a broader cinema of spectacular interruptions (2011: 210). He defines the whole with reference to Vijay Mishra's thesis about the movement of Hindi cinema from *dharma* to adharma and back to *dharma* (Martin-Jones 2011: 212).

2. Falling in love was euphemistically referred to as *woh ho jana* (that/it happened) in common Hindi parlance until the late 1980s, a practice that is reflected in Anjali's sceptical response in *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* to her friend's suggestion that the Raichand scion might have fallen in love with her ('*wo bhi ho gaya*') at first sight. Although Hindi has several

equivalents of the expression 'I love you', declarations of love in Hindi cinema are most often articulated in English.

3. Muhajir points out that 'the Hindu temple, once a staple of Hindi film moments ranging from lovers' trysts to quarrels with God, is conspicuous only by its absence in contemporary Bollywood: the only recent films that even featured anything like a temple or a religious festival are the afore-mentioned *Delhi-6*; *Ghajini*, and *Wanted*—and the last two are remakes of, respectively, Tamil and Telugu films, and hence products of far more rooted cinematic cultures' (Muhajir 2009).

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Waqt ki Har Sheh Ghulam [Everything is Subject to Destiny]: Time in Hindi Cinema

TIME OF HISTORY, TIME OF GODS

In the chapter 'Translating Life Worlds into Labor and History', in his book *Provincializing Europe*, Dipesh Chakrabarty contrasts the time of history with the time of the gods. Defining history as 'a universal language' or 'a code that invokes a natural, homogenous, secular, calendrical time without which the history of the human evolution/civilization cannot be told', he contrasts it with 'the presence of gods and spirits' that belongs to 'the field of differences' (Chakrabarty 2009: 74, 76). Chakrabarty suggests a 'nonsociological mode of translation' that 'lends itself more easily to fiction, particularly of the nonrealist or magic-realist variety practiced today, than to the secular and realist prose of sociology or history', and adds that 'in these fictive narratives, gods and spirits can indeed be agents' (Chakrabarty 2009: 86). Building on this, Bliss Cua lim proposes an 'alternative to translating radically different worlds into the language of disenchanted, homogenous time: an "antisociological" mode of narrating supernaturalism that is best suited to fiction and the cinema' (Lim 2009: 25) and asserts that 'cinema and the fantastic hold out the possibility of a scandalous, nonsociological translation of plural, enchanted worlds' (Lim 2009: 25).

Bliss Cua Lim argues here that 'cinema as clockwork apparatus belongs to the regime of modern homogenous time; on the other hand fantastic narratives strain against the logic of clock and calendar, unhinging the unicity of the present by insisting on the survival of the past or the jarring coexistence of other times ' (Lim 2009: 11). She argues that fantastic narratives 'have a propensity toward temporal critique, a tendency to reveal that homogeneous time translates disparate, noncoinciding temporalities into its own

secular code, because the persistence of supernaturalism often insinuates the limits of disenchanted chronology' (Lim 2009: 12). Lim refers to 'traces of untranslatable temporal otherness in the fantastic as *immiscible* times—multiple times that never quite dissolve into the code of modern time consciousness, discrete temporalities incapable of attaining homogeneity with or full incorporation into a uniform chronological present' (Lim 2009: 12).

In a similar vein, exploring the notion of time in cinema, David Martin-Jones asserts that popular Indian cinema demonstrates 'the relative truth of Deleuze's conclusions (his division of cinema into movement- and time-image), and gestures towards the 'numerous other philosophical conceptions of time that could potentially be argued of other world cinemas' (Martin-Jones 2011: 203). Arguing that Deleuze's fixing of cinema into two categories (movement-/ time-image) does not account for different cinematic traditions— based on different conceptions of time or cosmology—that have a different relation to the whole, Martin-Jones asserts that 'Indian films express the existence of a different organization of images based on a different conception of the whole' that he terms the 'masala image', which is 'created from the culturally specific aesthetic traditions that inform popular Indian cinema' (Martin-Jones 2011: 232–233).

The plural, enchanted worlds of Hindi cinema disrupt homogenous, secular, calendrical time and suggest an untranslatable temporal otherness that weaves Islamic temporalities into an overarching Hindu temporality. The Hindu notion of time—*kal*—is derived from the root kal, that means both to calculate and to destroy, and is deeply embedded in a cosmological notion of time. This notion of time is articulated in the theory of karma in which one's present destiny is viewed as a reward or punishment for past karmas or deeds.[1] Although Hindi films are underpinned by the Hindu notion of *trikal* or cyclic time, 'the rapacious intertextuality' (Larkin 2008: 201) of the Hindi film leads the dominant Hindu notion of time to be imbricated with the sufi. Even films that embody and propagate Hindu values articulate cinematic themes and motifs through the sufi derived Persian notions of time as reflected in the use of Urdu terms for time such as waqt, hal, *lamha, muddat, mohlat, kayamat* that are casually interspersed through titles, dialogues

and song lyrics of Hindi films. This might in part be attributed to film scriptwriters' preference for using a Hindi that is familiar to the audience. But Hindi films' functional preference for Urdu terms for time would also indicate an implicit endorsement of the cosmological concepts they signify. This chapter argues that time in Hindi cinema disrupts modern homogenous, secular, empty time through its invocation of an untranslatable temporal otherness that exhibits its incorporation of the enchanted time of Persian mysticism into the Hindu concept of kal.

ENCHANTED TIME OF PERSIAN MYSTICISM

Gerhard Böwering asserts that 'in its conception of time, Persian mysticism manifests an astounding capability of integrating a wide spectrum of cultures' and that Islam, particularly Muslim mysticism, 'blended seemingly contradictory conceptions of the temporal into an integrated understanding of human experience' (Böwering 1992: 77). Seyyed Hossein Nasr explains that: 'In the Islamic tradition, a distinction is made between *sarmad* (eternity and the purely changeless), *dahr* (relation of the changeless to that which changes) and *zaman* (time which concerns the relation between the changing and the changing)' (Nasr 1993: 28).[2] Abu Bakr al-Razi (Rahzes; d. 930 CE) 'claimed that the *dahr* (perpetuity) was absolute [*mutlaq*], while construing *al-zaman* [*time*] as being a flowing substance [*jawhar yajri*] that is bound [*mahsur*] as well as being associated with the motion of *al-falak*' (quoted in Tymieniecka 2007: 144). Al-Farabi (Alfarabius d. 950 CE) and Ikhwan al-Safa' (The Brethren of Purity fl. 10th century CE, Iraq) affirmed that 'time resulted from the movement of the created celestial sphere [*al-falak*]' (quoted in Tymieniecka 2007: 144). Böwering believes that the Arab idea of time was rooted in the experience of dahr, the infinite extension of time that was subsequently identified with God in the Islamic tradition (Hadith) (Böwering 1992: 77). He explains that 'Persian mystics of the classical period coined their spiritual conceptions of time in a variety of forms, prominent among them waqt, often interchangeably with hal, state and, here and now' (Böwering 1992: 83).

DAHR AND ZAMAN: ETERNITY AND TIME

Musharraf Ali Farooqi asserts that 'the boundaries between past, present and future do not exist in the Islamic mystical cosmos' (Farooqi 2008: 95). Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka believes that Ishaq Ibn Hunayn's translation of Aristotle's *Physics* transmitted the Aristotelian notion of *khronos* [*al-zaman*] into Arabic (Tymieniecka 2007). The general term for time, according to Böwering, used in Arab translations from Pahlavi is zaman, but this most common Islamic term for time remained unknown to the Quran (Böwering 1997: 58). He also points out that Arab lexicographers distinguished dahr, 'time from the beginning of the world to its end', from zaman, 'a long time having beginning and end' (Böwering 1992).[3]

While the Hindu notion of time as cyclic and of the universe arising and disappearing in an infinite series of cycles is the overarching frame through which time is perceived in the Hindi film, the idea of an age or a long time from beginning to end is expressed through the Urdu term zamana [ages]. In the Hindu time scheme, every *Mahayuga* [great age] encompasses four *yugas* [ages], beginning with *Satyuga* [the Age of Truth] and culminating in *Kaliyuga* [the Age of Corruption]. The Hindu timescale is formidable with each Mahayuga equaling 12,000 god years, each of which lasts 360 years, and 1,000 Mahayugas make up a *kalpa* [eon], a day in the life of Brahma which is equal to 4,320,00,00,00 years. Although the Hindu division of time into yugas, and particularly that of the present yuga as Kaliyuga, provides the moral underpinnings of Hindi cinema, it is zamana, derived from zaman, that articulates the idea of time that structures the cinematic text. Within the cosmological scheme of past actions as influencing present existence as embodied in the theory of karma, the sense of the present in which individual destinies play themselves out is expressed through zamana. Although events are predetermined over which human beings have little or no control in a larger schema, their actions in the sensible world determine how their destinies are shaped.

The definition of zamana includes among others the following meanings: 1. *(n.)* The whole duration of a being, whether animal,

vegetable or other kind; lifetime. 2. *(n.)* A particular period of time in history as distinguished from others; like the Golden Age, the Age of Pericles. 3. *(n.)* The people who live at a particular period; hence, a generation.

The use of zamana in Hindi cinema incorporates twin meanings, both in its understanding as a particular period of time in history and the people who live at a particular period. The term is most commonly used in dialogues to convey the sense of living in a particular era in expressions such as: *kisi zamane mein* [once upon a time], *zamana kharab hai* [the times are bad], *kya zamana aa gaya hai* [what terrible times we live in], *naye zamane ki ladki* [girl of the new/changing times], *bhalai ka toh zamana hi nahin raha* [the time for doing good is past], *zamana badal gaya hai* [times have changed] and so on. Similarly, the idea of time as belonging to a particular group such as youth, or women or the elderly is expressed in phrases like *kudiyon ka zamana* [the age of young women], *buddhon ka zamana* [the age of old men] or *paisewalon ka zamana* [the age of the rich]. In usages such as *us zamane mein* [in those days], *hamara bhi zamana thha* [we, too, had our time], *apne zamane mein* [in our times], *woh bhi kya zamana thha* [those were the days/what a time that was], the term is used to refer to a particular (usually pleasant) period in one's life, often in a nostalgic sense.

If Hindi film songs are to be received as social and metaphysical insights offered by Urdu literary figures, the songs may be viewed as a direct articulation of the Persian understanding of time, often mapped onto Hindu concepts of time.

> *Aaya hai mujhe phir yaad woh zalim*
> *Guzra zamana bachpan ka*
> *Hai re akele chhod ke jana*
> *Aur na aana bachpan ka*
> *Aaya hai mujhe phir yaad woh zalim*
> Once more they have come to torment me
> The memories of a childhood long past
> Bereft and alone it left me
> And childhood never returned

Once more they have come to torment me
[These memories of a childhood long past] (Anand Bakshi, *Devar*
1966)

The cosmological notion of zaman as changing is collated in this
song with the vicissitudes allotted by waqt that produces extreme
swings between joy and sorrow in human beings.

> *Guzra hua zamana aata nahin dubara*
> *Hafiz khuda tumhara*
> *Khushiyan thhi char din ki, aansoo hain umr bhar ke*
> *Tanhaiyon mein aqsar royenge yaad kar ke*
> *Wo waqt jo ki hamne ik sath hai guzara*
> *Hafiz khuda tumhara*
> Time once past never does return
> God be with you, farewell
> The joys lasted four days, these tears will last a lifetime
> In solitude I will weep and recall
> All the times we spent together
> God be with you, farewell (Tanvir Naqvi, *Shirin Farhad* 1956)

A similar idea of zamana as a long duration and separation from
the beloved through the workings of destiny is conveyed through
the combination of zamana with another notion of time, *muqaddar*,
in the following verse.

> *Aap se hum ko bichhde hue* (2)
> *Ek zamana beet gaya*
> *Apna muqaddar bigde hue* (2)
> *Ek zamana beet gaya*
> An age has passed
> Since we have been parted
> An age has passed
> Since our luck turned away from us (Gulshan Bawra, *Vishwas* 1969)

But the most recurrent meaning of zamāna is the present age,
represented as evil, that situates it within the Hindu discourse of
Kaliyuga.

Bhula nahi dena ji bhula nahi dena
Zamana kharab hai daga nahi dena
Pyar ki masti chhayi hui hai
Neend si mujhko aayi hui hai
Neend se mujhko jaga nahi dena
Zamana kharab hai
Don't forget me, don't ever forget me
The times are bad, don't you betray me
Love has cast its intoxicating spell
I am languorous with love and drowsy
Don't rouse me from this dream
The times are bad (Khumar Barabankvi, *Bara Dari* 1955)

The non-conflictual juxtaposition of Hindu with Islamic notions occurs through the code-switching by Hindi film lyricists between Hindi and Urdu terms, which might result in the articulation of the Hindu idea of rebirth and reincarnation to the Islamic notion of zamana. The following song from *Umar Qaid* (1975) expresses how lovers would never forget the love they shared and the vows they took to pledge their commitment to one another in each and every lifetime: '*Yaad rahega/Pyar ka ye rangeen zamana yaad rahega … / Janam-janam ye rasmein nibhane/Ki kasmein nibhana yaad rahega*' [We will remember/We will remember the splendour of our love … /We will remember the vows we took/To follow the rites of love in every life] (Gulshan Bawra, *Umar Qaid* 1975). The collocation of the Hindi term *rasmein* (rituals) with the Urdu *kasmein* (vows) possibly might have been motivated by rhyme scheme here, but such collocations are not uncommon in Hindi cinema.

The reincarnation film offers an unambiguous exploration of the jarring coexistence of other times. The film that set a trend for reincarnation films, Kamal Amrohi's *Mahal* (1949), hesitates between a natural and supernatural explanation of events, a practice that continues till *Om Shanti Om* (2007). Hari Shankar buys an old mansion, which, his old gardener tells him, is haunted by the ghost of the previous owner and his beloved Kamini. Hari Shankar hears the sound of a woman singing and follows it to find a beautiful woman on a swing, who he assumes is the dead Kamini but nevertheless falls in love with her. The woman's mysterious

appearance is resolved with a rational explanation at the end of the film. But the unexpected transposition of the previous owner's soul in Hari Shankar's body can be elucidated only through the working of a different temporality in which the past, the present and the future collapse. A number of films that followed traced the same movement from incredulity towards supernatural explanations of the uncanny to grudging acceptance. Two decades later, *Neel Kamal* (1968) portrayed a young woman Sita who sleepwalks onto the railway tracks and is rescued by a young man named Ram. But the rational explanation of somnambulism is rejected for a supernatural one of Sita being the reincarnation of Princess Neel Kamal, whose lover Chitrasen, buried alive by the king, keeps beckoning her through a song, and of her being released after she had a long conversation with him.

Farah Khan's *Om Shanti Om* (2007) is a postmodern reinscription of the reincarnation theme in Hindi cinema in which the parody of the genre does not preclude belief in the supernatural. Om Prakash Makhija, a struggling actor, is smitten by a top heroine Shanti, who is in a relationship with her director Mukesh Mehra, who sets her on fire on learning that she is expecting his child. Unknown to Mukesh, Om tries to rescue Shanti but fails, and is shot down by Mukesh's henchmen. He is taken to hospital by film director Rajesh Kapoor, who is driving past with his heavily pregnant wife. Om dies in hospital but his soul is transferred to Rajesh's newly born baby also named Om. Cut to twenty-five years later, we see Om Kapoor as a big star repeating the same speech at an Awards ceremony that a drunken Om Prakash Makhija had once delivered, which Makhija's friend Pappu watches on TV. When Om Kapoor is introduced to Mukesh Mehra, his past life memory returns and Om connects with Pappu and his mother Bela. Together, the three decide to expose Mukesh and hire a Shanti lookalike, Sandhya alias Sandy, to trick Mukesh into believing that she is Shanti's ghost. In the end, the supernatural takes precedence over the rational when Shanti's ghost herself appears to wreak revenge on Mukesh, although the real Sandy fails to show up. Thus, the reincarnation film epitomises the collapse of the past, the present and the future. But other films equally point to multiple temporalities that defy the logical time of clocks.

Waqt and Divine Determination

Quoting from the Quran, Böwering maintains that 'there is no place in the Quran for impersonal time; man's destiny is in the hands of God who creates male and female, gives life and brings death, and grants wealth and works destruction' (Böwering 1992: 78). In his view, 'the Islamic tradition amplified the notion of divine determination' (Böwering 1992: 78) and saw time as a series of predetermined events binding divine omnipotence to the certain occurrence of each instant in a person's life span' (Böwering 1992: 78–79). Sufi mystics understood waqt as the present moment, 'that which dominates the mystic' (Böwering 1992: 83). While Junayd used the image 'between two breaths' to define it, Khaaraj saw it as 'the precious moment between the past and the present' (Böwering 1992: 83). Similarly, Hujwiri defined waqt as 'that whereby a man becomes independent of the past and the future' (Böwering 1984: 81). It is not clear whether the Arabs borrowed their meaning of waqt *as* 'time' from *bakt* or from an East Iranian form but the Arabic and Persian concepts of time and fate are not far apart (cf. Arabic *dahr* which means both). Waqt (pronounced *vakt, voket,* or the like) might have etymological roots in '*bak̲t* (Middle and New Persian) meaning 'fate, lot,' often with the positive sense of 'good luck' (*kosbakti*), though the related New Persian verb *baktan* means 'to lose' (as opposed to *bordan*, 'to win') in a game or gamble ' (Eilers and Shaked 1988: 536).

According to Eilers and Shaked, 'this term forms part of a whole group of Iranian words which refer to the effect of superior forces on the destinies of people' (Eilers and Shaked 1988: 537). They state that 'Sasanian thinkers sought to define and explain the scope of the effectiveness of the intervention of fate in human life'. Another definition of the term posits that 'the material world (*gētīg*) is (governed) by fate (*baxt*), the spiritual world (*menog*) by action' (Pahlavi *Vidēvdād*, 5.9), which appears to suggest that 'things belonging to the sphere of religious activity are the responsibility of man, and it is only in mundane matters that fate can have its way and man is powerless' (quoted in Eilers and Shaked 1988: 536). The same range of ideas about fate and human power were

borrowed in early Islamic literature in Persian, including in the poetic compositions of Firdausi (*Shahnama* c. 977 and 1010 CE) and Gorgānī (*Vīs o Rāmin* eleventh century AD), with the difference that the relationship between fate and the divine is here often expressed in Islamic terms.

Musharraf Ali Farooqi states that although the dastan was known from the seventh century AD, the Indo-Islamic Dastan-e Amir Hamza 'exploited the mechanisms of fate and predestination to make them the driving force of the story' (Farooqi 2008: 89). He relates the use of fate and predestination as narrative tools in the dastan to 'the Islamic concept of the eternal God Who embodies and transcends Time', and to the belief that all events governed by Time are knowable to Him' (Farooqi 2008: 95). Rachel Dwyer explains that 'the world never becomes random, and never becomes a world without God like the world of western secularism' in Hindi cinema that this can be examined by looking at '*fate*, a concept in India and that argues is neither Hindu nor Muslim' (Dwyer 2006: 157).

The extent to which this perception of time structures the consciousness of Hindi filmmakers is evident in the title of Yash Chopra's film *Waqt* (1965) and the choric tone of its title song composed by renowned Urdu poet Sahir Ludhianvi, which comments on the action of the film and the indenturement of human life to time: '*Waqt se din aur raat/Waqt se kal aur aaj/ Waqt ki har shai ghulam/Waqt ka har shai pe raj*' [Day and night run on Time/On Time run today and yesterday/Everything is a slave of Time/Time rules everything]. Ludhianvi's use of the term alludes to the Middle Persian and New Persian term bakt, which designates 'lot, share, fortune', and plays on its root *bag*—'to distribute, allot', from which is also derived 'one of the most common Indo-Iranian terms for a deity, *baga*, that suggests that waqt be interpreted as divine decree' (Eilers and Shaked 1988: 537). It also has strong underpinnings of the Sasanian view 'that man's life is dominated to a very large extent by the intervention of fate' and that 'man's will and effort turn to nothing against the power of fate' (Eilers and Shaked 1988: 537). The idea of waqt as an experience that comes unexpectedly, bringing its own blessings and hardships which neutralises experiences preceding it, is strongly expressed here.

Kal jahan basti thhin khushiyan
Aaj hai matam wahan
Waqt laya thha baharein
Waqt laya hai khizan
Where dwelt joys yesterday
Today there is mourning
Time had brought spring
Time has brought winter (Sahir Ludhianvi, *Waqt* 1965)

If Ludhianvi elucidated the conception of waqt as destiny, Kaifi Azmi expounded on the sufi interpretation of *waqt* as a mystical or spiritual moment in which the self surrenders to the non-self and experiences complete oneness with it: '*Waqt ne kiya kya haseen sitam/Tum rahe na tum/Hum rahe na ham'* [What a beautiful tragedy has time wrought/You no longer are you/I no longer am I] (Kaifi Azmi, *Kaagaz Ke Phool* 1959).

The loss of volition that must necessarily precede the experience of the mystical moment, and Khwajah 'Abd Allah al-'Ansari's definition of waqt (quoted in Böwering 1984)—as the moment containing only God—is captured in the image of the dissolution of the lovers in one another.

Beqarar dil is tarha mile
Jis tarha kabhi hum juda na thhe
Tum bhi kho gaye
Hum bhi kho gaye
Ek rah par chal ke do kadam
[Two] Unquiet hearts met
In a way that we had never been apart
And then you were lost
As I was lost
As we walked but two steps down the same path (Kaifi Azmi, *Kaagaz Ke Phool* 1959)

In some films, dialogues become the vehicle for the exploration of the cosmological meanings of waqt. It is appropriate that Yash Chopra should have used the metaphysical concept of waqt as a motif that provides a rationale the apparently illogical sequence

of events in his swansong *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* (2012), written and scripted by Aditya Chopra. Chopra attempts to communicate the anachronic concept of waqt to a new generation audience through the character of a twenty-first century, high-achieving supergirl who believes in living in the present. The action that follows the union, separation and reunion of Samar and Meera would appear to defy all logic without the cosmological framework of waqt or destiny determining all actions in the material world. Samar is destined to meet Meera despite the difference in their social status and falls in love with her, only to be separated from her due to Meera's irrational mannat [vow] that if he were to survive his motorcycle accident, she would give him up. The motif of waqt is first introduced by Imran in response to Meera's question about his waiting for her mother for eight long years before she decided to move in with him by stating: '*Har ishq ka ek waqt hota hai … Woh waqt hamara nahin thha … Iska matlab ye nahin ki woh ishq nahin thha*' [Every love has its time … That was not our time … That does not mean that it was not love]. Samar and Meera's failure to unite for a decade despite their being in love is provided a divine explanation, instead of a rational one, with Meera repeating Imran's words to Samar at the end of the film: '*Har ishq ka ek waqt hota hai. Woh waqt hamara nahin thha. Aaj hamara waqt hai*' [Every love has its time. That was not our time. Our time is now](Aditya Chopra, *Jab Tak Hai Jaan* 2012).

Mechanisms of Fate and Predestination

The dominant sense of waqt in Hindi cinema is that of divine intervention in the affairs of human beings and it governs the action through two common plot devices: mechanisms of fate and predestination, and coincidence. Shamsur Rahman Faruqi maintains that the dastan 'is subject to the Law of Possibility' 'instead of the Law of Causality' (1999). The Law of Possibility may be understood with reference to Borges' idea of 'two chains of cause and effect: the natural which is the incessant result of endless, incontrollable processes; and the magic, in which—clear and defined—every detail is an omen and a cause' (Borges 2006). According to Faruqi, 'the dāstān does not necessarily

follow the cause-and-effect principle of the real world. It has its own dynamics' (Faruqi 1999). The mechanisms of fate and predestination also function as the strongest driving force of the story in Hindi cinema.

In Yash Chopra's *Waqt* (1965), a wealthy man named Lala Kedarnath Prasanta, whose three sons' birthdays fall on the same day, is warned by an astrologer not to be complacent about his achievements or be too optimistic about his future as fate has other plans for him. Dismissing the astrologer's prediction, Kedarnath shares his aspirations for the future with his wife that night. But a sudden earthquake reduces all his dreams to dust. Kedarnath regains consciousness to find his house destroyed and his family disappeared. The rest of the film follows the struggles of the father, his three sons, and wife before they are finally reunited with their fortunes restored, and ends with the rich man acknowledging the mechanisms of waqt or fate.

In his analysis of the assemblages of temporality in Hindi cinema, Anustup Basu views 't*ime* in *Waqt*' as 'a cinematic calibration of events in a linear temporality (the criminological detection that leads to the lost son) as well as a curve of mythic recall: there is no temporal gap between hubris and atonement: both are enactments of an eternal exemplum' (Basu 2010: 17). He points out that momentous utterances in the film are 'both dialogic speech acts between interacting individuals in an historical process, and words that are emblazoned in the sky of meaning' conveyed through the stock dramatic close-up of the sky rent with thunder.[4] The calibration of events into a linear temporality as well as the curve of a mythic recall is visible in a number of other Hindi films that attempt to provide a similar rational explanation for seemingly irrational events. While adhering to the dictates of modern clock time in structuring the cause-and-effect chain of events, films like *Madhumati* (1958), *Neel Kamal* (1968) and *Karz* (1980) weave in a non-modern mythic temporality underpinned by both Hindu and Islamic notions of time. The trope of the happy family singing together until the arrival of evil that destroys family harmony and disperses the family recurs through a succession of Hindi films.

Although the turn in fortune might have been activated by an act of individual choice, the suggestion that the perpetrator of evil

is only an instrument of fate pervades the moral universe of the Hindi film. In *Awara* (1951), Justice Raghunath's conviction of Jagga for rape on flimsy evidence in the belief that good people are born to good people, and criminals are born to criminals incites Jagga to kidnap Raghunath's pregnant wife for four days. The possessive and suspicious judge drives out his pregnant wife. Similarly, trade union leader Anand Verma's compliance with the management under pressure of their death threats to his family in *Deewar* (1975) results in his own disgrace and humiliation of his elder son Vijay, which provides the rationale for his wife to leave for Bombay and raise her sons by performing manual labour. In *Yaadon Ki Baraat* (1973), Shakal and his henchmen kill the father of three boys for accidentally witnessing their act of robbery to prevent him from reporting their crime. Although the films attempt to provide a rationale for the protagonist's sudden turn of fortune, they are pervaded by an overwhelming sense of the presence of evil or fate or destiny as placing the protagonists in situations that compel them to act in a particular manner at a particular time.

Like Bakht Jamal who was destined to be killed by Alqash and Buzurjmehr who was destined to avenge Bakht Jamal's death and become the king's minister in the Dastan-e Amir Hamzah, characters in Hindi cinema are represented as agents who merely fulfill their destinies. The acceptance of misfortune as a predestined act in which an individual acts as an agent is often articulated through the figure of a woman, usually the mother, who provides a moral rather than rational explanation for events. The mother's perspective is typically contrasted with that of the son, usually the bad son, who resorts to unlawful means to avenge injustice and must, therefore, be punished to restore moral order. Birju, whose rage at the suffering and ignominy inflicted by the usurping moneylender on his family is justified, must nevertheless be killed by his own mother in *Mother India* (1957) to ensure the moral victory of good. Although Vijay scoffs at his mother's faith, Sumitra's acceptance of her misfortune in *Deewar* as her kismet governs the film's moral universe and the former atheist Vijay must meet his death in the very temple that he finally agrees to visit to seek his mother's blessings.

Not only misfortune but good fortune is also attributed to the workings of fate and predetermination. Therefore, the hero's rise

to success is attributed, apart from his good moral character and sincerity, to the support he receives from a benefactor or a good human being. A young, unemployed man landing in an organisation and being offered a job by someone whom he had helped in another context, or a young woman per chance finding herself in the same town as the suitor she had rejected to reunite with him are commonplace occurrences within the realm of popular Hindi cinema. The number of protagonists who are initiated into a world of crime through the machinations of evil criminals is matched by those inducted into the good life through the intervention of a god-fearing benefactor. The possibilities of success and failure, virtue and vice, happiness and sorrow is perhaps best illustrated through siblings separated, found and raised by different people, and the suggestion that it was so destined. While Raja in *Waqt* and Shankar in *Yaadon ki Baraat* who find themselves on the streets of Bombay take to crime, their brothers are picked up by respectable families and raised into law abiding citizens.

Convenient Coincidence

Popular Hindi cinema has often been derided for its 'crude or naive plot mechanisms such as *coincidence*' (Vasudevan 2000: 101), possibly the most common plot device employed in Hindi films as much as it is in *The Arabian Nights* or other dastans. Leigh Michaels explains that 'books are full of coincidences. The trick is to make them so logical and believable that the readers don't notice (for example) what a strange thing it is for the hero and heroine to be in the same place at the same time' (Michaels 2007: 187). Since Hindi film viewers' expectations of cinema have been shaped in accordance with the 'Laws of Possibility' that structure mythical narratives such as the dastan rather than those of 'Causality', Hindi film makers make no overt attempt to make their films credible or logical, whether in their overuse of coincidences or other plot devices. Twins separated at birth find themselves in the same town and exchange places either by accident or through the villain's machinations. Siblings who separated in childhood flee their village or small town and end up living a few yards from each other, though

unknown to one another until the climax or the end. Childhood sweethearts meet after years as adults in disparate situations and finally recognise each other. If the hero is befriended by an old woman or man in his neighbourhood, s/he eventually turns out to be his long lost mother or father. In the climax scene, the villain realises that the young man or woman he is about to kill is actually his own flesh and blood.

Coincidences in Hindi cinema propel the plot forward, reveal hidden identities and resolve the conflict when all causal logic fails. Coincidence as a plot device may be illustrated through some popular films of the 1970s such as *Kati Patang* (1970), in which Madhavi leaves home on the eve of her wedding to elope with her lover, who turns her away since he wanted to marry her solely for her inheritance. Madhavi returns home to find that her uncle, unable to bear the humiliation caused by her sudden disappearance, has committed suicide. She boards a train to find herself sharing a coupe with a recently widowed friend who is travelling to Nainital to move into the house of her father-in-law, who had disowned his son for marrying against his wishes. In the train accident that follows, the dying friend makes Madhavi promise that she would assume her identity and be mother to her child. Madhavi arrives in Nainital to discover that the man she had left stranded at the altar and who, therefore, detests her is a friend of Madhavi's late husband, and who also falls in love with her. Before she can reveal her true identity to him, she is accosted by her former lover and his girlfriend who blackmail her by threatening to expose her as an impostor. Similarly, Sunil Kohli falls in love with Sonia in *Daag: A Poem of Love* (1973), marries her, ends up murdering his boss to protect his wife's honour and is convicted of murder. The police van carrying Sunil meets with an accident and while everyone is presumed dead, he survives. Sunil meets an elderly person who makes him promise to marry his pregnant daughter Chandni, who has been abandoned by her lover, and provide legitimacy to her unborn child. Sunil agrees, adopts a fake identity as Sudheer, and begins a life with Chandni, when Sonia moves in to the same town to teach in the same school where Chandni's daughter studies and accuses him of betrayal.

Happy Singh, a simpleton, in *Singh is Kinng* (2009) boards the wrong flight on the way to Australia to bring back Lucky Singh,

a dreaded underworld don, to his home village in Punjab and lands in Egypt where he helps a beautiful young woman Sonia recover her handbag from thieves and can't stop thinking of her. He eventually reaches Sydney and is sheltered by a kind middle-aged florist of Indian origin who finds him sleeping on a park bench. The lady is anxious about her daughter's impending visit to Sydney with her fiancée. To Happy Singh's dismay, the florist's daughter turns out to be Sonia. The coincidence of Happy meeting Sonia in Egypt follows no logic other than to have him serenade her against the spectacular desert backdrop and pyramids. Nor is it questioned why the first person Happy encounters in Sydney should happen to be Sonia's mother. Such coincidences, rare in real life, are routinely inserted as a plot device in Hindi films that do not ever invite the viewer's incredulity. Popular Hindi films make no attempt to keep coincidences under control nor give characters a reason for what they do. Therefore, when three separated brothers come forward to donate their blood to a blind beggar woman as their blood matches hers in *Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977) without realising their connection with each other or to the woman, the audience does not interrogate the causal logic of how this fact remained hidden from the three for so long in pleasure of the anticipation that the brothers would eventually discover their true relationship.

In a Hindi film, a man or woman seen falling into a stream or ravine would invariably emerge after a convenient gap in the narrative as s/he would have been miraculously rescued by human or divine intervention. In *Seeta Aur Geeta* (1972), the desperate Seeta jumps into the river to commit suicide only to be rescued by her twin sister Geeta's acrobat lover, even as Geeta is mistaken for Seeta and taken to Seeta's house, triggering a string of events caused by mistaken identity. In *Roti* (1973), a criminal escapes from police custody and enters a train compartment where his co-passenger invites him to share his meal. Noticing the handcuffs on his wrists, the co-passenger tries to stop the train and alert the police, whereupon a scuffle follows and the criminal throws him off the running train and he falls into a river. By chance, the criminal arrives in the co-passenger's village and is unknowingly given shelter by the man's visually challenged parents. The criminal

develops deep bonds with his adopted family when the son, given up for dead by his parents and the village, limps back to reveal that he had indeed survived the fall, and the criminal's identity. Similarly, a trusting wife, Aarti, thrown into a crocodile infested river by her greedy husband Sanjay in *Khoon Bari Mang* (1988), is given up for dead but survives, albeit with her face badly disfigured, and returns with a new post-surgery face, name and identity to seek out her murderer.

ARRESTED TIME OF *HAL*

The arrested temporality of dastan rokna provides an alternative perspective on Gopalan's notion of the 'disruptive temporality' mobilised by song and dance that interrupts the 'linear temporality' of the narrative. In addition to providing him with the possibility of infinite expansion, the dastango's stalling of the tale demonstrates his control over the flow of the action and narration by halting, slowing down or accelerating the action at will or in response to the mood of his audience. By skimming over the events of several years in a single frame or lovingly lingering over one moment in time for an eternity, the dastango evinces a masterful hold over temporality. In stalling the action to elaborate dastanic tropes, particularly husn-i-ishq and tilism, the dastango arrests time to transport the listeners into a state of hal or 'momentary modification of the state of consciousness', "getting out of the normal state" in the sense of valorization' (During 2003).

The term hal, which means 'change, transfer and the act of becoming distinct', is used to express one's condition or state (of being) (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). Hal is closely connected with waqt [time] because when 'the owner of *waqt* comes into possession of hāl, he is no more subject to change and is made steadfast' (Nicholson 2006: 369). Unlike someone who is in waqt and swings between extreme joy and sorrow, the possessor of hal is indifferent to 'affliction or happiness' because he is always in a state of 'actual vision' (Nicholson 2006: 370). The state of waqt might appear like hell to the possessor of waqt, because he is contemplating absence and his heart is distressed by separation

or loss of the beloved, or like a state of bliss because every moment brings a gift from God. For, 'when he was *waqt* without *hāl*, he may lose it, but when *hāl* attaches itself to him, all his state (*ruzgar*) becomes *waqt*, and that cannot be lost' (Nicholson 2006: 369).

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

> *hal*, (Arabic: "condition") plural *Aḥwāl*, in Ṣūfī Muslim mystical terminology, is a spiritual state of mind that comes to the Ṣūfī from time to time during his journey toward God. The *aḥwāl* are graces of God that cannot be acquired or retained through an individual's own efforts. When the soul is purified of its attachments to the material world, it can only wait patiently for those spiritual gifts of God, which, when they come, fill the Ṣūfī with the desire to continue his journey with new energy and higher expectations. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*)

Encyclopaedia Iranica explains hal as 'an essential notion in Persian arts, especially music, which is supposed to bring about a meditative state.… In its general sense, *hal* refers to a modality of the instant, and in its particular sense, to the physical, spiritual, or emotional state of a person' (During 2003: 580). In both Arabic and Persian, the term hal has come to acquire a meaning wider than its strictly sufi definition—that of an unusual and positive experience of the soul, which brings it out of its usual confines for a moment (Nasr 1972). Although hal is a conversational Urdu usage that refers to the state of one's health or being, its complex deployment in Hindi film song lyrics resonates with its sufi nuances.

In films of the 1960s, poets like Shakeel Badayuni play on the ambiguity of the sufi idea of the desire for union with a human beloved and the desire for the Divine.

> *Ye adayein ye shokhiyan tauba*
> *Bas Khuda hi Khuda hai us dil ka*
> *Jo tumhara khayal kar baithe*
> *Bekhudi mein kamal kar baithe*
> *Tumse izhar-e-hal kar baithe*

What bedazzling charm and what demeanour!
The one who meditates on you
In a miracle of selflessness, who bares his soul to you
That heart belongs to God and to God alone (Akhtar Romani, *Naya Paisa* 1958)

The experience of falling in love is represented as a mystical experience that transports lovers into a state that is described as hal.

Tujhe kya sunaoon main dilruba
Tere samne mera hal hai
Teri ik nigah ki baat hai
Meri zindagi ka sawal hai
What do I say to you my love
What my state is before you
Just one glance from you
Is a matter of my life (Majrooh Sultanpuri, *Aakhiri Dao* 1958)

The lover appears to be in the 'hal of sukr ("intoxication")' in which 'the Ṣūfī, while not totally unaware of the things that surround him, becomes half-dazed because his association with God dims his sight of other things' (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*), as can be seen in the following verse: '*Tere husn pe hai meri nazar/Mujhe subah-sham ki kya khabar* [My eyes are on your beauty/What do I know of day and night] (Majrooh Sultanpuri, *Aakhri Dao* 1958). The possessor of hal is not conscious of separation, grief, union or joy but sees God in whatever he looks at as 'the overpowering sense of the beloved in this state destroys the mystic's ability to distinguish between physical pain and pleasure' (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

Meri har khushi tere dum se hai
Meri zindagi tere gam se hai
Tere dard se rahe bekhabar
Mere dil ki kab ye majal hai
My every joy is because of you
My life is because of your sorrow
How can my heart have the audacity
To remain oblivious to your pain (Majrooh Sultanpuri, *Aakhiri Dao* 1958)

Wajd [ecstasy] is 'a state described by the Ṣūfī as a sensation that encounters the heart and produces such varied effects as sorrow or joy, fear or love, contentment or restlessness' (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). Although a contemporary film like *Murder 2* (2011) explores the psychology of an obsessive desire rather than love, its songs continue to draw on sufi terms and states to elevate physical ecstasy to the hal of wajd, as exemplified in the following verses penned by Sayeed Qadri for the film: '*Hāle dil tujhko sunata/Dil agar yeh bol pata*' [I would tell you the state of my heart/If only it could speak]. The scopophilic gaze of the male voyeur is equated to that hal of *muraqaba* [watching] that results in a feeling of joy: '*Guzara ho tere bin guzara ab mushkil hai lagta/ Nazara ho tera hi nazara ab har din hai lagta*' [It seems impossible now that I could exist without you/A vision of you every day and only you is what I pray]. Like the sufi, the lover meditates and contemplates on what is going on inside him such as proximity or nearness, fear of separation or joy of sorrow: '*Ai kash, kash yun hota/Har shaam sath tu hota*' [If only, if only it could be so/That each dusk you were here with me]. In a reversal of the notion of the soul purified of material desires, having received spiritual gifts of God, the sufi notion of love is mapped onto a purely physical desire for the beloved. The use of sufi terminology to transform the transient moment or *pal* into an unchanging state of hal or bliss occurs through releasing it from the vagaries of waqt: '*Tere sang jo pal bitata/Waqt se main woh mang lata*' [All the moments I have spent with you/Wish I could beg them back from Time] (Sayeed Qadri, *Murder 2* 2011).

In his detailed exposition of the Persian Arabic visuality of nazar and the intensity of direct visual exchanges between would-be lovers, Taylor explains that they are shown on screen through 'alternating views of lovers gazing into each other's eyes, with prolonged close-up shots of the beloved's intense frontal gaze' (Taylor 2002: 313). As Taylor points out, 'these close-ups of the lover's eyes gazing out from the screen offer movie viewers that desired visual experience of deploying their own *nazar* in a simulated exchange of gazes with the actress or actor on view' (Taylor 2002: 313). Viewers are given 'the simulated visual experience of intensely gazing at the beloved's eyes' in a

large number of Hindi films [*Guide* 1965 to mention one], to the accompaniment of audible cues provided by song lyrics or dialogue (Taylor 2002: 314). In addition to the notion of nazar, these visual and auditory regimes of Hindi cinema appear to be derived from the tradition of the exposition of husn-i-ishq through the strategy of dastan rokna, whose function is to transport the viewer, along the strategy of with the lover into the hal of muraqaba. However, the poetics of nazar are not restricted to the expression of intense sexual desire but also extend to divine desire, as in the '*Khwaja mere Khwaja*' number from *Jodhaa Akbar* (2008) in which the sufi song and beautifully choreographed dance of the dervishes collectively transports viewers into a state of hal.

CONCLUSION

Speaking about Iranian cinema, Negar Mottahedeh states that the 'integration of time and space, of past and present, of here and there' in the ta'ziyeh [5], 'sets the tone of a performance in which the blurring of eras and spheres ensures the blurring of all differences that separate sensual reality from the imaginal world, and of those that establish an actual historical happening as separate from the time of its performative transformation' (Mottahedeh 2008: 18–19). Stating that 'fantasy, fiction and historical facts merge; time—past, present and future—collapses; spaces run into one each other', she argues that the ta'ziyeh provided 'the spatial and temporal tropes' for Iranian cinema (Mottahedeh 2008: 19–20). The Islamic mystical cosmos in which the past, the present and the future collapse and coalesce with the Hindu notions of cyclic time in the production of Hindi cinema's enchanted temporality.

While the clock and the calendar have been incorporated in Hindi cinema to signpost the passage of time, the persistence of 'nonsociological' modes of 'narrating supernaturalism' in Hindi cinema challenges the logic of clock and calendar. Even though the supernatural directly figures as a theme only in a few films, Hindi films present an enchanted world in general in which the difference between sensual reality and the imaginal world is blurred and where the past, the present and the future collapse.

The dominant concept of time in Hindi cinema is that of waqt or the sense of time as a series of events predetermined by a divine force. But it also draws on the concept of zaman to refer to 'the temporality of ontic beings in the sensible world' (Kamal 2006: 76) and on hal to suggest sufi mystical moments and states of being to structure the cinematic action.

NOTES

1. Challenging the widely held view of Indian time as cyclic as opposed to the linear time of the West, Romila Thapar demonstrates the co-existence of linear and cyclic time in India through the incorporation of linear in cyclic time (Thapar 1996).

2. *Dahr* is defined as perpetuity that 'describes the relation between the unchangeable divine attributes and the sensible world' (Kamal 2006: 76).

3. Etymologists have often noted that the Sanskrit *saman* could be linked to *zaman*.

4. In interpreting the image as 'signaling disorder in a lawful patriarchal order' that also hints at an imminent restorative power, Anustup Basu adheres to the theory of the *dharmic* order as articulated by Mishra and others, missing the sufi connotations of the title as well as the signification of the stock image in signaling the mystical moment.

5. Ta'ziyeh (Islam): 'a form of Iranian musical pageant that is the theatrical expression of religious passion; based on the Battle of Kerbala and performed annually (in Farsi)' (*Free Dictionary*). http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Ta%27ziyeh

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Filmistan: The Land of Films

Aa chal ke tujhe main le ke chaloon
Ik aise gagan ke tale
Jahan gham bhi na ho, aansoo bhi na ho
Bas pyar hi pyar pale
Come, let me take you
Under such a sky
Where there is neither sorrow nor tears
But love and only love
(Kishore Kumar, *Door Gagan Ki Chhaon Mein* 1964)

WHEN TIME IS NO TIME, AND SPACE IS NO SPACE[1]

In his Introduction to his translation of the Dastan-e Amir Hamza *Sahibqiran*, Musharraf Farooqi explains that the dastan, denounced as 'idle tales' in the Quran 'followed a certain ideal in its narrative, which aimed at escaping reality' from 'the start', an ideal that did not change even after a millennium when Emperor Babur condemned the Dastan-e-Amir Hamza [DAH] as '[O]ne long far-fetched lie, opposed to sense and nature' that distorts reality (Farooqi 2000: 123). Asserting that the text of the DAH itself emphasised its escapist virtue, he points out that 'the escapist element was a factor in the popularity of the dastans' (Farooqi 2000: 124). Describing their world as 'the world of dreams which shut out all troubles', he adds that the 'expanse of the dāstān was a heaven for the Oblomovian mind' (Farooqi 2000: 124). Bo Utas, in '"Genres" in Persian Literature 900–1900', concurs that 'Persian stories (dastan) are often fantastic, but they are presented, and probably understood, as real, as something that really happened, although "far away" and "long ago"' (Utas 2006: 207). Similarly, Houra Yavari, in her afterword to *Touba and the Meaning of Night*, points out that in 'classical Persian literature, time is usually boundless and space extends far beyond frontiers' (Yavari 2006: 353).[2]

Milo Beach agrees that 'the Persian painting produces a formally idealized world, existing in a space separate from our own' (Beach 1992: 57).[3]

In an interview with Nasreen Munni Kabir, Javed Akhtar explained, 'There are many states in India, Bollywood is like another state in India', suggesting that Hindi cinema produces an autotelic space that has no referent in the real world.[4] Akhtar explains that Hindi cinema has not only 'its own myths' but also 'its own architecture: grand houses that have a grand stairway leading into the living room! … You see the father coming down these grand stairs wearing a dressing gown with a pipe in hand'. As Dilip Menon put it, 'the Hindi film is a foreign country; they do things differently there' (Menon 2003). These descriptions of the world of Hindi cinema resonate with *Na-koja-Abad*, the 'land of No-where', a term coined by the twelfth-century Persian theologist Sohravardi, from resources of the purest Persian language to signify 'the city, the country or land (*abad*) of No-where (*Na-koja*)' (quoted in Corbin 1964). For Islamic thinkers, in addition to the world perceptible to the senses, there is 'another climate, represented by that world which, however, possesses extension and dimensions, forms and colors, without their being perceptible to the senses, as they are when they are properties of physical bodies'; and 'that world, fully objective and real, where everything existing in the sensory world has its analogue' is called the '*eighth climate*', 'a climate *outside* of climates, a place *outside* of place, outside of *where* (*Na-koja-Abad*!)' (Corbin 1964). This chapter examines the 'dream world' of Hindi films to argue that the spatial and temporal tropes of Hindi cinema resonate with the time-space of Perso-Arabic narratives. Hindi cinema draws on formulaic conventions of representing space in Perso-Arabic narratives to conceive space in a manner that differs from the space of geographers and planners, but such is its power that it impinges on the lived space of its inhabitants.

In a paper presented at Rice University, Manishita Das examined the mise-en-scène of musical sequences from popular Hindi films of the 1950s to argue that,

> … the urban landscape created through these musical performances
> and the often highly stylized studio sets is not meant to be read as

an authentic representation of real-life locales but is an artifice that draws attention to its constructed nature and relies for its legibility and evocative power on this "unreality effect". (Das 2011)

Films of the 1990s made by directors like Suraj Barjatya and Karan Johar have also been examined in relation to their construction of spectacular, phantasmagoric consumerist, carnivalesque heterotopias. Ranjani Mazumdar considers the 'seamless movement from one palatial interior to another' as the most noticeable aspect of *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (1994) and states that its 'domestic architecture reveals pillars, grand staircases and a palatial ceiling' (Mazumdar 2008: 124). Their tethering of architectural grandeur and other commodity signs to intense moments of cultural identity make the family films unique, she argues, and shows that 'their clever manipulation of mise-en-scene is geared to relay a multiplicity of signs' (Mazumdar 2008: 124). Similarly, Jyotika Virdi holds that the 1990s films 'combining a visual Utopia of affluence, glamor and leisure with romantic fantasy', 'focus on and encourage pleasure' (Virdi 2003: 202). She observes that the occasional radio or telephone in the song and dance convention in the 1950s films is replaced in the 1990s with 'fast cars, water scooters, shopping arcades, luxury farm houses in rural settings, or palatial homes' (Virdi 2003: 202). While agreeing with Mazumdar and Virdi on the transformation in the role signs play in the production of 'the iconography of abundance' in these films, this chapter shows that palatial homes and interiors, grand staircases and country houses have always been inscribed in the visual economy of Hindi films to signpost social affluence or class difference (Kapoor 2010). In fact, the convention of the grand mise-en-scene has been firmly established in Indian cinema since the silent era when Franz Osten's sets, inspired by German expressionism, produced Orientalist spectacles.[5] A close analysis of images in Hindi cinema demonstrates that conventions of representing space and time in Hindi cinema since the silent era have been strongly influenced by a dastanic 'world of dreams which shut out all troubles' (Farooqi 2000: 124). Hindi cinema has always produced another space that is located in but differs from real spaces, not only in musical sequences of the 1950s'

films or in Karan Johar's designer campuses and slums but also in many other films.

HETEROTOPIAS

Michel Foucalt defines heterotopias as places that 'are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality' (Foucault 1967/1984).

> There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society—which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. (Foucault 1967/1984)

Since the utopian spaces of Hindi films are still grounded in a real space, whether of an actual or reconstructed village or city, heterotopia might be a more accurate description of the cinematic space. However, the Foucauldian notion of heterotopia must be read in conjunction with the worlds described by Muhammad Al-Ghazali in order to understand the representation of space in Hindi cinema. Al-Ghazali makes a distinction between *alam al-arwah* or a world that is free of matter and alam al-mithal or the supra-material world (Al-Ghazali 2009: 18). He defines alam al-arwah as a world that 'has the same relation to universum permagnum as our intellectual images have with our mind' (Al-Ghazali 2009: 18) and contrasts it with alam al-mithal or a 'sphere of existence', which has the same relation to universum permagnum as 'our mental images that are created by our imagination, fancy and cognition, have to our brain' (Al-Ghazali 2009: 18). How are real sites simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted in Hindi cinema? How does the representation and conceptualisation of space in Hindi cinema differ from the way it is conceived in other discourses?

The representation of space in Hindi cinema has engaged the attention of a number of scholars in recent years. They have focused in particular on the new wave of Bollywood films

in which location shoots are displaced by shots of panoramic interiors of 'non-places'[6] like airports, offices, hotels, shopping malls, condominiums, and real cities and villages are made to stand for one another for logistical or other reasons. Observing the link between 'consumption and aestheticization of urban space', Ranjani Mazumdar, for instance, calls attention to 'the emergence of a distinctly different regime of visual culture that constantly generates a fascination for visual spectacle' (2008: 111). She refers to this as 'urban delirium, in which commodity display, new kinds of architecture, the spectacle of film, and television converge' (Mazumdar 2008: 111). Other films of the 1990s, particularly those of Karan Johar, have been examined in relation to their production of cornucopian visions that are inscribed with the signs of global consumerism and are perceived as answering the anxieties activated by the movement of capital.

The substitution of Kashmir through a series of locations in the West following the two-decade long conflict in Kashmir was the first in the string of displacements that have now become integrated in the visual economy of Hindi cinema. The logic was that if the Valley of Kashmir could be located in Poland or elsewhere in Hindi cinema, the mustard fields of Punjab could also be dislocated elsewhere in *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (*DDLJ* 1995) and Bombay of the 1970s could be transported to Colombo in *Midnight's Children* (2012). Bollywood films could move from a generic city in India, imagined as Bombay or Mumbai, to another in the West with finer distinctions between the streets of New York and Toronto visible only to their residents. This chapter demonstrates that Bollywood films of the 1990s foregrounded a manner of representing space that reflects how it has been conceived in Hindi cinema since its inception.

The disappearance of real outdoor locations in Bollywood films and their replacement by artificially created spaces of the film cities in Mumbai and Hyderabad follows a long tradition in Indian cinema that goes back to the woods, hills, fields and caves that Dada Saheb Phalke had fabricated as settings for his films in the silent era to create a diversity of scenic backgrounds and interior sets with direct sunlight. The stylised film sets of the silent era have been ascribed to their emergence from local theatrical traditions. The first Indian film *Raja Harishchandra* (1913), a mythological,

produced by Dada Saheb Phalke, which reflects the influence of Sanskrit drama, Ravi Verma's paintings, calendar art, landscape painting and architecture, established a convention of filming stylised sets that has become the template for representing space in Indian cinema.

Similarly, the convention of the transposition of one real space with another began with Phalke's transposition of the real village of Gokul 'from the sandy banks of Yamuna to the rocky terrain of the Godavari' in *Kaliya Mardan* (1919), as Satish Bahadur rightly pointed out (quoted in Gangar 2013: 73).

The first talkie *Alam Aara* (1932) borrowed from the theatrical stylisation of Parsi theatre and its Islamicate ambience. Despite its social realism, the Orientalist décor and architecture of the *Light of Asia* (1926) appears to have been carried over in *Achhut Kanya* (1936) in the sets designed by Devika Rani. As Rosie Thomas argues, fantasy films, unlike the Hindu iconography and architectural tropes produced by Phalke and Painter, 'conveyed an [O]rientalist imaginary drawn as much from Parsee theatre as [from] Hollywood's Thief of Baghdad' through 'onion domes, minarets, crescent moons, giant urns, terraced gardens, filigree, colonnades and scalloped Islamic arches' (Thomas, 'Still Magic', *Tasveer Ghar*). She convincingly demonstrates that 'a series of cultural clichés and architectural tropes had become so firmly entrenched in Hindi cinema by the 1950s' that they could be effortlessly recycled in 'the mise-en-scene of fantasy films' such as *Alif Laila* (1953).

Anustup Basu asserts that fantasy genres offered a range of virtual milieus with some featuring imaginary settings and that 'other studio-constructed milieus were imaginary projections of a mythic time and space marked by geographical proper names' (Basu 2010: 113). He agrees with Thomas that 'though this fantasy assemblage persists in Indian films in later decades' (Basu 2010: 113), it is relegated to B and C grade productions.

The 'highly syncretic hyphenated Hindu–Muslim nature' of Bollywood (Mishra 2002) had become so strongly incorporated in the structure of Hindi films by the 1950s that a new spatial code that drew on both Hindu and Islamic architectural tropes could be produced to represent an exclusive Hindi cinematic space

whose meanings were shared by its audience. Hindi films switch between Hindu and Indo-Islamic architectural tropes as affective codes for representing particular emotions. While piety is split between the Hindu temple and the Islamic shrine, the preferred setting for romance is invariably an Indo-Islamic architecture and the *bāgh* [garden]. The stereotype of cultivated leisure and 'rentier decadence' derived from 'a part-fantasised vision of nawabi Lucknow, which was nostalgically remembered as the last bastion of Islamicate culture', as identified by Kesavan (1994: 246–51), is reflected in the spatial organisation and codes of Hindi cinema.

SPATIAL DYAD: *JANNAT* AND JAHANNUM

The representation of space in Hindi cinema, strongly shaped by the conventions of representing space in Persian literature and painting is deeply entrenched in the notion of the two-dimensional alam al-mithal or 'the world of analogies' also known as alam al-khayal or 'the world of the imagination', which corresponds to the 'intermediate world' known as *malakut* that possesses form but not matter.[7] It is simultaneously 'a world of hanging forms or *suwar al mu'allaqah*' and one that possesses its own matter (*jis-i-latif*) and 'both paradise in its formal aspect and inferno' are located in this world (Nasr 1969: 132). The spaces of real cities and villages are made to conform to this ancient cosmological space through the recycling of traditional Perso-Arabic visual tropes in Hindi cinema.

Jannat

Hindi cinema offers a dyadic representation of space formed through the contrast between paradise (*jannat/swarg*) and hell (*jahannum/nark*) as outlined in Islamic cosmology. Jannat is described in Islamic texts in the following manner:

> 15. (They will be) on Thrones encrusted (with gold and precious stones). 16. Reclining on them, facing each other. 17. Round about them will (serve) youth of perpetual freshness. 18. With goblets,

(shining) beakers and cups (filled) out of clear-flowing fountains. 19. No after-ache will they receive there from nor will they suffer intoxication. 20. and with fruits they may select; 21. And the flesh of fowls, any that they may desire. (Rustomji 2009: 48)

Paradise or jannat has been traditionally represented in Persian literature through the *bāgh* or garden.[8] As a poetic image, *bāgh* stands for order and beauty, and the link between man and nature and becomes a symbol of paradise under mystical influence. W. L. Hanaway is of the view that 'that the form of Persian gardens' was probably 'influenced by descriptions of the archetypical garden of Paradise in the Koran, which stress its green color, shade, fruits, fountains of running water, and cool pavilions where the inhabitants may drink a wine that does not intoxicate' (Hanaway 1988: 395–396). The archetypal garden forms a Mughal space of representation that is translated into the material space of the Mughal gardens as well as the imagined one of Mughal painting.[9] According to Khansari, 'the great Mughal gardens at Kashmir, Agra, Lahore, and Delhi are planted in Persian style' and 'are descendants of a concept established almost before history began' (Khansari and Moghtader 1998: 12). The signification of these gardens as a metaphor for paradise is evident from the famous inscription at the Shalimar Bāgh in Kashmir: 'If there be a paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this.' However, while borrowing the structure of the Persian garden, Shalimar Bāgh differed from its Persian counterpart in its being located not in the desert but on a hill overlooking a lake.

Paradise in Hindi cinema is conceived as a green expanse, on the mountains or the plains, with a water body such as a river, a lake or the sea. The image of paradise in the classic Hindi film freely borrows from the edenic forest settings of Hindu epics as well as from the idea of the pleasure garden, a recurring trope in Persian literature. Other than in mythological and historical films, the Persian bāgh in its Indo-Islamic translation becomes the trope of romance in Hindi cinema into which other pastoral images denoting the idyllic green expanse in the desert are integrated. The stereotypical perception of 'dancing around trees' in Hindi films is predicated on the concept of pleasure gardens 'as places of

private retreat, and as examples of royal pomp and magnificence' (Hanaway 1988). The trope of romance is signalled through the abrupt cut to the song and dance sequence in the pleasure garden in which the hero and heroine literally run around trees, playfully chasing and teasing each other.[10]

The gardens featured in Hindi films are all variations of the Persian gardens such as *hayāt*[11], *meidan*[12], *chahar bāgh*[13], park and bāgh. The topography of the bāgh might assume the shape of the ancient Mughal gardens in Kashmir, or modern ones like the Brindavan Gardens in Mysore or the Hanging Gardens in Mumbai, but they invariably conform to the description of the archetypal paradise with 'green color, shade, fruits, fountains of running water, and cool pavilions' (Hanaway 1988: 395–96). If the films of the 1950s approximate the structure of the Persian garden with the outdoor flowing indoors and terraces overlooking the garden (Lehrman 1980), many of the picturesque gardens became the standardised setting for romance in films from the 1960s to the 1980s, until 'the Kashmir crisis' pushed the song and dance sequences to the Swiss Alps and several other verdant locations in the West masquerading as the green fields of Punjab.

Mountains had a special place in the aesthetics adopted by British landscape painters like William Hodges, Thomas and William Daniell and Henry Salt. British pictorial representation selectively privileged scenes that conformed most closely to the conventions of the picturesque and focused on scenic vistas, turbulent waterfalls and gentle rivers, dramatic rock formations, curious natural phenomenon like the banyan tree rather than the semi-arid plains and marshy deltas that constituted much of the countryside. But the notion of the mountains as a summer retreat and a space of leisure and freedom is older than the colonial Utopia of the hill station that may be traced back to the summer capital of the Mughal emperors in Kashmir. The representation of the Valley of Kashmir as jannat in the Mughal imaginary intersects with the picturesque in the production of mountains as an other space of innocence as well as pleasure to which the protagonists must retreat in order to discover themselves before reintegrating into their everyday urban space. The journey into the mountains—

Nainital, Shimla, Ladakh, Ooty—in the song and dance sequences, if not in the diegetic, is a recurring trope in Hindi cinema that is carried over in new Bollywood films with the difference that here the mountain retreat shifts to the Black Forest or the Swiss Alps. Hindi film audiences, familiar with song and dance sequences abruptly shifting locales from a desert to a waterfall or to a mountain landscape, did not complain about Sridevi gyrating in a chiffon sari on the Swiss Alps in Yash Chopra's *Chandni* (1989) as Kashmir went out of bounds for Indian filmmakers.

While rivers are represented as sacred and maternal in Hindu mythology that celebrates their life-giving function, water has always been posited as the opposite of the desert in Persian thought and equated with paradise. Similarly, the Quran abounds with metaphors that equate water with paradise and promise to the believer, 'rivers of unstagnant water; and rivers of milk unchanging in taste, and rivers of wine, delicious to the drinkers, and rivers of honey purified' (Quran 47:15). Likewise, within the stylised make-believe world of Hindi films, 'paradise' is mapped onto different water bodies, rivers, lakes, ponds, waterfalls. Some of the most spectacular film songs have been shot against the backdrop of a river or a lake, like Srinagar's ubiquitous Dal Lake ('*Deewana hua badal*', *Kashmir Ki Kali* 1964; '*Achcha to hum chalte hain*', *Aan Milo Sajna* 1970), the Naini lake in Nainital ('*Tujhko mera pyar pukare*', *Gumrah* 1963; '*Jis gali mein tera ghar*', *Kati Patang* 1970); rivers, particularly the Ganges, have also served as the perfect setting for romance. The naming of a lake in Alpenrausch, Switzerland as 'Chopra Lake' after Hindi filmmaker Yash Chopra in deference to the number of films he shot there demonstrates that the displacement of one lake or mountain by another does not alter their generic signification as paradise. In contrast to the lakes and rivers, the sea in the Hindi film has a more complex symbolism. In most films set in Mumbai, iconic shots of Juhu or Marine Drive are largely used to signify the space of the city. In contrast to the iconic beach of Mumbai, beaches in Goa or Kerala, and now in Bangkok or Australia, are shown dotted with bikini-clad bodies and invariably inscribed as spaces of pleasure wherein the sea can have deeper and darker significations.

Jahannam

Duzak (Middle Persian. *dusox*, Av. *dusanhu*; *AirWb.*, col. 756) and jahannam are the terms commonly used in Persian for hell (Omidsalar 2003). If jannat is the abode of luxury, comfort and pleasure, jahannam is the abode of hardship, misery and punishment. The *Kitaabul-Imaan* states that 'the comforts of jannat and the terrors of jahannum are literal, real and physical' (Majlisul Ulama 2010: 45) and not figurative expressions conveying some mental or spiritual state of pleasure and pain. In Hindi cinema, jannat is juxtaposed against jahannam, but the tortures of jahannam as outlined extensively in numerous verses in the Quran[14] intersect with the intolerable tortures of the Hindu hell such as burning sand, fire, machines and weapons.

Christian Lange points out that the tendency to conceive hell as 'a part of the material world, complete with its own detailed topography', is as strong in Islam as in Hinduism (Lange 2015). Hell is 'a dark and dismal place of punishment' and 'unlike paradise, which is understood to be in the heavens, hell is believed to be somewhere in the earthly climes' (Ebn Abi'l-Donyā, 117–19 quoted in Omidsalar 2003), or even beneath the seven seas (Ebn Rajab, 44; Fayż Kāšāni 2003: 219; idem 2004: 12–13 quoted in Omidsalar 2003). The topography of hell includes mountains, rivers, valleys, wells, and springs, many of which have names, as well as buildings.[15] There is a mention of 330 ravines in each of which there are 330 palaces, each of which has 330 rooms with four chests in the corners of each chamber. Hell is also defined by specific flora and fauna that are designed to inflict torment, such as the tree of zaqqum and its fauna, largely comprised of creatures like massive snakes and colossal scorpions (Omidsalar 2003).[16]

In Hindi cinema, hell is reproduced as the villain's abode with its secret torture chambers where the protagonist's unsuspecting beloved and extended family are locked up before being rescued through human or divine intervention. The subterranean topography of hell is reiterated in the images of abandoned warehouses, basements, construction sites, ravines in which the epic battle between good and evil is staged. The villain's den, notwithstanding

its trappings of wealth, includes dark secrets that may be accessed through concealed doors usually located at the base of a building, where the villain is seen surrounded by his henchmen, and several torture chambers. The torture motif is repeated in several films of the 1960s and 1970s with the tortures personally supervised by the larger-than-life villain, played by Pran in *Ram Aur Shyam* (1967), Ajit in *Zanjeer* (1973) and *Yaadon Ki Baaraat* (1973), Madan Puri in *Deewar* (1975), and Jeevan in *Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977). It might shift to the rooftop in *Zanjeer* or *Yaadon Ki Baaraat*, with Ajit or Madan Puri conveniently made to fall to their deaths. The torture scene shifts outdoors to the ravines in *Sholay* (1975) in keeping with its rural setting with Amjad Khan as the iconic Gabbar Singh threatening to severe Veeru's limbs with axes or saws until his beloved Basanti agrees to dance for him. The topography of hell stretches to the arid plains as in *Yaadon Ki Baaraat* with the villain Shakal mowed to death by a speeding train. By the 1980s, hell acquires a high-tech dimension with Amrish Puri entering a concealed underground vault in his mansion. The underground torture chamber finds its most spectacular and hyperreal translation in Shekhar Kapur's *Mr. India* (1987) with Amrish Puri playing Mogambo. This topography of hell remains virtually undisturbed until the 1990s with *Agneepath* (1990), even with the emergence of the psychological thriller in *Baazigar* (1993), and returns with a vengeance in remakes of films from the 1970s and 1980s. The tortures prescribed by the many villains played by Ajit, a cult figure now, conform to detailed descriptions of the methods of punishment in jahannam offered in the Quran and Hadith. These include being 'boiled in oil' or 'rolled in caustic', though they might embrace new age technologies like being electrocuted as well.

Finally, hell is represented as a metaphorical space of misery and hardship into which the protagonist and his family are compelled to descend after inhabiting edenic spaces of comfort, luxury, love and togetherness, either through the intrusion of evil or through the vagaries of fate. Some of the most iconic Hindi films from *Awara* (1951), *Waqt* (1965), *Deewar*, *Yaadon Ki Baaraat* begin with the idyllic image of the happy family being separated and plunged into a symbolic hell through a natural calamity or an evil foe. In each of these films, a good human being and his family are visited by

intolerable hardships such as being imprisoned, rendered homeless, made to steal or beg, witness the death or murder of a family member. Raj is abducted by a notorious dacoit as vengeance for being punished by Raj's father Justice Shamsher Nath and raised to become a petty criminal in *Awara*. With their parents shot to death in *Yaadon Ki Baaraat*, the three brothers are not only forced to live in relative penury, but one turns to theft in a repetition of the same fate suffered by the three brothers in *Waqt* for a different reason. In *Deewar*, Vijay's melancholia is owing to being branded a thief in addition to being rendered homeless as a retribution the compromises made by his highly principled father with the management. In *Amar Akbar Anthony,* the wronged driver's three sons turn destitute, but are adopted in a Hindu, a Muslim and a Christian home respectively.

THE CITY AND THE COUNTRY

The most important dyad in Hindi cinema, however, is the city-country dyad that has been viewed as representing the complex and multifaceted relationship between cinema and modernity in the Indian context. Ranjani Mazumdar maintains that 'representations of the nation were worked out around the country/city relationship' in complicated ways (Mazumdar 2000: 262). Manishita Das, in 'Visions of Modernity in Colonial India: Cinema, Women and the City', examines 'the spatialisation of tradition and modernity along the urban rural divide' and demonstrates that the 'cinematic city is defined in relation to the village and both spatially and morally distanced from it' (Das 2012: 628).

Although films of social realism foreground the oppressive features of caste, gender and religion in the imagining of rurality, the countryside continues to produce the trope of the pastoral and of innocence even in films like *Gangster* (2006). This representation of the rural as edenic despite the presence of evil borrows as much from the valorisation of open, green spaces in the Persian jannat[17] as well as the picturesque in British landscape painting. Most Hindi films resolve the ambivalence underpinning popular significations of the country as an oppressive, closed space as well as a romantic

pastoral idyll through the sacralisation of the flora and fauna, particularly the land, trees, rivers and mountains while humanising evil. In the classic conflict between tradition and modernity, modernity is viewed as an intrusion into the natural landscape and suffering is represented as a consequence of blasphemy against nature through the introduction of the machine, the road or other modern structures. Even though the representation of modernity in *Mother India* (1957) is positive, its flashback narration produces a nostalgia for the land, the countryside and the simple life of the community. In rural films, the countryside is represented as a space of caste enmity and difference through which feudal, patriarchal structures are sustained and perpetuated. The feudal romance set in the village, as epitomised by the 'Thakur' films, represents the country as restrictive of individual freedom through clan control and is usually a vendetta tale, often ending with the death of the protagonists (for instance, *Sholay* 1975; *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* 1988; *Ram Lakhan* 1989; *Karan Arjun* 1995). But shots of the countryside, whether of the parched desert or of lush vegetation, represent its space as pristine and idyllic that is disturbed through an individual or group's transgression of clan/family honour and kinship priorities. While presenting the futility of vendetta and violence and the healing power of love, these films invariably end up upholding feudal patriarchal structures and values. Not only the city but the country, too, is an invented space in Hindi cinema that culminates in the designer villages of the new Bollywood films first created in the 1970s in *Sholay* and the trope of the green fields of Punjab in the NRI films. The village in NRI film (which consciously target the NRI audience) like *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* (1995), *Pardes* (1997), *Taal* (1999) returns as the pastoral idyll through diasporic techno nostalgia that recycles tropes from earlier films like *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* (1985) to represent the village as an opposition to the diasporic city.

Shyam Benegal stated in an interview that Hindi cinema concealed signs that indicated a geographical location and that when it 'showed a *city,* whether it's called Bombay or whatever, it really didn't concern itself with that specific *city* or its specific character' (quoted in van der Heide 2006: 40). Film scholars have emphasised the specific importance of Bombay in Hindi cinema but

also acknowledge that Bombay in Hindi cinema is the city by default (Prakash 2010; Prasad 2001) and that its iconic landmarks signify the space of modernity (Kaviraj 2002; Mazumdar 2008). The reasons why Bombay rather than Kolkata or Delhi was represented as the generic city in post-Independence India ranged from the influx of Muslim and Punjabi talent to Bombay after Partition, its skyline of high-rises and its polygot character in preference over the colonial city of Kolkata or Mughal Delhi. The construction of Bombay as *the* space of the nation, modernity and freedom was facilitated by its architecture, multi-ethnic population and cosmopolitan character.

The journey from the country to the city was represented as a movement from the ethnic, feudal, sectarian, caste-ridden space of the village to the melting pot of modernity in which the adoption of the city's speech, attire and comportment signalled the transition into secular democratic modernity. Focusing on the representation of the metropolis as 'an important aspect of Indian post-coloniality and nationhood', Sanjay Srivastava argues that:

> Perhaps the most enduring presence of the cosmopolis as an idea occurs in the Hindi films made in the decades immediately following political freedom from colonial rule in 1947.... Here the city is a *novum organum*: it magically transforms—through the work of the logical medical man, and the rational university graduate—the life of ignorance, superstition and venality which marked the cinematic village. (Srivastava 1998: 147)

He emphasises 'a new language of cinematic space, one where striation and secularization become important expressive principles' through which 'the aura of the metropolis is manifested' (Srivastava 1998: 147). He shows how 'the sense of the modern nation' as 'a measured grid of roads, traffic lights and footpaths' produced through the opening shot of the camera looking out of a car being driven along the urban boulevard, transports the audience into 'the realm of planned space' (Srivastava 1998: 147–48).

Cinema's complex relationship with the city translates it both as an emancipatory space of the nation but also a corrupt space of crime, violence and loss of community. Arjun Appadurai's point about the cosmopolitanism of the city of Bombay as created by

business is pertinent to the representation of the metropolis in Hindi cinema as an encounter with strangers, both friendly and unfriendly (Appadurai 2002). Arrival into the city is simultaneously represented as the security of anonymity as also anxiety about patriliny, an induction into opportunity as well as crime, often polarised through the life paths chosen by separated twins or siblings. As opposed to subjectivities and social relations as defined by ancestral lineage and filial relations in the country/village, the city's disregard of such kinship ties to individual competencies engenders both liberatory and anxious narratives. The neon lights and skyscrapers of the city serve as metaphors for upward mobility as well as the lure of easy wealth obtainable via crime. While erasing all signs of difference, the city is inscribed with signs of class through the opposition of the high-rise and the slum, negotiated through the thematic conflict between the trope of the poor boy meeting rich girl or vice-versa.

THE SLUM AND THE MANSION

The dyadic space of Hindi cinema is arranged along a grid that includes the opposition of the spaces of the rich and poor, represented by the mansion or *haveli* of the rich and the slums and huts of the poor. According to Anirudh Deshpande, 'there were class and caste statements in Indian cinema to begin with', that 'the well appointed houses were beyond the reach of the majority of the audience' and that even a police inspector's house appeared 'fantastic' (2009: 130). Artificially constructed in film studios, undifferentiated by architectural style or décor, the mansions in Hindi cinema are a generic space signifying the space of the rich.

An examination of some Hindi film classics from the 1950s to 1980s reveals that palatial homes, grand staircases, high ceilings and ornate pillars have served as conventionalised tropes for representing wealth. Justice Raghunath lives in one such palatial bungalow in *Awara* (1951) that Raj enters and is led into a large hall with a magnificent staircase that ends in an impressive sculpture facing a grand piano. Visibly awed, he exclaims, '*Kya shaandar ghar hai!*' [What a magnificent house!]. Raj returns home and is seen

lying with his eyes closed on a bed that sets the scene for a dream song and dance sequence featuring the stylised set.

Alain Désoulières points out that the Mughal architecture of Hindi films such as *Anarkali* (1953) and *Mughal e-Azam* (1960) is directly based on detailed descriptions of the Sheesh Mahal in Syed Imtiaz Ali Taj's preface in Urdu to his historical drama *Anarkali* (Taj 1931).

> But in the Imperial Harem (*haram shāhī*), there is such a delightful coming and going with pomp and magnificence that the eye is dazzled by its splendour. Golden tapestry (*zar baft*) and silk brocades (*kimx(w)āb*) sort of put walls and doors on fire. Carpets (*qālīn*) from Iran and Tu[r]kestan would make the floor look like a garden. On the doors curtains from China and Tatarstan (*Cīn o Macīn*) with beautiful pictures seem to keep the secret of some magic. Thanks to bushes of lanterns (*jhār phānus*), round shade lanterns (*qamqamā*), [and] chandeliers (*qandil*), the ceilings of the vast hall look like the sky of the world of poetry.… (Taj 1931 quoted in Désoulières p. 95).

Not only does the description of the Sheesh Mahal fit the representations of the Hindi cinematic palace in historicals, the Islamicate form is equally visible in the visual excess and dazzling splendour of the mansions of the rich in Hindi films through the insertion of objects mentioned by Taj.

Ranjani Mazumdar's analysis of architectural forms and interiors in Hindi cinema focuses on specific features such as staircases, halls and so on. But 'the generic *Hindi film* set—a palatial house with a *grand staircase* dissecting the middle of the living room' with 'chandeliers, carpet on the stairs, traditional costumes, and Rajputana architecture saturate the mise-en-scène', and the 'gold brocade, jewellery and music' that she discerns in *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* [*K3G*] are integral features of the Sheesh Mahal (Mazumdar 2008: 135). A comparison of films produced by the same studio in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s reveals that although the mansions might reflect the difference in time, they dwell on similar architectural forms and objects to signify the good life. Ornate pillars and banisters, carpets, lanterns, chandeliers, fireplaces, book-lined cases, paintings, portraits and stag heads on

the walls, vases and figures gracing carved tables, grand staircases and high ceilings of the vast hall produce the affect of the pomp and magnificence that Taj had highlighted in the Sheesh Mahal. The centrality of the chandelier to the mansion is parodically repeated by Farah Khan in her postmodern pastiche *Om Shanti Om* (2007) to great effect. Similarly, social difference in *K3G* is accentuated through a nervous Anjali's accidentally breaking a flower vase that she calls '*gamla*' [flowerpot] in Rahul's house. While Deshpande is right in stating 'that the lifestyle valorized in the films of the 1950s and 1960s was that of the businessman' (Deshpande 2009: 103), Hindi cinema made some distinctions between the homes of the aristocrat (*Devdas* 1935), the businessman and the professional (*Awara* 1951; *Sangam* 1964) and made cosmetic concessions to ethnic and regional difference. The Islamicate form in the structure of the mansion is appropriated to represent feudal patriarchal values and the pull of tradition that is juxtaposed against modernity.

The mansion forms a dyad with the slum or the *bustee*. Nitin Govil states that 'Bombay has always resonated in the popular imaginary as a study in contrasts between wealth and poverty; the skyline and the slum' (Govil 2007: 83). As Ashis Nandy argues, the representation of the slum as an 'entity that territorializes the transition from the village to the city' (Nandy 1998: 5) is a familiar trope in Hindi cinema and that 'both cinema and the *slum* in India showed the same impassioned negotiation with everyday survival' (Nandy 1998: 2). Much ink has been spilt on the aestheticisation of the Mumbai slum by Danny Boyle in *Slumdog Millionaire* (2009). But the slum in Hindi cinema like its other spaces has always been an aestheticised space that signifies deprivation, hardship, poverty, and perhaps crime in the gangster film. The sanitised slum that makes its appearance in the films of social realism in the 1950s is naturalised as a visual signifier of poverty.

The slum is represented in Hindi cinema from the inside rather than the outside as an aerial view. As a consequence, the spatial contours of the actual slum are represented as a combination of texture and light. In contrast to the mansion that represents opulence, the slum is represented as a dark, unlit place and is characterised by sparsely furnished interiors with uncovered floors and bare walls. The play of darkness and light, the repetition of

claustrophobic images produces the slum as an oppressive space marked by hunger, disease and suffering. However, the slum, despite the privations and oppression suffered by its inhabitants is a space of filial bonding, community and even conviviality from *Awara* (1951) to *Munna Bhai MBBS* (2003). Even though Mira Nair has been accused of 'performing poverty' in *Salaam Bombay* (1988), the idea of the slum as a convivial place despite suffering persists even in gangster films such as *Company* (2002) despite its reinscription as a space of violence.

The unit of dwelling in the slum is the *jhopdi* [hut], a cramped space in which entire families might be squeezed together. The space is demarcated into sleeping, living, cooking areas through the arrangement of functional objects like an old-fashioned bed, a chair or two, pots and pans and the washing line clearly visible. Functionality rather than grandeur is the theme of the slum tenement and calendars and pictures of deities are permitted as sole adornments on walls. Life in the slums is represented as the seamless glide of the indoors into the outdoors. The slum is also a place of open living with a number of actions taking place in the common areas. Even though the slum sprawls at the foot of the skyscraper, its narrow alleys and grimy exterior are represented as impenetrable. At its most dismal, the slum is housed in a hovel or a dark, damp open space below a railway bridge or flyover. The slum's open spaces in which dwellers quarrel, pass snide remarks but also come together in their mutual misery enable the performance of community.

The conviviality mapped on the slum in Hindi cinema enables it to serve as an alterity to the good life represented by a blind mansion as a space of largesse, community, even love. The mansions of the rich are conceived, until the emergence of the Hindu Family Values film in the 1990s, as sterile spaces dominated by a blind preservation of tradition, property and honour. In sharp contrast, the bustee is a vibrant space of communal living and sharing from *Bobby* (1973) to *Munna Bhai MBBS* (2003) with the hero or heroine from the bustee bringing about a transformation in the lives of the dwellers of mansions through the act of falling in love. As Jack Braganza tells Nath in *Bobby*, all he seeks is his daughter's happiness, a trope that is humorously repeated by Anjali in *K3G* by punning on the difference

between her sweetmeat shopowner father who has a '*vadda dil*' [big heart] with Rahul's father's '*vadde vadde* bill' [big bills].

But the aestheticisation of the space of the poor in which Raj lives is a convention that has long been established in Hindi cinema. While examining the images of abundance in *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (1994), film scholars have pointed out that not only Prem's family but also Nisha's father, a professor, lives in a large mansion. But the naturalisation of large houses as middle class homes has not required suspension of belief on the audience's part in the history of popular Hindi cinema. Neither middle class homes nor the bustee are expected to represent an actual material space but are synthetic spaces that are opposed to the spaces of the rich. Although the dimensions of Vidya's house in *Shree 420* (1955) are not particularly large, the schoolteacher's home with bookshelves lining every conceivable wall is inscribed with signs of erudition. Social difference in *Bobby* is represented not through size since Bobby's fisherman father Jack Braganza inhabits a fairly large cottage by the sea, but through the period furniture in the Goan nanny's house and new commodity objects in that of her employer's. One cannot but agree with Anustup Basu's contention that the big budget Bollywood film 'virtualized' India and increasingly catered to the escapist tendencies of metropolitan audiences at home and abroad by presenting a 'sanitized, "unreal" milieu devoid of dirt, poverty, hunger and other unwashed and unhappy aspects of history' and that the village itself vanished from the high-end screen (Basu 2010: 42–43). But the village in the Hindi films since the 1950s has been constructed as an idyll that enables 'the cinematic rewriting of what used to be the agrarian heart of India' (Basu 2010: 43) in the Yash Chopra films of the 1990s. The reconstructed village in which villagers perform Bollywoodized rustic moves under/over dressed in film'i rusticity is a trope familiar to viewers from *Naya Daur* (1956) to *Lagaan* (2001).

CONCLUSION

The Hindi film reproduces the binary space of the dastan that is structured on the opposition between jannat and jahannum, the

city and the country and the slum and the mansion. The spectacle of the good life produced in the Hindi film literally reproduces the description of jannat in Islamic texts. In particular, the trope of running round trees in the romance plot is borrowed from the idea of the pleasure garden. The Hindi film offers multiple translations of the idea of the bāgh in Persian poetry as a green expanse but overwrites it with the idea of the mountain retreat of the Mughal and British rulers. Similarly, the river and the sea play an equally complex role in representations of jannat. Like the images of the good life, images of evil, too, approximate descriptions of jahannam in the Islamic texts. Underground spaces infested with monstrous creatures are replicated as the hideout of the villain who is surrounded by hellish paraphernalia of torture and death. Heaven and hell are also reproduced in the opposition of the mansion and the slum that are represented as spaces of the rich and the poor respectively and also signpost class and socio-economic difference. But the city-country dyad forms the most important opposition in the Hindi film through its signification of corrupt albeit exciting modernity and pristine tradition.

NOTES

1. 'When Time is No Time, and Space is No Space: The Passion Plays of Husayn' (Chelkowski 1989).

2. Pelly explains that 'the so-called unities of *time* and *space* are not only ignored, but abolished' in *ta'ziyeh*, the Persian passion play (Pelly 1878).

3. Persian landscape schemes, however, are based on 'dividing the picture into several levels, each represented by a distinct cell of space' (Soucek 1987). Similarly, not only Hindi cinema but also 'the universe of classical narrative cinema (loosely defined as popular pre-1960 films)' is 'basically Manichean, with good and evil clearly demarcated' (Cubitt and Politoff 2011).

4. The 'imaginal world', defined as 'a world of autonomous forms and images', is based on the idea of 'a discernible world called *alam al-mithal* outside that of sensibility and intelligibility' (Edgar 2011: 11).

5. German expressionism was marked by elaborate sets and performance and used an exaggerated, distorted, unrealistic style to reflect inner emotional states. The unique collaboration between German filmmaker

Franz Osten, actor-producer Himanshu Rai in 1924 and Osten's cinematographer Wirsching brought a strong German expressionist influence to Indian cinema, now known as Indian expressionism, which used highly stylised sets and performances to produce an Orientalist affect (Manjapra 2014).

6. 'Non-places' is a term coined by Marc Augé in his book *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity* to refer to spaces 'formed in relation to certain ends (transport, transit, commerce, leisure), and the relations that individuals have with these spaces' (Augé 1995: 94).

7. It is contrasted with *alam al-ajsam* or 'the material world' and *alam al-arwah* or 'the spiritual sphere'. Henry Corbin referred to it as Mundus Imaginalis, a 'realm intermediate between our ordinary world and God's world'. 'The spiritual substances of this world that include the luminous (the good) as well as the dark (evil) beings may appear as Epiphanies, and although they are not included in Euclidean space, are real, and can be experienced, and "seen" in the sense that they are accessible to vision-illumination' (Ziai 1990: 222).

8. 'The Common Iranian word for "enclosed space" was *pari-daiza* (Avestan, *pairi-daēza*), a term that was adopted by Christianity to describe the garden of Eden or Paradise on earth'. Xenophon especially uses *paradeisos* as 'pleasure park'.

9. Amir Khusrau's description of the garden in *Mirah-i-Iskandar* (Khusrau 1820), for instance, matches this description.

10. In defence of 'running around trees' in Hindi films, Amitabh Bachchan wrote on his blog: 'The often mentioned 'dancing around the trees' comment. Yes … it does happen, so what? So long as I am not dancing on your head, why not the tree?' (2013). He even challenged those who 'dislike it and annihilate its occurrence' to make an effort 'to enact it themselves, purely as an exercise. Find out what it takes to express music and its words and its feel in the unrealistic escapist environment of our commercial film', he added (Bachchan 2013).

11. A classical Persian layout with heavy emphasis on aesthetics over function.

12. A formal public garden that puts more emphasis on the biotic element than the hayāt and that minimises structure. Plants range from trees, to shrubs, to bedding plants, to grasses.

13. A private and formal garden, its basic structure consists of four quadrants divided by waterways or pathways.

14. The punishment of inhabitants having their skin burned and then renewed only to be burned again for all eternity originated from verse 4:56 and is mentioned again in verse 22:20. Verse 18:28 describes in detail

drinking 'water like melted brass that will scald their faces', and verse 22:19 mentions the 'garment of fire' (Khusrau 1820).

15. For example, Ṭabari, IV, p. 1012; Ebn Abi'l-Donyā, pp. 26, 36–39, 41–44, 57, 69; Meybodi, I, p. 245; Abu'l-Fotuḥ, XII, p. 370, XIII, pp. 98–99; Ebn Rajab, pp. 90–93 (quoted in Omidsalar 2003). One of its valleys called the *lamlam* is so hot that the other valleys 'seek refuge from it in God' (Ebn Abi'l-Donyā, quoted in Omidsalar 2003: 38).

16. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hell-ii-islamic-period

17. 'In the *al-'Arshiyyah*, Mulla Sadra asserts that all that a man attains and is requited with in the after-life, whether it be the blessings (*na'im*) of Paradise (*jannah*) such as *houris* (*hur*), palaces (*qusur*), gardens (*jannat*), trees (*shajarat*) and streams' or the opposite sorts of pains (*adhab*) that are in Hell (*jahannam*) such as fire (*nar*), chains (*salasil*), scorpions (*aqarib*) and serpents (*tha'abin*)' are 'in the essence of his soul' (Moris 2003: 164).

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The Cinema of Enchantment

Le lo le lo sapnon ka saudagar aya
Le lo ye sapne le lo
Tumse qismat khel chukii tum qismat se khelo
Ab tum qismat se khelo
Here, take them away, the dream merchant is here
Come take them away, take away these dreams
Your luck is playing tricks with you
Now you play tricks with your luck (Shailendra, *Sapnon Ka Saudagar* 1968)

SAPNON KE SAUDAGAR: THE DREAM MERCHANTS

Viewing fantasy 'as another name for the world of imagination which is fuelled by desire and which provides us with an alternative world where we can continue our longstanding quarrel with reality', noted Indian psychoanalyst Sudhir Kakar defined Hindi cinema as 'a collective fantasy—a group daydream, containing unconscious material and the hidden wishes of a vast number of people' (Kakar 1980: 12). Hindi film scriptwriter and lyricist Javed Akhtar, adopting a similar psychoanalytic line both, described cinema in general and Hindi cinema in particular as 'a kind of dream', which enables those who are able to decode it, the collective thinking and fantasies of others (Akhtar 2007). Raj Kapoor, who enjoys an emblematic status in mainstream Hindi cinema as actor and filmmaker, preferred the Hindi term *sapna* [dream] to define it and described himself as '*sapnon ka saudagar*' or the dream merchant.

Making a film is like selling a dream. The man in the audience sees the hero beating up twenty people and he jumps with joy. He identifies with the hero and finds an outlet for his own pent up frustrations. I sell dreams too... [but] I sell visions of love sometimes ... (Raj Kapoor quoted in Nanda 2002)

This sentiment was echoed by Boney Kapoor, the producer of *Mr. India*, one of the most successful films of the 1980s: 'We are dream merchants and we have got to sell dreams, which are lapped up by all' (Kapoor 2010). Read without the Freudian or Lacanian baggage underpinning Kakar and Akhtar's description of Hindi cinema, the terms *khwab* or *sapna* that strongly resonate with Musharraf Ali Farooqi's description of the dastan as 'the world of dreams' (Farooqi 2000: 124) can yield demotic meanings which can disengage the 'unreal' in Hindi cinema from Western psychoanalytic categories and situate it within the dastanic world of enchantment. The main argument of this chapter is that Hindi cinema's lack of realism need not be considered its drawback because it indeed deploys pre-modern aesthetic categories and experiences made popular by the Perso-Arabic and Indo-Islamic narrative traditions of the dastan that were based on tilism or enchantment.

REALISM, ILLUSIONISM AND THEORIES OF CINEMA

Cinema emerged in the West in a socio-cultural environment shaped by the aesthetic preoccupations of the novel and painting, which were focused on art's capacity for realist representation. Cinematic realism has its origins in the naturalist movement in painting in the nineteenth century that accompanied the growth of scientific positivism in the West and the invention of the camera. The painter and the novelist viewed himself as competing with the scientist in recording reality with photographic precision and accuracy. Verisimilitude or correspondence with material reality became the prime value that arts were enjoined to cultivate. In contrast to painting and fiction, which emulated the verisimilitude of the photographic image, cinema's relationship with the photographic image allowed it a mechanical reproduction of reality unseen in any previous art form and, thus, uniquely qualified cinema to record physical reality. Realism, one of the most contested words in the history of cinema, raises important questions about the nature of cinematographic images, the relation of these images to reality and the role cinema plays in understanding the world. Debates on cinematic realism focus on two approaches to realism, the

first being its capacity for verisimilitude through the creation of plausible plots, characters and situations and the other through the mechanical reproduction of reality by the technological apparatus.

Adopting a cognitive approach to explain the nature of film representation, analytical philosopher Gregory Currie, in *Image and Mind,* critiques notions of illusionism underpinning recent semiotic and psychoanalytical film theory and argues that film is not an illusionist but a realist medium. He engages with three doctrines centred on realism that have shaped thinking and theorising about cinema, namely transparency,[1] likeness and illusionism and proposes the concept of perceptual realism. Perceptual realism means that 'film is, or can be, realistic in its recreation of the experience of the real world' or that 'the experience of watching a film approximates the normal experience of perceiving the real world' (Currie 1995: 326). Contending that 'illusionism' or the belief that 'film is realistic in its capacity to engender in the viewer an illusion of the reality and presentness of fictional characters and events portrayed' (Currie 1995: 326), Currie offers a useful distinction between those who believe that 'film engenders an illusion that something is real, when in fact it is not' and those who do not (1995: 237). Currie's view of films as essentially, uniquely and particularly realist has been critiqued over the years by those who view that illusion is central to the cinematic experience.[2]

Noel Carroll's definition of illusion as 'something that deceives or is liable to deceive' the viewer by which he means that 'the illusion provokes the viewer to have false beliefs about the object perceived' (Carroll 1996: 367) has been meticulously deconstructed by Richard Allen. Allen underlines the need to modify Carroll's definition of illusion as deception and differentiate 'the kinds of deception involved in visual representations that are putatively illusions' (Allen 1993: 33). Allen emphasises the need to distinguish the two respects in which illusions are deceptive—one is by deceiving the senses, and two, by leading us to make false inferences—by asserting that, 'We can experience a sensory illusion without being deceived into believing that what we see is real' (Allen 1993: 34), or in other words, that a 'sensory deception' need not be an 'epistemic deception' (1993: 34). Allen argues that

cinema is experienced as a form of illusion that he calls a 'projective illusion', which is not unique to cinema but is uniquely promoted by the cinematic medium. Although a sensory form of illusion, a projective illusion 'does not encourage us to believe in the reality of what we see' (Allen 1993: 22). As opposed to a 'reproductive illusion', which is derived from 'the reproductive properties of the photographic image' (Allen 1993: 25), and its 'transparency' (1993: 23), which allows the spectator to see both the object and how it is represented in the photograph, and remain medium aware, in a projective illusion, the spectator perceives the events of the film as 'a fully realized, though fictional, world' with all the 'perceptual presentness or immediacy of our own' (Allen 1993: 40). He points out that the reality experienced is a virtual one and entails a loss of medium awareness. Allen's notion of projective illusion places the photographic, perceptual and ontological realism of cinema in perspective by interrogating the idea of the spectator as a dupe of an illusion. He shows that the 'film spectator is not duped by the cinematic apparatus or the forms of narration in the cinema; the spectator is fully aware that what is seen is only a film' (Allen 1993: 21).

Allen compares projective illusion to other forms of pictorial and dramatic illusion, and one of the ways he distinguishes them is by identifying the absence of reproductive illusion in representational painting. Unlike a painting, which 'can only mislead us about its own status', but not about reality, he argues, a photograph can mislead us about the status of reality and 'contribute to the production of an illusion by presenting the phenomenon in a way that disguises its real status' (Allen 1993: 28–29). Allen posits that the minimum condition for a picture or drama to be experienced as a projective illusion is that it should be representational and must provide representational cues that facilitate the viewer's capacity to experience them as a projective illusion. He argues that projective illusion is perfected by cinema. Allen's emphasis on context dependency in projective illusion, the spectator's contribution in its production and the representational cues provided by each medium for its realisation have a bearing on the difference between cinema's projective illusion with those of traditional art forms. Comparing cinema

with painting and theatre, Allen holds that painting, in certain respects, is superior to cinema in its evocation of projective illusion, but the capacity of live theatre to engender projective illusion is constrained by the fact that the drama is embodied before us in the auditorium. He considers the projective illusion of cinema to be stronger than that in pictorial and dramatic forms. He shows that projective illusion is a sensory illusion in the sense that 'we entertain in thought or imagine that we see the represented object' (Allen 2001) or the event portrayed, and agrees with Currie that our relationship to visual fiction may be no different from our relationship to literary fiction (Allen 2001). However, he differs from Currie in maintaining that cinema allows us to both *see* a representation and also *imagine* that we see what the representation represents.

Realism and Hindi Cinema

Unlike Hollywood cinema whose naturalised relationship with the reproductive illusion of the photograph determines the production of cinematic illusion, Hindi cinema's generic debts to pre-cinematic visual and performing arts such as calendar art and Parsi theatre offer fertile grounds for the comparison of its projective illusion with that of Hollywood cinema. The ontological realism of the photographic image that enabled classic Hollywood cinema to create verisimilitude through reproductive illusion is undercut by these legacies. As opposed to realism that defines the ontology and rhetoric of the classic Hollywood film, Hindi cinema's ontological and rhetorical origins lie in an aesthetic tradition determined by enchantment. As opposed to Bazin's idea of cinema as answering the yearning for realistic representation, Hindi cinema answers its viewers' yearning for enchanted worlds.

Realism has always been a contentious issue in the analysis of Hindi cinema, causing a deep chasm between critics and defendants of its embarrassing 'anti-realism'.[3] Kakar asserted that 'when dogmatic relationalists dismiss Hindi films as unrealistic and complain that their plots strain credibility and their characters stretch the limits of the believable, this condescending judgement

is usually based on a very restricted view of reality' (Kakar 1980). Speaking about the psychological manoeuvres employed by Hindi cinema to convey different meanings to different segments of society, Ashis Nandy cited the steadfast refusal of such cinema to be conventionally realistic and argued that 'in Indian popular cinema, the subversion of realism is in "realism" itself' (Nandy 2003: 79). Similarly, Shyam Benegal pointed that 'the representation of the real world is not always supposed to entertain Indian audiences' and that 'they want to be transported completely into another world' (Benegal 2005/2011: 3). Thomas points out that 'tolerance of overt *fantasy* has always been high in Hindi cinema**,** with little need to anchor the material in what Western conventions might recognize as a discourse of "realism", and slippage between registers does not have to be marked or rationalized' (Thomas 2000: 158). Through its reworking the codes of realism through the narrative convention of tilism, Hindi cinema eschews the Platonic mimetic tradition running from Greek theatre to Victorian fiction and classical Hollywood cinema and unshackles cinema from its moorings in photographic verisimilitude and anchors it in dāstānic enchantment. In sharp contrast to cinema, as Farooqi demonstrates, 'verisimilitude was not the center around which the fantastic world of the dāstān revolved. Should he value his life, verisimilitude was well advised to look not only right and left, but also fore and aft, when crossing the highway of narrative' (Farooqi 2000: 141). Unlike realist cinema, which is predicated on photographic verisimilitude and is required to produce a faithful reproduction of the original, Hindi cinema produces a self-referential world. Akhtar's description of the world of Hindi cinema as one that has no correspondence to any real world emphasises its focus on the creation of an enchanted universe. Without suggesting that real geographical spaces do not exist in mainstream Hindi cinema, it is possible to assert that Hindi cinema produces a form of spatiality that draws on the materiality of geographical spaces but reinscribes them to create an autotelic universe. These constructionist codes of representation disrupt the conventions of cinematic realism deeply entrenched in Platonic mimesis and their valorisation of photographic representation.

Hindi Cinema: A Cinema of Attractions or Enchantments?

While scholars have engaged at length with Hindi cinema's anti-mimetic orientation, their use of borrowed vocabularies from the discipline of film studies does disservice to a cinema whose conventions have been derived from indigenous ontological and aesthetic terminologies. Ravi Vasudevan's celebrated description of Indian cinema as 'a narratively-integrated cinema of spectacle' in which 'the relationship between narrative, performance sequence and action spectacle is loosely structured in the fashion of a cinema of attractions' is adopted in apologetic defenses of its anti-realism (Vasudevan 1996: 307). Dwyer and Patel's unproblematic acceptance of Vasudevan's definition leads them to flesh out the evidence of spectacles in 'sets and costumes, action sequences, presentation of the stars, grandiloquent dialogues, song and dance sequences, comedy interludes and special effects' (Dwyer and Patel 2002: 30). In the polarised division between the two modes of film practice identified by Andre Gaudreault and Tom Gunning, namely the 'system of monstrative attractions' and 'the system of narrative integration', the non-continuity of its attractions leads to Hindi cinema being classified as the cinema of spectacle (Gunning 2006: 14). Although the term 'cinema of attractions' is not an inaccurate description of the pleasures of Hindi cinema, Gunning's coinage of the term in the mid-1980s to refer to early European cinema in relation to Eisenstein's own use of the term alludes to a specifically European lineage of vaudeville, circus and fairs that can be traced from Eisenstein to Spielberg.[4] Gunning's cinema of attractions looks both 'backwards to a popular tradition and forward to an avant-garde subversion' (Gunning 2006: 16). The key to the difference between the pleasures of Hindi cinema and early European cinema lies in the specific difference between attraction and enchantment. Unlike 'the cinema of attractions', which is invested in the technology of the medium, indigenous narrative practices of the dastan explain the 'dream-like' quality of Hindi cinema.

While the Oxford English Dictionary defines attraction as something that draws people by appealing to their desires, tastes, etc., it refers to 'peak moments' of a show and goes beyond a simple process of appealing to the tastes of the public 'by implicating

a direct, somewhat aggressive, address of the spectator' in Eisenstein's definition (Strauven 2006: 18). In Gaudreault's term 'cinematographie-attraction', which he borrowed from Coissac, 'attraction' falls under the denomination of 'cinematography'. Attractions, as Strauven's essay on early trick films shows, are produced through technologies, specifically the cinematic apparatus, which deploys tricks for the animation of the non-human or the dislocation of the human (Strauven 2006: 106–107). However, according to Eisenstein, an attraction was supposed to produce 'emotional shocks' in the tradition of French Grand Guignol Theatre—notorious for its use of horror and special effects (Strauven 2006: 18). Although the attractions that characterise early cinema also included other elements like chases, rescues, and even magic elements, in addition to bodily violence, they attempted to shock rather than to appeal to the miracle-seeking sensibility of the audience.

Enchantment is defined as 'captivation: a feeling of great liking for something wonderful and unusual' (*Princeton Encyclopaedia*) or an 'enraptured condition' (Oxford English Dictionary). Enchantments, as the product of 'a sorcerer by infusing inanimate things with the spirit of planetary and cosmic forces' (Farooqi 2009: x), have an occult basis. The effects of enchantment differ from Gunning's 'aesthetic of astonishment' despite his references to the influence of magic theatre because though 'first projections produced shock and astonishment, an excitement pushed to the point of terror' (Gunning 2006), this tradition used the latest technology to produce apparent miracles. The miraculous and the magical that constituted the attractions of the mythological genre designed to appeal to the religious sensibility of a devout mass audience or to astonish the listeners of the dastan cannot be framed within the spectacles of the cinema of attractions. Defining Hindi cinema as a cinema of attractions has teleological implications and its elucidation through the codes of photographic or cinematic realism fails to account for a 'domain populated with magic that is a world within the world' (Farooqi 2009). Bilal Tanweer, in his review of *Hoshruba: The Magic and the Tilism*, believes that it offers something 'entirely missing from our contemporary condition of disenchantment from the world', 'a world enchanted with

itself, perpetuating its meaning through an unmitigated belief in imaginative storytelling to bewilder, dazzle, and entertain us' (Tanweer 2010).[5]

Warning against regarding monstration and attraction as synonymous, Wanda Strauven shows that 'in the mode of attraction, the spectator is attracted towards the filmic (or the apparitical)' whereas in the case of monstration, 'the filmic (or the apparitical) is monstrated to the spectator' and concludes that 'attraction involves, more manifestly than monstration, the spectator; it is a force upon the latter' (Strauven 2006: 17). Gunning offers by way of explanation that 'rather than naming a specific period as "the cinema of attractions"', he had 'used the term to refer to an approach to spectatorship' that 'dominated the early cinema from the novelty period until the dominance of longer narrative films' (Gunning 2006: 36). He makes it clear that rather than seeing 'attractions as a counter narrative', he had proposed them as a different configuration of spectatorial involvement and address that can, in fact, interact in complex and varied ways with other forms of involvement (Gunning 2006: 37). Strauven notes the difference between Gunning's use of the 'cinema of attraction' (Gunning 1986) and 'cinema of attractions' (Gunning 1990) and suggests that while the first invites us to consider the cinema itself as an attraction, the second focuses on cinema as a series of attractions (Strauven 2006: 17).

While for Gunning, attraction is a category of cinema itself and its attractions might include magical elements, it doesn't include specifically the element of tilism or enchantment, which defines Indian cinema. The juxtaposition of Pritchett's translation of *Tilism-e Hoshruba* as 'Enchantment of the Senses' and Farooqi's as 'Magic that Will Blow Your Senses Away' against Gunning's notion of the 'cinema of attraction' might lead one to a different understanding of Hindi cinema in which the series of attractions, which contribute to the viewing pleasure are themselves embedded in a cinema that is itself an illusion. As Oldfield points out, Tilism-e Hoshruba offers the listener or reader 'a chance to lose oneself in an alternate reality built of untamed language that has been freed from any obligations to adhere to moral, logical, or didactic constraints' (Oldfield 2009: 383).

ENCHANTMENT THAT BLOWS AWAY THE SENSES

In her Introduction to Farooqi's translation, Oldfield argues that 'an important feature that distinguishes Tilism-e Hoshruba as a fantasy from other epics that contain magical elements (like the Arthurian legends, for example) is that the action takes place almost completely within the magical realm' (Oldfield 2009). The presence of fairies in the Dastan-e-Amir Hamza and other dastans makes them a specific category of tales in which fairies definitely play a key role, and which were probably directly translated in the stories that old hands in the Hindi film industry identified as 'pari stories' (Thomas 2014). While pointing out that the hero of the dastan inhabited a marvelous realm, Pritchett shows how the marvelous element increased in the Persian qissa over a period of time and culminated in the Urdu dastan, some of which like the Tilism-e-Hoshruba are nothing but magic (Pritchett 1985: 6). Oldfield agrees that 'unlike much fantasy literature, the epic does not offer a world that mirrors our own, providing morals and lessons like the grimly serious Tolkien trilogy' (Oldfield 2009).

The presence of the marvelous disqualifies Hindi cinema from being regarded in the same light as classical realist cinema. The marvelous, both as event and as explanation, has been central to discussions of Hindi cinema's realism. The marvelous events of the dastan have been divided by John Stevens into three categories: 'mysterious' events [that] are 'unmotivated, unexplained and inexplicable'; 'magical' events [that] are controlled by man; and 'miraculous' events [that] are controlled by God (Stevens 1973: 90–91). In a sense, the dastan world fits this typology, for it rests on the strong opposition between the (black) magic controlled by men, which must always be evil in the eyes of good Muslims, and the miraculous events ultimately controlled, however obscurely or indirectly, by God. Magicians work through spells and charms to create their enchantments. But the dastan hero is also aided by the arcane powers of pīrs, faqirs, and other holy personages and divine beings (Pritchett 1985: 5). Through examining how Queen Bilal deflects the magical objects with which Queen Suhel attacks her in the Dastan-e Amir Hamzah [DAH], Farooqi explains that 'within the enchanted world itself there are two layers of

magic: one in which all things exist, and the other produced by the reality to which they subscribe. While all are dependent on the first layer for their existence, the second could be suspended by one or more of the characters by resorting to a "sub-reality"' (Farooqi 2000: 141). He uses the word 'sub-reality' here because 'the whole of reality cannot be accessed from within the confines of the enchantment' (Farooqi 2000: 142). However, the centrality of the marvelous in the indigenous narrative and performing arts such as the dastan or qissa exceeds the situational and social to the representational that is shared by the dastango or qissakhwan and his audience because 'the fantasies/realities of all participants, the reader included, become one, and this linkage sustains the enchantment' (Farooqi 2000: 144). Farooqi's insistence that 'for the dāstān to be successful, the enchantment woven by the narrator's fantasy needs the second layer of the reader's own fantasy to sustain it' (2000: 142) foregrounds the mutual production of an illusory world by the teller and his listeners through shared codes of representation and perception that points to the nature of the world as a tilism or an illusion.

According to Farooqi, 'belief in the narrator is a core principle for the one who must enter the world of enchantment. And continuous belief in the narrator is imperative if one intends to explore this world further. The narrator wishes the reader to remain suspended in his (the narrator's) reality' (Farooqi 2000: 142). Unlike cinematic illusion that is tethered to the reproduction of an unstaged or staged reality even though the illusion might produce a virtual reality, the dastango creates purely imaginary worlds that have no referentiality. He also calls attention to 'things that do not have a material existence, either in this world or in the enchanted world of the dāstān: things which exist in the spatial realm of fancy for the characters of the dāstān, as well as for the characters in the real world. In such cases the identity of these objects is universal both within and without the enchantment' (Farooqi 2000: 143). But the dastango's freedom from reproductive illusion frees both his and his listeners' imagination to enter fully realised worlds of experience. Unlike cinema, the projective illusion depends to a large extent on the listener or spectator's ability to imagine in their minds the objects or events narrated by the dastango. In Farooqi's

opinion, 'If the reader does not believe in the conjuration raised by the narrator's fantasy, he may nurse his sanity, but can no longer derive any pleasure from the dastan. To enjoy the dastan, he must again plunge himself into the world of the narrator (2000: 143). Without being able to see a representation as in cinema, the listener must be able to imagine that he sees what the representation represents. In addition to its projective illusion that allows listeners to enter fully realised worlds, the dastan offers another level of illusion, that is, the tilism.

Tilism: Magic, Science or Ontology?

The term tilism is of Greek origin and meant an emblem possessing magical or protective powers but is now loosely understood as magic or a maze. Pritchett shows that though tilism transliterates as talisman or something to ward off enchantments along with other dangers, its dominant meaning in classical Urdu literature comes from the dastan, conveying an 'enchanted world—amazing, even stupefying, events and sights; mystery; inaccessibility; a general incomprehensibility that reduces one to helplessness; the inability to get out by any normal means' (Pritchett, Ghalib Project).

Tilism is often confused with magic, which has pejorative associations with pagan rituals of gods and goddesses in Christian thought. Farooqi draws on Islamic texts, such as the fourteenth century *Muqaddimah-e Tarikh-e Ibn-e Khaldun,* (Khaldun and Rahmani 2001) to interrogate the opposition between magic and science in Christianity and suggests that magic was closely related with physical and occult sciences and used science to produce magic. He argues that in the oral Urdu narrative traditions of South Asia, the special combination of occult sciences used to create a magical world, or tilism*,* is called *himia*. Defining himia as 'the science of conquering planetary forces and enslaving jinns' (2009: 433), Farooqi asserts that it was based on the combination of at least four occult sciences: *simia*, *kimia*, *limia*, and *rimia*.[6] This understanding of tilism appears to have been shared by Kamlapati Tripathi, the grandson of Devakinandan Khatri, whose novel *Chandrakanta* (1888) displays a strong influence of the tilism

literature in Urdu. Tripathi's objecting to the television version of *Chandrakanta* (1994) on the grounds that it reduces tilism, which is based on technical and scientific principles, to *jadoo* or magic, problematises the translation of tilism as magic and the reading of the dastan as magic realism.

Suhail Ahmad Khan argues that a simplistic understanding of tilism can undermine its symbolic significance for the dastango and his audience and stresses on its metaphysical dimensions: 'Ancient genres of literature regarded the world as a tilism and saw its outward aspect as an illusion or a phantasmagoria created by the elements. Similarly, man's inner being was seen as an enchanting tilism, but one in which lay hidden many an awesome ordeal' (Khan 2000: 96). Krishna Majithia (1978) observes a resemblance between *tilism* and *maya* based on its definition in the *Rig Veda* and calls attention to its relationship with *maya-vidya*[7] mentioned in the Hindu epics. Mahmood Farooqui agrees:

> A loose translation of tilism is *maya*. We are living in a mayavi world today. The moment we encounter multiple realms in *Dastangoi*, we open up a mayavi jaal, which can be applied to this world. It's a kind of questioning, an illusion. Are we living through it? It's as if someone is playing with us, like Shakespeare makes us feel the stars are sporting with us, so the idea that we're in a world of magic reveals all kinds of shifts in meanings. (Farooqui, quoted in Mita Kapur 2012)

Reading Pritchett's description of tilism as a fake 'simulacrum of a world', Farooqi's notion of himia as a special combination of occult sciences to create a magical world or tilism, and Khan's concept of the world as a tilism with Majithia's comparison of tilism with maya makes it possible to conceptualise tilism as a metaphor for the method and effects of popular Hindi cinema, which creates an enchanted world that produces certain sensory effects on the viewer and gratifications that are based on a different perception and understanding of the world.

The conception of the cinematic text as a tilism liberated from mimetic realism can facilitate the theorisation of the magical effect or enchantment that it produces in the minds of viewers. Pritchett

sees tilism as 'inherently a sort of fake, a simulacrum of a world: the things you find in it are almost never what they seem' and 'when it's broken it bursts like a bubble, and almost everything in it vanishes'—which might well apply to the simulacrum that is cinema (Pritchett, Ghalib Project: *Ghazal* 173, verse 11). Similarly, Farooqi's translation of tilism as 'a domain populated with magic that is a world within the world' (Farooqi 2009) reverberates with Akhtar's description of Hindi cinema as a dream that constitutes itself according to its own rules.

Pritchett's definition of tilism as magical worlds within which 'nothing is what it seems: time or space expand or contract at the narrator's pleasure' situates the unrealist Hindi cinema within a world that can be created and destroyed by sorcery and trickery (Pritchett 1991: 15). But when read in conjunction with Raj Kapoor's imagining of Hindi commercial cinema as a 'sapna' and himself as a '*sapnon ka saudagar*' or dream merchant that titles of books on Hindi cinema often pick on, it epitomises the method of a cinema that consistently invites attention to its anti-mimetic status. Marie Gillespie's warning that, 'in order to understand the conventions of realism\antirealism in Hindi cinema, one would need to consider much wider issues including concepts and conventions of realism in Indian culture generally' has a bearing on the symbolic import of tilism for Hindi film audiences, much like it did for the medieval dastan audiences (Gillespie 1989: 235). If cinematic realism is based on the production of an experience of illusion through technology that facilitates the removal of media awareness, the dastango is required to produce an illusion that leads one to truth rather than deception.

A distinction needs to be made between the idea of illusion as a fake and that created by the science of planetary forces or a combination of occult sciences. In understanding the 'illusion' produced by Hindi cinema, simia or 'the science of creating illusions and transferring spirits between bodies', which 'manipulates the imagination and presents non-existent and imaginary things to the human eye' is extremely crucial (Farooqi 2009: 433). The world of Hindi cinema that has been denigrated for its lack of resemblance to any experienced world interpreted in light of the logic of tilism underlines not the gullible audience's willingness to be duped by

an illusion that is untrue but its sensitivity to representational cues provided by the dastango that enable them to experience its projective illusion. Contrary to being misled into believing that the world they see on the screen is real, the audience's familiarity with the ontological illusionism of the dastan enables them to experience a fully realised world of experience. Unlike the Hollywood audience whose expectations of cinema have been shaped by its ontological realism, the Hindi film audience contributes to the production of projective illusion by expecting cinema to produce enchanted worlds. The failure of realist cinema to engage the average Indian spectator must be attributed to its refusal to recognise this expectation through its attempt to educate the spectator in the grammar of cinema. On the other hand, the commercial Hindi filmmaker, the merchant of dreams, reveals a cognizance of their need to experience enchanted worlds. Javed Akhtar's description needs to be quoted in full to understand this world:

> There is one more state in this country and that is Hindi cinema.… Hindi cinema's culture is quite different from Indian culture, but it is not alien to us.… As a matter of fact, Hindi cinema is our closest neighbor. It has its own world, its own traditions, its own symbols, its own expressions, its own language and those who are familiar with it understand it. (Akhtar quoted in Kabir 1999: 35)

It is the world created by the dastango in which everything is larger than life and impossible things happen. Giants more than ten feet tall walk the earth, brave young men vanquish an entire army, twins separated at birth are united through uncanny coincidences, human beings are rescued through divine interventions and ghosts return to exact revenge. All those aspects that seem implausible from a rational scientific perspective make perfect sense in the world of Hindi cinema whose rules, although entirely different from those of the real world, follow their own inexorable logic. At no stage is the spectator duped into believing that what s/he is observing is the real world but s/he does believe that in the fictional fantastic world of the film, this can indeed happen.

In the B-grade films of the 1950s, called *jadoo* or fantasy films, produced by Basant Pictures owned by Homi Wadia, the dastanic

space is unambiguously translated, featuring 'magical worlds in which the impossible happens' (Thomas 2014: 151). 'Fantasies permit you to stretch your imagination, to think out tricks which will thrill the audience, it's a bit like magic this fantasy film making', Wadia stated in an interview (Wadia 1991: 40). Rosie Thomas asserts that 'India's fantasy films' were 'spun around magical and wondrous happenings in a quasi-Arabian Islamicate setting, most drawing loosely on oral and literary traditions of the Arabian Nights' (Thomas, *Tasveer Ghar*). Arguing that 'magical worlds and superhuman feats have a long history within India's mythological traditions, both its Hindu religious epics and its Islamicate legends', Thomas examines stills from the film *Aladdin and the Magic Lamp* (1952) featuring the genie flying on a magic carpet to show that 'both are dreamscapes in which apparently magical flying promises to transport consumers out of the mundane world into an enchanted domain' (Thomas, *Tasveer Ghar*). She explains the popularity of tales from the Arabian Nights with the coming of the talkies in India to the audience's familiarity with these stories and to their offering 'surprising twists and turns' in storylines (ibid.). Although the fantasy films made way for the films of social realism at the end of the 1930s, there was a revival of the fantasy genre in the 1950s with K. Amarnath's *Alif Laila* (1953).

Anustup Basu points out that although 'the stunt spectacular was gradually relegated to poverty row segments of the industry' with 'the nationalist feudal-bourgeois recoding of culture and the emergence of the social from the early thirties', 'the caped/masked crusader' of this category of films 'appeared within the parameters of the top line feudal family romance' from time to time as late as the 1980s (Basu 2011: 559). He argues that 'in recent years, the popular Hindi cinema industry has been experimenting with the superhero and science-fantasy genres [*Koi Mil Gaya* 2003; *Krrish* 2006; *Ra.One* 2011], albeit with mixed box office results (Basu 2011: 559). However, Marie Gillespie is of the view that 'for those who enjoy Hindi films fantasy is a chief source of pleasure', and that 'the songs and dances as well as their settings often provide discrete dream-like sequences "and a moment of escape from reality" for the spectator', confirming their dastan-like ambience (Gillespie 1989: 234).

UTOPIAN VISIONS: THE WORLD OF DREAMS WHICH SHUTS OUT ALL TROUBLES

Hindi filmmakers' commitment to the production of a dream world which their audiences can retreat into would suggest that the space of Hindi cinema should be read as a Utopia, a site 'with no real places', one that presents 'society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down' (Foucault 1986: 22). Richard Dyer, in 'Entertainment and Utopia', examined musicals as entertainment and maintained that two of the taken-for-granted descriptions of entertainment, '"escape" and "wish fulfillment", point to its central thrust, namely, utopianism' (Dyer 2002: 20). Agreeing with Enzensberger's notion of media as answering deep social needs, Dyer holds that 'entertainment is responding to needs that are real, at the same time is also defining and delimiting what constitute the legitimate needs of people in this society' (Dyer 2002: 26). Therefore, while it addresses real needs, entertainment also denies 'the legitimacy of other needs', especially of class, patriarchal and sexual struggles' and that 'the ideals of entertainment imply wants that capitalism itself promises to meet' (Dyer 2002: 27), thus creating a 'one-dimensional' situation. Dyer contends that this one-dimensionality is countered by 'the deeply contradictory nature of entertainment forms' and the contradictions that are to be found in the disjunctions between 'the narrative and musical numbers', between 'the representational and non-representational' signs (Dyer 2002: 27). If utopianism is intrinsic to musicals and all forms of entertainment, how does the 'image of "something better" to escape into' (Dyer 2002: 20) offered by Hindi films classified as musicals differ from other forms of entertainment? Dyer underlines the need to 'examine the specificity of entertainment's utopia' and suggests that the categories of utopian sensibility 'are related to specific inadequacies in society' (2002: 25–26). He concludes that entertainment works because it responds to real needs created by society (Dyer 2002: 26).

Rustam Bharucha questions the construction of happiness in one of Bollywood's biggest hits *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (1994), which, in his view, 'almost assumes a utopic dimension' (Bharucha 1995: 801). He offers a compelling reading of the film as exemplifying a

'fetishized representation' that focuses on 'the materiality of objects, which are substitutes for desire (1995: 802) and concludes with the disquieting admission that 'the surrender to Barjatya's utopia cannot be separated from the infiltration of capital in our cultural space' (Bharucha 1995: 804). Although the utopian sensibilities of Hindi films from the 1950s to the 1990s are reversed through dystopic images of deprivation, squalor, disease and oppression and the presence of evil in the shape of the ubiquitous villain, their lavish studio settings, sanitised cities, slums and villages produce visions of abundance and goodness. Are these images of abundance to be viewed as utopian solutions to social tensions caused by scarcity, as Dyer suggests? The appeal of mainstream Bollywood films would appear to lie in their answering deep social needs for the elimination of poverty and injustice, for the individual as well as society, and equal distribution of wealth in the face of actual poverty and inequity. Contesting this simplistic explanation, Kakar holds that the reason for the ubiquity of film fantasy 'lies in the realm of cultural psychology rather than in the domain of socio-economic conditions in India' (Kakar 1980: 13).

Utopias mean no places, but also good places as opposed to bad places or dystopias. Manmohan Desai, the maker of several 1970s blockbusters and progenitor of the 'Hindi *masala* film', stated, 'I want to take them into a *dream world* where there is no poverty, where there are no beggars, where fate is kind and God is busy looking after his flock' (Desai quoted in Manuel 1993: 45). Contrary to his statement, Desai's '*dream world'* is replete with images of poverty and includes not only beggars but also thieves and pickpockets. Although Desai directly experimented with the dastan only in the highly successful *Dharamveer* (1977), one can demonstrate that Hindi masala films broadly function within the escapist space of the dastan. Desai made a number of superhit films in the 1970s that foregrounded issues of deprivation, social inequality, even violence, in the vendetta tales featuring Amitabh Bachchan. These films featuring separated lovers or twins or orphaned protagonists certainly do not represent a perfect world but one riddled with injustice, crime and violence. But the dream world is represented as a polarised opposition in true dastan style in which social tensions caused by scarcity and issues

of class, patriarchy and gender are submerged in an epic battle between forces of good and evil, concluding in the reformation or decimation of evil. In her reading of *Shree 420*, Virdi examines 'the contradictions between the commitment to the nation and the Herculean challenge posed by meeting the needs for food, shelter, clothing and education' (Virdi 2003: 97) and concludes that these tensions remain unresolved till the closing shot of the film featuring the song '*Mera joota hai Japani*' [My shoes are Japanese]. Despite the presence of squalor, deprivation and oppression, the films essay a universe 'where fate is kind and God is busy looking after his flock'. In this universe, after suffering tribulations and hardships through the workings of fate, separated lovers and siblings are permitted to reunite with each other and with their children, blind mothers regain their vision at saint's shrines, protagonists destroy evil and recover their rightful places in the family and community and are rewarded with true love in proper dastan fashion.

Like the dastan and fairytale, Hindi cinema has a distinct utopian function with its potential to make the underdog feel good and its happily-ever-after ending. Suffering and evil in Hindi films are explained by the ameliorating ontological understanding of kismet or karma and the generic expectation of the happy ending. Although the happy ending is by no means always assured either in the dastan or in Hindi cinema, its utopian gesture is articulated through its liberatory function, that is, through its reflection of a process of struggle against all forms of oppression. As Rachel Dwyer puts it, 'the melodramatic mode prefers an ending with the world restored in the correct way rather than a couple living "happy ever after"' (Dwyer 2013: 402). Dwyer contests the widely held perception of Hindi films having happy endings by stating that it is only the romantic genre whose ending requires the formation of the couple in the embrace of the (extended) family and reexamines the idea of happiness in Hindi films with respect to this dimension of utopia. She argues that the 'Indian film offers viewers three main types of happiness: emotional, moral and judgmental. This can mean the audience feels happy, is satisfied that the law is observed and the good rewarded and pleased that religion and traditions are upheld' (Dwyer 2013).

Interrogating the idea of utopia as comic or ending happily, Richard Gerber maintains that 'there are no happy endings in the greater Utopias, but there cannot be any despair either, because the ideal remains inviolate (Gerber 1955: 130). While speaking of the utopias produced by entertainment, Dyer makes the important point that utopias 'work at the level of sensibility', by which he means 'an affective code that is characteristic of, and largely specific to, a given mode of cultural production' (Dyer 2002: 20) that combines representational and non-representational signs. Although all Hindi films might not feature perfect worlds and end happily, their utopian dimension functions at the affective level through their gratification of audience's desires at the emotional and moral level. It is in their suggestion of the possibility of a perfect world, of families living in complete harmony, of finding true love and of good eventually winning over evil that the utopian function of the romance dastan is fulfilled. Gillespie's young respondent describes it as another world that transports her to a euphoric state.

> When I watch an Indian film, after that I'm in heaven but I don't relate to the real world like I did … they're in rose gardens and the music just springs up from nowhere … that's why people like watching them to get away from their lives. What do drugs do? They take you to another world but they are a safer way out of your problems. (Quoted in Gillespie 1989: 233)

Unlike Gillespie's young West London interviewee who 'wouldn't mind sitting around in rose gardens or deserts being loved and things like that' (1989: 234), the Hindi film audience is conscious that the rose garden is no more than a conventional dastan setting for romance. But this knowledge does not prevent them from surrendering to the escapist pleasures of the fantastic worlds created by Hindi films. Kakar points out that 'in India the child's world of magic is not as far removed from adult consciousness as it may be in some other cultures' and that the Indian ego is flexible enough to regress temporarily to childhood modes without feeling threatened or engulfed' (Kakar 1980: 14). He concludes that the Hindi film, like the adult daydream, emphasises the central features

of fantasy—'the fulfillment of wishes, the humbling of competitors and the destruction of enemies' (Kakar 1980: 15). He adds that 'to limit and reduce the real to that which can be demonstrated as factual is to exclude the domain of the psychically real, all that is felt to be the actuality of one's inner life' (Kakar 1980).

CONCLUSION

The self-acknowledged escapism of the Hindi film defended by its producers for its mitigation of the subcontinent's numbing poverty and derided by purveyors of realist cinema for its lack of social realism must be framed within the conventional pleasures of dastans rather than in those of fantasies. Innocent of Aristotelian injunctions on aesthetic pleasure and Platonic mimeticism, the literacy of the average audience of Hindi film in the conventions of indigenous narrative and performing arts allows them to suspend their disbelief and give in to the enchantment produced by Hindi cinema, which they are well aware represents a world produced by enchantment in the first place. Without denying the interaction between Sanskritic and Perso-Arabic performing arts visible in modern Hindi, Urdu and Parsi theatres, the magic of tilism, this book argues that the predominant trope in the dastan, produces a distinctive form of enchantment that is Hindi cinema. Viewing Hindi cinema as an enchantment produced through a combination of occult forces compels a fresh look at its much disparaged escapism. Although the enchantment of the world of the dastan might have been overtly translated only in Arabian Nights fantasies, oriental, costume and stunt films, its traces are visible even in mythologicals and historicals and inflects the realism of the socials.

NOTES

1. By transparency, Currie means that film, 'because of its use of the photographic method, reproduces rather than merely represents the real world' (Currie 1995: 326).

2. According to cognitive illusionist theory, film 'engenders a false belief in us such that we are literally seeing the fictional events of a film unfold before us'. Perceptual illusionist theory makes a distinction 'between how film appears to us and how it really is, independently of our beliefs about it' (Kania 2008: 237–238).

3. James Chapman contends that Hindi cinema 'is a cinema of spectacle, a cinema of excess, a cinema of stylization', which 'does not conform to any regime of verisimilitude', 'is highly melodramatic' and 'privileges performance over characterization and style over narrative' (Chapman 2003: 345).

4. 'The drive towards display, rather than creation of a fictional world; a tendency towards punctual temporality, rather than extended development; a lack of interest in character "psychology" or the development of motivation; and a direct, often marked address, to the spectator at the expense of the creation of a diegetic coherence, are attributes that define attractions, along with its power of "attraction"' (Gunning 2006: 36).

5. Geeta Kapur has brilliantly demonstrated the deployment of modern technology to produce devotion in the devotional genre through her examination of the gaze in early films like *Sant Tukaram* (1936) (Geeta Kapur 1987).

6. 'Simia is the science of creating illusions and transferring spirits between bodies. It manipulates the imagination and presents non-existent and imaginary things to the human eye. *Kimia* is the science of the transmutation of physical properties of elements, of bringing them to the highest pinnacle of their essence. *Limia* is the science of runes—letters or words that cause super-natural effects through interaction with the function of heavenly bodies. *Rimia* is the science of configuring and exploiting the inherent physical forces of the Earth to create extraordinary marvels' (Farooqi 2009: 433).

7. There are references to *maya-vidya* or producing illusions as an art associated with *rakshasas* in the Hindu epics.

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Towards an Alternative Aesthetic of the Hindi Masala Film

The formulation of a definitive theory of Indian cinema predicated on the Hindu concepts of dharma and darshan has effectively elided alternative aesthetic and cognitive systems, which have been incorporated in the production of a cinematic tradition that reflects and celebrates syncretic socio-cultural, linguistic and religious spaces prevailing in India until the end of the nineteenth century. This book attempted to fill this gap by throwing light on the Perso-Arabic lineage of mainstream Hindi cinema and suggested that the overlapping ethnic, cultural and religious boundaries of India encapsulated in the metaphor of the Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb are still visible and alive in the space of the Hindi masala film.

Described as 'Hindustani' by some and as 'all kinds of Hindi' (Trivedi 2006) by others, the language of Hindi cinema reveals the imbrication of Hindi-Urdu and reflects the strongest influence of Persian poetry in the use of words, images, metaphors and dialogues. Traces of the syncretic Ganga-Jamuni culture, that appears to have vanished from the lived experience of urban Indians in many parts of the country, is unambiguously visible in Hindustani—a language in use until the end of the nineteenth century in which the newly Sanskritised Hindi was inextricably mixed with Urdu. Even though Hindustani has been displaced in the public space by multiple registers of Hindi, ranging from a chaste Sanskrit-based Hindi to 'Bambaiyya' Hindi and Hinglish, educated speakers continue to converse in a spoken Hindi that is dominated by Urdu. In film dialogue, scriptwriters often attempt to create a speech that reflects these different spoken registers. The predominance of Urdu in Hindi film dialogue and lyrics has been largely attributed to the migration of Urdu poets and writers from North India to Hindi cinema following the collapse of royal

patronage to Parsi theatre, and from Punjab after Partition. In addition, Punjabi filmmakers, writers, actors and musicians educated in Urdu, which continued to be the official language of Punjab until 1947, who crossed the border from Lahore to Mumbai, brought with them the literary and cultural heritage of Urdu to Bollywood. Although the dialogues of more recent Hindi films mix Hindi with English, Punjabi and Bambaiyya Hindi to appeal to contemporary Indian audiences, Urdu continues to serve as the register of intense emotion and romance, particularly in film music.

Urdu words such as ishq, izzat, farz, qanoon, waqt, kismat are preferred over their Hindi equivalents in articulating key concepts in Hindi film storylines. Although prem, the Hindi equivalent of ishq, does exist in formal usage, it is rarely employed in declarations of love in the Hindi film that tends to switch between multiple Urdu terms. Similarly, the doctrine of divine determination is articulated through the notion of *kismat* or the sufi concept of waqt rather than Sanskrit bhagya. Surprisingly, the key trope of dharma is also expressed through the invocation of the Urdu farz rather than kartavya or dharma in dialogues. The long declamatory dialogues of historical films require the rhetorical flourish of Urdu, which also lends itself to the stylised, hyperbolic language of melodrama. 'Dialoguebaazi', one of the main attractions of the Hindi masala film, was synonymous with formal Urdu until the scriptwriter duo of Salim-Javed changed the rules of writing dialogues in the 1970s with short pithy impactful lines delivered in simple Hindustani. Yet the power of Urdu in oblique expressions of love and emotion continues to be exploited even in the present. The song and dance sequences directly reflect the influence of Persian poetry and mysticism on Urdu poets. Images and metaphors used by Hindi film lyricists borrow the conventions of Persian poetry and music in descriptions of the beloved and romantic love. Even new Bollywood films that reflect contemporary speech in dialogues resort to the sufi idiom in song and dance to express the intensity of love.

The Hindu concept of darshan in which both devotee and deity are locked in a mutual gaze has been judiciously appropriated by film scholars in complicating the notion of gaze in Western film theory by proposing an alternative 'look' for mainstream Indian cinema (Kapur 1987; Rajadhyaksha 1987; Prasad 1998). Similarly,

the notion of dharma prescribed by Hinduism that regulates the ethics and actions of protagonists in the Hindu epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* has been revealed as the grand syntagmatique of the Hindi film (Mishra 2002). Dharma undoubtedly forms the overarching framework within which all action is presented and the cosmological movement from adharma to dharma structures the fragmented, episodic plot of the Hindi film (Mishra 2002). However, as this book demonstrates, the 'grande syntagmatique of *dharma*' is invariably disrupted by the concept of ishq, engendering a moral conflict between filial obligations and romantic love. The idea of pak ishq or pure love that the Hindi film prefers to articulate through the Perso-Arabic qissa of Laila Majnun invariably complicates both the dharma plot and the meaning of the term.

The popular Hindi film draws on the Laila Majnun legend rather than the myth of Radha Krishna as a metaphor for pak ishq and juxtaposes *ishq majazi* or devotion to the beloved with *ishq haqiqi* or devotion to the deity. Although ishq is represented as conflicting with the protagonist's filial obligations, the lover's absolute devotion to his beloved reiterating Majnun's obsessive love for Laila elevates ishq as a form of religious duty or dharma that the protagonist is enjoined to observe even if it were to come in conflict with his filial and/or societal obligations. Even films that uphold duties to the family over those to the beloved leave the audience overwhelmed by the intensity of the lovers' devotion to one another. While the *Ramayana* trope of the faithful wife Sita and the duty-abiding husband Rama is reproduced in the Hindi film heroine's loyalty to the hero of the Hindi film, the Perso-Arabic qissa of Laila Majnun is appropriated in the trope of the devoted lover and his idealised beloved. Notwithstanding the strong presence of love as embodied by the Radha-Krishna myth in the songs as well as narratives of popular Hindi cinema, the unmistakable stamp of the Laila Majnun qissa in the romance plot confirms the unproblematic incorporation of diverse narrative and aesthetic influences of the Indian subcontinent in the Hindi film. The imbrication of the Islamic in the Hindu is best illustrated in Bengali writer Sarat Chandra's novel *Devdas* where the protagonist, as a reincarnation of the love-crazed Majnun, serves as the template of the Majnun hero of the Hindi film. Unlike tales of Hindu gods and

goddesses that offer tropes of conjugal (Rama and Sita) and illicit love (Radha and Krishna), the sufi legend of young lovers driven apart by societal pressures has an intrinsically stronger appeal for viewers of sentimental melodramatic romance (Mishra 2002: 15). The obstacles encountered by young lovers in their union in the form of caste, class, ethnic or sectarian differences are inevitably posed as an opposition between ishq and dharma. Torn between their love for one another and duty to the family or community, they attempt to reconcile the demands of duty with those of love. While upholding the principle of dharma, the Hindi film suggests that the sacrifice or destruction of love by the lovers for the sake of *dharma* inevitably leads to tragic consequences. It postulates that an amicable resolution of conflict is possible through the reconciliation of love with duty whereas the disregard of duty for love results in tragedy. However, film narratives of doomed romance patterned after Laila and Majnun that result in the death of both lovers inevitably conclude by extolling the power of love. Like in the Persian legend, the lovers' dedication to each other elevates their relationship to a divine level, enabling them to transcend earthly bonds governed by the laws of dharma.

The polarised characters of the typical Hindi film hero and villain, the heroine and the vamp, the comedian have been critiqued for their lack of development. Stereotypes of the loving mother, strict father, loyal wife and virtuous husband that abound in Hindi films have a strong resemblance to the two-dimensional characters of the dastan that enable the storyteller to focus on moral issues. The Hindi masala film borrows from the dastan otherworldly characters like the shehzada and the pari, divs, djinns and ayyars who exist to perform a specific function. The typical Hindi film hero, like the prince in the dastan, is handsome, high born, noble, virtuous and courageous, the very embodiment of good, whose primary role is to free his land from evil monsters. The villain, modeled after the monstrous divs in the dastan, is ugly, savage, violent and evil and forms a perfect foil to the hero. Hindi film heroes are represented as impossibly handsome and the villains as incredibly ugly even though the villain's role has often been essayed by some of the most handsome men in the film industry. This has been made possible with the help of costumes, accessories,

voice modulations, camera angles as well as mannerisms cultivated by actors playing the role. The typical Hindi film heroine best represents the idea of a category of beings known as houris in Persian literature—ethereally beautiful and virginal but completely innocent of the impact of her sexuality on men. Rather than the apsaras of Hindu mythology and epics, the Hindi film heroine bears greater resemblance to the dark-eyed, long-haired, voluptuous houris who inhabit jannat or paradise. Invariably virtuous, the heroine is contrasted with the immoral vamp and seductress who invites and enjoys the attention of men. The difference between them is represented sartorially, with the heroine clad in saris while the vamp sports short skirts and provocative clothes. Finally, the most important character of the dastan, namely the ayyar, makes an appearance in the shape of the comedian. However, unlike the dastan in which the ayyar aids the prince in accomplishing his goals, the Hindi film comedian is largely included to provide comic relief and play the go-between and facilitator between the lovers. Divested of his tilismic knowledge, the ayyar is reduced to a trickster.

The episodic, fragmented plot of the Hindi film, that was perceived as detracting from the unity of action by those who came with expectations of tightly knit linear cause-and-effect sequences, has been ingeniously elucidated through the description of Hindi cinema as 'a cinema of interruptions' in which the song and dance, interval, the fight sequences and so on are integral to diegetic and extra-diegetic pleasure. However, these components of the cinema of interruptions have not been read in connection with the device of parataxis or the random juxtaposition of disparate elements without an attempt to weave them into a whole that has been identified as the structure of the dastan. Beginning with the assumption that it is possible to speak of the morphology of the Hindi film, the origins of the time-tested formulae of the Hindi film were traced back to the four dominant features of the dastan—razm, bazm, tilism and ayyari. Familiar conventions such as the quest, falling in love, fist fight, comic subplot, happy ending, enchantment and song and dance were viewed as emerging specifically from the conventions of the dastan. Although the dastan shares the episodic structure with other Indic narrative

traditions that might equally have governed storytelling in popular Hindi cinema, the device of dastan rokna employed by the dastango to hold the audience's interest through displays of linguistic dexterity, elaborate descriptions of time and place, the and particularly of husn-i-ishq or beauty and love, explains the pleasures of song and dance and other interruptions. The charms of a cinema in which linear logic is disregarded to accommodate digressive elements that distract the viewer from development of the plot may be attributed to its formulaic nature. Since the audience is familiar with the plot, the filmmaker's challenge lies in being able to tell the same story differently through the introduction of details that would appeal to the audience rather than creating original plots. This accounts for the lavish settings, changes in locales, costumes, star power, action scenes and songs and dances, which distinguish one film from another. Like the dastango who would improvise on well-known tales and hold the audience's interest through the introduction of new details, twists and turns in narrative, the Hindi filmmaker draws the audience to the theatre through different permutations and combinations that differentiate one masala film from the other. One may argue, therefore, that the filmmaker's skill lies less in what kinds of stories are told than how they are told in a tradition that places a premium on infinite expansion rather than on original composition. The issue of original composition brings one to the contentious issue of allegations of plagiarism against Hindi filmmakers. Although intellectual laziness is cited as an obvious explanation, the culture of copy needs to be contextualised within a narrative and performative tradition in which the fetishisation of originality is displaced by the pleasure of repetition and foreknowledge.

The linear plot of the Euro-American novel and film reflects the linear notion of time in the modern Western notion of time. Western time's universalist pretensions have submerged alternative understandings of time that underpin narration in non-Western narratives. Hindi cinema reflects the enchanted time of the gods that contests the homogeneous, disenchanted, clock time of the West. While the Hindu cyclic notion of time, on which the theory of karma is predicated, structures the consciousness of time in Hindi cinema, it also incorporates the time of Persian mysticism.

The enfolding of Persian mystic time within the Hindu framework of yugas and trikal is reflected in the preference for Urdu terms such as zamana, waqt, hal, muddat, mohlat and so on over their Hindi equivalents for expressing the idea of time. Hindu and sufi concepts of time appear to converge in their belief in a personalised notion of time that governs human destinies. Waqt as defined in sufi thought dominates the universe of Hindi cinema in which all events are represented as the play of time or destiny. The idea of a divine force governing human action and destiny is translated in Hindi cinema's preference for a supernatural rather than a rational explanation of events. As in the dastan, the logic of events is governed by the laws of Possibility rather than Causality in the Hindi film and the sequence of events is represented as governed by divine intervention and convenient coincidence. In its combination of individual responsibility with divine will in the evolution of the plot, the Hindi film is able to weave the lived experience of time into mythic time. If the idea of predestination is expressed through the sufi concept of waqt, life in time is captured in the sufi notion of zaman translated in the Hindi film through the Urdu term zamana. While the Hindu division of time into yugas, of which the present falls into the Kaliyuga, forms the time-scale within which individual acts are located, the Hindi film turns to the Urdu term to bemoan the corruptive tendencies of the present age. The sufi concept appears to collapse into the cosmological time of Hinduism through characters' frequently switching between Urdu and Hindi terms. The temporality of the world of change is contrasted with a moment in time experienced by the sufi in which the distinction between the past, the present and the future dissolves. This moment when the devotee's focus on the image of the deity enables him to step out of time is experienced in the Hindi film through the act of falling in love. The lover's single-minded pursuit of his beloved transports him outside lived time into the moment of hal in which he remains oblivious of everything around him. The interruption of the narrative plot occurs through the description of husn-i-ishq through the technique of dastan rokna in the song and dance sequences in which the lover gazes at his beloved spellbound and claims to be in the state of hal. Finally, the cyclic notion of time is directly translated in the reincarnation film in which actions in

a past life are represented as being connected with those in the present and indirectly in the repetition of tropes within a single plot and of plots over several films. The cyclic notion of time in which the present is a reenactment of the past is borrowed as much from the Hindu notion of trikal as from the Persian ta'ziyeh and reflected in the repetitive pattern of the plot.

The 'once upon a time' setting of the Hindi film is located in the 'no place' of utopia as well as in the real spaces of the heterotopias. The utopian space of Hindi cinema has largely been read in relation to its generic classification as fantasy but not in that of the generic escapism of the dastan that has been the source of its unfailing appeal over the centuries. As in the dastan, the protagonists' adventures take place somewhere that does not exist anywhere on earth. The Hindi film offers its audience a dream world in which there is no sorrow or suffering. While the no space of the dream world certainly recalls the utopian space of Hindi cinema, real spaces are also represented in a manner that they acquire a heterotopic dimension. While scholars have called attention to the stylised sets of musical sequences in the films of the 1950s and the designer homes and slums of the 1990s, they have overlooked the fact that Hindi cinema has always created a space that has no spatial location beginning with the stylised sets of the silent era.

The self-acknowledged escapism of the Hindi film—defended by its producers for its mitigation of the subcontinent's numbing poverty and derided by purveyors of realist cinema for its lack of social realism—must be framed within the conventional pleasures of dastans rather than in those of fantasies. Innocent of Aristotelian injunctions on aesthetic pleasure and Platonic mimeticism, the literacy of the average audience of mainstream commercial Hindi cinema in the conventions of indigenous mythology, narrative and performing arts makes them suspend their disbelief in surrendering to the enchantment produced by Hindi cinema, which they know represents a world produced by enchantment in the first place. Without denying the interaction between Sanskritic and Perso-Arabic performing arts visible in modern Hindi, Urdu and Parsi theatres, the book suggests that the magical tilism that is the

predominant trope in the dastan produces a distinctive form of enchantment that is Hindi cinema.

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Index