Chapter Five

Walk across the Border: Questioning Stereotypes in Partition Cinema

In an article on ‘Films as Historical Sources or Alternative History’, Anirudh Deshpande tells us:

The time has come to seriously examine the approach of historians to cinema in general and the historical film in particular. Since history itself has proved to be a dynamic discipline, the habit of viewing films with an eye to ‘facticity’ should give way to a nuanced understanding of the historical potential of cinema...if historians want to bridge the widening chasm between public and academic histories they have no choice but to take relatively new forms of knowledge like film seriously. On the other hand, film makers cannot and should not, ignore the context of literacy informing their work. Given the will and ample opportunity to collaborate, historians and filmmakers, operating in a heterogeneous field of post-literacy, literacy and pre-literacy can learn a lot from each other.¹

Does a particular kind of cinema portray ‘history’ in a more subjective manner? Does it involve the audience in its representation of the historical event? Does it bring a fresh insight into the lives of women in society and does it give one a sense of ‘national identity’? The historicization of an event like the Partition is significant in terms of the way it portrays the women and whether it cultivates a sense of ‘national’ identity?

All this and more is what I attempt to answer in this chapter which proposes to show that Partition cinema is attempting to question certain stereotypes as far as the portrayal of women is concerned. These films also represent the stark and naked vision of a nation with all the accompanied feelings of loss, nostalgia and disintegration. The stereotyped possibilities of a
free nation are questioned as well. There was an inherent sense of falsity in this belief of a free nation, and that is what we see reflected in these films. Was it free for the women? Was it free for the masses? Before we move on to our thesis, it is important to know the difference between written history and the visual history of cinema, of the reasons why 'oral sources' of history are also important and also why it took so long for Indian cinema to look at such a momentous and calamitous event like the Partition.

Written and recorded history has been a dry exercise for generations. The history that we find in textbooks is full of facts and details but somehow it does not capture the human experience. In fact consciously or subconsciously for the greater part of the existence of historiography, historians remained chroniclers of the official records—the ones most likely to generate self-glorifying documents for posterity.

We have to agree that even historians would like to believe that all historical sources have their limitations. So the need is to look for alternative sources to write newer histories. It is fortunate that the critique of narrative history, which reeks of an abrasive subjectivity, has given an opportunity to the historians to explore newer avenues of representation.

Most of the filmmakers that I have taken up for analysis are a part of the ethos that is representative in their being Indian. It is something that reminds one of Frank Capra who was called "a representative man of his culture, in all of the expressive glory and frustration of that situation...the films can be read
as his spiritual autobiography, his on-going reflections on the predicament in which he found himself as he made them. 2

Can we consider cinema as an alternate mode of history? We cannot even begin to imagine what our lives would be like if we were devoid of visual representation of our ‘modern history’. All the major events of the last decade including the US attack on the Gulf, the 9/11 bombing of the World Trade Towers, the Babri Masjid demolition, the Godhra carnage and the latest Tsunami disaster have been shown in innumerable camera footage by the media and documentaries as well as films have been made on them. As Deshpande puts it:

...the strength of the historical film lies in emotionalizing, personalizing and dramatizing the past. The period look it presents offers the viewers an ostensible window into the past. But by far the greatest asset of the historical film is its ability to show history as an integrated process to a curious audience. It is this ability of the film which poses the greatest challenge to written history...the capability of a good film to bring alive, figuratively speaking, various dimensions and details of a social setting simultaneously is impressive...music enhances this effect. In combination with flesh and blood actors enacting historical or fictional characters—dress, weapons, facial expressions, voice, emotional subtleties—the camera produces a powerful historical effect on the audience. 3

What is equally significant is that the historian should give up his arrogance about ‘written’ history. The masses tend to have a kind of blind faith in the written records of history and the historian oftentimes takes advantage of this. In his complacency, he forgets that this is mere institutionalization of history by the academic discipline. In fact cinema’s popularity came much later than the annals of recorded and written historical facts. At the same time,
filmmakers too should remember that they could disregard history and make 'historical' films. In fact, films have the ability to show much more of 'human' histories than textbooks, therefore the film makers should act even more responsibly and make cinema which is socially relevant and historically valid. They have the power to illustrate concepts and hence complement and enrich written texts. Nowhere is this more visible than in the 'genre' of Partition Cinema. But before we get into that, it is important to recall why the need for an 'alternate' source of historical facts was necessary when it came to 'Partition' history.

Urvashi Butalia, at the beginning of her book, The Other Side of Silence tells us that she found the historical official records of Partition extremely deficient and perfunctory because they dealt with dates, with political negotiations and with imperial designs and decisions. However, what actually happened during 'Partition' was totally glossed over by major historians. As she puts it:

These aspects of Partition—how families were divided, how friendships endured across borders, how people coped with the trauma, how they rebuilt their lives, what resources, both physical and mental, they drew upon, how their experience of dislocation and trauma shaped their lives, and indeed the cities and towns and villages they settled in—find little reflection in written history. 4

There is another reason why it is important to look for 'alternate' sources of history. Oral history is a methodological tool that many feminist historians have found enormously empowering. Looking at women's narratives
and placing them along side, or indeed against, the official discourses, has offered feminist historians a new and different way of looking at history.

Coming back to Cinema, we need to ask why the vibrant national cinema of a country that went through the trauma of partition, not find it expedient to depict the harrowing experiences of those affected by it for at least the first two or three decades after the event. This is a question, which has acquired immense relevance and has often been posed by film researchers and others interested in the study of cinema.

There were some stray films soon after the 1947 such as Indra Jolly’s *Kashmir* (1951), C.M. Trivedi’s *Kashmir Hamara Hai* (1950) and Jaimani Dewan’s *Lahore* (1953). However, these were superficial and half hearted attempts and did scant justice in projecting the gravity of the tragedy of Partition. The very first film on Partition was Nimai Ghosh’s *Chhinnamool* (1951) and there is a unique immediacy about the way its events have been portrayed. Ghosh, with an intellect trained in filmmaking used an arresting combination of documentary footage and fiction sequences to convey what he wanted to say about the holocaust of Partition. His agenda in the movie is a larger one because this film is about the uprooting of people. The trauma of displacement is isolated and studied, divorcing it from the violence and terror, which brought it about. In fact, there is absolutely no violence in the film and the closest one gets to it being police boots thudding on a door.

Nimai Ghosh was in many ways an unconventional filmmaker and *Chhinnamool* [Uprooted] is an example of his methodology. He did not cast
professional actors in his films and did not let them use any makeup as well. The shooting was almost always outdoors, taking documentary shots with hidden cameras and sometimes totally impromptu shooting took place. There were no songs and the dialects of East and West Bengal were consciously and effectively used. The portrayal of the theme of uprooting is done in a stark manner, minus any of the sentimentality usually associated with such a tragedy. Ghosh rejected another stock feature, which appears in almost all Indian movies- the comic relief. The lighter moments are all organic to the film.

The film is more about the history of a people than the story of a family. Peasants and artisans live in communal harmony in Naldanga. There are rumours of the partition, of violence elsewhere. The landowners of both communities frighten people and grab the lands of those who flee their homes, at cheapest prices. Srikanta, who might have stopped the exodus, is in prison on trumped up charges. The villagers including Srikanta's pregnant wife, leave for Calcutta under the leadership of Bishu Chakraborty. After living on railway platforms, they shift to a portion of a large unoccupied house, eking out a living selling cheap goods on pavements. The owner of the house turns up to evict them. Meanwhile, Srikanta released from prison, comes to Calcutta in search of his fellow villagers and family. At the moment he finds them, his wife gives birth to a child. There is a fracas between the villagers and goons hired by the house owner. Srikanta rushes to prevent the fight. On his return, he finds his wife dead. Packing up his infant son, Srikanta stares adversity in the face. For such an important film on partition, very little critical acclaim has survived but
it has always been screened in international film festivals and has influenced the cinema of later directors like Ritwik Ghatak and Satyajit Ray.

One had to wait till the late 1970's for a film like *Garm Hawa* (Hot wind) to come up. At last, here was a film that succeeded in tackling the subject with the seriousness it deserved. Nevertheless, the subject never became much of a favourite with Indian filmmakers. Presumably, they did not want to dig up past wounds and create further embarrassment to a society, which had come to terms with an unfortunate episode in our history. Everybody wanted to forget or not recall the division of the subcontinent and its traumatic aftermath.

In an interview, Shyam Benegal has a thesis about this:

I think that it was it was after 1971, because after three wars, you still had a population of Muslims who considered India to be their country, that there was no serious sense of suspicion about Muslims in India. There was no suspicion anymore. And that was I think the beginning of the healing factor. It was only then that people could objectively look at Partition. So some of the best publications on Partition, stories of Partition, all emerge after 1971. Similarly, all the work in our cinema actually begins at that time. And therefore, the fullest truly objective portrayal of the Partition and the problems that led to partition in a very frank manner and seen from the Muslim point of view, was made in India which was *Garm Hawa*.

M.S. Sathyu’s film *Garm Hawa* (1973) which is based on a story by Ismat Chughtai depicts in intricate detail the changes brought about by the Partition of the Indian subcontinent as experienced by a middle-class Indian Muslim family in Agra. These experiences cover almost every single aspect of Partition’s impact on Indian Muslim life. The film’s opening, a series of black
and white photographic images depicting the freedom movement, the gaining of independence, the division of the map of India, the refugees and finally the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi followed by the switch to colour and the opening scene, illustrates that the real story of Partition begins where official history ends. The film thus states its aim of exploring the complex and far reaching human dimension of this political ‘event’.

In the Indian Muslim context, the division of national space and its rupturing of historical and cultural memory has been dealt with in a complex manner. It not only displaced its culture across national boundaries but also within the Indian nation. It was the Muslims of the minority provinces who had led the movement for India’s partition and now they had to bear the full brunt of its disastrous consequences. Migration to Pakistan was one way out but by no means a solution.

That Garm Hawa, is about the decision to stay rather than leave is underlined by the opening scene where the protagonist Salim Mirza is seen waving goodbye to someone at the railway station and his subsequent conversation with the tonga driver, who asks, ‘who have you seen off this time?’ The issue is therefore not of a home left behind but the transformation of that home and one’s place within it. With this as its central theme, the film skillfully highlights the problems of becoming a political and hence socio-economic minority while also exploring the possibilities through which they might be resolved.
The film portrays the Mirza family's growing sense of marginalisation and of becoming a minority. Here the term minority relates less to numbers than limitations in socio-economic power and political agency. As more of its members depart for Pakistan, the Mirza family is weakened.

The departure of Salim's brother Halim Mirza, one of the last remaining Muslim League leaders in U.P., proves to be particularly devastating for his family and community. As he makes the decision to go to Pakistan, a few flashback shots show him publicly advocating that the Muslims stay in India, referring to those who have left as 'cowards'. This denotes the betrayal of the community by its leaders; who through the example of Halim Mirza, are portrayed as political opportunists and as primarily protecting their own personal interests.

Secondly, Halim Mirza's abandonment of the ancestral home, bequeathed to him by his late father, results in the displacement of the family who remain behind and are deemed to no longer have any rights to the property. The betrayal is poignantly underlined as a photograph of Halim Mirza, delivering the speech cited above and accompanied by the sound of the cheering crowd, is shown as the last object to be loaded on to the cart which then sets off to the Mirza family's new rented house. Finally the film proceeds to highlight the point that not only have their former leaders betrayed the trust of the Indian Muslims, but it has also led to their own integrity as Indian citizens and national loyalty being questioned. When Salim Mirza visits the moneylender after failing to obtain a loan from the bank, his brother-in-law
Fakhruddin having just been refused himself, purposefully mentions that Halim Mirza has left for Pakistan and thus destroys Salim Mirza’s chances of success. Banks and moneylenders feared that their Muslim debtors might decamp to Pakistan.

The conflict between private and public space has been portrayed in the film quite effectively; in particular the way the former starts to encroach upon and disrupt the established stability of the latter. The ancestral home has been a timeless space where tradition and culture are preserved, untouched by the changes outside.

The first scene to take place inside the house portrays it as a predominantly feminine space, continually inhabited by women. Salim Mirza’s wife is sewing a wedding dupatta for her daughter Amina, while his elderly mother, from the side rooms she inhabits, comments on the comings and goings. Although not always visible, she is a permanent presence. However, as power relations alter in the world outside and the survival of Salim Mirza’s shoe factory comes under increasing threat, the traditional space of the home also becomes witness to external upheavals and change.

The women, who uphold the tradition of the home, are powerless in the face of change. A poignant example of this is when the summons arrives for them to leave the house and Salim Mirza’s mother tells her son to let her deal with it, to which he replies, ‘Mother, your reign does not extend beyond this house.’
Looking at the narrative methodology that prevails in the film’s time span, we find that the characters represent different narrative choices which are either largely past, dealing with loss and disillusionment or future oriented, representing hope and regeneration. The narrative that is portrayed through the character of Salim Mirza’s mother or ‘Dadda’ as her grand children refer her to is completely anchored in the past. Her old age is symbolic of the beautiful past traditions and culture. The cold weather reminds her of her wedding day and the ancestral home defines the foundations and structure of her life. She cannot leave India because her husband is buried here and she has to be literally dragged out of the woodshed where she hides and clings to the wall when the family is forced to move.

Dadda’s inability to engage with the present is depicted with sympathy and humour due to her age and fragility. That her consciousness is entirely focused on the past is reflected in her insistence on occupying the topmost room in the house, despite her physical frailty because she can see the old house from there.

Another perspective on the past impinging upon the present in the narrative is depicted by the figure of Halim Mirza’s sister. Like her brother, she too has promised to return to fulfil her promise to the family but goes back on it. This results in two broken engagements for Amina, first to Halim Mirza’s son Kazim and then his sister’s son, Shamshad; and ends in her suicide. The tragedy of Amina’s story is largely because of her gender-defined position, which denies her the agency of her brothers. Her social advance beyond the
family home is, by necessity dependent on the actions of others and she is ultimately consumed by the chasm that has opened up between the past and the future. Amina’s story is truly ironic, even when she is totally confined by domesticity, her life is transformed the most due to external change, which prevents her from ever entering the world outside, something which she can do only after marriage.

Two other characters that dominate the narrative of the film are Salim Mirza and his son Sikandar. Through the entire film, Salim Mirza’s narrative is oriented towards the past. This is evoked in his refusal to change his ways, his reliance on tradition and old links in business matters and the constant allusions to God, when he is faced with problems. On the other hand, Sikandar’s narrative is oriented towards the future as he is looking for a job after his graduation. Two identical scenes in the film, one in which Salim Mirza is refused a bank loan by a manager who knows him well, and the other in which Sikandar is told during an interview that the post has already been filled, lead the audience towards a reality that the old and the new, both are on the brink of disintegration. Sikandar’s joining the march towards hope and Salim Mirza’s realization that he is not alone is the pivot upon which the film’s narrative turns and forges a bridge between the past and the future.

The resolution of the overall narrative, arrived at through an examination of the different alternatives is underlined when Kaifi Azmi’s poem recited in part at the start of the film is completed at the end. At the start, it depicts the open wound that the film proceeds to explore. At the end it serves to
heal it, by pointing out that the real struggle extends to and thereby brings together both countries.

Jo door se toofan ka karte hain nazarah,

Un ke liye toofan wahaan bhi hain, yahaan bhi

Dharay mein jo mil jao, ban jaoge dhara,

Ye waqt ka elaan wahan bhi hai, yahaan bhi.

(Those who view the storm from afar, see no difference between here and there, To join in and become a part of it, this is the call of the times, here and there)⁶

The film leaves the question open as to how far this ideal of togetherness is going to be realized in post-partition India.

In the words of Partha Chatterji:

The film’s narration is linear and almost matter-of-fact. But the adopted technique is deceptive. It is full of the gnarled poetry of everyday life. And it is this quality that gives Garm Hawa its sense of truth, private and universal. There is no grand standing or melodrama but the enormity of the historical moment that is the partition of India and the loss it inflicts on sundered lives from both the communities—the Hindus and Muslims—is clearly articulated.⁷

Moving on in history, we find that although a television series, Tamas (based on a novel by Bhisham Sahni) is the first Indian film that realistically portrays Hindu- Muslim riots during Partition. For filmmaker Govind Nihalani it was the catharsis of a childhood trauma.
Govind Nihalani was born in Karachi on 19th Dec. 1940 to an orthodox, religious Hindu Vaishnavite Sindhi family. Before everything was changed by the partition, they ran a roaring grain trade in Karachi. The brutal Hindu exodus in Bhisham Sahni’s (Indian writer, 1915-2003, wrote both in Hindi and English) Tamas ((Darkness) had parallels to the uprooting of the Nihalanis from Karachi to Udaipur. For the filmmaker thus, Tamas was not a film but a reconstruction. In his own words:

The Partition was never dead for me. Partition is not dead for me even today. Partition is alive in my mind. I mean it’s like an event recorded in the mind. It is like a piece of history in my mind that happened and stays. It has never been erased.

A case against the telecast of Tamas was fought in the Bombay High court and Supreme Court. But the film was allowed to be telecast by the courts that ruled in its favour."For me, who has deep impressions of the holocaust of Partition, Tamas is more than a mini series or a film, it is an act of faith. It is a grim reminder of the immense tragedy that results whenever the religious sentiments of communities are manipulated to achieve political objectives.” Says Nihalani.

Writer-actor-translator Bhisham Sahni’s Tamas (published in 1974) is a novel that he began writing in 1971, after he witnessed the riots in Bhiwandi (a town in Maharashtra). The call to recall the events of 1947 was his intervention in the growing communalization of the socio-political ethos of the country. Govind Nihalani in his introduction to one of the English translations of the
novel delineates two possible responses to historical events—the emotionally intense one and the reflective one:

A traumatic historical event usually finds artistic/literary response twice. Once, during the event or immediately following it and again after a lapse of time, when the event has found its corner in the collective memory of the generation that witnessed it. The initial response tends to be emotionally intense and personal in character, even melodramatic. On the other hand, when the event is reflected upon with emotional detachment and objectivity, a clearer pattern of the various forces that shaped it is likely to emerge. Tamas is the reflective response to the partition of India—one of the most tragic events in the recent history of the subcontinent. 12

Bhisham Sahni provides us with a panoramic view of the period leading to the Partition—a view that finds representational fullness in the form of the novel. It offers us a double panoramic movement: one of the form, the other of the events that unfold within the plot. The novel is structured like a collection of short stories through which the protagonists pass through, disappear, reappear or die. There is remembrance of Manto’s Thanda Gosht (Cold Meat) for example, in the novel.13

Bhisham Sahni’s vision is a ruthless one when he examines the violence perpetrated by fanatics in all the communities. He charts the psychology of violence that is not merely internal and individual, but social. The quick psychological turn of behaviour, the vascillation or the crossover of the weak and the persecuted into violent exterminators, all are portrayed dispassionately.
One of the most powerful sequences on the irrationality of communal hatred is that of Shah Nawaz who hurries around in his huge car, helping Hindu families, but suddenly in a fit of hatred which has no logic kills a servant of the Hindu friends he has been helping escape. Sahni never loses sight of the fact that in violence of this sort, it is the poor, the weak and the helpless that suffer the most.

*Tamas* is about the dispersal of communities and neighbourhoods as they are engulfed by violence, of history gone awry. Thus, the episodic structure of the novel represents this dispersal. There are no heroes, only humans. For his 1988 adaptation, Nihalani has drawn on the novel *Tamas* and two short stories by Bhisham Sahni, *‘Sardarni’* and *‘Zahud Baksh’*, and structured the tale around Nathu and his pregnant wife. This was no doubt necessitated by the demands of serialization. While the book ends with the Deputy Commissioner of the district and his wife discussing his transfer, the film ends with Nathu’s wife who has just seen the body of her husband lined up with the other dead, giving birth to her child in a refugee camp. Harnam Singh and his wife Banto, who have begun to take care of her, hear the cries of Hindu and Muslim communal slogan-shouting merge with the cry of the newly born child. This scene reinforces the message that the newly independent India will have to reckon with clashes of communal forces.

Another moving sequence in the film is that of Sardar Harnam Singh and his wife who have been given shelter by Rajo (very powerfully played by theatre and film actress Surekha Sikri). She is compassionate but vascillates
constantly, surrounded as she is by a daughter-in-law, husband and son who hate non-Muslims. Harman Singh, played by Bhisham Sahni, unable to take the situation anymore, bursts out crying and wipes his tears with the tail end of his turban before tucking it back.

A change that has been shown in the film is of the character of Liza, the Deputy Commissioner's wife. In the book she is a budding alcoholic, completely cut off intellectually and emotionally from her surroundings and her husband's work. In the film, her inclination to drink is played down and she is portrayed as more 'active' and willing to take on relief work. According to Ania Loomba, attention is now being focused on the role of the women of colonizing nations and their relation to their positions of contradiction within this order,

...they participated in the imperial mission, and were tangential to or at odds with it as well. The English 'memsahib' is routinely portrayed in fiction as well as historical criticism as more racist and parochial than the British administrator himself - she becomes the main reason why he cannot develop a working comradeship with his subordinates. Recent feminist criticism has emphasized the patriarchal structures within which the Memsahib was trapped at home and abroad...\(^{14}\)

There is a depth of characterization and a breaking away from stereotypes in the book that is not so evident in the film.

One of the most interesting aspects of Tamas, the film, is the topography of the city under siege; which is an inherent part of the novel as well. A lot of Partition Fiction has to do with the topography and charting of one's lived space. But this is not the remote mapping of a land seen from above. This is the
charting of the small intimate space, the house, the neighbour’s house, the mohalla, the street beyond. In a state of siege, that is as far as the horizon stretches.

To the left of the gurudwara some of the houses near the end of the lane belonged to Muslims, behind which stood the Khalsa School. Beyond the Khalsa School, stretched the fields. To the right of the Gurudwara, where the lane ended, there was a mohalla of Muslim houses.  

It is this intimate charting that in fact constitutes the real perception of spatial relations in a lot of partition fiction. Big geographical realities were of no concern or significance to a majority of the people. As Mushirul Hasan points out:

Most people, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike, were largely unconcerned with the newly created geographical entities or indifferent to them... they were unclear whether Lahore or Gurdaspur would be in India or Pakistan... They did not know whether Gangauli or Hasanpur would remain in Gandhi’s India or Jinnah’s Pakistan. In fact ‘India’ and ‘Pakistan’ were mere territorial abstractions to people who had no sense of the newly demarcated frontiers and little or no knowledge of how Mountbatten’s plan or Radcliffe Award would change the destinies of millions and tear them apart from their familiar social and cultural moorings.  

In *Tamas*, a lot of the city unfolds through Nathu’s walking through it. Nathu, doubly silent, on the one hand, for being subaltern by caste and class and on the other, dumbfounded by the enormity of the events he has unknowingly unleashed—walks through the city, a city that seems alien to him now. One of the most interesting scenes in the film is that of Nathu spotting Murad Ali in the crowd and running after him, trying to engage him in
conversation and to somehow get a confirmation that the pig thrown in front of
the mosque was not the one he had killed. But by now the events have
overtaken them so much that this question cannot even be directly articulated.
Murad Ali too, does not want to talk to him, pretends not to know or hear him
and hurriedly moves away.

Cinema, unlike literature did not immediately create narratives on the
partition, barring the exception of a few filmmakers like Ritwick Ghatak who
spoke of the traumatic partition of his beloved Bengal in all his films.
It was the Indian cinema’s New Wave\textsuperscript{17} that began in 1969, which gave us
M.S.Sathyu’s \textit{Garm Hawa} (1973) based on a story by Ismat Chughtai.

Deepa Mehta’s film \textit{Earth-1947}, based on Bapsi Sidhwa’s \textit{Ice Candy
Man} has made the most compelling of Partition films. It is a powerfully
moving account of a Parsi family embroiled in the political rivalries of Hindus
and Muslims in the Lahore of 1947. It can be compared to \textit{Garm Hawa} in its
power to hold the audience and is much superior to the disappointing film
version of Khushwant Singh’s \textit{Train to Pakistan}.

Historians have often disregarded works of fiction because it lacks the
sanctity accorded to official archives and items of record. Yet, more and more
historians, academicians and filmmakers are now turning to Partition because
of the need to understand more about the complex cross-currents of identity
and political allegiance which resulted in Partition. The film is perhaps less
successful than the novel. But it does capture the sullying of the beguiling
innocence of Sidhwa’s central characters; the seven-year-old polio-afflicted
Parsi girl Lenny and her Hindu ayah Shanta as the city tears itself apart. The rivalry among Shanta’s circle of admirers in the park stands as a metaphor for the fight to carve up British India. “Hindu, Muslim, Sikh,” one character tells her, “all hover round you like moths round a lamp”.18

The denouement of the film, and the defiling of the ayah can be seen as reflecting the despoiling of a country. The opening shot is of young Lenny with her caliper. The closing image is of Sidhwa herself reflecting on Shanta’s fate: “Fifty years have gone by since I betrayed my ayah. But I never set eyes on her again”,19 and then walking away, with a pronounced and one must assume polio-induced limp. What she implies here is that her account is authentic; a recreation of her childhood experience of Partition. Elsewhere she wrote: “I was a child then. Yet the ominous roar of distant mobs was a constant of my awareness, alerting me, even at the age of seven, to a palpable sense of the evil that was taking place in various parts of Lahore.”20

In the article quoted above, Sidhwa makes no mention of her ayah, or Ice-candy man and the other characters of her novel. But she does allude to many other incidents which appear in both the book and the film: her father bringing home a pistol in a satin-lined box; her sikh neighbours fleeing to India and leaving their furniture in her mother’s care, and the camp for recovered women set up in what had been the Sikh family’s home. She says of these women: “Terrible vendettas were enacted on their bodies, not so much to dishonour them as to humiliate the men of another faith.”21 Sidhwa lived
through the events she describes just as Bhisham Sahni saw the bodies of Sikh women retrieved from a well at Thoa Khalsa.

On how the film *Earth-1947* came about, Deepa Mehta explains how she became fascinated with Sidhwa’s book set during the catastrophic period that followed partition in 1947.

I was hooked. The tumultuous period surrounding the British division of India into two separate countries, independent India and a newly created Pakistan, had always held a sort of dark fascination for me. India, after years of struggle, finally gained its independence from the British Empire in August of 1947. However, for most Indians, that ‘Independence’ is synonymous with its ‘division’ or ‘partition’, as it is known on the subcontinent. The announcement made by Viceroy Mountbatten, declaring the boundaries, which would divide India into two, began a sectarian strife that would wreak havoc for the next fifty years. My father and his family were some of the eleven million people that were uprooted from their homes during partition. I grew up hearing stories about...the carnage, the rapes and the mindless acts of violence that people who had lived together in relative harmony for centuries, committed against each other- all in the name of religion and nationalism. Bapsi’s novel was a highly personal account of the partition as seen through the eyes of an eight-year-old girl living in Lahore during that crucial time. What made it totally fascinating for me, was that Lenny, the protagonist, belonged to the minority sect of ‘Parsis’, a religious group that had remained neutral and non-aligned, while the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs single-mindedly massacred each other. Lenny’s was an entirely unique perspective. It came from within an impartial community, but was also the point of view of a child, who learnt about love, war, destruction and betrayal within a span of a few months. Sidhwa’s novel is written in English and although I wrote the screenplay in English as well, I decided to make the film in Hindi titled ‘Earth’. Most of the characters in ‘Earth’ are working class people and the thought of them speaking English in 1947 felt ludicrous, though some relevant scenes remain in English.
Two films *Khamosh Pani* (Silent waters) by Sabiha Samar (Pakistani woman film maker) and *Pinjar* (The Skeleton) by Chandra Prakash Dwivedi (Indian film Director) from either side of the border have uncanny echoes because both treat a subaltern subject from different perspectives and artistic sensibilities. Their theme is a subject that has been taboo for years, given the patriarchal norms that rule over the sub-continent as a whole. It is the untold story of women raped and abducted (and most often rejected by their families) during the madness of partition. *Khamosh Pani* and *Pinjar* force you to see, hear and think about these forgotten lives shrouded under the evasive veils of hypocrisy, rigid ideologies and notions of patriarchal honour.

*Pinjar* is based on Amrita Pritam’s novel by the same name which encompasses a time frame that stretches over 13 years—from 1935 to 1948; for the traumatized relationship between Puro and Rashid to reach acceptance. The director of the film Dwivedi however compresses this canvas to the hatred of Partition over two years. The guilt, the anger and the repentance therefore lack conviction and work at a superficial level.

Puro, the central character travels to her native village along with her family. The purpose is to finalize her wedding negotiations with Ramchand, a scholarly young man given to translating the Ramayan into Urdu. Her brother’s marriage too is fixed with Ramchand’s sister but this joy is doomed because the brooding presence of Rashid (Manoj Bajpeyi) hovers over her antics in the fields.
Puro has been dreaming of her Ramchand imagining herself as Sita to his noble Ram. However, this Ramayan idyll is broken when Rashid (or Ravan) abducts Puro. The Ramayan theme forms a disturbing subtext, demonizing the Muslim. Is this an unfortunate oversight or a subtle indication of the director's sympathy for the Hindutva cause? Given the imagery Dwivedi chooses, and total absence of any sympathetic Muslim character other than the anti-hero Rashid, Pinjar's ideological stance is quite clear.

It is only much later, after Puro has been kidnapped, that we are told of the generations' old enmity between Mohanlal and Rashid's families. All accounts of the Partition draw up an equal balance sheet of violence for all communities: Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs all indulged in loot, murder, abduction and rape. But what Pinjar showcases are carefully chosen images of violent Muslim mobs brandishing swords and the implacable insistence by Rashid's family elders that he kidnap Puro to avenge an old family feud. Rashid is made to carry the burden of ancient hatred and also the weight of personal guilt. From a negative character he is gradually transformed before our eyes into a man with a roused conscience, who will not touch Puro until she marries him and stoically accepts her emotional coldness and rejection without flinching. Rashid risks his life to save Laajo who has been abducted from the convoy going to India after Partition. Manoj Bajpeyi (the actor) as Rashid is a haunting presence. If one were to analyse the stance of the film politically, it implies that many Rashids have to pay for the 'sins' of their community. This reading becomes inevitable because Dwivedi does not even hint at the similar
fate of Muslim families who also suffered equally. Dwivedi’s period authenticity is a limited virtue and he has not been able to do justice to the spirit of Amrita Pritam’s writing which is essentially humanistic and secular.

Thus, what we have here are women who became agents of their own destiny—who refused to accept violent death to preserve the honour of family and religion, opting instead for life and all its frightening alternatives. There are only anecdotal accounts of women who married their abductors, bore children and ran households, sublimating their lifelong sense of loss and longing in the normality of family and stability. Their existence gave the lie to the unbridgeable divide between bitterly antagonistic nations and religions.

*Khamosh Pani* set in Pakistan in the 1970’s; breaks the silence surrounding these women with the story of Ayesha. Born Veero in a village in what is now Pakistan, she refused to commit suicide at the behest of her father and brothers during Partition. Kidnapped by Muslims, Veero was saved by one of her abductors who married her. Through her son Salim, *Khamosh Pani* also traces the rise of Islamic extremism in Pakistan during the reign of General Zia-ul-Haq.

As Ayesha, National award winning actress Kirron Kher is the calm center of the film, by turn resolute, bewildered and wistful in an understated portrayal that is as poignant as it is powerful. The film is an accomplished work, quietly eloquent on its large and universal themes of identity and belonging, faith and fundamentalism and love and loss. Director Sabiha Samar says the idea for the film grew out of her desire to document women’s
experiences during Partition, which led her to the records of the Constituent Assembly, oral histories of women in Pakistan and conversations with Urvashi Butalia and Ritu Menon in Delhi.

For the director, the dominant theme of *Khamosh Pani* is the way in which violence particularly when associated with fundamentalism plays out in women’s lives. “In 1979, extremism was moving to the center stage in Pakistan; spaces were closing up,” says Sabiha Samar. That was the year the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan; Pakistan as a frontline state against the intervention, began to see a rise in Islamic fundamentalism tied to its support for the Mujahideen. Ayesha watches in appalled disbelief as her son Salim, is abruptly transformed from an amiable, irreligious layabout into an unheeding zealot. His inexorable descent into self-righteous religion leaves his doting mother no place in his new world, which is peopled solely with like-minded men bent on gaining respect and purpose from an oppressive enforcement of Islam. Nor has he any time for his playful but outspoken girlfriend Zubeida. Her angry and despairing taunt—“I read the Quran too, but I also think!” leaves Salim unmoved.

For Ayesha, this is Partition all over again. Once again, Charkhi, the village she has lived in all her life, is cowed by men who assume the role of arbiters and custodians of a society’s behaviour and beliefs—agonizingly recalling the ways in which the Sikh men in her own family determined the fate of their women thirty years ago. And once again, women are silenced, thrust into roles of passive conformity and made to prove their allegiance to the new
order. "I wanted to connect the violence of 1947 to what was happening in 1979." says Sabiha Samar. Saleem grows increasingly impatient with Zubeida’s free and easy ways and starts questioning his mother’s enigmatic past. The young men in the village raise the height of the school wall, while the shocked girls react with dismay at this play to pen them into seclusion.

The arrival of Sikh pilgrims from across the border is the catalyst that disturbs the seeming calm of the village. After years, they have been granted permission to visit their holy shrine Punja Sahib on the outskirts of Charkhi. The director layers the film with the conflicting attitudes of Charkhi’s residents to these visitors, some of who had perhaps lived amidst them. Fleeting, sepia tinted shots—of a girl running, of an indistinct group of men and the palpable sense of fear—punctuate the narrative like teasers, waiting for an appropriate moment to unfold their full significance. Many people in the village, especially the village barber who is something of an irreverent satirist, are quite friendly to the visiting Sikhs. It is an uneasy calm, hinting at old hatreds being stirred anew.

Ayesha’s suppressed agitation, long forgotten loyalties and new foreboding fears are landmines under the even tenor of her life. What is admirable is how Samar captures all these nuances without recourse to loud melodrama. The cinema that she creates is understated and that is the reason why it is so effective.

Slowly we are told about the roots of this unease and discord. One of the Sikh visitors is Jaswant; looking for his sister Veero. He confronts Ayesha after
thirty tears and wants her to come to Amritsar to meet their dying father for the last time. Ayesha repudiates her past and commands Jaswant to leave. But what was kept secret all these years seeps out like trickling water into the corners of the village. Perhaps Ayesha could somehow find the will to survive the silent ostracism but her son’s angry, anguished questions is something more than she can bear. For Saleem, who is being indoctrinated to hate all non-believers as infidels, accepting his mother’s Sikh origins is akin to loss of his own identity. Ayesha tries to convince him that she has been a good Muslim.

The breaking point seems utterly trivial but it snaps Ayesha’s stoic will to survive. An embarrassed Shabnam (Ayesha’s neighbour and confidante) asks Ayesha not to attend Hina’s wedding—it is a closed community and her daughter’s future is at stake. Again it is a low-key scene where little is spoken but a lot is said. The next few scenes are silent, a fleeting shot is of Ayesha standing on the edge of the well and it fades away before it registers fully. Then Saleem rummages through an old box—a treasury of his mother’s past. We next see him by the edge of the swiftly flowing stream that carries away the tokens of the past in Ayesha’s tin box.

*Khamosh Pani* ends on a postscript. Years later, an older Zubeida goes out to work—obviously in a big city—wearing Ayesha’s locket. She pauses to look at a TV screen: a bearded, older Saleem is holding forth with all the impassioned eloquence of a zealous leader. The ironic half smile on Zubeida’s face is eloquent indictment of what has happened, is happening.
Khamosh Pani fully translates the director’s concerns and preoccupations on to the screen with integrity, sensitivity and courage. Courage, because the film honestly depicts the gradual transformation of a dreamy aimless nineteen year old young man into an Islamic fundamentalist. In a country where fundamentalists have a strong clout, it takes tremendous courage for a woman filmmaker to confront the religious establishment. Sabiha’s film is a quiet trailblazer of independent cinema in Pakistan.

In her book ‘After shocks of the New Feminism and Film history’, Patrice Petro has an interesting thesis in the chapter titled ‘Historical Ennui, Feminist Boredom’. She says that Hayden White in his recent writings on modernism and historiography never addresses the role of gender and fails to consider the way in which sexual difference in either represented or unrepresentable in the modernist experience of boredom. In fact according to Petro,

Gender and sexual difference are central to this experience of time in modernity—the time between the event and the uneventful, between that which happens and that which fails to occur. If as Frederic Jameson has claimed, “History is what hurts”, then, history is also about what fails to happen (something about which female artists and feminist women in the 20th century have long been painfully aware)...when history hurts, pain is expressed in the tradition of male melancholia. This tradition...not only excludes women’s experiences of the non-eventful—and thus their experiences of history, but also elevates male suffering as a sensitive or privileged...

In portraying their experiences of partition the character of these films seem to be echoing somewhat similar feelings. “In any event” Petro says
“Feminist historiography that takes its inspiration from modernism must reject the tedium of conventional representation...in this time of historical ennui, even within feminism, there remains an ever present need to struggle against the everyday on behalf of the everyday”.26 Thus what Deepa Mehta and Sabiha Samar have done is to negate the conventional ideas of historiography and present the new reality of the ‘event’ called Partition.

No account of Partition cinema can be complete without mentioning one of the most celebrated of filmmakers Ritwik Ghatak (Bengali film maker, 1825-1976). In the words of Satyajit Ray (Bengali film maker, 1921-1992):

Thematical, Ritwik’s lifelong obsession was with the tragedy of Partition. He himself hailed from what was once East Bengal where he had deep roots. It is rarely that a director dwells so singlemindedly on the same theme. It only serves to underline the depth of his feeling for the subject...27

The initial question of the partition of Bengal was to become for him a larger quest—an attempt to portray the relationships between the new classes formed by the process of urbanization and the machine-revolution and their old traditions. It led him to take a fresh look at the whole issue of rootlessness afresh—the search of the refugee for a new identity. Ghatak considered himself a refugee forever. “Through decay, I see life. I believe in the continuity of life.”28 said Ghatak once. Most of his films from Nagarik [The Citizen] (1952), Meghe Dhaka Tara, [The Cloud Capped Star] (1960) Subarnarekha [The Golden Line] (1962) and Titash Ekti Nadir Naam [A River called Titash] (1973) deal in some way with the themes of rootlessness and partition.
For twenty-five long years after its completion, *Nagarik* [1952] lay in damp vaults, condemned to obscurity. A year after Ghatak’s death in 1976, the print was restored at the initiative of the Left Front state govt. Ghatak insisted that *Nagarik* was a political statement that analyzed the agonies of a middle class family in Calcutta engaged in a grim struggle for survival against oppressive social forces.

The film shows the slow and tragic shift of the family several rungs down the hierarchical ladder of socio-economic class structure which, though geographic on the surface reaches deeper into the lives of its members whose characters metamorphose into something quite different from what they were when the film began. An innovation in *Nagarik* [The Citizen] that became a characteristic of his later style was the use of deep focus to place his characters firmly in their social environment. First the camera would view Calcutta in a panoramic long sweeping shot, encompassing shanties and shops, high rise buildings and ghettos, electric wires criss-crossing and masses of people crowding the streets, going about their daily chores. A long crane shot from a height of about twenty feet that introduces the character that is one of the crowds, helping an old woman cross the street, follows this. The camera then follows the man to his house through narrow and dirty by-lanes, passing street performers and beggars. The camera then looks head on at the hero in a close-up. By that time, the hero Ramu’s identification is complete—he is one of the masses—like the ordinary men, not heroic or rich or handsome but one who looks totally familiar.
Resting their hopes on Ramu’s ability to find a job after investing their eroding fortunes toward earning his college degree, his parents have little hope for a better life for his undereducated sister except to marry her off to anyone who is able to provide for her, indulging the whims of prospective suitors who subject her to humiliating physical inspections and candid assessments of her attractiveness. Chronicling Ramu and his family’s disillusioning, often frustrated empty rituals for economic survival and quest to return to a semblance of a normal life, the film represents an uncharacteristically affirming exposition of Ghatak’s recurring themes of marginalization, poverty, dislocation and petty self-interest that have contributed to the erosion of Bengali culture. Ghatak supplants the idyllic images of trees (in particular, Ramu’s calendar depicting a red-roofed country house) with the jarring noise of a heavy machinery excavator in order to introduce (or rather underscore) a metaphor for the intrusive, violent uprooting of the Partition that has figuratively crippled- and ultimately orphaned- a population. It is within this environment of crushed hopes and unrealized dreams that the father’s blindness and debilitation can be seen, not only as a metaphor for cultural shortsightedness that led to the Partition, but also as a spiritual resignation for their fractured homeland.

Ghatak was born on 4th Nov. 1925 at Jindabazar, Dhaka, the cultural center of East Bengal [now Bangladesh], which had become, by the beginning of his filmmaking career, East Pakistan. At that time, Pakistan had a general ban on all Indian films. As a consequence, for the majority of Ghatak’s film
making career, his films could not screen in his birth city. Ghatak migrated to Calcutta in early youth, attending the MA class at Calcutta University in 1948. His films are heavily influenced by his personal experience of Partition: "In our boyhood, we have seen a Bengal, whole and glorious.... Our dreams faded away. We crashed on our faces, clinging to the crumbling Bengal, divested of all its glory...."\(^{29}\)

What is different about Ghatak’s movies is that the images that are usually associated with Partition cinema depicting West Pakistan, those of the trains full of corpses coming in and out of Lahore, the attacks made on old friends and neighbours are not there in his movies. Ghatak’s cinema delves into the mindset of the refugees of Partition, without statistics and also the particular experience of Bengal, which is comparatively little known. We as audience are brought relentlessly into time and space of those left homeless, crumbling on the faded outskirts of a nation, living out a divided Bengal.

Ghatak’s pupil, Kumar Shahani, explains the importance of Ghatak’s approach to Partition as a radical political expression:

The heroes and heroines of Ritwik’s films, while their energies are sapped by a society, which can sustain no growth, have inner resources that seem to assert themselves. He was extremely disenchanted with those of his colleagues who wanted to maintain a false unity and was not implicitly, pained enough by the splintering of every form of social and cultural values and movement. It is these factors that make Ritwik’s films a vitally generative force for the young. He does not hide behind a medieval or a dead past or a decorative Indian ness...very few of his contemporaries have avoided these pitfalls whether they work in the cinema and the other arts, or in the
theoretical and cultural sphere. It is as if they were ashamed of being themselves, today, with their true history.\textsuperscript{30}

_Meghe Dhaka Tara\textsuperscript{[1960]}, Komal Gandhar \textsuperscript{[1961]} and Subarnarekha \textsuperscript{[1962]} form a trilogy around the socio-economic implications of Partition. Ghatak’s own description of a moment in his film _Subarnarekha_ set in a refugee colony called Nabajeeban on the outskirts of Calcutta in the 1950’s illustrates beautifully his cinematic manifestation of Partition: “When the camera suddenly comes to a halt at the dead end of a railway track where the old road to East Bengal has been snapped off, it raises [towards the close of the film] a searing scream in Anasuya’s heart.”\textsuperscript{31}

What makes it so fascinating is not only a new outlook on the Partition but more importantly, the consequences of this for the cinema as a medium. It is as if the very frames and coordinates of his cinema regularly manifest the fracturing that took place with Partition. Cinema itself, it seems must bear the scars of Partition as much as any individual or nation-state. A passing train cuts deafeningly across the background of a shot as Nita sits with Sanat by the river in _Meghe Dhaka Tara_, overpowering the soundtrack completely with its travelling wheels, piercing whistle and screeching breaks so as to drown out their conversation, sabotaging the spectator’s ability to hear. The sound of the railway, unreasonably loud, given its position in the very background of the image, breaks open the soundtrack as if a crack has formed and the train has surged through it.
The women in Ghatak’s cinema, all seem to be the main ‘motifs’ of the depravity and trauma of Partition. Sita of Nagarik, Neeta of Meghe Dhaka Tara and Sita of Subarnarekha, all in their different ways bring across the futility of a struggling existence, caught between their nostalgia for the good old days and their dreams of a brighter future. Each of them is shown hoping, and dreaming at the start of the film and completely broken, defeated and resigned at the end of these films. Interestingly, the figure of the brother is that of the saviour in each of these films, ready to bring about the family’s and the sister’s deliverance as soon as he gets a job\ becomes a famous singer\ and finds a suitable groom for her. This trauma of the burden that he is responsible for his sister’s happiness is what is evocatively brought out in these films. However, the partition has only led to a life which is a struggle, where dreams are not fulfilled and where happiness is as elusive as the hills of Meghe Dhaka Tara, a childhood photograph of Neeta and her brother and the beautiful valley with butterflies and flowers which Sita dreams about as she approaches her ‘nutan bari’ [new home] in Subarnarekha.

The opening shot of Meghe Dhaka Tara looks at Neeta halting to pull at her torn slipper on her way to work. She is the only earning member of a sprawling refugee family and cannot stop to have her slipper attended to by the wayside cobbler. The closing shot completes the circle. This time, it is not Neeta but an anonymous girl who takes Neeta’s place to feed her refugee family. She falters because her slipper is torn. Her gait, her body language is a duplicate of Neeta’s. Because she is forced to take on from where Neeta left
That single leitmotif of a torn slipper, repeated just once is Ghatak’s strong indictment on Calcutta. Calcutta, he seems to say through his film, sustains the vicious circle of poverty and social injustice almost with a vengeance. Neeta’s death in this sense is not a moral lesson from Calcutta to its massive refugee population. Rather, it is a sustained threat, a warning that leaves no option but to wear a pervasive real face.

In Subarnarekha, Calcutta is no less cruel to Sita, because it turns her name into the tragic irony of her life. When Sita slaughters herself after seeing who her client is, hers is more of a physical suicide than a moral one. For Ishwar however, the suicide is moral, yet partly physical because with Sita’s death, a part of Ishwar dies too. Her suicide is a statement of protest against the decaying values of a society in decay symbolized by the city of Calcutta.

In Ghatak’s own words:

To me it [the Partition] was the division of a culture and I was shocked. During the Partition period I hated these pretentious people who clamoured about our independence, our freedom... I just kept on watching what was happening, how the behaviour pattern was changing due to this great betrayal of the national liberation. And I probably gave vent to what I felt. Today I am not happy, and whatever I have seen unconsciously or consciously comes out in my films.  

Finally, we must look for a film, which is totally different from all the ones we have looked at, in that it does not criticize, nor does it bemoan the loss of rootedness for all those people who became ‘refugees’. In fact, it reconciles the issues, which have been simmering for too long and tries to come to terms with newfound identities of our ‘nations’.
Yash Chopra’s (Indian film maker born 1932) *Veer-Zara* offers the possibility of moving beyond the Partition. It offers new ferments of thought and possibility; and creates a new narrative of healing. It replaces the old story of partition as a genocidal narrative of violence, displacement, and vivisection with a new creation of reconciliation.

The narrative is a predictable one, a story of love between an Indian Air force officer Veer Pratap Singh and a Pakistani girl Zara Hayat Khan. Two lovers separated by family, state and history and yet it is the story of their eventual uniting. It is a story of how they are reunited after twenty-three years by a young Pakistani lawyer, a human rights Activist obviously modelled on Asma Jahangir. Agency stretches beyond the patriarchal framework to an activist woman lawyer. There is a subtle breaking of stereotypes, when Zara visits Veer’s village, it is she who notices that there is no school for girls. Veer’s father quickly decides that the boys’ cricket pitch should be the place for a girl’s school.

There is no demonology in the film. Goodness is not the monopoly of one nation and evil the patent of the other. The cast of characters is familiar, stereotypical and yet believable. The nation-state is not ignored, its power is evident and yet *Veer-Zara* is not a discourse of nation-states but a discourse of people’s civilizations and folk memory.

Partition is never seen as partition, a division, a split, a transfer of power. The word used is ‘batwara’, redistribution within a family. The emphasis is on familiarity even in difference. For Veer Pratap, the Pakistani
landscape evokes the Punjabi landscape. They feel the same behind the stated difference. Suddenly within the nostalgia of landscape, Partition appears like an aberration. The film invites a new generation unburdened by Partition to rethink their history and their future. The new generation steps beyond the old politics, the old idioms of nation, ideology, party.

Also, the stereotype of the woman who is a ‘victim’ in the earlier Partition films gives way to an empowered Zara, who moves to Veer’s parents’ village, once she decides to break off her engagement with her fiancé. The girl’s school and day care center functions because of her efforts and her faith in her eternal love for Veer. It is ironical that Veer spends twenty four years in a prison in Pakistan to save her ‘honour’ which she has no qualms about quitting and moving on in her life by making her own choices. In this sense, Zara is more emancipated than her male counter part. Yash Chopra’s vision is that of a positive possibility for Gender and the Nation.

Only cinema combines myth and history. Only cinema knows how to reshuffle events to create emergence, a new possibility, and a new event unfolding from the old. A film can be openly contradictory and open about contradictions and yet contain them. It can reshuffle themes. It understands the nature of memory and emotion, while recognizing the logic of the emotional. And that is what Veer-Zara does. It emphasizes on rapprochement, exchange, invites border crossing and also a blurring of boundaries.

As Veer and Zara walk across the Wagah Border, one recollects the old narratives of the Partition. One remembers Khushwant Singh’s *Train to
Pakistan or Manto’s great short story, which begins by stating that the train from Amritsar to Lahore took ten hours to reach. Today, a walk replaces the train. The memory of the train yields to the everydayness of a walk. Visiting Pakistan is like visiting a neighbour. Suddenly, Partitions, borders, boundaries seem remote; Veer-Zara is the celebration of this possibility.
Notes


3. Deshpande, pg. 4458

4. Butalia, pg. 9


6. Garm Hawa—National Film Archives, Pune


8. Interview with Govind Nihalani, South Asian Cinema, Issue 5-6, (London, 2004) pg. 73

9. See Introduction to Tamas, 1988, for a brief account of the court case.

10. Introduction, pg. 8

11. First translated as ‘Kites will fly’ (New Delhi: Vikas, 1981)


13. A group of men are chatting on the terrace of Sheikh Ghulam Rasool’s house.” They too had not had time to bury their dead” says the narrator of the story in a chilling conversational tone. The ‘Mujahids’ sitting on the terrace had come from outside. They were narrating their exploit….”A Hindu girl went up to the roof of her house. As soon as we saw her, we ran after her. There were nearly ten of us. She was trying to jump over the low wall on the roof when she fell into our hands. Nabi, Lalu, Mira, Murtaza, all had a go at her one by one...when my turn
came, there was no sound from her, she wouldn’t move. I looked at her. She was dead, I had been doing it to a dead body.” He laughed a hollow kind of laughter and turning his face to one side, spat on the floor. Bhisham Sahni, Tamas (New Delhi: Penguin, 2001) pg.288

14 Ania Loomba, Colonialism/Postcolonialism, (London: Routledge, 1999) pg.170

15 Tamas, pg. 232-233


17 New Wave or Parallel Cinema developed as a genre to change the face of the so-called Bombay masala film, it showed rural India in all its poverty and realistic detail.


21 Time Magazine.


24 Interview, Samar


26 Petro, pg.98
27 Satyajit Ray, Internet,  
http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/03/ghatak.html  
9th March, 2006

28 Interview with Ritwik Ghatak, Internet,  
http://www.filmref.com/people/ghatak.html  
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29 Ritwik Ghatak, Internet  
http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/03/ghatak.html  
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30 Kumar Shahani on Ghatak, Internet  
http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/03/ghatak.html  
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31 Shahani, Internet.

32 Ritwik Ghatak, Internet  
http://www.upperstall.com/people/ghatak.html  
9th March, 2006