This study sets out to examine identities and experiences as imagined by three recent independent films from Pakistan - Khamosh Paani, Khuda Ke Liye and Ramchand Pakistani. Produced during the culturally relaxed phase of General Pervez Musharraf’s presidency, these films embody the ‘opening up,’ in terms of themes as well as contexts of transnational co-productions and circulation. These films constitute an important historical archive for their proximity to real events. Given that history writing has been a much contentious project in the country these films perform a crucial historical function through the fine interplay of the personal with the political. Casting a critical inward glance, the films articulate the discontents of a nation by privileging the figure of a beleaguered artist.

In more than six decades of its existence Pakistani cinema has struggled with many difficulties, mirroring the trajectory of the nation. The study argues for going beyond the Partition prism in order to understand the contemporary subjectivities, conditioned as they were by the ubiquitous changes in the fortunes of the nation in the decades following 1947. It examines the identities privileged in filmic texts and its relationship to a national self, considering the strategic use that religion has been put to in Pakistan. What emerges in this discussion is the polyphony of contemporary Pakistan, unsettling the all too easy fit between religion and nation.

Today, it is the work of the independent filmmakers in Pakistan that provides hope for the revival of cinema in the country. Produced in the last five years, the specified films are finally breaking the silence that Pakistani films have maintained in the transnational films circuit. Significantly, all happen to be first features of their respective directors, though each has had an enduring engagement with other film/television forms. Circulating in trans-national contexts, these productions have earned critical acclaim in international festival circuits and managed limited releases and distribution in many countries including India. Addressing home as well as foreign audiences, it is a humanist cinema dealing with lives of individuals and families caught against political trends, developments local in manifestation yet often having trans-national roots and repercussions.
Synchronizing a Self:
Nation and Identity in Contemporary Pakistani Cinema

Salma Siddique

I

In more than six decades of its existence Pakistani cinema has struggled with many difficulties, mirroring the trajectory of the nation. The violent Partition of 1947 irrevocably altered the Hindi-Urdu film industry of the undivided sub-continent, where Bombay was the nodal centre and Lahore a regional.\(^1\) While Lahore had three major studios with the Punjabi film production particularly well-established, these were largely run by non-Muslims who in the uncertain times of Partition moved to India. To an extent, certain Muslim film artists, who made the trip in reverse from Bombay to Lahore, filled in this vacuum. Starting out literally from scratch, Lahore was transformed into the cinema city of the new nation. The two features that shaped the contours of the film industry in Pakistan were the lack of state incentive as well as the continuing influx of Indian films, initially as cinema hall releases and later through video and satellite technologies.

While the fifties were a period of struggle for the filmmakers and producers in Pakistan, faced as they were with competition from Indian films, as well as governmental neglect, it was the sixties that saw a new breed of directors who chose politically radical and rebellious narratives. Themes of corruption, poverty, colonialism and oil politics in the region weakened the earlier predominance of love, romance and tragedy. General Ayub Khan's regime recognised the propagandist potential of cinema and the industry received a shot in the arm in terms of financing, subsidies and a more protectionist home market. Identified as the golden age of Pakistani cinema in no uncertain terms, the sixties gave way to violence, gore and mass killing on screen in the late seventies, as the filmmakers tried making sense of the martial state. The Pakistani film industry was crippled under the repressive censor regulations of its military government in the eighties. While the nineties saw some recovery, it has been unable to resuscitate the industry, popularly known as Lollywood.\(^2\) The Government has had practically no role except to censor films and issue censor certification. The eighties and nineties also saw a decline in filmgoers due to uncensored and smuggled video and satellite TV. Yet the changing technology has hardly been a one-way process and Pakistani television dramas became quite popular in the Indian sub-continent and its diaspora.

Similarly, the music industry of Pakistan has always enjoyed considerable success both

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within and outside the country. Artists like Noor Jahan, Ghulam Ali, Mehdi Hassan, Nusrat Fateh Ali, Abida Parveen as well as Sufi-fusion bands like Junoon and Fuzon have been extremely popular, performing in concerts held across the globe. So, the trans-national circulation of Pakistani popular televised products and music preceded those of its films and cinema maintained an awkward silence throughout these decades. As its numerous cinema halls, film distributors and artists struggle to survive and work in the troubled nation even today, it is the work of the independent filmmakers in Pakistan that provides hope for the revival of cinema in the country. Produced in the last five years, the specified films are finally breaking the silence that Pakistani films have maintained in the trans-national film circuit.

This study sets out to examine national identities and experiences as imagined by three contemporary independent films from Pakistan – Khamosh Paani, Khuda Ke Liye and Ramchand Pakistani. Significantly, all happen to be first features of their respective directors, though each has had an enduring engagement with other film/television forms. Circulating in trans-national contexts, these productions have earned critical acclaim in international festival circuits and managed limited releases and distribution in many countries including India Addressing home as well as foreign audiences, it is a ‘humanist cinema’ dealing with lives of individuals and families caught against political trends, developments local in manifestation yet often having trans-national roots and repercussions.

The film Khamosh Paani (Silent Waters, 2004) by Sabiha Sumar is set in General Zia-ul-Haq's Pakistan, in the late seventies where an ageing woman – Ayesha Khan – is forced to confront her traumatic past in the increasingly radical climate of the country. Ayesha was once Veero, a young Sikh girl who escaped the mass honour killings committed by her family during the Partition. She finds refuge with a Muslim man who marries her and converts her to Islam. Thirty years on, as her son gets involved with the reactionaries mushroomed by the Zia regime, her marginalisation is completed by an increasing wariness of old friends. The film draws on the cyclical nature of trauma, where Veero’s survival of the physical violence of Partition is brought to a closure by Ayesha’s suicide three decades later, caused by the psychological violence of a radical state. The filmmaker Sabiha Sumar has several non-fiction films to her credit including Who Will Cast the First Stone (1988), Don’t Ask Why (1999) and For a Place under the Heaven (2008). Her films have explored the impact of fundamentalist Islam on the rights of women in Pakistan and Khamosh Paani was her first feature film.

Transcending three nations – Pakistan, Britain and USA, Shoiab Mansoor’s Khuda Ke Liye (In the Name of God, 2009) explores the delicate predicament of Muslims in a post-9/11 world

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order, confronted as they are by political Islam at one end and Islamophobia at the other. It is a story of two musician brothers, whose lives are changed forever when faced with these polar opposites. While the younger one joins the Taliban extremists, the liberal elder brother becomes a victim of racial profiling in the USA. Their cousin Mary, a British national, is forcibly married off to the younger brother thereby completing the third strand of the story. The film while being a critique from within, of Islamic radicalism, is also a scathing commentary on the America-led war against terrorism. Before *Khuda Ke Liye*, Shoaib Mansoor, produced and directed many television programmes including mini-series, music videos and documentaries. Becoming prolific late-eighties onwards, he became a household name, popularised as ‘ShoMan’ of Pakistani TV.

*Ramchand Pakistani* (Ramchand from Pakistan, 2008) is about a small Dalit-Hindu Pakistani boy who accidently crosses the sensitive India-Pakistan border and ends up spending six years in an Indian jail before reuniting with his mother. His father too follows him in the critical moment of border crossing and the mother is left behind, living in despair. Ramchand and his father spend six years in an Indian jail, marked by a yearning for the open skies of their village in Pakistan as well as forming some enduring bonds within the Indian prison. Mehreen Jabbar who has several television plays to her credit in Pakistan, made the film.

Produced during the culturally relaxed phase of General Pervez Musharraf’s presidency, these films embody the “opening up,” in terms of trans-national co-productions and circulations. For Sumar’s film, funding came from Switzerland, France, Germany and Sweden. The cast across the three films includes actors and actresses from the Hindi film industry in Mumbai in pivotal roles. While *Khamosh Paani* could not secure a release in theatres in Pakistan unlike the other two, all three films were released and distributed in India. The transnational aspect of the independent cinema of Pakistan affords it a tenor that is denied by the politically more conservative commercial industry within the home country.

The need to go beyond the crisis paradigm has been articulated by academics working on Pakistan. When it comes to the cinema of the country, one struggles with a crisis of perspective. There is a tendency among writings on Pakistani cinema to propose that discussions of the Partition are inescapable when examining Pakistan and the subjectivities within this nation-state. Two considerations may qualify this. Firstly, the thematic concern for national frontiers is hardly a phenomenon peculiar to Pakistan and is evident in many cinemas from a sensitive border

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context. The other is the presence of films in Pakistan that do not engage with the border or the Partition but with the internal fabric of the country. Can the latter be then read as expressions of a more confident nationhood that does not preoccupy itself with the trauma of its genesis?

While the Partition prism may undoubtedly have its merits, it creates a bind that is often more debilitating than liberating. It relegates to the background the social tensions, the popular desires and political anxieties of contemporary Pakistan that has led an independent six-decade long existence. To see Partition as an overarching presence in any art form is to dilute the significance of the subsequent events in the independent history of the country, as if the last worthwhile news from Pakistan was the vivisection of the subcontinent.\(^7\) There is a need to engage with the recent cinema as cultural artefacts of contemporary Pakistan, tempered by and responding to contemporary consciousness.

The attempt of this study is to read the post-Partition subjectivities, shaped as they were by the violence and displacement of the event, were also conditioned by the ubiquitous changes in the fortunes of the nation in the following decades. Thus, endless historical forces impact both individual and national psyches. The past is contemplated upon in the filmic space amidst the political wrecks\(^8\) accompanying the formation of the contemporary. The study urges attention to the historical impulse in the films where the present crisis is articulated by referring to events in the past. Given that history writing has been a much contentious project in Pakistan, these films perform a crucial historical function. It is important to examine the identity privileged in filmic texts and its relationship to a national identity, considering the strategic use that religion has been put to in Pakistan. Additionally, this study seeks to understand the relationship between the centre and periphery, discerning the character of different spaces within the nation. The oppositions and identifications involved in defining the "self" become evident on extrapolating from the human alliances that are vindicated along with the doomed ones in the realm of representation.

II

Janie: Pakistan? Is that a nation?

Mansoor: We think so and the UN agrees.

_Khuda Ke Liye_, (2007)

All three narratives claim historical specificity, where ‘true’ stories are being represented.

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\(^7\) Krishna Kumar identifies this tendency in the writing of history in Indian textbooks where the historical account stops with independence and Partition. See Krishna Kumar, _Battle for Peace_ (New Delhi: Penguin, 2002).

Several cinematic devices, first being the historical contextualisation of each story, help achieve this. Neat dates and detailing text appear at the beginning and often at crucial points in the film. Television as a source of news plays a crucial part in imparting authenticity. In Ramchand Pakistani, Champa loses hope of reuniting with her husband and son, once she watches the bleak television reports on the exchange of prisoners between the two countries. In Khuda ke Liye, Mansoor wakes up to the collapse of the twin towers being broadcast on the CNN channel, like millions did on 11 September 2001. The television set at the local village teashop telecasts a debate on the incomplete Islamisation of Pakistan, accompanied by the intermittent India-bashing in a Pakistani television programme in Sumar’s film. The filmmakers perform the task of a chronicler, drawing on lived and transmitted memory. The role of the news media (similar to the printing press in Benedict Anderson’s argument) in aiding the imagination of a national community is emphasised. Using television news as a leitmotif of lived reality, the films foreground the interpellation of assembled spectators as national audiences. Television images are also markers of historical change, as Sameer transforms from a hooked spectator of Hindi film songs played in local video parlours to being the image on the screen – of the bearded politician demanding complete Islamisation of the country.

The plot points in the films find the political traversing the personal, transforming lives, relationships and psyches forever. In Khamosh Paani, Veero’s embracing of Islam is explained as an outcome of Partition. Her leaving one community and joining another, is symbolic of the death of her religious identity, a death that her Sikh family wanted to mete out to her person. While Veero never crosses any borders as the village she stays in 1947 is the same which she inhabits in 1979, borderlines are established where the nations have changed. She then crosses both communal and national boundaries by marrying outside the community as well as by staying still. The biggest change brought about by the Partition was the heightened identifying and being identified as a Hindu, Muslim or Sikh and Ayesha is symbolic of a nation that was made ‘Muslim.’ It is the realisation of her precarious identity whereby she must reaffirm her faith and nation once again, that makes Ayesha jump into the well, which she had once zealously escaped from. Khamosh Paani contemplates on the unfixed nature of the self, whereby each time a crisis arises it demands a redefining and reassigning of the earlier identity.

While the border situation between India and Pakistan has always been sensitive, it is the ill-fated timing of Ramchand’s accidental crossing that exacerbates the situation. It was the time when the two nations nearly came to war, after India accused Pakistan of orchestrating the attack on its parliament in

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2001. Consumed by his own deprived existence as a national minority and neglected by the administrative machinery, Ramchand is poignantly oblivious of the magnitude of his simple straying.

In a pre-9/11 world where the Taliban were considered more of an internal threat to the liberal atmosphere of Afghanistan and Pakistan and not a global concern, is where *Khuda Ke Liye* chooses to begin its story. It is a time when the Taliban were bringing down the Bamiyan statues and the rest of the world were disapproving spectators in the comforts of their living room. *Khuda Ke Liye* points out how the terror timeline for Pakistan started much earlier than the rest of the world, when artists were being targeted and how the young in Pakistani society as well as the diaspora were becoming increasingly vulnerable. Instead of taking 9/11 as a watershed event, *Khuda Ke Liye* argues for a more Pakistan-centric historicity where ordinary life paralysed by the menace of Islamic fundamentalism, consecutively had to deal with an increasingly Islamophobic world.

Invariably, the historical referent is present in the films. It could be a person, a community, a group of people or a set of events. That the Pakistani filmmakers prefer a fictionalised form to the documentary provides insights into the impulse of filmmaking. Sumar chose the feature film form with professional actors, as a documentary version of *Khamosh Pani* would have meant scratching people’s wounds who had lived the trauma of Partition. For Shoaib Mansoor, it was the personal outrage at friend Junaid Jamshed’s transformation from a pop music icon to an active Tablighi Jamaat member that inspired the story of the musician-brother-duo. Junaid Jamshed was the lead singer of Vital Signs, the first youth band of Pakistan, for whom Mansoor composed and directed many tracks. However, some years ago Junaid quit music announcing that it was ‘haram’ (forbidden in Islam), adopted a visibly Islamicised appearance with a long beard, cap and shalwar-kurta (loose flowing two-piece robe) and has restricted himself to singing naats and suras (passages from Quran and Hadis). Mehreen Jabbar’s film is based on the incident narrated by a father-son duo living near the border areas in Pakistan. Be it references to Zia’s Islamisation, 9/11 attacks, Taliban, racial profiling, prison torture, and exchange of prisoners between India and Pakistan, these films foreground proximity to real events and insist on their historical specificity. Pushing the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction, these films constitute a crucial historical archive.

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12 Tablighi Jamaat is a trans-national Islamic proselytising movement founded in pre-independent India.
Two forces precipitate crisis in the narrative of these films, the first being the larger political development at the national and trans-national level. Military dictators unleashing terror regimes within the country jeopardise civil life. It is also affected by the radical, non-state actors who challenge the nation-state apparatus by transcending the borders as well as the state authorities. In *Ramchand Pakistani* it takes the shape of the hostility between two nations. However, the second force, contingent on the first, is the transformation of the individual, a family insider, who in all three films is naive, an idler, and a male member. Vulnerable to externalities, they become agents of destabilisation within the family. The younger brother in *Khuda Ke Liye*, Sarmat comes under the influence of the Taliban preacher Maulana Tahiri and exposes his family to external uncertainties. Abandoning the pop music band he started with his elder brother, Sarmat proceeds to take down the paintings and photographs in his house, grows a beard and insists on his mother observing *purdah* (veil), all done purportedly in accordance with Islam. As he plummets deeper into the political Islam cauldron, he abets the abduction of his unsuspecting cousin who is later forcibly married to him. Little Ramchand, who is indulged and spoilt by his mother, spends his days playing truant and bunking his village school. On a particular morning, cross at being refused a bigger share of the breakfast, Ramchand naively strides across the border in fury and gets caught. As his father follows him in desperation, he too is arrested for border crossing while the mother gets left behind, tormented by the separation. In *Khamosh Paani*, Salim, who at first is happy courting his childhood sweetheart and practicing his flute, soon joins the petty proselytising officials and undertakes Islamisation in his own village. Progressively estranged from his lover Zubeida, he is at the forefront of volunteers erecting a higher wall at the girl’s school, implementing Zia’s *Chador aur Chardiwari* (veil and four walls) prescription for women. To win approval from his extremist mentors and collaborators, Salim makes increasing demands of Ayesha in terms of identity, till she’s unable to withstand the ignominy and ends her life. It is in this fine interplay of the personal with political, that the recent independent cinema of Pakistan finds expression.

In sharp contrast, non-familial feminine alliances in *Khamosh Paani* and *Khuda Ke Liye* have radical potential. Zubeida becomes Ayesha’s sole companion and ally, even when her own relationship with Salim has reached an irremediable crisis. While this alliance is unable to save Ayesha from committing suicide, Zubeida continues her association with Ayesha even after the latter’s death, symbolised by the locket and her musings. In Mansoor’s film, the bond forged between Mary and the women of the house where she is detained, has similar resonances. With the help and manoeuvrings of the Pakhtun women, Mary manages to escape, only to be captured
later. In helping Mary escape, the Pakhtun women seem to articulate their own desires to escape the oppressive hamlet. Yet, it is the succour and respite provided by the women at home that see Mary through extremely trying times. The feminine alliance that has interventionist potential is the one between Mary and her father’s British partner. The latter plays a pivotal role in rescuing Mary from her captors, by mobilising both the British and Pakistani state authorities to trace Mary. While Mary remains estranged from her father, her friendship with his partner is deepened after the crisis. Her decision to return to the village to teach the young girls of the Pakhtun hamlet is an act in solidarity with her less privileged companions of captivity. In *Ramchand Pakistani*, Champa defies and hides from the male members of her community who want to leave the village in search of better livelihood options. On returning to her hut, once everyone has left, Champa discovers food provisions left behind by her sister-in-law who was unable to openly support Champa’s decision.

Most love relationships in the films that involve crossing of any boundaries - national, religious, racial or even ideological - are doomed. So Mansoor and his white American partner Janie, Mary and her British boyfriend James, Salim and Zubeida, Champa and jeweller Abdullah and even Ramchand and his childhood crush Inspector Kamla are romances that either remain unfulfilled or have drastic consequences for the lovers. While all the three films imagine such alliances, the fate of each reflects a cynical engagement that acknowledges the prevalent taboos in the society.

IV

"'You are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques... you may belong to any religion or caste or creed - that has nothing to do with the business of the state.'"

Mohammad Ali Jinnah, 11 August 1947

While *Khuda Ke Liye* and *Khamosh Paani* are narratives of religious identity and musings on political, radical Islam contrasted with a personal, humane Islam, *Ramchand Pakistani* doesn’t have similar preoccupations. It marks a shift by bringing into focus, the non-Muslim communities in Pakistan. The film title has the effect of an oxymoron, creating a disjuncture with the trans-national viewer’s expectations of narratives from Pakistan as being necessarily the narratives of the Muslim community. The brightly dressed Hindu women of the Kutch region in Pakistan, maintaining their customs and rituals, belie the popular imaginary of an

16 Interestingly, Shoaib Mansoor chose to give his own name to the protagonist of his film, played by the leading actor of Pakistan – Shaan Shahid.
assimilationist Muslim state. It also brings to attention the predicament of the Hindu minority in Pakistan, economically dispossessed and suspected of spying for India. In the Indian prison, Ramchand and his father are suspected to be Pakistani spies and initially the jail officials are not convinced of their Hindu identity. Both are checked for circumcision which, however once negated, doesn’t translate into a more favourable treatment. The Pakistani identity on its own, merits torture and maltreatment in Indian prisons. From a Pakistani standpoint, Ramchand Pakistani imparts a twisted and superfluous logic to the secularism of the Indian State.

Khuda Ke Liye engages in the interplay of cultural, religious and national ideas that shape individuals. It questions the desirability of religion impinging on personal choices and desires. Sarmat’s arguments with his elder brother Mansoor are countered by the logic-twisting, rhetoric of Moulana Tahiri. As Sarmat confessions to the Moulana that he becomes “lajwaab” (speechless) when faced with the sharp logic and clarity of his brother’s arguments, the Moulana recommends that he should avoid any further exchange and go to the border area of Waziristan, which is more congenial to counter the onslaught of western rationality. Through this refusal to engage in a dialogue, the film suggests the doctrinal precariousness of the practitioners of radical Islam. And the onus of countering both the Islamophobes as well as the Islamic radicals falls on the moderates.

It is Zubeida’s moderate voice in Khamosh Paani that warns Salim as he inches closer to radical Islam, remarking that while she too observes namaaz, she has not suspended her critical faculties. A plea to rational thought is pervasive in both these filmic texts from Pakistan. And it is not merely in Khamosh Paani, framed by a feminist vision, that retrogressive religious practices are linked to orthodox patriarchy. Even Khuda Ke Liye, makes similar connections where Mary’s father, who disapproves of the British boyfriend, forcibly marries her off to Sarmat. Violence against Mary continues as Sarmat, goaded by his male Jihadi colleagues, rapes her when she tries to escape from captivity.

Religion is also depicted in terms of the beliefs of the older as being more accommodative and humane. This is evident in the heated exchange between the village barber and the proselytising officials in Khamosh Paani. On being heckled to shut down his shop for Friday prayers, the barber lashes out on the oddity of half-baked youngsters instructing the older generation about traditions and religion. Similarly in Khuda Ke Liye Sarmat’s grandmother remarks how the debate of her childhood regarding veiling of women had resurfaced and not really put to rest, as many had believed. This communicates two trends, one that is applicable to

the contemporary world in general, which has witnessed a resurgence of conservatism in the last
decade or so. The other is more specific to Pakistan, being the unresolved issue of the role
religion was to play in the public life of Pakistan. There are ceaseless arguments over the identity
of Pakistan and what its founder intended – a secular nation or an Islamic state. In her other
documentary films Sabiha Sumar returns to the founding documents of Pakistan, where Jinnah’s
famous speech\(^{18}\) is often quoted. The ambiguity around the national character Pakistan was to
have, led to a disputed understanding of the nation and made it vulnerable to the power
manoeuvrings of later regimes.

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In *Khuda Ke Liye*, the characteristics are reversed. The ravine villages of Waziristan provide perfect foliage to carry out inhuman acts. These are also the areas where the state is shown to have little control, run as they are by tribal, Islamic and patriarchal laws of Taliban. While the city, bears the brunt of occasional assaults from the periphery evidenced by the attack on the concert venue of the musician brothers, it is able to extend some protection to its inhabitants from complete anarchy. This is reflected in Maulana Tahiri’s recommendation that while a forced marriage would be unsuitable in the city, the tribal villages near the Durand Line would be more conducive to such illegal acts.

Symbolic of the past, the iconography of the ruins serves a mnemonic function. These are the spaces of temporary relief from the strains of the contemporary. In *Ramchand Pakistani*, they appear as a huge monument in Ramchand’s dreams where he searches and reunites, albeit fleetingly, with his mother. In *Khamosh Paani*, the old mosque-like dilapidated structure provides the rendezvous space for the lovers. While the space of the ruins is one that evokes innocence and nostalgia, the motif of the well in *Khamosh Paani* and in *Ramchand Pakistani* is linked to women’s quests for survival and dignity.\(^\text{19}\)

VI

The Sikh-turned-Muslim Ayesha, the British-Pakistani Muslim Mary, the liberal Muslim Mansoor, the Dalit-Hindu Pakistani Ramchand, and the callow Islamic reactionaries Salim and Sarmat point to the cauldron of Pakistani identity. The protagonists of these Pakistani films present us with no easy identities. They reflect the internal heterogeneity of Pakistani society, where identities are terrains contested by forces of modernity and tradition, communitarian and liberal, local and national (and trans-national), past and contemporary – churning out hyphenated identities. In these hyphenated identities the polyphony of the Pakistani society emerges, unsettling the all too easy fit between religion and nation. These filmic identities underscore the tension of a post-Colonial nation with multiple cultural identities, which at one point in history were subsumed under the aegis of Islam. Synchronous with the Pakistan state’s tightrope walk of allying with the war against terrorism and negotiating with Islamic fundamentalism within, the historical interrogations of these films are conditioned by a post-9/11 world order.

A lot like Ayesha’s trunk, identity in the three films is varied, personal and jumbled. It is mimetic of the past and set afloat on the current of passing time. Despite being different in

\(^{19}\) Humaira Saeed discusses the motif of the well in her “Ramchand Pakistani, Khamosh Pani and the Traumatic Evocation of Partition,” Op.Cit, p. 486.
themes and treatment, the films indulgingly privilege one identity. Specific neither to a community nor an ethnicity, it is the artist who has taken centre-stage. Through these films, the characters talk to the world as artists, singers and musicians. Blending Sufi with classical Hindustani, the music that Mansoor creates is appreciated and joined in by his classmates at the American music school. Remaining individualistic, it is adaptable to and accommodative of worldwide influences. In his vagrant existence away from school, Ramchand’s constant companion is his whistle. And a love struck young Salim greets Zubeida with the strains of his flute in the old mosque. As his beloved dreams of commanding a household of servants, he indulgently asks her if in her reign fankaars (artists) will receive patronage or not. This perhaps is the question that musicians, artists and filmmakers are asking in Pakistan – about the prospects of their creative and artistic abilities.
Other PSP Publications

“The Future of India-Pakistan Relations,” PSP Special Lecture, October 2010


“India’s Options in Afghanistan,” PSP Special Lecture, September 2011

Tarun Mathur, “Karachi: An Informal city,” PSP Occasional Paper, No. 2 (Forthcoming)

Azad Ahmad Khan, “Primary Education in Pakistan: Status and Priorities,” PSP Occasional Paper, No. 3 (Forthcoming)

Namrata Goswami, “Just War Theory and Indian Intervention in East Pakistan, 1971,” PSP Monograph, No.1 (Forthcoming)

Rakesh Ankit, “The Origins of the Kashmir Dispute and Pakistan,” PSP Monograph, No. 2 (Forthcoming)

Rana Banerji, “The Pakistan Army: Composition, Character and Compulsions,” PSP Monograph, No.3 (Forthcoming)
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