A scrapbook is a record of personal memories, events and experiences; some real, others imagined, but always intimate and private. As is the case with Filmi Jagat, they can be in the form of newspaper cuttings, photos and just about anything that evokes memories of encounters with people, places, objects and a variety of art and entertainment forms; cinema, theatre, exhibitions and events of different kinds associated with the mix of a cultural history and a modern means of expression. It is, within aesthetic terms, a great equalizer. Scrapbooks on cinema hold memories of favourite films, actors and stars of different historical periods and times. Though this is one of the first publications that volunteer such an assortment to the public, it is a veritable record of a very special relationship with films and its stars – the mindscape of a fan or enthusiast addressing the excitement of a changing era in the pre-independence period. Often it does not follow any straightforwardly logical or historical order except to express a very personal connection that the owner/creator of the scrapbook has with cinema. However, Filmi Jagat is not merely Folding a World into itselF

Debashree Mukherjee

Cinema has historically shared a unique relationship with the modern. It has not only responded to but also embodied the myriad affects of the modern with its proliferation of spectacle, commodities, and sensation. Filmi Jagat reconfigures this visual modernity along surprising axes. It is a peculiarly cinematic form, composed of choreographed gazes and montage aesthetics. As different sets of eyes look upon each other across the pages of Filmi Jagat, the spectator’s gaze itself is pulled in multiple directions, prompting her to turn pages, revisit images, and pry behind folded cut-outs. [Fig. 1] For a paper genre dealing in still photographs, this scrapbook gathers a flurry of movement within it. Lohana created his scrapbook at a time when South Asian cityscapes were getting increasingly saturated by multiple media, from print advertising to film billboards. However, the very idiosyncrasies evident in Filmi Jagat demonstrate how this proliferation of visual stimuli did not numb consumers’ senses.
but prodded some to actively make sense of this new imagistic world. The immersive urban visual field of the 1930s and 1940s is reconstituted with wit and canny playfulness in this little book to create a singularly in-between form, suspended somewhere between the realms of the public and the private. Culled from mass-produced print objects, _Filmi Jagat_ is nevertheless an intimate work that melds the immediacy of a private diary and the reflective distance of a carefully curated photo album.

Comprising clippings from film magazines, song booklets, and advertisements from the mid 1930s to the late 1940s, _Filmi Jagat_ produces a unique and fragmented history of film. This historical conjuncture saw tumultuous political action and social transformation. The decolonization movement was set for political victory even as the subcontinent was gripped by communal tensions roused by talks of Partition. The Bombay film industry was caught in a matrix of contradictory changes as sound technology gradually replaced silent film, sources and movements of capital started getting corporatized, a new kind of ‘respectable’ film worker was actively sought along class and caste lines, and the star started to get untethered from the studio.

While we cannot retrace the exact process, we do witness traces of time and labour as Lohana turns and re-turns to older pages or newer films. Scrapbooks have traditionally been interpreted as technologies of memory, partly mnemonic aid, partly memorialization. This implies a kind of freezing of time, a nostalgic exercise to contain a moment of flux. Instead, _Filmi Jagat_ seems to me an attempt at re-activation. As films return to theatres and film magazines during re-runs; or are temporally dislocated as announcements of a forthcoming release or reviews of a film past; Lohana also revisits the pages of the book, tearing out some pictures, pasting over others, folding in new stars as older ones are superseded. This is an attempt to capture experience, a mode of inscription that materializes the present. In that it is a visionary act, as are all acts of archiving which are oriented towards the future and feel the burden of history.

**SCRAPBOOKING AS LIMINAL HISTORIOGRAPHY**

The scrapbook, as a generic cultural artifact, deserves its own social history. While there has not been any serious study of scrapbook practices in India, the form has been widely discussed in the Euro-American context. The history of the scrapbook form is inextricably linked with the history of paper, the book, and the printing press. Traced back to 16th century Europe, the earliest scrapbooks were an elite form composed of rare printed texts. As such, they found their way into the legendary wunderkammers,
or cabinets of curiosities, as idiosyncratic treasures to be socially displayed. By the late 19th century, the easy availability of paper, low-cost printing, and steam-powered chromolithography led to a surfeit of printed text and images in the public domain (Tucker et al, 2006:6; Garvey (2006b); Day Good). South Asia itself, during this period, witnessed a boom in popular visual culture, which proliferated via newspapers, calendars, picture postcards, magazines, illustrated novels, advertisements, textile labels, theatre playbills, even matchbook covers. [Fig. 2]
The 1900s inaugurated what can truly be called the century of cinema and this new medium and technology captured the urban imagination. Cinema’s conquest of the popular imagination was aided by the steadily burgeoning print industry that evolved around cinema, producing trade journals, fanzines, song booklets, lobby cards, posters, newspaper advertisements, and assorted publicity materials. Fanzines, especially, were presented as cherished collectibles and often carried lavishly produced art plates and photographs of stars that begged to be torn out, in order to adorn walls or scrapbooks. Magazines like \textit{filmindia} (Bombay), \textit{Cinema} (Lahore), and \textit{Dipali} (Calcutta) extended cinema’s cultural appeal and social influence into ever-wider circles. Thus, Dev Anand remembers that during his college days in Lahore ‘all the University boys in the campus used to carry copies of \textit{filmindia} along with their textbooks. It was their Bible.’\textsuperscript{2} Part of the appeal of the fanzine was the multiple functions it served—a prized stash that could make you the envy of your friends, a ‘status symbol,’\textsuperscript{3} and finally a private archive of images that you could ransack in order to create the ultimate shrine to your beloved star—a scrapbook. [Fig. 3]
At the same time, it is assumed that making and maintaining scrapbooks was a gender-specific activity, a domestic ‘genre of the self’ favored by women. One needs only remember Ray Milland’s ill-fated suggestion to Grace Kelly in *Dial M for Murder* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954), that she occupy herself at home by working on her scrapbook. Of course, Milland’s character can hardly imagine that the very scissors Kelly will use for her domestic craftwork will also double as a murder weapon. This deadly twist in the tale plays on the conventional faith in the spatial division of the sexes and their expressions of the self. Nevertheless, empirical surveys about scrapbook practices reveal that both men and women have kept scrapbooks through the decades, even though men’s scrapbooks have ‘usually centered around competitive activities’ such as ‘debate, sports, hunting… or actual public events’ (Katriel et al: 4). Where does Mangaldas V. Lohana’s *filmi* scrapbook figure in this gendered history?

It might be useful to compare Lohana’s work with another contemporaneous scrapbook (1940s-1950s) which embodies a different order of self-articulation, aspiration, and notion of celebrity. Straightforward in its serial pasting, Razia Begum’s scrapbook, crafted in Lucknow, culls clippings largely from *The Illustrated Weekly of India* and broadens the scope of the celebrity memory-book to include film stars, directors, British royalty, Indian political leaders, and sportspersons. While Lohana’s book focuses solely on diegetic images, publicity stills that represent scenes within a movie, the Lucknow book also privileges the celebrity’s off-screen private moments and domestic life. These images are equally staged publicity photographs, but they carry a different attraction, an all-encompassing vision of stardom. We see Stewart Granger falling asleep in his chair at the ‘end of a day’; Ashok Kumar with his wife and children relaxing at home; Ragini with her husband and kids on a family outing; Kamini Kaushal on a family picnic in little vignettes of the star-at-rest. [Fig. 4]
Razia Begum seems fascinated by the multiple roles that a star occupies – on screen or at home; as actor, spouse, parent, or just a tired body. The recurrent images of couples, parenthood, and children indicate a distinctly gendered imagination. Interestingly also is a section dedicated to weddings where the oddest of couples, from royalty, to film families, to government engineers, are curated together. This other scrapbook, then, illustrates the rise of the cult of a personality, centred on spectacles of consumption and aspirational lifestyles. Though the creator of this scrapbook is firmly located within the private sphere, her gaze is mobile as she is allowed to roam freely in the public realm of vital agents and conspicuous commodity consumption. Might we view scrapbooking as a form of female flanerie, which allows the home-bound, middle-class woman to wander through public spaces of upper-class leisure?

If Razia Begum’s scrapbook project can be viewed as mode of imaginative travel, a personal fantasy space sought by someone likely restricted to the domestic sphere, how do we account for Lohana’s choice of this liminal genre? A young fan’s confession in *Filmindia* magazine from April 1943 provides a crucial clue to this negotiation of the public-private.

I take *Filmindia* to school. On the 11th January [sic], my teacher caught me reading the mag during the interval, took me to the headmaster and got me fined a rupee. Is your magazine such a bad one? – Nagendra Shekhar Dikshit, Cawnpore.

And so we approach the heart of the matter. Now that we have celebrated a century of Indian cinema, it is hard to understand the fraught and liminal social role occupied by movies in the 1940s. Seventy years ago, if some college boys in Lahore proudly flaunted their copies of *Filmindia*, several other schoolboys in Kanpur had to take their silver screen passions underground. The ambivalence with which the middle class viewed the movies—as part moral contagion, part artistic endeavor—makes it appropriate that even a man with an official rubber stamp like Mangaldas V. Lohana adopted the marginal form of the scrapbook to nurture his film memories and work through these desires. In many ways, the scrapbook was a companion form to the diary, created in the sphere of the private and in the time of leisure. Nevertheless, it bridged the public-private divide as it was geared not only as a private pastime but also an object of occasional social display, shared with friends and, therefore, showcasing personal taste (Day Good). These contradictions can be seen in the way Lohana proudly stamps the pages of *Filmi Jagat* with his name, even while he chooses this in-between form. Lohana’s self-reflexive gaze at the light of cinema on the title page is thus an active gaze that confers value on a socially suspect medium and brings fandom and spectatorship into the ambit of history.
Filmi Jagat is an unruly object. It refuses to lend itself to linear narrative interpretation or thematic consistency. Instead, it jumps across ideas, revisits the same scenes of passion, and travels through time according to its own whimsical logic. What value can such an object have as an historical artifact? Can it be claimed as a legitimate part of the archive of Indian cinema? Let us approach these questions via the obsessive collector of film memorabilia, a figure I call the kinetomaniac.

Mangaldas Lohana, at a fundamental level, is a collector. His scrapbook represents days, months, even years of careful collection of film-related materials. The collector of film materials exhibits a particular order of mania, a mania that stems from a passion for the movies coupled with a keen understanding of the utter ephemerality of the cinematic experience. The kinetomaniac knows that the object of her desire is ineffable, merely shadows, ‘projections’, temporarily cast on air like phantoms, of this world and not of it at the same time. The images fade away into thin air, while the emotions evoked linger and urgently need to be anchored. Booklets that precede the release, ticket stubs, postcards of film stars, posters stolen from a theatre lobby, reviews cut out of newspapers and pasted in scrapbooks, a faithfully maintained list of films watched that year, diary entries that casually associate the memory of a film with the presence of a lover; these are some of the ways the kinetomaniac enshrines/reconstructs the filmic event in her heart and in her home. [Fig. 5]
Less than 5% of all the films made in the 1930s and 1940s survive today. How do we write a history of film without the films themselves? The kinetomaniac intuitively acknowledges that cinema is more than simply film. In the absence of an exhaustive, ordered, magisterial archive, we can turn to artifacts like Filmi Jagat that construct playful counter-archives. A majority of the films referenced in this scrapbook are permanently lost to us, but a close examination of the photographic fragments can provide us with unlikely information and vital clues about creative choices and material practices. The kinetomaniac offers a vital lesson for the film historian: collecting cinema memorabilia often has a libidinal logic with no clear hierarchy of artifacts. He understands that cinema is a dispersed phenomenon manifested in various forms, its traces found at diverse sites. Thus, while the lost films in the Indian cinema archive represent a cultural tragedy, we are reminded that we need not abandon our quest. There are other directions to look in and parallel histories to write.

**TASVEER: IMAGING THE FOLD**

One of the principal pleasures of Filmi Jagat lies in the tactile activity required to navigate it. The reader must unfold and re-fold the pasted images, discovering hidden faces behind printed surfaces. Paper images fold over into themselves as their meanings lie simultaneously inside as well as outside. This particular characteristic of the fold, its joining of the interior...
with the exterior has a special significance for Deleuze, who has suggested that the fold constitutes the basic unit of existence. He analyzes Foucault’s conceptions of self-formation, knowledge, and resistance via the fold and argues that the human subject is only able to resist death or emptiness by internalizing the outside. Life is ‘within the folds’ and in a similar fashion, the scrapbook affirms the seemingly banal moments of popular culture by folding them into itself. The simultaneity of the inside/outside in the fold, also speaks to the manner in which the scrapbook form straddles the threshold of the public/private. Lohana’s kinetomania and its creative, but marginal product, have remained hidden to history even as their component parts, the stars and publicity materials, have remained thoroughly exposed.

The fold also signifies doubling and Lohana’s book is full of repetitions. Films like *Apni Nagariya*, *Kunwara Baap*, *Duniya Kya Hai* (all lost films) repeat and return over and over again. Yes, this repetition is partly due to the logistics of availability and material access. But it is also an intuitive grasp of the nature of the commercial film machine, a world of stars, stories, situations that fold into themselves and are doubled, endlessly repeated across time and space. Lohana captures this notion of unchanging change by showing us same but different visions by recontextualizing them. This game of transposal is most explicitly indicated here [Fig. 6]. Seven cut-outs from films seen earlier in the book are assembled in a seemingly random manner. Their mutual dynamics is indicated by the words accompanying
them—‘Here – with --- another.’ These words come from film advertisements seeking to promote a studio that is ‘here’ ‘with another’ brand-new (but same old) combination of actors, sets, and situations, to entertain and edify. The spectator that is addressed is a canny consumer like Lohana himself, willing to be enchanted and seduced but not naïve about the mechanics of this seduction.

A section in the penultimate pages of the book, dominated by the poster image of Tasveer, gathers together the multiple meanings of this film scrapbook. Released in 1943, Tasveer represents the last years of Lohana’s Filmi Jagat, and also presages the end of a particular cinematic era. Within the next decade, the Bombay film industry would be significantly impacted by the rupture of Partition. Many artistes, producers, directors, singers, and lyricists would migrate to and from the Lahore film industry affecting the futures of both industries. On these pages itself are traces of this migration as Najam Naqvi, Swarnalata, and Pramilla’s actor-husband Kumar moved to Pakistan. The age of the studio star also came to an end in the 1940s and the 1950s saw the rise of the independent, freelancing star as his/her own brand. This mode of star economics led to a new chapter in film publicity that can be glimpsed in Razia Begum’s scrapbook with its freewheeling off-screen ‘private’ stars, de-linked from specific films or studios.

Unavailable at the National Film Archive of India and not yet on the shadowy pre-1953 VCD market, Tasveer is yet another lost film. However, we can take heed from the inventive form of Filmi Jagat, and employ a different sensibility to approach what is (or will soon be) lost. Through its intricate visual games and tangential clues, the scrapbook invites us to abandon a conventional search for plot synopses—for beginnings and ends—and instead, follow any or all of the visual hints that Lohana has telescoped onto the page. The possibilities are dizzying in their plenitude.

Swarnalata, holding an animated frame of Motilal, looks directly at us and invites us into the world of the film and its starry promises. Born into a Sikh family, Swarnalata had only debuted as a film actress the previous year. The next year, however, she was to shoot to the heights of popularity with the film Rattan (M. Sadiq, 1944). Note that Motilal’s image is photographic, not drawn like Swarnalata’s, and is rendered in black and white. These touches, combined with the wooden photo frame, create a distance between the photographed diegetic universe and the immediate context of the reader and paradoxically tempt the spectator into bridging that distance by entering the cinema hall. But what happens once the show is over and the fan exits the theatre? It is the printed photograph, again, that anchors the affects of the film and serves as a placeholder for memory. As a modern technology and forensic aid, the photograph recurrently appeared in Bombay films of the 1930s and 1940s. From Miss 1933 to Neecha Nagar, characters use photographs of their lovers to direct their longing during periods of separation. Often, these same photographs become crucial climactic devices to
jog a character’s fading memory of a past love, or to convince a judge of a protagonist’s true identity, and hence prompt ethical action. In the hands of a kinetomaniac, the published photograph has a similar purpose; it allows her to endlessly reiterate her love by gazing at her beloved star, thereby reactivating a distant memory into an immediate presence. [Fig. 7]

Zooming out from the Swarnalata invitation, we notice a complex choreography of gazes across the two pages. Motilal impishly squints to aim a pebble in Ashok Kumar’s direction, while Pramilla looks down, lost in pleasant but perhaps melancholy thoughts. Does Ashok Kumar look at Motilal in admiration, earnestly searching for a thespian role model? Sa’adat Hasan Manto has narrated the story of how Ashok Kumar went from being an earnest laboratory technician at Bombay Talkies Studio to a reluctant film hero. In 1935, during the shooting of the film Jeevan Naiya, the heroine of the film and co-founder of the studio, Devika Rani, eloped with her co-actor Najamul Hussain. Devika Rani’s husband, Himansu Rai, pressured Ashok Kumar to substitute for the erring hero and Ashok Kumar tried every trick in the book to evade his destiny. At this time, around 1936, Motilal was already regarded as a fine actor. In fact, he is now considered by many to be Bombay cinema’s first ‘natural actor’, for breaking away from the more extravagant acting styles influenced by the Parsi stage and folk theatre traditions. In this visual conversation of the gazes, perhaps the gauche, awkward Ashok Kumar of 1939 is looking up to the assured talent of Motilal in 1943? Possibly, for today the names of Motilal and Ashok Kumar are invoked in the same breath for ushering in an era of naturalistic acting in mainstream Hindustani cinema.

Coincidentally, the same scandal that pushed Ashok Kumar onto the silver screen also had repercussions on the director of Tasveer, who started his career as the
continuity person on Jeevan Naiya and several later Bombay Talkie films. Najam Naqvi had to shorten his name from Najamul Hasan Naqvi in order to avoid being mistaken for the infamous Najamul Hussain of Devika Rani notoriety. 6

Just above Ashok Kumar, Pramilla wonders why the stunt and action films she regularly starred in have such a meager record in the history of Indian cinema today. This film, Bijli (Balwant Bhatt, 1939), is also a lost film but it is evident from surviving reviews and publicity that it was a stunt picture featuring Pramilla as an airplane pilot and masked avenger. The production company, Prakash Pictures, was famous for its stunt and action films, including special effects mythologicals. Unfortunately, histories of more ‘respectable’ film concerns like Bombay Talkies and Prabhat Film Company continue to occupy both the popular as well as the academic imagination. 7 Lohana’s scrapbook itself reflects a bias against the sensational, low-budget, action film genre premised on shock and spectacle. There is no mention of Fearless Nadia or the Wadia Brothers’ hugely successful films of the period. Nevertheless, these brief images of Pramilla manage to keep the stunt film within sight. [Fig. 8]
In the pages of film magazines and newspapers, *Tasveer* was reviewed and advertised as ‘a rollicking comedy of modern life!’ and ‘a hilarious comedy of marital misunderstandings.’ Written in a satirical vein, the film was said to be an adaption of the Marathi stage play, *Samshaya Kallol*, and followed three couples plagued by jealousy and suspicion. This theme of romantic suspicion continues when we fold back the top panel, albeit in a tragic mode this time with the Lalita Pawar-starrer *Nirali Duniya* (1940). This film too, is lost and I have not been able to gather much extra-diegetic information about the story. However, with an English title such as *Trust Your Wife*, and images of a forlorn married Lalita Pawar and child, it appears that the film followed the familiar plotline of a wronged but virtuous, Sita-like Hindu wife. More interesting are the altered dynamics of the facing pages now with Pramilla and Ashok Kumar gazing towards different histories and futures. Pramilla and Lalita Pawar had both been stunt actresses in their careers. Born Esther Abraham, Pramilla, received several minor injuries while performing her own stunts in films like *Jungle King and Bijli*. Lalita Pawar, who started her career with films like *Diler Jigar/ Gallant Heats* (1931), was not so lucky. During a shoot in 1942, she was slapped so hard by a co-actor that she suffered partial facial paralysis and could no longer play glamorous lead roles. Such accounts of risk and precarity might get occluded in formal film analysis but we are forced to acknowledge them when the residual evidence is so slight. Lalita Pawar’s defective, perpetually squinting left eye ironically aided her career as a character actor and assured her career longevity not available to screen heroines. Her most memorable role for us today would be as the wicked Manthara in Ramanand Sagar’s television series, *Ramayan* (1987-88). Maybe it is his own future success in television that Ashok Kumar therefore looks towards, this time as the wise old man from *Hum Log* (1985-86). The upside-down autographed photo of Durga Khote conveniently joins these various strands of history and memory as we remember that Khote performed Sita several times in her career, including once for Prakash Pictures. [Fig. 9]
And so the skeins of history get entangled with each other and, depending on our perspective, the page reveals either a confusing mess or an intricate history. These disparate vignettes embody a mode of storytelling, of historiography itself, which Manto would have termed ‘pharai,’ a meandering, rhizomatic imagination which cannot tell a clear, linear tale but instead twists, bends, and folds to create an exhilarating intuition of a crowded moment. [Fig. 10]
NOTES

1 1947 saw the Indian subcontinent divided into two separate, politically sovereign nation-states—India and Pakistan, the latter created as an Islamic state. The end of over two centuries of British colonial occupation was accompanied by severe communal violence: rioting, massacres, rapes, looting, and mass displacement as people migrated to different sides of the new national borders.

2 See Mother India, 1979, 27. Another reader considered filmindia to be “worth its weight in gold for its wealth of wit and wisdom. … A study of this has enabled scoring success in I.A.S examinations, offices, dinner tables, clubs and society parties and making boys and girls’ popular personalities.” A. Narayana Rao (Sambasivarao, 2008, p. 41). Several of the clippings in Filmi Jagat can be traced back to the pages of filmindia. But we also see traces of less prominent Gujarati and Urdu magazines (pgs...). Comment: These are some of the pages where we see the Gujarati magazine clippings, based on the image numbers from the original scrapbook folder I was given. These numbers should be replaced with the actual page numbers in the final publication: 4412, 4421, 4436, 4461.

3 See N. D. Sharma, Mother India, 1979, p23: “[filmindia] was a status symbol with the college students.”

4 In fact, within the field of feminist film historiography, the scrapbook has taken on a political significance as it materially embodies the methodological claims of the field. As a marginal form, not allowed a place within the official archive, the scrapbook mirrors the way in which women’s contributions to film industries across the world have been ‘accidentally’ left unrecorded.

5 Gilles Deleuze, Foucault, trans. Sean Hand (Minneapolis:

University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

6 Based on conversations with his daughter-in-law, Tahira Naqvi, 2012.


8 filmindia, April 1943

9 Times of India, May 1 1943, p6

10 Times of India, April 10 1943, p6