PhD Thesis in Art & Design

Lahore through its Oral History: An Audio Visual Practice to Explore Cultural Transformation

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Abstract

This thesis aims to study the cultural transformation of Lahore; the cultural hub of Punjab, through oral history interviews, and to digitally document these audio-visual conversations. It addresses the need to preserve and reauthenticate historical and cultural narratives in Pakistani society, particularly in Lahore, where invaluable personal memories about arts, culture, and daily life are diminishing without any systematic documentation. The generation who witnessed Lahore after partition and during Dhaka separation has been disappearing and treasures of their memoirs remain undocumented, unpreserved and inaccessible, leaving the new generation oblivious about their untold past. Recognizing oral history as a powerful, yet often contested, method for rebuilding a more realistic and less fabricated past, this study employs open-ended, semi-structured oral history interviews. Eight prominent individuals from Lahore's cultural landscape, including art, academia, and media, have provided rich qualitative data, revealing unexpected insights and aiding in the development of thematic codes through reflexive thematic analysis. These codes, such as "Topophilia of Androon Lahore" or "Language; A Multilayered Impact on a Heterogeneous Society" serve as reflections of the ideologies and factors shaping cultural phenomena. A central finding is the pervasive "Collective Amnesia", exemplified by the subtle but profound erasure of Bengal's cultural influence and its 1971 separation from national memory, contrasting with individuals' inherited stories. The interviews further illuminate significant cultural transformations in Lahore, including the decline of cinema—once a vibrant communal activity—and a loss of its academic air and cultural activism. Concurrently, the academic landscape has shifted from a previously integrated, collaborative public sphere to a more fragmented environment. By documenting these personal memories and their underlying cultural codes, this thesis re-establishes oral history's role as a vital medium for both historical documentation and for deeper cultural understanding. Deviating from conventional history documentation approaches, the researcher, with a background of communication design, uses an

amalgamation of audio-visual techniques of communication with oral history. The practice part consists of slices from the interviews and use graphic language to add layers to the audio-visual form of intangible heritage to grab the attention of young spectators. The objective is to create contemporary archival data and to place it in a digital world, along with special focus on its accessibility by both general and specific audiences.

Keywords: cultural heritage, oral history, digital technology, history, people, community

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1. Introduction:

The idea to record common human history isn't very historical, until 20th century history was focused only on political purposes (University of Chicago 2025). Early records of oral history are traced after the First World War when the oral history of paid government informers was recorded in America between 1978 and 1980. The information taken from informers, though confined, offered a rich source for historians. These recordings captured the firsthand information of the accounts of surviving army men of the First World War. These interviews converted into a digitized version, which is available for listening on YouTube (National WWI Museum and Memorial 2017).

In the context of Pakistani society with every passing day it is losing people who own rich memory treasures about arts, culture, politics, lifestyle, film, media, and the society at large leaving no systematic record behind. A very limited number of autobiographies may be found in the form of printed books that reach fewer numbers of audiences. These autobiographies may give glimpses of transitions of time and places through the personal and professional journeys of some prominent people. The researcher has found limited autobiographies and biographies that mostly belong to emperors, political leaders, spiritual personalities and activists. A few of the examples include *Tuzuk e Jahangiri* (Jahangeer 1967), *Jinnah of Pakistan* (Wolpert 2000), *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times* (Wolpert 2021), *Daughter of Destiny* (Bhutto 1990), *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir* (Musharraf 2006), *My Feudal Lord* (Durrani 1994), *Pakistan: a Personal History* (I. Khan 2011), *Shahab Naama* (Shahab 1987) and *I am Malala* (Yousafzai and Lamb 2013). In terms of a visual record of personalities, their connection to land and their contributions, there is a huge gap that needs to be addressed with matter of urgency.

1.1 Oral History

Since the 1990s practice of oral history has been emerging in India to document non-mainstream history of partition (Virdee 2013). Oral History Project (OHP) Pakistan, is an initiative to record the stories of partition, connected with the independence of Pakistan, that provides an alternate perception of the historical literature (The Citizens Archive of Pakistan 2010). OHP was initiated by a non-governmental organization,

which indicates the absence of a public space or a forum that can disseminate culture and history, as an undistorted history. However, the project is collecting alternative information only about the partition, mainly through crowdsourcing and newspapers. "*Ghair Sarkari Tareekh*"[1], a spoken history project by Pakistan Chowk Community Centre (PCCC), is gathering oral information about the oldest historical places in Karachi through interviews with residents and extracting data to map the city before urbanization (Pakistan Chowk Community Centre 2017). *Ghair Sarkari Tareekh* along with some other projects by the same organization traces the footprint of expanding urbanization and the lost form of the city after development. Almost no information about the project's findings can be obtained from the PCCC website and social media platforms. Also, there is no trace of archives available online or in any research database. Hence a gap is found in accessibility for researchers out of Karachi and for the public.

Research-based well-analysed oral history to record cultural transformation is much needed in all the historical cities of Pakistan. Lahore, being a cultural hub has recently been designated as a city of literature by UNESCO. It has also been pivotal in mainstream cultural activities pre- and post-partition through its radio, television, film studios, theatres, and literary platforms. The city has nurtured numerous contributors in the fields of art and culture including great writers, directors, actors, producers, singers, musicians, instrument players, dancers, painters and historians etc., however, most of the contributors have passed away and only a few are alive who have been witness to the cultural transformation of the city since independence.

Record of people's memories, that is, oral history, in context to certain time and space, serves as the strongest immaterial and intangible evidence of history. However, in doing so oral history offers a more realistic and arguably fairer rebuilding of the past to contest the conventional description. Personal memories through oral history seem to be slightly flawed, as they are mostly relying on a person, yet these are far less fabricated than documented conventional history based on agendas and

[1] An unofficial History

propaganda. Rather “cultural memories are incorrigibly multi-vocal: host of voices telling tales at odds with the rhetoric in which they are inscribed” (Thompson 1988a).

Oral history contributors share their eyewitness experiences and point of views about certain events. Their unique perspectives help to impart the missing links in documented history, every so often amending or even denying the available documentation. In this process “oral history has radical implications for the social message of history as whole” (Thompson 2003, 25). Also, it deviates from the conventional historical recording methods that are “precisely documented and date-oriented to the oral and evocative, what are they really collective remembrances” (Mageo 2001, 2).

1.2 Heritage and Culture

Cultural heritage is the basis of building the collective distinctive identity of a nation by valuing the relationships and associations of the people with their past, to achieve a better present and prosperous future. Some societies realise the significance of their cultural heritage and try to save and preserve and try to capitalise on it while others do not. However, all of them are linked with their cultural inheritance in one way or another. Cultural heritage is different from heritage that consists of a “property, something that is inherited, passed down from previous generations” (Franchi 2015). It is hard to have one single definition of cultural heritage to cover the complete scope and practices; however, a straightforward approach is to include culture, values and traditions of a community that could connect its people in some kind of bond and develop a sense of shared belonging in them.

The concept of culture is multifaceted and encompasses a wide range of human activities. The precise definition and connotations of the term can differ across different languages, regions and societies (Lewens 2017). However, two prime definitions of the term culture can be separated. The first, broader definition encompasses a wide range of human activities and engagements, such as communication, religion, and traditions, which means equating the term culture with civilization. The second, more restrained definition, focuses on human artistic activities and intellectual creations, including visuals arts, performing arts, philosophy, and media.

1.3 The Case of Tangible and Intangible Heritage

Cultural heritage can be separated into two categories: tangible and intangible. Tangible heritage includes art assemblages, antique belongings, buildings and monuments, archaeological remains and sites. In a wider view, it also contains a creative and artistic impression of a society such as historic images and photographs, documents, maps, books, manuscripts, handwritten texts, drawings, writings and various tools, gadgets and instruments. In recent times, the scope of tangible heritage has been reconsidered and further expanded, so natural landscapes and sceneries, town expansions and underwater resources inheritance are also considered as cultural heritage, as a community can identify itself with their land, countryside, and tangible environments (Franchi 2015; Stewart, Liebert, and Larkin 2004).

The elements having immateriality form the intangible heritage; for instance, traditions and values, oral histories and folklores, languages and literature, dramatic and performance arts, music and social practices, conventional craftsmanship and talents, representations and depictions, rituals, knowledge and set of skills passed down through generations within a community (Franchi 2015). Unlike tangible culture, despite being incorporeal in its nature, intangible heritage leaves a deeper imprint on individuals and communities.

1.3.1 Intangible Heritage to Document History

To document history through collection of memories through oral history is to restore intangible heritage.

> Discrepancy between protection of the tangible cultural heritage and that of the intangible, heavily weighted in favour of the former, was well captured in the 1994 Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, Our Cultural Diversity, 'the intangible had for long been an ignored heritage. Ways of life have been ignored because they are in simple formats' (World Commission on Culture and Development 1995).

In the organizational and conceptual discourse on account of heritage, tangible heritage has been given priority over intangible heritage. However, West has been better aware of the significance and preservation of intangible heritage. A great deal has been saved through research-based projects rooted in academia, media, libraries, archives and film and drama industries. Whether they are continuous reproductions and adaptations of Shakespearean scripts, enormous historical series and movies or rich documentaries on art, craft, culture and people, West has largely celebrated intangible heritage. However, in societies like Pakistan where necessities are not provided to people, valuing, recollecting and preserving intangible heritage systematically isn't among the priorities. Unknowingly every human embrace intangible heritage through the values attached to tangible heritage around them. "The places that people instinctively recognize and value as not just being part of the landscape or townscape, but as actually being part of their own personal identity. That is the essential reason why people value heritage" (Bond and Worthing 2016).

The way people relate to shrines and tombs, particularly in a South-Asian setup, reflects the expression of middleclass masses and their connection, on a deep and personal level, with historical monuments and myths relating to these shrines. People mostly associate with places they have been living in or working in, in accordance with their personal memories and individual relationships with places and spaces (Taha 2016).

1.4 City of Lahore and its Intangible Heritage

In 1831, the young Lieutenant (later Sir) Alexander Burnes upon his arrival in Lahore noticed that once a grand city which once rivalled with Delhi had lost its glory. The provincial capital Lahore, once a vibrant city with towering buildings and mosques and a hub of cultural activities, was now decaying. The city's traditional grandeur had been fading and impressive monuments had been crumbling (Glover 2008). This deterioration never stopped rather it took a fast pace after partition and especially after the 1970s due to a series of socio-political happenings, including the separation of Bangladesh and Islamization by Zia ul Haq. Apart from tangible history, reflective of different cultures in good, bad and worst conditions, intangible history is harder to trace. Representation of cultural and religious diversity other than the Punjab is almost invisible in Lahore. In comparison with efforts made for preservation of

tangible heritage, intangible heritage has been given less importance. It's hard to identify which of them is dying faster. This thesis aims to preserve a glimpse of intangible heritage of Lahore by the memories of its people. It commemorates the city and its cultural transformation through opening the windows to the lives spent in Lahore from 1947 onwards, using oral history.

1.5 Gap

A few oral history projects have been taking place in Pakistan. Citizens Archive of Pakistan (CAP) is one of the significant projects of oral history. This project collects archival data in the form of visuals, oral accounts, and correspondences mainly about the partition of Pakistan from India in 1947. It explores an alternative history that challenges the official state narratives with anti-Indian nationalist rhetoric, which often excludes the stories of religious and ethnic minorities from the nation-building moment. CAP aims to counter state centric propaganda-based narratives that are heavily based on the history curriculum in public and private school systems (Osaka 2014). Hence, there is a huge room for more oral history projects in a variety of areas. Minorities aside, there are also 'dominating voices' which makes diverse voices ineffective. The thesis focuses on the audio-visual dimension to present the content, to make it more relevant within the contemporary world and provides a space to tell the localised personal stories to the larger audiences.

1.6 Aim:

The aim of this studio practice thesis is to explore cultural transformation in Lahore through the Oral History of its people and to develop an audio-visual model for its documentation. According to UNESCO "the intangible cultural heritage (or 'living heritage') is the mainspring of our cultural diversity" and it is essential for sustaining creativity. UNESCO further defines five basic elements of cultural heritage: Oral Practices; Dramatics and Music; Social exercises, customs and festivals; Knowledge and practices about landscape and the cosmos; and Conventional workmanship and set of skills (Bond and Worthing 2016, 61).

Based on these five elements, this thesis defines the objectives as follows:

1.7 Objectives

- To reauthenticate Oral History as medium of documentation, particularly in the context of Lahore
- To investigate memory and its connection with time, space, and identity
- To identify the historic journey of Lahore and key events that had an impact on its cultural transformation
- To re-establish, the role of communication design, and audio-visual documentation at digital and metadata platforms through practice to engage more users nationally and internationally

The practice will be shaped by all the above and whenever this practice will be applied to any other situations, all the above will be applied to it to achieve standardization.

2. Literature Review

A lot has been said about culture of Lahore however, analysing cultural transformation of Lahore, reflecting through its postcolonial being is quite a challenge. Several prominent writers have documented the culture of Lahore through the lens of Mughal and colonial history in descriptive manner. Mustansar Hussain Tarar, one of the most prominent writers in Pakistan has written multiple books about Lahore in which he has mentioned various changes and modifications in the life and neighbourhood of Androon Lahore (the Walled City) in a subtle way by comparing different periods, as he has been living in the city since his childhood, in the 1950s (Tarar 2021). Some episodes or happenings can be derived from his books, as these indicate contribution and influence of Mughals, Hindus, Sikhs and British on the settings of Lahore city. *Lahore Deewangi* (Tarar 2021) and *Lahore Awargi* (Tarar 2017) narrates his visits to the city in his late seventies and the references given in these books are also mentioned in other popular history, literature or fiction books.

2.1 National History Museum: Established or Alternate Narratives

The researcher visited National History Museum in Lahore established in 2018 by Citizens Archives of Pakistan (CAP). In countries like Pakistan, it is a commendable contribution to represent history in slightly untraditional way using interactive screens (un-common in traditional public museums), attractive installations, catchy displays and use of audio-visual, animation and "selected" oral history pieces. However, the entire idea follows the same pattern of "acceptable" rather "imposed" history set by elite structures. Although the aid of the medium of oral history compels the visitor to think and believe the parallel representation of history other than established notions, it does not seem to be present.

The museum tour starts from inception of Pakistan, depicting intervention of East India Company in Hindustan and featuring prominent political and ideological figures including Quaid e Azam, Allama Iqbal and others. It is the largest section of the museum that also tributes to female political figures at the time of partition. Moving forward in the section, it literally seems like physical tour of syllabus book of

Pakistan Studies even with the mild inclusions of 2, 3-minute oral history pieces about procession of 23rd March 1940. In a small transition darkroom, collages of some real footages, animated representations and oral history audios are short but impactful experience created about the painful events during partition of 1947.

The next and second largest section is all about armed forces of Pakistan and their contribution in making Pakistan just as we see in "official" history books and the army museums in the country. Here oral history inclusion diminishes. Very small and superficial displays are dedicated to art, literature and film. No reflection is found about Bangladesh separation, the major setback Pakistan has faced that devastated Pakistan's entire national identity. In the end the visitor comes out with the same perception that has been imbedded in the minds of the individuals since inception of Pakistan by the ruling elite. It's disappointing to see that the largest organization of oral history archives is bound to follow the conventional historical narratives set by the state, reflecting squeezed space for parallel history for people by the people.

2.2 Tangible Heritage under Threats

According to UNESCO, heritage sites are directly threatened by the armed conflicts and wars, earthquakes, floods and other natural catastrophes, along with pollution, vandalism, poaching, stealing, unplanned expansion of cities and unrestrained developments of tourist sites (UNESCO, 2021). The researcher has added belief systems and political motifs in the list of threats faced by heritage clearly seen in the case of Babri Masjid and Jain Mandir demolitions by mobs.

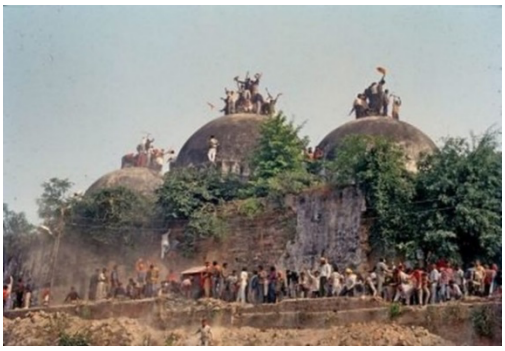


Figure 1
The outbreak to demolish the Babri Masjid, 1992
Photo: Sanjay Sharma/INDIAPIX NETWORK
Source: https://thewire.in/communalism/babri-masjid-the-timeline-of-a-demolition



Figure 2
A reaction to damage the Jain Mandir, Lahore, 1992
Source:https://tribune.com.pk/story/2332580/pakistan-set-to-reopen-lahores-famous-jain-temple

The Babri Masjid in Ayodhya was built in the year 1528, by Mir Baqi by the orders of the Mughal emperor; Babur (The Wire 2021). The historical mosque was demolished by a massive mob of 150 thousand followers of Bhartia Janata Party (BJP), India in December 1992 followed by 23 more mosques demolitions and 2000 deaths. As a reaction, mobs damaged 30 Hindu temples in Pakistan including historical Jain Mandir, Lahore. Reportedly Pakistani government is all set to rebuild and reopen Jain Mandir building (Anadolu Agency 2021).

Dangers to the tangible heritage are highly apparent; thus, often attract the significant media and communal attention. For instance, the destruction of the Bamiyan Budha, the artistic treasures engraved from cliffs 1400 years ago in Afghanistan, by the Taliban aggressors in 2001 (Crossette 2001), or the earthquake damage to Nepal's heritage sites in 2015 (Döing 2015) are covered by the mainstream media. Destruction of Residency of Pakistan's founder, at Ziarat Quetta in 2013 by the radicals were reported in National media (Shah 2013). These acts not only physically destroy cultural artifacts, but also undermine the intangible values and identity of the specific community and damage the traces of a whole civilization.



Figure 3
The hollow arch of Larger Bamiyan Buddha, after demolition by the Taliban in March 2001.
Source: http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/asiapcf/03/01/buddha.statues/index.html

Unplanned urbanization and expansion of cities often pose significant threats to heritage in countries that undervalue the cultural heritage. A most recent example of destruction of historic arched porticos and dozens of carved marble columns at the holy *Kaaba* constructed by Ottomans dating back to the 8th century (Power 2014). This is just one example, in the contemporary world, of Saudi Arabia's history of

destroying heritage sites due to numerous influences, linked with social and religious beliefs and financial considerations.



Figure 4
Ottoman porticos in the Grand Mosque were demolished at Mecca, 2014 -- Image Via Islamic Heritage Research Foundation. Source: http://www.islamicpluralism.org/2425/mecca-under-threat

One more recent threat to the heritage sites in Lahore, Pakistan is the construction of Orange Line train service, which passes through at least 11 historical spots of the city, including the shrine of *Mauj Darya*, a British colonial church, and UNESCO World Heritage site Shalimar Gardens. Evaluators, artists and thinkers argue that this urban development is damaging the city's historical heritage. They demanded to change the overhead bridge plan and use the tunnel technology. They fear that the future generation may lose a sense of the history, belonging and cultural identification due to these drastic changes (Hadid 2018). Protests were taken place against the project with slogans like; 'our history is not for sale'. Cultural activists including; Ijaz Anwar and Salima Hashmi, (the selected interviewees for this thesis), termed the venture as political show and a hurtful exercise to compromise Lahore's legacy, culture and heritage (Hasnain 2016).

2.3 Understanding Culture

One of the earliest definitions of culture was given by the British scholar Sir Edward B. Tylor, "Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society"(Edward B. Taylor 1871). "Fear God and the Stupidity of the Populace" is the phrase often

associated with T. S. Eliot who has been considered an advocate of elites over masses. His work demonstrates distinguish elitist streak. He disdained the tastes and values of the masses, considering them as intellectually and morally inferior. In this certain verse as reflection of elitist theory he warns about populace's irrationality and destructive behaviour. This fear is often linked to his concerns about the decline of Western civilization. Prominent academic critics and theorists including Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart and Antonio Gramsci challenged Eliot's elitist inclement where elites are the main source to preserve and prevail culture.

Relation of culture and economics in a postcolonial society is far more complex than usual definitions of culture. Discourse about culture, constructs through the superstructure of Karl Marx built on the base of economic system where society shapes its laws, beliefs, and even its art according to economics. However, Raymond Williams argues about the capacity of culture more than subordinate of economy, and that, not only economics dominate the culture but, economic system can be influenced by the culture too (Williams 2006).

Raymond Williams, considered as a precursor who has reinterpreted cultural studies in the context of Great Britian and beyond, emerged in the 1960s. He challenged the conventional elitist views of culture, arguing that it includes all aspects and characteristics of life, not just selective elite art. He theorised culture as "a whole way of life," that covers cultural artifacts, modes of responsiveness and awareness, ethics, and practices of a community (1958 and 1961) (Gigi Durham and M. Kellner 2006). He argues that media is shaping the society, and "culture and society" needs to be thought together to subdue the divide between "high" and "low" culture. He criticised the idea of homogenous "mass culture" and instead highlighted the variety, multiplicity and complexity of cultural experiences and practice (Williams 1977). This specific thoughtfulness about popular culture and its relationship to dominant cultural ideology has shaped modern-day cultural studies.

2.3.1 Dominant Culture

Extending the argument of correlation of superstructure and culture presented by Karl Marx, Raymond Williams presents "the base" as more important concept to understand the realities of cultural processes. Williams rejected static notions of

culture. He argued that cultures are constantly evolving and changing through internal dynamics and external influences. Contacts with other cultures, technological advancements, and historical events all contribute to cultural change.

> "That of 'culture' as a 'whole social process', in which men define and shape their whole lives; and that of 'ideology', in any of its Marxist senses, in which a system of meanings and values is the expression or projection of a particular class interest" (Williams 1977)

Williams, in the chapter *Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory*, discusses the dominant culture and the process of making it dominant. Williams urges his readers to understand the process of "incorporation" in making a culture dominant. The educational institutions play a vital role in incorporating effective dominant culture. He further elaborates that at philosophical level, in his terms selective tradition becomes part of the process based on selective approach. Where some segments from past or history are chosen, and some are totally neglected to build certain narratives. To support and reenforce dominant culture the selected narratives and practices are reinterpreted and tempered. The effective dominant culture and selective tradition is developed through the processes of education and even more widely through social training within institutions like the family. In his words "If what we learn there were merely an imposed ideology, or if it were only the isolable meanings and practices of the ruling class, or of a section of the ruling class, which gets imposed on others, occupying merely the top of our minds, it would be – and one would be glad – a very much easier thing to overthrow" (Williams 2006). "For tradition is in practice the most evident expression of the dominant and hegemonic pressures and limits" (Williams 1977).

The concept of dominant culture and selective tradition by Williams further orchestrates with the idea of hegemony by Gramsci and the notion of dominant memory by the popular memory group in their collective work in 1979 and 1980 at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, England. Dominant culture and its role in shaping different forms of memory and oral history are further elaborated in fourth chapter of this thesis.

Gramsci takes Marx's idea of base and superstructure a step further and categorises the superstructure into two: political society and civil society. Political society includes institutions like government, law and order organism, and military forces, while civil society comprises of the institutions that are involved in shaping public opinion; for instance, schools or media houses In the words of Gramsci, "everything which influences or is able to influence public opinion, directly or indirectly, belongs to it: libraries, schools, associations and clubs of various kinds, even architecture and the layout and names of streets" (Boggs 1976). Indeed, these institutions play a crucial role in maintaining social order and power structure. According to Gramsci (2011), the dominant class maintains the power with the blend of force and consent, whilst force is used to have a direct control through administrative bodies like government or law and order or the military, and the consent is accomplished through cultural, social and ideological means. The dominant class forms the general opinion, morals, and values of the masses, through institutions like schools, media, and religion to derive them to happily accept their social position of dominance. This process of gaining consent is called "hegemony". It means that the "Hegemony is attained through the myriad ways in which the institutions of civil society operate to shape, directly or indirectly, the cognitive and affective structures whereby men perceive and evaluate problematic social reality" (Martin 2002, 265).

Louis Althusser, in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, in the process of defining the functions of ideology refers to the Middle Ages where church as religious ideological structure along with family "controlled consciousness of individuals and their conceptions of their relations to the conditions of existence" and "systems of communication as well as modes of conduct and behaviour" led by the ruling elite. Lenin's concept of the "bourgeois state," and Althusser's "Ideological State Apparatuses" (ISAs) converge in their analysis of how the state maintains power through ideological control. Althusser questions philosophies by the petty-bourgeois intellectuals functioning in the bourgeois education system who inject the ideology of elite class to the youth while empowering the already powerful class. "To my knowledge, no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and, in the State, Ideological Apparatuses" (Althusser 2002, 147).

Ronald J. Grele in *Movement without aim Methodological and theoretical problems in oral history,* a chapter from Oral History Reader discusses "ideology as more than simply a political program". Ideology is a systematic phenomenon that formulate cultural patterns and shapes it just as superstructure of Marx and Base of Raymond Williams do (Grele 2003).

2.3.2 Media, Language and Culture

According to Noam Chomsky, a significant philosopher of the 20th and 21st century, consent of the masses is manufactured by the elites. In various interviews he explains this process that if someone wants to understand the working of society, it's important to know that "who in the position to make the decisions to determine the way the society functions". Capitalists and media owners play a dominant role in structuring the governments, decision holders and policy makers. They place their people on important positions in these institutions, so that they dominate the political and ideological systems, to control resources and secure their interests (Herman and Chomsky 2002). They use propaganda to target two groups in the society, political class that makes twenty percent of society and rest of the eighty percent people. "Political class, that is educated, articulated, they take some part in decision making, they participate in social life. They can be managers, cultural managers such as teachers, writers and so on" (Gramsci 2011). This class votes and have a role in the economics, cultural and social activities; however, they are deeply indoctrinated as their consent to the narrative set by elite is imperative. The remaining part of the population, that is eighty percent, are only the followers, who primarily follow rather than think critically.

Elite media in any society set the general parameters for the rest to propagate desired narratives and to build the consent of masses. They can do this by "selection of topics, distribution of concerns, emphasis, framing the issues, filtering the information and by bounding the debate" (Herman and Chomsky 2002). This is how through process of selection, prioritization they exclude and include certain narratives to determine and shape the ideologies. They control the mindsets to serve and secure the dominance and benefits of elites in the society.

Herman and Chomsky (2002). mention nine corporations including “Disney, AOL Time Warner, Viacom (owner of CBS), News Corporation, Bertelsmann, General Electric (owner of NBC), Sony, AT&T-Liberty Media, and Vivendi Universal” who have been owing media world all over the globe since 1990. All major TV networks, music companies, film studios and production houses, cable systems and publishing houses are run and controlled by these giants. The propaganda model suggests that media bias is influenced not only by ownership and advertising but also by other factors. These include the ability of powerful groups to criticize media coverage (flak), provide supportive experts, and shape the fundamental beliefs and values that guide media personnel and elites. Ultimately, these power sources often align with the dominant ideologies and principles that shape media content (Herman and Chomsky 2002). After the emergence of social media Chomsky argues that social media has amplified the issues outlined in his "Manufacturing Consent" model. Algorithms can reinforce existing biases and filter bubbles, limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints (Herman and Chomsky 2002).

A mesmerizing, animated report by Aljazeera simplifies the concept of *Manufacturing Consent* and the *Five Filters* (Goodman 2017). Ownership and control and domination of corporations over wealth is the first filter. Media doesn’t run by viewership of people it is rather run by Second filter ‘the advertisers’ with whom massive money media makes profits. When advertisers invest money, they want sellable content where there is no room for foreign wars or welfare of the public. All it need is *Masala*/spice in south-Asian terms, loud and sensational mix of high emotional and provocative content. Whether it be about sex, murders, robberies, celebrity scandals, religious scams, political corruption and what not to spice up the screens and to grab mass audiences. In other words, media sell the audiences to the advertisers as product.

Third filter becomes more complex when establishment, governments, bureaucracy and army; in third world dominates rather shape media narratives by implanting complicity with media. These institutions become crucial to the media debates and discussions, being representatives or experts, where nothing goes unfiltered or uncontrolled. This is how media rely on “information provided by government,

business, and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power" (Herman and Chomsky 2002, 2).

"Flak" is the fourth filter through which the challenging and alternate stories and narratives are rejected by media machine. The people with original ideas to challenge the existing propaganda; are cornered, marginalized and victimized. In recent times many prominent Pakistani journalists have seen the consequences of practicing freedom of press. Some have been sacked from mainstream channels and some have been kidnapped for good by the *Naa Maloom Afrad* meaning 'unknown people'. Some are fortunate enough to come back to their homes with 'software update', a famous term in Pakistan. A few of them are made to compromise after months or retention and physical torture, the rest are fed enough money to keep silent. Among them there are a few who never come back or are killed by the 'unknowns'. Most recent example is murder of one of the most distinguished young journalists, Arshad Sharif in Kenya by the 'unknowns', which may be due to his anti-establishment stance (Noor and Nazir 2023).

Fifth and the last filter is very interesting that is projection of common enemies of the public that are communism, migrants and terrorists. "Communism as the ultimate evil has always been the specter haunting property owners, as it threatens the very root of their class position and superior status" (Herman and Chomsky 2002, 29). Through this common public is engaged in non-issues and brought to the consent of being silent about their actual rights.

2.4 Locating Culture in the Realm of Beyond

Among all the important theories to contextualize this thesis, the concept of beyond by Homi K. Bhabha pricks the researcher. The researcher has been familiar with 'air' by Roland Barthes and have been establishing some of her research and practice around it. One of the research papers *"Munnu Bhai; Aura and Beyond through Portraiture"* discusses the evolving identity of legendary writer of Pakistan through time and space (Ahmad Bilal and Bilal 2018). The concept of boundaryless 'beyond' is something so subtle that sets it free from many labels. It holds the softness of Barthes air that is not physical or confined but it's there with great significance. Bhabha defines ongoing process of individual and collective transitions in the realm

of past and present and “beyond”. His “beyond” is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past. He refers to the modern times and the fin de siècle; that is cultural, artistic, and social atmosphere of the late 19th century, particularly in Europe when during this metamorphosis a complex relation between space and time comes into play to evolve identity in midst of the discourse of past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion.

“For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the ‘beyond’: an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words au-dela-here and there, on all side, fort/da-hither and thither, back and forth” (Bhabha 1994).

2.4.1 Post-colonial Hybridity

Bhabha presents the idea of hybridity, third space and beyond by deep insights about the close connections between opposites of life, such as the private and public spheres, or the past and present. He challenges binary divisions and the idea of confinement and separation between various ideologies and concepts including modernism, postmodernism... he refers to these divisions as artificial or oversimplified. He further introduces the concept of 'In-Between' understanding time is not linear but complex that involves present and past. Nor past neither present can be disconnected from each other. The author further establishes that identities are liquid and are a blend of various influences, inspirations and experiences. This hybridity creates a complex fabric and multifaceted sense of individuality and collectiveness. Lastly, he discusses the notion of borderline existence where existence is found somewhere between different worlds and identities that don’t completely connect to each other (Bhabha 1994).

Bhabha’s "metonymy of presence" refers to the duality and blurry process of identity in making a kind of an “interdictory location”. This unclear and unobvious frame of reference becomes an ideal space for mimicry. Hereby normative principles of race, writing and history are developed under the influence of colonial hegemony (Chakrabarti 2012). “The desire of colonial mimicry—an interdictory desire—may not have an object, but it has strategic objectives which I shall call the metonymy of presence” (Bhabha 1984).

Frantz Fanon calls for a psychoanalytic explanation of colonialism because the colonizer's attempts to modernize or civilize the colonized often result in harmful and ironic consequences. For example, the colonizer's efforts to modernize native institutions can lead to their decline and stagnation, while the use of violence in colonial governance contradicts the ideals of civilization. Additionally, the racist stereotypes perpetuated by the colonizer can be internalized by the colonized, leading to self-hatred and other psychological issues (Fanon and Markmann 1996).

Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* is another important contribution in the postcolonial and Black studies. Though his theory focuses on Black community however the notions discussed under this subject quite relatable to other postcolonial civilizations other than Blacks. Fanon discusses psychological impact of colonialism and racism on Black people, so is the case of people of subcontinent who after more than seven decades of independence are dependent on European supremacy. Fanon argues that Black people are often perceived and handled as if they are objects rather than normal human beings, stripped of their humanity by a racist society.

2.4.2 Orientalist Otherness

Edward Said, in *Orientalism*, highlights the dominance of western photographer over his subjects in colonised societies (Said 2014). Likewise, Gisela Parak also discusses photography in her article *Seeing the 'Other'? Pictorial Practices of a Colonial Appropriation of Space*, that how it represents the image of colonial people and communities as weak, uncivilized and inferior in the western world. In her words, "A multitude of explorers learned privateers, colonial officials, seamen, trade commissioners, travel writers and adventurers captured the photographs" and brought them home as visual impressions of foreign cultures (Parak 2023). In this regard the trend of Carte de Visite got immense popularity in entire Europe. These photographs played a vital part in nurturing the myth of an 'objective' view of the world of "others".

2.5 Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture

Historians may have realized the significance of photography as an important aid in documenting history or an alternate approach to decipher history in the 1960's, and yet, photographers have been intentionally or unintentionally preserving history from much earlier times. One of the most impactful documentary projects in the history of photography is by August Sander. It took Sander around 40 years, from 1911 to 1952, to photograph thousands of German citizens. Sander distributed the portraits in seven categories with forty-two portfolios, each portfolio consisted of twelve portraits. Consisting of 700 portraits of German people this series was developed in the times when the German nation was facing the national identity crises. The series is said to set new grounds for photography by bringing common people to the front and made them a subject. Indeed, 'A social inventory is no gallery of celebrities, and sander kept this constantly in mind' (Sander 1973).

In her last book before her demise in 2004, *Regarding the Pain of Others,* Susan Sontag discusses the layered complexities involved in Photographic representations. In context of war and violence, photographs are more than just images; they are powerful enough to elicit viewer responses and interpretations that lead to suffering. Sontag investigates the sensitive but crucial role of photography and other visual media in envisaging the horrors of conflict. She further talks about the ethics, empathy and role of the viewer that makes this entire process more complicated (Sontag 2003). Philip Gourevitch presents the journalistic aspect of photographs that they cannot tell stories. Photographs can only provide evidence of stories. Stories can be discovered by deconstructing the evidence, and by interpreting and investigating these photographs (Gourevitch 2023).

Freund and Thomson, in *Oral History and Photography*, quote various writers with different point of views about the relation among photography, storytelling, memory and oral history. They quote Penny Tinkler and the idea of happy photographs that avoid any physical hints of "profound emotions of loss, death, anger, and bitterness." It is often this insidious void between meanings and layered connection of photography and oral history that oral historians wish to understand (Freund and Thomson 2011). Marjorie L. McLellan, the writer of *Six Generation Here: A Farm*

Family Remembers, an oral history project, shares that the impact of storytelling is more than just photographs. In her words "that profound emotions of loss, death, anger, and bitterness are expressed in stories rather than in the trite photographs of funeral bouquets" (McLellan L. 1997).

2.6 Striking Parallels: Photographs as Rhetoric of Memory

Like McLellan (1997), two more scholars Martha Langford and Marianne Hirsch have built the rationale on the personal photographs and family albums. Martha Langford (2001) explores that oral tradition is presented in the family photographic album, even if the family isn't interviewed orally, orality is found in the content and structure of their albums. She probes the "striking parallels as a relation between photography and orality" and intimates' oral historians about the process of performance at each time of presenting photographs. She refers to it as the specific posture is not just a moment captured at the time of taking the photograph, but it's a continuous performance that occurs each time the photograph is presented. "The showing and telling of an album is a performance", and according to her this experience can be called oral-visual performance during the interview (Langford 2001). Prof. Marianne Hirsch introduced the term "postmemory", which elaborates the relation and connection between a recent generation with the experiences, incidents and sufferings of the previous generation or the forefather. This connection is based on the imaginative engagement with the past, and mostly through the photographs. However, only a few parts of the family life are captured in these photographs (Allana and Baid 2011).

Many prominent photography philosophers including Burgin, John Tagg, and Allan Sekula have been presenting a variety of critical approaches for "reading" the photographs. It is elaborated that photography not being a language itself, has the quality of narration through the codes embedded in its nature (Burgin 1982). Benjamin, Burgin, Barthes and Sontag have talked about the multilayered sensitive relation of photography, seeing and interpreting and the impact it can create (Berger 2008; Sontag 2005; Barthes 2010). Multiple important theories have been given about the relation of photography with death, past, trauma and more. However, Hirsch and Langford have further developed the link between photography and language by emphasising oral qualities of photography in building narratives.

Hirsch establishes the textuality in photograph that she calls “imagetexts” and that through deciphering these texts, complex narratives can be read. Langford argues about decipher the family photographic albums and deconstruction of their oral constructs to get the deeper meaning and history. Individual photographs and photographs organized in photo albums have a lot to reveal and unveil the complex social constructs topped with emotions. These arguments help oral historians to re-explore the connectivity between private lives and dominant history. Photography has certain significance in any family life, just like other customs and ways of living. Susan Sontag advocates “through photographs, each family constructs a portrait chronicle of itself – a portable kit of images that bears witness to its connectedness” (Sontag 2005). Photography plays a crucial role in shaping family histories and building collective professional and leisure memories.

The researcher, in 2013 as part of her research work, *Munnu Bhai Aura and Beyond,* has captured a portrait of Munnu Bhai; a renowned Pakistan writer, and connected it with eight of his previous photographs including his family portrait from 1940’s. The researcher deconstructed the phases of life of Munnu Bhai, through his portraits borrowed from his family photographic collection. “Air, the expression of truth, makes photography so believable that it has categorically been considered an act to record memory to archive a family’s pictorial heritage” (Ahmad Bilal and Bilal 2018). The research work explores aura of Munnu Bhai (1933-2018), through portraiture, and deconstructs his life’s journey as the only son of a lower middle-class family from a remote area to a star writer under the influence of communism, and finally his transformation into a philanthropist.

2.7 Towards Solution; Digital Technology and Sustainable Heritage

Threats to the tangible and intangible heritage has been discussed in introduction chapter of this thesis. Organizations, architects, historians, archaeologists, and cultural studies experts are working together to save, preserve or sustain the heritage sites around the world. One key idea in this effort is sustainability, which denotes the capacity of a phenomenon to maintain or "sustain" itself for a specific period. “The importance of heritage to achieve sustainable futures has been acknowledged explicitly within the framework of UN Agenda 2030” (Labadi et al. 2021a).

Digital technologies through image mapping technique, such as scanning photogrammetry, BIM processing, satellite remote sensing, drones, mobile mapping, laser scanning and 3D modelling, are revolutionising heritage conservation. These technologies, by creating detailed digital records and documentation of heritage sites, are helping the preservation and restoration process. “It is evident that digital technologies support the holistic documentation and planning for the preservation of heritage sites” (Acierno and Fiorani 2019). Output of almost every technique to digitally restore tangible heritage is based on visuals created through camera, laser scanning and other technologies.

As discussed earlier that intangible heritage has been regarded inferior to tangible heritage due its immateriality. That’s an interesting finding by the researcher that tangible heritage is bound to take support of intangible digital technology for its immaterial sustainability. Enormous efforts have been made, around the world, to attain digital version of material heritage hence automatically making intangibility, equal to tangibility, if not superior. Digital record of audio-visual oral history is not only important for archival data, but its accessibility to public, historians, academicians, researchers and students can reconnect people and communities with their history.

2.8 Oral History as Art Practice

Most of the initial oral history interviews are sound recordings and written texts, along with the photographs. A photograph has power to flash back the history when viewed in later times. Clarke describes this power in *Portrait in Photography* as “to look at Sander's portraits then, is to view a social order- a public world of individuals defined through their public roles” (Clarke 1997). This indicates that the visual record of the memories is integral for building a collective memory, and this concept has provided the base to the researcher’s practice. Instead of simply representing the individual, the photograph positions him within a broader context. displaces, rather than represents, the individual. Its meaning is derived from its relationship to other images and cultural background. Thus, the portrait, more than any other photograph, relies heavily on its context for interpretation.

The availability of the video has combined the audio with the visual and add a new dimension to the oral history practices. The audio-visual oral history stories can be entertaining, insightful and reconstructive as they offer a feel, to the listeners, of being in a same physical space. Video can make it more engaging, and can add more depth, as it includes facial expressions, gestures, body language, along with the words, the pauses and the tone of voice. The nonverbal parts can add empathy and allow a deeper understanding to the whole practice. Video has also increased the scope of the oral history practice, as it can be uploaded on various platforms, can be presented at art galleries, and it can be accessible to larger audience (QUANTILOPE 2024).

Indira Chowdhury in her article "Speaking of the past: Perspectives on oral history" offers a new insight into oral history, as an informative mechanism that can reveal a whole new understanding of the past. She explores the role of memory, language and politics in shaping the oral history stories. She pleads that this characteristic of oral history to offer a whole new understanding will formulate the base of a new subject of orality, oral traditions and oral history (Chowdhury 2014). This validates the relevance of the thesis as oral history is complementing a whole new dimension to the field of art and design, and a range of subjects, based on the of oral traditions, are on the verge of their induction.

Oral history and collective remembrance have been adding a social and political value to the national narratives, as an evolving field in the subcontinent. It has an impact on the public policies and can connect various stakeholders and cover a diverse range of historical and cultural transformations. Memory has emerged as a fundamental human right, as it is the only way to redefine a historical event, and to construct the modern identity of any nation, by addressing the injustices: apologies and recognitions. In the modern world, to remember and commemorate the past, is essential for the processes of democratization.

This research underscores oral history's profound evolution, transforming from mere documentation into a dynamic art practice. Photographs, now complemented by video, provide a multi-sensory immersion, enriching collective memory through visual and non-verbal cues. This evolution, as supported by Chowdhury's insights, positions oral history as a vital mechanism for reinterpreting the past and nurturing a deeper understanding of human experience. Crucially, oral history also serves as a potent tool

for social and political engagement, contributing to national narratives, informing public policy, and asserting memory as a fundamental human right essential for democratization and identity construction.

3. Methodology

In practice-based research "researcher intends to generate novel apprehensions (by novel I mean culturally novel, not just novel to the creator or individual observers of an artefact) by undertaking original creation, and it is this that separates the researcher from the practitioner" (Scrivener 2002).

The research practice has evolved from a step-by-step series of experimentations, which is linked with the previous practice of the researcher: *A Normal Pakistani*. It is a series of portraits of Pakistani men that provides the study of post 9/11 typologies of Pakistani men to challenge the notions of otherness about Muslim males.



Figure 5
A Normal Pakistani 2013
Intervention Exhibition with Inside Out Project at Nottingham UK
Source: The Researcher

'A Normal Pakistani?' celebrates the identity of contemporary Pakistani men to highlight the normality of the subjects. The viewer is invited to interact and engage with these normal Pakistani men. Above all it deciphers researcher's personal experiences, as a Muslim woman, and my interactions with Pakistani men. The researcher relates to them as sister, as daughter, as niece, as neighbour, as student, as cousin and primarily as a Pakistani woman, and therefore cannot identify them with the western labelling of 'other'. This portraiture serves as the record of the

spaces between the researcher as Muslim woman photographer and her subjects, whether it be formal, casual, frank or restricted in relation to the social, cultural and religious beliefs. The researcher is the observer of her subjects behind the camera, reversing the conventional process of "looker and to be looked" (Berger 2008)at and opening a new dimension of socio-cultural discourse attached to an Islamic society.

3.1 Phase One: Squeezing Spaces for Females

The researcher has started the research practice from a series of videos: *"Oppositely Parallels",* to identify the cultural landscape from a female's perspective. It is a series of audio-visual artistic voyage to comment on limited spaces available to the women population in Pakistani patriarchal and Islamized society.



Figure 6
Oppositely Parallels
PhD Phase-I, Display of Moving Images at Old Campus University of the Punjab
Source: The Researcher

This series of videos examines the tension between the "likable" spaces in the form of home and the more public, yet controlled spaces of advertising and display, to recognise the contrast between the idealised or commercialised image of woman on the advertising boards with the actual constrained real lives of the women. By examining these opposing forces, the researcher responds to the challenges faced by the women while navigating in a society, which on the one hand celebrates the female identity and on the other hand restricts and controls it.

3.1.1 Beginning of the Journey, Selection of Photograph by UNESCO



Figure 7
The Mover 2021
https://www.unesco.org/reports/world-media-trends/2021/en/global-trends
Source: The Researcher

The researcher is a graphic design and a documentary photography practitioner. One of her portraits from the series; *"Female Journalists in Challenging Conditions"* has been selected by the UNESCO. The portrait depicts a Pakistani female journalist standing tall amongst the paradoxical socio-cultural and religious constructs of patriarchal society. The photograph has been published on multiple venues of UNESCO. The researcher has recently explored that it is also published UNESCO report *Defending Creative Voices: Artists in Emergencies Learning from the Safety of Journalists* in 2023 (Soraide 2023, 72). The very image has also been part of the Speak exhibition at UN Geneva, curated by the esteemed Bangladeshi photographer and activist Shahidul Alam.

3.2 Phase Two: The Black Box (Building the Monumental Memory Lane)

In the second phase the research practice investigates memory and displacement through tangible belongings. The researcher named it “The Black Box: Building the Monumental Memory Lane”. This part of the practice investigates memory and displacement as actors of impact on the construction of identity. It demonstrates remembrance through tangible belongings and photographs associated with the past. Travelling through the belongings to three different characters in the past, the researcher has explored three men in her early life, her father, and two brothers. It is a symbolic walk through the memory lane to see the impact of memory on the identity of an individual.

The resonance of this experimentation based on personal inquiry has been marked on multiple layers of objectivity and subjectivity by the infusion of new media with performance, animation, photography and projection techniques. It has intrigued the researcher to further investigate memory’s role in the collection of the past in larger contexts of community, cultural identity and history by eventually inculcating oral history as a means for documentation.

The researcher has used the data gathered in the first and second phase of the research practice, as a first layer of methodology, to build the rationale. Third phase of Practice is directly linked with the Oral History Interviews, and Memory.

3.3 Reaching to the Final Phase; Oral History Interviews and Memory

Oral history bases itself on the memories of people, so to understand how oral history connects to the past it is important to come through ‘memory lane’. In the first phase after virtual and physical visits to the practices or displays for commemoration of memory, two major approaches with greater impact are defined by the researcher, that is, photographs and belongings. Most commonly people keep the past in form of photographs and possessions associated with people and events. Just as Roland Barthes remembered and rediscovered his mother with the photograph of her when she was five. It’s an emotional inquiry that pierces through the soul (Barthes 2010).

Secondly, emotions attached with and linked to- belongings play important roles in remembering pasts, and later history. As Christian Boltanski's 'Personnes', demonstrates a gigantic mountain of memory comprised of tons of clothes once wore by the people who are no more (Cumming 2010).

> Surrounded by our things, we are constantly instructed in who we are and what we aspire to. Surrounded by our things we are rooted in and visually continuous with our pasts. Surrounded by our things we are sheltered from the many forces that would deflect us into new concepts, practices, and experiences. These forces include our own acts of imagination, the constructions of others, the shock of personal tragedy, and simple forgetfulness (Belk 1990).



Figure 8
Christian Boltanski's *Personnes*
Source: https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/personnes-by-christian-boltanski-paris-france

3.4 Interviews and the Selection of Interviewees

Open-ended interviews are one of the main sources of Oral History as well as for collecting research data. These interviews are normally flexible with regards to

coverage, allowance and duration (Yin 2012; 2009; Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006). An open-ended interview can be of an hour or of more than a few hours, and the presentation and format is also flexible; for instance, an interview can be with a single subject, or more than one participant can be included. Another concern is "how many" interviews are required for an oral history project, and the reply is that it varies depending on the specific goals of the research (Baker and Edwards 2012). A single case study can be effective at times, and a large sample size in the other cases, and an oral history project can be ongoing. The key is to gather enough data to address the fundamental basic concerns effectively, thus, six to twelve interviews with the experts can provide comprehensive insights (Baker and Edwards 2012).

This research practice focusses on the cultural transformation, so the most senior experts, practitioners and contributors in art and culture related fields, who belonged to the city of Lahore from their childhood, have been identified. The spheres of art and culture in Lahore include Radio, Television, Film, Theatre, and Art Schools. Lahore has lost most of its senior practitioners, only a few are living in Lahore, who either were born or shifted to the city from their early days. Initially, fifteen practitioners, three each from the relevant field were categorised and contacted, and yes, it was "hard to engage" them (Baker and Edwards 2012). Thus, eight of them confirmed their availability for interviews. One of those is Irfan Khoosat, has been interviewed, and converted into an audiovisual representation as an initial prototype of research practice, and have been appreciated by the thinkers and practitioners of the filed, while presented in a seminar. It is available on the link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/18N3n8Bc4x24JymKpqSmUFWec5z9I1f06/view?usp=share_link

Initial list included Khalid Abbas Dar, Shahid Nadeem and Naheed Siddiqui from theatre, radio and television. Syed Noor, Nasir Adeeb and Hasan Askari from film. Shahnawaz Zaidi, Dr. Rahat Naveed Masood, Javed Iqbal, and Salima Hashmi from art schools. List further included Ms. Sangeeta, Satish Anand, Naeem Tahir, and Nayar Ali Dada. Most unfortunate part of this thesis is that key supporting figures and distinguished cultural contributors Qavi Khan, Amjad Islam Amjad and Zia Mohi u Din from the interviewee list passed away during 2023. Hence a few more prominent names have been included and interviewed. Final list of interviewees includes Irfan

Khoosat, Shahid Nadeem, Shahnawaz Zaidi, Saeed Akhter, Ajaz Anwar, Arshad Mehmood, Hafeez Tahir and Salima Hashmi. A few more can be planned; for instance, Mustansar Hussain Tarar, Salman Shahid, Ajaz Ul Hasan and Masaraat Hasan, as its ongoing research.

Due to its flexibility, method of semi-structured interviews with a set of open-ended questions is used, to achieve in depth responses. Questions are prepared in advance to lead the conversation with no time constraints. Results have shown unexpected treasures of memories that deviate the expected outcomes, making the practice more beautiful yet complex. The interviewees perspectives with natural flow gives insights to unexpected explorations. Hence providing rich qualitative data based on strong and diverse foundation.

3.4.1 Stud Terkel Methodology

Andrea Gustavson (2012) in her article, *From ‘‘Observer to Activist’’: Documentary Memory, Oral History, and Studs Terkel’s ‘‘Essence’’ Narratives*, discusses methodology practiced by Stud Terkel, and uses the term ‘‘documentary memory’’ for Terkel narratives. Terkel intentionally blurred the lines between objective and subjective history and employed documentary techniques to impart reliability to his work, and label as ‘‘memory books”. Indeed, he proposes impartiality while continuously prompting his reader that “this is a memory book rather than one of hard fact and precise statistic” (Terkel 2005). Terkel observed oral history as a tool for social change, using the past to comment on the present, and his process involved three stages: planning, conduction of interview, editing transcripts and construction the final text (Gustavson 2012). Other layers in Terkel’s work such as his selection process, thematic grouping and juxta positioning of narratives is further discussed in Practice Chapter.

This practice of Cultural Transformation of Lahore through its Oral History: An Audio-Visual Practice sits somewhere between the conventional practices of oral history and Terkel’s memory books. Because it endeavours to explore certain cultural phenomenon through time and space and engages the role of audio visual in commemorating past and celebrating present and future. However, social change is beyond the scope of this research, thus the third stage of Terkel’s process: editing

transcripts and construction of the final text, is excluded. The researcher selected a slice from a complete oral history talk to use it as a tool to quantify the cultural transformation, rather than constructing a narrative for social change. However, the thematic analysis of the study is based on the examination of complete interviews.

3.5 Thematic Analysis of the Interviews

Thematic analysis is an intricate process where subtle and sometimes apparently irrelevant details serve as thematic points to larger narratives. In Frank De Caro words “often stories are striking encapsulations of ideas and experiences and thematic points, and personal narratives are a particularly immediate and accessible source for assessing ideas and attitudes behind the actual narration” (Caro 2012). He refers to a story by an interviewee where apparently a disappointing detail about serving of papaya seeds in Indian train becomes first breakthrough into the cultural details of "the East," by a teller within the colonialist context. Mostly personal narratives and anecdotes, serve as insights of grand narrative of personal and collective history and thematic analysis helps in deconstruction of themes and reconstruction of larger narratives.

Following the multilayered process of “reflexive thematic analysis, including data familiarization, coding, theme generation, review and refinement, and writing” The researcher has generated initial codes based on relevant points of discussion in the oral history interviews, that might not be common (Braun and Clarke 2023). These codes are developed after extensive literature review about memory, culture, ideologies and narratives and the factors that shape these phenomena. The details about construction of memory, culture and ideology are discussed in the chapters, Literature Review, Memory and Historical Journey of Lahore. In next phase themes are identified that are indicators towards larger narrative of cultural transformation in post-colonial setups.

4. Memory; the Genesis of Oral History

In the last couple of decades, oral history has gained popularity as a tool to explore the past. Scholars have been using it to document various aspects of history including "film history, public history, material culture, art history, landscape history and living history" (Beard 2017). However, the impact and relevance of oral history as a collective memory has not yet too been fully recognized in Pakistan.

Oral history suggests a unique side of the past, as it provides insights into the memories and experiences of the 'ordinary' people that are often neglected or overlooked in traditional history books. Before the 20th Century, historians primarily relied on written texts and official documentations, and only a few cases existed of giving some attention the lives of ordinary people are in the times of crisis, such as the Reformation, the English Civil War, or the French Revolution (Perks and Thomson 2003). Paul Thompson and others have traced the origins of modern oral history and highlighted the marginalisation of oral evidence by early historians who trusted the eyewitness accounts of any substantial events, and by 19th century historiographers and philosophers who preferred archives and documented sources; however, oral confirmations were mostly ignored (Perks and Thomson 2003). The development of technological devices, particularly portable tape-recorders, has made it possible to collect and preserve the firsthand information. This shift has led to a more inclusive and subtle documentation of history and in acceptability and helped to rebuild the field particularly after the Second World War. The researcher relates this shift to the latest shift of digital devices in the age of new media, which validates the significance and pertinence of this thesis.

4.1 Oral History Projects

Established in 1948 by historian and journalist Allan Nevins, the Columbia Centre for Oral History (CCOH) is one of the world's oldest oral history projects. It launched internationally with ten thousand oral history interviews, covering a whole range of socio-cultural aspect of Whiteman society (Columbia Research Initiative 1980). Nevins (1980) argued that historian should narrate the past in terms of the stories of individuals and communities, rather than impersonal forces. By understanding the

motivations, inspirations and activities of the people, the profound comprehension of the past can be achieved.

Since its emergence in 1940s in America till mid 1980s Oral History has been used as support methodology for documentation in libraries. Oral History Association (OHA), New York, founded in 1967, first time acknowledged oral history for its archival use to build collections. Along with OHA, Society of American Archivists (SAA) played a vital role in normalizing oral history as new method to bring out the historical records from 'bottom up' (Swain 2003). According to the manual of principles and standards issued by OHA in 2009 Oral history is a method of preserving the past through documented of recorded interviews. It involves the recording and preserving first-hand information from individuals, by an interviewer, and making these recordings accessible to other users, researchers, and the public, through various means (OHA 2009). In the process, oral history connects the present generation with the past and helps them understand the history through personal experiences.

In the digital age and virtual spaces of metadata, new dimensions are available to be explored by historians and archivists. Capitalization of these digital technologies and virtual networks can use the methodology of oral history to create more possibilities in creating parallel history that is from the people and for the people. By digitizing oral history methods and making them accessible through social network platforms, we can ensure they resonate more strongly with contemporary audiences (Mark Turin and Wilkinson 2013). Exploration of meta-world as new means to restore history makes this research distinguished from existing practices in Pakistan, discussed earlier in introduction.

Oral history does not inherently stimulate the change, yet its use can be transformative. The way oral history is used, can influence the understanding and interpretation of the past, and that can lead to some kind of social change (Thompson 1988b). However, it bridges the gap between generations, between academia and the parallel realities; it brings back the history to the people who have lived it. Oral history gives conviction to any community to write its own history, and have an inbuilt capacity to correct, confirm, and add to the historical record (Ockert 2019). Hence, oral history can be an effective process to document transitions through past

and history in making. It can play important role in preservation of intangible heritage through commemoration of the contributors, their memories and their experiences.

4.2 Remembrance of Partition; Projects in India and Pakistan

When prominent projects of oral history in India and Pakistan are investigated, one common discourse is found across the boundaries i.e. partition of 1947. The most important oral history project in Pakistan is by Citizen Archives of Pakistan. In India multiple oral history projects are significant that include Oral History by Prof Arnold J Toynbee for Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (1967). This project initially featured men and women who encountered political leaders and political events and happenings. Later, the project involved the spheres of economy, foreign policy, sports and culture (PMML 2022).

Amarnath Sehgal Oral History Project by the Partition Museum Delhi and Amritsar features partition stories. The project is done in collaboration with Amarnath Sehgal private collection. It documents and preserves the stories of millions of people who were distressed or suffered by the Partition of India in 1947 (Sehgal 2023). It also reflects that these kind of projects gets sponsorship to strengthen the borders. Gross (2017) declares that these types of projects are aligned with the chosen National narrative to keep the wars sensations alive.

Collection of photographs is one of the most significant parts of CAP, OHP Pakistan. CAP has digitised a collection of over 650 thousand photographs and 5000 oral histories. CAP has preserved historical records documenting the events leading up to Pakistan's movement, the independence and then the activities in the initial years of the newborn country (CAP 2007).

4.3 Collective Memory

The ideas of collective memory, history, and oral history are closely connected, and influence each other. Trying to define them separately is difficult because they are so intertwined (Rusu 2013). French philosopher Maurice Halbwachs introduced the term "Collective memory" in early 20th century, and classify it into three types: familial, religious, and national/official (Bilsel 2017). Nations choose what to remember and what not to remember resulting often in politically influenced memory where the

parades, textbooks, media, controlled by the elites tell picked stories and overwrite the others. Thus, it is contested that "collective memory manifests as a subset of national memory" (Gross 2017). Collective memory, after the involvement of oral history, deviates from the national memory, because it is the memory of people who inherit stories from family, friends, streets, making it parallel to the imposed, historical memory.

Susan Sontag disagrees with the concept of collective memory, arguing that there is no such thing as collective memory. In her words, "Memory is individual, unreproducible—it dies with each person. What is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating: that *this* is important, and this is the story about how it happened, with the pictures that lock the story in our minds. Ideologies create substantiating archives of images, representative images, which encapsulate common ideas of significance and trigger predictable thoughts, feelings" (Sontag 2003). While the memory of war is often collective; however, like all memories, it is deeply personal and local. For example, Armenians living in the diaspora continue to remember the Armenian genocide of 1915; and Greeks remember the sanguinary civil war of the late 1940s.

The concept of collective memory has been discussed by various intellectuals favourably and critically. However, it's evident that collective memory has a role and impact in shaping socio-cultural constructs in a society. It has the capacity to challenge, imposed political, religious and historical narratives (Olick 1999).

4.4 Popular Memory

In the essay, *Popular memory: theory, politics, method Popular Memory Group* Richard Johnson and Graham Dawson discuss the 'sense of past' and how it is "produced". They further interpret memory as "object of study" and its "dimension of political practice" and argue that it is the public representations or the private memory that may be collective and shared. In this way, the process of history-making through theatrical representations and performances, theorises the historical narratives as inherently collaborative, involving "a public 'theatre' of history, a public stage and a public audience for the enacting of dramas concerning 'our' history, or heritage, the story, traditions and legacy of 'the British People'" (Johnson and Dawson 2003). This

corelation highlights the performative scopes of historical accounts, emphasising an relationship between narratives, their representation and public response in shaping the collective meaning. They further talk about actors who occupy the stage and deliver contradictory narratives. The entire 'historical apparatus' works to create, recreate and direct public ideologies, narratives.

4.4.1 Formulation of Popular Memory

Historical narratives are constructed and reconstructed through building popular memory and creating dominant culture. Recently socialist, feminist and antiracist history has been given importance, both for general and specific reasons. According to Gramsci, a strong socialist culture should include a deep understanding of history, and this knowledge helps people understand the broader context of their struggles and empowers them to play a more active role in shaping society (Johnson and Dawson 2003). The deliberate formulation of history when people consciously follow the beliefs within their cultural settings. The goal is to rediscover and understand our cultural heritage, not simply to preserve it as a relic of the past. By examining the origins and implications of our traditions, we can make informed decisions about whether to embrace, reject, or modify them. This kind of historical understanding is essential for creating a better future, as it allows us to consciously shape our collective path.

4.4.2 Construction of Past as Political Practice

Historical arguments often operate as political force through construction of traditions. For better understanding of ongoing power struggles, their historical backdrops must be deciphered and that how they fit into the capitalist and patriarchal constructs over time. Political activities involve interpretation of history and modifying ideas to shape the present and future. These constantly happening processes, are much faster and happen before historians can deconstruct them. "Controlling the narratives of history is a tool to hold and maintain political power. "History—in particular popular memory—is a stake in the constant struggle for hegemony. The relation between history and politics, like the relation between past and present, is, therefore, an *internal* one: it is about the politics of history and the historical dimensions of politics" (Johnson and Dawson 2003).

The political uses of history are often problematic, even from a Marxist perspective. History is typically seen as the study of the past, based on various interpretations of memory. However, this view overlooks the ongoing relevance of the past in the present. The past's influence on our current lives and politics is significant because it's not merely a relic of the past but an active force shaping our present. Understanding this relationship between the past and the present is crucial for political analysis (Johnson and Dawson 2003).

Collective memory is “retro-projectional” in character, that is shaped by the present, as people look back on the past through the lens of their current experiences and beliefs. This means that the presently dominant social and political scenarios, interests, ambitions, and requirements can influence and lead to a biased or an incomplete or a fractional interpretation of the history. Traditional history is derived from the actions, desires and targets of elites, while popular history emphasises the experiences and aspirations of ordinary people. Indeed, one side of the narrative is “the V.I.P.’s history” surveyed from a bird’s eye perspective, as defined and elaborated by Thomas Carlyle (1996). Whilst there is a growing emphasis on “the worm’s eye view”, that is the perspectives of regular men and women gathered from the grassroots level (Hill 1984).

4.4.3 Personal Loss and Memory

Barthes explored the relationship between myth and history. He argued that myths present themselves as natural and timeless, but they mask underlying social and political structures. By deconstructing myths, we can uncover the historical forces at play. This analysis suggests that understanding the past (history) is crucial to deconstructing myths and their influence on the present (Barthes 1972).

Though not a major theme, Barthes' autobiographical work, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes,* touches on themes of loss and personal history. He reflects on the death of his mother and grapples with the fragmentary nature of memory. This suggests that personal deaths and the past can shape our present identities (Barthes 1977).

4.5 Dominant Memory

The representation of the past can considerably influence how an individual and groups observe history. The power of some specific representations and narratives to control the thought process and understanding of individuals as well as of the groups, about the past, is the basis of the concept of "dominant memory".

Historical demonstration of memory form alliances to win the consent, build alliances to become part of political processes. But that doesn't mean that the concepts which dominate in the field of public representation are either monolithically followed or all believed in, in other words they are not "dominant". Dominant memorial representations in their nature are always open to competition, changes and challenges. Some representations achieve significance and luxury, while others are disregarded, rejected or reformed (Johnson and Dawson 2003).

Traditions are not simply historical residues, but these are active forces that mould and form a society. They expose dominant ideologies, beliefs and power structures, which are mainly influencing and determining the perceptions of the people about the past and present. Williams (1977) argues that the most essential aspect of traditions is their selection, as some are preferred over others, just to highlight a specific aspect of the past and to blur the other fragments; thus, this selection process dominate the formation of identity and cultural values.

Shaping and reshaping of memory to make it dominant is directly associated with hegemonic construction. Certain historical narratives and interpretations attain significance and relish widespread dominance; others are relegated or omitted or amended. Hence memory, when becomes dominant, shapes choices, preferences, culture, collective wisdom, vision and politics. If certain goals to reshape, modify rather use dominant memory in building desired history, are not achieved by the ruling class "naturally", these achieved by the forced intervention. In contemporary capitalist societies, this constantly involves manipulating public discourse through political debates, traditional media, and social media.

4.6 Memory, Identity and Imagined Communities

Individual memory is personal and internal, while cultural memory is shared, mutual and external. For most of the theorists, cultural memory is in physical objects, like monuments, in rituals and traditions, other social practices, in codes of clothing and behaviour, and in a variety of other communal things. Moreover, it exists in the way politicians, journalists and opinion makers talk about the past, and use language to frame specific issues and mould public opinion in one direction or another (Poole 2008). Collective memory, shaped by the factors like culture, collective experiences, socio-cultural practices, and religious beliefs, plays a significant part in shaping the identity of any community (Amenta, Nash, and Scott 2012).

4.6.1 Making Sense of the Past

Oral history is not a completely objective record of the past; rather, it is a subjective interpretation of events. It is influenced by the personal memories, cultural beliefs and social influences. Thus, the focus of any oral history project should be on understanding these subjective representations; personal or established, individual or inherited, and the processes through which memories are shaped (Frisch 2007). This approach allows oral history to be used as a tool for understanding how individuals make sense of their past and to place their experiences within the socio-cultural contexts. Thus, Oral History as a practice can be used to interpret and to reinterpret the happenings in the world.

By shifting the focus to memory, oral historians began to employ a variety of analytical approaches to understand past. They started using tools from linguistic, storytelling, and cultural and ethnographic studies, to examine oral history interviews. This broadened the scope of oral history and allowed for a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of historical memory.

4.7 Four Paradigms of Oral History

In the 1970s, oral history had been criticized, as it was argued that memory was unreliable due to factors like old age, individual favouritisms, and collective memory. In response, oral history experts had developed a methodology to measure the reliability

of the memory and devised strategies to tackle the limitations. Paul Thompson (2007) claimed that oral history could challenge the traditional historical narratives, and can work as a voice of marginalized groups, and transform the way history is written. Further, the reliability can be measured with the four paradigms:

4.7.1 Resurgence of Memory as a Historical Source

The genesis of modern oral history practices started materializing after World War II. This can be called renaissance of contemporary oral history when memory was started recognized as important historical source. Paul Thompson induced the argument about ancient practices to document history; that used to be based on the eyewitnesses as primary source until emergence of academic methods of history documentation in nineteenth century, after which oral methods started to get marginalized.

After the World War II, technology in form of portable recording devices played a vital role in under-pinning the progression of oral history. Around the globe multiple projects started to document memories of common or elite people. Early important projects include Allan Nevins oral history project in Columbia University (1948). 1950s and 1960s oral history projects in the UK documented the experiences of so-called “ordinary” working people and linked with folklores (Thomson 2007).

4.7.2 Memory and Subjectivity; A Post-Positivist Perspective

After the emergence and serious efforts and discourses pursued by oral historians, they faced the criticism of positivist historians. Positivist historians consisted mostly of documentary historians, with conservative political approach, responded to the oral history practices by targeting the so-called unreliability of memory. By 1970 s the reliability of memory was questioned with the claim that memory gets distorted by physical depreciation by the age factor. They also highlighted that documentation through oral history can get affected by the personal bias of interviewee and interviewer. Lastly, they criticized that oral history may manipulate the historical records through collective and reflective experiences of past.

These criticisms provoked early oral historians to design the guidelines for assessment of solidity of memory. While doing so that gave harsh reminder to the traditionalist

historians, about their own methods and practices by engaging oral evidence. They developed methodologies to determine bias of memory in the disciplines of social psychology and anthropology they also discussed importance of "retrospection and the effects of the interviewer upon remembering"(Thomson 2007). They opted the methods of representative sampling in sociology and introduced rules to ensure reliability and internal consistency of the sources in documentary history.

Revolutionary oral historians of late 70's took these criticisms as challenge and argued that so-called unreliability of memory was also its strength. They embraced the subjectivity of memory and that how it leaves traces of the underlying meanings of collective past. This subjectivity also a links past and present, ties memory and personal identity, and connects individual and collective memory.

4.7.3 Subjectivity in Oral History; Interdisciplinary Approaches

By the end of 1970's oral historians by the third paradigm shift started distinguishing oral history practice from traditional historian's methods through embracing subjectivity instead of objectivity. One of their primary concerns was that historians kept influencing the interviewees to focus on objectivity. In this regard contribution of notable oral historians like Portelli and Passerini in Europe, and Frisch and Grele in North America is commendable. They started questioning objectivity and celebrating the subjectivity of the relationship of interviewer and interviewee. Objectivity was under the criticism of feminist theorists, post-modern anthropologists and qualitative sociologists in parallel to the oral.

4.7.4 Digital Revolution in Oral History

Alistair Thomson concludes four paradigms with digital revolution. He calls it "dizzying digital revolution" and its outcomes are unpredictable. Emergence of email and internet related platforms have shaped new forms of historical dialogue globally (Smyth, Nyhan, and Flinn 2023). Digital technologies, as discussed in introduction chapter of this thesis, are transforming means of preservation including recording, interpretation and cataloguing oral history and history as whole. Thomson mentions Michael Frisch who predicts the integration of computers and AI in recording, indexing, cataloguing and connecting historical discourses (Frisch 2006).

Four paradigms of oral history provide context to this research practice. It embraces subjectivity to interpret individual memories and reflections in collective socio-political order. Further it discusses photographs in support to oral history interviews. The researcher has interviewed individuals with digital camera and digital sound recorder and has incorporated digital audio-visual connotations to engage young target audience and for further interpretation.

4.8 Colonial Photography and Oral History

Through the course of history, photography has demonstrated the ability to build and break narratives and concepts through its multilayered complexities. The claim that documentary photography bases on truth is half the story. Photography has played a vital role in "construction of the ideologies of colonialism and contribute, just as much as scientific facts and military conquests, to the building of a 'colonial culture'" (Adamson 2004). It has been integral in establishing and nurturing social, political and cultural constructs of Western Colonialism in rest of the world.

In doing so certain imbalance between western photographer and subjects of colonial societies is evident through the photographs. Edwards Said writes about dominance of influential photographer over vulnerable subjects especially women who were shot in provocative ways. At large photographers helped colonists to represent societies and communities in stereotypical ways to facilitate power dynamics (Said 2014). However, photography can also challenge the notions like 'otherness' in post-colonial times, and now post 9/11 war on terror. Researcher's photographic series *"A Normal Pakistani"* consisting of more than hundred portraits featuring Pakistani men challenges western labelling of 'other 'on them. The series has been discussed in detail in methodology section.

4.8.1 Fabrication of Memory through Photography

It is intriguing to find that in the realm of dominant, collective and popular memory, individuals, families, tribes and groups endeavour to create their own identities through the means of dialects, traditions, practices. They document through photography and other visual means that later becomes memory. This unique practice adds to another layer to the domain on memory. Marjorie L. McLellan whose

pioneering work on oral history has been consulted by many oral historians talks about this experience of creating unique identity while working on her project about immigrant families. She uses the word “dramatic windows” for the stories and photographs shared by the farmer families. These windows based on oral narratives and photographs may be fictive and subjective to a point that can be called fabricated.

Here McLellan shares something that the researcher has also experienced in her documentary photography practice in the UK in 2011. She shares that in the “picture taking event”,

> “the family had dressed up in period costumes and used old farm equipment to display, like in a tableau vivante, scenes of their ancestors’ farming life. Few of us go to the same extent of designing photographs, but when we pose, often smiling, with a babe in arms, on a voyage to a new country, in front of a new car, or surrounded by friends, we similarly perform a scene as our life. Most family photographs, even those called snap shots, are posed” (McLellan L. 1997).

Most of the time these photographs are fabricated and no or little connection with reality and when these are seen as historical documents, can be deceiving.

Here comes the role of a photographer and a researcher who can decodify the intentional made photographs and visuals. Types and social statuses of individuals can be analysed by deciphering the codes and signifiers involved in the self-representation of individuals. These codes can be universal and can be akin with certain cultures.

5. Historical Journey and Cultural Transformation of Lahore

UNESCO creative cities network assesses any city on criteria including "crafts and folk art, design, film, literature, media arts, and music, and promotes intersectoral collaboration across different creative fields" (UNESCO 2024).

One of the seven categories in which UNESCO recognizes a city as a member of its Creative Towns Network is literature. There are several factors pertaining to different facets of a city's literary scene when choosing cities for this distinction and Lahore fulfils the requirements to be named as City of Literature. From pre-partition Lahore has been recognized as a cultural nucleus in the region. The literary legacy of Lahore is extensive and distinguished in fiction, novel, poetry, drama and myth writing. For decades, the city has been nurturing the creations of literary luminaries such as Allama Iqbal, Intezar Hussain, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Nasir Kazmi, Munir Niazi, Saadat Hassan Manto, Kamal Ahmed Rizvi, Amjad Islam Amjad and Munnu Bhai belonging to an array of literary traditions. Going back to historical sources, Shah Hussain is one the most initial recognizable names in the domain of Sufi poetry (Ali 2022).

Along with literary traditions Lahore has been a centre for radio, theatre, cinema, and music for number of decades. These traditions were widespread throughout the city emerging from educational institutes and spanning over theatres, film studios, and radio and the café culture. In one of the oral history interviews, as part of this research, Shahnawaz Zaidi remembers the café culture of Lahore where eminent poets used to sit and discussed literary and revolutionary ideas. One of the most prominent cafes "Pak Tea House" was situated near Punjab University Old Campus and Mayo School of Arts (now NCA) on historical Mall Road. "Pak tea house as well as coffee house were very important places where poets, very great famous ones like Niazi, Faiz Saheb, these people used to visit, Nasir Kazmi and others" (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023)

In a different way, Lahore still carries on with a thriving modern literary scene in addition to its historical heritage. Strong emphasis has been placed on promoting literacy and reading habits. Public libraries and institutional libraries offer widespread

access to books. Many initiatives and programs from public and private platforms nurture new literary talent through literary festivals and mushairas or poetic symposiums. Many new writers are emerging in through drama writing. Most prominent festivals include Lahore Literary Festival (LLF), Faiz Festival, Think Festival, Lahore Music Meet etc (Ahmad Bilal 2023).

5.1 Hybrid Social Structures

The city of Lahore has a long-enriched history. From its foundation in 1000 BC by Prince Loh, Son of Rama Chandra, to Ghaznavid period in 1021 AD, Ghauris in 1200 AD, Mongols in 1300 AD, Mughal Empire from 1500 to 1700, Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1767, Ranjit Singh in 1848, British rule from 1857 to 1947 and eventually the post-partition period since 1947, Lahore has seen the rise and falls of multiple dynasties. The city has gone through socio-political, cultural, and religious transformations several times. Variety of invasions and rules can be traced mostly in the form of historical architecture. A splendid diverse architecture and buildings representing the times of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, and Britishers, are losing their glory because of the mushroom growth of unplanned buildings, roads, streets, and societies in the name of urban expansion. Lahore has been one of the most important cities in the region strategically due to its location on the "historical route from Khyber Pass to Delhi crosses the River Ravi". This factor leads to "its foundation is also the reason of its continued growth and importance as a regional trade, military and administrative center" (Noe 1981). Lahore, despite being the political nucleus of the country, has historically shown tolerance towards extreme religious parties and military rules. However, in recent times, the cultural heritage sites of the city have faced challenges, due to the development and modern constructions; for instance, the latest of these are two projects; the metro bus route that has demolished an installation at Kalma Chowk in 2008, and orange train route which has an impact on 11 historical sites including Chauburji in 2013 (Khalid 2018).

Lahore, while sharing a rich history with other former Mughal capital cities in the Indian sub-continent, such as Delhi, Agra, Lucknow, Hyderabad, has its own unique character that sets it apart. "Despite its inevitable architectural similarity to Mughal cities of Delhi and Agra, Lahore stands out thanks to its unique preserved urban nucleus - the inner or Walled City (Androon Lahore)" (Suvorova 2022). The Agha

Khan Trust and Walled City Authority have been doing preservation and restoration projects in the interior city. Their collaborative interventions since 2016 have been instrumental in increasing the tourism in the city (AKDN 2019). Despite many efforts, most of the significant architecture has been unattended or deteriorated.

On a personal visit to the interior city in February 2024, the researcher walked through Mori gate to Bhatti gate. During this walk, a variety of observations were made. The Interior city is less intact in its real shape and more transformed into so-called ‘modern construction’. Some shops based on *Thara* (platform) style, still have traces of the original wood and huge locks, most of them have been transformed with cheap looking tiles and other materials. Most of the historical multi-story houses around the famous Victoria school have been demolished and have been reconstructed by the inhabitants. Though due to limitations of the confined area, these houses mainly follow the same multi-story plan, in a modernized way. One of the major problems of the interior city is its deteriorating sanitization facilities. So many of the once glorified architectural splendours are only in memories now. Thus, oral history research is pivotal in documenting the cultural transformation.

Lahore holds a unique historical trajectory where this traditional city navigated the complexities of colonialism and modernity. Elements of traditional hierarchy from Muslim and Sikh time periods to the western influences, and nascent nationalism coexisted and interacted resulting in "hybrid" social structures in Lahore. “The fact that some of Lahore’s colonial- era buildings, streets, and patterns of occupation seem formally similar to Anglo-European models thus provides an opening into questions of cultural difference rather than auto-matic evidence of Westernization”(Glover 2008). Lahore has gone through cultural transformations countless times not only through the tangible architectural styles but intangible changes in the identities of people. It is still during transformation as in the words of Stuart Hall “cultural identity as a 'production,' which is never finished, never pure, always in process, and always constituted, within the relations of power” (Hall 1990)

In his book "Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imaging a Colonial City," William Glover analyses how Lahore's social structures transformed under British rule. Prior to British rule, Lahore's social structure reflected a Mughal hierarchy. Nobles, elites, and religious figures held high positions, while artisans, merchants, and

labourers formed the lower strata (Glover 2008). Strong community bonds existed within neighbourhoods and social groups. Guilds for artisans and close-knit family structures provided support and a sense of belonging.

The British introduced new social categories. Colonial officials, military personnel, and Christian missionaries who formed a distinct upper class. British economic policies disrupted traditional livelihoods. The decline of Mughal patronage and the rise of new industries created a new class of industrial workers. The British legal system and administrative structures gradually undermined the authority of traditional elites and religious leaders. New westernized identities were formed when a segment of the local population adopted Western education, dress, and customs, forming a westernized elite class. A growing sense of nationalism and resistance to British rule led to the emergence of a new social category – Indian nationalists who advocated for self-government. The rise of industry created a working class with its own set of challenges and potential for collective action.

The westernized influence on the hierarchies and occupations is evident throughout the city and its people. However, Lahore is lucky enough to have sustained its indigenous social structures in the form of Androon Lahore. It still holds deep rooted traditions: the life of Androon Lahore is characterized by a strong sense of community. The narrow streets with houses built close to them promote a sense of neighbourhood. Residents often get to know each other well and participate in common traditions and celebrations. They are in love with cultural practices including singing, dancing, drum beating, qawwali, films and so much more. In words of Hafeez Tahir "An old singer singing a Ghazal/poetry probably *Akhtari Begum*, I a small child would pass by house 4th of street 10th running would then turn right and there was a house of a lumberman they had given everyone a crossing from inside their house" (Tahir 2023).

Residents of Androon Lahore are not very religious but they practice religion as cultural norm. One of the most interesting common traditions is a *Dhol Wala* (drum beater) who comes to wake people up beating drum from street to street during the time of Sehri in the month of Ramzan. In words of Shahid Nadeem "in Ramzan people would come to wake you up at sehri time, they would play drums and *Naats* and songs and would knock doors" (Nadeem 2024). He refers to the time of 1960's,

however, this tradition is still alive in Androon Lahore, today. Nadeem also mentions that when his family moved to Misri Shah from Bata Pur, it was a whole new world for them and that feeling is still alive. “The streets, the roads, the people, all kinds of characters, neighbours’ interaction, the life in a neighbourhood, in which you have conversation from a balcony, the first ever mingling I ever had was at the age of 12, 13, that was from my balcony across the other side of the street” (Nadeem 2024).

Androon Lahore is loaded with historical mosques, shrines, and religious sites. The call to prayer of the minarets breaks the day, and residents may be keen to go to mosques for prayer or religious festivals. Androon Lahore is a sanctuary for traditional crafts where generations of families are continuing to inherit the heritage of handloom weaving, metal, wood, leather, mud and other handicraft skills. Researcher’s photographic series *‘Identity Insistently Public’* 2017 is a visual depiction of these generations who are proud custodians of their old traditions.



Figure 9
The Maestro
From the series *Identity Insistently Public*
Source: The Researcher



Figure 10
The Fan
From the series *Identity Insistently Public*
Source: The Researcher

Walking along the streets one can find workshops with the sound of hammers and weaving and shops with intricate handmade goods. Androon Lahore is the home of

bustling bazaars filled with life. The narrow streets are lined with shops selling everything from spices and fabrics to fresh goods and everyday necessities. Haggling is an art form, and the air is filled with calls from vendors and customers who exchange. Street food is of most important part of life in Lahore. Small restaurants and street vendors offer a variety of traditional Punjabi cuisine. From boiling hot samosas and pakoras, to rich curry and delicious pulao, the fragrances and flavours are constantly tempting. Modern facilities may be limited in some areas, and life has a certain charm. Although homes are small and more traditional, social interactions and strong community feelings compensate for the material possessions. Hunain Khan in his news article *If only we loved Lahore as much* compares Lahore with city of Istanbul and stresses that after visiting Istanbul he misses the folklore charm of Lahore, and the sense of loss increases (M. H. Khan 2023). The researcher felt the same when she visited London, a city with presence of one great civilization but preserved so well and Lahore: a faded glory, despite of being tremendously multi-cultural in past.

5.2 Theatrical and TV Scripts based on the Characters from Walled-City

Lahore has been the cultural hub for performing arts including theatre, radio, TV and film even before partition. This city has produced great names in all these fields. In the category of writers, many names including Patras Bukhari, Kamal Ahmed Rizvi, Saadat Hassan Manto, Munir Niazi, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Habib Jalib, Nasir Kazmi, Munnu Bhai, Anwar Sajjad, Ahmed Nadim Qasmi, Mustansar Hussain Tarar, Amjad Islam Amjad, Asghar Nadim Syed, Shahid Nadeem and many more are included. The masterpieces by them in the form of theatre, TV and film scripts were rooted in the culture of Punjab and Lahore. Unlike the cultural connotations in Androon Lahore, representation of Lahori culture and the reflection of deep-rooted characters of Lahore has been disappearing from films, radio and TV.

One of the living legends Shahid Nadeem during the oral history interview in this research, talked about the characters of his plays. “In *‘Marya Hoya Kutta’* all those characters, a hairdresser, a *halwai*, shopkeeper, *molvi Sahib*, I had in my mind came as very genuine one although I had never planned to observe them but because of daily routine that had been engraved in my mind”. Later he also discusses his plays

Janjalpura for PTV and *Khushalpura*, whose characters are based on the characters and surroundings of Androon city. He also mentions his theatre plays *'BalaKing'* and *'Lo Phir Basant Aayi'* where vibrant culture of Androon Lahore filled with middle class characters is very much alive (Nadeem 2024). Shahid Nadeem who is also the director of Ajoka Theatre is one of a few playwrights left with the ideology to keep the traditions alive in his theatrical presentations.

For a couple of decades, the mainstream theatre and commercial theatre has gained popularity amongst some male dominated segments of society. Despite the low-quality content and vulgarity this theatre is commercially viable for makers. Though some of the organizations including Ajoka are continuing their practice, but these are not commercially viable and limited to exclusive audiences. Apart from Ajoka that has been an established organization for forty years other theatre groups have limited resources. This economic deficiency limits them to perform only at theatre festivals by Lahore Arts Council, occasionally.

TV playwright and poet the late Amjad Islam Amjad, also featured characters deep rooted in the cultural and political settings of Lahore. Most of his big hits on television including *Waris, Din, Raat, Samundar* represent politics in the educational institutes and emergence of black money in a naive society where youth is being unknowingly misused by powerful structures. Amjad deals with social injustices intricately while writing about them as intertwined in a very social fabric of the society. Other eminent playwrights whose writings shed light on political and social injustice include Munnu Bhai and Dr. Anwar Sajjad.

Prior to 1947, Lahore was a hub for the Progressive Writers' Movement (PWM), a force advocating social change through literature. Saadat Hasan Manto, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi were prominent figures in this movement. Partition brought both hope and challenges. The creation of Pakistan and an influx of Urdu speakers led to the formation of the All-Pakistan Progressive Writers Association (APPWA) in 1947. However, the initial optimism faced roadblocks:

- **Shifting Politics:** The Pakistani government stressed national identity over socialist ideals, creating tension for writers accustomed to questioning authority.

- **Banned Party:** The Pakistan Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP), with which many progressive writers were affiliated, was banned in 1951.
- **APPWA (All Pakistan Progressive Writers Association),** faced extreme difficulties in the next seven years and at last, in 1958, during the regime of General Ayub Khan it was blamed for conspiring with foreign communist states, and had perished forever (Zafar 2023).

Writers like Faiz Ahmed Faiz continued to be powerful voices. His poems, like *"Hum Dekhenge"* (We Shall See), became anthems of resistance. Manto's short stories continued to explore social issues but faced censorship throughout his career. Qasmi, a leader in the APPWA, later faced criticism for his perceived shift towards a more conservative interpretation of progressive ideals. Habib Jalib's works used strong language and imagery to challenge the status quo and advocate for the rights of the marginalized. Jalib is considered a significant figure in Pakistani progressive literature. Munnu Bhai through his columns, poetry and TV dramas followed and promoted socialism.

Internal disagreements within the APPWA regarding ideology and artistic freedom led to a decline in its influence. The Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case of 1951, where communist leaders were accused of treason, further weakened the movement. Despite these challenges, the progressive writers of Lahore left a legacy. Their works continue to be read and discussed, offering valuable insights into the social and political realities of Pakistan's early years.

Akhtar and Zaidi (2006) in their article about progressive writers mention some names and their contributions towards socialist and communist approaches. They mention undeniable contribution of writers like Prem Chand, Ali Abbas, Krishan Chander, Ismat Chughtai, Bedi, Hayatullah Ansari, Ghulam Abbas, Balwant Singh, Ahmad Nadeem Qasimi, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Upendra Nath to Hindi and Urdu literature and cites the names of numerous classical stories by these writers', which have fulfilled the requirements of social responsibilities. These writers belonged to pre-partition India and some of them stayed in Pakistan until they died.

Premchand's address in Progressive Writers Association (PWA) conference in 1936, reveals that the progressive writers wanted to root their stories within the local

culture. They wanted to relate themselves to the broken comb of a working woman or to the sweat of a peasant. In his words:

> "It seems that our stories and poems barring a few have not come down from the high pedestal. Poetry has not yet outgrown feudal underpinnings. It continues to be in tune with the subdued and melancholic temper of old. It is not firmly rooted in the soil, nor does it exude the sweat of the peasant's toil. I do not find in poetry or other literary genres, the home and hearth of the poor nor the songs of the peasant, nor the workers, endless travails. Our poetry does not refer to the working woman's broken comb with *wisps of hair entangled in it; nor does it refer to Dabbo Manohar's pet that accompanies him every morning when he sets out to plough the fields; it does not reverberate with the sprightly and bold love songs which the rural women hum for their menfolk while carrying food for them across the uneven pathways. …
>
> Till such time that we do not come down to earth, and study the life lived by peasants and workers in their homes and paint its true picture with utmost sincerity and effort, till then our literature will not attain literary heights that will compel a reader in the world to conclude that Indians are the same as them. Though the task is difficult we have to accomplish it" (Akhtar and Zaidi 2006, 151).

5.3 Unsung Heroes of Radio Lahore

In the oral history interview as part of this research, Irfan Khoosat, one of the most eminent actors of Pakistan who started his journey from Lahore radio as a child, talks about many people whose names are being heard for first time. Even when googled, apart from a few, most of the individuals are not found in archives, no photograph and no information. He mentions Mustafa Ali Hamdani; the announcer who announced "Ye Radio Pakistan Hai," the first announcement of Radio Pakistan, Aziz ur Rehman, Muzaffar Ahmed, and Akhlaq Ahmed Dehlvi (Khoosat 2021). For the first prototype practice, the researcher could only find photographs of couple of individuals.

Apart from Mirza Adeeb and Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi, the names of other professionals like Syed Abid Ali Abid Sahib, Sabira Sultana, Hamid Raza, Madam

Mohini, Nazir Hussaini are never heard. However, some of the names; for instance, Kanwar Naseer, Khalid Abbas Dar, Dr. Anwar Sajjad, Ashfaq Ahmed, and Bano Qudsia were recognizable because of their appearances on the Pakistan television screen, in the 1970's and 1980's, during the golden times of PTV. The researcher has been teaching undergraduate and postgraduate teaching for past sixteen years and identifies that younger generation is unaware of the most prominent names of Pakistani literature and arts including Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Nasir Kazmi, or Shakir Ali. They are in dark for the simple reason that power structures of this land never wanted any heroes to be acknowledged, leaving no record behind in the form of archives resulting in a blind and deaf nation.

5.4 Lahore: A City of Art Supporters

Like many sophisticated cities around the world despite many crises Lahore has a big heart for art and culture. It has many art, design and media schools producing hundreds of art, design, film, media and culture practitioners. According to Shahnawaz Zaidi in oral history interview by the researcher till 1961 National College of Arts (NCA) was offering only diplomas so the elites preferred to join Fine Arts Department at Punjab University due to the degree offerings. First ever degree of graphic design was offered from the same department. Zaidi shares a very interesting memory of being part of first ever batch of graphic design in Pakistan "I remember that once in class they said, 'Layout, you have to make a layout'. Now we did not even know what layout was, I mean we heard this for the very first time. We all looked around with teary eyes, what is the layout?" (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023).

For the art and culture practice Androon Lahore has a gravitational force. All art students whether they are enrolled in institutes within the span of Androon or study at schools far from it, are bound to interact with the inner city for inspiration and practice. Painters, filmmakers, photographers seek the subjects and stories for authentication. It's not about the traditionalists only; modernist practitioners also rely on the themes, symbols and inspirations from fascinating Androon Lahore.

The researcher has produced multiple photography and film projects in Androon Lahore. Many of her students regularly visit Androon Lahore for their projects. You find the most supportive people when in Androon. The people open the doors of their

homes, they let you photograph them, their streets, their lives, every time you go there. They even tell you the stories about Lahore, they offer you food and drinks, all just for your passion and work. They don't demand anything in return. One of the interviewees Ajaz Anwar, famous for his passion and activism to save the heritage of Lahore talks about his early experience of painting Lahore.

> Yes they would not call it landscape, they called it a *Naqsha* (map), for example 'why is he making a map of our home' when I started painting on spot those people knew that I am not from there, board on bicycle, other things, fixing the easel, drawing two to three lines and people would get an idea and understand what is happening, nonetheless all of them would say 'let the man draw; get aside' (Anwar 2023).

5.5 Lahore; Topophilia of Space and Place

Yi-Fu Tuan, the geographer from the University of Wisconsin, devised the term 'topophilia', and defined it as the emotional bond of a person with his environment. Indeed, the emotional sense of belonging of an individual to a space, place, or location. Tuan introduced this concept in his book, published in 1974, titled "Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values,", and signifies a deep love or attachment to a specific geographical location and encompasses the complex web of emotions, memories, and meanings associated with that place. Places that evoke topophilia often have cultural, historical, or personal significance to individuals or communities, which is rooted in shared experiences, traditions, or a sense of belonging (Tuan 1990).

Topophilia is closely tied to one's sense of identity. The attachment to a particular place contributes to a person's understanding of who they are, where they come from, and how they relate to their surroundings. Tuan's work on topophilia also delves into the ways people perceive and experience space. It considers the sensory and perceptual aspects of the environment, examining how people interact with and interpret the physical spaces around them. The concept of topophilia underscores the importance of environmental values and attitudes. It explores how people's connections to specific places influence their attitudes towards the environment and may contribute to efforts for conservation and sustainable practices. Ajaz Anwar in

the oral history interview with the researcher, shares his affection with Lahore and its river Ravi through multiple memories. One of the very unique experiences to be compared with today is “Ravi was unpolluted, we would go on bicycle, every college had their own rowing club for boating, we would give four *Aana’s* and pushed onto the boat as gust if they didn’t let us come, those were the good times” (Anwar 2023).

Topophilia has influenced various fields; like geography, environmental psychology, and cultural studies. It offers a theoretical framework to understand the complex and subjective nature of relationship of humans with their environment. This concept has been functional in diverse settings, to analyse the attachment individuals with their hometowns for exploring the impact of urban design on people's well-being. The oral history interviews in this research endorse individual and collective relationships associated with a place close to the heart, Lahore. The subjective lifelong encounter with Lahore and its lifestyle has shaped up the individual’s personalities and identities. Whether they belong to Cultural Activism, Art, Academia, Music, Painting, Drama or Theatre; Lahore has larger than life impact on them and their, interests, lives and careers.

5.6 A lost Connection: Displacement of Past, Present and Future

Walking through his memory lane, Mustansar Hussain Tarar in *Lahore Deewangi* writes, “I wish that I refresh the memories of days spent in the old house at Chamberlin Road. I wish, I visit Krishna Gali, Ghandi Square and Gurwarjin Nagar’s ancient *havelis* (mansions) and *chaubaraas* (room at the top of the house with wooden windows on all walls). Then I see houses on the Dhani Ram Road walking through Mayo Hospital” (Tarar 2021). In the chapter, *Four Windows of Lakhsmi Mansion and Chajjo’s Balcony,* Tarar mentions Muhammad Baqir, Mairaj Khalid, Aysha Jalal, Shahid Jalal, Khursheed Shahid, Salman Shahid, Senator Paracha, Dr. Mehmood Malik, and Saadat Hassan Manto who used to live in flats of a historical building Lakshmi Mansion facing Hall Road. He himself spent his childhood, youth, and 12 years after marriage in flat No. 17 of the same building (Tarar 2021). This historical building has been demolished in 2012 to accommodate development, whilst the authorities were aware (Dawn 2012). It is left with only the façade under the shadow of horrendous concrete bridge of Orange Train Line. The building remains only in

memories like many other spaces and places. This abrupt physical transformation of the city in the name of expansion and so-called modernization has not only demolished the face of history physically, but also emotionally and spiritually.



Figure 11
Facade of Glorious Lakshmi Building under the shadow of newly built Orange Train
Source: The Researcher

Surprisingly this is not the case with religious constructions where thousands of shrines, mosques and worship places stay intact rather a few most prominent ones keep on flourishing including the most iconic, Data Darbar. Data Darbar plays the central role in the socio-political and religious history of Lahore. It's a space where spiritual pursuits, new ideas, and political missions become manifest (Suvorova 2022). Lahore is also called as Data ki Nagri means Data's Town. This imbalance or pick and choose situation reflects upon two major factors, socio-economic needs and partial state control. Most of the demolished architecture belonged to the category of personal inheritance and was demolished by the state.

Lahore is a city valued for its saints and still have annual *Urs* (birthday of *Sufi* saints) and regular festivities and feasts at the tombs of Ali Hajveri (Data Sahib), Madho Laal Hussain, Bibi Pak Daman, Shah Jamal, Mauj Darya, Shah Abul Maalik, Shah Chiraagh, and many others. Inhabitants of interior Lahore, often define their addresses in reference to religious places such as Data Darbar and Mian Mir. In the oral history interview, Hafeez Tahir mentions about his childhood days in the area near Mian Mir

Darbar; the shrine of Sufi saint of Qadri order of Sufism streak Hazrat Mian Mir (c. 1550 - August 11, 1635), built in early 1700 (Ali Raza 2017). He is well-known for his role being the spiritual trainer of Prince Dara Shikoh, the eldest son and designated successor of emperor Shah Jahan. The life of the saint Mian Mir has been documented in "Sakinat-ul Aulia" his devoted disciple Dara (P. Mahmood 2022). Thousands of followers from within and outside the city visit the Darbar to fulfil their desires based on the deep rooted, complex belief system of Indo-Pak (Abbas et al. 2013). Where people are categorized into segments depending on their levels of association with Sufi saints. The deeper connotations go beyond emotional involvement when it comes to political, social, cultural constructs and economic dominance (Collins-Kreiner 2010). The phenomenon of spiritual seeking is experiencing a renaissance worldwide, and historic shrines of saints continue to attract all those who are in search of spiritual fulfilment (Digance 2003).



Figure 12
Photo by Abdullah Khan
dawn.com



Figure 13
Backyard of Mian Mir Darbar 2024
Source: The Researcher

Apart from this layered discourse, when a 78-year-old TV producer recalls his memories, he uses Mian Mir as a referential point of the area where he used to live in his childhood. There he doesn't discuss any affiliation with Darbar, rather he discusses train tracks, wooden stairs, the poor plight of his house and his mother.

> "Train still uses that path but those houses, those ceilings are no more where we used to stand to watch the train go by, whenever we would

hear the train coming, that child who was embracing his mother, giving her comfort he would run up the wooden stairs to watch the train. He would watch the train coming and going and would wish to travel on that train one day"

(Tahir 2023)

5.7 Where it Lost: Religion, Values and Beliefs

In addition to the physical destruction of Lahore's heritage, Pakistani nation has gone through intangible damage that is even more dangerous than physical loss. Since the very beginning the value of archives has not been taken into consideration. In the oral history interview with the researcher, Irfan Khoosat, one of the most experienced living actor and producer or radio, TV and film shares his early experiences in Radio Pakistan Lahore. In his words "the production used to be live in those days with no recording. The result was that we could not protect our historical treasure. Whatever we had done had gone, been lost, or looted, whether it was TV or radio" (Khoosat 2021). Hence, careless attitude of individuals, institutes and state towards documentation and preservation has left this society with "collective amnesia" (Nadeem 2024).

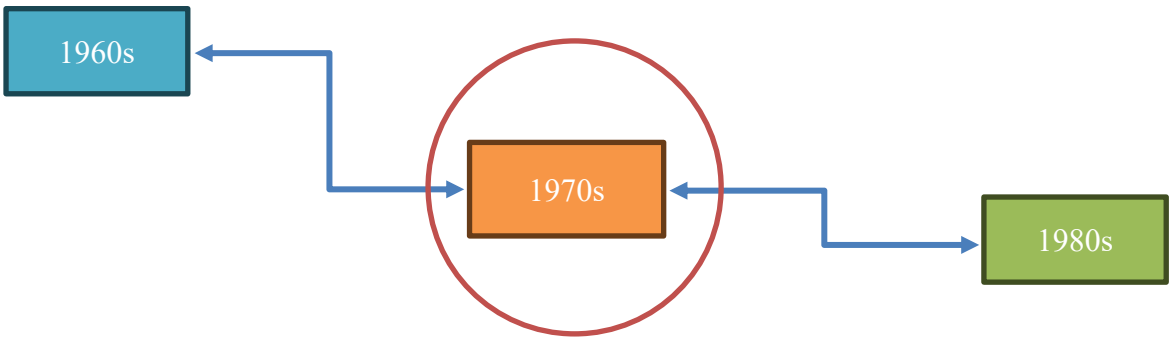


Figure: A Decade with Missing Links

Values are the principles or standards that a group of people consider important, while beliefs are the convictions or acceptance that something is true or exists. Changes in societal norms, technological advancements, or shifts in political and economic systems can lead to the transformation of values and beliefs. After the forceful

political shift from Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to Zia ul Haq; Islamization emerged in the 1970s with the mindset to eliminate the moderation in society by victimizing art and culture forms, to transform values and beliefs. In the oral history interview with eminent painter Saeed Akhter, transition from Bhutto to Zia ul Haq is noticed. Referring to the difference between Bhutto and Zia era, he says “there was nothing special in me, it was the era in which I was able to work freely”. Then he talks about Zia ul Haq's reign in which artists were bound to do calligraphy only. He refers calligraphy as nothing creative but a copy (Akhter 2023). This brief comment has deeper underlying connotations. Artists were left with no choice but to opt calligraphy as an art practice. Even larger than life artists like Sadequain whose “singular persona continued to serve as a reminder of the personal, sexual, and Sufistic surplus could not be contained in General Zia ul Haq’s coercive and austere Islamization project” (Dadi 2009).

The society was made ashamed of their secular thinking and moderate lifestyle and practices through various gross acts. Zia ul Haq‟s Islamisation policies which questioned the dress code, religious beliefs and cultural traditions, created a cultural vacuum. The censor policy according to Motion Picture Ordinance 1979, a film will not be licenced for public display if, in the opinion of the Censor Board, the film or its part undermines Islamic glory, or the security and integrity of Pakistan, or foreign relations, or public order, or the decency and morality or incite a criminal activity (WIPO 1979). It echoes the mentality of the government, “who tried to control the medium of cinema in the name of safeguarding religious ethics, national security and public morals” (Gazdar 1997).

In Zia regime country has seen the mushroom-spread of Islamized groups in every segment of society including educational institutes. Punjab University, Lahore is country’s biggest educational institute and for decades, it’s been known as home to Islami Jamiat, an anti-secular power group, that relates to mainstream country politics. Unfortunately, this situation was not like this till early 70’s. To researcher’s surprise Shahid Nadeem and Shahnawaz Zaidi in their oral history interviews shared the modernism in Punjab university till early 70’ s. Punjab university new campus in 60’ s “was a very easy environment, girls and boys sitting and chatting together, music, art discussion, but no one would take interest in politics” (Nadeem 2024). The

researcher has been associated with this institute for about five years from 2000-2005 and the liberal atmosphere described by Nadeem is unimaginable in the new campus of this institute. The old campus that comprises of Art and Design College is comparatively free but up to a limited scope.

Shahnawaz Zaidi has been a student of Art and Design, Punjab University in 60' s and later he worked for the same institution till 2008. For a few years he left for Nairobi for teaching, he describes this gap as "Jamiat was not there at that time, no Jamiat until I left there. That was in 1974. There was no Jamiat till 74. When I came back, I saw that the whole system had collapsed, and some strange situations had happened, and it happened because of Jamiat slowly and gradually that people started giving preference to send their children to NCA" (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023). This statement gives another insight that society was still liberated till that time. People chose not to send their children to once most elite art institution; Punjab University, they rather started preferring NCA. Before this transformation, Punjab University art and design was the preferred institute.

5.7.1 Youth of the 1960s; Between Imran Series and Tablighi Jamat

Religious influences triggered during Zia period but it's also an established fact that the country was created in the name of Islam. Hence this ideology was misused and misinterpreted since the very beginning. The state control on progressive writers and progressive ideas, has been discussed in the section 'cultural interactions' in this chapter. Youth of sixties was inclined towards secular and communist ideas. In the oral history interview, Zaidi says that his interest developed in the reading due to the books of 'Ibn-e-Safi', who wrote suspense base crime mysteries which are still engaging for youngsters, for instance, Imran Series, Faridi and Hameed and others. Later, he read authors like Krishan Chander, Manto, Ismat Chughtai and others progressive writers. However, he and other youngsters were not allowed to read progressive literature, so they followed this content secretly. He also mentioned that he and his siblings read almost every available book, which were not the course books, and he learnt a lot from them. He specifically mentions that Krishan Chander and other socialist writers has a profound effect on the youngsters of that time (Zaidi 2023).

Though Pakistani society was more towards modernity till 60' s. At the same time religious influences were also active, especially in youth. While discussing the religious influences on a common educated middle class family one the interviewees Shahid Nadeem says, "I am talking about 60's Raiwind, that is now famous for other things but before that it was a centre of Tablighi Jamat, I also went to a *Chilla* in my 10th class for 40 days, took a complete round, in Choona Sad-e-Shah near Chakwal" (Nadeem 2024).

Prejudices in caste and ethnicities were also visible, based on the historic practices of discrimination in sub-continent. Zaidi while talking about his early days in Lahore and limited interaction with Punjabi people says "maybe because we were Urdu speaking, we were never very comfortable here, that is, the conversation was good, there were good relations, but they did not develop to the extent of friendship, especially after coming to Lahore" (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023).

5.7.2 Lahore a Symbol of Power and Rebellion

In the historical course of the country and even before Lahore has been considered as symbol of hegemonic authority, that can make and break idols. During seventy-seven years, dozens of top lined political leaders are constructed and destructed in Lahore. Political parties try best to kick off from Minar e Pakistan for their power show. Minar e Pakistan is the famous monument in Lahore that serves as a symbol of political movements. It is said that if you need to make government in centre you need to win Lahore. A recent example is of former prime minister Imran Khan who raised from Lahore and later got arrested from Lahore after long party riots against establishment.

At the same time, this city has nurtured resilient people to challenge elites and power structures. Poet and activist; Faiz Ahmed Faiz, column writer and playwright; Munnu Bhai, artist, academician and activist; Salima Hashmi and lawyer; Asma Jahangir are a few of those many names who have been standing against elitist systems. Haroon Khalid in his book *Imagining Lahore* highlights that despite of the pivotal role of the city in politics it has been home to the rebel poets like Habib Jalib, who was a vocal opponent of Pakistan's first military dictator; Ayub Khan (Khalid 2018). Till today most of the movements against power structures rise from this city.

5.7.3 Lost Glory

Lahore is situated 393 KM from Islamabad the capital city. As discussed earlier, this city has pivotal role country's politics. Major political setbacks and Islamization has resulted in loss of conducive environment of Lahore for art and culture activities. Especially TV drama, film and music has been affected the most. In the oral history interview with the researcher, Arshad Mehmood, one of the significant musicians of the country shares the reason of leaving Lahore in 80' s. "It is still difficult for a family member in Punjab to say that your voice is good, and you sing well, and you won that *naat* competition in school so go and learn music properly now" (Mehmood 2023). He further shares that Karachi is far more adaptive to music and other cultural activities.

5.7.4 Cultural Interactions

Lahore, as a cultural hub, offers a vibrant mix of cultural, literary, and academic activities, loaded with music, fun, art, dance, food, and heritage. Indeed, it influences its residents as well as the visitors and offers them some unique memories and impression. The cultural places of Lahore, like Pak Tea House and the meetings of Halqa-e Arbab-e-Zouq; a literary platform of progressive writers, at the Tea House have been mentioned by many writers. "India Tea House,"; a tea spot at the Mall Road Lahore, was established during British period, around 1939, which became a meeting point for learned dignitaries, poets, and writers of various ideologies. After partition, it was transformed into "Pak Tea House" and kept the literary tradition alive (Ali 2022).

In the oral history interview during this research, Shahnawaz Zaidi talks about the spaces other than Pak Tea House where ordinary people could interact with big names of poetry and music. This fact is further endorsed by Ustad Daman radio interview on YouTube. Zaidi mentions that the "*Akharas* (arenas) of Gama wrestlers, Jhara wrestlers, Rustam-e-Zaman, Bholo wrestlers, served as cultural places, for people from the streets and neighbourhoods. Famous singers like Tufail Niazi and Mehdi Hassan used to sit there and sing, and common people could interact with them in informal settings. The singers didn't charge any fee for it. Hazuri Bagh, situated next to the Lahore Fort was also a gathering space where singers used to come from the

nearby villages and small towns and participated in singing the famous folklore, *Heer Waris Shah*. Ordinary people used to gather there as active crowd, applauding singers. Back then Hazuri Bagh belonged to public not the elite. However now Hazuri Bagh has been closed by a barbed wire, confining people to come in" (Zaidi, Appendix A1 2024).

He recites his poem in Urdu:

"*Hazoori baagh mein kya mahfilen theen,*
kaisay kaisay log thay,
kaisa zamana tha,
yahan Ustaad Daman, Faiz, aur Barket Ali hotay thay,
Safdar Meer aur Jalib, Tufail aur Rahi aur Nasir,
bohat se ahal-e-zouq aur ahal-e-fun hotay,
magar Ustaad Daman sab pe bhari thay,
parhay likhay nahi thay woh magar baithak kitabon se bhari thi,
poori duniya ka adab un ki nazar mein tha,
woh Punjabi mein seedhi aur jhat ki baat karte thay ke,

'ke ki kari jana aye,
way ki kari jana aye,
kadi shimle,
ty kadi murree jana aye,
o ki kari jana aye'

He wrote this for Bhutto Saheb. And,

'Jaagan waaleyan,
Jaagan waaleyan rajj ke lutteya aye,
jaagan waaleya rajj ke lutteya aye,
soye tusi vi o soye assi vi an,
laali akhan di pe ae dasdi aye,
roye tusi vi o roye assi vi an.'

This is when some Indian delegation came here, "Roye tusi vi o, roye assi vi aan."

He continued, "*Huzoori baagh mein aksar bohat se heer ganay walay utay,*
shaam ko mehfil sajaate,
dhol bajate, qissay chaltay, sher urrtay thay,
wohi bara dari ab bhi wahein mojood hai,
pehle se barh kar saaf suthri hai,
magar aik baar kaanton ki laga di hai kisi ne is ki charon simt,
jis se ab Saqafat ki ghalazat is jagah se daur rehti hai,
faqat kavon ke naghmon se fiza maamoor rehti hai."

Translation:

"What literary meetings were held in Hazoori Baagh,
What people!
What times!
Here Ustaad Daman, Faiz, and Barkat Ali used to come,
Safdar, Meer, and Jalib, Tufail and Roohi and Nasir,
Many connoisseurs and artistes used to come,
But there was none like Ustaad Daman

An illiterate with a drawing room full of books,
Literature of the whole world was in his vision,
He used to talk in simple and plain Punjabi that,

Lo! What is it that you want to be done?
And what that have to be done?
Moving and fro
Sometime to Shimla
Or to Murree
What is it that you want to be done?

He wrote this for Bhutto Sahib.

The vigilantes,
The vigilantes robbed the govt.,

The vigilantes robbed the govt.,
You are sleeping as well as we are,
Redness of eyes informs us that,
Wept you as well as us',

"In Hazoori Bagh frequently many Heer singers used.
They used to set meetings in the evening,
Used to beat drums, stories read, verses were passed,
The same Bara Dari, even now still exists there,
Cleaner than before,
But a fence of thorns someone has put around in its
All four directions,

The result being that so-called "taboo" of culture has departed
This place,
Leaving behind caws of crows to fill the void."

5.8 History Retitled

In the chapter *Photographers of Hospital and Shrine of Qutb ud-Din Aibak*, Tarar shares a memory of his youth when his father took him to a narrow alley of Aibak Road where there was a chaos of rotten houses and smelly open drains. A shrine on slightly higher plinth, covered with torn off fabric was grave of emperor Qutb ud-Din Aibak. Many of the places, spaces, roads, chowks have been renamed. Such as Chowk Chakla of Lahori Gate has been renamed as Chowk Bukhari. Kanjri di Maseet (prostitute's mosque) is now called masjid Maai Moraan, who was courtesan and later wife of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh (Tarar 2021).

Lahore has seen a sequence of repulsive actions of re-titling its streets, buildings and institutes to change the course of history. Most of the buildings, streets and institutes named after a Hindu and Sikh personalities have been replaced with the Muslim names. This practice of altering names of famous places and buildings deform and distort history. Despite of the change of names till date most of the Lahoris still remember and refer Dharampura (Mustapha Abad), Mall Road (Shahrah e Qaid

eAzam), Sanat Nagar, Sham Nagar, Krishan Nagar, and Ram Ghar, by their old names. Last four localities have been re-categorized under Islam Pura. Interestingly, the places named after British officials, including Chamberlain Road, Nicholson Road, Beadon Road, Brandreth Road, Cooper Road, Lake Road, Hall Road, Davis Road, Macleod Road, Egerton Road, Lawrence Road, and Linton Road remain unchanged. Only roads and streets named after Hindu figures have been renamed (Mahmood 2024). A famous historian Fakir Saifuddin critiques this practice by saying that in this way the name of the city Lahore should also be altered, as this name is linked with Loh, son of the Hindu deity Ram.

6. Culture of Lahore; Re-Interpreted through Practice

Oral history challenges traditional rather established historical narratives by unveiling eccentric viewpoints. This process containing subtility, unknowingly generates parallel discourse that is otherwise missing in textbooks or established history. The researcher's knowledge about parallel world of oral history hasn't been accomplished until she has witnessed this magic through practice. Apparently, a simple journey of recording personal stories of people who have been living in Lahore more than fifty years, has turned out to be a complex phenomenon, and a challenging worldview.

This practice is contextualised on a layered backdrop of Lahore's cultural transformation. For that matter it has been important to understand the general and specific regional and global concepts about how culture keeps evolving, gets affected by and does affect, hegemonic and dominant narratives and practices and linking these concepts with Pakistan. These theoretical concepts have been discussed in earlier chapters. Ideas, debates and discussions about memory have added another intricacy to the already layered notion of culture and history.

6.1 Elements of Design and Oral History Documentation

Since the 1990s, oral history projects in India and Pakistan, including Oral History Project (OHP) and *"Ghair Sarkari Tareekh"* have sought to document non-mainstream histories and urban transformations, however gaps in the selection of subjects and form of the archives are still there. In both India and Pakistan, main subject of discussion in the oral history projects, has been partition of 1947. The basic audio-visual techniques have been used to archive oral history interviews. In case of oral history project by CAP, titled as *"Partition Stories of Pakistan 1947"*, a limited selection of video interviews is uploaded on the YouTube channel. Duration of the interviews range from two and half minutes to five minutes making this project partially, accessible for the public.

This practice thrives to add further layers to the archiving methods of oral history and re-explores the role of communication design, and audio-visual documentation at digital and metadata platforms through practice to engage more users nationally and

internationally. YouTube as social space has been explored all-over the globe by various organizations and individuals including UNESCO for archival of intangible heritage (Pietrobruno 2013).

Role of YouTube as an archival space is not very new and has been discussed in various multi-disciplinary approaches such as television history (Spigel 2010), media studies (Spurgeon and Burgess 2015), archive studies (Prelinger 2009), cinema studies (Lundemo 2009), cultural studies (Gehl 2009), media history (Kessler and Schäfer 2009) and library sciences (Gracy 2007).

6.1.1 Stories, the Storytellers and the Visitors

In the oral history interviews of Irfan Khoosat, Hafeez Tahir, Shahid Nadeem, Arshad Mehmood and Shahnawaz Zaidi by the researcher, many heartwarming idiosyncrasies have been shared by the interviewees from their young age that were later transformed into their lifelong ideologies. It is also pertinent to mention that the prototype (couple of minutes from first interview; Irfan Khoosat), has received an overwhelming response when presented in a closed gathering of art critics.



Figure 14
A shot from Episode 3 of Light House
A series of Educational Interviews for Aleif TV
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRlHHldzF-4&t=559s

An educational Television Network has offered the collaboration in the project. It also asked to provide similar kind of program for their Network; Lighthouse; a kind of educational oral history. The researcher helped the Television to develop and design this program, and a series of six interviews were conducted with the top educators from the most historic and topmost public sector universities of Lahore.

6.1.2 Photography and Ideological Constructs

The researcher's practice interests include communication design and documentary photography. Through this doctoral research, her areas of interest have entered the extended dimension of archiving, documentation and cultural studies. This practice-based research endeavours to explore extensions of documentary photography, documentary film, and communication design and to redefine their distinct role in the documentation and manifestation of history.

Individual and collective representational codes are often misread and misinterpreted when seen through media propagation. Photography is being used to develop ideological constructs such as 'otherness' since colonial times. Edward Said writes about the unequal relationship of western photographer with women subjects in colonial societies, where dominant and influential photographer represented the weak and poor subject. "She never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, her presence or history. He spoke for her and represented. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was typically oriental" (Said 2014). However, the real like nature of photography can challenge the concepts like 'otherness' in colonial and post-colonial times and so is today. For instance, in the words of Liz Wells, "In bourgeois portraiture, it is specially the arrangement of heads, shoulders and hands- 'as if those parts of our body were our "truth" that act to furnish evidence of the individual as though 'the world may be civilized by the domestication of the hand by the head (WELLS 2004). Socio-cultural representation of individuals, classes and societies has been significant subject of portraiture, or it can be said that portraiture has been hand in hand with politics in building spectacles in modern societies.

6.1.3 Graphic Design in the Service of Oral History Practice

The elements of graphic design have always been an integral part in developing the cinematic language, and often used to determine the expression and style of a specific audio-visual content, documentary or fiction. Indeed, graphic language is operative from the opening titles to the end credits; from verbal, pictorial and schematic decisions to the animated content; and from printed or hand drawn props, graphs, figures, and signs to the moving logos. These elements, in cooperation with the recorded and edited footage, form the graphic identity of any audio-visual content, which helps in conveying the message, improve the audience engagement and add authenticity to the content. Indeed, the elements and principles of design are completely applicable to the visual part of content. Christian Metz identifies these graphic elements as "written materials" or "matter of expression": as according to him the form of film is based on five elements: moving photographic image, dialogue, noise (sound effects), music, and written materials, which create the cinematic language (Tröhler and Kirsten 2018). The "matter of expression" is further elaborated as graphic configurations, which are designed by design specialists with experience in graphic design, digital and motion graphics, UI/UX, 3D modelling (Aragão 2006; Song 2011; Tude 2021).

6.2 Thematic Codes; Indicators of Cultural Transformation

This research applies the thematic analysis (TA) on the data derived from semi-structured oral history interviews. Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke elaborate the potential of TA in their essay *Thematic Analysis*, according to them "Numerous patterns could be identified across any data set—the purpose of analysis is to identify those relevant to answering *a particular* research question" (Braun and Clarke 2023). They further explain that this flexible process is not only about finding out commonalities or common points but to dig down further and decipher intricate layers and meaning across the entire data set. They suggest examining phenomenon, laying underneath or between the lines, in depth. Whilst interrogating semantic and latent meanings hiding behind the conversation leading to the ideas that are not spoken.

Frank De Caro also supports the idea by Braun and Clarke by calling stories as striking encapsulations of ideas and experiences and thematic points. He also talks

about investigating ideas and attitudes behind the apparent narration (Caro 2012). He refers those personal stories and anecdotes, as acumens of larger narrative of personal and collective history. Thematic analysis helps in deconstruction of themes and reconstruction of larger narratives.

The researcher has followed the process of "reflexive thematic analysis, including data familiarization, coding, theme generation, review and refinement, and writing" to develop codes based on relevant points of discussion in the oral history interviews (Braun and Clarke 2023). These codes are subtle echoes from the personal memories, and serve as reflections of the culture, ideologies, narratives and the factors that shape these phenomena. For instance, *Walled City Lahore* and experience of living there and its transformation in modern days has been discussed in each interview, and this derives the first theme: *Topophilia of Androon Lahore.*

Language is another theme, as local languages are compromised over the National language to fulfil the desire to create separate identity of the newly formed country. Thus, a whole movement of regional languages and their theatrical traditions have been discussed in the interviews. Third theme; *Bengal* (former part of Pakistan) has not been directly discussed in any of the talks; however, 1971 emerges as a key year in city's transformation, and a gap is identified in most of the cultural elements; cinema, theatre and music. Indeed, the power politics attached to the separation of Bengal has an impact on the cultural history of the city as well as of the country. *Forgotten Bengal* has an influence on the next two themes: *Pockets of Cultural Interactions,* and *Culture and Religion.* The discussion of culture as opposed to something different from the religion, was never a point of discussion before the 1970s. However, religion gained power in the later regimes. The next two themes reveal the most unexpected insights that enrich the research beyond initial expectations: *Radio and other Cultural Elements* and the *Academic Aura of Lahore*.

Following are the thematic codes designed by the researcher derived from the Oral History Data:

1. *Topophilia of Androon Lahore*
2. *Language; A Multilayered Impact on a Heterogeneous Society*
3. *Forgotten Bengal: Collective Amnesia*
4. *Pockets of Cultural Interactions*
5. *Culture and Religion*
6. *Radio; A Major Cultural Tool*
7. *Academic Aura of Lahore*

On top of these seven thematic codes, eighth one is also added as a code of "postmemory" and that is:

1. *Stories of Partition:* "Postmemory", The link of the Interviewee with the sufferings of the Previous Generation
   Or
2. *Migration of bread-earners from the homeland*: A phenomenon of the 1960s and 1970s as the father of the family had to move to other countries for their jobs. Later, in 1990s onwards this phenomenon is further triggered, but now the younger generation is moving abroad for career opportunities.

6.2.1 Topophilia of Androon Lahore

Topophilia is a multilayered fabric of emotions, memories, and meanings associated with a place that evokes abysmal love or connection to a specific geographical location. This sense of belonging is often constructed upon personal and historical experiences, cultural interactions and traditions with that specific space or place (Tuan 1990). Most of the interviewees of this research have spent their entire lives in Lahore and developed topophilia of this city. They have been living in old parts of Lahore till 1970; and then have moved to multiple parts of Lahore but their deep connection with the city and its life grows further. All of them with all their educational and professional careers, passions, practices, political-cultural activism and artistic endeavours have been driven by this ever-transforming city.

Shahnawaz Zaidi has lived in Islamia Park and had strong connection with Burns Road, Neela Gumbad, where the family of Nayyar Ali Dada was also residing. Shahid Nadeem has been resident of Misri Shah till his early career. "Misri Shah, the feeling

of Androon within us, the streets, the roads, the people, all kinds of characters, neighbours' interaction, the life in a neighbourhood, where you can have conversation from a balcony. The first ever mingling I ever had was at the age of 12, 13, that was from my balcony to across the other street" (Nadeem 2024). Nadeem's love for Lahore is so deep that it can be seen through his entire career and personal life. He shared his personal photographs with researcher and a significant part those photographs are captured in Androon Lahore in various stages of his life.

Hafeez Tahir talks about his childhood experiences while living in Androon Lahore. His conversation reveals the closely knit society of the 1960's Androon Lahore and the interest level of common people in art and culture including classical music, street theatre and puppetry. He recalls some interesting daily interactions, in a neighbourhood of middle and lower middle class when he used to hear "A singer singing a Ghazal probably Akhtari Begum, and he used to chase the voice through the streets, "I would reach the last house, a gramophone record would be playing. It must have been 78 rpm and nearby a parrot's cage would be hanging and the parrot would be listening to the same music silently that I used to go there to listen" (Tahir 2023).

It's important to mention that Androon Lahore has been the origin of many musical Gharanas including Patiala and Punjab Gharana. Gharana is the term for family practicing music for generations.

6.2.2 Language; A Multilayered Impact on a Heterogeneous Society

Pakistan is a diverse, heterogeneous postcolonial society based on variety of traditions, cultural ethnicities, languages, customs, social divisions, class systems, shrine culture (*Makhdooms*), tribal systems, caste system and family structures (*Biradri-ism)*. This heterogeneity also has historic dimensions, considering the deep connections of the Pakistani regional class and caste system rooted into Hinduism, Buddhism, Sufism. Colonial class structures added a layer to the already complex fabric. Post partition Pakistan has been an experimental lab for American, Iranian and Arab influences.

Language is a dense layer; often led or controlled by ideology, that adds to the complex fabrication of any society. "Ideology intervenes to stop language, to stop

culture producing new meanings, and that, of course, is the opening through which interest operates. Why do you want to stop the slide of meaning? You want to halt it because you want to do something, you want to control society in some way" (Hall 1997). The debate about opting Urdu as State language of Pakistan emerged right after the independence in 1947. It generated conflicts throughout the country at different stages and had devasting effects on socio-political and demographic shape of the country. Neglecting Bengali language that was spoken by 54% of East Pakistanis and enforcement of Urdu with only 7% speakers became the basis of separation of Dhaka in 1971 (Jabeen, Ali Chandio, and Qasim 2010). This opened the doors for politics of extremism based on language and ethnic difference in Karachi 1980's onwards and struggle of Pashtuns in Baluchistan are major examples. Interviewees during this thesis referred to multiple aspects of language through their memories.

Upon asking if he and his family developed a strong relationship with the Lahoris (a Punjabi city) after moving to Lahore as an Urdu speaking family, Shahnawaz Zaidi shared, "No, maybe because we were Urdu speaking, we were never very comfortable here, that is, the conversation was good, there were good relations, but they did not develop to the extent of friendship, especially after coming to Lahore" (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023).

6.2.2.1 Language: Growth of Pakistani Music

The oral history interview with a veteran musician Arshad Mehmood focused on a pertinent but ironically frequently ignored issue i.e. impact of Urdu as official language on different forms of music.

According to Arshad, Pakistani music grew immensely after Urdu was declared as official language. He explains the process as "Because our national language was converted to Urdu, so more emphasis was laid on Urdu. For example, Hindi music formats such as *(bandish)* and classical music with too many Hindi words, or bhajans, which were classical, were discouraged a little. As a result, many classical singers who were well versed in Urdu language and Ghazal forms were preferred, occupying more airtime on radios with Urdu Ghazals. Ghazal emerged as dominating genre along with other forms of classical and light music. When talking about Ghazals, one cannot ignore the front runners of that period including Mehdi Hassan, Ghulam Ali,

Farida Khanum and Iqbal Bano. In the past Begum Akhtar and Barkat Ali Khan also sang Ghazals even though they were originally classical singers" (Mehmood 2023).

6.2.2.2 Language and Postcoloniality

Apart from Urdu Pakistani society being a post colony hasn't come out of influence of British culture in terms of language, dress and food. Department of Fine Arts in Punjab University was founded by Anna Molka Ahmed a British Pakistani painter who moved to Pakistan in 1940 from England. She headed the department till 1978 and Shahnawaz joined first batch of graphic design in 1960's. Shahnawaz Zaidi in his oral history interview recalls his university days and his first encounter with English language through Anna Molka Ahmed in a very light manner. He talks about interesting interactions of students with no background of English with Anna Molka Ahmed who couldn't speak any language other than English. In his words "So those poor people even if they wanted to give an answer, but for one thing, that she was a lady and understood only English, they could not speak in any other language, so they were left with nothing to say. So, Mrs. Ahmed used to rule at that time in a true sense. Most of our time after being admitted to Art College was just spent in these activities, in the activities of Art, with Mrs. Ahmed and classmates" (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023).

Dominance of English language is deeply engrained in the national metabolism of Pakistan. In the oral history interview, Arshad Mehmood talks about his experience of getting proficient in English. "We used to get the best newspapers, Pakistan Times or whatever the teachers knew that where good writers belonged, like Dawn Etc. We should read their editorial, where the English is very correct and expressive, and how to express through their articles. Sometimes there are great but strange and sensitive subjects, which are to be addressed but with much care. As an outcome people may understand the point, and no one gets offended" (Mehmood 2023).

6.2.2.3 Language and Expression

Hafeez Tahir in his interview talks about loss of expression when any content gets translated from one language to another. He says "words have value and languages have their own cultural connotations that can't be translated into other languages For example, there is this very famous song

Jey tu holi aji lenda ay mera naan, mai than mar jani aan'
Can anyone in this world translate
'*mai than mar jani aan'*
Me and legend *Tariq Azeez* Sahib when I used to be on Manzil e aam we tried together and even he laughed *'when I take your hand softly, I die at once'*
Hahahaha

He later expresses "then in our final's exam in English I got 92 out of 100, Rehman Sahib Used to be our English teacher, he called me, I thought something had happened, whenever any teacher would call, we would think 'this is it, some problem has happened'.

It was a picture that's not hanged here so like that the bonds and Connections build with these people contributed in my life a lot then there is NESPAK and their magazine, yes you can call it a magazine, I became the assistant editor then I started writing in English, I would write then Farooq Sahib would edit and final it And then it would get printed very few people know this that Farooq Zameer Sahib was fluent in English, he had done Master in geography as much as I remember but his English was equal to someone with an MA English's degree" (Tahir 2023).

6.2.3 Forgotten Bengal: Collective Amnesia

Pakistan has seen one of the most devastating incidents that has reshaped political, cultural and social dynamics of the country. That incident is Bangladesh (East Pakistan) separation from West Pakistan in 1971. Surprisingly, none of the seven interviewees talked about it. They don't mention any Bengali friend or interaction. They talk about various British contributors, Ayub Khan, Bhutto and Zia ul Haq however what they don't talk about is Mujeeb u Rehman or Bengali revolution. It indicates that Lahore and Bengal were apart from each other politically, socially and culturally. Or they have been spending their lives within given narratives under hegemonic influences and dominant narratives. The interviewees of this research are a few of the finest individuals from the fields of culture and their active contribution in these fields are commendable. However ruling elite has been successfully implementing dominant ideologies upon the cream of the society and the masses. Where Bengalis were portrayed as *'Chaptey'*, inferior, short and burden on the superior race of West Pakistan. Which means that the colonial mindset have been prevailing by the ruling elite first with the people of Bengal and then with the proletarians of Pakistan.

The researcher raised this query to Shahnawaz Zaidi on a telephonic conversation. Zaidi shares that presence of Bengalis in Lahore as common people was not visible. They might be in civil services or on any other governments positions, but he never had any interaction with them. He further shares an interesting event when he wanted to translate Nobel Prize winning Bengali writer, Rabindranath Tagore' book *Geetanjali* and he wanted an original Bengali copy of it. For this he visited biggest libraries in Lahore including Punjab Public Library and University of the Punjab Library, but he couldn't get hold of one. Upon asking that why they haven't had it, librarian sarcastically replied that we never had any of the Bengali books (Zaidi, Appendix A1 2024).

In a telephonic conversation, the researcher inquired Shahid Nadeem, about no trace of interaction with Bengali people in his life story, discussed in oral history interview. Nadeem endorsed the fact that he, being Kashmiri has been living in Lahore since 1960's, never had any interaction with Bengali people. He said that "we only knew

about Bengal and Bengali people through news channels where they were represented as burden on the West Pakistan. There was no reflection of Bengalis in any common spheres of life including educational institutes and offices" (Nadeem 2024).

Quaid e Azam declared Urdu as national language for both East-Pakistan and West-Pakistan, which appears to be a point of conflict started. Bengalis were compelled to study Urdu in their educational institutes. They were bound to accept Urdu as superior language, leaving their own language and culture as 'inferior'. Along with economic exploitation of Bangladesh, there were systematic attempts to undermine Bengali native culture. Bengalis had to face the subordination of West Pakistani elite after being long ruled by Hindus, Mughals and British. "The struggle for economic emancipation became a part of the general struggle for the preservation of cultural heritage" (Ahmed, Ahmad, and Ahmad 1973).

6.2.4 Pockets of Cultural Interactions

The oral history interviews during this research unveiled unheard aspects about cultural interaction spaces in Lahore. Details about the cultural pockets given by Shahnawaz Zaidi have already been discussed in 5.7.4, Cultural Interactions. Where arenas of great Lahori wrestlers served as cultural spaces for common people from the streets and neighbourhoods to gather and interact with famous singers like Tufail Sahib, Tufail Niazi, and even Mehdi Hasan. Also, Hazuri Bagh before it turned into confined place used to be a platform for commoners from Lahore and elsewhere to pay homage to Heer Waris Shah and other musical forms. In Zaidi's words "people, ordinary people used to gather there, and they would applaud in local mannerism. It was not the type of place that was kind of elitist. It was a very public place!" (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023).

Shahid Nadeem in his oral history interview credits to his teenage walks in the neighbourhood for interaction and inspiration for his playwritings that he wrote much later. On his daily route from Misri Shah to Muslim Model School on foot or by any means of transportation he got chance to observe many people who later transformed into characters in his plays. In his words, "in my school time till matric, all these characters got so engraved on my brain that when I later started writing, these characters started coming out. My first play *Mara Hoa Kutta* all those characters

came out, a *naai* (hairdresser) a *halwai* (sweat maker), a *dukaandar* (shopkeeper), a *molvi Sahib* (religious preacher). Their characteristics that I had in my memory came as very genuine ones although I had never planned to observe them but because of daily routine, the characters stayed with me. When I wrote *Janjal Pura* for TV, and those characters appeared there very prominently as well. Later, serials including *Khushal Pura*, *Bala King* and *Lo Phir Basant Ayi*; a play about Basant festival featured all these characters and surroundings of Androon city. In all these works, Androon's life and vibrance is depicted, filled with lower middle-class characters is regarding that period (Nadeem 2024).

Arshad Mehmood in his oral history interview refers to multiple places of cultural interaction in Lahore including Radio Lahore and house of Mr. Shoaib Hashmi. He remembers meeting many great names including Ustad Amanat Ali Khan and Shoaib Hashmi at informal spaces. Mehmood remembers, "lots of pockets in Lahore, for example, a radio canteen where we used to go very regularly, then there was television, used to meet in the rehearsal rooms. Also used to visit a canteen there and meet while sitting" (Mehmood 2023).

6.2.4.1 Cultural Activity as Power Show

In our entire childhood till teenage till its end, Horse and Cattle Show in Lahore used to be conceived as one of the biggest cultural representations in region. This show used to be held annually in fortress stadium Lahore Cantt till 2015. Shahid Nadeem tells a way different perspective about this massive display that used to pull huge crowds. Nadeem refers to Horse and Cattle Show as Power Show of General Ayub Khan. He quotes an incident of his university times in 1968 when he started engaging in political activism. In 1968 Horse and Cattle show was organized to "celebrate, his 10 years old rule, in the fortress stadium. It was for an entire week with different activities and floats, music etc. Each time one department had to be sent from Punjab University. When our department's turn came, what we did or I did was we wrote a parody, there was a famous song at a time

Sau bar janam lain gay,
Sau bar fana hon gay
Lekin janay jahan hum tum na juda hon gay

We will reborn hundred times
We will be destructed hundred times
But, my beloved! We will not be separated!

based on its rhythm I wrote
das saal udasi kay
kis tarah guzaray hai
kuch pouch na aye hamdam
ka jeetay ha ya haray ha
bekar laho ham tum Sarhad pai ganwa aye
referencing to the 1965 declaration
bekar laho ham tum Sarhad pai ganwa aye,
Awam na jeetay, hukam gawa aye
Tareekh ya kehti ha ka jung jeet kay haray hain
Is mulk ma ab tak sahghal or adam kay waray hain, neyaray hain'

How we grief of ten years
Don't ask my dear!
If we won or lost it
Our blood was shed to feed the egos on border
referencing to the 1965 declaration
People didn't win, leaders lost us
History reveals, we have lost the winning battles

A political comment of all sorts, very strongly condemning Ayub khan. So they seated us in brigadiers enclosure, their families were there, all of them in their uniforms, we were a group of around 20 students and we all of a sudden started singing, our voices started echoing in the whole of area, we had practical and as I had said at some place in time that are brigadiers are very bright and fair and their more fair and well dressed, despite that the redness from embarrassment could be felt, I started doing such acts which resulted in going to a protest and going to jail, and facing jail at a young age" (Nadeem 2024).

6.2.5 Culture and Religion

Though the wave of Islamization in Zia's period is credited with the cause of extremist approaches in the society, yet the roots of religious integration in mainstream politics are traced far beyond it. However, it is a well-known fact that religious extremism and attacks on the culture of Pakistani society have seen the rise in Zia's regime. Pervez Hoodbhoy has written extensively about the causes and impact of religious extremism on once-vibrant Pakistani culture. In his article *Saudizing Pakistan: How Pakistan is changing and what this means for South Asia and the world* he refers to the rapid pace of Saudization in Pakistan that even till early 2000's "The "abaya", a long robe worn in Saudi Arabia, was an unknown word in Urdu. Today, some shops in Islamabad specialize in abayas" (Hoodbhoy 2017). Its researcher's own experience as student and now an academician in public sector universities that till 2000's Abaya was rare to find in comparison to today when majority of females even in female universities are found in Abaya with covered faces. Hoodbhoy further elaborates that during and after Afghan Jihad during Zia ul Haq period Pakistan has seen mushroom growth of Madrassas across Pakistan and till 2017 this number reached to 13,000 and increasing. The hegemonic incorporation of religion by the elites and power structures has brought devastating impact of Pakistani culture.

6.2.5.1 Culture Under Threat; Aftermath of Zia Regime

Reflection of above discussion in reference to press and theatre is traced in Shahid Nadeem's oral history interview. Nadeem recalls the struggle as, "when Ajoka started it was an alternate theatre during Zia ul Haq's period. In that time all the halls were closed, and you could not perform anywhere you could not even express yourself anywhere. He remembers his young fellows who were tortured by the government officials for only making V symbol. That was a very hard time when there was a complete ban on press. A worst example of pre censorship when a copy would get ready an army man would come and if they did not like the news it would be removed, or blank columns would be printed instead. When, Ajoka started it was a

hard time, our plays had a force about democracy and human rights and gender issues, which would get them angry" (Nadeem 2024).

He further talks about the Ajoka's audience that included lawyers, political activists, journalists and others. Those were those who did not have any other platform for expression. "We would get all kind of coverage, but we could not publicize properly, from word-of-mouth telephones, person to person contact, we got the lawn of Goethe institute which was not in much use back then. We slowly took over that is where we would do our rehearsals and perform" (Nadeem 2024).

6.2.5.2 Attack on Cinema and other Art Forms

Cinema has been one of most important entertainment means in the entire Indo-Pak region since its inception. Pakistan and India have produced immortal films, songs, directors, writers, singers and actors. These films, actors and songs have shared cross boarder popularity. Memory of any individual in these countries whether coming from any background, religious or modest or modern is not free from the experiences about watching films till the most unfortunates decline of cinema in Pakistan. In the oral history interview Hafeez Tahir mentions the memorable experience of watching films on the *Jumma* (Friday) as the films in Indo-Pak release on Fridays. He shares the ownership of fans with the celebrities and their passion to watch movies' 'first show'. "So, what we would do was, our uncle was a very religious man, and he also preached at mosque, he would tell us 'come and offer jummah' Films would also be released on jummah, we were four cousins Aram, Anwar, Jameel and Saleem we would go with him and after a few *witars* we would come out! Hahaha!" (Tahir 2023).

Shahnawaz Zaidi also recalls watching a lot of films in his father's cinema in Mandi Bahauddin and how he is very "filmy". He further elaborates the term filmy, the people who live in imagination, very romantic, and how films influenced him and his siblings. In his words filmy is "who do not have a particularly deep connection with materialistic life, we all turned out to be like that" (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023). These memories reflect the softness of a society and incitement towards art and cultural activities.

Then the time came when Zia ul Haq's Islamisation created a cultural void by making society embarrassed of their secular thinking, moderate lifestyle and cultural practices through various gross acts. Cinema due to its potential to transform narratives and its massive impact on audiences came on the hitlist and its rapid decline started. It reflects the ruler's attempt to control cinema in the name of religion, security and morality (Gazdar 1997).

The oral history interview of one of the most important state painters Saeed Akhter, reflects the shift from Bhutto to Zia ul Haq. Akhter touches the difference in Bhutto and Zia era, with a slight sentence about Bhutto's time as "there was nothing special in me, it was the era in which I was able to work freely" (Akhter 2023). Then he talks about Zia ul Haq's reign in which artists were bound to do calligraphy only. He refers calligraphy as nothing creative but a copy. This subtle dialogue has deeper underlying connotations. Artists were left with no choice but to opt calligraphy as an art practice. Even Sadequain with larger-than-life persona with his wide spectrum of subjects, could not be contained in General Zia ul Haq's forced and rigid Islamization project (Dadi 2009).

6.2.5.3 Activities, Activism and Politics

This society has seen a clear shift in teenage activities. The interactions and activities have converted from collective to individual and from outdoors to indoors. Shahnawaz Zaidi tells about his teenage activities that how he used to read a lot of books, and then some of his friends used to live in the hostel of Civil Lines College, and it's his daily routine to go straight to the hostel, instead of classes, and there they used to play board games or playing cards or table tennis, till evenings. Shahid Nadeem shares about his very first friendships, where they used to play street games, climbing trees, and enjoying water at the canal. Hafeez Tahir talks about watching circus, doing street theatre and going to cinema. Arshad Mehmood shares about experimenting with all musical instruments available in the school. It's important to mention that the facilities of theatre and music were available in government schools in 1960s (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023) (Nadeem 2024) (Tahir 2023) (Mehmood 2023). None of them mentions offering prayers or practicing *roza* (fasting) as something important or essential, as opposed to today's youth.

“So, when we would jump out from the wall of the school to college, in that time my Tablighi influence was coming off, but I had grown a beard, and I had not gotten rid of it yet. Even in that time people with beard were few unlike today its almost a part of it whether it’s on media or in real life, so in college I stood for election, in election against me was our friend Saleem Nisar who later on became a General Manager of PIA and on other positions , I was winning on a very clear margin, my debating experience or my general interaction, all of a sudden a few weeks before elections a rumour spread through the whole student community, that I was a Mirzayi (Mirzayi is considered to be a non-Muslim sect and Mirzayi people once reveal their identity, face extreme unacceptance from the society), my beard was like it was something I could neither accept nor deny but because my beard was only on the central part, in that time Ahmadi (Mirzayi) community had this style, they had a French cut beard, this was my first interaction that of religious exploitation, so I lost the election by a very small margin” (Nadeem 2024). This apparently soft memory indicates towards a trend of religious extremism present in 1960s even in elite colleges of Lahore.

6.2.5.4 Moving Towards Extremism

Shahid Nadeem recalls one of his friends from Government College as, a friend of mine named; Yusuf, was in Pakistan Army, having a pretty face with an earring in his left ear, felt like a superhero. Later, he left the army, during the times of general Zia, and became a religious scholar. He lifted himself to the level of a *Pir* (saint), and so many individuals started visiting him for the blessings. I was amazed by his genius and success and inspired with his personality, and fan following. However, he got accused of blasphemy. It was probably a fight of property where Yousaf had a piece of land with the other man who was in a media group. Yusuf taped some message and give it to the news where he mentioned that “I had seen prophet in my dreams” and he is seeking guidance from these dreams. His statement of seeing the Prophet in his dreams was manipulated as blasphemy. Even though many people may claim something similar, but somehow that case had become an issue. For instance, our ex-prime minister has had such claims, Tahir ul Qadri Sahib, and one of our former first ladies had given similar kind of statements; however, in the case of Yusuf, it became such a scandal that he is now known as, you might have heard of him: “Yousaf Kazzab”. They put him in jail, and there he was killed by some unknown individual.

That was the extend of the propagandas against him, so I knew him as Yousaf, that tender and gentle, insecure maybe somebody not strong enough to handle himself in society. Yusuf took advice from me in many situations, I got involved in his wedding, I was a witness, his parents regarded me a lot and he would be the last person to be involved in a scandal like this, but this is what happened" (Nadeem 2024).

6.2.5.5 Influence of Marxism

Shahnawaz Zaidi remembers the socialist literature available in in *Aana* libraries in Mandi Bahauddin and Lahore. He mentions Krishan Chander, Manto, Ismat Chughtai, whose writings were available to all and how it impacted on him "It had a very profound effect, at least on my personality to a great extent, especially of people like Krishan Chander, and these people who were basically socialist. They had a great impact on us, especially on me" (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023).

Shahid Nadim mentions about his interaction with progressive individuals in Punjab University that shaped his ideology. Despite of his family's willingness to join medicine he joined BA psychology and literature in Punjab University. There writing and debating became a part of his interest. Applied psychology department was an interesting department with 80 percent girls mixed from different class backgrounds. Punjab University New Campus was bit free from the pressure of society in Androon or even Government College, Islamia College and in such areas. Here he encountered the progressive and Marxists individuals including Dr. Aziz ul Haq and Prof. Aziz u Din along with them Prof. Khalid Mehmood, who later went into journalism, and became The Nation's editor. He also recalls, Dr. Anees Aslam and Simi Aslam, they were one year senior than Nadeem (Nadeem 2024).

6.2.6 Radio; A Major Cultural Tool

Radio has played a significant role in early decades in shaping cultural identity of Pakistani society. Before inception of Pakistan Television in 1964, Radio Pakistan was the only medium of entertainment and information apart from newspapers. Majority of mainstream and ghazal classical singers, TV and film actors were produced by Radio Pakistan. Multiple interviewees during this research have talked about radio and memories associated with it. Shahid Nadeem and Shahnawaz Zaidi

shared a sound from their childhood memories, and that is of cricket commentary on the radio. “Cricket commentary was running somewhere, and latest score is displayed on a board written with chalk. The groups of people listening to commentary through transistor” (Nadeem 2024) (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023).

Irfan Khoosat has a long association with Radio Lahore from the times of his father since 1950s. In his interview he mentions many great names from radio, radio shows and public association with radio and its programs. In his words “at those times, the drama was listened in such a way that no drama is even seen today. In those times, Mirza Adeeb, Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi, and many other writers like Syed Abid Ali Abid Sahib. I have seen all those figures with my eyes and recognized their stature. Then, in dramas, artists Sabira Sultana, Hamid Raza, Madam Mohini, Kanwar Naseer (at a very young age), Khalid Abbas Dar who was then studying in Government College, Dr. Anwar Sajjad, Nazir Hussaini, Ashfaq Ahmed, and Bano Qudsia were the founding pillars, among others, whose writing played major roles in dramas in those days. If in a drama we say that today is Tuesday, people used to write us complaining letters saying that on Thursday, how can you say that it was Tuesday? This was the intensity of letters saying to people” (Khoosat 2021).

Arshad Mehmmood is one of the leading music directors of the country. He also started his career from radio. Mehmood shares about radio, its people and radio’s role in nourishing Pakistani music. In his words “let me tell you that the radio was a great source for us, and that was how you connected with the government, and keeping this aspect in view the people of that time used to include those things in their programs that they could guide people and give them information. The problem that occurred in 1947 was that the villages that were along the Indian border did not have this idea that we are in India or in Pakistan, so people did not know whether the neighbouring village was in India or in Pakistan. So that was a program in which Ahmed Basheer Sahib was there and Chiragh Hassan Hasrat was the program manager at that time, this was all before my birth. I have heard this thing, so I am telling you because it is very important. At that time Ahmad Basheer Sahib, Noon Meem Rashid and such great writers used to write programs like “Hamara Pakistan”, and this is how the information was given in it, so the radio was a great source of communication and for any information that needed to be conveyed to the people. And radio, because our

national language was converted to Urdu, so more emphasis was given on Urdu. For example, such music formats *(bandish)* and classical music, which has too many Hindi words, or things in the form of *bhajans*, which were classical, were discouraged a little. The result was that as many classical singers as there were or to those who were given this job because they were very clear in the language of Urdu languages, they all sang a lot of ghazals and the practice of singing a lot of ghazals on the radio became a new trend, that is, one was classical music and then, in some light things, ghazals were also sung, but what you call modest *(burdbar)* and a regular mood the way ghazals were sang in Pakistan, and in which four people are very much considered as the front runners. Amongst those Mehdi Hasan, Ghulam Ali, Farida Khanum and Iqbal Bano, and before them, Begum Akhtar also used to sing and then Barkat Ali Khan as well who were foundationally classical singers" (Mehmood 2023).

6.2.7 Academic Aura of Lahore

Almost all the interviewees mention a bunch of prominent higher education institutes in Lahore of 60' s. These institutes, including Government College, Punjab University, NCA and Islamia College Civil Lines have been playing a significant cultural, social and political role in shaping city's metabolism since their inception. Salima Hashmi in her interview discusses an important factor about educational scene of Lahore then and now. In her words "Academic life was so important in the city back then. It was much stronger than it is now. All these places were in one area on the map of Lahore" (Hashmi 2023). Students were aware, active and connected despite of all the rivalry due to class system.

In Shahid Nadeem's words "especially with Islamia Civil College, it was a big conflict and rivalry. They were a little more traditional with an Islamic touch, our Govt. College was a more liberal, and there was a class difference as well. It had more middle and upper class, whereas they had more middle and lower class. So, when there would be a match or debate, we would shout "Qurbani Dian Khaalan Haye Haye". Because they ran on charity, and they would shout "Surkhi Powder Haye Haye". Because we only had boys so they would say what kind of boys are you who has Surkhi Powder" (Nadeem 2024).

Largest of all institutes was Punjab University that was struck by Jamat e Islami (Islami Jamiat e Talba) after 1975 and entire academic scene of Lahore transformed forever. Shahnawaz Zaidi shares that modern elite used to get admission in Fine Arts Department, Punjab University. Girls from Karachi and elsewhere used to come to the very institute due to its modern image and degree offering. In his words “there were only two art institutes NCA and Fine Arts Department at the University of the Punjab. University was offering degree programme, which were after intermediate, so most of the students preferred University. However, the intervention of political groups, particularly Islami Jamiat, around 1975, transformed the status of the University” (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023).

7. Research Practice; Oral History as an Expansion of Memory Lane

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/2/home

(Above is the link to the folder at Google Drive with all eight oral history interviews practice prototypes.)

This chapter discusses the practice part of the thesis and identifies the significance the selected parts of the eight interviewes. All of these parts are uneditted continous segments, and no cutting is involved as far as the content is concerned. The pauses and breaks are remained intacted, and all the effects and graphics are added on seprate layers.

The research practice, as described in methodology chapter, can be understood by comprehending the progression of personal practices of the researcher. It began with the series of portraits; "A Normal Pakistani", originating from the post-9/11 landscape, to challenge Western notions of "otherness" tagged with Muslim men, by identifying diverse typologies of Pakistani males. Capatalizing on "A Normal Pakistani"**,** the researcher launched another experimental study; "Oppositely Parallels; Squeezing Spaces for Female", rooted into the cultural landscape from a female perspective, specifically examining the restricted spaces available to women within Pakistan's patriarchal and Islamized society. Subsequently, a series based on "Female Journalists in Challenging Conditions" has been part of UNESCO report *Defending Creative Voices* (Soraide 2023).

The pracice evolved into another series; "The Black Box: Building the Monumental Memory Lane," marked a shift towards exploring memory and displacement through tangible belongings, to illustrate the profound impact of memory on the identity building of any individual. This experimentation, incorporating new media, performance, animation, photography, and projection techniques, revealed the intricate interplay of objectivity and subjectivity in remembering, and provides a solid base for the practice part of Oral History. The resonance of these practices ultimately propelled the research towards the final form of Oral History Interviews in defining the collective memory.

Semi-structured interviews are kept flexible with duration, so that they allow the freedom to gather in-depth information (Yin 2012; 2009; Dicicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006). Open-ended, semi-structured oral history interviews with the senior practitioners and contributors in art and culture, provide, firstly, a rich qualitative data to recognize the critical role of personal narratives in shaping collective memory, cultural identity, and historical understanding within broader community contexts.

Secondly, they reveal some of the most unexpected insights that enrich the research beyond initial expectations. Thirdly, the analysis of these interviews has helped to develop thematic codes. The researcher has followed the process of reflexive thematic analysis, to develop codes based on relevant points of discussion in these interviews (Braun and Clarke 2023). Apparently, these personal memories, when converted into codes, provide a deep understanding of the larger set of cultural and ideological factors. Finally, portions of these interviews, based on unexpected insights alinged to the thematic codes, are selected and presented as the main body of the practice.

An interviewee mentions a name during his interview and that has helped to identify the next interviewee, for instance, Shahnawaz Zaidi, the fisrt interviewee, through his link with the television and radio industry, helps to identify the second interviewee; Irfan Khoosat, as his father was an actor and he is attached with the mainstream media since his childhood. Khoosat mentions some of the forgotton contributors of the history, and discribes their lifestyle. His memory lane has included a few contemporary names; for instance, Salima Hashmi. This automatically defines the name of the next interviewee. Thus, a link is developed within these talks that can carryon even futher.

Some of the interviewees share personal photographs, which helps the researcher to identify the layered information, as Roland Barthes rediscovered his mother through her photograph at the age of five (Barthes 2010). The researcher has experimented through the role of performance, video art, video installation, photo kaleidoscopic animation amalgamated with old-school large-scale negatives and light and dark projections to monumentalize memory and displacement. Finally, research practice develops digitized oral history to document transitions in the culture of Lahore.

The researcher, having background of graphic design and advertising, puts special focus on the ability of communication in the video to catch attention and keep interest of viewer in the oral history content that can be otherwise too serious yet, sometimes unappealing for the common people. To convert an information document into a captivating presentation, multiple graphic elements, animation, cut to cut editing, music and sound follies have been combined digitally.

To document the crux of Lahore's history within the scope of doctoral research, personalities from different socio-cultural segments of the society are selected for oral history interviews. The interviewees belong to various fields of art and culture including art education, painting, art activism, theatre, TV, film, radio, and music. The interviewees have been living in Lahore from 1950's and 1960's and in some cases beyond that. As stated earlier, this thesis project endeavours to document oral history of people, to construct meaning about themselves and their times to preserve intangible heritage of Lahore.

7.1 Practice 1: Mapping Lahore Through Oral History; Form and Elements



Figure 15 (Practice 1)
A frame from Oral History Interview of Irfan Khoosat
Source: The Researcher

7.1.1 The Whistler

Practice 1, *Mapping Lahore Through Oral History; Form and Elements* features Irfan Khoosat who is an eminent actor, radio anchor and a producer whose three generations have been associated to the radio, film, theatre and drama. The actor was referred to the researcher by another interviewee; Shahnawaz Zaidi, as a wonderful speaker who holds lots of memories of radio, TV and film from old times. In one hour and twenty-nine-minute interview, Khoosat shares his journey from childhood till the start of his career on PTV. The researcher has developed a prototype of seven minutes according to the standard attention time of viewing of web-based platforms videos. The oral history interview of Irfan Khoosat is recorded at Khoosat house on Raiwind road (suburbs of Lahore). The location consists of a house and studio space. The studio space that depicts the deep association this family with performing arts, was not in working condition due to less productions in Lahore, so it was suggested by Khoosat to do the shoot in his drawing room space.

The video starts with a black and white image of old radio placed on a table of 70' s style against a vintage backdrop. On the radio Khoosat's image is vibrating on the beat of the sound. A unique sitar music fused with techno overlapped on the visual. This visual is created to give the viewer a teaser of what they are going to experience in the next seven minutes. After dissolving the visual title of the practice appears on black screen as "Mapping Lahore Through Oral History". This title was given to the research in first phase, that was later changed into "Lahore through Oral History of its People: An Audio-Visual Practice to Explore Cultural Transformation".

Khoosat recites Bismillah before starting; reciting the name of God loudly is one of the most practiced rituals of this region to have the support of God, which is rare in the other parts of sub-continent. On the surface, it is a gesture to display the association with the religion; however, beneath the surface it reflects the vulnerable and controversial positioning of the individuals associated with the field of arts. He initiates his talk by associating himself with field of sound and voice, which in a way is a segregation, if not disassociation, from all other arts. A kind of hierarchy, if not the class-system, within the field of arts. At this point photomontages are used along with animation and visual elements to amplify the effect.

7.1.2 Power of Audio-Visual to Engage Audience

This oral history interview is supported by variety of photographs, animations, typos, caricatures, archival footage, YouTube references and newspapers, to literate the young audiences of the past through visual references. This practice is based on researcher's personal experience when she with the background of graphic design and photography had to appear in doctoral program entry exam that used to be based on mostly art and architecture disciplines in Pakistan. Within span of two weeks a candidate needs to equip with medium level of understanding of all art forms, movements and architectural knowledge. Keeping in consideration, her background of image making, the researcher opted to prepare through authentic resources of YouTube videos, along with other web resources and books. In this process it was explored that "captivating" educational videos on art and culture by various institutes, art galleries, archiving forums, and publishers are having millions of views means they are engaging millions of people of various age groups from all-over the globe.

These continuous segments of short duration, from seven to nine minutes, are a specific part of the complete interview that is aligned to the thematic codes. Indeed, not even a single word has been omitted. Design elements are added in variety of ways to engage the viewer. This research practice identifies the historic journey of Lahore and key events that have an impact on its cultural transformation through thematic analysis. It investigates memory and its connection with time, space, and identity and it reauthenticates oral history as medium of documentation, particularly in the context of Lahore in digital age.

As discussed in detail in previous chapters, memory is not as simple as remembering something. Memory has much more complex connotations that emerged from layered social fabric and intertextualities. Whilst, expanding researcher's documentary photography practice that narrates social, political and global intertextualities, this practice of oral history narrates memory, history, culture, and intangible heritage in postcolonial setups. This practice explores cultural identities, cultural practices, cultural lifestyle and cultural ideologies on the backdrop of individual and collective memory, religion, tradition, social fabric and political ideology as part of a larger narrative. The complex system of decoding stories told through the memory is done

through thematic analysis textually, and represented visually, through modern design elements as discussed above.

When Khoosat talks about the importance of voice (sound) and his relation to the field of drama and singing he refers to the birth of human that starts with the crying sound. The crying sound used in this oral history video is of the researcher's couple of months old daughter, making her part of the history. At this moment Khoosat whistles beautifully and states that when a man is going alone on a road, he starts whistle, though this sound not a weapon but still it gives the person a shelter from the fear by creating a sound.

7.1.3 No Archives; No History

When Khoosat refers to his starting journey in radio in his childhood, he talks about his father Sultan Khoosat who was already associated with radio and at the age of 54 he used to play the role of a child in radio drama *Ultey Phultey* (upside down). Khoosat mentions about the plight of archives by remembering that all programs used to be live without recording and in result leaving no documentation and recording. Great treasures went wasted rather looted and remained non-existent in the history. This is the same case of Pakistan Television where the entire tapes were re-recorded leaving no record of previous productions. The practice of losing photographs, artworks, cassettes, reels and recordings is common phenomenon in art, culture, performing arts and heritage all over the country. The importance of making archives and saving intangible and tangible heritage has never been acknowledged. This practice is an effort to archive the memories of people who have been through the important segments of Lahore's art and culture in early years of Pakistan and who are still to experience the current scenarios.

Visual of his father appears on the screen and gets dissolved by a doodle element, representing memory thread. The frame then comes back to Khoosat sitting in his drawing room with his eyes shining but lost somewhere back in 60's when he was nine years old. He rubs his forehead, as a signifier of a little uneasiness of what he is going to tell us next. He shares that once he started working for radio in his childhood his father told him to keep it as hobby and continue with studies. Unfortunately, his father passed away in couple of years and he had to join radio as his profession.

Later he shares about a program *"Farmaishi Khat"* (request letter), that was designed for people to send song requests through letters. There was no response from the public as they didn't really know how to proceed with it. So, radio office had to reach out job centre, *(Daftar e Rozgar)* situated nearby in Shimla Pahari, for some actual names, where people used to put requests for jobs. He mentions "people didn't have jobs even in those times, in newly created Pakistan" (Khoosat 2021). Visual references of old Urdu letters, on the backdrop of Lahore railway platform and a train is positioned with the voice over to depict the flavour of struggle and nostalgia at the time of partition and later. The montage images are bit shaky and are given some noise to enhance the scratchy effect of memory.

7.1.4 The Unsung Heroes

In the last part, Khoosat mentions names of a few prominent people who were associated with radio at that time. Visuals of Rafi Peer, Nanna, Mustafa Ali Hamdani and Aziz u Rehman are shown. Some of the names mentioned by him were not found on the internet. He specially mentions Akhlaq Ahmed Dehlvi that how he used to wear a hat and come on a bicycle that looked like a lady's bicycle. When he talks about Hamdani and Dehlvi, he replicates the voice of first ever announcement of Pakistan on 14th August 1947, "yeh Radio Pakistan hey" (this is Radio Pakistan) and the action of driving cycle. By doing so Khoosat's voice gets louder, and eyes shine brighter depicting his love for acting and knowingness.

7.1.5 The Aura

Unlike his routine TV interviews, Khoosat wore casual cotton kurta shalwar that is usually wore in Pakistani homes, depicting his space of comfort. It depicts that he is ready to through the voyage of his memories without any formalities. He does not present himself as a star or a big shot. At the same time, he arrives at the shoot after fresh shave considering the importance of eye of the camera. He wears four stone studded heavy rings in both his hands. All these gemstones are of different types having symbolic meanings and spiritual connection according to the faith of wearer.

Khoosat's drawing room space is very simple without any luxury, seems like it is dedicated to the formal meetings only, but a few interesting elements can be noticed.

Some wooden Jalis can be seen as addition to the décor that is made with inspiration from TV and film sets. In the dark background, on the dining table, a stuffed toy bear is kept along with a colourful fruit basket. Presence of a toy bear represents the active family life in the house in context of Pakistani culture.

7.2 Practice 2: Down the Memory Lane



Figure 16 (Practice 2)
A frame from Oral History Interview of Shahnawaz Zaidi
Source: The Researcher

Practice 2; *Down the Memory Lane* features Shahnawaz Zaidi, esteemed art and design academician, painter, actor, writer, poet and singer in Lahore. Zaidi is Pride of Performance awardee and holds dozens of awards and recognitions during his fifty years career. He has served as faculty and then principal of College of Art and Design, University of the Punjab. After his retirement he has been associated with multiple public sector and private institutes. He belongs to a family who is strongly connected with the fields of art and culture including, drama, poetry, painting and music. Zaidi and his family have significant contribution in the said areas for decades. One of the most acclaimed ghazal and *geet* singers Nayyar Noor, was Zaidi's sister-in-law. Shehryar Zaidi, Zaidi's brother is a veteran actor based in Karachi. Zaidi's second generation is also engaged in direction, production and music.

Initially, Shahnawaz Zaidi refused politely to give interview by saying that I have a very bad memory and don't remember much. Upon researcher's insistence, he agreed to give the interview. The interview was conducted on 48 mega pixel SONY camera at Zaidi's house. It is mostly observed in Pakistani culture that the awards and recognitions are displayed at the most prominent places in the house or office of the awardee. In the case of Shahnawaz Zaidi, not even a single award is on display in his

house cum studio, a reflection of his belief that such displays are superficial (Alief TV 2023).

The unsaid parts in the oral history interview, the smile, the peace and the grief on the face of interviewee when recalling his/her mischiefs and favourite things reveal more than what is being said. Sometimes an embarrassing smile and laughter, pause or expression add new layer to the textualities. His face glows when Shahnawaz Zaidi remembers about watching a lot of films in his father's cinema and the impression of films on his life. He shares that this practice shaped his entire way of thinking, converting him into a 'filmy' human. He further elaborates the term 'filmy', as the people who live in imagination, very romantic, and how films influenced him and his siblings. In his words filmy is "who do not have a deep connection with materialistic life, we all turned out to be like that" (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023).

7.2.1 The Forgotten Places of Interaction in Lahore

A clip of 4 minutes and 33 seconds is selected from Shahnawaz Zaidi oral history interview. These four and half minutes depict the art and culture, music, wrestling, street life, public interactions, heritage and political scenarios. The researcher has previously known that Zaidi has a deep love for the city of Lahore and has written various poems about Lahore and its culture. The four and half minutes video also features one of his poems. First frame of the video shows multiple images relating to the lifelong aspirations and bonding of Shahnawaz Zaidi. This visual collage features photographs from Zaidi's personal collection and images from internet archives.

Zaidi shares that apart from the iconic and much talked about places of interaction in Lahore, like Pak Tea House, there have been other spaces as well, where common people could interact with each other and with the artists of that time. He then mentions *Akharas* (practice areas of traditional wrestlers) of famous *pehlwans* (wrestlers) as kind of cultural places where commoners from different streets and *muhallahs* (neighbourhood) used to gather, listen and interact with famous singer without paying a penny. Great names like Tufail Niazi and Mehdi Hassan used to come and sit among common people and sing for them (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023).



Figure 17
Akhara Rustam e Zaman Gama Pehlwan 2024
Source: The Researcher

7.2.2 Teenage; and The Influences

During the interviews in this research, memories of interviewees from their teenage have certain threads that allow this research to build a narrative that how surroundings, environments, interactions and happenings shape personalities. Most of the interviewees were in their teenage in the 1960s. The 1960s marked a period when Pakistan was still a young nation, only 10–15 years old, and society was shaped by lingering influences from the pre-partition era, the partition itself, and the colonial legacy, struggling to adopt a suitable ideology. In 1948, the Communist Party was originated in Pakistan, and a debate was sparked to compare Islam with Communist ideologies. Both ideologies aim for social revolution and a classless society with equitable distribution of wealth. These similarities prompted a significant figure of Muslim League, Mian Abdul Bari, to state in Parliament: "Islamic socialism is as much above Communism and if Communism comes into contact with Islamic socialism, I am sure we may be able to convert it into the Islamic cult" (Chengappa 2002).

7.2.3 Socialism as an Inspiration

The youth of 60' s was under the influence of socialism through various pre partition writers including Krishan Chander, Manto, and Ismat Chughtai, whose writings were available in *Aana* (one penny) libraries. Shahnawaz Zaidi remembers reading the socialist writers from *Aana* library in Mandi Bahauddin. He further recalls that they were not allowed to read such literature, and they had to hide and read. "It had a very profound effect, at least on my personality to a great extent, especially of people like Krishan Chander, who were basically socialist. They had a great impact on us, especially on me" (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023), he repeats. Hafeez Tahir also mentions Railway Road library in his oral history interview that the library "had great books and there, me and my friends Mian Riaz Ahmad Qureshi, who later retired as lieutenant general, Rashid Ali became an actor, there were many people" (Tahir 2023). This depicts the trend of youth of going to nearby libraries and impact of progressive literature on them. This practice has been narrowed down in modern times.

7.2.4 Lesser Real-Life Opportunities for Youth Today

Zaidi shares about his activities in youth with lot of excitement. The details about playing cricket, carrom and cards have been mentioned in different parts of the thesis. He gets a little dejected while showing disappointment towards the life patterns of today's youth. In his words "I feel unhappy when I observe younger generation, like my grandchildren, some of them have too much pressure on them, to perform well, to get good grades and secondly, now that the times have changed they don't even go out, they don't go out from home at all, they stay indoors and even when they go out cycling their mother tells them not to saying it's dangerous. Hence, they don't go out at all, they don't meet anyone, nothing but staying at home, engaging with computers and those mobiles etc." he continued, "But life, interaction with people and with it the ups and down of life, the experience with such has become limited I believe. And that's a very terrible thing because what will you gain from it, only from books?" (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023).

7.3 Practice 3: Lahore; A Stage for Socio-Political, Religious and Cultural Actors



Figure 18 (Practice 3)
A frame from Oral History Interview of Shahid Nadeem
Source: The Researcher

Shahid Nadeem is one of the most important playwrights and activists of this time. He has worked for Pakistan Television, multiple newspapers, Amnesty International and BBC. For around forty years he has been attached with Ajoka Theatre that was founded by his late wife Madeeha Gauhar. His family including son, daughter and daughter in law are associated to performing arts as well. Ajoka theatre is Pakistan's leading theatre group, it is recognized and connected in multiple countries around the globe including India and the UK. The theatre group calls itself rightly a miracle in socio-cultural context of Pakistan. "Ajoka has waged a war against the forces of obscurantism, extremism and callous commercialism" (Ajoka 2024). Ajoka is connected to traditional theatrical forms derived from cultural heritage. However, it also infuses new and vibrant themes influenced by contemporary theatrical and performing arts forms. Ajoka's work has strived for the development of democratic and egalitarian society. It engages youth and converts them into theatre enthusiasts and social and cultural activists, playwrights and media professionals to instigate social change. Ajoka's theatre and projects are about "gender and minority

discrimination, environmental degradation, cultural awareness and heritage preservation" (Ajoka 2024).

7.3.1 Striking Parallels as a Relation Between Photography and Orality

Throughout the struggle of Ajoka, Shahid Nadeem and his wife and founder of Ajoka, Madeeha Gauhar have stood together along with their children. Nadeem doesn't discuss about involvement of his family in the journey of Ajoka in detail in his oral history interview, though he leaves the hints of his early interactions with Madeeha at Kinnaird College. The family bonding and parallel professional life is revealed later when some personal photographs are acquired from Nadeem. Seeing those photographs gives more understanding about Martha Langford's "striking parallels as a relation between photography and orality" (Langford 2001).

Nadeem during his interview talks about his childhood, teenage influences, student activism, professional contribution, political affiliations, living in the UK and working with Amnesty International, his writings and Ajoka. What he doesn't talk about is his personal life with Madeeha and his children in detail for one or another reason. These missing links are connected through the photographs, shared after a few months of interview. The photographs from his childhood to the current age say a lot, parallel to what he has shared verbally.

A small black and white photograph of about 2X2.5 inch featuring Nadeem, his father and elder brother sitting in a wooden boat in Kashmir, is a visual record of an important incident in their lives when Nadeem was about to drown in the lake and was rescued by his father. In this photograph, he is wrapped in the woollen coat of his father. Nadeem hasn't mentioned this incident during the interview, rather he told this when he was sharing this photograph with the researcher. This is fascinating, as photographs and the layers of remembrance through them is another dimension of human memory that is otherwise overlooked. It also reveals that Nadeem was given exposure to the world outside home at early age, in the time when not much importance was given to recreational activities in middle class households.



Figure 19
Shahid Nadeem (right) with his younger brother (middle), elder brother (left) and father (middle)
Source: A Photograph from Personal Collection of Shahid Nadeem

The debate about photographs and their link with memory is extensive and may be beyond the scope of this research. However, a few more photographs are striking enough to be discussed here. These photographs belong to the category of 'not so important memories'; however, they are insights to the unsaid parts of memory depicting much important aspects of personal and collective lives. Fig. 19 and a few more photographs from similar occasions depict the existence of Basant festival in Lahore and the involvement of Nadeem's family in it. Centuries old Basant Festival was banned by the government in 2007 due to increasing number of deaths by the chemical wires; however, the kite flyers resisted this ban on the festival (Zahid and Dayan Khan 2007). Instead of controlling and banning chemicals and prohibited material in kite flying thread; *dor,* the historical festival related to the common man was banned in a typical postcolonial fashion. An event of happiness, laughter and collectiveness has been forbidden leaving Lahoris and Pakistanis with lesser opportunities to embrace their culture. Indeed, the festival is now almost vanishing from the collective memory of the people. Hence, photographs as integral part of memory indicates towards a cultural vacuum in form of banning Basant in Lahore.

There are many more photographs in Nadeem's collection that represents the love of him and his family for Androon Lahore, its festivals and traditions. Though this photograph is posed but it is a slice from a larger activity. Selection of clothes according to Basant and shoes of Madeeha and Nadeem in terms of cut, colours and textures depict their sense and association with culture.



Figure 20
Mehmood Aslam, Madeeha Gohar, Nirvaan Nadeem and Shahid Nadeem
Source: A Photograph from Personal Collection of Shahid Nadeem

Another photograph of Nadeem and Madeeha represents relationship and bonding of both. In the photograph Shahid Nadeem and Prince Philips, the Duke of Edinburgh are in middle of conversation after a performance of *"Kaali Ghata"* by Ajoka Theatre. Captured right intime the shining gaze of Madeeha towards Nadeem, and full bright smile on her face depicts her ownership and pride that she holds for her husband who is partner of her personal and professional life. It also represents her strength and success as an independent woman who stands as tall as men or may be ahead of them in a patriarchal society.



Figure 21
1984: WWF congress in Ali Auditorium, with Prince Philips, the Duke of Edinburgh, after a performance of *"Kaali Ghata"*
Source: A Photograph from Personal Collection of Shahid Nadeem

The researcher has met Nadeem multiple times in last couple of years with her three-year daughter Tabeer. In every meeting he gives special attention and love to Tabeer by saying she will be the future of our dreams. He always wants us to photograph him with Tabeer, reflecting his affection, love and respect towards family and children especially females. It's the 8th of November, the final rehearsal day before the start of Dosti International Festival by Ajoka Theatre, and Tabeer is wandering around the set and backstage of Hall No 1 of Alhamra. More than dozen theatre and dance groups are participating in it from around the globe while engaging youth from multiple educational institutes in Lahore. Ajoka's connectivity with the future generations reflect the aspirations and ambitions of Nadeem for achieving a positive change in a complex and fragmented society through performing arts.

It recalls the researcher of her initial interaction with Nadeem, in November 2023, when she was shy to invite him as a judge during first inter-university theatre festival at the University of Home Economics, due to his aura and stature; however, his repones was amazingly surprising, as he straight away said a yes. He expressed doing theatre in academic institutions, which has never done anything like this before, is not easy and that he would come for sure.

7.3.2 Amidst Socialist and Religious Constructs

Shahid Nadeem shares an important event of his life that changed the course of his family. In 60's he and his two brothers, along with his mother were going to Muscat, to see his father. He was in matriculation at that time. In the plane they had an interaction with Tablighi Jamat's group whose leader was a pilot of PIA. In his words "our age was very vulnerable and impressionable, me and my big brother during the period of reaching Karachi, had become a part of their scheme and my brother still to this date is not out of it, he is a very religious person, his wife, his family, are very different from my personality and my family" (Nadeem 2024).

During his interview Nadeem expresses that there are many things I am mentioning in any interview for the very first time. He shares "I must admit I started from Tablighi Jamat, then to progressive side, then to the left and then I reached to Marxism. There was a change that occurred in me during college, secondly, I started idealizing General Ayub Khan. I was an active supporter of Ayub khan, I was one of the few people who were saying 'Ayub Khan Zindabad' but the plot changed so much within couple of years that I became his worst opponent, due to a few incidents happened in Ayub's Era. When Dr. Chaudry Nazir, one of the most popular principals of Government College was transferred by Kala Bagh. Dictator like Nawab Kala Bagh was appointed as governor in 1960. This event has also been discussed by Salima Hashmi in her interview.

In Nadeem's words "Dr. Nazir was very nonchalant, wore hats and would come on a cycle but there was a sense of individuality, he wouldn't listen to threats or bribery. Many people wanted to join Government College because of the excellent education and its essence, it was an esteemed institute and was the best option, some problem or issue happened, and they transferred him. We initiated the rallies in his favour and in opposition of Nawab Kala Bagh, we went till Governor House, in that time it was a very big break through, talking against Nawab Kala Bagh and in a rally going till Governor house. We got victory and Dr. Nazir came back" (Nadeem 2024). He further shares that as a student activist, he started recognizing Ayub Khan's regime as repressive. That was the time when a change was occurring in the world, and progressive movements driven by youth and students were starting in UK, Germany,

America, Latin America. Through the mediums of radio and newspaper, students of Pakistan could relate to what was happening in rest of the world. Nadeem also shares that activism in the youth of 60's had substance; it was not like it is today.

The polarization discussed above has entered majority of households in Pakistan. The researcher herself has faced the same segmentation in her family, when her moderate minded elder brother was converted into a Tablighi Muslim. The researcher has transmitted this experience to her research practice titled Black Box, in the doctoral coursework. She demonstrates remembrance through tangible belongings and photographs associated with three men in her early life. These men include her father, elder brother and younger brother, all three displaced in different ways.

7.3.3 Politicisation of Public Sector

Shahid Nadeem is left-wing and throughout his life he has been standing against the establishment of the country. From his college times to university career, he has been active in students' politics and has been part of the students protest the dictatorial regime of Ayub Khan. He recalls some idiosyncrasies that resulted in serious consequences. During his initial time in Punjab University in the late 1960's a wave of student movement revolution was going on around the globe. In Pakistan students were campaigning against the dictator Ayub Khan. Government had banned students' unions. Nadeem himself went to prison for being an activist against dictatorship. Vice Chancellor Professor Hamid Ahmed Khan, though from a well-educated family, was the same as a dictator. Unlike today, the atmosphere of the University of the Punjab, in the 60's was very easy going. Girls and boys sitting and chatting together, music, art discussion, but no one would take interest in politics especially if there would be any risk involved for Punjab University administrative or Government (Nadeem 2024).

Nadeem took the initiative for student union revival committee. He shares one of his daring idiosyncrasies during the visit of Vice Chancellor "I made small chits of 'revive student union', it was winter's time, Vice Chancellor had coat on, when he came close I stuffed his pockets with 15, 20 of those chits, he saw it when he went back home, in that time nobody could even imagine that, there was a terror, our head of department got called up by him in which he said 'you have 80% girls and you

can't handle these 10,15 boys' to this he got very stressed and said to me 'this boy comes in my dream and I wake up in terror' 'I have nightmares about him'" (Nadeem 2024). Hence, the idiosyncrasies of mischievous nature sometimes connect with larger political contexts.

7.3.4 Partition; a Basic Reference

About the inquiry of memories about partition, Nadeem shared that he had no such memories of partition. In his words "Not really, no, because when we migrated here, instead of coming here in 1947 when Pakistan came into being at that time, we migrated three years later in 1951. So, at that time, whatever the claims and other things existed back then for the people who came here through migration all those operations had almost ended" (Nadeem 2024)

7.3.5 Dhaka Fall and Bhutto Phenomenon

Pakistan has seen the largest and the most painful turmoil in 1971 in form of Dhaka fall when East and West Pakistan were parted. Multiple viewpoints from various forums, thinkers and mindsets have been emerging. Some put the entire responsibility on Bhutto, and some see army as culprit. In the reshaping of political dynamics of Pakistan and track change of country's ideology, contribution of two names cannot be denied: Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Zia ul Haq. In every oral history interview, interviewees have mentioned both from different perspectives.

Shahid Nadeem shares an iconic event from his life when he was working as journalist in Azad newspaper back in 1970 when Nadeem was covering Bhutto's electoral procession in Lahore. Those days Bhutto used to do up to fifteen processions a day. Nadeem shares, "Just as Bhutto Sahib finished the speech, I handed the writeup to the dispatch rider and he took it to Azad office to our editor Abdul Sattar Sahib. Sattar Sahib was the master of highlights. He gave the highlight to the news as *'udhar tum idhar hum'* (we here, you there, in context of East and West Pakistan Elections). This slogan wasn't spoken by Bhutto, but it became stigma on peoples party, that has not wiped away yet. Believing in these words that were never spoken by Bhutto, people still consider that Bhutto was behind Bangladesh separation even though he talked in a different perspective. Bhutto wanted to give equal rights to both majorities

in East and West Pakistan, however, that was a news that became history unfortunately.

7.3.6 Zia and Bhutto Fan Following and Ideologies

The researcher has inherited familial memory of Zia ul Haq as saviour of Pakistan and Islam, as she still remembers her six-year-old self, crying on the demise of Zia in plane crash in 1988. It might be post-trauma of her father's young death a few months ago, who was a middle-class scientist, inclined towards Islam, and a follower of Zia. This childhood perception transformed 180 degrees, much later when the researcher stepped into art and design research in the UK. Indeed, exposure to research in a developed society aided to analyse larger narratives in different context; however, this option is not available to majority of people in Pakistan. Sections of Pakistani society has been segmented into pro-Zia and anti-Zia ideologies. It's unfortunate to document that variety of religious extremist events are the outcomes of policies and strategies which are the continuation of pro-Zia ideas.

Shahid Nadeem shares about his fan ship about Bhutto as "Bhutto Sahib was my first line in political point of view that is why when he came after resigning, he was a dashing young man, great personality, intellect, the power of people, he was minister in Ayub's time when Tashkent declaration came to happen in 1965 war, he resigned, reached Lahore from Rawalpindi through train and the whole of Lahore, even forget Bhutto's entrance, his crowd was enormous, the whole of surrounding of railway station was filled to the brim and Bhutto Sahib got so emotional that he cried and the cloth that he used to clean his tears travelled so many places and got a very high value. We also went to see him, I in that time wrote an article, one of my first article's, one of my first article's for *Qandeel* which was a weekly newspaper from probably *Nawa e Waqt* group or close to it.

Sher Muhammad Akhter was the editor, Syed Qasim Mehmood was the assistant editor, it was titled '*raigistan ka phool*' (desert flowers) that was about Bhutto, I was a young student then and my fascination was there, his personality, ideas, how he would change the world. When I went to the railway station there was no space left, in a car we were few friends, he was going to stay in flatties hotel but the crowd was so big that there was no space for the car, so in the crowd and hustle they took him to

governor house because that was the only safe space for him where he would not get crushed in the crowd, there was no chance of contact with Bhutto Sahib, so I said to put the car aside his car, I said to touch the car with his car and they got more panicked, went inside governor house, they opened the gate for him, when the car went in the gate was not closed immediately so our car also got inside, this was beyond activism, this kind of passion, he came out of the car, his hair a little messed and he was totally lost as to what was happening and where was all this love coming from and Lahoris show their love in a very intense way as well.

Just as he came, a student of Islamia College 'Khawar' started kissing his feet, the other kissed his head and I kissed his forehead, all in a rush, guards came and pushed us out. That was the association to Bhutto Sahib when he was coming into politics but when he came, he was a little leftist and we were little more leftist with Mairaj Muhammad khan and Sheikh Rashid, we also had an organization 'young people's front'. Bhutto Sahib would say 'you are not doing enough, you should be more on the left, end feudalism, nationalism etc.' but we had an opposition from a different point of view, totally different from right wing and establishment, then the contact with Bhutto Sahib was in jail, Kot Lakhpat Jail, he was there for Ahmad Raza Qasuri's father's murder case which was going on he was there. And we were there due to strike of PTV union, we were arrested as suspect to occupy PTV. Through military trail and they put us into jail, there in jail he was our neighbour, he was in "A-class", and we were "C-class" prisoners. There were 40, 50 people of all kinds of backgrounds, so the man who worked there with Bhutto Sahib, they gave a prisoner to them. He would make food, wash clothes and press etc. He would also play badminton with him after which he would come back. The environment was very tense, intelligence everywhere, rumours of helicopters coming from Yasir Arafat to air lift him or that he was going to be killed in jail. In that time, he would tell us through whispers as to what happened today. Who came to meet him and how they were thrown away by Zia's appointees" (Nadeem 2024).

7.4 Practice 4; The Daredevil and the Betrayal



Figure 22 (Practice 4)
A frame from Oral History Interview of Hafiz Tahir
Source: The Researcher

Practice 4 features oral history interview of Hafeez Tahir, a renowned TV producer and director, who created a series for children from Pakistan Television: *Ainak Wala Jin*[2] *(1993-96)*. It can be said that immensely popular *Ainak Wala Jin* became his identity. The 90-episode fantasy story was penned by A Hameed, one of the most eminent fiction writers in Pakistan. Characters and dialogues of the series became part of life and then of the memories of 90's kids. Nastoor, Bil Batori, Zagoota Jin and others are the ones set trends and became part of daily conversations. Even still individuals from who were kids in nineties recall the characters and refer them in regular conversation. The researcher still remembers a few dialogues from the show such as *'Bil Batori Naasan Chori'* (You witch Bil Batori with wide Nostrils) and *'Asi Chaar Sau Vi, Tussi Nau Do Giara'* (We 420, You 9-2-11).

Tahir's interview is one of the most organic interviews recorded during this thesis. Among many memories, he shares one of the most iconic experiences of his life that

[2] https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2720708/

has long lasting impact on his memory and life. The experience is about becoming part of circus and feeling like a dare devil, that later set the paradigms of his endeavours.

7.4.1 Rethinking of the Genre of Oral History through Audio-Visual

The use of photographs, animations, typos, moving images, archival footage and personal photographs to create interactive and engaging visual language for the viewers has been discussed under 7.1.2. The use of visual language in *The Dare Devil and The Betrayal* is influenced from the work of Paul Rand and Laszlo Moholy Nagi. “Design is a problem-solving activity. It provides a means of clarifying, synthesizing, and dramatizing a word, a picture, a product, or an event”(Rand 1981) . In achieving this problem-solving activity, one must believe in the power of visual language established by Paul Rand. This practice is close to the researcher’s heart as it re-explores variety of visual elements of design. The cutouts, the play of contrasting elements, juxtapositions, overlapping, boldness and photo montages all together in the service of oral history to evoke new meanings for the spectator depending on the levels of curiosity and imagination. Interview of Tahir has provided a strong baseline for the researcher’s imagination to play at full.

The phenomenal artist, sculptor and painter Laszlo Moholy Nagi writes about the artist as he is who "disentangles the most essential strands of existence from the... chaotic complexities of actuality, and weaves them into an emotional fabric of compelling validity, characteristic of himself as well as of his epoch?” (Nagi 1947). “Throughout his career, Moholy thought deeply about what kind of art would be best and most appropriate for the world in which he lived”(Kirkpatrick 1988). Moholy believed that artist would create the artworks to train individuals to new ways to see the world around them. This research practice introduces existing visual languages and merge them in the historical context, giving oral history a whole new dimension.

The visual elements of design are derived from variety of mediums to link past, present and the future, and to address the gap between oral history and visual treatment. This practice reveals multiple layers of storytelling for the spectator. On the first layer an individual speaks out his heart in Urdu through sharing his memories in video shot on digital camera. On the second layer subtitles are added in English to

involve most audience. On the third layer, original copyrighted music is used that depicts the fusion of old and the new. Lastly multiple layered images, cutouts, montages, animations and colours are incorporated to translate complex narratives through visually attractive forms. This specific selection of interview comprises on the part where Tahir shares his phenomenal feelings about becoming part of the circus with a Thai skater couple.

He starts his oral history interview from his own piece of poetry and relates himself to a daredevil:

"Life is the name of making decisions in each passing moment
Life is the name of making decisions in each passing moment
At every step there is a new obstacle facing

"I was watching a circus; I was young enough and was sitting in the front rows. There came a Thai couple with fingers crossed like this (expands his arms with excitement) and they had their skates on, they started going around the whole arena on their skates. They then came in the middle and looked at the crowd, the spectators.

The person asked, "Is there anyone who will join us in the arena?"

Huh I was a daredevil, I stood up and went into the arena, they again crossed their hands like this and said, lay down here! I laid on their hands and they started going round and round on their skates. For a while things were clear to me but afterwards all the crowd and the whole arena turned into colours like a splash. Just like you have consciously splashed colours on a painting, when it stopped, I got so dizzy that I fell to the ground, they lifted me up and after a few seconds I was on my feet, and I came out smiling. My story is the story of that same daredevil who used to just jump in" (Tahir 2023).

This phenomenal experience by a teenager belonging to a lower middle-class family with a zeal to do something special in his life later became ideology of his life. His fascination towards the experience of being dare devil reflects in his professional practice and political beliefs.

7.4.2 Bhutto Beyond the Dominant Memory

Tahir narrates an allegory about *Mot ka Kuaan* (the well of death)*;* an essential part of any largescale traditional *Mela* (festival) or circus in mostly remote areas and relates this story to the politics of Pakistan. He used to witness the man on a motorcycle who used to drive the bike on the wooden walls of death well. Tahir used to imagine himself riding the bike on the trembling wooden walls and taking applause of the audiences. He calls it the daredevil mindset that he once again witnessed in another form. In his words "one day I found myself in Nasir Bagh, I was standing at a tall height, and with that same camera I was making a video of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and when Bhutto Sahib would fling his mic like this!! (he flings his arm like Bhutto's famous action) and push up his sleeves like this!! I would be reminded of that young man in well of death who would show his tricks on motorcycle, so this was Bhutto Sahib's political circus, and I became a part of it" (Tahir 2023).

Tahir shares the biggest regret of his life when he and his entire generation felt betrayed by Bhutto. In Tahir's words "He gave us our life's biggest betrayal, he started from socialism, then got into Islamic socialism then onto Masawate Muhamadi then he opened his zip and from inside came that same feudal lord against whom he used to talk. Then what did he do with his partners, he started from his position of Sindh civil martial law administrator. Though he reached us out by building narrative against martial law and won our hearts. Our disenchantment started from there and later what he did with us, that I can't forget nor can my whole generation. We suffered a great deal for him, got beaten up, went to jail, many people from my generation went to jail. I got saved from going to jail somehow but those who didn't, ask them about what happened to their families. Did Bhutto family ever turn back and support them, so that was you know a regret. A big regret!" (Tahir 2023).

7.4.3 "Postmemory"; His Mother's Story of Partition

Tahir remembers the story of partition through his mother. He explained: "My mother used to tell me this story that in her times it was a tradition that when the girl would get married the first child would take birth in her Parent's house. Riots were on peak before couple of months before my birth. She used to tell that in our village in Amritsar district where there is a famous bridge Kanjri Da Pul (Bridge of Hustlers),

her father, my grandfather Mian Abdul Aziz was the imam of the mosque, but he was the kind of imam who didn't survive on charity or donation. He had his own land and took care of it, we would survive on whatever income came from that and there were also cattle, and many more tales like this of that time" (Tahir 2023). He later adds about how Muslims were forced to leave their homes and migrate to Pakistan. Sikhs who used to be friends and saviours became the enemies. Tahir's father was already in Lahore, and he brought his wife and child to Lahore from Amritsar on a motor bike. Tahir's early years were spent in his maternal village in Amritsar.

Tahir's grandfather the Imam Masjid was supposed to come through an army truck during partition. In his words "People told my mother that the truck was waiting, and everyone was sitting, and he said, "let me bring my stick". He went to bring it but never came back but the truck did, when my mother used to tell this story tears would start clouding her eyes, I was a child what more could I then embrace her and usually in that moment the melody of railway train would be heard. Railway train used to cross very nearby our house. This is the story of Mian Mir Pind. Train still uses that path but those houses, those ceilings are no more where we used to stand to watch the train go by, whenever we would hear the train coming that child who was embracing his mother, giving her comfort he would run up the wooden stairs to watch the train. He would watch the train coming and going and would wish to travel on that train one day" (Tahir 2023).

7.4.4 Music in the Streets and a Story of Escape

Tahir's proudly shares all his difficulties of being a member of lower middle-class family whose father was in Kuwait to earn livelihood. They used to live in Mian Mir Pind in Lahore in a half-constructed house near railway lines. He remembers his mother's struggles and that how she faced multiple separations in form of Indo-Pak partition and his father departure to pardes (abroad). In his words "I think I learned to struggle and work hard from my father and patience from my mother, He would return after two years and I can't forget how desperately my mother would wait for his letter, every day she would say to me, 'Hafeez go check if there is any mail'!" (Tahir 2023).

He shares his helplessness as a child when after rains his mother had to collect water from the ceiling and the room through pots. He and his siblings would just sit and look with concern. In those struggling times Tahir found the creative outlets for him. In his words "This was the time when across small half-baked walls a voice would echo. A singer singing a Ghazal probably Akhtari Begum, I a small child would pass by house 4 of street 10 running, then turn right and there was a crossing through a house. I would run through a mosque straight ahead from which I would take a right turn and then another right turn and then I would enter a series of houses. There was a street with a few houses, and I would reach the last house a gramophone record would be playing. It (gramophone) must have been 78 rpm and nearby a parrot's cage would be hanging and the parrot would be listening to the same music silently that I used to go there to listen. There used to be an old lady holding a cup of tea, sipping on it listening to the music, that music stayed with me all my life, When the record would end the parrot would say: *Mian Mithu!* Do you want some *churi*? I would come out of that spell give my greetings to the old woman and return" (Tahir 2023).

7.5 Practice 5; Liberty in Work



Figure 23 (Practice 5)
A frame from Oral History Interview of Saeed Akhter
Source: The Researcher

Saeed Akhter, one of the most famous and acclaimed portrait artists of the country, in his oral history interview, he remembers different phases of his life in relation to his skill of drawing and painting. He recalls the timeline of his life by relating it to the various paintings made in a specific timeframe. For instance, he explains his early phase of drawing in school as

"I was very bad at drawing in the beginning, so my schoolteacher advised me to look at the object carefully. I started looking at the structure of the object. The cup was placed, and I started to draw it, and my teacher appreciated the final drawing, as according to him it's a lot improved drawing. Then I asked him how to do shading. He said that the way you are seeing the change in colour of an object do it that way. After 2 to 3 still-life drawings, I became the top student in the 8th grade" (Akhter 2023).

7.5.1 Established Image of Quaid e Azam

During the same period, he tried to draw the image of Quaid e Azam for the first time, so he mentions this as “I asked my teacher how to draw a picture of Quaid e Azam. He told me it's quite hard, but I can give you some guidelines on how to do it. He said to bring a picture of Quaid e Azam and make a graph on it. Now shift the graph on bigger paper, and it will form the pixels (grid). So, I made it. He then asked me to copy the way the lines pass each other and draw. There were numbers written on the top of every block; like 1, 2, 3, 4, on both horizontal and vertical sides. It was the easiest way of drawing an image. In this way, I made a sketch of Quaid e Azam and showed it to my father. My father did not like and said to me, please don’t make picture of Quaid e Azam. He said you ruined the picture and the facial expression. It doesn’t feel good” (Akhter 2023).

It is pertinent to mention that Akhter has been commissioned for political leaders’ portraits by the state entire his career. It can rightly be said that Pakistani people recognize about Quaid e Azam’s visual through the portraits painted by Akhter. This practice started when Akhter was commissioned to paint Lifesize portrait of Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for National Assembly in Bhutto’s time. After the immense popularity of that portrait, Akhter was hired for more work for state institutes including military. Akhter mentions in his interview proudly that he was appreciated by Bhutto directly. In his entire interview Akhter talks about different portraits of Quaid e Azam and how and when they were planned, painted and transported from Lahore to Islamabad. What he doesn’t talk about are the bold subjects he has been painting and exhibiting in elite art galleries. The researcher has visited many of his exhibitions since student age and personally seen the art produced by Akhter. Many of his series feature stylised, bold and exotic figures of desert women and dominating male portraits. It seems that Akhter retains his image of a state artist and filters rest of important details about his life, aspirations and career. This interview is important in a sense that it reveals that selection of interviewee is one of the most important parts to document history through oral methods. If any interviewee has certain bend towards any segment of society, he can present his selective memory and may not serve the purpose of collectiveness. At the same time such interviews can be read and deconstructed through what has not been told.

7.5.2 Power of Elite Art

Benjamin claims that art in the past has been providing a magical foundation for the cult. Art used to fulfil the desire of ritual and religious traditions (Benjamin 1969). In case of Pakistani society, religion hasn't used art, as per the established narrative about art to be *haram* practice. However, art has been serving national institutes and elites through portraits and decorative themes. Moreover, artists who work for state and elites are ready to compromise on their artistic expression. The researcher has experienced such example recently at the nationwide exhibition of portraits of Quaid e Azam by renowned artist Ali Azmat in 2023 (Baig 2023). It was noticed that in the Lifesize portrait of Quaid in sitting posture, cigar is missing from his hand. Upon the inquiry, artist replied that I have purposefully eliminated it from this portrait to save our young generation from this bad habit and to glorify the image of our Quaid. The answer was surprising, so conveniently an artist changed a reality and a course of history according to the desire of established narratives where we want to see Quaid in Shalwar Qamiz and beard. A cigar smoking Quaid is no more acceptable now!

"We got a call by government official saying no one can make (a painting of) prime minister only Saeed Akhter will make it. And then I continued to make these paintings and made around 18 in total. These paintings were put in the foreign office as well" (Akhter 2023). Akhter is indicating Second Islamic Summit Conference was held in 1974 during the period of Bhutto (OIC 1974). And he was commissioned by the government commissioned to paint all the heads of state. He added, "The portraits never took a lot of time, mostly made in a day. There was nothing special in me it was the era in which I was able to work freely. Later, in Zia ul Haq's reign calligraphy is the only art form that grow, but mostly copy work, nothing was creative" (Akhter 2023).

7.5.3 Subjectivity, Memory and Silence

Italian cultural historian Luisa Passerini emphasised the role of subjectivity in shaping historical narratives. Her work demonstrates how individual stories are shaped by broader cultural and ideological forces, often revealed through silences, discrepancies, and idiosyncrasies in oral testimonies. She explores the complex relationship between subjectivity, memory and silence, particularly in marginalized context (Perks and Thomson 2003). Indeed, the subjectivity of individuals is influenced by collective

experiences, whether these experiences are dominated by family, schools and so on shaping the entire socio-political and cultural practices in a society.

It is noted that Akhter conversation revolves around his art works and if he tries to remember a period, he relates it to his paintings; for instance, when he is asked about the time-period, he mentions that he needed to send the artwork through a truck, and it was hard to find due to the transition period of the government. He mentions, “It was 1970 when Tika Khan no, no, Yahiya Khan. When the election took place in the Yahiya Khan Era. It was the time of election all the trucks were under the Government. The picture was to be taken to Pindi. We couldn’t find anyone but at last, we found a truck. He packed the picture very nicely and took it. We gave him the letter. He was told that it was the picture of the nation's father it was to be hanged there in the National Assembly (Akhter 2023). Indeed, his personal memories seems to be an example of self-censorship and control and are only connected to the artworks, and he placed his artistic actions above any socio-cultural or political events.

7.6 Practice 6; A Squeezing Space for Music and Melody

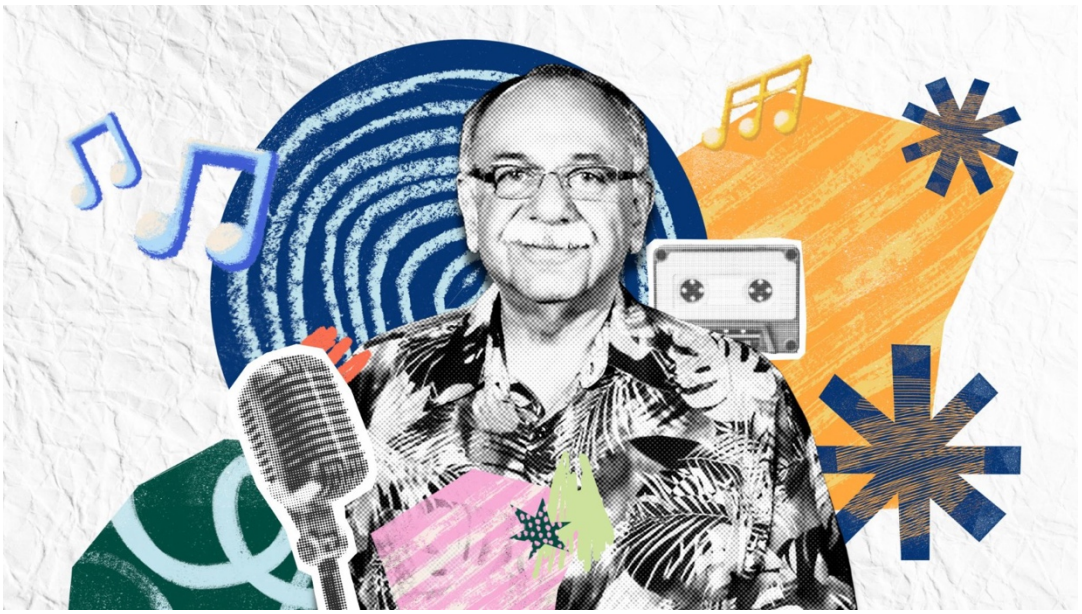


Figure 24 (Practice 6)
A frame from Oral History Interview of Arshad Mahmood
Source: The Researcher

Arshad Mehmood (Pride of Performance) is one the most important musicians and actors of subcontinent. He has produced a wide range of melodies including ghazals, jingles and OST's. He started his career as professional musician for PTV in 1972. Apart from his musical excellence, Mehmood is known for his love for Faiz Ahmed Faiz and his family (Inpapermagazine 2011). Mehmood is from Punjabi origin and lived in Lahore till late 80' s. After that he moved to Karachi for his music pursuance. He keeps on coming to Lahore and lives in his own house. For the researcher, Mehmood belongs to the set of people whom she has seen as the idols and the ideals since her childhood. Meeting Mehmood first time in his Karachi studio in 2016 was highly emotional moment. The generation of 1980's has grown up in the era of Arshad Mehmood, Nayyara Noor, Rahat Kazmi, Shafi Muhammad, Noor Jehan, Marina Khan and more. The combination of immortal compositions of Mehmood, the Koel like voice of Nayyara and piercing poetry of Faiz has a lasting impact. Many of the above-mentioned names have been transited to the next world, so this interview has special value within the field of art and culture. Oral history interview of Mehmood provides the comparison of Lahore and Karachi in terms of cultural evolution.

7.6.1 Government Schools and Co-curricular Options

Just like other interviewees, Arshad Mehmood also reflects to his school memories that how he used to practice music in school in 1960's. Mehmood studied in Government Central Model School; one of the most prominent schools in Lahore before mushroom growth of private schools. The school is still there, but music is not. Mehmood recalls "my passion for music, I think, is quite old because in our time there were a lot of good music activities in the school. There was this program called 'Bazm-e-Adab' and children participated in it, and we used to prepare for it, it used to happen on Fridays. There were a lot of activities that were encouraged back then which I don't see nowadays but, in our school. I have some pictures with me that show when I was in the third grade. There was a music club of our school, and I was also a part of it with other students" (Mehmood 2023).

7.6.2 Squeezing Space for Music in Lahore

Later in the interview upon the question about comparison of Lahore and Karachi in terms of conducive environment for cultural activities Mehmood shares that he found Karachi more conducive than Lahore when he moved to Karachi is 1976 after the completion of TV show *Tal Matol*. "I used to feel that the society in Karachi had a very different temperament or behaviour compared to the society here (Lahore), especially with respect to my field. Other fields were not much different but, in my field, people used to say that whoever is doing music, is doing nothing! It's all nonsense! It used to be like this in Lahore. When I used to tell someone that I do music, and I do it professionally and even earn money from it. They used to say, well it is okay that you do music but what else do you do? And I used to think that what I am doing is already enough if I learn well enough. So, I used to feel it a lot when I was here in Lahore" (Mehmood 2023). He added, about the people of Lahore that they are not as biased towards arts as much as they are towards music and acting.

7.6.3 Raag Mala Project

A few comparisons are traced through the conversation about lives of interviewees about situation of art and culture during Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Zia ul Haq. Arshad Mehmood talks about an important music project titled "Raag Mala" commissioned

by the government of Bhutto. It's when Mehmood recently joined EMI, His Masters Voice. In his words "Khawaja Khursheed Anwar did the *Raag Mala* project, in which 30 long-play records were made of pure classical music and those who were our big singers of that time, in any city they were in, though there were mostly in Lahore and Karachi, we recorded them all and there were a total of 100 Rags that were recorded" (Mehmood 2023). He talks about how he learnt through the conversations and discussions of various great musicians and how out of respect he wouldn't participate and only listen to what they used to say. During this two and half year's project they recorded veterans like Salamat Ali Khan, Begum Roshan, Ustad Salamat Ali Khan and Ustad Fateh Ali Khan were recorded in Lahore. In Karachi they recorded Fateh Ali Khan from Hyderabad Gawaliar Gharana and his brother, Rao Bundu Khan and Qudrat ullah Sahib. He recalls that he heard so much classical music that if he doesn't remember all of it and retains 25% of it, that's enough because it was in extensive detail. He calls himself lucky to be part of this project.

7.6.4 The Real Noor Jahan

Arshad Mehmood mentions many big names in the field of music during his oral history interview and how he used to learn from them. In his words "When I used to work in EMI, I was very happy to meet a very influential personality. A wonderful person and that was Madam Noor Jahan, and she was an amazing human being as well. People talk about her bad attitude, but I think that she was very clear about everything, she had a very clear idea about who to talk to and how. When talking to someone she would never make a mistake, she used to talk to him in the way that she should talk to him according to the personality of that person, so that was amazing. After spending some time with her, like if she is talking to Mr. Bukhari, it is totally different compared to the way she is talking with the driver outside who has not done the work assigned to him. She was the kind of personality who had deep love for her art and singing just like a true artist. It is obvious that her own skill was par excellence" (Mehmood 2023).

The above piece of conversation reflects upon a unique feature of Pakistani film and music industry; inclusion of women and the impact they created. Akhtari Begum, Noor Jehan, Nayyara Noor, Aroona Laila, Mussarat Nazir, Roshan Ara Begum,

Reshman and so many more have great contribution in the music industry. Their impact and popularity were equal and sometimes more than male singers in Pakistan. Their role in development of music in a patriarchal society has been phenomenal. It must be noted that a lot of controversial things have been said about Noor Jehan due her bold and courageous approach towards her personal life. However the level of respect Mehmood shows for her, her brevity and craft say it all about the stature of Noor Jehan. This is what oral history do, it brings out the parallel narratives apart from the established notions of the history.

7.7 Practice 7; Academic Aura of Lahore



Figure 25 (Practice 7)
A frame from Oral History Interview of Salima Hashmi
Source: The Researcher

Mrs. Salima Hashmi, also known as Mrs. Hashmi is undoubtedly one of the most reputed art and culture educationists, activists and artists of Pakistan. She carries the legacy of great Faiz Ahmed Faiz along with her younger sister. Faiz Ahmed Faiz was the first Asian poet who received Lenin Peace Award by Soviet Union in 1962. Her and her family's contribution towards literature, art, culture and democracy are remarkable. Mrs. Hashmi and her family is engaged in various projects for heritage prevalence and preservation with multiple organizations.

This interview validates the significance of this thesis, and emphasises its need, and validate its path and findings. Mrs. Hashmi due to her busy schedules was hard to connect. The researcher took all her equipment to her place in Model Town G Block. On the day of interview there was extreme interruption of construction sounds from a neighbouring house, which reflects that, after old Lahore, the area of Model Town which were built in colonial period is also under threat (HET SCHIP 2024). This experience added another layer that how rapidly heritage in Lahore has been diminishing physically along with its spirit, and these noises did not bother to the city anymore.

Although Mrs. Hashmi took us to the newer part of the over hundred-year-old Victorian house, which was relatively a quiet place consisting of her studio and the meeting place, the construction noise was so high that recording equipment did not work. Luckily, a part of the oral history interview was also captured on a smart phone as backup. Considering the value of Mrs. Hashmi's time the recording of the phone is added as practice 7, though surrounded by construction sounds is still of significant worth.

7.7.1 Physical Displacement of Heritage in Lahore

In start of the interview Mrs. Hashmi shared her experience about an organization; Lahore Sangat, that installs blue plaques naming the people with significant contribution by writing down their contribution at places where once they belonged. In her words "They wanted to put a plaque of my father outside our house at Empress Road. Then they wanted to put plaque for Khursheed Shahid outside the radio building. They started moving towards radio station, then I interrupted that where are you heading to. Radio station old building was not this, it was a different place. Then they went to that place that is now under a private organization, got permission from them and place the plaque. This was an oral information and was a strong part my being, so I could them about it. I didn't know that when it was shifted, but I know its original existence. Similarly, when we went to install Iftikhar u Din's plaque to the building where Pakistan Times and Imroz used to be, we found that building has been replaced by a plaza. Many important people were once associated with Pakistan Times including Hamid Akhter, my father (Faiz Ahmed Faiz) and off course Iftikhar u Din who was its owner. What I mean to say that the heritage is gone and replaced by a commercial plaza. We took permission to put the plaque, though everything is gone but a piece of history will remain there" (Hashmi 2023).

7.7.2 American Influence and the Rise of Army

Mrs. Hashmi gives insights to the American influence on Pakistani culture and its special interest in controlling Pakistani societies through her personal and familial experiences. In her words "American Centre which used to be at Bank Square was the most important place and the biggest library in Lahore. They showed films, they invited top line musicians from America. 50' s and 60' s was a time when Americans were changing the complexion of Pakistan. Culturally they had huge presence. There

used to happen regular exhibitions. CIA was very active in Pakistan, and they were in close friendship with all top intellectuals of Pakistan. In 1969 a small book "Who is Who in CIA" was published by a defected man from CIA who was then living in Germany, and he took all the lists and published them. I was in London at that time and when my father was visiting us, I showed the book to him. He opened the book and started laughing, I ask what happened? He said Jane Able used to be my friend and she working as council general in Karachi" (Hashmi 2023).

She also discusses that in the period of Ayub Khan army was empowered beyond the limits. This power politics had and is still having strong impact over the entire face of the country. In her words "In Ayub Khan's period, concentration of money was with 22 families. That became important because you see the impact on entire society. Firstly, because money and land were started given to army. Wealth started going to the armed forces. The rise of the cantonment is an important part of the city. Before that it used to be sleepy place where nobody used to go. A lot of private housing started emerging. Before that if you would go to and cross Sher Pao Bridge, it used to be a huge land. Then all those lands were allotted to generals in form of plots. So, you see the city changes and the importance of certain people also changes. Then the economic structure changed. When Nawab Kala Bagh was appointed as governor, one unit was made, and Bengal was separated. The provinces were downplayed, after Kala Bagh a general were appointed as governor and you know when it comes to military uniform, it becomes a symbol of power. It reminds me of dismissal of Dr. Nazeer Ahmad from principal ship of Government College. The entire college came to the streets to protest" (Hashmi 2023).

7.7.3 A Wave of Private Schools

Almost all interviewees have mentioned their schools as public schools and that those schools provided all necessary quality education and co-curricular activities. Mrs. Hashmi tells the story after that when private schools started emerging and why? In her words "Private education has gone to the school level, all credits to Zia ul Haq. Because when he changed the syllabus in government schools and the way it was taught started bothering liberals. Those liberals had money, and they thought not to send their kids to government schools and opened their own private schools. This is

how private schooling emerged in education scene. All the elite ladies got together, and they decided that we are not going to educate our children in the way government wanted to. Nasreen Qasoori said, I will not give this education to my sons, so she started school with five students. That's another story that growth of private schools could never be controlled. LCAS was the other group and Beaconhouse was the other group. I also didn't want to send my children to government schools. My daughter Meera was already in Divisional Public School, and she used to hate it. Because of all this business like they said wear *chaddar* (veil). My mother went and had a fight with the principal that first tell boys of the boys' branch to wear topis (caps) then you can tell my granddaughter to wear *chaddar*. So, this is how it was sorted. Then eventually Meera moved to LACAS though she was in matric.

It was not only this but changing the textbooks, taking away the history. That's the worst thing happened to this nation when its history was taken away to keep them *jahil* (ignorant). They even don't know where their roots are. That was rebellion against new education system that they decided that we are not going to do this. But then the whole thing took off. Now it has become half of your education system and off course it has become the class system. It was meant to be happen this way. This has always happened in this country that when you don't want to follow what is offered by government for the commoners, you do what you want to do. This is the fact. You don't pay taxes just as government servant pays" (Hashmi 2023).

7.7.4 Because I am not Musharraf

Mrs. Hashmi shares an iconic rather ironic incident during Martial Law of Musharraf (1999-2008) when she along with many was arrested. In her words "It was a night of November 2007, I was at Asma Jahangir's place. We were having dinner, and we decided to turn on the TV. At that time, it was announced that emergency has been declared and right then police raided and surrounded her house. It was house arrest of Asma Jahangir, her husband told her to escape from backdoor, but she refused. The next day HRCP (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan) meeting was scheduled, Asma said to me, that you must attend tomorrow's meeting. I came back home in night. Next day 12 o'clock was the meeting and there were around fifty people. So, we were having the meeting and the police came. They asked ladies to go outside. We

said one thing is clear that here are no ‘ladies’, but the ‘women’ and we will not go outside. Then police brought the vans to arrest everyone. They asked me to get up, but I said that I am not going to! There was a rude policeman, I said I am not going to get up as this is my mother’s chair, she used to sit on it in this office, and I will not leave it. They started arguing and then called lady police and told them to pick me along with the chair. They picked me unwillingly and dropped on the door that she is too heavy, we cannot carry her anymore. After that male police picked me and sat me in the police van where rest of the people were already sitting. Then I got up from the chair and that rude policeman said why you are getting up from the chair now? I said because I am not Mushrraf!” (Hashmi 2023). This iconic sentence was quoted on so many levels and platforms.

This incident also depicts two most iconic women activists in Lahore, Salima Hashmi and Asma Jahangir. Along with them Lahore has produced hundreds of women who have been fighting on the front end for human rights.

7.8 Practice 8; Marginalized Heritage and the Topophilia of Lahore



Figure 26 (Practice 8)
A frame from Oral History Interview of Dr. Ajaz Anwar
Source: The Researcher

Dr. Ajaz Anwar is an acclaimed artist, cultural activist and most prominent voice to save Old Lahore. Lahore is also the main subject of his paintings. Dr. Ajaz Anwar is son of renowned cartoonist Anwar Ali famous for his political cartoons and a character Nanna (baby boy). Anwar Ali has been one of the very first editorial cartoonists in Pakistan associated with Pakistan Times. Dr. Ajaz Anwar interview is conducted in the house of Nannas during Monson in 2023. The half-built structure represents a dream unaccomplished or an unfinished conversation. Whilst looking like a dream place that is yet to be completed. On the right-side of rough brick parking space, there is big lawn that sounded like a pond after heavy rains. After the lawn, there is a veranda connecting to a big exhibition hall having great water colour artworks by Dr. Ajaz Anwar.

One of the most unique features of this interview was presence of people around Anwar, before and during interview, as if he is a man of people who love to remain connected with his society. He loves to talk and eat with them. They were not art critics or artists, they were simple visitors, his family and friends, from all walks of life. Some of the visitors departed and some stayed till the end of the interview. His

wife, as simple as him, Anwar was also present during entire interview with a pleasant smile. Anwar showed all his paintings in the hall where the researcher took some of his portraits with studio light setup. The entire space and Anwar himself seemed like reflection of resilience against all the odds.

7.8.1 "Postmemory"; My Past, Told by Others

Dr. Ajaz Anwar started his talk from the times of partition and mentioned the postmemory in these words: "There is a childhood that has been told by people, not everyone has that much of a sharp memory. My father was on the roof of the train, and I was in my mother's lap, inside the train, I was one and a half years old. Each time the train stopped; my father got off and took me in his arms to get me some fresh air as we were in a box where 500 people were breathing. When my father walked me around, an old lady requested him to take the parrot's cage as well, so that the pet would have some fresh air as well" (Anwar 2023).

7.8.2 Jhon McDonalds to Government College

Majority of the interviewees went to government schools where there were sports, debating, music and performing arts were available as extracurricular activities. In case of Anwar, he went to a private school established by first principal of Kinnaird College, an Irish lady, Miss Jhon McDonald. He also shares that Kinnaird college used to be a school till 1912. In his words "I was very lucky in regards of schooling, there is a school along with the session court, Jhon McDonald School, it is very small now. It was located at lake road, near *Chaubarji*. After retirement of Miss Jhon McDonald, in 1933, she opened a school in her residence which she named on her own name Jhon McDonald. It was a co-education institute, and the girls and boys are not seated separately, they were all seated together. Anwar said that his father thought that a child should be at least of 5 years of age to start schooling and that is the reason I joined the school in 1952, though I was born in December 1946" (Anwar 2023). He used to play sports like basketball with girls.

Mrs. Murad was his teacher who recommended him to be shifted from nursery to 1st grade then it kept going. He mentions that Mrs. Murad had left the school after a little time, and then she started a career of a dancer in the films. She performed dance, with

so much involvement that it's a treat to watch her. Anwar also mentions the names of his teachers, who were mostly Britishers, European and Indian like Mrs. king who was a teacher of Persian, and then Mrs. Harding's daughter Mrs. James and one was Mrs. Singha. Mrs. Singha was the widow of S. P. Singha, who was the registrar of Punjab University. In his words "My Fathers matric and BA degree had the signatures of SP Singha. Singha was the one whose single vote caused Punjab to be included in Pakistan" (Anwar 2023)

Anwar talks about his interest towards arts and the fine arts options available for boys. In his words "Government College is the only boy's college in which they used to teach fine arts, as it was considered a subject only specific for girls. I loved to do watercolours; it was a part of my daily routine. Indeed, nobody had taught me, my father was a very good watercolourist, and I learnt the art by watching him. When I told my father that I wanted to pursue my career in the field of arts. He warned me, 'you should know it's a 24-hour subject' and earning and living out of this is hard" (Anwar 2023)

7.8.3 Gumnaam (Nameless)

Another uniqueness of Anwar's interview is that he talks a lot about his father and his professional journey. It may be because his father was a celebrity cartoonist, and Anwar was raised under his influence. In his words "My father had an ability to draw from the very beginning and he was making caricatures. Once he made a cartoon of the Principal of the College and put it on the notification board. He signed it as *Gumnaam* (Nameless), and that was his penname. Indeed, if he would have written this name, he would have been in trouble. However, those were the different days, and the principal have valued him and offered him a cup of tea and gave him 10 rupees as a token of appreciation by saying, 'boy you have talent, keep it up'. The principal also offered him a part-time job in the library, as compensation of his fee. At that time, he was making cartoons in Daily Dawn with the name; *Gumnaam* and he got 1 or 2 rupees per cartoon" (Anwar 2023).



Figure 27 (Practice 8)
A cartoon by Anwar Ali for Pakistan Times (1949)
Source: Dr. Ajaz Anwar

7.8.4 Orange Train; A Defaced Lahore

Ajaz Anwar has dedicated his entire life to save the heritage of Lahore. Anwar has formed Lahore Conservation Society that organizes meetings on last Wednesday of every month, where the issues regarding Lahore and its fading heritage have been discussed. Upon the question about how Anwar reacted on Orange Line, a massive train project elevated over the city and various heritage sites through a concrete bridge. Anwar shares "I was opposed to file a complaint against orange train, we didn't do for Tolinton Market. In case of Tolinton Market we decided to do press conference and to engage the stakeholders. I still believe that if we would have engaged the affectees; shopkeepers and residents, to handle their situation themselves,

they would have stopped the whole project. Indeed, they trusted us, and we made them lost, if they would have known they would have demolished three or four pillars, and the orange train would not have been made. It was a loss of Lahore".

He further added, "if you go from Lahore to Sheikhupura you will only see houses on the way; however, twenty years ago it was all greenery and farms. In comparison, from London to Birmingham all the roads are filled with greenery, it is stated that from between the road to 120 ft radius from both sides you can't build a house. It is a question of management" (Anwar 2023).

These small chunks of interviews are based on single continuous pieces of talks which are aligned to specify the key elements of the cultural transformation, and the size of the segment is managed to keep the interest of the viewer. However, the complete interviews are also preserved, and a comprehensive database can be managed and provide access to the students of culture and oral history.

7.9 Communication Design and Digital Platforms

The above audio-visual segments, extracted from the eight oral history interviews, reestablish the role of communication design in Pakistan, particularly in the contemporary digital age. Firstly, to engage the viewer by using the visual references of photographs, animations, typos, caricatures, live and archival footage, YouTube references and newspapers as design elements. Secondly, to make these narratives available to the larger audiences through the digital platforms.

Art and design offer an underpinning to define a style of any audio-visual footage. Indeed, "design is a problem-solving activity", as it brings to life the words and images to present products or experiences in an impressive way (Rand 1981). Design, as a problem-solving activity, offers a visual language; cutouts, contrasting elements, juxtapositions, overlaps, videos and photo montages, that drives the curiosity and imagination of the viewer. According to Moholy Nagi the artist extracts the core part of the reality and presents it in a way that it reflects the style and time of that specific artist (Nagi 1947). Artworks can train individuals to see the world in a new way.

The researcher, with almost twenty years of experience in advertising, graphic design and photography, through this practice expands the possibilities of interdisciplinary

approaches in the field of visual communication to achieve a unique identity in context of Pakistan. It submits a possibility to start a localized content-generation and dissemination platform in midst of high-quality content produced mostly by the western platforms including PBS, The Art Assignment, Smart History, Art History at Khan Academy and The Crash Course where complex array of art, history and culture are presented in attractive ways to engage a range of audiences (Ingram 2014). The viewership of these platforms indicates that they are engaging millions of people of various age groups from all-over the globe.

Design with the availability of the digital technologies; camera, scanning and image mapping, has revolutionised the heritage conservation at large. Thus, recently a complete documentation and planning for the preservation of heritage sites are more evident (Acierno and Fiorani 2019). Organizations and industries are developing collaborative platforms and exploring various possibilities to preserve intangible cultural heritage, and tangible heritage sites around the globe. The digital archives help to expand tourism, as the physical visits to the historic sites or actual meetings with local communities are transforming into virtual and immersive tours. The scope of digital technologies broadens due to its role in heritage conservation and transformation of tourism experiences (Aysha Bilal 2024).

Technological advancements have also transformed the distribution netwroks and data can be delivered and processed across all aspects of life, and now digital content can be reached to segments of society which were previously unapproachable. Hence cultual intangible heritage converted into digital data, disseminated via social media, websites, and mobile apps, has broadened the reach and engagement of the content (Ari Nugroho 2024). These internet based digital platforms can be helpful in developing a digital content ecosystem, but it will require a strong infrastructure with accessiblity to technological advancement (El-Darwiche et al. 2015) This research proposes that an internet based local platform, can be developed in future, to transmit these oral history interviews, in more than one language, so that these are accessible to all kind of practitioners; historians, academicians, researchers and students, to reconnect with the cultural oral history narratives of this region and to use this data to build their projects.

8. Validity, Findings and Conclusion

The researcher is a graphic designer and a documentary photographer, her photographic series *"Female Journalists in Challenging Conditions"* has been recognized by UNESCO and featured in multiple publications. It was the beginning of this research thesis, initially, with a simple ambition to document the stories of people to preserve intangible heritage. During the quest of finding mediums of documentation the researcher has been intrigued by the role of oral history in establishing parallel historical narratives. However, once the researcher stepped into the domain of culture and memory, a complex maze of layered concepts started revealing itself. Eight interviews have been conducted of prominent individuals from the spheres of art, cultural activism, academia, drama, playwriting, radio, music and performing arts. Seemingly casual conversations based upon memory lane of interviewees has helped to decipher layered codes of complex underlined and established narratives. These codes have provided a strong base to outline the factors involved in shaping cultural transformation in Lahore and Pakistani society as whole.

8.1 Collective Amnesia

The deconstruction of the conversations made through oral history interviews reflect no impact of Bengal separation on the culture of Lahore on a connotative level. However, as the researcher digs deeper about the cultural elements including music and cinema a sublime aura of Bengal can be sensed in subtle layers and intricacies. For further reassurance, Shahid Nadeem was contacted on the telephone and asked about the representation of Bengalis in West Pakistan TV, music and cinema industry before Dhaka separation. Nadeem briefly covered many dimensions of the query. According to him, West Pakistanis have always been kept away from Bengalis in every possible way, physically and psychologically. Through propaganda, textbooks and socio-cultural and political narratives both sides of people have been kept apart. According to Nadeem real Pakistan movement was from Bengali side and was people oriented. They stood against the Hindu feudalism and their struggle is still happening. Whilst West Pakistani people were always driven by the establishment and the interests of the ruling elite.

Upon the question of Bengali representation in West Pakistan, Nadeem shared that, yes Bengali actors and singers used to appear in Pakistani creative industries but that was not in a true sense. Producers exploited their talents for bigger market shares. Lastly, he shares that we have been victims of "Collective Amnesia" where we have been kept away from the facts. Any information, association with East Pakistan has been wiped away from our individual and collective memory (Nadeem 2024).

Bangladeshi journalist Syed Badarul Ahsan writes about how Pakistani generals and Bhutto and his party never spoke about their role in building the crises of Dhaka fall. However, he also quotes Bhutto when he replied to Mujeeb u Rehman (East Pakistan prime leader), ""I would rather be destroyed by the military than by history". Ironically, it was the military that, having raised Bhutto to political prominence, destroyed him in the end"" (Ahsan 2021). Such important historical events especially wars including 1965 and 1971 and the shadowy role of military in these have been manipulated and fabricated. This practice is not new but started right after partition of Pakistan. Salima Hashmi blames Zia ul Haq for erasing the history from people's minds by changing curriculum. In her words "the worst thing happened to this nation when its history was taken away to keep them *jahil* (ignorant)" (Hashmi 2023).

Connecting the clues given by oral history interviews about textbooks, it is revealed that the researcher's generation and the next generation read about Fatima Jinnah and her active role in the making of Pakistan along with her brother Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in *Pakistan Studies* curriculum. Then she suddenly disappears from the textbooks and media, nothing is told and written about her later life, her politics and activism. She is erased and vanished rather scratched from the memory of this nation. The fact that is never seen and heard in textbooks and media that, Ms. Jinnah was victimized badly by dictator Ayub Khan when she was contesting the elections opposite him in 1964. She was defamed and finally declared as traitor. US *Time* documents the derogatory remarks of Ayub Khan against Ms. Jinnah on 25th December 1964 paper as ""They call her the mother of the Nation," sniffed Pakistan's President Mohammed Ayub Khan. "Then she should at least behave like a mother"" (Time 1964). Interestingly these ironies are not discussed by any of the interviewees. It may be because of the erasion of these incidents from the dominant and collective memory.

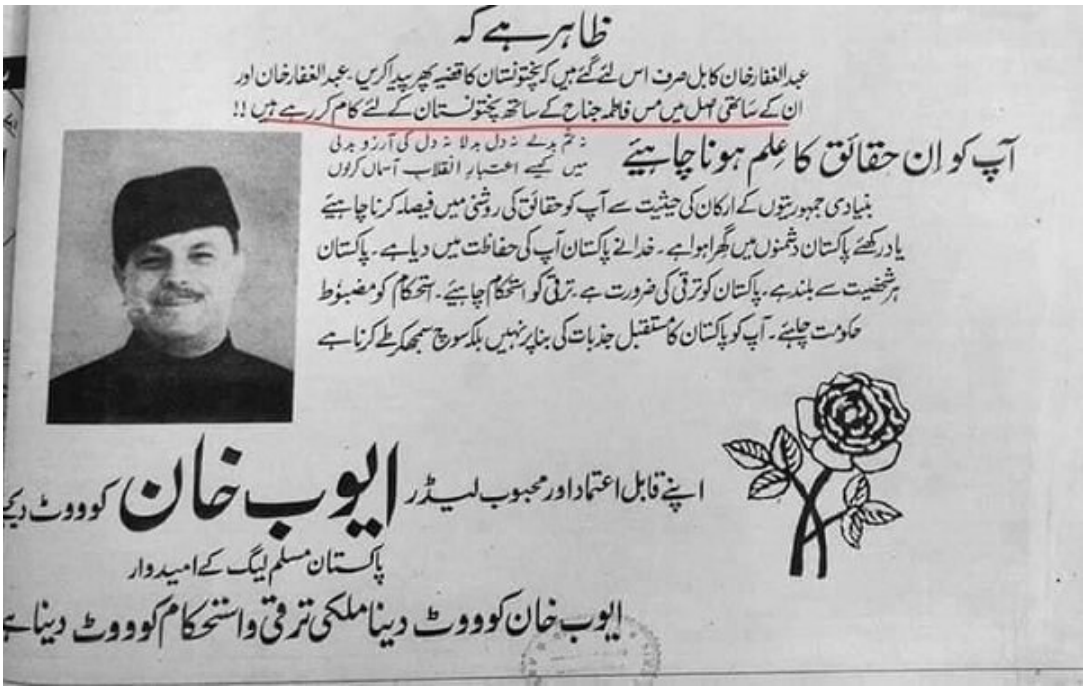


Figure 28

An Advertisement by Ayub Khan against Fatima Jinnah to depict her as traitor
Source: https://syedirfanhyder.blogspot.com/2020/07/ayub-khan-accused-fatima-jinnah-of-treason.html

8.2 Dominant Culture and the Faded Cinema

Power of cinema to build, rebuild and transform narratives is a known fact. Film theorists and critics Walter Benjamin, Jean-Luc Godard and Michel Foucault have valued the role of cinema in making or breaking political and social, psychological controls

(Benjamin 1969; Hillier 1985; Foucault 2023). Cinema has a significant role in creating dominant cultural narratives (Ahmad Bilal 2018). Pakistani society, just like Indian society has been deeply associated with cinema going experiences. The researcher has herself watched multiple films in cinema boxes along with her entire family before the emergence of cineplexes. It used to be amazing and an unforgettable experience.

Almost all interviewees have discussed about watching movies in their childhood and young age. They talk about cinema and its significant role in shaping their personalities and lives. Shahnawaz Zaidi memorizes that how he and his siblings became filmy and romantic towards life after being in touch with films and cinema

(discussed in detail in 7.2). In his oral history interview Hafeez Tahir talks about memorable experiences of watching films on the *Jumma* (Friday) as the films in Indo-Pak release on Fridays in most exciting way. He shares the ownership of fans with the celebrities and their passion to watch movies' first show. "Our uncle was a very religious man, and he also preached at mosque, he would tell us 'come and offer jummah' Films would also be released on jummah, we were four cousins Aram, Anwar, Jameel and Saleem we would go with him and after a few *witars* (element in prayers) we would come out (and he laughed) (Tahir 2023).

Saleem was our designated commando—the brave one we'd always send ahead to get the movie tickets. We'd let him know we were on our way, but securing the tickets was a mission in itself. The ticket counter would be swarmed with people, a sea of eager faces. And there was Saleem, pushing through the crowd like a soldier on a battlefield. With money clutched tightly in his fist, he'd somehow make it to the window, stretch his arm through the chaos, and shout his request. The person behind the glass, barely visible through the throng, would call out, "How many?" Without even seeing their face, Saleem would yell back, "Four!" or "Five!", depending on how many of us were coming. It wasn't always easy to recall the exact details, but what stood out was the thrill of it all. By the time we reached the cinema, our commando would be waiting with shirt sometimes torn, shoulders slouched, but always victorious, tickets in hand. It became our little ritual, and honestly, those moments were unforgettable (Tahir 2023).



Figure 29

Metropol Cinema right Before Demolishing
Source: The Researcher

Suddenly, in 1990s, Lahoris witnessed cinema vanishing in front of their eyes. Several commercial cinema halls mostly built till 70's was expanding all over Lahore, which are now been demolished and replaced by petrol pumps, plazas and so on. These cinemas used to showcase films on nominal rates, affordable for any middleclass family. The demolishment of cinemas is a direct attack on economical entertainment facility for masses. Masses have been compelled to watch movies either on VCR, cable or computer or not watch them at all. A bunch of multiplexes were built in malls in posh areas of the city as a replacement of dozens of commercial cinemas. The tickets of these luxury multiplexes are unaffordable for masses. This market shrink has impacted the quantity of films, and finally a decline to film industry in Lahore, that used to be regional hub for filmmaking (Asif 2024). This city has created a line-up of great names in acting, singing and production. Noor Jahan, Mehdi Hassan, Farida Khanum, Ahmed Rushdi, Nahid Akhter, Aruna Laila, Muhammad Ali, Wahid Murad, Zeba, Shabnam, Nadim, Babara, Rangeela, Lehri, Javaid Sheikh and many more amazingly talented people have taken Pakistani cinema to the heights. It seems that cinema goer culture all-over Pakistan and in Lahore has been diminished through systematic state policies. This is also a consequence to the "collective amnesia" rather collective cultural amnesia for this society, enforced by ruling elite.

In recent times Pakistani cinema has seen an array of hope in the form of new emergent cinema. According to Bilal, the new emergent cinema thrives to have distinguished identity and hunts for parallel or oppositional elements (Ahmad Bilal 2018). In a society based on class structure, cultural values that challenge the dominant order can emerge from the rise of a new social class (Williams 1977). Though on a limited scale, a new class of filmmakers in Pakistan are trying to create liberated space for the emergent cinema that can be representative of proletarian population. It's also a process of having alternative narratives and alternative histories.

According to research, one of the main reasons of progressive decline of Pakistani cinema is Dhaka fall. In his research article *The Established Cinema of Pakistan* Ahmad Bilal discusses the factors involving the decline of Pakistani cinema. He

quotes Amjad Islam Amjad as “the separation of East Pakistan, in 1971, was a major disaster for the Pakistani film industry, as the split has damaged the inflow of human resource” (Ahmad Bilal 2017). In reflection of Nadeem, Gazdar and Bilal’s views, Bengali talent was exploited due to Bengal’s rich tradition in art and culture. The delicacy and romanticism of Bengal was used to enrich Pakistani content and to exploit the market share of up to 33 percent. Pakistani music and Urdu film industry lost its magic as well as market share after the Bengal split. The real integration of Bengalis and their culture in mainstream ideological and cultural contexts was never intended (Gazdar 1997) (Nadeem 2024) (Ahmad Bilal 2017).

8.3 Androon Lahore; the only Saviour of True Culture

Pakistani people like any other nation state have been led by variety of hegemonic narratives set by elites. These dominant ideologies have been trying to control and drive the masses and some what they have been succeeding in it. Religion and its manipulation have been one of the most powerful tools in the hands of power structures to exploit and control. However, there are various segments of society, though not very powerful but the real stakeholders of this society keep deviating the imposition of dominant narratives. For instance, the ‘real’ residents of Lahore specifically Androon Lahore practice religion as cultural phenomenon.

The religious customs practiced in Lahore aren’t a burden rather they celebrate them. Shahid Nadeem in his oral history interview talks about his youth time spent in Misri Shah, “I still remember those things being a ritual and it wouldn’t be disturbing but rather you would enjoy it, the experience of getting up early and praying Fajar, having sehri, in that time I also had a Namazi period because my father later got shifted to Muscat, Oman, so we shifted to Misri Shah and my mother used to visit Muscat most of the time and we would be under the protection of uncle” (Nadeem 2024).

Recently the researcher visited Androon Lahore on the night of 12 Rabi ul Awal, the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to document the religious event along with two young female practitioners. The researcher being non-Lahori witnessed something that was not expected for an outsider. Narrow streets were lit and decorated like brides on various themes. Some streets were as narrow as 3 to 4 feet but the welcoming attitude of the residents was making them broad. The beauty of every

street was separate, but the love and smiles of the natives was same. All streets were filled with aroma of delicious menus of desi food and aura of liveliness. Children of all ages were wandering here and there fearlessly. The bonding of children with their grandparents was remarkable. They were sitting in groups on the *tharas* of shops. On corner of most of the streets, an old man or old woman was sitting on a chair as custodian of the that area.

One very interesting event happened when the researcher took permission from an old woman to take her photograph. Suddenly a young boy told her in Punjabi not to get photographed. That old woman started scolding him in loud voice, telling him not to interfere between her and her guest (the researcher), and then smiled and got herself photographed. This boldness, and openness is unique to the natives of this city who have been proudly living here for hundreds of years.



Figure 30

Inhabitants of Androon Lahore (2024)
Source: The Researcher

In every street, drinks and food were offered. Some of the streets ended in the shape of avenue where lavish amounts of food were in the process of cooking and was about to be served. The locals were so willing to interact and tell their stories. They were so

happy that the outsiders, who did not belong to Androon city, have come to document their activity. There was traditional *dhol*, loud music and so much activity by the indigenous people. So, in a religious festival, there was no sight of orthodox religion, there was only festivity and warmth.

One of team members was invited to a house by an old man and his wife to show the interior that is more than hundred years old.



Figure 31

The Future: Inhabitants of Androon Lahore (2024)
Source: The Researcher

The Lahoris showered their big heartedness and visitors being females felt so protected.

8.4 Ajoka's Survival of 40 Years During Political Transitions

Just like cinema, theatre of Lahore has suffered a lot during and after Zia regime. Lahore has produced great theatre drama writers, actors, producers and directors. Dr. Salman Bhatti in his book *Lahore Mein Urdu Theatre Ki Riwayat Aor Irtika* mentions the theatre companies established in Lahore before partition. Babu Nabi Baksh

Amritsari initiated, Star of Punjab Theatrical Lahore in 1875, Babu Nanak Chand established Albert Theatrical Company of Punjab in 1897, Hafiz Noor Muhammad launched Sunlight Theatrical Company in 1916, and Sardar Kahniya Lal established Lining Theatrical Company of Punjab in 1899 (Bhatti 2016). Along with companies' theatre has been in practice in educational institutes. GCDC of Government College Lahore has a long history regarding theatre and performing arts. He also mentions that most of the theatre companies at that time were owned by Hindus and Parsis.

In 60's and 70' s quality theatre in English and Urdu was written and performed at Alhamra. Hafeez Tahir remembers his interaction with theatre as "in those days Naeem Tahir Sahib did *Apki Tawaif*, Masood Akhtar did *Paisa Bolta Hai*… super hit plays, Kamal Ahmad Rizvi wrote and performed a lot of plays, Bano Appa did dramas, that was the hay period of theatre inside the hall Art dramas were being held, outside western plays were Being done" (Tahir 2023). In 2024 a few theatre groups have survived including Ajoka, Mass Foundation, Chota Mota Theatre, along with some at academic institutes; for instance, Government College Dramatic Club (GCDC), Natak-PU and NCA Puppeteers. Among these only Ajoka has been able to survive as an organized group with regular theatrical presentations for forty years now.

Shahid Nadeem talks about Ajoka's survival as "the circumstances that have played in the last few years even though our focus is same, but our topics have changed. For example, climate change, we address that as well. Other than that, legal complications where there is corruption, we also address that, but the most interesting thing is that how the viewers of our plays do not require any ad on newspaper. But through Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp groups, email groups that news spread, and people come. There is a loyal audience developed as well as that the most promising thing being that 70 percent of our audience are youngsters who slowly through Ajoka are understanding meaningful theatre and their responses surprises. Their enthusiastic responses evident that our younger generation want through theatre and performing arts their hopes, frustrations, anger or wishes to be expressed. So that is a promising part. One that through social media we are getting quite a lot of support and secondly a lot of young people boys and girls and a lot of people from young generation, bearded man, covered woman also come because our plays done judge anyone nor do

they provoke anyone but where and injustice is taking place it is not left alone either" (Nadeem 2024). Ajoka and other serious theatre groups perform without selling tickets, hence left with little resources to invest in production quality.

Commercial theatre is a regular feature in late night shows at Lahore Arts Council and our government organizations. The tickets range of such shows in thousands of rupees depending on the seats. This theatre form is based on *juggat*, vulgar jokes and *mujras* (obscene dance). In contrast original form of theatre is seen occasionally in Lahore unlike any other city of the world where theatre shows are regular feature of art and culture scene because of the economic inconsistency. Despite of unacceptability by the society hundreds of people are associated with 'night theatre'. Shariq Thara, theatre practitioner and journalist, writes in his article that even if anyone is against 'night theatre' or he wishes it to be disappeared forever, they should rethink about the coexistence of art forms with energetic and constant efforts by its stakeholders (Thara 2020).

8.5 Television Interface Between the Elite and the Popular

Raymond Williams in his work *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* discusses that how the cultural narratives are constructed through technological advancements such as television. Moving from the genres of theatre and drama, he writes about televised sports that the sports events are organized for television spectators. Resulting in increased commercialism and television agency. "In a number of cases, the old governing bodies of sports are being challenged or displaced by the new international commercial and sponsoring interests, with mixed effects". This practice has great capacity to affect the spectators' thinking patterns and behaviours (Williams 2004).

One of the most prominent examples in Pakistani society is India-Pakistan cricket rivalry. Shahnawaz Zaidi who is still a cricket enthusiast in his 70's, shares his thoughts about radio as a single mean for sports entertainment before television. He remembers two distinguished commentators, Umar Qureshi and Jamshed Marker who used to do fantastic commentary in English. He admires Umer Qureshi, for his exciting high pitch commentary along with the pace of the match. Zaidi represents an average Pakistani household where the "entire family used to listen to the cricket

matches, especially when there were matches against India etc. That was a very exciting part also" (Zaidi, Appendix A 2023). In the oral history interview, Irfan Khoosat talks about the intense association of public with radio in the 1960s. He shares a light event as: "Then, at those times, the drama was listened to in such a way that no drama is even seen today… If in a drama we say that today is Tuesday, people used to write us complaining letters saying that on Thursday, how can you say that it was Tuesday? Those were simple people" (Khoosat 2021).

Power of television to develop the content to build discourse and narratives about socioeconomics, gender, injustice and class discrimination is undisputed (Tichi 1991). Unlike cinema that has been declined, in Pakistan TV drama is still flourishing in terms of number at least. Private channels in Pakistan are producing hundreds of TV serials and series per season. In 2024, 44 entertainment channels are operating in Pakistan (Qureshi 2024). Every channel has its YouTube channel with millions of views. Channels are working like factories and in one week you see multiple dramas on same themes, sets and actors. Despite of heavy production and massive viewership most of the dramas apart from a few, represent domestic themes, family politics, greed, conspiracy and violence with focus on women. In her upcoming research *A Study of Cultural Transformation: Through the Portrayal of Women in Pakistani Drama,* the researcher discusses the shift in roles of women from empowered and strong to domesticated and weak in Pakistani dramas. The era of radio and TV that is discussed in the oral history interviews used to represent constructive themes for a progressive society. These days most of dramas are shot in domestic settings and are based on domestic issues rather than collective societal problems.

8.6 Transformation of Academic Life of Lahore

According to Salima Hashmi in her oral history interview "Academic life was so important in the city back then. It was much stronger than it is now. There was thing that all these places were in one area on the map of Lahore. FC College was too far off from the hub despite of its beautiful building. But because their hostel was in Anarkali, their boys used to come to Government College. I think city's expansion itself affected the concentrated education which was in one area. For instance, vice chancellor of Punjab University, Hamid Ahmad Khan, used to sit with principal of Government College who was friends with principal of NCA. Principal of Dayyal

Singh College used to be an important personality. This culture of professional contacts blending into personal relationships is a past thing now, all due to private universities. LUMS has emerged as an important academic place. There were no such private institutes in the past. Yes, FC College and Kinnaird College were private in the sense that they were run by foreign missionaries" (Hashmi 2023).

Salima Hashmi elaborates about academic atmosphere where in those days Mushairas and debates were the most important part of academic life. Debaters of that times used to be famous in entire city. These trends have been changed especially from public sector institutes. LUMS a private institute owned by an industrialist family has taken up the place. It is evident that LUMS has significant role in many dynamics of art, culture, literature, science, intelligentsia and business.

All the interviewees went to the public sector colleges and universities and seem connected with rest of the institutes being part of the academic culture of Lahore, as discussed by Mrs. Hashmi above. Arshad Mehmood's memory about Government College authenticates it further how well connected the educational institutes were "For Example, the one who did music professionally, was Azhar Hussain, but he was two years younger than me but because I was there in the music society of our government College, so there was not so much difference between junior and senior. I think that he was a good musician created by our college who worked very professionally. And there were many others like Farani Sahib and many more who considered music as a good thing, and we used to listen to great music teachers in Government College from time to time. People like Tufail Niazi Sahib and Amanat Ali Khan Sahib also came and from which one can understand enough even by listening to it, if you are attentive, that is, in modern terms, if you have put your sense of music on the desktop top, then one can understand very well when someone is performing" (Mehmood 2023).

Shahid Nadeem talks about the rivalries of Government College and surrounding colleges, that also depicts the connectivity of various institutes in 60's. When Government College was hailed as *Surkhi Powder Haye Haye* due to upper class inductions and Islamia College Civil Lines was labelled as *Qurbani Dian Khaalan Haye Haye*, due to the charity funding and lower-class students.

It is important to mention that every interviewee has mentioned Punjab University and its significant role in academic landscape of Lahore. It has been revealed by Shahid Nadeem and Shahnawaz Zaidi that how Punjab University used to be a liberal place till 1975, where Marxism and activisms prevailed in true academic sense until Jamiat occupied it in Zia ul Haq regime. The liberated and rational image of Punjab University transformed into a radical and conservative that is also a reflection of overall society.

8.7 Sustainability through Design and Digital Platforms

Sustainability refers to the ability to maintain a process over a period of time, and sustaibable future of cultural heritage is part of UN Agenda of 2030 (Labadi et al. 2021b). Tourism industry has been investing heavily on digital technologies with more focus on interactivity and consumer engagement. The digital techniques used to enhance tourist experience are visually captivating to appeal consumers, tourists. “Digital techniques involved in the tourist industry include projection mapping, augmented reality, virtual reality and immersive rooms” (Aysha Bilal 2024). One of the most important examples of immersive experiences is immersive show on Van Gogh in 2018 by Atelier des lumières Paris, formerly a factory. Till 2024 these immersive art exhibitions have become global phenomenon after being showcased simultaneously in dozens of cities across the world (Exhibition Hub 2025). Wall bounded artworks have come into life by the power of technology.

This research suggests the integration of design with digital technologies to transform the user experience towards oral history, from conventional to interactive. It provides a unique visual identity to the existing design practices and proposes to develop and design a sustainable digital platform, in future. It endeavours to create a collection of databases of oral histories and localised cultural design elements to be accessed by the practitioners and researchers. The oral history interviews produced as part of this thesis, with the involvement of the funding bodies, can be transformed into a virtual database available in cultural museums and libraries. This database has the capacity to further increase the number of interviews of personalities from art and culture of Lahore.

8.8 Conclusion

This research practice has reached to some conclusions about memory, oral history, narratives and ideologies in a post-colonial society under the influence of the pillars of nation state. Pakistan has gone through many political experiments from 1947 partition to Dhaka fall in 1971. Till date most of the top lined civilian political leaders have been assassinated, jailed or forced to take asylum. Elite has been successful to penetrate their ideology and narratives through hegemonic means that affect persons for a whole life without even knowing it. Individual memories also get derived from the complex fabric of collective memories. Established history has been infiltrated on the brains of people through textbooks, religious stakeholders and media. New generation is left with no roots and no sense of past.

The researcher has been teaching in multiple public sector female universities for more than 16 years. She has been witnessing the bend of young females towards western ideas. They don't connect with local content and prefer to watch and associate with international content through over-the-top (OTT) platforms. However, at the same time most of them have been wrapped in heavy veils and face cover. They represent a hybrid generation with multiple religious and cultural influences.

There is a dire need to re-introduce history to them that may not be so 'unreal' like the established one and oral history can fill this gap in an organic way. Oral history tells us what has not been told, shown and written. It has the power to challenge hegemonic constructs and state narratives through parallel experiences. The question is who will go and dig down the oral history transcriptions and watch long oral history interviews? Only a few? This is where the contribution of this research practice emerges. The prototypes produced under this thesis are designed to grab attention of the masses especially youth who are interested in gaining information through quick mediums and social media.

To check the results, one of the prototypes has been presented in public and the response of audience has been fascinating. Every spectator appreciated the fact they couldn't blink their eye for once due to the captivating audio-visual elements and quick cuts. They said after watching this we can say that history isn't boring if presented in this way and that the historical content presented in this manner have a

lasting impact. It's important to mention that this practice endeavours to create difference amidst complex socio-political and religious fabrication in this society where systematics efforts and policies have been implied to damage culture and associated elements. The study of cultural transformation of Lahore can be expanded on various areas and regions. This practice provides a standardized approach through carefully selected methodological and theoretical framework for future research to decodify the narratives through oral history. The systematic coding and decoding of material gathered from the oral history interviews is important to present an alternate case of intangible history in parallel to academic history. The quest of oral history is of urgent nature in Pakistani society on rapid pace. Oral history documentation is a subtle yet powerful tool to preserve history through the people for the people. Its insightfulness reveals multiple layers otherwise hidden under socio-political, religious and power constructs. This organic approach to dig down history seems to be future of history documentation.

8.9 Prospects

The researcher has persuaded this inquiry of memory through personal approach as bases of a larger research spectrum. Further investigation in this domain can serve as one of the important leads of the research projects to be conducted in future. Personal histories are based on experiences in certain time and space that are later called memories. Personal memories are helpful, to some extent, in decoding the complexities of past to understand present and to anticipate future. Further investigation on the offshoots of personal memories, emotional and physical displacement and liquid nature of identity with reference to Lahore will help in achieving a unique database of archival. This research practice paves the way for similar research to document people and their memoirs who are fading away physically, in various art and culture domains.

This research has been an intellectual voyage through a world of information, ideas, concepts, philosophies and surprising narratives. The researcher has created a new bond with her city through intellectual dig through its multi-layered historical narratives, its positivity and wholeheartedness despite of multiple socio-cultural, religious and political invasions. Documentation of people's memories about Lahore through oral history helps in achieving a unique database of archival knowledge. This

research tends to be an urgent inquiry even though people who have spent their lives through the various phases of evolving culture of Lahore are fading away physically. Audio visual record of their memories is important to tribute them and to collect and save the memory of Lahore at large.

The researcher is planning to present the research practice to various funding bodies to expand the prospects. These interviews should carry on covering at least hundred interviewees, to build a parallel source of information for people engaged in research in various fields. The expansion of this research project is much needed in the context of Recent uprise in Bangladesh (once East-Pakistan) and political turmoil in Pakistan. These days internet is inaccessible, mainstream television networks are silent, and the roads are blocked. Whilst a political party is striving to achieve its position in the mainstream. This phenomenon is repetitive, 1960's its Fatima Jinnah, in 1970's its Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, and in 1980's and afterwards a lot more names struggling to achieve political, cultural, social and economic stability. Thus, the country and its people deserve to have an alternate track to its historic journey and oral history along with effective use of audio-visual techniques can become a major source of change.

Oral history has a unique ability to offer fresh perspectives, and personally with this thesis, a whole new range of themes based on orality, oral tradition and oral history can be introduced in the field of art, design, storytelling, television programming and filmmaking, in Pakistan.

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Khoosat, Irfan, interview by Aysha Malik. 2021. *Appendix E*

Anwar, Ejaz, interview by Aysha Malik. 2023. *Appendix D*

Tahir, Hafeez, interview by Aysha Malik. 2023. *Appendix B*

Zaidi, Shahnawaz, interview by Aysha Malik. 2024. *Appendix A1*

Zaidi, Shahnawaz, interview by Aysha Malik. 2023. *Appendix A*

Akhter, Saeed, interview by Aysha Malik. 2023. *Appendix G*