

GURU DUTT: A MULTITALENTED PERSONALITY

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The film history of cinema begins in India on the seventh of July 1896, when *Times of India* advertisement invited Mumbai residents to witness “the marvel of the century, the wonder of the world” at Watson’s hotel that day. The attraction was described as “living photographic pictures in life-sized reproductions” by Lumiere Brothers. It was called the *cinematographe*. The cinema was received in India like any one of the magic shows that were so popular with the audience of that time and era. After two weeks of the shows the *Times of India* carried a further announcement:

At the desire of a large number of Bombay residents who have flocked recently in spite of bad weather to see the cinematographe, the patentee has obtained a fresh lease of Novelty Theatre for a few more nights.
(*Times of India*)

Marius Sestier, a representative of Paris-based Lumiere-Brothers, had perfected his process of ‘living photographic pictures’ and had held the first public exhibition only a few months earlier in Paris on 28 of December 1895. The image which flickered in Bombay’s Watson Hotel on that evening became India’s first film show and hotel’s clientele which saw it formed the first audience. The day’s programme started with an item “Entry of cinematographe” introducing the new medium. There were four shows per day and the admission rate was one rupee. In January 1897 James B. Stewart’s *Vitograph* came to the Gaiety Theatre and apparently ran about a week. From 1897 to 1914 the major filmmakers were H. S. Bhatvadekar and Hiralal Sen in Kolkata, F. B. Thanwala was the first who presented the first Muslim religious ceremony through cinema. Abdulally Esoofally entered into partnership with Ardeshir Irani in order to establish the first cinema theaters. Another important name of this period was Jamshedjee Framjee Madan who introduced the first embryo of the cinema industry with his Elphinstone Bioscope Company in 1905.

For urban elite as well as for the rural migrants of India the major source of entertainment was cinema. In response to the growing public demand, permanent cinema halls started to appear in 1906-07. Pathe, the film production company, was the first to open a branch office in Mumbai in 1907, which dealt with the production and sale of material needed for screenings. Comedy was introduced in *The God of the Sun* (1912). The first Indian fiction film was *Pundalik* (1912), directed by Nanabhai Govind Chitre, Chandra Gopal torney and P. R. Tipnis. But the real pioneer of Indian cinema was Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, more generally known as Dadasaheb Phalke. The Indian feature film came into being with Phalke’s *Raja Harishchandra* (1913). *Raja Harishchandra* was 3,700 feet long and took up about fifty minutes of the programme. The film was advertised as “first film of Indian manufacture” (Banker 12).

Baburao Painter, the most brilliant director after Phalke, established the Maharashtra film industry in Kohlapur. He has the pride of place as “the first original genius of the Indian screen”. He is also known as “director of directors” (Ramachandran 27).

Phalke had made about sixteen short films by 1919. After 1920, the Indian cinema assumed the shape of regular industry. In 1921, the first social film of historical importance appeared titled *Bilat ferat* or *England Returned*, made in Kolkata by Dhiren Ganguly. It was the first love story of modern life on the Indian screen. Another talent of this period was V. Shantaram; he acted in the role of Lord Krishna in *Surkha Haran* made in 1921. *Noor Jahan* or *Light of the World* (1923) was the first historical film of Mogul dynasty to catch the fancy of cinegoers.

Ardeshir Irani established Imperial Films in 1925 and with it he went on to make sixty two films. The year 1926 was memorable for the first Indo-German company production’s *Light of Asia* produced by Himansu Rai. It was directed by Franz Osten, a German.

Ranjit Movietone, a noteworthy studio in Mumbai, it was established in 1929 by Chandulal Shah. This studio was best known in its early years for medium budget social satires and stunt, and for derived mythological themes. It was India’s biggest producer of films until the 1950s. Prabhaht Film Company of Kohlapur came out with *Gopal Krishna* (1929) an evergreen mythological subject directed by V. Shantaram. The first record of silver jubilee run was set up by Madans, in 1929, with *Kapal Kundala* running at the Crown Cinema for twenty nine weeks.

The year 1930 proved to be a turning point in the history of Indian cinema. Seth Ardeshir Irani of Imperial Film Company created a sensation in film the world by releasing *Alam Ara* (1931). It was advertised as an “all talking, all singing, all dancing film” (Ganti 390). This film had seven songs and it established music, song, and dance as staples of Indian cinema. *Indrasabha* (1932), a movie with seventy songs and influenced by *Alam Ara*, proved a biggest failure.

Wadia Movietone studio was established in 1933 by J. B. H. Wadia and Homi Wadia and it became famous for its stunt and action films. The Wadia Brothers made their first talkie *Lah-e-Yaman* (1933). But it was *Devdas* (1935) a romantic tragedy, their next venture, which superseded everything else and exerted an influence that lasted for year. With 1937 and its amazing string of achievements, the Indian cinema stepped into its golden age. Topping the list was V. Shantaram’s extra-ordinary works like *Duniya na Mane* (1937) (Hindi) and *Kanku* (1937) (Marathi).

The period from 1940 to 1960s is regarded by film historians as the Golden Age of Bollywood. Raj Kapoor’s *Awara* (1951), Bimal Roy’s *Do Bigha Zamin* (1953), *Shree 420* (1955), Guru Dutt’s *Pyaasa* (1957), Mehboob Khan’s *Mother India* (1957), *Kagaaz Ke Phool* (1959), and K. Asif’s *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960) and are considered unequalled even now in Indian cinema.

The cinema was not considered important enough for serious study during the early decades of the silent era. It was looked upon as just a novelty. But when the new medium of entertainment made its presence felt as a means of mass communication, some knowledgeable persons became interested in it. Soon the interest gathered momentum and now we have almost a library full of prestigious books on cinema. Film archives and special classes in schools and colleges in many countries have further facilitated research and critical appreciation.

Whereas the study of cinema began in America and Europe in the wake of the First World War, it did not have even a modest beginning in India till the mid fifties. Despite some good articles and books, there is still no magnum opus on the sociology of Indian cinema as yet. This

absence of interest is an irony of history, because India had a flying start in the world of cinema: Lumiere Brothers' first films were shown in Mumbai at Watson's hotel just a few months after their premiere release in Paris in December 1895.

Guru Dutt's films are a veritable gallery of the cinematic art. He understood, like few others in his time, the nuances of this complex art. Laura U. Marks points out in her book *The Skin of the Film*:

Film may not have grammar, but it does have systems of "codes." It does not, strictly speaking, have a vocabulary, but it does have a system of signs. It also uses the systems of signs and codes of a number of other communication systems. (64)

The visual effects of Guru Dutt's films are so striking that even the non-living things speak in his films. The director is in charge of the visual appearance and Dutt had the ability, along with his photographer V. K. Murthy, to translate desired moods, messages, concepts and undeveloped ideas into imagery. In Dutt's films visual effects play the role of expressing realities more realistically and depicting the imagined things as if they are real. As a director Dutt was equally brilliant behind the camera as he was in front of it. In *Pyaasa*, he experiments with plot and techniques along with lighting. He played the main role in three of his films (*Pyaasa*, *Kaagaz ke Phool*, and *Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam*) in an astonishing low key-lighting, keeping physical movement to the minimum and reducing the dialogue. He was the first to use the establishing shot followed by close-ups. The major breakthrough in lighting style in Hindi cinema came with the work of V. K. Murthy in the films directed by Dutt. Lighting is creatively used in his films to convey the characteristics of certain character. In *Pyaasa*, Meena (Vijay's ex-girl friend) is always presented in low key-lighting to show her materialistic attitude and Gulab (sex worker) and Sattar (a masseuse and Vijay's only friend) are always presented in high key-lighting to show their positive attitude, because they both recognize the worth of Vijay's poetry. We can quote Deleuze who argues that "experience cannot be represented directly and in its entirety, but only approached partially by the orders of the discursive and the visible, or the say able and the seeable" (Marks 39). There is a very limited appearance of Gulab in the film and nothing is ever spoken between her and Vijay, but there is an amazing spark which is maintained through the cinematic brilliance of Dutt. Gautaman Bhaskaran asserts in his article "*Kaagaz ke Phool: Paper Flowers*":

Dutt's creations had a rare style which captured with ease both the tragic and the comic. Their emotional depth was so intense-magnified even more by his black and white images, that no frame left anyone unmoved.

Kaagaz ke Phool is India's first cinemascope film in which Dutt along with Murthy wonderfully makes use of a beam of light. *Kaagaz ke Phool* breaks away from the established tradition of lighting and creates images that are evocative and even poetic. The realistic depiction of the film industry, with its premiers, film shooting, box-offices successes and flops, commercial pressures and frustration of the creative spirit of the filmmaker need a visual personality and Murthy's photography creates the realistic environment. Dutt uses silhouetted figures to show the isolation and alienation of his characters.

Dutt's films *Pyaasa*, *Kaagaz ke Phool* and *Sahib Bibi aur Ghulam* are overflowing with one quality that seemed to be the very essence of the man, an inexplicable dark sadness that know no boundaries. This is not a sadness that evoked frustration or some petty disenchantment. It is sadness that evoked loss of companionship and betrayal of romantic love as manifested in this song.

The narratives of *Kaagaz ke Phool* and *Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam* are unfolded through the use of flashback. Dutt made evocative use of flashback in these two films. *Pyaasa* is the story of a poet that deals with words while Suresh in *Kaagaz ke Phool* is a filmmaker whose world is related with movement and gesture. Chhoti Bahu in *Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam* shares equal space with Bhoothnath as the protagonist. She is a pivotal character, even though she appears in less than a third of the film. The narrative is told largely from the perspective of Bhoothnath. In the words of Freud, Bhoothnath is a “voyeur”¹. The narrative of *Kaagaz ke Phool* takes place in the mind of Suresh. The studio where the whole story takes place is reminiscent of Shakespeare’s poem “All the World is a Stage” where actors come and go; likewise in this studio everyone has his/her own glorious period and this glorious period has ended for Suresh. Dutt had used chronological editing in *Pyaasa*. He had made innovative use of the flashback as fantasy in *Pyaasa*. Another narrative device used by Dutt was the creative use of a rich texture of metaphors most often creates an expanded moral context for the narrative. *Pyaasa*’s most conspicuous metaphor is the cross on which Vijay is crucified again and again and *Kaagaz ke Phool*’s recurring metaphor is the sweater which becomes the displaced object of unspoken love. In *Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam*, Dutt uses liquor and the Mohini *sindoor* as contesting metaphors in the tragic life of Chhoti Bahu.

The pace of *Pyaasa* is slow as demanded by the theme. *Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam* is based on a novel and the pace of the film is fast as compared to *Pyaasa* and also *Kaagaz ke Phool*. *Kaagaz ke Phool* is a slow-paced film because it is the story of a filmmaker whose world is a world of movement. His characters (Vijay in *Pyaasa*, Chhoti Bahu/Bhoothnath in *Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam* and Suresh Sinha in *Kaagaz ke Phool*) depict the same helplessness of one person against a corrupt, selfish world and the resulting angst, frustration and silent resignation that ultimately leads to self-destruction.

In *Pyaasa*, Gulab and Vijay never come closer to each other except during the one situation when Vijay saves her from a policeman. Likewise in *Kaagaz ke Phool* Suresh and Shanti never touch each other and Chhoti Bahu in *Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam* longs for sexual gratification. The central point in the relationship of Gulab and Vijay in *Pyaasa*, Suresh and Shanti in *Kaagaz ke Phool*, and Bhoothnath with Chhoti Bahu and Jabba in *Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam* “is the asexual manner through which Dutt develops them in the trilogy” (Cooper 25).

Dutt’s films are replete with montages. In one montage, Dutt highlights female sex-workers and beggars on the streets in *Pyaasa*. Sahir Ludhianvi in the song “*jinhe naaz hai hind par vo kahaan hain?*” took figures from Indian history and mythology and with the help of these figures Dutt and Ludhianvi elevated Indian women, regardless of class. Montage is used at another point of the film when Gulab is applying *sindoor* on her forehead and the news of Vijay’s death arrives. Gulab goes to Ghosh’s office and offers him all her worldly possessions to pay for the publication of Vijay’s poetry. Gulab wants to have Vijay’s poems published at any cost. The poems reveal Vijay’s feeling for Meena and she (Meena) wants to buy the poems for herself. The subtext of the scene throws into relief the relative values of the middle class and of the poor. As an affluent married woman Meena is appropriately dressed in a costly *sari* but Gulab wears a simple black *sari* with a *shawl* over her head. After glancing through Vijay’s poems she realizes her error in leaving Vijay for the sake of better material prospects. At this point she realizes that has nothing while Gulab, who is a sex worker, has everything. Dutt makes

¹Voyeur is a person who secretly views the activities of other people unbeknown to them and derives pleasure from doing so (Hayward 446).

wonderful use of montage in *Kaagaz ke Phool* also. After the joyful song where Shanti and Suresh express their feelings for each other “*san san jo chali hawa*”, we get the news of Suresh’s accident. In another scene Suresh is unemployed and he wants to buy a gift for the marriage of their daughter. He goes to a dirty place to meet his former make-up man so that he (make-up man) would make him a gentleman for the wedding of his daughter Pammi. Towards the end of the film, Shanti recognizes Suresh as one of the extras. He is wearing the sweater which was given to him by Shanti, which has now several holes in it. During the scene Suresh recognizes Shanti and he starts running away from her. She follows him but is soon mobbed by people as they see her in the studio compound. Here we see two contrasting images: of the defeated Suresh and Shanti at her peak. In *Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam*, Chhoti Bahu offers herself to her master as an obedient wife and is prepared to do anything to satisfy his aristocratic ego and his lust. But her husband’s (Chhote Babu) longing for the pleasures of the outside world finally overcomes him. She tries her best to keep her husband by her side, but all her efforts are in vain. Her husband leaves her. Here we see the cries of Chhoti Bahu on one side and hear music on the other side as Chhuni Dasi is performing for her clients except Chhote Babu. There is a great contrast between Chhoti Bahu, who is the wife of Chhote Babu, and Chhuni Dasi, who is a sex worker: the sex worker has a name, but wife does not have any name.

Guru Dutt’s Life and Career

*Rahne ko sadda dehr mein aata nahin koi,
Tum jaise gaye aise bhi jaata nahi koi...*

These lines are the tribute paid by the poet Kaifi Azmi to Guru Dutt.

Guru Dutt was born Gurudutt Shivshankar Padukone in Bengalooru, on 9th July 1925. He had a rather unsettling though exciting childhood when he accompanied his mother Vasanthi Padukone on her travels from Bangalore to Kolkata, from there to Mangalore and then to Ahmadabad and finally back to Kolkata. He was fascinated by Bengali *jatras*² since his childhood and would never miss a performance held in open spaces. After watching the dramas he would act out the roles he had seen.

Guru Dutt was brought up in the culturally rich and intellectually vibrant city of Kolkata as his mother moved there with his siblings while he was very young and his father worked elsewhere. Guru Dutt’s uncle B. B. Benegal encouraged Dutt’s artistic endeavors. His family was not financially well-placed, so after graduating from high school, Guru Dutt won a scholarship to learn dance at the Uday Shankar India Cultural Center at Almora. Uday Shankar ran the prestigious cultural centre in those days that attracted musicians, painters and other artists from all over India. After the academy closed in the mid-1940s, Guru Dutt joined the Prabhat Studios in Pune as a choreographer. By the end of the 1940s, Guru Dutt’s contract with Prabhat expired and he moved to Mumbai.

Guru Dutt’s mother, who had a troubled relationship with her husband Shivshankar Padukone, had a great zest for life. Guru Dutt’s brother, Atmaram, points out:

We came from a lower middle-class family, so there was a lot of ambition to do well. Success was very important; it was very necessary to do things in life. My mother fired that ambition. (Doraiswamy 1)

²*Jatra*, a form of itinerant theatre that drew upon stories from epics and folk tales often with a view to imparts a reformist, social or religious message, was immensely popular in Bengal in the 18th-19th century.

Guru Dutt married the playback singer Geeta Roy in May 1953. Though they loved each other, the marriage was an unhappy one from the beginning. They were always fighting and caught in the midst of misunderstandings. Guru Dutt's affair with actress Waheeda Rehman only made things worse. Before his death on 10 October 1964 Guru Dutt had tried to commit suicide on three other occasions. But the cinematic work he has left behind makes him, for this writer, part of the first great troika of Indian cinema along with filmmakers Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak (Cooper 1). His death and the iconic status he and his films subsequently achieved eerily echoed the stories in *Pyaasa* (1957) and *Kaagaz ke Phool* (1959) (Chaudhuri 42). His death left a lot of projects unfinished. Even though Guru Dutt died at age of 39 and movies which he made were 50 years ago, his movie are sheer timeless which has made him immortal.

Guru Dutt: The Man and the Artist

Guru Dutt was one of the greatest Indian filmmakers, who worked for a little over a decade starting in 1951. He died prematurely in 1964. In those few years, he made some of Indian cinema's most memorable films. Along with contemporaries Raj Kapoor and Mehboob Khan, he made some of the most important films of Indian cinema that are admired even today. He directed eight films and produced and acted in a few more.

Through the 1930s and till the mid 1940s, Prabhat Studios (Pune), New Theater (Kolkata) and Bombay Talkies (Mumbai) had been the major films studios. Independent production companies now started springing up, and Mumbai became the centre of the commercial film industry. At this time Guru Dutt was working as a choreographer with Prabhat Films in Pune. After his contract with Prabhat expired, he along with some colleagues moved to Mumbai. Guru Dutt landed a job, assisting Gyan Mukherjee and later Amiya Chakravarty. In 1951, he got the opportunity to direct his first film *Baazi* (1951), starring Prabhat colleague Dev Anand. Guru Dutt was an actor, director, scriptwriter and producer who dominated the Indian film industry for several years. He was not in the usual sense a filmmaker in the usual sense, but a remarkable poet, expressing himself through the camera. He was an artist who triumphed in winning the hearts of the audience with the simplicity and naturalness of his work, an artist who believed in his vision. He knew how to bring his intense vision to life on the silver screen. He is often credited with ushering in the golden era of Hindi cinema. The self-reflexive *Kaagaz ke Phool* (1959) was India's first cinematic film. According to Raj Khosla, who worked as assistant director to Guru Dutt, says:

His ambition was not just to make a good film or be one of the top film-makers. He aspired to make a great film, a different film and he wanted to be the best film-maker. He always wanted things in absolute terms. Be it acclaim or success. He would settle for nothing less. Film making was an obsession with him. He was a very ambitious man. But ambition is a passion that can destroy. It ultimately drove him to the point of no return. ("Saima's Backyard")

Guru Dutt's films are examples of mainstream middle class popular cinema. They are not dedicated to any special exploration of or focus on women and women's roles but on the whole, fall within the broad bounds of cinematic convention.

Guru Dutt's films are, among other things, pleas for the social acceptance of artistic creativity, and interrogations of that creativity and its value. The films investigate new social realities and the individual's entrepreneurial struggle in a rapidly modernizing society in the process of redefinition.

Like many of the classics of the era, they are explorations of modern concepts of social mobility and social relations, of the decaying forms of old value systems, of citizenship and its relation to the state, of morality, individuality and identity in an economically defined newly capitalist and newly fluid world. They are also explorations of the economies of modern romance, and of the unpleasant truths of family and society behind a hypocritical veneer (“Guru Dutt Introduction: Scribd 2”).

Guru Dutt entered the film industry as a choreographer. He also worked as an assistant director and as an actor. In *Chand* (1944) Guru Dutt had a secondary role as Lord Krishna. He appeared in a very small role in *Lakhrani* (1945) and also worked as an assistant to the director Vishram Bedekar. In *Hum ek Hain* (1946) he was a choreographer as well as an assistant to the director P. L. Santoshi. Another film which he directed as an assistant director was *Mohan* (1949). After this he became an assistant to Gyan Mukherjee in *Sangram* (1950). The tide was soon to turn for the better and he got a chance to direct his first film; it was *Baazi* (1951). Dev Anand, already a star by then, played the lead role in this and also in his next film *Jaal* (1952). In 1952 he set up a production company called H. G. Films with Haridarshan Kaur. This company produced only one film directed by Guru Dutt: *Baaz* (1953). It was the first film with Guru Dutt in the lead role. The film did not do well at the box-office. In 1953 he had set up a production company called Guru Dutt Productions which henceforth produced all his films. *Aar Paar* (1954) was Guru Dutt Production’s first film and it proved a big hit. This was followed by *Mr. & Mrs. 55* (1955) and *CID* (1956) produced by Dutt and directed by his assistant Raj Khosla. *Sailaab* (1956), his fourth film, was produced by Geeta Dutt’s brother, Mukul Roy, and directed by Guru Dutt himself. *Pyasa* (1957), based on an early script written by Dutt and entitled *Kashmakash*, was the next film directed by him. The film did well at the box-office and proved one of the high points of not only Guru Dutt’s career but also of the Hindi cinema.

The self-reflexive *Kaagaz ke Phool* (1959), India’s first cinemascope film, remains one of the landmark films in the history of Hindi cinema, though it flopped. *Chaudhvi ka Chaand* (1960) produced by Dutt with himself in the lead role, was the biggest commercial success of Guru Dutt’s company. *Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam* (1962), directed by Abrar Alvi, was the last film which Dutt produced and acted in.

As a director, Guru Dutt experimented with many genres: a historical *Baazi*, thrillers (*Baazi*, *Jaal*, *Aar paar*), social comedy (*Mr. & Mrs. 55*), tragedy (*Pyasa*), and self-reflexive film with autobiographical elements (*Kaagaz ke Phool*). He directed eight films: *Baazi* (1951), *Jaal* (1952), *Baaz* (1953), *Aar Paar* (1954), *Mr. & Mrs. 55* (1955), *Sailaab* (1956), *Pyasa* (1957), *Kaagaz ke Phool* (1959). As an assistant director he directed five films *Lakhrani* (1945), *Hum Ek Hain* (1946), *Mohan* (1947), *Girls School* (1949), *Sangram* (1950).

As an actor, Guru Dutt acted in about sixteen films. He is one of those Indian actors who made a mark in the world of Indian cinema in a short span of time. Through his acting skills, he reflected the changing social situation of the period. Guru Dutt's stint as an actor began with the film *Lakhrani* in 1944. As an actor he played a variety of roles in the films of his own production as well as outside his production. As mentioned earlier Guru Dutt acted in a small role as Sri Krishna in *Chand* in 1944. In *Baaz* (1953) he played the role of a prince. In *Aar Paar* (1954), he was a taxi driver. He was a cartoonist in *Mr. & Mrs. 55* (1955) and he appeared as a lawyer in *12’0 Clock* (1958). In *Pyasa* (1957) he played a poet while in *Kaagaz ke Phool* (1959) he was a film director. In *Chaudhvi ka Chaand* (1960) he was a loyal friend, Aslam and in *Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam* (1962) he was a retainer. In *Bharosa* (1963) he was Bansi who is illiterate and in

Bahurani (1963) he was the son of Zamidar Raghu Singh. He was a doctor in *Sanjh aur Savera* (1964) and a detective in *Suhagan* (1964).

As a choreographer also he was a very talented personality whose works were artistically superb. As a technician he effectively utilized the sophisticated technologies available at that time. Even though black and white films were made during those days, Guru Dutt's films had significant characteristic quality of their own. His selection of stories was perfect and well-suited for those times, the screenplay were excellent, technical quality the best, arrangement of the objects in scenes beautiful, and the performance of actors was admirable so that the ultimate results were artistically memorable productions.

As a producer he showed mastery over cinematic elements, from lighting and camera-work to film composition. As a producer his films are *Baaz* (1953), *Aar Paar* (1954), *Mr. & Mrs. 55* (1955), *CID* (1956), *Pyasa* (1957), and *Kaagaz ke Phool* (1959). The cinematography in Guru Dutt's films was undoubtedly the high point of his art. His frames are rich and expressive and the extensive use of tight close-up shots helps his actors get intimate with the audience. The quality of Dutt's frames is rich, intense and is marked by details of light and shade.

Not many people know that he also wrote short stories for *The Illustrated Weekly of India*.

The post-independence period saw the emergence of many directors who crafted distinctive styles in their handling of the themes they had chosen to focus upon. Iqbal Mausad, in his article "The Great Four of the Golden Fifties" observes that the worldview of directors who would be counted in the Golden Pantheon of the fifties – Mehboob Khan, Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt and Raj Kapoor – were formed in the traumatic years of the thirties and forties:

The fight for independence, famines, changing social mores, the global fight against fascism, all contributed to the ethos in which the directors grew up. There are many common traits in the works of these directors. The foremost is that much-abused word 'humanism'.... It was fuelled by outrage against India's savage poverty and inequalities. A second element was [India's] deep awareness of India's past and present cultures, both 'high' and 'popular'. A third was the skill in communicating its outrage and call for change to the masses. The last element has been called 'entertainment'. But in the forties and fifties this had an aspirational touch about it which had vanished long ago from our cinema. (Doraiswamy 7-8)

Guru Dutt's work also differs from the works of other directors of the Golden Pantheon of the fifties which Mausad has elaborated in his "Poetry of Defeat". *Pyasa* (1957), according to him, marks a break from his earlier works in precisely this very tone of defeat. His premature death left many projects unfinished. He was a multitalend artist who knew his field very well. He is always remembered as a shining star in Bollywood.

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