



National Film Archive of India

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India

Interview of prominent Director, Screenwriter and Producer

J. B. H. Wadia by N V K Murthy

N V K Murthy :

This is Monday 25th of June 1984, we are recording this in the study of Mr. JBH Wadia on Worli Sea Face in Bombay. Mr. Wadia as you know this is part of the aural history of Indian cinema project of the National Film Archive of India. At the outset, I want to thank you for readily agreeing to give us your valuable time and record your history as you as you've seen it unfold before your eye so of the Indian cinema... of the early days of Indian cinema and you have had the unique opportunity, you are one of the few, who have seen the growth of Indian cinema from the silent days to its present... shall we say state because whether it is glory or dubious glory we don't know, but it certainly has grown in splendor and size and you have witnessed all that has happened.... And I thought it might be a good idea if you could kindly start with a biographical sketch ... of yourself so that we know ... how you came into films what were your? What were your cultural antecedents? And how you were brought into films? ... so could we kindly have.... Some biographical details.

JBH Wadia :

Right well the first thing must be done first...

I think what other things have got to be mutual I am as thankful to you as you are to me, you want to know something about my life as sort of a bio-data where shall I begin... I think the best way to do is to start from my school days, the high school of course when

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I first became interested in the cinema... the first film which I still remember Very vaguely of course was a topical one called the Russo Japanese War. It was shown in Bombay at the Victoria theater where today we have the Taj cinema. It was a short film and I used to go there with my sister and I think I must have seen it not once but perhaps 20 times for the simple reason that... the man who had imported that film was a family friend of the Wadia, his name was Arjesa Patel, he had come from South Africa and he used to stay next to us at the Khitwari and myself and my sister used to see that film with our eyes wide open and a gap then there was a big break because the regular commercial cinema was yet to come in Bombay... of course, Lumière Brothers films were shown at the close of the 19th century I think in 1896 or 97 just a year after they were released in Paris they were shown at the Watson's Hotel situated in the Fort area just opposite the Jahangir Art gallery and the Price of Whales museum, the old building is still there but no longer as a hotel but as a commercial building housing offices and other industries ... then naturally, the new medium attracted all of us ... especially the youngsters and when there were a few cinemas in Bombay showing the silent films I with thousands of others was a regular moviegoer- a film fan, you can say ... and another early film which I remember I had seen at the old Excelsior theater I think at that time it was owned by the Madhar of Calcutta (name is inaudible) and the film was 'Who will marry Mary?' a series with an actress called Mary Fuller... every week they used to show one episode along with other films but the main attraction was the series because every time we wanted to know what was going to happen to Mary ... I must admit that today i've forgotten everything about Mary and the film but the impression is still there.

Then I had a couple of friends .. My chumps in school One was friend's F. B Kotenka of Hampankata and another was Jahan Prophet.. (name is inaudible) we formed the trio.. And on Saturdays and Sundays we used to go to cinemas from the Excelsior theater in the Fort area right up to what we know today as the Lamington road and see at least two films a day sometimes three... then in those days of course as a school boy I didn't have much money nor did my friends have its what we had to do was to split it out see a film in the Excelsior cinema.. And rush up to Loharchand.. Where we had the

old Alexander cinema in all its tin roofed spelled splendor. At that time I think it was owned by Sethaji Sayani who was going to be the Mughal of the Indian film industry as a producer later on. The main entertainment of course was a Serials on the western and I still remember how we used to enter there in the auditorium there would be a queue in front of the box office / booth and that would Jahan was given a princely sum of apparently some of say 6 anas or 12 anas (currency in that era) if you were to sit in two hours and 6 anas for three hours and we were little more money 4 anas which was supposed to be the so-called second class generally it was always the third class Jahan was to find his way right up to the front of the box office booth and we were young and impetuous and with no responsibility on our heads the giant used to go from one place to another and sometimes even jump over the shoulders of some other waiting to get the tickets and would receive their abuses and was discreet enough to say Sorry then Kotenka would be just near the box office booth but quite a bit this little distance away by the time. Jahan came there he would extend his right arm with the sticks or whatever some he had and Jahan would immediately buy tickets for us. My job was to reserve the seats because by that time I was already at the in the front line of the collapsible doors which were there once the show was over the doors were opened at once because in those days there was no fumigation as such in most of the cinemas only a few of them had it and that also in the upper classes so my job was to rush in and occupy one of the benches and just sleep spine on it it's motionless completely and you see and this was the accepted manner of the of the film friends and nobody objected to it say about two or one or two dozen boys or men would just sleep on the bench reserving till their friends came so this is what i used to do and sometimes it appeared as if you were more like officers a very tempting situation for an undertaker but as soon as our friends came we jumped up and we were sitting together and that is how we used to see the films and in those days Piassava Badamwalas (dry fruit vendors) and the others had the free access in the theater so they would shout out the rest saying who wants it whatever you want to use they go on shouting and we would if we had money we would buy very often we did not but others would and believe it or not even when the film started they used to sell their goods pista badam or whatever it was that samosa or whatever was that something and people would buy even while seeing the

films. The films generally were of entertainment as pure and simple entertainment and that applies applied not only due to the serials of the westerns or the thrillers but even uh short films made from literally works whether it was Shakespeare or Duma or defense without any fanfare they were given as entertainment they were always preceded by a comedy. I remember in those days most of the communities were the keystone cops comedies and they were so very much liked by the audiences because at every few feet there was some gag some just jump some acrobatic feet something very comic so we had to laugh our lungs out the whole audience would laugh the lungs out and those who were sitting next to us would be slapped on the thigh and they would slap us also but nobody objected to all these interruptions. Then we would have the serials, I remember.. I mean if you like I can give you the names of the serials but I don't know what purpose it will say but I can mention some...

N V K Murthy :

Yes, please you can mention.

JBH Wadia :

Thank you, there was a serial called the 'Broken Coin' with Francis Ford, Grace Kennard and Eddie Polo, Francis being the elder brother of John Ford who was yet to make a name for himself, then there was another called the 'Black Box' with Herbert Rollinson, then there was a western serial called 'The Red glove' with Mariwal Camp, Pearl White (actress) of course was there with Perils of Pauline as we all know very famous serial and we would watch it most anxiously. The technique which they used to employ at that time was to end the episode on what we can what we call razor edge suspense... the cliffhanger as they say you see the heroine may be in danger or the hero may be in danger and the villain is about to cut the rope or throw them down the bridge or something like that and to stop abruptly. The result was that we were so very much engrossed and excited about what was going to happen that the for full one week we would speculate among ourselves as to what was going to happen again going to see the next episode this was the way we used to see those films in those days.

I remember some of the cinemas which were there and the new ones are there on the both sites also Alexander cinema and Loharchand of course is no longer there but we had the Alhambra cinema then on the gold petha the Sanddust road side where later on we had the Kamal talkies when the name was which is changed to Alanka and it is still there.

N V K Murthy :

Excelsior is still there and there the Old Imperial is there... these were the two theaters there was no strength. The third one was Minerva and the fourth one was Lamington talkies on the Lamington road where we have got Apsara today. The old Imperial was somewhere near the January junction road somewhere nearby the Kasandra's hospital that was owned by Abu Bakr Muhammad a very enterprising businessman and exhibitor distributor and also, he financed some films the Alhambra I don't know who owned it but I still remember that the man in charge the boss was Rustam ji Modi the eldest brother of Keki and Saourabh Modi and he used to be at the box office giving tickets I mean he was very hefty and once he would shout that we will be terrorized but he was a gentle soul and he always used to help the youngsters to buy the tickets and especially the Parsi because he was a Parsi and I was a Parsi but suppose any one of us tried to be funny and became rowdy then we always had a lecture from him that was the impression I had of Rustamji Modi then at there was one cinema also owned by a Parsi I forget his name America India that was somewhere near the centers were present by Vallabh Patel road where we had the goldfield leatherworks. I remember that it had a small compound where to buy the tickets and go in and there was that big paper organ you know the old organ on which that tunes would be played perforated uh sheets and the organ spikes would be there and it would roll on and on and we would have to listen to the musical pieces very often, .. Most often almost always they were western music in those days. Then there was another cinema called the Western cinema, not the present one uh where is Nazis but just behind the Girgoan Police Court it was owned by two Parsi.. Uh adventurous exhibitors said Rustam ji Dolorabhi and Ratan Sadaraji Wellington they called themselves Wellington brothers because they are a shop at Kalpati where they used to sell Wellington cycles but that cinema was

there and I used to see a number of American films which were shown there but today I might mention that the very first film which I saw,.. Indian film which I saw was lankadahan - of Palkhe sab.. Was of hallowed memory maybe sometime in 1916 it was tagged to an American film and I remember that when we saw... I was with me when I saw it with my friends...

N V K Murthy :

When you were still in school ?

JBH Wadia :

Yes 1969, I was still in school I passed out in 1980... I was still in school and as you know energy must be admitted the Parsi were an insular community you see and there they had developed a way of life which was nearer to the western way of life than the Indian way of life, so when we saw the film at least when I saw the film lankadahan I was greatly amused because the role of Sita was played by a man uh later on as it found out his name was Salunke, he has become has got a niche in the history of the India film industry Salunke was Sita but he was too muscular so that naturally amused me and then the tail of Hanuman was nothing but a single rope, long rope so we again have to laugh at him saying what sort of film is this and then suddenly the memorable flight of hanuman begins and he flies in the air and Phalke dada was an expert in trick photography he took it in such a remarkable way that even today i've got a vague impression of that flight he showed hanuman nearer the camera in a and then he looked very big in the next shot the distance was to be shown so his figure becomes smaller like that ultimately became the smallest and then he goes to Lanka and this is something which was really remarkable and I was so very much impressed with lankadahan which was the first Indian film, I had missed Raja Harishchandra just and first Indian film I saw but then immediately I fell in love with Indian films from that time onwards... then even then my interest in the Indian film was said as alter I was not a regular I didn't see them regularly few here and there our major fair was the European and the American film the American film or the English or the French or the Italian but the best and some Scandinavian countries also used to send the films but

our main subsistence was the American film we had some or other fallen in love with the American film and next to that gave the English in French

N V K Murthy :

So this just continued

JBH Wadia :

The days went on and I also began to be interested in the Indian films by that time I had come to the matriculation class I can tell you one incident about it you see that in in the English paper you see about three or four choices are given to write our essays for one I say out of the four we have to select ourselves and we knew at least our teachers also knew the number of uh questions which would be asked so we had committed by heart you can say a number of subjects. When I appeared there were three subjects which we had studied in school and the fourth happened to be on the Film and I don't know what came over me but the other three essays which I knew by heart I omitted and I wrote on the film I wrote on the film because somehow there are little before that Examination I had seen a film called Rob Spear whether it was French I think it was a French film and shown at the majestic cinema of Irani then I was in Kabira and about the same time I had a little earlier i've seen Tolerance so these three big films had made such a deep impression on me that I wrote out the essay and telling everything about those films giving the cast and the name of the directors etc. And then I said that films like this were really good for the education of youngsters I still remember I don't know whether I exasperated my examiners or whether oh they were overhauled or not but I got through my matriculation and when I came out of the uh examination tent in that they had a big canted gaway tank and when I told my friends they said that Jamshed said you have made a very big mistake these three others essays were so well known to us why did you select this I said I don't know what came over me but the fascination for the film was there evidently so subconsciously I took it up then I about this time when Jahan, Crawford, Kotenka and myself used to go we had come into contact with a party another person called jolly engineer that dial engineer was an employee in the Tatas but it remarkable as it may happen it is true that he was perhaps the first man in one

way outside the industry if not in India to get them to make American magazines well-known magazines called the American World and I forget the names one was the American world and something else and they were ultimately amalgamated as the Herald but these two weeklies used to come and then I used to get them from Jahan who seemed to be very inclined towards me because we shared the common knowledge of our films American films and I used to read them study them make notes and return them about the same time when I was in school and in my early colleges we had the office of the universal film corporation on Pakhna samaj, Hira house where today is still I think we still have the central bank of India branch on the second floor was the office of this Universal now in those days the Universal with the university company corporation used to distribute weeklies in which they used they used to give all the details of the films and the production which are available which will come with proper layouts and publicity advertisements so, we used to go there and buy them at throw away prices uh 1 ana and a half copy or 2 anas and agave because once the copies were distributed to the exhibitors in the circuit the rest was sold pretty dare puranas and instead of that I used to buy them and my friends used to buy them and once I remember Addison Iran spotted me and he called me “come here you young fellow what business have you got here I said... Sir I only come to purchase these whole copies... what's your name ?” So I gave my name my name is Wadia now as you know the Wadia happen to be an illustrious family in Bombay and their ancestors were the mastership builders to the East India company and government of India and the Wadia's would be three out of the five fire temples so Edison whose views were really orthodox flew at me I said what business are you to be interested in filming get out of here if ever you come again I will report you to your school teacher fortunately never enquired the name of my school so I was I was allowed to go squat free and the next time I was discreet enough not to face him when he was in the office but those weeklies who really educated you Karl Almay was the President of the Universal very famous until they called him and we used to get all the details about the films there so that way my interest in the film continued somehow rather... About this time naturally having gone to college my main subject was English literature and that was my curricular to study in literature but I was also fond of it very fond of English literature with that

result.. To some extent my first love which was the film became my second love but even so I began writing letters not only to the artists but also to the directors like D. W Griffith, Eric Fromstein, Ronald Walsh Rex and Graham many others Ellen Hollywood and others and they were all caused in hyperboles in which I used to give quotations from English... so somehow that my interest if not directly indirectly continued it was still extracurricular. Very often I mean in those days the films are popular as they are today also and our college friends used to discuss them sometimes the discussions would be very heated and the controversy would crop up and if I was not there then someone will say call Jamshed we'll ask him because my knowledge of the film the cinema was respected and I used to tell them and to bear out what I said the next day I would bring the magazines for you to prove that this is true.

N V K Murthy :

But Jamshedseth said about this time we also had a fairly... uh popular and active theater in Bombay

JBH Wadia :

The theater was actually even before the film

Yes if you want me to speak on that

N V K Murthy :

No but i thought that were you not interested in the theater at all

JBH Wadia : much before I was interested in the film for the simple reason that the film did not exist you see as a youngster our main entertainment was the stage the legitimate stage and my family fortunately my father and mother, my uncle we had were persons of catholic taste did not only saw the Urdu plays but Gujarati plays and Marathi plays also and that was my first education in Dramatics I must have seen almost easily 70 to 80 percent of the films about the theater shows the plays which were staged in Bombay say between uh 1908 to 1980 definitely I mean it was main form of enjoyment used to go from one place to another and today we have got the cinema

houses in the playhouse locality but at one time it was reserved only for the stage uh the Elphinstone theater where we well when I think today we've got some cinema and another name I don't know the name Gulzar or something Elphinstone theater at the Gandhava Natak Mandali with Baal Gandharva and Keshav Rao and my family was fond of classical music so we used to visit that theater and I still remember I mean how the audiences would receive to take to those places when any good singer Bal Gadharva or official or somebody else came and he began thinking they would just close their eyes put one hand on their ear and listen in complete silence till it was over

N V K Murthy :

No, I asked you about the theater because we are told that the theater especially the Parsi theater had a tremendous influence you would be in a position

JBH Wadia :

So, majority of the theater owners were Parsi uh this Victoria theater was owned by a Parsi called Mr. Appu and he used to stay Urdu place then today we are going to Diana cinema at what is that known for Clarine road and it was owned by Central govt. Forest road area .. That was own by Rustamji Bariwala.. Natak Mandali owned by Manikji Master and it was also composed of Parsi actors most of them most of the actors were Parsi in those days and then he had another company Marlins had a very big company called the Elphinstone theatrical company in Calcutta so and you can see in that the legitimate stage more or less was monopolized by the past year

N V K Murthy :

The Modi family JBH Wadia was also,

JBH Wadia :

The Modi family came in later on, they came in Hyderabad ..but I am talking about the earlier days I'm talking of 1908 to 1918 whereas I think the Modi theater of course himself in 1928 or something like that and before that it was owned by the brothers who had come to Bombay and leaving the company in the hands of Swarabh but these

were the pioneers and they and their knowledge of Urdu was simply fantastic I know that Swarabhji Ogram was considered to be one of the most popular comedians on the stage and he was a scholar of Urdu and Persia little bit of Arabic also and I remember one story told about him that when there was some difference of opinion in a Majlisi Delhi which was attended by the ulamas and this Muslim scholars and Iranian scholars and they could not agree as to what was the solution somebody got up and said just wait for some time Swarabhji seth is coming to Delhi with his company and we will ask him that was the respect they paid to Swarabhji they were not the only, there was Baliwala one also was wonderful I had the good fortune to listen to them they seen all their place and uh Swarabhji another great actor then a number of them I can't remember their names but they were all monopolized the Gujarati stage was in the hands of the Gujarati the Marathi and hands of the Marathi's but majority of the players even in the on the Gujarati stage were Parsi and you can safely say that when the cinema started not only here but even in America or elsewhere the influence of the stage was very big it may not have been recorded properly it might have gone must have gone unrecognized but I believe that the legitimate stage one as a catalyst for the film industry to give better views and especially

(00.30.00)

When talkies came it was the Urdu place, the Gujrati place and regional places had become more famous now and because articulation the original place which was being filmed more often than now same thing happened in the states with you know these plays of David Velasco and others so stage the Parsi stage had a lot to do with the development of the Indian film industry in another sense in Bombay at least the majority of these cinemas were owned by the Parsi the exhibitors were mainly Parsi very few others were there and later on of course the Gujarat is and others came

N V K Murthy :

Jamshed seth, I am sure you remember some very interesting anecdotes pertaining to this particular era when you are busy seeing all the silent films in your students' school do you do you recollect any particular anecdote

JBH Wadia :

I remember a few of them but i'll just narrate one you see I spoke to you about my friend Jalan engineer who was also a very uh avid film fan so I had gone to see a film at the old Empire theater uh of course in the 4 anas tickets in the pit class now as you know the audience in the pit class is known as gallery gods and in this case it was more or less uh correct because the pit class was on the second floor at the top of the theater and from which the screen appeared as if it was a postage stamp screen as it came to be known when the big white screen in the cinemascope came we were seeing an American film there was a bhaiya who was who had occupied the whole bench and had gone to sleep I don't know why he came back because the fan was there and he wanted to fan and there was a bully gentleman with an umbrella sitting in the front row and kept his umbrella there and we were engrossed in our film suddenly halfway through or some something like that uh a character flashed on the screen and jolly engineer shouted out at the top of his voice "mara bap... oh my father this is Rupert Julian".... You see and the sleeping bhaiya woke up and began shouting Thief! Thief! And that somebody lost his umbrella which sailed down on the first floor while balcony and hit someone else who shouted there audience perhaps some of them thought that the roof was falling or something had happened but fortunately the projection is blissfully unaware of it all because the voice didn't go there otherwise you don't go there so the film went on merrily being projected but very soon the door keeper came and dragged both of us out he was a party and he started abusing us in the expressive Parsi-Gujrati language we did not know what to say in the meantime the manager came from below to the second floor and in a hop jumps and skips die two or three steps at a time and panting and he also began to say things to us and we did not know what to say then what do you mean I will enjoy the police for breaking peace etc. We said please excuse us and then I don't know why but suddenly I began to explain to you the genesis of that shout... Rupert Julian was at one time a very well-known director and actor he had produced very good films which we had seen in uh early in earlier years like 'Mother of mine' and 'Kaiser, the beast of Berlin' and here he came in a big role so naturally uh Jahan was uh feeling offended about it he said what is this a great actor right this is a director like this should place the road so that is why he did it so I explained to the manager as best

as I could that was the only reason and we didn't mean any offense and then the manager began to laugh perhaps he had the typical Parsi sense of humor and he said in Gujarati a few words about us saying that you were stupid and all that and banged our heads and went down saying that if you do it again, I will hand you over to the police so we had to go in and see the film in perfect silence and that was the end of it we thought but no but when the show was over and when we came down another doorkeeper who was also a Parsi hold us up and said come with me so we did not know what was going to happen then Mr. Dacosta who was the piano player one of the best-known pianists in Bombay at that time and he used to play the piano to the silent films which were being projected according to the score supplied by the American distributors so he wanted to see us they said I just wanted to have a look at your two fellows what did you mean so again we explained to you and he said you Parsi you will never give up your exhibitionism get out of here and that is how our first adventure in exhibition exhibitionism ended that is the one story which I remember

N V K Murthy :

You mentioned about the uh piano score being supplied by the company by the film company the American film Company ... uh I know that there was uh in there were Indian films also which were silent and there was some music.. Accompanying this and I don't but did the Indian companies also provide some guidelines as to what music should be I mean

JBH Wadia :

Unfortunately, the Indian film producers did not pay any attention to such things with the result that the cinema owner had to employ his so-called orchestra the orchestra was composed of a harmonium player and tabla player and a Sarangi player three of them would be sometimes instead of Sarangi that would be Violin and they used to play whatever they liked just seeing the picture whether it reflected the mood whether it was sad or comey or dramatic and according to that they went on playing whatever they liked and it was quite possible taking every shot to play something else and in no two theaters all the orchestra are the same as in the case of the American films where

the scores were supplied and remember when one Mr. Firojshah Mistry he was a Parsi I'm a director a good singer Harmonium player and he had been employed as the Harmonium player in one of the local cinemas in Lamington talkies I still remember it was Lamington probably some other name at that time I don't know but I used to visit that also saying Indian films and he would play along with his table player and the violin player and sometimes he would become so very much excited with what he was seeing that he would begin to sing also along with that and believe it or not but when the song was completed the people clapped, they liked it so that was the way we had our orchestras

N V K Murthy :

Could one... could one sort of make a guess and say well these were the unconscious beginnings of the background music

JBH Wadia :

It was a sort of background music which came later on with the development of the film technique quite so it was it was applied to background and in the foreign films especially the American films the scores were very good different moods and compositions of military bands and composers like better one Mozart and others they used to play

N V K Murthy :

That it means that the foreign filmmakers did pay attention to the soundtrack even

JBH Wadia :

Then even then they were aware of it... consciousness of it and they knew that the interest of the film will be augmented with a proper background score

N V K Murthy :

All that did that came about later on was the mixing of the soundtrack on the film itself but the importance of the soundtrack as such and as a regard to the experience of the film goer was already there it was felt even then

JBH Wadia :

And it became a necessity it became unnecessary every American film at the score

N V K Murthy :

Now to go on with the story of your involvement in Indian cinema

JBH Wadia :

As I told you I began seeing films off and on and.... Quite a few of them I liked cursorily I think the fault play with me because as an insular Parsi I was still not in tune with the Hindu way of life or the Muslim way of life what you can say the Indian way of life with the result that I was not in sympathy with the moral overtones in the Indian films whether they were Mythological or Socials the one thing which I could never understand at that time was the... submissive role played by the women... a wife.. She will be shown aside that she will carry out everything that her husband said or her father-in-law or the mother-in-law said and if the husband had... had shown wilds and was moving about with another woman the vamp in that case and the wife came to know of it she just kept quiet, bore all these things silently and if someone were to tell her that “look here you don't know what your husband is doing” she would silence him by saying please shut up don't say anything against him he is my *patidev* .. He is my god like that now that sentiment as a Parsi, I could never understand you see I remember one film called Pati Bhakti which I had seen and I liked ... but in in that it was from the Madans who were also pioneers and they really give good social pictures, mythological stage plays filmed etc. And Patience Cooper (actress) was the ‘*adarsh abla*’ the ideal Indian woman the wife and her husband's part was played by an actor called Master Mohan who was on the legitimate stage in Bombay and who had been employed by the Madan in their stage company but also used to play on the screen so he was the husband and he had committed the murder... when the murder was

committed... I don't know what happened I don't remember the whole story today.. Actually it was a play by Agar Ashrae Kashmiri who is euphemistically called the Shakespeare of the Indian stage but in that she finds the head of the murdered man she would have wraps up in a towel and hides in a vase takes out the flower pot and hides it in the vase and nourishes it as if it was a plant keeping its eye, I couldn't understand what it was about but that was the way... and then there was a wife, she was played by an Italian actress called Sinora Minelli I still remember the names Minelli and seemed for the simple reason that she was really voluptuous her costume was so daring that you can compare it to the costumes of the modern uh artist dancers like Helen and others and Helen that would appear to be more modest compared to what she wore in those times the Censors did not object by the way... let me tell you and uh whenever she came on the screen and whether Patient Cooper who was really a lovable creature people rise would be focused on Sinora Minelli also and that included me also so ultimately the film had some compensation we enjoyed it but that was 'Pati Bhakti' and that is what I could never understand that's why perhaps when I started filmmaking and when 'Fearless Nadia' was employed by me on the screen I tried to give the other side to the picture as it were through entertainment, exclusively entertainment about the emancipation of women was an independent person

N V K Murthy :

But I'm sure that before you came into filmmaking there were other influences that shaped your filmmaking perhaps you could yes

JBH Wadia :

Yes, I can tell you. I came in the film industry in 1928 closing years of the silent films but by that time I had seen quite a few good films and with my interest in films... I used to study even the Indian films try to understand the content of the stories from my point of view, which was which was rather vague at that time but I began to study and I could understand I remember that I had seen 'Puran Bhagat' uh which was shown at the Wellington..

N V K Murthy :

What I meant was that even before you came into all this filmmaking you had other interests you were actually lecturing in English literature yes and uh you had uh an unlikely...English literature yeah and so all this sort of uh shaped you're the way you looked at the film yes perhaps that would

JBH Wadia :

I had seen 'Alam Ara' which I liked but not so much I must admit then I had seen the second film 'Shrin Farhad' of Madans full of songs... the star attraction was the music ... Kanchan and Nisar who were excellent singer.. Thumari .. They used to sing.. So that film I like because of its music value 'Alam Ara' I like because of its fantasy... it was an Arabian night fantasy then I saw 'Puran Bhakt' and that film I tell you that it made a very deep impression on me because it was quite apart from the other Indians which I was seeing made in Bombay with a Saigal ji and Kumar ji there and we are talking about the background music so for the first time when uh Saigal goes to that Maya Nagari a big silence shot of about 100 or 200 feet two or three shots and completely taken completely silent because of the illusive creatures uh very attractive young girls or some uh some others who look like these rakshasas is giants and some others who look like monkey sand he goes from one end of the Maya Nagari to another and the whole thing was embellished by the background music... the entirety and then I went and appeared with me very much I said this is something and another thing was that the performances were subdued... they were they were not over like the legitimacy of a magician which characterized the performances of Indian artists moving their hands and feet and making their eyes nothing like that very natural so that film impressed me very much then the third one which I saw was Chal Machindera Gorakhhaya that being what Shantaram's picture I forget the name one what was the name of that picture do you? Remember on

N V K Murthy :

On Shanta ram uh

JBH Wadia :

On Gorakhnath .. Who goes to the Maya Nagari ... and Machindra who has fallen in love with the Queen of the Maya Nagari But there was one uh sequence in which Gorakhnath goes in search of his guru - Machindra and he finds that he is being entertained by that uh Queen of the Maya Nagari and he starts playing Tabla and on the Tabla the words come out “ Chalo Machindra ... Gorakh aya ... “ that impressed me very much so ... I should come to that later that was the talking and now I came to produce ... I haven't seen this talky Films video but when I saw the silencers somehow or other, I was seldom in sympathy with this social film I like these sun films uh of master victor and others or fantasies or even the mythological I like but socials I did not could not understand because the moral overtones were such that I was never in sympathy with them because every time the male of the species is dominated and we protect the manuscript even for that but in a sense the....

N V K Murthy :

Hindu mythology was also not that familiar to you..

JBH Wadia : I am afraid .. Unfortunately, in my case I was interested in mythology in Greek mythology, Roman mythology, in our Iranian mythology and somehow another when I was in my matriculation, I had purchased a thousand-page book in Gujarati Mahabharat of Vyas and I got I still remember that in those days I had no money and the man gave it to me for 1 Ana so I purchased that and I was very much fascinated by it that I finished all the eighteen *pervahas* it is in eighteen fifteen four verse all the eighteen chapters I finished and I liked it very much and somehow or other uh I mean very fantastic things were happening there but they didn't have it

N V K Murthy : One might wonder whether it was your uh interesting English preaching that also triggered off your

JBH Wadia :

Yes, as I said my name is, i've written a group of poems ... used to write poems in those days or other verses in English... and a couple of them went on Greek mythology in the Atlanta flight and all that I had done so my interest was there catholic interesting mythology and it was augmented with what I said about Mahabharat and Ramayana because in MA I had taken up our stuff as my second language and I was a gold medalist naturally when you take Avastha you have got to know something about the Rigveda because these are two sister languages and very much aligned the culture is very often common the Gods and the Goddesses names are common except that the Gods of the Iranian mythology are the devils of the Aryan Mythology and with Vedic mythology and vice versa... so my interest was always there in mythology and that is why I returned when me brother started his Vasant Pictures and he produced a number of methodologies say out of 30 mythological pictures he produced 20 screenplays were by me out of that 20 of them were mine

N V K Murthy :

Perhaps this is a sort of place anywhere you can kind of tell us about the way you look at mythology as a place of mythology in society

JBH Wadia :

The Mythology is an inalienable place in the life of man in society and that applies not only to man as he existed thousands years ago but as he exists today sometimes some kind of mythological uh effort is always there in men only the methodology changes for example let us think to take case of a Communism in Russia you see they were against religion the churches were closed the bible was considered as outdated etc. Etc. So a gap was created in the life of the other industry because it had to feel and this so-called intelligent and intellectual persons had to kill culture so, when they removed god and religion they replaced that by Marx and Lenin the new gods were Marxist Lenin so they made a mythology out of Marxian that is why Marxism has been generated it is... not what it was originally meant by in one sense so that is another thing is that it supplies a feels a psychological need in men.... Mythology fantasy fiction all these things are necessary because a man generally imagines himself as a hero in his

private life and he has got to be in search of heroes and girls to find you... is from the mythologists because they are superman and you are always attractive when mythology is very necessary and today if you look at this technology super pictures like the Star Wars - science fiction science fiction- sci-fi you will find out that it is the modern mythology nothing else in a new form

N V K Murthy :

And so perhaps the show business people are on to a great secret as far as the hold of mythology on the human psyche is concerned

JBH Wadia :

Yes, I agree with you so what were we talking about originally how I came

N V K Murthy :

No, you you're talking about the world of mythologies and how yeah you came to write right because of

JBH Wadia :

My interest because I had studied mythology Greek and Roman mythology were my favorite subjects and I was drawn towards our Indian mythology automatically because I had taken up us stuff and that was the first step taken by me towards understanding the Indian mind it was because of the mythology with Indian mythologies that I began to understand the Indian mind

N V K Murthy :

And that's how um your brother started

JBH Wadia :

Yes, my brother was my brother when he started defense thereby also hangs a story till uh, I was My brother and I had some domestic differences in 1947- 48 and by that time somehow or other I had got tired of producing stereotyping films... stunt films and

I wanted to switch over to social which I had done but Homie naturally had no intention of doing anything else but some things are mythological so in 1952 when I joined him in Basant so it wasn't pictures of Wadia brother presence he had he wanted to do a film of a mythological... I was doing Mela at that time with Dilip Kumar and Nargis and now and he came to me and he said "Jamshed, you have already announced the film called Ram Bhakt Hanuman as the next film after Mela, I had the whole script with me ready which was worked out with Tripathi and Tripathi was the writer and was going to play the role of Hamunan.. Excetera so I was going to produce that but he said no now I also do not want to make custom film I want to go in for myself so I gave the entire script to him he said here everything is ready and that is how under the Basant Banner.. The first mythological which was produced was Ram Bhat Hanuman in which Tilak Kapoor was Ram and one Bengali Actress .. Was Sita and our Tripathi was Hanuman ... but that was all drafted by me the script was written by me ... and uh whom he had requested me said now this is something new for me so you will have to come and supervise so that's how.. I supervise the picture also I looked after the music side and also the editing and the screenplay were mine though my name is not that because we had given Tripathi's name naturally but and

N V K Murthy :

You talked about your interest in stunt films uh yeah veining because it worked after some time but uh you kind of tell us more about your involvement in

JBH Wadia :

The Stunt film veining was for a simple reason that one would like to do something new, this is when I made myself five Stunt pictures the very first film which I made in 1928 was uh Vasantleela aka Sons of the Rich and that was produced by me with Mr. G. S. Zeware as my partner, under the name high-fellating of Artistic Pictures Corporation.. Because I was animal of the American all along so instead of calling this Company I said Corporation and that was a social film then my second film was a story which was a social film called Bondage which was made by Deware Brothers - Pratigya Bhandar, but then later on when a started I had to start on my own naturally I

was a devotee of the Stunt Films even then Douglas Fairbanks was my hero, Eddie Follower was my hero, Francis Ford, you take any name William Furnham, William Duncan, Pearl White, Grace Canard, Marie Walcamp, and Ruth Holland, that was those are the films which I enjoyed in my formative years and the memory of it was very fun and I was sincerely and seriously attested so when I started my own company in in 30 after 28 and 29 I started on my own because Deware has also left me, he gone out to produce some big feature with some other financial and the very first film which I made was Thunderbolt or Diler Daku it was nothing but a crash copy of Douglas Fairbanks The Mark of Zorro produced cheaply as a treaty in 10 or 12 shifts and since in those days we have not uh enough money to do so you will be surprised I don't know how and why we did it,... but we did it the whole film was produced and uh Kodak positive stock instead of negative because the positive was cheaper and then when the picture was ready and we showed it to Dwarkadas of Kohinoor and others they must have admired me for my Dileri as it was Diler Daku but they must have doubted my judgment as to what is going to happen as luck would have it the film was released at the super cinema and it clicked in its class it clicked in this class and people liked it so it was very cheap they somehow, they like because after all the model was the Madars a perennial picture to which all Indian producers are indeed and in in one place I also said that the Indian film industry should raise the statue in honor of Douglas Fairbanks that is the least they can do to repay that debt to him because Douglas Fairbanks have been done over and over again and by schools and schools of us producers they are doing them today also like that and the music I must have done it so many times so I mean there is nothing wrong in admitting our dietary... facts are facts and they are stubborn teachers you see... they have a knack of coming out from the bottles of the heart and face you so

N V K Murthy :

No but your films with Nadia, they were not only stunt films but they were feminist films in a sense yeah

JBH Wadia :

And something else was there i'll come to it but before that let me finish quickly about the five stunt films so I made Thunderbolt or Diler Daku and it succeeded and in his class it was a C- class success because the picture was the cheapest possible it was a quickie because the talkies that come and we had to compete with them we had them I didn't mean I was one of those producers who was penniless so we had to fight against those odds and do it, but it succeeded and Thunderbolt i'll tell you another funny story about it another anecdote that comes to my mind now after the successful run at the super cinema the print was removed to a Venus talkies where we have Jaihind Cinema today Lalbagh , that was owned by a friend of mine called Mr. Tevar Senpasiya he was with me in college but he had become the theater owner of that small cinema and we were showing it there and, in those days, Homie and I had not even a car so we went by the tram car see what was the fate of Thunderbolt at Venus cinema in the meantime, Thunderbolt lived up to its name there was rain and thunder complete so we had to rush inside the theater and when we went up his pet name was Taimur so we met Taimur and he said congratulations so we congratulations I'm saying how is full I said I refuse to believe it there is so much of rain there and nothing was trying to appease me he says come with me so we went upstairs in the balcony and the balcony was full house full then he said now

(01.00.00)

Look down so I looked down house full but the third class which was nearest the screen I could not see the heads of the audience only the umbrellas all the umbrellas were open because the rain water was sticking from the roof on them so with open umbrellas they were seeing the picture they didn't mind getting wet and they were clapping that's why I made a joke that if uh the producer of umbrellas at Sherwood had seen my picture you might have made use of these anecdote..

N V K Murthy :

But how many how many shows did this positive print stand

JBH Wadia :



ntai

In those days uh I think we didn't have the windows stalk, the window stalk does not stand but the kodak with the two standard there are so Rawful stuff and definitely they were of a much higher standard more durable very different though the projection is what I illiterate that there was no training again is or projection is then but somehow then many of them were confused having learned the art of by themselves the art of running the Projection themselves

N V K Murthy :

Um you've still not told us uh how you actually, changed your profession as it were and came into filmmaking because you didn't start off as a filmmaker as soon as you started a career

JBH Wadia :

It was a lucky circumstance which helped me to come in the film lines I was a first-class graduate with in English Honors and was eligible to appear for my ICF so I studied for my ICF and before uh for one year or so and at the end of his came to examination physical test and I was disqualified because of my weak eyes the irony of it being that I studied for not less than 12 hours a day during one year and that disqualified me so I continued with my MA in the meantime my father had suddenly died after a short illness and I happened to be the only one in the family who could be called the bread earner I had to... so I gave up my fellow.. Fellowship and my job as a tutor in English in the college because all that I was getting was a princely sum of 60 rupees a month naturally I tried elsewhere and luckily, I was employed by the Central Bank of India when uh Sorabji Pochkhanawala was the Managing Editor he was very considerate and looked upon me favorably and he sent me to Delhi and told me that look her Jamshed you have been here for more than a year when you come back I will see that you become the Assistant Manager of a branch and go up to Manager but by the time I could return uh Sorabji had to resign in in that famous case known as the Shamdasani case in which the two Directors are Firozshah Chetna and Sambhaccha and Managing Director - Sorabji Pochkhanawala of uh had to resign I mean had to undergo simple imprisonment for one day uh Sorabji resigned someone else came in

this place that was Mr. Rostami Masani and became the vice chancellor of Bombay university and the first thing that he did was to ask the juniors I was a junior so when I came back my salary which was 175 in Bombay had gone up to 350 outside Bombay was reduced to 175 and on top of it within a month I got the notice so I saw uh Rostami Masani the father of Minu Masani a very learned and a very good man a god's good man and I told him that this is not fair sir I am about I'm about to get married and now you are throwing me out this is what I'm sorry but i've got to do it because they come the bank cannot afford this expenditure can I ask them sir would you advise the same thing to your son Minu if he came and asked for the employment he said pick up the phone and ask him pick up the phone and ask Minu know what I told you that you are in LLB go and practice so I also want you to practice then I told him that if it is I can do it only if you are liberal with me and give me my uh retrenchment compensation and many other things uh gratuity and something else three months leave so he was good enough to grant all that so I started practicing with the small causes law but my heart was not in law I didn't like the law at all so uh and a Alexzander Cinema which was my favorite when you during my school days and early colleges was there the theater had been demolished but I was always reminded of my association about this time I began writing scenarios I mean you can say about 10 or 12 stories and scenarios I wrote but I did not know to whom to give them .. Then one day I went to the Sharda Studio at Tardev Road where later on my one of my best friends keki Modi had his western Indian theaters limited and the central studios and the producer was Yogilal Dave was known as boss so I sent my card in that I wanted to see with some of my stories and scenarios I had to wait for about half an hour or one hour but he didn't come out and when he came out, he didn't even he didn't even look in my direction looked elsewhere and went away in his car I did not know what to do then his partner Nanubhai Desai if you remember another early pioneer film producer writer he came out and he told me what is it so I said that this is the position I have been here for more than an hour I wanted to give my stories and just find out whether it's possible for the company to take them up so he took away the three stories and said I will go to them and let you know but don't come and see me here you see me in my at my residence on Girgoan road so I went there twice or thrice and on the third or the fourth occasion he said Mr.

Wadia i've gone through three stories which you've given me I like them what would you what do you expect I was very naive I said money is no consideration if I get a break it will be enough for me so you emptied his wallet and took out 45 rupees he said I have got only 45 rupees for three stories I said whatever it is give me but see that so 15 rupees per story and is what I sold but the I don't think my name ever came even as a story writer in the succeeding films and forgot everything about it in the meantime I had given MA and Madhan Companies were known to be very enterprising so I sent my application to Madhans privately during my qualifications I didn't hear a single word from them again no reply you see possibly they were scared because of my qualifications and being a Wadia and all those things so they ignored me then somehow then I set my heart to be in the film line so I went one day to the Star Film Studio of Ardeshir Irani that was in the Chowpatty Sets if you remember just opposite the Tilak Statue so I went there and I entered and I did not know where to go suddenly a tall handsome figure in uh Bengali dhoti and kurta and salwar - what do you call it - Angavastram, saw me from he asked me I said I have come to see the boss because I want to sell my stories etc. He was very good to me he asked me about my qualifications I said I am already in MA LLB so he said good I am also a graduate I'm glad to meet you. He turned out to be Mr. B.P. Mishra who had quite made a name for himself as a Director and story writer in Ardeshir Irani's companies so he said directed me on the first floor I went there one Mr. Frenchman was sitting... one was the Frenchman was sitting he was the man-in-charge Manager of Ardeshir Irani so he said wait for some time then suddenly I heard him shouting, I listened it was Ardeshir Irani, he was in temper and getting angry with some artist a woman in a saree I don't know I never till this date I don't know whether she was the heroine or the extra or the Clerk or whatever it is but he flew at her in such a way that everybody was quiet then Frenchman told me... the Frenchman told me... that look here young boy take my hint take the hint of an experienced person this is not the right time to see the boss... scared.. So I went out and gave up all idea then I began practicing and one day again I read an advertisement in the Mauj Maja that someone wanted a Partner with 3000 rupees to make a film in partnership so I applied it turned out to be Mr. GS Deware of company brother elder brother a first-class cameraman who wanted to become a film director

and producer so when the advertisement came I saw Mr. GS Dewarra and I found out that he wanted four partners each one of them to plow in 3000 rupees so 12000 rupees the fifth partner was the financial will bring in 3000 rupees in the beginning so with 15000 rupees and provided these 15000 rupees are in the bank and 15000 rupees more will be plowed in by his father the financial father - he was a cloth merchant in Baleshwar so, it was a very lucky thing for me to happen and we wanted to make the film then suddenly our financing partner died of heart failure - young boy and we went and saw his father who was in tears he said I didn't want her to come in the film line it was only for the sake of my son now that is dead I please deliver me so Deware and I mean thought of the agreement in his presence embraced him and parted as good a good man but bad businessman then my second partner was one in uh Solomon - an advocate very handsome fellow and who wanted to become a hero so he was there but the moment he found that the financing position was shaky he went out the third one was the great Indulal Yagnik - of Gujarati politics later on trade union leader and he was there so one day he and I and you we in those days we used to meet in a bar - Savay Hotel bar up near the central uh station and at seven o'clock until ten o'clock we will be there discussing the story whether we could find one or not we searched for some several stories they were all turned down and with him I was there and one day ultimately, I offered him my cellar of was vasantleela I said you go since you've not found any good story and scenario have a look at this so next day when he came he was very happy and he said we have found the story and we'll produce ourselves as story and scenario in the meantime that our uh Mr. Shah junior had died so Indulal Yagnik also back out and only devil and myself were there fortunately the boss of the question studio where I was working was a great pioneer a man who is called the Father of the Indian Commercial film industry, he was there and he was well disposed towards me also and instead of I was his son's age he was a senior but he always used to call me Wadia Seth and embarrass me. So he said that to divide me that you go and produce the entire film in my studio on credit and he recommended our case to Kodak that supply the film also on credit so that's how it very major financially started it vasantleela and the picture began came out and was quite successful it was quite successful but then later on uh Bandu that is how I used to call Deware I started his own

film then I was lost that's how I started the first diledaku when that succeeded I become a little more ambitious I had another small second hand car also so I produced the first railroad trailer in India called toofanmail that was entirely silent was my was my first film and it was entirely short on location that was the on railway stations and goods yards and cabins and uh running the running trains and on the roof of the engine etc. The whole story..

N V K Murthy :

To what extent was it inspired by the great train robbery...

JBH:

No not by the great train robbery, but it was definitely inspired by the railroad serials of Helen Holmes and she was the director of those films was her husband JP mcgowan I remember their names and I liked those thrillers very much .. Those stunt films and I modeled my story to suit the Indian conditions and made to toofanmail

N V K Murthy :

Ready now here again uh Jamshedbhai... do you remember any characteristic? Anecdotes of this particular period

JBH Wadia :

Yes, speak to a number of them I will have to be a little selective so, starting with toofanmail, I can tell you that the story we are into making of toofanmail find well was as interesting and as hearing as the film itself once we were I once I wanted to take the shot of a train approaching and going over the camera we have seen such shots in the American films serials. So, Homie was my cameraman at that time I was the director so we went and hid ourselves in railway nala with our camera and as soon as the train came Homie just took out the eyehole and started cranking it you see and the whole train passed over and we took the complete shot to make it more effective we took it in slow motions about 8 or 12 pitches instead of 16 and then I started with my other work along the rail lines with my unit within a few minutes two policemen railroad

policemen came and grabbed both two brothers and took them away we didn't know what was happening he took us to the station and put us before the station master who again happened to be a Parsi in those days the station masters and the railway guards and the ancient levels that were Parsi or Christians mostly... so he was very angry with us he said you have flouted all these rules and you have come and disturb us and I said how did you come to know of it because the engine the driver has now parked the cart... he could not stop the cart in between and he complained from the next station so now we will keep you in custody... fortunately I had the letter of authority from the DSP which was another delightful way in which they said that Mr. JBH Wadia unit should be allowed to work on the railways so long as they did not disturb or damage any reliable property so I said okay this is the authority but we have neither disturbed not damaged the thing went out I went over us and everything was all right so I don't know what came over him possibly because we were young I need to put pity on us or possibly because he thought that there were two Parsi youngsters doing something wonderful so he some two or three or four abusive words were thrown at us and said look at the next time you do so I mean you will definitely be in custody... we think then went out but I was so nervous that I stopped the shooting for that day that was one incident. The other incident which I remember into toofanmail was that we wanted a shot of uh my hero Yashwant Dave to take a jump from a bridge on the roof of the railway boogie and run across it from one boogie to another then come up to the engine and ask the engine driver to stop it because he had come to know that the bridge had been blown off that was a very crude trick shot which we had taken half bridge and half masked shot so I said that here is the authority and I would like to do it again it was a Parsi, as usual he said all right you can do it but we said how many of you are I said four of us are there he said I am not allowed to keep more than five we are already four you see and if all of you come then I cannot do it because the regulation says that in the engine there should be five person and not more that I cannot flout so we came to some compromise I said all right I become the fireman so I became the fireman the firemen actually stayed out of the engine so there were only four of us there the fifth would be the Dave we will come at the proper time so, he came up the camera Homie was tanking it and then he said in Gujarati stop the car stop the chain at once so the

engine driver pulled the cable brought it to an abrupt halt you see but he was really panicky there's the people who should think there was an accident so he again started it but our work was done, the shot which I wanted was taken because the car is stopped, I mean I mean the train engine had stopped so, at the next station we all went out thanked the driver that was one incident then I will come to my third film because now I was successful so I could produce pictures in a good way the third one was called the Lion man in which I took up a new hero Burman Shroff whom I had termed as the Dead Devil Burman Shroff and I tell you too that it have not come across a better stunt puller in my 50 years of career than Burman such a fellow he was that he would never say no to any stunt... see now in the lion man or Singh Garjana he was supposed to wear the entire dress of a lion and the head of a lion which is specially purchased and he would put it on cheerfully even if he would perspire he would not bother then one time he was supposed to take a stunt from uh one side of a hill to another by a pulley along the rope a sort of stunt which i've seen Eddie Polo take in one of his scences.. Which I said now let us do this which Eddie can do it Burman can do it so we need it we put up the rope across the chasm about 30 feet wide and the pulley was there the villains are coming up in the meantime Burman catches the pulley and slides from one end of the hill on this side to the end of the other on the other side and he went so fast and he banged against a rocky current and actually there was a third like a big cannonball or something and he was lying... Homie said that the shot is okay so we shouted the moment but then now get up come and get a Burman would not get up so, he thought that he had passed out all of us said but he would not simply get up then after some one or two minutes he slowly got up and he was all right and we received a sigh of relief then I asked him Burman what did you mean i was shouting to you all along all others were saying that come out did you I did not hear you the master fitted so strong here that he could not even hear us as he remains there i thought that the camera was cranking so I did not want to spoil the shot ... That was Burman ...

N V K Murthy :

That was one and those were the days when you didn't have a stunt alternative .. No stand by more than it is

JBH Wadia :

Most of the stunts were taken by the audience themselves very seldom in the case of a female artist we might employ a duplicate very seldom but in the case of Nadia never ... not once ... she did all that all everything... never not once ... then then again it was a new type of film we are taking it on a ship on board the ship we came to and comes with some dark people and went and shot many of the scenes on the steamer itself now in one scene Burman having wiped out the entire contingent of the gangsters he's supposed to jump out in the water to escape so I asked him the Burman do you know how to swim... he said I am an excellent member why somebody says what do you say not i'll take it jump from 20 feet out more in water he said i'll do it so we placed our camera in a launch and Burman took a jump from the steamer in a long shot in the water which we also caught and then we had told Burman that they should come to the launch come suddenly a found that Burman could not come .. He was drowning .. And my... one of my artists I think she said Burman was drowning ... somebody just could try to save him so we rushed our lungs down there threw a lifejacket and took him out... then later on and I said Burman what did you mean you said you are an excellent swimmer where do you swim in the swimming pool, " no sir not in the swimming pool then where I end a small well which we have" got I said you called this excellent swimming but he never said no to instant that was Burman then after the last film was called the Amazon in which it was the reverse of the Mark of Zorro the woman becomes the savior and that was Padma that beautiful creature whom Babur Patel later on abducted away from me but after my second talkie for his own Gandharva Cinetone and about this time till then I was giving stunt pictures of silence and pictures in competition with the talkies... the talkies that come but I had never thought of making a talkie till then but about this time I had made good money what I did was that I had given the booking of my famous Mr. BM Billy Maureya he was a very competent film distributor but at that time fortunately he had these small pictures stunned pictures American cereals or Italians or eternal five fighting pieces like that so he was my distributor and somehow after withdrawing our monthly expenses for three years I had preserved about 25000 rupees there I said give that money so he had kept it then

I went to him with the proposal that I want to make a talkie and he said all right i've got 25000 rupees you give me 25000 rupees in 50000 rupees we made the talkie if there is little extra to be recovered what wanted for the production will get from the distributor so you should come and see me the next day

N V K Murthy :

Now was 50000 rupees was enough talkie film

JBH Wadia :

Absolutely more than

N V K Murthy :

What was the what was the average budget for these silent films

JBH Wadia :

10 000 thousand and 10,000 thousand was maximum.

JBH Wadia :

No on the contrary I mean you I want your interruptions to avoid the monotony of my voice otherwise I will become fond of hearing my voice so then I said we must prove talking next day he came he I went to see him and he told me that he will do it in partnership with him try them that the proposal so Billey became our financing partner and Wadia became the working partners... later on the Tata brothers came Mr. BM Tata and his brother was there also his partners but Tata was an active partner BM Tata he was our sound technician also and that's how Lal-E-Yaman was, like now when Lal-E-Yaman that was your first thought you see I knew of a man called Joseph David he was he was the producer and the President of a very well-known stage company called Parsi Theatrical Stage Company because many practices were involved in that unit and he used to produce Urdu plays...

N V K Murthy :

Joseph David... Joseph David... was he in any way related to it accepted both were (inaudible) guys that's nothing else nothing else

JHB Wadia:

But this man was a rarity and I was his admirer even from my colleges when I used to see his plays all the plays of the Paris Theatrical Stage Company were seen by me... Khaki-Putla and Nur-E-Watan, Hoor-E-Arab many and many others I don't remember them in six plays he had fallen apart in medieval times and he had to close down his company because the competition of the cinema... that had films that started so you had to close down but I knew that he was the man who had given the story of Alam-Ara the first place his name was there also so I came into contact with him through one of my unit members called Mr. Isa and I went to see him because when I went to see him he was staying at Dongri in a very old dilapidated building second floor two or three rooms only and they were not full of furniture but full of books more books than uh chairs and tables or bed completely and I was aggested looking at it and then I found out that he had the Elizabeth (inaudible) or 60th Milo and also Bowman and Fetcher and all others you can name yesterday and the eighteenth century cemeteries and here George Bernard Shaw's place and then on the other shelf he had the Marathi plays on the third Urdu in Devon's and everything he was a linguist also he knew English Marathi Guajarati a little bit of Urdu and a little bit of Hebrew and a very scholarly type of man so I mean apart from the fact that I wanted him to write a story for me I fell in love with him actually there is a man I mean who is so very well conversant with English literature to this extent he can discuss with me Shakespeare so after some time I decided to take up his story called Lal-E-Yaman, it was an Arabian night's fantasy but the entire background was of a social film domestic element as if a husband and his wife and the second wife and the son of the first wife and the seeker is played by the second wife against accusing the first wife's uh son who was grown up etc. With a complete social background so i liked it and in that the role of the king was played by Jahal Khambata especially called him there because nobody knows today he is both Joseph David and Jahal Khambata are two of the greatest figures in our in our early cinema but they have been neglected and of course at the time of the silver jubilee of

the talkie when some journalist approached me to write an article on Wadia Movietone I decided to write an article on Joseph David so that his memory can be preserved so that story was there in which the king marries the second time and comes in the viles of his new wife young wife who accuses the son with whom she wanted to make love and the father gets excited king and drives him to anxiety now there is the second son by the way that's a young boy eight or nine years so the old King like in a feat of madness like king Lear leaves the kingdom says do what you like I'm going away when he finds out that his wife has played such dirty tricks on him and he takes the boy of everything the Prince, see there is an irony because she wanted the boy to become the king afternoon not the first elder brother but the younger

(01:30:00)

Brother son by her but he goes away so that gave me an idea because Jahal was a great Shakespearean actor this is something worth recording I mean unless it goes by default, I'm telling you all these things Jahal were my senior in Saint Xaviers college and he was in charge of that theatrical department there is also a majoring in

N V K Murthy :

English literature I am a MA English literature

JBH Wadia :

And he used to see Shakespeare plays year by year and I used to see them and help him at backstage he had played all the tragedies he was Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth, Romeo and then he was also then As You Like It in many other plays, Comedy Of Errors.. A Wonderful Day and I remember one the great actor Alexander Wallace came to Mumbai and he saw Jahal on the stage he went and embraced it and then said the time here you have got a man who can do justice to the London Stage that was this is he attended that Economic Institute started by Sir Patrick another big name and one of the most renowned persons in literature and many other arts somebody wrote a book "Village of state" Gardner another Englishman

N V K Murthy :

And Jamshed bhai said you were talking about Khambata his background of Shakespearean stage and you came to the point when he came to where he went to the Institute of Economics uh starting with Patrick

JBH Wadia :

It was started by suspect one of the most talents if not genius of his time when AJ Gardner wrote his well-known book the pillars of state he selected six British contemporaries representative of the cultural times and Patrick Geddes was one of them and he was not only a scholar of English literature drama but he was a town planner and it was he who had given to Bombay the first big master plan as to how to develop the reclaimed land at Church Gate facing the university and unfortunately, that plan was not accepted because there were a number of gardens there and then playgrounds were there and apart from that the structures which were to come up were very important from the academic point of view that plan was never taken up by the government here so Jahal was one of his favorite students and Jahal used to call me there as his favorite friend and I had come into contact with Geddes and I remember that once he told me that I want Jahal to come on the London stage and perform Shakespeare if he comes there I will say if you come to London I see that it gets an opening on the London stage unfortunately Jahal had no money and he would not ask anyone he didn't even ask for the scholarship from the Tatas or others and he lost the chance but that was Jahal now Jahal played the mad king and naturally I had seen him plainly king here on the stage so I told Dada and understand I have conceived the whole character on king Lear my dialogue will prove to you that it is on king Lear so I said let Jahal do it so we gave to Jahal to elaborate the character and I tell you that it's one of the finest characterizations which has come from an early Indian talkie I mean if you allow me to say so about my film then along with him was that boy prince now we had finalized all our cast but we could not find a young boy who can play the place then one day uh the proprietor and we called him for an audition in the small office at Parel so there Dada...Joseph David as we used to call him Dada and I listened to him

and I like this way of singing extremely so I signed him up immediately and then I suggested to Dada that let us make a change in this original screenplay and instead of giving only one song to this boy let us give him three to four songs because he will look into that he will justify the role... that's how La-Le-Yamen become a musical teacher which creates the story singing classical songs like darbari Kedah and when the picture was released, he stole the picture from all and he became a star overnight that was the beginning of later on he was with me in a number of films in Vadim Utah and elsewhere but he gave up everything and went back to his first love now when he was in my company, I had allowed him full attitude to carry on his studies so that he can become meticulous and at the same time he can attend some uh music classes but I was very fond of the music of Abdul Karim Khan and I thought that the way he was singing he was suited to the Kirana Gharana of Abu Karim Khan so I said that you should take up that guarana but Abdul Karim was watching Bombay he was in some of the places Sawai Gandarva his star people another big name and immortal in our music world he was there in Bombay but he had also gone away so I placed him under another musician called Jaunkar his uncle was individual and when Sawai Gandharva came he became the star people of Gandharva, today because the story is a Pandit in his own right and he's dedicated his life entirely to music he is the Pandit needs just to acknowledge exponent one of the three best exponents of Kirana Gharana and for the last many years he is the senior professor of music in the music department of the university of Mumbai so that was how we made La-Le Yamen I was completely nervous I believe in the wood I did not know anything about talking he wasn't in his agenda studio so I went to him and told him because Bennani and I had come to in contact during the silent stages uh when he was a director in Columbus and then he went so I went to him and he said I'm saying struck a bargain building he signed the contract terms etc. Which I didn't bother to look into and one day was fixed I think it was 13th of April 13 being a very lucky day for me somehow or other though I don't believe in astrology then we were supposed to shoot from nine o'clock so, Homie, myself and my unit were all there at seven o'clock and ready with makeup at nine o'clock but boundary was shifting his own film of Zelda or some such film and the shooting went until one o'clock since he came out at one o'clock and I went and took

my first shot shortly and La-le-Yaman, after one o'clock now Vishwa Singh was the history was the goddess very well-known name in roses one of the foremost aquatics and I did not know anything about how to take a shot when to say start when to say clap nothing like that so I fumbled and I made mistakes because when uh issues would usually come there, I would not know what to do so after all I got a little clearing and he came out and said Mr. Wadia don't become nervous you see when I do this you have to start and then when the clap will come and when the clap will go out then give a sign for the dialogue or strong and it will go on like that so I did not know how a talkie was give me till then and I took the shot so the news went out in the industry that uh Mr. Wadia had fumbled does not know what to do why not tell him to stick to silent pictures like that but somehow rather, i've got in tune soon and completed the picture against all odds the picture was again shown to Bhavaji that is foreign and he liked it he was the first men to like it the only meant to like it the finished print so you measured in my building and said that I will convert my silent picture out into talking provided you beautiful to me see nobody also really willing to take my film I'd be able to play it on the playoffs locality and as luck would have it clicked it ran for 14 weeks instead of four weeks and uh it had to be taken off in the 14th week because Bhavaji had signed the contract 14 weeks earlier for the next picture of some other producer which was to come on the eighth day and the Eid was coming in the 50 period so with a heavy heart he and I and Billy had to remove the fear otherwise it would have been the first film to do a silver jubilee 25 weeks on married and not concocted jubilees as they happened later on

N V K Murthy :

The first talkie film uh didn't do so well at the box office did it very well click like anything nobody's business

JHB Wadia:

Already beginning talking to such a way that the silent picture was immediately turned all the studios into talkies

N V K MURTHY :

No but I had the impression that uh did even better than uh more and did better business that's one

JHB Wadia:

Absolutely ready box office for them my publicity value for them they ran for 11 weeks each my picture ran for 14 weeks and had to be removed so that was a good luck for good luck for me I made a good beginning

N V K MURTHY :

After La-Le-Yamen which was that was naturally five four or five hundred seven eight films were not that famous

JHB Wadia :

Were knocked out of some pictures nor fantasy and a musical next one was a place again by dada it was the story came from him it was called the Garden of Egypt and again a fantasy story and that was we fill us the story my usual cast then suddenly uh Joseph David was a writer he wrote socials mythologies devotionals and detective stories saw some out of the stories like Sorrows of Satan and many other things so they said that look at this boy is here first and then said he used to call me Jamshed said I used to call him Dada they said I want you to produce this Vaman avtar because very important character and so we produce with him now when I produce woman out there with him the orthogonal Hindu element in Bombay took exception saying he is our god he is the fifth avatar of the Vishnu and he's not being played by a Hindu but by a Parsi whether we want it to be played by a Bramhan Avtar by no one else so I did not know what to do I mean we have spent money on it unfortunately bhavaji was very successful he went and saw the chief priest in Bhuleshvar an old man a vulnerable old man that said look here we have made a film we want you to see it if you see it and if you find there is nothing objectionable we want you to give us a clean certification that you can release it because we have made the picture in good faith which means the idea has made it a good fit he took me there so the it was a very nice polite young man I

twist he said but I'm sorry I cannot see the picture in any theater that is against my principles you bring this the projection here and visually that was impossible 35-millimeter projector to be taken there installed and to show so then I began to talk with you and I learned about Hindu literature into mythology Hindu scriptures regveda and many other things and also the motive behind making Vaman Avtar and the old man was really genuinely pleased so he gave us a certificate and I'm sorry that I could I'd since I don't go out to see films, I cannot see Mr. Wadia's film but I have discussed it with him and I do not find anything objectionable so we publicize that letter put up in a frame even in the theater and then we showed them around all that that's how we said that was the story after Vaman Avtar was very successful so he made a sequel of La-Le-Yaman called Ma-re-Yaman again with heroes there and others but it was not half as successful as the original because sequels seldom become successful very seldom do sequels become successful and anyway, he brought us money and I went on then something unexpected happened fearless she was Miss Nadia at that time she was brought into my company by one Mr. Kanga who had seen her on the stage in Lahore and I had an interview with her and suddenly it struck me that since I had produced Diler Daku with Padma who was beautiful but very delicate but here is a woman quite hefty acrobatic and capable of taking the stunts she she's a rider she's a swimmer everything and she's also a fencer she answered and echo that she would take splits she could go on the trapeze and many other things she could do because she was also into circus when she was young and then on the stage as a dancer so I signed up. I all along thinking that I am going to make the reverse of Mark of Zorro on her quite a few character and that's how I produce Hunter Wali another one but before I did that I wanted to feel because you could not speak Urdu or understand it properly so I had to ask my dialogue director to coach her up so he was from the north so he coached there for six months and in six months I only took a small role I gave a small role in Me-re-Yaman, called in a social setup and then I was producing another ambitious picture called Jose water based on ancient Iran the civil war between two sisters when the last emperor is the god fell and Islam became Islam was established in IRAN it's a historical story and I knew this story also Dada again brought a wonderful story and I wanted to do it I did it in wish I made a slave girl now as it happened that picture took

a long time to complete it was a major film so I said let me make a stop jiffy so I the hunterwali scenario was completely ready screenplay I gave it to Homie I said now you do it because I have no time I'm doing the other film but I was with him throughout and Hunterwali with her stunts and coming as the savior of the people with a little adaptation a little away from Mark of Zoro and Indian sentiment being there mothers the mother element was there it looked like nobody's business

N V K Murthy :

This was in which 36 35

JBH Wadia :

30 35 35 I started in 33 I made six pictures in a row all directed by me so this was 35. 35 and uh it clicked like nobody's business Hunterwali everywhere and it became super if I had only patented the name I would have made thousands of rupees the Hunterwali shoes, Hunterwali belts, Hunterwali weeps and Hunterwali watches match everything intervals all over India for three years and then naturally nothing succeeds like success so when interval is and I also liked it because nothing succeeded I mean I was elated I felt very glorious that my film has succeeded but I went on producing stunt pictures one after another and as luck would have it whether they were A class or B class every picture which I made succeeded at box office and some of them as good as Hunterwali a film called Jai Bharat which I made a story set in a native state and the famous jungle picture to Toofani Tarzan based on thousands of the years but the reason why my pictures if you allow me to say so much too the reason why they are still remembered today is not only because of the fields stunts gags and comedies but because of the story value and some purpose in that story for example uh I was in the Congress for a number of years in the II Civil Deceiving movement I was involved that time I used to wear Khadi and become foreign I don't know why but I didn't like it and I was supposed to be one of the Congress dictators in the II Civil Deceiving movement you see but god is called off as you know after 28 the congress dictators my turn was to come after 40. So I lost the chance of being garland and becoming the hero in the just

of his majesty's government after which I would have come out and joined politics and might have become minister of information all right

N V K Murthy :

That might have been a lost Presidential industry

JHB Wadia:

Now I don't know become Minister I might have defected from one party to another which is all in the game nowadays but anyway it was a good thing a blessing in disguise so I began producing now why uh if you allow me to say so I'm sorry I'm doing my own publicity but I can't tell you this is I used to write the screen play myself very often the dialogue first dialogue which will be corrected by the dialogue writer and in almost every stunt film which I made I introduced the problem my most favorite problem was Hindu Muslim unity to which I revolted again and again in number of fields along with that emancipation of women literacy campaign untouchability, struggle for freedom etc. So with every stunt film there was something of basically something which was not there in other services that is why on top of it the some pictures were technically the best in India I was the best for the simplest and then Nadia took all history no doubling and she could drive and swim and think anything she can do so that was one big reason secondly Homie had become an expert in direction of stunts so in every film the stunts were entirely in his charge because he was much better than myself but when a genetic scene would come he would call me and he would call me I will take over help him I might direct it sometimes a song if it was an intricate song or something like that but that's how that's why my films are remembered the stunt pictures were of a higher caliber a little higher grade than they were

N V K Murthy :

But this is a very interesting point that you mentioned uh that

JBH Wadia :

Yes, because no overt political statements were possible no what are your thoughts yes but I that from one point of view censorship when the British Indian government was there was more liberal than what it became in 1947 and until the 1980s the British censorship Indian census was more liberal they never interfered with us in anything only there should be no direct attack on imperialism no direct attack on the crown if you didn't do that you can do anything and get away with it could we could we put it also

N V K Murthy :

To their lack of understanding of that no

JBH Wadia :

No, I'm sorry they were no they liberals I mean they were here to rule over us no government is altruistic so if any if the British government came it wanted to make money out of India if we were there we would have made money about imperial schools have made money out of other Indians in India the Mughals have done it the Marathons have done it and even from Ashoks you see the taxation has been there and you have taken the money from the people here they were taking the money from the entire people and trying to entice London England and I think we must take it in the very uh correct the correct approach should be of liberal philosophy of life you see because they have done many good things and as I tell you and I have said it and against many others that you are doing great injustice to the censorship as it existed right after 1947. It was more liberated in many respects for example uh in number of stories I and many others will saw a tyrant the king he would be a tyrant the people will revolt against him azadi liberty freedom they will not object sometimes the king would be good this minister would be the villan of the peace or his general would be the minister of this villain of the peace like that when they allowed these things god wants no objection no objection whatsoever so long as you did not attack British rule directly taking the name of the British government you could do anything you could do almost anything only once or twice I know the case of Bhakt Vidur which was a silent picture produced when I was making uh i was about to make VASANT LILA just before that

little before that in uh studios was the proprietor and he had a tall and lanky figure like Gandhiji so when he took up the devotional story of bhakti Vidur our mythology he played the role of Vidur and his entire makeup was like that of Gandhiji including this thick than the danda in his hand so the innuendo was so fragrant it was so clear that the British government objected and the census did not pass it they said no you know what you are trying to do it is not you do it is condition we won't allow you to do it so the picture was banned somehow or rather I don't know what happened I was not concerned that I don't know the inside story but why can't I say succeeded in removing the men in some states including Bombay and the picture was shown in Mumbai with maybe one or two cuts but it was shown in Bombay and it did a roaring business because the nationalist Indians were there, they saw individual countries non-violence and all those things that's also their love and when our our censorship was established after our political independence situ, I am sorry to say but such frivolous objections were taken against several pieces and I have experienced that not in my case but in case of other films also for example there was one film in which about Rajaji was used in a comedy comic song the census objectives Rajaji means Raja Gopal you are insulting him you move towards raga in another picture there was a song another comic song saying Patel now Patel is a very common name so but some Petal is made full of in that story I don't know what it was objection remove the word Patel

N V K Murthy :

The Patel is a very common question but then

JBH Wadia :

Then our wonderful uh chief minister Morarji with music there and in which the glasses of mine are taken up and drunk you know not paraphernal in Opera films you won't believe it uh the senses cut up the moment it came to the lips you have to cut it off with the result that the song suffered the Opera suffered such stupidities they have committed I tell you and I was always against them I also fight against them I think no this is not sensation listen of course in Indian films they will not allow anything if you have a biasing in which the whiskey bottles the whiskey bottles are there and if

somebody takes it up cut and leave aside uh it is the moral overtones against you see for example the bust of a woman you see if it is any prominence in the close-up cut they will cut it from my film one of my films and then Kamini Kaushal she took up the censors actress she went and saw the senses in one of her films maybe Bombay talks and I'm it is it is reported I think it's a true story and for which has stopped to come any question she told those people what do you want me to do these are my natural guys do you want me to cut off my breasts

N V K Murthy :

What do you want me to do?

JBH Wadia :

I'm sorry but I mean one has to be truthfully it is very unpleasant to say these things but from the historical point of view it has to be recorded the shortcomings of the Indian censor board in those days now long since it has come out fortunately, in the last three years one must go very much and of course censorship will be always there I am not against incision I mean in a developed country like India with number of religions number of casts number of cultures flourishing censorship is necessary but it has got to be done with a world of understanding it should not be frivolous and I'm sorry very often the people who sit there they do not know anything about filmmaking you ask them they can't distinguish between the negative and the positive leave aside anything else which is a long shot and which is a close-up I was told to remove by the censor boarding Madhosh picture it was Meena Kumari's first picture I brought it on the screen in the social pictures afterwards came by Biju Bavara so, there was a song and the dance number and I was told that I should remove the short of Chalakti Choli shining because they breast winged the best so I looked on the movie I could not find any so I took my piece there and I told the officer whose name I should not take because he was such a nice man and a good friend of mine himself involved in politics at one time good man he said why I said now tell me forever says where is the Chalakti choli this shining blouse or whatever you find where is it he showed me one top shot one top shot 20 feet up and some three girls were forming some they were making some design

on the ground and they were moving about and the light fell on the cholis remove this and I said this is not a close-up whatever it is removed

(02.00.00)

Now this was the immediate is coming committed by the of people there who did not know what

They were another time there was a lady on the censor board and possibly there was a v-shaped blouse worn by some heroin I don't know but I heard the story and it is true it is true I heard that story and uh and that lady objected this is very vulgar you see you are showing this breast from v-shape and the breast formation can be seen that ladies have the guts to tell you before three other male members... madam look at your blouse look at your blouse now dismantle sort of people in those so I think let us round it off by one another which I happen to remember on

The spot now you see at the time of Ram Rajya produced by Bhat brothers it was being viewed by the censor officers there not the censor but two or three of them were there were supposed to see the film they came out and then they had a very serious discussion among themselves and came to the producers and said to Shankar bhai - the elder brother that you are such fine people gentlemanly and all that we like your pictures but why are you stupid well directly so you are saying what will guarantee where do you find you see where Ram and Sita are in the shining bedroom, Ram dialogue to Sita "tum jab soti ho to hbahot achi lagti ho" when you are near me, he said when you are sleeping with me the person you did not even know ... so they had to change to "Sita tum jab mere saath hoti ho, toh bahot acchi lagti ho" such were the person in censors.. Now let us finish it off as I said censorship is necessary it has got to be liberal it should be taken in the right space

N V K Murthy :

Jamshid said yesterday we were talking about the censorship of films and so on yeah and how the old days the censors were seemed to be much more imaginative and they were not very wooden headed in their approach would you like to tell us something from you the vantage point of your own personal knowledge something about the uh the so-called social films that were made in the early days both during silent film days

as well as talkies because they seem to suggest that the early filmmakers were not preoccupied with making money they of course every film had to sell and every film had to be seen to make ends meet but at the same time they seem to have other purposes also in mind they have not completely lost sight of those other ideas what do you have to say

JBH Wadia :

Uh Murthi, you are right to an extent only when you say that the early filmmakers were not motivated from the point of view of making money only but naturally the idea of making money was there it is legitimate human and very necessary because unless you make money in a film you cannot produce another so that that point of view from that point of view I think they were also commercial but you are again, right when you say that in course of time say in the last see after 19 1950 or so the new element the new producers who came had further motive only one thing to make money profits I think that is how uh the so-called proposal makers came into film line you see what they did was that they made a proposal with some couple of stars good music director and say a good cameraman or director and then with the proposal they approached the distributors or the financiers it was all right proposal making it in itself is not wrong nothing wrong with it but where do you emphasize it to such an extent that once you are once you know that the proposal has been accepted and you are on the right side of your books in making films then you lose sight of the result that of film making which is first of all one of dedication you can say that is not that today as it was at one time it was definitely there in the early filmmakers because foreign for one thing their economic position also was such that they couldn't make much money very few theaters were there and the people were not film minded or cinema minded in the beginning very it took a long time say about 10 years before they could you could say that a regular film audiences came into being the pioneers naturally they were the pioneers in those days the pioneers naturally do not think much of making money as of giving uh went to that personality through their films what they want generally is to throw their ideas to project their mind to the public in the form of entertainment and from that point of view I think some of the early films were really made by dedicated

persons later on uh if you are now you wanted to ask me about the social films and I think i've already told you that the social films were all through establishment films there were very few cases in which you could find as you want against establishment in the early films some of the early pictures which came from Calcutta from new talkies new theaters some of the early films which came from Prabhat also say later on from Bombay talkies had tried to make a compromise open revolt I do not remember there was any open revolt against social customers

N V K Murthy :

Now when you uh what I had in mind was I can't talk first-hand knowledge of the old silent days but in the talkies uh films like Achoot Kanya and even earlier um I think Chandra also will go to which you are referred in your writings these were these were certainly anti-establishment in one sense that there they were anti-the social conservative norms of the Brahminical classes but in one sense they were not they were also, pro-establishment as you rightly say because the so-called uh more liberal uh government of the day uh as far as the social norms were concerned the British they were against sati they were against untouchability and so in that sense they were pro-establishment but they did go against the grain of the conservative core of Indian society

JBH Wadia :

You can count such films on one's fingers taking the cut more or less and when you were talking about Achoot Kanya and I should both came much later on and I think they do deserve and this each one of them deserves a niche in the history of our Indian cinema but between the two I prefer the Achoot Kanya of gentle also which was in I said Kanya and the idea was that and an untouchable the Iran is an individual and the hero belongs to the higher state of society and they fall in love and whether the love whether their love is fulfilled or not but in a truth the problem was much deeper in general where I still remember one scene in which uh Gombai playing the role of the untouchable girl has come into contact with the hero who s uh who belongs to the uh say bourgeon is class they have come into contact and then something happens and the

girl is driven away from the household and she have to come back to her family and to her community when she comes back, she is not accepted when she is not accepted you see her create the curse what I still remember is the film being in Gujarati today I have become an untouchable among the untouchables you see now that was something quite new something, we should not have we should not strike anyone else until then whether they produce pictures of untouchability or not some such attempts were made then uh there were a few of off-beat films in the early days also you know especially in Bengal did and Ganguli England return and then later on Sarat babu's film Kappal Kundela and in Bombay in Pune in Dunya Na- Mane was there so those things were there along with them then along with that babu Rao is given another good film Kalyan Khajina the treasure of Kalyan which was which centered down Shivaji maharaja in which the sense of justice of Chhatrapati Shivaji is brought out very efficiently variably and when a Muslim girl has been captured she is the daughter of the General who was in charge of the Kalyan district he was defeated and she was brought in the Darbar of Shivaji maharaja and then Shivaji give his ruling and he said that no she's a woman I don't want her to be a touched right where you and any one of you here and he allowed to go squat free under that squat back to her home such so many heroic deeds were there all along but the really films real off-beat films came with much later on especially in the last few years in the last decade you can see that this off-beat films have tackled problems which the regular producers had not thought of doing it or dared not to can they have been doing

N V K Murthy :

No, I was trying to see that the offbeat films of last decade are there when we come to the contemporary scene, I'm sure you will tell us more about it but were there precursors of these films in the earlier days and were they was there an intone where the entertainment film took over completely now that's what I was trying to get in from your knowledge

JBH Wadia :

Entertainment films are always there whether they were social mythological yes that's accepted but

N V K Murthy :

For the offbeat films of today and yesterday or the last decade were there precursors during the during the silent film days and the later talkies

JBH Wadia :

Yes, I mean if you go in for an epistemological study it is possible to find the precursors there as I have given you some names already but just often, I am not in a position to tell you I will I might have to do some homework before I can refresh my memory and give you the names but here are some of the names which I can think of Savkari Pasha, I already said, England returned Kapila Kundala, Achoot Kanya etc

N V K Murthy :

You mentioned about the studio Prabhat and have also been Bombay talkies in Bombay uh Sager yeah later yes New Theaters in Bombay in Calcutta um could you tell us something about these studios what do you want me to say how which give us an idea because to us all this history of these old studios is just history that we read in the books exactly and here is a person who remembers those studios who have seen them function and you could perhaps tell us how they flourished and uh what are the factors that they made the momentum flourish and what were the factors that also made them close down

JBH Wadia :

Those were the healthier days of filmmaking for the simple reason that each studio had complete personnel exclusively in its charge, the producer had uh on his payroll not only the police and carpenters and electricians as they are today even not even twitter and also but also hero and heroines and music directors everyone was on the staff he was supposed to come in time say at nine and nine thirty and go home at 6:00 or 6:30 and during the day he would be there available to the producer for any work

required and then number two and very important that he was exclusively uh in in once employed in one studio only there was no so-called freelance system which came later on and spoiled the spirit of camaraderie which existed between the boss and the staff that is why they were in a position to give if you allow it is just coherent pictures whatever the standard when they took up when they went in for production one film then they could finish it at a stage in about three months or four months maximum five months and that is why number of studios used to give more than one film a month general also in Ranjit he gave about 15 to 16 pictures a year even in Wadia movietone we used to produce five to six pictures of our own plus six pictures which were either subsidized by us or produced in Wadia movietone under different banners and that was possible because each and every one was available to us.. For example I still remember that during the monsoon we used to keep our indoors uh studio shooting suppose suddenly the sky cleared say in the month of august as generally does I had only to issue instructions and say stop work in the studio don't start it don't start it at all pack up and go outdoors because everybody was available, the entire unit was there ... however and the sequence may be different but some a sequence which we can take in outdoors we used to make use of the day now such a thing cannot exist today in the so-called freelance with the so-called freelance system prevailing...

N V K Murthy :

Do you remember any interesting anecdotes of your own studios or other studios of famous names of later years or some one or two of them are still surviving of how they were on the payroll and uh how they were faring because we hear that even the great Motilala.. Both the heartbeat of the matinee idol of those days

JBH Wadia :

Yes, he was on a very every one of them had to make a modest beginning in those days and the skills were of course much lower but comparatively so because anyone who was making 100 rupees that day no in those days was happy about his earnings then one who is making a thousand today with inflation and other things another important thing in those days another significant factor in those days was that the hero or the

heroine or whether the director or the cameraman or whether it was the case of the coolie or the carpenter every one of them was a handyman more often than not if a carpet was to be stretched properly and our staff was busy elsewhere it was not unusual for the hero or the second hero or the member of the production staff to arrange the carpet by himself as if he was a coolie and very often the heroine would come and attend to the decor with a from a woman's point of view saying no this curtain is not properly placed and you place it there and like that and everybody was involved in filmmaking nobody was weak nobody was poor na koi bandan

N V K Murthy :

Yeah, I think that speaks volumes as you say for one thing it prevented an actor from signing up an impossible number of films it was impossible, he simply could not be he was not unlikely

JBH Wadia :

And holding up he was not allowed to do he was not allowed to do either he had to leave the company and he was he would go to the other company which was legitimate or in very rare cases the permission of the producer was taken very rarely

N V K Murthy :

So just by guest appearance and for a film also now could you ... could you tell us uh what are the factors do you think that led to downfall of the studio system

JBH Wadia :

Uhh, the studio system that is the advantage development in technology which enable us to make films nowadays not in this studio with the artificial lights but we can take a few small complements of lights and do it in a regular house or a home or a palace or a castle anywhere and then it gives a sense of realism also,

N V K Murthy :

You know when I say a studio system not only the physical studio but the system of one establishment with all these people

JBH Wadia :

Only they freelance system is responsible for that because once the freelance system became the rule of the day everybody was free it started with the heroes and heroines then came the turn of the music directors then they directed cameramen ultimately even these stunt pullers they become freelance .. Artists and you have to run about run away run from one place to another and you may be working for one film today or for a couple of days then you go and work for the second film then again for third film and studios cannot transfer in such an atmosphere if there is no regular work done and if the producer has to depend upon getting dates from practically the entire staff nowadays and the entire stuff you have got to work out the jigsaw puzzle in full for example I still remember when 60s when I was making films in the studio this freelance system was in practice, I had to postpone my shooting once because my four characters small characters who were fighters were not available to me they had gone outdoors perhaps to Shimla or Kashmir or Hyderabad and I had to postpone the shooting because they were equally important, they were in the sequence and when they we're not available I simply could not carry off my wall so that is one reason why the studios have gone down and it is the same case everywhere even in America the glory that was Hollywood at one time he's no longer there

N V K Murthy :

Now um coming chronologically we've covered up to the beginning of the talkies now could you tell us the further development of Indian cinema after the talkies came in what were the developments significant and in the 30s in the remaining 30s and then in the 40s and 50s how it developed

JBH Wadia :

The charm of entertainment lies in novelty... it's novelty and when the novelty wears off the studio the producer has to sit up and take notice and go ahead and give

something else in its place for example you start with let us take the example of western films when the stunt films were invoked everybody used to make stunt films not only their Wadia before me also a few did it... I just did it but then a time came when the audiences got bored more or less with the same sort of formula films which came in the market so naturally to keep the show going the show must go on and it can only go on when you affect the change which is accepted by the audience because the audience is always ready to take something new so from step to step you go on from mythological you came to devotionals along with that you came up to the socials then small films and then big budget films and spectacular films historical films all those things come only because the man in the audience wants to be entered in with something new it may take a long time for him for example uh the large number of our so-called social films are still the formula films whether the big a very big star is there or a small star is there it is the same thing uh the story content is the same what we call the masala film everything should be this number of songs should be there the dances will be there fights will be there and a few sentimental things will be there but now for the last few years you can say the people have got tired and that is why when the so-called off-beat films came people have accepted them because they wanted something new and that is the secrets of show business it has got to be on the move throughout as soon as something becomes stale something new has to take its place the whole order changes and the yielding place to know as they say now about the offbeat also I have always maintained now let's come to

N V K Murthy :

the offbeat from a little later uh I thought i mean we might devote a little more time to the changeover from silent to talky and the

JBH Wadia :

Early character talking films and what changes were wrought in the very the very the talkie films which were made in the first few years were more or less theoretical and very often the stage plays were adapted to the screen even when somebody wrote an original screenplay it was stagey because the moment the artist began to speak he was

reminded of what he would be doing on the legitimate stage and that happened also in the silent film in the beginning and towards the end of

This silent film era says between 1927 and 30 31 the standard of acting had improved the leisure domain and only the theatrical expressions had given way to realistic treatment and then suddenly when the doctors were evolving improving that when the silent pictures were improving the TALKIES came and when the topics came again the pendulum swung back and then the approach was completely theatrical for a long time then later on with the improvement in the technique especially the recording equipment's does it then the artists were not supposed to shout out they could speak in their natural tones and their voices was recorded properly it brought us reform much needed reform and today you find that very few films are theatrical but when I was saying talking about speaking about the offbeat films I wanted to see something else what I was saying was that there have been offbeat films in every decade of field making this is a fact which has been overlooked by us everywhere not here but all over the world in show business there are there have been offbeat in every decade then once in a while the off-beat film takes like nobody's business then others have got to cut them pick up the courage and follow and they give more offbeat films if this process goes on for a long time then the offbeat film also falls in the trap of the formula film and time will come or time has come in the past and it will come again when the so-called offbeat films which are supposed to be superior today will become stale and the audiences will not like them and they will want some change at that time again the filmmaking treatment of filmmaking has to change with the changing the taste of the audiences

N V K Murthy :

It's like it's like shall we say the cliché in uh language form exactly what is cliché but much used phrases now when it is not only the average commercial film

JBH Wadia :

Or the escapist film which has creases even the offbeat films have their cliches if they look deep into what they are doing it's not easy to avoid cliches so they will be there

and once when they become cliché the people will lose interest in the story content even and then change must be there don't in fact the only thing which is permanent in nature is change

N V K Murthy :

Change is order of life ...

JBH Wadia :

Change it is always there ...if you don't change you see use you stagnate and stagnation is that biologically speaking

N V K Murthy :

Would you like to refer to any? Outstanding films of the late 30s or the 40s which you think have uh made for themselves a permanent nation in the history of Indian cinema

JBH Wadia :

I think in every decade there have been films which have earned their respective place places in the pantheon of the Indian cinema now in the early talkies even the earliest event I'd like you to believe if there's

N V K Murthy :

Anything that comes to your mind can you refer to any of those films I mean which you which you think either

JBH Wadia :

I will have to make a very long list it doesn't fit there no if I give a few I mean i'll be doing injustice to a number of others but a film very often gains reputation retrospectively when it is you may make a film which will not succeed at the box office at the time of its release perhaps after five or ten years when it is seen again by the ciners or everybody's film societies, they find some values in it which the audiences missed at that time because they were not prepared for it they didn't believe in it and

(02.30.05)

Our tastes have changed when our approach mental approach intellectual approach has changed and then we find that the so-called film which has failed at the box office has a has a something of permanent value in it this is not unusual everywhere

N V K Murthy :

Now earlier you refer to uh the development how film has changed and changes the order of life as you said that from the early stands you had the devotional mythological then you had the social films and then you had the off-bid films uh then you had the you had the commercial from say the formula films and the spectacles and so, on um how do you see this change from the ordinary commercials of the early uh 40s to the big spectacles which appeared say around about the in the late 40s perhaps 48 years like films like uh filmmakers knew that if they give dreams of the same type they will click at box office and they

JBH Wadia :

Did click do you see Chandra lake has a sort of a turning point in in marking out the

N V K Murthy :

Success of the spectacular film this happened in 1948 if I'm not mistaken no

JBH Wadia :

Yes and no because even you can go back and there were spectacular films in the during the early years also Anarkali and majori even asylum films had spectacles which were produced by the Irani with a surely but they were spectacular because compared to the films which were made at that time anarchy became a spectacle I still remember having seen it this island and I called it a spectacular film there

N V K Murthy :

So, these were the precursors of the genre naturally and the precursor the Chandrakala that was made by was an was only a further development in course of time because

JBH Wadia :

By that time by the time general like I was there since vasana was a very good businessman he had made good money out of his films and other businesses and he had the courage to plow back that money and a big spectacle of him novelty of it was there with the circus scenes

N V K Murthy :

With that famous uh drum the consequence absolutely and then

JBH Wadia :

When others copied it became a travesty also this the so-called drum dance of central was copied by so many filmmakers in that escapist films and everyone every time the men in the audience compared it to Chandralik and found it haunting

N V K Murthy :

Yeah this happened in 1948 yeah but later on, in the 50s we saw the beginning of the offbeat film you were saying something about the earlier offbeat films and that was your question murti and I think the

JBH Wadia :

The of big films the era of big film loosely speaking in India may be set to begin with Satyajit ray Pathak Panchali responsibility really because theology apology turns on they became a turning point in the prestige of the Indian film industry from an international point of view and today when i think after all these 20 years and more and so many films which he has made Satyajit ray stands on the highest pedestal in in film making in India and also in the international film world unfortunately it did not go in appeal with the Indian audiences elsewhere apart from Bengal because they

were in Bengali primarily meant for Bengalis and the title subtitle versions were also shown but they were live to limited audiences somehow that people were not prepared for it and I'm sorry to say that not even the film industry could take a hint from it and do something on the lines of Satyajit ray he was like he's a humanist he was a humanist and as we were talking about the early filmmakers Satyajit ray s that they wanted to make films certainly, is a classic example of our times a man who is dedicated to filmmaking and he has made films just for the sake of making filmmaking and once I remember he wrote an article when john ford died and in which he said that he was a real filmmaker john fought because he went on making films so I wrote an article and sent it to I think the span magazine American medicine but it was published also and I said that the proto if you want to compare someone to john ford in India it is Satyajit ray he believes in making films soon as soon as the film is over, he goes to the next one and a dedicated filmmaker and he wants first of all to satisfy his own self and project his mind as honestly as possible without any fanfare very often on shoestring budgets but whether a film is produced on a sustaining budget or lavishly it is the content of the film treatment and the heart of the precision of given film which means shorts place for it for in history and many of the films of Satyajit ray belong to that category

N V K Murthy :

Now um talking to the earlier of it films you said that uh unfortunately they were uh they did not have uh um mass audience but some of the films of Vimal Roy did have oh yes oh yes and um for allowing these people to make that as a sort of an experimental film right and that's how your path was made but these films were made and they did have a wider appeal i'll come to that later I think there is something about the manipulation of the outlets and how some of the films which could be seen by the majority are not even seen by them and we take it for granted that the people will not like them now that that's something that we could uh perhaps

JBH Wadia :

Nobody knows what the people what the audiences will like it's only when the film comes and the audience the reaction is there that you know whether they have accepted it or not uh films and many of the new topic's films of which the real inspirer was Mr. Sarkar veins we are accepted by the people here also, for example when they were shown the early new talkies films chandidas and Devadas and others I mean it did create a very good impression here and people began to take notice of it in fact, the later on where any film which came from uh youth administrators had a ready audience because the people had accepted it somehow the Bombay filmmakers could not adjust themselves to this point of view or the Bengali point of view you can say and they went on producing on their own their films as they liked and in their own manner

N V K Murthy :

Now talking to the very early films even uh from the silent days you have had a first-class collaborator in your own brother yeah homie yeah and you wanted to say something about it

JBH Wadia :

I'm very glad I'm very glad moti you have given me an opportunity homie is my younger brother younger by about almost 10 years and when I was already in college, he was Schooling and I used to take him with me to see films from that time onwards I may be said to be responsible for creating an interest in the film you know me then when I started vasant Lila with Jesus my first silent film in 1928 Homie was uh and he was not even a matriculate he was in the sixth or seventh standard at that time and he used to come with me and whenever the school was not there he used to move out with me and he began to be interested in genuinely especially on the technical side then it so happened that he failed into metric examination and there was a veritable crisis in the family you see because he said that he didn't want to go ahead he wanted to join his brother he said I'm going with Jamshed I don't want to study naturally the entire membership was against it including myself my mother was a woman of deep understanding and she told me to attend to this crisis so I had a talk with homie and I told him look here Homie you must at least be a meticulous I will not take you up unless you are a matriculate then get to that examination then come to me and i'll see what I

can do so very uh stimulus worked for the exam and came out successfully on the second day of the exam when we were discussing whether we should go join the same sat jives college or what he came back to kick him to us and said that he didn't want to go further there was another crisis at that time because they said and what is this which party boy who is a matriculate coming from a good family and has got an opportunity to go to a college and will not do so and his family will sit quiet about it everybody was against it except my wife who was with me you are all very happy without the time the great healer will take its course and mommy will join the college but within 10 or 15 minutes he came back with all these books neatly tied in the bundles and threw it under the one and said these are the books I'm not going if you send me to college i'll say to you that I don't succeed I fail for five years i'll fail I'm not going to work I didn't know what to do so my mother naturally asked me I said give me some time let me think over it a went and saw his principal banaji of the tutorial high school a worldly-wise mentor an educationist and I explained to him my dilemma I said this is what has happened and what shall I do he says send homie to meso I sent Homie to him that you go and interview your principal later on he called me principal Banaji and he said I'm saying I had a heart to heart talk with your brother there is no way out you have to take him up with you but I said how can I do it what about the family my family's his reaction to it he said I only know one thing that if you don't take him up his heart will not be in the study and one does not know what he will be in future he might go astray or anything else so I request you as a man of as an education is the 40-year standing, he will come into contact with the voice you take him up he'll be all right with you I said how shall I explain it to my mother he said go and tell what have explained to her what i've told you but in case you need my me, I will be very happy to come and see your mother so I went and saw my mother and told her that this is what has happened he said what has happened and he told anaji which principle banana repeated to meshed said I can believe my god going back on this world I can't think of my brother going back on his word he has promised me so there was no way out for me so I told my mother and he said all right now from today you are his brother his father his trusty you take him up and that is how homie joined me that is and when we produce the first picture the silent pitches thunderbolt I gave the direction to him

because I was busy with me body or film exchange the laboratory get close by the film exchange was there a distributing office and it had the staff of only one meant that is myself and a peon so I had to attend for to hold my bread and butter

N V K Murthy :

But I believe uh the camera cinematography part of it are interested in more than anything

JBH Wadia :

Yes he was always interested in the technical side of it that is why he became a cameraman also that is why he became a good libertarian also with Deeware that was his fault all along i think he

He discovered himself yeah and he got unfortunately you got the opportunity to do so with me you know and somehow that we have been together all these 50 years though in 48 there was some 48 in 1948 there was some domestic difference between him and me and others and he started the Basant pictures but even then I used to attend uh his films and he used to direct my films even then because I after mela I had produced a film called Balaam with surah and I gave the direction to him in the meantime he started distant pictures with fearless Nadia ultimately, he got married now well circling the life for the last 25 years

N V K Murthy :

But I believe that's the thing of the past now because I remember in the 60s when I had the privilege of making a short film when you're wondering

JBH Wadia :

We were working in business absolutely we have always been together

N V K Murthy :

As Jamshed Seth said we have already which you don't demand we have been talking about uh feature films all these uh all this time yes but I know you have played a very

notable part as far as the short film movement is concerned and so, when we talk of the history of Indian cinema let's not commit the same mistake of some there some of the others when they think that Indian cinema means only cinema of one type and only the feature film the short film I think forms a very important part of our history and you have played a notable part would you like to say something about some of the films that you have made and also, the whole institution of the films division the film advice report these are things with which you have been connected right from the inception

JBH Wadia :

Yes, it just happened that way for one thing I was always interested in Indian classical music and semi classical music even from my school days onwards and when I started Wadia movie tour naturally there was no scope for me as a producer to make use of classic music although I did do so in the case of Lalayaman and some other films of heroes the stool but after all we had to come finish that win every song is about three to four minutes maximum and naturally you cannot give full scope to the to classical music and its technique so it was only a labor of love for me so along since the company was making good money why they moved on making good profits I asked Mr. Billy Modia that I wanted to do this as a labor of love and for my personal satisfaction she allowed me to do so and I started producing a short film series of musical value that was the beginning of it and what I did was that if anybody of any well-known exponent of music vocal or instrumental happened to be in Bombay you see I would invite him to the studio and invite him to the studio receive him well and then ask him to give me one or two of his numbers on the set naturally I mean he would say yes, to it and I used to remunerate him I remember now even in those days that means in between 1934 and 40 42 I used to pay at least 500 rupees to each one of them sometimes more which was a handsome in the context of the times so I would take him on the set now it may it would sometimes very often there was some uh film going on the set was meant for some particular film and the shooting was in progress but since the great man will not be would not be available to me again I would stop the shooting immediately select a corner redecorate it that is to shoot the playing or the singing of the man concerned and then immediately asked my cameraman and my recordist and on the spot we used

to take this numbers that's how I took the and many others were there sakhawatu-san khan as the sororities who was the Aliyah AKBHAR khan of his days from served and so forth and so on and each number was about a thousand feet of one or two items and I used to release them along with my feature films and it was a non-profit making venture because nobody was prepared to make us give us any extra payment they were not interested but because we are supplying it free almost, they would do it at the most I remember Mr. Billy Murray used to charge 10 rupees for the whole week in in city cinemas 5 rupees in small cinemas and many others free and this I continued because my heart was in it then in 1942 the his uh government of India brought control on their awful stock because of the exigencies of the second world war and it was with the heavy heart that I had to stop it because the frame stock was not even available to us for feature fields even so later on I tried to continue dazzling and

N V K Murthy :

I know I think you're all restricted to eleven dreams

JBH Wadia :

That was one station apart from that you for you have to get the negatives and the positives for the 11 days and worrying about that I require some extra negatives for these short films which are not available you

N V K Murthy :

Know what I mean to say that even for the feature films

JBH Wadia :

Yes, they couldn't help it exigencies of circumstances compare them to do so I had to give it up but later on when I got a chance, I used to take some numbers I'm mighty proud of the fact that when in 1957 was in Bombay and Shakil Bhattai when he brought him to me, I received him it was a sort of a swagger just a reception attended by some very well-known poets and Urdu scholar scholars and journalists in Bombay and on the spot I just made a request to him that since he has come here buddy kindly give me

a gasa and he agreed and I have taken two guzzles by this great man the last uh you can say he was the dawn of Woodward uh poetry and the last uh poet to belong to the generation of dag

N V K Murthy :

Another what has happened to the negative of these films why are they available oh yes

JBH Wadia :

I donated them years ago that's great I don't know what you say is of great historical importance

N V K Murthy :

Because I remember years later, we were discussing a similar thing in films division when I remember one of the people who came here was when the discussion was uh Rishikesh Mukherjee himself and this was after his success was being seen and he agreed with some of us who said that one or two reels seem to be ANURADHA well-padded up and if you had been given a free hand you would have gladly cut them cut them and made them shorter but he said what can I do I was helpless because the show business the distribution etc. Wanted a minimum number of so many reads eleven thousand to twelve thousand now I made a very uh what I thought was a very foolish suggestion I mean in a sense that I said look dada it seems to me that if you were restricted by such restrictions that you had to give 12 reels or 13 greens and you found that you could not pack this up beyond 10 rails supposing you said all right now you were already you're already a director of repute establishment absolutely you can say all right i'll give you ten rules and ten reels of this film as i've seen it plus

JBH Wadia :

A short film two reels

N V K Murthy :



ntai

Uncontrolled by anybody there is no sponsor or anything of that sort i'll make two reels of a film on an art subject or music or architecture whatever which I like or in the landscape of uh then follow for the countryside in Bengal and i'll give it and tag it all together that 10 plus this 2 will make 12. And here you have 12 reels yes and it doesn't it also opens up a tremendous possibility for short film making outside the government auspices of which all the short film makers were critical they said I mean this is sort of an iron clamp and it is stunting or growth that is yeah yes I said you can kill two birds at one stroke he said it's a very novel idea but one will have to think hard about it here you were this is still possible this is still possible and today we don't have the restriction

JBH Wadia :

On length no none no none so this opens up tremendous possibilities and one can fall back on yeah, your experience well anyway when even when I used to uh should take those films I was not aware as to what would happen to them in future, I believed in doing the job at that time and I was satisfied every time I took a sequence or a song or a dance even sometimes or the ghazal recital I was happy and I released it along everything every feature film of mine it's only in retrospect that I found that it was valuable now this has two vessels it's a I call it a priceless

Gift from a priceless poet because you can put the value of one rupee or one lack of rupees it's meaningless it is priceless that's the only record of this great man on the screen so that gives you also personal satisfaction psychological satisfaction

N V K Murthy :

This can make a wonderful feature at featurette on television it can be shown on television let us

JBH Wadia :

Forget it just now we'll do it I'm actually doing the whole series now and it will take about six months more and of course, a lot of money to be plowed in which I find very difficult today but I'm going to do it

N V K Murthy :

Now what about the film advisory board and your role yes

JBH Wadia :

There also it so happened that I was interested in the documentary film much earlier you can say that from 1932 or 33 I was interested and I used to read the literature and I used to subscribe to the copies of John Grierson's early journals called the world and see and then later on the uh the journal of the film institute sight and sound and they had another journal at that time called the documentary newsletter which was solely devoted to the documentary films made in England and elsewhere with their stories sometimes whatever the story content was there and reviews criticism etc. With the names of the people so I don't know how but I happen to be interested in it and I used to make small documentaries myself then the war came and when the war came the British Indian government wanted to start a film advisory board so that they can produce war effort films at that time I was out of the national congress I had joined the amen droids radical humanist radical democratic party of India as a rise and I believe that that war which was which was an anti-fascist war should be supported that was the righteous point of view because the freedom being indivisible India's freedom was linked up with world freedom and if Hitler and his words were to succeed then another dark age would set in come into being and it will be very sad and tragic for humanity so only from that we were anti-imperialist but at the same time we were provoked for these bigger reasons so when the film advisory board was to start naturally the film industry people were called and along with them were the American distributors heads of the distributing offices here and somebody from the government Mr. P J Griffiths was there is that as the press controller so he was the man in charge uh pain tapper was the secretary of the information and broadcasting Japan he was there and we were all there and Desmond young it was Desmond young's idea so Desmond young attended the meeting and then naturally the discussion started and then they said that we need a producer no um there cannot be a uh you cannot find the produce in India because the movement did not exist nobody knew anything about it

so we had to depend upon getting someone from England naturally the American contingent and others knew about two or three important names like that of Paul Roth I and John Grierson and they said we can invite them and I remember that's when he even wrote down the news and I was sitting quietly I mean I was a backbencher and then I said that I'm afraid sir it is not possible I said why I said because John Grayson is busy making raw advert films for England and he's likely to go to Canada and Paul Rasta will not find time also then some names were taken and then they said we don't know can you suggest any name so I suggested the name of Alex Shaw nobody knew why Alex was here not even Desmond Young not Pediatrics not anyone else in India or everything so fortunately I was ready I used to read those papers documented newsletters and other things so I knew something of his background I said he is good he's an up and coming documentary film director and he will be available if at all anybody else and that's how Alex showed me that at my instance then they wanted somebody as the uh chairman of the fellow advisory board and I was not in the room honestly; I was not in the run for it I had no idea there were some others I need not take their names but one day General also the real side out of the industry he came and saw me at Warli and he said the driver came and said Rajasam General said wants to see you I said why not invite him this is our home he can come and say listen he wants to talk to you privately so I went and talked to him and he prevailed upon me he said that look here they want me to be the chairman of the film advisory board I am for the war effort films but I cannot be the chairman because I am also an Indian nationalist and a congressman and it will be very dishonest some others are there I said let us go listen no delay that is to say Desmond Young and P.J. Griffith want you to be the chairman that's how I became the chair and I accepted it and naturally since my heart was in it, I remained the chairman until the film advisory board was dissolved and not only a chairman on the administrative side but fortunately since I was also a filmmaker I used to be with Alex series films on the mobile make suggestions etc. Etc. Almost unofficial producer also so when Alex left

(03.00.04)

They came to me when they came to me and said Mr. Wadia I still remember they came to my logic castle studios with paralyzed uh P.J. Griffiths was there uh and Tapper my

Mr. Member Maurya and one or two American distributors who were also members they came and they asked me to be the chairman to be the producer of the film advisory board I was hesitating you see because my services are honorary, I had not taken a single rupee from them it was out of my conviction that I was helping them so I was about the most tempting terms mostly you will be surprised they said we are going to remove the entire film advisory board from this place here to lovely castle Vania movie tone that I would be allowed to make my future films I wanted to make documentaries there my laboratory was also there the work would come there and they would pay me 2500 rupees a month I did not accept it because I was already back Noah he black sheep not a good patriot Indian patriarch trying to help the things so I said no I cannot afford to take any money from you but I don't know whether I should accept it or not let give me some time because I did not want to compromise my position, I did not want people in here whether they knew me or not to say that now I have benefited out of my work and I am getting the work involved and making money one day babu Rao Patel dropped him I said what did Jamshed said I have come to see you on a very important matter they wanted uh yet one day babu Rao Patel dropped him I said what did Jamshed said I have come to see you on a very important matter They want a producer for the film advisory board yes I have a name to suggest I said which name Shanta I said now don't I know you are yoga fight very fond of making jokes and all those things but it is that for your film India he said no jump said you don't know then he told me the whole background now Shantaram has gone out of Prabhat and I come to Bombay et cetera so I said so I went and saw Shantaram with Bhagavatam he was also hesitating because aligned within Indian national congress he did not know what to do believe it or not I lectured him I actually gave lectures to him three times before he could accept ... then he accepted ...when he accepted Hezramir was there as assistant to Alex and naturally it was his chance he should have become the producer because he was there but when the meeting was held in the metro cinema and I was called and I was in the chair and they said they expect expected me to say that I'm going to be the producer and I said no I'm not going to be the producer but I have found a much better man who I said Shanta ram so Mr. Billy Maury and others who are really angry with me actually you are making a fool of

yourself what is this I said I may be a bad businessman but I want to be a good man and I am giving you the name of a man whose signature will hold good in the whole of India produced by Shanta ram will be accepted by all India produced by JBH Wadia it will not be and I'm more for the cause than for my name so we he came eventually Ezra maid was very much perturbed and he thought that he was let down in a way he was I must admit but I did it objectively I said neither is that me nor myself not

N V K Murthy :

You're saying you're mentioning the um how the film advisory board they were looking for the first producer and you suggested Shantaram's name yes and I

JBH Wadia :

I knew that neither is name's name nor mine not that of anyone else could make the name of Shantaram from the box of his point of view and that's how Shantaram became the producer of course when he resigned within a year at the time of the quit India movement it was rami who took his rightful place as the producer of film's advising board so at that time the film advisory board was more than an advisory board it was actually a film production board absolutely it was a film production board and it is on the ashes of the film advisory board that the film's division was born and it was rebound out of the ashes of filmmakers now

N V K Murthy :

You referred to a Zamir who was Shanta ram's immediate assistant and who were the other Indian filmmakers and the technicians who were involved

JBH Wadia :

I many I remember Bhaskar Rao who gave the that first memorable film advisory about documentary the tree of wealth then of course Mr. Master was the cameraman chief cameraman and he was loaned by me he was in Wadia motion and I had loaned his services to the film advisory board these two I remember then of course there was the Dalai Daruwala and many others who were there with me the moment they got a

chance to be here I gave them good certificates and they were really good workmen they good technicians and they made good Indians that followed

N V K Murthy :

Now um would you like to comment on the later uh history of the film advice report after Mr. Ramirez took over uh

JBH Wadia :

No except only as soon as I mentioned the tree of wealth I will just give that incident the tree of wealth I was also a member of the publicity advisory board government of India and there the question of the films produced by the film advisory board was taken up and those who I'm sorry to say but those who were there did not know anything about film making and they could not distinguish between a negative or a positive stock they would not know whether it was bad photography or bad projection and whether it was bad some original sound was bad or whether a loud speaker was not working well in the theater such so much of ignorance was there and they began speaking disparagingly about the magnificent work which the film advisory but god was doing under Alexa my turn came and I don't know what came over me but I became very bold I don't remember what I said extempore but I remember one thing that I said that please if you have since you have seen the tree of wealth now and you consider it to be an ordinary documentary I am prepared to stake my reputation that this film is on a par and on level with the documentaries produced in England or elsewhere and years afterwards I was proved right when the tree of wealth got some citation or some trophy or whatever it is for first or second place in an international uh festival of the documentary held in Europe or America I don't remember but at that time I wrote a short letter to the secretary of the information department and said now remember what I said and we had we had Bhaskar Rao documentary filmmakers trained by Alexa definitely man fortunately he continued

N V K Murthy :

Yes, actually he was definitely friends with the film situation

JBH Wadia :

Yes, I know I used to meet him here very often I know I know now would you like to say something about the later role of

N V K Murthy :

The films division and how it has developed in the short film making because you have continued to make short films though not as often as the earlier days you have been busy making films off and on yeah right up to the 70s 75 so would you like to comment on how this

JBH Wadia :

What do you want me to comment I always been as you as you I have always been a strong supporter of the work done by the crew of the films division from the very Beginning and having come into contact with many of them and in one or two of my reports which I was asked to give at the time of the inquiries I don't remember which I was spoken very highly of them and I will criticize the bureaucratic approach of our government and I said if anything if anything goes if you want one reason why you would be justified in saying that definitely division people the technicians are not giving the best the fault lies with the government bureaucracy there are a lot of impediments in that way a lot of interference and therefore, they should give up those these tactics and give autonomy to finish division and that was what I said when our present prime minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi was also the uh minister for information and broadcasting at that time also some inquiries

N V K Murthy :

In 65.

JBH Wadia :

So twice I have my reports have gone there all favorable not out of flattery you're not out of just uh superciliousness or anything because I have come into contact with them

these workers the technicians the cameraman the directors the story writers and I always had a very high opinion of them but at the same time I must admit that I am more or less divorced from the field division in the last decade I don't know what has happened since 1975-76

N V K Murthy :

So, you do believe that um the short film movement can do a great deal of course even in the contemporary scene of course provided it's used with imagination

JBH Wadia :

Absolutely but the only impediment again is the film's division because all the films have to be shown through the film's division so independent filmmakers short film makers do not stand any chance I either the famous division employees must get work and they must go on producing professionally as them doing if the outsiders come then the theaters are not willing to show more than one documentary at a time or something at the time if they take courage from your experiments

N V K Murthy :

But in those days usually the film's division was not there even with the institution the with the film advisory board as at present constituted even though they have to show approved film anybody who wants to show a censored film a short film along with a feature film as a part of the deal nobody can prevent them and nobody didn't prevent them and so I can if the theoretically 500 films can be made and shown outside the film's tuition

JBH Wadia :

It will be only the effort of an individual filmmaker yes it cannot be an organization

N V K Murthy :

No what I'm saying is that there are 750 options being made in the country and out of 750 feature films even if 300 or 400 feature films carry independent short films made with them under their banner or by other independents for them and when they are tagged onto these films it can open up a tremendous uh

JBH Wadia :

But it is not possible you see with uh let's just let us be practical let us be realistic about it two thousand feet of the government sponsored reels will be there either usual order documentary then thirteen thousand feet minimum of the feature film sometimes fourteen sometimes fifteen now where is the time for a short film to be shown unless the filmmaker as you said in the case uh of someone else that only the filmmaker is content to make a film of eleven thousand feet that's what I'm saying and provided they have the courage to

N V K Murthy :

Do that and follow your example they can combine the two their short film and their feature film and finish it within twelve thousand or thirteen thousand

JBH Wadia :

I don't know if you forgive me for saying it easier said than done there will be many obstacles in the way of a filmmaker to do that I see first of all he must be a Dedicated uh short filmmaker along with a feature filmmaker and he must believe in what he's doing there will be very few who will be ready to do it with the financial handicaps which are all well known to us

N V K Murthy :

Now which brings me to the next question about the financial position and the financial situation in the so-called film industry because as you know it is still not been recognized not just not by the government and nor by the banks because no not by this business yeah not by the business people because uh it's still it's got a very high degree of speculation and the stigma is there yeah and still apart from the stigma even it does

not even fulfill the economic criteria of any organized industry right that's true so how do you see this

JBH Wadia :

I would rather not speak on this subject because I am a filmmaker myself and no... but I thought that you know from that you can from what I say

N V K Murthy :

You know the handicaps better than anybody else you see the pinch, but the handicaps will

JBH Wadia :

Involve personalities the proposal filmmakers and it will not be decent on my part just to go and sing no I'm opening my opening out here on this particular subject so since we were ready you can you can we can infer one thing is certain that we haven't got a production code whatever else we can say and the production code for which I was fighting in 1950 as president of the Impal when I had brought the preamble for the census code and at that time I said that what we need is a code of conduct just as the Americans and the Europeans have and tried my best but I did not succeed in those days and I don't think anybody can succeed today somehow or the cardinal weakness to put it politely of the Indian film producer is that he believes in working as a lone wolf he may attend the association's meetings and pass the resolutions but when it comes down to grassroots he only thinks of his film and his own security that is average every one of them almost all of them

No use taking names but unless we have got a majority of filmmakers who have an enlightened point of view enlightened self-interest as I always maintain if that approach is there then a code of conduct is possible then discipline is possible then it is possible also to take to task not only the artists or the technicians who go wrong but even the producers who go wrong we must not encourage them the producer is wrong he must be taken to task he must be disabling as much as the artist or technicians or the employees it should be from an enlightened point of view so

N V K Murthy :

I think you use the correct phrase enlighten self-interest because in the long run this is going to help all producers

JBH Wadia :

Unfortunately, nobody understands it if you go through some of my articles in those days, you'll find that my mind was a voice in the wilderness only minority of one now

N V K Murthy :

One aspect we have not elaborated though you the present films again that

JBH Wadia :

Let me correct myself on I was referring to Bombay not to madras film industry has always been organized and in the in the earlier days much more organized than even today because of regional languages there are differences among themselves also but otherwise even at that time there was a wonderful unity of purpose and action among the majority female producers out Indian prime producers I mean they stood by one another here it was not so

N V K Murthy :

Now I was referring to one aspect which we have not elaborated perhaps you would like to elaborate on this about the purpose of the present-day entertainment film there is a very interesting analogy that I see the way some of these films provide escape from reality uh to the present viewer to the audience because the present reality is all of us agree is not a very pleasant one and one would like to escape now a similar thing happened in USA after the great depression okay depression yes in the 30s yeah that was the that was the period when the great musicals yes and that was the period where people were rummaging through garbage trends for food and so on right and when economic depression of unprecedented limits had uh had ravaged was the economy

was it 29 20 29 was the depression but then these films came about that time about that and that was the period when the whole movement for the great musical operas The great musical comedies flowered yeah in the states so do you see any connection between these two i'm

JBH Wadia :

It's a perennial connection depression or no depression the average man has lost security in life he has got his own worries and he wants to escape from there whether there is a general depression or not there is some amount of some sort of depression in him it may be due to his financial position he made with a bread earner and not enough money he may have a family and not a home not a flat where he could stay he may have other expenses he falls ill there is no security and therefore the escapist film offers a psychological relief to the common man who wants to forget his worries for the time being that is why he does not even? Care as to whether an escaped escape is the film has an it's a coherent one or not a song comes a very pleasant song he likes it he doesn't care whether it comes in the proper place or not dance comes and dramatic since comes violence comes whatever comes he gets enjoyment out of it means he forgets his daily worries from that point of view the commercial film has been tendering very good human service to keep people happy of course it doesn't mean that the standard of film should not improve because you can also be happy with better films which are made in a better way and not merely say so not millionaires gives picture a good commercial picture with a social team leaves aside the offbeat films like Aardh Satya and chakra and others leave them aside but even a commercial film which has a purpose behind it can entertain entertainment always be mixed up with the story content I would rather have it but since it is not done in every case and since the common man the man in the street has to entertain himself somehow other and since the medium of the film is the as the strongest pool where television or medium the film commercial film or video you see so we should not grudge whatever little happiness they get out of forgetting themselves which doesn't mean that we should not elevate their outlook on life that's why I in my in the preamble which I have given which I had given at the time of the new sensor code when morality they say I wanted it when I was

the president I said films should have entertainment and enlightenment more defectors should be there if there is enlightenment it can be entertaining also and sometimes the orbit films also succeed because they entertain maybe they are specialized ordinance but they are also entertained a document those who are fond of documentaries will go and see documentaries and when they are not entertained, they will say this are pedestrian I don't want to see it and when he likes it is a very fine documentary means he's entertained so entertainment is the be all and the end all the greats may be different grades of entertainment and therefore the escapist film on and over it supplies the entertainment on a certain scale as a semi-purposeful social film on another scale a mythological on a third scale you see but they all supplied they as they say partners which has several peaks and on each peak that delves that dwells a god you see it's like that every genre has a purpose to fulfill but then the striking it attention worthy I can tell you one thing that when I use the word enlightenment I'm very conscious about it I want us to be differentiated from education when our politicians and our rulers and when our critics and when our so-called intellectuals come out and say why don't you produce educational you must educate the people, I say that is tough and nonsense if I were to produce the future film to educate the people who are seeing it what will the educational picture make us do will they produce entertainment films the purpose of to promote education is the main job of those who are producing educational views for the commercial filmmaker it has got

To be entertainment and enlightenment and that is what at least in my modest way I have tried to do all along all my life I have tried to enlighten i've never tried to educate yeah another difficulty it's very hard and another thing is the question which I put so often to the uh people in Delhi in the good old days when I used to go there and then when they say why don't you produce it and try to educate the masses then I always used to tell them I am prepared to do it but from whose point of view if you are going to be the educators the government the bureaucracy the ministers and if you go wrong who is going to idea educate you who is going to re-educate you when you go wrong very

N V K Murthy :



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Embarrassing question

JBH Wadia :

No and nobody answered nobody ever answered me that question I said don't talk about that and another thing I said you want us to produce educational pictures I am prepared to do it you give me the screenplay you tell me I submit to your screenplay of educational and so-called educational feature film which is supposed to entertain you approve of it finance it then you make all the money out of it as you like distribute it do what you like I give it a film as you want from your point of view educational but don't try uh to force others if you want to be charitable you should be with your own money you cannot ask the poor embarrassed filmmaker who has no finance you want to go through his future film to say that now make educational charity should started austerity must start at home I said

N V K Murthy :

You bet the brunt of do it no you use the um key figure enlightenment and you also said that the escapist film the entertainment film does a very useful social purpose it provides escape and so that way it is it's very good uh now but you are not just a filmmaker you are a humanist you are an intellectual from that point of view would you call a film which entertains in such a way that it deadens one's sensibilities now I'm not I'm not entering the field of education or anything sensibilities or critical faculties would you call that a useful purpose

JBH Wadia :

No certainly not that's why I always use the word enlightenment even my idea films you see my slogan in many of my advertisements and publicity was Wadia stands for entertainment enlightenment with an e-commerce invoice a biggie entertainment enlightenment I believed in it I and I think I have done it more often than not in any film somehow or other I do it for example i've experimented in music I produce a fantasy like Amal Raj a very well-known story of Gujarat lancinin lady and goganova everybody knows it but I made a film in which I experimented and I gave a musical

number which was for the first time so presented in on the Indian screen in which there is a competition between a classical singer and a classical dancer you see it is enlightenment and it was running at the at that time in the western cinema the old western cinema where you have the nas and I knew that for six weeks many persons only came to see that number and go away they said this are something wonderful because it was enlightening, I mean it was an experiment a sort of a hint to the scholars of classical music and classical dance to evolve what this their subtitle so like that I have done I think I already said I should not repeat it was my stories were woven down the struggle for freedom illiteracy campaign anti-fascism physical culture emancipation of women they all came in my stunt films all these things but never included they form the part of the story okay cut let's see but

N V K Murthy :

Well Jamshed by it's been a pleasure talking to you um I have been educated in the last two days yesterday and today uh I i've had the privilege of knowing you for a number of years but now I can claim to know more of you and perhaps before I wind up you have got so many firsts to your credit because you have done all sorts of things whenever I think as if it's a novel idea you say well I did it about 25 years ago and one feels foolish so I think if you could first give us the number of things that you have done where you were doing pioneering efforts then i'll finish up

JBH Wadia :

It's very embarrassing I wish somebody else would do it because if I were to dilate on this subject it will be like blowing my own trumpets

N V K Murthy :

No, it's not it's just recording Indians by way of record I can cite a few examples

JBH Wadia :

The first 100 railroad film was made by me to fund mail about which are spoken as a silent film completely short on the long location and it was the first time it came that

was one then I skip over and come to my talkie la Lehmann about which also I said it was it was a film in which I experimented and gave classical and semi-classical music and so fortunately for me the people accepted it so that was also for the first time which was done then comes my great achievement Hunterwali about which i've spoken and it started a cycle of films and stunt films much very much derided by the intellectuals and by the social film producers but anyway the idea caught on and hunter valley was accepted as the model on which many valleys came cycle valley motor valley others but no none came up to the standard of our diamond sealers in which fearless Nadia came so only one example then I may come to something which is really more important than what i've said after up till now whatever I was saying about first in 1936 37 I made the first film without a single song called

(03.30.00)

Nav Jawan at a time when the average film had nothing less than 10 to 12 songs and many of them at 20 and one or two of them had seventy a film called Linda Sabah had seventy songs opera and at that time I was fond of music I was on the song but even then I dared to give that film called naughty one the action circumscribed to 24 hours something more on the lines of the Greek unity of time place and action loosely speaking unfortunately it did not do well because there was not a single song in it and when the picture was released in Delhi the audiences became rowdy they threw stones on the screen destroyed the furniture and said Wadia ne lithia so we pictured it to be done when it was returned I didn't know what to do because it would have been a very big loss fortunately some very good ideas struck me and I made a new trailer and in the trailer I made it very plain and told my audiences that this is the first time that you are going to see a film from Wadia's which is not a single song but don't think that because there is no song it's a bad film, we invite you to see if you will find it as thrilling as antar valley or others they did the trick and the picture was released but on the whole the audience is whatever's they wanted the songs I mean music then it was not that but that was at least the first film to made without a single song that was mine then uh in in 42 when these Hindu Muslim tension was at its height I was asked to make a documentary on Hindu Muslim unity subject instead of that I ran away with my pen and I wrote the subject which turned out to be a feature film called Ekta now I

wanted to do it for since in Hindi but then I tried to find out where the problem was most acute in the Muslim and I found that it was the worst the worst features of these communal disharmony were in Sindh cannot see others so I took it out in Hindi the first film to be taken out in sandhi of course it was again a non-profit taking venture so I didn't worry yes, that's why I didn't worry about it and it was released as a place in history but it didn't do well but even in Karachi it went fairly well and there was no Cindy's elsewhere in India so we never had any opening in other places but that was and then of course you know the chord dancer the first English picture with sadhana Prithviraj and Jaal Kambata 41 now produced during the years of storm and stress when the shadow of Hitler was hovering all over the world and approaching India at that time I made it my made the English version also along with Rajnard chatty Bengali and India like that you will go on many first out there

N V K Murthy :

And there's this film and Hindu Muslim unity I think uh for the first time you were you discovered am I right no not that no I did not discover diarism

JBH Wadia :

But I took Dara Singh in a Gujarati film called now that was that is based on history actually was a decoys but uh he was quite of a different type apart from the fact that he never molested women and children he believed Hindus Muslims and others to be one he was against the foreign government the British government he wanted to fight against them so the other thing I took up is the decline in the Guajarati film and it did well it got four awards out of 11 awards from the government of Gujarat film first film government that department then that was that in the Muslim unity was a reigning passion with me many films have reverted to it

N V K Murthy :

I think did you forgot to mention

JBH Wadia :

I'm glad I'm glad you remind me that was the first time that I had uh the solo sitter background music by Khansa Villarat Khan the whole and entered in in the entire picture of course here and there I had to support it with an accompanying piano but nothing more than that and then I took up villain when he was yet to become an international celebrity but I listened to him very often and It was my music director Madan Mohan with whom I had a discussion and he said I am bringing the khan so

N V K Murthy :

I think motherboard had a great year for classical music he had he had also

JBH Wadia :

He had also classical and uh modern moon was really a very good musician great musician but unfortunately somehow or other he lost his mornings otherwise he could write the score in in in in in our Indian alphabet India or India alphabet and also the English like notations one of the first which I can claim is Madhosh- Meena Kumari she came in a film called she was the second heroine and she stole own right starring her own right

N V K Murthy :

I believe when we got into a skirmish with china over Tibet perhaps yours was the first uh documentary that was made all under heaven by force yes

N V K Murthy :

Jamshed thank you very much it's been very kind of you to spend these two days recording your uh your um I can't uh thank you enough for sparing all your time yesterday and today for recording this early history of the history of early Indian cinema because you have been an institution not just a filmmaker but your involvement in the cinema has been so deep and whatever you do you get so involved

that you are not only just a filmmaker but you're also a good film historian and that's exactly what we wanted to do because we wanted to capture the dramatic development of Indian cinema whatever its present dilemmas may be whatever its contemporary difficulties may be it has had a glorious past it has started it has got many first to its credit and I'm sure the future is also equally bright it might sound very idealistic but I'm one of those optimists who refuses to be overcome by the circumstances of the day and in that sense I must thank you have been a part of the history of Indian cinema

JBH Wadia :

Now I thank you Morty but then all that you said in my praise is very embarrassing I am already starting to feel a slightly taller than I am and it has been a pleasure for me also to be with you after such a long time and I look forward to our meeting again not necessarily for an interview but over us of scotch and good exchange of ideas

N V K Murthy :

Thank you very much