

# **A SEMIOTIC STUDY OF (MIS)REPRESENTATION OF PUNJABI CULTURE IN PAKISTANI PUNJABI CINEMA**



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## THESIS SUBMISSION APPROVAL FORM

(SUPERVISOR)

The thesis titled "A Semiotic study of Misrepresentation of Punjabi Culture in Punjabi Cinema," written by Malik HaqNawaz Danish, a candidate for MPhil degree in English, has been read by me and has been found to be satisfactory regarding contents, English usage, format, citation, bibliographic style and consistency, and is ready for submission to the Department of English, Faculty of Languages and Literature (FLL), International Islamic University, Islamabad for internal and external evaluation.



**Dr. Muhammad Safeer**

Thesis Supervisor

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2011

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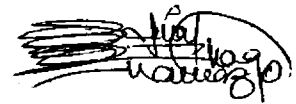
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candidate of Master of Philosophy (English) at the International Islamic University, Islamabad do hereby declare that the thesis A Semiotic Study of Misrepresentation of Punjabi Culture in Punjabi Cinema submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree in the Department of English (FLL) is my original work and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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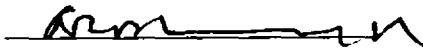
### Acceptance by the Committee

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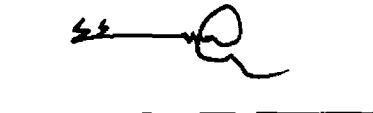
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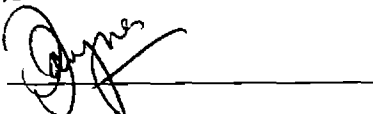
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*This work is dedicated to all those who contributed to the development of my  
academic acumen*

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## **Abstract**

This study investigates the misrepresentation of Punjabi culture in the Punjabi Movies.

The focus of the study is to investigate the multiple signs as means of communication employed in the movies carrying certain meanings for the audience. The study sheds lights on the issues relating to the misrepresentation of pure culture of Punjab on the big screens. The key theoretical concepts running through this work are those of misrepresentation and semiotics, both interconnected to each another and underline the fact that production of meaning is indeed a complex and an unconscious process.

The tools of analysis employed in this investigation are primarily those of semiotic analysis and Critical theories to investigate into the apparent and hidden messages in the images. Different images from different movies have been selected for the analysis subjected to a detailed analysis using Pierce's Model for sign analysis. This is a multidisciplinary study that is going to venture into the domains of semiotics, cultural and media studies. The study is basically qualitative in nature.

Chapter 1 introduces the topic and builds the theoretical framework of the study in addition to a brief overview of issues related misrepresentation of culture. Chapter 2 is a detailed account of all the key terms of all the related disciplines and rationale for the study. Chapter 3 discusses the issues of misrepresentation and a brief account of rural and urban Punjab as two different cultural pockets. Chapter 4 details analysis of images selected from the movies with description of connotation and denotation according to the cultural values of Punjab. Chapter 5 concludes the research with statements regarding the research questions mentioned earlier. The results of this study show that the movies contain multiple layers of meanings which actually promote alien culture eroding the local culture of Punjab.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Problems

In this postmodern age, where every new day brings forth some discoveries and developments, replacing the previous one and further exploring the hidden realities about the general makeup of life, media act as a powerful engine of socio-cultural change. Media has become the sole and immediate source of information as well as the best entertainment provider. Media sketch the perception about the reality in the mind of the viewers with lasting effects and inspire the audience to extract meanings out of all the acts of communication they project. Graeme Burton duly recognized the influence of media via acts of communication and labels the media industries as the producer of meanings.

All acts of communication produce meanings. It is the power of these meanings, what we do to them, that shapes relationships, exercises influence, models reality, generates behaviours of domination and feelings of subordination.

(Burton; 2005,01)

Media orchestrate the society with its powerful influences over the audience; in fact, it shapes the ideology of the audience in the desired way. There have been intoxicating effects on the cultural, social and moral lives of the people in Pakistan due to the influence of electronic media, maintaining a strong spell over the population. The influence of the print media fades out due to the low literacy competency of the people throughout Pakistan, giving way to the electronic media as it does not require advanced literacy for

comprehending its images and oral communication. Moreover, the impact of the visual scenes on the audience exercises more influence than the print media with everlasting effects as Dan Laughey quotes, claiming the legality of Meyrowitz's views on electronic media:

With the advent of television, telephone and radio, however, Meyrowitz claims that access to knowledge and information is shared by all, regardless of literacy skills. So electronic media help to blur class, age and other social differences. (Laughey; 2007,84-5)

One of the most significant agents of socio-cultural change in the media is film industry. It is primarily based on the notion of providing entertainment to the audience with no exception of class and gender. It is taken as a cheap source of available entertainment within the reach of a layman. Besides offering some moments of entertainment to the public in general, it also inculcates ideology in the minds of the spectators. This may be an unconscious compliance towards the magical spell of the films changing the views and mental model of reality towards the basic makeup of life with sustained effects. Films cannot entirely propagate the culture or attitudes they represent, but somehow they manage to create a breach in the lives of the audience resulting in continuous engagement of the audience with the text fabricating certain (or uncertain) meanings consciously or unconsciously. As Graeme Burton maintains:

Media texts intend to engage people, to convey some kind of information, and to produce reactions in their audiences which justify their continuing production. Even when treated as part of the environment they can never be seen as passive in the way that the façade of the building or wallpaper is passive.

(Burton:2005:45)

These involvements with the texts create a smokescreen in the vision of the audience and they perceive the world in a different way, the way as it is projected on the cinema screens, for example. These films propagate an alien culture in the texture and misrepresent the

culture they ought to promote. The representation by the media about the social groups and their culture should be realistic manifestation of their cultural background and their values. Culture is ordinary and common place, having its own social backgrounds. These assessments are advocated in an essay by Williams, published in 1958:

Culture is ordinary: that is the first fact. Every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expressed these, in institutions, and in arts and learning. The making of the society is the finding of common meanings and directions.....  
(Couldry: 2000:24)

In Pakistan, during the last few years, there has been massive growth in the electronic media. There begins a new era for the people of Pakistan to watch multiple channels inculcating different ideologies in their minds. However, the film industry of Pakistan remains under the same dominance of some producers, directors and actors, producing movies in the same lot as ever. The film industry of Pakistan has failed to mark consistency and has become a dead business for the investors to produce high budgeted films with laudable structures. Owing to such deficiency of investment along with the interest of the investors, the various aspects of production ranging from the selection of actors to the script writers has been compromised.

Despite the low standards of the production, the Pakistani film industry remained passive to the latest techniques and technologies. The decline in the film industry not only claims to be the output of low investment, but several other driving forces such as political instability, economical crisis, lack of piracy laws and inattention of the heavy audience also contributed towards the deterioration. Moreover, the mounting ratio of the easy access to the cable network also contributed to the decline of the film industry because people save their time and energies which are otherwise to be spent by going to cinema halls and return

discontented, rather demoralized. Cable access has made infotainment at choice providing varieties of channels within the reach of the consumer. This easy access makes the audience flaccid to participate in the rows of the cinema halls and furthermore, Pakistani films, when compared with the other Hollywood and Bollywood films being telecast at different channels, fail to lure the audience towards viewership. Such an attitude reflects the disinterestedness of the audience who intends to gain a good deal from the container called Media and the modern consumer is ever ready to extract meanings out of the cover of the text and relate them to his own cultural background and prior knowledge. Burton, in the same approach, propagates the ideas of Tolson about the decoding skill of the reader to extract meanings out of the text:

Tolson (1996) talks more about the 'reader' of texts and about the process of making sense of them: meanings are derived from meaning systems to which everyone in our culture has access.

(Burton; 2005:46)

It has become difficult for the modern consumer of the media to relate the text with his surroundings, with the local culture, but it becomes easy for the consumer to manipulate the culture in the same fashion as propagated in the media. It exercises deep effects on the lives of the viewers and is responsible for structuring public opinion. Media influence has become a major discipline in the media-oriented societies for the researchers to probe into the ways in which it shapes the lives of the viewers and enables them to derive 'desired' meanings. There has been a lot of research conducted in the context of the influence of the media on the society especially pertaining to the advertisements of national and multi-national companies to inculcate desired ideology about the world around them, but there is a gap in the research areas regarding the local cultures of Pakistan and the effects of the misrepresentation of Pakistani culture on the viewers and their minds.

General masses in Pakistan lack the capacity to comprehend the disguised or subliminal messages in the media and are subjected to fabricate their general opinions consciously or unconsciously with lasting effects. This study is hoped to shed the garbs put on the reality which media project and make people conscious to remain alert while watching the small box that occupies very little space in their homes.

In this research, I intended to investigate the multiple layers through which the culture is being misrepresented in the Pakistani Punjabi movies neglecting the real culture of the Punjab. I also intend to investigate into some of the following research questions:

1. How do movies affect the approach with which people perceive the world around them?
2. How do misrepresentations of the local culture of Pakistan, particularly Punjabi, in the movies influence the Pakistani people and their culture?

For this purpose, I have analysed still images from four Punjabi movies that got popular acclaim, released in different decades. The selection of the movies as samples has been made on the massive public response, popularity of the films among the masses, the wholeness impact they exercise on the immediate target audience and their effect on society as general.

It is hypothesised in my study that the culture being represented in the Pakistani Punjabi movies is alien, having no roots in the people of rural or urban Punjab. It may have some traces of the local culture but only a small segment of it is practised and owned by the people in general. Besides the dress code, impression and other visual elements producing



meanings, the language consumed in the movies is also alien in its semantic and phonological traits. The Punjabi culture is rich in its use of language, the fact that most of the mystic poets have preserved their richness of thought in Punjabi; its present use in the movies creates breach in the audience, deforming the moderate medium of communication in the Punjab. Furthermore, the dialogues in the movies are replete with emotionally charged words, abnormal intonation and different speech patterns. Language in the movies also requires a detailed study in the shape of misrepresentation. However, I have delimited my area of study to the visual elements in order to analyse them by applying the science of signs and extracting the intended meanings out of it.

## **1.2 Delimitation of the Study**

The study incorporates various disciplines in its course including media studies, anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies etc. In the course of this research, it would be impossible to probe deeply into all the disciplines in detail. Hence, I have limited my study to those specific areas concerning the research questions mentioned above. A movie is a much broader term for the analysis. It encompasses many aspects and disciplines such as script, dialogues with emotionally charged words, abnormal intonation and stress in speech, petty themes, odd characters, strange and out of place sound effects, high-pitched songs with odd lyrics and other visual elements like camera angles, settings, dress code, colour, gestures and costume. It is a wide range of subjects covered under the heading of Movies. It is not possible to discuss, analyze or diagnose all such detailed topics within one research effort. Each one of these fields requires a detailed study; hence the present research is focused simply on one specific area of study that is visual elements in the images including settings, dress code, colour, gesture and costume. Furthermore, it is pertinent to delimit the

study to semiotics analysis; otherwise it would touch the boundaries of language in general, a diverse and different field of study.

Visual communication does not include language codes; it leaves the visual message and the recipient alone. This paper focuses on the production of meaning from visual messages in films from a semiotic analysis perspective which can be examined through viewer responses to identify patterns of meaning construction. Every message system, whether linguistic or non-linguistic, verbal or nonverbal, is a system of signs. We use available signs and codes to produce and receive verbal or nonverbal meaningful messages. As we live in a world dominated by electronic media, producers of visual messages such as advertisers, filmmakers, graphic artists, image-makers all use images and signs to affect our meaning making process.

This study is a humble attempt to investigate the multiple layers of signs employed in the movies. The focus of analysis is to analyze the signs in the images including settings, dress code, gestures, colours and expressions. I have limited my study only to those specific areas relevant to meet the research questions mentioned above. Also, I have selected only four films that acquired lot of space in the popular imagination.

### **1.3 Research Methodology**

The main theoretical frame of this research is semiotics and falls within the domain of cultural studies. Multiple layers of signs occupy the visual screen in the movies and these signs are replete with a number of implicit and explicit messages. It is therefore required that the approach to expose hidden implications in the signs should be theoretical and critical. Semiotics, the systematic study of signs, is an approach appropriate for exploring

the multiple layers of the signs (visuals) employed in the movies, in order to dig out their hidden meanings.

It is to be considered seriously that most of the attempts to (mis)represent Pakistani Punjabi culture take place in the Punjabi movies. I have selected five Pakistani Punjabi films that did well on the box office, as visual texts, released during the last few years. I have taken still images from the movies as a text for the analysis. The selection of these still images is made with a view of getting rich text for the analysis of the misrepresentation of the culture in the movies. The selection of these images is made systematic, as in the selected images; there are images of the main characters and any such shot which denotes to any cultural event represented and connoting misrepresentation in its meanings. I have employed qualitative mode of research on the selected images from the movies for the analysis as it permits appropriate interpretation in narrative. Qualitative research method is employed to get an insight about the thinking patterns of the people the way they are and why they are, what they believe and what meanings they attach to various activities. I have selected five movies as samples and the design for the research is case studies. The approach is process oriented and inductive. I have sought help from critical theories like deconstruction and structuralism in discussing issues of cultural identity and diversity of cultures in Pakistan. Furthermore, I have utilized the Pierce's Model for the analysis of the signs. The signs are further to be categorized as symbolic, iconic and indexical in the study. The study is framed in chapters and the division would be as under:

## **1.4 Chapter Division**

### **1. Chapter 1: Background and Introduction**

In the introduction, I have tried to provide the justification for my research in this particular field. I have briefly stated the setbacks and develop the background for the study. In the introduction, I have also introduced the hypothesis which will, as the result of the investigation, either be proved or refuted. The chapter also includes the discussion about the research methodology and the significance of the study with a brief description of the frame work for the chapters.

## **2. Chapter 2: Literature Review (Key Terms in Cultural Studies: An Overview)**

This chapter includes a brief history of the work already carried out in the related field of research. The theories concerning the key terms in cultural studies will be discussed such as Culture, Pakistani culture and Punjabi culture. Similarly, the key terms in Semiotics and film studies will be discussed in detail. The rationale of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the main issues and key terms of the field and also to highlight the existing gap which this study is aimed to fill.

## **3. Chapter 3: The Issues of (Mis)representation: The Politics of Film Semiotics.**

This chapter offers a detailed account of the problems of misrepresentation and the effect of such misrepresentation on the viewers. This chapter raises the issues of 'bias' representation and misrepresentation and their entire effect on the viewers shaping their ideology from a political viewpoint. The role of media semiotics in (mis)representation is also a part of discussion.

## **3. Chapter 4: Cultural (Mis)representation in Pakistani Punjabi Movies: Some Case Studies**

Analysis of the cultural (mis)representation in selected movies is the focus of this chapter. The (mis)representation of the local culture in the sign system woven in the texture of Punjabi movies is discussed in detail. The deliberate visualisation of the fake signs is analyzed whether they represent the real culture of Punjab in a candid manner or not.

## **5. Conclusion**

This final part of the study concludes the issues of (mis)representations under study by revisiting the research questions mentioned earlier and analyse whether suitable answers have been found or not through the investigation.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study seeks to investigate how the Punjabi cinema has been presenting a distorted picture of the rich and ancient culture of the Punjab. The study is likely to arouse both the common people and film critics alike to gain consciousness about the misrepresentation of the culture of Punjab. In this way, it is likely that the writers, directors and actors would try to refrain from such distortions while making movies. The study may also provide guiding principles for the film critics in the print/electronic media to develop informed critiques of such films, paving the way for the improvement in the thinking patterns of the people concerned.

This study is also aimed at inviting the researchers to carry on further study in the same pattern as the theme is serious enough and thought provoking. This research is aimed at the people from all the disciplines of life including the scholars and academicians whose culture is at stake due to the eroding mechanism of cultural misrepresentation. Such a misrepresentation disrupts the ideology of the people being represented in a different colour. This marginalization damages the confines of the cultural identity of the country and asserts

serious threat to the social fabric. The study is a humble attempt to make people conscious of the designed cultural tools which are eroding their cultural identity and shaping their world views in a different manner. The important aspect of the study is that such attempts to misrepresent the culture are made by people of the same identity. It is the self-marginalisation by the people of the same background. Furthermore, the research in the area of cultural misrepresentation, especially Punjabi culture, needs to be conducted by the research scholars. Cultural misrepresentation is a serious issue, often noticed in the advertisement and television serials, but it needs authentic consideration by the research scholars because the encroaching trends of the foreign culture maintain a strangle hold and the purity of the culture is giving away. The theme of the study is quite serious and thought provoking.

## Chapter Two

### Review of Literature

(Culture, Pakistani culture, Punjabi culture)

This research incorporates various disciplines and it is pertinent to explain the related key terms with a brief account of the issues related to the topic. Therefore, this chapter has been divided into three parts in which there will be a brief account of all the key terms to introduce them to the readers with the jargon of different disciplines so as to make them familiar with the ongoing study. The first segment is all about culture and terms related to cultural studies. The second segment offers a detailed account of semiotic studies and Semiology. The third and the last discipline to be explored is Film Studies. In this segment, elements of making meanings will be discussed as they are indispensable for the construction of meaning.

I shall also provide a rationale for my study in this chapter for conducting research in the above mentioned discipline. The earlier studies in the field of cultural misrepresentation have been reviewed critically. I find a gap in the existing literature over the issue of misrepresentation of the Punjabi culture. However, research has been conducted by the scholars on the issues of misrepresentation of culture in the advertisements<sup>1</sup>, television serials and effects of the media on the viewer<sup>2</sup>, but Punjabi movies were ignored and not taken as a rich text for the analysis. Furthermore, the failure of the Punjabi Film Industry is attributed to the factors other than misrepresentation of culture like low budget, rigid government policies regarding the screening of Indian movies in Pakistani cinemas, lack of latest equipment for the film making, lack of original scripts, massive interest of the audience in foreign films and, mounting plagiarism and

poor quality. Punjab Minister for Sports and Culture Dr Rana Tanvirul Islam said, "I am surprised by the titles of Pakistani movies, one can assess the worth of our movie from its name."<sup>3</sup>

The film industry that once was the identity of Pakistan is in a bad shape and the misery is that nobody wants to take the responsibility of rebuilding it. 'The only reason that good films are not being made here is lack of financiers. Why don't the distributors, who buy expensive Indian films, invest their money in Lollywood<sup>4</sup>? The analysts are still finding the gaps to be filled in but they fail to reach at the core of the problem, misrepresentation. 'Almost every cinema hall in Pakistan including those located in Northern Lahore and the Walled City are known for displaying Punjabi movies, but now they have switched to screening either Indian or English films. Cinema-owners are going in for foreign flicks after Pakistani films failed to attract viewers in sizable numbers<sup>5</sup>.'

Major Punjabi film producers also ascribe the decline to factors such as discussed above. No such attempt is made to investigate the reason why the audience loses interest in the local movies or why it is difficult for the audience to maintain affinity with what they view on screen. The reason is still not revealed to them. Audience, throughout Pakistan cannot approve any such attempt which is not rooted in their local culture. They fail to perceive their cultural identity in the movies and unconsciously fall a victim to the foreign culture and give way to the propagated culture replacing their own one.

Thus, the issues of misrepresentation in the visual screens are to be analysed and my attempt is to investigate the signs in the movies, displaying misrepresentation of the Punjabi culture and



propagating what is not bona fide and weird. A brief discussion of culture and cultural studies is as under:

## 2. Culture and Cultural Studies.

The last quarter of the twentieth century marks the growing interest in the discipline of the cultural studies especially during the last decade. It has succeeded in getting the status of an academic discipline in the universities and has become a 'genuinely global movement' (During: 1999: 11) throughout the world for the intellectuals as well as for research scholars. This discipline owes to the early work of the Birmingham centre, founded in 1964. The directorship of the Richard Hoggart who was at that time a Professor of English literature, marked the prominent regime of the centre for the Culture and Cultural Studies in Britain as well as for the rest of the world for the most of the 1970s to 1980s. Birmingham Centre's work was titled by the late Professor of English and cultural studies at Manchester Metropolitan University, as the most important 'intervention in cultural studies in Britain' (Easthope: 1988: 74). Graeme Turner, director of the Centre for the Critical and Cultural Studies, Queensland, testifies the supremacy of the Birmingham centre as the role model for the cultural studies stating, 'The Birmingham Centre . . . can justifiably claim to be the key institution in the history of the field' (Turner, 1996, 70).

Ziauddin Sardar and Borin Van Loon, in their book *Introducing Cultural Studies*, comment that Cultural Studies "does not have a clearly defined subject area" with a definite course line (Sardar: 1998: 06). It borrows from all the disciplines of the social sciences and humanities to fulfil its own purpose. The multidimensional nature of the study is to traverse the boundaries of the various disciplines in order to meet the purpose of inquiry. That is why, cultural studies is

also known as “anti-discipline” (Sardar: 1998: 08) or a collective term for the varied proceedings of different political and theoretical positions. The study of culture is “a direction, an object of study, a set of themes and issues, a distinctive problematic of its own” (Hall 1980a: 26).

Cultural studies, as a discipline owes much to the theories and movements by various theorists. It is possible to probe into the development of the cultural studies in much more detail, but it is pertinent to discuss the key terms of the field like ‘Culture’, ‘Pakistani culture’ and ‘Punjabi culture’. The first term to be discussed is the problematic one, ‘the culture’ itself.

## 2.1 CULTURE

Culture is one of the most multifaceted words in English, as Willaims has put it. It has also been reviewed that culture is being defined in 164 diverse meanings by the anthropologist Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (qtd. in Inglis:2005:05). The term culture covers a number of various descriptions of everyday practices, values and beliefs, customs, rituals and objects in which the values of the society are shaped. It becomes difficult to concise the definition of the term culture in few words, but is quite relevant to equate the meaning of the term with whatever is practised by the members of the society in particular space and time. Catherine Belsey proposes the distinct definition of culture in *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction* (2002); ‘culture: the inscription in stories, rituals, customs, objects, and practices of the meanings in circulation at a specific time and place’ (qtd. in Miles:2007:192). The definition legitimizes the acts of the people in a society with reference to a particular period of time in which they are practised. Culture is not a confined set of values or beliefs. It is rather arbitrary. It absorbs the entire actions and the

ideologies by a group of people or a nation as a whole. The term 'Culture' remains ambiguous as many theorists define it in different ways and it becomes impossible to accept one definition and ignore the another. Therefore it is appropriate to view some of the definitions given by some leading theorists. Belsey writes about culture thus;

Culture constitutes the vocabulary within which we do what we do; it specifies the meanings we set out to inhabit and repudiate, the values we make efforts to live by or protest against, and the protest is also cultural. Culture resides in the representations of the world exchanged, negotiated and contested in a society.  
(qtd. in Miles:2007:30)

The definition given by Belsey takes in everything which may have the remotest bearing to the concept in which culture is inferred. It is an umbrella term which, in the words of T.S Eliot, is 'a whole way of life'. It is much more than what it actually represents. It concludes the entire attitude of a group or community towards some idea, belief and values.

The Editors of *Culture and Public Action* offer their views over the much debated term culture as;

Culture is concerned with identity, aspiration, symbolic exchange, coordination, and structures and practices that serve relational ends, such as ethnicity, ritual, heritage, norms, meanings, and beliefs.  
( Vijayendra Rao & Michael Walton;2004,04)

This definition portrays culture as the structures within which an individual confirms the kinship with a particular ethnic group using the cultural tools and acts as a medium to convey the heritage of the culture further. We cannot limit the culture to mere specific things; rather what is not to be specified becomes even more problematic. It 'connotes the entire range of a society's make-up such as religion, faith, morals, customs, laws, learning,

arts, craft, hobbies and leisure which a man acquires as a member of a society' (Jalibi:2008:02). It somehow manages to be synonymised with civilization. Culture means the development resulting from training and growth. It is inculcating the set norms and ideas into the framework of the mind of an individual. Broadly speaking, it means 'the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole' (Williams: 1961:16). It is taken to be the general and universal process of human development. Culture becomes the coffer of tradition and history, an 'artistic record of a society' (Wise:2008: 14).

While writing about the culture, Williams observed the marginalization of the working classes in the teashops and the lecture halls of Oxford and proposed that the culture was 'ordinary'. It means that the culture is concerned with everyone's everyday life. He asserts;

Culture is ordinary: that is the first fact. Every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning.

(Williams: 1989: 04)

Williams rightly points out that human society has its own shape, purposes and meanings. Culture constitutes the 'full common meanings' for the members of the society in their common and everyday experiences. Williams further adds three levels to his definition of culture saying;

There is the lived culture of a particular time and place, only fully accessible to those living in that time and place. There is the recorded culture . . . from art to the most everyday: the culture of a period. There is also, as the factor connecting lived culture and period culture, the culture of the selective tradition.

(Williams, 1965:66)

Williams refers to the ways in which a group of people or groups of people feel, think and act in a particular space and time. He argues the accessibility of the culture to those who confirm to be the heirs of particular tradition and values in a particular time and space and the proposed meanings of the culture are to be fully comprehended.

In the same vein, the recorded culture also propagates the 'everyday facts' in art and literature giving insight to the practices and beliefs of the people of a particular time in which it was written. It is an access to the *lived culture* of that time. It is incorporated in literature, film, newspaper and other products of mass media like advertisements and posters. Williams theorizes the culture as genres in the human society for evaluating and defining the human existence.

In spite of all the views held by the theorists, it still becomes difficult to find the middle ground for the definition of culture. We cannot reserve the vitality of culture confining it to mere actions and beliefs of a group of people.

## **2.2 Pakistani Culture**

Pakistan is one of the countries in the world in which there is a diversity of cultures. It is difficult to confine the beliefs and the practices of one group and generalise it to the others. 'Pakistani culture is largely grown out of Islamic norms and values' (Jalibi:2008:06). The concept of Islamic culture has two strains. First of all, a culture cannot subsist without an ideology, secondly, spiritual and worldly lives are like two peas in a pod making a single whole. The rights of the individual and the rights of the people in general are laid emphasis through the complete guidance of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of The Prophet

Mohammad (PBUH). The ultimate aim of Islam is to preach an ideology which is indifferent to the ethnic differences of colour, race and creed.

Islam aims to establish a universal culture in which people belonging to any creed or religion may live with perfect peace and harmony.

(Jalibi; 2008:07)

Islam lays bare the paths to be followed in order to manage a society as a whole, a 'unity' without any racial differences among the people of the same creed. 'The soul of Islamic culture is 'unity' which symbolizes "Unity and Oneness of Allah, unity of mankind and unity of life' (Jalibi; 2008:09).

The foundation of the Pakistani culture has its roots in the teachings of Islam. 'Pakistan encountered many creeds and religions'(Jalibi.2008:61) The minorities are allowed to dwell in their own structures while for the Muslims, 'Islam became the catalyst in all spheres of intellectual, spiritual and material life of the people'(Jalibi:08:61). 'Despite having an ideology, some theorists claim that there is an absence of true Islamic ideology in Pakistan'(Saleem:2001:312). Saleem asserts that the study of the Pakistani culture will not be, in fact, the study of Islam. One of the main factors of such discrimination is that the region was never under the rule of the locals, but it was a subject to foreign invaders who came and ruled for centuries.<sup>6</sup>

In Pakistan, especially in Punjab, there is a cultural diversity owing to the migration of millions of immigrants from the United India after the partition in 1947. Even before the partition, the culture practised in Punjab was hybrid, a mixed culture of the Sikhs and the Muslims. Several practices were owned by both of them despite the discriminating

ideologies of the religion such as festivals, values and social structures. After the migration, there existed diversity in cultural lives of the people due to the long affiliation of the migrants with the Sikhs and the Hindus. The migration resulted in a change of atmosphere but also as the continuation of the same hybrid values across the borders. M. H. Siddiqui writes;

This has resulted in diversity in the racial and ethnic formulations as well as admixture of one or more racial groups with indigenous elements.  
(Siddiqui:2008:18)

All the values and traditions dwelled in the newly born state as the people loved to continue their primitive tastes of life with the sense of inheritance.

The ideological foundation of Pakistan was purely Islamic. The culture it boosts, somehow, at times, deviates owing to the tradition and the customs laid by the ancestors. It is impossible to concise the unlimited behaviours of the people to one regional or geographical boundary, as Punjabi culture is diverse and rich in its spectrum.

### **2.3 Punjabi Culture**

Punjab is the most thickly populated province of Pakistan. It is the province of five rivers. It is fertile and replete with the beauties of nature. Its climate and physical landscape meet at extremes<sup>7</sup>. The diversity in climate results in the diversity in the cultural background also with distinct features. Dr.Mohan writes:

These extremes of atmosphere and surface have preserved all the regional and consequent, social and linguistic differences and prevented the whole of what we know now as the Punjab.

(Mohan: 1982:01)

Punjab breeds diverse cultures throughout and it becomes difficult to designate a single culture as the sole culture of Punjab. Even the rural and urban areas in Punjab show a clear

discrepancy in their cultural outlook. Rural and urban Punjab comprise of two different cultural pockets with different ideologies. In spite of slight variations in both the cultural pockets, there are some general values and customs to which, every one of the society adheres.

Punjab has been the centre of culture from the very beginning where countless civilizations were bred, made progress and with the passage of time, were eroded. The ancient city of Harappa shows remarkable similarities with the ancient city of Mohin Jo Daro(Sindh).<sup>8</sup> Both these civilizations are known to be four thousand years old. The way of living of the ancient people of that age, their necessities, food, articles of clothing and jewellery inform us of their cultured lives and social structures.

In the pages of history, Punjab faced a number of invaders and rulers in different centuries including Aryans, Greeks, Iranians, Arabs, Turks and Mongols<sup>9</sup>. Gradually, the races started merging into one another and the cultural tools were exchanged. The culture of the dominant race remained prominent and there existed diversity in the cultural lives of the people of different races and regions. Even today, people of different regions and races display cultural patterns in their primitive tastes and these cultural tools are further inherited by the next generation. All the cultural practices in Punjab have some ideological backgrounds and Punjab is a fertile land for breeding cultures of diverse nature. Each culture has some distinct features and different cultural tools. Dr. Mohan Singh endorses the idea of cultural diversity of Punjab in his words,

The people that now occupies the Punjab was formed by the fusion of several superimposed races

(Mohan; 1982.01)

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This diversity in the cultural pattern of the Punjabi people is the product of the cultural exchange of the natives and the migrants from the eastern Punjab after the partition. None of the three other provinces of Pakistan faced the dilemma of cultural hybridity<sup>10</sup>. Hanif further writes:

Their cultural and social lives faced no prominent change or hustle  
bustle after the establishment of Pakistan.

(Hanif:1988:25)

Punjab remains the laboratory of cultural exchange allowing the inhabitants to prosper and spread. Despite having diversity in cultural tools and ideologies, there are still some features which are generally followed by the people of Punjab. There is an unusual resemblance in the rites and the rituals, ceremonies and the cultural values among the people who apparently follow different cultural patterns.

The study of signs must be briefly touched upon in order to investigate the areas of misrepresentation of the Punjabi culture in the movies, since, “semiotics involves studying representations and processes involved in representational practices, and to semioticians, ‘reality’ always involves representation” (Chandler:2003:55). Semiotics, the discipline for the study of signs is to be discussed in length with detailed discussion of Peirce’s model.

### **2.1.1 Semiology**

Semiotics is defined as the ‘systematic study of signs’ (Eagleton: 1986:100). It is the scientific study of the ‘sign system’ in a particular time and space. It has been termed ‘Metalinguistics’ to refer to the proximity of the linguistic system with the system of signs. The source thinkers of the discipline were Ferdinand De Saussure and the American

philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. Saussure instituted 'Semiology' and Peirce founded the science of 'semiotics in the same span of time without having the notion of the ongoing research by both of them. Saussure, in *Course in General Linguistics* (1915), claims:

A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; I shall call it semiology (from Greek semeion 'sign'). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it would be; but it has a right to existence, a place staked out in advance.

(Saussure:1966:16)

For Saussure, language is one of the complex semiological systems and linguistics is the 'master-pattern for all the branches of semiology' (Saussure:1966:68).

Pierce on the other hand, constructed his theory of semiotics concerning symbols, the 'woof and warp' of all thoughts. He writes, "It has never been in my power to study anything-mathematics, ethics, metaphysics, gravitations, thermodynamics, optics, chemistry, comparative anatomy, astronomy, psychology, phonetics, economic, history of science, whist, men and women, wine, metrology-except as a study of semiotic"(qtd. in Deledallè:200:35). Both the terms, semiotics and Semiology have been interchangeably used, but in the recent years, semiotics has become a term more commonly used by critics.

Umberto Eco offers the definition of the semiotics in the broadest sense saying, 'semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as signs'(Eco:1976:7). The study of signs is not only confined to the signs only, but to any other thing which 'stands for' something else(Chandler:2003:01). According to Chandler, it can take the form of a gesture, images, sounds, words and objects, since they all contribute towards the meaning and how they are represented.

### 2.1.2 Sign

Ferdinand De Saussure (1857-1913) accentuates synchronic study of language discarding the conventional diachronic study that aimed at the historical study regarding the gradual development of the language in the historical context. He argued that a linguistic must shift away from the historical (diachronic-‘two times’) orientation of the language and should invest in Synchronic-‘same time’ study of the language which is functional. In his view, linguistics concerning synchronic study “will be concerned with the logical and psychological relations that bind together coexisting terms and form a system in the collective mind of speakers” (Saussure 1966:99–100). For him, it is a mistake to confuse synchronic facts with that of diachronic facts, since the disparity between them is ‘absolute and admits no compromise’. He also introduced the notion of sign in his theory of language. M. H. Abrams offers this definition in his *A Glossary of Literary Terms* to explain the concept of sign in Saussure’s culture;

A sign consists of two inseparable components or aspects, the signifier (in language, a set of speech sounds, or of marks on a page) and the signified (the concept, or idea, which is the meaning of the sign.

(Abrams; 1999: 280)

The signifier is a visual or acoustic signal which activates a mental concept, the signified. The relation between signified and the signified is signification. The signified is a ‘mental representation’ rather than a thing or image or a sound.

The relationship between the signifier and the signified is claimed to be arbitrary and conventional by Saussure, they can mean different things to different people. He gives the idea that ‘there is no natural, inevitable link between the signifier and the signified’ (Culler:

1988:19). A Danish linguist Hjelmslev surrogates the term with Sign Function, a correspondence between an expression and its content. For Hjelmslev, semiotics is “a science that studies the life of signs within society” (qtd. in Cobley: 1998: 39). Saussure claims that each language has an arbitrary and distinct way of organizing the entities into concept and images. The sign, as he perceives, is institutional and a social phenomenon which can be sensed by the user of that language in a particular time and space.

Saussure also stresses that the meaning of the words are relational to ‘adjoining words’, as Barry puts in, “the definition of any given word depends upon its relation with other adjoining words” (Barry: 2002: 42). The meaning of a word is acquired in terms of ‘binary opposition’ as in language, “there are only differences with no positive terms” (Course: 120: 166). The concept of the colour brown is to be comprehended when it is differentiated with black or white. A brown is brown because it is not green or blue. We equate meanings of the words with their differences among them.

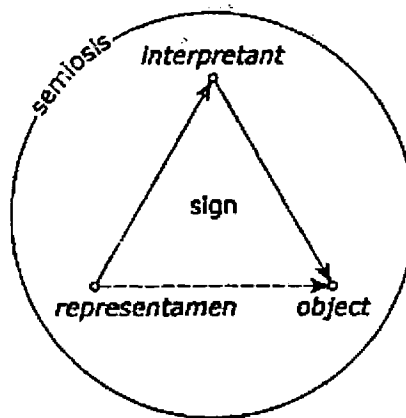
Logically, the signs are recognized by the reader and ‘then he goes on to decipher some sort of cultural, social or emotional meanings’ (Cobley & Jansz:1998:50). The meanings contained in a sign have an access to the reader who shares the same cultural, social and emotional background. Somehow, different meanings at different levels are also expected in addition to a single sign with different meanings for different readers. Sign is a means of communication, a container offering meanings to the reader. These signs may contain elements which make them complex and multilayered structures. They can be interpreted by keeping in view the context in which they are utilized.

Signs, according to Roland Barthes, project two dimensions of interpretations. They can be well interpreted, or they can be equally ambiguous. 'Signs ought to present themselves in two extreme forms: either openly intellectual or so remote that they are reduced to algebra' (qtd. in Lavers: 1981:29)

### 3.1.3 Peirce's Model

[I]t has never been in my power to study anything, [ . . . ] except a study of semeiotic.

Peirce



Along with the Saussurean Semiological Model (as the term Semiology used by Saussure, Culler 1986:90), there exists another model presented by an American pragmatist philosopher and logician Charles Sander Peirce as the model of sign, of 'semiotic' and of taxonomies of signs (Chandler: 2003:32). He gives three part model:

1. The *representamen*: the form which the sign takes.
2. An *interpretant*: not an interpreter but rather the sense made of the sign.
3. An *object*: to which the sign refers.

Peirce categorized the archetypes of meaning in signs as *iconic*, *symbolic*, and *indexical*. An *iconic* sign, in one or more respects, is the same as the object signified. It is a sign which represents its object by the virtue of similarity or resemblance as in the case of diagrams, statues and portraits. Iconic sign displays the same patterns of the represented object, for instance, in a photograph a person being pictured resembles the actual person.

A *symbol*, according to Peirce, means something 'thrown together' making a contact or convention. 'Symbolic signs, completely arbitrary signs which depend on conventions, codes, rules and cultural practices for their recognition' (Forrester:2002:08).

An *index* is a sign, affected by or physically linked to, its object. It also denotes to the cause and effect relation between the sign and the interpretant. For instance, a cry for help may indicate someone in need. Similarly, a knock on the door may indicate that there is someone at the door. According to Peirce, indexical sign is 'determined by its dynamic object by virtue of being in a real relation to it.' (Stam *et al*: 1992: 06). An indexical sign engrosses an existential link between the sign and the interpretant.

All these three types of signs are used in visual communication. The knowledge of these various types of signs can help us in interpreting the text that is fabricated with these different types of signs. Peirce, in his essay, 'Logic as Semiotics', writes;

A Sign may be termed an Icon, an Index, or a Symbol. An Icon is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses, just the same, whether any such object actually exists or not....An Index is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object....A Symbol is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas which operates to cause the Symbol to be interpreted as referring to that Object.

(Pierce:1986: 8)

For Peirce, language constitutes the human being: 'the word or sign which the man uses *is* the man himself...thus my language is the sum total of myself' (1931: V, 189).

He asserts that every sign belongs to a class and all the considerations are to be measured. One of the salient things is how to 'read' the text, considering that the process of reading involves negotiation and interaction of the reader with the text. As Fiske (1982: 3) asserts, 'negotiation takes place as the reader utilizes aspects of his/her own cultural experience to understand the codes and signs that make up the text. The different ways of 'making meaning' or decoding are divided into specific categories that combine to form the frame for a comprehensive semiotic analysis of any text' (Fiske: 1982: 3).

Since this study is an exploratory effort that attempts to analyze the different readings of visual texts, I have investigated the meanings of the images in the movies in terms of semiotic analysis of the visual aspects of the text. In order to achieve my main goal, I have formulated several research questions for providing rationale for utilizing Peirce's Model for analysis.

- 1) What are the dominant visual signs in the images?
- 2) How are these images described ?
- 3) What do they signify ?
- 4) How do various message elements function in terms of semiotic meaning: iconic, symbolic, indexical?
- 5) How do message elements carrying various types of semiotic meanings differ in type of impact they create on viewers' perceptions?

Sign, in itself is a complex term. It doesn't only refer to the signification or relation between the signifier and the signified, but also denotes multidimensional meanings

encoded in the signs. I have selected Peirce's Model for the sign analysis as it allows in-depth investigation of the sign according to its intended meanings and nature.

For this analysis, the images used to note the message elements were categorized as being **iconic** (mostly representational by the virtue of resemblance), **indexical** (a signal of something in nature or event), or **symbolic** (something that stands for something else – a meaning assigned by convention).

### 2.2.1 Film Studies

Film studies is generally assumed to be merely about the activity of sitting around watching the film and getting some moments of entertainment. This assumption is not altogether wrong, because a close reading of the text is indispensable before analyzing it seriously. Reading a film means to navigate the multiple layers of the meaning in the structure of the film and analyze them in the larger context of the existing ideology of the age. Generally, audience does not respond to the process of meaning making consciously, rather the activity is unconscious to extract meaning out of it. The medium of film is relatively rich as compared to television because of its visual resolution. It requires no prior training or any level of literacy; rather it offers entertainment to almost all the sections of society. The editors of *The Essential Study Guide*, Ruth Doughty and Deborah Shaw, stress that the medium of film exercises intoxicating effects on the audience.

Without doubt, film is the most powerful medium society has for influencing mass audiences

(Doughty & Shaw; 2009.02)

The development of the meaning in the minds of the audience is an unconscious process. It is also realized that cinema 'has a powerful effect on the consciousness of the viewer'



(Doughty & Shaw; 2009.03). The images on the screen form ideological standpoints in the minds of the audience, forcing them to nourish ideologies according to the representation being propagated by the film maker.

Deleuze in 'New Developments in Film Theory', argues that 'a theory of cinema is not about cinema, but about the concepts that cinema gives rise to and which are themselves related to other concepts' (Deleuze :1989: 280).

The discipline of film studies was shaped by several movements in the history of its development. It will be irrelevant to probe into the stages of its development, but it is pertinent to focus on the elements of the visual science which are indispensable for making meaning out of the codes and signs. 'Representation on television is encoded by technical codes with the camera, lighting, sound, music, and editing in order to transmit conventional representational codes' (Smith *et al* :2005:530).

The study of signs was employed by Roland Barthes ( Barthes 1957) in the cultural analysis. The translation of his popular essays into English entitled *Mythologies* followed by many of his other writings and influenced scholarly awareness of this approach. He once again glosses the term writing, now taking into account the critique of the sign and its development in which he so forcefully participated. Barthes embraces a new program: to shake the bases of the representation of meaning.

Semiotics has been employed by the research scholars in the interpretation of the text such as analyzing magazine covers, ads and commercials on the television<sup>11</sup>. The focus of this study is to conduct semiotic analysis on Punjabi movies, which have not been under such

investigation before. I find gap in the existent literature regarding viewing movies from a semiotics perspective. The study of signs is feasible in exploring the multiple layers of signs in the images from the movie for analysis with respect to their misrepresentation.

### **2.2.2 MISE EN SCÈNE: SETTING**

Mise en Scene is a French word referring to the elements of the film construction. The term is borrowed from the theatre, used for staging or putting on stage. It aids the audience to think of the elements of the scene like a particular location for the desired shot, particular characters and their dresses in the same pattern and the direction of movements of the characters in the film. These entire elements lend meaning to the film in a particular manner and they even contribute towards the complexity of the meanings as well, for instance, the background of the gloomy scene contributes towards the meaning of the narrative. The uncovered and dishevelled hair of the protagonist speaks of his mental agony. The costumes and the props invest the same pattern of meaning in the film. The setting of the film is to project the nature of dialogues of the characters. It further includes lightings, make up and costumes, symbols and motives and camera movements. All these elements have to work in an organic manner in order to convey desired meanings.

‘Representational codes have to work together to encode a preferred meaning and to appear natural at the same time’(Smith *et al*:2005:531). Butler adds, ‘whether it is studio or location, the setting contributes to the meaning of the film’ (Butler:2005:28). The overall setting compliments the context of the scene and makes it easy for the spectator to make out meanings.

A brief introduction to these terms is given below:

### 2.2.3 Lighting

This refers to the various ways in which the light whether in the studio or on location is controlled and manipulated in order to achieve the 'look' desired for a particular shot or scene.

(Gaffney *et al*: 2006: 29)

In films, the natural light is supplemented by the light sets in order to convey possible moods of the objects. There is a frequent use of lights in the romantic comedies to show the attitude towards life. High lights are also used whenever there is a supernatural element in the film appearing with the flood of lights all around. Similarly, the tragedies make less use of lights in the making to convey the atmosphere of obscurity and anonymity. Light in the film is one of the elements to analyse the encoded meaning structured by the film maker. It denotes the context of the film which decides the source of the lighting, the colour and the quality.

Lighting analysis includes the source type, colour and quality. The direction and the source of light convey the symbolic meanings to the scene. Similarly, the quality of the light will contribute towards the inferences as the light of a candle is quite different from that of the sun. Moreover, the direction of the light, its brightness and flickering also stand for the encoded meaning in the visuals of the film. Finally, the colour of the light helps the audience to relate the meanings of the scene with the specific colour in a specific setting. Butler puts in 'the colour of the light – red, green, blue and so forth – will have an impact on how we relate to a scene' (Butler:2005:29). For instance, red delivers the sense of heat, rage, death and even love accordingly. The green colour attributes to the fertility and life. Black signifies threat, death and danger and white stands for life and peace. Moreover, Danesi is of the view that the use of colour proves helpful in the interpretations of the visual scenes. He writes 'Colors are, in effect, signs that we can use to represent whatever

we deem appropriate' (Danesi; 2004, 75). The colour of the film and the lighting are the sources to interpret the changing mood and the entire atmosphere of the film.

The objects in the film are also lit in the manner to express their dispositions. The light from the front (front lighting) will highlight them, whereas if they are lit from behind (back lighting), it will create a silhouette. In the same vein, if the objects are lit from the sides (side lighting), it may refer to the dual personality of the character as half of the face is lit and the other is put in the dark. Lighting from above (over head lighting) is to cast heavy shades, concealing the eyes and producing mysterious image of the face. Lighting from below reverses the usual expectations of the viewer and he is disoriented to be confronted with what is otherworldly or strange. Different angles create different shades and render different meanings likewise. It lies in the decision of the film makers how to utilize the elements of film making in the creation of meaning.

#### **2.2.4 CINEMATOGRAPHY: CAMERAWORK**

All the elements in the film making equip the viewer to decode the intended meanings from the film, and in addition to this wide range of touchstones, the film makers can also control the viewer's point of view through camerawork. 'The camera chronicles the action from a fixed or changing camera angle'. (Villarejo:2007: 36)

The viewer is put in a comfortable or uncomfortable position, weak or dominant position, simply by deciding the angle and the movements of the camera. It can be moved forward or backward (track), up and down (crane shot), and on either of the sides (pan). The angle by which an object is made to view, lends meaning to the object being filmed. The camera can be placed at any distance from the object being filmed and it can move in any direction. It

can also move at any pace away from, or around the object and this movement can be as shaky or as smooth as desired by the film maker. The availability of the technology required to produce the desired effects is the only 'limitation on the fluidity and mobility of the camerawork in any film' (Gaffney *et al*; 2006; 31). The technology in the related industry has made tremendous progress producing light weight cameras and sound recording instruments since 1950.<sup>12</sup>

The angle and the distances at which the character or object is being shot are again a matter of choice of the film maker.

The cinematographer can employ anything from an extreme long shot (ELS), to an extreme close-up (ECU) closing in on just part of the face. In between there are possibilities for a long shot (LS) giving a full-length character shot, a medium shot (MS) giving half a standing character, and a close-up (CU) giving a head and shoulders shot.

(Gaffney *et al* ;2006;32)

By materializing the shot scenario, the film maker narrows down the element to be viewed by the viewer in a logical sequence. First of all, there is an establishing shot, a shot narrating the setting 'in which the scene is to take place' (Gaffney *et al*: 2006: 32), enabling the viewer to establish a spatial relationship between the scene and the characters. If the establishing shot is missing, it becomes difficult for 'the viewer to make the sense of the relationships of the characters shown' (Gaffney *et al*: 2006: 32) The spectacular means of the film convey the context in which the characters are being shot and the relation of the character with the scene is further established.

The scenes in the film are logically shot by the film makers. The framing of the scenes and the objects, Gilles Deleuze notes, "the frame teaches us that the image is not just given to

be seen, it is legible as well as visible” (Deleuze: 1986: 12) The frames are the profiles of the objects being shot.

“The more information that fills the framed image,” suggests Bogue, “the more it may be said to be saturated” (Bogue: 2003: 42). The frame of the image provides clues to the viewer to form ideological background of the setting and the encoded meanings are decoded accordingly.

Another important issue regarding the visuals in the film is ‘the point of view we are presumed to see’ (Villarejo: 2007: 119). Each shot in the film is shot deliberately in a distinct manner, conveying the symbolic meanings about the object. For instance, looking on an object from a higher camera angle can suggest the miniaturization and triviality of nature while looking upward can suggest power and privilege, the zooming in on an object can offer more detail about it and the zooming out is ‘to take in more of the setting’ (Gaffney *et al*:2006:33).

All the combinations can be utilized by the film maker at his disposal in order to create meanings out of the frame in which the shot is being filmed. The techniques of the camera movement help in making the viewer to view the shot with the desired feelings and sensations.

### **2.2.5 Costumes and Props**

Costumes and props include all the articles of clothing worn by the character in the film in the given settings. Costumes can ‘announce a character, giving an insight into what this person is supposed to be, for instance shy or flamboyant’. (Gaffney *et al*; 2006: 23) It may

also refer to the relationship of the character with some specific group or a rank or a position.

A garment is a sign, and wearing it fulfils specific functions that can coexist, or overlap, in the same item.

( Calefato; 2004:15)

Calefato further asserts that 'dress functions as a kind of syntax' (Calefato:2004:10) and it gives audience meanings more convincingly. It gives insight into the nature of the character in the particular setting and conveys logical meanings to the characters. He further comments that the way the body is clad in, rationalizes the motives of its being dressed in that particular fashion. 'Bodily coverings, clothes and skin decorations 'create' the body, shaping it together with the surrounding world' (Calefato: 2004: 11). For instance, an army officer is supposed to be in uniform with stars on his shoulder and a clown must be dressed in a ridiculous manner. Similarly, a tramp mostly wears tattered clothes, a scholar is dressed in a simple and realistic manner and a youth is found to be in colourful articles of clothing supplemented by the props. Props suggest some vital characteristics of the individuals and they may even convey the sense of place as well. 'Props may be considered as an extension of costume because they tend to be associated with a particular character' (Butler: 2005: 32). They possess symbolic interpretations, often exposed at the end of the film. 'The prop takes on a role and significance within the film over and above its mere presence as a material object' (Gaffney *et al*: 2006:26)

The combination of costume and props lends maturity to the viewer in analyzing the character and they work to make the texture of the film realistic according to the setting in which it has been shot. 'Details of costuming contribute to the believability of a film's world' (Villarejo: 2007: 34). The costumes in the films become text for the audience to add

particulars to the characters accordingly. 'Like any other common object or artifact, we interpret *clothes* as signs, standing for such things as the personality, the social status, and overall character of the wearer' (Danesi: 2004: 177).

Make up is another supplementary element of the visual language being associated with the costumes lending meaning to the character and clues to the viewer to analyze it. It often goes unnoticed but it offers the disposition of the character. A country girl is found to be in a simple makeup while a modern girl from the city may have a brighter one. In comedies, the characters are dressed in a foolish manner in order to create an atmosphere of mirth and joy and the odd makeup makes them appear hilarious and amusing.

All the elements of the visual language produce meanings about the character and they also portray the cultural aspect of the lives of the character. It is through these indications of the cultural tools that a character is analysed and compared with the culture of the time. Burton expresses his view on the treatment of the sign in media saying, " The uses of colour, of focus, of lighting, for instance, will all contribute to the meanings that we make of the image(Burton:2005:67).

The disciplines discussed so far provide a background for the analysis of the films through the study of signs. Another term pertinent for the discussion is representation/ misrepresentation, with effects and influences on the audience. Since the focus of this study is to analyse the cultural misrepresentation of the Punjabi culture in Punjabi movies, it is pertinent to detail the variations in the cultural pockets of Punjab, urban and rural. The variations in both the cultural pockets of Punjab will be discussed in length in order to penalise the elements of misrepresentation. The discussion so far about the culture,



semiotics and film studies will unify to provide a criterion for the analysis of the images from the movies. The views on representation/misrepresentation are discussed in the next chapter followed by the cultural variation in the rural and urban Punjab.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Some of Semiotic analysis of advertisements are listed :Gardner and Levy's "The Product and the Brand" (1955), Levy's "Symbols for Sale" (1959), and Levitt's "The Morality (?) of Advertising" (1970), , Veblen (1899), Warner (1953), and Warner and Lunt (1941). This information has been retrieved from Jstore. Entitled Consumer Research and Semiotics: Exploring the Morphology of Signs, Symbols, and Significance Author(s): David Glen Mick Source: The Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 13, No. 2, (Sep., 1986), pp. 196-213

<sup>2</sup> Over three thousand studies have been conducted during the past forty years in the United States alone that suggest that there is a " correlation" between social aggression and the viewing of violence on the big and small screens. The effects of misrepresentation on the audience. Reference: A.H Shamsi, Mass Media in the new world order, p.85.

<sup>3</sup> The statement by the Minister has been taken from. <http://www.urdutahzeeb.net/film-and-music/articles/failure-of-lollywood-2>, Dated 01<sup>st</sup> July 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Syed Noor declared that the reason for the deterioration of the Pakistani film industry is due to lack of investment. He made this statement in an interview with The Weekly MAG, Oct. 24 - 30 , 2009

<sup>5</sup> The statement was taken from the [http://www.thenews.com.pk/blog/blog\\_details.asp?id=360](http://www.thenews.com.pk/blog/blog_details.asp?id=360) regarding the failure of Pakistani cinema.Dated 16<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Saleem writes that the united India always remained under the foreign domination for countless centuries and the culture of the invaders ruled over in their regime. The locals were transported and the local culture was marginalized.Pp313

<sup>7</sup> Dr.Mohan Singh acknowledges the diversity in the climate of Punjab. He writes that the Kashmir, dense growth areas of Bar, arid areas of Multan and Bahawalpur and the plains and the wide along with the snow fed rivers in the centre show extremes in climate.Pp.01

<sup>8</sup> Hameed writes that there exists a similarity between the two ancient cities of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro. They resemble each other in architecture and designs which illustrates that both the ancient cities were proponents of the same civilization. page15

<sup>9</sup> The land of five rivers was invaded and known by different names in the regime of the different rulers. Punjab was known by different names in different centuries. Pp02

<sup>10</sup> Hanif analyzes the reasons for the cultural diversity and claims that except Punjab, all the three provinces remained uninfluenced, as the masses were migrated at large in Punjab. Pp25

<sup>11</sup> Research scholars analyzed advertisements, magazine covers and images including Nadin Reschke on Cosmetics ads, Jeff Henry, Alexander Clare, Neiman Marcus, Merris Griffiths, Tahir Mazari on advertisements etc. some of the analysis have been taken from <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Students/lmg9302.html>, [http://www.merrisgriffiths.co.uk/PhD/chapter\\_5.html](http://www.merrisgriffiths.co.uk/PhD/chapter_5.html), retrieved on 27-10-09, [hypertext.rmit.edu.au/singing/essay/greimas.html](http://hypertext.rmit.edu.au/singing/essay/greimas.html).

<sup>12</sup> It is mentioned that the technological advances in the field of equipments required in a film making were as earlier as 1950s when light weighted cameras and sound gear made it easier to shoot out doors. Pp31.

## **Chapter 3:**

### **The Issues of (Mis)representation**

Representation and misrepresentation through media are major issues of this study. It is requisite to provide in detail the issues of representation and misrepresentation in film semiotics and the resources which are materialized in this regard. For Peirce, language constitutes the human being: "the word or sign which the man uses is the man himself...thus my language is the sum total of myself" (1931: V, 189).

I shall divide this chapter into two sections; the first dealing with the terms representation and misrepresentation supplemented with an explanation of misrepresentation and its influences. The second section will be a detailed study of the variations of urban and rural Punjab with the factors contributing the radical change in the cultural lives of the people. Though the study related to the variation between the urban and the rural Punjab will be quite brief owing to the diversity in the cultural lives of urban and rural Punjab, yet the main events in urban and rural cultural lives of the people will be focused.

### **3. Representation/Misrepresentation**

The meaning of the term 'representation' in The Oxford English Dictionary is primarily of 'presence' or 'appearance'. Representation can also be defined as the act of placing or stating facts in order to influence or affect the action of others.<sup>1</sup> The meaning suggests that something stands for something else. It refers to another entity and it also has a political

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connotation. In semiotic terms “representation is the production of meaning through language.” (Hall 1997: 28).

‘Representation’ has been allotted different meanings in different dictionaries and all the meanings contribute in creating confusion and perplexity as to what it really means. By and large, it means “the construction in any medium (especially the *mass media*) of aspects of ‘reality’ such as people, places, objects, events, cultural identities and other abstract concepts. Such representations may be in speech or writing as well as in still or moving pictures”.<sup>2</sup> The definitions lay stress on the post-modern view of reality that there is no objective reality and what is offered as truth is just the representation of something and such a representation is the construction of reality. In this respect, the reality is nothing more than a representation, claiming that there is no truth. Representation covers the study of both the issues, of the absence of truth and the construction of reality i.e. how the truth is constructed through representation and what is the function of the reality that is constructed (Objective reality). The discussion of representation involves the following questions:

1. Can something be truly represented?
  2. How a particular entity is replaced by its representation?
  3. How can representation be construed?
  4. What is the affiliation between the representation and the thing itself?
  5. What are the key factors responsible for the representation in a scrupulous manner?
  6. How is representation linked with the expression of identities?
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The representation of an entity admits bias to some extent, either in the favour of the entity or against it. 'However, there can certainly be disagreement in the interpretation of representations' (Gaffney *et al*: 2006:265).

In fact, the representation in itself is said to be the misrepresentation of the entity to some extent, no matter how earnestly it is endeavoured to be objective and disconnected. Every representation tends to give impressions of misrepresentation. 'The concept of representation reveals that media texts are constructions; they re-present the world to the audience' (Gaffney *et al*: 2006:265). The audience is supposed to perceive reality in the way in which it is being represented in the media. Film, as a media text, offers the constructed reality to the audience which is produced for specific purposes.

Representation is a construction that tries to be recognizable as the real; it is a substitute, an imitation that attempts to evoke a response as if to the real thing (Smith *et al*:2005:528).

Any media text, including film, is mediation, an interpretation of the world, produced for a variety of artistic, economic and social reasons (Gaffney *et al*: 2006:265). It is pertinent to probe into the procedure of representation and to investigate the reasons why such representations are constructed.

The validity of representation is supported by the fact that it may influence the audience to think about particular group in a desired way. For instance, in Hollywood movies, the Muslims are being represented as terrorists, having a beard, wearing particular dress and plotting inhuman activities<sup>3</sup>. The way they are filmed, influence the people to nourish their doubts about the Muslims around the world and to strengthen their existing ideology about them. The idea about a particular group is not supposed to be generalized, but still it

exercises deep effects in the make up of their minds. It may prop up prejudice among the ethnic groups and in turn modify the behaviour and attitude of the people for the 'others'. Moreover, the sustained repetition and re-use is likely to replace the real object being represented and the represented form of the object is considered 'real'. All the representations are likely to be interpreted in order to comprehend the meanings they contain. Halls states that the reality itself is subjected to have multiple meanings and in the same manner, the representation constitutes multiple meanings. 'There is no one thing that is so fixed that it will always be represented in a certain way. True meanings depend on the meanings that different people derive from a representation' (qtd. in Smith *et al*: 2005:528).

Representations are made in the film in the form of codes and the signs being employed. The inference about the codes and the signs in the film is the focus in order to analyze the intended meanings. Signs bear meaning, and therefore, they have to be inferred. These signs can be words, images or even sounds. These signs always surround us and we interpret them accordingly. 'Humanities are connected by their common interest in communicative objects, or texts' (Scholes: 1982: 01). In the view of Scholes, human beings produce texts, they are text producing animals, and they are 'primarily engaged in the analysis, interpretation, evaluation and production of the text' (Scholes: 1982: 01).

### **3.1 Historical Context of the Representation**

From the very beginning of civilization, the need of representing life and the ways of life had been a desperate one. Man, in every age, has been communicating in one way or the other. Before the language was formulated, the communication used to take place through signs and gestures. Language aided man to communicate and to transfer the treasure of culture to the

successors. The old cave paintings and sculptures translate their culture of representing themselves in the early age. Stones were engraved and they became a medium to convey the heritage, showing the life style of the people with their traits and characters. Their outfits and their practice of hunting can still be seen engraved on the stones in the caves. After the initiation of language, representation was carried out at the disposal of man and the folktales and the stories were told and preserved. The imagination of man found medium of expression and the culture of that time was preserved in the stories, folktales or any other piece of literature.

Johannes Gutenberg, in 1440, invented the printing press and offered a new dimension of representation, making the mass production and distribution of text possible. The medium of printed media remained active for a long time, until the invention of radio made another remarkable advance in the service of man, especially in representation throughout the world in no time. Radio served the purpose of representing the 'unknown' to the others with the power of addressing thousands of the people at the same time.

The invention of television, providing moving images, offered a much more convincing medium of representation. With the development in the field of technology, the colour and the sound were added, making the image real, in fact, more than the real. The visual screen exercised a strangle hold on the viewers, forcing them to believe the 'created' as real. The establishment of the film industry trailed the fashion and a heavy medium of communication came into existence, blurring the line of distinction between the reality and the representation on the screen.

Electronic media had a very strong impact on the viewers since the very first day, causing them to believe what is projected and manipulated. The same magnetic effect is still maintained by the electronic media in every section of the society, making people believe what is being propagated and indoctrinated.

### **3.2 Representation in Media**

The idea of representation is central to understanding the production of meaning through texts.

(Burton:2005:61)

The representation in media tends to drive viewers in the desired direction, as intended by the producers, to seek out meanings from the visual text. The text is prepared to represent some entity. It is not just a view on the screen; rather it has an ideological background in the making. 'Texts are nothing but representation in both a material and an ideological sense' (Burton:2005:61).

In the process of decoding the text by the reader, the preferred meanings by the producer are produced, generating ideas about the entity. The images on the screen raise doubts among the viewers about the reality itself. The reality, somehow, is what media represent and how it is being represented. Apart from the elements of meaning making in visual science like settings, costumes, colour, camerawork and other options, the way the subject is represented, urges the viewer to construct 'reality' from what is not real. When such representations are discussed in the form of social groups and people, it involves not only the images but the ideas provoked about that group in that particular age. 'Media representations of social groups purport to show to others what those groups are 'really' like' (Burton; 2005; 64). Burton stresses that the ideology about a particular group of people in a definite time is



preserved in the representations in the texts. 'Representations tend to reflect the ideological positions of the times in which they are created' (Burton: 2005: 63).

Representation is 'construction of ideas about a subject' (Burton:2005: 65). It helps building up the identity of the social group and such a concept of identity has been a key issue in cultural studies. The perpetual representation of a social group fabricates the conceptions of the viewer about them. Moreover, representation is not just for the subjects to be represented on screen, rather it also constructs the 'sense of identity about us individually as well as about others' (Burton: 2005:65).

The representation of the text and the possible interpretation manage to create an ideological position about the entity being represented. Scholes states, 'when we make an interpretation we do add to our store of knowledge' (Scholes:1982: 04). These representations in the film install a 'sense of reality' in the minds of the audience. Almost all the school of thoughts 'accept the notion that the production of the texts involves the acceptance of the rules that are already in place' (Scholes: 1982: 05). If the production of the texts is different from that of the reality, or the rules that are already in place, it will ultimately pose a serious threat to the identity, culture, norms and values of that society in general.

Another important dimension of the representation is associated with the representation of violence. 'Violence is something that is perceived and judged through its representation'(Burton:2005:112). The projection of violent behaviour and the response to that violent behaviour may accordingly be taken by the audience with varied instincts. '...the idea that representation of violent crime may lead to a fear of crime, as much as to violent behaviour.'(Burton:2005: 114). Violence triggers the emotions of the viewer and forces him

to frame the existing ideology about any social or ethnic group. The recent films in the Hollywood and Bollywood can be cited in this regard, offering much of the conceptions about the Muslims as extremists and terrorists. Constant characterization and repeated themes create a breach in the ideological background of the subjects being projected, resulting in violent experience in the viewer and creating gulf between the 'projected' and the 'viewer'. The bullying at school can easily be instanced for the mounting violent behaviour in the children through the exposure of violence on television screens and video games as well. Burton expresses his views about the violence and negative projection in the media saying 'they have been (and still are) the sometime agents of moral panic, which typically might relate to the release of some film or video which supposedly influences the minds of the public at large or of the young in particular' (Burton:2005: 98).

Representation of Punjabi culture in media and its driving influence on the audience is worth mentioning. The issues concerning representation are infinite; so it is pertinent to focus on the concerned phase of representation/misrepresentation in the Punjabi movies and the variation in the cultural lives of the people of urban and rural Punjab. The variation in the cultural lives of the people of urban and rural Punjab is not easy to cover, owing to the diversity in cultures in both the regions. However, it is endeavored to opt some of the cultural practices of both urban and rural Punjab to verify the variation in the cultural lives of the people and their contributing factors.

### 3.3 RURAL AND URBAN PUNJAB

The country is physically agricultural in character, and has, therefore, a predominantly rural society.

(Siddiqui:2008:26)

Punjab is the largest province of Pakistan in respect of population. The diversity in cultural lives of the Punjabis cannot be denied. They have a rich cultural background and they still carry on with their primitive framework of tradition. We can analyse the cultural practices in Punjab in two strains, Urban and Rural. The former is said to be the product of modernization, global economy, globalization and industrialization, while the latter is the 'heritage' transferred to new generations by their predecessors. Biesanz writes about the rural community saying, 'in the rural community, custom is the king, the folkways and mores control most of behaviour (qtd. in Sharma: 2004.50). Rural Punjab is the dwelling place for the traditions and values to be accommodated and the primitive cultural practices are still followed.

The village community has remained serenely committed to the traditional husbandry, little aware of the moving times and least affected by the socio-cultural inroads beyond its own tracts. This has, however, helped them to preserve, to a large measure, their old traditions and values through their folklores and folk arts and crafts.

(Siddiqui: 2008: 26)

Siddiqui also comments on the eternal bond of the rural societies saying,

' The harmony between life and nature has been so absorbing that the rural communities are neither left with any time, nor with any urge to move out of their surroundings, except under the compelling circumstances(Siddiqui:2008:26).

Every member of the family in rural Punjab is connected with the activities being integrated by the tradition. 'In the traditional family, the traditional functions integrated the activities of its various members' (Quddus: 1995: 67). In the same vein, Sharma adds, 'Tradition has a very important place in the rural culture, while urban culture does not attach much importance to them (Sharma:2004:52).

The status of the rural family remains dependent on occupational status of the head of the family, mostly husband and the father. Every other member of the family remains concerned with the issues of occupation, largely agriculture. Women in the rural Punjab supplement the earning hand of the family and support their fathers and husbands in their daily grind. They serve food to them and do useful works in the fields along with the chores at home.

The community of the rural Punjab is mostly based on *biradari system* and the lives of the people have great concern about the caste to which they belong. The *Biradari* was based on the occupational groups, which were consolidated and expanded in the earlier days of the newly founded society and irrespective of all other bonds, "such occupational groups were further institutionalized in the sub-continent under the caste system of the Hindus, which continued to be retained by most of the Jat, Rajput and other tribes even after their conversion to Islam" (Siddiqui: 2008: 26). The divisions in castes were made according to the occupations of the people and they are still known in the same profile. "The Muslims developed their family system on entirely different lines, partly because their traditions were developed outside the subcontinent and partly because their law is based on the recognition of individual rights and duties"(Quddus:1995:76). The distinction among the castes is still in fashion in the rural Punjab and it remains at centre for all the major concerns in the lives of the traditional families. The members of *biradari* are emotionally involved with one another

and they have great concerns about every other member as well. Even in the political scenario, 'Biradari occasionally plays a significant role' (Siddiqui: 2008: 26). Every major issue in the lives of the rural people in Punjab is greatly concerned with the caste system.

The marriages are arranged and the relationships are maintained commonly on the base of the *biradari* and more often, in the family. If the reasonable match is not found, then it is obvious to search for a suitable match outside the family, but not surely out of the caste. The couples, married outside the caste, pay heavy price in the family and are often forced to move to some other city. Any such attempt is looked down upon as something odd and strange and the concept of marriages outside the caste is almost unthinkable. The heads of the family decide the match of their young ones and the decision is accepted by the off springs. 'Parents or the elders of the family select the matches within the caste and class' (Farooq:2007:182). The practice of *Watta Satta* marriages is common, ensuring the long lasting companionship between the couples. The chances of divorce are rare in such cases and the members of the family remain connected for the whole of their lives.

The members of the rural family pay regular visits to relatives, especially on ceremonies or rituals. The gathering of the members on *Eid* festivals or some other religious occasions is obvious and they even arrange marriages soon after the *Eid* festivals in order to ensure participation of the members who work away from their villages. The relationships among the members are not complex in nature, rather they are simple and straightforward in their offerings. The usual subject of their conversations among them is about the local matters and crops.

Rural Punjab is well known for its customs and traditions. Some of the customs were imported from the united India after the partition and they are still in practice without having any roots in the religion, but because they have been in practice for a long time. For instance, the newly married couple is received by the hosts after pouring oil at both the hinges of the door, so as to ensure good luck at the arrival and prosperity of the members of the family. Similarly, the offerings at the wedding ceremonies have some constraints and obligations. The groom offers gifts (often monetarily) to all the people who had been in contact with the bride as a teacher, seamstress and maid. The offerings are known as *Laag* and the same gifts and offerings are presented to the near relations of the bride. Moreover, both the families exchange gifts with each other on the auspicious day and a healthy environment of mirth and joy is maintained. The bride and groom escort each other to the bridegroom's house and a ceremony is arranged of *Goat Ralae*, a ceremony in which the bride is 'officially' accepted as a member of the groom's family.

Apart from the general festivals in the rural Punjab, the rural families also celebrate their special occasions in different fashion. The most celebrated events in the life of the rural Punjab are the birth of a child, the marriage ceremony, the *mehandi* ceremony, the *valima* ceremony, the *maklawar* ceremony and many others. The marriage ceremony comprises of several interrelated ceremonies in the families. The marriage ceremony is escorted with a series of ceremonies, a couple of them before the marriage, and rest of them following the auspicious day. Ceremonies that usually take place before a marriage include, the gathering of the relatives a day or two before the marriage and become a part of the gay atmosphere. They arrange *Mehandi* ceremony before marriage, the ceremony of applying henna in the hands of bride and groom with some gifts and offerings. In rural Punjab, the *mehandi* is

almost arranged and managed by the friends, cousins and close relatives of the groom. They escort the groom amidst fireworks and music with participants dancing and enjoying the occasion. The orchestra is usually a pair of *Dhool* with the artists playing folk and *bhangra* tunes, making them dance and show their enthusiasm. The train of participants walk through the entire village to the groom's house and then the groom is made to sit amidst the family and the members of the family apply henna on his hands and serve sweets. There are often eunuchs, invited by the friends and the relatives of the groom to sing and dance and receive money since the occasion presents an opportunity in which everyone spends generously. .

On the other hand, the bride is made to sit in the seclusion till the day of marriage. In mehendi ceremony, the friends and the close relatives of the bride, usually ladies, apply henna in the hands and the arms of the bride .The girls of the family and the village gather and sing folk and traditional songs. There is also a *Sikhriyan or tappay* among them. The major portion of the night is spent in the jubilations. After the celebration is over, the guests are entertained to a feast.

The marriages in rural Punjab are not usually arranged in marriage halls, as it is in the major cities of Punjab, rather the arrangements of receiving guests of *Barat* are made at or near bride's house. In the morning, the groom, after the *Sehra Bandi*, leaves for the bride's house with the large company of his relations, and reaches there amidst musicians and fireworks. They are received and entertained and then all the necessities of the *Nikah* are carried out in a traditional manner. The *Nikah* is followed by some formalities of displaying *Bari*. After all the proceedings, the bride is taken to groom's house and the next day *Valima* is arranged in the village of groom. The invitees pay *Niyundra* on the *valima* to the couple and a feast is

arranged. The marriage ceremonies in rural Punjab have a comic element also, having *Bhands* amidst the guest, wheedling and fabricating jokes in order to entertain the guests of both the sides and receiving *Wailan*. They are uninvited guests, carrying a soft flapper in their hands for administering a hit on the palm of the other *bhand* on a punch line. They create fun in the gathering and even hit the targeted person with spicy jokes if they fail to receive any monetary endowment.

There are many more celebrations related to the marriages in rural Punjab, according to the geographical considerations and ethnic backgrounds of the natives. There are a number of such practices which can be cited in this regard about the culture of rural Punjab that have their roots in a foreign culture, mostly integrated in the culture of the Sikhs in India. The culture of the rural Punjab is primitive in its nature, accommodating and hybrid to some extent, but the values and norms are generally based upon dignity, honour and esteem. The structures of the society are firm and are honoured by the members of the rural society. Any diversion from the norms of the society is met with rigidity and harsh treatment. The women are generally not allowed to get an exposure like most of the metropolitan cities; they are protected and granted shelter in the premises of the house. They are sent to institutions but are not supposed to challenge the male dominance in the family, or outside. They are not encouraged to get jobs in the cities and are destined to remain within the sphere of the family. Their ultimate aim is to run a family and to look after their children and their husbands.

The youth enjoys playing simple games and sports of some sort. *Kabadi*, *volley ball* and *wrestling* are among the most popular games of the rural Punjab. The boys spare their time in the evening and participate in the sports with the other boys of the village and local competitions are also arranged. The communication among the teenagers and among the old



ones in the rural Punjab is frank and blunt. The issues being discussed are related to local and family matters. Every member of the village is concerned about one another in every matter of one's life. They share their grievances, joys, ups and downs with sincerity and frankness. The texture of the rural life is limited, narrow, but it is rich in its colours of traditional values and primitive structures of life. The people in the rural Punjab are simple, hardworking and mostly honest. They still follow the patterns of life laid down by their ancestors and they transfer the treasure of heritage to the next generation.

The clothes worn by the people of the rural Punjab are simple; however, the embroidery in the dresses of the males and of ladies has a special profile. Men in rural Punjab wear *qameez* known as *Jhugga* with *longi* or *dhoti* or *shalwar* and a *Pugri* as a headgear, while the women wear *shalwar qameez* or *laacha*( in some of the districts). The traditional dresses vary from region to region, with some of the features of geographical environment determining the dress code, but most of the dresses have commonality among them. The dresses of the women are sober and loose enough to cover their bodies decently. They do not get their clothes stitched in a vulgar fashion or in a manner of exposure; however, the embroidery or other patterns in fabric designing are in use. The men in rural Punjab are fond of wearing *shalwar qameez* or *dhoti* with a *Pugri* as a head gear. The simple dress is accompanied by *chaddar* in the winter season and a *Saafa* (Bandanna) to cover their face and head in the intense heat of the summer.

Traditional costume tends to maintain such spheres unchanged through time,  
while fashion tends to transmit signals which are antithetical to the everyday.  
(Calefato:2004:13)

The major festivals in the rural Punjab are several. Some of the significant religious festivals are *Eid ul Fitar* , *Eid ul Azha*, *Shab-i-Baraat*, *Muharram* , *Eid -i-Milad-un-Nabi* and the anniversaries(*Urs*) of all the eminent saints. People of the rural Punjab arrange get-togethers and rites are continued in the traditional manner. Besides the religious festivals, there are certain festivals related to seasons like *Besakhi ka Mela*, *Mela e Maweshiyan* and several other carnivals associated with some historical or cultural figures.

A carnival in the rural Punjab is a festival for all, with hundreds of stalls, circus, magic shows, rides and other entertainments. It is arranged by the local people in their vicinity, most likely to be arranged on the anniversary of some saint, or sometimes on particular dates of the *desi* calendar. The carnival is visited by all the members of the family, and even the relatives pay visit on the given day.

Rural Punjab is the custodian of the traditions in Pakistan. It has a unique significance in the political scenario of the country also. Rural Punjab is the place for the religious and political orthodoxy. The concern of the people with religion is strong, rigid, sometimes giving way to orthodoxy. The religion is imbibed with the mysticism in the rural Punjab. On the other hand, we also find some superstitions and dogmas related to the concepts of paranormal and supernatural.

Most rural people are uneducated, in consequence of which they nurse all kinds of superstition and dogmas, religious in nature

(Sharma: 2004: 131)

The political hold on the masses in the rural Punjab is quite strong. The people are tied to the political parties from the beginning and never think of shifting preferences. The association of the people with their political party is strong enough to direct their lives, and to form

companionship on the basis of political brotherhood. They are enthusiastic on the polling and often face fatal encounters at the polling stations. Farooq comments 'The traditional political families play the axis in the politics'(Farooq: 2007: 188). The candidates in the rural Punjab belong to families having a political background, feudalism and land lords. The decision to elect a political leader on the basis of merit is rare. The people, one way or the other, have eternal association with the political parties and they materialise their relations for gaining fringe benefits. In addition to this, *Biradari* is also one of the factors contributing to the biased support of the candidate of the same *Biradari*. 'People are asked to vote for their caste candidate and this casteism is maintained by the elected leaders after the elections are over' (Sharma: 2004: 157). When the elections are announced, the political parties sponsor the candidate whose caste is the most copious among the voters.

### 3.4 URBAN PUNJAB

The exodus of people from the rural community is mostly a result of industrialization and economic pressures.

'Due to progressive industrialization, the old type of family is breaking up and there is a steady movements of the splinter groups from the villages to the towns, and from the towns to cities'

( Quddus:1995:126)

Some people move towards cities in order to maintain a life style and to secure their future by offering best opportunities to their children, and to get facilitated by the necessities of life which are missing in the rural community like education and medical facilities. In this race of progress, the urban society manages to widen the gap of socio-economic status between the two groups and it also 'appropriated to itself all the surplus produced in the villages' (Siddiqui:2008: 27). Siddiqui stresses the ideology of the rural folk to get urbanised in following words:

The rural folks are also being gradually attracted to the towns and cities, seeking new economic opportunities.

(Siddiqui;2008:27)

The political unrest in the country, the mounting challenges for a common man, the never ending competition of maintaining identity and other socio-economic factors contributed to the urbanisation. The economic competency remains the driving force for the rural community to shun the traditional heritage and to move to the cities to grasp opportunities. Quddus rightly says 'the economic change has deeply affected the form and the character of the traditional family' (Quddus:1995:66).

The modern family is devoid of the traditional patterns and behaviour.. There is cultural *hybridity* in the cities with no general traditional framework of culture.

The modern family which can be described as a restricted conjugal family does not prescribe to its members any definite code of behaviour, which was a characteristic feature of the traditional family

(Quddus:1995:67)

The only culture to which they could respond is hybrid in nature, not necessarily the foreign culture of the colonizers, but even the hotchpotch of the local cultures of different regions. 'Undoubtedly, urban expansion is one of the causes that intensified cultural hybridization' (Durham & Kellner: 2006: 422).

Urban society has existed by accommodating different peoples with different ethnic backgrounds, customs and culture. They all became part of the urban society and a hybrid culture came into existence, making room for everyone to maintain one's identity. The cultural values are shared in the urban community and progress.

In the towns, people of different cultures live side by side and thus the process of assimilation operates much faster.

(Sharma;2004:51)

Even the caste system is losing hold in the urban Punjab because of the awareness and literacy rate.

The relation between caste and profession is no longer necessary because the people are adopting new professions according to interest and profit, in place of the professions determined by the caste.

(Sharma:2004:52)

The festivals in the urban Punjab are quite different from those of the rural Punjab, owing to the ever changing environment of the cities and the impact of globalization. For example, there is no concept of Valentine's Day in the rural Punjab, but in urban localities, because of the influence of the media, it is celebrated and even eagerly awaited. In the same way, special days like Mother's Day, Father's Day, Teacher's Day and all such are much celebrated and enjoyed in cities. The youth enjoy exchanging greeting cards and gifts on these special days.

The celebrations of marriages in urban Punjab are quite different from the proceedings of the rural people. The sequence of the events may go in the same manner, but the proceedings are quite different in nature. The *mehandi* in urban societies of Punjab is commonly arranged, with the families of bride and groom in the same venue, and they are led to sit together on the stage. They enjoy singing, dancing and making fun together. They rarely make separate arrangements for the men and women. The sets are arranged and both the families enjoy the occasion in their own mood.

The marriage ceremony in the urban society is usually arranged in the marriage halls and in the hotels. The concept of visiting the bridegroom's house is rare in urban Punjab. The guests attend marriage ceremony in the halls or the hotels and they arrive at the proposed hours. The concept of paying *lag* is out dated in urban Punjab and just the ceremony of *Doodh pilae* is performed by the sisters of the bride. The guests are then entertained with the feast and the

couple leave for the bridegroom's house. The next day, the *valima* ceremony is arranged, and the venue is again the hall or a hotel. Guests visit the venue and again they are entertained. The concept of offering *Nindra* is out of date in the urban societies. Moreover, the offerings by the maternal uncles for the bride or groom in the rural Punjab is again missing, as the people living in urban Punjab have given up the traditional liabilities and gave way to newly formed hybrid culture of the cities.

Apart from the marriages in urban Punjab, there are a lot of other variations in the structure of the urban society. One of them is the lack of relations. Quddus comments;

Two weavers working side by side in a textile mill may hardly know each other's real family background.

(Quddus:1995:96)

The proximity among the dwellers depends upon the nature of work they do. The relations are usually influenced by the economic factors. The companionship exists between the workers of the same firm or industry. The individual is known by his profession or his status, but not surely by the family name he has. People in the urban Punjab are less bothered by the caste to which they belong. In the same way, 'the urbanism helps to break down, religious orthodoxy and personal, social restraints' (Quddus: 1995:96).

The concepts of traditional values are dying out in the married couples. They are more interested in making their own world and are least bothered by the norms which had been laid down by their ancestors. Sharma says, 'In the towns there is a preponderance of love marriages in comparison with the villages (Sharma: 2004: 49).

The married children are caught up between their own self-interests and the set of obligations stemming from the fading traditions.

(Quddus:1995:96)

The fabric of traditional values is on decline in the urban Punjab. The hybrid culture is making progress in every walk of life. The concept of joint family after marriage is rarely practised, as individual intends to grow out individually. The visits among the relatives are occasional, mostly on Sundays or some other holidays.

The political hold on the masses in the urban Punjab seems to be weaker than it is in the rural Punjab. The dwellers in the urban Punjab are least interested in maintaining the strong political scenario that is seen in the rural setup. Most of them even do not cast vote. Similarly, the religious orthodoxy has loose hold in the urban Punjab. The people of the urban Punjab are religious minded, but the fundamental concepts about the sects and objections on other sects are missing. The entertaining spirit in the masses maintains the environment peaceful in the urbanized societies, free of malice and hatred for the other sects and religions.

The caste system is also facing a loose hold on the people of the urban Punjab, as the education and the broad mindedness have coupled to produce logical thinking. The marriages are held among different classes, castes and ethnic backgrounds. The couples are married at the ripe age, often after completing their desired academic pursuits. The marriages are often arranged by choices in the urban Punjab, and are not much bothered by the caste to which they belong, or any other social requirement. The awareness to check these man-made barriers have come into existence through the exposure to media, globalization and access of infotainment at the door steps. The youth is least interested in such divisions among the masses and they disown the heredity complexes.

Urban Punjab is largely under the influence of the post-colonialism and there are traces of hybrid culture as well. The people of urban Punjab wear different dresses in different seasons, not surely the local dresses of Pakistan or Punjab, but the dresses of updated fashion and foreign culture as well. Ladies like to wear *shalwar qameez* with a *dupatta* (usually as a prop), jeans and t-shirts, sleeveless *kurtas*, *sari*, and gents wear *shalwar qameez*, pantaloons and shirts, t-shirts trousers, *sherwani*, safari suits and all the foreign and local articles of clothing. Urban Punjab goes hand in hand with the latest fashion and the youth enjoys making advancements in the latest style of the Hollywood and Bollywood.

The language consumed in urban Punjab is mostly creole. Urdu, Punjabi and all the other languages of the regions to which the people belong are used in urban Punjab. The existing language accommodates the patterns of the other languages in vocabulary, style and syntax. The pure Punjabi is rarely spoken. Urdu is mainly adopted as the language of conversation. The Punjabi being spoken in Lahore, Faisalabad and Gujranwala is the standard dialect. The other dialects commonly used in the other major cities of Punjab are *Seriaki*, *Pothohari*, *Hindko* and *Jangli*.

The political hold on the people of urban Punjab is not as stronger as it is found in rural Punjab. People do participate in the political campaigns, but the influence of the political parties is average. Moreover, the people in the urbanized society are not as much enthusiastic as they are in the rural societies. Many of them are even not interested in casting votes to any of the political parties. In the same vein, the religious orthodoxy is missing in the busy life of the urban Punjab. People have a strong relation with the religion, but it is not orthodox or fundamental in nature. The average literacy rate is higher and logical thinking prevails.



The variation in the cultural lives of the people in urban Punjab is also a result of the encroaching ideology of the consumer's market, which has been the motto of the multinational companies in order to direct the lives of the people in a desired manner. The advertisements play vital role in shaping the cultural lives of the people in the urban Punjab, specially the capitalist societies. The big multinational companies use different strategies to advertise their brands and services to promote a particular life style among their customers and message-receivers. They create desires and ultimately change these desires into our needs.

Resultantly, they keep on wrestling with their 'fear' of rejection from society by not using a particular cosmetic product or adopting a particular way of living suggested by the ad. As Marcel Danesi (1999:183) remarks 'advertising exalts and inculcates lifestyle values by playing on hidden fears—fear of poverty, sickness, loss of social standing, and unattractiveness.' The sense of 'guilt' is also exploited when the bourgeois get the pinch of not enjoying the life style as enjoyed by a happy family in a well-built, brightly-coloured house that is interiorly decorated with expensive western furniture. After repeatedly receiving this message, desires get the shape of greed that put the viewer on way of earning more and more and spending more and more. As Barthes (in Danesi: 1999: 183) claimed that in a society that relies on mass consumption for its economic survival, it is little wonder that the trivial has become artistic. Contrasting picture is presented by Danesi (1999:185) that this is not the innovation of the advertisers that shape a particular behaviour in some individuals rather these advertisers reinforce lifestyle, behaviours and shifts already present in the popular culture. The consumer society remains at the disposal of the multi national companies to maintain their life style in a proper manner.

Commercial advertisements can indeed be considered one of the dominant cultural forms of contemporary capitalist societies .

(Sassatelli: 2007:117)

The ultimate theme of the advertisements is to spark the desire in the viewers to feel a 'need' for what is advertised.

All such attempts by the multinational companies destroy the remnants of the local culture in the 'consumers', and a hybrid, or a foreign culture is installed in the lives of those living in the capitalist society. The dresses, the eating habits, sleeping, waking, laughing, drinking and almost all the behaviours of the people are commercialised. The people portray the life style which has been promoted by the advertisements and they follow the foreign patterns of culture being propagated. Farooq asserts the adaptability of the urban Punjab in the social structure commenting 'the social change is largely found in Punjab. Most of the people are doing away with the traditional values and adopting new norms' (Farooq: 2007:78). The social change is mostly due to the eroding mechanism of the multinational companies, forcing people to adopt the foreign or alien culture as a consumer market.

The advertisements on the cable network have served the purpose of the change engine for the people of Urban Punjab in general. The effect is felt in the cultural lives of the people. The life style being projected made it difficult for the people to maintain their cultural identity. Advertisements propagated alien culture to which the response of the audience is worth mentioning. They have accommodated themselves in western style and ideology in general.

Apart from the advertisements on the media, the rest of the programmes on the Television channels and on the golden screen even manage to split the local culture and promote what is

remote and alien. The response of the audience towards the 'domesticity' being filmed or projected on media (specially the programmes on Zee TV and Star Plus) is massive and encompassing. The popularity of television and its acceptance into family life are unparalleled in human history<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, the fashion in the society is directly linked with the changing styles and the outfits of the actors. Urban Punjab is subjected to these changes on a very high plain. The youth, in general is giving way to the hybrid culture and the purity of culture is dying out. The traditional values of the society are at most, being considered conservative and out-of-date. The provision of local culture is being eroded by the programmes on the media and they even demoralized the audience to some extent. For instance, the exposure to obscenity and vulgarity in the media affecting the audience to take conscious interest in sex. The costumes by the actresses and the models attract deeper interest in their bodies rather than in the content of the programme. The youth in the urban Punjab fall a prey to these clutches of glamour and the response towards sexuality is ever on the increase. In short, the 'Life has become more artificial, and selfish. Individualistic, materialistic and atheistic tendencies are gaining ground (Sharma; 2004: 53).

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> This definition of representation has been taken from the website;<http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Representation.html>. Site accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> This definition is taken from the website of the Aberystwyth University with the URL: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Modules/MC30820/represent.html> retrieved on 26 September, 2009

<sup>3</sup> Movies in Hollywood such as, *Iron Eagle* (1986), *Death Before Dishonor* (1987), *Navy SEALs* (1990), *The Delta Force (film)* (1991), *Patriot Games* (1992), *Executive Decision* (1996) and many more represent the Muslims as fundamentalist and orthodox.

<sup>4</sup> This citation has been taken from an article from Jstore. A Time to Reexamine the Role of Television in Family Life Author(s): Richard A. Fabes, Patricia Wilson, F. Scott Christopher Source: Family Relations, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Jul., 1989), pp. 337-341

## **Chapter four**

### **Semiotic analysis of the Punjabi culture in Pakistani Punjabi movies**

Film , in general , reflects the culture of the society in which it originated .. Films can provide insight into the cultural setting and conditions that led to their development and the factors that led to the patronage of audiences. Yet, film reflects reality, or various aspects of it, in a distorted manner. Most of the time , movies reflect what audiences wish to see rather than the actual state of affairs in the society .In addition to this , the movie can also be the vessel through which various messages are transmitted . These messages depend on the persons or institutions that produce the films.

In this chapter, I have tried to analyze the misrepresentation of the Punjabi culture in Punjabi movies. I have also investigated the patterns of misrepresentation in the movies and the ways in which the local culture of Punjab is being marginalized by an alien culture. I intend to conduct my research on different movies of different periods. The images in the movies serve as text for the analysis. I have discussed each sign at length while looking at its denotative and connotative significance with its cultural implications. I have followed the following procedure/format for analysis employing Peirce's Model making the analysis systematic.

I have analyzed the dresses of the different characters, setting of the movies, colours in the image, gestures and expressions of the characters and their impressions on the audience. I have selected images from five different movies representing the above-mentioned visual elements for the semiotic analysis. All these elements point towards the movie as single whole making it a rich text for the analysis.

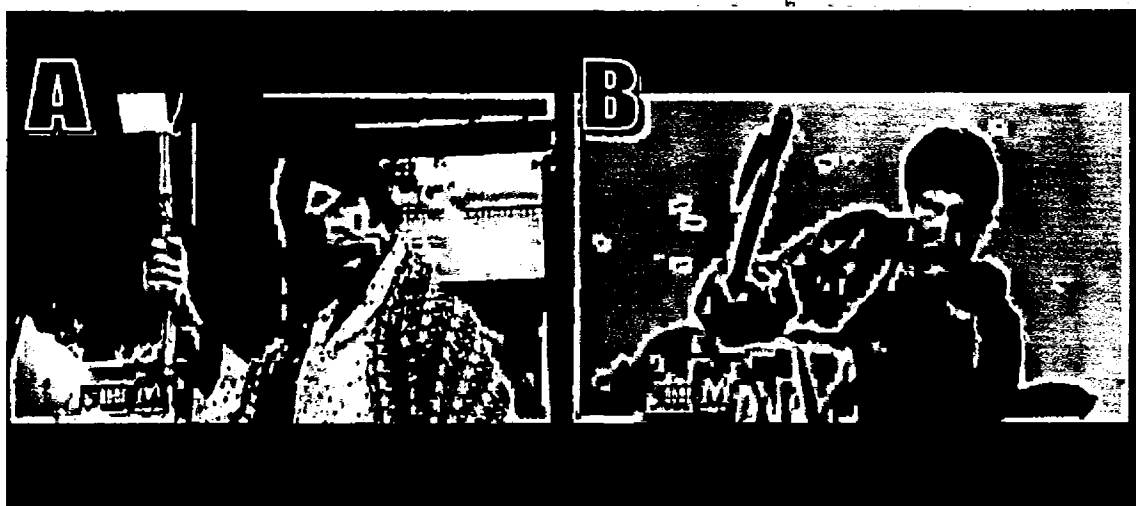
#### **4.1 Dress, setting, colour and gesture**

Dress is an authentic cultural sign and it reflects different meanings and connotations. It gives access to the cultural, ethnic, psychological and ideological background and the class of the individual to which he belongs. For example, people attend condolence rituals by wearing black suits in the western culture. The black there signifies the mourning atmosphere and the intended condolences from the person wearing black. On such an occasion, bright and light colours are inappropriate according to the context in which they are worn. All such cultural values are well defined and shared by all who live in that society sharing cultural values and norms. Any deviation from the set patterns of the society will create ultimate confusion and disorder. Dress in Punjab maintains the traditional values of the past and they are still in fashion in rural societies. Any deviation from the set patterns of the rural community claims social commotion. Traditional dresses in Punjab are simple, colourful and decent.

‘Traditional costume tends to maintain such spheres unchanged through time, while fashion tends to transmit signals which are antithetical to the everyday’ (Calefato: 2004: 13).

The dresses being worn by the heroines in the Punjabi movies are quite different from what women wear in general in the Punjab. The ideology is marked with the Islamic teachings to remain covered and to hide the orgasmic beauty. The dresses in the Punjabi movies fail to claim resemblance with those generally worn by the Punjabi women, either in rural or urban Punjab. The simplicity or even the pomposity is much distanced and detached from reality. The relation between the photographic image and the ‘real world’ is subverted, leaving the entire problematic concept of representation pulverized (Druckrey in Forrester: 2004:147).

The function of the dress, in *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* is also “to beautify or enhance sexual appeal and to supply information about the wearer (i.e., age, sex, social status, occupation) (Encyclopedia Britannica; 1993, vol. 4. pp. 222). In the light of the above stated argument, some dresses in the Punjabi movies are to be discussed:



(Images from Moula Jutt)

The first images (A) and (B) are from the super hit movie *Moula Jatt*, Starting from the dress code, the hero is wearing a *qameez* and *patka*. He is holding an axe, *Gandasa* in his right hand and displaying gestures of anger and anguish. The setting of the scene is façade of a rural house with an open door. There is also a tree in the court yard of the house.

Dress is a strong cultural sign connoting to the insight of the character and referring to the class to which he belongs. Here, the dress worn by the actor is a cultural sign, having mixed pattern of blue check on white and similarly, white check on blue on his *patka*. His dress code signifies his relation to the rural community. Moreover, the buttons of his *qameez* are undone at the top, his sleeves are tugged, symbolically signifying his rebellious attitude and arrogance. The colour pattern of his dress is equally symbolic of his inner goodness of his heart but also points to the

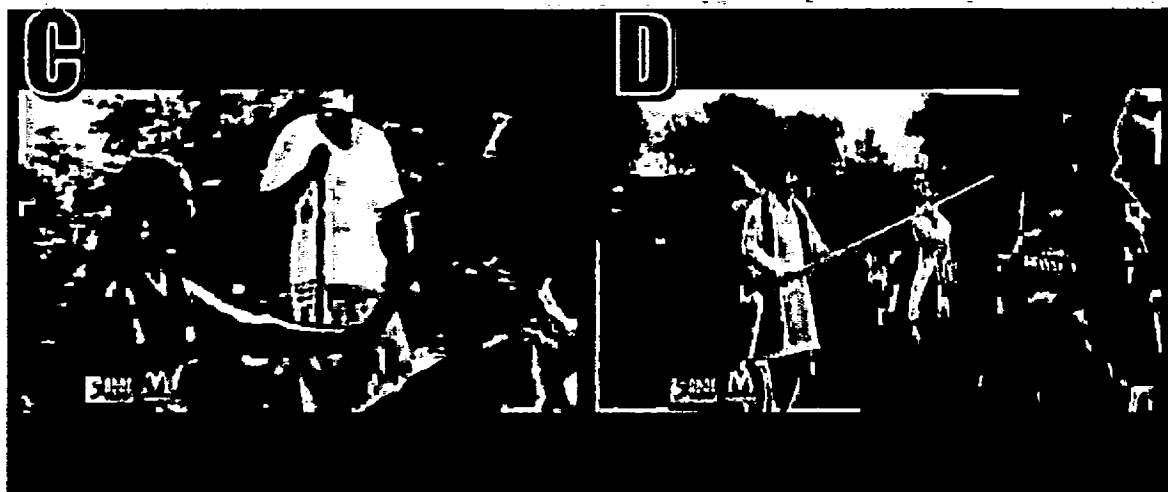
fact that he is forced to violence by some unknown factors. Colour pattern signifies his cool and calm nature, but the circumstances seem to be otherwise, compelling him to be brutal. The setting is simple in the background, a simple village house, signifying a peaceful life in open atmosphere. The Gandasa in his right hand is another sign. It indexically signifies the brutality and signs of violence. The holding of the gandasa in the right hand also signifies the command of the hero over the weapon and readiness for the action; rather he is ready to any violent situation whatsoever. His determined eyes signify his persistent and resolute nature and his expressions on the face are symbolically signifying his contempt and anguish. The overall impression of the hero is iconic, as he is an icon of explosive and aggressive nature of man.

Image B is from the same movie *Moula Jatt*. The villain is lying helpless on the ground. He wears *qameez* of dark blue colour. He is also holding an axe in his right hand. He is littered with blood and the *qameez* is tattered. He is badly injured but not ready to yield yet. The dark blue colour of his *qameez* signifies his passion towards evil. The blood on his chest indexically signifies his being badly injured and his love for violence. His undaunted nature is symbolically signified by his stance of upholding his blood stained axe, a symbol of violence and brutality in itself. The expressions displayed by the actor symbolically signify his stubbornness and not ready to yield.

The images misrepresent men in general in Punjab. Bloodshed and violence is found in every society of the world, but the gandasa culture is attributed to the punjabis alone, as they propagate violence and bloodshed at their earliest. The frequent exposure to violence is dominant in Punjabi movies. People are not as violent as projected in the movies. Moreover, frequent exposure to violence with reference to a particular group indoctrinates others to form ideology and it evokes people to be violent in behaviour. Burton asserts 'It is a truth often proposed that



the media contain 'too much' violence, and that this violence is in some way to blame for violent social behaviours' (Burton:2005:108).



( Images from Moulla Jutt)

The third image C from the same movie is also replete with signs. In the scene, there is a woman on horse, holding a gun in her hands. She wears *qameez shalwar* of pink colour and wearing a *dupatta* of black around her neck. A man in the background wears a white vest and a dhoti. The setting is out doors in the fields .

The woman in the image wears pink *qameez* , symbolically signifying her humble nature but the gun in her hands offers other meanings. Gun in her hand is a sign of rebellion and violence. She is bare head with no article of clothing to cover her head and *duppatta* is just a prop. She also wears pendants in her ear, signifying her feminism and her bound with fragility being a women. Her hair is free, symbolically signifying her care free attitude towards life. The woman in the image is an icon of revenge and distemper. Her face is resolute, symbolically signifying her revengeful nature and determination.

The man in the background also connotes meanings as a sign. He is an icon of simplicity and rural ease of life. His expressions symbolically signify his resentment over the situation.

Women in Punjab are respected and honoured. There is not a single character seeking revenge for the wrongs being done to her. They are mostly domesticated and refined in their character and exposition. They don't do such acts of violence and aggression. They are not bare headed riding horses in the plains displaying manly valour.

Image D from the same movie is another example of misrepresentation of the Punjabi culture. The scene is outdoor. Hero and heroine are having a great time in the garden. Heroine is leading the hero towards right. The hero is wearing *qameez* and *dhoti*, similarly the heroine is wearing pink *qameez* and *lacha*. Both of them have prop around their neck. Both the characters display expressions of felicity and hilariousness. The hero is holding *gandasa* in his hand and the heroine is resting it on her shoulders.

The dresses of both the hero and heroine symbolically signify their commonality. Moreover, the colour combination of the dresses symbolically signifies their mutual interest in each other. The setting signifies fertility of the action in the fertile surroundings. The holding of *gandasa* by the hero and the act of resting it on her shoulder indexically signify the ability of the women to have power over men. The contact of the *gandasa* between the hero and the heroine also symbolically signify that the women prompt men to action. Both the characters in the scene are icon of love (woman) and violence (man).

The relation of love between man and woman is a common enough theme, but it is not expressed at public places displaying such gestures and movements as depicted in the scene. Furthermore, the women in Punjab are less likely to be attracted by a rigorous man like the one in the scene. Mostly, the Punjabi women are shy, sleek and domesticated. They don't expose themselves to

open romantic situations like this one. Love is always a private affair as such it should not be publicized / advertised/ manipulated on the big screen. It is surely a misrepresentation of a true culture of Punjab. The true Punjabi spirit has been dampened by this misrepresentation. Such scenes invoke violence, sexual harassment and lasciviousness in society in general.



(Images from Sheer e Lahore)

Another misrepresentation of the Punjabi culture is evident in the image E in which the setting is indoors, having devotees sitting on the floor in group and singing *Qawali*. The *Qawal* is sitting with the harmonium player on the right, and a *tabla* player next to the woman on left and the rest of the musicians and the chorus surround him. The setting signifies the arrangements of the rituals. The floor is matted with a white sheet, signifying rituals in the house with devotees all around. White colour here signifies the purity and the sanctity of the devotees, and the holiness of the occasion. The scented wood on the floor indexically signify the decorum of the rites and rituals, omitting fumes in order to make environment pleasant for the occasion. The *Qawals* and the members of the group have covered their heads with white caps and a *bandanna*, signifying reverence and spiritual bond in their offerings. The gesture of clapping by all the members signifies the unity of purpose, seeking divine blessings through the prayers in *qawali*. The different colours worn by the members symbolically signify their

different ethnic backgrounds and distinct disposition, but they themselves are signs, signifying brotherhood and proximity among themselves.

The odd figure among the *qawals* is the woman, clad in white dress, sitting besides the *qawal*, signifying transparency and purity of the soul. Her gesture signifies her state of ecstasy during the offerings. The proceedings of the ritual on the floor signify the humility of the devotees in their offerings. The room is not well lit, but airy, as the window is kept open, symbolically signifying that the divine blessings can be conferred upon the people, who keep their hearts open for the guidance, even though they are deserted and barren at the core.

The woman in the image E is equally misrepresented in the context, as the presence of a woman amidst the *Qawals* is out of question. No woman, throughout the Punjab ever takes part in the *qawali*, a genre specified for the male devotees to express mysticism. The need for mysticism in the woman cannot be denied, but participation in the *qawali* is purely a male activity. Moreover, the setting of the *qawali* is indoors, whereas, such an occasion is usually organised in the open, or at least at some feasible place where the spectator can relish the spirit of *qawali*.

Image F has some distinct significations, as it involves mysticism and spirituality of some level. The setting of the image is a shrine, with prayer mats and black flag hung against the walls, some hermits and mystics performing *Qalandri Dhammal* in order to satisfy their spiritual needs. Among these mystics, two women are also performing *Dhammal* for some specific purpose, with the same intensity and passion towards religion and mysticism. All the mystics are dressed in green and light blue cloaks, signifying their eternal peace and eternal bond with their Lord, whereas the two women are dressed in black, signifying their state of

grief and the need of divine blessing. Their heads are not covered, symbolically signifying their state of being indifferent to the norms of the society, especially in a state of mourning. All of the devotees in the shrine are bare footed, signifying their erstwhile devotion and reverence for the blessed soul. Moreover, the gestures of the women indexically signify need for spiritual peace and bliss from the Heavens, whereas the gestures of the mystics signify the omnipresence of God. The expressions on the faces of the heroines signify their craving for the divine blessing and they signify mystical relations with the Lord.



(Images from Sheer e Lahore)

Some of the misrepresentations of the pure Punjabi culture are also found in the way the male characters are presented. The image G reflects the ideology of representation as far as the male characters are concerned. Both of the men wear baggy Qameez with open collars, signifying their rebellious attitude and a hint of feudalism. Both of them wear charms around their necks, signifying their spiritual bond with the God. The charms they wear indexically signify their relation with some religious family, where such charms are worn to avoid bad omen. At their heads, they wear a bandanna, a scarf usually worn by the clergymen in the Punjab. The red colour of the bandanna is mixed with patterns of golden, signifying the rigidity in their

character with a touch of suppleness. They both carry guns in their hands with particular expression on their faces signifying proficiency in the art of killing. The yellow fog light on the rod of the jeep signifies their interest in hunting and exploring far off regions in the darkness. The setting is urban, as the building at their back signifies perfect structure of some office building. The armed men are themselves signs, icons of brutality of human nature and feudalism.

The image equally misrepresents the real culture of Punjab, as the dress code and the props they wear are quite out of question. The white colour of the dress signifies purity and the blue stands for sensuality and passionate nature. Both these colours are worn by the people who signify brutality and aggressiveness. The charm they wear connects them with some religious family, having intimate relationship with the God and His creation, but their stance displays their rebellious attitude towards religion, having arm in their hands and expressions of hatred and brutality for the fellow men. Such exhibition of arms in the urban or rural Punjab is totally out of question, as there are strict government policies in this regard, announcing punishment for disobedience.

In image E, there are two young women, accompanied by an elderly woman, most probably the head of the family, in the presence of police. The police in the background seem to be in a fix, while both the young ladies are confident enough to maintain an atmosphere of mirth and joy in their presence. The aged woman, in her white shawl, signifies her authority and old age, while the young women are dressed in blue and yellow colour. Both the colours signify the good-humoured and playful nature of the women. One of them has free hair symbolically signifying her rebellious attitude towards traditions, while the plaited hair of the other signifies her restrictions to traditions to some extent. The gestures of the women in the image signify

their unrestrained attitude in the presence of the head of the family, and even in the presence of the visitors, especially the policemen. One of the ladies poises a balance by resting elbow on the shoulder of the elderly woman, signifying her bluntness and frankness with her. One of the policemen stares at them with surprise, signifying his bewilderment at the misbehaviour in the presence of the visitors and elders. The expressions by the elderly woman indexically signify her resentment over the misconduct of the young women. The young ladies in the image wear dupatta as a prop, not bothering to cover their heads, signifying modern attitude towards life; while on the other hand, the elderly woman is properly covered, indexically signifying her strong faith in the norms and values of the society. Both the young ladies are themselves signs, iconic in nature, signifying the blunt generation of the post-modern age, that can do away with the norms and set patterns of the society.

The Punjabis normally do not allow the culture of bluntness in the presence of elders, or visitors. Women, especially, are quite confined and constrained in their limited social space. They do not even expose themselves in the presence of a stranger. The family is the first institution, inculcating behaviour and norms in the youth. They are educated in a manner to display decency to the elders and the visitors as well. They are not encouraged for their frank behaviour with the elders, especially in the presence of visitors. Such a blunt attitude, as projected in the image is purely alien, a product of western ideology of making woman feel free and unconstrained. Such a misrepresentation attempts to reorganize the traditional concept of a family and the particular behaviour of the young ones with the elders.

The social fabric of the Punjab is teemed with moral values and strict norms of the society. The young ones owe much to their elders. They are not expected to act frankly in the presence of the elders, especially the women, who are always thought to be a sign of respect, dignity and

honour. Women of mature age, as shown in the image E fail to convey moral code of displaying respect and honour to the elders. Moreover, their age is not immature enough to challenge the set norms of the society.



(Images from Gundi Ran)

The next image (I) for the analysis is also replete with symbolic signs, as a woman, amidst armed policemen, surrenders herself. She is dressed in white, a colour commonly signifying spirituality and purity, but here, signifying persistence and aloofness. All the policemen around her are uniformed, signifying discipline and obedience. They are following a woman, and even they are at their position at both the sides. The woman, a dacoit, is wearing a turban on her head as a headgear, symbolically signifying her authority and rank over her gang. She also wears a bullet belt, slung across her shoulders and a magazine bag in her belt. The equipping of arms and the necessary arrangement for the bullets signifies her readiness for action. The greenery at both the sides of the trail signifies fertility, and the track on which the convict is being led is barren, with no blade of grass or any other greenery. The sterility of the path symbolically signifies the barrenness and desertedness in the way of crime. The gesture of the



woman signifies her rebellious nature and insubordination. The police at the left side are in dark, while in the right, there is visibility. The binary opposition in this regard symbolically signifies the loyalty and obedience in them and corruption and dishonesty on the other.

The women in the Punjab are treated with respect and honour. They enjoy rights and share their lot with men. There are rare chances of a woman to get involved in crimes as shown in the image. The image, more or less, alludes to the Bandit Queen of India.<sup>1</sup> The aggressive nature of women cannot be denied, but they do not form bands or head such activities. The police are also shown in somewhat fake colours. The criminal, a woman, is not usually given such a protocol if she is to be taken to the police station. If she is disarmed, they are not supposed to display their fear, as they are in a strong position. The woman is being taken by the policemen, whereas the lady police are missing, as lady criminals are generally led by them. The dress by the lady dacoit is also inappropriate. She wears a manly dress, and even then, there are some incongruities like wearing a turban and a matching *shalwar* with a *lungi*. She gives glimpses of a *Baluchi* male rather than a Punjabi woman.

The dress of the heroine in the image J consists of a shirt and a *Laacha*. The shirt is multicoloured with small pieces of glass as ornaments. The colourful fabric with the patterns of embroidery signifies the colourful nature of the woman with a touch of pomposity. The *Laacha* also has colourful combination of red and black and a yellow fringe at the corner. The shirt is quite comfortable in exposing the upper part of the chest and shoulders, and the *Laacha* is brief enough to expose the legs to the knees over the fittings, signifier of feminine sexuality, as an object of desire for men. The bangles in both the hands of the heroine signify the cultural bondage, what girls in general wear on special occasions like *Eid* or *Mehandi*. The bangles are signifier of the submissiveness of a lady, associating fragility and colourful nature with them.

Bangles in the image signify outrageous femininity as the gesture of the heroine signifies a carefree attitude towards life. Bangles in such gesture signify the playful and coquettish nature of the woman. They may also signify the eternal bond of a woman with the womanhood, despite her audacious posture. The costume and the gesture in the image are symbolic of seduction since she displays a provocative gesture. The woman is symbolically signified as an object of sex for men, since she is considered necessary from the way she dresses in limited clothes. The gesture of the woman in the image is indexical as well, signifying the authority of woman over man. She is followed by a man, clad in white *qameez shalwar*, signifying his simplicity. He follows her unbuttoned, indexically signifying his rebellious attitude towards life. His sleeves are untagged signifying his aggression in nature. The setting in the image is also a sign. The setting is outdoor, displaying fertility in the surrounding. There is a large statue of a dinosaur in the background, signifying the place to be a children park or some entertainment area.

Love is private affair in one's life. When it comes to a couple, it is not possible to expose relations of love at a public place. The women in Punjab are not like western women in exposing their bodies, especially at the public places. On the other hand, men protect and regard women in general. They don't allow them to expose themselves in their presence more than that; they are not led by the women.



(Images from Gundi Ran)

Image K is also an appropriate example of misrepresentation of Punjabi culture. The setting is a court, where the culprits are in the witness box, people running riot and a woman is in the position to kill. The people, with police and lawyers are escaping in order to save their lives. The enraged woman is aiming at the culprits in the witness box. The tables and the chairs are turned, signifying chaos and disorder in the court. The lady is dressed in black, signifying mourning and resentment over the injustice. The culprits in the witness box are handcuffed, indexically signifying the suspicion resting on them. The gesture of the woman signifies her rage and contempt for the society, who might have wronged her. The gestures of the accused symbolically signify the helplessness, which they expect from the lawyers and the police. The papers on the table indexically signify the proceedings of the court, which is barred by the enraged woman. The woman in the image is iconic, signifying the marginalized and victimized woman of the society. The culprits in the witness box are also icons, signifying dominance over the fair sex, exercising viciousness and brutality on them. The woman may also stand symbolic, signifying the ability of reprisal or retaliation for the injustices being done to her.

The setting is also a sign, symbolically signifying the inefficiency of the courts to dispense justice and compelling the victims to seek vengeance. The gestures by the policemen indexically signify their inability to seize the culprit and readiness to ensure their own safety.

The image signifies the lawlessness in the Punjab and the possible retreat from the people who have been marginalised or wronged by the people in position. The setting of the image is in court, probably a no-go-area, protected by the police and law enforcing agencies. The possibility of getting an armed person in the court room is rare, and if such situation prevails, the police do not show a white feather or take to heels. The victims of marginalisation and brutality by the Bigwigs of the society do not seek vengeance in the court, in the presence of the Judge and the policemen. Moreover, the chances of a woman avenging on the culprits is rare. The utmost responsibility of the police is to provide security, and the obligation of the courts is to provide justice, whereas the image signifies the situation otherwise. The justice is being delivered by the victim herself and the protection by the police is just to ensure their own security.

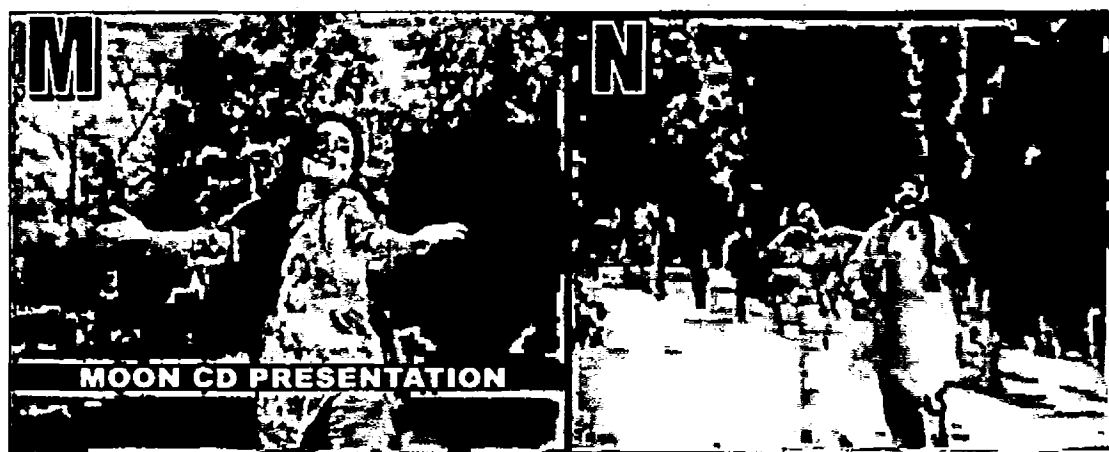
There is another evidence of the misrepresentation of culture in the Image L.. The setting is indoors. The characters are female, one is an artiste and the other one is the spectator. The artiste is wearing red, signifying her passionate nature and her intensity of feelings. The other is wearing light blue, signifying her contended character and temperate nature. She is also wearing a head gear, a turban, signifying her status and authority in the feudalism. Her matching articles of clothing signify her principled nature, a propensity in character to maintain harmony. She is not wearing any article of jewellery, signifying her simplicity of character or rigidity towards the set patterns for the women in general. The artiste on the other hand is loaded with jewellery, signifying femininity and the tendency for embellishment in women,

especially the ones, who strive to maintain their desire of getting fascinated by men. She is clad in a short dress, deliberately exposing cleavage and shoulders. Her dress indexically signifies her passion for exposure, being an object of sexuality for men. The tattoos on her arms augment the playful nature of the woman, indexically signifying her ability of utilizing orgasmic beauty.

The gesture of the woman in soberly dress signifies her indifference towards the stimulating stance by the same sex. The gesture by the artiste signifies invitation from the viewers. She tries to secure appeal from her immediate viewer. The imminence between both of the women signifies the contrast in the same sex, one being too conventional and the other modern. Both the women in the image glance towards the spectator, a suspicious glance, symbolically signifying their desire of getting mandate on their stand point, as which of them is suitable and tolerable for the society in general. The woman on the left is iconic, signifying the conventional ideology of woman in Punjab. The other woman in red also claims to be iconic, signifying the woman as a sex object for men.

Another apt example of misrepresenting the real culture of the Punjab is available in image L. The woman in the left is more or less a manly character. She wears a dress which is not surely worn by the women in the Punjab. The other women, an artiste is also made alien in her dressing. She propagates an Indian or western ideology. Her liking for sketching tattoos on her body is a Western cultural practice. The way she exposes her body is again not a product of the Punjabi culture, where women cover their bodies and even their heads to look reasonable and suitable. One more signifier is distorting the purity of the simple culture of the Punjab; the artiste is making an effort to stimulate a spectator, a woman. The lesbian approach in the west is aptly utilised in making the image, an appeal for the women attracted by another woman.

The unsuitability of lesbian ideology becomes vague because the woman who is being attracted by the artiste is conventional and she even displays the gesture of indifference. Making such an effort by a woman to attract the other is out of question. The image attempts to malign the status of the Punjabi woman in general.

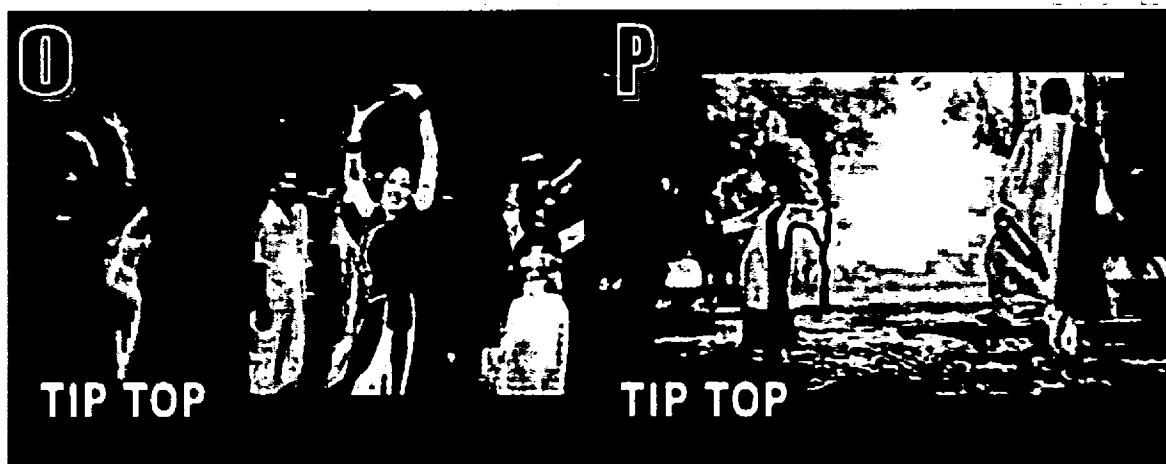


(Images from Moulla Baksh)

The woman in image M is equally alienated by the way she is dressed up. She wears jeans with a shocking combination of orange and patterns of other colours on the shirt. Her hairstyle too is signifying her freedom and a carefree attitude towards life. The scene is shot in a garden, signifying her freedom to express herself in the open. The setting signifies the fertility in the surrounding invoking her to express her suppressed desire. Her multi-coloured shirt symbolically signifies her gaudy nature and her gesture signifies her as an object of male gaze and desire.

The lady in the image N is again signifying her intimacy with the upper class of society. She wears blue shirt with the patterns of white, knotted at the waist as it is knotted by the *Bhai log* in Indian Movies. She wears pants and her hair is tossing in the air. She is following a *Jatt*,

who is indexically signifying her beloved, wearing *Qameez Shalwar* of orange colour and *bandanna* around his neck. His colour choice signifies his rebellious temperament. The bandanna with patterns is mostly worn by the clergymen, signifying their restricted and guided attitude towards life. The man in the image is chased by the woman, indexically signifying her desire to get attention from her lover, whose gesture signifies indifference towards her beloved. The setting in the scene is outdoor, symbolically signifying the place for expressing love in the arms of nature. The man in the image is a sign himself, iconic of authority and command over the woman. His dress, hair and peculiar expression signify the conservative ideology. Punjabi culture is much conservative in such sense and such an exposure is totally out of question. Somehow, the urban societies may conform to some foreign cultural practices but still there are restrictions. Rural folks are free from such pretensions and pomposity. They are simple in their lives. They are not even attractive for the people of the urban societies as they are generally considered primitive, conventional and conservative. Urbanised women do not surely get captivated by simple country man as shown in the image N. Her life style does not permit her to get entangled in the restricted framework of tradition. All the images propagate a distorted and discoloured representation of the culture of Punjab. The manner in which an individual is presented, norms and values in the culture of Punjab are also misrepresented.



(Images from Mehendi Walay Hath)

Image O is another example of cultural misrepresentation. The woman is escorted by some other women in performance, and the performance is given in the presence of the villagers, usually male. The gesture of the woman in the image signifies her perfection in the performing art, and her stance is also imitated by other women around her. Their positions at both the sides signify the centrality of the character of the heroine, dancing amidst the people in the village. She wears short sleeve *kurta* while the others wear full sleeved simple dress, signifying her distinction over the rest of them. Her facial expressions indexically signify ecstasy of the occasion and her ability to relish the fruits of happiness. The male spectator in the background signifies the ignorance of the art. The tugged sleeves of the man in white suit signify his relation with working class. The lighting in the background indexically signifies merriment and celebration. On the whole, the image reflects some occasion being celebrated with zest and zeal.

The woman in image O is similarly a sign of a foreign dominated culture, where women can dance; perform in the presence of the spectator in open, with least notion of being stared at by the men. Women of the Punjab celebrate occasion by dancing, singing and performing arts, but such activities are strictly indoors, as no man in the family is even allowed to share or watch them dancing. Even in the seclusion, the women do pay attention to their social and cultural status and avoid displaying vulgar or indecent postures. They observe the dressing codes of Islam and refrain from exposing their beauty.

The last image (P) for the analysis also connotes misrepresentation of culture in its meanings. The woman is facing the audience while the man is facing the woman. The woman is clad in



baggy *kurta* and the man is wearing white *qameez shalwar*. The setting is outdoors, amidst the woods, displaying some trees in the background. The woman is wearing yellow coloured *kurta* signifying her passionate nature. The man, in contrast, is in white, signifying his calm attitude towards situation. Both the man and woman have common black prop, a shawl and *dupatta*, symbolically signifying their mutual interest in each other.

The woman in the image holds a bottle of wine in her right hand and she flings her hand playfully in the air. She tosses the bottle of wine in the air. Her gesture symbolically signifies her uncontrolled passions and her flight into refuge after being drunk. The man on the other hand is an icon of authority, as his left leg is resting over the bench. He holds a pistol in his hand which indexically signifies his aggressive nature and readiness for action. The ground in the scene is covered with dry leaves, symbolically signifying the desolateness and futility.

The image connotes to negative impact towards women in Punjab. The women do not drink or toast bottle of wines as pictured in the image. Men in relation with such women do not allow them to have such bounties. Moreover, the gun in the hands of the man is symbolic of his rebellious nature. Such an atmosphere is not to be found in the Punjab and totally alien to the pure culture. It is the propagation of an alien culture having roots in foreign culture.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Bandit Queen was an innocent rural woman who had been brutalized and tortured by the bandits in India. She seek vengeance on them by orchestrating her own guerilla band and later on, she joined politics and gained heights.

## Conclusion

The rationale for the study was to explore the various channels by which the local Punjabi culture is misrepresented in the Punjabi movies and the way an alien culture is propagated. It was also my hypothesis to investigate the areas which affect the local culture of Punjab and the factors contributing to this distortion. This is achieved through a deliberate attempt by the film makers of the same cultural background, not considering the ceaseless impact of the projected culture on the lives of the audience. Moreover, the demarcation of 'real' in the sense has caused suspicion in the minds of the people regarding the identity of the people of Punjab and their cultural lives.

In order to claim validity for my hypothesis, I have tried to find the answers for the following questions;

1. How do movies affect the way people perceive the world around them?
2. How do misrepresentations of the local culture of Pakistan in the movies influence the Pakistani people and their culture?

For the purpose of investigating the stated questions, I have conducted research on different Punjabi films released in different years. Each of the Punjabi films was analyzed through the systems of signs employed in them. A careful semiotic analysis was carried out in order to explore the hidden meanings in them. The findings of the research are also discussed at length at the end of this chapter with conclusions.

The culture of Punjab is versatile and multi-layered. It is not a homogenized or a singular culture. Punjab is also renowned as a breeding place for the cultures, even having roots in

foreign cultural influences from Persian and Central Asian regions. It is impossible to ascribe the culture of a particular area as pure Punjabi culture. There exists similarity in their conduct, but at the same time, there are variations in them. The culture of Punjab can be divided into two major strains, rural and urban. Both the cultural pockets of Punjab have variations and even display similarities. People of Punjab show enthusiasm in carrying out their practices and they even enjoy doing away with the conventional and conservative ideologies. Urban Punjab is more subjected to this change and the people keep on altering their ways of life according to the patterns of the time. The change in the urban societies is largely owing to the economic pressures, industrialization, globalization, the influence of media and advertisements of the multi-national companies. All of these factors have claimed a radical change in the cultural lives of the urbanized people, losing their identity and assimilating the new codes of life. The rural Punjab, somehow, manages to shield temptations of the time and the rustic people sustain their connection with their primitive and traditional lives. The factors responsible for the hybridity are active in the rural societies, as media have penetrated the remotest areas of the country, but still, the rustics are deeply rooted in the chains of civilization and traditions. The variations and the factors contributing to the change are brought to discussion in the study. The cultural practices in the rural and urban Punjab are distinct, according to the ethnic background and cultural heritage. The religion in the culture has also provided certain common features, deeply rooted in practices of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his followers. Pakistan was founded in the name of Islam and the culture it breeds, therefore, must be according to the values and beliefs of Islam. The people throughout Pakistan have their faith in religion and it shapes their ideology. Most of the cultural practices, throughout Pakistan and especially in Punjab like norms and values, family setups, relationships, the status of women in the society

and the rights of an individual are common. Somehow, there exists variation in the cultural practices owing to the geographical and environmental changes in different parts of the country. Since the research has been focused on the cultural misrepresentation of Punjabi culture, it is therefore attempted to highlight the variations in the rural and urban Punjab with regards to the cultural discrimination between the two cultural pockets.

The rural Punjab is the custodian of the traditional heritage. It preserves the customs and values of primitive societies. The cultural practices of their forefathers have been in fashion in the modern times also. They transmit their cultural heritage to the next generation and it is further transferred in the coming generations. Urban Punjab on the other hand shows hybridity in cultural practices and the urbanized are doing away with the traditional practices and try to pace with the ever changing trends of the media riddled society. The factors contributing change are mounting and the stranglehold of tradition and values is getting loose. However, the practices in both the cultural pockets suit the environment and people carry on the patterns of life as it is.

After a brief analysis of the Punjabi movies, I realized that the culture being represented in the movies is quite alien to the local culture of Punjab. The purity of culture has been marginalized and given no consideration by the filmmakers. These deliberate projections distort the 'reality' and represents what is remote and unreal. This misrepresentation through the effective medium of film exercises effects on the viewers, specially the youth, or the people in general who have no access to the culture which is being viewed on the screen. The signs in the movies indoctrinate the viewers and lead them to assume the identity of the people in the desired way. Eventually, the worldview of the audience is manipulated through the apparent glamour and the lifestyle shown by the celebrities. Though they represent a humble background, yet the

lifestyle they own would be quite different from what it ought to be. The ideologies of the audience remain unstable as they fail to distinguish the 'real' from what is represented as 'real'. The culture which is represented is marginalizing the indigenous culture of the Punjab, and propagates an alien pattern of living, dressing and attitude towards the norms of the societies.

The deliberate projection of an alien culture in the movies tends to obscure the purity of the culture of the Punjab, and tries to manipulate a global culture, mostly Indian or Western. The subliminal messages inculcate in the audience, specially the youth a desire to follow the patterns being propagated in the movies. They believe the projected as real and form ideologies accordingly. The social fabric of the society is also subjected to moral degradation as the dress code and blunt attitude of the youth in the movies suggest association of the audience with the text. Eventually, the norms of the society in general, get subjected to modernization, replacing the conventional and the traditional outdated patterns of life. In lieu of such a transformation, the generation is deprived of their pure cultural inheritance and is misled towards the western or alien patterns of living, unfit for the environment and society.

The sustained misrepresentation in the media leads the audience to think the way they are briefed. The gradual process of misrepresentation dislocates the reality from the minds of the audience and a new, fabricated ideology is installed, without making the audience conscious of it. The initial remarks by the audience against some abnormality become harmless after getting repetition of the same material on the screen. A village lass in a blouse and summary dress may invite harsh criticism from some sections of the society and religious minded people in general, but after continuous exposure, such misrepresentation becomes a regular matter, a thing of low significance. Such an attempt to misrepresent the local culture and to distort the

reality regarding a civilization results in no retaliation after being projected without break. The audience gets hypnotized to the glamour and fashion introduced on the screens. Moreover, the curiosity to imitate the western culture or any other alien culture has always been an earnest desire of the people on the screen and the impact is accordingly accepted by the audience. In the attempt to keep pace with the changing scenario of the world's trends, the purity of the local culture receives blows from foreign eroding structures, and the victims of Xenocentrism<sup>1</sup> take pride in following the patterns of the leading nations.

The easy access to the cable network in Pakistan has given rise to a different ideology of viewing. The influence of the foreign channels resulted in formulating a similarity between the local television programs with those of Indian and Western, compelling the local channels to pace with the latest international trends and to create hegemony in the cultural lives of the viewers. Such a craving for adopting the foreign culture also sparked the film industry to fabricate reality by installing the 'latest' trends in the film, despite the inaptness of the cultural codes in the local context. The recurrence of such attempts in the movies work silently in the minds of the viewers and their ideology is shaped accordingly after getting exposure time and again.

The sudden growth of media in the recent years has increased the risk for the local culture to retain its purity in the face of competition with the foreign channels. The mounting interest of the youth in glamour and modernity compels the local channels to adopt the same strategy to compete with the leading international channels of the world. Such an attempt to pace with the foreign channels leads to the deliberate misrepresentation of culture in the favour of representing what is fake and fabricated. Similarly, the film industry of Pakistan is also trying to maintain the status like Hollywood and Bollywood. All such attempts to compete the foreign

media remain void, resulting in misrepresentation of local culture offering effects to the audience.

Television and films have far reaching effects on the lives of the audience. These effects range from our personal lives to family, from emotional to social spheres of our existence. All the sections of human society are prone to the media effects. As discussed in this study, the images on the screen work gradually on the minds of the viewers without making them conscious, resulting in mutilating the cultural sensibilities of the viewer. Their attitudes and ideology change and a new pattern of thought is installed, promoting the alien culture in the lives of the people having local cultural backdrop. It is, therefore, pertinent that the viewer should develop a habit to remain observant while watching movies, or any other program, and show a mental resistance to survive the onslaughts of the signs, being deliberately employed. Through such an attentive attitude of the viewer ship, it is hoped that we may minimize the negative effects of the media and reject every attempt made to promote an alien culture, marginalizing our own pure local culture, so that we can preserve our values and traditions in order to maintain our own identity as a civilized nation.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Xenocentrism means a preference for foreign. It is the belief that the native culture is necessarily inferior to those which originate elsewhere.( Taken from B. Hourton and L. Hunt; Sociology,1980). It is to refer to the tendency of the People of Punjab who are under the influence of foreign media and started considering their own rich culture as inferior and base. They disown their identity in attempt to imitate the foreign culture in all of its colours.

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## APPENDIX

**Besakhi ka Mela,** Besakhi is the month of Wasakh in the desi calendar. It has a taste of its own. Wasakh is the month for harvesting the grain. The activity of harvesting involves all the folks in labour and they celebrate their profits in the form of a fair. It includes different programmes like circus, music programmes and other variety shows inviting the rural folks to gather and enjoy the procession. Women visit the fair generally in the day light, while the men folk are entertained through out the night. Mainly, the fair is arranged for three days with a division of different performances each day.

**Bhands;** Bhands are the entertainers who entertain the guests in the marriages or any other ceremony in order to receive endowments from the guests. They are professionals and have a command of making jokes and improvising the situation in order to maintain an atmosphere of mirth and joy. They carry a flapper in hands and they inherit the profession of entertainment as an entertainer.

**Biradari;** It is the caste-system in Pakistan, especially in Punjab. It is based on the blood relations of the past and afterwards, the occupational groups were institutionalised in organised Biradaris. The people in urban Punjab are still known by the caste to which they belong and they, irrespective of all other ties and bonds, consolidate themselves in Biradaris.

**Desi calendar;** People of the rural Punjab do not measure the season by the standard calendar. They follow the traditional calendar of the ancestors and measure the months

accordingly. The rural folk even take serious considerations while sowing or reaping crops and every agricultural activity is bound to be managed according to the specific traditional dates. The division of the desi months goes like.

Chait, Vasakh, Jaith, Haarh, Sawan, Bhado, Asu, Katak, Magar, Pooh, Maagh, Phagan.

**Eid -i-Milad-un-Nabi;** The birth anniversary of the Holy Prophet(PBUH) is held on 12<sup>th</sup> Rabi ul Awal.houses, public buildings, shrines and the Mosques are illuminated and processions are taken out. Mehfil e Milad is also arranged throughout the month in order to praise the beloved Prophet(PBUH) and processions are taken out with zest and enthusiasm.

**Eid;** There are two separate eid festivals. Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Azha. Eid ul Fitr is the biggest festival which marks the conclusion of the Holy month of Ramadan, the month of fasting. Eid ul Azha is celebrated after two months and ten days from Eid ul Fitr, in the month of Zil-Haj. Muslims all over the world, who have sufficient means, sacrifice animals in the name of Allah, to commemorate the Prophet Ibrahim's readiness to sacrifice his own son Ismael to please his Lord.

**Goat Ralae;** It is a ceremony of acceptance of the newly wed wife as a member of the family. Seven married women gather and offer hand full of rice to the bride one by one to transfer them to another utensil. This is thought to be the ritual to ensure the wifhood of the bride with special prayers and wishes. The guests are served with dishes later on.

**Laag;** Laág' is a traditional practice of offering money as gift by the groom's family to the lower class employs like water-carrier, haircutter and pot-maker of the bride's village. The amount is to be distributed among all of them as they were assigned to serve them.

**Mela e Maweshiyan ;** Maweshiyan means cattle. Cattle are main source of income for the rural folk. They are a part of the family in rural Punjab. A Mega event is attributed for the cattle in Lahore every year. The exhibition of beautiful cattle and the distinct breed are the main attractions for the people. Different competitions are arranged for the cattle and awards are offered to the participants. On the local level, such fair are also arranged to encourage the rural folk for their services for the cattle. These activities are much awaited through out the year.

**Muharram ;** It is the first month of the Islamic calendar. The first ten days of this month are associated with the tragedy of Karbala(61H), when the army of Yazid martyred the grand son of the Holy Prophet(PBUH) Hazrat Imam Hussain (may Allah have mercy upon him)with his seventy two followers. This month is marked with grief and sorrow.

**Niyundra;** Niyundra is one of the most important elements in the marriages of the rural Punjab. It is the monetarily contribution of the guests for the bride's or for the groom's family. It is a traditional practice of offering money, as a gift for the groom or for the bride. The offered amount is noted in the record with the name of the guest presenting and further the same amount is re-paid to the person when they have an auspicious occasion.

**Shab-i-Baraat;** The month preceding Ramdan is called Shabaan. The fourteenth night of the month is known as Shab e Baraat or the night of repentance. After isha prayers, men folk visit the graves of their loved ones and beseech Divine forgiveness from the God Almighty. The rest of the night is also marked with prayers of special significance and rewards.

**Sikhniyan or Tappay;** Sikhniyan or Tappay are traditional songs in the rural Punjab. The participants (usually ladies) form two groups, one from the bride's side and another from the groom's side and they compete each other in songs of special significance. These songs are comic in nature, accusing the other for unsuitability of the groom for the girl of the first magnitude, or the girl for not having the perfect match with the groom. These songs sessions are known as Sikhniyan or Tappay with the guests being the participants and enjoying the assumed role as for the either of the side.

**Urs;** Urs is the anniversary of the saints. The anniversaries of the eminent saints are observed with devotional reverence. The devotees visit their shrines where Qawalis are sung, Fatiha is offered and such rites are continued for at least three days. If the saint happened to be the man of letters, then symposia are held to pay homage to him.

**Watta Satta ;** It is interrelated marriages of two couples between two families. A match is offered to both the sides and two marriages take place, of brother and sister with the brother

and sister of the other family. It is a traditional concept of marriage to ensure long lasting relationship between the couples and to get the children married in the same family.