

Copyright

by

Gwendolyn Sarah Kirk

2016

The Dissertation committee for Gwendolyn Sarah Kirk certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

**Uncivilized language and aesthetic exclusion:
Language, power and film production in Pakistan**

Committee:

Craig Campbell, Co-Supervisor

Elizabeth Keating, Co-Supervisor

Kamran Ali

Patience Epps

Ali Khan

Kathleen Stewart

Anthony Webster

**Uncivilized language and aesthetic exclusion:
Language, power and film production in Pakistan**

by

Gwendolyn Sarah Kirk, B.A.; M.A.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of the University of Texas at Austin
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

December 2016

To my parents

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been possible first and foremost without the kindness and generosity of the filmmakers I worked with at Evernew Studio. Parvez Rana, Hassan Askari, Z.A. Zulfi, Pappu Samrat, Syed Noor, Babar Butt, and literally everyone else I met in the film industry were welcoming and hospitable beyond what I ever could have hoped or imagined. The cast and crew of *Sharabi*, in particular, went above and beyond to facilitate my research and make sure I was at all times comfortable and safe and had answers to whatever stupid questions I was asking that day! Along with their kindness, I was privileged to witness their industry, creativity, and perseverance, and I will be eternally inspired by and grateful to them.

My committee might seem large at seven members, but all of them have been incredibly helpful and supportive throughout my time in graduate school, and each of them have helped develop different dimensions of this work. I would like to particularly thank my co-supervisors, Craig Campbell and Elizabeth Keating, for their continual guidance, encouragement, and feedback in this particular project and throughout my graduate career. Kamran Ali also deserves a great deal of credit not just for encouraging me to work in Pakistan in the first place, but for supporting my project throughout the years and helping facilitate my research every step of the way; I owe a great deal to his kindness and generosity. Katie Stewart, Anthony Webster, Pattie Epps, and Ali Khan have all helped shape this research, and their varied interests and backgrounds have enriched it immeasurably. Other scholars and mentors

at UT Austin who have contributed to the development of this research include Kathryn Hansen, John Hartigan, Heather Hindman, Carla Petievich, Martha Selby, Nora England, Akbar Hyder, James Brow, Joel Sherzer, and the late, great Brian Stross, and if I could I probably would have added all of them to my committee too.

I also could not have completed this research without an incredibly wise and kind group of student colleagues. Senior graduate students such as Maria Garcia, Simeon Floyd, Noman Baig, Danny Law (who *definitely* knows everything), Amber O'Connor, Abdulhaq Chang, Jenny Carlson, Mubbashir Rizvi, Nedra Lee, Hilaria Cruz, Emiliana Cruz, Raja Swamy, Isabel Huacuja, Hafeez Jamali, and Ryan Sullivant—acted as friends and mentors, playing perhaps an even greater role than my committee in shaping my approach to theory and research, and generally developing my anthropologist habitus. I am continually inspired as I watch them out in the “real world” accomplishing great things. This is not to belittle the contributions of my own 2009 cohort, who by chance or by the grace of some higher power proved to be maybe the most incredible bunch of budding anthropologists ever put together. Elizabeth Lewis, Sade Anderson, Sarah Ihmoud, Elizabeth Velasquez, Eshe Cole, Ernest Alba, Omer Ozcan, and Tathagatan Ravindran all helped show me how exciting, vital, and multifaceted anthropology can be. Perhaps none of these were as important as Chelsi West, who deserves special recognition for many late nights at Monkey Nest and Bennu and Flightpath and the “call center” in SAC, for last minute proofreads and peptalks, and of course for overall brilliance and greatness as a human being. Finally, Aimee Hosemann, Deina Rabie, Aniruddhan Vasudevan, Vasilina Orlova, Claudia Chavez, Robyn Dodge, Ayana Flewellyn, Julie Conquest, Ece Saltan, Maya Berry, Drea Brown, Susan Quesal, Elizabeth Bolton, and others have acted as

soundboards, given feedback, and provided inspiration by sharing the variety and complexity of their own work.

This research was largely funded by the American Institute of Pakistan Studies, and I want to acknowledge here not only AIPS' financial contribution but also the importance their institutional support in Pakistan. Without the AIPS facilitating this research it would certainly have been poorer, and likely would not have been possible at all; with that in mind I'd like to especially thank Kamran Ali, Mark Kenoyer, Nadeem Akbar, Ghulam Rasool, and my wonderful traveling companion Amjad Farooq. Other friends and colleagues in Lahore have also contributed immeasurably to this dissertation. Conversations with Umar Anjum, Ali Nobil Ahmad, Ali Usman Qasmi, Muntasir Sattar, Najm Hosain Syed, Tariq Rahman, Zareen Suleiman, Sher Ali Khan, Ammar Ali Jan, Julie Flowerday, Grace Clark, and Nida Kirmani were invaluable in all stages of the research, from the earliest development, to its methodological hurdles, to the writing phase. Furrukh Khan deserves a very special mention as he is the one who introduced me to Maula Jatt so many years ago, and who has continued to encourage my research on Punjabi language and cinema. I also want to thank Saeed Bhutta for giving so generously of his time and resources to work with me on Punjabi language materials.

I doubtless would have quit long ago if not for the support of my family: my parents Martha and Guy, my brothers Andrew and Alex, and the grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles who have unceasingly supported and encouraged me along the way, and mostly refrained from asking me whether I'm done with school yet. Friends like Evan Monez, Ashley Jones, Laurie Duncan, Chelsi West, Liz Lewis, Walter Smith, Faiza Saleem, Claire Hansen, Nida Kirmani, and too many others to

name, kept me balanced and sane throughout these years. And although all of the previous acknowledgements were in no particular order, I have of course saved the dearest for last: innumerable thanks to my husband and partner Abdul Aijaz, who is patient, kind, and steadfast, who encourages and believes in me, and who waters my soul when it is dry.

**Uncivilized language and aesthetic exclusion:
Language, power and film production in Pakistan**

by

Gwendolyn Sarah Kirk, PhD

The University of Texas at Austin, 2016

CO-SUPERVISORS: Craig Campbell, Elizabeth Keating

This study investigates language ideologies and aesthetics in Pakistan through an ethnographic study of the Punjabi film industry, known popularly as “Lollywood.” Punjabi is the mother tongue of about 45 percent of the Pakistani population and the most widely-spoken language in the most politically and economically powerful province, yet it has long been relegated to a subordinate position by hegemonic political and cultural apparati, which give preference to Urdu and English. Punjabi films, like the language, are heavily denigrated by the cultural elites (particularly the English-speaking upper class) as crude and vulgar. While most studies on film and language are textual in nature, this research hopes to join a burgeoning body of ethnographic work on cinema in finding new approaches to understanding film production, film culture, and the relationship of cinema to language politics.

This dissertation asks how an ethnographic study of film—and specifically cinematic production—might contribute to a broader understanding of both cultural

and linguistic practices. Specifically, I seek to explore the connections that emerge from and inhere in the relationships between the Punjabi language and the aesthetics, representations, solidarities, and social commentaries found in Punjabi popular cinema. Moreover, I argue that an examination of the particular kind of language used in film, the register I call *Filmi Punjabi*, is key to understanding how these issues are connected. Finally, I seek to explore what happens to a community of analog filmmakers in a rapidly digitizing world; how do they navigate the concurrent technological and aesthetic shifts that often seem to threaten not just their economic opportunities but also their filmmaking praxis and community networks? This project takes the cinema industry as a lens through which to investigate the relationships between issues such as class, ethnicity, and gender, aesthetic and moral hegemonies, and linguistic and cultural practices in contemporary Pakistani Punjab.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	xii
List of Charts	xiii
List of Illustrations	xiv
List of Maps	xv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Nostalgia, technology, and aesthetic exclusion	44
Chapter 3: Linguist on the film set	97
Chapter 4: Language ideologies and verbal art: the Punjabi <i>barḥak</i>	135
Chapter 5: Performative dialect leveling and the ideal cinematic Punjab	175
Chapter 6: Conclusion	212
Appendices	
Appendix A: Transliteration Scheme	218
Appendix B: Glossary	222
Appendix C: Cited verbal paradigms in original transliteration	224
Appendix D: Interlinear gloss abbreviations	226
References	227

List of Tables

Table 1.1 Population of Pakistan by language	10
Table 5.1 Variation in pronominal enclitics	192
Table 5.2 Variation in future tense: Paradigms for <i>karṇā</i> ('do')	199
Table 5.3 Filmi Punjabi vs. Urdu future tense forms	200
Table 5.4 Devoiced/unaspirated forms in Filmi Punjabi	203

List of Charts

Chart 2.1 Pakistani Films By Language 1948-2015	71
Chart 2.2 Film Production in Pakistan Per Year 1948-2015	72
Chart 2.3 Percentage of Urdu versus Punjabi Films 1948-2015	73

List of Illustrations

Illustration 1.1 Censored film posters in Lakshmi Chowk	20
Illustration 1.2 A film song playing in a cinema, March 2013	25
Illustration 1.3 Stunt men rehearsing explosions on the set of <i>Sharabi</i>	34
Illustration 2.1 Ghulam Hussain carrying the camera	44
Illustration 2.2 Arriflex camera used during the making of <i>Sharabi</i>	47
Illustration 2.3 Doorway at Evernew Studios	53
Illustration 2.4 Evernew Studios courtyard, May 2013	76
Illustration 2.5 The master electrical switchboard	85
Illustration 2.6 35mm projector (built ca.1940?), Capitol Cinema	92
Illustration 3.1 Main gate of Evernew Studios	97
Illustration 3.2 Shooting a scene in the Evernew Studios courtyard	100
Illustration 3.3 Nida Chaudhury poses for the first shot of <i>Sharabi</i>	106
Illustration 3.4 Saima filming a song sequence	109

List of Maps

Map 1.1 Language of Pakistan	7
Map 1.2 Provinces of Pakistan	8
Map 5.1 Undivided Punjab (present day)	180
Map 5.2 Undivided Punjab (ca. 1916)	181

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 *Prologue: Life of a film*

On a torpid June evening in Lahore, Evernew Studios is sleepy and quiet. At the edge of its large tree-lined courtyard a sweeper collects cigarette butts and celluloid scraps, bits of plastic and dust into a small pile. A pedestal fan swirls lazily in the wind; the electricity has gone out as per its regular schedule. Nearby, a small group of men sit in a circle of molded plastic chairs, their animated talking in contrast with the otherwise sleepy atmosphere. These men are planning to make a film. In a rapid-fire back and forth they discuss its story, who ought to be cast, which technicians to hire, and where it will be released. There is also discussion of other topics; a few men speculate on relations with India, someone presents a critique of a new film made in Karachi, one inquires after a recently ill friend, someone hums. Rounds of tea and cigarettes sustain their energy as the sun sets, and the conversation, like most days, continues into the wee hours.

A few days later, in one of the offices at the edge of the courtyard, the key players meet to finalize the script and shooting schedule. The scriptwriter describes it scene by scene, flecks of paan dripping from the edge of his mouth as the others listen attentively, ashing their cigarettes into a film canister. His monologue is punctuated by excited outbursts from the director, who animatedly bursts in with plot suggestions or ideas for particular shots, pantomiming camera movements with his hands. The producer expresses occasional reservations, but mostly seems pleased just to watch him at work, and the assistant director is quiet, furiously taking notes. The film is to

be a saga of poverty and piety, romance and revenge, cruel oppression and tragic death. It will have six songs, or maybe seven; a few romantic songs, a couple of sexy “item” songs, a religious number, a wedding song, and one sad melody for the heroine to sing as she watches her lover taken away to be hung.

The stars have gotten free from other projects and sales of the film to five cinemas have been finalized by the time August rolls around, and work begins in earnest. Most mornings the crew loads tons of rented heavy equipment on to a shiny Toyota bus. The rainbow lettering on its sides reads AMJAD COACH; on the dashboard a set of stickers proclaim religious slogans—*yā ‘Alī madad!*¹—those on the rear window inform followers that “All of this is from the prayers of my mother and father.” Today they will be driving about an hour away, to an unoccupied house in the producer’s village where they can shoot for free. Sometimes they shoot at other locations—the shrine of a Sufi saint, a large private garden, a rented mansion with hot pink columns, only rarely on a sound stage at the studio. But today they are at this village house. After unloading, some of the assistants set out chairs and charpoys in its courtyard. The camera equipment is laid out in preparation, the soundman has checked the batteries in his tape recorder, and the makeup artist trims and tidies some of the fake mustaches. The senior crew members relax in the shade, drinking tea and chatting casually with a few of the supporting actors.

Finally, when the noonday sun is beating down, the stars arrive and the crew launches into activity. The male lead changes from shorts and a tee shirt to a cream colored *shalvār* suit, a young helper holding a bottle of Evian water and shading the

¹ ‘Oh ‘Ali, help!’

hero's face with an umbrella as the assistant director helps him go over his lines. Nearby, in the shadow of a tree, the makeup man carefully glues a mustache onto the villain's upper lip and sets his gray wig in place. The technicians are running electrical lines, the cameramen attaching lenses and setting up the tripod, as the director explains the first shot of the day—"I want it like *this!*" The first shot heralds the beginning of the shooting day, the hurry up and wait; in between shots there are lens changes, power failures, a short break during the call to prayer, churning out shot after shot with very few re-takes. A female assistant is dabbing sweat from the heroine's brow, straightening out her brightly-colored costume as she touches up her lipstick in a small hand mirror. A crowd of onlookers from the village has gathered, and every once in a while the director shouts obscenities at them when they intrude into the shot. As the sun approaches the horizon and the light gradually tints red, the frenetic pace increases. Everyone is tense; there are still several shots to get through in order to stay on schedule and there have been a number of hiccups today, including the failure of the generator (though with coaxing it eventually chugged back to life) and the fact that someone forgot the zoom lens and a person had to be sent all the way back to the studio to get it. The producer's normally placid face looks annoyed, sitting to the side of the filming, and the director's commands even more gruff as the strain of the day begins to catch up with him. The cameraman directs the engineers to turn their reflectors just so to catch the last rays of light before they slip below the horizon; just before twilight descends the director finally calls for a recess.

The shooting is not done for the day, however. After about an hour long break in which the crew share some chicken and bread—the first real break they have had since morning—the unit moves inside. Although the sun has gone down, it seems

hotter; the mosquitoes are out in full force, and in the high humidity everyone is drenched in sweat. It is time to film one of the song sequences. As the camera crew work out the lighting and put the equipment in place, the choreographer listens to the song we are about to film. His body is twisting, head shaking, feet tapping, eyes closed as he plans each shot in his mind. He hasn't heard the song before, but is drawing on decades of experience to know exactly how to plan out the song sequence. Once the actors are in costume and the lighting is set, filming begins again, this time with the director taking somewhat of a back seat while the choreographer takes charge. He leans into the heroine, who isn't giving the exact expression he wants; "No *no jaani*, it's like this, do it this way," he instructs her, flashing the camera a pouty look that is somehow both innocent and seductive as he swivels his hips. By the time they work through the entire song, which includes three costume changes and is shot in four different rooms of the house including a bathroom, it is after midnight.

The stars change and go to their cars, leaving separately to go home. The crew is left behind, wearily but hurriedly packing up, and then everyone piles back onto the AMJAD COACH. The commute this time is quieter, and the fatigue shows on everyone's faces. The assistant director begins to sing an old film song, a heartbreaking hit from forty years ago. He has a beautiful voice and his rendition is met with murmured praise. Back at studio crew unloads, but the work is not done. From here the editors will take over working into the morning, quickly developing the day's rushes and with scissors and tape pasting them into something for the director to see the next morning.

Work has to be done continuously; the film is scheduled for release on the Eid holiday in just a few weeks. Even working around the clock it is going to be tight to

finish a two and a half hour movie with seven songs, get it edited and dubbed and printed, and then send it to the Censor Board in Islamabad for approval in time for it to be distributed and released on Eid day. After twenty-one days of nearly continuous work, the film is complete and has been sent to the censors. The studio has returned to an atmosphere of relative quiet and the group has dispersed somewhat; some people are staying home, some working on other projects. Final kinks are to be worked out with the censor board and the theaters, but overall there is a sense of relief that the filmmaking is over.

When Eid ul Azha arrives, the city of Lahore blossoms with joy and festivity. In addition to communal prayer, spending time visiting family, and dressing up in new clothes, the goats that have been tethered in front gardens and on terraces for the past several weeks are sacrificed in the annual commemoration of the story of the Prophet Ibrāhīm. Butchers wander through neighborhoods offering their services for a competitive fee and a small share of the fresh meat, some groups of men go around collecting the animal skins for charity. In more crowded neighborhoods, the aroma of blood gives the air a metallic tinge; indoors the smell of cooking tantalizes. There will be human blood shed today too, but the fictional kind, as on screen another tale of sacrifice and piety plays out. The area known as Lakshmi Chowk—home to several movie theaters—is overrun with people who have come with their families to enjoy a film. Although it's usually a fairly busy area, located near the city center, today there is no where to park, and lines at the ticket counters stretch far longer than on a normal day. Once inside the crowded theater, a beleaguered looking usher shows the patrons to their assigned seats, either in the family section in the balcony, or down below on the floor. As on most days, the audience is primarily male, but today there is a larger

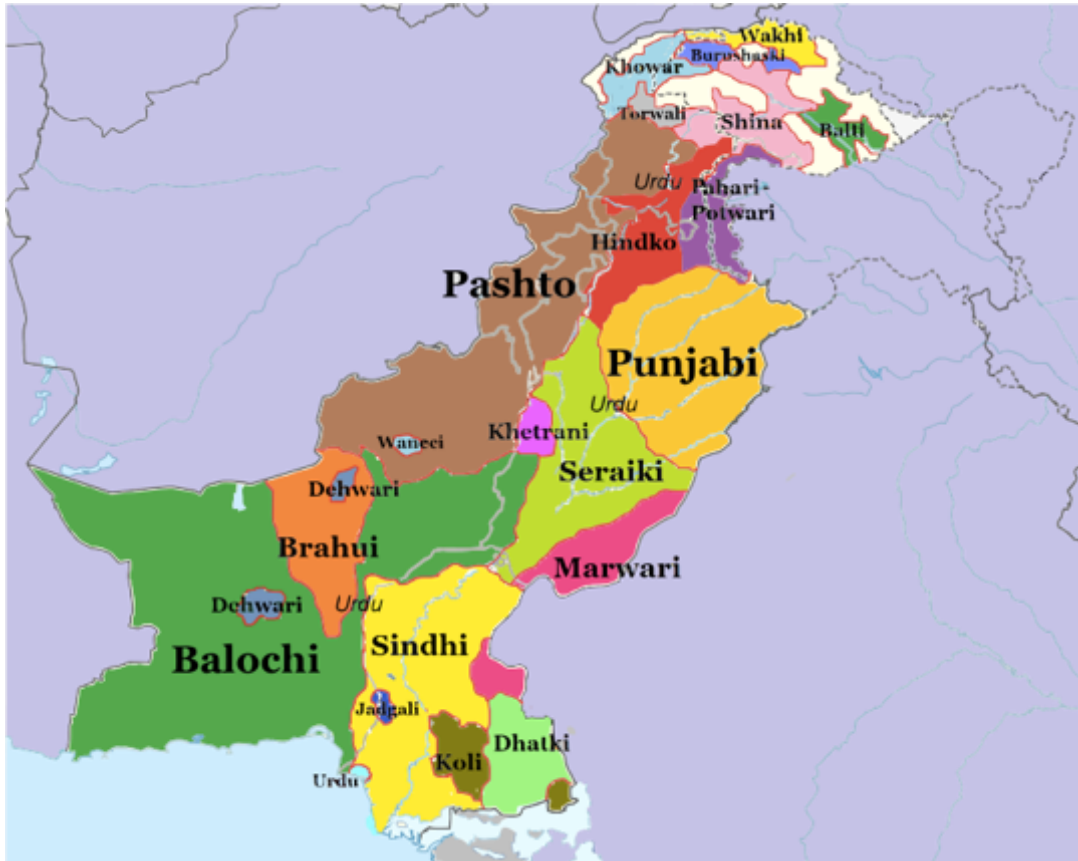
than normal proportion of women in attendance as well, many of them with groups of children in tow. Finally the speakers blare to life and the censor certificate flickers before us, and at last the opening titles appear on the screen.

When the hero appears for the first time there are cheers and whistles, and the male audience members react similarly to the heroine and to the vampy character. There is toe-tapping to the songs, enthusiastic applause for particularly good comebacks, and general exultation at the defeat of evil and the triumph of good. Streaming out of the theater after three hours, the audience seems satisfied that they have gotten their moneys worth. However, by the time a few months have passed, film has vanished. It did decent business, but cannot be found on DVD or online, having never been digitized. Back in the studio the director's planning and preparation for another film has already begun. Seemingly the only traces left of those three weeks of intense and continuous labor are on a few faded posters around Lakshmi Chowk—themselves torn, faded, covered by newer posters—and perhaps in the memories of the filmmakers.

1.2 Punjabi in Pakistan's sociolinguistic landscape

This dissertation emerges first from the large body of linguistic anthropological literature on language ideology and language attitudes.² Bambi Schieffelin and Kathryn Woolard write that language ideologies “envision and enact links of language to group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to

2 Cf. Alim 2004, 2006, Friedrich 1989, Irvine 1989, Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity 1998, Woolard 1989, 2003.



Map 1.1 Languages of Pakistan
 Source: Wikimedia Commons, created by Alhabib 7



Map 1.2 Provinces of Pakistan
 Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

epistemology” (1994:55-56). In her discussion of the phenomenon of accent in English, Rosina Lippi-Green (1997:64) defines language ideology as “a bias toward an abstract, idealized homogeneous language, which is imposed and maintained by dominant institutions and which has as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class.” Unsurprisingly, the paradigmatic object of investigation in these studies has remained the relationship of minority languages or marginalized language varieties to the hegemonic, majority language in a given society (e.g. Catalan in Spain, or African-American Vernacular English in the US). Unlike these, Punjabi³⁴ in Pakistan is the majority language spoken by a large and powerful ethnic group that is at the same time marginalized and devalued in certain ways. One similar case is Volodymyr Kulyk’s work on language ideology and media in post-Soviet Ukraine. In demographic terms the relationship Kulyk describes between Russian and Ukrainian in this case is quite similar to that of Urdu and Punjabi in Pakistan, where ethnic Russians are 17% and ethnic Ukrainians 77% of the population (2010:86). However, Russian is still often the preferred language of many kinds of interactions. Importantly, Kulyk takes a nuanced perspective on the role of media in promulgating language ideologies in this situation: “The media is a crucial site, on the one hand, of the *overt* articulation of various ideologies and the competition between them (e.g., in opinion articles and talk shows) and, on the other, of the *covert* embodiment and the naturalization of dominant

3 While some scholars choose to transliterate the terms Punjab and Punjabi phonetically as Panjab and Panjabi (IPA: pəɲdʒàb/pəɲdʒàbi), I retain the conventionalized spellings.

4 Punjabi is a Western Indo-Aryan language spoken in Punjab province in Pakistan, Punjab state in India, and in a large diasporic community in Europe, North America, the Middle East, and elsewhere.

ideologies” (2010:84). In this case, Kulyk’s conclusion is that the dominant (centrist) ideology “normalizes the ambivalence” of Ukrainians towards both languages. A similar process seems to be present in the Pakistani context.

As in the case described by Kulyk, the position of the Punjabi language in Pakistan is thus fairly unique in the scholarship on language ideology given that it does not represent a minority language or that of an oppressed group; the language is marginalized in certain ways but Punjabis themselves often enjoy a position of

*Table 1.1 Population of Pakistan by language*⁵

Language	Balochi	Punjabi	Pushto	Saraiki	Sindhi	Urdu	Others
Percentage of total population	3.6	44.1	15.4	10.5	14.1	7.6	4.7
Estimated number of speakers in millions ⁶	6.9	84.5	29.5	20.1	27	14.6	9

⁵ These percentages are taken from the 1998 census (Government of Pakistan 2011), which is the most recent data available. This data is also not clear; the census documents alternately sometime describe it as ‘mother tongue’ and sometimes as ‘language usually spoken’ in a given household, which are neither equivalent nor unproblematic categories. For lack of a better alternative, however, I retain the numbers here.

⁶ Based on the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics’ 2015 population estimate of 191.71 million (Government of Pakistan 2015).

relative power in Pakistani society. Clearly, a group of approximately 80 million speakers⁷ includes a wide array of socioeconomic classes, education levels, occupations, religious affiliations, caste identities, and so on; it would be problematic to argue that merely being a Punjabi automatically guarantees one a place of privilege. However, they are the largest ethnic group in Pakistan and have traditionally made up the majority in the army and bureaucracy (Ayers 2008:920), arguably the country's two most important centers of power. While other ethnic groups in Pakistan, such as Sindhis, Pathans, and Balochis, place a high value on linguistic identity and language promotion for reasons of political solidarity, this has not been the case in Punjab (Rahman 1996, 2004). Furthermore, the Punjabi elite themselves have continued to be a driving force behind the ideological supremacy of Urdu (Ali 2004, Zaman 2002). This could be seen as an instance of diglossia, where Punjabi is the L or low variety—preferred for more informal settings—and Urdu the H or high variety, used in more official domains⁸ (cf. Rukh and Saleem 2014, Umar-ud-Din et al 2011). Punjabi in Pakistan has also been productively analyzed in Bourdieuvian terms by Alyssa Ayers (2008), who argues that the linguistic capital of Punjabi is negligible compared to that of Urdu, which has played a much greater role in official domains, domains of power, since the colonial era.

When the East India Company annexed Punjab in 1849 after the defeat of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the fall of the Sikh Empire, the new British province saw the imposition of new forms of governance and particularly of new systems of land

7 This does not account for bilinguals, for example speakers of Siraiki (estimated at about 10 million in the census, and at 20 million by Ethnologue), are often bilingual with Punjabi.

8 Some more rigid definitions of diglossia, however, exclude bilingualism; for a detailed discussion see Sahyahi (2014:1-8)

tenure and agriculture. Perhaps the most significant of these was the development of the canal colonies, a large scale system of irrigation and corresponding settlements which were developed in areas that had previously not been extensively settled or used for agriculture. Many who settled in these canal colonies migrated from other areas in Punjab.⁹ heralded a swift transformation that simultaneously imposed Western-derived legal and governmental structures while at the same time conserving and promoting those local traditions which would best serve the purposes of the colonial state (Talbot 2007b). This transformation had implications for language as well; although there was debate on the governmental and administrative usefulness of the Punjabi language versus Urdu (cf. Rahman 2007), Urdu was adopted by the colonial government as the language of administration in Punjab not long after the imposition of colonial rule. Farina Mir (2010) explores a variety of reasons that this decision was made, including the facts that there was no standard, central, written form of Punjabi and thus it was not considered a 'real' language by many orientalists; that British officers had had training in Urdu and it was more efficient to capitalize on these skills than to teach them a new language; and that the British associated Punjabi closely with the recently defeated Sikh state. Mir argues that "the most important [reasons] are those related to consolidating colonial rule: using experienced administrative personnel, facilitating Punjab's integration into Company territories, and supporting native intermediaries. British fears of a Sikh resurgence and the conception of Punjabi as a Sikh language surely played their part as well." (2010:52-53) This gave rise to a diglossic situation in Punjab, where Urdu was aligned with the

⁹ For detailed discussion cf. Ali 2014, Gilmartin 2015.

official domains of state and Punjabi was relegated to the home, the personal, and local religious traditions (in particular Sikh and Sufi traditions).

Mir thus concludes that Punjabi occupies a very different set of domains than Urdu; and that “when colonial language policy drew vernaculars into the state apparatus in the early nineteenth century, Punjabi continued to function largely as it historically always had, at the margins of state discourse” (2010:185). In the early 20th century, a burgeoning Muslim nationalism promoted Urdu as the unifying language of Muslims in South Asia, a move which not only differentiated Muslims linguistically and politically from other religious groups but also Hindi from Urdu. This same nationalism eventually led to the creation of the Pakistani state with Urdu as its official language (cf. King 1994, Rahman 2011), although Urdu has never been the mother tongue of the majority of Pakistanis. As Christopher Shackle argues, “In view of the identification of the Muslims with Urdu as an essential part of their identity, it was inevitable that there should have been an overwhelming demand for Urdu to be declared the national language of the new Islamic state” (1970:243). This language policy also played an important role in the political tensions between East and West Pakistan which led to the independence of Bangladesh 1971. Elite Punjabis (and by this I mean groups such as the landholding classes and educated urban upper classes), while by and large enjoying a position of relative power vis à vis their ethnic identity, participate in perpetuating policies, institutions and discourses that marginalize or devalue Punjabi—subjugating their own ethnolinguistic identity in order to keep a firm hold on the reins of power in the postcolonial Muslim state. In daily life code-mixing is not uncommon, and a relatively small degree of contact-

based language change seems to have occurred¹⁰, but for Punjabi speakers by and large Urdu remains the hegemonic language of officialdom while Punjabi is relegated to informal spheres. Tariq Rahman puts this in simple terms: “Urdu serves to extend the power base of the ruling elite” (1996:209). This leads to a rather atypical situation of language marginalization; because Punjabis already have political and economic power, embracing their regional identity would only weaken their claims to national identity, and by the same token Punjabis who are excluded from such domains of power (e.g. the working classes, the peasant farmers) thus embrace Punjabi at the risk of further exclusion from these domains.

The marginalization of Punjabi is combined with the perpetuation of a series of stereotypes about the language among the cultural elite in Pakistan—this in stark contrast to its position in India where it is the official language of the Punjab state government and widely used for official domains such as education, government, and media. In Pakistan it is often thought of as vulgar and coarse, the kind of language preferred for swearing, insults, and jokes, but ill suited for newspapers, court documents, or textbooks. Its literature is “dismissed with a grudging recognition of ‘Hir’,¹¹ but otherwise as a collection of rustic crudity, suitable only for Sikhs.” (Shackle 1970:248) There is no “standard” Punjabi, or even any standardized orthography; rather it exists along a dialect continuum with notoriously difficult boundaries (for a detailed discussion see Ch. 5). It is also thought of, even by many

10 For example, the use of an ergative subject in the place of a dative subject (maī ne jānā vs. mujhe/mujh ko jānā ‘I have to go’), a handful of nouns that are classed as masculine in Standard Urdu (e.g. dard ‘pain’) yet are treated as feminine in both Punjabi and in Pakistani Urdu, or at the very least, Lahori Urdu, and some borrowed kinship terms. For details see Bhatia 2007:130, Malik 2010.

11 A famous epic poem written by the 18th century Punjabi poet Waris Shah.

Punjabis, as a language tied to lower socioeconomic status, rural populations, and a limited economic future (cf. Mansoor 1993). Above all, my own informants characterized its difference with Urdu as one of formality, refinement or civility, and ‘loudness,’ a concept I will return to later in this dissertation.

As Bourdieu points out, “It is in the process of state formation that the conditions are created for the constitution of a unified linguistic market, dominated by the official language” (1991:45). Thus Urdu, and of course English, have come to dominate the linguistic market in the Pakistani nation-state. However, there have been, since the inception of Pakistan, various literary and cultural movements focused on Punjabi and on Punjabiyat which have been suppressed or supported to various degrees by the Pakistani state over time (Rahman 1996:199-209, Ayers 2008). For example, Abbas Zaidi describes the following incident in the Punjab Assembly in 2002:

“It was a matter of routine and all went as planned till Fazal Hussain, a legislator-elect, said that he would take his oath in Punjabi, his mother tongue. The speaker, a fellow Punjabi, did not think much of it and proceeded with the ceremony using Urdu, the usual language of assembly proceedings. But when Fazal Hussain insisted on taking the oath in Punjabi, the speaker had him removed from the assembly through security guards.” (2010:22)

Notably, legislators in other provincial assemblies can and do take their oath in their native languages. Similarly, in an interview Mushtaq Soofi recounted to me a well known anecdote from the life of noted civil servant and leftist activist Masud Khaddarposh, that he was thrown out of a mosque for trying to offer his prayers in

Punjabi rather than Arabic.¹² Pro-Punjabi activism has, however, been “slowly growing out of the work of an urban cultural and political elite—fluent in Urdu and English as well—some of whom have maintained comfortable positions of power for some time” (Ayers 2008:919). This is further evidence that by and large only those who already possess a certain degree of power, status, and social capital can embrace and promote Punjabi language and literature, and that too a certain kind of Punjabi language and literature. The work of such literary figures as Najm Hossain Syed, for example, privileges the classical Punjabi poetry of Sufi mystics such as Waris Shah and Shah Hussain, texts that gain legitimacy not only from their considerable literary value but from their religious significance as well. Similarly, scholars and writers such as Saeed Bhutta and Mushtaq Soofi have been at the center of efforts to rehabilitate Punjabi’s image by recording and promoting its (primarily oral) folk literature, such as the epic poetry genre *vār*, or participating in a variety of efforts to get government recognition for the Punjabi language. Various organizations, such as the Punjabi Adabi Board, boast similar goals. Recently, in a column in *Dawn* (one of Pakistan’s leading English dailies), Soofi addressed Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif directly:

“Well Mr chief minister [sic], mother language has been ignored in Punjab for too long and now is the time to end the linguistic violence that has been bruising the soul of Punjab since 1849, the year the British colonialists occupied this ancient and glorious land of five rivers and threw out our mother language from the indigenous educational institutions.” (Soofi 2016)

12 Interestingly, however, it is not uncommon for the Friday sermon (*xutba*) to be delivered in Punjabi, perhaps for practical reasons—to ensure maximum intelligibility—as much as anything else. However, this is more likely to happen in smaller mosques or more rural or working class areas.

Punjabiyyat movements have been growing considerably over the past two or three decades, creating a project of “literary-historical reclamation” (Ayers 2008:925) that engenders a trans-border Punjabi sociality between Indian and Pakistani Punjab. Yet this too is by and large the purview of elites, and seeks to reclaim an idealized past version of lost Punjabi literary glory. I argue that this further marginalizes what is perhaps the most significant and populist site of linguistic production in postcolonial Punjab—the cinema. Even among strongest proponents of Punjabi—such as those who sat weekly at Najm Hossain Syed’s house to read the poetry of Shah Hussain, or those who came to the musical performances or literary gatherings at the Punjabi cultural center near Gaddafi Stadium—almost completely excluded film from the conversation; it seemed as though holding up Punjabi cinema as a legitimate form of cultural expression would undermine their arguments for the artistry and beauty of the language. In essence, when Punjabi language is celebrated it tends to happen in a way that submits to the notion that some languages are more civilized than others, or have “more” history, or “better” poetry—in essence, these celebratory discourses do not question the criteria by which Punjabi has been devalued; rather they attempt to rehabilitate it within the existing linguistic hierarchy.

In spite of such efforts to rehabilitate Punjabi’s ‘image,’ and to prove that it is just as full of historical tradition and literary merit as Urdu, it continues by and large to be marginalized and disparaged, even by many Punjabi speakers themselves. During a meeting with Punjabi scholar and activist Najm Hossain Syed in March of 2013, he informed me that Punjabis were complicit in this marginalization; that they had “not only discarded their language but abused it...we as resisters are also marginal.” Moreover, efforts to rehabilitate Punjabi seek to bring Punjabi on par with

Urdu within an existing hierarchy of cultural value, rather than questioning that hierarchy altogether. Thus certain expressions of Punjabi language—‘pure’ folk tales, high literature such as Sufi poetry—lend themselves more to such rehabilitation than something like verbal dueling in cinema (which, as I describe in detail in Chapter 4, is extremely poetic). Cinema has the potential to be used as an tool for cultural and political activism of indigenous and marginalized communities (Ginsburg 2011), and while (as I describe below) the films do show political awareness, pro-Punjabiyat, and a strong streak of anti-state resistance, Punjabi film has not been widely accepted or praised by those who are actively working to promote the language. As Woolard and Schieffelin point out, “Ironically, movements to save minority languages are often structured around the same notions of language that have led to their oppression and/or suppression” (1994:60-61). Thus the Punjabi disunion of linguistic and ethnic solidarities is also overdetermined by hegemonic nationalist conceptions of what constitutes high and low culture. Perhaps because of this, popular discourses of Punjabi cinema show remarkable parallels with those surrounding the language, describing it as low-class, backwards, and vulgar. Everyday experiences and conversations I had throughout my fieldwork revealed integral discursive linkages within and between language and cinema to issues of vulgarity, social class and stratification, and Punjabi identity. This research, by focusing on these discourses of linguistic and social stratification and cultural hegemony, creates a starting point for understanding how practices of cinematic production negotiate sociolinguistic landscapes.

1.3 Lollywood: Punjabi cinema in Pakistan

“I have learned politics from English films, and anger from Punjabi films!”

Ameen, a ticket checker at one of the cinema halls that line Lakshmi Chowk, tells me. This street is lined with faded and crumbling cinema halls, and my colleague Muntasir and I walk along noting their names—Odeon, Prince, Capitol, Metropole, Shabistan—and the films playing. Most of the advertisements are for Indian films (in Hindi-Urdu), with two or three Punjabi films, and a few dubbed English features—a poster for the 2011 film *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (dir. Rupert Wyatt) boasts “For the first time, see monkeys speaking in Urdu!” The posters for Punjabi films stand out, with their mustachioed, heavily armed heroes and buxom, pouting heroines. For propriety’s sake someone has taken the time to carefully color in any deep cleavage and bare midriffs with a black marker, but it only accentuates what it is meant to hide, giving a tantalizing offer of what can be seen for the mere price of a ticket. It is an act of what Michael Taussig calls ‘public secrecy,’ the stifling of something that is “generally known, but cannot be articulated” (1999:5). However, the irresistible combination of sex and violence hasn’t drawn too many people out on this sweltering weekday, and Ameen has time to pause and chat with us about movies. He likes Punjabi movies the best, he tells us, although these days they aren’t as good. Audiences generally want to see Indian movies and, except on major holidays such as Eid ul Azha or Eid ul Fitr, Punjabi films rarely play to full houses. “But *why* do you want to do research on Punjabi cinema?” he asks me. It is a question I have been asked countless times during my fieldwork. For most people I meet, it is completely unthinkable that anyone would find anything of intellectual merit in these films, which are usually dismissed as unrealistic, trashy, and just plain bad; clearly for them

Punjabi cinema does not fall into the realm of legitimate objects of academic study. Yet this fact in itself is telling, and a provocative starting point for this research. As Claire Perkins and Constantine Verevis argue, “The very term ‘bad cinema’ indicates how critically intertwined issues of taste, style, and politics are in all film practice and criticism” (2014:6). To these intertwined issues I would also add language; it seems to be not coincidental that the discourses about Punjabi cinema’s loudness, crudeness, and vulgarity are strikingly similar to the derogatory discourses about the language itself.

Cinema in Pakistan has historically been regarded with indifference or outright disdain by the state. According to Mushtaq Gazdar, in 1949, the newly formed Islamic Republic’s head of the Ministry of Industries issued a statement that “In principle,



Illustration 1.1 Censored film posters in Lakshmi Chowk

Muslims should not get involved in film making. Being the work of lust and lure, it should be left to the infidels” (1997:24). Similarly, it has also by and large been marginalized or even denounced by the cultural establishment; poet Sir Allama Iqbal, posthumously lauded as the national poet of Pakistan, published the following short poem ‘Cinema’ in his 1935 collection *Bāl-e Jibrīl* (‘Gabriel’s Wing’):

Cinema¹³

The same trade in idols, the same idol-making
 Is this cinema or the artistry of Azar?¹⁴
 That was not artistry, it was the business of infidelity
 This is not artistry, it is the business of sorcery
 That was the religion of the peoples of the ancient age
 This is the commercial trade of present-day culture
 That was the clay of the earth, this is the clay of hell
 That idol-house was earthen, this one is ash gray

(Iqbal 1995:368)

Here Iqbal directly compares the cinema with idolatry and polytheism (*shirk*, Ar. شرك), generally regarded as one of the greatest sins in Islam. However, cinema is even worse; rather than idols made of the honest clay of earth, for (albeit misguided) religious purposes, these are crass commercial idols made from the clay of hell (“*dozax kī miṭṭī*”). The first Punjabi film, A.R. Kardar’s *Heer Ranjha*, had been released just three years earlier in 1932. Pakistan would not come into existence for another fifteen years, but through the construction of cinema as un-Islamic, Iqbal’s poem presages the conflict between cinema and a state whose existence and unity was underpinned by a particular hegemonic Islam. Similarly Urdu, through its alignment

13 Translation mine.

14 The father of the Prophet Ibrahim, who was an idol-maker by trade (Quran 6:74-79).

with the state as national language, comes into conflict with other languages.¹⁵ Thus the Punjabi film is doubly condemned; it is both un-Islamic—although, as discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, films often embrace religious motifs, metaphors, and themes—and also un-Urdu. It lies outside state-sanctioned forms of cultural production, anathema to the political leadership that “emphasized a nationalism of one language (Urdu), one religion (Islam), and one people (Pakistani)” (Ali 2013:391).

Despite all of this, the Lahore-based Punjabi film industry—known colloquially as ‘Lollywood’—is a key site of Punjabi-language cultural production in Pakistan. According to Gazdar’s encyclopedic *Pakistan Cinema 1947-1997*, at its zenith Pakistan was one of the top ten film producing countries in the world, with an average output of around 80 films per year (1997:1). This number accounts for films made in Punjabi as well as in Urdu, Pashto, and other languages, but during the most productive years Punjabi films were the clear majority. Although Punjabi-language films have been made in Pakistan almost since its inception, it was not until the late 1970s that Punjabi-language films became the majority of those produced, or that their genre conventions were so strongly solidified. As Ayers writes, at this time Punjabi cinema “rose to a position of market dominance, primarily through the iconic revenge-seeking peasant-warrior Maula Jat,”¹⁶ [sic] played by Sultan Rahi (1938-96), who, by the mid-1990s, so overdetermined the aesthetic, linguistic, and narrative content of Punjabi cinema as to embody the genre” (2008:927). Beginning in the late 1970s, Punjabi films were almost all action films revolving around themes of honor

15 There have been a variety of other language promotion movements in Pakistan; for an overview see Rahman 1996.

16 Hero of the eponymous film, dir. Yunus Malik, 1979.

and bloody revenge, with provocative songs and dances and a decidedly rural and proletarian ethos. The Punjabi film industry was also at the height of its production, while Urdu film production dwindled. Yet these changes were not the result of a surge in the popularity or acceptance of Punjabi language and culture, but were instead informed by the turbulent political climate of the time. It is no coincidence that 1979, the year *Maula Jatt* was released, was the year populist prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was executed by General Zia ul Haq, who had deposed him and assumed power as a military dictator less than two years before. According to Ali Khan and Ali Nobil Ahmad, Punjabi cinema production overtook that of Urdu cinema at a time when the film industry was altered by a series of external events. First, the Urdu film circuit was essentially cut in half by the loss of the East Pakistani market (with the 1971 independence of Bangladesh). Later, the introduction of videocassette technology and subsequent influx of pirated Indian films drastically changed film availability and viewing practices. Additionally, the strict censorship laws that came about during Zia's period of 'Islamization' (2010:153-154) had a significant impact on the thematic content of films (indeed, *Maula Jatt* was banned for a time as well). As the Urdu-speaking urban middle class moved their entertainment of choice away from cinema towards television and video, filmmakers began catering to working class Punjabis—the largest common denominator of film consumers. The films that were made during the 1970s through the 1980s were primarily what Ahmad and Khan refer to as 'natural horror,' a style of action film characterized by themes such as rape, revenge, and vigilante justice, and that often portrayed the violence and injustices perpetrated by landholding classes (*caudhrī*, *zamīndār*) and other elites. They write:

“The action film is generally regarded as reflective of the brutality of the Zia years...And yet, surveying this new genre of cinema, despite all its seemingly reactionary glorification of violence and vengeance in defence of masculine honour, what is perhaps most striking is its deeply ambiguous relationship with the Pakistani nation-state. Put simply, the popularity of vernacular action films underlines the way in which class in Pakistan is lived, experienced, and constructed through language and ethnicity.” (2010:154)

Notably, the rise of these films also marks what is often considered by Pakistanis to be an aesthetic and eventually economic downturn in their cinema. This long, slow period of decline is commonly referred to using the term *zavāl*,¹⁷ and I address its possible causes and ramifications in detail in Chapter 2. Coinciding with the wave of conservatism unleashed by Zia’s Islamization policies, as the Punjabi action film rose to its zenith in the 1980s, cinema halls were also becoming spaces that were markedly working class and masculine. Cinema as a whole was increasingly disparaged as overly violent and sexual, and cinema halls seen as an inappropriate space for families and women. It was reported to me during fieldwork that even scenes of hardcore pornography were sometimes showing during film screenings.¹⁸ Respectable women were thus expected to stay home and watch TV, as is still often the case; going to the cinema not only means viewing potentially unsavory film content, but also being seen to do so by others. During fieldwork, I invited a colleague, a professor of psychology, to attend a film with me. She turned me down saying: “No woman in my family has ever been to a cinema hall, and I will never go

17 John T. Platts’ classic dictionary defines *zavāl* as: “Declining (as the sun from the meridian); declination; setting (of the sun, &c.); decline, wane, decay; fall; cessation; defect, deficiency, failure; harm, loss, injury (syn. *nuqṣān*); humiliation; misery, wretchedness.” (1884:618)

18 I did not experience this myself, but the work of Lotte Hoek, discussed below, describes this practice in detail as it happens in Bangladesh.

either.” For her it was a matter of her family’s honor that she not be seen to expose herself to whatever vulgarity might lurk in the dark corners of the cinema hall, in the light of its flickering screen.

Widely held notions about the Punjabi language—that it is crude, rural, backwards, and invariably loud—resonate inextricably with the onscreen portrayal of Punjabis and Punjabi culture. The films are loud, rough, violent, predominantly set in



Illustration 1.2 A film song playing in a cinema, March 2013.

rural settings, or if in urban settings, then often revolve around the lives of anti-hero gangsters and thugs.¹⁹ They appear in stark contrast to many Urdu films, which historically tend towards urban-set social dramas featuring upper class heroes and elegant heroines, although there have been some Punjabi films that try to break this mold (in particular some of the recent films of Syed Noor and Shahzad Rafique).

¹⁹ For a time in the 1990s some Lahori gangsters were supposedly major source of film financing, and many of my informants made allusions to this connection, although unsurprisingly it has been difficult to verify.

Clearly the Punjabi action film had to have an intense appeal to be so successful for so long, and to have crystallized so rigidly as a film genre. However, although Punjabi films still occasionally draw crowds, their market share has greatly diminished over the past decade or so, and filmmakers who were once lauded and lucrative now find themselves in increasing obscurity, facing ever smaller audiences.

This dissertation also hopes to contribute to an important and ongoing intervention in South Asian cinema studies to move away from its perennial focus on Hindi popular cinema. In their introduction to the October 2010 special issue of *South Asian Popular Culture*, Sarah Dickey and Rajinder Dudrah propose that “now, as a critical mass of such work has been achieved, it is time to take stock of the field and scrutinise the ironic development of a new norm, wherein Hindi cinema (or ‘Bollywood’) provides the primary referent for South Asian cinemas. In other words, Hindi film often functions as an unmarked centre to its marked and peripheral others” (2010:207). While there has been a large amount of interdisciplinary work on other South Asian cinemas, almost entirely in India and particularly concerned with the Hindi popular film industry,²⁰ a recent group of articles and book chapters have begun to complicate this prior body of work by critically addressing Pakistani cinema. These tend towards the historical, such as Mushtaq Gazdar’s history of Pakistani cinema (1997), Iftikhar Dadi’s (2009) investigation of nuclear proliferation and popular culture, Hoek’s investigation of memory and erasure of East Pakistani cinema (2010b), and Ali Nobil Ahmad and Ali Khan’s (2010) analysis of the development of

20 Baskaran 1996, Dickey 1993 and 2009, Dwyer and Patel 2002, Dwyer and Pinney 2001, Dwyer 2006, 2010 and 2014, Gopalan 2002, Mishra 2002, Nandy 1998, Vasudevan 2000 and 2011, Velayutham 2008

horror film in Pakistan. The scholarly works that do deal specifically with Punjabi cinema (in particular Ayers 2008) tend to both start and stop with discussion of 1970s film hero Sultan Rahi, who died in 1996. It is certainly true that the Punjabi film industry is not operating at the capacity that it was in its heyday, but in nearly twenty years there have been enough changes in this industry to make it a fascinating site for contemporary study. My work aims to build on South Asian film scholarship not only by adding a linguistic anthropological perspective, but also by virtue of its geographic and synchronic focus on contemporary Pakistan.

As described above, recent historical work by Mir (2010) argues that Punjabi and Urdu have traditionally existed not so much in a simple hierarchy with each other as operating in different social spheres. While Urdu was adopted by the colonial state as the primary language of governance and education in Punjab, local cultural production continued to operate outside or at the margins of this administrative system. Therefore, she concludes that this cultural production is not so much a result of resistance but rather of resilience (2010:60). My fieldwork suggests that in continuity with this linguistic history, Punjabi cinema also operates outside or at the margins, rather than in direct opposition to, the sphere of linguistic control of the Pakistani state. This is seen particularly in the linguistic content—register, style, verbal art forms—although at times the thematic or narrative content of the films can be read as anti-state. This finding resonates with recent developments in South Asian film studies. Ravi Vasudevan writes of Indian cinema that “while the cinematic institution was thus perceived to be culturally illegitimate, its popular appeal, its social reach, was acknowledged and presented a threat, or at least an impediment, to the cultivation of civil society” (2005:174). In allowing for an understanding of the

spectating public as both heterogeneously constituted and widely contested, Vasudevan's analysis problematizes a body of South Asian critical film scholarship that has displayed a tendency to posit popular cinema as a unilateral outgrowth of postcolonial nationalism.

Because of its tendency to operate outside and at times counter to the discursive and aesthetic regimes of the Pakistani state, critical analysis of Punjabi cinema in Pakistan also lends support to this intervention. In some important ways, Punjabi cinema is anathema to the cultural hegemony of the Pakistani state, for example in their emphasis on the primacy of 'Punjab' rather than that Pakistan. Even if these films did not boast sexualized dancing to suggestive lyrics, they might still be considered vulgar by some for the mere fact that they present women's bodies for public consumption by men. And even a 'clean' film might still be devalued for the mere reason that it is in the Punjabi language and therefore considered the purview of the working classes. This dissertation shows how these hegemonies are inextricable from each other; although the linguistic, the aesthetic, and the moral can be thought of as different regimes, they work together in film to form a sort of counterhegemonic gestalt. This is not to say that Punjabi cinema is some kind of liberated space of pure resistance; as Stuart Hall notes, "there is no whole, authentic, autonomous 'popular culture' which lies outside the field of force of the relations of cultural power and domination" (1998:447). Instead, Hall argues, popular culture is a site of contestation, creating possibilities for both resistance and suppression. In Punjabi cinema, the almost complete erasure of other ethnic groups—Sindhis and Balochis for instance—mirrors ongoing, state-perpetrated practices of erasure and exclusion. The female characters in Punjabi films may display an agency that is less common in Urdu films,

yet by and large this agency is deployed to uphold patriarchal systems rather than undermine them. Women's bodies might be on display, but kissing is still avoided. Populist (rather than orthodox) Islamic practices such as the reverence of Sufi saints and use of Shia iconography are promoted on screen, but the general supremacy of Islam—whatever the exact interpretation or practice—is unchallenged; there is almost no space in these films for non-Muslims (except, very occasionally, as villains).²¹ Finally, the very features thought to be the most negative characteristics of the Punjabi language and rural Punjabi culture—their supposed loudness, coarseness, and violence—are not denied in film but rather reappropriated and emphasized.

1.4 *Language materiality and cultural value*

Shalini Shankar and Jillian Cavanaugh propose the term 'language materiality' to describe the the burgeoning body of academic work that considers “the material alongside the linguistic to address broader questions varying from nationalism and class to religion and cultural production” (2012:356). This approach involves taking the linguistic *as* material, as an object that circulates and accrues value in processes of identification and differentiation, objectification and commodification, but it also points toward understanding the linguistic and material dimensions of cultural forms as imbricated with each other. Shankar and Cavanaugh argue, “Whether the context of circulation is immediate and face-to-face or mediated in some way...the material remains critical for the linguistic to make sense” (2012:360). Along with the

21 One exception is the 1959 film *Kartar Singh* (dir. Saifuddin Saif), which deals with the aftermath of the Partition.

ideologies that devalue and marginalize Punjabi, the general ambivalence toward popular cinema within a state-sanctioned cultural hegemony, and the fact that these films are seen as the purview of the working classes, the material qualities of the film (for example scratchy 35mm prints, low-budget set and costume design, interference and noise in cinema hall speakers) play a key role in overdetermining the discursive construction of Punjabi analog action films as lowbrow, trashy, and vulgar.

One of my main frameworks for approaching the relationships between class, language, and aesthetics in Pakistani Punjabi cinema grows out of an economic conception of cultural value. Raymond Williams' discussion of literary taste and consumption ties both of these directly to class: "As subjective definitions of apparently objective criteria...and at the same time apparently objective definitions of subjective qualities, 'taste' and 'sensitivity' are characteristically bourgeois categories" (1977:48-49). Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1984) problematizes the idea of "taste" by correlating cultural consumption with social class. In the Pakistani context, Punjabi cinema is both largely consumed by a working-class audience and is looked down upon by the middle and upper classes as crude, vulgar, and (in short) in poor taste. Yet I argue here that the linguistic works together with the aesthetic and thematic dimensions of film to overdetermine (in an Althusserian sense) this process of devaluation. Bourdieu builds on the notion of social capital in *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991), describing the idea of linguistic capital, and how it functions in an economy of language. Both concepts are highly productive starting points for this study, yet Judith Irvine (1989), as well as Kathryn Woolard (1985) have pointed out that Bourdieu's notion of a linguistic marketplace is simplistic and unidirectional, treating language as a mere symptom of the political and economic situation. Irvine

argues that:

“Indexical correlations between realms of linguistic differentiation and social differentiation...bear some relationship to a cultural system of ideas about social relationships, including ideas about the history of persons and groups. I do not mean that linguistic variation is simply a diagram of some aspect of social differentiation—as correlational studies often in effect suggest—but that there is a dialectic relationship mediated by a culture of language (and of society).” (1989:253)

Asif Agha similarly critiques Bourdieu, arguing that his theory in certain ways oversimplifies the linguistic dimensions of habitus formation and also overlooks the importance of agency in these processes (2003:269-270). In general, however, theories of cultural value and language ideology have created productive frameworks for linguistic anthropologists to approach media. For example, Debra Spitulnik’s investigation of radio in Zambia shows the important role media plays in processes of “language valuation and evaluation” (1998:227), and the production of linguistic and social hierarchies through broadcasting practices. Richard Popp’s discussion of bilingualism in *Dora the Explorer* and *The Passion of the Christ* (2006:7) connects Bourdieu’s linguistic marketplace with media consumption, arguing that “media texts act as a resource from which individuals can draw speech patterns—and the cultural capital with which they are linked.” What sorts of cultural knowledge and social values regarding language emerge in a cinematic context? Moreover, what are the processes by which they are created, circulated, and disseminated? Here, again, my focus is on the role of language both during film production and within filmic texts. Ultimately, Irvine proposes working towards “a more comprehensive conception of ‘value,’ so that the various kinds of sign-value and material values can be seen in their complex integration” (1989: 262). Media offers an ideal and underused locus for

observing this integration, as it incorporates processes of both material and linguistic production.

I draw also on Agha's work on register, emblem, and cultural value, (2003, 2005, 2007) particularly his notion of enregisterment, "whereby distinct forms of speech come to be socially recognized (or enregistered) as indexical of speaker attributes by a population of language users" (2005:38). This is a highly productive concept for addressing the social valences of the different varieties and styles of Punjabi found in cinema, and can help in understanding the role that cinema plays in creating and perpetuating the meanings attributed to certain kinds of language. Agha writes that cultural value is "a precipitate of sociohistorically locatable practices...which imbue cultural forms with recognizable indexical sign values and bring these values into circulation along identifiable trajectories in social space" (2007:190). Here the notion of register is key because it is a particular kind of Punjabi, discussed in detail in Chapter 5, with particular qualities that is deployed in cinema and thus associated with certain social identities and values. Additionally, verbal art styles such as the *barhak* are of particular significance in this performative context; loosely glossed as 'roar' or 'challenge,' this is a shouted verbal dueling style described by Gazdar as "a high-pitched, full-throated, threatening yell, a sort of warming up, a prelude to a brawl" (1997:134), which I explore in detail in Chapter 4. Observing film production and eliciting metalinguistic commentary about film dialogues and speech styles can provide insight into the role cinema plays in the process of enregisterment, that is, the way different registers become socially valent through cinema production and consumption.

Focusing on emergence remains integral to enregisterment as well as to my

understanding of identity in this cinema; rather than representing a concrete and static Punjabi identity, film offers a space for filmmakers, viewers, and critics to constantly negotiate and reshape the various identities at play. Emergence is particularly salient when discussing language or film as commodities with value; as Arjun Appadurai notes, cultural value is not a static universal, rather “the degree of value coherence may be highly variable from situation to situation, and from commodity to commodity” (1986:15). The value assigned to a given film, for instance, might be different depending on the identities of the interlocutors and the interactional context in which it is being discussed. Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall, in proposing a framework for understanding identity in interaction, emphasize that identity is emergent in a given context—that “identities as social processes do not precede the semiotic practices that call them into being in specific interactions” (2005:588). This is a vital insight for understanding the ways that identities can shift in different situations. Additionally, Bucholtz and Hall write:

“Any given construction of identity may be in part deliberate and intentional, in part habitual and hence often less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of interactional negotiation and contestation, in part an outcome of others’ perceptions and representations, and in part an effect of larger ideological processes and material structures that may become relevant to interaction. It is therefore constantly shifting both as interaction unfolds and across discourse contexts.” (2005:606)

Again, film production here becomes a locus of linkages between such ideological processes, material structures, and interactional norms. What are people’s performed identities and attitudes towards the language during the different phases of filming, while writing, while acting, while sitting behind the camera, or while being projected

onscreen?

1.5 Cinema ethnography

This project, even in its non-ethnographic moments, is centered around research conducted primarily with members of the film industry at Evernew Studios in Lahore. These filmmakers constitute a ‘community of practice’ (Lave 1991, Lave and Wenger 1991, Wenger 1998, Wenger et. al. 2002), a group of people working towards a common goal or interest, whose identity as part of or membership in the community is determined by situated learning and participation practices.

Investigating filmmakers as a community of practice allows us to see films as products of social interaction rather as the realized vision of a single director, or a



Illustration 1.3 Stunt men rehearsing explosions on the set of Sharabi, September 2013

floating, authorless text. Analyses of film content and language are heavily informed by conversations I had with those involved in film production, and my experiences at the studio and on the film set. I use ethnographic methodologies such as participant-observation and semi-structured and informal interviews to explore the community members' relationships to each other and to their filmmaking praxis. By incorporating ethnography into this study of film language, this dissertation builds upon previous anthropological engagement with cinema. John Weakland (1973) provided one of the first arguments for an anthropological interest in popular cinema; however, his primary concern was film content, and such analyses of film have traditionally been regarded as the prerogative of media and film studies scholars alone (Weakland 2003). I believe an attention to film production can help answer many questions that are beyond the reach of such textual analysis. Sarah Dickey, in her 1993 study of cinemagoers in Madurai, India, was one of the first anthropologists to study film circulation and reception. By integrating film analysis and a structural and historical description of the Tamil film industry with the perspectives of working-class cinemagoers she brings forward the ubiquity of cinema in urban life and the complex affective relationships that emerge in a cinematic context. In recent years, Brian Larkin's work on Nigerian cinema (2008), Lotte Hoek's research on Bangladeshi cinema (2010a, 2010b, 2014), and Anand Pandian's work on South Indian cinema (2011a, 2011b) have pioneered the ethnographic study of cinema industries and filmmaking. Additionally, there have been some sociolinguistic studies of language and cinema (cf. D'Lugo 1993, Georgakopoulou 2000, Lippi-Green 1997, Weitzner 2002), but very little from the perspective of linguistic anthropology, with the notable recent exceptions of the work of Daniel Lefkowitz (2005), Barbra Meek (2006),

Leighton Peterson (2011, 2014), Mary Bucholtz (2011), Constantine Nakassis (2015), and Robin Queen (2015).

My first few months in Lahore were a busy time of making connections within the film industry, of interviewing anyone I could find with a cinema background, and of collecting broad observational data about cinema halls, video stores, and people's opinions and thoughts about Punjabi cinema. Something that became clear very quickly was that there was not a single monolithic film industry in Pakistan; although I write about "the Pakistani film industry," films—and filmmakers—tend to fall into at least three camps. The first are the up-and-coming, new filmmakers; these tend to be based in Karachi (far from the Punjabi heartland) and are often connected with the television industry, for example Humayun Saeed or Shoaib Mansoor; their films are ideologically more targeted towards educated, pro-establishment or liberal middle class viewers and tend to have some kind of explicit social message in their films. For example, Shoaib Mansoor's *Khuda Kay Liye* (2007) deals with rising Islamic radicalism and the War on Terror, and his *Bol* (2011) takes women's rights, family structure, and gender identity as its subject matter. While most of these films are in Urdu, the dialogue of 2013's *Zinda Bhaag* (dir. Meenu Gaur and Farjad Nabi), which dealt with immigration and human trafficking, was actually mostly in Punjabi, perhaps to add a linguistic dimension to its gritty, cinema vérité aesthetic.²² The second group of filmmakers are the ones who have their roots in the Lahore film industry but have not been as severely impacted by its decline; they continue to make

²² Interestingly, this film was roundly critiqued by several Evernew filmmakers I spoke to who found fault with the performance of veteran Indian actor Naseeruddin Shah. They found his Punjabi—he plays the role of a Lahori crime boss—to be heavily Urdu-accented and inauthentic.

higher budget films with more advanced technology, and also tended more towards Urdu rather than Punjabi cinema. Prominent in this camp are filmmakers like Syed Noor and Shahzad Rafique, who shoot at Shabab Studios, one of the most technologically advanced studios in Lahore. Finally, there were those industry veterans who had been hardest hit by the slump in film revenue and production. They continued to make films using the same technology they had used for forty plus years; most of them were older themselves and had few options at this point for changing careers. They also tended to make more Punjabi films than the other groups, although an exact ratio is difficult to estimate.

I ought to make one caveat here; I want to avoid reifying these groups as distinct, discretely bounded entities; certain group members did move in between two or all three. Actors in particular have this freedom, although there are others as well. Certain professions are more bound to one of these three groups, for example cameramen and editors are limited by the degree and type of their technical training and access to equipment. There were also socialities and personal relationships that governed who might work on what kinds of films; a director might favor a cameraman he has worked with for many years, their relationship of friendship and trust equally important as technical skill. This also seems to be a fairly recent development; as little as fifteen or twenty years ago Lahore was still the only major site of film production in Pakistan, and the technological, stylistic, and linguistic differences were not so sharply defined between these groups that seem to have emerged.

One of the more intensely productive periods of my fieldwork was during the six weeks or so leading up to the festival of Eid ul Azha in 2013, during which I

followed the production of the film *Sharabi*. The film was shot in only 21 or 22 days, often in 16 hour shifts, and because it was edited and dubbed concurrently with shooting, it released on the first day of Eid, October 13. Chapter 3 is mainly focused on that fruitful period, and aims to add a language-oriented approach to the recent expansion of studies of cinema and ethnography, studies which ask how an ethnographic approach informs our understanding of filmmaking as a cooperative, emergent, context-based practice, focusing on the site and means of production of film rather than merely its reception? The subdiscipline of visual anthropology has already done fruitful work addressing many of these questions, not only through its approaches to ethnographic filmmaking (and photograph), but also through its critical attention to visual culture. More recently visual anthropology has taken other cultural forms into account, including historical and archival photographs (Campbell 2014), comics and visual narrative (Cohn 2016), museums (Bouquet 2012), and many others, yet it still has largely left the study of popular cinema to disciplines such as film and media studies or communication studies. As Gordon Gray writes, “For many people the words ‘anthropology’ and ‘cinema’ go together like bread and gasoline” (2010:x). Yet there have been some noteworthy ethnographic studies of popular film production. The first ethnography of popular cinema was Hortense Powdermaker's *Hollywood: The Dream Factory* (1950). Conducted in 1947-48, her study attempted “to understand the complexities of the Hollywood social system rather than reducing it to an oversimplified formula and, likewise, to see the relationship between Hollywood and the society in which we live” (1950:9). While it offered an interesting starting point, with the rise of film studies as its own discipline through the 20th century (a discipline with a tendency to privilege the filmic text more than the

conditions of its production), anthropologists, for the next five decades or so, largely avoided focusing on cinema. Fortunately, this has begun to change in recent years with developments in media ethnography. For instance, Brian Larkin's investigation of media in Nigeria underscores the importance of seeing media, including film, as enmeshed in a "networked infrastructure" (2008:5), contiguous with society rather than a discrete entity. In his investigation of filmmaking and temporality in South India, Anand Pandian writes that "...ethnographic fieldwork with filmmakers in the act of filmmaking offers an especially effective means of engaging the emergence of cinema in an open-ended durative time: the accidental happening of cinema is best grasped, that is, through the incidental happening of ethnographic encounter."

(Pandian 2011b:196) Similarly Lotte Hoek argues that "an anthropology of media that proceeds from the theoretical starting point that what the media are and accomplish cannot be read from either their technologies or the society and cultures in which they are embedded requires a satisfyingly thick description of the media" (2014:7). Her attention to the emergent properties of the filmic text--which in most academic studies of film is largely thought to be a fixed and unchanging thing, shows that understanding the site of production and the socialities around filmmaking can provide a more nuanced picture of cinema as a social phenomenon than mere textual analysis. In attempting to understand the significance of language in film and about film, the site of production and the voices of the filmmakers are key to helping understand not just at the final product, but the way it emerges as a collective effort, embedded in a social context.

Linguistic anthropology, because of its attention to interaction, emergence, and multiple modes of creating meaning in the world, is uniquely positioned to inform this

relatively rare subspecialty of media ethnography. Most linguistic anthropological research has focused on “naturally occurring” language to the exclusion of scripted narrative media, yet it is clear that there is still much to be learned from examining language in the context of film and television (as well as from the metalinguistic commentary that might accompany it during filmmaking). In arguing for greater attention to be paid to narrative or fictional films and television, Robin Queen writes “We can consider the scripted media to be fundamentally interesting precisely because of the ways in which they are of the culture of which they are a part, even as they play a role in shaping that culture” (2015:20). Much of this work has focused on the ways language in film is used to construct the ‘other.’ Rosina Lippi-Green’s work (1997) investigates, among other things, Disney villains and accent, where villains are much more likely to have some kind of foreign accent than positive characters, regardless of setting (even, for example, in films where all the characters are ostensibly nonhuman animals), thereby indoctrinating children with the notion that foreign-ness is negative. Barbra Meek (2006) discusses the creation of Hollywood Injun English, in which a particular register of English has developed and been deployed to perform Native American stereotypes for largely non-Native audiences. Mary Bucholtz (2011) and Quiana Lopez (2012), investigate the ways in which African-American Vernacular English is appropriated by white characters in Hollywood films in both mocking and non-mocking ways. In all of these cases, the language used indexes a certain set of characteristics to the film’s viewer; language in Punjabi film performs similar work of solidarity-building and othering, and its ability to accomplish this work is rooted in its constructed nature.

Finally, I want to keep in mind that, as Claudia Bubel has written, “the co-

construction of meaning in screen-to-face discourse is a joint effort of the audience in front of the screen, the actors, the directors, the screenwriter, the story editors, the producers, the camera team and the cutters involved in the editing process” (2006:58). By virtue of studying filmmaking through participant-observation and other ethnographic methods—with a particular focus on metalinguistic discourse and language use on set—I was privileged not just to my own interpretation or even a populist interpretation of what film language is and does, but to the ways *Filmi Punjabi* (described in detail in Chapter 5) is conceived of and deployed by film practitioners. Their metalinguistic commentary and conception of film language allows for a more nuanced understanding of why this register exists, what it accomplishes, and the ways in which it is politically and affectively charged.

1.6 Structure and scope

In this dissertation, I explore the connections that emerge from and inhere in the relationships between the Punjabi language and the aesthetics, representations, solidarities, and social commentaries found around Punjabi popular cinema. This study asks how using ethnographic methods to study film—and specifically cinematic production—might contribute to a broader understanding of both cultural and linguistic practices. Moreover, I argue that an examination of the particular kind of language used in film, the register I call *Filmi Punjabi* and which is detailed in Chapter 5, is key to understanding how these issues are connected. Finally, I explore what happens to a community of analog filmmakers in a rapidly digitizing world; showing how they navigate the concurrent technological and aesthetic shifts that often

seem to threaten not just their economic opportunities but also their filmmaking praxis and community networks. This project takes the cinema industry as a lens through which to investigate interrelated issues such as class, ethnicity, and gender, aesthetic and moral hegemonies, and linguistic and cultural practices in contemporary Pakistani Punjab.

While the participant-observation and interview data I gained during my fieldwork anchors the dissertation chapters together, each chapter deals with a different aspect that grew out of this data and employs a variety of methods to explore them, including discourse analysis, film analysis, and dialectology. In the next chapter, I offer a historically contextualized discussion of the Punjabi film industry, focusing on the ways the filmmakers at Evernew Studios, my primary field site, make sense of the ‘decline’ of Pakistani cinema. In this chapter I also deal with the relationships between film aesthetics and filmmaking technologies, with a particular focus on practices of analog filmmaking in a rapidly digitizing entertainment industry. Finally, I explore linkages between the language and the social, infrastructural and aesthetic formations and practices that inform their filmmaking.

In Chapter 3, I discuss my field site in greater detail, hierarchies of power within the filmmaking community, and the way they are informed by different kinds of identity (in particular, gender). I also present an account of the making of the film *Sharabi* (2013, dir. Parvez Rana), with emphasis on the linguistic dimensions of filmmaking praxis. Key to this dissertation is the notion that attention to film language can both build on and complicate a thematic and aesthetic understanding of film and film production. Chapter 4 and 5 delve more deeply into the language used in films, investigating its features, qualities, and usage and the ideological linkages between

films' linguistic and thematic content. In Chapter 4, I examine a genre of verbal art that has become emblematic of Punjabi cinema, the verbal dueling style known as *baṛhak*. In Chapter 5, I consider how dialect leveling gives rise to a particular variety of language which I am calling *Filmi Punjabi*, which is enregistered and deployed in the linguistic created of an idealized cinematic Punjab.

Chapter 2: Nostalgia, technology, and aesthetic exclusion



Illustration 2.1 Ghulam Hussain carrying the camera during a location shoot

2.1 'Urūj / Zavāl

“This camera is from the time of the British!” assistant cameraman Ghulam Hussain told me proudly as he lifted a heavy camera onto a steel tripod. It was the very first day of shooting, and those words echoed in my mind throughout the four weeks I spent doing participant-observation research on the set of *Sharabi*. For some time I doubted that this could be possible, though certainly the 35mm Arriflex camera (Illustration 2.1) was old. When I asked the film’s head cameraman, Sajjad Rizvi (affectionately called 'Shahji'), he told me it was from the 1970s, which seemed more likely. It was only later that I realized Ghulam Hussain might not have been

exaggerating. Looking at historical photographs of Arri cameras, I found that the camera used to film *Sharabi* bears a marked resemblance to photos of the Arri 35 II series (Arri Picture Chronicle 2012:13), which was introduced in 1937 (CinemaTechnic N.d.), ten years before British India won its independence and was partitioned into the separate states of India and Pakistan. During the pre-Partition period Lahore, along with Calcutta and Bombay, was one of the centers of film production in South Asia (Gazdar 1997, Said 1962). According to Ahmad Said's brief essay on the cinema history of Lahore, despite its rise to artistic prominence in the early sound era, the Lahore-based film industry was struggling, losing artists and technicians to Bombay and Calcutta,²³ even before the uproar of the Partition. The Partition wreaked its own havoc on the film industry; Ahmad Said writes,

“During the riots such a fearful earthquake came through [the film industry] that its very foundations were shaken. The flood of flames that had spread through the entire country burned one studio—Upper India—and reduced it to rubble and sweepings, and licked another one to ashes. This was Shorey Studio. Those who used to portray burning and looting on the screen had themselves become victims to the terrifying drama that was being played out all over India from the Khyber Pass to Ras Kumari.” (1962:791)

Yet with the film industries of Bombay and Calcutta cut off by the Radcliffe Line,²⁴ Lahore was to once again rise as a center of film production, and by the 1950s, according to Said, “a time came when in all four studios in the city...it was impossible to get shooting space for months at a time” (1962:795). This echoes the stories I heard

23 Now Mumbai and Kolkata.

24 The boundary line demarcating the separate states of India and Pakistan, drawn by Sir Cyril Radcliffe in 1947.

from almost every industry veteran I met, of a bustling, highly productive industry, where there was always work to be had and money to be earned. Interestingly, however, Said invokes many of the same discourses of destruction and loss that I encountered during my fieldwork fifty years later, even though he is writing in the early 1960s, the dawn of what is now widely considered the ‘golden age’ of Pakistani cinema. This suggests there is more to these discourses than the mere narration of film history; deployment of nostalgic or mournful discourses indexes an interpretive stance towards the quality and value of recent or contemporary film, whether the speaker is a literary critic in the 1960s or an entertainment journalist in 2013.

Perhaps more important than the exact vintage of the camera is what it reveals about the way at least some filmmakers in this community relate to the technology of their craft. The camera is old (see Illustration 2.2), but for Ghulam Hussain it is not outdated. Contrary to the received discourse that newer technology is better, this camera, having borne witness to seven decades of filmmaking, is a symbolic repository for the collective filmmaking knowledge of what was once a booming industry. As Walter Benjamin famously argued, “The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable to its being imbedded in the fabric of tradition” (1999:75). While here he refers specifically to the tradition of reception as it pertains to a given work of art, it stands to reason that the tradition of production would bear down on an artwork with a similar weight (perhaps even on a mechanically reproducible work of art). The continued pride in this heritage of craftsmanship and maintenance of community practices and ties creates a powerful counter-narrative to the story commonly told in the Pakistani media about the film industry’s *zavāl*, its crashing ‘decline.’ A Guardian article from 2013 on the Pakistani cinema revival argued that “Pakistan's crumbling

infrastructure of classic cinema houses, many of which are now dives showing seedy B-movies, is unfit to compete. One film distributor estimates that there are just 150 cinemas in a country of 180 million people, and 130 of those are 'in a shambles.'" (Boone 2013) Meanwhile, countless newspaper articles and entertainment editorials described the Pakistani film industry as 'dead,' 'moribund,' or, at best, 'dwindling.' However, by focusing attention back onto the filmmakers themselves, this chapter seeks to problematize the assumption they are uneducated and behind the times, haphazardly and clumsily churning out films with whatever equipment is available, instead suggesting that while of course they are conditioned by market constraints, they operate under a different set of socialities and aesthetic precepts.

The *'urūj* of the cinema—its “golden age”—is commonly said to have been



Illustration 2.2 Arriflex camera used during the making of Sharabi.

the 1960s. This was the period in which suave, clean-shaven heroes in suits and ties would romance perfectly-coiffed sari-clad heroines in chaste²⁵ and poetic Urdu. Not only were the films in Urdu, they drew heavily on the mores, tropes and conventions of urban, Urdu-speaking *muhājir*²⁶ culture. One example of this might be the wearing of *sārī* by heroines, which has traditionally been less common in Punjab than the *shalwār-qamīz* or *lāchā-kurtā*.²⁷ Another example can be seen in the thematic of these films with the genre known in Indian film studies as 'Muslim social' (cf. Dwyer 2006, Vasudevan 2000, 2015); films often involve complex, novelistic plots focused on themes of family, duty, sacrifice, honor (‘*izzat*’), and unrequited love. My informants often characterized Urdu films of the 1960s as more refined (*naftīs*), more realistic, and more emotional (as opposed to the 'loudness', bombast, and vulgarity of the Punjabi films that were to come later). Heroines of this period, for example Zeba, Shabnam, and Shamim Ara, tend to be portrayed as fragile, submissive creatures who cry at the drop of a hat (“*rone-dhone wālī* heroines!”) and dutifully guard their sexuality. Conversely, the archetypal Punjabi film heroine (e.g. Asiya, Sangeeta, Anjuman, and later Saima) are bolder, openly flirtatious, and often fight alongside the

25 This is the conventional translation of the term *khālis*, 'pure'. 'Chaste,' interestingly, is a quite common South Asian English translation of *khālis*, from the Arabic root *خلص* 'clear,' which means, somewhat less poetically, 'pure' or 'free from admixture.' I keep the convention of translating this word as 'chaste' because of the resonances with morality, sexuality, and bloodlines that inhere in this metaphor.

26 *Muhājir* is the general term used for those who migrated from India (particularly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar) following the 1947 Partition.

27 *Sārī* is a long unstitched drape of cloth commonly worn by women across the subcontinent, but in contemporary Pakistan mostly only worn for special occasions such as weddings. *Shalwār-kamīz* is a long shirt over baggy trousers—the most common style of women’s dress in Pakistan—and *lāchā-kurtā* is a long shirt worn over a sarong-like loincloth. The latter is now rarely seen in urban centers, and is the most emblematic of rural Punjabi identity.

men rather than stand on the sidelines.

Films were also being made in regional languages, and also films were made that do not fit this archetype; Khan and Ahmad point out that “many of the best films [of this era] problematise the simplistic myth of blissful economic plenty in this period” (2010:153). Examples include Riaz Shahid’s *Zarqa* (1969), which took on the Israel-Palestine conflict while also making subtle social criticisms about Pakistan, Iqbal Shahzad’s *Badnam* (1966), based on a short story of acclaimed progressive author Saadat Hasan Manto, or Parvaiz Malik’s *Heera aur Patthar* (1964) which deals with love across class divisions. Still, the general trend in filmmaking was towards an aesthetic of optimism, modernity, aspiration and urbanity, in films that, as Kamran Ali writes, “brought people into the fold of the progressive nation-state with their portrayal of the modern built environment and the pleasures of city life.” (2015:396) It is the transition from these films to films that emphasize the rural and the 'traditional', and most importantly are in Punjabi rather than Urdu, that is generally characterized (at least in the received folk-history I encountered endlessly during my fieldwork) as the beginning of the end for Pakistani film.

Although most discussions of Punjabi cinema in Pakistan seem to begin (and often end) with the landmark 1979 film *Maula Jatt* (dir. Yunus Malik), it is actually a sequel to the 1975 hit film *Wehshi Jatt* (dir. Hassan Askari).³⁰ The film, based on a

28 For a more in-depth analysis of gender in Punjabi cinema, see Chapters 3 and 4.

29 For example, in 1991’s *Qanoon Apna Apna* (dir. Muhammad Akram), Anjuman takes on Sultan Rahi in both physical and verbal combat to avenge his attack on her brother; eventually she ties him up and kidnaps him on horseback, although of course eventually they fall in love. Anjuman in particular was famous for her portrayals of the rough and tumble *jattī*, sexy but still a fighter, in films such as *Hunterwali* (1988, dir. Masood Butt), *Daku Haseena* (1990, dir. Javed Raza), *Super Girl* (1989, dir. M. Aslam), *Qatil Haseena* (1989, dir. Khalifa Saeed Ahmad), and others.

30 Itself based on an Urdu short story, *Gandāsa*, by noted author Ahmad Nadim Qasmi (2007), *Wehshi*

short story of Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, deals with rivalry and revenge between two feuding families in rural Punjab. Gazdar writes that “The black and white Punjabi feature had so many scenes of blood and gore that it shocked even the short story writer...The success of *Wehshi Jatt* set a trend of ferocity and savagery in Punjabi cinema that became the hallmark of every Sultan Rahi film” (1997:144). I would argue that in fact that many of the conventions of Punjabi cinema that allow for its discursive positioning as diametrically opposite to Urdu were already in place by the 1960s, with films such as *Aabroo* (1961, dir. Abdurrahman Shaikh), *Daachi* (1964, dir. Aslam Irani) and *Chacha Jee* (1967, dir. Waheed Dar), already displaying elements of the kinds of rurality, hypermasculinity, subversive sexuality, violence, and Punjabiyat that were later to become the major characteristics of the archetypical Punjabi film. As early as 1962, Ahmad Said laments the direction in which the film industry is heading:

“The biggest reason for the crisis that has started in this industry from the past three or four years is those shameful, commercial Punjabi films of which even their makers appear to be ashamed...after the wild popularity of the aforementioned Punjabi films film studios appear more in the form of houses of intoxication than temples, and film companies as whorehouses.” (1962:796)

Such a perspective from the so-called 'Golden-Age'—one that resonates with and sets the tone so completely for more recent critiques of 'loud and vulgar' Punjabi cinema—highlights the subjective nature of such assessments of film history, and points to the necessity of understanding them as situated within their given political

Jatt suggests the possibility of a greater intertextuality than often afforded by descriptions of Punjabi cinema as a separate entity from Urdu cinematic and literary culture.

and aesthetic contexts. I also do not here want to create a binary opposition between Urdu and Punjabi cinema, that Urdu cinema has continued to be tied by the bounds of middle and upper class morality while Punjabi cinema has remained ‘vulgar’ from the beginning. Both Urdu and Punjabi films have changed over time with general aesthetic and moral norms; a film like *Yakkey Wali* (1957, dir. M.J. Rana), one of the ‘shameful’ Punjabi films mentioned by Ahmad Said (1962), would certainly seem innocent compared to most contemporary films, be they Urdu or Punjabi, Pakistani or Indian. However, the general perception still exists that Punjabi films tend to be more bawdy, more crudely made, and overall have less artistic and social merit than Urdu films.

During my preliminary research on the film industry, I became intimately familiar with the terms *‘urūj* and *zavāl*, translated as ‘zenith’ and ‘nadir,’ or ‘pinnacle’ and ‘decline.’ The media, in particular English-language media such as newspapers, frame the history of the film industry invariably in these terms, and this narrative of corruption, decline and decay now seems to inform almost any discussion of Pakistani film, whether in the Urdu or English media or in people's daily lives. The decline of the film industry is generally traced back to the 1970s (Faruqi 2010, Zaidi 2013)—not coincidentally, the period when the number of Punjabi films produced began to overtake that of Urdu films. Many of my informants spoke of the film industry's *tabāhī* (‘destruction’ or ‘ruination’) at the hands of the Pakistani government, the Indian government, video piracy, its own vulgarity, or the Taliban—a dazzling array of explanations. I would often hear the claim, particularly when non-filmmakers learned about my research topic, that “Film industry *to xatm ho chukī hai!*” (‘the film industry's finished!’). They were clearly nonplussed; how would I do research on

something that no longer exists, and more importantly, why? Such reactions seem to be informed by the connection between class, aesthetics and language, and a hegemonic conception of academic research that precludes popular—and particularly ‘low culture’—cinema from being a legitimate object of scholarly inquiry.

The concept of the *zavāl* of the film industry has different, even somewhat contradictory resonances. For some, particularly those taking a culturally hegemonic perspective, the *zavāl* begins with the drop in Urdu and rise in Punjabi film production (and its concomitant aesthetic and thematic shifts) and then includes the overall drop in film production in the late 1990s-early 2000s. For others, particularly those in the film industry, the *zavāl* was tied more to economics than aesthetics; they did not see the heyday of the Punjabi action film as an aesthetic downturn in Pakistani cinema culture, and considered *zavāl* just as the latter period, when fewer films were being made. These two ways of approaching this history were by no means separate from each other, but instead represent two poles toward which an informant might gravitate given their own relationship to the film industry and the context of the conversation. Although I had initially expected those at the center of the industry to confirm this narrative of decay in even stronger terms, I was instead to hear director Parvez Rana and his group of colleagues offer not merely a counter narrative about the decline of the film industry, but at times a complete denial that such a decline had even happened. When I touched on the subject in our first meeting—too bluntly, in all likelihood—he responded, “What decline? What destruction? We are here, we are making films, we never stopped!” This set the tone for his entire attitude throughout the rest of my fieldwork. More than anyone else, Rana Sahab demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the films he made and the film industry he has been a part

of for so long. This attitude was puzzling for a long time; easily dismissed as bravado or perhaps even denial. Sitting in the courtyard at Evernew Studios on molded plastic chairs, dust-covered sound stages standing empty except for the occasional commercial or Pashto film, it was as though we bore witness to the final crumbling of a once-mighty empire. I wondered how one could sit surrounded by signs of decay—economic, artistic, even corporeal—yet bluntly deny it?



Illustration 2.3 Doorway at Evernew Studios

2.2 Reasons and rationalizations

I am sitting with Hassan Askari on a June evening at Evernew Studios. His preferred sitting spot is on a rail-less balcony overlooking a small courtyard between sound stages, above the offices of the Pakistan Film Writers' Association, of which he

is the head. We sit together on the balcony, a battered chessboard between us, drinking toothachingly sweet tea out of small glasses and puffing cigarette after cigarette. From this vantage point Askari Sahab can see the main gate and parking lot of the studio, and observe all the comings and goings of the place. The air is heavy and the electricity is out, a feeble breeze making the blades of the standing fan spin ever so slowly. Askari Sahab is telling me about his past glory days, the awards he won, the films he made, the accolades—and suddenly he fixes his gaze on mine. “If you can bring the funding, we can save the film industry. All it will take is one good film. Ask your university, ask your government. Do something!” I shift uncomfortably in my seat as he trails off. The wave of nostalgia has crashed down over us, tinged with an unmistakable sense of desperation, regret, and loss.

How does one pinpoint the decline of a film industry? Does it come down to the numbers of films produced, or is it the amount of money made? Is it failure to meet a certain 'quality' standard (and who sets such a standard)? Or are audiences just bored? Although people will readily give you reasons why the film industry has failed, they are like thin layers of dust, accumulating gradually, blending with one another until that which they cover is unrecognizable. The actual 'truth,' the cause and effect, the reasons and the reality of the *zavāl* narrative are perhaps immaterial; however when viewed as a discursive formation (Foucault 1972), this narrative allows us insight into the relationships between cinema and its political, cultural, economic, and sociolinguistic context. This is of course not to argue that there is a single homogenous narrative, nor make an “attempt at totalitarian periodization, whereby from a certain moment and for a certain time, everyone would think in the same way...” (Foucault 1972:148). Rather, my goal is to highlight the cracks and slippages,

disunities and contradictions. The following list, in no particular order, catalogues the most-cited reasons for the industry's decline that I encountered in my ethnographic interviews, during participant-observation, and also drawn from the media and everyday conversations with non-specialists. Following Kathleen Stewart, I consider these various explanations as atmospheric attunements, “alerted sense[s] that something is happening and an attachment to sensing out whatever it is...[that] attend to the quickening of nascent forms, marking their significance in sounds and sighs and the feel of something’s touch or something penetrating” (2010:4). These explanations came out at particular moments from an array of people, sometimes whispered or hinted at, sometimes exploding, ringing out into the discourse and drowning out all others.

1. The independence of Bangladesh

Or, as some of my more outspokenly nationalist informants referred to it, “the betrayal (*ḡaddārī*) of the Bengalis.” In Bangladesh, the 1971 Liberation War³¹ is remembered in terms of Pakistan's cruelty and the brave struggle of the *Muktī Bāhinī*³², and celebrated as the bloody yet ultimately glorious birth of the nation. It is memorialized in literature, in films, and in monuments and museums (cf. Mookherjee 2011). Perhaps unsurprisingly, most Pakistani histories of the period are brief and vague; in school textbooks the war is generally relegated to a few lines that point to

31 Tensions had been brewing for decades between Pakistan’s eastern and western wings; when the East Pakistani party the Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, took the majority of seats in the 1970 elections, the military led government of General Yahya Khan did not allow Rahman to form a government or become prime minister. Rahman and other East Pakistani leaders declared independence on March 25, 1971, setting off a wave of armed conflict and genocidal violence perpetrated by the Pakistani army, that ended with the intervention of India in December of 1971.

32 ‘Freedom fighters,’ the Bengali guerrilla resistance army that fought against Pakistani forces.

the collusion of India in breaking up the union while omitting any mention of genocide or war crimes. In fact, in Pakistan it is routinely described not just as the 1971 War, but in even more evocative terms, for example *sānihā-e Bangladesh* ('the tragedy of Bangladesh'), the East Pakistan debacle, or the fall of Dhaka. As Yasmin Saikia points out, "The tendency of national histories in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan is to partition the memories of 1971...[producing] simplistic narratives without addressing the complexities of the conditions and circumstances that produced horrific outcomes in the war and the impact of violence and terror on people's lives" (2011:4). Despite clear nationalist biases in the histories currently told on both sides, as Hoek points out, "the dividing lines between Bengali and Urdu in East Pakistan were not as clear as retrospectively suggested" (2010c:79).

Before the 1971 War, Urdu films were made and shown in both West Pakistan and East Pakistan, now of course the separate states of Pakistan and Bangladesh. Urdu films were made in East Pakistan as well as Bengali films, and Urdu films from Lahore and from Dhaka circulated through both wings of the country, something film historians in both countries tend (perhaps intentionally) to overlook (Hoek 2014a). Moreover, after the war, not only did many East Pakistani artists settle back in Dhaka, the Pakistani film distribution circuit was essentially cut in half, causing a substantial economic as well as artistic setback. Mushtaq Gazdar describes the impact on the film industry in ambivalent terms:

"For the western wing [the independence of Bangladesh] was a colossal loss. Besides having very strong ideological and psychological implications, the former eastern wing was an important film market for the Urdu films of Lahore and Karachi and contributed around thirty-three per cent of the total investment in a production. The drying up of this

source of revenue was a major blow to the national film industry. On the other hand, it became a turning point for the development of regional cinema as the producers looked into the financial viability of making more films in the provincial languages—Punjabi, Pushto, and Sindhi.” (1997:124)

It is interesting here that Gazdar both frames this event as a 'major blow,' deeply impacting the national—i.e. Urdu language—film industry, yet also points out that it resulted in greater interest in producing 'provincial' language films. This is a perfect illustration of the extent to which a Pakistani nationalist viewpoint tends to crystallize around the promotion of Urdu to the exclusion of other languages. Films in languages other than Urdu can never be 'national;' no matter how large their following might be, they are still subordinated to Urdu cinema and classed as 'regional' films.

2. The shift from Urdu to Punjabi film production

As Gazdar suggests, another aftershock of the 1971 war was that it had called into question the initial vision of Pakistan as a multiethnic, multilingual state united not only by Islam but also by Urdu, an ideology that—particularly in the Pakistani government's apathy, even antagonism, towards Bengali—had played a major role in the conflicts leading up to the independence of Bangladesh (cf. Umar 2004). With the linguistic component of the Two-Nation Theory—the ideological foundation for the 1947 Partition³³—shaken to its very foundation by the secession of the Bengalis, Urdu's supremacy was also (at least numerically) challenged in filmmaking, as Punjabi film production began to outstrip Urdu film production. While films

³³ The political ideology that argues that South Asian Hindus and Muslims are fundamentally two different nations and require two separate states, which was deployed in the creation of Pakistan. For the relationship of Urdu to this theory and to the Pakistan movement, see King 1994, Rahman 2011.

continued to be made in Urdu, and had already been made in Punjabi, the ratio of Urdu to Punjabi films decreased dramatically from 1971 through the 1980s and early 1990s. This can of course be seen as a result of demographic change; Punjabis were far and away the majority in post-1971 Pakistan. Yet this shift was not just a shift away from Urdu and towards regional languages, but also from everything Urdu represents in the linguistic hierarchy of the Pakistani nation-state: modernity, pan-Islamism, nationalism, and urbanity. In his 1949 essay *Building Pakistan and Filmmaking*, Muhammad Hasan Askari³⁴ argues:

“Pakistan's most pressing need at this time is the forging of a unity of purpose and understanding and a new sense of nationhood in its different parts and regions. The best method of achieving this is through films with one simple lesson: people living in each province must fully witness the daily struggles of life in others. This will allow the fostering of national feeling and at the same time bring color, diversity, and uniqueness to our films.” (2015: 178)

Such idealism and love for diversity in film depiction seems to have been short-lived. There was already an anxiety about Punjabi films by the beginning of the 1960s, as seen the passage from Ahmad Said’s essay above which refers to ‘shameful, commercial Punjabi films.’ Ostensibly Said's objection is that the films are vulgar, however I argue that their vulgarity and their Punjabiyat are, in this case, inextricable from each other. For example, proponents of the Punjabiyat movement (a transnational literary cooperative movement which emphasized refocusing the glory of classical Punjabi literature) were characterizing the Punjabi language as “lost

34 No relation to film director Hassan Askari.

through the oppression of Urdu” (Ayers 2008:927) and bemoaning its fate even during the period in which Punjabi film production was at its peak. One might expect proponents of Punjabi to be overjoyed at the seeming dominance of Punjabi language and culture in the cinematic sphere. However, for the writers, critics, and scholars invested in the kind of Punjabiyat found in the works of classical Sufi poets, popular films are still seen as too vulgar and too lowbrow to be of any artistic merit. Again, rather than challenging the hegemonic hierarchy that puts Urdu above Punjabi and high literature above cinema, these pro-Punjabi activists instead seek to reclaim Punjabi’s importance within the hierarchy by virtue of its classical literature.

3. The dictatorship of Zia ul Haq

In her historical analysis of religion and politics in Pakistan, Saadia Toor claims that “Every aspect of the Pakistani state, society, politics, and culture worth noting today bears the scars of the 11 years of martial law under General Zia ul Haq from 1977 to 1988, Pakistan's longest and most brutal military dictatorship” (2011:117). Rather than the aspirational, nationalist cinema of the 1960s, the films of this era were anti-state and subversive, matching onscreen violence to the violence that had spread in daily life. Among others, Khan and Ahmad comment on the relationship of the Pakistani cinema industry with the censorship and state violence of the Zia era, convincingly arguing that the archetypical Punjabi film, a rural-set, action/revenge drama, comes to the fore at the moment of the extreme brutality of Zia's rule. Speaking of the career of Punjabi film hero Sultan Rahi (a career that spanned over 800 films) they write: “The string of box office hits in which he stars can be seen as gory fantasies of the common man enacting revolutionary violence against an

oppressive state. Time and time again, the protagonist confronts issues that the cinema-going public immediately recognized: exploitation, brutality, and indifference from a corrupt police force, politicians and the courts” (2010:155). The wave of Zia's Islamization also brought with it the ideology of *chādar aur chārdīwārī* ('the veil and the four walls'), which discouraged women from spending time in public³⁵ (cf. Burki 2016, Toor 2007 and 2011); cinema halls became increasingly male spaces, and so film audiences shrunk. Several of my female friends and colleagues who had grown up in Zia's Pakistan and afterwards reported (sometimes with a degree of pride) that they had never actually seen a film in the cinema. I did not find this among older Pakistani women, who had perhaps grown up in an era when going to the cinema was not so problematic for them.

4. Indian films and video piracy

With the introduction of the VCR in the 1980s, and later satellite and cable TV, the market share of Pakistani cinema grew smaller and smaller.³⁶ Indian films were easily available on VHS, and it was common for even those who could not afford a VCR at least occasionally to pool their money with friends or relatives and rent one for a day. Competition from Indian films is often cited as a major threat to the Pakistan film industry as well. During the decline period, and particularly within the past fifteen years, many of the older cinema halls closed down. They have become

35 The rise of heroines such as Anjuman, who display a bolder on-screen sexuality and at times fight as equals with male characters, could also perhaps be seen as a response to this.

36 Unlike Hollywood, which although prey to similar anxieties about the introduction of VCR technology, actually became more powerful as a result of its control over the VHS market (Wasser 1997).

parking lots and shopping plazas, or just stand empty, although there has been a spate of multiplex construction in just the past three or four years, particularly since Indian films have been allowed into Pakistan in greater numbers. Indian films were first banned from Pakistan in the late 1950s, a policy which was more strictly enforced following the 1965 Indo-Pak war, yet that did not stop people from watching them in their homes via pirated videos or Indian TV channels³⁷ —many of my informants recalled being able to pick up Doordarshan³⁸ signals coming in from just over the border in Amritsar. More recently VHS, then VCD, then DVD, and now web-based file sharing and torrenting technologies have made the dissemination of Indian films in Pakistan easier than ever thought imaginable. These “off the map” (Ginsburg et. al. 2002) alternative change and shift as rapidly as new technologies themselves are created and disseminated. In 2006, the official re-release of *Mughal-e Azam* (1960, dir. K. Asif) marked the first time an Indian film had been released in Pakistan in four decades (BBC News 2006). Gradually over the next few years, more Indian films began to be released in Pakistani cinemas. The justification for removing this cinematic embargo was that Pakistan was not making enough movies on its own to support the theaters. Yet this policy reversal in some ways destabilized the Pakistani film industry even further, as the local filmmakers now faced stiff competition from Bollywood in a market where cinema owners often see an Indian film as a more lucrative investment than a Pakistani one. Thus the filmmakers at

37 Pakistani films are also victims of piracy, although one could argue that as very few films are actually legitimately and officially released on DVD (I would estimate less than 10%, and that's generous), piracy of Pakistani films is a relatively victimless crime.

38 The Indian state-owned TV channel.

Evernew, as well as others I spoke to, understood the lifting of the ban on Indian films to be insulting, unpatriotic and almost malicious; the nail in the coffin of the local film industry. By my estimation, about half of the films, or slightly more, playing in Lahore theaters at the time I was conducting fieldwork were Indian, with the remaining half split between Pakistani and American films.

5. *Vulgarity*

Decline is thought of very much in aesthetic and moral terms as well as quantitatively. Although the film industry was perhaps never seen as a respectable line of work for women, the received wisdom that most actresses have ties with the raunchy Punjabi theater or red-light district Heera Mandi, have not helped dispel the image of the actress/prostitute among the general public. This is hardly a solely Pakistani or South Asian phenomenon; in many times and places the two have been and continue to be discursively constructed as similar or the same (Cheng 1996, French 1998, Pullen 2005, Seizer 2000, and many others). As Kathryn Hansen argues in her study of the *nautanki* theater of North India, the act of providing sexual services is not required for actresses to be considered prostitutes: “Since the social construction of gender places “good women” in seclusion, women who appear in public spaces (such as on stage) are defined as “bad,” that is, prostitutes. Subjected to the gaze of many men, they belong not to one, like the loyal wife, but to all” (1992:23). Furthermore, Punjabi film songs tend to be highly sexualized, with cameras unashamedly pointed at the breasts or between the legs of scantily-clad, gyrating heroines. An actor told me about a shot he refused to do in a particular film where he played the villain. “She was lying on the bed and the camera was right

above her face as she squirmed and moaned. Then the cameraman lay on the ground and asked me to stand with my face directly over his camera. I knew how they were going to edit this footage, and what it would look like we were doing, so I bluntly refused.” That is, they were going to edit the film to look like an act of penetrative rape was taking place. Even though this actor often played negative characters, he had personal limits on the nature and degree of negativity he was willing to perform, and he preferred to avoid scenes of a sexual nature.

On the first day of *Sharabi*'s release, my colleague Umar, who had graciously accompanied me to the theater, shook his head in dismay, half-seriously covering his eyes with his hands during the first song. “Don't tell my mother I was ever here!” he moaned. Nida Chaudhary was prancing around a bed in a short black dress as the hero lay watching her. She pouted into the camera lens, bright red lips in close-up mouthing the lyrics: “*kill thok de ve, kill thok de ve, merī manjī tuḍdī jāṅdī ā!*” (‘Hammer in the nail, hammer in the nail, my bed is breaking!’) Many non-industry people, when I asked why they didn't go to the cinema, cited the fact that it was not a place one could go with “family,” i.e. women. Films today are very vulgar (*fuhash*), they would tell me, although this is also sometimes explained as an effect rather than a cause of the decline, the fact being that filmmakers feel obligated to add more *masāla* ('spice') to their films in order to make more money. And indeed, at the interval of *Sharabi* (after another few such songs), one of a group of men sitting near us happily commented that “*paise pūre ho gaye,*” he had gotten his money's worth. Of course, there is still no kissing shown on screen, and ostensibly all films released pass through the government censor board, yet filmmakers often seem to push the limits of what the censor board will allow. The standards for what is considered vulgar, which

of course varies between individuals and also in different segments of society, also seems to have changed over time; the Punjabi films of the fifties and sixties that led Ahmed Said to describe studios as whorehouses seem quite innocent when compared to more recent productions, which regularly feature heroines in revealing (sometimes Western) dress, suggestive dancing, and close up shots of actresses' bodies.

6. Film system and the underworld

Who invests in the film industry? How are films financed? A broken film-financing system is also often blamed for both the film industry's decline as well as the perceived repetitiveness of analog Punjabi films. This explanation is less common in popular media and was not offered by film industry outsiders, but within the film industry this was by far the most common 'cause of decline' narrative I heard (for a transcribed example see section 3.1). While in the heyday of film production cinema owners had actually competed to buy films for their halls, these days many producers were practically begging cinema owners to buy their films (instead of Indian films, which are seen as more lucrative). Other informants suggested that certain Lahori gangsters had become involved in film financing starting in the 1990s, and were likewise connected with prostitution, the drug trade, and other illicit activity. One explanation for the spate of gangster films (a major subgenre of Punjabi action cinema) released in the 90s was offered by a media journalist friend of mine: "Yeah, the gangsters took over the films, you know? Because they wanted to see movies about themselves. And then they just kept on paying the filmmakers to make their stories!" The flashy gangster culture of Lahore has indeed been memorialized and of course exaggerated in many films, for example *Lahori Badmash* (1991, dir. Rana

Shahid), *Ghunda Raj* (1994, dir. Saeed Rana), and *Jagga Tax* (2002, dir. Masood Butt). This explanation points to the moral ambiguities surrounding the film industry—here it is constructed as an underworld/criminal space—as well as subtly addressing the common critiques in the discourse on Punjabi cinema that its films are both extremely violent and extremely formulaic by suggesting that it is not entirely the filmmakers’ fault.

7. The death of Sultan Rahi, and other foreign conspiracies

Conspiracy theories abound in Pakistan, and one often hears various crises being blamed on the covert collusion of foreign agents, particularly Israel, the United States, and India, and different political or criminal factions within the country (e.g. military intelligence, extremist groups, political parties). While often these conspiracy theories are derided by Western journalists and scholars as irrational or illogical,³⁹ a discourse analysis perspective towards conspiracy theories—understanding them as social texts rather than something marginal and/or pathological—offers insight into the way people relate to the state and the political realities around them. As Clare Bicknell proposes, it is perhaps more productive to see “conspiracy theory as constitutive of, rather than marginal to, a paradigm of interpretation” (2001:67). The conspiracy theories I heard repeated in the film industry often did something. Scholars

39 Anatol Lievin, for example, writes in his bestselling *Pakistan: A Hard Country* that “conspiracy-mindedness...is one of the biggest curses of intellectual life and public debate in Pakistan.” (2011:530); he also refers to conspiracy theories as 'crazed,' 'cretinous,' and 'lunatic' (ibid.:338, 253, 323). Similar examples of this attitude are not difficult to find in the Western and even Pakistani English-language press. Steve Inskeep takes a slightly more sympathetic view: “Pakistan is a land that embraces conspiracy theories. Of course the people of any nation, including America, can display a paranoid streak, and Pakistanis seem especially susceptible given their national history of repeated coups and covert wars.” (2011)

such as Aasim Sajjad Akhtar and Ali Nobil Ahmad also take a more sympathetic view: “For all its many shortcomings...organic conspiracy theory's refusal of easy morality offers food for thought. To dismiss the intuition of the Pakistani public as delusion is equivalent to telling millions of people they know nothing of a war they are experiencing first hand” (2015:108). The filmmakers at Evernew often discussed politics together, and conspiracy theories played a large part of these discussions. Moreover, rather than separating politics from the entertainment world, the conspiracies were regularly related to the ups and downs of the film industry.

The death of Sultan Rahi is a particularly poignant example. One of the world's most prolific actors and the absolute dominant force in Punjabi cinema for nearly two decades, he starred in some 800 plus films before being mysteriously shot on the side of Grand Trunk Road in 1996. Gazdar writes, “His hundreds of thousands of fans were stunned as for them it was like the passing away of a superman, a legend that they adored” (1997:221). His death was described thus in a 2014 article titled “The dark side of Lollywood”:

On January 9, 1996, he was returning late at night from Islamabad when his car's tyre deflated near Samanabad Chungi close to Gujranwala on Main G.T. Road. Taking advantage of the darkness and deserted surroundings, some men approached the vehicle and opened fire on him. Rahi sustained serious injuries and was rushed to the DHQ Hospital in Gujranwala where he breathed his last. (Awan 2014)

No charges were ever brought against his killers (who remain unknown), and there is no real consensus on who committed the crime or why he was murdered. I have heard explanations ranging from “there was a property dispute in his family” to “Indian agents did it to destabilize our film industry.” Although the Punjabi film

industry did not come to a grinding halt with his death, it certainly marked the end of an era, and the event still resonates today as a sea-change in Pakistani filmmaking, and one with a definite economic impact. Gazdar states that when he died “the producers of his films collectively lost more than 100 million rupees without any chance of recovery” (1997:221). It would be a few more years before other actors (most notably Shaan Shahid) began to fill the vacuum left by his death in Punjabi cinema.

8. Economic strain and the “War on Terror”

For many working-class Pakistanis, who make up the majority of the audience of Punjabi cinema, a trip to the cinema is out of reach. The cook at the guest house where I stayed for part of my research had a great passion for Punjabi cinema. He boasted an almost encyclopedic knowledge of the films of the 70s and 80s, he regularly listened to film songs on his mobile phone, and he would talk with me at length about his favorite films and stars. When I asked him why he didn't go to the cinema anymore despite his obvious interest, he patiently explained to me, in simple arithmetic, the actual cost of going to the cinema. “I have five children at home. Even to get to the cinema I have to pay to go in a rickshaw or wagon,⁴⁰ then buy seven tickets at two or three hundred rupees each, and then of course you have to buy some burger or something for the kids...” he trailed off with a wry smile; it was clear that a single night at the movies would take up a significant chunk of his monthly salary, which seems to be the reality for many people in Lahore. There are still patrons who

40 Shared vans that run on set routes around Lahore.

go to the classic theaters of Lahore, mostly located in Lakshmi Chowk, but the halls are unkempt and crumbling and the audiences are generally small except on Eid. In the past few years shiny new multiplexes have begun to pop up here and there, particularly in affluent suburbs, but for the majority of people these are even less affordable than the older cinemas.

Not unrelated to economic struggles is the impact of war and violence on cinema culture. Since the start of the “War on Terror” and subsequent rise of extremist groups in Pakistan, cinema has been the victim of actual physical violence in many ways. During my first trip to Pakistan in 2010, Hall Road was bombed, a major market for electronics, CDs, and videos. This was not the first time it had been under threat; in 2008 shopkeepers, under threat of terrorist attack, shopkeepers on Hall Road “voluntarily started a campaign against the sale of obscene CDs in the market and torched all their stock to send a message of compliance to the suspected terrorists” (Dawn News 2008). Even more disturbingly, cinema halls in Peshawar and Karachi have been the target of terrorist attacks; the famous Nishat Cinema of Karachi was burned down by a mob in 2012; a 2014 grenade attack on the Shama Cinema in Peshawar left 12 dead. These attacks are a violent articulation of the ideology that classifies cinema as vulgar and un-Islamic. Now there are signboards outside of cinema halls warning moviegoers to be alert for suspicious activity and packages, and more upscale facilities feature metal detectors and pat-downs by guards upon entry. Although the security situation in Lahore has somewhat improved since the Hall Road bombings, and is markedly better than that in Karachi or Peshawar, some informants still cited security as a reason they avoided going to the cinema.

At the risk of overemphasizing the importance of numerical statistics, or

reifying the suggestion that there is a single objective truth about the decline of the film industry, I present the following charts. Figure 3.1 shows overall film production, which clearly peaked before the independence of Bangladesh. It is tempting to correlate moments of national crisis, such as the 1965 War or Zia's coup, with larger dips in what is indeed an observable gradual slowing of film production, but to do so might be overly reductive, as there are also drops in film production in years for which no such easy explanation can be made, for example 1975 or 1987. The picture becomes a bit more complex if we take into account which languages films were made in (Chart 3.2). Bengali films, unsurprisingly, disappear after 1971; we also can see the rise of Pashto cinema from the 1980s onward, as well as the appearance of the 'double version' category in the early 1990s. These were films shot simultaneously in both Urdu and Punjabi (a separate study of these films would be necessary to say whether they fit better thematically with Urdu or with Punjabi films, and how this distinction might have worked at that time). Finally, notice after 1996 the shrinking of the Punjabi film category, and the almost complete disappearance of double version films. The latter almost entirely an aftereffect of the death of Sultan Rahi, who at the time starred in most Punjabi and almost all double version films. Finally, Chart 3.3 shows the proportion (as a percentage) of Urdu to Punjabi film production throughout the history of Pakistan. It is by no means an even or simple trajectory, but around 1971 is when Punjabi films begin to pull ahead of Urdu. Surprisingly, the 1996 point where one would expect a huge and sudden shift back towards Urdu with the vacuum created by Sultan Rahi's death, is actually more gradual, with this shift starting in the early 1990s. However, if one takes into account the double version films starring Sultan Rahi, and puts them in with the Punjabi category by virtue of their thematic

content and intended audience (likely very similar to films shot only in Punjabi),⁴¹ Urdu films are still decidedly outnumbered up until that point. However, since the beginning of the Pakistani film 'revival,' in 2013, Urdu has again begun to overtake Punjabi in terms of film production.⁴²

Throughout my research, I was repeatedly confronted with all of these explanations for cinema's *zavāl*, weaving together rich histories of where the film industry had been and where it was headed in the future. Narratives of corruption, decline, and decay were predominant, yet certain groups within the film industry opposed these discourses, creating their own counter-narratives of survival and resistance. Rather than privileging one narrative over another, I seek to understand these discourses as emergent, shifting, and context-dependent in the ethnographic encounter. As Foucault argues, discourse tends toward contradiction, yet “contradiction...functions throughout discourse, as the principle of its historicity” (1972:151). That is, contradiction works to both contextualize and constitute discourse. These sometimes conflicting accounts of the reasons for the film industry's decline not only give us a picture of some of the reasons that such a decline might have happened, but also give us important clues as to who these narrators are and what their stake in the film industry might be.

41 The fact that these films star Sultan Rahi is almost enough for me to just put them in the Punjabi category, although more research on their thematic content would be necessary to be sure; at this point in his career Rahi's role was practically the same in every film.

42 This is also likely impacted by aspects of demographic change (such as language shift, immigration, and internal migration) for which, sadly, few data exist.

Chart 2.1 Pakistani Films by Language 1948-2015

source: Pakistan Film Database

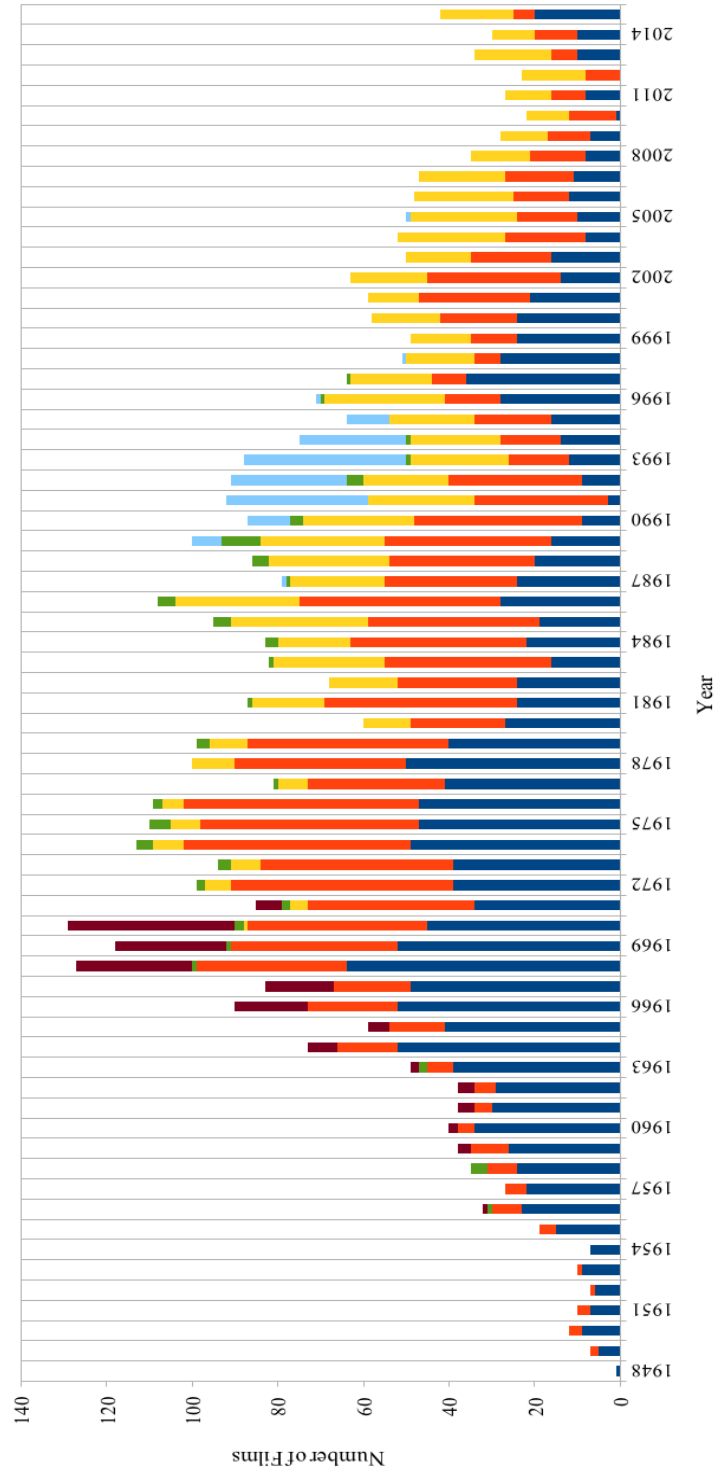


Chart 2.2 Film Production in Pakistan Per Year, 1948-2015

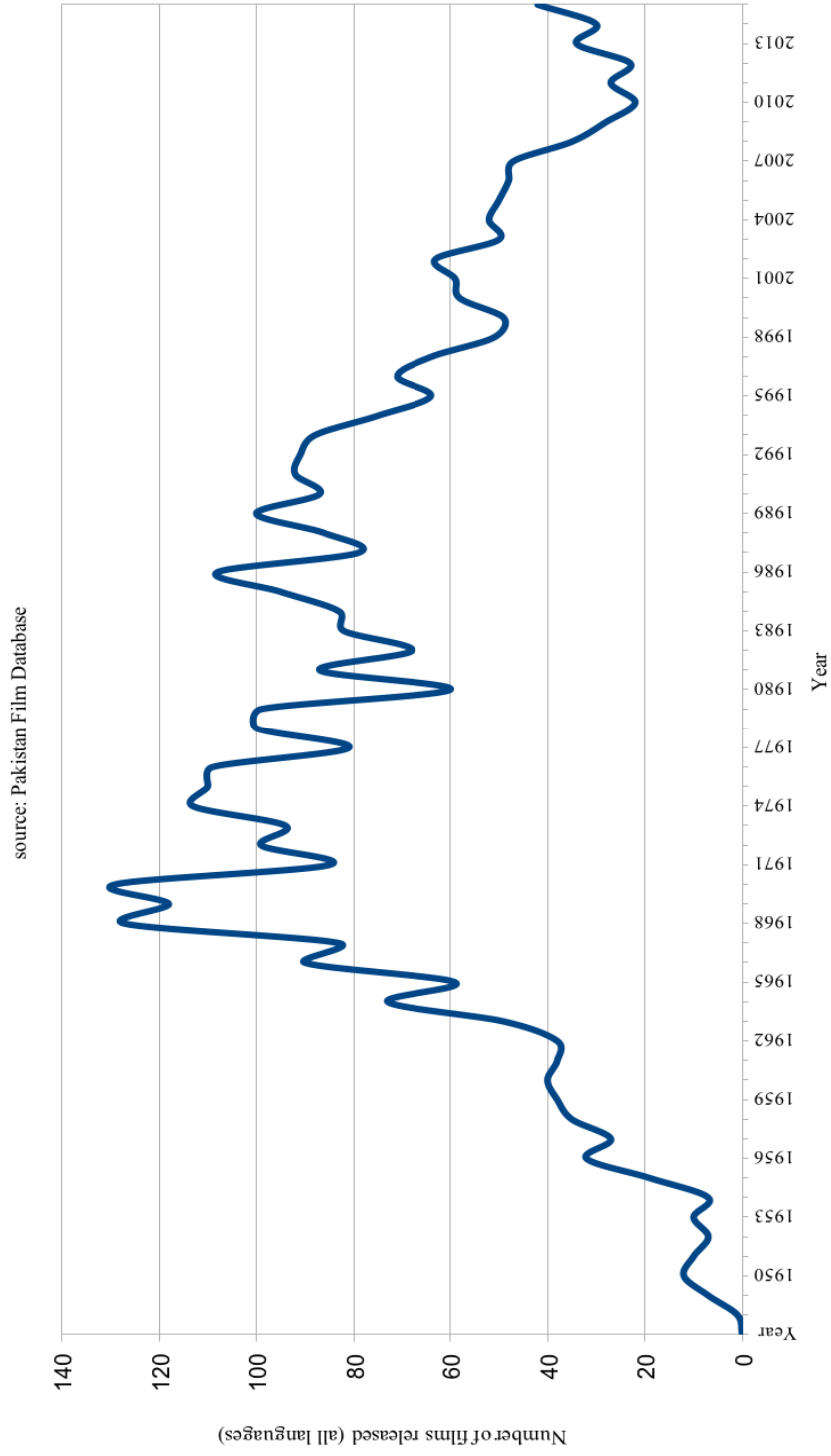
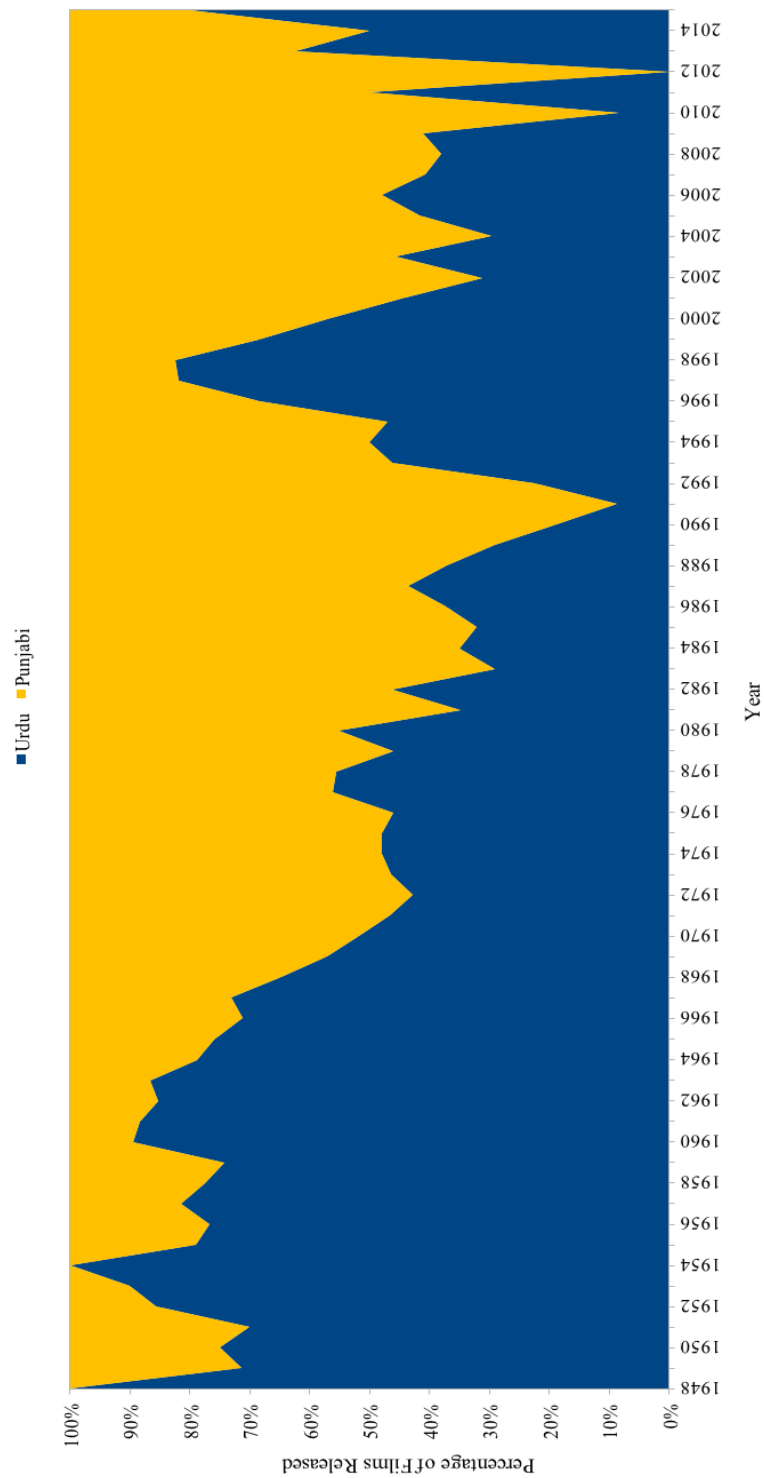


Chart 2.3 Percentage of Urdu versus Punjabi Films 1948-2015

source: Pakistan Film Database



2.3 'Revival' and its nostalgic backlash at Evernew

The year 2013 was, by some standards, a watershed for the Pakistani film industry; although the total number of films produced did not show a significant increase, many in the media had begun to talk about a film industry revival after more than a decade of dwindling production, lackluster performance at the box office, and cinema halls across the country being turned into parking lots or shopping plazas. During the period of my fieldwork, a series of films were released that seemed to signal a change in the kinds of film being made in Pakistan; most notably *Main Hoon Shahid Afridi* (Humayun Saeed, 2013), *Waar* (Bilal Lashari, 2013), and *Zinda Bhaag* (Meenu Gaur and Farjad Nabi, 2013). All were films that either performed well at the box office, attracted international attention, or could be held up as 'saviors' of the industry. Shot using digital technology and stereo sound, and designed for urban middle and upper class multiplex audiences, these films were consistently held up by the media as evidence that the Pakistani film industry could aesthetically and technologically 'compete' with cinemas of other countries, in particular those of India and the US.

The narrative of rise and fall and then the rebirth of the film industry was not just the purview of the English language press but something repeated to me by countless friends, colleagues, and associates. When I spoke to people outside the film industry about its history and current state, inevitably some version of the following narrative would come out: "Pakistani cinema was excellent in the sixties, but then the Punjabi films started to be made and the standard of filmmaking dropped. Punjabi

films are bad, they are *bakvās*,⁴³ but now some filmmakers are making good films again.” The apparent paradox of this statement was that usually the person making these claims had never even seen a Punjabi film, particularly if they came from the middle or upper classes, yet they could talk about the shortcomings of these films at length and with absolute conviction. This recalls Bourdieu's observation that “The practical mastery of classification has nothing in common with the reflexive mastery that is required in order to construct a taxonomy that is simultaneously coherent and adequate to social reality” (1984:472). That is, the material and aesthetic realities of Punjabi cinema are completely unimportant in the face of the powerful discourse that says Punjabi films are terrible, with no redeeming aesthetic or cultural qualities. This folk taxonomy of cinema has become common knowledge, a ‘truth’ of cultural life in Pakistan. Thus, if the majority of films being made are constructed as ‘bad,’ a discursive space is created for ‘good’ films to come on to the scene, to fill a perceived lack of culturally legitimate Pakistani films. These dynamic heralded in the cinema revival, the release and production of films that were aesthetically, thematically, and, I argue, linguistically, acceptable to an Urdu and English-speaking, middle- to upper-class audience.

While on the surface the notion of a cinema revival seems like it would be a positive thing for the film industry, the technological and aesthetic gap between the old and the new had created a schism between the Evernew filmmakers I worked with and the up-and-coming young filmmakers of the revival. While Rana Sahab and others at times reacted to the notion of a cinematic death and rebirth with dismissal or

43 ‘Nonsense, bullshit, silly or senseless chatter, crap’

even disdain—“What *zavāl?* We are still making films!”—throughout my fieldwork nostalgia would bubble up through the cracks, somewhat unexpectedly at times, flooding the mood of the encounter and changing the affective tone of the narrative. Once I mentioned to a director friend I had caught an old film of his—a classic from the early 90s starring Sultan Rahi—on television the night before. “Ah, now *that* was a film. We hired two helicopters for just a single scene!” He added wistfully, “In those days filmmaking *kā sahī mazā ātā thā* (‘it was really fun’). But now, what can I say...”

Early on in my research, veteran director Hassan Askari took me on a tour of Evernew Studios. “You used to have to book these halls three months in advance, there was so much work going on. Now they stand empty, they are used very little.” Askari Sahab and others have vivid powers of description—they are storytellers after



Illustration 2.4: Evernew Studios' courtyard, May 2013

all—but it was still somewhat difficult for me to imagine the glorious past of this film studio. The walls outside the offices are a palimpsest of faded and torn posters, a sweeper gathers together strips of negative from the cutting room floor and discarded cigarette butts, and the lab equipment is battered and dusty. I did not realize the potential irony of the name “Evernew” Studios until my second research trip; from one point of view it seems a strange moniker for a place filled with antiquated equipment, its denizens mostly men in their sixties and seventies. Initially this name must have been as saturated with novelty and glamour as the midcentury modern architecture of its central courtyard (Illustration 3.5). At one time the studio boasted the latest technologies in film processing, sound recording, and editing; yet at the same time as its now-crumbling infrastructure contradicted the name. However, the fact that film production was still ongoing in the same way, maintaining a cultural and social continuity, proved the name to be highly fitting. Above all it seems like the ties of community, relationships built around work but also deep affection, are the most “ever new.” One evening, for instance, Pappu Samrat reminisced about his grandfather, the first choreographer in his family of choreographers. He remembers him as soft-spoken, refined, and impeccably well groomed, with never an un-pressed shirt or an unpolished shoe, his perfume wafting in his wake. Others sitting with us added their reminiscences, conjuring up a figure from this place’s past as vividly as if he had just left a few minutes before. The nostalgia is often informed by ties of family or friendship, these echoes and memories also underscoring the permanence suggested by “Evernew.”

Yet the filmmakers' nostalgia could not be allowed to undermine their focus on the present and future; they had to show familiarity with or an inclination towards

newer technologies in order to present themselves as still competitive commercially. One particular director (outside Rana Sahab's circle) was often criticized and dismissed as being "depressed." I was asked, "Why would you sit with these depressed people? They aren't doing anything and you can't learn anything from them! You need to stay with those of us who are still making films." (I declined to contradict this statement by pointing out that the director in question had just released a film and was in the process of editing another.) There was a certain quality of unyielding optimism, even to the point of denial, that seemed to be a prerequisite for being in the film industry, for justifying one's work. A certain amount of this could be chalked up to the mere business of film publicity, but it also seemed that this was doing the important face work (Goffman 1955) of maintaining one's social standing, on behalf of both the larger community and the white American anthropologist.

The tension between nostalgia for a glorious past and maintaining a stake in Pakistan's cinematic future is further underscored by the way people's relationships with the film industry's *zavāl* could shift depending on their job, their status, and of course who was in earshot. On the crew bus, I was usually seated at the front out of courtesy, and if anyone sat between me and the bus driver on the long bench seat it was usually a high ranking crew member. I was awarded extra deference not only by dint of being a foreign guest, but also a white woman. On one particular evening, coming back from a shoot in the producer's village, I found myself seated next to Ghulam Sahab, an industry veteran and electrical engineer with a kind face who started chatting with me. When I asked about his career in the film industry, he began telling me excitedly about the times he had worked in India, in the Mumbai film industry. I wanted to hear more about this kind of transnational work, which I had

been led to believe was relatively rare. His face fell and his voice lowered somewhat as he began to tell me about the offers he had had to stay in India and work with film companies there; he had decided to stay in Lahore because he did not want to leave his family and the work—this was the 1990s—was quite steady (neither of us needed to point out how scarce the work had become now). He grew quiet for a while, and then told me regretted not taking these offers.

Scholars have grappled with nostalgia in different ways, particularly since the 1980s. How and when is it deployed, and what kinds of social work does it accomplish? Vladimir Jankélévitch famously linked nostalgia to regret, stating that it is ‘a reaction against the irreversible’ (1983: 299). This is echoed in Susan Stewart's assertion that “Nostalgia cannot be sustained without loss” (1984:145). Svetlana Boym writes that “modern nostalgia is a mourning for the impossibility of mythical return, for the loss of an enchanted world with clear borders and values; it could be a secular expression of a spiritual longing, a nostalgia for an absolute, a home that is both physical and spiritual, the edenic unity of time and space before entry into history” (2001:52). Moreover, the idea of home or mythical world is created *through* nostalgic expressions. Loss, mourning, and regret are the hallmarks of the nostalgic mode, in this case the longing for a time when work was steady and money was plentiful, when local films and filmmakers were appreciated more than denigrated. However it would be reductive to stop this analysis here. In their exploration of a Deleuzian model of listening, Joao Biehl and Peter Locke caution against seeing the nostalgic as merely frozen, stuck, or depressed. Locke argues that “...The stories I hear could be signs of illness or stagnation *or* passages of life, depending on my presuppositions and methods. What possibilities does seeing the language of refusal,

of waiting, of nostalgia as a “collective depression” foreclose, both for analyst and interlocutor?” (2010:332, emphasis in the original). A more nuanced interpretation is necessary when it comes to the kind of nostalgia that emerges in these ethnographic encounters. It is important not to ask just what is being said but how, why, and by whom. As Jane Hill argues, “through the implicit and explicit positive valuations of the past that the [nostalgic] discourse asserts, people who benefit from practices that they believe are legitimated by tradition put forward their political interests (1992:263). Similarly, Dominic Boyer notes that nostalgia is indexical, “a mode of inhabiting the lived world through defining oneself situationally and positionally in it” (2010:20). This of course includes language too, both as an object of nostalgic discourse and also in its metadiscursive functions. Nostalgic discourses are inherently performative, not merely narrating a history but indexing the speaker's relationship to it. In the case of Punjabi cinema, by denigrating newer technologies and up-and-coming filmmakers in favor of their own people and traditions, they are maintaining both community cohesion as well as defending their own increasingly-marginalized artistic practices. Moreover, when the nostalgic frame is broken, it indexes a shift in the speaker's relationship both to the discourse and to the interlocutor.

2.4 Interlude: A day at the cinema, the 'feel' of films

Although I had planned for my research to center around film production rather than reception, whenever I could wheedle a friend into going with me⁴⁴ I would

44 Apart from a few friends and colleagues interested in Pakistani cinema from an academic

try to make it to Lakshmi Chowk to see a Punjabi film. I enter the theater and purchase our tickets; my friend and I manage to get a “family box,” a private room with its own door at the back of the main theater floor. Blue paint is peeling from the walls, high overhead fans spin lazily and to little effect. Many of the dingy wooden seats are broken. The theater is large; by my estimate it probably seats around 800, if you include the balcony and boxes, but fewer than a dozen people are here today, and those perhaps are mostly here to escape the first hot days of March. A woman sits with two small children towards the front, but the rest of the audience is men, sitting alone or in pairs. My friend and I are the only mixed group. To be fair, we have come to the 3pm show on a weekday, hardly a peak time at any theater. But it is still clear that this place has seen better days. The irony of its emptiness is that the details of its decay become starkly apparent, when they are also a result of, at some time in the past, the theater being bustling and full. When people are sitting on the seats perhaps you can't see how worn they are.

We are there to watch *Yaar Badmash* (2006), a Punjabi action film directed by former starlet Sangeeta, one of Pakistan's few female film directors. At the time it wasn't clear, but later I would find out that this film was actually made several years earlier, and that it is a common practice for theaters to play older, hit films they have in stock when a new one hasn't been released in a while. Even so, the film looks much older to my eyes than 2006; only the presence of items like cell phones betrays its date of origin. The film tells the story of two friends; one of them has ended up a criminal due to various unjust circumstances, but he is loyal to his friend despite these

standpoint, among my own friend circle—predominantly female, largely middle and upper class—there was unsurprisingly very little enthusiasm for trips to the working class cinemas to see Punjabi films.

struggles. As we watch, noise permeates the audible and visible. As Brian Larkin writes of Nigerian pirated films, “Reproduction takes its toll, degrading the image by injecting dropout and bursts of fuzzy noise, breaking down dialogue into muddy, often inaudible sound” (2008:237). The crackling and popping of the speakers, volume turned to deafening levels in compensation for the interference, accentuates the flickering of the projection light and the scratches and dust on the print itself. The noble gangster sacrifices his all for his childhood friend; the moral order of the Punjabi film world is maintained. I want to emphasize that nostalgia *for* Punjabi cinema (that is, for the golden age of film production) cannot be delinked from the nostalgia *in* Punjabi cinema. The thematic content of films—that is, the conventional universe of Punjabi cinema with its village setting, vigilante justice, anachronistic clothes and strict code of honor (*gairat*)—their visual style and 35mm aesthetics, and their linguistic content (described in detail in the following chapters), are all inextricably bound together in a kind of Punjabi nostalgia gestalt.

2.5 Technological change, aesthetic exclusion

Much of my fieldwork consisted of waiting for our film to begin production; in the evenings, sitting in a circle of plastic chairs in the Evernew Studio courtyard, discussion of the state of the film industry and the changing aesthetic preferences of the cinema-going public were constant. Filmmakers themselves realize, of course, the ways in which the texture, the ‘feel’ of these films is tied in with their thematic and linguistic content; In Jakobsonian terms, they can easily shift their focus from the content to the message (1960:356), and readily understand the effects of this

foregrounding. Filmmakers understand the way that filmmaking techniques and technologies can be used in artistic ways to underscore, highlight, subvert, or otherwise influence a film's thematic content. Moreover, they are highly aware of the rapid series of aesthetic shifts that have happened in filmmaking over the past half century. As Marshall McLuhan famously argued, "The effects of technology do not occur at the level of opinions or concepts, but alter sense ratios or patterns of perceptions steadily and without any resistance. The serious artist is the only person able to encounter technology with impunity, just because he is an expert aware of the changes in sense perception" (1964:18). That is, artists (in this case filmmakers) are more deeply aware of the aesthetic impacts of technological change. There was a marked tension in the way the Evernew filmmakers' community related to new technologies; on the one hand they took great pride in the analog skills they have honed over decades, but on the other hand they were aware that the market value of analog films has steeply declined, and that their viewership now largely expects films to shot using newer technologies. Sharabi's director, Rana Sahab, expressed an intent to shoot his next film on a Red⁴⁵ digital camera, and the confidence that he did not need any additional training to be able to do so—he was adamant that since the film was already completed in his mind before shooting even begins, that there would be no issues in this transition. Again there may be an element of 'facework' at play here, by which he discursively maintains his expertise by downplaying the differences between analog and digital filmmaking and the implication that he might not have the

45 The brand of camera almost universally held up by my informants as the gold standard of digital cameras.

technical mastery or experience to shoot using newer technologies. Rana Sahab, like the others in his circle, could appreciate the expertise required to make a film on 35mm, and had a large amount of personal pride invested in his expertise. At the same time there are economic reasons for filmmakers to turn towards digital technologies. In a discursive move I experienced many times during my fieldwork, filmmakers would in this way simultaneously denigrate the new technology while staking their claim in it. Put another way, they were exhibiting solidarity with their community of practice at the same time as they opened themselves up to the possibility of increasing their social status by adopting new technologies. Additionally, among the filmmakers I worked with, there was also a general recognition that for these new films, new kinds of narrative, new themes and plots would have to be found. One of my informants patiently explained: “if you try to make a film like [*Sharabi*] on a digital camera, it will look really weird!” For him, many of the stylistic devices accomplished with the 35mm Arri cameras, such as triple takes, shots made by spinning the camera, or dramatic zooms, would be incompatible with high-resolution digital footage. A similar phenomenon has been observed by Leighton Peterson in the production of Navajo cinema, noting the ways in which “the predominance of Navajo also allowed for a specific kind of filmic recontextualization in the editing process, one that figuratively and literally privileged Navajo voices” (2014:258). Although the linguistic is often thought of as secondary to the visual aspects of filmmaking, the actual linguistic content of a film thus seems to have the power to impact its visuality as well.

Over the past three or four decades the Pakistani Punjabi action film has crystallized into a fairly rigid genre, with a set of stock characters and plot scenarios

that are variously recombined in film after film. The evil landowner, the poor hero on the wrong side of the law, the *tawā'if* ('courtesan/prostitute') with a heart of gold, the pious mother, all make regular appearances in stories which seem to inevitably center around themes of violence, honor, and revenge. Moreover, cinematic techniques such as the triple take during moments of heightened tension or extreme closeups of the heroine's eyes or lips during romantic or sexual scenes are all standard in these films, are also immediately recognizable to viewers.⁴⁶ Some of the reasons for these generic conventions lie perhaps in the financial and material resources at hand; for example, more scenes are shot outside simply because of the expense of electricity. Participant-observation on the film set gave a window into how these issues of infrastructure (Star



Illustration 2.5 The master electrical switchboard on the set of Sharabi.

⁴⁶ To the extent that they are quite easily parodied, for example in TV comedies, as in sketch from the famous 1980s series *Fifty-Fifty* about “the first Punjabi film in English,” or in advertisements.

1999, Larkin 2013) conditioned not only the daily rhythms of filmmaking in this community, but also many of the aesthetic choices that were made. As a result of long-term interactions with a given technology, a community of practice will necessarily develop a set of bodily techniques—“physio-psycho-sociological assemblages of series of actions...more or less habitual and more or less ancient” (Mauss 1973)—that will continue to inform their filmmaking style and practice, perhaps even as technologies shift and change around them.

Excluded from access to digital technologies, filmmakers in Evernew Studios continue to use cameras that are decades old, and are filming feature films for a national market on 35mm technology. Film sound is produced on a circa 1960s reel-to-reel tape player; editing is done with scissors and scotch tape. Electrical plugs are chunky blocks of wood with iron strips nailed to them, and the entire script is written by hand rather than typed. I argue that the aesthetics and conventions of Punjabi cinema have grown out of such infrastructural and technological conditions of filmmaking as much as any “purely” stylistic motivation. Participant-observation on the set of *Sharabi* provided a window into how these issues of technology and infrastructure conditioned not only the daily rhythms of filmmaking for this community, but also many of the aesthetic choices that were made. One way to consider this kind of filmmaking would be in Jon Elster’s framing, “creativity under constraint,” where constraints on film production are at the same time inherent in the material, imposed from outside forces, and also self-imposed. For example, because of the limited availability and expense of film stock (I was told that negative alone accounted for about a third of the film’s approximately \$60,000 budget), Rana Sahab tended to prefer shorter takes that could be edited together, rather than longer takes

that would use up more negative if they had to be shot multiple times. As mentioned above, outdoor locations were generally favored over the indoors, even when it was not necessarily called for in the script, for the simple reason that sunlight is free, while electricity is unreliable and expensive. In Pakistan this is a major issue; even if one can offset the costs of having more lights (to say nothing of fans or air conditioning) required for indoor shooting, electricity might not even be available. Generators tend to be expensive and break down, so the shooting day is extended as long as light permits, and a series of wooden reflector boards is used to extend the sunset light even further.

Gaining familiarity with infrastructure is part of the process of socialization into a community of practice; camera equipment, an editing table, or film distribution systems are meaningless to outsiders who are not familiarized with them, or when divorced from the filmmaking process. Infrastructure is not just a set of tools, materials, and filmic building blocks; rather it holds immense symbolic importance. Brian Larkin, for instance, has written about the British colonial regime's use of infrastructure as "both a visual spectacle and a political ritual...where the public display of colonial authority is made manifest" (2008:19). At Evernew too, infrastructure is imbued with the ability to display authority and expertise. Within communities of practice such as Evernew's infrastructure both makes possible and simultaneously constrains filmmakers' very aesthetic choices, yet the technical competence to use the infrastructure, the knowledge of filmmaking practices and rituals, also carries a great deal of symbolic value.

As noted elsewhere in this dissertation, cinematic performances of Punjabiyaat have historically invoked discourses of class difference, valorizing the marginalized

and providing a space for the expression of feelings of political alienation. Such moments of on-screen proletarian resistance, not only to state violence but also to the linguistic and cultural hegemony of the Urdu-speaking establishment, lose their forcefulness as the perceived technological backwardness of Punjabi cinema leads to its further marginalization. In Pierre Bourdieu's terms, digital films have a greater cultural capital than those shot on 35mm, and Urdu cinema has greater linguistic capital than Punjabi cinema. Where technological innovations in filmmaking have created a broadened spectrum of aesthetic possibility, they have altered the information channel and literally increased the amount that there is for the film audience to perceive, whether in terms of pixels on the screen, multiple audio tracks, or the relative ease and speed of digital distribution pathways. Analog Punjabi cinema usually left out of these changes. As the technological gap widens, analog Punjabi cinema's legitimacy as an artistic and cultural product decreases, its filmmakers increasingly alienated and its audiences more limited. I term this process of marginalization 'aesthetic exclusion.'

There seemed to be consensus in the group at Evernew that fancy equipment or filmmaking degrees from abroad made no difference; a 'real' filmmaker could make an amazing film on the most inadequate equipment, and even those filmmakers who had the best equipment and the biggest budgets were making films that were absolutely worthless. After seeing the film *Waar* (2013, dir. Bilal Lashari), which went on to become the highest grossing Pakistani film of all time, one senior film writer told me angrily "[It was so bad that] it made me want to murder the guy who took me to go see it!" When I asked how it was bad, he refused to give my any specific answer; but rather than dismissing such statements as the quixotic fantasies of

washed-up old men, they deserve to be seen as discursive positioning in an attempt to defend their their own artistic forms and practices. By completely subverting the discourses that Urdu is superior to Punjabi and new technology is better than old technology and that Pakistani films should be more like Indian or American films, Rana Sahab and his colleagues at Evernew were staking claim to a prestige that the Pakistani cultural establishment has denied them.

It is also important to note that not everyone at Evernew is equally invested in this particular discursive stance. I watched one of the film technicians hauling camera equipment around one brutal August day; he has been working in this industry for over 40 years, and his own age must be at least 70. Setting down the heavy tripod that dwarfed his spare frame, he turned to me and said bitterly, “*Bas. Ab aur nahī̃.*” ‘Enough, no more now.’ He told me that as soon as he could find a job—any job—he would leave the film industry. That even though he was a highly trained technician he got no respect for his work, and that for 500 rupees (about \$5) a day it simply wasn’t worth it. I generally rode back and forth to shootings and the studio in the crew bus, and when the director and producer and stars weren’t around, the crew members expressed similar frustrations; one man asked for my help getting a visa and a job in the US, others muttered about the producer’s apparent stinginess⁴⁷. Because of the importance of maintaining social and work hierarchies, it seems unlikely that a worker in the film industry would openly contradict those in power over them—such as Parvaiz Rana—when they vehemently resist the notion that there is anything wrong

47 “I’ll tell you the REAL reason we don’t start shooting until 2—it’s so the producer only has to feed us in the evening!” one crew member bitterly complained.

with the film industry as it stands. But at the same time they don't have the luxury of embracing this ideology with such complete confidence because these men are nearing the end of their working lives, with families to support and very little economic gain to show for their years of labor.

These varied explanations not only index certain kinds of relationships with or discursive stances toward the film industry, they also say something about a way of positioning oneself in a certain kind of temporal relationship with the material dimensions and qualities of cinema as well. They can also be considered atmospheric attunements, ways of sensing that things are changing and attending to these changes, to “the quickening of nascent forms, marking their significance in sounds and sighs and the feel of something’s touch of something’s penetrating” (Stewart 2010:4). The alternation between nostalgia, mourning, and cynicism, the notion of who counts as an industry insider or an outsider, and the belief in or denial of the ongoing cinema revival are affective and temporal stances—emergent and slippery, intersubjectively created and context-bound—and they tell an important story not just about the film industry as a whole but about the precarious situation of the individual filmmakers whose livelihoods depend on it.

As outlined in the introduction, the filmmakers of Evernew constitute a community of practice, with a great deal invested in sustaining this community. One of the most important arguments for an ethnographic investigation of filmmaking is that it allows us to better understand the emergent meanings of cinema by grounding this understanding in the praxis of cultural production, by shedding light on such critically important yet often overlooked issues as the language, bodily techniques, infrastructures and material culture of film production—issues that fundamentally

condition the onscreen sound and image as experienced by the cinemagoer. The community at Evernew is comprised of film veterans—directors, writers, cameramen, choreographers, music directors, electricians, actors, and so on—most with thirty or even forty years of experience. Their networks and bonds are based not only on decades of working together but other powerful kinds of social ties. Many got their start in the film industry because of other family members who did this kind of work, whether through apprenticeship or generally getting employment through family connections. Even when there is not a family connection, filmmakers regularly locate their identities in networks of teacher-student (*ustād-shāgird*) or fictive kinship relations that can have an equally deep significance. Trained for decades working with a certain set of technologies and inextricably tied to a very specific visual idiom with which these correlate, they are not the ones to benefit from the sudden surge in multiplexes being built in affluent suburbs. In fact, the theaters being built do not even have the capability to show the old films; the 35mm projectors with their smooth bakelite handles are falling into disuse in favor of digital projection systems, and so the circuit and earning potential for these ‘low tech’ films shrinks even further. The filmmakers themselves are of course keenly aware of these issues; the production of *Sharabi* was itself delayed several months due to problems with theater remodeling and distribution.

In the evenings, in the Evernew Studio courtyard, discussion regularly centered around the state of the film industry and the changing aesthetic preferences of the cinema-going public. There is a deep ambivalence in the way this community relates to new technologies. *Sharabi*'s director, Parvez Rana, expressed an intent to shoot his next film on a Red digital camera, and the confidence that he did not need any additional training to be able to do so. He was adamant that since the film was already 'completed' in his mind before shooting even begins, that there would be no issues in this transition. Rana, like the others in his circle, had a large amount of personal pride invested in his own craftsmanship and expertise. Unsurprisingly, technology is one of the focal points of the nostalgic discourses around cinema; Boym argues that "Nostalgic manifestations are side effects of the teleology of progress" (2001:57). In this case, another way to think about this nostalgia is as a direct response to technological change, a reaction to their aesthetic exclusion that reinforces their pride in traditional filmmaking techniques. At the same time there are economic reasons for

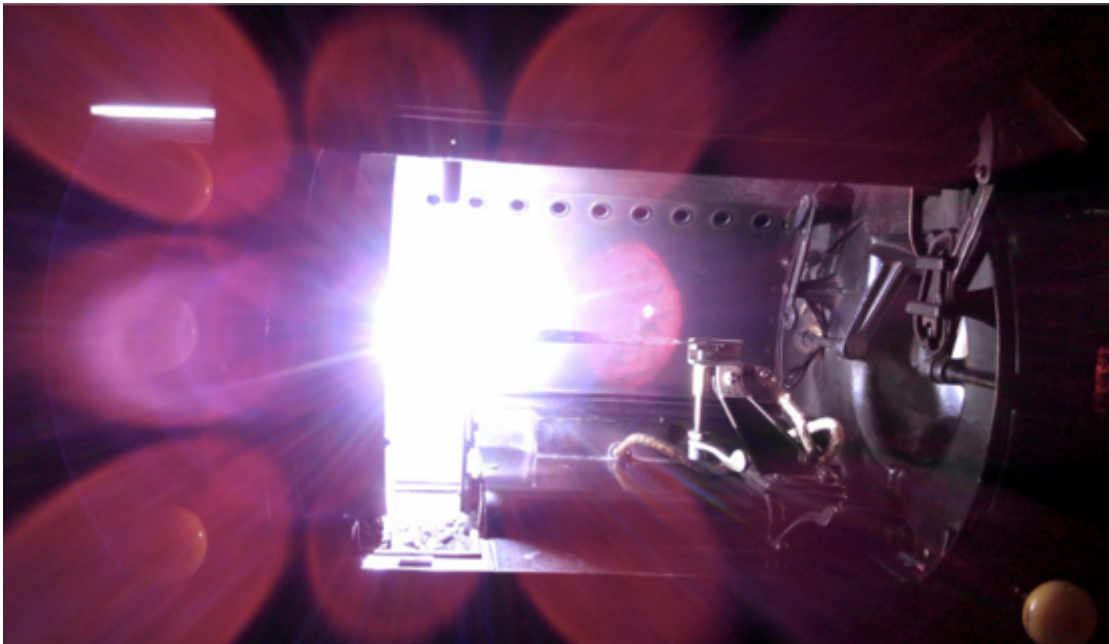


Illustration 2.6 35mm projector (built ca. 1940?), Capitol Cinema, Lahore 2013

filmmakers to turn towards digital technologies. In an apparently contradictory discursive move I witnessed many times during my fieldwork, filmmakers would simultaneously denigrate the new technology while staking claims to it: “I’m making this film in the old way, and it will be a huge success, but the next one *insha’Allah*⁴⁸ will be all digital!” Put another way, they were exhibiting solidarity with their community of practice at the same time as they opened themselves up to the possibility of increasing their social capital by adopting new technologies.

2.6 Implications for language, identity, community

Alongside shifts in technologies and other related parts of the filmmaking habitus, the language of filmmaking itself is changing. As more and more filmmakers are trained abroad or come from an elite class, the language of production is likely to shift away from Punjabi and more towards English; for instance, the use of digital technologies generally demands a certain degree of English literacy, particularly in the training process and in the use of computer software. If this becomes true in the film world then a lot of these filmmakers, who may have limited English proficiency, might be in an even more precarious position; linguistic markers of class difference can have very real consequences for things like employment. This (admittedly) small-scale language shift would have dramatic implications for the sorts of socialities and solidarities that the filmmaking community rests upon. In 2015, at the time of writing, 20 films were released in Urdu in Pakistan, and only 5 were released in Punjabi. The

48 'God willing'

more successful and critically acclaimed of these films, such as *Karachi Se Lahore* (dir. Wajahat Rauf), *Manto* (dir. Sarmad Sultan Khoosat), and *Jawaani Phir Nahi Ani* (dir. Nadeem Baig), were made by first time film directors who were not part of the traditional filmmaking community; many of them had crossed over from television.

When I came back to Lahore in 2015, I met a few times with some informants from my fieldwork days, who promised to update me on all the goings on of the cinema industry. Two new theaters had opened since my last visit—both high-end megaplexes in posh areas—and there was a great deal of hype about some of the upcoming films. Yet, according to my old informants, the people at Evernew were largely without work. “*Yeh Karāchī-wāle hamāre sāth kām karne ko tayyār hī nahī!*”; “These Karachi guys aren't even prepared to work with us!” one veteran editor told me, shaking his head in disgust. They emphasized that these people were from outside, with TV experience but no film experience, again discursively constructing their own filmmaking practices as more artistic, more 'cinematic,' even. That October, I went for the first time to the Vogue Towers SuperCinema on MM Alam Road—a posh shopping district of Lahore—with a friend of mine from Gujranwala. She had never been to the movies in her life (it was not common for women in her middle class family to go see films in public), and she was very excited for her first cinema experience. We rode the escalator past four floors of shiny designer clothes, to the very top. We were early for the film, so we stood on the balcony at the adjacent coffee shop and looked out at the cars and city lights below while we killed some time. All signage was in English, and the coffee shop advertised hazelnut macchiatos, pesto chicken paninis, and molten lava cake; the gleaming steel and linoleum of the mall were a stark contrast with the atmosphere of the older cinemas at Lakshmi Chowk. No

Punjabi film was playing—probably no Punjabi film has ever played—at the Vogue Towers SuperCinema; all but one of the films at the multiplex were Indian productions. Svetlana Boym points out that “nostalgia is not always about the past; it can be retrospective but also prospective. Fantasies of the past determined by needs of the present have a direct impact on realities of the future” (2001:26). I couldn't help but think about the Evernew filmmakers' reminiscences in light of their complete and utter exclusion from spaces such as these. Moreover, if as Jacques Rancière argues, the politics of aesthetics “revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak,” the ability of these filmmakers to say something with their art, to be relevant to the publics that are its object, has been severely limited by these technological changes, both directly—the fact that there are fewer theaters where these films can be released—and indirectly—the fact that they are largely out of fashion, shunned by the cultural elite as crude and vulgar.

Popular Punjabi cinema has thus seen a tremendous decrease not only in its mass appeal but also in its political force, its potential to be used, as it has often been, as a tool to subvert both political and cultural hegemony. As the technologies of which these craftsmen are masters lose their potency, the craftsmen themselves are excluded from spaces grounded in the new aesthetics. The very real power they once had both within this industry and in a broader sense as producers of culture has dwindled even as they continue to make films in the way they have done for the past thirty or forty years. Sweaty and tired after a grueling day of shooting in the September heat, Ghulam Hussain resolutely told me, “This is my last film. I get paid five hundred rupees a day, and no one gives any appreciation, any respect. Bas

[enough]. No more.” Other crew members expressed similar sentiments, sometimes asking whether I could help them get work in the United States. Ultimately those who are excluded from the power and prestige that inhere in the spaces of possibility opened up by new technologies are at risk of losing not only their investment in their communities of practice but their very livelihoods.

Chapter 3: Linguist on the film set

3.1 Evernew Studios



Illustration 3.1 Main gate of Evernew Studios

By May of 2013, I had met the small community of filmmakers with whom I would spend the majority of the next few months: director Parvez Rana and his circle of colleagues. They included choreographer Pappu Samrat, writer Rashid Sajid, editor Z.A. Zulfi, cameraman John Sahab, and a few other regulars—composers, producers, editors, writers—who would come and go. I would be introduced to more specialists—those who worked with lighting, electrical, or stunts, for example—once filmmaking commenced. At this point it had also become clear that there was not a

single, monolithic Pakistani film industry or even a unified or discrete Punjabi film industry. The filmmakers at Evernew were among those with less capital—both material and cultural—and they tended to make action films with plenty of fight scenes and sex (*masāla*, literally, 'spice'). They also tended to make more Punjabi films than other groups of filmmakers, who tend to prefer the higher status and broader market appeal of Urdu. These filmmakers used older technology, maintaining the film aesthetic developed in the 1980s and 90s to almost uncanny effect—it is very difficult to date these films just by their look or feel. Unlike the Evernew crowd, elite filmmakers such as Syed Noor and Shahzad Rafique generally had more money, and were based at the newly-renovated Shabab Studios on the outskirts of town. Even if they made films in Punjabi (for example, Rafique's 2013 *Ishq Khuda*), they featured bigger stars, tended to get slightly wider distribution, and also had a bit more respect from the cultural establishment. Then there were the outsiders, the aforementioned up-and-coming group. Unanimously denounced by the Evernew filmmakers, they were seen as interlopers, outsiders from Karachi with too much money and not enough talent. “When you watch one of their films,” I was told, “it’s not even like watching a film, it’s just like watching a TV serial on the big screen.” In this community, this is a grave insult.

Coming regularly to the studio and spending time with one another is a key mode of sociality, even when no filming is being done. On an average day people would arrive at Evernew in the afternoon and early evening and sit in plastic chairs arranged in circles at various points around the studio's large courtyard. They would smoke cigarettes, drink tea, occasionally send out for food, and chat. The state of the industry, national and international politics, the people they knew; topics ranged from

the global to the mundane. Some people would also circle from group to group, going to visit other cliques who sat at different places. Maintaining these relationships is an important part of one's career in the film industry, so that when work became available one can count on being considered for a particular job. On the one hand there were the formalized relationships of training between an *ustād* and *shāgird* (teacher and student), common across South Asian arts practitioners, and on the other were relationships forged through decades of collaboration and socialization.

Evernew studios, many of my informants told me, was once the largest and most beautiful film studio in Asia. Boasting dozens of sound stages and offices, several recording studios, rehearsal rooms, workshops, a film lab, and a mosque, it is painted bright colors. Off to the side are a few more sound stages, and a smaller courtyard painted like a police station. The lettering over the gate reads "Central Jail (Peshawar)." The main central courtyard is several hundred yards long, with large trees, landscaped shrubbery, and a fountain, now dry, in the center. This courtyard has been used as a set in countless films; I remember the shock of recognition the first time I saw those same cement columns while watching a fight scene in a film from the 1960s. During my fieldwork, and especially during the heat of the day, the courtyard was relatively quiet. At one time you had to schedule shootings months in advance, one director told me, but now except for the occasional commercial or Pashto film the floors stood empty.

Beginning in March of 2013, I had been meeting occasionally with Hassan Askari, the maker of *Wehshi Jatt*. One day I went to find him and he wasn't in his usual spot, so I walked around to the courtyard where his office was. A group of men were sitting in molded plastic chairs in the courtyard near his door. "Excuse me," I

asked, “Have you seen Hassan Askari here today?”

“I know you,” said the bearded man sitting on the end of the circle, “you are from America. You want to learn about Punjabi film. You can learn from me, I’ll make you assistant director on my next film.”

The man’s name was Parvez Rana. He was in his mid sixties, with a gray beard and a gravelly voice from years of chain smoking. I eagerly accepted his offer, although I did explain that I wasn't so much interested in becoming a director myself as doing research on how Punjabi films were made. Whether he had invited me because I was an American, and a woman to boot, or just because he appreciated the interest in his work, I am not sure. At the time, he was getting ready to shoot a film called *Sharabi* ('The Drunkard'), and from his description (as well as knowing some



Illustration 3.2 Shooting a scene in the Evernew Studios courtyard disguised as police station

of his earlier work) it seemed to be exactly the kind of analog Punjabi action film I was interested in, and I began visiting the studio regularly as to sit with Rana Sahab and his circle of colleagues. When I first met Rana Sahab he was saying that the shooting would start in early May. Then he started saying “after the elections.” The elections were the upcoming Monday, May 13, and although there seemed to be little doubt that Nawaz Sharif’s PML-N would win (they did), Imran Khan’s PTI (Pakistan Tahrik-e Insaf) were putting up quite a fight and there were rallies and demonstrations across Lahore every night. In any case, elections are unpredictable times, and although this election would ultimately be Pakistan’s first peaceful transfer of power between governments without a coup or a military intervention, it was a time of heightened alertness and tension, and most of the conversation at Evernew revolved around politics. But the elections came and went, and we still had not begun to shoot. Now instead of the elections, apparently there were scheduling issues with the actors. “Any day now, as soon as Shaan [our film's leading man] is free,” became Rana Sahab's usual response when I asked about the start of shooting.

And then the summer hit its full force, bringing with it not only an increase in load shedding but also the month of Ramzan (Ramadan). During this time, Lahore comes to a grinding halt, and so did most activity at the studio. Although directors often preferred to shoot in the summer to make the most of the natural light, and Rana Sahab said that he had shot during Ramzan before, it became clear that there were more serious problems than actors' schedules, or the possibility of fasting all day in the blazing heat. There was an issue with the theater *Sharabi* had originally been sold to; they had decided to remodel, installing HD projectors and getting rid of their 35mm projectors. Thus there was literally no way for the film to be shown in this

theater, and so the cinema owners were backing out of financing the film. Despite Rana Sahab's best efforts, the outlook was a bit grim. As the month crept onwards he didn't outwardly show any sign of perturbation, although I couldn't help but worry whether the film would even be made. Meanwhile I spent time at the studio, making small talk, meeting occasional new faces, and discussing direction with Rana Sahab. On the face of it it had seemed as though nothing much was happening, but out of my sight there were clearly many deals going on and preparations being made; this downtime was in some ways much more instructive even than the film shooting, as it gave me an opportunity to learn more about film communities and the structural aspects of the industry.

The received discourse about the decline of the film industry says that it is because films are low tech, or too vulgar, or cinemas are dangerous or rough places. These discourses, and their relationship to film aesthetics, technology, and language, have been discussed in depth in chapter 2. But a conversation from July with Zulfi Sahab, Pappu Sahab, and Nimbu Sahab showed me that there were possibly other factors in this decline. Rana Sahab had not come that day, and the four of us sat in the dark courtyard, the lights from office windows feebly casting a few shadows in our direction as an equally feeble wind provided the smallest bit of relief from the stuffiness of the night. I was confused as to why a cinema hall's cooperation was needed in order to make a film; shouldn't the producer just finance it and then sell it later?

Pappu Sahab: In the old days, exhibitors would buy the films and then make contracts with the cinemas. They would go to the producers and then make offers for different cities, Gujranwala, Islamabad, etc. In

Lahore the main cinemas in Lakshmi Chowk would have their own producers, but now exhibitors aren't interested because they have had so many [financial] losses. If they sell their film at 25 cinemas then it gets recovery and then the profit comes from these main cinemas.

Some films, when the producer would announce them, would already recover their money during the shooting itself.

Zulfi Sahab: Producers have run away [from the industry] because the money wasn't being recovered. If the people involved were marketable ["saleable," for example big name stars or directors] then all of the money would be recovered.

Pappu Sahab: [director] Yunus Malik would get applause in cinemas when his name appeared in the credits. People would stand and clap. Parvez Rana is also like that, the second most appreciated after Yunus Malik.

Nimbu Sahab: First cinema owners would approach the producers, now it's the other way around.

Pappu Sahab: Because Indian films are preferred.

Nimbu Sahab: There are films sitting here finished in the studio that will never be released because they can't be sold.

Pappu Sahab: People want a certain kind of film now. This is the issue with *Sharabi*, even in places like Gujranwala cinemas are being renovated for Indian films.

Nimbu Sahab: Cinema owners don't want to release Pakistani films.

Zulfi Sahab: If [the owners of the cinema our film was having issues with] had wanted to they could have released both *Ishq Khuda* and *Sharabi*, because they have the technology to screen both.

GK: So why didn't they?

Pappu Sahab: Rana Sahab is an unpredictable guy. His low tech films can slay the most expensive films. But cinema owners don't want to take risks.

Nimbu Sahab: They don't even want to release Pakistani films!

As seen in this discussion, for the industry insiders the decline of the film industry is decidedly not seen as a result of waning audience appreciation or the supposed crudeness of the films. These explanations, while common in the discourses of the cultural hegemonic elite (as discussed in the introduction), were not relevant here. Instead these filmmakers were offering up a counter narrative rarely heard outside the studio walls, one that set the blame of cinematic decline elsewhere than the industry itself. Blame was laid at the feet not of the filmmakers or even the audience's disinterest, but rather with the producers and exhibitors who had turned their backs on the local film industry in favor of India. This fell in line with a general antipathy towards India and Indian cinema that echoed time and again in these conversations; perhaps not surprising given the hostilities between the two countries. Actors who had gone to work in India were seen as traitors, Indian films were derided, and when non-cinematic issues such as politics were being discussed it was not uncommon to hear people making bold claims that war with India was inevitable and imminent. While earlier I had been reading Punjabi films as highly subversive and resistant to the nationalist narrative of the Pakistani state, these filmmakers' conversations betrayed a much more ambivalent relationship. On the one hand they would bemoan that Pakistani government had abandoned them, had never done anything to promote or support cinema. But these same people at other times showed themselves to be allied

in their political opinions underneath the banner of anti-Indian nationalism.

3.2 *Women (including me) on set*

What does it mean to be a woman on a film set in Pakistan? Women's particular place in the hierarchy of the film world is complex and shifting, and predicated on a host of factors, including age, experience, star power (or lack thereof), marital status, their perceived attractiveness and sexuality, and their relationships with men as the embodiment of their honor (*ġairat*). The literature on revealing or concealing the female body in Islamic and South Asian societies is justifiably large,⁴⁹ but a few concepts in particular, *ġairat*/*izzat* ('honor') and *hayā* or *sharam* ('modesty/shame'), are useful in understanding certain gender dynamics on the film set. Anjum Alvi, in his discussion of veiling in Pakistani Punjab, argues that men's social relationships are greatly concerned with the performance and maintenance of "shame and honor, the source par excellence of which are the women whose care is a prime responsibility of every man, rendering him vulnerable [to loss of status and respect]: terms for women of the house (like mother, sister, daughter, wife) may in some contexts be equated with terms for honor and shame (*izzat*, *ġairat*, *sharam*)" (2013:183). Not surprisingly, the term *be-ġairat* (dishonorable, immoral, shameful, literally 'lacking in *ġairat*') is one of the most common insults used in Punjabi cinema, and while the hero may romance a suitable virginal heroine, only villains engage in

49 Cf. Abu-Lughod 2013, De Souza 2004, Heath 2008, Jeffery 1979, Kirmani 2013, Toor 2007 and 2011

such dishonorable behavior as rape and molestation—a classic example being the villain who snatches a girl’s scarf (her symbolic modesty) from her chest, a scene enacted in countless Punjabi films.⁵⁰

Although the film industry is seen by the cultural and moral establishment of Pakistan as generally outside the bounds of respectability, women in the cinema have a complicated relationship with their work. One day, fanning herself after a particularly long and strenuous take, a female dancer looked at me, asking wryly, “*Yeh hai nā xūn pasīne kā kām?*” ‘This is bloody, sweaty work, no?’ The idiom *xūn pasīne kā kām* literally means ‘work of blood and sweat’; while it can be translated simply as hard work, the implication here is that the work she is doing is *halāl*, that is,



Illustration 3.3 Nida Chaudhury poses for the first shot of Sharabi.

50 Variations on this scene occur in both *Maula Jatt* and *Humayun Gujjar*, which I focus on in Chapters 4 and 5, and it is a common theme and plot device in other South Asian cinemas as well.

legitimate or honest. In many parts of Pakistani society a woman dancing in public, or even in front of any men not immediately related to her would be seen as extremely shameful, and a reflect negatively not just on the woman, but her entire family and possibly community. This dancer's comment, by locating her work within an Islamically acceptable framework, seemed to be a reassertion of her *ġairat*, which might otherwise threatened by the fact that her work involves showing her body to strange men.

“Those actresses, they all come from Hīrā Maṇḍī.” My landlady, a devout grandmother often concerned for my safety, uttered the name of Lahore's infamous red light district in a hushed yet derisive tone, warning me not to make friends with the women on the film set. The assumption that the film industry is connected with prostitution is a common one, and although there may have been some truth to it historically--some women from the families of courtesans and dancers in Hīrā Maṇḍī may have had relatively more freedom to seek other performance work like acting--the women in the film industry come from a wider variety of backgrounds. During my first trip to Pakistan, in 2010, I had met a few women in Hīrā Maṇḍī, the last vestiges of the traditional families who have now mostly been pushed out. Sitting in on a dance class full of girls, hypnotized by the rhythmic chiming of their anklets, I had rather slyly asked one of the girls' mothers why she wanted her daughter to learn dance, a pastime considered rather scandalous for most young girls. “So she can dance in the movies,” came the reply. Whatever an actress' background, the work to secure and maintain honor was constant in the film world. Briefly comparing two actresses illustrates the process and importance of this work.

On the relatively more ‘respectable’ side of the film actress respectability

spectrum is Saima, the main female lead of *Sharabi* and star of hundreds of other Punjabi movies over her twenty-odd year career. She has the kind of beauty most valued in Pakistan, including fair skin, large eyes, and a curvaceous figure; she looks much younger than her forty-something years. She is also married, and her husband is Syed Noor, one of Pakistan's most powerful and influential directors. Out of all the women on the set, she was accorded the most deference and respect; even in her absence nobody had anything but the highest praise for her. Her status as a married woman with a powerful husband, her star status, her beauty, and her long and successful career all tipped the scales of honor in her favor. Of course, whether those outside the film world would necessarily be so praiseworthy, respectful, and adoring of her is another matter entirely.

Nida Chaudhary, a theater actress and dancer who is closer to the beginning of her cinema career, is an excellent foil to Saima. She is younger and she is not married, nor is she a major star, although she is relatively well-known. Also, unlike Saima, Nida has certainly transgressed over the bounds of conventional respectability; her legal troubles bear witness to this. In 2007 she was tried for obscenity but granted bail, and in 2011 the Express Tribune reported that "Nida Chaudhary and Deedar were the most frequently warned and banned actresses [of 2010]. Chaudhary received four warnings, three show cause notices and two 16-day bans." (Khan 2011) The bans continued in 2012 (Awami Politics 2012). While *Sharabi*'s producer would let his friends come and watch the shooting of Nida's songs, nobody was ever invited to watch Saima--it was unthinkable. The differences even became evident in the choreography and camera work. While Saima's body was certainly on display in her songs, she always wore a *lācā* (idealized 'traditional' Punjabi dress, considered more



Illustration 3.4 Saima filming a song sequence

modest than Western clothes), her dance moves were never ‘vulgar,’ (that is, overtly sexual) and she was filmed from a somewhat respectful distance. Nida, on the other hand, sometimes wore the *lācā* but was also shown in short Western dresses and jeans. The camera intruded into her space to a much greater degree, using extreme angles and lingering close-ups on her lips or breasts to force the viewer’s gaze inexorably on her suggestively gyrating body. Even if both women are ultimately going to be on the same exact screen in the exact same film, the choice and power to show or not show, to make explicit or merely to hint, is tied up in their social status and *ġairat*. In the end, the process of navigating the codes and rules of *ġairat* is different for each of them.

Although the crew of the film was all male (with one exception, described

below), there were other actresses on set besides the stars: character actresses, Then there are the character actresses, the midwife, the heroine's aunty, the slain policeman's mother. The women who play these stock characters are all generally industry veterans. They were perhaps starlets at one time, and most have worked for decades in the industry, at least off and on. Some left when they married then returned, perhaps after the death of a spouse, or when their financial situation became difficult. Because they were usually married or widowed, and thus had certain credibility as respectable women, and their age also afforded them a certain degree automatic respect that made it perhaps less difficult for them to constantly maintain their honor. These senior actresses were very kind to me, and associated mostly with the other new actors and the senior crew members. They seemed the most relaxed on set; they did their scenes, drank tea, enjoyed chatting and bantering with the other actors and the crew. This suggests that gender in the film industry is more complicated than the blatant objectification and misogyny that it is sometimes accused of, and that there are more opportunities for women and men to form friendships and solidarities than in many other workplaces.

However, misogyny and objectification are a real part of this particularly image-focused industry, and particularly affect those women with less seniority and social status, such as the junior artists (i.e. backup dancers), extras, and new actresses trying their hardest to get a break in the film industry. One of them played the wife of the hero's best friend, slain by one of the villains after she refuses his advances on her wedding night. It was her first or second film and she seemed meek and nervous. She is the only one provided a costume by the studio (a wedding outfit); everyone else brought their own clothes. The scene was supposedly after the marriage had been

consummated, and so they were setting the actor and actress up in bed to look as though they had made love. “Call in the girl!” shouted Rana Sahab. “What’s her name?” someone asked. “*Eh dā koi nāñ nāñ hegā,*” replied one of the actors with a chuckle--‘she doesn’t have a name.’ “Take her dupatta off, take her jewelery off,” said Rana Sahab as the two settled down next to each other. “Take her shirt off too!” jeered an actor from the sidelines, everyone laughing, as the actress uncomfortably shifted in the bed. Clearly this actress was valued only for the display and consumption of her body in this particular role, her identity, her acting, nothing else mattered. More than mere uncovering of her body, this kind of banter clearly stepped close to threatening her sense of honor and modesty, and this same powerlessness that opened her up to these threats also rendered her powerless against them. It was one of the few times I felt truly uncomfortable on the set.

Finally, there was Sohni Amma, the only female member of the crew, who regularly rode in the crew bus next to me. Tiny and lithe, and in at least her 60s, she usually wore a man’s *shalwār-qamīz* with a thin *dupaṭṭa* breezily looped around her neck. I had seen her around the studio before the Sharabi began shooting, but on the long bus rides through Lahore’s traffic-choked streets we got a chance to chat; she had spent her life as the assistant to Pakistan’s most beautiful actresses: Rani, Zeba, Anjuman, Babra Sharif. She lived across the road from the studio with her daughter and her daughter’s husband. On set she diligently followed Saima--the only actress important enough to warrant her assistance--carrying an umbrella to shade her from the hot sun, and makeup box and mirror if Saima needed to give herself a touchup, or fetching water and tea.

Regardless of gender, in the studio and on the set there was a very strict

hierarchy, with the director, producer, and stars at the top. After them came minor actors, the other skilled and senior crew members, then the less skilled crew members, the extras and backup dancers, and finally the errand boys and assistants. I was also pulled into these hierarchies. By virtue of being an American everybody thought I was rich; a few times filmmakers even asked me to invest in their productions. I was even invited to invest in a few non-film ventures, such as a shopping plaza. “We’ll make you a partner!” It seemed that with work at a low ebb the filmmakers were trying to make money wherever they could.

Rana Sahab had a “boy”, Yaseen, a thin, quiet, gray-haired man with twinkling eyes, who served generally as a gofer and whose job it was to bring tea, move chairs around, light cigarettes, and so forth. He seemed mildly amused at my presence, bringing a chair for me along with Rana Sahab as we moved around each location, offering me water, and so on. I was clearly inhabiting a male space. On the crew bus I was generally given my own seat at the front with the driver while everyone else squeezed into the back. If I did sit next to anyone it is usually a higher-ranking crew member, either Shahji or Maqsud Sahab. I was offered tea and food with the high ranking crew members or with Rana Sahab, but not usually with the stars, who seem to be given the most deference.

Early on in my research my friend and sometimes cinema escort Umar gave me some advice: that I should stop telling people I wanted to meet with less “important” people such as assistants, makeup people, technicians, and instead tell them I wanted to meet with directors and producers and writers. Slowly I realized he was telling me that in this context, given that I was a white woman coming from the US, it made sense that I would want to talk to ‘important’ people—directors, not tea

boys—those equal to or above my own position in this social hierarchy. Similarly it clearly made Rana Sahab uncomfortable when I would talk to lower ranking crew members; eventually I realized I was compromising the social cache he gained by having me around. This cache was related to my whiteness and Americanness, but also with my gender; there were complicated rules of chivalry and honor at stake. By allowing me access to this film Rana Sahab's own honor was invested in my protection and care, and even though in some ways I was exempted from having to maintain my *gairat* (after all, in some ways I had never even had it), in other ways I was expected to conform to the role of respectable, honorable, high-ranking woman.

As a white, American woman, I fit uneasily into this social framework. On the one hand I was an unattached female, and there was a certain uncomfortable possessiveness in the way Rana Sahab controlled my movements on the set. By virtue of my connection with him as well as my whiteness and my status as a guest, I was granted a great deal of deference (sometimes to the point that I was uncomfortable). The crew members invariably told me, "You are like our sister." At the same time there was an unspoken expectation for me to play a certain role, to talk only with the more important and senior members of the cast and crew and also to be interested, but not ask too many questions about certain things that might not reflect positively on the film industry. Moreover, there was a definite attempt made to shield me from some parts of the film industry that I might consider more unsavory. One day, along with most of the crew I was ushered outside the room after shooting part of a particularly raunchy song, but I saw Rana Sahab give the instruction to Shahji to get a close up, high speed shot of the actress shaking her breasts. This kind of shot, taken in private, seemed not to have made it into the final cut of the print, making me wonder whether

there is a system of cut-pieces as Lotte Hoek (2010b, 2014b) describes in Bangladeshi cinema—pornographic segments of the film left out for the censor review and then reinserted in the theater. Because of the security situation in Pakistan as well as social expectations about women's movements and behavior in public I was not able to solve this mystery, although I have heard rumors that such things do occur.

In any case, while it is certain that I perhaps would have learned more about some aspects of the film industry had I been Pakistani, or male, or both, the kind of access I had, as a woman, to the women on the set, offered me great insight into the gender politics at play in this environment. In certain instances, the expectations of traditional gender segregation and morality were even somewhat relaxed; while I cannot understate the importance of honor and propriety in gendered interactions and socialities on set, there were also moments where the conventions were broken, where the atmosphere of the film set--seen by society at large as a place of immorality--did in fact allow for possibilities other than those proscribed by societal norms, and my position as a woman gave me greater access to these moments of play or of gender subversion. This is of course an experience common to many female fieldworkers. As Lila Abu-Lughod notes, “As a woman I often found myself confronted with difficulties not faced by male researchers, but I also enjoyed the advantages of access and unexpected pleasures of intimacy in the women's world” (1988:16).

On the one hand my presence on set was used as an an asset, a sign that this filmmaker was important enough to attract foreign guests (he often told people I was there to learn direction from him); on the other hand my presence clearly brought with it the danger that I would uncover things the wider world should not know. My gender meant I was lucky enough to spend time with amazing and talented women who can

face a great deal of social censure for doing this work. Yet it also meant that I could not ask all the questions I wanted to, or I would certainly risk some of the relationships I had built with the film community, men and women alike.

One day during filming, while we were waiting to leave the studio for the location, I met an actress (who I will call Ruqiya), sitting in our producer's office waiting to talk to the director. We introduced ourselves and she told me she was there to try to get a role, to see if Rana Sahab had anything for her. Her husband was having problems supporting the family and he brought her to the studio regularly to try to find her some work. I asked what kind of role she wanted, and she answered that anything would do; she was not picky and anyway couldn't afford to be. "I'm too black [dark-skinned] to be a heroine," Ruqiya said, looking at her arms in dismay. Suddenly she was spinning a tale that, while common, I had only heard of in whispers, a story of casting couch politics, and how producers wanted something "in return" (*us ke badle mē*) for offering a role. Without her volunteering this information, it would have been difficult for me to broach the subject either with the actresses or the male cast and crew. There were other moments too—the aforementioned close-up shot of Nida's breasts, or times when I wondered what heavily made-up young women were doing in some of the studio offices late at night. The producer and director were taking a risk by allowing me onto the set, and in turn I take a risk in relating certain experiences here.

3.3 Film shoot

"We're going to start shooting next week." At first I am convinced I misheard

Rana Sahab; the film project has been stalled for months. But no, I am told to show up at the studio Monday morning for a “lesson in direction.” The kinks with the theater and distribution have been worked out, and shooting is ready to begin. The first order of business is to go over the script and plan for the shoot. Rana Sahab, assistant director Maqsud Sahab, the producer Chaudhary Sahab, the writer Pasha Sahab and me, all meet up a few days before shooting begins to go over the script scene by scene. We sit about the office on couches as a standing fan pushes hot air around the room. An empty film canister sits on the table serving as an ashtray. As Pasha Sahab reads over the scenes, Rana Sahab and the others go back and forth with notes and suggestions for how each scene is to be shot. They speak quickly, in Punjabi; I strain to understand Pasha Sahab whose mouth is generally filled with paan⁵¹ as he speaks, and Rana Sahab whose enthusiastic Faislabadi Punjabi and gravelly smoker’s voice prove an ongoing challenge for my ears. There is little argument though; we get through the entire script in about an hour and a half. Only when Rana Sahab leaves the room for a moment is there more equal discussion of the scenes; otherwise he dominates the conversation. The script finished, plans were made to start shooting within the next few days.

Once the shooting began, on a typical day I would arrive at the studio by around 9 or 10 in the morning, waiting in the studio for a while with Zulfi and Maqsud as the crew loaded up the bus with all the equipment. Then we would get in the bus and head out to whichever location we were shooting at. The main locations varied according to what was on hand but we were clearly going with the most cost-

51 An arica nut (often with tobacco) preparation for chewing, common across large swaths of South Asia.

effective option; cheaper than renting a studio floor for the day was using the producer's house and his cottonseed oil factory, or his relatives' and neighbors' houses and the adjacent streets for the bulk of the scenes. Two of the songs were shot in gardens rented out for the day, and one major series of scenes was shot in a large mansion on the outskirts of town that was rented for a few days. The only shooting that happened in the studio was an indoor scene, in a courtroom set, and a series of shots done in the studio's parking lot and courtyard, painted to look like a jail and police station. There was also a shoot on a Lahore street, one day in a working hospital, and one day at a religious shrine (because no film is complete without such a scene). The preference, wherever possible, was for outdoor scenes, because they cost the least. One day we walked around the producer's village recruiting its inhabitants to look afraid and slam their doors for the camera, which was hilarious. I am not sure whether or not they were compensated, but I am sure that many people would have agreed in any case because Shaan, one of Pakistan's most famous actors, was with us. Many times such guerilla shooting attracted massive attention because of the stars, and the onlookers were sometimes recruited as (I believe unpaid) extras in certain shots. Generally a crowd would gather and the assistants and crew would do their best to keep them from getting too close to the stars or in the way of the production. Rana Sahab himself would become frustrated by them on occasion and curse them out like hell, particularly if they were blocking the fading light towards the end of the day, or when ice cream and snack vendors showed up to try to make a few rupees off of the gathered onlookers. Sometimes a few schoolchildren would work up the courage to ask Shaan for an autograph, which he beleagueredly obliged. One of a small group of girls once approached me and asked for my autograph; I told her I wasn't famous or

even an actress, but she insisted and so I dutifully signed the back cover of her school notebook.

After arriving on the set, there was usually at least an hour or two of waiting for the crew to set up the lights, the furniture, and the scenery. During this time the director would arrive, and the more junior actors. Most of this time was spent chatting and gossiping, perhaps drinking tea and smoking cigarettes. We couldn't begin shooting until the stars arrived, and this almost never happened until the last possible minute, probably noon at the earliest. Then we had perhaps seven hours of good light before the sun set and we either packed up or moved inside. Unsurprisingly there was a lot of hurry up and wait. Maqsud Sahab, the assistant director, would make sure everyone was in place for whichever sequence and coach the actors on their upcoming lines. They did not know the script or the story before each scene, rather were given their lines and memorized them before each shot. Maqsud Sahab and Rana Sahab would coach them on their delivery, they would do a take (preferably only one take, as negative is expensive), and then move on to the next shot. There was very little interpretation in terms of lines and action, with everything only being finalized if Rana Sahab approved it.

When the call to prayer (*azān*) sounded, there would be a brief break from filmmaking activity. The women would drape part of their *dupaṭṭas* over their heads in a common gesture of reverence, and the music would stop. Very few of the crew actually paused to go and pray, but there was a strong sense of religiosity among many of the group. The first shot of the film commenced with an exhortation for everyone to recite *bismillah ar-rahmān ar-rahīm* (in the name of God the most merciful and most beneficent), the beginning of the Quran and an Islamically

proscribed ritual of beginnings. On that first day sweets were also distributed after the first successful take, and the producer himself gave the clap on the first shot. The work of the filmmaking had officially begun.

3.4 Language, power, and filmmaking

My investigation of language on set is informed by the Hymesian linguistic anthropological tradition of ethnography of communication. Based on the “understanding that speaking, like other systems of cultural behavior kinship, politics, economics, religion, or any other-is patterned within each society in culture-specific, cross-culturally variable ways” (Bauman and Sherzer 1975:98), ethnography of communication allows us to view linguistic practices holistically, enmeshed in larger cultural patterns, tendencies, and ideologies, and also sustaining and supporting them. It takes into account the wide variety of linguistic resources a community has on hand and examines them in the context of usage. Although this dissertation examines language ideologies and aesthetics in a variety of ways, it is in the ethnographic account that these come together as part of a daily set of practices.

Unsurprisingly, a specialized vocabulary had developed around objects, events, and actions that was specific to the film industry. The most archetypal example would be the ritual exchange preceding every shot, which will be familiar to English speakers as well. Although few of the crew had any fluency in English, and mostly used Punjabi with some Urdu, many cinematic terms were borrowed from English for the rituals of filmmaking. Most of us are familiar with the phrase “lights! camera! action!”; similarly here each shot commenced with the following sequence of

commands, as in this transcript below:

- Rana Sahab** 1) Take karo! (lit. ‘do a take’)
- Quiet!*
- 2) Start Sound!
- Javed (sound man)** 3) <starts the reel-to-reel recorder> Started!
- Rana Sahab** 4) Camera!
- Ghulam Hussain** 5) <switches camera on> Working!
- Rana Sahab** 6) Action!

The significance of these terms being in English should not be underestimated simply because they are conventionalized. English conveys power, prestige, and connections with the West, and perhaps linkages to an international filmmaking tradition. Similar to the claim discussed in Chapter 2 that the Arri camera was “from the time of the British,” the English filmmaking commands also link the moment of use to a tradition that goes back to a time before the Partition, and that spans all the way to England and perhaps to Hollywood. When the director starts this ritual exchange, he is addressing the entire unit, not directing his comments to anyone in particular, or making eye contact with anyone. Then the scene would commence. When the take was over, Rana Sahab would say “Cut!” and if it had been a good take, “Got it!” as a kind of signal of satisfaction and that this shot was over. Then there would be a scramble to set up the next shot. There would be a brief consultation between Rana Sahab, Maqsud Sahab, and Shahji, then the lights, the camera, and actors, and any materials such as a mattress to soften the landing of the hero jumping out of a car, or the fake arm to be

chopped off, would be set in position. Then the same thing would repeat. But it often took many shots to get a good take and this would get frustrating for everyone, there was often a palpable sense of tension when a shot had to be taken again and again; nobody liked wasting time or money as there was precious little of both; film negative is expensive, and the unit always seemed to be a hurry to finish the day's filming before the sunlight slipped away.

In addition to “*take karnā*” (to do a take), there were verbs such as “*shot lenā*” (to take a shot), “*pan karnā*” (to pan the camera), or “*run out honā*”; all of these are compound verbs, common in Indo-Aryan languages, created by combining the English words (take, shot, pan) with Punjabi/Urdu verbs such as *karnā* ('to make/do'), *honā* ('to be') or *lenā* ('to take'). In addition to words for filmmaking equipment that are generally borrowed from English (high-speed, negative, and so on), there is also a particular vocabulary around the events that are a part of the daily rhythm of filmmaking. Moreover, most of these sentences are performative in the Austinian sense, small rituals. For instance, when somebody says “*Azān ho rahī hai*” ('the call to prayer is happening') it isn't a simple observation. Rather it means the crew must stop shooting until the call is over, and women should cover their heads, and any music should playing should be shut off. Similarly, when Ghulam Hussain says “*Run out ho gayī*,” ('[the negative] has run out') it tells everyone that they have to cut, the shot is ruined because the film has run out and everybody can take a break for a minute while they reload and setup for the shot again. Both of these examples function as perlocutionary acts (Austin 1962), causing the addressees to react and respond in particular ways. Moreover, the pragmatic value of such utterances indexes professional in-group membership, something that became quite obvious to me as an

outsider when I was the only one left wondering what was happening (Why did shooting stop? Why were all the women covering their heads? Why did Rana Sahab look frustrated?) during such times.

Dubbing started almost concurrently with filming; the entire film had to be made in less than a month, so work went on around the clock, with acting and shooting during the day and dubbing and music at night. Because of the noise created by the Arri cameras, synch sound could not be used (although it was dutifully recorded for every shot). Therefore in the evenings the actors would go over the roughly edited scenes, re-recording their lines to match the images. Processing, editing, and sound effects all continued at the studio while the camera crew and directors were out shooting. Because I was attending the shooting, to my chagrin I missed most of the opportunities to see the dubbing happen. Dubbing is a space of linguistic possibility; for example many Pashto films are shot with actors who speak little or no Pashto; their lines are performed in Urdu and simply dubbed over in post-production. Although I was not able to see much of it in person, there was quite a discussion about the dubbing of one particular actress. She had never dubbed her own lines before, but the producer seemed to be pushing to let her do it this time. “She’s got that lispy voice,” Maqsd Sahab told Zulfi Sahab, using the word *totlāpan*, which connotes a rather childish way of pronouncing words with overuse of dental consonants. Rana Sahab came by and joined the conversation. He reassured them, “No, we’ll find some girl-*moṭī sī āvāz valī*,” ‘with a thickish voice.’ Even though this actress was a native Punjabi speaker whose thick accent was very obvious when she spoke Urdu, a very specific type of voice was considered desirable for this role; they needed to find someone with a meaty, strong voice. Eventually the producer was able

to persuade them to use the actress' own voice, although it was clear that some of the senior crew members were concerned about the impact this would have on the film. The prevalence of dubbing has important implications for this film industry's relationship with language. Once I was watching a Pashto movie being shot at Evernew and was surprised to see that the entire cast was actually delivering their lines in Urdu. When I asked why I was told that none of the actors actually even knew Pashto, that it would be dubbed later, and that this was a very common practice. Slippery and tricky, language is both separate from and integral to these films; it is ultimately the idealized conception of language in the Punjabi film that defines it, it is incomplete without its linguistic identity.

As discussed in the introduction, the Punjabi action film is a distinct and highly conventionalized genre in Pakistan. One leading actor told me, somewhat wryly, "I've made 500 films, and 450 of them are the exact same film." Similarly, when I asked one of the lead actresses about her character, she replied wearily, "Yes, the *jattī* type, I've done this so many times." When I asked her how she prepares for a role she looked at me like I was an absolute idiot; she's been making these films for over twenty years; what on earth is there to prepare? Not only as media consuming members of society but also as film specialists themselves, the cast and crew of *Sharabi* debated little about the nature of language used in the film; its style, dialect choices, delivery, word choice, and so forth tended to be as conventionalized as the plot elements of the fallen woman who meets her just and fatal end, or the tyrannical feudal landlord, or the grieving mother who weeps for her son. The linguistic conventions of what I call *Filmi Punjabi*, and their relationship to larger ideologies of Punjabiyat and performance, will be discussed further in Chapters 4 and 5. But even

though the conventions were fairly rigid, there was still a great deal of useful information in the occasional explicit metalinguistic discussions I was privy to. For example, in the following transcript assistant director Maqsud Sahab helps one of the actors memorize his lines for the next shot, a love scene:

- Babrik Shah** 1) Kī kariye akkhā̃ dā--
What shall I do about eyes--
- Maqsud Sahab** 2) Innā̃ akkhā̃ dā
About these eyes
- Babrik Shah** 3) Kī kariye innā̃ akkhā̃ dā
What shall I do about these eyes?
- Maqsud Sahab** 4) Jihriyā̃ tenū̃
That [at] you
- Babrik Shah** 5) Tenū̃:
[At] you
- 6) Jihriyā̃ tenū̃ vekh ke
That having seen you
- Maqsud Sahab** 7) Te tenū̃-tenū̃ <inaudible> de rūp icc vex ke
having seen y- you-you like a [queen]

Babrik Shah

8) Māhārāṇī de rūp icc vekh ke

Having seen [you] like a queen

Maqsud Sahab

9) Har vele apṇī havelī icc vex ke--

Having seen [you] all the time in my mansion--

10) Nāĩ

No.

11) Jihṛā tenũ

Which [at] you

12) Ikk māhārāṇī de rūp icc

like a queen

13) Har vele

all the time

14) Apṇī havelī vicc vexdā rihā--

have seen you in my mansion--

Babrik Shah

15) Acchā māhārāṇī dī jagah assĩ caudhrāṇī kar deiye?

OK, shall we put 'caudhrāṇī' in the place of 'queen'?

Maqsud Sahab

16) Nāĩ, māhārāṇī

No, queen.

Babrik Shah 17) Maĩ āpe ī caudhrī

I'm a chaudhary myself.

Maqsud Sahab 18) Koī gal nāĩ sone cāndī dā taxt ai māhārāniyā̃ baiṭhdiyā̃.

*It doesn't matter, there's a silver and gold throne,
queens sit on it.*

19) Eh oh saī ai

This--that's right

Babrik Shah 20) Calo ṭhīk ai

Fine, OK

21) Eh...Urdū kā lafz lag rihā sī asal [icc...

This...seemed like an Urdu word actually...

Maqsud Sahab 22) [Oh nāĩ nāĩ nāĩ Panjābī icc bolde ne

Oh no no no, [we] say it in Punjabi.

In this example, Babrik Shah is having serious difficulties with the (admittedly cumbersome) line: “What about these eyes, that see you all the time sitting in my mansion like a queen?” Maqsud Sahab gently prompts him phrase by phrase, and a few things become apparent. First of all, Babrik’s Punjabi is different than Maqsud Sahab’s Punjabi. In line 21, even while speaking Punjabi, he uses the Urdu genitive postposition *kā* rather than the Punjabi *dā*, perhaps because it is being used in the phrase *Urdu kā lafz* (‘an Urdu word’). Secondly, Babrik Shah’s Punjabi is distinctly

closer to Urdu in the pronunciation of certain phonemes, particularly /kh/. While he produces an aspirated voiceless velar stop [kh], as would be expected in most dialects of Punjabi, Maqsd Sahab uses the velar fricative [x] in some tokens, in this example the verb stem *vekh* ‘see’—cognate with Hindi/Urdu *dekh*—is realized in his speech as *vex* (lines 7, 9, and 14). This particular sound correspondence occurs only in certain lexemes and seems to be more prevalent among working class Lahoris as well as possibly in certain rural areas, and it is certainly common although it is barely mentioned in any of the sources on dialectical variation in Punjabi. However, I suggest that the velar fricative variant seems to be less prestigious than the aspirated stop. Additionally telling is Babrik’s Urdu-ized pronunciation of *lafz* (‘word’), as opposed to the Punjabi variant *lafaz*, which introduces a prop vowel and is the kind of pronunciation looked down upon by Urdu prescriptivists. As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet have argued, “A way of speaking in a community does not simply constitute a turning on of a community-specific linguistic switch, or the symbolic laying of claim to membership in that community, but a complex articulation of the individual’s forms of participation in that community with participation in other communities that are salient at the time” (1992:10). Ultimately what it means in this example is that Babrik Shah’s Punjabi is closer to Urdu, his pronunciations carrying connotations of being more educated, more upper class, and more aligned with Urdu. This makes sense given their class backgrounds and social status (Babrik Shah’s family is more affluent than Maqsd Sahab), and therefore their relationship to Punjabi; Maqsd Sahab spoke it frequently but off camera I rarely heard Babrik speaking anything but Urdu or English.

More importantly, the exchange in lines 15-22 is particularly revealing. Babrik

takes issue with the word *māhārāṇī* ‘queen’, wanting to substitute it with *caudhrāṇī*, the female equivalent of *caudhrī*, a title for a feudal landlord. When Maqṣud Sahab denies the request, he protests, “I myself [speaking of his character] am a *caudhrī*,” and more over, the word struck him as an Urdu word rather than a Punjabi one. For Babrik, using *caudhrāṇī* makes more sense in this case because it is more evocative of the idealized rural Punjabi society the film aims to portray. Meanwhile Maqṣud Sahab reassures him that no, *māhārāṇī* is a perfectly acceptable Punjabi word, and in any case the lady in question is going to be “sitting on thrones of silver and gold.” That is, Maqṣud Sahab sees poetic potential in the use of *māhārāṇī* without compromising the film’s ability to evoke the conventionalized generic representation of rural Punjabi society and language.

3.5 Appearance, disappearance

Less than 10 days after the shooting had wrapped up the Eid holiday came. Known informally in Pakistan as *Barī Īd* (big Eid) or *Bakrā Īd* (goat Eid), Eid ul Azha commemorates the story of Abraham and Isaac with animal sacrifice, feasting, visits to relatives, and, for many, a trip to the cinema. My friend Umar was kind enough to take time away from his family to join me at the Capitol Cinema in Lakshmi Chowk where *Sharabi* would be shown. It was the only location where it was shown in Lahore; the other five prints that had been made had gone to Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Sargodha, and Multan. There was discussion about selling a second print to another cinema in Lahore, but the producer had refused on the grounds that they weren’t going to charge enough for tickets and he would not be able to recoup his losses. So

the Capitol it was. We headed out to catch the 3pm show.

I had never seen such a rush in Lakshmi Chowk before, although I had been several times before. Theaters were a more difficult site for my research than the studio had been; although they were interesting spaces and I learned a lot whenever I would go, the theaters that showed Punjabi films, concentrated in an area in the northern part of the city known as Lakshmi Chowk, were not easy spaces for me to access. Few women would go to the cinema, although there were certainly more women than I expected there to be, and moving around as a hypervisible American woman in Lahore comes with certain risks, and without an escort (preferably male) I would not have felt comfortable in such a space. Additionally, social taboos regarding gender mean it would be difficult if not dangerous for me to talk to many strange men in the audience. In any case, whenever I had gone to the cinemas in this part of town there were only a few people in the audience.

But this was Eid, and the Capitol was transformed. Fresh, new billboards showed the stars of *Sharabi* in stills from the film, Shaan posing with a knife dripping blood, Nida in a scanty outfit suggestively posing for the camera. The theaters were covered in twinkle lights and a huge crowd of people spilled out of the theater doors and onto the sidewalks. Umar and I found our seats in the “family section,” an architectural division from a different era that is these days generally ignored. Today however in the family section—usually filled with men—there were actual whole families present for this special day, including women, children, and elders. It was a far cry from my last visit in March, when barely a dozen people sat silently through a showing of *Yaar Badmash*, a film that had been made some 8 years before.

Of course men still made up the majority of the audience, and were highly

appreciative of Nida, particularly her main item song, which garnered whistles and applause. There were also cheers during the particularly religious parts of the film, for example when Shaan takes dramatic revenge for the killing of a local *sayyid* (a caste that traces their origin directly back to the Prophet). But the main draw for a large part of the audience was clearly the sex and the violence. Interestingly, on the Eid show Nida's song "*Kil Thok De*," with its highly suggestive lyrics, was unedited; and the men in the audience (with perhaps the lone appreciation of my friend Umar, who was cringing in embarrassment) appreciated every gyration as she mouthed the lyrics "hammer in the nail, hammer in the nail, my bed is breaking!" When I went back a week or so later, however, the lyrics had been dubbed over to the much more innocuous "let's join hearts, I'm wasting away [for your love]." There were also a few shots that I expected to see which had apparently not made it past the censor board in any form, particularly the close-up that had apparently been taken of Nida's bouncing breasts. Although my research is far from conclusive, this suggests that like Bangladeshi cinema, Punjabi cinema in Pakistan is also a form of "unstable celluloid" (Hoek 2010b, 2014b), its form and content shifting according to audience and context. As celluloid films disappear from cinema screens (and pornography becomes more easily available) such practices may disappear altogether, indexing the ways shifts in technology contribute to changes in social practice.

Sharabi did decent business, which was a fairly impressive feat considering it released the same day as *Waar* (dir. Bilal Lashari), which went on to become the highest grossing film in Pakistani history. Before the conclusion of my fieldwork that December, I tried desperately to find a copy of it. First I visited my normal video source, a large store in the relatively posh Liberty Market. An investigation of DVD

copying and circulation would be a fascinating study, but is far beyond the scope of this dissertation. Still, there are a few salient points that should be addressed. First, by my admittedly far from official estimate, well over 90% of DVDs sold in Lahore are unofficial, pirated copies. Even the shiniest video stores in the fanciest neighborhoods stock their shelves mainly with illegal pirated discs. The practice is so commonplace that little effort is even made to make the copies imitate the official thing; the discs themselves are unlabeled, the covers merely cheap photocopies of the originals if they exist at all. Second, many of these copies are made on demand; whenever I would go in looking for a film that the store didn't have, I was assured that given a few days time it could probably be gotten for me, but I was continuously foiled; no one could find the film.

When my regular sources didn't help me, I made a trip to Hall Road in the older part of the city, a long street crammed with shops selling every kind of electronic equipment imaginable, from turntables to iPhones, and their various accessories. There were some CD stalls here that could perhaps help me find what I needed, but this also turned out to be a dead end. They had never ever heard of the film, even though it had been released less than two months before. One shopkeeper offered to make inquiries for me but when I called him the next day he had had no luck. "No one has uploaded it to the internet," he told me. I asked for clarification, and he replied, "we make all our CDs by downloading them from YouTube and burning them. Until someone uploads this film we can't get you a copy." I didn't bother to point out that if the film was on YouTube I wouldn't really need him anyway, but instead asked if he knew how the films got on YouTube in the first place. "There are some people, some people who do it," he said, vaguely, and promised to

call a guy for me. I never heard from him again. Last, I turned to a few sources I had gotten from one of Lahore's film collectors, people interested in film who keep private archives and circulate materials among themselves. Even this didn't work, as their main resource was Karachi, and *Sharabi* had never even been released in Karachi.

I am confounded by the ephemeral nature of this film; while I have sections of its dialogue and action in my field recordings, in my notes and in my memory, I question whether I will ever actually see it again. Months after *Sharabi* was released, then a year, then two years, I continued searching for a copy of the film, but it was nowhere to be found. I went to DVD shops in different parts of the city, always ending up on Hall Road, where I had connections with the owners of a few DVD stores. But all of those leads also turned up nothing; it was as though the film had vanished. Each time was the same: I asked the person for the film *Sharabi*, then had to repeatedly emphasize that this was the version with Shaan made last year, not the 1970s Indian film starring Amitabh Bachchan.⁵² Then I was asked to sit near the counter while the owner made a series of calls to his friends and colleagues, to no avail. Even asking my contacts at Evernew studios proved fruitless; one ultimately suggested I go to the Capitol theater and buy the physical print that had shown there, which unfortunately I have not been able to do.

Originally, analyzing the filmic text was to have been a significant part of this dissertation, but without the finished product in my hands again the methodology of the study must follow the resources available to the researcher. This also adds

⁵² Both films have the same title but little else in common.

another dimension to Hoek's idea of unstable celluloid, the idea that a film made less than two months ago can all but disappear, something almost unthinkable in the age of on-demand internet streaming. I have no doubt that the film's six prints still do exist somewhere or other, in storage at theaters, perhaps waiting to be shown during a slow spell. However, the ephemeral, unstable nature of this film and others like it underscores the value of ethnographic description in understanding cinematic cultures; it is quite possible that *Sharabi* the film may completely disappear, as countless others have done, yet the information gathered about its production might hopefully be of interest or use even if the film itself is no longer accessible. Moreover, its continued existence—say, in the form of a Blu-Ray disc—is, after its release, almost completely immaterial to the community that made it, given that there is almost no legitimate infrastructure for the reproduction and circulation of films, hence almost no way for anyone to collect royalties. The two directors I spent the most time with, Parvaiz Rana and Hassan Askari, reported to me that they do not keep copies of their films. When I asked why, Rana Sahab told me, “*Kyā fā'īdā?* [What's the use?] By the time a film releases my mind has already moved on to the next project.”

Hortense Powdermaker observed in 1950, “Since the making of movies is a highly collaborative enterprise, in which no one works alone, a study of the relations between the people who share the undertaking is essential” (1950:29). Constantine Nakassis echoes this when he exhorts researchers engaging with film to:

“...rethink the question of what a filmic image is beyond questions of representation, to consider the image's performativity, the dialectical tension and movement between the onscreen and offscreen, the textual and its extratextual peregrinations, the pro-filmic and its apprehension on the screen's thither sides.” (2015:169)

Foregrounding the site of production rather than the text itself shifts the emphasis away from what a film means--as a static, unchanging text--to how it means. It allows us to focus on film as emergent, intersubjective, and grounded in particular ways of producing and receiving. While most studies on language in film are textual in nature, this ethnographic research hopes to find new approaches to understanding both the Pakistani case in particular and film culture in general by focusing on film production. It also allows new possibilities for looking at the relationship between language and film. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet argue that rather than communities or sets of linguistic resources being fixed and static, “in actual practice, social meaning, social identity, community membership, forms of participation, the full range of community practices, and the symbolic value of linguistic form are being constantly and mutually constructed” (1992:9). An ethnographic approach to cinema opens up previously uncontested spaces for us to examine these processes, and ethnographic data, thick description, and an attempt to understand the daily practices of those who produce these forms offer a much more holistic view of cinema cultures. If we want to look at the role film plays in producing, disseminating, or subverting language ideologies, understanding it as a collective effort highlights the power of such ideologies and the degree to which they permeate, down to the interactional level, the linguistic practices of filmmaking communities.

Chapter 4: Language ideologies and verbal art: the Punjabi *barhak*

4.1 Verbal dueling and the *barhak*

The previous chapters of this dissertation focused on language during filmmaking and the discourses around language and cinema that arose during my ethnographic research. However, this dissertation argues that in order to take a holistic view of the relationships between and discourses around language and cinema, language *in* film should also be a major object of study. This chapter investigates the verbal dueling style, *barhak*, prevalent in Punjabi cinema in Pakistan. Verbal dueling is an extremely fruitful source for data on language, culture, and power. As Joel Sherzer points out, “Verbal dueling is at the heart of the intersection of speech play and verbal art and reflects and expresses in extremely creative ways the essence of the relationship between and among language, culture, society, and the individual.” (Sherzer 2002: 69) As described in the introduction, although Punjabis are the largest and most powerful ethnic group in Pakistan, Urdu and English, rather than Punjabi, are the preferred languages of cultural and political elite, while Punjabi on the other hand, is often described as the best language for speech genres such as jokes and insults (*gāliyā*), the latter particularly salient to this chapter. A set of related stereotypes exists about Punjabi; that it is the language of the backwards, the rural, the crude; that it is, above all, “loud.” This converges with the discourses around Punjabi cinema, discussed in detail in the previous chapters, as unpolished and slapdash, violent and vulgar, the purview of the uneducated working-class men. All of these common notions about Punjabi come to bear in on-screen verbal duels, yet I argue

that these verbal duels are based on the pleasurable reappropriation of these stereotypes. Galinsky et. al. refer to reappropriation as “the process of taking possession of a slur previously used exclusively by dominant groups to reinforce a stigmatized group’s lesser status” (2013:2020). Although loudness and the slinging of (sometimes graphically violent) insults are disfavored in some spheres of interaction (particularly official or formal spheres), films create a space where they become markers of heightened wit, power, and masculinity. That is, the very features for which Punjabi is denigrated are reappropriated, repossessed, and skillfully deployed on screen for the enjoyment of the audience.

In the film context, the *barhak* can be described as an artful style of verbal dueling, challenge, threats, and insults that features loudness and shouting, the use of exclamatories (e.g. "oye!"), and invokes discourses of courage, strength, honor, kinship and caste ties, piety, and revenge. It can be characterized as a 'masculine' genre, but is also performed by women, playing into stereotypes of the rough-and-tumble *jattī*⁵³ and the strong mother figure who stand in stark contrast to the weeping, passive heroines of Urdu cinema. The *barhak* serves the important narrative function of heightening tension before a fight—generally the hero and villain will exchange verbal blows before they physically attack each other—and it also can prolong the conflict even after the physical fighting is done, for example when physical fighting is rendered impossible by the interference of the police. Maya Singh’s Panjabi Dictionary of 1895 defines the verb form of *barhak* thus: “BARHKANĀ v. n. To roar (as a bull), to speak in a gruff, hoarse tone” (1895:100). Outside of film, *barhak* is

⁵³Female of the Jatt caste

often used as a general term to describe insults or scolding (or the joking imitation thereof); it develops into verbal dueling only when it occurs between equals. One party offers a threat or challenge, and the other party is compelled to respond to maintain their honor or social standing. For example:

Husband: Tũ gharõ bār niklī te maĩ teriyã ãngã bhann desã!

If you leave the house I'll break your legs!

Wife: Ve ullū de patthe tũ maĩnũ hatth lāh ke te vex!

You idiot,⁵⁴ touch me and just see what happens!

Gazdar's definition of *barhak* in film is rather telling: "The verbal brawl called barrak [sic], in *Punjabi slang*, is the hallmark of the movie...a high-pitched, full-throated, threatening yell, a sort of warming up, a prelude to a brawl... [it is] a part of Punjabi life and culture. It is a bold challenge to the opponent" (1997:134, emphasis mine). Note that *barhak* is relegated to the category of 'slang,' even though it is not an uncommon or unusual term across various Punjabi dialects and sociolects. Although Iqbal Sevea's investigation of masculinity in Punjabi cinema makes mention of the *barhak* as "exaggerated and loud verbal brawls...an important and incredibly popular cinematic oratorical style," he also glosses over much of the nuance of these duels, describing their role as merely serving "as a prelude to actual combat" (2014:134-135). I argue that the *barhak* is in fact as important, if not more important, than "actual" (i.e. physical) combat, and that both the display of skill and the

54 Lit. 'student of an owl'; in Punjab and across North India owls are thought to be the stupidest of creatures.

reappropriation of stereotypes lie at the heart of what makes these films enjoyable and popular. In analyzing and describing the *barhak*, I use it as a lens to explore cinematic portrayals of class, caste, gender, ethnicity, and power.

Verbal dueling offers incredibly rich terrain for the study of language, power, and performance. Cook writes that verbal dueling “manifests itself in the exchange of clever and intricate insults and boasts, in storytelling competitions, or the setting of verbal puzzles, such as riddles” (Cook 2000: 65). In its manifold forms, verbal dueling has been observed and studied in diverse locations and cultures, among others in African American groups (Labov 1972, Smitherman 1977, Rizza 2012), in Greenland (Kleivan 1971), Lebanon (Haydar 2014), Turkey (Dundes, Leach and Özkök 1970, Glazer 1976), Tuscany (Pagliai 2009, 2010), and in Homeric and Old English poetry (Parks 1990). Joel Sherzer (2002:63) notes that verbal dueling involves play with rhyme, rhythm, phonological, syntactic, and semantic elements. All of these are certainly involved in the *barhak*; take for example the following, one of the most famous and iconic dialogues of Punjabi cinema, delivered by Sultan Rahi in the 1979 super-hit film *Maula Jatt* (dir. Yunus Malik).

Maule ne Maule nū nañ māreya te Maulā nañ mardā!

Maula ERG Maula DAT NEG kill-PERF.Msg then Maula NEG die-
PRES.Msg

(If) Maula doesn't kill Maula then Maula doesn't die!

This particular line is well known to many, if not most, Pakistanis, even those who do not watch Punjabi cinema. Among its poetic elements are alliteration of nasal sounds,

parallelism, and also a pun on the name Maula. *Maulā*⁵⁵ can mean ‘lord,’ ‘ruler,’ ‘master,’ or ‘patron,’ and is also commonly used as an epithet of God. Thus in referring to himself in the third person—rather than simply saying ‘I won’t die unless I kill myself’—Maula invites the comparison with God as well, essentially arguing that the only person stronger than Maula is God. This also is suggestive of Maula’s piety, that his strength is divinely ordained, and that God wills him to stay alive and continue fighting.

At the center of verbal dueling is the dialectic between conflict and cooperation. That is, in order to sustain the duel, the participants must both be in conflict with each other—otherwise why fight at all?—and also cooperate with each other to respond in appropriate ways, for example following conventions of style, turn-taking, content, and so on. Comaroff and Roberts note that “it is in the context of confrontation—when persons negotiate their social universe and enter discourse about it—that the character of that system is revealed” (1981:249). Moreover, conflict not only reflects the social order but also plays an important role in creating and enforcing it (cf. Briggs 1994: 10-12). Pagliai argues against an overly simplistic, structural-functional view of verbal dueling as merely an alternative to fighting, “as the catharsis of aggression among young men” and offers instead the definition of verbal duels as “a genre of argumentative language that entails exchanges between two persons, parties, or characters that challenge each other to a performative display of verbal skillfulness in front of an audience” (2009:63). This emphasis on the performance is highly useful for the understanding of verbal dueling in film; rather

55 From the Arabic root ولي denoting proximity, relatedness, or guardianship.

than seeing the *barhak* or similar genres as ‘blowing off steam’ to avoid physical confrontation, as an uncontrolled byproduct of aggression, this perspective posits verbal dueling as artful and strategic conflict, an art form created with an audience in mind. Exploring the *barhak* as verbal art, (and not ‘slang’), helps to undermine the discourses of Punjabi as an uncivilized or uncouth language, to destabilize the binary that places shouting at one end and wit at the other, and to foreground the linguistic content of Punjabi cinema as a verbal art form.

Joel Sherzer has argued that “it is especially in verbally artistic discourse such as poetry, magic, verbal dueling, and political rhetoric that the potentials and resources provided by grammar, as well as cultural meanings and symbols, are exploited to the fullest and the essence of language-culture relationships becomes salient” (1987:296). Verbal dueling has other forms in Punjabi culture as well, notably in the folk musical genre *ṭappe*. Often performed during rituals leading up to the wedding, they generally feature witty insults and flirtations sung back and forth in a competition between a male singer or singers and female singer or singers. The verses may be improvised, but there are also many *ṭappe* that have been made popular by recording and are widely known and repeated. Here is an example of a few verses, two stanza pairs from the popular “Ciṭṭā kukuṛ banere te” (‘A white rooster on the edge of the roof’).

Female(s):

Etthe pyār de pucch koī nā

Etthe pyār de pucch koī nā

Tere nālō naiyyo bolnā

Tere mūh te muchh koī nā

Don't ask for love here

I won't talk with you

Don't ask for love here

There's no mustache on your face

Male(s):

Mazā pyār dā cakk lāgā

I will taste the enjoyment of love

Mazā pyār dā cakk lāgā

I will taste the enjoyment of love

Je terā hukam hove

If you give the order

Maī tā dāṛhi vī rakkh lāgā

I will even grow a beard

Female(s):

Bāge vicc āyā karo

Come into the garden

Bāge vicc āyā karo

Come into the garden

Jadō assī sō jāiye

When I go to sleep

Tussī makkhiyā uṛāyā karo

You shoo away the flies

Male(s):

Tussī roz nahāyā karo

Take a bath every day

Tussī roz nahāyā karo

Take a bath every day

Makkhiyā tō ḍarde o

You're afraid of flies

Guṛ thoṛā khāyā karo

Then eat less sugar!

Each stanza consists of three lines, a repeated first line that frames the proposition found in the following two lines—a structure that will come into play later in this chapter. As mustaches are a sign of masculinity, the suggestion in the first

stanza is that the man here is either too young or not virile enough to be bothered with; he should neither waste his time nor hers in trying to woo her. His response is fairly good-humored, offering to even grow a beard if she orders it, he assertively states that he will indeed taste the enjoyment of love. In the second pair of stanzas again the female part again insults the masculinity of the male, suggesting that he come meet her in the garden not for a tryst but in a servile capacity, to shoo away the flies while she sleeps. The male response is slightly more forceful this time, suggesting that her sugar-eating and poor hygiene are actually responsible for her fly problem. She doesn't need a fly-swatter, she merely needs to bathe regularly!

Although the context of performance is different than in cinema, and the battle here is ultimately a flirtatious one, there are important similarities between forms such as *tappe* and the filmic *barhak*. In both cases, a wide variety of cultural symbols are invoked in order to frame the relationship and assert power over the other party through the deployment of wit. In addition to one-upmanship, both depend on cooperation between the participants to sustain the conflict for the benefit of an audience's pleasure. Moreover, similar poetic and semantic processes are at play, again, all focused primarily on the audience rather than the interlocutors.

A variety of scholars⁵⁶ on language and media have classified film audiences as eavesdroppers or overhearers. Erving Goffman was perhaps the first to advance this theory, referring to theater audiences as “supernatural out of frame eavesdroppers” (1981:83). Marta Dynel (2011) problematizes this concept, stating instead that film viewers are “ratified listeners.” She points out that in film,

56 Cf. Bubel 2008, Goffman 1981, Kozloff 2000, Richardson, 2010.

“characters talk heedless of the viewer, but their interactions are fully dependent on the underlying layer [of discursive and cinematic techniques] controlled by the film production crew, who are well aware that conversations held at the inter-character level of communication are subject to the viewer’s interpretation” (2011:1632). That is, there is an entire network of authors responsible for a given message, and those messages are deployed with film audiences fully in mind. I follow Dynel in arguing that it is not productive to focus only on the content of onscreen dialogue, separating it from what describes as “the collective sender’s communicative strategies” (ibid.); that is, by thinking of film viewers as overhearers or eavesdroppers we ignore the fact that an entire community’s meaning-making work is ultimately directed at the film audience. Thus, conceiving of viewers as ratified listeners, rather than eavesdroppers (even supernatural ones), strengthens an understanding verbal art in film as performance.

Verbal dueling is performative in the Austinian sense that it has illocutionary force, which can enact and inscribe identities and power. Bauman and Briggs argue that illocutionary force is “Not simply a product of the referential content and/or syntactic structure of particular sentences,” rather it “can be conveyed by a host of elements from micro to macro and, most importantly, by the interaction of such features” (1990:64). In the examples below, this force not only works to emphasize a dynamic of conflict between the characters who are themselves performing the duels, but also works in building an idealized cinematic Punjab, with a social order and morality that can sometimes finds itself at odds with the nation-state. This resonates with Michael Lempert and Luke Fleming’s assertion of the power of taboo or vulgar language to immediately alter and create contexts simply by the fact of its utterance

(2011). While not taboo language in the strictest sense, the *barhak*, with its loudness and its insults, is far from polite speech. Not only does it have the power to invoke a certain kind of Punjab, it also offers a subversive comment on the value Punjabi language itself, reveling in the loudness, the rudeness, and the violence that are so often invoked in discourses that marginalize the language.

I argue that the *barhak* itself is equally important to, if not more important than, the actual fight sequences; it is the emblematic linguistic form of the Punjabi film; while the term literally refers to roaring or yelling, as a speech genre it can be broadly described as shouted verbal dueling between hero and villain that generally occurs as a prelude to or woven into a fight scene, and which indexes a particular kind of Punjabi identity that is pointedly rural, hypermasculine, and proletarian. Sevea (2014) goes further in explicitly connecting the *barhak* with caste hierarchies. Caste began to be identified with qualities such as strength and fighting ability as a result of colonial army recruitment and ethnological practices, particularly following the 1857 First War of Indian Independence.⁵⁷ The British recommended certain ethnic groups as more suited to military service based on their supposed strength, hardiness, and masculinity (in contrast with the supposed weakness and effeminacy of other groups); among these ‘martial races’ were Punjabis (particularly Sikhs but also Muslims), specifically those belonging to the Jatt, Dogar, and other agricultural castes. In analyzing the series of films based around the character of Maula Jatt, Sevea argues that “the Jatt’s superior masculinity is itself reified by the very fact that the other caste groups are valued according to characteristics that are supposed to mark out a manly

⁵⁷ For a detailed account see Streets 2004, Rand and Wagner 2012.

Jatt” (2014:131). Although the various definitions of *barhak* cited above tend to deemphasize its artistry and perhaps (over)emphasize its loudness and violence, loudness and violence are indeed central to this verbal art form and contribute to its aesthetics, again as a reappropriation of stereotypes. As I will demonstrate below, they are also directly connected with notions of power, violence and masculinity. Following Anthony Webster (2009), I look to David Samuels’ notion of ‘feelingful iconicity,’ an “emotional attachment to aesthetic forms” (2004:11). Inasmuch as the semantico-referential content of language is often privileged (both by scholars and in the ‘common sense’ notions of speakers) over its poetic and aesthetic functions, attention toward those functions can be seen as resistance (Webster 2009:53). The loudness in the film—and imagine that to be increased tenfold when the film is viewed in a theater, the speakers cranked up to deafening levels—contributes to the audience’s enjoyment of and attachment to a feeling of powerfulness in rural, proletarian Punjabi identity.

4.2 *Shock and awe, kharāk and oye!*

In this section I analyze an example from the seminal Punjabi film *Maula Jatt* (dir. Yunus Malik 1979); this film is inarguably the best-known Pakistani Punjabi action film, and indeed many times during my research I heard Punjabi action cinema as a whole referred to (albeit dismissively) as *Maulā Jatt-walī filmē* (‘*Maula Jatt*-type films’). The film’s importance to this cinema is immeasurable, as such I take it as a paradigmatic example of this genre. In the scene described below, hero Maula Jatt (Sultan Rahi) and his nemesis Noorie Natt (Mustafa Qureshi) encounter each other for

the first time along a deserted roadway. At first they do not realize who the other is; that revelation comes halfway through the scene and the moment is marked by fast cuts, extreme zooming, and thunder sound effects. Otherwise most of the scene is edited using a classic pattern of shot-reverse shot, alternating mid shots and close ups. In transcribing the film, I have divided their dialogues into lines with divisions marked by audible pauses and often also by pronounced changes in the actors' bodily position, such as crossing to the other side of the shot, spinning away from the interlocutor and towards the camera, or brandishing a weapon. There also tend to be long pauses between turns, and no overlaps. While I found no previous studies on turn taking with reference specifically to Punjabi, in their cross-linguistic study (which compiled data from English, French, German, Dutch, and Japanese) Helder and Edlund have observed that although the phenomenon of turn-taking in conversation is highly complex and variable, the most common interval between turns at talk is "a slight gap, or a just noticeable gap" (2010:564). Emanuel Schegloff notes that the organization of turn-taking is based around cooperation towards the possibility of responsiveness: "one participant being able to show what they are saying and doing is responsive to what another has said and done" (2007:1). In a scripted, fiction film, this cooperation is merely based on the conversational organization of the script; as the participants are not concerned with co-constructing their own emergent and contextualized exchange (except to the extent that they must convincingly imitate "real-life" conversation). rather they are performing utterances (generated by the screenwriter) for the benefit of an audience, which is spatially and temporally distant. Thus maximizing pauses gives more time for the audience to enjoy and appreciate each turn at talk, it builds suspense, and it is purposefully 'dramatic' as opposed to

‘natural.’⁵⁸ These turn-taking conventions also can be thought of as an element of a filmic register, discussed in detail in section 4.5 and in Chapter 5. Following Daniel Lefkowitz’s call for “a linguistic anthropology [that] recognizes that visual and aural systems of meaning are intimately related and complexly interconnected in the process of social communication” (2003:93), it is important to note that visual elements, music and sound effects all work together with film dialogue to produce meaning. In this example, as is typical of Punjabi films, key lines of dialogue are often further sonically emphasized with echo effects applied to the voice, the sound of thunder crashing, or the use of background music. These are complemented by the visual aspects as well, including fast repeated zooms, spinning of the camera, and rapid cuts back and forth between the interlocutors, to create a sense that something significant has just happened.

Example 4.1: Maula and Noorie meet for the first time

(Maula rides up on a horse to where Noorie is standing, waiting for him with a smile)

- Maula:**
- 1) Nassaṅ dā navā bahānā soc rihā?
 - 2) Yā eh murdā but
 - 3) sirf dāṅg de sahāre khilotā ai!

58 This ties in with other ways this cinema tends towards a more overtly theatrical style rather than an insistence on realism. For instance, actors regularly deliver their lines facing the camera, in the style of a stage performance, rather than each other. Over the shoulder shots are actually less common during these duels (again perhaps as a result of an aesthetics of constraint), it is more common, for instance, for an actor to stride across the shot, crossing in front of his interlocutor, and deliver his lines looking not directly into the camera but still facing the audience. Rather than using a shot-reverse shot pattern, the interlocutor’s reaction is shown in the same shot.

Is he thinking of a new excuse to run away,/or is this dead statue/just standing there supported by a stick.

- Noorie:** 4) Ghore tō thalle te ā so::neyā::
5) Tainū te pehle ī chaḍḍ deḥ dā huḥ tak dukh ai.

*Get down from the horse, pretty boy/even now I regret letting you get away.*⁵⁹

- Maula:** 6) Merā dil kahindā ai (*dismounts from horse*)
7) Terī maut dī lakīr (*thumps gaṇḍāsa on the ground*)
8) Mere hatth'icc likhī ai.

*My heart says/the line of your death/is written in my hand.*⁶⁰

- Noorie:** 9) Mainū te aisā hatth labhde ā
10) Ciṭṭe ā gaye ne yār.
11) Zarā oh hatth te vixāo

*(While) I've been looking for such a hand/the white ones have come, my friend.*⁶¹ /Do please show me that hand.

- Maula:** 12) Mainū eh dass oye!
13) Es murde nū borī'cc band kar ke (*strikes a pose*)
14) Bhejnā kitthe ve?

Hey, first tell me this/having placed this dead man into a sack/where should I send it?

- Noorie:** 15) O maidān gallā nāl nāl
16) Gāṭṭe lāh ke jitte jānde ne soṇeyā::!

59 The two had a brief and violent encounter earlier in the film, without realizing each other's identity.

60 A palmistry reference, i.e. Maula is fated to kill Noorie.

61 The white ones seem to refer to hair, that is, he's spent so much time unsuccessfully looking for his equal that he's getting old.

17) (*gestures for Maula to swing at him*) Lā gaṇḍāsa calā!

*Oh, the battlefield is won not with words/but by taking necks (i.e. decapitation),
handsome!/Bring it on, swing your gaṇḍāsa!*

In this first section of the 64-line dialogue (which I have broken up for ease of analysis), the hero Maula and anti-hero Noorie lay the discursive foundation of their encounter as one of violent conflict and a struggle for dominance. Although neither actually approaches the other at this point, they engage in a series of taunts, egging the other on to attack. I want to also bring attention to the fact that with few exceptions character's lines are delivered to be in groups of three phrases, structured much like the *tappe* example given above. Dell Hymes argues that such sequences of three “tend to give an implicit rhythm of onset, ongoing, outcome” (2003:304). This observation can perhaps be applied to some of these (e.g. lines 9-11, 15-17, but not all. Rather the sequence seems to suggest something akin to a setup/punchline; the first line frames the following line pair (or sometimes single line as in lines 4-5). For example, in line 6 Maula frames the veiled threat of lines 7-8 as reported speech; his heart (that is, soul/will/consciousness) says that the line of Noorie's death is written in Maula's hand, that is, that Maula is fated to kill Noorie. Noorie's challenging response—“I've been looking for a hand like that”—actually casts aspersions on Maula's ability to actually kill him; the implication is that he hasn't been defeated yet so how could he be defeated now?

Judith Irvine has argued that “verbal abuse involves evaluative statements grounded in specific cultural systems. Even with a detailed familiarity with cultural context, there can still be no hard-and-fast semantic criterion distinguishing

statements that are abusive from statements that are not” (1992:109). That is to say, an insult emerges in a specific context and cultural framework, and is contingent also on the identities and social relationships of those involved. Here, where the emphasis on masculinity is This is further illustrated in the next section, where Noorie more ironically uses the display of masochistic desire to belittle his opponents’ capabilities.

Maula: 18) Es ḍerh mann dī lāsh te

19) Eh gaṇḍāsa kinnī ko der calegā oye!

Over this one and a half maund⁶² corpse/for how long will this gaṇḍāsa even go?⁶³

Noorie: 20) Oye es piṇḍe te nishān pauṇ laī te maī

21) Pūrā Panjāb phere āvā

Oh in order to get scars on this body I/roam all over Punjab!

Maula: 22) Je Panjāb ne tainū pāgal samajh ke kujj naī ākheyā

23) Te fir jā oye!

24) Jā ke kise mazār te cādar caṛhā!

If [all the people of] Punjab have understood you to be crazy and so not said anything

to you (i.e. not hurt you)/then go!/Go and offer a sheet at some shrine!⁶⁴

Noorie: 25) Es murde nū

26) baḡair dafnāye ṭur jāwā?

62 Mann is the Punjabi word for maund, a unit in the pre-colonial Indian system of measurements. One and a half maunds equals roughly 55 kg/120 lbs.

63 i.e. ‘Your body is so small my gaṇḍāsa will slice through it in no time.’

64 Often mental illness is dealt with through the intervention of spiritual figures, whether living or deceased. Offering a decorated sheet at a shrine is a common method of currying favor, gaining spiritual reward, and having supplications granted. The suggestion is that people just think Noorie is crazy so they ignore him.

This dead guy/should I leave without burying (him)?

Maula: 27) Es ghore te bai ke nass jā oye!

Sit on this horse and run away!

The repeated references to the speakers' opponents as *murdā* ('dead person') or *lāsh* ('corpse') is a metaphorical technique of showing the opponent to be weak and powerless. Additionally, in Islamic cultures, swift burial of a body is paramount; thus in lines 25-26 Noorie offers, in a roundabout way, to bury his already dead opponent; the laconic way he asks whether he should bury him or not almost implies that it's almost not worth his time. His own body is covered with scars that he has presumably gotten from repeatedly fighting and winning. Finally, we have an example of the usage of *pūrā Panjāb* ('the whole/all of Punjab'), which as Ayers points out, is part of a technique used in these films to "valorize a view of Punjab that pays little heed to the necessity of defining Pakistan in national terms" (2008:938).

Noorie: *(laughs)*

28) Oye eh nattiyā⁶⁵ te gidḍar de kann'icc vī pā deiye

29) Te oh vī naī nasdā!

30) Maī te fir Nūrī Natt ā!

Oh if you put these earrings⁶⁵ in the ears of even a jackal⁶⁶ /then even it won't run away/and after all I'm Noorie Natt!

[There is a pause here in which the camera zooms rapidly and repeatedly into

Noorie's face as dramatic music plays; this is a significant plot moment as Maula has

65 Nattiyā seem to be a kind of earring specific to the Natt caste.

66 Jackals are seen as cowardly.

just learned Noorie's identity for the first time.]

- Maula:** 31) Es gaṇḍāse dī tāk te laggā oyā
32) Saṭ nattā dā lau sūṅgh ke samajh jā oye
33) Kih maī kaun ā!

On the edge of this gaṇḍāsa/smell the blood of seven Natts and understand for yourself/who I am!

- Noorie:** 34) Acchā:
35) Te Maulā Jatt tū ai?

OK,/so then you are Maula Jatt?

- Maula:** 36) Apñī latt apñe hatthī lāh ke mere pairā vicc suṭṭ de oye
37) Jatt de kharāk tō bachaṇ dī
38) Eh āxrī sūrat ī

Cut off your leg with your own hand and throw it at my feet/to be saved from the Jatt's power/this is the final way (i.e. your last best chance).

Again in this segment of dialogue we see the synthesis of dialogue, film sound, and camera effects underscoring the importance of the revelation of the character's identities. It also involves the invocation of discourses of caste identity and bloodlines, using these social formations to underscore the characters' power. We also see the use of the term *kharāk*, which I have inadequately glossed as 'power.' *Kharāk* is an onomatopoeic term denoting a particular type of noise, such as wood loudly striking or scraping against wood or metal. It also has obscene sexual connotations—its transitive verb form *kharākāñā*, literally 'to strike or knock,' can also be used to mean, in a pejorative way, 'to fuck.' *Kharāk* and *barhak* are both sound

symbolic forms (as noted above, *baṛhak* denotes the roaring sound of a bull); as Nuckolls (2000:235) writes, as such they “communicate not by referring but by simulating the most salient perceptual qualities of an action, event, process or activity.” *Kharāk* is often used to metaphorically represent the violent and heroic actions of film characters. Take for instance, the proliferation of film titles using the term: *Jatt da Kharak* (‘*kharāk* of the Jatt’), *Gujjar da Kharak* (‘*kharāk* of the Gujjar’), *Kakay da Kharāk* (‘The kid’s *kharāk*), and even simply *Kharak*. Sevea, investigating the notion of *kharāk* in terms of its relationship to masculine power, writes:

“...its meaning has evolved to one that both describes an act (i.e., doing or engaging in kharaak) and an ability/quality. In the latter sense, the term comes to describe the ability of someone to engage in kharaak and is often used to describe the power of someone to overwhelm others. Derivatives of the term have become popular in colloquial Punjabi to describe qualities such as valor, strength, and the potential to strike fear in one’s enemies...The term kharaak is used in Punjabi films and songs (both in Pakistan and India) generally to describe masculine qualities and acts.” (2014:134)

Sevea also notes that “the manifestation of kharaak continues to be associated with loud sounds and oratory in the films” (ibid.), thus relating *kharāk* directly to *baṛhak*. One way of understanding this connection in their usage is the relationship of noise or loudness to power and violence. Both *kharāk* and *baṛhak* straddle the semantic domains of loudness and physical power. Remember from above that *baṛhak* exists as a verb (*baṛhakṇā*), but it is also often found in the compound verb form *baṛhak/baṛhakā mārṇā* (lit ‘to strike/sound a *baṛhak*/*baṛhaks*’). The verb *mārṇā* ‘hit/strike,’ is a semantically rich one, its resonances including both violence (it can also be glossed as ‘kill’) and sounding, as in *sītī mārṇā* ‘to whistle’ or *cīx mārṇā* ‘to scream.’ In foregrounding, in a playful, aesthetically pleasing way, the loudness and violence of Punjabi, *baṛhak* and *kharāk* take advantage of such verb patterns to create

a play between the sonic and the physical.

- Noorie:** 39) Bas kar soṇeyā bas kar
40) Kidre nazar lagdī ū
41) Oye mainū̃ rajj ke vex te laiṇ de
42) Vah rabbā
43) Lattā̃ vī do ne
44) Hatth vī do
45) Sir vī
46) Ikk
47) Inne ām jism vicc te
48) Oh jurrat ā ī nāī sakdī
49) Jihrī Natt nāl̄ ṭakṛā sake

Stop it handsome, stop it/may you not get the evil eye/let me me look to my heart's content/Wow, my God!/There are two legs/and two arms/and the head/is one./In such an ordinary body/that audacity cannot even come/that might challenge a Natt.

- Maula:** 50) Terī badbaxṭī sirf innī ai Nattā̃:
51) Tū̃ Jatt dā sirf nāī suṇiyā ai
52) Oh dā kharāk nāī vexiyā!

Your misfortune is just this, Natt/that you have only heard the name of the Jatt/you haven't seen his kharāk!

In this segment of the dialogue Noorie (in a rather unusual, much longer utterance) implies that Maula is just an ordinary man who cannot possibly take on a Natt, but

Maula's response is that his *kharāk* must be *seen* (*vexiyā*, rather than 'heard,' *suniyā*) for his full power to be understood; not heard, as one might expect, but seen. Thus the lines between the sonic and the physical manifestation of power (that might be visible) are further blurred here.

Noorie: 53) Oye Jattā::!! (*here an echo effect is used*)

54) Eh nū cīr ke vex oye (*rips shirt open*)

55) Tainū patā lage

56) Terā kis balā nāl wāsta piyā ai

Oh Jatt!/Slice this open and see,/you'll find out/what misfortune you've encountered!

Maula: 57) Kuhārī siddī kar oye

58) Jatt dā gaṇḍāsa tere hikk te wajjā

59) Te eh tainū apnā hathyār yād ānā ī

Hey straighten out your axe!/When I strike the Jatt's gaṇḍāsa on your chest/you'll miss your weapon.

Noorie: 60) Oye zabān kaḍḍ ke merī tallī te rakh de oye

61) Jīhne bharī panchāyat'icc merī beṇ dā nā littā sī

*Cut out your tongue and put it in my hand, you/That took the name of my sister in the crowded pancāyat.*⁶⁷

Maula: 62) Oye es hatth nāl tū apnī beṇ nū dolī'cc pānā Nattā::

63) Te dujje hatth nāl tū mainū apnī latt deṇī ai

⁶⁷ A traditional judicial body of rural north India, somewhat like a local open-air court of law with five judges.

With one hand you seat your sister in her bridal palanquin, Natt/and with the other hand give me your leg (i.e. chop it off and give it to me)

Noorie: 64) Oye Jattā::!!

It is notable that this dialogue lasts for nearly four minutes, while the fight that follows only lasts for about 80 seconds before the police break it up. Along with *kharāk*, two other loudness elements can be seen in this segment of dialogue. The first is the exclamatory/interjective particle *oye*, which depending on context could be glossed (very unsatisfactorily) as ‘hey,’ ‘hey you,’ or ‘oh’, but invokes feelings of urgency, emotion, and even aggressiveness (particularly in a fight context). It is a common enough particle in daily usage, but the frequency with which it is deployed in *barhak* is noteworthy, likely displaying a heightened emotional state and conflict inherent in these verbal duels. Note that in this example the frequency of *oye* increases as the dialogue goes on. The second element is *cinghār* (‘scream, battle cry’) a loud and angry roar-like yell that is generally delivered at the moment the confrontation moves from the verbal to the physical, that is, when one opponent finally charges at the other. The *cinghār* acts almost as a sonic punctuation mark signaling that the verbal duel is over, and the physical conflict is beginning. In this sense it resembles what Goffman calls a ‘response cry,’ a “ritualized act in something like the ethological sense of that term. Unable to shape the world the way we want to, we displace our manipulation of it to the verbal channel, displaying evidence of the alignment we take to events, the display taking the condensed, truncated form of a discretely articulated, nonlexicalized expression” (1981:100). It also resonates as a masculine expression of power as it heralds the moment when the opponents begin

their physical struggle. Finally, here we see more imagery of bodily mutilation; the opponent is exhorted to cut out his own tongue to render himself voiceless, and therefore powerless (line 60), and even more humiliating, to proffer the disembodied tongue to his conquering enemy.

Additionally, the dialogue moves from just insulting each other's strength and power to questioning their masculinity in terms of their social position, family relations, and honor. It is when Maula implies that he will have both Noorie's sister and his leg that Noorie is provoked to physical confrontation. In much of this region the worst kind of insults that can be given involve the dishonoring of female relatives⁶⁸ and are actually referred to metapragmatically as *mā dī gālī* or *beṇ dī gālī* ('insult of the mother' or 'insult of the sister'). The maintainence of honor in this context centrally involves the protection of the women in a family and the regulation of their sexuality. The greater threat to Noorie's masculinity is not that he is weak but that he will be placed in a subordinate social position to Maula by Maula's (imagined) marriage to his sister (in the contracting marriages, it is generally the bride's family who are subject to pressure and demands from the groom's family). Maula's threat to sexually possess Noorie's sister and thus occupy a position of relative power over Noorie is coupled with the demand that Noorie also cut off his leg and give it to Maula, rendering him unable to fight or protect his family's honor any longer, and surrendering that role along with his limb.

68 i.e. 'motherfucker' or 'sisterfucker'

4.3 *Maula Jatt, Noorie Natt, and the state*

Chris Rizza has convincingly used Bakhtin’s notion of the carnival or carnivalesque (1984) to examine the practice of verbal dueling in Hip Hop culture. He argues that “both carnival and Hip Hop present alternative realities and worldviews, a “second life” to the dominant *staus quo*” (2012:386). That is, verbal dueling can be used to open up a topsy-turvy discursive world, one that is both highly enjoyable and deeply subversive. In Punjabi cinema as well, verbal dueling helps to destabilize certain power relations, for instance between the central government and the rural periphery, or between the Urdu and English speaking elites and the Punjabi speaking proletariat. This makes up a large part of its appeal. In this two-minute scene, protagonist Maula Jatt (played by Sultan Rahi) and his archenemy Noorie Natt (Mustafa Qureshi), having just had their fight broken up by the police, are being treated in a hospital—conveniently, in adjacent beds. The camera alternates from wide shots of the entire room to mid-shots of each of the characters as they take their turns at speaking, with a consistent pattern of shot-reverse shot. Again, at certain points an echo effect is added to the actors’ voices.

Example 4.2: Hospital scene from *Maula Jatt*

Maula: 1) *laughs (with echo effect)*

Doctor: 2) *Aqal karo Mauliyā*

3) *Tainū xūn dī botal lagī oyī ai*

Use your brain, Maula/you’re hooked up to a bottle of blood!

Maula: 4) *Mainū chadd daktar!*

- 5) Eh nū do botlā xūn diyā aur lā de!
- 6) Es laī
- 7) Kih eh diyā ragā vīc innā xūn jā naī rihā
- 8) Jinnā merī akkh dī lālī vex ke
- 9) xushk o giyā

Leave me alone, Doctor!/Bring him two more bottles of blood!/Because/there isn't even as much blood going into his veins/as, from looking at the redness in my eyes,/has dried up [i.e. he has turned white from fear, his blood has gone dry seeing my angry red eyes]

- Noorie:**
- 10) Ts ts!
 - 11) Daktar sāhab!
 - 12) Eh noṭ eh de sir tō vār ke
 - 13) Aspatāl de os cūre nū de de ā
 - 14) Jīhne
 - 15) Eh dī lāsh nū murde xāne le jānā ai

Psst!/Doctor Sahab!/ Wave these banknotes over his head/and give them to the hospital sweeper/who'll/have to take his corpse to the morgue.

- Maula:**
- 16) *laughs (with echo effect)*
 - 17) Oye eh nū pāgal xāne le jā ke bijlī de jhaṭke lavāo oye
- Take him to the madhouse and have someone give him electric shocks!*

- Noorie:**
- 18) *laughs*
 - 19) Oye bā-vazū ho ke ravī soṇeyā!
 - 20) Maraṇ tō bād
 - 21) Ikk ikk boṭi nū kaṇ ḡusal devegā?

Oh pretty boy, keep yourself in a state of ritual purity!/After you die/who is going to wash every single little chunk of you?

Policeman: 22) Bakvās band kar oye!

23) Te apṇe apṇe biyān likhvāo.

Hey, quit your nonsense!/And each of you make your statements.

Maula: 24) Koī purāṇa biyān paṛh ke dass de sāb bahādur!

25) Eh apī samajh jāyegā

26) Kih Jatt ne sirf ajj tak khaṛāk kītā ai

27) Te huṇ

28) Cann dī caudī nū khaṛāk te khaṛāk rihā!

Just read out any old statement, my brave man!/He'll understand by himself/that up til now Jatt has only made a noise./And now he's roaring at the full moon itself!

Policeman: 29) Hm!

30) Tū apṇa biyān dass oye!

Hmph! (to Noorie)/You, give me your statement!

Noorie: 31) Sirf likhṇā ī naī, yād vī rakhṇā ai thāṇedār sāhab!

32) Aggū tō eh mere piṇḍ āve te rabb dā vāsta ī

33) Eh nū tū golī na marī oye...

34) Eh piḍḍī maī āp mārṇī ai

Don't just write it down, remember it too, Mr. Policeman!/From now on if he comes to my village then for God's sake/if you don't shoot him/I'll kill this little insect myself.

Joel Sherzer has argued that “socially and culturally, verbal dueling focuses on

the boundary between the literal and the play...It tests and protests the boundaries of social relations and taboo topics” (2002:64). This exchange is notable for its invocation of discourses of piety, honor, and courage, mostly through the artful use of indirect threats and comparisons. For instance, Noorie never simply says he is going to kill Maula; rather he compares him to a sacrificial goat (line 12-15) telling the doctor to wave the banknotes over Maula’s head as is done to sacrificial animals in order to remove the evil eye. Traditionally the money is then given away to the needy with the notion that it carries misfortune away with it (a ritual called *sadqa*). He paints a picture of Maula as stupid, weak, unfortunate, and of course, about to die. Later (line 19-21) Noorie invokes another discourse of piety; Islamic funeral practices prescribe a specific ritual of washing the corpse and nobody will care to do it a thousand times on every little chunk of his body, so Maula should constantly be in a state of having performed ritual ablutions as one does before prayers (Punjabi *vazū*, Arabic الوضوء) to make the ritual corpse-washing unnecessary after death. Finally, Noorie directly compares Maula to a tiny insect he is going to crush (line 34). All of these are artful invocations of cultural notions and practices that are highly pleasurable to a Punjabi audience and hallmarks of the *barhak* genre.

Additionally, the notion of loudness—again invoking and maintaining the discursive stereotype of Punjabi as ‘loud’ language—is foregrounded here in three important ways. First and most noticeably, an echo effect is used in two separate instances when Maula laughs (line 1, line 16); it is not present when Noorie laughs, and seems to index that Maula (as the hero) ultimately is more powerful and will overcome Noorie. Even in the hospital bed he radiates power sonically and linguistically. His use of the term *kharāk*, then, is also particularly salient. In the first

instance (line 26) Maula has ‘only’ (*sirf*) been making a *kharāk* sound, implying, that although he is making noise he hasn’t done anything. But in the next line (27), the form is reduplicated intensifying its’ meaning, now he’s making that sound again and again (‘*kharāk*-ing and *kharāk*-ing’) at the ‘full moon,’ i.e. the zenith of all adversaries, which is to say that Noorie is his absolute nemesis, the strongest enemy he has ever faced.

But not only does this exchange, capitalizing on exaggerated qualities of loudness that play into the stereotypes of Punjabi, allow the audience to have a pleasurable reappropriation of these stereotypes, it also helps position the audience in solidarity with Maula and Noorie rather than the bourgeois agents of the state (in this case, the legal/correctional system represented by the police). Following Keith Basso’s account of ‘Whiteman’ joking practices among the Western Apache, verbal playfulness, while on the one hand seemingly antagonistic, on the other indexes certain kinds of social intimacy between interlocutors. Maula and Noorie, while enemies, are of equal status and share a common set of social values; they are denizens of the same world. The audience here is ‘in’ on the joke, aligning them with the protagonist and antagonist rather than the outsiders: the doctor and the policeman. By coding the conflict as playful, the *barhak* exchange serves as a demonstration that Maula and Noorie are enemies on equal footing; the policeman and the doctor, symbols of the bourgeois state, do not engage in *barhak*. They serve merely as a stage for the protagonist and antagonist to continue their fight. Here it is important to note that often in Punjabi films such outsiders (particularly higher agents of the state such as judges and politicians) are often portrayed as speaking Urdu rather than Punjabi, demonstrating both their outsider status and their alignment with official domains of

the state.

4.4 Gender and caste

Women's performance of *barhak* in films is particularly interesting and complex. Given that *barhak* is considered to be an extremely masculine genre vis-à-vis the relationship of sonic to physical violence as discussed above, one might not expect female performances of *barhak* to be at all common, yet they are highly prevalent. Most kinds of female characters—heroines, villains, and mothers—engage in *barhak* when the narrative calls for it, and moreover they engage in it with men and not just each other. Given the great variety of forms of verbal dueling across the world Pagliai argues that “interpretation of verbal duels as connected to masculinity cannot be generalized.” (2009:69) This is somewhat of a departure from the larger body on research on gender and conflict, in which women are often found to be more indirect and cooperative than men (cf. Kakava 2008:656-657), although this view has often been rightly critiqued (cf. Goodwin 2006, Hasund 1996). Kulick points out that Western academic analyses of conflict tend to overemphasize settlement and resolution, as well as overly focusing on the language of men, arguing that “women, who are often portrayed in ethnographic accounts as instrumental in provoking the conflicts that the men find themselves compelled to settle, are almost never represented in the ethnographic-sociolinguistic data.” (1993:511) There are also counter-examples; Kulick finds that in Gapun, Papua New Guinea, expression of anger is thought of as a stereotypically female emotion, and men thus distance themselves from it: “Men in the village like to pretend that they have no conflicts with

others.” (1998:142) Edwards argues that *busin* verbal dueling in Guyana is associated specifically with femininity, and a man who attempts to engage in it “opens himself up to the insult of being labeled an *antiman* (i.e. a homosexual)” (1979:25). No formal study has been done on the role of women in conflict or women’s insults in Punjab, two questions become salient here, first of all, why Punjabi films—and not Urdu—feature women partaking in verbal duels, and how can women’s verbal dueling in these films inform our understanding of the conflicts in terms of gender and caste? In the following example, the villainous Noorie Nutt’s sister Daro is seeking out Maula to take vengeance for her brother’s arrest.

Example 4.3: Daro goes looking for Maula Jatt

Daro: 1) Ve gāḍeyā!

2) Etthō Maule dā piṇḍ kinnā dūr ai?

Hey cart-driver!/How far is Maula’s village from here?

Muda: 3) Je sajjan baṇ ke pucchiyā te tere qadmā’cc

4) Te je dushman baṇ ke pucchiyā te terī qabar tō vī agge vekh

If you ask as a friend then it’s at your feet/and if you ask as an enemy then look beyond even your grave.

Daro: 5) Ve kammī eh kidre Maule dā piṇḍ te naī?

Hey low-caste, this isn’t Maula’s village, is it?

Muda: 6) Eh sohñī nār kidre nattā dī te naī?

This beautiful woman isn’t one of the Natts is she?

Daro: 7) Ve nattā nū te har nasal jandī ai!

Every race (i.e. all peoples) know the Natts!

Muda: 8) Te Maulā Jatt̃ nū

9) Sārā jag jāndā ai!

And the whole world knows/Maula Jatt!

Daro: 10) Ve terā gaḍḍ picchā mār de kammiyā!

11) Maī es gaḍḍ te Jatt̃ di lāsh le jāṇī ai!

Hey bring your cart behind me, low-caste!/I'm going to take the Jatt's dead body away on it!

Muda: 12) Te es gaḍḍ te tuhāḍḍe piṇḍ

13) Jatt̃ ne janj le ke jāṇā ai!

And on this cart to your village/the Jatt is going to bring a wedding procession!

Daro: 14) Ve maī te maṅṅ ā Shakkū Sher dī jīhdī hikk te vīyā bandeyā dā lau
ai

15) Shukar kar ve oh jel vicc ai

16) Naī te tere gāṭṭe dī tār vī siddī oh dī hikk te jāṇī sī!

Hey I'm the fiancée of Shakku Sher, in whose chest is the blood of twenty men./Give thanks that he is in jail/otherwise the stream of your neck (i.e. the blood spurting out of it) would have gone straight into his chest!

Here Daro and Muda use metaphors of marriage, status, and honor in order to assert power over each other as he denies her request for information of Maula's whereabouts. She repeatedly refers to the man as *kammī*, a highly derogatory term for a member of any number of lower castes. She also performs a higher social status by imbricating herself in legitimate kinship and marriage relations. If a family's honor (*ḡairat* or *'izzat*) is in a large part sustained by the control of women's sexuality and

maintenance of social ties through marriage and through women’s seclusion from non-related (*ġair, nā-mahram*) men. Of course, Daro here is moving around on her own and is speaking openly to a strange man, something that (whether or not it is common practice in daily life) is less preferred in the hegemonic conception of how an honorable and pious Muslim woman should behave. Rather than subverting this concept Daro relies on the same discourses of honor in order to display her own power. Thus when Muda implies that Maula Jatt is going to come and marry her or one of her kinswomen (lines 12-13), her response is that she is engaged to Shakku Sher, who “has the blood of twenty men in his chest” (i.e. he has killed twenty men), thus making explicit the connection between legitimate sexual and marital connections and her own claim to power. In Urdu language films, women’s direct participation in such conflicts is rare; as discussed earlier the ideal heroine of Urdu cinema is passive and soft-spoken, suffering in silence and a paragon of self-sacrifice. By creating a space for women to participate in conflict in film, Punjabi cinema does undermine the kind of hegemonic Islamic womanhood supported by the Pakistani state. This is not to overgeneralize or argue that Punjabi cinema is completely reversing gender roles or toppling gendered power structures—the emphasis on piety and patriarchy are still strong in these films—but I do argue that it opens up a space for alternate conceptions of womanhood that appeal in to both male and female viewers of these films.

Muda: 17) Ey oh jel ī ṭhīk ī giyā

18) Sher dī āmad hove te gidḍarāñ nū lukṇā ī paindā ai!

Hey he rightly went to jail/when the lion comes jackals have to hide!

Daro: 19) Eh zubān kaḍḍ ke saḍḍe hatth te rakh de ve

20) Es laī kih maĩ Nūrī Natt dī beṇ ã!

Cut out this tongue and put it on my hand/Because I am the sister of Noorie Natt!

Muda: 21) Fir matthe te hatth rakh ke salām kar nī

22) Es laī

23) Kih maĩ Nūrī Natt dā bhaṇvaiyyā vā

Then put your hand on your forehead and salute me, girl/because/I am the brother-in-law of Noorie Nutt! [i.e. I'm going to marry/sexually possess you]

Daro: 24) Ve kammiyā:::! (echo effect, zooming, raising gun to shoot)

Hey low-caste!

[At this moment, the police appear as if out of nowhere and reach up to take the gun from her hands]

Policeman: 25) Xabardār kuṛiye!

26) Tainũ es halate vex ke mainũ yaqīn ho giyā kih tũ waqaī Mākhe nũ
qatal kītā

27) Giriftār kar do

Beware, girl!/Seeing you in this state I have become certain that you really did kill

*Makha.*⁶⁹ /Arrest her.

Daro: 28) Jānna ai thāṇedārā kīhnũ giriftār kar riha aī?

Policeman, do you know who you are arresting?

Policeman: 29) Oh thāṇedār mu 'attil ho cukā ai jihṛā oh de kolō ḍardā sī

That policeman has been transferred who used to be afraid of him [Noorie].

⁶⁹ In the previous scene Daro had killed her own brother, Makha.

- Daro:** 30) Esī laī sāb
31) Oye gāḍḍī!
32) Ve Maula āve te ehnū ākkhe kih apṇī vasīhat likhvā ke rakkhe
33) Je beṇ naī te bhrā zarūr pahunc jāyegā!

That's why sir./Hey cart-driver/If Maula comes then tell him to get his will written and ready./If not the sister then the brother will definitely arrive!

Sevea has argued for the importance of understanding masculinity not only in terms of gender but also in terms of caste identity (2014:131), noting that Punjabi films tend to portray certain higher agricultural castes—Jatt, Gujjar, Arain—as archetypes of rural Punjabi masculinity, while denying this privilege to lower castes. One way Daro asserts dominance over Muda is by repeatedly identifying him as a *kammī*, a member of a lower caste (lines 5, 10, 24). She also emphasizes her own identity as a member of the Natt caste (lines 7, 20), thus placing herself in a higher caste position in relation to him as well as placing herself within a protective network of kinship ties. In fact, in the scene immediately preceding this one, she mercilessly shoots her own brother, Makha, for dishonoring the Natt family by losing to Maula Jatt and then coming home alive. For Daro, maintenance of the honor of her family is paramount, even to the extent that she will kill her own brother for endangering it. Finally, as in the previous example, she shows a complete disdain for the authority of the state in the form of the policeman, implying that if he only knew who she was he wouldn't dare arrest her, and he should in fact be afraid of her too.

4.5 *Filmi Punjabi and enregisterment*

Richard Popp (2006:7) connects Bourdieu’s notion of ‘linguistic marketplace’ with media consumption, arguing that “media texts act as a resource from which individuals can draw speech patterns—and the cultural capital with which they are linked.” In investigating the *barhak*, this chapter has tried to address the sorts of cultural knowledge and linguistic and social values that emerge in a cinematic context, with the understanding that these filmic texts continuously circulate and reproduce them—again, I offer the example that many Pakistanis who claim not to watch Punjabi films, or that they have never seen a Punjabi film, will nonetheless recognize some of the more famous dialogues from *Maula Jatt*. Moreover, they can recognize and perform “Filmi Punjabi” outside of its context, for example in advertisements such as the circa 2009 television ad for Bodyguard soap described below. Although the ad does not feature a full dueling *barhak* performance (it is, after all, only 39 seconds long), it does feature imitation of *barhak* style, in terms both of its semantic/referential content, its delivery (particularly loudness), and even a direct quotation of well-known film dialogue. In the ad, which now circulates on YouTube and other video sharing websites, a young woman standing in a cornfield is circled by three threatening looking men, personifications of dirt. All the actors in the ad are in traditional *lacha-kurta*, as they might be if they were actors in a Punjabi film, and the men wear mustaches. The woman shouts “Bodyguard!” and the ad cuts to an actor with a heavy mustache and thick hoop earrings (“Bodyguard Man”), holding a *gaṇḍāsa* like an archetypical Punjabi film hero. In a perfect performance of Filmi Punjabi, he defends her “honor,” in this example, her cleanliness from them:

Example 4.4: Bodyguard Soap Ad

Woman: 1) ::screams::

2) *Ve Bodyguard!*

Oh Bodyguard!

BG Man: 3) Oye safā'ī de dushmano! Beṇ nū chaddo!

Hey enemies of cleanliness! Leave my sister [alone]!

Villain: 4) Navā āyā ai sohṇeya?

Are you new here, pretty boy?

BG Man: 5) Merā nā

6) *Bodyguard ai*

My name/is Bodyguard

Villain: 7) Tere vāste te mail te pasīnā ī kāfī ne!

Grime and sweat are enough to deal with you!

Titles on the screen identify the villain's two henchmen as *Mail* 'dirt, grime,' and *Pasīnā* 'sweat.' The Bodyguard Man strikes Grime and Sweat with a bar of Bodyguard soap, knocking them to the ground, defeated. A few quick shots are shown of him scrubbing their heads under the water coming from a tube well (it is common practice in rural areas to bathe in tube wells). The woman applauds, and the villain, eyes wide, turns as if to sneak away. The final shot has the Bodyguard man standing with the woman and addressing the camera directly:

BG Man: 8) Mail te pasīne dī jaṅg icc-

In the battle against grime and sweat-

Voiceover: 9) (sung) *Bodyguard:::rd*

10) hameshā!

Bodyguard, always!

This ad directly references the character of Noorie Natt in the use of his catchphrase “Navā āyā ai sohneya?” (line 4), which is another of the most famous dialogues of *Maula Jatt*. Also, like Maula and Noorie, the hero carries a *gaṇḍāsā* and the villain carries a small axe on his shoulders. Interestingly, however, the villain in this advertisement is markedly more soft-spoken than the shouting hero; perhaps this is shows a contrast with the original film, in which Noorie and Maula were somewhat equal opponents. Here Bodyguard soap is supposed to easily vanquish sweat and grime, and correspondingly the villain’s soft-spoken tone is no match for the hero’s loudness. This advertisement is an example of the way *Filmi Punjabi* has become enregistered, how it now circulates in other spheres and is used to index particular qualities of those using it, in this case strength, emphasized by the sound-symbolic quality of loudness, and honor, here vis à vis the protection of women. Of course, the ad is also supposed to be funny—a parodic imitation of the cinematic genre that exaggeratedly shows the strength of the soap, but the humor counts on the audience’s ability to interpret, appreciate, and enjoy the parody.⁷⁰ Further, the fact that the advertisement has been shared online, at times with mocking or ironic comments, is

⁷⁰ I take the view here that parody is not always mere insult, but can also show affection for or act as tribute to its object. Cf. Rossen-Knill and Henry 1994.

evidence that the value and import of these cultural and linguistic forms shifts contextually. Again, the linguistic marketplace and notions of social and linguistic capital have become key to discussion of one of the central concepts useful for conceptualizing the performance of linguistic differentiation: register.

Asif Agha writes that cultural value is “a precipitate of sociohistorically locatable practices...which imbue cultural forms with recognizable indexical sign values and bring these values into circulation along identifiable trajectories in social space” (2007:190). The cultural form in question here is what I refer to as *Filmi Punjabi*, a register of Punjabi with particular qualities that is deployed in cinema and thus associated with certain specific social identities and values. Following Inoue’s description of Japanese women’s language (2002), *Filmi Punjabi*, including features such as loudness and verbal dueling, is not necessarily a reflection of empirically observable speech patterns of Punjabis, but rather a cultural speech category that indexically constitutes reality “not by naming and pointing to a preexisting object but by inverting the order of the indexed and indexing as if the indexed preceded the indexing” (2002:412). *Filmi Punjabi* is a performance register that includes the *barhak*, but extends beyond verbal dueling alone; it has a highly conventionalized set of grammatical features and focuses around particular content domains. The complex relationship of *Filmi Punjabi* to regional dialects is explored in detail in the following chapter, but I want to emphasize that it inheres not just in a particular set of grammatical and lexical features but also in a verbally artistic, performative mode. Agha’s work on register, emblem, and cultural value, (2001, 2003, 2005) is useful in contextualizing the kind of social work that film language, including forms like *barhak*, can perform. I look particularly at his notion of enregisterment, “whereby

distinct forms of speech come to be socially recognized (or enregistered) as indexical of speaker attributes by a population of language users" (2005:38). This concept has been used to study a variety of situations of twinned linguistic and social differentiation, for instance the formation of national publics in Catalonia (Frekko 2009), urban dialects in nineteenth century England (Beal 2009), the linguistic inscription of Pittsburghese identity in radio talk (Johnstone 2011), and folk-linguistic photo blogging (Heyd 2014). Enregisterment is a highly productive concept for addressing the emergence and social valences of *Filmi Punjabi*, and can help in understanding the role that cinema plays in creating and perpetuating the meanings attributed to certain kinds of language.

Agha lists three steps in the process of register formation: contrastive individuation, biographic identification, and social characterization (2005:43-45). That is, first the hearer becomes aware of linguistic difference (what he terms a 'voicing contrast'), then associates that difference with the voice of a particular (real or fictional) person, and finally metalinguistically assigns socially salient qualities to that voice. In the case of *Punjabi* cinema, there was always a linguistic difference between *Punjabi* and Urdu cinema, but with the crystallization of the *Punjabi* action cinema as a genre in the 1970s, *Filmi Punjabi* becomes enregistered not long after the release of *Maula Jatt*, which is also the same time parodies of *Punjabi* cinema begin to appear (Kirk N.d.b). This is also the same time the rise of *Punjabi* cinema comes to be hegemonically seen as the aesthetic downfall of Pakistani cinema overall (as discussed in Chapter 2). I argue that it is this moment, when film and film language come to be co-constructed as (overly) loud, crude, and vulgar, that is the point at which *Filmi Punjabi* has begun to index the qualities, the social statuses, and the

aesthetic value of film.

Filmi Punjabi allows the particular qualities associated with this Punjabi identity and social order to be appropriated and circulated by a wide variety of audiences and for a wide variety of means. Many of the features of *barhak* (particularly loudness, sound symbolisms, yelling and interjections, and so forth as described above), inform much, if not most, film language outside of verbal dueling—there is very little place for the soft-spoken, the sensitive, the urban, or the ‘refined’ in most Punjabi films. I argue that *barhak* has thus become enregistered as indexical of supposed attributes of Punjabis in general, and working class and rural Punjabis in particular: that they are (for better or worse), loud, crude, rough, and hypermasculine (or in the case of women, they step into masculine roles). Throughout post-*Maula Jatt* era of Pakistani cinema, the *barhak*-inspired register of ‘Filmi Punjabi’ became the major discursive mode of Punjabi cinema. As discussed in the following chapter, it also forms the basis for the linguistic creation of an idealized cinematic Punjab.

Chapter 5: Performative dialect leveling and the ideal cinematic Punjab

5.1 Regional language varieties in Punjabi cinema

In this chapter, I argue that dialect leveling in Filmi Punjabi maximizes comprehensibility for a wide audience, performs a heightened degree of Punjabiyat, and also does the work of creating a Punjabi of nowhere, of a placeless Punjab that works as a proxy domain where caste, class, and anti-state contestation takes place. At the start of this research project, I had taken it for granted that the variety of Punjabi used in cinema would simply be the Majhi dialect, generally accepted by sources writing in India, and to some extent Pakistan, as “standard” (Bhatia 1993, Gill and Gleason 1969, Grierson 1916, Singh 2006, Singh 1970). As Majhi is not only supposed to be the standard dialect but is also said to be spoken in the areas surrounding Lahore, it made sense to me at that time that this should be the language of films; indeed it seemed close enough to the Punjabi I had studied in India, and the variation could perhaps be explained by the same kinds of nationalist, post-Partition divergence that have impacted Hindi and Urdu (cf. King 1994, Rahman 2011). Yet immediately I began to find problems with this explanation. First of all, there is no standard Punjabi in Pakistan, and opinions differed widely among my informants as to which variety should be considered the most 'correct,' 'true,' or 'pure'--obviously problematic notions in the first place. Linguists working on Punjabi, when they don't avoid the issue of dialect variation altogether, do not seem to have reached any particular consensus how many dialects there are (admittedly a problematic question) or what the major differences might be. This is understandable, not only because the

academic material is relatively sparse for such a widely-spoken language, but also because like many if not most languages, the language known as “Punjabi” is a vaguely bounded continuum rather than a monolith, one that varies not just along geographical lines but also in connection with religion, caste, and class. While I want particularly to avoid reifying any hard political or ideological boundaries between the various dialects, differences are strongly perceived and commented on by Punjabis themselves. Many of the native speakers I worked with did have ideas about how many regional varieties there were, what differences made them salient, and which ones were the most significant; in considering their opinion I take the perspective of folk linguistics and perceptual dialectology,⁷¹ that non-linguist speakers can offer a great deal of insight into a language even when they do not use the terminology and frameworks developed by linguistics as an academic discipline. As Dell Hymes argues, “If the community’s own theory of linguistic repertoire and speech is considered (as it must be in any serious ethnographic account), matters become all the more complex and interesting” (1972:39).

As is common practice in linguistic anthropology, I found it more productive to focus not merely on colonial-era grammars and other such ‘legitimate,’ ‘scientific’ texts but to understand what kinds of social meaning inhere in the speakers’ perception of variation and difference. Taking into account nonspecialist views of language variation is also a highly valuable way to refocus the discussion of variation onto what Eckert calls the “indexical field, or constellation of ideologically related meanings, any one of which can be activated in the situated use of the variable”

71 Cf. Hoenigswald 1975, Niedzielski and Preston 2000, Preston 1989, 1993, 2002, Preston and Long 1999

(2008:454). I argue that understanding the scope and social salience of linguistic variation in Pakistani Punjab is key to understanding how and why *Filmi Punjabi* emerges, and to what purposes it is deployed. For this purpose it is important to look to both formal linguistic data and that of non-specialists.

As Niedzielski and Preston write, I reject “the notion that folk belief is a static set of wisdoms trotted out at opportune or culturally caricaturistic moments. Folk belief is also the dynamic process which allows nonspecialists to provide an account of the environment” (2000:24). I often asked my informants, who were almost entirely native Punjabi speakers, about the kind of Punjabi used in films. The initial response I received was usually, after a pause, “Just Punjabi. Normal Punjabi.” Here they would invariably use the English word ‘normal.’ I would usually ask them to elaborate, asking whether it was closer to the Punjabi of one particular place or another. No perfect consensus was ever reached on where the language of films might have originated, but it was unanimously agreed that the Punjabi in films was neither the Punjabi of Lahore (this is discussed below) nor the Punjabi of any other major urban centers, and decidedly not of “the village” (*gāḍvālī* or *pinḍ’ālī* Punjabi). Rather than referring to a particular village or a particular dialect, instead they seemed to be indexing the perceived linguistic difference between the urban centers of Lahore and more rural areas. I was repeatedly assured by my city-dwelling informants that if I was to hear “village Punjabi” I wouldn't understand a word of it, something that proved in varying degrees to be true when I traveled in rural areas. It became clear in these interviews that while there exists a wide variation and speakers are aware of it, *Filmi Punjabi* was meant to be maximally understandable not only across Punjabi-speaking areas but to those who were also not Punjabi speakers. While this is

certainly economically motivated (there was a time when Punjabi films were hits even outside of Punjabi-speaking areas), it appears to be ideologically motivated as well. As Michael Silverstein points out, "...any linguistic, a.k.a. sociolinguistic, fact is necessarily an indexical fact, that is, a way in which linguistic and penumbral signs-in-use point to contexts of occurrence structured for sign-users in one or another sort of way" (2003:195). In the previous chapter, I explored how verbally artistic film dialogue, and particularly features like loudness and forms like the *baṛhak*, come to be indexical of a certain kind of Punjabi identity. In this chapter I investigate Filmi Punjabi in terms of its dialectal variants and features, and how particular dialect features are selected in a pattern of leveling to create an imagined Punjabi lect that is simultaneously that of everywhere and that of nowhere.

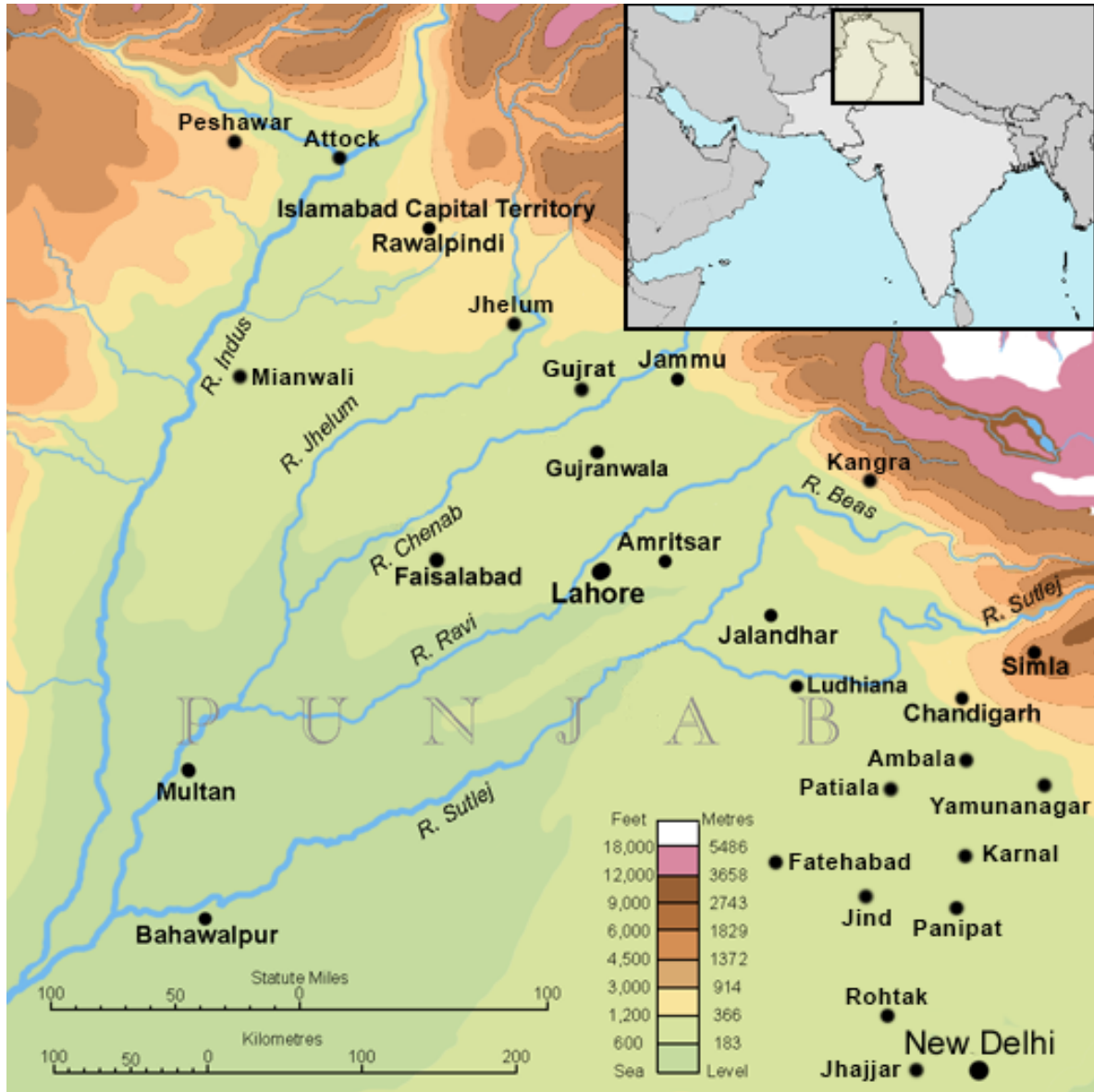
5.2 Dialect variation in Punjabi: history and issues

While much of the more recent linguistic research on Punjabi avoids the question of language variation altogether, colonial-era research was greatly invested in establishing fixed boundaries and dialect classifications (cf. Cohn 1996). The *Linguistic Survey of India*, a massive, 30-year project administered by linguist and British civil servant Sir George Grierson, divides what is now conventionally thought of as Punjabi into the separate languages of Punjabi and Western Punjabi or Lahnda, although he cedes that the two merge into each other so gradually that "it is quite impossible to point to any boundary line or approximate boundary line between the two forms of speech" (Grierson 1916:608). However, he argues that Western Punjabi/Lahnda is "an altogether different language, akin to Sindhi and Kashmiri"

(ibid. 619). As far as Punjabi ‘proper’ is concerned, he cites the Majhi dialect as the standard (ibid. 609) and the Punjabi of that area as the most ‘pure.’⁷² I think it is worth noting that this clearly problematic yet supposedly common sense observation did not seem to be supported by the Punjabi speakers I worked with in Pakistan, who stated variously that the ‘purest’ form of Punjabi was Potohari, or that of the Salt Range, or that of the area near Jhang, or some other variety. In fact none of them ever actually pointed towards the Punjabi of Lahore (ostensibly the Majhi dialect) as being the ‘purest’ form; rather this Punjabi was often seen as having been overly influenced or even corrupted by Urdu. Shackle argues that it is “preferable to disregard Grierson’s awkward construct, which is quite absent from popular local usage, in favour of a closer attention both to objective linguistic features...and to the locally current perceptions of linguistic identity which derive from the usual complex interface between these features and politico-cultural factors” (2003:583). Grierson’s splitting of Lahnda from Punjabi is untenable not merely because there is no clearly defining boundary but also because speakers certainly do not conceptualize these as two different languages, although they certainly may and do make distinctions contra Grierson’s schema, for example between Punjabi and Siraiki, or Punjabi and Dogari, etc. Other colonial sources offer similarly questionable classification schemes. Bailey and Cummings, for example, are careful to note that they avoid hypercorrect ‘imitations’ of Urdu as well as the language of the uneducated: “In the following pages an effort has been made to avoid forms which are confined to illiterate

72 “Panjabi of the purest kind is spoken in the upper part of the Bari Doab.” (1916:608) This is the area between the Ravi and Beas, slightly north of Lahore and generally associated with the Majhi dialect.

Map 5.1 Undivided Punjab (present day)



Source: Wikimedia Commons, created by Apuldrum

Map 5.2 Undivided Punjab (ca. 1916)



Source: Douie 1916 (<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/24562>)

villagers, to avoid also imitations of Urdu and to preserve the forms which are commonly used in daily speech amongst people of moderate education, such as schoolboys or shopkeepers” (1925:iv). Their focus is quite large, including “the Panjabi spoken in the districts of Sialkot, Gujranwala, Lahaur, Gujrat, Firozpur, and to some extent in the adjoining districts. The language of the northern part of Gujranwala has been taken as the standard” (ibid.:iii; for reference see Maps 5.1 and 5.2). Beyond differentiating this language from the language of the Sikhs (although it seems at times they make this distinction on the basis of script alone), they give little discussion of dialect variation, although from other writings and my own experience there is a great deal of variation within this area.

Wilson’s 1899 *Grammar and Dictionary of Western Panjabi* mentions a Chenab Valley dialect, a Doab dialect, a Thal dialect, a Salt Range dialect, and a dialect spoken in the plans of Shahpur (around Sargodha and Gujrat). Like Bailey and Cummings, he states that these are decidedly different from the language of the Sikhs “east of Lahore” (1899:9). He also offers the reassurance that “as the dialects spoken in Shahpur [the focus of his book] do not differ greatly from those spoken in the neighboring districts, I trust this compilation will be found useful by all officers serving in the country between the Ravi and the Indus” (ibid.:11). Much like Grierson and Bailey, the ultimate purpose of this research is clearly to provide language training to British imperial officers and employees in order to further the project of colonization.⁷³

73 For a detailed discussion of the utilization of language learning by the British imperial powers in

Singh (1970) offers the most comprehensive list of dialects, although the discussion is limited and at times problematic. He lists the dialects of Punjabi as the following: Majhi, Doabi, Malwai, Bhattiani, Rathi, Powadhi, Multani, Shahpur Doabi, Thali, Potohari, Western Pahari, Dogari, Kangri. However, several in this list are widely recognized by both linguists and by their speakers as separate languages, including Multani (Siraiki language), Thali (which Singh links with the Hindko language), Western Pahari (a group of languages), and Dogari⁷⁴ and Kangri. Echoing Grierson, Singh describes Majhi, which he locates in districts around Amritsar, Gurdaspur, and Lahore, as “the purest form of Punjabi...the language of the new Punjabi literature and the same form is the official language of the newly created Punjabi Speaking State”⁷⁵ (1970:126). Bhatia, following Singh, lists the following “traditionally recognized” dialects: Majhi, Bhattiani, Rathi, Luchianwi, Doabi, Patialwi, Powadhi, and Malwi, although he does question the validity of affording Rathi, Ludhianwi, Patialwi, and Bhattiani independent dialect status (1993:xxix). However, it seems that this ‘tradition’ is rooted in Grierson’s awkward (and nearly century-old) colonial-era schema rather than either local metalinguistic classificatory schema or accurate contemporary research. In any case Bhatia, like most scholars working in contemporary India, focuses on Majhi with little to no discussion of other varieties. Christopher Shackle rightly alludes to the problems with this issue, stating

India, see Cohn 1996:16-56.

74 Grierson also takes Dogari/Dogara as a dialect of Punjabi (1916:643-645), proving how eternally problematic the distinction between language and dialect is. It was officially recognized as a national language of India in 2003.

75 A reference to the Punjab Reorganisation Act of 1966, which redrew state boundaries in India along linguistic lines.

that while a focus on Majhi (or what they term Modern Standard Panjabi of India) “has the merit of convenience and some degree of comprehensiveness since the same language with the usual lexical differences is also widely current in Pakistan, it risks seriously distorting any general understanding of the Panjabi linguistic area as a whole” (2003:585).

As stated above, Punjabi varies not just according to geographic region but also in conjunction with religious, class, and caste identity, but very little work has been done to understand these additional factors in variation. Also problematic when trying to grasp the dialect geography of contemporary Punjab is the impact of the upheavals and migrations of past hundred years or so. The British imperial government created a series of canal colonies in Punjab during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, bringing in settlers from areas across Punjab to farm in newly irrigated lands.⁷⁶ These migrations displaced semi-nomadic pastoralists or forced them to settle and adopt an agrarian lifestyle, and also brought in members of agricultural castes from ‘overpopulated’ areas to lands newly opened up for agriculture by the introduction of complex irrigation systems. Even more dramatic were the migrations of the 1947 Partition. Beginning in August of 1947, somewhere between ten and fifteen million people moved across the newly demarcated boundary between Indian and Pakistani Punjab. (Talbot 2007a:152, Zamindar 2009:6, Bharadwaj et. al. 2008:39). Not only did Punjab see the largest amount of migration by far, an incredibly large percentage of the population was uprooted. Bharadwaj et. al. find that “Pakistani Punjab saw 20.92 per cent of its population leave while by

76 For a detailed history of this project see Ali 2014

1951, 25.51 per cent of its population was from across the border; in Indian Punjab, 29.78 per cent of the population left and 16.02 per cent of the population was migrant” (2008:40). Although scholarship in recent years has produced a plethora of works on the upheaval and violence of the Partition and its legacy in the subcontinent, there has been little research on the relationship of these migrations or the earlier canal colony migrations to language shift and change in India or Pakistan.⁷⁷

5.3 Dialect leveling, style, and enregisterment

Even taking into account the problems and gaps in the scholarship on language variation in Punjab, this body of work shows that significant regional variation does exist. In comparing film language with this scholarship I argue that film language has undergone a process of dialect leveling and enregisterment in order to create a lect that is both maximally understandable to allow for a wider audience appeal and also maximally Punjabi, that is, that embodies the qualities of Punjabiya further emphasized by the visual and narrative content and verbal art such as *barhak*. This further supports the argument that in these films, and indeed in perhaps all sound films, the linguistic, the sonic, the narrative, and the visual are in fact inextricable from each other, and careful consideration of one should not automatically preclude the rest.

Otheguy and Zentella group the related terms of dialect leveling, dialect

⁷⁷ Shackle (2003:583) does hint at “massive disturbance to local dialectal patterns as the result of the communal transfer of populations in 1947,” but unfortunately does not offer specifics.

convergence, koinéization, and homogenization together, arguing that they “are best understood as theoretical constructs proposed to explain differences that arise between, on the one hand, a reference lect and, on the other hand, a lect that has become separated and that is now in contact with, and under the influence of, not a different language, but a different form of the same language with which it is becoming more similar” (2012:18). For *Filmi Punjabi* I avoid using the terms koiné and koinéization because they are fairly ambiguous, as pointed out by Siegel (1985), and also the situation of *Filmi Punjabi* doesn’t appear to fit the notion that a koiné is “the stabilized result of mixing linguistic subsystems such as regional or literary dialects... [that] usually serves as a lingua franca among speakers of the different contributing varieties and is characterized by a mixture of features of these varieties and most often by reduction or simplification in comparison” (Siegel 1985:363). *Filmi Punjabi* is not a lingua franca, and due to the relatively fast rise and current drop in production of Punjabi films its stability seems to be questionable as well. Rather I refer to the literature on dialect leveling to understand *Filmi Punjabi*’s particular grammatical and morphosyntactic features. A great deal of the literature on dialect leveling has investigated “new settlements to which people, for whatever reason, have migrated from different parts of a single language area” (Kerswill 2002:669). For example, Brownie (2012) finds dialect leveling in Mussau, Papua New Guinea, to be tied closely with missionization and schooling. Larsson et. al. investigate koinéization, including dialect mixing and simplification, in the language of Swedish immigrants to the United States over the last fifty or so years (2015). *Filmi Punjabi*, in the sense that it is a marked performance register rather than everyday speech, cannot be said to be a direct product of migration. However, it would be naive to ignore the

history of migration in Punjab—from the canal colonies to the Partition to more recent rural to urban population shifts—and the influence of this history on language, which must be taken into account.

Additionally, dialect leveling is generally attributed to accommodation in face to face interaction. Trudgill writes that “in face-to-face interaction...speakers accommodate to each other linguistically by reducing the dissimilarities between their speech patterns and adopting features from each other’s speech,” and these reductions gradually become more or less fixed (1986:39). This too might pose a problem for understanding Filmi Punjabi as a product of dialect leveling processes. However, more recently Sayers (2014:187-188) points out that the term ‘face-to-face’ may be problematic, and that media may indeed have an important role to play, but cautions that linguists also pay attention to two often-overlooked factors: “firstly, the way global variants are actually used in mass media; and secondly, the way individual people engage with mass media—and precisely how that might figure in their appropriation of variants” (ibid.:187). Bell (1984) takes into account that speakers may be accommodating to not just the immediate interlocutor but also to an audience; this insight, too, is key for the study of language in film.

It is this accommodation that Coupland (2001, 2007) focuses on in his description of “dialect stylization”. He writes, “Whereas sociolinguistics has generally assumed that speakers speak in their own voices, *in propria persona*, stylizing speakers speak *in altera persona*, or at least allow that inference to be drawn” (2001:349). Nowhere, of course, is this truer than for films, where the speakers are actors, voicing fictional characters. Coupland posits speech style as “predicated on the basis of both dialect (relating to who the speaker socially is) and register (what

situational constraints are operative), together” (2007:15). As I discuss in detail below, this linking of dialect with register, and the notion that speakers (and in the case of film, also directors and screenwriters) consciously pick and choose which dialects and registers to perform, is vital to understanding the way that Filmi Punjabi has gone through a dialect-leveling process to become enregistered itself.

To understand the role dialect leveling in plays in Filmi Punjabi, I rely on the film *Humayun Gujjar* (dir. Parvez Rana, 2001), to provide the data set. I chose this film in particular because it is an archetypical hit film of this genre, and it was made well after generic and linguistic conventions of analog Punjabi cinema had more or less crystallized. Moreover, it was directed by the same filmmaker who made *Sharabi*, and had many of the same cast and crew, providing continuity with the linguistic observations I made during my participant-observation research. I do believe that linguistic variation in cinema may be more complex than this one film allows, particularly over time. However, given observations of film language and Punjabi in general, I believe that a film like *Humayun Gujjar* provides an excellent starting point for understanding issues of Punjabi language variation on screen. As discussed above, the material on the Punjabi language, particularly its Pakistani varieties, is relatively limited and rarely exhaustive or authoritative, so I relied on a variety of sources for comparison between film language and everyday language, including articles, descriptive grammars, and teaching manuals dating from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first century. I also draw on native speakers’ insights collected during my fieldwork, the data that caused me to question my initial assumptions about film language.

Due to the aforementioned complex and varied provenance of scholarly

materials on dialect variation in Punjab, I had to narrow down the particular language features of my interest into those that varied most widely and obviously between them. Additionally, I was faced with the issue of sound quality on the films analyzed; it is practically impossible to get a clean print of a Punjabi film (with a very few exceptions), and although the poor sound and image quality and practices of unauthorized copying and distribution play important and interesting roles shaping film production and reception, they certainly make careful linguistic analysis more challenging. It can be difficult, for instance, to hear aspiration and voicing when the sound is unclear. Therefore, I tried to be conservative in choosing only features I was sure I could conclusively identify. This focus was also conditioned by fact that I was drawing my corpus from a limited source. A good part of the post-colonial research previously done on dialect variation focuses on the distribution of particular lexical isoglosses, for example Gill's *Linguistic Atlas of the Punjab* (1973). Because I was working from a film rather than live speakers, I felt that the sample size was too small and limited in content to provide conclusive evidence that certain lexemes were preferred over others. Lexical evidence is discussed briefly at the end of this chapter, but does not make up the bulk of this investigation. For this analysis, I settled on three variable linguistic features: pronominal enclitics, future tense formation, and a single phonological variable, the presence of voiced aspirate consonants. I chose these features based on their high degree of variability and their uniqueness to Punjabi vis-à-vis Urdu and other languages in Pakistan (hence their potential for emblematic value). Combined with some of the native-speaker generated linguistic data from my field research, I believe they paint a compelling picture of how the selection of certain dialectical variants over others creates a performance register that ties together an

idealized, imagined Punjab.

5.3.1 *Pronominal Enclitics*

The first feature I focus on, the use of pronominal enclitics,⁷⁸ a linguistic feature that is found in some varieties of Punjabi and decidedly not in Urdu. Bailey and Cummings write that these are used to indicate the direct or indirect object, to indicate possession or connection, used with the past tenses of transitive verbs to indicate the agent or subject of the verb, and for the second person singular and plural to indicate the person addressed (1925:349-350). They can attach to verbs or nouns, and so perform a range of grammatical functions. In varieties of Punjabi that have them, they often do grammatical work that might otherwise be performed by postpositions. In the following example, third person pronomial enclitic –sū is affixed to the verb stem de- ('give'), to mean 'give it to him.' In varieties of Punjabi that do not have pronomial enclitics, this must be expressed using a pronoun and a postposition:

Pronominal enclitic vs.	Pronoun+postposition
de- sū	oh-nū̃ de
Give- PE.3sg	3sg-DAT give
'Give it to him'	'Give it to him'

Pronominal enclitics are a hallmark of what Grierson refers to as "outer circle"

78 A pronomial enclitic is a grammatical particle that has functions somewhat like a pronoun, but that generally must be phonologically joined to the preceding word. An example of an English enclitic (not pronomial, however) is the possessive -'s.

Indo-Aryan languages. He writes: “Lahnda shares with Kashmiri and Sindhi the use of pronominal suffixes...These are employed in exactly the same way as in Persian or Hebrew, and can be used for any case” (1919:260). He also notes that they are used in Majhi, though claims them to be absent from any other dialect of Punjabi (1916:617). However, it must be remembered while admitting that there is no clear boundary, he also separates what is today considered to be one Punjabi language into two separate languages: Punjabi (to the east) and Lahnda (to the west). According to this classification system, Lahnda would include what is now generally considered to be the separate language of Siraiki. While Siraiki does boast the full paradigm of pronominal enclitics Grierson proposes for Lahnda (cf. Shackle 1976:101), there is no other evidence that any variety of Punjabi possesses the full paradigm.⁷⁹ The presence of pronominal enclitics does seem to be an areal feature; Emeneau proposes that they develop as a result of contact with Iranian languages (1980:155). Masica, on the other hand, argues that while Old Indo-Aryan had enclitic pronouns, and that “they may have survived in the west reinforced by Iranian influences...the actual history of the Northwestern forms is not clear” in part because of the variety of grammatical roles they play (1991:344).

I find a tendency for sources from post-Partition India (e.g. Bhatia 1993, Gill 1969, Singh 2006) to not discuss pronominal enclitics at all, perhaps unsurprising as they do not seem to be present in any of the varieties of Punjabi spoken in India. However this feature is discussed in the colonial grammars as being characteristic of

⁷⁹ The closest to full paradigm is purportedly in the Salt Range (Wilson 1899:34).

certain varieties of Western Punjabi or Lahnda. In addition to Grierson's discussion of Lahnda, Bailey and Cummings' 1925 *Panjabi Manual* refers to a system of pronominal suffixes.⁸⁰ Butt (2004) gives the most recent description of pronominal

Table 5.1 Variation in pronominal enclitics

Source	Person	Singular ⁸¹	Plural
Grierson 1919:260-261 (Lahnda)	1	-s, -m	-s, -se, -ahsē
	2	-ē, -ī, -ū, -ō, -ō̃	-ne, -nihē, -innhē
	3	-s	-nē
Shackle 2003:614 (Siraiki)	1	-s, -m	-se
	2	-ō, -o	-he
	3	-i	-ne
Butt 2004:8	1	∅	∅
	2	-i	-je
	3	-s(u)	-ne
Bailey and Cummings 1925:349-350	1	∅	∅
	2	-ū, -ī, -ā, -ī̃	-je
	3	-s, -su	-nē, -ṇe
Wilson 1899:34	1	-m	-sē, -ahse
	2	-ī, -ū̃	-ne, -nine
	3	-s	-nē
Kirk N.d.a	1		
	2	-ī, -ū	-je/-ne
	3	-sū	

⁸⁰ Although they use the term suffix, they note that in the future tense they are often infixes, something not observed in any of the other sources' discussion of these particles. They may be making this claim because they appear between the verb stem and another affix.

⁸¹ Grierson, Bailey and Cummings, and Wilson have slightly more complex paradigms in which they subcategorize the clitics according to different grammatical usages; I have simplified their paradigms here as this difference is not relevant to this particular chapter.

enclitics available; she doesn't address dialect variation, but her data is elicited from speakers from the Gujrat district in Pakistan. She also suggests that the suffixes may be used in Lahore, something supported by my own field observations. In any case, judging by the available evidence, pronominal suffixes seem to occur mainly on the western side of the Punjabi-speaking region, and in both the extreme north and the south.

From the data listed in Table 5.1 it is clear that the pronominal enclitics exhibit considerable dialectal variation, but that they also are present in most of the varieties of Punjabi spoken in Pakistan (to say nothing of closely related languages such as Siraiki, Pahari, Sindhi, and so on). Shackle unfortunately does not provide evidence for Punjabi, but does state that “all varieties of Panjabi to the west of Majhi possess pronominal suffixes which may be attached to inflected verbal forms to express various syntactic relationships of the pronoun to the verb” (2003:613). Again, my data as well as that of Butt (2004) demonstrate that these enclitics can affix to nouns as well as verbs. Rather than offering Punjabi forms, he gives the Siraiki forms for comparison, and I have included them here.

Another issue with earlier sources on pronominal enclitics is that even when scholars describe them, they do not address in detail the function of the enclitics in discourse, particularly if we refuse to take at face value Grierson's claim that they function identically to those in Persian and Hebrew. In Shackle's view, the use of pronominal suffixes “normally presupposes suppression of the full pronominal forms capable of expressing the same syntactic functions” (2003:613). Butt (2004) also focuses on the role of enclitics in terms of Punjabi's tendency to pro-drop, writing that “information-structural backgrounding...accounts for the postverbal placement of

pronouns. Because these pronouns represent backgrounded information, they also tend to be distressed and therefore also tend to cliticize” (2004:17). While her data is limited, my own field observations, conversations with native speakers, and data from the films themselves tend to support this. In example 5.1, the character of Naji Butt’s mother is explicitly addressing her son using the kinship term *puttar*, with the pronominal enclitic, rather than the pronoun, showing that he is the agent of the verb. In the context of the utterance the second person pronoun is discursively redundant, as she is addressing him directly. Examples 5.1-5.3 show the use of pronominal enclitics (in bold) in *Humayun Gujjar*:

Example 5.1: Naji Butt’s mother to her son

Eh kī kītā-ī puttār?

This what do.PERF-Msg-**PE.2sg** son

What is this [that] you did, son? (i.e. what have you done?)

Example 5.2: Humayun addresses thugs

Oye la’ū dā chirkā vī kītā-**je**

Hey blood GEN.Msg sprinkle too do.PERF-Msg-**PE.2pl**

Te oh vī Humāyun Gujjar de yār dā?!

And that too Humayun Gujjar GEN.Msg.OBL friend GEN.Msg

Oh you even sprinkled blood/and that too of Humayun Gujjar’s friend?!

Example 5.3: Humayun’s father to police inspector

Piṇḍe te pavē kanūn dī vardī-**ū**

Body-Msg.OBL on might law GEN.Fsg uniform-**PE.2pl**

Par sīne icc dil nā̃ dī koi shai te hai?

But chest-Msg.OBL in heart name GEN.Fsg any thing then be.PRES.3sg

You might have the uniform of the law on your body/but is there anything named a heart in your chest? [i.e. you have no heart]

These three examples (and there are many more) show that although the paradigm of pronominal suffixes used is small, and their usage is perhaps somewhat less common than in everyday speech, they do occur in Filmi Punjabi. This contradicts the notion that the language of films is ‘central’ Punjabi or Majhi dialect. I was only able to find examples of *-s(ū)* (3sg), *-ū* (2sg), *-ī* (2sg), and *-je* (2pl) in the *Humayun Gujjar* corpus. This may be due to the fact that the corpus was limited to a single film, and that the nature of film dialogue might lead to a disproportionate amount of second person examples. However, it also supports the idea of internal consistency in Filmi Punjabi; although there are a many possible attested forms (Table 5.1) this set of four is agreed upon and used repeatedly. Their usage in film is consistent a backgrounding function as argued by Butt; this allows for emphasis of other information, for example key verbs and nouns, that is a highly valuable resource for verbal art and dramatic storytelling. As Butt points out, “backgrounded information is still recoverable within the clause, pro-dropped information is wholly context dependent” (2004:19). In example 5.1, for instance, rather than using the second person pronoun *tū̃*, as in “*tū̃ kī kītā?*” (‘what did you do?’) Naji Butt’s mother’s use of the second person singular enclitic *-ī* with the verb *kītā* (done) still shows that Naji Butt is the agent, but allows her to emphasize the act of doing,

commenting perhaps on the severity of the actions. Thus we might more freely translate the utterance into colloquial English (here taking liberties with tense and aspect) as “What have you *done*, son?!” A similar process happens in example 5.2, where the second person plural enclitic *-je* attached to the verb *kītā* in the phrase *la ’ū dā chir̥kā vī kītā-je* (‘you even sprinkled/spilled the blood’), again emphasizes the action rather than the doers (redundant perhaps because they are being directly addressed), in this instance giving a sense of ‘how *dare* you’ to the act of sprinkling or spilling the blood. In example 5.3 the enclitic *-ū* is affixed to a noun rather than a verb, but the process of encliticization is similar, *vardī-ū* (‘uniform’ + 2pl enclitic) foregrounding the uniform and backgrounding the wearer, as it is discursively redundant to point out that it is the policeman wearing it since he is the interlocutor. Moreover, there is an added indexical bonus that as these are found in some varieties of Punjabi, but not in Urdu, they also index a greater degree of Punjabi-ness.

5.3.2 Future tense formation

The formation of the future tense in apparently all dialects of Punjabi is achieved through the combination of a verb stem with a set of suffixes inflected for person and number, and sometimes gender, a common pattern in Indo-Aryan languages. For a full comparison of future tense formation in four of the sources discussed as well as from my own preliminary field research on the variety of Punjabi spoken in the Okara district, see Table 5.2. With slight variations, all accounts fall into two main paradigms, which for ease of reference I will call the G paradigm

(Bailey and Cummings, Bhatia, Shackle) and the S paradigm (Kirk, Wilson).⁸² In the *Humayun Gujjar* corpus, all future tense forms fit into the G paradigm, which is also the one found in most descriptions of Majhi/Modern Standard Punjabi. Bailey and Cummings report that the future suffix *-gā* is in variation with an alternative *-dā*, thus you might find *karēdā* instead of Majhi *karēgā* ('You [singular] will do'). Both Shackle and Bhatia note the potential dialect variation in some of the suffixes between *-ā/e* and *-ū/-ū*, leaving us with the possibility of *karūgā* instead of standard Majhi *karāgā* ('I [masculine] will do'). Neither of these variants are attested in *Humayun Gujjar*, or indeed in any Pakistani Punjabi film I have seen, although I have heard the second one used in Indian Punjabi cinema.

Example 5.4: Naji Butt to policeman

Giriftārī maī tenū os vele **deāgā**

arrest 1sg 2sg-DAT that time **give-FUT.1-Msg**

Jadō maī es kuṛī nū oh de kar chaḍḍ ke **avāgā**

When 1sg this girl DAT 3sg GEN.Msg.OBL house leave CP **come-FUT.1-**

Msg

I will let you arrest me only when I come back having dropped this girl at her house.

Example 5.5: Humayun Gujjar explains the need for revenge

Oye duniyā dī koī gujjarī māñ nañ to **sakegī**

⁸² The G paradigm suffixes seem to have developed from a Prakrit verb participle *gā* 'go,' (cf. Kellogg 1893:231), while S paradigm suffixes can be traced to Old Indo-Aryan inflected future tense and linked more broadly with Indo-European sygmatic futures (cf. Masica 1991:289). For a detailed discussion of variation in Indo-Aryan future tense formation, see Butt 2012.

Oh world GEN.Fsg any Gujjar-F mother NEG wash **be able-FUT.3-Fsg**
Oh, no Gujjar mother in the world will ever be able to wash it [the stain of defeat]!

Example 5.6: Humayun Gujjar to Bhola Sunyara

Oye ajj tō bād es bāzār wale mūh naī **karāṅge!**

Oh today ABL after this market toward face NEG **do-FUT.3-Mpl**

Je mūh kītā te ihnā dī(yā) lāshā

If face do-PERF-Msg then 3pl.OBL GEN.Fpl.OBL corpse-Fpl.OBL

diyā safā bichā **deāge**

GEN.Fpl line.Fpl spread **give-FUT.1-Mpl**

Oh after today they won't turn their face [i.e. look] toward the market/and if they do turn their face then we will spread out rows of their corpses!

It could perhaps be argued that the G forms are favored because, the Majhi dialect is most commonly considered as “standard,” although as discussed earlier the notion of a “standard” Punjabi does not really apply in Pakistan. However, I believe there are two more compelling reasons for the usage of G forms. Although no isoglosses can be drawn with any certainty, comparison with the geographic described listed in the various sources above would indicate that, in Pakistan at least, the G forms tend to be concentrated in the east, particularly the area around Lahore. Speakers outside this area would be more likely to use S paradigm suffixes; this also broadly fits with Grierson’s inner circle/outer circle division of Indo-Aryan, in which Punjabi lies at or across the border. In view of these films’ emphasis on *rural* Punjab, we might expect to see some of the S forms represented rather than the G forms. This

Table 5.2 Variation in future tense: Paradigms for *karṇā* ('do')

Source ⁸³	Person	Singular		Plural	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Shackle 2003:608	1	karāṅgā/ karūṅgā	karāṅgī/ karūṅgī	karāṅge	karāṅgiā
	2	karēṅgā	karēṅgī	karoge	karogiā
	3	karegā	karegī	karange	karangiā
Bhatia 1993:248	1	karāṅgā/ karūṅgā	karāṅgī/ karūṅgī	karāṅge	karāṅgiā
	2	karegā	karegī	karoge	karogiā
	3	karegā/ karūṅgā	karegī/ karūṅgī	kar(a)ṅge	kar(a)ṅgiā
Bailey and Cummings 1925:319	1	karāṅgā/ karādā	karāṅgī/ karādī	karāṅge/ karāde	karāṅgiā/ karādīā
	2	karēṅgā/ karēdā	karēṅgī/ karēdī	karoge/ karode	karogiā/ karodīā
	3	karegā/ karedā	karegī/ karedī	karṅge/ karnde	karṅgiā/ karndīā
Wilson 1899:64	1		karsā		karsāh/karsāhā
	2		karse		kareso
	3		karsī		karsin
Kirk N.d.a	1		karsā		karsaē
	2		karsē		karso
	3		karsī		karsaṅ

is decidedly not the case. An argument could be made that the dialects featuring G forms have more prestige, but as no form of Punjabi in Pakistan can actually be said to be a prestige form (as discussed earlier), this seems unlikely. I argue instead that it is because of their close resemblance to Urdu future tense forms, which also feature [g] in their stems as well as inflecting similarly for gender and number, that the forms are retained (for comparison see Table 5.3).

⁸³ Transliteration schemes have been homogenized for ease of comparison; for original transliterations see Appendix 3.

This would allow for greater comprehension to those who do not speak Punjabi but have familiarity with Urdu, either as a first language or as a *lingua franca*. As Punjabi films during their heyday were popular in cities that do not have majority Punjabi-speaking populations (such as Karachi and Peshawar), it the choice to use G forms might improve accommodation to these audiences relative to S forms, which might fit the rural setting better but are more markedly different than Urdu.

Table 5.3: Filmi Punjabi vs. Urdu future tense forms

	Person	Singular		Plural	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Filmi Punjabi	1	karāṅgā	karāṅgī	karāṅge	karāṅgiā
	2	karēgā	karēgī	karoge	karogiā
	3	karegā	karegī	karange	karangiā
Urdu	1	karūṅgā	karūṅgī	karēge	karēgī
	2	karegā	karegī	karoge/karēge ⁸⁴	karogī/karēgī
	3	karegā	karegī	karēge	karēgī

5.3.3 Phonology; Tones and Voiced Aspirates

The final feature I will discuss in showing the leveling of dialectical variants in Filmi Punjabi is the treatment of the voiced aspirate series of consonants—[gh], [ḍh], [jh], [dh], [bh]—a common group of phonemes in Indo-Aryan languages, which tend towards full sets of stops that contrast based on both voicing and aspiration. Thus in most IA languages we would find a phonemically contrastive set of /p/ /ph/ /b/ /bh/. Punjabi is distinctive among the IA languages in that in some varieties what are historically voiced aspirate consonants have lost both aspiration and voicing and

⁸⁴ Urdu has a tripartate second person system (singular, plural, and honorific plural), hence the two plural forms given here.

instead change in tonality,⁸⁵ making Punjabi the only IA language with contrastive tone. While is clearly a strong relationship between tonemic shifts and the voiced aspirate series, given the widely differing accounts of this relationship and the limited size and generally poor sound quality of a film corpus, I chose to focus only on the presence or absence of the voiced aspirate series and not their relationship with tonality. As Shackle writes, “The reduction of historical voiced aspiration to tones is generally taken to be single most distinctive feature of Punjabi within Indo-Aryan” (2003:592). Thus in Majhi/Modern Standard Punjabi we would find *kòrā* ‘horse’, with a low tone on the first syllable, instead of Hindi-Urdu *ghorā*. In medial and final position voiced aspirates tend to be unaspirated but still voiced. Similarly /ṛh/, which occurs only word medial and final, also tends to reduce to /ɾ/, although it is not devoiced. There are three contrastive tones, as in these examples from Gill (1960:11-12):

/kòrā/ horse, /kōrā/ whip, /kóṛā/ leper

/cà/ peep, /cā/ enthusiasm, /cá/ tea

However, this reduction does not apply to all varieties of Punjabi, although according to some authors voiced aspirate consonants do not exist in Punjabi at all (Bhatia 1993, Gill 1969, Singh 2006), these sources deal only with Indian (eastern) varieties of Punjabi and not those found in Pakistan. Sources working on western dialects of Punjabi do note the existence of voiced aspirates. Bailey and Cummings describe them as a “blend...these letters sometimes have their Urdu pronunciation...but the regular Panjabi pronunciation is a blend of surd and sonant, in

85 For a detailed description of Panjabi tonemics see Gill 1960, Bhatia 1975, Bhatia 1993:343-345.

other words bha, dha, jha, Dha, and gha are as if they were pba, tda, cja, Tda, and kga” (1925:18). Wilson treats this series as its own phonemic class, as it is in most other Indo-Aryan languages. Finally, Grierson notes that the presence of voiced aspirates varies across regional varieties, but his examples do not show this variation. He ties the loss of aspiration with the development of tonal contrast: “[non-initial /h/] is hardly audible or may be altogether inaudible, but it strongly raises the pitch of the preceding vowel, often altering the whole tone of the word” (1916:628). Taking into account the literature as well as my own field observations, it seems there is a general trend in Pakistan (remember, they are not reported in any Indian varieties of Punjabi) for voiced aspirate series to be preserved in the western, southern, and possibly far northwest Punjabi speaking regions, and for the shift from voiced aspirate to tonal contrasts to be more prominent in urban areas, particularly Lahore, and towards the east and northeastern edges of the province. Thus I refer to varieties that maintain the voiced aspirates as Peripheral Punjabi to avoid the unsubstantiated geographic and social implications of calling them Western Punjabi or Rural Punjabi or some other term.

Filmi Punjabi corresponds more closely with the eastern varieties in that this group of phonemes is generally realized both as voiceless and unaspirated. In the entire *Humayun Gujjar* corpus, the only voiced aspirates came in a very few scenes from characters who were speaking Urdu; notably these characters were a government officer, a court judge and the judge’s kidnapped son. No other voiced aspirates were found. Again, we might expect to find that because of cinema’s emphasis on rural themes and settings Filmi Punjabi would employ voiced aspirates to differentiate from eastern or city Punjabi; however this is not the case. Rather, I argue that the preferred

form is that which is distinctive from Urdu, emphasizing Filmi Punjabi's difference, and hence the usage by those characters (the judge, the government official and his son) who are related to domains of the Urdu-speaking state and other to the Punjabi-speaking protagonists.

It should be noted that the opposite may be true for other phonological elements. Take for instance the following set of phonemes in words Urdu and Punjabi have borrowed from Arabic: /q/, /f/, /x/, and /ǧ/. While Standard Urdu retains these as separate phonemes, Punjabi by and large assimilates them to /k/, /ph/, /kh/, and /g/

Table 5.4: Devoiced/unaspirated forms in Filmi Punjabi

<i>Humayun Gujjar</i>	Urdu/Peripheral Punjabi
kàr 'house'	ghar
ṭolā 'friend/loved'	ḍholā (WP)
ṭol- 'sway'	ḍhol-
tò- 'wash'	dho-
tì 'daughter'	dhī (WP)
pòlā 'innocent'	bholā
pèj- 'send'	bhej-
paìyyā 'brother'	bhaiyyā
pèn 'sister'	behen (U)/bhen (WP)
siddā	sīdhā (U)/siddhā (WP)
sũg- 'smell'	sũgh-
paṛ- 'read'	paṛh-

(depending on the particular dialect, education level, and sometimes religious background of the speaker). Yet in Filmi Punjabi they are, except for /q/, largely preserved as they would be in Urdu. This may have to do with the 'careful' pronunciation of actors, but it may also be showing another way that Punjabi is aligning with Urdu for maximum comprehensibility to a wider audience.

Unfortunately although sociolinguistic studies exist for this kind of assimilation in

Hindi/Urdu (Ahmad 2011), similar studies do not exist for Punjabi, and more evidence would be required to determine conclusively what kind of role these play in non-scripted Punjabi speech as well as in these films.

These data present a complex picture of the way Filmi Punjabi creates difference but also accommodates its audience. At times Filmi Punjabi shows alignment with Urdu, as in the more careful pronunciation of Arabic and Persian derived phonemes and the construction of the future tense. Yet in certain features, as in the use of pronominal enclitics and the reduction of the voiced aspirate series it maintains and maximizes its difference. I argue that features that are more ‘different’ from Urdu are retained because by and large they do not interfere with the audience understanding. While pronominal enclitics may be unfamiliar to speakers coming from an Urdu-speaking perspective, because they are used for backgrounding information that is already there, they do not impede understanding even if the listener is not familiar with them. Similarly, the reduction of the voiced aspirate series would not generally compromise the audience’s understanding, and as it is such a distinctive feature of Punjabi it plays a key role in sonically indexing difference. Finally, it should be noted that Filmi Punjabi does seem to bear a striking grammatical and phonological resemblance to Lahori Punjabi, in that it displays the phonological pattern of voiced aspirate → voiceless unaspirate. Yet there are a few features that mark this Punjabi as linguistically different from that of Lahore; for example, Lahori Punjabi⁸⁶ famously exhibits a tendency to switch the phonemes [r] and [ɾ], giving us *Lahaur* (‘Lahore’) and *sarak* (‘street’) where in other varieties of Punjabi and in Urdu

⁸⁶ Which itself is said by native speakers to have several varieties, although no linguistic surveys or studies have explored this.

we would find *Lahaur* and *sarak*. My informants were also unequivocal that the Punjabi of films is not Lahori Punjabi, and that it was in fact closer to Urdu than any variety of Punjabi. This supports the hypothesis that while difference from Urdu is emphasized in some features, Filmi Punjabi also seeks to accommodate its audience by maintaining a certain degree of similarity with Urdu.

One final note I wanted to make is in regard to the origins and accents of the various actors. This could potentially play a considerable role in their speech, yet I have yet to find evidence that an actor's personal speech variety impacts the dialect they use in film performance; the only time dialects are markedly different is when it is specifically called for in the portrayal of the character.⁸⁷ The most famous example is perhaps Mustufa Qureshi, the storied villain of hundreds of Punjabi films, whose mother tongue is actually Sindhi. Similarly, Sultan Rahi himself was born in what is now Uttar Pradesh, India, and migrated to Pakistan with his family in 1947, and Shabnam, one of the leading actresses of 1960s Urdu cinema, was Bengali. Saima, the reigning queen of Punjabi cinema since the mid-1990s and female lead of both *Humayun Gujjar* and *Sharabi*, told me that she grew up in a Pashto speaking household. The existence of such figures also supports the assertion that Filmi Punjabi has developed into a distinct and recognizable variety, and is in concordance with the fact that the filmmaking community is not a linguistically homogenous one. While many people in the community are from Lahore, I also encountered many people from other parts of Punjab and Pakistan, who spoke a range of regional linguistic variants.

⁸⁷ And sometimes not even then; the title character in *Humayun Gujjar* is supposedly from Sialkot and his friend Naji Butt from Lahore, yet there is no remarkable difference in the way they speak.

Interestingly, the homogenization of actors' regional or L2 accents does not seem to occur in the Punjabi theater, where actors such as Nasir Chinyoti emphasize or exaggerate their regional accents for the enjoyment of the audience. This may be due in part to the fact that theater audiences are very local; rather than catering to a national market that may not be able to easily understand subtle dialectal variations (as cinema traditionally has), theater performances are aimed at local, mainly Punjabi-speaking audiences who would better appreciate these nuances. In cinema, the exaggeration of regional accents tends to only occur for non-Punjabis, for example in the speech of Pashtun characters. When characters who are supposed to speak Punjabi do so in a way that is not acceptable to the filmmakers (as seen with the example of Nida Chaudhry in Chapter 2) or to the audience (Naseeruddin Shah's heavily Urdu-accented Punjabi in 2013's *Zinda Bhaag* was the source of much derision), they are heavily critiqued.

5.4 Dialect leveling and the ideal Punjab

More research is necessary to understand exactly how speakers are manipulating variables for purposes of performance, but preliminary research suggests that the patterns seen in the language of *Humayun Gujjar* are found in other filmic corpuses, and moreover that they show a consistency that contrasts with the wide range of of linguistic and cross-linguistic variation actually found in both filmmaking communities and film-viewing publics. In contrast to Rosina Lippi-Green's study of accent in Disney cartoons (1997), Barbra Meek's investigation of "Hollywood Injun English" (2006) or Jane Hill's discussion of "Mock Spanish" (1998, 2009), *Filmi Punjabi*, while like these other examples is a way of performing

difference in identity, seems by and large to create a space for a largely proletarian audience to enjoy a reappropriation of stereotypes about themselves, and revel in ethnic and class solidarities that do not emerge in many other media contexts. Like the popular tradition of *qissa* (Punjabi folk poetry that circulated widely in print form in the nineteenth and early twentieth century), cinema has historically “embodied the historical imagination of a broad cross-section of the Punjab, and that imagination...was far more open-ended and complex than a narrowly communalist interpretation can account for” (Mir 2010:25). The interpretation I have offered of Punjabi cinema is that it stands largely counter to state linguistic and moral hegemonies, and has resonances with class struggle; however, the wide proliferation of parodies of film language, for example in television comedy (Kirk in press), suggest that the register of *Filmi Punjabi* is available to be appropriated in both positive and negative ways, as resistance by those who would see in it the articulation of their own struggles and concerns, but also as further stereotyping and denigration by those reject those models and who want to align themselves with the Urdu- and English-speaking cultural hegemony. *Filmi Punjabi* opens up for its viewers a range of possibilities for identification and resistance, alignment or rejection among its audiences. Even though Punjabi may not be an official language of the political domain as Urdu, English, or other regional languages such as Sindhi and Pashto are, it is itself a site for political contestation, played here out on the bodies of actors and animated by a filmmaking community.

As seen in the examples above, in *Filmi Punjabi* certain features are selected and emphasized when they are emblematic of Punjabi as being different from Urdu (pronominal enclitics, tonality) even when this ignores the actual diversity of (rural)

Punjabi dialects. However, grammatical features tend to be simplified and leveled to where they are both geographically bleached and also maximally understandable by a national audience, hence the Urdu-similar future tense formation and the limited set of pronominal enclitics. This means that overall, *Filmi Punjabi sounds* markedly more Punjabi than Urdu or various dialects, but is grammatically simplified, maximizing its Punjabiyat while at the same time remaining easier for a greater number of people, Punjabi and non-Punjabi to understand. In the context of film performance, such a marked and regular tendency towards a particularly distinct phonological features can even be understood part of a complex indexical order of certain kinds of identities (Silverstein 2003, Blommaert 2007). It highlights the characters' Punjabiyat in a way that magnifies its difference from Urdu and allows the audience to delight in this otherness. However, for obvious practical reasons, *Filmi Punjabi* cannot overemphasize its otherness to the extent that it would either preclude audience engagement or risk moving too close to any particular geographic variant. To do so would undermine the imagined Punjab of cinema, which more than just a geographic location is its own moral and social universe.

Again, Agha has described processes of enregisterment as those “through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms” (2005:38). While a large-scale diachronic study of language in Punjabi cinema is out of the scope of this paper, it is clear from my conversations with my informants that, although they might not specifically call it *Filmi Punjabi* themselves, filmmakers and actors are well aware of the kind of Punjabi they expect to hear in films and it is reproduced and immediately recognizable. Even Pakistanis who proudly state that they never watch cinema have a fairly good idea of

what film language “sounds like,” as it is often copied and parodied in other media. Here, *Filmi Punjabi* is not just the means by which characters express thoughts or deliver dialogue but its very sound is meant to overemphasize their Punjabi-ness. Ochs has argued that the indexical potential of a form derives from the historical-cultural usage of that form (1996:418); if *Filmi Punjabi* is indexical of certain speaker attributes, it is also indexical of a shared cultural, and to some extent political, past. Again, when I pressed my informants on the question of film language, they would patiently tell me that it wasn’t Lahori Punjabi, or Multani Punjabi, or anything like Indian Punjabi, but rather it was “normal” Punjabi; the Punjabi “that most people could understand.” Ironically this often means that the lexical and grammatical forms bear greater similarity to Urdu than anything else (for example, future tense formation and loss of the voiced-aspirate to high-tone change). However, there is a vested interest in leaving Punjabi geographically unmarked (except where it serves to index character origin as required by the narrative) that transcends just making the film legible to a greater number of people: it creates an idealized Punjab that further destabilizes the symbolic control of the state and possibly harkens back to a pre-Partition time. This Punjab can also be seen as what Faye Ginsburg (2002) has referred to as the “screen memories” of indigenous groups, ways they use media to subvert dominant national narratives in which their own collective histories and experiences have been elided and erased, a way for marginalized groups to recalibrate and reinscribe their pasts. In the case of Punjabi cinema, the rural and ‘traditional’ is valorized over the urban and the ‘modern,’ and local socialities and moral codes are valued over those of state and global hegemonies, and moreover these are supported by the linguistic choices made by the filmmakers. Leighton Peterson (2011) has shown how,

in the case of Navajo, language is strategically policed and deployed in order to build these screen memories, and a similar process appears to be happening in Punjabi cinema. As Alyssa Ayres points out, in films:

“Punjab rather than Pakistan seems to structure the landscape.

Characters refer to Punjab, not Pakistan, as being very big, or that “all of Punjab” will come to a festival. The central hero invokes, by name alone, pre-Islamic caste identities native to Punjab, Jats and Gujjars.

These traditional agricultural castes exist in both Pakistani and Indian Punjab. Thus, ethnic as well as geographic horizons valorize a view of Punjab that pays little heed to the necessity of defining Pakistan in national terms, terms that have come to ignore the non-Islamic dimensions of social life.” (Ayers 2008:238)

I would caution against reifying the dichotomy of Pakistan/Islam vs. Punjab/Pre-Islam (particularly in cinema, which delights its audience with the depiction of Sufi shrines and other Islamic iconography, references to *panj tan-e pāk*,⁸⁸ and the regular use of Quranic verses as framing devices). Yet still the symbolic and political implications of this idealized cinematic Punjab are considerable. Blommaert argues that “systematic patterns of indexicality are also systematic patterns of authority, of control and evaluation, and hence of inclusion and exclusion *by real or perceived others...*” (2007:117, emphasis in the original). Similarly, Bucholtz argues that

88 The “Five Pure Bodies,” i.e. the Prophet, Hassan, Hussain, Fatima, and Ali.

“indirectly indexical linguistic forms are markers of highly differentiated styles of identity that operate within a semiotic system in relation to other locally available-and often competing or contrasting-styles” (2009:148). *Filmi Punjabi* too is imbricated in linguistic hierarchies and cultural power relations (of class, ethnicity, caste, and technology), and the placeless, timeless Punjab it creates is also a direct product of these.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This dissertation investigates language attitudes and ideologies, practices of film production, and aesthetics in Pakistani Punjabi cinema. Combining a variety of methodologies, I have tried to make conceptual connections between linguistic anthropology and media anthropology, fields of inquiry that share similar concerns—semiosis, representation, publics, power—yet often see their objects of inquiry as utterly distinct. Media anthropology, while clearly concerned with sound and meaning, seems disinclined to explore the linguistic dimension of these. And linguistic anthropology seems to have held a bias, perhaps even an unspoken rule, against taking language in film or television as its object of investigation, something that has begun to shift only recently even though generations of linguistic anthropologists have been drawn towards the investigation of performance and poetics. Yet these subfields can and do productively converge; the rich tradition of scholarship on language ideology in particular provides a theoretical toolkit well suited to the study of film language. As Robin Queen points out, while language in narrative audiovisual media (to use her excellent term) might be different than other forms of language, it involves audience and interaction, intentionality and performance, and also depends on “predictable, recognizable forms of language that combine with the skills and styles of the people involved in the production, and the response of the audience, to form multilayered representations of social life” (2015:22). One of the main objectives of this dissertation has been to continue the work of bridging the visual-linguistic gap when it comes to the anthropological study

of media, a direction that I believe can open up productive new methodological and theoretical realms.

Contextualizing technology and aesthetics in Pakistan's social and cinematic history, the second chapter of this dissertation grew out of careful observations that came as filming went along: that the limited technology available to filmmakers has fundamentally impacted their aesthetic practices and decisions. In some ways this might seem like common sense, but I want to avoid taking the simplistic teleological view that being left behind in the 'evolution' of film technology has somehow stunted these filmmakers' aesthetic growth. Rather, filmmakers' experience and skill allow them to make productive and creative choices within their available infrastructure. Questioning this technological teleology also offers insight into the rise-fall-revival narrative, which is both central to the way Pakistanis understand their film industry, and closely tied with discourses of technology, aesthetics, and identities. In Chapter 2 I explored a variety of explanations and reasons for the industry's *zavāl*, and how these same discourses, in almost a single stroke, often single out Punjabi films in particular as clumsily-made, degenerate, vulgar, and uncivilized. I also explored the element of nostalgia that runs both through the way the filmmakers (now often struggling to find regular work and aging themselves) talk about the past of their industry as well as through the content of the films themselves, and how it can actually operate as an interpretive mode that is deployed as a form of discursive framing.

In the third chapter of this dissertation, I highlighted the kinds of ethnographic data that can enrich understandings of film and film language. In his investigation of cinematic landscapes in South India, Pandian argues,

“Cinema draws its vitality from affective encounters with many kinds of worlds: those of characters and the landscapes within which they engage one another, those of filmmakers seeking and remaking resonant environments for cinematic elaboration, and those of audiences who may or may not be moved by the horizons of these works. It is my contention here that ethnographic encounters with film production constitute an especially effective means of engaging such emergence.” (2011b:53)

An understanding of the worlds and ideologies created and disseminated linguistically in cinema also benefits from such ethnographic attention. In looking at the language of filmmaking alongside the language of films, and in understanding how these are both contextualized and emergent, a space is opened up for understanding the creation and circulation of language ideologies themselves. Concluding her analysis of ‘Hollywood Injun English,’ Meek argues that “the next step is to explore how and to what extent the ideologies indexed by these representations are acquired” (2006:121), encouraging future researchers to consider language socialization to understand the ways stylized linguistic representations come to index difference for communities of speakers. This is certainly a productive avenue for future research, yet it also perhaps puts disproportional importance on consumers of media while leaving producers out of the equation completely. As the above quote from Pandian suggests, the domain of production, of the film text itself, and of reception are inextricably linked with one another, and careful attention to these as a whole can offer new possibilities of understanding the multiple linguistic and cultural threads that link them together. In this chapter I also focused on situating this research broadly in the context of contemporary Pakistan, and more narrowly within the community of filmmakers I worked with at Evernew Studios.

What kind of language is used in Punjabi film? What are its features and characteristics, and how might it relate to non-film varieties and usages of Punjabi? Why and how are certain styles of language used in these films? What kind of world does film language create? The fourth and fifth chapters of this dissertation are investigate these questions. Through the use of sound symbolic terms such as *barhak* and *kharāk*, and through expressions of ‘loudness’ such as *oye* and *cingār*, an image of the loud, violent, rough, rural Punjabi emerges. Power, violence, and masculinity are emphasized in the verbal artistry of the *barhak*, yet there is also a space for all of these to be used by female characters. It would seem that the real antithesis of such loud violent language is neither femininity nor evil, but rather the state itself, as its agents are generally portrayed as little more than annoying but ultimately powerless foils. Similarly, the kind of dialect leveling seen in film language (which I have termed *Filmi Punjabi*), serves to emphasize the characters’ Punjabiyat over and above particular geographic or other identity factors. Phonologically as well as grammatically, *Filmi Punjabi* tends towards maximizing its understandability across dialects of Punjabi (as well as, in all likelihood for non-Punjabi speakers) while it also emphasizes its Punjabiyat through the deployment of features that render it more different from Urdu. *Filmi Punjabi* then, is essential to the creation of *Filmi Punjab*, an idealized space, somewhat timeless and placeless but filled to the brim with Punjabiyat, where codes of honor and vengeance prevail and vigilante justice trumps the law and order of the Pakistani state.

Throughout this project, there were dimensions that were, of necessity, left under-explored. Doubtless a larger and more rigorous study of film reception would be an excellent addition to an understanding the way Punjabi films are received by

their audiences. This research could also benefit from a detailed analysis of filmic techniques—camera angles, lighting, mise en scène, editing, and so forth—and their connections with the sonic and linguistic dimensions of this particular genre. At some points, as noted in the transcript, certain characters’ lines are altered with echo effects, or accompanied by dramatic cuts, or changes in camera position or lighting. Finally, my inability to access a copy of *Sharabi* was in some ways a hindrance, however it was also somewhat productive, as my repeated quests to find a copy of the film uncovered dimensions of film distribution and circulation that I might otherwise not have questioned. More research is certainly needed in this area, particularly given the way these films circulate not merely on disc but also online; as of March 2016 the most-watched of several versions of *Maula Jatt* on YouTube had over 1.5 million views, and *Humayun Gujjar* over two hundred thousand.⁸⁹ There are dozens, if not hundreds of Sultan Rahi’s movies available online. And this is in addition to the routine screenings of older films in theaters and on television; clearly these films have a complex afterlife.

Through the creation, synthesis, and circulation of a non-hegemonic and at times outright subversive cinema genre, Punjabi cinema in Pakistan offers up a space for its largely working class audience to enjoy the possibility of resistance against the Pakistani state. Kamran Ali has argued that:

“the creation of Pakistan gave its inhabitants access to an imaginary future where Muslimness would be their primary identity ...[yet] the subsequent history of Pakistan...in its postcolonial period has been one of contestation and conflict around questions of the national self-determination of various ethnic groups, and the promised

⁸⁹ It is also worth noting that YouTube was banned in Pakistan starting in 2008, and although of course plenty of people in Pakistan still manage to access it, this may also speak to the popularity of these films in the diaspora.

or imagined religious (Muslim) cohesiveness and national belonging has never been fully achieved.” (2013:390)

Although Punjabis may have not had the same kinds of self-determination or autonomy movements as Balochis or Sindhis or Kashmiris (many would argue that they have had little need), they have had cinema as a site to imagine and for a few hours inhabit an ideal Punjab. I want to be clear that this is not a simple story of Punjabis as an oppressed class in Pakistan—this is far from the truth—but rather of Punjabis who do not have access to the Urdu and English-speaking domains of power; generally working class, less educated people. That is to say, those for whom the reappropriation of negative stereotypes about Punjabi—that it is loud, rural, violent, crude, vulgar, and so forth—has the potential to be both entertaining and empowering.

In understanding the value of Punjabi cinema for its audiences in Pakistan, I have attempted to critically analyze the important linkages between film aesthetics and film language. This research seeks to use the cinema industry as a lens through which to investigate the relationship between linguistic practices and social issues such as class, power, ethnicity, gender, and vulgarity in contemporary Pakistani Punjab. Most of all, in this dissertation, I have tried to create a starting point for understanding how cinematic practices are mobilized to negotiate sociolinguistic landscapes.

Appendix A: Transliteration scheme

There exists a fairly regular set of transliteration conventions for South Asian languages that have their roots in British colonial language scholarship. I have largely kept these conventions for the ease of readers who may be used to them. For reference, my transcription of each phoneme is given with the corresponding letter in both the Shahmukhi (Perso-Arabic) and Gurmukhi writing systems as well as the International Phonetic Alphabet. I would also like to point out that although voiced aspirate stops are in some dialects of Punjabi (but not all) realized as voiceless unaspirated stops with a high tone (see Ch. 5 for details), I have transliterated them here as voiced aspirates to avoid confusion, and because they are orthographically represented as a separate category of (voiced aspirate) sounds in both Gurmukhi and Shahmukhi. Similarly, consonants qāf and ‘ain are generally not retained in transliteration, but listed here because they exist orthographically (though not generally phonetically) in words borrowed from Arabic. In general, Arabic and Urdu /q/ is realized in Punjabi as /k/, and Arabic /ʔ/ is generally lost in both Urdu and Punjabi, yet their inclusion is conventionalized in transliteration schemes of South Asian languages written in variants of the Perso-Arabic script. Finally, it is important to note that Shahmukhi is not a standardized writing system, and there may be local or individual variations in the writing of some consonants from the ones I use here.

Vowels:

Transliteration	Shahmukhi	Gurmukhi	IPA
a	ا	ਅ	ə
ā	آ	ਆ	a
i	ا	ਇ	ɪ
ī	ی	ਈ	i
u	ا	ਉ	ʊ
ū	و	ਊ	u
e	ے	ਏ	e
ai	اے	ਐ	ɛ/æ
o	و	ਓ	o
au	و	ਔ	ɔ

Consonants:

k	ک	ਕ	k
kh	کھ	ਖ	k ^h
g	گ	ਗ	g
gh	گھ	ਘ	g ^h /k
ŋ	ن	ਙ	ŋ
ch	چ	ਚ	tʃ
chh	چھ	ਛ	tʃ ^h
j	ج	ਜ	dʒ
jh	جھ	ਝ	dʒ ^h /tʃ
ɲ	ن	ਣ	ɲ
ʈ	ٹ	ਟ	ʈ
ʈh	ٹھ	ਠ	ʈ ^h

d	ڈ	ड	d
dh	ڈھ	ढ	d ^h /t
n	ن	ण	ɳ
t	ت / ط	ड	t
th	تھ	ष	t ^h
d	د	ड	d
dh	डھ	ण	d ^h /t
n	ن	ण	n
p	پ	प	p
ph	پھ	फ	p ^h
b	ب	ब	b
bh	بھ	ड	b ^h /p
m	م	भ	m
y	ی	य	j
r	ر	र	r
l	ل	ल	l
l̥	ل	ळ	l̥
v	و	व	v
sh	ش	ष	ʃ
s	ث / ص / س	स	s
h	ح / ه	ह	h
x	خ	क्ष	x
	غ	ग	ɣ
z	ظ / ض / ذ / ز	ज	z
ɾ	ڑ	ड	ɽ
f	ف	फ	f

q	ق	-	q *
ʕ	ع	-	ʕ **

* generally realized as /k/

** not usually pronounced

Diacritical marks:

- Dot beneath a consonant indicates it is retroflex (e.g. ‘ḍigg’).
- Macron indicates a long vowel (e.g. ‘jā’).
- Tilde indicates a nasalized vowel (e.g. ‘tõ’).
- Aspiration is indicated by ‘h’ (e.g. ‘ṭhīk’).

Appendix B: Glossary of Punjabi and Urdu terminology

<i>azān</i>	اذان	Muslim call to prayer
<i>baṛhak</i>	بڑھک	Shouted verbal dueling genre emblematic of Punjabi cinema
<i>dupaṭṭa</i>	دوپٹہ/دپٹہ	Approximately 2 meter long scarf worn by women for modesty, used to cover their chests and sometimes heads.
<i>fuhash</i>	فُحش	obscene, pornographic
<i>ġairat</i>	غیرت	honor, closely related or nearly synonymous to <i>hayā</i> , <i>‘izzat</i> , and <i>sharam</i> (حیا، عزت، شرم)
<i>gāliyā</i>	گالیاں	insults, cursing/obscenities
<i>gaṇḍāsa</i>	گنڈاسہ	A long-handled axe commonly used as a weapon in Punjabi cinema
<i>jatt</i>	جٹ	An agricultural caste of Punjab or one of its members, usually written in English as Jatt or Jutt
<i>jattī</i>	جٹی	A female Jatt
<i>lācā</i>	لاچا	Stereotypical ‘traditional’ dress of rural Punjabis, also sometimes called <i>dhotī</i> when worn by men
<i>muhājir</i>	مُحاجر	Term used to refer to Muslims who migrated to from India to Pakistan after the 1947 Partition
<i>oye</i>	اُوئے	Vocative or exclamatory particle; ‘Hey!’ or ‘Oh!’

<i>pancāyat</i>	پنچایت	A traditional judicial body of rural north India, somewhat like an open-air court with five judges
<i>Punjabiyaṭ</i>	پنجابیت	Punjabi-ness, the characteristic of being Punjabi
<i>sārī</i>	ساڑی	Long unstitched cloth wrap commonly worn by women across South Asia
<i>sayyid</i>	سیّد	One who claims direct lineage from the family of the Prophet Muhammad
<i>shalwār-qamīz</i>	شلوار قمیض	Clothing consisting of a long shirt over baggy trousers; probably the most common form of dress for women in present-day Pakistan
<i>ṭappe</i>	ٹپے	Punjabi song genre featuring witty banter and flirtatious insults
<i>vār</i>	وار	Long form epic poetry genre, usually oral
<i>zavāl</i>	زوال	Decline, downfall, zenith

Appendix C: Cited verbal paradigms in original transliteration

Table 5.2 Variation in Future Tense: Paradigm for *karṇā* ('do')

Source	Person	Singular		Plural	
		Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Shackle 2003:608	1	kərāga/ kərūga	kərāgi/ kərūgi	kərāge	kərāgiā
	2	kərēga	kərēgi	kəroge	kərogiā
	3	kərega	kəregi	kəreṅge	kəreṅgiā
Bhatia 1993:248	1	karāāgaa/ karūūgaa	karāāgii/ karūūgii	karāāge	karāāgiāā
	2	karegaa	karegii	karoge	karogiāā
	3	karegaa/ karuugaa	karegii/ karuugii	kar(a)Nge	kar(a)Ngiāā
Bailey and Cummings 1925:319	1	karāgā/ karādā	karāgī/ karādī	karāgē/ karādē	karāgīā/ karādīā
	2	karēgā/ karēdā	karēgī/ karēdī	karōgē/ karōdē	karōgīā/ karōdīā
	3	karēgā/ karēdā	karēgī/ karēdī	karngē/ karndē	karngīā/ karndīā
Wilson 1899:64	1		karēsā		karsāh/karsāhā
	2		karēse		karēsō
	3		karēsī		karēsīn
Kirk n.d.	1		karsā		karsaē
	2		karsē		karso
	3		karsī		karsaṅ

Table 5.1 Variation in pronominal affixes

Source	Person	Singular	Plural
Grierson 1919:260-261 (Lahnda)	1	-s, -m	-s, -se, -ahsē
	2	-ē̃, -ī̃, -ū̃, -ō̃, -ō̃̃	-ne, -nihē, -innhē
	3	-s	-nē
Shackle 2003:614 (Siraiki)	1	-s, -m	-se
	2	-ō, -o	-he
	3	-i	-ne
Butt 2004:8	1	∅	∅
	2	-i	-je
	3	-s(u)	-ne
Bailey and Cummings 1925:349-350	1	∅	∅
	2	-ū̃, -ī̃, -ā̃, -ī̃̃	-je
	3	-s, -su	-nē, -ṇe
Wilson 1899:34	1	-m	-sē, -ahse
	2	-ī̃, -ū̃̃	-ne, -nine
	3	-s	-nē
Kirk n.d.	1		
	2	-ī̃	-je/-ne
	3	-sū̃	

Appendix D: Interlinear gloss abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
CP	conjunctive participle
DAT	dative
ERG	ergative
F	feminine
FUT	future tense
GEN	genitive
M	masculine
NEG	negative particle
OBL	oblique
PE	pronominal enclitic
PERF	perfective aspect
pl	plural
PRES	present tense
sg	singular

References

Abu-Lughod, Lila

1988 *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*. Oakland: University of California Press.

2013 *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Agha, Asif

2003 The social life of cultural value. *Language & Communication* 23:231-273.

2005 Voice, Footing, Enregisterment. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 15(1):38-59.

2007 *Language and Social Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ahmad, Rizwan

2008 Unpacking indexicality: Urdu in India. *Texas Linguistic Forum* 52:1-9.

Ahmad, Ali Nobil and Ali Khan

2010 *From Zinda Laash to Zibahkhana: Violence and Horror in Pakistani Cinema*. *Third Text* 24(1):149-163.

Akhtar, Aasim Sajjad and Ali Nobil Ahmad.

2015 Conspiracy and statecraft in postcolonial states: theories and realities of the hidden hand in Pakistan's war on terror. *Third World Quarterly* 36(1):94-110.

Ali, Imran

2014 *The Punjab Under Imperialism, 1885-1947*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ali, Kamran Asdar

2004 Pulp Fictions: Reading Pakistani Domesticity. *Social Text* 78:123-145.

2015 Cinema and Karachi in the 1960s: Cultural Wounds and National Cohesion. *In Handbook of Religion and the Asian City: Aspiration and Urbanization in the Twenty-first Century*. Van der Veer, Peter, ed. Pp. 387-402. Oakland: University of California Press.

Alim, H. Samy

2004 *You Know My Steez: An Ethnographic and Sociolinguistic Study of Styleshifting in a Black American Speech Community*. Durham: Duke University Press.

2006 *Roc the Mic Right: The Language of Hip Hop Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Alvi, Anjum

2013 Concealment and Revelation: The Muslim Veil in Context. *Current Anthropology* 54(2): 177-199.

Appadurai, Arjun, ed
1986 *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Arri Group

2012 *Arri Picture Chronicle*. Online resource, http://www.arri.com/fileadmin/media/arri.com/downloads/About_ARRI/Picture_Chronicle_2012.pdf, accessed 2 December 2013.

Askari, Muhammad Hassan

2015 [1949] *Building Pakistan and Filmmaking*. Ali Nobil Ahmad, trans. *BioScope* 5(2): 175-181.

Austin, John

1962 *How to Do Things with Words: the William James lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*. New York: Clarendon.

Awan, M. Saeed

2014 *The dark side of Lollywood*. Dawn News, October 27. <http://www.dawn.com/news/1140070>, accessed 18 February 2016.

Awami Politics

2012 *Stage Dancers Afreen Khan & Nida Chaudhry Banned*. November 7. <http://www.awamipolitics.com/stage-dancers-afreen-khan-nida-chaudhry-banned-10051.html>, accessed 10 February 2014.

Ayers, Alyssa

2008 *Language, the Nation, and Symbolic Capital: The Case of Punjab*. *Journal of Asian Studies* 67(3):917-946.

BBC News

2006 *Pakistan clears Bollywood films*. February 8. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4694682.stm, accessed 11 May 2013.

Bailey, T. Grahame

1904 *Panjābī Grammar: A Brief Grammar of Panjābī as Spoken in the Wazīrābād District*. Lahore: Punjab Government Press.

Bailey, T. Grahame, and T. Cummings.

1925 *Panjabi Manual and Grammar: A Guide to the Colloquial Panjabi of the Northern Panjab*. Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press.

Bakhtin, Mikhail

1984 *Rabelais and his world*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

- Baskaran, Theodore
 1996 *The eye of the serpent: An introduction to Tamil cinema*. Madras: East West Books.
- Basso, Keith
 1979 *Portraits of "The Whiteman"*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bauman, Richard, and Charles Briggs
 1990 Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19:59–88.
- Bauman, Richard and Joel Sherzer, eds.
 1974 *Explorations in the ethnography of communication*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beal, Joan C.
 2009 Enregisterment, commodification, and historical context: "Geordie" versus "Sheffieldish." *American Speech* 84(2):138-156.
- Bell, Allan
 1984 Language style as audience design. *Language in Society* 13(2):145-204.
- Benjamin, Walter
 1999 [1936] The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. *In* *Visual Culture: The Reader*. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall, eds. Pp.72-79. London: Sage.
- Birchall, Claire
 2001 Conspiracy Theories and Academic Discourses: the necessary possibility of popular (over)interpretation. *Continuum: Journal of Cultural and Media Studies* 15(1):67-76.
- Bharadwaj, Prashant, Asim Khwaja, and Atif Mian
 2008 *The Big March: Migratory Flows after the Partition of India*. *Economic and Political Weekly* 43(35):39-49.
- Bhatia, Tej K.
 1975 The Evolution of Tones in Panjabi. *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences* 5(2).
 1993 *Punjabi: A Cognitive-descriptive Grammar*. New York: Routledge.
 2008 Major regional languages. *In* *Language in South Asia*. Braj B. Kachru, Yamuna Kachru, S.N. Sridhar, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Blommaert, Jan
 2007 Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis: Orders of Indexicality and Polycentricity. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 2(2):115-130.

- Boone, Jon
 2013 Pakistan's movie-makers dig deep to revive film industry. Guardian Online. May 31, 2013.
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/31/pakistan-film-competition-bollywood>, accessed 23 July 2015.
- Bouquet, Mary
 2012 Museums: A Visual Anthropology. London: Berg.
- Bourdieu, Pierre
 1984 Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
 1991 Language and Symbolic Power. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Boyer, Dominic
 2010 From Algos to Autonomos: Nostalgic Eastern Europe as Postimperial Mania. *In* Post-communist Nostalgia. Todorova, Maria and Zsuzsa Gille, ed. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Brownie, John
 2012 Multilingualism on Mussau. International Journal of Society and Language 214:67-84.
- Bubel, Claudia
 2006 The linguistic construction of character relations in TV drama: Doing friendship in *Sex and the City*. Ph.D. dissertation, Philosophischen Fakultäten, Universität des Saarlandes.
- Bucholtz, Mary
 2009 From Stance to Style: Gender, Interaction, and Indexicality in Mexican Immigrant Youth Slang. *In* Style: Sociolinguistic Perspectives, Alexandra Jaffe, ed. Pp. 146-170. New York: Oxford University Press
 2011 Race and the re-embodied voice in Hollywood film. Language & Communication 31:255-265.
- Bucholtz, Mary and Kira Hall
 2005 Identity and interaction: a sociocultural linguistic approach. Discourse Studies 7(4-5):585-614
- Burki, Shireen Khan
 2016 The politics of misogyny: General Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization of Pakistan's legal system. Contemporary Justice Review 19(1):103-119.
- Butt, Miriam
 2004 The Role of Pronominal Suffixes in Punjabi. Paper presented at DGfS Workshop Evolution syntaktischer Relationen, Mainz, February 25–27.

- Butt, Miriam and Tikaram Poudel
 2012 A Comparative Look at the Future in Indo-Aryan. Paper presented at South Asian Languages: Theory, Typology, and Diachrony Conference. Yale University, September 28–30.
- Campbell, Craig
 2014 *Agitating Images: Photography Against History in Indigenous Siberia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Caton, Steven
 1990 *Peaks of Yemen I Summon*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Cheng, Weikun
 1996 The Challenge of the Actresses: Female Performers and Cultural Alternatives in Early Twentieth Century Beijing and Tianjin. *Modern China* 22(2):197-233.
- CinemaTechnic
 N.d. Arri 35 II. http://cinematechnic.com/resources/arri_35-2.html, accessed 26 October 2014.
- Cohn, Bernard
 1996 *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge: the British in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Cohn, Neil, ed.
 2016 *The Visual Narrative Reader*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Cook, Guy
 2000 *Language Play, Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Coupland, Nikolas
 2001 Dialect stylization in radio talk. *Language in Society* 30:345-375.
 2007 *Style: Language variation and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- D'Lugo, Marvin
 1993 Catalan Cinema: Historical Experience and Cinematic Practice. *In* Otherness and the media: the ethnography of the imagined and the imaged. Naficy, Hamid and Teshome H. Gabriel, eds. Pp. 131-146. Langhorne, PA: Harwood.
- Dadi, Iftikhar
 2009 Registering crisis: Ethnicity in Pakistani cinema of the 1960s and 70s. *In* Beyond Crisis: A Critical Second Look at Pakistan. Khan, Naveeda, ed. Pp. 140-171. New Delhi: Routledge.
 2010 *BioScopic and Screen Studies of Pakistan, and of Contemporary Art*.

Bioscope 1(1):11-15.

Dawn News

2008 Hall Road traders burn 'obscene' CDs. Staff Report, October 11.
<http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/lahore/11-Oct-2008/hall-road-traders-burn-obscene-cds>, accessed 18 February 2016.

De Souza, Eunice, ed

2004 *Purdah, an anthology*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Dickey, Sara

1993 *Cinema and the urban poor in South India*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

2009 Fantasy, Realism, and Other Mixed Delights: What Have Film Analysts Seen in Popular Indian Cinema? *Projections* 3(2):1-19.

Dickey, Sara and Rajinder Dudrah

2010 South Asian cinemas: Widening the lens. *South Asian Popular Culture* 8(3): 297-212.

Douie, James McCrone

1916 *The Panjab, North-West Frontier Province and Kashmir*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dundes, Alan, Jerry W. Leach, and Bora Özkök

1970 The Strategy of Turkish Boys' Verbal Dueling Rhymes. *Journal of American Folklore* 78:337-44.

Dwyer, Rachel

2006 *Filming the Gods: Religion and Indian cinema*. New York: Routledge.

2010 I am Crazy about the Lord: The Muslim Devotional Genre in Hindi Film. *Third Text* 24(1):123-134.

2014 *Picture abhi baaki hai: Bollywood as a guide to modern India*. New Delhi: Hachette.

Dwyer, Rachel and Divia Patel

2002 *Cinema India: the visual culture of Hindi film*. London: Reaktion.

Dwyer, Rachel and Christopher Pinney, eds.

2001 *Pleasure and the nation: the history, politics, and consumption of public culture in India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dynel, Marta

2011 "You talking to me?" The viewer as a ratified listener to film discourse. *Journal of Pragmatics* 43:1628-1644.

Eckert, Penelope

- 2003 Elephants in the Room. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7(3):392-397.
- 2008 Variation and the indexical field. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 12(4):453–476.
- Eckert, Penelope and Sally McConnell-Ginet
 1992 Communities of practice: where language, gender, and power all live. *In* *Locating Power: Proceedings of the 1992 Berkeley Women and Language Conference*. Hall, Kira, Mary Bucholtz and Birch Moonwomon eds. Pp. 89-99. Berkeley: Berkeley Women and Language Group.
- Edwards, Walter F.
 1979 Speech Acts in Guyana: Communicating Ritual and Personal Insults. *Journal of Black Studies*, 10(1):20-39.
- Elster, Jon
 2000 *Ulysses, Unbound: Studies in Rationality, Precommitment, and Constraints*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Emeneau, Murray
 1980 *Language and Linguistic Area: Essays by Murray B. Emeneau*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Ethnologue
 2016 Saraiki. <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/skr>, accessed 25 April 2016.
- Faruqi, Sara
 2010 Pakistan's film industry and cinema culture. *Dawn News*, December 15. <http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/15/pakistans-film-industry-and-cinema-culture/>, accessed 13 March 2015.
- Fleming, Luke and Michael Lempert
 2011 Introduction: Beyond Bad Words. *Anthropological Quarterly* 81(4):5-13.
- Frekko, Susan E.
 2009 "Normal" in Catalonia: Standard language, enregisterment and the imagination of a national public. *Language in Society* 38(1):71-93.
- French, Dorothea
 1998 Maintaining Boundaries: The Status of Actresses in Early Christian Society. *Vigilae Christianae* 52(3):293-318.
- Foucault, Michel
 1972 *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*. New York: Pantheon.
- Friedrich, Paul

- 1989 Language, ideology, and political economy. *American Anthropologist* 91:295–312.
- Galinsky, Adam D., Cynthia S. Wang, Jennifer A. Whitson, Eric M. Anicich, Kurt Hugenberg, and Galen V. Bodenhausen
 2013 The Reappropriation of Stigmatizing Labels: The Reciprocal Relationship Between Power and Self-Labeling. *Association for Psychological Science* 24(10):2020-2029.
- Gazdar, Mushtaq
 1997 *Pakistan Cinema 1947-1997*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Georgakopolou, Alexandra
 2000 On the Sociolinguistics of Popular Films: Funny Characters, Funny Voices. *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 18(1):119-133.
- Gill, Harjeet Singh
 1960 Panjabi Tonemics. *Anthropological Linguistics* 2(6):11-18.
 1973 *Linguistic Atlas of the Punjab*. Patiala: Punjabi University.
- Gill, Harjeet Singh and Henry A. Gleason
 1969 *A Reference Grammar of Punjabi*. Patiala: Punjab University Press.
- Gilmartin, David
 2015 *Blood and Water: The Indus River Basin in Modern History*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Ginsburg, Faye
 2002 Screen Memories: Resignifying the Traditional in Indigenous Media. *In Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*. Pp. 39-57. Berkeley: University of California Press.
 2011 Native Intelligence: A Short History of Debates on Indigenous Media and Ethnographic Film. *In Made to Be Seen: Perspectives on the History of Visual Anthropology*. Pp. 234-255. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ginsburg, Faye, Brian Larkin and Lila Abu Lughod
 2002 Introduction. *In Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*. Pp. 1-37. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Glazer, Mark
 1976 On Verbal Dueling among Turkish Boys. *Journal of American Folklore*, 89:87-89.
- Goffman, Erving
 1955 On face-work: An analysis of ritual elements in social interaction. *Psychiatry* 18(3): 213–231.
 1981 *Forms of Talk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Goodwin, Marjorie Harness

2006 *The hidden life of girls: Games of stance, status, and exclusion.* Malden (MA): Blackwell.

Gopalan, Lalitha

2002 *Cinema of Interruptions: Action Genres in Contemporary Indian Cinema.* London: British Film Institute.

Government of Pakistan

2011 *Pakistan Statistical Yearbook.* Islamabad: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

2015 *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics (September).* Islamabad: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

Gray, Gordon

2010 *Cinema: A Visual Anthropology.* Oxford: Berg.

Grierson, George

1916 *The Linguistic Survey of India Vol. IX Part 1: Indo-Aryan Family. Central Group. Specimens of Western Hindī and Pañjābī.* Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing.

1919 *The Linguistic Survey of India Vol. VIII Part 1: Indo-Aryan Family North-Western Group, Specimens of Sindhi and Lahnda.* Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing.

2001 *Grierson on Punjabi.* Lahore: Institute of Punjabi Language and Culture.

Hall, Stuart

1980 *Cultural studies: two paradigms.*

1996 *Who needs 'identity'?* *In* Questions of cultural identity, Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, eds. Pp. 1-17. London: Sage.

1998 *Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular.'* *In* Cultural theory and popular culture: a reader. John Storey, ed. Pp. 442-453. Essex: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Hasund, Ingrid

1996 *Colt conflicts: reflections of gender and class in the oppositional turn-sequences of London teenage girls.* Hovedfag thesis, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway.

Haydar, Paula

2014 *The Art of Lebanese Verbal Dueling: The Battle of Beit Mary and Beyond.* Ph.D. dissertation, Department of English, University of Arkansas.

Heath, Jennifer, ed

2008 *The Veil: women writers on its history, lore, and politics.* Oakland: University of California Press.

- Helder, Mattias and Jens Edlund
 2010 Pauses, gaps, and overlaps in conversations. *Journal of Phonetics* 38:555-568.
- Heyd, Theresa
 2014 Folk-linguistic landscapes: The visual semiotics of digital enregisterment. *Language in Society* 43:489-514.
- Hill, Jane
 1998 Language, Race, and White Public Space. *American Anthropologist* 100(3):680-689.
 2009 *The Everyday Language of White Racism*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Hinskens, Frans, Peter Auer and Paul Kerswill
 2005 The study of dialect convergence and divergence: conceptual and methodological considerations. *In Dialect change: convergence and divergence in European languages*. Auer, Peter, Frans Hinskens, and Paul Kerswill, eds. Pp. 1-48. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hoek, Lotte
 2010a Cut-Pieces as Stag Film: Bangladeshi Pornography in Action Cinema. *Third Text* 24(1): 133-146.
 2010b Unstable Celluloid: Film Projection and the Cinema Audience in Bangladesh. *BioScope* 1(1): 49-66.
 2010c Urdu for Image: Understanding Bangladeshi Cinema through its Theatres. *In South Asian Media Cultures: Representations, Audiences and Contexts*. Shakuntala Banaji, ed. Pp. 73-90. New York: Anthem Press.
 2014a Cross-wing Filmmaking: East Pakistani Urdu Films and Their Traces in the Bangladesh Film Archive. *BioScope* 5(2):99-118.
 2014b *Cut-Pieces: Celluloid Obscenity and Popular Cinema in Bangladesh*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hoenigswald, Henry
 1975 *A Proposal for the Study of Folk-linguistics*. New York: Mouton.
- Hymes, Dell
 1972 Models of the interaction of language and social life. *In Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*. Gumperz, John J. and Dell Hymes, eds. Pp. 35-71. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
 1994 Ethnopoetics, Oral-Formulaic Theory, and Editing Texts. *Oral Tradition* 9(20):330-370.
 2003 *Now I know only so far: Essays in ethnopoetics*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Inskeep, Steve
 2011 *Instant City: Life and Death in Karachi*. New York: Penguin.

- Inoue, Miyako
 2002 Gender, Language, and Modernity: Toward an Effective History of Japanese Women's Language. *American Ethnologist* 29(2): 392-422.
- Iqbal, Muhammad Allama
 1995 *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Urdū*. Lāhaur: al-Faiṣal Nāshirān va Tājirān-i Kutub.
- Irvine, Judith
 1989 When talk isn't cheap: Language and political economy. *American Ethnologist* 16:248–267.
 1992 Insult and Responsibility: Verbal Abuse in a Wolof Village. In *Responsibility and Evidence In Oral Discourse*. Hill, Jane and Judith T. Irvine, eds. Pp. 105-134. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Jakobson, Roman
 1960 Concluding Statement: Linguistic and Poetics. *In Style in Language*. Sebeok, Thomas, ed. Pp. 350-373. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Jeffery, Patricia
 1979 *Frogs in a well: Indian women in purdah*. London: Zed.
- Johnstone, Barbara
 2011 Dialect enregisterment in performance. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15(5): 657–679.
- Kellogg, Samuel H.
 1893 *Grammar of the Hindi Language*. London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner.
- Kerswill, Paul
 2002 Koineization and Accommodation. *In The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. Chambers, J.K., Peter Trudgill, and Natalie Schilling-Estes, eds. Pp 669-702. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kerswill, Paul and Peter Trudgill
 2005 The Birth of New Dialects. *In Dialect Change: Convergence and Divergence in European Languages*. Auer, Peter, Frans Hinskens, and Paul Kerswill, eds. Pp 196-220. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Khan, Ali, and Ali Nobil Ahmad
 2010 From Zinda Laash to Zibakhkhana: horror and violence in Pakistani cinema. Special Issue: "Cinema in Muslim Societies," *Third Text* (24:1):149-162.
- Khan, Sher
 2011 No to vulgarity: Cleaning up the stage. *The Express Tribune*, March 21. <http://tribune.com.pk/story/135665/no-to-vulgarity-cleaning-up-the-stage/>, accessed 10 February 2014.

- King, Christopher
 1994 *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Kirk, Gwendolyn
 N.d.a [Unpublished MS] Descriptive grammar of an Okara dialect of Punjabi.
 N.d.b [Unpublished MS] "The first Punjabi film in English:" Cinema, parody, and enregisterment.
 In press Karachi Weds Lahore: Urdu-Punjabi language mixing, indexicality, and the performance of ethnolinguistic identities in Pakistani TV comedy. *Pragmatics and Society*.
- Kirmani, Nida
 2013 *Questioning the 'Muslim Woman': Identity and Insecurity in an Urban Indian Locality*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Kleivan, Inge
 1971 Song Duels in West Greenland: Joking Relationships and Avoidance. *Folk* 13:9-36.
- Kulick, Don
 1993 Speaking as a Woman: Structure and Gender in Domestic Arguments in a New Guinea Village. *Cultural Anthropology* 8(4):510-541.
 1998 Anger, Gender, Language Shift, and the Politics of Revelation in a Papua New Guinean Village. *In Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. Schieffelin, Bambi Kathryn Woolard and Paul Kroskrity, eds. Pp. 133-153. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kulyk, Voldomir
 2010 Ideologies of language use in post-Soviet Ukrainian media. *International Journal of Society and Language* 201:79-104.
- Labov, William
 1972 *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Larkin, Brian
 2013 The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42: 327-343.
 2008 Signal and noise: media, infrastructure, and urban culture in Nigeria. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Larsson, Ida, Sofia Tingsell, and Maia Andréasson
 2015 Variation and change in American Swedish. *In Germanic Heritage Languages in North America: Acquisition, attrition and change*. Janne

Bondi Johannessen and Joseph C. Salmons, eds. Pp. 359-388.
Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Lave, Jean

1991 Situating Learning in Communities of Practice. *In Perspectives on Socially Shared Cognition*. Lauren Resnick, John Levine, and Stephanie Teasley, eds. Pp. 63-82. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Lave, Jean and Etienne Wenger

1991 *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lefkowitz, Daniel

2003 Investing in Emotion: Love and Anger in Financial Advertising. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 13(1):71-97.

2005 On the relation between sound and meaning in Hicks' *Snow Falling on Cedars*. *Semiotica* 155(1/4):15-50.

Lieven, Anatol

2011 *Pakistan: A Hard Country*. New York: PublicAffaris.

Lippi-Green, Rosina

1997 *English with an Accent: Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States*. New York: Routledge.

Lopez, Qiuana

2012 *White bodies, black voices: The linguistic construction of racialized authenticity in US film*. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Linguistics, The University of Texas at Austin.

Malik, Tahir Ghafoor

2010 *Lexical Borrowing: A Study of Punjabi and Urdu Kinship Terms*. *Language in India* 10(8):22-32.

Mansoor, Sabiha

1993 *Punjabi, Urdu, English in Pakistan: A Sociolinguistic Study*. Lahore: Vanguard.

Masica, Colin

1991 *The Indo-Aryan languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Maula Jatt

1979 *Yunus Malik*, dir. 145 min. Sarwar Bhatti. Lahore.

Mauss, Marcel

1973 *Techniques of the body*. *Economy and Society* 2(1):70-88.

- McLuhan, Marshall
1964 *Understanding Media*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Meek, Barbra
2006 And the Injun Goes “How!?”: Representations of American Indian English in White Public Space. *Language in Society* 35(1):93-128.
- Mir, Farina
2010 *The social space of language: vernacular culture in British colonial Punjab*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Mishra, Vijay
2002 *Bollywood cinema: Temples of desire*. New York: Routledge
- Mookherjee, Nayanika
2011 'Never again': aesthetics of 'genocidal' cosmopolitanism and the Bangladesh Liberation War Museum. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.):S71-S91*.
- Nakassis, Constantine
2015 A Tamil-speaking Heroine. *BioScope* 6(2):165-186.
- Nandy, Ashish, ed.
1998 *The secret politics of our desires: innocence, culpability, and Indian popular cinema*. New York: Zed Books.
- Niedzielski, Nancy and Dennis Preston
2000 *Folk Linguistics*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Nuckolls, Janis B.
1992 Sound Symbolic Involvement. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 2(1):51-80
- Ochs, Elinor.
1996 Linguistic resources for socializing humanity. *In Rethinking linguistic relativity* Gumperz, John J. and Stephen C. Levinson, eds. Pp. 407-433. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Otheguy, Ricardo and Ana Celia Zentella
2012 *Spanish in New York: Language Contact, Dialectal Leveling, and Structural Continuity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pagliai, Valentina
2009 The Art of Dueling with Words: Toward a New Understanding of Verbal Duels across the World. *Oral Tradition* 24(1):61-88.
2010 Conflict, cooperation, and facework in contrasto verbal duels. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 20(1). 87–100.

- Pandian, Anand
- 2011a Landscapes of Expression: Affective Encounters in South Indian Cinema. *Cinema Journal* 51(1):50-74.
- 2011b Reel time: ethnography and the historical ontology of the cinematic image. *Screen* 52(2):193-214.
- Parks, Ward
- 1990 Verbal Dueling in Heroic Narrative: The Homeric and Old English Traditions. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Perkins, Claire and Constantine Verevis, eds.
- 2014 B is for Bad Cinema: Aesthetics, Politics, and Cultural Value. New York: SUNY Press.
- Peterson, Leighton
- 2011 "Reel Navajo": The Linguistic Creation of Indigenous Screen Memories. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 35(2):111-134.
- 2014 Made Impossible by Viewers Like You: The Politics and Poetics of Native American Voices in US Public Television. *In* How television shapes our worldview: Media representations of social trends and change. Pp. 247-265. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Platts, John T.
- 1884 A dictionary of Urdu, classical Hindi, and English. London: W.H. Allen & Co.
- Popp, Richard K.
- 2006 Mass Media and the Linguistic Marketplace: Media, Language, and Distinction. *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 30(1):5-20.
- Powdermaker, Hortense
- 1950 Hollywood, The Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers. New York: Little, Brown.
- Preston, Dennis
- 1989 Perceptual dialectology: nonlinguists' views of areal linguistics. New York: Foris.
- 1993 The Uses of Folk Linguistics. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 3(2):181-259.
- 2002 Perceptual Dialectology: Aims, Methods, Findings. *In* Present-Day Dialectology: Problems and Findings. Berns, J.B. and Jaap van Marle, eds. Pp. 57-104. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Pullen, Kirsten
- 2005 Actresses and whores: On stage and in society. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Qasmi, Ahmad Nadeem
 2007 *Aḥmad Nadīm Qāsimī ke Numā'indah afsāne*. New Delhi: Modern Publishing House.
- Queen, Robin
 2015 *Vox popular: The surprising life of language in the media*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Rahman, Tariq
 1996 *Language and Politics in Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
 2004 *Denizens of Alien Worlds: A Study of Education, Inequality, and Polarization in Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
 2007 *Punjabi Language Under British Rule*. *Journal of Punjab Studies* 14(1):27-39.
 2011 *From Hindi to Urdu: A Social and Political History*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Rand, Gavin and Kim Wagner
 2012 *Recruiting the 'martial races': identities and military service in colonial India*. *Patterns of Prejudice* 46(3-4):232-254.
- Rizza, Chris
 2012 *The carnival of verbal dueling*. *Text & Talk* 32(3):371-390.
- Rukh, Samar and Nargis Saleem
 2014 *Diglossic Situation in Central Punjab: A Case of Urdu and Punjabi Language*. *Language in India* 14(6):350-356.
- Said, Ahmad
 1962 *Film*. *Naqush* 92:785-797.
- Saikia, Yasmin
 2011 *Women, War, and the Making of Bangladesh: Remembering 1971*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Samuels, David
 2004 *Putting a Song on Top of it: Expression and Identity on the San Carlos Apache Reservation*. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press.
- Sayahi, Lotfi
 2014 *Diglossia and Language Contact*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sayers, David
 2014 *The mediated innovation model: A framework for researching media influence in language change*. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 18(2):185-212.

- Schegloff, Emanuel
 2007 *Sequence Organization in Interaction: A Primer in Conversation Analysis I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schieffelin, Bambi, Kathryn Woolard, and Paul Kroskrity, eds.
 1998 *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sevea, Iqbal
 2014 "Kharaak Kita Oi!": Masculinity, Caste, and Gender in Punjabi Films. *BioScope* 5(2):129-140.
- Shackle, Christopher
 1970 Punjabi in Lahore. *Modern Asian Studies* 4(3): 239-267.
 2003 Punjabi. *In The Indo-Aryan Languages*. George Cardona and Dhanesh Jain, eds. Pp. 581-621. New York: Routledge.
- Shankar, Shalini and Jillian Cavanaugh
 2012 Language and Materiality in Global Capitalism. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41:355-69.
- Sherzer, Joel
 1987 A Discourse-Centered Approach to Language and Culture. *American Anthropologist* 89(2):295-309.
 2002 *Speech Play and Verbal Art*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Siegel, Jeff
 1985 Koines and koineization. *Language in Society* 14(3):357-378.
- Silverstein, Michael
 2003 Indexical order and the dialectics of sociolinguistic life. *Language & Communication* 23:193-229.
- Singh, Atam
 1970 An Introduction to the Dialects of Punjabi. *Pakha Sanjam* 3(1-2):120-152.
- Singh, Maya
 1895 *The Panjabi Dictionary*. Lahore: Munshi Gulab Singh and Sons.
- Singh, Sukhwinder
 2006 *Punjabi phonology: A sociolinguistic study*. New Delhi: Indian Institute of Language Studies.
- Smitherman, Geneva
 1977 *Talkin and Testifyin: the Language of Black America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

- Soofi, Mushtaq
 2016 Mother Language and Punjab Government. Dawn News, February 26.
<http://www.dawn.com/news/1242003/mother-language-and-punjab-government>, accessed 23 March 2016.
- Spitulnik, Debra
 1998 Mediating Univerty and Diversity: The Production of Language Ideologies in Zambian Broadcasting. *In* Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory. Bambi Schieffelin, Kathryn Woolard, and Paul Kroskrity, eds. Pp. 226-257. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Star, Susan Leigh
 1999 The Ethnography of Infrastructure. *American Behavioral Scientist* 43:377-391.
- Stewart, Kathleen
 1988 Nostalgia—A Polemic. *Cultural Anthropology* 3(3):227-241.
 2010 Atmospheric Attunements. *Rubric* 1:2-14.
- Stewart, Susan
 1984 On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Streets, Heather
 2004 Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Cultlre, 1857-1914. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Sullivan, Celeste
 2007 The Language Culture of Lahore. *The Annual of Urdu Studies* 22:113-145.
- Talbot, Ian
 2007a A Tale of Two Cities: The Aftermath of Partition for Lahore and Amritsar, 1947-1957. *Modern Asian Studies* 41(1):151-185.
 2007b Punjab Under Colonialism: Order and Transformation in British India. *Journal of Punjab Studies* 14(1):3-10.
- Taussig, Michael
 1999 Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Toor, Saadia
 2007 Moral Regulation in a Post-Colonial Nation-State: Gender and the Politics of Islamization in Pakistan. *Interventions* 9(2):255-275.
 2009 Containing East Bengal: Language, Nation, and State Formation in Pakistan, 1947-1952. *Cultural Dynamics* 21(2):185-210.
 2011 The State of Islam: Culture and Cold War Politics in Pakistan. London: Pluto Press.

Trudgill, Peter

1986 *Dialects in Contact*. New York: Basil Blackwell.

2008 Colonial dialect contact in the history of European languages: On the irrelevance of identity to new-dialect formation. *Language in Society* 37(2):241-254.

Umar, Badruddin

2004 *The Emergence of Bangladesh: Class Struggles in East Pakistan (1947-1958)*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Umar-ud-Din, Muhammad Kamal Khan, and Muhammad Iqbal

2011 Multiple Nested Trilingual Situation in Pakistan. *Language in India* 11(3):9-18.

Vasudevan, Ravi

2000 Shifting codes, dissolving identities: The Hindi social film of the 1950s as popular culture. *In Making meaning in Indian cinema*. Ravi Vasudevan, ed. Pp 99-121. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

2005 An Imperfect Public: Cinema and Citizenship in the Third World. *In Civil Society, Public Sphere and Citizenship: Dialogues and Perceptions*. Bhargava, Rajeev and Helmut Reifeld, eds. Pp.159-185. New Delhi: Sage.

2011 *The melodramatic public: film form and spectatorship in Indian cinema*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

2015 Film Genres, the Muslim Social, and Discourses of Identity c. 1935-1945. *BioScope* 6(1):27-43.

Velayutham, Selvaraj, ed.

2008 *Tamil cinema: The cultural politics of India's other film industry*. London: Routledge

Wasser, Frederick

1997 *Veni, vidi, video: the Hollywood empire and the VCR*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Weakland, John

2003 Feature Films as Cultural Documents. *In Principles of Visual Anthropology*. Paul Hockings, ed. Pp. 45-68. New York: Mouton De Gruyter.

Webster, Anthony

2009 *Explorations in Navajo Poetry and Poetics*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Weitzner, Jacob

2002 Yiddish in Israeli Cinema. *Prooftexts* 22(1-2):186-199.

- Wenger, Etienne
 1998 *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wenger, Etienne, Richard McDermott, William Snyder
 2002 *Cultivating Communities of Practice*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Williams, Raymond
 1977 *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wilson, James
 1899 *Grammar and Dictionary of Western Panjabi as Spoken in the Shahpur District with Proverbs, Sayings, & Verses*. Lahore: Punjab Government Press.
- Woolard, Kathryn
 1985 Language variation and cultural hegemony: toward an integration of sociolinguistic and social theory. *American Ethnologist* 12(4):738-748.
 1989 *Double Talk: Bilingualism and the Politics of Ethnicity in Catalonia*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
 1998 Introduction: Language ideology as a field of inquiry. *In Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. Bambi Schieffelin, Kathryn Woolard, and Paul Kroskrity, ed. Pp. 3-47. New York: Oxford University Press.
 2003 'We Don't Speak Catalan Because We Are Marginalized'; Ethnic and Class Connotations of Language in Barcelona. Essay. *In Language and Social Identity*. Richard K. Blot, ed. Pp. 85-103. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Woolard, Kathryn and Bambi Schieffelin
 1994 Language Ideology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23:55-82.
- Zaidi, Abbas
 2010 A postcolonial sociolinguistics of Punjabi in Pakistan. *Journal of Post Colonial Societies* 1(3-4):22-55.
- Zaidi, Anam Narjis
 2013 Declining Pakistani Cinema Industry. *Asia Despatch*, June 17. <http://www.asiadespatch.org/2013/06/17/declining-pakistani-cinema-industry/>, accessed 13 March 2015.
- Zaman, Mohamad Qasim
 2002 *The ulama in contemporary Islam: Custodians of change*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Zamindar, Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali
 2007 *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories*. New York: Columbia University Press.