

NOT REALLY BOLLYWOOD:

A HISTORY OF POPULAR HINDI FILMS, SONGS, AND DANCE
WITH PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING INDIAN
HISTORY AND CULTURE

by

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Abstract

Contemporary fascination with ‘Bollywood’ proliferates much of reality TV dance shows, media blurbs and other communicative outlets. These avenues homogenize India as ‘Bollywood’, while social and political outlets place Indians and people of South Asian descent into fitted stereotypes that are ridiculed and largely distorted. The intent of this thesis was to explore how the growing international intrigues of popular Hindi films exist *beyond* ‘Bollywood’.

This study is especially important because current U.S. demographics are undergoing a ‘browning’ effect yet a comprehensive method for understanding South Asian peoples and their cultures have been isolated to terrorist ‘breeders’, the model minority or as products primed for consumption.

This thesis discusses the history of popular Hindi popular cinema, its changing methods of songs and dance and includes options of pedagogical applications within secondary level classrooms. In short, this thesis is an effort to highlight the similarities present amongst the differences that are consciously and unconsciously created or implicitly believed by the general population when attempting to decipher the many different components that exist across South Asian cultures, ethnicities, traditions, histories and identities.

Dedication

For my loving parents, Prakash and Bharti Nayee.

Both of you are my pillars of strength and compassion. As my very first teachers, you each helped me realize my passion. Thank you for your unwavering faith and love for me.

I would not be what I am if I did not have either of you.

For my sister, Mikita.

Thank you for being my best friend and translator. You've taught me how to accomplish my goals and appreciate that 'all of this' *must* count for something.

For all my family members and friends across the regions and continents whose affectionate embrace wraps its arms two fold across borders and oceans.

For the reflection against the shadow, who walks down this unfamiliar path that departs and blooms past the sound of departure. The tender young ears expand, enact, contort and finally awaken in the slumberous sleep of peace of mind.

This life of an immigrant wants to sleep for just one asphyxiated breeze of wishful thinking.

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Complex Introductions

“Where are you *from*?” “You look exotic!” You talk *like* a white girl.” These are questions and statements that I have frequently run into which have categorized me the “other,” by (white and brown) classmates, teachers, and strangers alike. In school, I liked explaining my intriguing background to people who I thought were genuinely interested in learning about different cultures and me. But then one day, I started to notice something that I had not before.

My younger sister, Mikita is five years younger than me. With my parents both working full time, I was her baby sitter, tutor, and partner in crime. One day she came from school and as always, shared the events of her day with me. On that day, Mikita and I both had henna/mendhi on her hands. Henna/mendhi is cultivated and used as a harmless natural dye used for body art, hair and even leather. Not only is henna/mendhi an age-old custom in our culture, but during weddings a bride and every other female in the wedding party adorn their hands with its delicate and artistic designs. Naturally, as any middle school girl would, Mikita told me of how she shared the excitement of the henna/mendhi on her hands with her friends as they admired the artwork painted on her hands. After class, Mikita showed her hands to her science teacher, Mrs. Michaels, explaining that her there would soon be a wedding in our family. Mrs. Michaels said, “why would you do *that* to yourself?” with an almost disgusted look on her face, as if there was some sort of disease growing on her hand instead. My seventh-grade sister could only meekly tell her it was tradition. But what she *should* have told Mrs. Michaels was that henna/mendhi is a type of plant, that prepares the one of the most organic dyes, isn’t that science? Wouldn’t that have shown her capability to express multiple intelligences; I mean it *was* a science class. Or maybe she could have feigned interest, while Mikita could explain the origins of the plant and

even tie that into the science project due in two weeks. Mrs. Michaels's curt response disempowered my sister, as an immigrant, as a teenager, and an individual who was already negotiating identities.

My own experience would come a few years later in 2001. For my family, the obscure dream of immigration had transformed into the reality of American citizenship. For my family, 2001, was the year the "American Dream" was accomplished. For my family, the meticulous immigration forms were filled out, steep application fees had been paid, and our 'lost' file at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration office had magically reappeared with bold red stamp of "APPROVED". My parents had been saving up for a house and by late August, we had moved into our new house.

Then in September, as I was driving to my first college class, the radio roared with frantic calls and news of which schools were closed, but I never heard *what* exactly had happened. As class began, the professor walked in and turned on the television. For some reason, nervousness sunk in, I thought maybe I had entered the wrong class and so I looked down to intently study my schedule hoping for an answer to appear. Once I finally looked back up to the screen, I saw and heard what was *really* happening. Confused with the details, I thought: "This is happening *here*?" At college, no announcements were made by the administration. Class was canceled but my professor held me back and apologetically explained that I should be extra careful because, "during times like these, people get really mad."

That evening, my family and I watched President Bush speak, we did not even have couches yet and the television sat bare on the floor awaiting the furniture to arrive. Then, the President's words breathed war and instinctively, I looked to my mom. She told me not to

worry, but before I left for class the next day, she handed me a mini American flag, (the one that we had each clutched onto as we were declared citizens of this country), to put on my backpack. Soon after that, the very cute Muslim twin boys and their family moved out my new neighborhood and I got called dot-head, terrorist lover, sand-nigger by classmates more often than before. For a while, I tried to clarify the misunderstandings by explaining the differences between 'us and them' but then I realized that I *am* them and *they* are me.

Nobody 'Gets' You

I have shared these stories not on the grounds of revealing the ignorance of my sister's science teacher or to portray the sincere worry of one the first college professors I had. I revealed them because even though my speech sounds 'white', this was the first time I had to highlight the visible differences of my skin color, my eye/hair color or my heritage's history of henna/mendhi. As a young adult, my South Asian culture was always of mixture of both Eastern and Western worlds; for me, living in "both sides of the imperial divide enables [me] to understand them more easily" (Said, 1993, xxvii). But, the aftermath of my sisters' and my incidents accelerated with the tragedy of 9/11. Soon after, it became customary for my family and I to take to the streets to prove our 'Americanness' by placing stickers of the American flag on our cars, on travel luggage, or backpacks. At grocery stores, the mall or other public places, we shopped quickly and avoided the stares of others who seemed to shoulder additional glances that were a blurred mixture of fear and rage. This was then and at times, it *still* occurs in the media, in the heated arguments on the radio or Internet sites and even amongst the many others who continue to share bigoted assumptions on the issues of race and ethnicity after 9/11.

Nowadays, topics of culture and diversity may be taught to students as a lesson in which they must neatly organize and compose a five-paragraph essay on the importance of multiculturalism. I remember my own Orlando high school would publicize one day out of the school year, in which the Multicultural Club would organize a daylong celebration of skipping class to attend the festival of: Multicultural Day, at the school's gym. Inside the gym, my diverse student body would have tables showing artifacts, food or books from our cultures, heritage and lifestyles. Except the highlights of the day were the dances or performances – once

during each of the two regularly scheduled lunches. The majority of the audience came only to watch to the performances and to grab extra handfuls of free food. No one, including the teachers, really walked around to study or asked questions about the artifacts, read a few pages of the books laid out, let alone even talking about the individual culture or background with the person sitting at the table. No one really cared enough. No one really got it. The teacher sponsoring the Multicultural Club took no proactive effort to change up the day's schedule of events or revised its format during any of the three years that I attended there.

Other times, during classroom instruction, whenever the topic of India would sneak into the discussion the teacher in charge would usually just shrug his/her shoulders and glance towards me. Even though I am not, I became the official representative of my heritage, unofficially. I abhorred these moments the most. Why should I, a teenage student be in charge of presenting my background to peers and teachers when in reality, I was mocked and teased constantly because I looked 'different'?

I accept that teachers are not to be held solely responsible for this dearth of knowledge. Except children of all backgrounds, races/ethnicities, cultures and lifestyles spend so much time in school every day, that teachers indirectly and directly play a significant role in shaping a students' awareness, attitudes and views. The twenty-first century teacher must begin by first seeking to expand the curriculum on diversity that exists beyond the hyped buzzwords of celebration, tolerance or acceptance (Blanchard & Johnson, 2008). Implementing films into this style is a uniquely appealing method that can begin an exchange of ideas, values and beliefs to occur within secondary level classrooms. Teachers can begin by first learning themselves how films can be viewed critically, then by using clips or dividing the film across sections to be

studied throughout the year and lastly by recognizing the educational appeal a film can offer to students (Blanchard & Johnson, 2008). When appropriate films are used they can be a welcome break from tedious assignments, rigorous instruction and monotony for a student and a teacher. Think of it this way, people world over watch all types of films whether they be original screenplays or books adapted into films, so why not include foreign films, the ones that are not really ‘Bollywood’, into these categories as well? Soak that up and marinate this idea for a bit, while I continue to present my reasoning.

Since pursuing my college degree, my peers in the College of Education discuss research that has proven the effectiveness of practicing a multicultural curriculum, we present lesson plans to incorporate ESL learners and we analyze an assortment of ways to effectively prepare methods that meet the needs of diversity in our classrooms while still meeting state and national guidelines. My thesis is a small handbook that includes each of these requirements. Of course, it seems a little easy: ‘Bollywood’ this faraway ‘kingdom’ of song, dance with severely escapist tendencies – how is *that* even relevant? I will tell you that not *all* of ‘Bollywood’ is, but a large portion of this gargantuan industry can be. And, I do not intend to romanticize a version of this South Asian film industry as the singular defining facet of Indian culture. I propose a small, but refreshing way of opening the crucial dialogue that is far too often coded with the growing anxiety regarding the descriptions of ‘terrorists’ fitting the specified *physical* requirements and not the sociological, mental or political ones. I propose a way to look beyond the negative stereotypes of the term ‘model minority’ as it pertains to people of South Asian traditions. By using a few ‘Bollywood’ films that are not really ‘Bollywood’ films, these topics can be illuminated. You might be thinking: this is not genuinely possible, what about the song and

dance? What about the enchanting fascination? What about the elephants, bindis, or curry? These statements are most often uninformed and most definitely Eurocentrically packaged to fit across the grid of capitalist globalization.

There is a need to improve the understanding of 'Bollywood' that begins in first acknowledging how, "cinema [in general] assumes a pedagogical role in the lives of many people. It may not be the intent of a filmmaker to teach audiences anything, but that does not mean that lessons are not learned" (hooks, 1996, p. 2). For starters, in many prominent American films: the central evildoer is connected to viscous acts of terror and after his attendance is accounted for on film, his wickedness generally tends to be denoted to his darker 'primitive' skin color and is from an uncivilized region of Arab, Islamic, or South Asian descent. The 'Other' characters in mainstream American films are typecast as the cab driver, the convenient store employee, the IT professional, or the South Asian female who exudes a mysterious and exotic allure. These images form a succinctly standardized view of the South Asian identity. In many ways, the same is applicable of mainstream 'Bollywood' films. The majority of films are flawed in its utopian-like depiction of a mesmerizing India that only sings, dances, wears the latest fashionable trends, lives in immaculate mansions and ends all its stories with a happily ever after. Both of these combined interpretations of South Asian identities are *enormously* inaccurate.

This obsession with 'Bollywood' has grown tremendously within the last decade and many other topics of Hindi films are discussed at greater length within sophisticated areas of research. My work is plain and simple when compared the countless before me. My research is an endeavor to create a guide that modestly discusses popular Hindi films, its history, its uses of

song and dance and the slightly slow but steady advancement in the types of films that are produced. To value and appreciate this *reel* diversity, I suggest ways in which two films: *Maachis* (1996) and *Udaan* (2010) to help learn *some* of India's *real* diversity for secondary level students. Maybe this way, someone or the other will eventually 'get' it.

Brown

“Who’s that? Broown! / What can brown do for you? /
What has brown has done for me lately?”
- Das Racist, “Who’s that? Broown!”

Demographics within the United States have changed drastically. In August 2009, the U.S. Census predicted that there would be a “large increase in racial and ethnic diversity” due to the increase of migrations from Hispanic and Asian countries. In March 2012, the census released a report in regards to the growing the Asian population. This report states the U.S. population stands at 281.4 million, and the U.S. Asian population grew from 10.2 million in 2000 to 14.7 million in 2010. However, the Census clusters the largest continent of Asia, to refer to the continents of the Far East, Southeast Asia, and South Asia.

At the same time, this ‘browning’ of the U.S. shows that separate races/ethnicities can fill the fissures across continents by establishing connections, bridging links, and by creating associations. This practice can begin within our public schools, or as Geneva Gay eloquently states: “cultural heritages, social contexts, and background experiences, along with individual attributes, [that] count in critical ways for both teaching and learning” (2010, p. 242). Although, based on the two experiences I have shared in my introduction, there remains a strong Eurocentric perspective that has its roots implanted in dominant Western ideologies of values and perceptions, which maintains a general xenophobic consensus.

These ‘browning’ demographics also represent diversity – “differences that encompass race, ethnicity, gender, social class, ability and language, [but is also] used a euphemism in an attempt to soften the blow the racism” (Neito, 2002, p. 184). Therefore, the term ‘diversity’ is loaded with sociological weights that subtly separate the haves from the have-nots. In short,

celebrating just the foods, artifacts or holidays of another culture is not and will never encompass a bona fide multicultural curriculum.

The India

“I, Shashi, from the India.”

“No, Shashi! Not from *the* India, *from* India.”

“Why India, not *the* India? Why America, *the* United States of America?”

(English Vinglish, forthcoming Hindi film)

Focusing specifically on central South Asia, India is multifarious in its religions, languages/dialects spoken and in its ethnicities. The cultures of India are too vast and share numerous similarities and differences across its regions. Each of India’s twenty-nine states and union territories have equally different climates, dialects, traditions, customs, and much more. Having one fixed explanation would not encompass the richness and variations of *all* of India’s cultures. For example, if I were to say that the American culture is french fries, ‘Biebermania’, and Facebook, I would be utterly incorrect.

Instead, anyone from the countries of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, or Nepal is generally considered a ‘desi’. In the U.S., this category is grouped with the Asian population, and only in 2010 did the U.S Census begin including other categories of Asian Indians as well as Koreans and Filipinos. Locally, the U.S Census shows that our state, Florida boasts an estimated population of 18 million, with the Asian population comprising less than half a million (approximately 2.6%) of the total population. In Orange County alone, our population rounds off at a little over one million; the Asian population places third making up roughly 5.2% of the states’ total population. While the U.S. Census does show Orange County’s public school

population at 177,228, there are no indicators of this population divided by race or ethnicity. The National Center for Education Statistics did provide efficient data regarding the English proficiency rates by race and ethnicity, except the site did not provide county data specific to Asian subpopulations. Thus, this lack of information is vague and still (if ever) should be thoroughly examined by Census reporting.

Objectified, Commodified, and Appropriated

“...the Orientalist makes it his work to be always converting the Orient from something into something else: he does this for himself, for the sake of his culture....This process of conversion is a disciplined one: it is taught, it has its own societies, periodicals, traditions, vocabulary, rhetoric, all in basic ways connected to and supplied by the prevailing cultural and political norms of the West.”

- Edward Said, *Orientalism*. (1978).

As I stated earlier, India is not a homogeneous entity. Like any country, its demarcations of culture are blurred and rightly so. But somehow, everything about Desis in general is placed in a snug stereotype and is ridiculed, mocked and distorted. The list is endless, starting with 7/11 gas stations, Aishwarya Rai, Apu, bindis, Bollywood, Brownface, cab drivers, costumes, curry, Diwali, elephants, exoticized fashion, immigration, interior designs/prints, IT professionals, and continue later with: model minority, Muslim rage, oppressed because of choosing wearing hijab or niqab, Osama lover, ‘Slumdog’, suspected terrorist, terrorist, terrorist lover, Third World, and towel head. Powerlessness is usually the first feeling, followed by fear. Yet, logic and reasoning remind us that at their root, these slurs are presumptuously ignorant and veiled within the structure of systemized racial/ethnic and gendered inequalities. The use of these words can be divided according to pre 9/11 eras and post 9/11 eras – this suggests the enduring capability of a

racist ideology to grow and strengthen over time. With more words added regularly, thanks to mainstream media outlets and popular culture, diversity used in this context *is* racist.

Diversity is also a marketable and highly profitable product; Murali Balaji declares the blame openly, “to cultivate consumption, [the] media must first construct an audience that will consume” (2008, p. 27). This dynamic is evident since dominant hegemony imposes the idea of the United States as the melting pot of assimilation and corporate globalization. South Asian countries are presented to Western worlds only in terms of its ethos “Bollywood, bhangra music, bindis, male minstrelsy, yoga, tandoori, [and more recently] Aishwarya Rai” (2008, 26). In short, cultural appropriation abounds, while authentic understanding vanishes in the latest South Asian textiles offered at the nearest Pier One Imports.

According to the extensive research of Vijay Prashad, the exoticism of India was first introduced in the U.S. in “circuses and vaudeville houses”, where representations included “images of an opulent and effeminate sultan surrounded by oversexed women, animals, jewelry, and the scent of the unknown” (2000 p. 27). In text, *The Arabian Nights* became the prevailing impression of all things from the East (Prasad, 2000). In the 1930s and 40s, American film introduced India through Ram Singh, anglicized as Sabu¹; each of Sabu’s roles consisted of associations to animals, specifically tigers and elephants and to the forests of India or as Prasad states: “films that conjured up the generic Orient of which India was to be a major part” (2000, p. 28). The film *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984) is a case that syncs itself with Prasad’s work. The film is rife with orientalist imagery, and ideologies of Eurocentrism where Indians are shown eating monkey brains, while Harrison Ford, lends his muscle as an

¹ According to Prashad, Sabu was “discovered in the maharajah of Mysore’s stables by Alexander Korda’s cameraman” (2008, p. 28).

“archeology professor [who] can ‘rescue’ artifacts from the colonized world for the greater benefit of science and civilization” (Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 124). Soon after, American films continued to mercilessly feed inaccurate portrayals of Desi culture. One such incident is that of Harpeet –

“a male Sikh² high school student [who] wears a turban to school. During Christmas holidays he and his fellow students entertain the homeless by dressing up and playing different characters. As he always wears a turban, Harpeet’s teacher insisted he play Jafar, the Arab villain from Disney’s *Aladdin*” (Shaheen, 2008. p. 16).

A film is never *just* a film. Films are visual realities that represent and even propagate human morals and values. The revolution of technologies makes films easily accessible on laptops, tablets, and smartphones to expand viewership across continents.

So, I ask the same question as Jack G. Shaheen does, “what better time than now to demonstrate the true positive impact of cinema, to project real human interest films that inspire dialogue about relevant issues” (2008, p. 86)? Some of the films that are churned out of popular Hindi cinema have the potential to expose secondary level learners how race and culture are tools of empowerment if and only if, diversity is productively studied and discussed. In the words the famous postcolonial writer, Chinua Achebe: “Let every people bring their gifts to the great festival of the world’s cultural harvest and mankind will be all the richer for the variety and distinctiveness of the offerings” (1995, p. 61). This offering then, as a thesis, seeks to highlight the robust cultural identity and history that undergirds the progression of a song from its inception to its portrayal on celluloid and the steady evolution away from the old formulaic

² Sikhism is a monotheistic religion in which one of the five tenets includes uncut hair kept in turban. Its significance is associated to piety, self-respect and devotion.

methods by examining two specific popular Hindi films: *Maachis* (1996) and *Udaan* (2010).

Using only these films, I will show how popular Hindi cinema is different in its themes and structures, but remains unique in its appeal to the masses. In addition to a thorough examination of the above-mentioned popular Hindi films, as well as its use of songs and dance, this thesis will also include pedagogical applications in conjunction with the films discussed for secondary level students.

Just *Another* Misunderstood Nickname

Before proceeding, I would first like to clarify all the hype surrounding the term ‘Bollywood’. There are many just debates regarding the words’ origins in scholarly research. Some believe it to represent song and dance, opulence and melodrama, or just “a buzz word in the West” (Dwyer & Patel, 2002). Others, like Sangita Gopal and Sujata Moorti, note that the name was given by a fanzine as “a mimicry that is both a response and a dismissal” (p. 3). They go on to mention that other actors from within the industry have declared the name ‘Bollywood’ as one that “demeans and belittles [the industry’s] contributions...[thereby] reducing it to a subcontinental clone of Hollywood” (2008, p. 4). For the purposes of this thesis, I have already referred to the industry as the popular Hindi cinema (PHC), because I feel that the concept of Hindi cinema within itself is so multifaceted, that to generalize it into the specific category of ‘Bollywood’ would be a disservice to other regional filmmaking industries in India.

Also, much like how an American film might be called a Hollywood film, a geographic location has become synonymous for Hindi cinema also. The logical explanation of the epithet Bollywood is because its home is located in the city of Mumbai.³ Additionally, the city became the central location of film making after the introduction of sound in 1931 (Dwyer & Patel, 2002). Although, this does not explain why *any* film, from any of the various filmmaking regions within India, are automatically dubbed as ‘Bollywood’ by the outsider. The term ‘Bollywood’ begins and ends with this section, from here after, I will refer to popular Hindi cinema as PHC.

³ The name Bombay was born under imperial British rule as a standard to British lexicon. In 1995, the Shiv-Sena (a political group of right-wing conservatives, decided to rename Bombay as Mumbai). This socio-political decision in some ways, was viewed as an official formaliz[ation] of [the city’s] transformation” of old to new. – *Mumbai Fables*. (Prakash, Gyan, 2010, p. 11).

Over time, the growing intrigue of popular Hindi films entralls audiences everywhere. However, the world of PHC exists beyond the *Slumdog Millionaires*, the fascination with the colors of its film sets and costumes, as well as the overly exclamatory “ohhs” and “ahhs!” Any mention of a Hindi film is immediately associated with song and dance. What goes unnoticed is how popular Hindi films use songs and dance to visually narrate the story, and how they “illustrate [the] cultural concepts such as emotion and ‘heart’ to their audiences” (Sarrazin, 2008). While this formula has been continuously used, popular Hindi films are not always *just* singing and dancing. As Rajinder Kumar Dudrah notes, Western public notions mistakenly identify ‘Bollywood’ films as only “musicals” (2006); whereas, popular Hindi cinema has the capacity to include “all the Western film genres-musical, romantic, comedy, action, thriller, tragedy and melodrama” (2006, p. 48) into one feature film.

Popular Hindi films have a worldly appeal, its audiences range from: the Far East, to China, Egypt, Turkey, (Kabir 2001), as well as Australia, Africa, the Caribbean, Canada, the Middle East, Great Britain, the United States and from the countries formerly tied to the Soviet Union (Dissanayake & Gokulsing, 1998). With such a transcultural audience, PHC continues to grow with wider access to subtitled DVDs in different languages, local/national/international South Asian film festivals, and other new modes of technological advancement. Despite its ardent audiences, PHC remains a cinema that is “inaccessible, foreign, [and] difficult to appreciate” (Hogan, 2008). At other times, PHC is dubbed to have films that are fantastically escapist in narration and structure, that serve audiences with large helpings of varied emotional content (Dwyer & Patel, 2002). Sometimes admiration for PHC becomes tangled as its recognition becomes flawed with ideas of “exoticization and kitschification” (Chan, 2008). Just

a few weeks before I began writing this thesis, a classmate shared her passion for the film *Slumdog Millionaire* and asked me where she could find an Indian Halloween ‘costume’. I asked her why she thought of the ‘costume’ of an Indian. Her response was: “because I want to have a ‘*Jai Ho*’ meets *Aladdin* themed party”. My classmate’s statements are just one example of how the dominant hegemony perceives the Other; her ignorant statements are flawed with misconceptions. As a viewer, my classmate, is what Edward Said posits, has:

“a proclivity to divide, subdivide, and redivide its subject matter without ever changing its mind about the Orient as being always the same, unchanging, uniform, and radically peculiar object” (1978).

My reply to my classmate is was this: There are too many things that I find wrong with what you’ve just said, but think about this: by deciding that the ‘costume’ of my heritage and culture is only aesthetically pleasing, you find it acceptable to place monetary value on the traditions of South Asian culture without understanding how you have homogenized my identity *and* that of the millions of people of South Asian descent, you have distorted my identity *and* that of the millions of people of South Asian descent, and of course reinforced an ideology loaded with racist and prejudiced beliefs. As for the film *Slumdog Millionaire*, it is **not**, a film from India. It is an example of the Western obsession of exploiting anything from the East (Gyan, 2011). In short, I told her, just don’t do it.

In regards to PHC, a naïve viewer distances himself/herself from the intimacy and immediacy created with the film. I do not claim that all viewers embrace this characterization; neither do all films within PHC enhance the cultures of India truthfully for its audiences. Still, in an increasingly ‘browning’ and multi-cultural society, the opportunity to educate young adults

about the cultures of India would be enriched if teachers had materials that let them share the nuances and subtexts that are woven throughout the popular Hindi films. For this reason, I will present a beginner's guide to understanding PHC with the films *Maachis* (1996) and *Udaan* (2010). These films in themselves have a rare charm when compared to their other cinematic counterparts. Each film features elements of the song and dance but departs from the usual techniques in which they are executed. In some ways, they are representative of what the Hindi cinema might label as either art films or experimental films. Regardless of the label attached, *Maachis* (1996) and *Udaan* (2010) simply bend the norm of songs and dance but maintain an effective storyline, which in turn, led to their popularity with the masses. However, before closely analyzing each of the above films, it is necessary to study the origins and history of Hindi cinema.

Popular Hindi Film's Pedigree

The subsequent section is a **brief** history of PHC. As with all types of history, there are many interpretations of PHC's history; mine focuses on the history of Hindi cinema within the decades following its first film in 1913. Simultaneously, this includes the history of songs and dance. I want to emphasize that each decade of PHC is related to the shift within the film industry and with the nation state of India before and after Colonial Rule; my analysis is limited because this is, after all, only a thesis! *All* of India's languages are not represented. Next, I have included a **condensed** history relevant **only** to how Urdu and Hindi have been used within the context of cinematic origins.

Hindi-Urdu

Until independence from the British, the population of Punjabi Hindus and Muslims largely spoke Urdu (Dwyer & Patel, 2002); it was even one of the main languages spoken in Bombay. The history of languages within India is embedded in the many various conquests; before these new visitors, languages across India were mixture of assorted but incomprehensible dialects (Rahman, 2011). The term Urdu is a shortened version of the Persian expression *Zubān-ē-Urdu-ē-Muallā* – the language of the Exalted City: Delhi (Rahman, 2011). Urdu is comprised of the Persian alphabet, and is Persian and Arabic in both its vocabulary and script; it is therefore a Muslim identity marker, while Hindi is associated with Hindus (Rahman, 2011). While the colloquial use of Hindi is said to derive from Urdu, Hindi is written in Devangari, a script used in Sanskrit – the language used most commonly in Hindu ceremonies and rituals today. Sanskrit also has a rich tradition of drama, literature and poetry; its implementation is used largely to depict tales from holy Hindu texts. Sanskrit was and continues to be spoken by a limited few

who encompass a thorough understanding of its phonetics, phonics and grammar. Consequently, Sanskrit as a lingua franca, experiences a divide amongst the masses within India.

Both Urdu and Hindi share the same phonology and grammatical style. Islamic artists fluent in Urdu are credited for establishing the roots of “film genres, texts, music, and scripts” (Jaikumar, 2006, p. 35). The prevalence of these artists then and even today, is why “the language of Bollywood is so close to Urdu” (Rahman, 2011, p. 378). In fact, Hindi-Urdu are what Nasreen Munni Kabir has called, “sister languages” (2002, p. 41), that established early “cinema’s hybrid nature, allowing it to evolve a style that would be seen as national entity” (Dwyer & Patel, 2002, p. 19), unlike for example, that of Sanskrit drama. This is believed to have granted idiomatic Hindi a higher ranking than Urdu, mainly because when spoken, Urdu is more refined, elite and essentially sounds more ‘cleaner’ in manner when compared to speaking the informal version Hindi. Urdu is the official the language of Pakistan but is still widely spoken in India. My petite sized explanation of Hindi-Urdu is scarce, since I have not comprehensively had the privilege of studying the complete linguistic histories of South Asia. I have included this section only to illustrate Hindi-Urdu’s continued ties to popular Hindi cinema.

Classical Sanskrit Beginnings

I have stated earlier that Hindi filmmaking became significant to the city of Bombay with the advent of sound in 1931 and has remained so since then. Prior to this, early Sanskrit texts, several centuries before the nineteenth century (Dwyer & Patel, 2002) state that Brahma, the creator of the universe, “created *Natyaveda*, the holy book of dramaturgy by taking the four

elements of speech, song, dance and mime from the Vedas⁴” (Raina, 1983, p. 3). In accordance with Raghunath Raina’s essay, this knowledge was spread and taught by the sage, Bharat muni; who taught others that drama should be comprised of “*bhava*-emotions, and *rasa*-the exalted sentiment or mood which the spectators experience” (p. 3). Raghunath Raina goes on to state, that as one of the early sources of PHC, Brahma’s fundamental criteria included that “hero triumph over all obstacles”⁵, so that drama “sympathetically echoes or accentuates human feelings” (p. 4). In reality though, when these dramas were staged in Sanskrit, the language was understood only to a small, select class of elite, thereby limiting the potential of receiving a larger audience (Raina, 1983). Still, Sanskrit drama’s style of narration “was episodic, [and laid] the utmost emphasis on spectacle; in it, music and mime intermingled to create a distinct theatrical experience” (Dissanayake & Gokulsing, 1998, p. 18). Inevitably facing decline due to its appeal only to a select few (Raina, 1983), PHC may have adapted the components of *bhava*, *rasa*, and the spectacle aspects of Sanskrit theaters, but the sensibility of simple vernacular is credited to folk theatre.

Theatre for the Masses

Using inspiration from Sanskrit drama, “polychromatic folk theatre” (Raina, 1983, p. 4) spread across the different regions of India. The majority of these plays are based on ritual frameworks, stories from religious holy texts, stories of ancient kings (Dwyer & Patel, 2002, p. 15), and changed “with the social conditions” (Raina, 1983, p. 4) of the era. Folk theater was staged by the common folk who maintained “the use of song and dance, humour, the structure of

⁴Literal translation: knowledge. Vedas are collection of texts written in Sanskrit from ancient India.

⁵No mention of a female hero was found.

the narrative, and inform[ed] melodramatic imagination” (Dissanayake & Gokulsing, 1998, p. 19). The combination of classical Sanskrit and folk theaters, are classified as “old theater traditions in which music is seen as an extension of storytelling” (Kabir, 2002, p. 41). Acting in any of old theaters plays meant that those involved expressed vocals “on a continuum – [of] speech-dialogue-poetic recitation-intoned speech-song” (O’Beeman, 1980, p. 77). Anil Saari echoes this position and adds that

“in Indian folk [theatre] and in mainstream Indian films, the outline of the philosophical mood and the philosophical world view is, therefore, written out and delineated not through the events of the plot, but directly addressed to the audience through poetic invocations, songs and chants” (2009, p. 18).

In sum, the artist(s) were able to establish a close proximity with the viewer to share the story and because the artists and audiences were both representative of the vast majority, folk theatre was widely received.

Creating Similarities

Under the British Raj⁶, touring theatre companies and dramatic societies introduced the facets common to Western theater styles; as a result, the Bombay Amateur Theatre opened to audiences in 1776 (Dwyer & Patel, 2002, p. 14). By adapting the techniques of the West to those already prominent to India, the Parsi⁷ theatre was born in 1853 (Gopal & Moorti, 2008, p. 18). As a form of traveling entertainment, Parsi theatre artists boasted of many talented writers and

⁶ Literal translation: reign.

⁷Originally from Iran, Parsis follow the Zoroastrian faith. They arrived as exiles in India sometime around the 8th century to escape persecution in Persia/Iran (Raina, 1983, p. 4).

technicians (Dissanayake & Gokulsing, 1998, p. 19). Theatre, for the first time, experienced two major changes. The first, being the technical production value of drama. The stage was styled according to the specific play/story: painted backdrops established the setting, narrative spectacle, melodrama and of course, the uses of songs and dance (Gopal & Moorti, 2008, p. 18). The second, enabled the creation of drama based on the works of Shakespeare, modernized adaptations of classical Sanskrit tales and original stories written in the regional languages of Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Marathi and even English (Dwyer & Patel, 2002, p. 14). In addition to being immensely versatile, Parsi theatre artists performed in front of citizens, colonial and princely audiences, and eventually expanded its reach to audiences in Southeast Asia (Gopal & Moorti, 2008, p. 18). Having such a profound effect on audiences, Kathryn Hansen states that Parsi theatre existed as a:

“set of disparate, localized performance practices into a widely circulated pan-Indian style. With its emphasis on spectacle and song, it fostered modes of visual and aural discrimination that were linked to pre-existing forms, yet afforded new pleasures by means of technological innovations that conveyed the feeling of modernity” (2001, p. 76).

The standard of popular Hindi film, even today, closely resembles a Parsi play (Dissanayake & Gokulsing, 1998, p. 20). Unfortunately, Parsi theatre would succumb to a new technological advancement. On July 7, 1896, the French invention of the *le cinematograph* - the earliest film projector by the Lumière brothers was introduced to audiences through the short film *Arrival of a Train* (Garga, 1983). This event would later come to mark the introduction of modernization in Bombay.

Introducing the Father of Indian Cinema

Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, also known as D. G. Phalke or Dadasaheb⁸ Phalke, is believed to have watched the documentary, *The Life of Christ* and decided on impulse that he would produce a film based on Indian gods with a cast of Indian actors (Kaur & Sinha, 2005, p. 12). The middle aged Phalke had already dabbled in the fields of photo engraving, producing plays and even working as a magician (Garga, 1983). Not having any expertise in filmmaking, Phalke learnt cinematography from books, personally financed two different trips to London in hopes of purchasing equipment, and multi-tasked the duties of producer, cameraman, set-designer, and exhibitor of his initial films (Raina, 1983). Finally, on May 3, 1913, Dadasaheb Phalke released the film, *Raja Harishchandra*⁹ – a mythological tale found in holy Hindu texts that recounts the tale of virtuous king who forfeits his kingdom, wealth and family to honor his word to a respected sage. Released as a silent film (sound arrived later), the film is hardly an hour long, but its Coronation included a duet dance, a comic sketch, and a foot juggler (Gopal & Moorti, 2008). As the movie played, Gopal and Moorti quote Gulzar - a famous director, and lyricist who recalls that a pit in front of the projector screen included seats especially for musicians to provide live music as visuals for the film; the classical instruments of a *tabla*¹⁰, *sarangi*¹¹ and harmonium played to such an effect, that the noise of the equipment and food vendors was inaudible (2008). Clearly, the demand for live entertainment, music and spectacle had been rooted in audience preferences already created during the theatre days; and the father of cinema, Dadasaheb Phalke acknowledged this fact as he laid the foundation of popular Hindi cinema.

⁸ The reverent equivalent of grandfather and/or father.

⁹ English translation: King Harishchandra

¹⁰ A set of Indian drums played by hands.

¹¹ A stringed instrument laid flat to play.

After Phalke

From 1913 up till the late 1920s, two genres took prominence: the mythological, “depicting the actions and interactions of gods, the epics and scriptures” and the devotional – which tell the stories of poets and saints (Dissanayake & Gokulsing, 1998, p. 24). Through silent films, both of these genres can informally educate, have historical references, and join the past to the present. Silent films of this era were nationalist in sentiment and embodied “a ‘universal’ language, with the ability to transcend linguistic boundaries” (Jaikumar, 2003, p. 25). The initial success of these films generated profits even as Hollywood looked to expand its popularity in India as the British Raj welcomed Western films with lower taxation rates (Dwyer & Patel 2002).

By the end of the 1920s, a third genre grew to popularity: stunt films; they displayed the avenue of stunt “as pure excitement” (Gyan, 2010, p. 108). Most commercially successful were the series of films starring the half British, half Greek female, Mary Evans, or famously known as ‘Fearless Nadia’. Neither slender, brown-skinned, nor black haired, Mary Evans adopted the name Nadia as she attempted to make her living dancing, singing or in the circus and is compared to “the brave *veerangana* – female warrior” (Gyan, 2010, p. 111). In films, she “projected an image of independence that sidestepped the alternatives of the whore and the housewife presented to woman in contemporary Hindi cinema” (Gyan, 2010, p. 110-111). Fearless Nadia, is the first woman in popular Hindi films to have: “beat up evil men, cracked a whip, swung from chandeliers, rode on top of speeding trains, and fought lions [she] was a thoroughly modern woman” (Gyan, 2010, p. 110). Her heroic efforts in stunt films are hardly visible in films today, the male hero dominates in action and stunt genres, very few female actors

are given credible action sequences in which she need not require the support or rescue from a male actor.

A few other major events sharing space with these genres are listed below.

- World War I brought the telegraph, airplanes, railway construction, in exchange for men to fight the war, cotton and jute mills, the construction of ammunition factories and other Indian resources. (Raina, 1983).
- The Jallianwala Bagh¹² massacre killed thousands of peaceful Hindu, Muslim and Sikh protestors. This incident is believed to have stirred Gandhi's non-cooperation movement against the British Raj (Raina, 1983).
- Songs were learnt and passed only by oral transmission; the capabilities of earning profit from films songs had not yet been realized (Morcom, 2007).
- Political themes in films endured strict censorship by the British Raj because of its expansive reach (Raina, 1983).
 - Nearing the end of the 1920s, film studios were built in the major port cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras and investors/entrepreneurs addressed films as the newest form of profit (Raina, 1983).

The Arrival of Sound

The first talkie - film with sound, was made in 1931. Afterwards, the language of Hindi-Urdu became the governing language of the film industry in Bombay. The thirties witnessed fully-fledged studio systems in which the control of hiring scriptwriters, directors, lyricists,

¹² Jallianwala Bagh is a garden located in the state of Punjab.

actors/actresses, and other technicians flourished (Dwyer & Patel, 2002). In the mid-Thirties, the genre of social dramas portrayed social issues rooted in the history of caste discrimination and other contemporary issues (Dissayanake & Gokulsing, 1998). Due to the lack of specialized equipment in the Hindi films, largely factorable to high costs and British taxes, three key factors affected songs. When filming a song, it was done “with synchronous sound, which was recorded on the optical track of the negative with two microphones, one directed at the singer and the other at a small number of offscreen musicians, usually just a *sarangi* and a *tabla* player” (Kabir, 2002, p. 41). Moreover, the scene in which the song would be picturized remained “visually static”, in doing this, “the main points of interest in the scene [lay in the] performance of the song and the composition itself” (Kabir, 2002, p. 41). Lastly, potential success of a film was based on whether or not the actors/actresses hired could also sing, since “a star identity was primarily constructed in terms of the voice rather than the body” (Majumdar, 2001 p. 167). To fulfill audience expectation of songs in film, the music accentuated a style of “light classical music, such as the *ghazal* (lyric Urdu poetry set to music), and by folk tunes” (Kabir, 2002, pg. 42), already discernable to the listening ear. These techniques of songs cemented the fundamental importance of song that exists with the majority of the films made till today; however, the styles of music and genres used in films have experienced many changes.

Momentous Events, Playback Singers, and Singing

The 1940s were significant to Hindi filmmaking and also for the country.

- World War II marked the start of industrialization and increased the divide between the wealthy and the working class (Raina, 1983).

- Wartime inflation under the British Raj began the influx of black marketing and black money, especially in the Hindi film industry (Raina, 1983).
- The Congress party and other leaders pushed the ‘Quit Movement’ with greater rigor after tolerating nearly 250 years of the British Raj; frustration mounted with the famine of Bengal that took the lives of three million people and a mutiny that affected the armed and naval services (Raina, 1983).
- In films, the studio system faded away and drew freelance directors and producers. This notable event saw rise to “producers’ hir[ing] stars and facilities for single-film projects” (Jaikumar, 2003, p. 23).
- Culturally, the Indian People’s Theatre Association (IPTA) was set up and resuscitated folk forms of theatre for the isolated and the masses as a means to shed light to national issues and largely to increase anti-imperialist momentum (Raina, 1983). The IPTA made sure to implement these causes through the practices of “stirring songs and vivid presentation” (Raina, 1983, p. 12).
- With the initiation of magnetic tape recorders, the film industry saw the rise of playback singing; this eased the position of singing only to those who had been classically trained (Kabir, 2002, p. 42). The actor/actress instead would simply mime the pre-recorded vocals of the song. This practice continues today.
- Film studios employed the use of voice-casting, using “a singing voice that matched both the speaking voice and the personality of the actor” (Majumdar, 2001, p. 167). Hindi film song fans cry foul, so the editor of a popular fanzine publicly replies that this method “ ‘is an artistic fraud which the producers

practice on the film-goers with the good intention of giving them maximum entertainment' ” (Majumdar, 2001, p. 168).

- With the debate of play back singing taking center stage, the question of reflection asks if it is morally acceptable to separate the voice from the body even if the voice is unforgettable (Majumdar, 2001).
- The mid-Forties released the camera from its many cables and microphones. For the first time, Hindi films relished “pictorial freedoms [in which song sequences become] increasingly dynamic and visually exciting” (Kabir, 2002, p. 42).
- The concept of a formula film or ‘masala’ film is paved. Masala is mixture of Indian spices used to create flavor in foods; masala here is metaphorical for the right blend of drama, comedy, romance, music and dance needed to guarantee profit while still ensuring entertainment (Jaikumar, 2003).
- The British Raj ends August 15, 1947; but the partition of India creates the separate nation of Pakistan to simultaneously dislocate and dismember the largest amount of citizens in recorded and unrecorded history. The event is marked “as a time when everyone became temporarily insane: reason took a leave of absence, as human beings turned into violent, unthinking savages” (Sarkar, 2009, p. 27).

New Eras

After gaining independence in 1947, the new India set out to build the nation. In an effort of participation, the Hindi film industry asked the government to legitimize its status “that

would make available the infrastructural and credit support that the economic policies had already promised other industries” (Bhattacharjya & Mehta, 2008, p. 107). The newly formed government dismissed this plea; largely because now ready to face an international arena, *new* India’s already prosperous industry would not deem appropriate status of progress and development (Bhattacharjya & Mehta, 2008, p. 107). Instead, the government donned a new identity, as the “moral guardian of the nation” (p. 108) and took to blaming cinema with the decline in moral standard and the wicked influences of cinema on children that lead to truancy, the promotion of sexual interests and self-indulgence (Bhattacharjya & Mehta, 2008).

Even with the new governments’ sour attitude, Hindi films continued to prosper. The Fifties are regarded the years in which the directors,

“Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt, Mehboob Khan, and Bimal Roy, were not only great cinema authors [directors] but masters of song picturization, assembling teams of composers and lyricists to collaborate on their productions” (Kabir, 2002, pg. 42).

Not to be left behind, the popular songwriters and composers “Naushad, Shankar Jaikishen, S. D. Burman” (Kabir, 2002, p. 42) and others from the Fifties etched eminence in their own right.

Even though an independent India ungraciously welcomed films, music managed to circumvent state guardianship through the radio. The uses of radio pre-independence were used as a way of informing people about the movement for liberation. Post-independence, the incident of The All India Radio (AIR), in the Fifties is best summarized by Nilanjana Bhattacharjya and Monika Mehta here:

- AIR was owned by the government and under reign of Dr. B. D. Keskar – the minister of information and broadcasting.

- Keskar openly declared his disgust for Hindi film music, and decided to cleanse immoral ears, by banning all airplay of Hindi film songs.
- All India Radio faced competition from Radio Ceylon, funded largely by advertisements paid for by American companies.
- Once listeners shifted dials to Radio Ceylon, only because the pure love for music drove them so, the state run Air India Radio realized it was losing its listeners in greater numbers and vital tax revenues.
- In 1957, the state conceded the inauguration of not one, but two radio stations located in the bustling cities of Bombay and Madras (2008 p. 109).

Other censorship regulations reacted against the positive draw of popular Hindi films, although Bhattacharjya & Mehta state that this isolated incident proved two equally valid points:

“First, film music’s extraction from film has enabled it to travel independently via underregulated technologies. Second, music’s ability to circulate beyond the state’s control has compelled the state to compromise its own position on national culture and negotiate the process of definition with its citizens and the film industry” (p. 109).

By the end of the fifties popular Hindi film song had been refined and modified by many talented “music directors [who] worked creatively toward establishing an identifiable art form, which became national character” (Sen, 2008, p. 93). Evidence of this impact is seen in the sixties and seventies, in which Hindi film songs “redefined modernity” (Sen, 2008, p. 95) with

“radically new versions of pleasure, sexuality, and desire: they celebrated the body by invoking new styles of movement, liberated the voice from the constraints of formal singing, and brought into play an accelerated notion of being” (Sen, 2008, p. 95).

The seventies in particular provided even better consumption of film and film songs with the cassette (Bhattacharjya & Mehta, 2008) leading the way for the futuristic option of an mp3 used today. My own memories of seventies Hindi music is reminiscent through my mother who fondly recalls her college days in India, where handsome young men would innocently sing to her “Roop tera mastana” (Your beauty is intoxicating) from the film *Aradhana*¹³ (1969) or my father, who still enjoys watching the film *Sholay*¹⁴ (1975) before it became a cult classic for its story of friendship, comedy, love, revenge, action all rolled into one, and of course, its epic dialogues, songs and dance.

By the 1980s, popular Hindi film music experimented with the styles of disco. The music director Biddu, reformed the style of previous times and began to add to international sounds and beats to create what would be known as ‘Indipop’ (Sen, 2008, p. 99). The 1990s are, in my opinion for A.R. Rahman, who pioneered much of the sounds heard in today’s music.

Biswarup Sen shares some fascinating facts:

- Born into a family of musicians, Rahman learnt the piano at the age of four
- At the time of his father’s death, Rahman was only nine years old, but by the time he was eleven, he joined a local troupe to support his family.
- A.R. Rahman earned a scholarship at the Trinity College of Music at Oxford University to study western classical music. After graduating, Rahman worked in the advertising industry as a composer of jingles.

¹³ Translation: worship.

¹⁴ Translation: fire.

- Rahman started working in the Tamil film industry in South India before gaining recognition in PHC since Tamil films were dubbed and released for Hindi speaking audiences (Sen, 2008).

Other current music directors have also used innovative techniques, but A.R. Rahman has in many ways, single-handedly introduced the “worldliness” (Sen, 2008, p. 101) of popular Hindi cinema because of “his amazing fluency in several musical languages enables him to create a synthesis that can appeal to a vast domestic audience” (Sen, 2008, p. 100).

In my opinion, the *majority* of popular Hindi films from the early 2000s until present-day are a sloppy regurgitation of lackluster narratives, haphazard songs and dance, and in some cases, sheer senselessness. Films today, as Javed Akhtar states: “are desperate only to entertain so that the songs have become what are called ‘items’ ” (Kabir, 2005 p. 43). An ‘item’ is usually a song and dance routine where another popular actor/actress who is not cast in the film appears to add marketable value to the promotion of the film. These types of songs and dance are targeted toward male audiences and “provide as many occasions as possible for the fetishization of the woman” (Kabeskar, 2001, p. 289). Nonetheless, a few popular Hindi films depart from this omnibus and draw audiences with original storylines and inventive uses of songs that are with or without dance; I will present *Udaan* (2012) as an example of this new style.

The most visible differences within PHC today are seen in its stylized cinematography, originality of scripts or in the musical technology that is used. Songs and dance are marketed to intrigue audiences in two persisting aural and visual methods (Dwyer & Patel, 2002):

- 1.) The soundtrack of a popular Hindi film is released a few months prior to the film’s release to engage the aural viewer.

2.) Ahead of and after the soundtrack's release, the images of actor(s)/actress(es) are juxtaposed against visual and sometimes dialogue snippets from the film itself (Dwyer & Patel, 2002).

This process can be compared to a film trailer from Hollywood. With the onslaught of technologies from globalized cable, digital satellite, and the Internet, many Hindi film producers have and continue to release film trailers similar to the style of Hollywood because of PHC's wide range of audiences. At the same time, Hindi film producers separately release full song and dance picturizations with the actor(s)/actress(es) and background dancers¹⁵ or the 'item' song and dance to spark and preserve the overall marketability of the film. Hindi film songs and Hindi films "are two sides of the same coin" but Hindi "film songs have commercial power...only when coupled with a Hindi film" (Morcom, 2007, p. 205). This relationship is strengthened when a popular Hindi film has equally (if not more) popular actors – I mention actors because a profitable popular Hindi film is where the 'hero' (male actor) dominates, he is key when deciding the value of the songs within a film since he draws the masses as well as the profits (Morcom, 2007). Other quotients of recognition are dependent on the success ratio of the producer and director of the film, lyricist and music directors, and/or the pairing of the actor with the actress (Morcom, 2007). So, once a popular Hindi film is released, the film songs are identified and recollected solely with the film.

¹⁵ Background dancers within Hindi cinema are a field of separate studies. While older films relied heavily on South Asian ensembles, recent popular Hindi films have included troupes of diverse races and/or ethnicities.

All that Singing and Dancing

The following sections identify the functions of songs and dance within popular Hindi films. I have illustrated this with two abbreviated figures, to present a viewer's guide for the novice viewer. The first section introduces how songs are conceived, the individuals involved and a generalized figure under which the conventional functions of a song are utilized. The second section is an analysis of dance in popular Hindi films that will present how the translation of songs is performed through various dance movements and gestures. Accordingly, the second figure will show the evolution of dance throughout the eras of popular Hindi films. I will stress again that my analysis merely discusses the surface levels of mainstream songs and dance in Hindi films; my thesis is not inclusive of *all* the many facets that encompass mainstream Hindi songs, dance or filmmaking.

Fundamentals of Songs

Since good and bad films coexist in any film industry, popular Hindi cinema is distinct because of its songs and dances. Taking from the work of Arjun Rajabali, a song is present right from when the *idea* of a film is first conceived (2003). From here, the writer(s) of the screenplay adapts the songs as and when the situation can be better expressed. The writer(s) shares the script with the director, who in turn, expresses the situations for when a song will be needed and relays the emotional context in which the song will be used to the final crafters: the lyricist(s) and music director(s) (Rajabali, 2003). Because music of Hindi film song (HFS) has recently taken greater prominence, the music director takes the lead in arranging the melody; thereafter the lyricist composes the poetry to match the tune made by the music director; in Hindi filmmaking's heyday, a lyricist's position of composing lyrics took received greater

consideration than that of the music involved (Rajabali, 2003). Rajabali states, that if this process heeds quality assurance of music, poetry, voice(s) used, and song placement within the film, “they can greatly enhance the narrative value of a film, making its impact on the viewer aesthetically more pleasing and involving” (2003, p. 62). If this process is sloppy in any way, then these types of HFS break “the symbiotic relationship [they have] with films” (Morcom, 2007, p. 205). Popular Hindi films operate in between these gradients and its target leans more towards boasting overall publicity for the film.

Function of Songs

Songs in popular Hindi cinema serve many purposes; the following are a few of HFS definitive factors.

1. A HFS may be the narrative moments that are paused for the actor to reflect the goals, actions, and/or conditions up till the present moment of the film. Much like how a Shakespearean soliloquy or a Chinese novel’s use of poetic verse during transitions may function (Hogan, 2008).
2. A HFS takes the role of poetry in which the song is “the innocuous thread that garlands together the scattered episodes of conventional drama” (Saari, 2009, p. 20). Within HFS, or “in its kernal was hidden the film’s message: the director’s true intentions” (Chatterjee, 1995, p. 57). The director breaks narrative monotony by highlighting his/her artistry in the lyrics used, the melody used, the expressiveness of singing and the picturization of the song so each song is a film in itself (Chatterjee, 1995).
3. HFS is meant to heighten the emotional connect with the scenes before/after the song or to provide a break between emotional intensity (Rajabali, 2003). HFS serves as “tools for

narration, and there are songs for every mood and emotion – romantic, sad, devotional, patriotic, cabaret, comical or simply lullabies. But there is no compartmentalization here – there is much crossover (Dissanayake & Gokulsing, 1998, p. 98).

4. HFS “operate[s] on a metaphorical level, [and] enabl[es] a step *beyond* the story...;[songs] can be dreams sequences....often fantasies for the protagonists as well as the audience” (Dudrah, 2006, p. 50). When this occurs, “real time is suspended”, hence the multiple location changes, climate changes, and costume changes (Dwyer & Patel, 2002, p. 38).

The following figure, as documented from Arjun Rajabali, simplifies these functions or as he calls it: “the different ways in which songs aid the telling of a story in a Hindi film” (2003, p. 62).

Figure 1 Conventional Styles of Song

Introduction	<p>Predominant in love stories, reveals the lead actor/actress, each one is singing hellos to the audience.</p> <p>Picturization here reveals the character’s habits, qualities and other facets of lifestyle.</p>
The “Thunderbolt”	<p>The lead character(s) experience intensity that is indescribable by mere dialogue.</p> <p>Character(s) fall in love instantly, intensely, and/or uncontrollably.</p>
Beyond forbearance	<p>When the situation in the plot reaches a point of unbearability for the character(s).</p> <p>Used for dramatic purposes and to underline the tension of ecstasy/agony of the character(s).</p>
Ah! Relief	<p>Used in action films, or in a dramatically intense film to welcome the relentlessness of the conflict.</p>

	Meant to take the audience away from the film only long enough to heighten the upcoming enjoyment of action or resolution that will follow.
A parallel narrative	Common in love stories, where the aid of songs express the story of the character(s). Can chart the entire graph of the love story also.
Can't say it? Sing it!	Expressing sentiments that would be inhibited with dialogue. The character(s) are free to expose deepest desires, longings and feelings.
Transition	Used as a montage to convey the passage of emotions, of growing up or of transformation.
What's grammar without punctuation?	When appropriate, songs help to mark the ends and beginning of movements, acts, and sequences. Take the audience through a mood change smoothly and allow fresh issues to emerge in the story without tripping gears.

Fundamentals of Dance and Its Style

“Now the song looks like some sort of aerobics class. The dance numbers are now a form of gymnastics.”

– Javed Akhtar, in *Talking Songs*

Dance in all parts of India is tied to social and cultural customs; “men and women danced together in rural and tribal India during seasonal festivals” (Chatterjee, 1995, p. 199). Various styles of dance exist throughout the histories of India; each style has its own sets of varying movements and gestures and each consists of trained dancing communities that continue to perform across India and to overseas audiences. Sangita Shrestova highlights three **broad** categories of dance (2011):

1. Classical dance – devotional, religious dance that is pure and refined.
2. Folk dance – communal, rural and innocent
3. Non-Indian – foreign styles of dance

Of the three styles, classical and folk dance styles are the basis in which “colorful costumes, group formations, gestures, and body positions” (Shrestova, 2011, p. 24) are used. In the beginnings of Hindi film songs, dance was not evident and “was of minor importance” (Chatterjee, 1995) to the picturization of song. In older Hindi movies, recalls the lyricist, Javed Akhtar, the actors, “if they moved at all, they would move like normal human beings...[the song would be sung as if it] was conversational as though [the actors and actresses] were talking to the other person” (Kabir, 2005, p. 45). The utilization of dance in song picturizations were included in the pre-industrial eras – the years following Indian independence; even in those days, PHC is believed to have merged the traditions of new India by reviving the traditions of old India (Chatterjee, 1995).

Today, Sangita Shresthova describes two genres of dance that are derived from PHC. The first is *Bollywood dance*, “a description of choreography and movement inspired by Hindi films taught in dance classes and performed on stages. The second, *Hindi film dance*, is “a reference to song and dance sequences contained in the films themselves” (Shresthova, 2008, p. 244-5). This understanding is too often misconstrued and *all* Indian dance forms are curbed into ‘Bollywood’ style. In many ways, the dance sequences are just as “hybrid in their content and intention [as popular Hindi films themselves,] as they juggl[e] national priorities with social, political, cultural, and perhaps, most importantly, profit considerations (Shresthova, 2011, p. 18).

Unless otherwise stated, the next abridged figure aligns with the research of Sangita Shresthova (2011) to list the changes of dance picturizations from the 1950s through present day.

Figure 2 Conventional Styles of Dance

1947-1950s	<p>Professional dancers slightly change traditional styles of staged performances (classical & folk dances) in films.</p> <p>The Hollywood musical influences Hindi films in both technical and thematic ways. Hereafter, films use the interplay between the traditional and the contemporary.</p> <p>Hindi films adapt the dream sequences where the song functions on a metaphorical level (Dudrah, 2006). Songs are picturized with Hindu deities placed next to art deco columns to set up the apt mystery and intrigue needed for dream sequences.</p> <p>Attention to the heroine's (female actor) facial expressions is presented through close-up shots as she uses her face to express emotive elements used classical Indian dance.</p> <p>Camera angles honor classical dance as trained classical dancers are used in long shots, cuts to close-ups to accentuate the footwork, facials expressions and/or gestures.</p>
1960s	<p>Heroines are the primary performers of traditional Indian dance styles; men are merely spectators on and off screen. Until the actor, Shammi Kapoor sets the trend of rock and roll; other actors gradually follow suit.</p> <p>The female vamp character¹⁶ is penned and her signature move becomes the hip thrust. She is "simultaneously shunned, admired, and desired [as] she dazzle[s] audiences and heroes alike with her worldly dancing abilities" (Shresthova, 2011, p. 28).</p> <p>Some films use a dance competition between the vamp and the lead heroine to interpret "Indian and non-Indian dance movements for specific characters" (Shresthova, 2011, p. 28)</p> <p>Hip thrusts, pulsating movements, twists and arm swings change the style of song picturizations.</p>

¹⁶ The role of vamp is intended to depict "a woman of questionable moral standing [and] whose sensual appeal made her almost irresistible" (Shresthova, 2011, p. 27).

1970s	<p>The strut and swagger of the new hero, Amitabh Bachchan is copied by his quickly budding fan following.</p> <p>In general, the hero's dance movements remain basic enough to match the simpler movements performed by of the heroine.</p> <p>Heroines enact the role of a romanticized courtesan¹⁷ who is revered in her talent for dance and composing songs but remains outside acceptable social norms. Heroines express a tragedy through powerful restraint and the songs and dance amplified her overall performance.</p> <p>The late 1970s sees the rise of the choreographer from behind the scenes to a space in PHC's screen credits (Chatterjee, 1995). From here on, choreographers modified and borrowed from different dance styles to launch the song and dance format seen today.</p>
1980s	<p>Western pop culture is flaunted with Indian style much more boldly due to more the experimentation of various choreographers.</p> <p>The heroes dance moves are still easy movements but with added flairs of eccentricity so that the masses can imitate the movements without much difficulty.</p> <p>Female sensuality is explored as heroines perform seductive dances without compromising her persona on or off screen. Choreographers borrow the hip thrusts of vamps, but contain the movements. Sexual movements are juxtaposed with close ups of the heroine's innocent and playful facial expressions.</p> <p>Choreographers gain a foothold in PHC; earn recognition and awards amongst popular Hindi award shows.</p>
1990s	<p>PHC engages the Indian urban disaporic and non-Indian audiences in full swing.</p> <p>The skinny and lean hero persona vanishes; new heroes take up athleticism in dance due to many of them packing more muscles. This trend continues even today.</p> <p>Heroines continue sensual performances of song and dance; the actresses Aishwarya Rai and Madhuri Dixit are trained dancers who</p>

¹⁷ “A female entertainer trained in Indian's performance traditions generally characterized through nuanced facial expressions, rhythmic footwork, and gestures that often approximate the north Indian dance of Kathak” (Shresthova, 2011, p. 28).

	<p>more or less model the requirements needed of heroines.</p> <p>Choreographers trained in studio jazz and other Western forms add another dimension of mastery of dance and song picturizations.</p>
2000s	<p>In 2000, the actor, Hrithik Roshan debuts and dances with finesse and versatile skill that suddenly changes the bar for male dancers. His choreographer states she reworked all of his dance movements once she witnessed his immense dancing talents.</p> <p>Even though most actors are not as gifted in dance, they comply with new changes and dance movement becomes more physical.</p> <p>The line of separation between the vamp and the heroines last seen in the 1960s fades.</p> <p>Today, the dance movements of the song are remembered far more easily than the film itself.</p>

As I have repeatedly underlined, the Figures 1 and 2 are miniature-sized examinations of an industry, which like the country it resides in, are **not a monolith** from any angle, close up or wide shot. Thus far, I have presented **a beginner's manual** of the PHC's history of song and dance, the functions and evolution of songs and dances to underscore how the films *Maachis* (1996) and *Udaan* (2010), each digress from the traditional forms of popular Hindi films. My aim is to make the process of implementing pedagogical applications in tandem with *Maachis* (1996), and *Udaan* (2010), as efficiently comprehensive as possible.

South Asia in the Curriculum

Within educational practices, South Asian countries would generally be studied in Social Studies courses. To study how these countries were depicted within the public school curriculum, I reviewed a handful of secondary classroom texts but limited my search to only the terms: 'India', 'Islam/Muslim', 'Hindu/Hinduism', and 'Sikh/Sikhism'. Here is what I found:

- o The topic of India is hardly visible in paragraphs or even through descriptive full-length sentences. For example, *The American Promise* includes this sentence meant to describe the eventual British withdrawal from India: "In Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, World War II accelerated a tide of national liberation movements against war-weakened **imperial** powers" (2009, p. 958). The purpose of this sentence is evident, the bolded term 'imperial' is simply needed for students to identify and regurgitate its meaning for a later assignment, quiz or test. In this same section, the authors restate India as a free nation that both "the United States and the Soviet Union cultivated" since new options arised for both these nations to pursue an independent India as it met "their own interests" (Cohen, et. al, 2009, p. 958). In *The American Promise*, it may not be coincidental that the topic of India sits snugly under the subheading label 'Superpower Rivalry around the Globe'. The only time I found more than a page written about India concerned the issue of outsourcing jobs.
- o Regrettably, under 'Islam/Muslim' the main topics presented to students are those of bombings and terrorism. No other details of Islamic culture, its beliefs or values are discussed.

- o The topics of 'Hinduism, Sikhs and/or Sikhism' were not found in either textbook that I reviewed.

My results do not cover all Social Studies textbooks for secondary level students, a further inquiry into current public school curriculum would be vital and necessary given that I have already stated how our current demographics within local and national levels have undergone a 'browning' effect.

I did realize though that the style used in my small sample of textbooks, are what Madhulika S. Khandelwal would identify as "a neatly packaged homogenized version of the culture with no emphasis on evaluating its internal dynamics" (1998, p. 112). Take for instance, the permanent attachment of terrorism or terrorist activity to the constant association with Islam and Muslims. Or even the complete absence of the Sikh population within the history of United States. Nowhere did I find how in the early twentieth century, Sikhs settled along the Western coast of the United States and endured the same discrimination and exclusions felt by other residents of Asian descent (Kandelwal, 1998). Also, many textbooks might refer to South Asians as a group within Asians in general who embody the prototypical 'model minority' but this term "excludes issues of economically disadvantaged South Asians, and blocks out voices of women and 'less-sophisticated'....South Asian experiences" (Kandelwal, 1998, p. 117).

Another valid argument I want to mention is that discrimination within South Asian identities has vast differences in comparison to racial categories in the United States (Khandelwal, 1998). I have already confirmed the many diverse populations that exist within India, each retain its own stratified hierarchies of power that include caste systems, religious communalism and even patriarchal structures; not to mention the continued discrimination

against darker skinned South Asians- viewed as bad/ugliness and fair skinned South Asians- viewed as good/beautiful (Khandelwal, 1998). By considering these issues alongside an accurate study of South Asian culture, identity and history, educators may encourage an interethnic curriculum without dusting off the surface of South Asians as a people identified within the confines of 'imperial' rule, leaders of terrorist activities, or nonexistent within the margins of Asian American history.

Teaching Similarities through Differences

“...it is absolutely necessary that educators act in a way consistent with their choice – which is political – and furthermore that educators be ever more scientifically competent, which teaches them how important it is to know the concrete world in which their students live, the culture in which their students’ language, syntax, semantics, and accent are found in action, in which certain habits, likes, beliefs, fears, desires are formed that are not necessarily easily accepted in the teachers’ own worlds.”

- Paulo Freire, *Teachers as Cultural Workers*. (1998).

Films in general can be applied within the secondary level curriculum to create new methods of understanding and awareness. Films are basically aural and visual stories, told in different ways. The films *Maachis* (1996) and *Udaan* (2010) are innovative and engaging stories that bring mainstream Indian culture into the limelight. These films are visual stories that are meant to “entertain, educate, inform, evoke memories, showcase ethnic and cultural characteristics and illuminate abstractions” (Gay, 2010, p. 3). The core of my research has explained how the

“entertainment and encouragement of cultural diversity, [occurs with the] corresponding containment of it. [Containing differences is when] a transparent norm is constituted, a norm given by the host society or dominant culture, which says that ‘these cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them without our grid’” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 208).

I will suggest an approach to integrate the cultural content of each film, labeled as a:

“culturally responsive teaching [method] that is double-focus. One direction deals with confronting and transcending the cultural hegemony nested in much of the curriculum content and classroom instruction of traditional educational. The other develops social consciousness, intellectual critique, and political and personal efficacy in students so that

they can combat prejudices, racism, and other forms of oppression and exploitation”

(Gay, 2010, p. 37).

I commence first with *Maachis* (1996), my comments for this film end with my purposes of choosing a slightly ‘older’ film. From then on, I have created lessons plans for secondary level students that are related to the different themes in *Maachis* (1996). Later, my comments on the film *Udaan* (2010) denote the slow evolution of popular Hindi cinema, which presents a youthful maturity in film making technique and style. My observations of this film end with additional lesson plans exclusive to *Udaan* (2012) and its subject matter.

***Maachis* (1996) – Retelling History**

Reel #1

The English translation for *Maachis* is matchsticks. The central plot of this film revolves around Sikh youths who are compelled to engage in terrorism during an era in India where dominant Hindu political parties enforced anti-Sikh violence. Written and directed by Gulzar, born Sampooran Singh Kalra, he wears the many hats of composing poetry, writing lyrics for popular Hindi films, and directing films. When India was partitioned in 1947, Gulzar’s ancestral birthplace was shifted to the side of what is now Pakistan. *Maachis* (1996) is a film that deals with the aftershocks of Partition¹⁸. A current documentary, *The Story of the Turban* (2012), states that population figures *before* Partition include the Hindu majority at about 255 million, with 92 million Muslims who resided in the northwest and northeast regions of India, and six million Sikhs resided mainly in the fertile state of Punjab. When the line of separation was

¹⁸ The event of India’s partition is an **immense** area of study that will not be competently expressed with the few sentences I have here.

drawn, it cut through the state of Bengal and Punjab (Singh, 1999). The minority Sikhs became an even greater insignificant minority¹⁹. As histories of the world share, anytime minority races/ethnicities, religions, and/or gender are pitted against the dominant majority, countless inequalities will reign.

The efforts of minority Sikhs sought to create its own separate state of Khalistan – a “nation of the pure” (Chopra, 2011) within the territory of Punjab during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The Indian Constitution under Article 25(b) consistently refused to recognize Sikh citizens outside the category of ‘Hindu’ (Chopra, 2011). When leading Sikh political figures known as members of the Akali Dal, proposed the Anandpur Sahib Resolution to outline Khalistan’s “citizenship [that] was not an abstract identity conferred by the Indian state, but rather a matter of language, ritual observance and embodied spirit converging on a specific territory” (Chopra, 2011, p. 17), the Indian government felt that it “would lead to the disintegration of the country” (Singh, 1999, p. 340). Politics continued to be played dirty with the Indian government seeking more methods of suppression.

Meanwhile, the members of the party formed groups whose main goal was equal rights and privileges of Sikhs with equal representation within the national government. The Khalistan resistance gained membership once the Indian state began inciting atrocious inequalities and genocidal tendencies to its Sikh population. But the Indian government sought out these members and acknowledged them as ‘fundamentalists’ and ‘terrorists’; these types of labels always “hide more than they illuminate” (Mahmood, 1996, p. 49). Publicly, Sikhs were stopped and frisked for bombs, Hindu shop owners refused to serve Sikh customers and violence

¹⁹ Again, the military wars against Sikhs in India, is an area of **enormous** study that are barely justified by the few paragraphs I have written.

continued in the area of Punjab (Mahmood, 1996). What followed after remains a guarded secret of India's history: the ethnic cleansing of Sikhs with massacres and riots throughout largely populated Sikh areas, Operation Bluestar and many other incidents of mass killings, randomized arrests, police and military brutalities. The government claimed that these incidents were pursued in order to find and destroy any Sikh led 'terrorist' cells.

Of these genocidal incidents that have occurred, Operation Bluestar²⁰ is most closely connected to the film *Maachis* (1996). The unresolved political issues and discrimination against Sikhs had escalated up until 1984, "even as discussions about the issues were proceeding, preparations were being made for a military solution to the crisis" (Mahmood, 1996, p. 83). The Indian army, in 1984, led a three-day attack on the holiest shrines for Sikhs, the Golden Temple Complex located in Amritsar, Punjab. This extensive complex houses: "the Golden Temple, the Akal Takht²¹ (Eternal Throne), the Sikh Reference library, and other religious buildings, but also incorporates large hostels for accommodation of visitors and offices of major Sikh organizations" (Mahmood, 1996, p. 88). A short summary of Operation Bluestar, the 1984 attack on the Golden Temple Complex from the work of Cynthia Keppley Mahmood is included below:

June 3rd:

All communications including phone lines to and from Punjab are cut, any reporters present are asked to leave, and a total curfew was imposed. Thousands of pilgrims were present within the Golden Temple to celebrate the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev— one of the ten Gurus held in deep significance in Sikhism.

²⁰ This event is one of the many attacks on Sikhs in India; once again, this topic is **incalculable** and will not be detailed with specifics. I have kept my analysis short to underline how *Maachis* (1996) has used the events of 1984 in India as the setting of the film.

²¹ A *takht* is an important location of Sikhism's "temporal authority"; [inside Sikh leaders] traditionally make decisions relevant to secular, nonreligious, and the religious aspects of Sikhism" (Singh, 1993, p. 91). The Akal Takht is one of five such different places; its location within the Golden Temple is the "supreme seat of religious and temporal authority" (Singh, 1993).

June 4th – 7th:

The Indian army starts intermittent firing on the temple complex on June 4th, targeting the houses and buildings around the complex that were occupied by militants and also to and from the Akal Takht. The firing and assault continues with brief lulls. No aid to the wounded/injured pilgrims, including women and children, is provided.

On June 5th, military commanders direct its assault to the Akal Takht. With pilgrims and ‘terrorists’ trapped inside, the attack is prolonged until June 7th.

The battle of Operation Bluestar destroyed the Akal Takht; its disfigurement is owed to rocket-propelled grenade launcher (Chopra, 2011); besides traditional weaponry, armored carriers and tanks were used to fire into the Complex by the Indian army (Singh, 1999). The number of people who lost their lives will never be accurately known, the Indian government guards this number also. The numbers are however bundled as ‘civilian-terrorist’ deaths with 554 killed and 121 injured (Singh, 1999), some state these casualties are listed at 493 (Mahmood, 1996), but still others, point out that “3,000 would be nearer to the truth” (Nayar & Singh, 1984 p. 109). Whatever the actual numbers may be, there is no denying that “mounds of dead bodies” (Mahmood, 1996, p. 84) were taken “truckload after truckload...out of the Golden Temple Complex” (Mahmood, 1996, p. 84). Besides the lives of men, women and children lost, much of Sikhism’s valued and rare handwritten copies of the Granth (Sikh Holy text) were lost to the fires set off by firing (Mahmood, 1996), some say that the Indian “troops set fire to the archives under the impression that the manuscripts were probably account books of the Temple” (Singh, 1999, p. 365). Indian troops are even accused of debauched behavior during and after the attacks, they denied trapped pilgrims and prisoners water during the 120 degree heat, walked the sacred areas with shoes on, drank rum and smoked cigarettes freely (Singh, 1999).

Disgracing Sikhism in all these actions is nothing less than India’s implementation of a military state.

Within a few months of Operation Bluestar, Indira Gandhi, the ruling Prime Minister of India, was assassinated by her own bodyguards: two young Sikh males. As retaliation, citizens of Delhi, India, engaged in weeklong riots and massacres against Sikhs (Mahmood, 1996).

Reel #2

The setting of the film *Maachis* (1996) begins after Operation Bluestar, the Delhi riots and the assassination of Indira Gandhi. The ominous but poignant music of the opening credits articulates the mood for the film and the state of affairs for Sikhs events after 1984. In the very first scene of *Maachis* (1996) two police officers, one in uniform and the other not, share this dialogue:

Prison guard: “Have you called for an ambulance?”

Officer: “Yes, I had called them...they must be on their way.”

Both stand in unison with vacant expressions as they watch other prison employees pull up the unidentified body of a prisoner who has committed suicide by jumping into the well. As the body appears, the viewer will notice the victim is a male, with “unshorn hair, [a] beard, and [a] moustach[e]” (Chilana, 2005). The deceased is a Sikh.

The term Sikh means “disciple or learner” (Chilana, 2005, p. 109). Its founder, Guru²² Nanak, taught and preached a monotheistic religion with “no ordained priesthood...[and] no religious hierarchy” (Singh, 1998, p. 65); Guru Nanak laid the foundation of Sikhism in which there would be equality for all (Chilana, 2005, 108). Followers of Sikhism believe in “one single, all-powerful and loving God who has no gender or form” (Chilana, 2005, p. 109) and

²² Teacher

follow “the teaching of the ten gurus are embodied in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*²³” (Singh, 1998, p. 65).

Under Mughal rule, the people of India were greatly divided by barriers of religion, ancient traditions of caste and oppressive Mughal rulers (Cox, 2012). As a result, the five symbols of the *Khalsa*²⁴, known as the five K’s were organized under Guru²⁵ Gobind Singh in 1699 (Singh, 1993). They are: Kesh - unshorn hair, Kangha - a comb, Kara - a steel bracelet, a Kachara - a pair of shorts and a Kirpan – a sword (Cox, 2012). Guru Gobind Singh created elite armed forces to protect Sikhs and others being religiously persecuted under Mughal Rule (Singh, 1993).

Today, Sikhism is “the world’s fifth-largest and youngest organized religion” (Chilana, 2005, p. 109). Since its origins, Sikhs have been “fierce and proud warriors” (Chilana, 2005, p. 109); within India, Sikh militants “remained undefeated until the mid-1800s” (Singh, 1993, p. 13). Once the British colonized India, 10% or 100,000 Sikh men served during both World War I and World War II (Cox, 2012) with distinction.

Turbans for Sikh men and women are “considered crowns of spirituality” (Chilana, 2005, p. 109), which are worn to protect and cover their long hair. As with all religions, the basic tenets of Sikhism are grounded in respect and equality for others, community service, prayer and peace.

²³ The written words, poems and/or songs of Sikh gurus contained within Sikhism’s holy scriptures

²⁴ Pure ones

²⁵ Teacher

Reel #3

Returning to *Maachis* (1996), the two police officers leave the jail. During the drive, the officer in uniform probes the officer in civilian clothes to investigate this suicide; the deceased prisoner we learn is a “terrorist”, he was needed to uncover further evidence of terrorist cells. To this, the other officer’s response is mixed with weak “Yes sirs” and intermittent yawning. Judging from just this officer’s body language, his reaction to a suicide under his watch is flaccid and even callous.

In the next scene, the film shifts gears to a flashback. Through the piercing blue skies and picturesque snowcapped mountains and hills, a male voice echoes “Chhod aaye hum woh galiyaan” – We have left those streets, through the scenery. And four young men come into focus whistling and singing in unison “Chhod aaye hum”. They walk together relaxed and lighthearted as if their worries and frustrations are separated from reality because the scenery of this song engulfs a mood of serenity and peace as they begin to sing the very first song of *Maachis* (1996).

The Hindi lyrics with its English translation²⁶ are provided next:

²⁶ The English translation is taken directly from the film’s subtitles.

Figure 3 Song "Chhod Aaye Hum" from *Maachis* (1996) with Translation

<i>Chhod aaye hum wo galiyaan... – 2</i>	We've left behind those streets/valleys... - 2
<i>Jahaan tere pairon ke kanwal gira karte the</i>	Where the lotuses of your feet used to fall
<i>Hanse to do gaalon mein bhanwar pada karte</i>	When you used to laugh, the dimples in your cheeks were deep like whirlpools
<i>Teri kamar ke bal pe, nadi muda karti thi</i>	The river used to take its curves from your waist
<i>Hansi teri sun-sun ke, fasal paka karti thi</i>	And the crops ripened with the sound of your laugh
<i>Chhod aaye hum wo galiyaan... – 2</i>	We've left behind those streets/valleys... - 2
<i>Jahaan teri eDi se dhoop uda karti thi</i>	When you used to walk, sunlight took off from your heels (you set free the sunlight)
<i>Suna hai us chaukhat pe, ab shaam raha karti hai</i>	(I've heard that) that doorstep of yours is now under a gloomy shadow of dusk
<i>Jahaan teri eDi se dhoop uda karti thi</i>	When you used to walk, sunlight took off from your heels (you set free the sunlight)
<i>Suna hai us chaukhat pe, ab shaam raha karti hai</i>	(I've heard that) that doorstep of yours is now under a gloomy shadow of dusk
<i>Laton se uljhi lipti ek raat hua karti thi</i>	The night that I found entangled and coiled around in your hair
<i>Kabhie-kabhie takiye pe, wo bhi mila karti hai</i>	Once in a while it comes to pay me a visit when I'm lying awake at my pillow
<i>Chhod aaye hum wo galiyaan... – 2</i>	We've left behind those streets/valleys - 2

<i>Dil dard ka tukda hai, patthar ki dali si hai</i>	My heart is as if a lump of pain, now a piece of stone, hardened with those memories
<i>Ek andha kuaan hai ya, ek band gali si hai</i>	(It's) crevices are dark and resemble a dark alley
<i>Ek chhota sa lamha hai, jo khatm nahin hota</i>	Those moments never seem to slip our memories/
<i>Main laakh jalata hoon, yeh bhasm nahin hota</i>	No matter how much I try to burn those memories, they won't reduce to ashes
<i>Chhod aaye hum wo galiyaan... – 2</i>	We've left behind those streets/valleys.. – 2

Whenever translated into English, the Hindi poetic elements are more or less lost. So, for a clarified analysis, I will refer to the English lyrics of this song since it is central to establishing the general storyline of the *Maachis* (1996). The lyrics are penned by Gulzar, he is also the writer and director of film; his poetic simplicity juxtaposes the visual scenes of nature to the aural and visual qualities praising a woman who is deeply loved. The song opens with a general sense of cheerfulness as each of the four men sing a line each to describe their respective beloveds. The repeated chorus of “We left behind those streets” informs the viewer that each of the men longer has a stable home or does not live a life of normalcy. Visually, the song is performed with each character wandering or standing stationary through the rivers, woods, and hills, with minimal luggage. The jovial attitude amongst the four young men remains but neither is dancing or involves other bodily movement as they sing. One of the characters recalls his loved one as he sings the line:

“When you used to walk, sunlight took off from your heels (you set free the sunlight) /

(I've heard that) that doorstep of yours is now under a gloomy shadow of dusk”

A melancholy of sorts appears for the first time since the song began. The elements of beauty used to describe the beloved woman is fading as the brightness in her home slowly succumbs to a sadness, still unnamed in lyric or illustrated through the song. It should be noted here that no particular importance has been given to either character in dress or appearance, and neither of the young men have been singled out to sing their hellos (Rajabali, 2003). This specific character though, as he sings these lines, represents a momentary lapse in the aura that has already been created since the song started. His smiles as he sings: “When you used to walk, sunlight took off from your heels (you set free the sunlight)”, but the smile is short-lived as he sings the next line of “(I’ve heard that) that doorstep of yours is now under a gloomy shadow of dusk”. This slight change of mood expressed first by this character may hint to his significance later in the film or may be symbolic for the overarching plot. The other three men singing take turns repeating these two lines, and throughout the song, these two lines, (not counting the chorus) are the only ones which are repeated by the other three men.

On the outset, a viewer can identify these men according to the friendships shared amongst them, but their connections to one another have not been revealed to the viewing audience. As the music changes, a solitary home is pictured to remind the viewer of the lines mentioned previously and/or as a prediction of the idea of home for any one of these characters is a vague and hazy dream. Within the next few scene changes, the music suddenly picks up a strong pace and the calm setting of mountains, the woods and the river are interrupted by newspaper headlines stating: ‘*Golden Temple Storming*’, ‘*Indira Gandhi Shot Dead*’, and the morbidly graphic image of a dead body is flashed with the headline ‘*Mob burns Sikhs alive*’. The last verse of the song begins:

“My heart is as if a lump of pain, now a piece of stone, hardened with those memories/
(It's) crevices are dark and resemble a dark alley”

The viewer now can draw predictions between the dead Sikh prisoner from the opening scene, the flashes of newspaper headlines and the dejected emotions of the poetry that appear at this point of the song. The close up and zoom in/out shots isolate the four characters from each other for the first time since the song has begun. Performing these lyrics concentrates on relaying the different experiences of violence in which all four young men have collectively lived through then and continue to relive through their memories up until present day. The music slows down completely, with a solitary flute playing; a new character is seen sitting amongst a herd of sheep. As the camera zooms in closer, he sings:

“These moments never seem to slip our memories/

No matter how much I try to them [the memories], they won't reduce to ashes.”

These final lines summarize the depth of impact that memories can create and the long lasting effects of pain and anguish that persist especially since these men began the performance of this song from a different trajectory than what is evident now. The camera brings back the four young men seen earlier, but this time each is a distant silhouette crossing the rock-strewn river. This may be symbolic for the journey in which all of the men pictured have indefinitely “left behind those streets” of their beloved to traverse a new path laden with troubles and greater complexities. But the viewer will not yet know that these men have taken up the life of a terrorist, until later in the movie. Looking back at Arjun Rajabali's descriptions, “Chhod Aaye Hum Who Galiyan” convenes at the stage of “grammar without punctuation” (2003, p. 65), where the viewer has been taken through a mood change, as new topics emerge within the plot

(Rajabali, 2003). Similarly, no dance is present in this film from 1996 (Figure 2); this song requires no movement because the poetry of the lyrics is emoted through the visuals and expressions of the four characters singing.

Reel #4

After this song, the plot flashes back once more, and the viewer can spot one of the characters seen earlier smiling as he rides his bike into a village. Kirpal Singh is endearingly called Pali, by his family, friends and the woman whom he is engaged to. The noise of Pali's bike is enough to identify his arrival to Virender Kaur, called Veeran as she finishes chores inside. Veeran's brother, Jaswant Singh Randhawa, called Jassi leisurely, plays hockey in the courtyard, upon hearing Pali's bike, he asks Veeran to let him in. As Veeran opens the doors, the camera zooms first to Pali's face; he smiles charmingly to Veeran and seizes the moment to wink at her. Veeran's first reaction is slightly bashful but she teases Pali's sudden display of affection as she jokingly calls him 'rascal' as she steps out to help him with his bags. Veeran is Pali's fiancée.

Kirpal enters the house with his hockey stick and Jassi and Pali pretend as if they are deeply involved in securing the hockey ball. Jassi and Veeran's mother, Biji²⁷, hears the commotion and steps outside, lightly reprimanding the young men for playing hockey indoors. Pali respectfully greets Biji. In this scene Pali, Biji, Jassi and later Veeran, share this dialogue:

Biji: "Don't play with a stone. You might hurt yourself."

Pali: "Biji...I was ten years old when you first told him [Jassi] to stop playing with the stone."

²⁷The equivalent word for Mother, Mom and/or grandmother in Punjabi is Biji

Jassi: (cheekily replies) “So?”

Pali: “He [Jassi] hasn’t listened to you then and he won’t now!”

Biji: (grins and replies) “When did *you* ever listen either?!”

Pali: “I will right from this moment! (jokingly) But here, (goes to hand the hockey stick to Biji), teach him [Jassi] a lesson, right here, right now!”

Jassi: (jokes) “You’re provoking her!”

Biji: (smiles and grabs the hockey stick in Pali’s hands to act if she will hit Pali) “I will hit him [Jassi] but *you’ll* feel the pain. Don’t you think I know how strong the love of your friendship is for one another? (and walks away)

Pali: (teases) “Oh Biji, our love for each other has the same intensity of *Laila and Majnu*.²⁸ We’ll live together and die together!” (smiles)

Veeran enters the scene

Veeran: “But they didn’t get to live happily together, and they didn’t even die together!”

Pali: (looks stupefied) “Ohh...yea. I’ll think of another example then!”

The viewer has already labeled the romantic angle between Pali and Veeran, but this dialogue has compared the love of two males sharing a friendship similar to the lovers’ in the tale of *Laila and Majnu*. This may be because the friendship of Pali and Jassi dates back to when Pali was only ten years old, now both Jassi and Pali look as if they are in their early twenties. In essence, they have grown up together and established an unbreakable bond of brotherhood with their

²⁸ An Arabic-Indo love story in some ways, equivalent to *Romeo and Juliet*. In both stories, each couple concedes to death because of the circumstances that arise.

friendship. The casual mention of *Laila and Majnu* is crucial later once the friendship of Pali and Jassi faces hardship, as well as the bonds of love with Veeran meet tragedy.

Later, Biji shifts the attention away from Jassi and Pali and expresses to Jassi to begin planning the marriage of Veeran and Pali by early summer. Biji states that if Pali and Veeran are married, then Jassi might also consider getting married. This type of scene is common in many popular Hindi films, especially before any sort of conflict or problem in the narrative is identified. Veeran pretends to reject the idea of quickly getting married as she walks closer to the camera where Jassi is sitting, but Veeran unexpectedly stops. Jassi, because he is the closest in range to Veeran, notices her freeze. The camera also angles itself behind Jassi and Veeran; the scene shows the backyard of their family home, up on the hill is an unmarked car and a lone figure is watching from the outside. The background score plays an eerie tune to create an uncomfortable ambiance and on cue, someone knocks on the door.

Pali opens the door and armed policemen casually welcome themselves inside without presenting any legal notices for their visit. Ignoring Pali's requests of explaining the situation, the officer from the first scene is recognized; but this time, he is dressed in full police regalia. Pali addresses him as Vohra. Two other armed policemen surround themselves inside the home of Jassi and Veeran. A third officer (not in uniform) approaches Jassi, flaunts his official government I.D. and declares that the home must be searched. Noting the name on the I.D., Jassi politely identifies the man as an Inspector and calls him, *Khurana Saab* (Sir) but Khurana continues to press Jassi for answers. Is Jassi hiding a terrorist? How many people live in this house? Meanwhile, Vohra insolently probes Veeran for answers, Pali advises Veeran to take Biji inside.

Jassi's direct gaze with Khurana is firm but he remains at ease. Khurana informs Jassi, Pali and the viewer, that a terrorist has shot an MP (Member of Parliament) in Delhi and is supposedly hiding nearby. The suspected terrorist is identified as 'Jimmy', to this, Jassi's response is the affirmative and he leads Khurana and Vohra to him, Pali follows. Armed officers are ordered to remain in the house, while other armed officers follow behind. Once near the field behind Jassi's home, Jassi calls out to 'Jimmy' - Jassi's dog. Jassi has mocked Khurana and Vohra's investigation with honest mischief, but neither officer is entertained. Khurana, Vohra, Jassi, Pali and the accompanying officers make their way back to the front of Jassi's home. Inspector Khurana stops Jassi in his tracks and directs him to come to the police station, even though no 'suspicious' evidence is found and no physical proof of the real 'Jimmy' is discovered. Pali steps in for Jassi and asks why Jassi is needed, but Inspector Vohra acts quickly to exclaim: "We'll let him go after asking him a few questions", to which Pali responds, that he will come also. Inspector Vohra immediately blocks Pali's way, in what can be identified as a sly attempt of force by pushing Pali away from Jassi. Jassi intervenes to stop Pali from an engaging in a brawl with officers and his last words to Pali are: "Take care of Biji, I'll be back soon".

Reel #5

Jassi's impromptu arrest and questioning may be inspired from the actions of Operation Woodrose (Sharma, 1996). Under this tactic, any male seen with "a flowing beard was branded a terrorist and eliminated" (Pettigrew, 1995 p. 36) random searches were aided with the help of Hindus living in areas with Sikh populations for a period of three months (Pettigrew, 1995).

Synchronized with the events so far in *Maachis* (1996), Operation Woodrose was conducted after the riots of 1984 and the assassination of Indira Gandhi to advance the cause of the gradual and relentless Sikh genocide.

Many days pass following Jassi's arrest, Pali is shown searching local police stations and seeks the advice of a professor practicing law but finds no clue or legal aid as to Jassi's whereabouts. Fortunately, in the film, Jassi is not 'eliminated' but returns home bruised, battered and severely tortured. Witnessing Jassi's physical and mental wounds sparks the *Maachis* or matchsticks of rage and anger in Pali. As Pali and Veeran tend to Jassi's wounds, Jassi states that during the incessant beatings he wished for the police to shoot him dead. Unable to see the wounds of Jassi, Pali's helplessness overcomes him and his behavior drastically changes. Soon after, Veeran finds Pali hiding a gun in haystack. When Veeran confronts him, Pali is already fuming with rage; Pali slaps Veeran across the face and angrily drives off. This incident is Pali's first act of violence committed against his fiancée Veeran.

Pali disappears for eight days, neither Jassi, Veeran or Pali's grandfather knows of his whereabouts. All Veeran learns from Pali's grandfather is Pali sought out the address of another young Sikh male, Sarjeet Singh. Sarjeet had earned a degree but was unable to find a job and began to involve himself with *those guys*, or Pali's grandfather says: "The guys who are indulging in terrorist activities". As if the lines of the opening song, "Chhod Aaye Hum" forecast for the plot, Veeran surrounds herself "under a gloomy shadow of dusk" and waits anxiously to hear from Pali.

Meanwhile, Pali has contacted other members of a terrorist cell and is later introduced to Sanatan; he is pictured in the song, "Chhod aaye hum" amongst the herd of sheep. Sanatan plans

the operations of attack, and the remaining three young Sikhs also from the song are identified as other recruited members: Kuldeep, Jaimal and Wazira. Pali is the newest recruit. The *maachis* – matchsticks have alighted as Pali’s seeks to avenge the unwarranted torture of his friend Jassi. The events of this story so far have provided the reasoning for the line from “Chhod Aaye Hum” where Pali’s “heart is as if a lump of pain, [and] now a piece of stone” has taken position where his heart once was.

Reel #6

After some time, Pali returns to visit Jassi, and describes how he has affiliated himself completely with the cell led by Sanatan. With Sanatan’s access to arms and explosives, Pali’s planned attack and murder of Inspector Khurana was successful. As Pali describes this to Jassi, he explains how he couldn’t tolerate knowing that Inspector Khurana –responsible for Jassi’s arrest and subsequent torture was still alive. Pali breaks down and declares that these thoughts created a blazing fire within him. Although Veeran’s is devastated by Pali’s actions, she stands listening with tears in her eyes but harshly asks Pali “Has the fire subsided now that now you’ve killed him?!” Pali has no answer and says to Jassi, to have Veeran’s marriage arranged to another boy from a better family. The story so far, focused on the strength of Jassi and Pali’s friendship, the events of Operation Woodrose and Pali’s transformation as a terrorist. Now, the story shifts as Veeran decides that life without Pali is no life at all; she decides to run away with him.

In the next scene, Pali attempts to sneak out of the village, Veeran corners Pali. She earnestly tells Pali that marriage is not a necessity for her. Veeran already accepted Pali as her

husband and can be at his side if he accepts her also. This dialogue between the two lovers ensues as they embrace:

Pali: “Death roams with me, where ever I roam”

Veeran: (faces Pali and asks) “Are you afraid then....of death?”

Pali: (visibly distressed) “I’m scared....of dying since that would mean going away from you for good. I am afraid of dying all alone away from you, Veeran!”

Veeran: (pleads) “Then I’ll come with you. Take with me you, Pali, please!! Don’t refuse, I’ll die with you only!”

The sounds of a police car approach and Pali hides Veeran in a shed as he stands watch outside.

With no visible threat of police, a solitary flute sadly plays in the background once again. Pali is presented with two options: take Veeran with him or run away and continue down the path of matchsticks that Pali has consciously lain out. Uncertainly, Pali locks Veeran inside and Veeran is left shouting out for him. The last embrace of these lovers’ ends with many questions, but first recall Pali in the beginning of the film: he brings up the names of Laila and Majnu – a love story comparable to *Romeo and Juliet*. Like the latter couple, Laila and Majnu as lovers never experienced the bliss of union because of the barriers placed in their way. Veeran and Pali’s love story is beginning to follow the same the course.

As the film continues, Pali is assigned to different locations with Wazira, Jaimal and Kuldeep. Veeran has temporarily disappeared from the plot. One day, Sanatan informs Pali that a new assault is being plotted and with this, a new member specializing in launching rocket missiles will join the cell soon. Unbeknownst to Pali and the other members of the cell, the new recruit turns out to be Pali’s fiancée, Veeran. Once Sanatan comes to know this, he addresses her

first as “Pali’s Veeran”. Veeran has traced Pali’s steps and finally reunited with Pali, this act solidifies Veeran’s commitment to Pali. The meeting of Pali and Veeran is bittersweet because Veeran details the events that occurred after Pali left. Biji has passed away in grief after Jassi was arrested the second time. This time, Jassi’s torture reached its zenith and he is not released to go home. As Veeran informs Pali this news, the viewer is taken back to the scene immediately after the opening credits of *Maachis* (1996), the dead body discovered in the well is that of Jassi’s – he committed suicide to escape the ruthless torment of his captors.

After Veeran joins the cell, Pali notices that Veeran wears a small tube of cyanide on a black thread around her neck. Veeran proclaims that her black thread is a *mangalsutra* a sacred thread tied around the bride’s neck by the groom during a marriage ceremony to symbolize the union of marriage. Pali later uncovers the same type of thread with cyanide around *his* neck and tells Veeran:

“Without you here with me, death was easy. Now that you’re here, you’ve made it difficult. Now I crave to live. Really, I mean it.”

Foreshadowing death and life concomitantly, Pali later loses *his* thread. Veeran and Pali’s love story has transformed the entire narrative; at the same time, Veeran is representative of hope. A hope that may possibly change Pali’s membership as a ‘terrorist’; or a hope that the matchsticks that were ignited by Pali’s anger are miniscule when compared to the matchsticks that burn with the blinding radiance between Veeran and Pali.

Reel #7

Immediately following the scene above, Veeran sings “Paani paani re”- tears, tears. The word *paani* literally means water; but in this song, this lyricist Gulzar has used *paani* to define

tears. It may seem ironic that Veeran sings this song after laughing and smiling with Pali. But the conversation between the two is shaded with traces of imminent death in the form of the black threads that Pali and Veeran both wear around their necks. With Veeran back in his life, Pali extinguishes the *maachis* that have raged within him, this is especially apparent because Pali has just told Veeran:

“Without you here with me, death was easy. Now that you’re here, you’ve made it difficult. Now I crave to live. Really, I mean it.”

Seeing the possible flicker of ‘old’ gentle and buoyant Pali, Veeran may be using this song to sway Pali from committing any more acts of violence.

Of the total six songs in *Maachis* (1996), I have described the introductory song and I will conclude with a song most fitting with the story line. Without any planning, the song “Paani Paani Re” happens to be the very last picturized song of the film. Hereafter, its Hindi lyrics with English translation taken directly from the film:

Figure 4 Song "Paani Paani Re" from *Maachis* (1996) with Translation

(Humming)	(Humming)
Paani paani re, khaare paani re Paani paani re, khaare paani re	Tears, tears, salty tears Tears, tears, salty tears
Nainon mein bhar jaa, neendein khaali kar jaa	They well up in my eyes And then I go restless
Paani paani re, khaare paani re Paani paani re, khaare paani re	Tears, tears, salty tears Tears, tears, salty tears
Nainon mein bhar jaa, neendein khaali kar jaa	They well up in my eyes And then I go restless
Paani paani in pahaadon ki dhalaanon se utar jaa na	O water of these mountain brooks I request you to flow down
Dhuaan dhuaan kuch vaadiyaan bhi aayenge, guzar jaa na	You'll meet smokey valleys on your way You have to flow through them
Ek gaaon aayega, mera ghar aayega Jaa mere ghar jaa, neendein khaali kar jaa	You'll also flow past my village Do visit my house there, those memories are making me anxious
Yeh rudaali jaisi raatein jagraaton mein bita de na	These sad nights will be spent sleepless with tears in the eyes
Meri aankhon mein jo bolni ke paakhe to uda de na	These tears will wash away the grime around my eyes
Barfon mein lage mausam pighle	When the snow melts away
Mausam hare kar jaa, neendein khaali kar jaa	The surroundings will be covered in luscious green, and my sleep goes away [as] I reminisce those days
Paani paani re, khaare paani re Paani paani re, khaare paani re	Tears, tears, salty tears Tears tears, salty tears
Nainon mein bhar jaa, neendein khaali kar jaa	They well up in my eyes, and then I go restless

The visuals of this song return to the same snowcapped landscapes, except images of snow and water take importance with the camera keeping minimal movement. Only Veeran is pictured and although there no traces of *paani* – tears on her face, she is somber and her eyes disclose a pensive mood. As the song begins, the camera reworks to position itself outside of the home the members of the cell live in. A steady drizzle of rain continues and Veeran is standing alone against the patio of the house. The same scenery from “Chhod Aaye Hum” is pictured around, but the land is covered with snow and no effervescent colors exist. This setting is symbolic as Veeran is expressing the dreariness that looms in the coming future.

In the first verse, Veeran is outside standing near the river watching the natural flow of the water as she croons:

“O water of these mountain brooks
I request you to flow down

You’ll meet smoky valleys on your way
You have to flow through them.”

But Veeran’s sorrow appears quickly. Her eyes well up, she sings:

“You’ll also flow past my village
Do visit my house there; those memories are making me anxious”,

As the evening progresses, night arrives and in the darkness, Veeran is shown still lost in her memories but this may transfer to the lyrics of “Those moments never seem to slip our memories”, from “Chhod Aaye Hum” as Pali appears by Veeran. Sitting beside Veeran, he listens as she continues to sing:

“These sad nights will be spent sleepless with tears in the eyes
These tears will wash away the grime

around my eyes.

When the snow melts away

The surroundings will be covered in luscious green, and my sleep goes away when I reminisce those days.”

During this verse, the camera pivots itself to face Veeran directly and Pali is shown directly behind her. This may be figurative for the emotions and thoughts of Pali, but he is unable to articulate them in the manner that Veeran does. In this instance of Arjun Rajabali’s research, Pali cannot say it, so Veeran is used to jointly convey their deepest feelings (2003). Neither Pali nor Veeran reach out to console or embrace the other, the lovers maintain a small distance but the seconds of silence following the song are felt and experienced as Veeran performs for Pali also by shutting her eyes close and allowing the words of the song a chance to soothe both of their agonized souls.

Final Reel

The days pass slowly, and by coincidence Pali spots Inspector Vohra (the other officer who tortured Jassi), a chase ensues. Pali is swiftly trapped and arrested by Vohra and his men. When Sanatan learns this, his frenzied actions are coated with wrath. Pali’s actions have foiled the strategy for the upcoming attack, he claims Veeran and Pali are moles and threatens to kill Pali before he arrives in jail. Veeran is held captive and later Sanatan is shown firing the missile launcher at an entourage of politicians. The action occurs quickly here, and Veeran has managed to escape. With a gun in her hands, she runs for cover in the surrounding woods. Sanatan is in the same woods and is unknowingly following Veeran’s trail. Members of the army also file

into and around the woods to search for suspects. While Veeran is hiding beneath massive rocks, Sanatan approaches overhead. Quickly seizing the opportunity to save Pali from death, Veeran shoots Sanatan dead. Climbing up the rocks to make Sanatan is dead, the camera zooms to Veeran's face and she points the gun directly to the camera – Veeran is no “terrorist”, she joined the ranks only to free Pali from the matchsticks Sanatan hovered as bait for Pali and the other members he enlisted.

As the film draws to a close, Veeran awaits clearance into the jail to visit Pali. Inspector Vohra and another officer are shown discussing Veeran's ties to Pali as his fiancée. Vohra advises that Veeran might be the link to unravel the other members involved in the terrorist cell. Veeran is permitted to enter Pali's cell and not the visiting room because like Jassi, Pali has been rigorously beaten and thrashed. As Laila and Majnu would and as Romeo and Juliet would, the lovers, Veera and Pali gently entwine as one. Veeran is weeping but locked in Pali's embrace, her crying stops as she says:

“I've brought it. Put it in your mouth. I can't take it anymore.”

‘It’ are the small cyanide tubes worn by the lovers, except Pali never ‘lost’ his, Veeran kept both tubes as on the thread of her *mangalsutra*. Veeran faces Pali, each has understood that only in death with the two lovers be reunited. They kiss tenderly and Veeran passes Pali's cyanide, to seal their union of marriage and to bid their final goodbyes.

The guard announces visiting time is up. Veeran slowly walks backward to the door, as Pali smiles the same charming smile seen his initial scene. Veeran has put out the *maachis*, within Pali, he has to returned to Veeran as her husband. Alone in his cell, Pali lays down and smiles. Alone in the back of truck amongst some luggage, sits Veeran, also smiling. The final

scene ends in the same woods seen from the onset of the film. A voice loudly resonates, “we have left those streets/valleys”. A soft instrumental version of “Chhod Aaye Hum” plays as the dead bodies of Veeran and Pali are shown with finality, and *new* newspaper headlines state that several officers are under investigation for the tactics used against Sikhs.

Applying *Maachis* (1996) in the Curriculum

Before beginning my thesis, I was hesitant to incorporate *Maachis* (1996) in my study. I did not want to address the film in a way to draw divisions amongst Sikhs and Muslims who each wear turbans. But then, the Wisconsin Gurudwara massacre happened. This tragedy resounded the same numbness and sickening emotions felt just a few weeks earlier at the Aurora Theater massacre. This time though, I was shocked by the series of “misinformation, sloppy reporting and outright ignorance about the Sikh religion” (Zara, 2012) that followed. The well-known political figure, seeking the Presidential office, Mitt Romney offered a moment of silence for the Wisconsin shooting victims but called Sikhs, the “...the sheik people” at the “sheik temple” (Rucker, 2012). A Fox News reporter asks a member of the Wisconsin Gurudwara whether not any “anti-Semitic” (Zara, 2012) attacks had occurred prior to the shooting. Another Fox News affiliate mistakes the origins of Sikhism to be based in northern Italy (Rosoff, 2012). While the CNN reporter Eric Marrapodi says Sikhs are “unfairly” (Zara, 2012) targeted as Muslims, but this comment had undertones of targeting yet *another* minority already falsely identified by major news media, communicative mediums and public rhetoric.

In *Maachis* (1996), neither Pali, nor the other members in the terrorist cell are shown wearing turbans. But their beards, moustaches and brown skin are clear signifiers of their identity. Jassi is arrested on the grounds of stereotypical bias, with no tangible evidence, Hollywood and to some extent, popular Hindi films before and after 9/11 films have propagated and exploited a minority race/ethnicity and/or gender based on the select few who choose to defile religion under tyranny. This has permeated into public discourse at breakneck speed as I have shown earlier in the introduction of my thesis with the case of Harpreet, who during a play

was asked by his teacher to play Jafar from *Aladdin* (Shaheen, 2008). This occurrence shows just how *early* many films can unknowingly and knowingly misinform and educate its viewer(s). Asian men particularly in Western/Hollywood films are usually the “emasculated nerds or brainwashed terrorist out to destroy the West” (Rajgopal, 2010, p. 116). The film *Maachis* (1996) avoids this from every angle. Pali and Jassi are both Sikh males but neither encourages ideologies against the Indian government which sought to suppress them. Pali was fueled by revenge, but Jassi, the innocent bystander, takes no turn for evil to denounce the nation and plot against his oppressors. Pali shoots only Inspector Khurana but he targets him strictly on the basis of retribution and no other bystanders are targeted.

Moreover, films with Asian men impart subtle coaching to identify “this Other with the face of the alien [who] is responsible for the gradual erosion of the American Dream” (Rajgopal, 2010, p. 120). *Maachis* (1996) avoids glorifying terrorism, in fact, during Veeran’s visit to Pali’s grandfather, he derides Pali’s friend Sarjeet Singh for befriending those who are “indulging in terrorist activities”. Veeran also scolds Pali after he confesses to murdering Khurana, asking him if the fire inside has contained itself because he committed murder. The Veerans, Jassis and Palis are characters that are given roles with hidden agendas in mainstream ‘Western’ movies. What occurs most often predominantly with these films, is the type of thinking that is “tautological and circular [which equates a belief that] we are powerful because we are right, and we are right because we are powerful” (Shohat E. & Stam, R., 1994, p.19).

Recently, the Sikh Coalition website reported that Sikh Americans, are still victims of hate crimes, job discrimination, bullying at school, and racial profiling when in reality the turban in Sikhism is symbolic for love and justice. I concur. The Sikh Coalition website continues to

add that more critical dialogue must be present in order to respect the basic values **all** races/ethnicities, religions, genders, and classes honor: justice, equality, religious freedoms, honesty, hard work and community service. I concur. The director, writer and lyricist of *Maachis* (1996) Gulzar has once stated:

“Cinema is the most modern form of expression and offers extensive contacts with people. It crosses the barriers of language and can be shared internationally with much less an effort than other forms of art. Filmmaking is not just one art of expression. It is an assembly of arts. It is this complex form that make it more fascinating than other forms of expression and, perhaps, that is good enough a reason for me to make films” (Vasudev, 1995, p. 269).

I concur. In fact, all of the above eventually became the factors for my decision to use *Maachis* (1996) in this thesis. My work is *just* a starting point and a response to the reality around me. Therefore, the pages that follow include two prepared lesson plans built for secondary level students to address the improper cultural stereotypes of Sikhs and to explore the ways in which poetry has been used in the song “Chhod Aaye Hum”.

Lesson Plans for *Maachis* (1996)

Title: Have You Heard?²⁹, You're in this Scene!

Content Area: English and/or Social Studies

Grade Level: 9-12

Unit: Speaking, Listening and Collaborating

Sunshine State Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

Goal 3 Standards:

Standard 9 - Effective Leaders

Florida students establish credibility with their colleagues through competence and integrity and help their peers achieve their goals by communicating their feelings and ideas to justify or successfully negotiate a position which advances goal attainment.

Standard 10 - Multiculturally Sensitive Citizens

Florida students appreciate their own culture and the cultures of others, understand the concerns and perspectives of members of other ethnic and gender groups, reject the stereotyping of themselves and others, and seek out and utilize the views of persons from diverse ethnic, social, and educational backgrounds while completing individually and group projects.

Rationale: During secondary level schooling, students experience multicultural encounters that affect them within and outside of school. This lesson will prepare students to understand the impact of racial profiling and caustic stereotyping that occurs to people of South Asian background/descent.

Objective: Students will learn how the statements they have read about South Asian identities and cultures are motivated by what they hear from media, the Internet, movies and

²⁹ This lesson plan is inspired from *Reel Diversity: A Teacher's Sourcebook*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc. I have made adjustments as deemed necessary.

other modes of communication. Then, students will watch a small clip from *Maachis* (1996) as they imagine themselves in the scene to understand concepts of being the minority and majority.

**Note:* It is recommended to review the summary of Reel #4 in this thesis and if possible Reel #1-3. Also, access the film *Maachis* (1996) on visual media available to present to the class at: http://www.youtube.com/movie?v=Pnp47lPqiPk&feature=mv_sr; the film is available with English subtitles by clicking on 'cc'.

Procedure:

1. The teacher will write the following words anywhere visible to all students: 'Sikh', 'India', 'beards and moustaches', 'turbans', 'Islam', 'Muslim men', and 'terrorist'. Have three blank lines drawn below each word; to the left of each line, the teacher will draw a small square. To the right of each line, the teacher will draw a small circle. Have students copy this identically on a their own blank sheet of paper.
[ESOL Strategy: Using Visuals]
2. Explain to students that they will write three statements that they have heard/read/seen about the words written above.
[ESOL Strategy: Reflective thinking]
3. Afterwards, have students work in small groups to share and discuss their statements. Explain to students, that if the statements shared are agreed to true facts of these words, place a check in the small square they have drawn. If the statements shared are agreed as statements that students themselves can identify with or know someone who identifies with them, have them fill in the circle that they have drawn. Keep students seated with these same groups for the guided practice portion of this lesson.
[ESOL Strategy: Small groups, cooperative learning]
4. Ask students to share a few of their statements.
 - o Most of what may be shared will be negative, so ask students why they believe them to be so.
 - o Discuss the possible sources of these statements. Ask students how these statements have changed since the 'war on terror'.
 - o Ask students what questions they have each statements. Discuss the ways to find accurate information without being pressured by other information outlets.
[ESOL Strategy: Think aloud, Building on Prior Knowledge]
5. Access the film *Maachis* (1996), Watch **only** Reel #4 starting at 9:55 and ending at 16:41 (the scenes with Pali at Jassi's house up until Jassi is arrested). Before beginning the clip, review the summary of Reel #4 in this thesis and if possible Reel #1-3.
6. Explain to students that they should imagine themselves in the scene they are about to watch to understand concepts of being the minority and majority. Advise students to take

notes as they watch the clip. Emphasize that students must note their comfort levels³⁰ if they were present in the scene also; students are encouraged to describe their feelings and thoughts as the scene unfolds.

Guided Practice: Using the same small groups that students are already divided into, have them come up with their own understanding of this scene as it relates to a South Asian minority group by using one of the words that have written on their sheet (see #1 under 'Procedure') in a short 2-3 minute skit. Explain to students that the same type of unfair stereotyping and prejudiced actions that occurred in the scene must be expressed in their skit.

[ESOL Strategy: Small groups, cooperative learning]

After each skit, ask the class questions such as:

- o Reveal how your feelings might be different if you were the minority group represented within the scene and had to endure such an event?
- o After choosing the statements within your groups, which ones were you right about? Which ones were you wrong about? Explain why or why not.
- o Because the character Jassi had a turban and beard, would you say that police had racially profiled him as a terrorist? Explain why or why not.
- o Share some differences or similarities you noticed between Pali and Jassi. How can you tell they share a strong friendship?
- o The character Pali did not have a turban, but he did have a beard and moustache. Based on *just* these physical attributes make you believe he was suspicious if you saw him boarding a subway, plane or any other place? Explain

Independent Practice: On a fresh sheet of paper have students rewrite the same words: 'Sikh', 'India', 'beards and moustaches', 'turbans', 'Islam', 'Muslim men', and 'terrorist'. Redraw the three blank lines drawn below each word and have students write new statements to describe each term.

Evaluation: In student's learning logs or daily journals have students answer the questions:

- o How did watching a clip from *Maachis* (1996) clear some of the false judgments you might have unconsciously made about people of South Asian origins/backgrounds who wear turbans, or have a beard/moustache?
- o Can you name other racial or ethnic groups that falsely accused of being terrorists or criminals? Is the racial/ethnic you stated a minority or majority?
- o What are some of the ways to avoid discriminating against someone from a different background, race/ethnicity, and/or gender?

³⁰ Adapted from the film clip and questions used for the film *Barbershop* (2002), found in: Blanchard, S. C., & Johnson, B. C., (2008). *Reel Diversity: A Teacher's Sourcebook*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Title: Singing as a Way to Share Poetry

Content Area: English Language Arts

Grade Level: 9-12

Unit: Writing an original work and illustrating illustration

Sunshine State Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Goal 3 Standards:

Standard 4 - Creative and Critical Thinkers

Florida students use creative thinking skills to generate new ideas, make the best decision, recognize and solve problems through reasoning, interpret symbolic data, and develop efficient techniques for lifelong learning.

Standard 10 - Multiculturally Sensitive Citizens

Florida students appreciate their own culture and the cultures of others, understand the concerns and perspectives of members of other ethnic and gender groups, reject the stereotyping of themselves and others, and seek out and utilize the views of persons from diverse ethnic, social, and educational backgrounds while completing individually and group projects.

Rationale: This lesson will help students assess how poetry is present in songs both aurally and visually. They will also illustrate understanding of how two different objects can share similarities and differences.

Objective: Students will watch the song “*Chhod Aaye Hum*” to learn the ways in which poetry has been used to compare the beauty of nature (visual) to the beauty of a woman (aural). Students will compose an original poem, rap or song and then illustrate either through a small comic strip or storyboard. The completed illustration must show how two different objects can share similarities and differences.

**Note:* It is recommended to review the summary of Reel #3 in this thesis before beginning this lesson. Also, access the film *Maachis* (1996) on visual media available to present to the class at: http://www.youtube.com/movie?v=Pnp47IPqiPk&feature=my_sr; the film is available with English subtitles by clicking on 'cc'. Skip to 5:00 to have the song “*Chhod Aaye Hum*” easily available when needed. The song ends at 9:50.

Procedure:

1. Ask the class: How is poetry used in songs? Once several students have shared this. Describe to students, that songs are used in many different cultures to represent different emotions and can have many meanings. This method is also similar to how music videos are produced. [ESOL Strategy: Brainstorming, Building on Prior Knowledge]
2. Introduce the film *Maachis* (1996) as a film from India that integrates song and its performance through both visual and aural means.
3. Have students take notes on how the visual scenery changes and shifts as the different characters sing the lyrics of the song. [ESOL Strategy: Using Visuals/Media]
4. After watching the song, ask students to share their notes. Ask: How did the song highlight nature to accentuate the longing for a beloved? [ESOL Strategy: Retelling]

Guided Practice:

Pair students in groups of two, and have each group discuss where they have seen/read/heard about something similar to this type of music video before? Have each group of student write the ways in which the visual scenery connect or digressed from the lyrics of the song.

[ESOL Strategy: Small groups, cooperative learning]

Following this activity, ask the class:

- o In what ways does the song connect the visuals, (what you to see) to aural (what you hear)?
- o Why is nature beautiful?
- o What are the most common characteristics often used to describe to a beloved?
- o How is the beauty of nature comparable to the beauty of someone you love?

[ESOL Strategy: Reflective thinking, think aloud]

Independent Practice: Have students to write an original poem, rap or song.

Evaluation: Using the student’s original poem, rap or song, have each of them illustrate how two different objects can share similarities and differences through a comic strip or storyboard. The words or lyrics of their poem, rap or song act as the dialogue or transition while the illustrations may be the student’s own, cut out from magazines, newspapers etc. Students may share and present their work with the rest of class. [ESOL Strategy: Visualization]

***Udaan* (2010) – A Novel Story**

Reel #1

Every so often, a film is released without any rampant publicity sans any leading characters of popularity or aerobics (Kabir, 2005) styled song and dance. As word of mouth spreads, the film sells more tickets, gains national recognition and suddenly, a cult classic is born. The film *Udaan* (2012) means ‘flight’ and its flight to fame left quite a few mainstream popular Hindi films outshined and dazed. On the contrary, well-known actors, actresses, and filmmakers commented on the candid intensity of the content presented.

The story of *Udaan* (2010) is ordinary, no top male film actors lend any screen space to swell the film’s market value and there is no ‘item’ dance number performed by a female actor. In its place, a seventeen-year-old teenager named Rohan, is expelled from his boarding school. Having no other option, Rohan is forced to return home. His journey begins at his new ‘home’; here is where he meets his authoritarian father after eight long years away from him. His mother has long past away, and his father has remarried once already. ‘Home’ is also where Rohan learns that he has a six-year-old half brother, Arjun. Happy reunions are nowhere visible to prolong any scenes of emotion or affection. No songs or dances fill this absence either. What begins as a movie to symbolize youthful exploits while at a boarding school promptly changes to explore the idea of a place to call home as nothing more than a structure of cold stones and rigid walls.

Rohan and his three friends, Maninder, Benoy and Vikram stand before the headmaster or principal to hear his verdict of “You are expelled”. The four young adults had snuck off campus the night before, to watch a ‘dirty’ film. Not realizing it before, another professor is in

the same theater enjoying his alleged affair with a much younger woman. After being caught red-handed, each of teenagers accepts his sentence of expulsion and file out orderly. Rohan is called behind and the headmaster tells says: “Rohan...I’m sorry”. This leads the viewer to ask what would prompt the principal to say this? How bad can expulsion be for Rohan? These questions are partially answered in the scene that follows. Rohan is seen walking off and Maninder follows him into the woods. Neither boy talks in detail about anything of much importance but Rohan asks Maninder: “Want to hear a poem?” Maninder listens carefully as Rohan starts:

“Tiny scattered moments³¹,
sprinkled on the garden of memories,
strolling, bare foot on them,
it feels we’ve wandered too far...
Now we can’t find where we left our shoes.
Our heels were soft when we got here,
they still feel tender,
and they will remain fragile,
till those bittersweet memories, keep tingling them.
True, we’ve forgotten,
where we left our shoes...
But now it seems we don’t need them anymore”

One interpretation of Rohan’s poem might be to follow the changes a young adult undergoes in school or to mark the end of childhood and welcome the beginning the adulthood. Each is illustrated in Rohan’s poem. Orally presented in the film, this poem replaces any need for a song or a physical performance of dance. The poem locates a conclusiveness of childlike behaviors or attitudes. The scenes of Rohan’s subsequent departure join with the song “Kahaani

³¹ This translation is directly from the subtitled film; of course the heart of Hindi-Urdu poetic elements are not transferable to English completely. Only the English translation is presented because my emphasis concerns the native English speaker.

(Aankhon Ke Pardon Pe)”. Combining the poem and the song reveals to the viewer, that a typical loud and thunderous popular Hindi film is thankfully not of the order in this film.

Reel #2

The few songs in the movie are never performed or lip-synched to. The first song is heard as Rohan while boards the train from Shimla to his father’s home in Jamshedpur. Played briefly, the song marks the transition of old life to the one he is about to face. The opening credits of the film are displayed for the viewer about fifteen minutes after the film has already began. Below are the lyrics and English translation of the song, titled “Kahaani (Aankhon Ke Pardon Pe)” – loosely translated to mean - the story present in the blankets of my eyes.

Figure 5 Song "Kahaani (Aankhon Ke Pardon Pe)" from *Udaan* (2010) with Translation

<p>Aankhon ke pardon pe pyaara sa jo tha woh nazaara,</p> <p>dhuan sa dan kar udh gaya ab na raha,</p> <p>baithe the hum toh khabon ke chaahon ke tale,</p> <p>chodh ke unko jaane kaha ko chal.</p> <p>Kahaani khatam hai ya shuruwat hone ko hai Subah nayee hai yeh ya phir raat hone ko hai</p> <p>Kahaani khatam hai ya shuruwat hone ko hai Subah nayee hai yeh ya phir raat hone ko hai</p>	<p>The beautiful vista which was on my eyes,</p> <p>has blown away like vapor,</p> <p>as I sat below the shadows of dreams,</p> <p>leaving those (dreams), don't know where I am going</p> <p>Has the story ended or is it about to begin? Is this a new morning or will there be dusk first?</p> <p>Has the story ended or is it about to begin? Is this a new morning or will there be dusk first?</p>
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Aane wala waqt dega balayee ya phir se milenge do rahein? Khabar kya/kya pata	The coming time brings misfortune or do I meet the two paths? [I] Don't know, [I] don't know
---	--

At first glance, this figure is has many differences in comparison to the songs from *Maachis* (1996). Besides the length of this song, a viewer is introduced to the fork ahead in Rohan's life. These lyrics are relatable to young adults who are attempting to understand themselves on the grand scale of what is so easily called life. A young teenager, advanced the narration by reciting a poem to his closest friend, Maninder, bid goodbye to his closest friends, and carefully packed his Superman action figure and comic books before boarding the train. In a 'traditional' film, one or more of these events would be depicted with a song and dance picturization or with melodramatic scenes with intense background scores, but none of these essentials are used. Grabbing attention is uncomplicated and natural, realism peaks through and dialogue is just as effective as a song and dance would be.

Reel #3

Rohan's arrival into the city of Jamshedpur relays itself to the overall appearance of the film. The city is dreary and the coat of its industrial tarnish fastens itself to the camera. Introduced also is the austere looking male, Rohan's father, who arrives to pick him up from the train station. While Rohan's father disappears from the frame immediately after Rohan arrival home, Rohan alone lugs his heavy luggage up the flight of stairs. Rohan's father makes himself a drink and lights his cigarette – a ritual he continues throughout the film. If the viewer has not already done so, the socioeconomic status of Rohan's father is completely contradictory to the

fancy cars, homes and even clothing seen in the majority of mainstream popular Hindi cinema. I am **not** describing Rohan's home as a sub-par slum, but Rohan's family comes from a modest background. There is no shimmer and sparkle in this film but there is plenty of integrity and verity in the narrative.

At home, Rohan meets Arjun – the six-year-old half brother whose existence was never revealed to Rohan until now. The dynamics so far are three fold. First, Rohan is the young adult finding discovering himself and his self-worth. Second, Rohan is faced with establishing some sort of relationship with his father, even though eight long years of quiet and disconnect has grown between them; Rohan's father also insists on being called 'Sir'. And finally, Rohan has just learned that he is the elder half brother to Arjun.

The evening introduces two additional family members, Rohan's Uncle Jimmy (younger brother to Rohan's father) and his Aunt. The interaction between Uncle Jimmy and Rohan is far removed from that of Rohan and his father. The dialogues amongst both Rohan and Uncle Jimmy overflow with emotion, trust, love and laughter. At dinner the conversation turns to Rohan's intentions of college. Rohan's reply is instant; he would like to study the Arts and Literature. With glowering eyes and mocking language, Rohan's father declares that Rohan will study Engineering and join the family business of metal making. Standing firm, Rohan returns his father's stare with defiance, to which Sir retorts: "I'll whack you....lower your eyes!" Rohan storms outside, Sir follows and Uncle Jimmy tries to help but Rohan's father has Rohan pinned to the ground and locked in a tight headlock. The anger and abuse between a father and his child in popular Hindi film has never been scripted with as much heated forcefulness as this scene

shows. Rohan's new life exists in the shadows; any presence of self-identification has morphed with physical and verbal abuse.

Reel #4

The next morning begins the rigid performance of male dominance – Rohan's father, Sir, wakes up both Arjun and Rohan at the break of dawn so that Sir can maintain his daily scheduled run. Arjun records time and Rohan is forced to run around the city with Sir in this rigorously strict exercise. As instructed by Sir, the run ends as Rohan and his father return to the end of their street, from here, father and son race to see who will be fastest in reaching home.

Forced to work in Sirs' factory, and attend college courses on Engineering, Rohan continues to fill his journal with writings. By now, Rohan has already sneaked out of the house with the car, smoked cigarettes and been drunk – but Rohan is never physically aggressive nor is he shown recklessly out of control. His actions are the result of an oppressive and controlling environment. The ritualistic morning run continues and each time Sir, beats Rohan in the final race while being completely oblivious to Rohan's exhaustion.

The only break from monotony is the time spent with Uncle Jimmy. About an hour and fifteen minutes into the movie, Rohan, Arjun, Sir and Uncle Jimmy are out for a picnic – a skeptic Rohan confides with Uncle Jimmy how he finds it impossible for Sir to plan a picnic; after all, Rohan and Arjun silently comply with all of Sirs' commands. The viewer notices a difference in the scenery that briefly diverts from the morose sequence of events. At the same time, Rohan and Arjun have yet to establish a friendship of trust and love between each other. And six-year-old Arjun has hardly smiled or laughed since his introduction – his life is just as

void of feeling as Rohan's is. As the picnic ends, Uncle Jimmy, Rohan, Arjun and Sir are relaxing on a bench near the lake with their backs faced to the camera. Uncle Jimmy requests Rohan to share one of his poems, but quickly sides with his older brother's opposition to Rohan's writing and states "Let's just *hear* his [Rohan's] poems". So, Rohan begins:

"If you could see past the shore, you would know what I think.
If you could hear the waves, you would know what I think.
Remove your veil of obstinacy, and look beyond the window.
If you could see through convention, you would know what I think.
If you had faith in yourself as I do, you would walk with me a while...
If you could see the colors I do, you could walk with me a while...
If you want to touch the sky as I do,
Then your desires would come alive.
Then, in my next life, we could fly together a while."

Once Rohan completes the last line of this poem, his instantaneous reaction is to glance at his father. With no other songs since the beginning credits, this poem sets the ambiance of the *Udaan* (2010). Ever since living with his father, Rohan has kept his writing to himself or to the new friends he made. The willingness to reveal his writing here in the script suggests a possibility of acceptance, especially because Rohan's father is silent for a few moments after the poem ends. Awaiting for Sir's comments, Rohan is ordained to quit writing, and is told that his writing "will earn you coin that's dropped into your bowl as you beg".

Reel #5

The viewer follows Sir to work one day as he meets with potential clients. The meeting is interrupted by a call from Arjun's principal who states that Arjun has caused trouble and must be taken home immediately as his punishment. Irritable and angry at the loss of greater profit, Sir is next seen running down the stairs with Arjun's limp body in his hands. Rohan arrives at this

precise moment and asking what's happened and is told Arjun had a "ball fall". Arjun is rushed to the hospital in the family car, the doctors report Arjun's condition as serious and advise Rohan and Sir that Arjun may have suffered from internal bleeding.

Away from the prying eyes and ears, Rohan asks Sir again about what happened, his response is no different than before: Arjun had a "bad fall". Sir proceeds to tell Rohan that he will be out of the city, in Kolkata for three days, and reminds him: "Don't inform your Aunt and Uncle about this accident". While Sir is away, Rohan and Arjun develop their friendship and nurture their bond as brothers: Rohan shares his Superman action figure and comics with Arjun, reads him one of the poems from his journal; Rohan and Arjun also meet the neighboring patient, an eighty-year-old grandfather who supports Rohan's writing and lightly pesters Arjun to smile more.

In the three days away from Sirs' looming presence, Rohan has seen and heard from Arjun that he was hit by their father after Sir had to pick him up from school. This revelation awakes the hardened compassion within Rohan. Once Rohan shares his own fictional-fantasy story of a kingdom, and its ruler who trains the young for an army while brainwashing them, Rohan captivates an audiences of other patients, particularly the eighty-year-old grandfather, the doctors, nurses and visitors. Then just the story reaches its climax:

Rohan: *(talking slowly to build tension)* "...someone was coming through the tunnel....."

Grandfather: *(excitedly asking)* "WHO WAS IT?!?!WHO WAS IT?!?!"

And just then, a shadow in front of the camera is visible to the viewer and Sir has returned.

After Arjun recovers, Rohan and Sir have another physical confrontation once back at home. Rohan makes it a point to bring forth the truth about Arjun's accident, Sir says he will

apologize to Arjun but even as he ends up hitting Rohan hard enough to knock him down. On this night, Sir drinks and smokes cigarettes throughout the night. At dawn, Sir sits in the room shared by Rohan and Arjun, his face deeply shadowed to represent the fiendish father. Sir announces a list of proclamations he has made regarding the lives of Rohan and Arjun:

- He half-heartedly apologizes for Arjun’s accident.
- Since Rohan does not want to study, he will begin working at the factory full time.
- Arjun will be sent to boarding school by next week.
- Sir announces that he will be remarrying again.

As usual, Rohan and Arjun are tacit members of Sirs’ regiment. In the next scene, Uncle Jimmy tries to resolve some of the issues, but the discussion between them takes an ugly turn, to which Sir becomes volatile and enraged as he dehumanizes Uncle Jimmy by pointing out his infertility and labeling him as a ‘Big Fat Bloody Loser’. Uncle Jimmy storms out, and Rohan runs after him but Uncle Jimmy rejects the idea of Rohan coming with him and states: “Arjun needs you!” Rohan turns around to go back home, but Sir has met him halfway down the stairs and has a burning book in his hand, Rohan’s journal of poems and stories is reduced to ashes.

The next song used in this film, “Chadhti Lehrein Laang Na Paaye” – loosely translated³² as “The Boat Unable to Cross Upward Waves” plays in the background as a montage over the visual sequences.

Figure 6 Song "Chadhti Lehrein Laang Na Paaye" from *Udaan* (2012) with Translation

<i>Chadhti lehrein laangh na paye kyun haapti si naav hai teri, naav hai teri,</i>	It's (the boat) unable to cross upward waves, why is your your boat moving sideways,
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³² This translation is provided from the fansite: <http://www.bollymeaning.com/2010/07/chadhti-lehrein-laang-na-paaye-meaning.html>.

<p><i>tinka tinka jod ke saanse kyun haanpti si naav fhai teri naav hai teri,</i></p> <p><i>ulti behti dhaar hai bairi, dhaar hai bairi.</i></p> <p><i>Ke ab kuch kar ja re panthi jigar juta kya baat baandh le hai baat thehri jaan pe teri jaan pe teri.</i></p> <p><i>Haiya ho ki taan saath le jo baat tehri jaan pe teri shaan pe teri</i></p> <p><i>chal jeet jeet lehra ja parcham tu laal phehra ja.</i></p> <p><i>Ab kar ja tu ya mar ja karle taiyari,</i></p> <p><i>udja banke dhoop ka panchi chura ke gehri chhaon andheri chhaon andheri.</i></p> <p><i>Rakh dega jhakjhor ke tujhe tufano ka ghor hai dera ghor hai dera,</i></p> <p><i>bhanwar se dar jo haar maan le kaheka phir jor hai tera jor hai tera.</i></p> <p><i>Hai dil mei roshni tere tu cheer daal sab ghere lehron ki gardan kas ke daal phande re ki dariya bole waaha re panthi sar ankhon pe naav hai teri naav hai teri</i></p>	<p>adding little breaths like straws, why is your your boat moving sideways.</p> <p>enemy stream is going in the opposite direction.</p> <p>Do something O' Traveler be courageous, be confirmed that this is as important as your life.</p> <p>Keep singing Haiya ho (as in, be bold, fearless) as this is related to your life and pride</p> <p>Go wave with victory, hoist the red flag.</p> <p>Now do or die, and be prepared.</p> <p>Become the bird of sunshine and fly, stealing the black shadows.</p> <p>It'll shake you to the core, it's a huge camping of storms,</p> <p>(but) if your fear goes into submission against whirlpool, what is your power?</p> <p>There is light in your heart Break all the sieges Tie the necks of waves tight such that the river says wow O' Traveler, your boat is on my head and on my eyes (a proverb that would mean I respect your boat)</p>
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The entire song is performed in accordance to the changes of time that have elapsed, after Sir has burned the book of Rohan's writings. Many different events are presented to the viewer in these sequences and the song reduces its volume tremendously whenever any dialogue is presented. To model this paradigm, Rohan and Arjun are introduced to the soon to be stepmother and her young adolescent daughter. Rohan is then shown labeling Arjun's luggage

container to prepare for his departure to a boarding school. The music is lowered again to show Rohan's birthday celebration, as Sir gifts him a watch that has been passed down by from his own father; the music is slightly louder again to show Rohan drinking and almost fights one his new friends for deriding the fact that Rohan cannot step up to his father. Throughout the entire picturization of the song, Rohan is shown lonely and disengaged to the events around him. The tribulations escalated once his journal of writings were burned and each event following Rohan through this song might be a metaphor for the "upward waves", the "huge camping of storms" that will persist since Rohan is a "Traveler" who must be "courageous" even if the events of his life are "shak[ing him] to the core". By pressing forward, Rohan can rise in the midst of the abuse, violence without yielding or sacrificing his own flight towards his dreams.

Final Reel

Rohan's breakthrough may have begun as he released his own fury on Sirs' shabby and somewhat dilapidated car by damaging the car's frame, breaking its windows, and headlights with a pole he found in the trunk of the car. As a cop watches from the distance, Rohan is taken to jail and is left to spend the night there. For Sir, the queries to the cop do not concern Rohan's welfare, but the location of his car. Once Rohan returns home the next day, Sir has his new fiancé, her daughter and other guests brightening the dull and cheerless home. Rohan walks in and heads straight to his room, Arjun is in his school uniform standing against the wall visibly miserable and despondent. Rohan dresses, packs a backpack and prepares to leave. The proceeding conversation between Sir and Rohan is important to denote the scale of Rohan's character development.

Sir: (*seated in living room*) “Where are you going?”

Rohan: (*standing with backpack strap in his hand*) “I’m leaving this house.”

Sir: (*adjusts his position to Rohan to face him*) “Why? Are you unhappy with my marriage?”

Rohan: (*Turns to face Sir*) “No, Sir. Not at all (*half smiles*). I’m very happy. It’s a good thing you’re getting married...your frustrations will be directed to something or someone else. And Arjun won’t have to go to the hospital again.” (*walks out*)

With steel for eyes, Sir looks to Rohan as he walks out. Sir and Rohan have a final confrontation at the staircase, Sir grabs Rohan by the head and roughly pushes him against the wall. Rohan uses the opportunity to punch Sir across the face, waits for a moment to watch Sir’s reaction and the flight of chase has begun. The background score of a slow ringing bell toll picks up a couple of decibel levels to heighten the outcome of this sudden race. No winner for time and speed is accounted by Arjun; he is left behind. The daily runs at dawn between Rohan and Sir are fruitful practice; Rohan is the winner of this race. The camera stops at Rohan to capture his victorious smile and double time to present Arjun, seated quietly amongst the guests ornamenting their home.

Rohan ends up at Uncle Jimmy’s house to tell him of his decision to move to Bombay to join his friends Maninder, Benoy and Vikram. Vikram and Maninder are managing a restaurant for Vikram’s father so Rohan will help them. Rohan vows: “I’ll write. I’ll clean toilets. But I’ll never come back here.” Uncle Jimmy says nothing but leans in, outside the rain pours to block out the inaudible conversation and the two figures are muted silhouettes to the viewer. What Uncle Jimmy says is not clear, but afterwards, Rohan looks through Uncle Jimmy’s photo albums and the viewer meets Rohan’s mother. Rohan shuts the album, wakes up early the next

morning and heads back to his home. Once outside the home Rohan shared with Sir, he spots Arjun seated outside.

Both brothers exchange this dialogue:

Rohan: (walks from the gate to Arjun): Hi.

Arjun: (seated, but looks up) Sir's gone to get an auto [autorickshaw]

Rohan: "Let him go. You're coming with me."

Arjun: (gently protests) "Sir told to me wait here."

Rohan: "Forget what Sir said. Do you want to go to boarding school?"

Arjun: (*shakes his head sadly saying no*)

Rohan: "No right? You will come with me wherever I go."

(both smile at each other)

Rohan and Arjun walk away from the home empty of attachment; they take their first flight together towards freedom, friendship and brothers connected by 'rebellious' but determined aspirations.

Applying Udaan (2010) in the Curriculum

Rohan's story is a welcomed break from the constant flow of love stories, comedy or action flicks that purge popular Hindi cinema. By not having any dances or 'item' numbers, *Udaan* (2010) focuses solely on the young adult – a population that exceeds other age ranges within India today. To take flight, like Rohan does in *Udaan* (2010) is something many young adults come to terms with in their every day lives. The roles of friendships, family, school, and careers are bargained against the factors of joy, hope, creative drive, and for some, the issues of personal safety and well-being. Rohan is everything wrong with the 'model-minority' stereotype. His choices of individuality face many drawbacks but it is exactly this 'rebellion' that demarcates the option of pursuing the freedom of choice and the potential of its dreams, nightmares and visions that are not readily considered 'model' behavior.

Udaan (2010) is a few amongst the multitude that expose violence and abuse towards children and youth in an honestly realistic way. Such a subject is most often brushed underneath the fancy rugs of acceptable social norms or as 'private' family matters that need no outside ears or assistance. The continuous verbal, physical and psychological abuses, of Rohan and six-year-old Arjun have negatively affected their emotional growth; Sir spurns Rohan's writing and Arjuns' childhood is engulfed by a cheerless gloom that has restrained his smile. Sir has managed to "regard many of the things...beloved by [Rohan]with scorn and utter contempt" while disrespecting Rohan's "competence in [himself] and others [that] is crucial in adolescence" (Friedenberg, 1959, p. 17). Instead of establishing any type of relationship with Rohan or Arjun, Sir personifies a cruel and violent father, who ensures that his disciplined rules are met with submission as he quite literally stifles both of his sons in the process.

The film itself unravels in a manner similar to a coming-of-age-young adult novel. Rohan's story is memorable amongst the throngs of traditional Hindi narratives because the story is told *through* him. Rohan is the young protagonist who: solves the problem, is optimistic enough to achieve an accomplishment, and absorbs the viewer completely through the tensioned and fast-paced plot line (Blasingame, Donelson, Nilsen & Nilsen, 2012). There is no sugar coating to Rohan's story; the realism of *Udaan* (2010) can be applied to the incidents of teens beyond the borders of India and South Asia. By not having any dances, there are no distractions to story. This greatly shortens the length of the movie and allows the films to be viewed easily within a few days. The greatest asset of *Udaan* (2010) is that it needs no 'warm-up' or introductory elements beforehand; it is a simple story told with unequivocal sincerity that reroutes the typical formulaic popular Hindi film. The mood of buoyancy begins and ends the film – much like how a young adult novel reads. The in between portions on this continuum of plot, are what makes this atypical film a best selling teen novel told *visually* but read by ardent lovers of unique storytelling.

Up next, a few prescribed ways of incorporating *Udaan* (2012) into a secondary level classroom.

Lesson Plans for *Udaan* (2010)

Title: Gender Differences³³

Content Area: Sociology

Grade Level: 9-12

Unit: Identifying Male Gender Expectations

2011 Florida Next Generation Intercultural Standards

Standard 7: Connections: The student will be able to acquire, reinforce, and further his/her knowledge of other disciplines through the target language.

Standard 8: Comparisons: The student will be able to develop insight into the nature of the target language and culture by comparing his/her own language(s) and cultures to others.

Sunshine State Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-12.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Goal 3 Standards:

Standard 2: Effective Communicators

Florida students communicate in English and other languages using information, concepts, prose, symbols, reports, audio and video recordings, speeches, graphic displays, and computer-based programs.

Standard 10 - Multiculturally Sensitive Citizens

Florida students appreciate their own culture and the cultures of others, understand the concerns and perspectives of members of other ethnic and gender groups, reject the stereotyping of themselves and others, and seek out and utilize the views of persons from diverse ethnic, social, and educational backgrounds while completing individually and group projects.

Rationale: This lesson will help secondary level students understand how gender roles are socialized within our society and in South Asian society.

³³ This lesson should be used only if teachers can find the time to watch the film *Udaan* (2010) up until 1:05:46; if not interpretations of the clip used in this lesson will be misconstrued.

Objective: Students will work in groups with male and female classmates to answer a series of discussion questions, after watching *Udaan* (2010) until about hour in and later record how the expectations of males in this film is similar/different to those of males in American films.

*Note: The film *Udaan* (2010) is available via NetFlix and Blockbuster.

Procedure:

1. Recall the film *Udaan* (2010) watched with students until 1:05:46. Ask the following questions to open the discussion: [ESOL Strategy: Brainstorming, Retelling]
 - o Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the relationship between Rohan and his father up until this point in the film.
 - o If possible, review the scenes where Rohan meets his Uncle Jimmy (25:42-27:05). How is Rohan's uncle different from Rohan's father, who he must call Sir?
 - o Rohan's father, Mr. Singh, tells him that he did visit Rohan when he was away at boarding school (1:04:49-1:05:07), but because Rohan says he "didn't want to disturb" Rohan while he was playing football. From what you have seen of the film so far, does it seem as if Mr. Singh is attempting to create a relationship with Rohan?

Guided Practice:

Have students take out a piece of paper and draw a K-W-L chart on a board. State that since only about an hour of the film *Udaan* (2010) has been watched, ask students to write some things they know about how young males and females of South Asian origins are expected to act. List two-three statements each for: what students know, what students want to know, and what they have learned so far.

[ESOL Strategy: Graphic organizer]

Independent Practice: Let students complete their K-W-L charts, walk around to assist students.

Evaluation: In learning logs or journals, have students answer this question: What are the similarities and differences that Rohan might share with a young male or a young female here? Can you imagine Rohan as your friend, or a classmate? Explain why or why not.

Title: Debunking the ‘Model Minority Stereotype’³⁴

Content Area: Sociology

Grade Level: 9-12

Unit: Race/ethnicity, prejudice and stereotypes

2011 Florida Next Generation Intercultural Standards:

Standard 6: Culture: The student will be able to use the target language to gain knowledge and demonstrate understanding of the relationship among practices, products, and perspectives of cultures other than his/her own.

Standard 8: Comparisons: The student will be able to develop insight into the nature of the target language and culture by comparing his/her own language(s) and cultures to others.

Sunshine State Standard:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-12.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Goal 3 Standards:

Standard 8 – Cooperative Workers

Florida students work cooperatively to successfully complete a project or activity.

Standard 10 - Multiculturally Sensitive Citizens

Florida students appreciate their own culture and the cultures of others, understand the concerns and perspectives of members of other ethnic and gender groups, reject the stereotyping of themselves and others, and seek out and utilize the views of persons from diverse ethnic, social, and educational backgrounds while completing individually and group projects.

Rationale: This lesson will show students the negative stereotype of the model minority.

Objective: Students will view the film *Udaan* (2010) from the beginning until 32:00 minutes, to analyze how the myth of the model minority operates and the pressures it adds to the already complex lifestyle of the character Rohan.

*Note: The film *Udaan* (2010) is available via NetFlix and Blockbuster.

³⁴ This lesson is modified from a lesson available in: *Reel Diversity: A Teacher’s Sourcebook*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Procedure:

1. Open the lesson by asking students to define the stereotype ‘model minority’. Write a few responses on the board and continue to fill up as much of the board as possible with students’ responses. Look out for the statements shared by students that demarcate a specific race/ethnicity.

[ESOL Strategy: Brainstorming, Building on Prior Knowledge]

2. After gathering enough statements, say each statement aloud and ask students to stop you from reading if anything on the board describes a prejudice or stereotype.
3. If you are stopped more than once, stop reading. Ask students why they think you stopped, and how the statements they shared are hurtful to others. [ESOL Strategy: Think aloud]
4. Provide this brief summary of *Udaan* (2010) to the class:

The film *Udaan* (2010) is a movie made in India and is about a teenage boy named Rohan, who is expelled from his boarding school. He is South Asian, and along with other people from Asia, Rohan could be considered a ‘model minority’.

His journey begins once he returns home to an authoritarian father, who has strict rules that must not be broken. All Rohan wants to do become a writer; he’s good at too. But Rohan’s father, whom he has to call Sir, strongly opposes Rohan’s passion for writing and insists that Rohan study Engineering and work his father’s factory.

Have students take notes on the film. Make sure students pay attention to

- a. How Rohan is depicted in early scenes,
 - b. The socioeconomic status of Rohan and family,
 - c. Rohan’s body language and behavior with his father,
 - d. And how Rohan is depicted as the movie picks up pace.
5. Before beginning the film, state in advance:

The verbal and physical abuse by Rohan’s father is illustrated as the other major problems Rohan has to overcome. For now, please focus your attention only to the scene where Rohan states that he wants to study Arts and Literature and not engineering. Describe this scene as if you were declaring your passion out loud for the first time to a crowd who thinks your talents would be wasted if you don’t pursue a ‘safer’ path instead. Start the film for viewing from the beginning, and stop the movie at 32:00 minutes.

[ESOL Strategy: Using Visuals/Media]

6. Have students share from the notes they have taken. Base your questions on asking the statements A and D from #4.

Guided Practice: Share your own interpretation of the scene with students or a story similar to that of Rohan's. Then ask students to describe their interpretation of the confrontation with Rohan's father, Sir at the dinner table with Uncle Jimmy and the rest of the family members.

[ESOL Strategy: Reflective Thinking]

Independent Practice: Then, write down these questions for students to answer individually in their learning logs or journals:

- o When Rohan declares his desire to become a writer, is Rohan breaking the norm of a 'model minority'? Why or why not?
- o How would this scene be if a girl wanted to be a writer and not an engineer?
- o Uncle Jimmy tells Rohan to understand that every father wants his son to be like him. Is this statement too similar to what a father from a race/ethnicity other than Asian would want for his son or daughter? Why or why not?

Evaluation: Using **only** the scene discussed in the guided practice, have students separate into groups of 4-5. Each group will perform a short act that debunks one or more of the statements written on the board from the start of the lesson (procedure #1).

For example, a statement may be: 'Asian/Indian IT professional'. Every group will select one member who will proclaim a career that is he/she is anything but an IT professional, the remaining members will play the roles of enforcing on the career choice of an IT professional.

At the end of each performance, have each group state the reasons for choosing to role-play the statement they did. Ask what misconceptions they had before this lesson versus what they have now learned.

[ESOL Strategy: Small groups, cooperative learning]

Conclusion

In this thesis I have explained how the identity and history of songs and dance in popular Hindi cinema have underwent major changes to meet the demands of rising global audience. I have examined two popular Hindi films, *Maachis* (1996) and *Udaan* (2010) to demonstrate how the term 'Bollywood' is only a partial representation of the films produced in Hindi cinema. As I have continuously stated throughout, my thesis is one amongst the scores of works that have examined and argued the tenets of popular Hindi cinema. The analyses of *Maachis* (1996) and *Udaan* (2010) are my own and there are infinite ways to infer each film's significance, narrative technique and its uses of songs or if applicable, dance. Mine is just one.

And finally, to adopt popular Hindi cinema into secondary level classrooms, I have included lesson plans that indicate the Florida guidelines and standards most pertinent for teaching and learning tolerance, diversity, history, that are beyond the marginal and dogmatic approaches of multiculturalism.

Using popular Hindi films is **one** way to create dialogue and understanding of South Asian cultures without neatly stratifying a range of identities into the erroneous pictures and stories that shape current attitudes and opinions today.

As a future 21st century secondary level teacher, I believe an innovative teacher must provide meaningful instruction while constantly re-creating and adapting new ideas that break the confines of that oh so ancient 'box'. *Maachis* (1996) and *Udaan* (2010) are foreign films, but each equally depends on visual imagery as well. With this in mind, encourage students to watch these films as they would any other film, by paying close attention to its cinematic style, acting (Maynard, 1977) and by all means, the songs and dance that are not *really* Bollywood.

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