

Technology, Tradition, and the Reification of Culture : A Study of Two Punjabi Films

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ABSTRACT

Culture is a set of beliefs, values, patterns, or practices of a particular group of people. In other words, culture is a way of life. It consists of everything from our food to fashion. However, sometimes it is produced by some institutions or organisations and it takes the form of mass culture. Mass culture is concerned about the production of goods or commodities through which industry gets more and more capital. These commodities circulate among people by popular forms whose emphasis is always on the exhibition value. This kind of value tends to fulfil the artistic function of an object. These ‘different forms’ of culture produced through the means of technology remove a cultural object from its tradition and erase its authenticity. Therefore, these cultural objects become part of the heritage. In the process of exhibition value becoming more important, culture and cultural artifacts merely become objects or commodities through which the audience or consumer derives pleasure. In this project, I attempt to foreground this process of a cultural entity’s movement from being part of a way of life to the condition of fulfilment of an artistic function. I carry it out by taking the medium of cinema as an instance, through an analysis of the two Punjabi movies, *Angrej* (2015) and *Bambukat* (2016). Both of these movies try to frame a traditional way of living throughout the whole setting. The filmmakers exhibit cultural artefacts, rituals, and beliefs of people that were used at that time to create a specific atmosphere in order to attract the audience. All these things which are represented through the movies, become artifacts and go through the process of reification.

Key Words: culture, mass culture, technology, tradition, and reification.

INTRODUCTION

CULTURE

The word ‘culture’ derived from a Latin root *colere*, refers to cultivate or to nurture. There are different understandings of the term culture. According to one of the positions, the term culture refers to a set of beliefs and values of a particular group of people. Edward B. Tylor, the founder of cultural anthropology, defines culture as “a complex whole which consists knowledge, beliefs, art, law, customs, morals and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor Primitive Culture 1). That is, according to Tylor, culture is something that is not only inherited but also is learned by the people of society. It is based on the interaction of people; a single individual cannot constitute a culture. For instance, Punjabi culture is a set of beliefs, rituals, food, dialect, art and literature, values and lifestyles of Punjabi people. Culture has some important elements which are different in every culture according to geography, history or social context.

Culture is a dynamic process (Fiske Reading the Popular 1). It is not static and fixed; instead, it transforms from time to time, from generation to generation because of the change in attitudes or lifestyles of the people. For example, ‘Bhangra’ is considered as the folk dance of Punjab: it is a major element of Punjabi culture; but it has changed from earlier times with the invention of newer techniques and compositions.

Culture is not limited to a certain group of people, rather it available to and by all, and this is why Raymond Williams argues that “culture is ordinary” (Williams “Culture is Ordinary” 4). Sometimes, culture is produced by a group of people or institutions or organisations which are dominant. Then it takes the form of mass culture.

MASS CULTURE

Mass culture is the culture that is produced or distributed among the common people in society. As the word ‘mass’ suggests, it is created for the mass audience in a mass amount. Mass culture is closely related to the concept of ‘culture industry’, which is discussed by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. According to them, the culture industry is not concerned about fulfilling the desires or needs of people rather it is more concerned to make more capital. It foregrounds the process of commodification of goods (Adorno Culture Industry). Mass culture tries to maintain ignorance and passiveness among the people. For example, advertisements are produced by the institution of mass culture to attract people. But every product or produced good remains dead without its circulation and the circulation of a cultural commodity leads to the formation of popular culture.

POPULAR CULTURE

Popular culture refers to the consumption of goods or products, produced by the culture industry or the institutions of mass culture. It is based on the interests of common people. It influences everything from the most common thing to a very particular activity of an individual; it includes movies, music, television, dance, games, news, sports and so on. It is produced from ‘within and below’ (Fiske Reading the Popular). Popular culture tries to represent things or objects in a new form as those things become unfamiliar to us. For example, people know how to celebrate festivals but it is produced and circulated in newer ways: people start celebrating the same festival by giving greeting cards, sweets like chocolates or branded eatables, which were not part of the celebration earlier. Through music and movies, popular culture tries to create a new atmosphere. It does by combining traditional lyrics with new compositions, for instance, that becomes the reason for in-circulation among people. This in-circulation leads to mass consumption. As much as it is circulated, the industry makes more and more profit out of it. In this form use value (as Marx calls it) is replaced by exchange value. The use value refers to the actual value of the product or concerns about the material cost of the product; the exchange value refers to cultural meanings or beliefs attached by the people of a particular society. In this way, culture becomes the main entity available for commodification. As culture is changing every day, there emerges a need to preserve the cultural products and practices. These products, practices, and beliefs are preserved in the form of heritage.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

The term ‘heritage’ has various connotations. Cultural heritage generally refers to oral or written traditions of literary expressions, various art forms, diverse social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge or craftsmanship. The UNESCO defines it in terms of monuments, group of buildings and sites (Nic Craith “Cultural Heritages: Process, Power, Commodification”).

Some consider heritage as an asset, a gift from their ancestors that is passed on from generation to generation. When these objects or practices are no longer in use, they come under the category of heritage. People try to preserve them in different forms. Governments arrange certain festivals or programs or designate buildings to preserve and promote cultural heritage. (Nic Craith “Cultural Heritages: Process, Power, Commodification”). However, when heritage is seen as a tradition, that is handed down from ancestors, it is not seen as a dead object; instead, it constantly undergoes the process of transformation.

TRADITION AND TECHNOLOGY

The term tradition refers to cultural patterns, beliefs or practice that are in the daily practice or that are handed down across time and space (Kockel “Reflexible Traditions and Heritage Production”). According to Walter Benjamin, tradition is in crisis in modern times due to its amalgamation with technology (Benjamin The Work of Art).

Technology in relation to tradition refers to those techniques or skills that eliminate the distance between the culture and the newer generation, by reproducing the work of art, a cultural artefact or a set of practices. Technology becomes a way to transmit culture from one generation to another. But according to Benjamin, these processes or techniques lead to the shattering of tradition (Benjamin The Work of Art). These techniques detach a work of art from its cult value or its uniqueness. They emphasize more on the exhibition value. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer also agree with this point, as they say that with the process of commodification emphasis moves from use value to exchange value (Adorno and Horkheimer Culture Industry). Technology presents a work of art in a new form. As Benjamin says, mechanical reproduction of work of art “represents something new” (Benjamin The Work of Art). In this process, culture merely becomes an object of pleasure to the audience or an object supposed to be consumed by the mass audience. The process of objectification or commodification leads to the destruction of authenticity and uniqueness of a work of art. Benjamin calls it “aura’.

AURA IN MODERN ERA

Aura refers to the uniqueness and authenticity that an object carries on a particular time and place. According to Benjamin, it is that which is withering away: it is getting demolished in the age of mechanical reproduction. Cultural products or objects are reproduced to gain popularity as well as profit by the culture industry. Thus, culture becomes an object or artifact specifically to be sold because it is one of the activities through which human beings derive pleasure. They feel like interacting with their culture in this way. The culture industry fuses the old and familiar into a new quality (Adorno and Horkheimer Culture Industry). This removes the reproduced object from the domain of tradition and the form loses its aura by reproduction. The authentic original image cannot exist in the age of mechanical reproduction. But the work of art has an association with its ritual function. Benjamin argues that the aura is missing in the new forms of art which espouse to become popular among the masses. The photography and movies become the main media to transmit all the works of art that preceded them and they have a profound impact on the public.

I will try to foreground such a process of objectification or commodification through looking at two Punjabi movies, Angrej (2015) and Bambukat (2016). Moreover, I will also highlight that how in this process culture and heritage get their aura erased and become popular in the public sphere. Movies are one of the main elements of popular culture that have a profound effect on the minds of people. The popular forms help people to interact with their past. The past becomes a major element in the movies to deal with. People feel connected with their past through these popular forms. However, the mechanical reproduction of work of art does not represent culture in these popular forms, instead, it tries enable an object fulfil its artistic functions. The artistic function of an object chiefly refers to its ability to give pleasure to the public. As Benjamin argues, culture becomes the main element through which people derives pleasure by the process of commodification or reproduction. The technique detaches the work of art from the domain of culture and tradition. The film techniques try to bring culture in the public sphere by using certain new skills and techniques. The emancipation of a work of art into public sphere brings forth the significance of beautification that emphasizes on the exhibition value of an object. The culture industry also represents the same idea that in popular forms culture has been shifted from referring the way of life to the treatment of traditions and artifacts as commodities that are available for sale for the monetary and economic gain.

2. ANGREJ (2015)

The movie Angrej (2015) picturizes the traditional village life of Punjab throughout the whole setting of the movie. The story set in a small village that represents the tradition and heritage of Punjab in the pre-partition period. The protagonist of the movie, Geja, tries to connect the people with their beliefs, behaviours and lifestyles of their ancestors in the immediate past. The movie covers most of the aspects of culture such as festival, food, marriage, cultural practices, costumes, rituals, bonding, language (especially the Punjabi dialect), and also other minor characteristics of Punjabi culture. Though the filmmaker has tried to create entirely that Punjabi culture, it is impossible to see its social significance without acknowledging its destructiveness, i.e., the liquidation of the traditional value of the cultural heritage (Benjamin The Work of Art). The representation of culture in the movie and its own actuality has a huge gap, and by showing that culture after so many years, the film tries to eliminate that distance and this also fulfils the interest of the culture industry. The culture industry produces goods or products that circulate among the masses through these popular forms, as this will be shown in the following discussion of the movie.

The movie starts with the description of a house where all the objects depict Punjabi cultural pattern. Each and everything on the screen carries a specific meaning. The frame covers the whole environment of house by visualising the playing children, the wooden cot, utensils of clay on the small wall of the kitchen, costumes of both men and women, women appears cleaning cereals, charkha. With this background, the protagonist appears by holding his mukka that plays a crucial role in Punjabi culture. There is a scene of a festivity, where the camera focuses certain objects like jalebis (a sweet dish), wangan (bangles), luddi (a kind of Bhangra) shops selling handicrafts, camels and so on. One has to remember that the movements of images in the movie are not the movements of viewers but the movements of camera, which never brings itself into the view (Benjamin The Work of Art). That is, it is not the audience who decide images or actions in the movie according to their own interests, instead, the images are chosen according to the choice of the filmmaker. The director of the movie decides what to show in front of the audience in order to create a particular environment. For this, a filmmaker has to be conscious about everything, even about a single object. For example, as one sees in the movie, there is a scene of preparing breakfast where each and everything reflects the traditional culture: everything there picturizes the whole view of a traditional Punjabi kitchen. . Those patterns and objects are no longer in the everyday use today and hence have become a part of the heritage as cultural artefacts. For example, in a scene, there is a lady who serves the meal to her husband (Fig 1). Though this is not very much crucial from the point of view of the plot of the film, instances like these become significant in the film's attempt of showcasing the Punjabi culture that is lost. This scene becomes important show the way of serving the meal, traditional food like lassi, and the traditional utensils that were used earlier By showing the culture and tradition through the movie, filmmakers try to bring back those values, beliefs, rituals ,and customs.

The audience feels a kind of intimate connection with their culture through such scenes as their lifestyle have changed due to modernization and they long towards the previous lifestyle as well as the objects that were used formerly because those were part and parcel of the life of their earlier generations. One such object is sajj that was very much part of the everyday life earlier and now has been replaced by the modern gadgets. The movie tries to bring to life those dead objects by showcasing them in front of the audience. These objects are used merely to be showcased because they are not in the everyday use, then such an attempt takes the form that drives the process of objectification. Objectification or reification refers to that process when we treat something merely as an object by ignoring its other social or cultural significance; further gaining benefit/profit becomes the sole motif. As we have already saw earlier, Benjamin argues that in mechanical reproduction the emphasis moves from the cult value to the exhibition value. In earlier times art was regarded as pure as religion so its authentic or actual significance refers to the cult value of a work of art whereas exhibition value tends to fulfill the artistic function of a work of art, in the sense that it tries to give pleasure to the audience by commodifying certain objects (Benjamin The Work of Art). The Angrej

showcases Punjabi costumes in general but in a scene it particularly focuses on the traditional male dress to promote the belief that has been associated with it. It depicts the wonderful look of a Punjabi boy as a handsome, dignified man who can never cry in front of others. By showing the culture and tradition through the movie, filmmakers try to bring back those values, beliefs, and practices that are away from the present day. Those patterns and objects are no longer in the everyday use today and hence have become a part of the heritage as cultural artifacts. For example, in a scene, there is a lady who serves the meal to her husband. Though this is not very much crucial from the point of view of the plot of the film, instances like these become significant in the film's attempt of showcasing the Punjabi culture that is lost. This scene becomes important show the way of serving the meal, traditional food like lassi, and the traditional utensils that were used earlier such as dhollu and the cup made by metal.

Thus, when cultural objects are used merely to be showcased because they are not in the everyday use, then such an attempt takes the form that drives the process of objectification. Objectification or reification refers to that process when we treat something merely as an object by ignoring its other social or cultural significance; further gaining benefit/profit becomes the sole motif. As we have already seen earlier, Benjamin argues that in mechanical reproduction the emphasis moves from the cult value to the exhibition value. In earlier times art was regarded as pure as religion so its authentic or actual significance refers to the cult value of a work of art whereas exhibition value tends to fulfill the artistic function of a work of art, in the sense that it tries to give pleasure to the audience by commodifying certain objects (Benjamin The Work of Art). The Angrej showcases Punjabi costumes in general but in a scene it particularly focuses on the traditional male dress to promote the belief that has been associated with it. It depicts the wonderful look of a Punjabi boy as a handsome, dignified man who can never cry in front of others.

One cannot escape noticing the protagonist of the story in proper Punjabi attire: he wears kurta, chadra, kantha (necklace), noka vali jutti (a specific kind of footwear) and holds sammna vali daang (a stick) in his hand. Nowadays, it only used by performers of Bhangra or otherwise during special occasions. These things that the guy wears have become popular through the films and, in a way, these attires and ornaments have become artifacts for the culture industry to market them among the masses. This generates profit to the industry, which constantly tries to create desires, which is the prime driving force of the market.

Throughout the entire movie, the filmmaker tries to create a positive image of the culture of Punjab as it was in the earlier times. The movie tries to evoke the charm of the old world by re-creating the similar atmosphere on the screen. The audience feels as if they are a part of that setting; they feel what they see on the screen as a living phenomenon and they are trapped in an illusion. Production of illusions that make things look real becomes a way to gain profit.

BAMBUKAT (2016)

The movie, Bambukat (2016) presents the story of Channan Singh, who belongs to a middle-class jatt family. The movie is set in a small village, similar to the earlier movie Angrej. This movie also tries to depict the old village life of Punjab through both the higher-class and the middle-class characters. The movie presents the scene of marriage as a very significant event of Indian society. It celebrates certain rituals and practices that have been associated with the Punjabi culture. The movie tries to reach back and reproduce the past cultural ethos and all other elements through modernizing certain forms in present and circulates those cultural forms among the audience. The movie begins with the shot where the machines, which represent arrival of modernity, enter into the social life of the people. This can also be seen in a symbolic way, as an example of mechanical interventions in the domain of culture.

The women in the movie are in the salwar kameez with phulkaris as duppata. The phulkari is regarded as the major element of the culture of Punjab that became a part of the heritage in nowadays. It is usually shown in the movies where the piece of cloth, in different shapes and colours, carries out a symbolic function. Here, it

is presented in various colours. But the point is that it is not as it used to be in the earlier days . They were usually handmade, but today it is produced on a large scale and comes in various designs, as one can see in the movie.

The movie also becomes remarkable for the designs or style of houses as these houses are made out of clay specifically designed for the purpose of re-creating the environment from the past. However, in the film one can see the usage of certain kinds of designs, like the outdoor layers and other designs as shelves of utensils and notice that they did not exist in that way in the times as the film is trying to portray As the movies have a great impact on the minds of people, masses often try to follow the same lifestyle that the cinema presents. Thus, the effect of such scenes can be seen in the Punjabi community, especially one the occasions of the shooting of marriage scenes for the pre-wedding ceremony and thus it becomes an image to convey a particular impact of the past.

The mechanical reproduction represents the things in a way that seem real and new. From this process a very new form of work of art emerges. And this art attracts the attention of the audience. However, the very authenticity of a piece of art always remains under threat of moving far from the actual thing. As Theodor Adorno highlights the point in *The Culture Industry*:“Imagination is replaced by a mechanically relentless control mechanism which determines whether the latest image to be distributed really represents the exact, accurate and reliable reflection of the relevant item of reality”. (Adorno *The Culture Industry*).

The materials or objects presented by such techniques of reproduction influence the minds of people and they become unable to imagine the real objects that existed historically in a particular period at a particular place. These artifacts become representative of a particular entity that existed at a particular time and place and they also hide the actual thing. They try to imitate those things in a certain way to celebrate specific occasions like weddings or other functions. Thus, in a way, those cultural representations become merely an artifact to make a profit by selling those artifacts among the masses.

In another scene, when relatives come into the house of Channan Singh’s in-laws, they are welcomed and are asked to be seated on the cots that are made out of bed by covering daris .This is similar to the tradition according to which this ritual is practiced in Punjab. In this way, it becomes showcase of hand- made daris or handcrafted-fabrics that depict the importance of handicrafts of Punjab.

These things are used to produce an environment in the movie through which they try to give a feel to the people of their culture. It is their own culture and tradition that the popular forms are presenting before them in the form of cinema, songs or other artificial instruments.

The games and food also play a crucial role in cultures because certain emotions and feelings are attached with them.This helps the people recall or even recognize the traditional games played in the past. The same is being depicted about the food habits of the past.

Those who played these games in their childhood want to remember them as they have vanished with the passage of time. When these games or food habits which are less preferred today are revived again as elements of the cultural heritage they give pleasure to those people; they again experience those lost things! And, they feel the bliss of connecting with their glorious past through these popular media—movies and songs For example, in *Bambukat*, both of these aspects are presented through a scene: when Resham Singh comes to his in-law’s house, a group of children are shown playing bante so that one can see it on the screen and re-live the past. Thus, the culture industry promotes the promise of happiness in the lure of the utopia of the past (Adorno *The Culture Industry*). The past is exhibited as a utopia where all great things happened . People lived together with love and affection.They lived in an environment that was very peaceful and without any pollution. They enjoyed the food without any intoxication as sweets, lassi and sarson da saag. This utopian

picture is not necessarily a reality. However, there are very few movies that depict such a reality. In spite of emphasizing on the reality of things, they are presenting only a partial picture, and further adding newer elements through the process of reproduction. When these older forms of past are reproduced by using new techniques, then those older forms become new or those forms emerge in another forms. But still, those forms invariably remain a part of the culture from their outer appearance, and this is enough for appealing to the masses and providing pleasure to people.

COMPARING THE TWO MOVIES (ANGREJ AND BAMBUKAT)

Both the movies, Angrej and Bambukat, demonstrate the motif of Punjabi cinema: an attempt to capture the beauty of Punjabi culture by representing its traditional forms in order to promote and preserve the cultural heritage of Punjab. Both the movies try to produce a Punjabi atmosphere. But both of them use different kinds of setting, colour, and inner forms of culture like costumes, architecture of houses and so on. Both the movies are set in two small villages, and this helps in re-creating on the screen an atmosphere of traditional village life. If Angrej presents cultural values, patterns or practices which existed at that time, Bambukat shows the influence of technology upon culture, as the very name of the movie hints at. There is a literate person who works as a station-master, presented in modern clothes— a shirt and a trouser. Despite this, the movie's emphasis remains on the traditional attire of Punjab—kurta chadra or kurta pajama. The major characters appear in this kind of dress, thus representing the theme or motif of the movies. Women appear in the same traditional appearance, in kameez-salwar with phulkari. Though, both the movies fail to demonstrate the authentic product that existed in the past, they try to depict the past by re-producing a similar kind of atmosphere and by using some of the objects that are regarded as possessing cultural value throughout the movie. For instance, in both the movies, women use different kind of phulkaris but neither Angrej nor Bambukat show the handcrafted phulkari which was in use at that time. The culture industry merely uses the fact that the dress material is phulkari and tries to relate it with the past object, thereby making it a link with the past that is lost.

This can be extended further: the phulkari shown in both the movies are from the present and they are made to represent the past. However, the phulkaris from the past were very much different and had different forms and various shapes embroidered on them, and they had cultural significance: they had pictures of men and women, birds like sparrows and peacocks, animals, snakes and other objects that were culturally and emotionally attached with the people.

Those phulkaris were made out of khaddar. Today, such kind of phulkaris have become a part of the heritage because they are no longer in everyday use. By becoming a part of the heritage, they have lost the use value and possess merely exhibition value. These phulkaris in the movie have gone through the process of modification, from which emerges a “new form” that is different from the earlier one (Benjamin The Work of Art). The cloth which was seen at the Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh,(for the purpose of this study) has an element of aura in terms of an authenticity in its form. Aura refers to the unique phenomenon of a distance however close it may be (Benjamin The Work of Art). On the other hands, the films show them to us closer, however distant they are: although these cultural objects seem close to us as presented through movies or songs as we perceive them daily, in fact they are much far away in terms of place and time. These older cultural forms and artifacts are used by the culture industry as a theme to popularize new products in the present time through which they gain profit. For instance, the motif of Punjabi phulkari is used to produce a market image, a brand in the market to produce products to fetch profit ultimately to the industry and these products are consumed by the masses on a daily basis. Thus, the culture industry determines their effect on the social subjects and uses these subjects to make the reproductive cycle of capitalism (Lash and Lury “Global

Culture Industry”). Here comes a point that goods are produced not to meet the desires and human needs, but for profit, to acquire more capital. The phulkari that is museumized as a part of the heritage formerly possessed a cult value; however that has been replaced by the exhibition value that concerns about the beautification. Hence, the culture industry fuses the old and familiar with a new quality.

Moreover, both movies share a similar kind of music, with lyrics and tunes that make them a part of popular culture. The lyrics of both the movies emphasize on the essence of Punjabi community from the past: they deal with issues related to marriages, costumes, lover or beloved, departure, etc., everything projected into a distant utopian past. When a movie circulates among the masses, it becomes a part of popular culture that particularly emphasizes on the artistic function of an object, as we already noted. These kinds of songs appeal more to the audience because of their use of certain cultural objects with which they feel emotionally attached; moreover, they experience those songs as their own by visualizing on their own, assisted by the screen, the things of the past. When such a lyric mingles with modern musical rendering, automatically more attention goes towards those compositions and beats which hide the lyrics and rhythm under their influence. For example, in *Bambukat*, the lyrics deal with the themes from the past, but there is more emphasis on the compositions and particular beats/hits that also reveal the nature of Punjabi culture. These kinds of songs have a profound impact upon the public. The usage of instruments of music from the past such as *algoje*, *chimta*, *katto*, *bansi*, *dhol* helps further in recreating the atmosphere of the past through sound. Thus, the classical music is marketed to and consumed by a mass audience through the greatest hits of particular composers, collections organized around particular themes. Culture becomes a subject to talk about and to exhibit in the commercialized society. In simple words, we can say that culture and heritage is kept for sale.

CONCLUSION

A culture that is not alive takes the form of heritage, and makes its appearance in the present mediated through technology, and film is one of these means. Mechanical reproduction is inherent in the very technique of film production. It is impossible to understand its social significance without noticing the destruction of its aura (Benjamin *The Work of Art*). In the process of mechanical reproduction, the authenticity and the cult value of the cultural objects are replaced by artificiality and the exhibition value. Punjabi culture can be seen as such a culture that is going through the process of reification, a condition when human beings and cultural materials are treated merely as objects, ignoring the other significance elements of them. Punjabi culture is a culture of Punjabi people. The various cultural objects such as utensils, costumes and lifestyle, customs and rituals from the past are regarded as an essence of Punjabi culture. When they are represented through technology or technical means, then the more emphasis is placed upon the aspects such as beauty and popularity instead of the actual significance that these objects and practices carried with them at that time. The mechanized forms represent the amalgamation of culture by combining the old theme with the new forms to gain profit in the capitalistic society. In this way, culture production becomes similar to the production of any other commodity. Through the process of objectification and reification, the authenticity of a culture comes under question, as it changes into a new form whose concern is on an exhibition of culture and its objects. The objects such as *canna*, the metal cup, *chhajj*, the wall made up of clay, *lassi*, *sarson da saag*, attires like *kurta-chadra*, *kameez-salwar*, *duppatta* and so on get represented through modification and become the part of commercialisation. When an object becomes part of the process of marketing, there is a threat to the authenticity of that object.

Culture represents the whole living of a person from childhood to death, through different forms and fields. It includes each and every aspect of human life such as happy moments as well as painful incidents. Every community and society has its own culture that is particularly revealed in terms of food, costumes, rituals, living-style, behaviour, morals, relations, and so on. People living in society use them according to their needs and preferences. However, the cultural forms are not static or unified; rather they change from time to

time. When the culture of a particular time is regarded as supreme and representative of that community, it becomes a part of the cultural heritage. The heritage refers to those patterns, practices and values that are no longer in everyday use. The technique of mechanical reproduction which produces such a cultural heritage, detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. There is the liquidation of the traditional value of cultural heritage (Benjamin The Work of Art). As Janet Donhoe says, “Benjamin understands tradition as the neutral medium of transmitting the past to the present life with risk, particularly in the modern era. There is always a risk of inauthenticity at the site of tradition” (Donhoe “The Place of Tradition”).

Punjabi culture, specifically of the jatt community, is one of the main subjects of Punjabi cinema. This culture becomes a representation of the past, making the past accessible in the present. The Punjabi movies try to eliminate the distance of many passed years by showing it through the setting of the movie. It reproduces culture and its objects through technology which is seen and felt in the public sphere. A film is the “handing over” of an object not by tradition, but by technology (Benjamin The Work of Art). The experience becomes mechanical by approaching the culture in its artificial forms: artificial in the sense that the actors who perform in the movie, may not have the first hand experience of those values or objects; often they may not be part of Punjabi culture at all, for instance, Aditi Sharma in *Angej*. To catch the attention of the viewer, filmmakers try to exhibit a few things, connected with Punjabi culture. The images or objects that identify with the Punjabi culture are chosen or selected by the filmmakers to create an impact on the audience. Thus, by displaying the culture of Punjab, the cinema tries to promote a positive image of a specific kind of culture.

Both the movies try to represent the culture of Punjab: the culture from pre-partition times is revealed through the setting of *Angej*, whereas *Bambukat* showcases the period after partition. Though both the movies are concerned with different periods, their purpose is similar, i.e., to create an image of Punjabi culture. The kind of culture that is reflected throughout the movies is of a particular time that has become a model for Punjabi community. The popular cinema emphasizes the exchange value that tends to fulfil the artistic function as well as concerns about gaining profit. Punjabi people especially jatt, feel attracted towards the images of culture that appear in both movies.

Some people believe that these attempts also help to revive a culture in the present times. But, my point here is that the mechanically reproduced work of art removes the actual object of art from its reality and is produced in a ‘different form’. In such a representation, culture and heritage become a crucial part of economy where these forms are perceived merely as commodities. The process of objectification detaches them from their aura (that is rooted in time and space).

Every culture is going through the similar process like Punjabi culture, which is reproduced and evolved in the process of objectification; major function here is to give pleasure to the consumer and to gain profit. One can see the influence of objectification on the culture of a particular community in a capitalistic society through this project. How a particular culture detaches from its moorings and is reproduced for some other purpose such as for beautification, for pleasure and profit is a significant question. In addition to that, the project also helps in understanding how people indulge in the process by consuming these objects and remain unaware; in other words, they become a kind of “ignorant and passive” consumers.

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