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GENDER REPRESENTATIONS: A STUDY OF INDIAN WOMEN DIRECTORS, APARNA SEN AND DEEPA MEHTA

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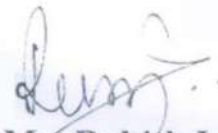Jnana Sahyadri, Shankarghatta -577451
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2017

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled *"GENDER REPRESENTATIONS: A STUDY OF INDIAN WOMEN DIRECTORS, APARNA SEN AND DEEPA MEHTA"* is a product of the bonafide research work carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of **Prof. Rachel Bari**, Department of P.G. Studies and Research in English, Kuvempu University. The present work has not formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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This is to certify that **Mr. Rohith L.S.,** Research Scholar, Department of English, Kuvempu University has successfully completed the dissertation entitled *"GENDER REPRESENTATIONS: A STUDY OF INDIAN WOMEN DIRECTORS, APARNA SEN AND DEEPA MEHTA"* under my guidance. This has been submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Kuvempu University, during the year 2012-2017.

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CONTENT

CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is a study of gender representation in the films of Aparna Sen and Deepa Mehta, two women directors in the Indian film industry. This research limits itself to a specific time period of post-independence, that is 1970's onwards. The films taken for study are Aparna Sen's *36 Chowringhee Lane*[1] *(1981)*, *Parama*[2] *(1984), Sati*[3] *(1989), Mr and Mrs. Iyer*[4] *(2002) and 15 Park Avenue*[5] *(2005)* and Deepa Mehta's *Fire*[6] *(1996), Earth*[7] *(1998), Water*[8] *(2005), and Heaven on Earth*[9] *(2008)*.

This research aims to explore the issues of gender representation and the way in which the representation of gender unfolds through cinema. It examines whether Indian women directors help the emergence of counter cinema as against mainstream cinema which avoids strategic male gaze and sexist ideology.

In the 1970's many American, British and French scholars were looking at a different way of approach for women's cinema. It was however Laura Mulvey's

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[1]*36 Chowringhee Lane,* dir. Aparna Sen. Perf. Jennifer Kendal, Konkona Sen Sharma and Geoffery Kendal. Shashi Kapoor Production. 1981. Film.

[2]*Parama*, dir. Aparna Sen. Perf. Raakhee, Aparna Sen and Anil Chatterjeee. 1984. Film.

[3]*Sati,* dir. Aparna Sen. Perf. Shabana Azmi. NFDC. 1989. Film.

[4]*Mr. and Mrs. Iyer*, dir. Aparna Sen. Perf. Rahul Bose, Konkona Sen Sharma and Bhisham Sahni. N. Venkatesan Produced. 2002. Film.

[5]*15th Park Avenue,* dir. Aparna Sen. Perf, Shabana Azmi, Konkona Sen Sharma and Rahul Bose. Bipin Vohra. 2005. Film.

[6]*Fire*, dir. Deepa Mehta. Perf. Nandita Das and Shabana Azmi. Kaleidoscope Entertainment. 1998. Film.

[7]*Earth*, dir. Deepa Mehta. Perf. Nandita Das, Aamir Khan and Rahul Khanna. 1999. Film.

[8] *Water*, dir. Deepa Mehta. Perf. Seema Biswas, Lisa Ray and John Abraham. David Hamilton Production. 2005. Film.

[9]*Heaven on Earth*, dir. Deepa Mehta. Perf. Preity Zinta and Vansh Bhardwaj. Deepa Mehta and David Hamilton Production. 2008. Film.

'Visual Pleasure and Narrative cinema' which brought changes in the view of conception of women's cinema. Mulvey's psychological approach tells how men and women are affected and influenced by the dominant ideology. After Mulvey, women's cinema was understood to be not against the biological men but sexist ideology.

Althusser's *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, presented conceptions of repressive state apparatuses and ideological state apparatuses and how these ideological apparatuses function in a given society or context. In the 1970's a new wave/parallel cinema developed under the influence of Italian Neo Realism which began in the world, especially in Hollywood. In India, It was pioneered by Bengali filmmakers, prominently Satyajit Ray, who focused on social and political issues of India and also on the position of women in Indian society especially the position of Bengal women. At the end of the 1970's with the influence of new wave cinema and with the influence of Satyajit Ray's films, new wave- women centered cinema influenced many women director's in the Hindi film Industry

India is the world's largest film producing nation with 1602 films being produced every year.[10] People enjoy watching films, either in the cinema hall or on a television as a source of entertainment. But cinema is no more a mere source of entertainment. It has become a field in popular culture where dominant ideologies are circulated, stereotypes are framed and various discourses are projected. Both male and female audiences have been affected by these political messages, societal issues and gender identities that are represented in the films. This research examines the complex relational arrangement of male and female, their day-to-day

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[10] "Tamil leads as India tops film production". Times of India. Retrieved, 25 March 2015.

social behavior and how this social relation is created and carried out.

> Gender refers to the varied and complex arrangements between men and
> women, encompassing the organisation of reproduction, the sexual divisions
> of labour and cultural definitions of femininity and masculinity. (Bradley.
> 2007.01)[11]

> Glover and Kaplan call gender as "A Busy Term" (2007.01) Harriet
> explains, the reasons why Glover and Kaplan called gender a busy term. He states,
> "It is widely used and in many different contexts, so the term gender is
> continuously evolving and its meaning is quite slippery. Part of busy and
> slipperiness arises from the fact that this is a highly politically charged concept. Its
> use is inextricably bound up with the centuries- long struggles over power between
> men and women". (2007.02). In general, gender is a social construction. It is a
> category made by human being as a way of dividing up the world they perceive
> around them.

> Gender is not just the conflict between men and women, but it includes
> social, political and biological division. It is not just a division of heterosexual male
> and female but it also includes homosexual gay, lesbians, transgender and all the
> others who are different. As Harriet rightly said, the term gender is continuously
> evolving. Even though Indian society has been evolving over generations, it still
> faces a lot of gender related problems. For instance, even after 67 years of
> independence only three women have been allowed as fighter pilots in the Indian
> Air Force. In the field of information and technology (IT), there are many cases
> being reported on sexual harassment by subordinate women workers. Some famous
> cases include one of India's best known software executive, Phaneesh Murthy in

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[11] Bradley, Harriet. *Gender: Key Concept.* Cambridge. U.K. 2007. Print.

the sexual harassment case (2002), Airhostess, Geetika Sharma's sexual harassment case (2012), Bollywood choreographer, Shiamak Davar's sexual harassment case, and the former Tehelka chief, Tarun Tejpal for sexual assault and rape[12]. Last year, 50 Nifty companies annual report[13] showed that sexual harassment cases had rose in these companies with only two-thirds of them being disclosed. There was a total of 525 complaints in 2016, an increase of 26% over the previous year. *Wipro* tops the list with 111 cases, followed by *ICICI* bank with 87 and *Infosys* with 62 cases. The recent Bengaluru mass molestation of women on New Year's Eve (2016) is still fresh in our minds. Karan Johar (a famous Bollywood film producer) has said in several interviews that he will never say those three words (I am homosexual) given the parochial view of our society and legal status of homosexuality in the country.[14] Gender discrimination or gender problem is not just a problem of a section of society, but is a problematic issue of the entire human society. One way or the other, every person, irrespective of their class, caste, race, sex, age, status, appearance, food habit, and etc., faces discrimination in life.

The culturalist Stuart Hall, in his work, *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices* [15] examines the relationship between politics and representation. He defines representation as a channel or medium where the meaning of production takes place. He states that, 'people, objects, and

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[12] To get complete information on the above cases of Phaneesh Murthy, Geetika Sharma, Shiamak Davar, Tarun Tejpal, kindly refer to http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/it-s-a-man-s-world-7-sexual-harassment-cases-that-rocked-india/story-TJ4sebHtBlmn2oEkJpJCHO.html
[13]The link to know about the issue in detail is
http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/company/corporate-trends/sexual-harassment-cases-rise-by-26-in-nifty-50-companies-wipro-icici-infosys-top-list/articleshow/54573926.cms
[14]http://indianexpress.com/article/entertainment/bollywood/the-new-york-times-just-called-karan-johar-the-man-who-let-india-out-of-the-closet-do-you-agree-4530328/
[15] Hall, Struart. (ed). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practice.* Sage Publication. New Delhi. 2007.

others do not have stable meanings'. (Vukcevich. Mai. 2002)[16]. The meanings are the production of human beings who as participants of a culture has the ability to make things meaning or signify something. (Hall.2007.19). For Hall, representation is process of understanding "...how language and systems of knowledge production work together to produce and circulate meanings. Representation becomes the process channel or medium through which these meanings are both created and reified" (2002. 03).

Hall looks at representation as something larger than a single representation. W.J.T. Mitchell in his work *Picture Theory* [17] calls representation as a 'Master-term' (1994.06). For Mitchell, representation not only "… mediates our knowledge, but obstruct, fragment, and negates that knowledge" (1994.188). It means representation not only mediates the knowledge which is consumed by people, but it also effects to change the existing knowledge through fragmenting, contradiction, etc. Therefore, Mitchell says, representation constructs the social knowledge. In his conclusion of *Picture Theory*, he says, representation is not objectification but rather it is a way towards the relationship and processes by which representations are exchanged, valued and produced. (2002.04)

Gender representation is one such mechanism, which recreates a whole set of roles for human beings, and this mechanism runs with the fuel of vested interest of some class, caste, sex or religion. Today people enjoy watching films, either in the cinema hall or on a television as a source of entertainment. But cinema is no more a mere source of entertainment. It has become a field in popular culture where

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[16] For further reading on Stuart Hall, follow the link:
http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/representation.htm
[17] Mitchell, J. William. *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation.* University of Chicago Press. 1994.

dominant ideologies are circulated, stereotypes are framed, and various discourses are projected. Both male and female audiences are affected by these political messages, societal issues, and gender identities that are represented in the films.

This research deals with the issues of gender representation and the ways in which the representation of gender unfolds through cinema. It examines Indian women directors' cinema as a form of counter cinema to the main stream cinema by focusing mainly on films directed by Aparna Sen and Deepa Mehta. Why is the focus on cinema? Why not on any other literary form? The other literary forms like, novel, drama, short story, poem, social awareness speeches requires time, education and literacy.

According to the 2011[18] census data on literacy, workers, and educational levels, released by the *Register General and Census Commissioner of India*, below primary level education occupies a major share of 32.6 per cent. It was followed by primary (25.2 per cent), middle (15.7 per cent), Matric (11.1 per cent), higher secondary (8.6 per cent), and graduate and above (4.5 per cent), by considering higher secondary and graduate and above as literacy. Readers or who read novels, or those who listen to social awareness speeches, debates and other, consists of 12.11%, which means that 14.65.31.000 crore people out of total India's 121 crore population are people who can read and understand the literary texts or works. But according to Butalia (in 1984), the Indian cinema is the world's largest medium of communication, as close to 12 million (1.2 crores) people watch films every week in cinema houses and theatres (1984. 108).[19] In 2012, India produced as many as

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[18]Follow the link for complete details on 2011 census of India.
http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-common/census_2011.html.
[19]Butalia. Urvashi. "Women in Cinema". Feminist Review (17), 1984, Pp. 108-110.

1602 films in one year. Its size increased from the 1.255 films made in 2011.[20] The trailer of the recent movie *Baahubali-2* was viewed by 50 million people (5 crores) in 24 hours.[21] The above data illustrates that, films are consumed more other than any literary form since films can be directly consumed by the people. There is no need of a basic or higher degree to watch and to enjoy movies. In modern scenario, mass media has become a powerful mediator to convey messages and ideologies with its cache of visual forms to attract everyone, irrespective of their age, sex, and social status. The Indian film industry entertains a large population. Film as a part of mass media along with entertainment also circulates interest to some sections of society**.**

Today people enjoy watching film, either in the cinema hall or on a television as a source of entertainment. But cinema is no more a mere source of entertainment. It has become a field in popular culture where dominant ideologies are circulated, stereotypes are framed and various discourses are projected. Both male and female audiences have been affected by these political messages, societal issues and gender identities that are represented in the films.

This work attempted to look at the ideology of the films through twentieth-century Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser who formulated the notion of ideology in his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in 1970. In this essay, he argues that a state maintains its power through Repressive Apparatuses and Ideological State Apparatuses[22]. An ideological state apparatuses consists of art,

[20] Further information, http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/Tamil-leads-as-India-tops-film-production/articleshow/21967065.cms

[21] http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/baahubali-2-trailer-rajamouli-prabhas-rana-50-million/1/906088.html

[22] Althusser, Louis. 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses'. *Lenin and Philosophy.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971.

media, school, family, church, political parties whereas Repressive Apparatuses which is mainly physical force consists of government, army, police, law, courts, prisons. For Althusser, the reproduction of unequal social order is achieved not only at the point of gun or policeman's baton but, more subtly, by the operations of a wide range of institutions which he calls Ideological State Apparatuses (Dix. 2010, 228-229)[23]. Through these medium the state imposes its ideological power on society to adopt false consciousness, encourages it to admit and identify the false images which are perpetuated and reinforced on the people. The same idea can also be applied while dealing with cinema which gives unequal representation of men and women. Further, this research presents the idea of Goaran Therborn, (1980)[24] who redefined Althusser's idea of interpellation and examined the influence of interpellation at individual level.

As Goran Therborn points out, the interpellation of subject does not mean that the created ideology is accepted by "a fixed and unified subjects" (1980.78). The individual changes and also re-constitutes himself/herself/itself by the influence of interpellation. Ideological interpellations are constituted and reconstituted without the awareness and the knowledge of the individuals involved in the process. So an individual fits into an enormous number of roles throughout his/her life time. The ideology being "governed by opening and closures in the existing power matrix of affirmations and sanctions" (1980.79) is significant. What appears as a natural fact or general scenario in ideology is portrayed in reality, an

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[23]For further information on 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' see Andrew Dix, "Film and Ideology" in Beginning Film Studies, Manchester University Press, 2010, 228-229.
[24] Therborn, Goran. *The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology.* Verso Editions. London. 1980.

ideological acknowledgement of a true, real self-evident situation imposed by ideology.

The 'lived' relation is thus:

> An objective structure of the social formation which is imposed upon them [people] by a mechanism they do not understand, a mechanism which determines that structure as the mode of appearance of reality. (Geras, Nicol.75)[25]

Ideology is visibly circulated through material practices and is situated within classes. These functional apparatuses are bound and developed as a result of the class struggle and as a result of reproduction of the relations of production.

In Indian Cinema, women are presented at different levels. Some movies project women by subjugating her identity and suiting her character to that of the patriarchal ideologies that has to be circulated in the society. For example, in the movie '*Mother India*'[26], women are projected to be very sacrificing, dedicated, domesticated, a silent sufferer and supportive. In *Kabhi Kushi Kabhi Gham*[27] *(K3G)*, Jaya Bachchan is not allowed to take decisions, is hesitant to approach her husband, and does not even sit in front of her husband in the movie.

On the other hand, there are movies which seem to project the characters more neutrally, without any bias. In *Page 3*[28], Konkana Sen as a crime reporter goes around even at odd hours for reporting crimes. Similarly, in *Bachana Aa*

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[25]Geras, N. Althusser's Marxism: An Account and assessment. New Left Review. No.71, page-75.
[26]*Mother India.* dir. Khan, Mehboob. Perf. Nargis, Sunil Dutt and Rajendra Kumar. Mehboob Production. 1975. Film.
[27]*Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*, dir. Johar, Karan. Perf. Amitabh Bachchan, Jaya Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan. Dharma Production. 2001. Film.
[28]*Page 3,* dir. Bhandarkar, Madhur. Perf. Konkana Sen, Atul Kulkarni and BomanIrani. Sahara One. 2005. Film.

Haseeno[29], Deepika Padukone works as a taxi driver at nights in order to earn her pocket money and dreams of becoming an independent woman without depending on any man for support.

At another level, women who are projected as completely liberated from the clutches of the ideologies are the silent sufferers because of the dominant ideologies prevailing in the society, which makes them weak at some level. The movie *Fashion*[30] projects a glamorous world where women aspire to become models and face all kinds of odds in the world of fashion. Priyanka Chopra, as a supermodel in the movie, when drunk, sleeps with a black man, which shocks her and she starts questioning about her own chastity and gets completely depressed. This happens to her because of two reasons, firstly, because it was a black man and not a white man with whom she slept, and secondly, because of the dominant patriarchal ideology present in the society which questions the chastity of women in all walks of life. In yet another movie, *Samay*[31] Sushmitha Sen plays the strong character of a police officer, who as a mother fails to gain control of her emotions at the end of the movie, and shoots the serial killer (Jackie Shroff), even as he wants to surrender, making her appear weak at this point. Thus, directly or indirectly, there is always circulation of the dominant ideologies influencing every individual in the society.

In India, feminism aimed to define, establish and defend equal political, economic, equal opportunities and social rights for Indian women. Indian feminism fought against specific-cultural issues of India's patriarchal system, such as

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[29] *Bachna Ae Haseeno*, dir. Anand, Siddharth. Perf. Ranbir Kapoor, Bipasha Basu and Deepika Padukone. Aditya Chopra Production. 2008. Film.

[30] *Fashion.* Bhandarkar, Madhur, dir. Perf. Priyanaka Chopra, Kangana Raraut and Mugdha Godse. UTV Motion Pictures, 2008, Film.

[31] *Samay*. dir. Grewal, Robby. Perf. Sushmita Sen, Jackie Shroff and Dinesh Lamba. iDreamProduction, 2003, Film.

inheritance of laws and Sati. (Ray. 1999.13)[32] Feminism in India can be divided into three phases. During the first phase (1850-1915), male European colonists like William Bentinck and reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Ray from Bengal began to speak out against the social evils of sati and widow re-marriage. (Gangoli. 2007. 06)[33] The Second phase, (1915-1947) began when Gandhiji incorporated women's movements into the Quit India Movement and encouraged independent women's organisations to start. (2007. 07). The third phase, (1947 onwards) post-independence, has focused on the equal treatment of women, in marriage, in the work force and reservation in politics. (Kumar. 1998)[34].

As discussed in beginning of this chapter, this research limits itself to a specific time period of post-independence, that is, from 1970s onwards. The 1970s become important for two reasons. Firstly, at the end of 1960s and the beginning of 1970s, many feminist film scholars like Molly Haskell, Laura Mulvey, Claire Johnston, Teresa De Lauretis, and others began to analyze the representation of women and gender roles in Hollywood. In the United States, feminist by adopting a sociological approach, examined the portrayal of women characters and gender roles in particular film narratives and saw the replica of patriarchal views set for women. Secondly, in the 1970s, the parallel cinema developed under the influence of Italian Neo-realism led by Bengal cinema and were produced by the internationally recognized film makers such as Satyajit Ray and others. This movement focused on the social and political issues of India, especially Bengal society, such as the caste system, poverty, communalism, and the position of

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[32] Ray, Raka. *Fields of Protest: Women's Movement in India*. Kali for Women. New Delhi. 2000.
[33] Gangoli, Geetanjali. *Indian Feminisms: Law, Patriarchies and violence in India.* Routledge publication. 2007
[34] Kumar, Radha. *The History of Doing.* Kali for women Publication. New Delhi. 1998

women. These new wave films presented a social and political and social realistic approach. The 1970s was also prominent because a number of women directors began directing movies on gender and women issues. They addressed the problems and hardship faced by women from a woman's point of view.

This research examines Indian women directors' cinema as a form of counter cinema to the mainstream cinema by focusing mainly on films directed by Aparna Sen and Deepa Mehta. Why is this research focusing on women directors? Why not the male directors? Few researches claim that, 'male directors portray the incidents that women characters face with a lot of sadness. Therefore, they try to evoke a sense of pity amongst the viewers to rationalize her action' (Sarkar, 2012.100).

It appears to be true in the case of the film *Bandit Queen*[35](1996)directed by Shekar Kapoor, who is said to be one of the most controversial directors in India. The movie is based on the real life experiences of Phoolan Devi also known as the Queen of the Chambal Valleys. Initially, the movie was banned in India as it contained sexually explicit scenes. Though the ban was relaxed, later the movie was marked only as an adult movie. Phoolan Devi after seeing the film threatened lawsuits against the director and producer, arguing that the film's representation of her life was grossly inaccurate. She objected to her portrayal as a sexual object. The lovemaking scene in the film had *Bandit Queen* choreographed as if she was as an active subject and instigator of the sexual play. The film contains multiple scenes of rape where the brutality of Devi's sexual victimization becomes horrifyingly palpable. The film begins with a significant subtitle, "This is a true story". If the

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[35] *Bandit Queen,* dir. Shekhar Kapur. Perf. Seema Biswas and Nirmal Pandey. Prod, Kaleidoscope Entertainment, Channel 4, 1999, Film.

common mass perceives the film as true story without being aware of the cinematic changes or trans-mediation of reality into cinema, their patriarchal mindset has the possibility of internalizing Phoolan Devi's personality in a negative way. As Sarkar in her research writes that as female directors portray women as much stronger characters, 'they evoke a sense of anger for the social injustice that the women face' (2012.100). Feminist film critiques argue that those films portraying women's issues by women directors represent a more liberal and impartial male directors in India (2004.90).

Films made by women directors explore various themes like, female identity, treatment of women as a symbol, marginalization of women, oppression of women, and gender discrimination (2004.92). These women's issues are examined by some women directors, most notably Aparna Sen[36], Kalpana Lajmi[37], Sai Paranjape[38], Mira Nair[39], Deepa Mehta, and Prema Karanth[40]. The films of Mira Nair and Deepa Mehta represent issues of Indian women and bring fourth different and new aspects of women's problems hitherto which was unnoticed. This research has specifically focused on the movies of Aparna Sen and Deepa Mehta.

Aparna Sen is an internationally acclaimed film maker, screen writer, and actress. Her father was a famous critic and film maker Chidananda Dasgupta. She became important for two reasons, firstly, Sen as an actress, and secondly, Sen as a

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[36] Aparna Sen's films are, *House of Memories* (2000), *The Japanese Wife* (2010), *36 Chowringhee Lane* (1981), *15th Park Avenue* and others.

[37] Kalpana Lajmi's films are, *Ek Pal* (1986), *Rudaali* (1993), *Darmiyaan: In Between* (1997) *Daman* (2001), *Chingaari* (2006) and others.

[38] Sai Paranjape's films are, *Jadu ka Shankh* (1974), *Sparsh* (1980), *Chashme Buddoor* (1981), *Katha* (1983) and others.

[39] Mira Nair's films are, *Salaam Bombay* (1968), *Kama Sutra: Tale of Love* (1996), *Monsoon Wedding* (2001), *The Reluctant Fundamental* (2012), *Mississippi Masala* (1991) and others.

[40] Prema Karanth is first women director of Kannada film industry. Her films are, *Ondu Premada Kathe* (1977), *Phaniyamma* (1983).

director. She made her debut at the age of 15, in the film of *Teen Kanya*[41] directed by Satyajit Ray (a longtime friend of her father) in 1961. In 1965, she resumed her film career in Mrinal Sen's *Akash Kusum*.[42] As an actor, Sen worked under Satyajit Ray (Pioneer of New Wave Cinema), Mrinal Sen (pioneer of Middle Cinema in India), and her father Chidananda Dasgupta (veteran critic and film maker), which had a great impact on her, and she represents two generations and genres of cinema, that is new wave and middle cinema. Secondly, Aparna Sen as a director. She presented a new perspective on Indian women cinema. The themes and characters presented in her films represented women of caste, religion, age, class, and race. Her films represented the unique subject of women and gender. Aparna Sen represents two generations of cinema and two genres of films that is New Wave Cinema pioneered by Satayjit Ray and Middle Cinema pioneered by Mrinal Sen. The basic and main objective of Ray's New Wave cinema was to change the stereotyped narrative of Indian cinema and to bring out the realistic cinema.

Feminists generally believe that films are a contributory factor in perpetuating a narrow range of stereotypical images of women. They argue that the way notions of gender represented by the films perpetuate and reinforce the values of a patriarchal society; for instance men tend to take exceptions to such narrow stereotyping- a strong women portrayed can be seen as positive or rather more cynically they could be seen as the mere as 'role reversal' (Nelmes, 274)[43] films and thus as having purely novelty value. In turn, these representations encourage expectations of women, which are very limiting, representing a narrow range of

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[41] *Teen Kanya,* dir. Satyajit Ray. Pref. Soumitra Chatterjee and Aparna Sen. Sony Pictures, 1961, Film.

[42] *Akash Kusum.* dir. Mrinal Sen, Soumitra Chatterjee, Aparana Sen and Subhendu Chatterjee. Purbachal Film Production, 1965, Film.

[43] Nelmes, Jill. *An Introduction to Film Studies*. 2nd Edition. Routledge, 1999, Print.

images of women, for instance, women as caregivers, as passive objects, and an objects of desire, basing them at home, inferior to men, etc.

Feminist Film Theory, which emerged in the past 20 years, has flourished to become a large field in itself. It first emerged in the 70s as a part of 2nd wave of feminism. Feminist film critics examined the question of 'Feminine Identity'. Molly Haskell's essay 'From Reference to Rape: The Treatment of women in movies', suggests that films affect society through ideological and social construction of women, who are either to be revered (as virgin) or reviled (as a whore). She also points out that,

> …from women's points of view the ten year from, say 1962 or 1963 to 1973 have been the most disheartening in screen history'. In the roles and prominence accorded to women, the decade began unpromisingly, grew steadily worse, and at present, shows no sign of improving. (Haskell. 1973. 323)

Feminist Film theorist Laura Mulvey's essay, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1989) is considered to be an important development of feminist film theory. In her essay, she says,

> ...the world is ordered by sexual imbalance: men and women are unequal, and this inequality is the originating point of a feminist critique. Second, the feeling of pleasure and the activities of looking are structured and formed in such a way as to cater for specific need of men (2010,72).

The book, *Laws of Manu*[44]*,* says that women should be guarded by her father in her childhood, by her husband in her youth, and by her sons in her old age.

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[44] Smith, Brain K. *Laws of Manu.* Penguin Publication. 1991.

This is a very popular statement that is always seen to be quoted by men when assaulting women.[45] Sumita S. Chakravarthy in her book *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema (1993)* says that the ideological myths that are said in Manu Smirthi about women are being circulated in our society to add to the patriarchal beliefs that dominate even in our modern world.

Laura Mulvey at the end of her essay, 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema' (1975), argues that Hollywood cinema generally centralizes the male in the narrative, which the audience is assumed to relate to, whilst the woman are positioned for visual impact and erotic pleasure (2010. 209). Mulvey emphasizes the need for women to understand the mechanisms of voyeurism and fetishism that underline the patriarchal unconscious of narrative films. At the time of writing 'visual pleasure and narrative cinema' her aims were iconoclastic in order to break the codes and destroy the narrative pleasure (2010. 212). At the end of her essay she calls for filmmakers to free the look of the camera into dialectics and passionate detachment" (2010. 212). She hopes for a feminist cinema with radical, modernist practice, in which there is the self-reflection and recommend for the destruction of the narrative pleasure. This led to the foundation of alternative cinema, which can destroy the narrative pleasure.

In 1979, British feminist film theorist, Claire Johnston wrote an essay 'Women cinema as a Counter cinema[46] in which she argues that a feminist cinema should be a counter cinema and have the potential to posit an alternative to Hollywood films both in rejecting its content and means of production (1999. 28).

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[45]This book assigns women to bed and seat, jewellery, lust, anger, crookedness, malicious nature with a bad conduct and regards them as a whore with fickle mind running behind every possible man and being dishonest to their husbands. For further information see "*Laws of Manu*", Penguin Books India (P) Ltd., New Delhi, 1991, 198.

[46] Sue, Thornham. Feminist Film Theory: A Reader. Edinburgh University Press, 1999, 28.

Others have argued that in embracing the strategies of the avant-garde, the films actually lose some of their political impact rather than posing an alternative. They lose their audience (1999. 28) Counter-cinema is a group of films, by few film makers and institutions, which attempt to work against the formalist and ideological domination of Hollywood cinema. This is quite a broad definition but effectively means that counter cinema includes films that do not follow linear plots, have stereotyped character as rare hyper-violent as main stream commercial do. In fact, one could say that counter cinema does not strictly exist as one concept. Some researchers suggest that it started with a feminist film (Gurkan and Ozan, 2015. 76).[47]As Claire Johnston said women's cinema could function as "counter cinema". Through consciousness of the means of production and opposition of sexist ideologies, films made by women have the potential to posit an alternative to traditional Hollywood films.

In 1985, Teresa de Lauretis in her essay, "Rethinking Women's Cinema" approaches the new idea of a feminist aesthetic from a slightly different angle.

> When I look at the movies, film theorists try to tell me that the gaze is male, the camera eye is masculine, and so my look is also not a women's. But I don't believe them anymore, because now I think I know what it is to look at a film as a woman (1985.159).

For de Lauretis, it is to whom the film addresses above all other factor that initiates a film into a feminist aesthetic or de-aesthetic as the pursuit. For her, a film becomes feminist when it is able to address the spectator through a spectrum of subject positions.

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[47]Gurkan, Hasan and Ozan, Rengin."Feminist Cinema as Counter Cinema: Is Feminist Cinema Counter Cinema?" Communication and Media Technologies, Vol. 5, Issue 3, July 2015.

As de Lauretis's argues, a feminist film and feminist film makers must create a voice for women and bring out representation of women parallel to mainstream cinema. In India, the development of women's cinema made its presence from the 1930s itself. Fatima Begum is often considered as the first Indian woman director of Indian cinema. She launched her own production house, Fatima Films and directed *Bulbul-e-Paristan* in 1926. Women cinema or feminist film strongly emerged during the 70s and 80s with the influence of New Wave Cinema, which is also considered as parallel cinema. This research also tries to explore the development of women cinema or feminist films, which try to 'Re-visit, Re-create(s) and create(s) in response to mainstream…' as well as radical filmic text. The research categorizes feminist film development in India into three stages: one, during the new wave or parallel cinema of 60's and 70's; the second as feminist cinema or the middle cinema of the 80s and 90s, and third, the mainstream cinema of the 2000s. With reference to the third point, which presents the reference of the mainstream cinema of 2010, the researcher tries to examine whether feminist films made their presence in mainstream, for instance, *Dil Dhadkne Do*[48] directed by Zoya Akthar, a mainstream cinema with popular actors and actress like Anil Kapoor, Shefali Shah, Priyanka Chopra, Ranveer Singh, Anushka Sharma, and Farhan Akhtar and narrated by Aamir Khan. In the movie, Priyanka Chopra owns a successful travel portal of her own, but she is unhappy in her marriage to Manav, acted by Rahul Bose, a controlling, narcissistic husband. She decides to divorce her husband on grounds of incompatibility. Her parents oppose it, as they believe that it would dishonour her and the family. But later they relent and support her decision

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[48] *Dil Dadakne Do,* dir. Zoya Akhtar. Perf. Anil Kapoor, Shefali Shah and Priyaka Chopra. Prod. Junglee Pictures, Excel Entertainment, 2015, Film.

and decide to give her the responsibility of managing their family business. The movie also presents the character of Sunny Gill acted by Farhan Akhtar, to whom Priyanka has feelings. He appreciates her strong personality and believes in female empowerment.

Pink[49] directed by Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury, critically represents the Indian society and the Indian mindset. In the movie, the lawyer Deepak Sehgal acted by Amitabh Bachchan, presents a Girls Safety Manual.

> ***Rule No. 1***: A girl should never go anywhere with a boy alone, and most definitely not to a resort and definitely not to use the bathroom. Since by her doing that, people will presume that she has come willingly and they have been issued a license to touch her inappropriately.
>
> ***Rule No. 2***: Girls should never smile while talking to a boy, 'while smiling' or 'touch him' because he will take that as a hint. Her 'smile' will be considered a 'yes', and what is 'natural human behavior' can make her seem 'characterless' to him.
>
> ***Rule No. 3:*** In our society, the clock determines a person's character. When girls walk down the road at night, cars slow down windows get rolled down. But no one thinks of doing this during the day.
>
> ***Rule No. 4****:* No 'Girl' should ever have a drink with a 'Boy' because if she does, the boy seems to think that, if she can have a drink with me, then she won't mind sleeping with me. For girls, drinking alcohol means being available. Just for girls, not for boys. This does not apply to boys. For the boys, it's just a health hazard. So the terms and conditions differ.

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[49]Chowdhury, Aniruddha Roy, dir. *Pink.* Amitabh Bachchan, Taapsee Pannu and Kirti Kulhari. Prod. Rashmi Sharma Telefilms Limited, 2016, Film.

This girl's Safety Manual sarcastically criticizes the feudal and patriarchal mindset and presents the construction of gender. *Angry Indian Goddesses*[50] by Pan Nalin is a film, which follows a group of seven women character fighting against misogyny in their different worlds. These women characters fight against gender inequality through the various phases of their lives. Other movies are *Ki and Ka*[51] directed by R. Balki. Recent movie *Dear Zindagi*[52] directed by Gouri Shinde, Nitesh Tiwari's *Dangal*[53] and *Queen*[54] by Vikas Bahl. The Indian society is slowly accepting and recognizing gender identity. These changes represent the changes taking place in the society because movies are inspired by the living society.

This research also examines how directors play a significant role in creating a film. Most of the time, a film is the signature of a director. A director's way of thinking is presented in their films. It is important to see the *Auteur theory*[55] to understand, whether a director really controls all the elements of the film and how this can be seen in Indian cinema.

In order to define counter cinema, it is necessary to understand against whom and what? Peter Wollen in his essay "Godard and counter cinema"[56] says that Godard had developed a counter-cinema, whose values were counter to the classical orthodox cinema. Counter movies are separated from classic movies in

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[50]Nalin, Pan, dir. *Angry Indian Goddesses*. Sanshya Mridul Anushka Manchanda and Amrit Maghera. Prod. Gaurav Dhingra and Pan Nailn, 2015, Film.

[51]Balki, R., dir. *Ki and Ka.* Arjun Kapoor and Kareena Khan. Prod. Eros International and Hope Production, 2016, Film.

[52]Shinde, Gauri, dir. *Dear Zindagi*. Alia Bhatt and Shah Rukh Khan. Red Chillies Entertainment, 2016, Film.

[53]Tiwari, Nitesh, dir. *Dangal*. Aamir Khan, SakshTanwar and Sanya Malhotra. Prod. Walt Disney Pictures, 2016, Film.

[54]Bhal, Vikas, dir. Queen. Kangana Ranaut, Raj Kummar Rao and Lisa Haydon. Prod. Viacom 18 Motion Pictures, 2013, Film.

[55] https://www.britannica.com/art/auteur-theory

[56]http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic173435.files/B__Dominant_and_Counter.htmlhttp://i sites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic173435.files/B__Dominant_and_Counter.html

terms of ideology. Wollen takes up the seven values of old cinema. Most Hollywood film as Godard would put it, and contrasts with their counterparts and contraries (1972. 74).

There are two reasons to consider Peter Wollen's Seven Sin conception. Firstly, during the 1960s and 70s when feminist film theorists were trying to develop a framework to counter cinema, Wollen and Muvley developed counter cinema against mainstream Hollywood cinema, especially Wollen's Seven Sin concept. Secondly, Wollen not only involved himself with the theoretical work, but also directed and produced many films as a counter cinema to Hollywood's mainstream cinema. Wollen's seven sin conception are,

- Narrative Transitivity v/s Narrative Intransitivity,

- Identification v/s Estrangement,

- Transparency v/s Foregrounding,

- Single Diegesis v/s Multiple Diegesis,

- Closure v/s Aperture,

- Pleasure v/s Un-Pleasure, and

- Fiction v/s Reality.

This research attempts to examine Aparna Sen and Deepa Mehta's films from the point of Wollen's seven sins and attempts to see whether Sen and Mehta's films could be an answer to counter cinema.

1. 2. Review of Literature:

This section presents review of literature mainly pertaining to the gender representations. The texts, articles, films and directors selected for this literature review are included because of their additions to the field of study about gender representation of women and 'the other' in Indian society.

1. 3. Works on Gender Representation and Feminist Film Theory

The term Gender is continuously evolving in society. There are number of studies which have been conducted on gender related issues. Laura Mulvey, Molly Haskell, Judith Butler, Kaja Silver man's concept of female voice and fantasies of the maternal voice, Kristeva and Irigaray's concept of *The Homosexual –Maternal Fantasmatic,* Teresa de Lauretis's, *The Technology of Gender (1987)* and *The Technology of Sex.* Barbara Creed's *The Monstrous-Feminine* E. Ann Kaplan, are some of the important thinkers, and theorizations associated with the issue. Molly Haskell's essay *From Reference to Rape: The Treatment of Women in Movies* suggests how films effects society, through ideological and social construction. Laura Mulvey's essay, *"Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1989)* draws the difference between feminism and gender politics and her concept of male gaze decodes the female subjectivity on the screen. British feminist film theorist, Claire Johnston's "*Women cinema as a Counter cinema*", argues that a feminist cinema should be a counter cinema and has the potential to posit an alternative to Hollywood films both in rejecting its content and means of production. Teresa de Lauretis, in her essay "*Rethinking Women's Cinema"* approaches the new idea of a feminist aesthetic from a slightly different angle. E. Ann Kaplan's book *Women*

and Film: Both Sides of Camera[57]*,* decode the mechanism of representation on screen. She opined that, "idea of women presented for man not in terms of what she actually signifies". (2000.18).

In India, works on gender issues have also been conducted by many scholars like Shohini Chaudhuri who tired to bring feminist film theorist and their works on film in her work *Feminst Film Theorists.* Subeshini Moodely, Manju Jadika, Jasbir Jain, Tejaswini Ganti, Uma Chakravarty, Brinda Bose and Bina Agarwal are the prominent writers who worked on the women and gender representation of Indian cinema.

1.4. Work on Ideology and Film

Works on ideology has been done by the time of Karl Marx on economical hierarchy but ideology and film has become a vibrant subject to investigate. Michel Foucault conception of *Power of Knowledge,* Antonio Gramsci's conception of *Hegemony*, Louis Althusser's *Ideological State Apparatuses* , Dr, Mary Klages, Ralph Miliband and Goran Therborn's *Ideology of Power and Power of Ideology*, are prominent figures and their works defined the power of ideology and how it circulates and impacts the society. Althusser's conceptions of repressive state apparatuses and ideological state apparatuses give function and mechanism of ideology in a give society or context. Goran Therborn's conception of interpellation points out that, an individual changes and also re-constitutes himself/herself by the influence of interpellation.

With reference to Satyajit Ray[58], Ruthvik Ghatak's *Megha Dhaka Tara*[59] *(The Cloud – Capped Star- 1960), Subarnarekha*[60]*,* Adoor Gopal krishna's

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[57] Kaplan. E, Ann. *Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera.* Routledge. 2000. 18.

Swayamvaram (1973), Mukhamukham (1985), Anantharam (1988) Mathilukal (1990) and etc. Scholars like Tejaswini Ganti (*Producing Bollywood*) Ranjani Mazumdar, and Brinda Bose and some prominent scholars have contributed their knowledge in field of Indian cinema. M. Madhava Prasad' s *Ideology of Hindi Cinema* and *Cine-Politics* brings out how a set of dominant ideologies controls and plays its role in Indian Hindi cinema. Sumita S. Chakravarthy in her book *National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema (1993)* say that the ideological myths that are said in Manu Smirthi about women are being circulated in our society to add to the patriarchal beliefs that dominate even in our modern world.

1.5. Works on Counter Cinema

Feminist film theorist like Mulvey, Haskell, Claire Johnston and de Lauretis urged for counter cinema/parallel cinema/women cinema in their respective works. Peter Wollen in his essay *Godard and Counter-Cinema, Vent d'Est (1972)* points out the elements in order to call a cinema as a counter cinema. Wollen's work helps to examine women cinema as counter cinema. Hasan Gurkan and Rengin Ozan, examines Ridly Scott's *Thelma and Louise and* Steven Soderbergh's *Erin Brockovich* (feminist films according to Wollen conception of counter cinema to

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[58] Satyajit Ray's, Our Films and Their Films (1976), My Year with Apu (1994) Speaking of Films (2005) and other works gives the knowledge about Indian Cinema and his movies are fundamental to understand New wave Indian cinema like, Mahanagar (1963), Devi (1960), Charulata (The Lonely Wife-1964), Ghare-Baire (The Home and The World – 1984).
[59]*Megha Dhaka Tara,* dir. Ghatak, Ritwik. Perf. Supriya Choudhury, Anil Chatterjee and Gita Ghatak. Chitrakalpa production. 1960. Film and others.
[60]*Subarnarekha,* dir. Ghatak, Ritwik. Perf. Abhi Bhattacharya, Madhabi Mukherjee and IndraniChakrabarty. 1965. Film.

examine) women cinema as counter cinema in their article *Feminist Cinema as Counter Cinema: Is Feminist Cinema Counter Cinema?*[61].

1.6. Works on Directors

A number of studies have been conducted on Aparna Sen films and critical examinations of her characters presented in her films. Shoma. A Chatterji's *Parama and Other Outsider: The Cinema of Aparna Sen*[62] critically examines the Sen's *36 Chowringee Lane* from marginality and identity of Anglo-Indian women in Indian society and *Parama* as a question of identity, self –recognition and self-consciousness. *Sati,* gives the picture of inhuman treatment of women in the name of Sati system which was practiced in India. *Yugant* from changes of women role in the context of post-modernist point of view and *Paromitaar Ek Din* represents female bounding between in-laws. In *Parama*, Chatterji criticizes Sen by saying, "Ms. Sen staunchly refuses to succumb to popular demands of devaluing, punishing, or even, saving Parama as the guilty one nor does she celebrates Parama's guts by placing her on a pedestal. But her 'Male' camera does, at times, along strategic points of the narrative, presents Parama as fetish". (2002.75)

Mantra Roy and Aparajita Sengupta's "Women and emergent agency in the cinema of Aparna Sen"[63] examines Sen's character's as representative of feminist movements in India and it demonstrates how Sen emphasizes self-reliance and self-fullfilment. Brinda Bose, "Sex, Lies and the Genderscape: The cinema of Aparna

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[61]Gurkan, Hasan and Rengib Ozab. "Feminist Cinema as Counter Cinema: Is Feminist Cinema Counter Cinema?". Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies. Vol-5, Issues-3, July-2015, 73-90.

[62] Chatterji, Shoma. A. Parama and other Outsiders: The Cinema of Aparna Sen. Parumita Publications, Calcutta. 2002.

[63] Mantra Roy and Aparajita Sengupta's "Women and emergent agency in the cinema of Aparna Sen". South Asian Popular Culture. ISSN: 1474-6689. Online.

Sen"[64] examines how Sen's films represents the contemporary problems of Indian society and how these problems are gendered. Geetha Ramanthan's "Aesthetics as woman: Aparna sen's Parama"[65], article draws Laura Mulvey's arguments from her "Visual Pleasure and Narrative cinema" by exhibiting the politics between visual pleasure in Sen's and in the mean time it also questions the aesthic values of woman cinema parallel to main stream cinema. The basic and main objective of the Ray's and New Wave cinema was to change the stereotyped narrative of the Indian cinema and to bring out the realistic cinema.

Deepa Mehta, is a well known Indian Diasporic director. Mehta becomes important because, her character and themes bring the layers of western thought and idea which stand different from other directors. Mehta's films deal with the real problem of Indian society which turned to be a cultural shock to Indian audience. Deepa Mehta being a diasporic director focused on different dimensions of Indian society and women problems. Manju Jaidka's, *A Critical Study of Deepa Mehta's Trilogy Fire, Earth and Water*[66] critically investigates Mehta's trilogy from hidden meaning to the politics behind the language, audience, showcased platforms, character names and the diasporic gaze of the films. Jasbir Jain's work (edited) under the title of *Films, Literature and Culture* is a collection of articles bringing valuable insight from nineteen different writers across India which focused on Mehta's trilogy. Subeshini Moodley's *Construction of Indian Women in the films of*

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[64] Bose, Brinda. "Sex, Lies and the Genderscape: The Cinema of Aparna Sen". Women: A Cultural Review. ISSN: 0957-4042. 1997.

[65] Ramanthan, Geetha. "Aesthetic as Women: Aparna Sen's Parama". Quarterly Review of Film and Video, 17:1, 63-73. ISSN: 1050-9208. Print.

[66] Jadika, Manju. *A Critical Study of Deepa Mehta's Trilogy Fire, Earth and Water.* Readworthy Publication. New Delhi. 2011.

Mira Nair and Deepa Mehta[67] examines how Nair and Mehta's films represent Indian women being on diasporic stage. By analyzing these two women directors, it combines the theories of post-colonial feminism and an accented cinema. This research by considering above discussed research works, texts, and articles, examines different aspects of Sen and Mehta's films. However using all the research available, this work draws on all the critiques and aims to discuss it from the point of view of counter cinema to main stream Hindi cinema. This research examines whether Sen and Mehta's films avoids the strategic male gaze and narrative pleasure in their films. This research also attempts to develop a frame work to women cinema or any art/parallel cinema as a counter cinema.

1.7. Methodology

The primary sources for the proposed research are the movies of Aparna Sen and Deepa Mehta. The research follows the model of doctrinal type of research which depends on books and journals for its analysis. It collects the data and information required by studying books, articles, and journals related to the primary sources. It also uses the methodology followed under non-doctrinal type of research or analysis, fieldwork with empirical details, etc.

1.8. The chapterization of the thesis is as follows:

1. Introduction

2. Ideology and Film

3. Towards A Feminist Film Theory: Gaze, Spectator and Auteur

4. Women's Cinema as a Counter Cinema

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[67] Moodley, Subeshini. *Construction of Indian Women in the Films of Mira Nair and Deepa Mehta.* Lambert Academic Publishing. 2011.

5. Conclusion

The first chapter, ***Introduction*** states the overall objective of the research that is being conducted and also the gender related theories of the films used in the research.

The second chapter, ***Ideology and Film*** talks about the relationship of the dominant patriarchal hegemonic ideologies present in the society and the circulation of these ideologies through powerful films, and the impact of these ideologies on the masses. It is important to know the dynamism and function of ideology in society. The term ideology is like a detective novel or film. Every letter of this word takes the researchers into a different world. In a set of conditions or in a particular society, a dominant ideology plays its power. This power plays different role functions and affects in different ways. It is relevant to understand the concept of ideology. The understanding and examination of this term will help to examine the films and other media forms. This chapter stands as a foundation for the construction of the other chapters. The term ideology takes us back to period of Marxism and Karl Marx. No one can ignore the fact the contribution of Karl Marx to the concept of ideology and his Base and Superstructure concept. As this research mainly focuses on the films and popular digital media, the ideas of Althusser become relevant to understand the role of ideology through social institutions. Althusser's *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* essay is significant to understand the operational zones of ideology. His essay gives a new point of view to understand the function of ideology through different social institutions like schools, churches, newspapers, and films. How these social institutions carry the ideology of the dominant class is examined in this chapter. In the meantime, the work of Goran Therborn helps us to know the condition of an

individual who gets affected by these ideologies and its changing role in society with the ideology of class in a particular time.

The third chapter, ***Towards a Feminist Film Theory: Gaze, Spectator and Auteur*** form the crucial part of the thesis. In the beginning of this chapter, the researcher traces the development of women- centred cinema, irrespective of male and female directors in the world, and specifically in India. This investigation helps us to notice the changes in the representation of women in Indian cinema and the changing scenario and changing roles of women in Indian society. This examination also helps us to identify the influence of Hollywood on the Hindi film industry not only on the film character and story, but also the other factors like technology, posters, customs, action, movie and other elements. During the 1970s, many feminist film theorists examined the dominance of patriarchal ideology like Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.* Her essay is one such work which defines feminist film theory and tells how a woman unconsciously gets affected and carries forward the ideology of a patriarchal system. Mulvey's concept of 'Male Gaze' plays a significant role to understand whose gaze wants to see what? Further, the researcher looks into the negative portrayal of women in films and how they are made as an object of consummation and how women watch films and are affected as a spectator. It also examines the position of directors or film makers and their influence on their cinema and how they become the mediator for carrying the dominant ideology in their films. It also focuses on the Teresa De Lauretis rethinking of women's cinema, which also encourages women directors to discard the pleasure narrative and develop alternative counter cinema to mainstream cinema.

The fourth chapter ***Women cinema as a Counter cinema*** draws on the major arguments of feminist film theorists as discussed in chapter three and examines whether Aparna Sen and Deepa Mehta's films can be counter cinema. Theorists like Molly Hoskell, Laura Mulvey, Claire Johnston, Teresa de Lauretis and others along with the encouragement of women cinema try to develop a framework and explain women's cinema and how to bring the women position from object to subject. In this chapter this research considers work of Peter Wollen's conception of *Seven Sins of Hollywood* mainstream cinema. There are two reasons to consider Peter Wollen Seven Sin conception. Firstly, during 1960's and 70's when feminist film theorists were trying to develop a framework to counter cinema, Wollen and Muvley initiated to develop the counter cinema. Wollen not only involved himself with the theoretical work but also directed and produced many films as a counter cinema against the Hollywood main stream cinema. This chapter with the help of Wollen's conception tries to examine Aparna Sen and Deepa Mehta's films to see whether can Sen and Mehta's films can be called as a counter cinema or not.

The fifth, ***concluding chapter*** of this research, discusses the findings of the research through the selected films of women directors and attempts to see what kind of ideologies are created for the masses.

CHAPTER -2

IDEOLOGY AND FILM

Social life is essentially practical; all mysteries which mislead theory into mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of the practice.

(Marx and Engles, 1978: 145)[68]

The examination of intricacies of Indian cinema remained silent until the development of new wave/parallel cinema and thinkers, who undoubtedly refused to consider Indian mainstream cinema or commercial cinema as a truth. Indian main stream cinema enjoyed its power for decades without anyone questioning it. It is not about questioning the structure of cinema, instead it is the question of ideological presentation and its implication. Post-independence stage film makers and scholars, like Satyajit Ray, Ruthvik Ghatak, Adoor Gopalkrishna and M Madhava Prasad and many feminist writers and directors like, Aruna Raje, Sai Paranjpye, Vijaya Mehta, Mira Nair, Aparna Sen and Deepa Mehta tried to understand and define Indian main stream cinema and its ideological paradigms. They were primarily responsible in infusing ideological notions of Indian cinema. This chapter aims to broaden the approach to understand ideology and film by drawing on the theoretical work specifically to Indian cinema, which has hitherto been under-utilized, by the national and international community of film theorists.

2.1. Ideology

In general terms, ideology can be defined as a thought or belief generally held true by groups in society in a specific time and place. The most radical film

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[68] Tucker C, Tucker. (edited) *The Mark-Engles Reader.* Norton, 2nd Edition, 1978.

theory has been guided within structuralist frame work drawing on the ideological notions of Louis Althusser[69]. The concept of ideology is very central to the operation of culture and Marxist critique. M. Madhava Prasad in his work *Ideology of Hindi Cinema*[70] refers to Marx and Engels definition of ideology. Marx and Engels define ideology in two different ways: *Firstly,* the famous metaphor of the 'Camera Obscure'[71] - was employed in The German ideology to define "Ideology as the inverted representation of real social relations" (Madhava. M 2000: 09). *Secondly*, the definition connects with Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which refers to the process of establishment and maintenance of an order which is acceptable by all classes which is under control and serving the interests of the ruling classes. Further.

> The 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on the social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (2000: 09)

Althusser translated Gramsci's terms hegemony and domination as ideological and repressive function, and borrowing from psychoanalysis, elaborated ideology as a process of interpellation of individual as a subject Althusser's concept of interpellation will be further discussed in detail in the same chapter. Althusser, defines ideology as

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[69] Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses". Lenin and Philosophy and other Eassay. Monthly Review Press. London. 1971.
[70] Prasad, M Madhava. *Ideology of Hindi Cinema.* Oxford University Press. 1970. Pp. 08
[71] The camera obscura is an optical device that projects an image of its surrounding on a screen. It is used in drawing and for entertainment and was one of the inventions that led to photography and the camera.

The 'lived' relation between men and their world… In Ideology men do indeed express, not the relation between themselves and their conditions of existence, but the way they live the relation between the man and their conditions of existence. (1971:24)

The prominent question for Althusser was the way in which the class-society reproduce themselves. Althusser focused mainly on the ideological and political conditions of reproduction and influential notion of ideology in his essay, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. For Althusser, the state maintains its power through two mechanisms for ensuring that people within a state behave according to the rules of that state. The first mechanism is what Althusser calls the R S As, *Repressive State Apparatuses*, (1971. 12) which is mainly physical force which consists of government, army, police, law, courts and prisons. Through this apparatuses, the state has the power to force us physically to behave.

The second mechanism that Althusser investigates is termed as - ISAs, *Ideological State Apparatuses*.(1971.15). It consists of Art, mass media, films, school, family, church, political parties. These are institutions which generate ideologies which we as individuals give our consent. Althusser's main concern is, how do societies accept internalisation, and live with the ideologies that are created by the ideological state apparatuses. In these ideological state apparatuses, Film and mass media is one such which influences and controls the mindset of the people in society.

Film is compound in its nature and is a cocktail of expertise. It is a composition of art form which includes camera, visual, sound, actors, location, dialogue, writer, narrative and others. It is the power of visual media which attracts

people and takes them away from the real world to illusion and fantasy world. Most of the time viewers associate themselves with the film characters and they get influenced by those characters, because of its visual effect, the background sound, music etc, which, gradually mould the people's mind. This process of moulding might cause good or bad impact on audience. For instance, a person after watching a movie, might associates himself with the hero, who is hard working, who is helpful to the people in the society and respects women and elders. More of socially accepted good behavior might reflect back on the audience behavior. In the same way people might get influenced by negative character, like some rape scene or crime. People internalize the aspects of film narration as the depiction of their life which in turn influences their day to day life.

For Althusser, it was not important that these ISA's belonged to the state or the private enterprises. The matter is how they function. 'Private' institutions can perfectly work as 'function' of the ideological state apparatus. The ideological state apparatuses function to reproduce submission or according to the rules of the established order, to give currency to the societal view of the ruling class and to make the dominant ideology as the 'common sense' of the all classes within the social formation.

Extending the concept of 'functioning of ideology', Althusser proposed three formulas of ideology.

- He claims that "ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence". (1971. 30) According to this, imaginary relationship is the production of images of reality. This resembles the Marxist concept of 'false consciousnesses'. It is

lived experience as far as the individual subject experiences it, a real and objective relationship.

- His second thesis states that ideology has "Material existence" Ideology can only exist within a set of social practices within a state apparatus. In this sense, each ISA is showcase of an ideology. The unit of ISA's with one another is ensured by their mutual subjection to the same dominant ideology. It follows that each individual, through his/her lived relations represented in his /her ideology takes part in the practices, rituals and in his/her routine, which constitutes a concrete ideological apparatus. For instance, a civilian in a political party, or a technician of a film, a follower of a religion, etc. So here, every ideology has the function of constituting concrete individuals as subjects. This introduces the central concept in the functioning of ideology as the subject. (1971.33)

- Althusser's third statement is that "ideology interpellates (or constitutes) individuals as subjects". According to Althusser, ideology has the function of constituting concrete individuals as subject as all belief system do, and get people (subject) to believe them. (1971.37)

The third thesis of Althusser's is that ideology interpellates (or constitutes) individual as subject. Here Althusser question, how are individual subjects constituted in ideological structures? Or, in other words, how does ideology create a notion of self or subject? As Dr. Mary Klages[72], points out that, there are three main points that Althusser makes about an individual becoming the process of

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[72] http://www.Colorado.EDU/English/ENGL2012Klages/2althusser.html

subjects in ideology. *Firstly*, 'we are born into subject-hood' because we are named before we are born. Hence, by birth, we are already subject to certain ideology. *Secondly*, we are already subjects in ideology, in specific ideologies which we inhabit, and which we recognize only as truth and other's beliefs are considered as ideological or that is imaginary/illusionary, or false, whereas ours is only true. For instance, as Dr. Mary Klages gives an example of different religious beliefs, everybody who believes in their religion thinks that, only their religion is true, and everyone else's is just illusion. *Thirdly*, as Klages states, there are numerous questions which have to be answered such as:- What makes us to become subjects? Who defines us not to recognize our subject positions within any particular ideological formation? How do we come to believe that our beliefs are simply true, and not relative?

Althusser answers these questions with the notion of 'Interpellation'. Althusser complicates the relationship between domination and subjugation by introducing the interpellation process, where individuals recognize themselves as subjects *through* particular ideology, thus illustrating how subjects can be complicit in their own domination. He gives the example of a police officer shouting out "Hey, you there!" in public. Upon hearing this exclamation, an individual turns around, and "by this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a *subject*" (1971: 42). Here, the act of acknowledging that it is indeed he who is addressed, the individual thus recognizes his subject hood. It is important to note that this subject hood is double: although he is recognized as a social subject by the law, he is also subjugated by the law. Althusser emphasizes the presence of ideology and interpellation by noting how subjects are consistently constituted by Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) such as the family, educational

institutions, and media such as literature, radio and television. The idea that an individual can be interpellated through various mediums would later be appropriated by theorists from diverse backgrounds such as cinema and media studies and cultural studies.

Although he initially presents a temporal example of interpellation, Althusser insists that the process is not governed by cause and effect, but happens simultaneously. He emphasizes that "the existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing" (Althusser 1971: 45). In other words ideology, interpellation, and subject hood, mutually reinforce each other so that "ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects, which amounts to making it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects, which necessarily leads us to one last proposition: individuals are always-already subjects" (Althusser 1971: 46). For instance, a film technician constitutes him or herself in terms of numerous subordinate relations. The individual who tacitly recognize himself or herself in projected respective roles and behaves according to the ideological responses connected with them follows the theory of ideology

Althusser's framework of interpellation and his emphasis on the circulatory relationship between subjectivity and exterior structures have been utilized and extended by numerous critical theorists. Markedly, Michel Foucault holds similar notions of how subjectivity is constructed by focusing on discourses around sexuality (Foucault, 1990)[73]. He describes how at the end of the 19th Century, experts in various scientific fields created discourses that allowed them to label and

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[73] Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*. New York, NY: Random House. 1990

identify individuals and their sexuality. Like Althusser, this subject hood has a duality: it both subjugates individuals as passive beings involuntarily defined under the scope of scientific discourse but it also simultaneously, and counter-intuitively, creates the potential for autonomy and resistance by mobilizing around these new identities. These arguments around how subjects can resist or defy dominant power are not thoroughly fleshed out by Althusser.[74]

This identifies Althusser's assertion that class ideologies are real ideologies and that "the state and its apparatuses only have meaning from the point of view of the class/ideological struggle, as an apparatus of class struggle ensuring oppression and guaranteeing the conditions of exploitation and its reproduction". (1971. 50)

As Goran Therborn points out, "…the interpellation of subject does not mean that the created ideology is accepted by a fixed and unified subjects" (1980.78) [75]. The individual in the society changes and also re-constitutes himself/herself by the influence of interpellation. Ideological interpellations are constituted and reconstituted without the awareness and the knowledge of the individuals who are involved in the process. So an individual fits into an enormous number of roles throughout his/her life time. The ideology being "governed by opening and closures in the existing power matrix of affirmations and sanctions" (1980.79) is significant. What appears as a natural fact or general scenario in

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[74] How an Ideologically infected individual react, functions to the dominate ideology and whether is there a change in an individual believed ideology and if it changes what is the mechanism of it in the life time of an individual is not examined by the Althusser in his work. This mechanism noticed by the theorist like Goran Therborn in his work *The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology.*

[75] Therborn, Goran. *The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology.* Verso Editions. London. 1980.

ideology is portrayed in reality an ideological acknowledgement of a true, real self-evident situation imposed by ideology.

The 'lived' relation is thus:

> An objective structure of the social formation which is imposed upon them [people] by a mechanism they do not understand, a mechanism which determines that structure as the mode of appearance of reality. (Geras, Nicol.75) [76]

Ideology is visibly circulated through material practices and are situated within classes. These functional apparatuses are bound and developed as a result of the class struggle and as a result of reproduction of the relations of production.

2.2. Critiquing Althusser

Althusser's ideology has shown significant approach in film studies and one should not deny the importance of Althusser's contribution without which the concept of ideology cannot be understood. But, a few limitations are identified by various scholars and commentators, of which some are relevant to the present study.

The approach of his categories to concrete situations due to his insistence on the pre-dominance of theory which alleged lack of historical method in his work is the foremost limitation. The 'appropriation of the real in thought' particularly difficult to stress only on the rationalist side of historical materialism' is rendered through Althusserianism. An idealist view of ideology is what makes it difficult to

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[76] Geras, N. Althusser's Marxism: An Account and assessment. New Left Review. No.71, page-75.

apply to any concrete practice as the process of over-abstraction strides in. (Tomaselli, G.K.1983.16)[77]

The difficulty in applying Althusser's theory also lies in his level of abstraction. The concrete connection between the levels of ideological and economic within a particular historical conjuncture has been noted on the account of some theoretical issues. It is possible to identify parallel movement within the base and superstructure which occur simultaneously along with one another. The crisis of the one can be associated with crisis of the other and the causal connections are not so easily figured out. (1983.17) This criticism of Althusser is not original. Althusser notes in his self- critique appended to his essay that his "few schematic theses" allows him,

> …illuminate certain aspects of the functioning of the superstructure and its mode of intervention in Infrastructure [base] they are obviously *abstract* and necessarily leave several important problems unanswered. (Althusser. 1971.49)

The anomaly of whether ISA's should be conceptualized as "belong(ing) to the system of the state or conceptualized separately is a dilemma indeed". (Poulantazs, N.1972.251) Various theorists argue that it is immaterial whether the ISA's "are public or private _ _ _ the distinction having a purely juridical… character, which changes nothing fundamental". (Poulantazs, N.1972.251) The various differences between the ideological apparatuses of advanced capitalist societies and those of more monolithic ideological institutions are noted. Ideological apparatuses are more likely to "conceal the degree to which they

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[77] Tomaselli, G Keyan. Ideology and cultural production in South African Cinema. Doctor of philosophy Thesis. University of Johannesburg. 1983.

belong to the system of power of capitalized society" according to Ralph Miliband. (Miliband.1972.262)[78] It is the preview of concealment which makes these apparatuses more effective in conveying the discourses of 'free enterprise', 'personal choice' and 'non-state intervention', the concepts which are fundamental to the reproduction of capitalist production which collapses the distinction between the state and the private/public apparatuses.

A second problem in Althusser's exploration of ideology is the concern with his regression into functionalism. Ideology for Althusser seems to subsume contradictions by all too neatly preparing individuals to take up their places in the hierarchical division of labour or as Richard Johnson observes correctly:

> What is correctly understood as a condition or contingency becomes, in the course of the argument, a continuously achieved outcome. Dominant ideology… works with all the certainty usually ascribed to natural or biological processes. (1979. 273)[79]

Thirdly, the reproduction of the relations of production in which the level of the economics is sublimated to the ideology leads Althusser to frame a contradictory account. Ideology thus assumes the position of autonomy. Althusser neglects the force of economic relations which provide the main impulse of the relations of the production despite his avowed historical material assumptions. In cinema, the economic relations cannot be underestimated as the production is prohibitively expensive. A country like India, produces cinema which invests two digit crores and earns gross three digit crores. The best examples are, *PK* (2014), Budget:85 c, Gross:792 c, India: 489c, Overseas:303c. *Baahubali*(2015), Budget:

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[78] Milband, R. *The problem of the capitalist State.* Blackburn. 1972.262. Print.
[79] Barrett, Michele, Corrigan, Philip, Annette Kuhn and Janet Wolft. "Ideology and Cultural Production" (ed). New York: St. Martin's Press. 1979.

120c, Gross: 650c. *Bajragi Bhaijan*(2015), Budget: 90c, Gross:626c. *Dhoom-3* (2013), Budget1.5 billion, Gross: 542c. *Sultan* (2016), Budget: 70c, Gross:446c. *Bajirao* Mastani (2015), Budget:125c, Gross:355c. The economic investment on the movies, target the mass audience and develop the structure of the movie according to the gaze of audience. It cannot be ignored that, capitalist investment always holds its strong ideological consciousness to cater and takes consent of its ideological interests as a common sense by individuals, institutions and from society. These high budgeted films have the tendency to dominate the counter genre films.

The fourth possibility is how powerfully established dominate ideology or ideologies limits the counter genre's possible conflicts and resistance. Even though counter genres are small in their number but still it hold its own set of audience and followers and it has tendency of growing in the urban area due to educated people. The counter genre holds the power to develop a taste of interest and it holds its community. This possibility was not developed by Althusser which is related to the importance of conflict, resistance and struggle in any other social formation.

2.3. Affirmation and Sanction of Ideology

Althusser's ideology is explained by a second generation of Althusserian scholars importantly, Goran Therborn. Goran Therborn in his work *The Ideology of power and the power of Ideology*[80], Categorizes the discursive affirmation and sanction as significantly important to understand, the way in which ideological practice are acted out within institutional framework such as powerful film industry.

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[80] Therborne, G. *The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology.* Verso publication, London.1980.

Ideologies are not fixed and invariable. A single human being may act as an unlimited number of subjects, and in the course of a single human life, a large number of subjectivies. Ideologies are social processes which operates through material and discursive practices in the social formation. So, people are discursive in the way in which groups or individuals articulate their ideology through what they say, what they do and how they act.

The generation and organization of ideologies are two folds: Firstly, the construction and maintenance of particular discourse. Secondly, the development of discursive and non-discursive affirmations and sanctions. The discursive affirmation of any particular ideological order is asserted through affirmative symbolism or rituals. For example, police uniform. Police is a part of state apparatuses and the uniform of police itself stands as affirmative symbolism. The discursive form of sanction acts by redefining the interpellate or subject as an object. This is stated by Therborn as 'excommunication' in which the

> Victim… is excluded from further meaningful discourse as being insane, depraved, traitorous, alien and so on. The excommunicated person is condemned temporally or forever, to ideological non-existence: he is not to be listened to, he is the target of ideological objectification; he is someone whose utterances are to be treated as symptoms of something else, of insanity, depravity and the like. (1980.82).

As an example, women in Indian film and in society is constructed as an object. It is objectification of a subject. 'The Victim' means women or subordinate class which has been objectified and excluded from their individual discourse. Here, women or subordinate class as an excommunicated person is condemned

forever or for certain period. When these sections rise against the social evils they are treated as insanity, depravity etc.

Therborn identifies three procedural categories through which discourse can be controlled: "Restriction, Shielding and the Delimited appropriation of discourse". (1980.84) The condition of discourse refers to socially institutionalized, restrictions on who may speak? How much may be said, what may be talked about, and on what occasion. (1980.84) Basically their limitation is not dependent upon state mechanism or repression, but are reinforced by these state mechanisms. They work through the interpellation of individual subject and their place within discursive order.

The shielding of discourse is designed to protect it from the intrusion and contamination of other discourses. One procedure for achieving this is through 'author-ization' (1980.84). It denotes not only one author to be supreme, the hero, the film director drawn from a particular consensus, are also the people authorized to make valid assertions. In Indian films the projection of women as an object and gender inequality appears as a natural and accepted phenomena. Every discourse has its own place, time and limitations: religion should be confined to temple, church and mosque, politics to parliament, education to schools. These attempt at institutional delimitation and are apparent in the rhetoric of keeping religion out of politics; and vice-versa. In Indian society apart from hetronormative, relations like gay, lesbian and transgender, are avoided or extra marital relation is not accepted or delimits discourse concerns of inter-religious relation or marriage. In the context of heterosexuality and homosexuality, heterosexual is socially authorized. In the same way, between male and female, male has become authorized. The heterosexual male dominates the other. The other represents the subordinates.

Here, the question is how a particular behavior, system, class, caste and sex were able to form its dominance over the other. What was the discourse, which constructed the power to a section?

The discussion will now turn to the seminal work of Antonio Gramsci whose theories are particularly useful in understanding how dominant discourse is constructed and how subordinate section of the society, that is, women or oppressed section of gender and class articulate their opposition to dominant class through cultural forms.

2.4. Hegemony: The Negotiation of consent

Hegemony means, in general terms, leadership or dominance, especially by one state or social group over others. In other words, the success of the domination of classes in presenting their definition of reality, their view of the world, are in such a way that it is accepted by other class, which defines the culture, behavior and history of an individual, institution and society.

Gramsci uses three key terms in his analysis of history and culture. The first key term is 'common sense', here he means that, the uncritical and largely unconscious way of perceiving and understanding the world that has become 'common' in any given epoch.[81] Common sense for Gramsci, occupies a position somewhere between folklore and knowledge produced by specialists. "common sense is not something rigid and immobile but is continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life" (Crehan. Kate. 2002.110)[82]. Common sense has the ability to

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[81] Hoare, Q. and Nowell smith, G. Trans and Ed. *Selections From Prison Note Books.* Lawrence and Wisehart, London. 1971. Print.
[82] Crehan, A.F.Kate. *Gramsci, Culture and Anthropology.* University of California Press.2002.110.

'organize' human masses and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle etc.

The second key term that Gramsci states is 'philosophy/ideology'. He distinguishes between 'historically organic ideologies which are necessary to a given structure and ideologies that is arbitrary, rationalistic or willed' (1971. 322). The first of these has the ability to " 'organize' human masses and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc" while the second "only creates individual 'movements', polemics etc" (1971. 376-377). For him, ideology can be thought of as a logical and well organized set of rules or ideas, which have a limited capability to transform the ways in which men and women live out 'common sense'. For example; dalits, have believed they are meant for lower jobs and upper class consciously articulated that they are superior and the dalits and women are inferior to them and it has been projected as a exclusivity into a 'willed' state policy of domination, which is not common sense in real terms. The 'willed' ideology is the result of the strivings of organic intellectuals to mobilize the organic ideologies of the classes or class alliances they serve and if they succeed it becomes the dominant idea within a particular social formation. (1983.15)

The third key term stated by Gramsci is 'Hegemony'. The term hegemony was previously used by Marxists such as Vladimir Llyich Lenin to denote the political leadership of the working class in a democratic revolution. Gramsci expanded the concept of hegemony, developing an acute analysis of how the ruling capitalist class- the bourgeoisie- established and maintains its control. The hegemony refers to a situation where ruling class, or more precisely, an alliance of fractions of the ruling classes not only forces the subordinate classes to conform to

their interest and ideology, but to exercise "Total Social Authority" over subordinate classes. The hegemony is constructed by the interest if various class support and class division represented in the 'Hegemoic Bloc',[83] of particular importance in this respect is the distinction drawn between the ruling alliance of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie fractions which exercise political control and economic control. In this formation these two alliances may not necessarily coincide. Another significant element of hegemony is that power exerted by the hegemonic bloc over the subordinate classes, without force predominating excessively over consent. (1971. Note-49.80)

The given consent to the dominant classes must appear not only spontaneous but also natural and inevitable. This method of taking 'consent' from subordinate classes is through the repetitive articulation of cultural solution to ideological problem as they occur over a period of time.

In the context of Indian society, which is male dominated, women have been considered inferior to men in practical life. (Gupta, S.D.2003)[84]. It has set the role of women as passive and subordinate. Over the period of epoch it turns into common sense and has taken the consent from women, family, institution and from society. This patriarchal hegemonic bloc, blocked women to enter temple. This hegemonic bloc of caste system, blocked dalits to enter temples and to have access to lakes and ponds. This heterosexual hegemonic bloc, blocked homosexuality. This male dominated hegemonic bloc, blocked women to enter film industry as against its oppression but it allowed women, in order to enjoy her body to satisfy

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[83] Hegemonic Bloc means is a durable alliance of class force organized by a class or class fraction, which has proved itself capable of exercising political, intellectual, and moral leadership over the dominant classes and the popular masses

[84] Gupta, S.D. *Report On Adolescent and Youth Reproductive Health in India.* Jaipur: Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR). Print.

its gaze but not the brain. When they used their brain and tried to break the conventions it stirred immense conflicts and controversies in the Indian society. The best example is Deepa Mehta's[85] '*Fire*'[86] and '*Water*'[87].

Further, this study shows how social hegemony was dominant to suppress the subordinate organic intellectual in Indian patriarchal society even though there was the availability of potential organic intellectuals working within the industry and outside of it. The answer to this lies primarily within the extremely coercive nature of the social arrangements within social formation.

> "Do we, as women, have choices? And if we make choices,
> What is the price we pay for them?
>
> -   Deepa Mehta. (Jadika, Manju.2011.32)

Deepa Mehta's Film *Fire* (1996), was originally made in English and was later dubbed into Hindi. This film in its original form received standing ovations, fourteen international awards, and rave reviews in the western world. But when it was released in India in Hindi, it created real fire in the Indian patriarchal mind set. Shiv Sena men, stripped down to their underwear, demonstrated outside Dilp Kumar's studio in Mumbai, to protest against the alleged obscenity of the film. 'An anonymous viewer raged…

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[85] Deepa Mehta is an Indo-Canadian film director and screenwriter, most known for her Elements Trilogy, *Fire* (1996), *Earth* (1998), and *Water* (2005); among which *Earth* was sent by India as its official entry for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, and *Water* was Canada's official entry for Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, making it only the second non-French-language Canadian film to put forth for consideration in that category and the first to receive an Oscar nomination.

[86] *Fire.* Dir. Deepa Mehta. Perf. Nandita Das and Shabana Azmi. Entertainment., 2005.

[87] *Water.* Dir. Deepa Mehta. Perf. Lisa Ray, John Abraham and Sarala. Universum Film, 2005.

The obnoxious concept of a lesbian relationship in an Indian household as explicitly presented in the films is completely alien to our culture and traditions… (Jadika, Manju. 2011.34)[88]

The film did not portray an inescapably Indian microcosm in its milieu, characters, and theme. It takes all these aspects in one go.

- The milieu: a non-descript, semi-literate, middle-class, extended family in the heart of New Delhi. In a patriarchal set up there is a façade of contentment and well-being.

- The characters: the wife domesticated and obedient, neglected by the husband, attending on a bed-ridden mother-in-law, managing the family business. The men in the house are free to indulge in their interests: one in spiritual pursuit, Gandhian and prayer; the other in a torrid affair with an exotic Chinese woman. The mother-in-law, an incapacitated but authoritative matriarchal figure, manages to queen from her sick-bed. There is a servant who lives in a fantasy world, frequently releasing his tension through sexual self-stimulation.

- The theme: The disruption of façade following the arrival of a new member, the younger daughter-in-law. The tradition which had not been questioned earlier is subverted by the individual voice which now dares to be heard. (2010.36-37)

This family structure is common enough in Indian film. The name of the characters Radha and Sita are also common name in Indian society irrespective of

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[88] Jadika, Manju. A Critical Study of Deepa Mehta's Trilogy Fire, Earth and Water. Readworthy Publications (P) Ltd, New Delhi, 2011. Print.

north and south India. The clash between tradition and modernity is a popular theme in a number of films and movies.

Deepa Mehta says she deliberately chose a backdrop that Indians are familiar with:

> More than 350 million Indians belong to the burgeoning middle-class and lead lives not unlike the Kapur family in Fire. They might not experience exactly the same angst or choices as these particular characters, but the confusions they share are very similar-the ambiguity surrounding sexuality and its manifestations and the incredible weight of figures (especially female ones) from ancient scriptures which defines Indian women as pious, dutiful, self-sacrificing, while Indian popular cinema, aka 'Bollywood', portrays women as sex objects (Mundu's Fantasy). (Jadika, Manju. 2011.38)

> The reasons for hostility to *Fire* are due to semi-nudity, women's sexual intimacy, cultural displacement, or because of questioning the law governing women's behavior. Firstly, *Fire* was by no means the first Indian film to show scenes of semi-nudity or physical intimacy. There are examples of films which are sexual explicit like Shashi Kapoor's *Utsav* and Mira Nair's, *Kamasutra*. At present the Hindi film industry has no film without semi-nudity. Secondly, hostility to *Fire* was because of patriarchal sexual displacement. Deepa Mehta in her interview to Margetts says,

> > This (mentioning the word 'lesbian') is not in our Indian culture was a refrain I heard often. When I would give examples from literature, paintings and erotic sculptures all celebrating- in one form or the other- this particular relationship; I would be accused of

fabrication. It's all very confusing!" she continues. "If we got into dialogue, it would invariably emerge that it was not the lesbian relationship that so offended middle-aged Indian men,(surprisingly, younger and older). It was the fear that fire might shift the *status quo* of husbands, and women might just question their own insignificant role in material relationships that lean heavily in favour of husband (2011.44)

The question in *Fire* is that Radha and Sita, decide to exercise their choice, walkout of traditional marriages and seek happiness with one another in defiance of social norms and thus could not go down easily in a tradition-bound society. But don't they have any choice? The hegemonic patriarchal system might not have answer.

The 2005 film *Water,* directed by Deepa Mehta, presents late 1930's and early 1940's British colonial India. The story revolves around the area where child marriage was practiced in India and it explores the lives of widows at an Ashram in Varanasi, India. During those time the child brides were married to much older men and their husbands would die, and they would be child widows. The widows were not allowed to re-marry. Therefore they were sent to widow homes, where they were expected to spend rest of their lives in the name of god.

The film *Water*, portrays the lives of three widows. One of the protagonist, Chuyia, an eight-year old girl, loses her old aged husband and she does not even remember her marriage. She is brought to the widow house, keeping in with traditions of widowhood. Chuyia's head is shaved and is dressed in a white sari. In the widow house she witnesses the condition of widows of different age group. She

gets close to a young window in her early twenties named Kalyani. Kalyani is forced to prostitution by Madhumati, a pompous lady in her 70's, who controls the Ashram. For Madhumati, Kalyani is the bread winner of the widow house. Since most of widows in this ashram are aged, they have no caretaker. Another protagonist is Shakuntala a middle – aged widow and most enigmatic of the widows. She is also one of the few widows who is able to read. She is angry with Madhumati's decisions- Shakuntala is sympathetic to Kalyani's conditions, and she does not want the same to happen with Chuyia.

Chuyia presumes that her stay in her ashram is a temporary one. She believes that her mother will come to take her from the ashram. Chuyia befriends the beautiful Kalyani, who is full of life compared to any other widows of ashram. She witnesses Kalyani's willful feelings towards, Narayan a upper caste, Mahatma Gandhi follower. Even though she was reluctant towards Narayan she eventually falls into his dream of marriage, and a new life in Calcutta. She agrees to go away with Narayan to start new life. She recognizes that, Narayan is the son of her former client and feels shocked and humiliated. For Kalyani, marrying Narayan is not only considered incestuous but it would also bring a lot of social humiliation to Narayan. Narayan wants to marry Kalyani, even after knowing that she was his father's prostitute. Narayan decides to leave his father and becomes a Mahatma Gandhi follower. Kalyani sacrifices her life to save him from social humiliation. Chuyia witness all these incidents and the next day Madumati sends the eight year old widow child to the same old zamindar. The next day shakuthala takes a deeply traumatized child from the ashram and hands her over to Narayan in the railway station.

This movie clearly portrays the condition of widows. In India widows experience the restrictions, pressures of society, emotional and physical violence in the name of system. The widows in India conforms to the social rules, Shakuntala opposes the rules and strongly upholds the ethical and moral principal in the film. She opposes the oppressive widow system which sees widows as inhuman. She turns out to be a rebel to the oppressive system. This film faced the riot, for two reasons, first, because it was Deepa Mehta's film and secondly, portrayal of widows' lives in a different light. She faced a lot of opposition while shooting and the film set was demolished. This was planned to be shot in the town of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. In an interview Deepa Mehta said…

> What happened with Water in fact is incredible. We were not allowed to shoot it even before our first shot and a lot of it has to do with internal politics our shooting was shut down two days into the filming in a brutal way our sets were thrown into the Ganges in India it was perceived that water was somehow detrimental to the health of Hindu culture." (Nandakumar. 69-70).

The reasons for the opposition and riot were not only because of the portrayal of widow and reality but also because a women director was courageous enough to make a film which represented the dark side of Hindu religion, which is meant for Western audience. Many religious and political groups opposed this film on the ground that the film was attempting to make an anti-Hindu unit for the western world. Many religious group opposed the portrayal of evils of the Hindu religion. Along with that, they also opposed the representation of windows in the films. Deepa mehta's films created hostility because, as she herself says, "It challenged the echelons of power in a patriarchal society, a society not accustomed

to being challenged, and certainly not by women". (Jadika, Manju. 2011. 39).[89]
This aspect explains that in the context of hegemony and hegemonic bloc takes the
'consent' of the masses that agrees and treats ideology of hegemonic class as
'common sense'. Hegemonic bloc does not allow anyone to question it. If it is
questioned by a subordinate section or class it tries to suppress it through its
medium of power.

As dominant class develops into a hegemonic bloc, each class tries to
develop as part of its own reproduction, one or more "strata of intellectuals…
which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own fraction, not only in the
economic, but also in the social and political fields. By origin these intellectuals
are limited to their class of interest to direct their class through idea and inspiration
to which they belong. For instance, on July, 2016 thousands of dalits protested
against the brutal assault and public shaming of four Dalit men in Una, Gujarat.
Few upper class men thrashed four Dalit boys by removing their cloths in public
for carrying cow meat.[90] In India, since ages dalits have witnessed these kind of
assaults and shaming by upper class. This protest symbolizes the breaking of
dalits' silence against the domination of upper caste. A Dalit community has its
own way of culture and identity, which has been developing as a hegemonic bloc
to upper class domination.

The working class too, is capable of developing its organic intellectuals
form within its own. Gramsci argues that in order to counter hegemony and to
upset the consensus or the common sense view of society the oppressed

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[89] Jadika, Manju. *A Critical Study of Deepa Mehta's Trilogy Fire, Earth and Water.* Readworthy
Publications (P) Ltd, New Delhi, 2011. Print.
[90] For more details of the protest of dalits in Gujarat follow
http://www.countercurrents.org/tag/gujarat-dalit-protest/

class/group should produce its own organic intellectuals. Not only that they should also 'ideologically' win over and assimilate a section of traditional intellectuals. This process is towards a more active formulation of counter – ideological discourses. It is important to note that Gramsci makes a distinction between 'organic intellectuals', defined in terms of their function in articulating class aspirations, and 'traditional intellectuals' who derive their position through their professional and technical expertise. For example, a lawyer, a film director. An artist, a business executive etc, they are connected to his/her class of origin.

Organic intellectuals of subordinate class function by exploiting contradictions in the social arrangement. The intellectual creates a new discursive site in which the possibilities of alternative social reactions are identified. An application of this concept to the film industry provides immense explanatory power, particularly when applied to the phenomena of film movements. It is during times of hegemonic crisis that the social formation is vulnerable to intellectual intervention, which may take any number of forms. An analysis of women's film movement shows, opposition to patriarchal dominance on film industry. Women organic intellectuals working at specific historical conjunctures are able to literally rewrite the structured organization and thematic content of films.

2.5. Mass - Media

Today people enjoy watching film, either in the cinema hall or on a television as a source of entertainment. But cinema is no more a mere source of entertainment. It has become a field in popular culture where dominant ideologies are circulated, stereotypes are framed and various discourses are projected. Both male and female audiences have been affected by these political messages, societal

issues and gender identities that are represented in the films. Films are consumed by the mass and the elite. Thus it become important for this research to examine the influence of films which is part of Mass Media and part of popular culture. *Firstly,* it tries to examine the influence and effects of mass media and its role. *Secondly*, tries to examine film as a part of popular culture and how it circulates and influences its ideology on its viewers.

The vocabulary of 'Mass', 'Media', and 'communication' frequently involves particular assumptions about the nature of such media, the processes of which they form a part and the ways in which these are connected with broader social and political processes and relationships. In its classical usage, for instance, the term 'mass' Implied that the audience created by the new media was socially undifferentiated, lacking any clear divisions along class, sex or race line.

(Tony Bennett, 1989.[91])

Mass media is large communication, whether broadcast, TV serials, advertisement, reality shows, news, movies, FM. Internet, posters etc. which reaches a large audience. Mass media is a significant force in modern culture. Sociologists refer this to as a 'Mediated Culture'.[92] What role does mass media play?

The three important sociological perspectives on the role of the media thus exist.

- The limited-effects theory,

- Class dominant theory

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[91] Bennett, Tony. "Theories of the media, Theories of society." In *Culture, Society and the Media.* Edited by Michael Gurevithch et al. London: Methuen, 1982
[92] Mediated culture is the moods and attitudes of our society are influenced by messages delivered through mass media channels. This affects our actions, thoughts and values. The point, where mass media creates and reflects our culture or day today life

- Culturalist theory.

The Limited-effects theory[93], argues that because people generally choose what to watch or read based on what they believe or thought are predetermined, so media exerts a negligible influence. This theory originated and was tested in the 1940s and 50's. It examined the ability of media to influence voting and found that well-informed people relied more on personal experience, prior knowledge and their own reasoning. Critics points out two problems with this perspective. *Firstly,* they claim that limited-effects theory ignores the media's role in framing and limiting the discussion and debate of issues. How media frames the debate and what questions do the members of the media ask, change the outcome of the audience and possible conclusion people may draw. Second, this theory came into existence when the availability and dominances of media was far less widespread. This theory applies to 1940's and 50's.[94]

Class-dominant theory, argues that the media reflects and projects the view of a minority elite, which controls it. These people own and control and produces. Here media comprises of these elites and advocates of this view concern themselves particularly with massive corporate mergers of media organizations, which limit competition and put big business at the reins of media, especially news media. Their concern is that when ownership is restricted few people then have the ability to manipulate what people can see or hear. Critics of this theory counter

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[93] Limited effects theory questioned the paradigm of direct media influence, a notion that prevailed till late 1930's. Mc Quail recognises four stages of research in media effects. The first stage, dominated by the experience of propaganda during World War one, recognised media's role as decisive, opinion shaping and with the capability to change attitude and lifestyle. This gave emergence to the "Hypodermic needle" model. The second stage, which extends from 1940s to late 1960s, questioned the paradigm of direct media and was called the theory of "Limited Effects".

[94] For further reading on Limited-Effect Theory follow the link, https://marketography.com/2010/11/23/a-method-culture.

these arguments by saying that local control of news media largely lies beyond the reach of large corporate offices elsewhere, and that the quality of news depends upon good journalists. They contend that those less powerful and not in control of media have often received full media coverage and subsequent support. For example, numerous environmental causes, the anti-nuclear movement, the anti-caste system movement, Anti -Corruption Anna Hazare's Jan Lokpal Bill movement, Karnataka Kavari-Mahadayi River water movement and the anti-dominant movement etc. While most people argue that a corporate elite controls media, a variation on this approach argues that a politically 'liberal' elite controls media.

The Culturalist theory, developed in the 1980s and 1990s, combines the above two theories and claims that people interact with media and create their own meanings out of the images and messages they receive. This theory sees audiences as playing an active rather than passive role in relation to mass media. One strand of research focuses on the audiences and how they interact with media; the other strand of research focuses on those who produce the media.

Theorist emphasize that audiences choose what to watch among a wide range of options, choose how much to watch, and may choose particular channel. If this is true with Television, Advertisement, posters are also playing a vital role in viewers mind. When people approach material, whether written text or visual images and messages, they interpret that material based on their own knowledge and experience. The experience varies based on age, gender, race, ethnicity and religious background. For example,

Fig: 2.1. The image illustrates how a young man recognizes the movie posters on the street wall while moving. (Personal Collection)

Fig: 2.2. A beautiful woman showcasing her Jewellery in Jewellary Ad. (Personal Collection).

Fig.2.1 A young man watching this movie posters on the street wall may not intend to watch these vivid film posters but nevertheless it comes through into his vision. These posters or any other form of mass media or visual images influence the viewers based on their age, gender, race, ethnicity and religious background.

Fig.2.2 a beautiful woman in a jewellery advertisement. Here jewellery manufactures belong to the elite class, a minority group who can create message in society according to their needs. The sub-title is projected as a universal truth. It has direct impact on women in the society. Therefore culturalist theorists claim that, while a few elite in large corporations may exert significant control over what information media produces and distributes, personal perspective plays a more powerful role in how audience members interpret those messages.

Denis Mcquail in his essay *'The Influence and effects of Mass Media'* explains the effects of mass media with few case studies which extends better understanding on it. Mcquail quotes the comment by Klapper (1960), in an influential view of research, that 'mass communication or mass media does not ordinarily serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functions through annexes of mediating factors'(Mcquail,Denis.1973.10). This comment leads to the understanding that media has not left anyone without its effects. Mcquail identifies 'of course, research had not shown the different media to be without effects, but it had established the primary of other social facts and showed the power of the media to be located within the existing structures of social relationships and systems of culture and belief.' (1973.10). In order to discuss the results of research and to provide evidence in a meaningful way, Mcquil distinguishes important media situation into five.

1. The campaign

2. The definition of social reality and social norms.

3. The immediate response and reaction effects

4. Institutional change.

5. Changes in culture and society.

Social reality and social norms refers to the process of learning through the media, a process which is often 'incidental, unplanned and unconscious' for receivers. There are two main aspects of socialist media. On the one hand, visual medium in the society which may lead the audience to adopt this version of reality, a reality of 'facts' and of norms, values and expectation. The best example to understand is today's news channels. The function of news channels is just to report the news. In general news channels repeatedly telecast one news item. The news may be about an individual, or an incident. In few rape victim cases most of the media change the name of rape victim but they give identical information of victim to society and they interview the victim's, parents and relatives with questions like, 'your daughter is raped how are you feeling? etc... The problem with news channels is that they exaggerate the incident but do not create awareness in the society and they become a platform for political enmity and personal ravage. In 2016, Government of India imposed a day's ban on NDTV news channel for anti-national act.

Secondly, there is a continuing and selective interaction between self and the media which plays a part in shaping the individual's own behavior and self concept. People learn what their environment is and respond to the knowledge that they acquire. (Mcquail.1973.14).

As an instance, image 1.2 tag line illustrates, 'Jewelleary A Passion of every Woman'. The sub-title word Every Woman influences women in the society and shapes their own behavior and they come to an understanding with the entire women group in the projected codes. It is also applicable in the case of caste system. In Indian context, as presented in films, dalits or lower class workers follow the command of the landlord or factory owner. Even though they are exploited by them they never revolt because of the fear that they would be punished. Poor farmers will wait for an Avatar Purush or hero to come and solve their problems. This kind of story or projection makes dalits or lower class people or women to wait for someone and it kills their self action and shapes their mind.

Mcquail brings out issues concerned with unintended, generally 'undesirable' effects which fall into two main categories. One related to the problem of crime and violence, another to cases of panic response to news or information, where collective responses develop out of individual reception of the media.

> … one school of thought is now convinced that media portrayals of aggression can provoke aggression in child audiences (eg, Berkavitz,1964). Another favours the view that the effect of fictional evidence is more likely to be a cathartic or aggression-releasing tendency. (Feshbach [and singer], 1971.) (Mcquail, Denis.1973.17).

Mcquil says, in many experiments majority opinion seems inclined to the cautious conclusion that direct effects involving disapproved behavior are rare or likely to happen only where there is a strong disposition in that direction amongst a small minority of the already distributed. Further he states the possibility that

information received from the mass media will trigger widespread and collective panic responses that has often been canvassed, but rarely demonstrated. For example, the demise of Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalithaa who died on 5th December 2016, at 11.30PM. was aired by few news channels who declared her death on 5th December 2016, by 8 AM itself. Due to this shocking news two people died due to cardiac failure. The Apollo hospital, where J Jayalithaa was treated released a press note, which follows;

> The Hon'ble Chief Minister continues to be on life support at the Apollo hospital. The Apollo specialists and specialists from the AIIMS are continually monitoring the Hon'ble Chief Minister very closely. Some TV channels are wrongly reporting that Hon'ble Chief Minister is no more. This is totally baseless and false. They are advised to rectify this mistake based on this press release.

Issued by : Apollo Hospital, Chennai.[95]

The above argument and example clarifies that mass media has a strong impact on its viewers. Mass media has a power to mould minds of people. A capitalist producer for his sake can use mass media for shaping the individual's own behavior and self concept. As Mcquail said, 'people learn from their environment and respond to the knowledge that they acquire'. Film being a part of mass media contributes more compared to any other form, due to its long colorful communicative visual narration with songs, dance and visual pleasure.

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[95] Indianexpress.com/ariticle/india/jayalalithaa-dies- 05/12/2016

From the above argument it is clear that mass media has been used as medium to circulate their ideology. Today films have become a part of popular culture, consumed by a large section of society.

The next section of this chapter makes an attempt to discuss popular culture as mass culture to bring in a deeper understanding of the objective of the thesis.

John Storey defines Popular culture as Mass culture… popular culture is a hopelessly commercial culture. A film through its narration depicts the collective interest of a group, class, caste and sex. It is important to know the influence of popular culture on society. According to Raymond Williams the word popular means, 'well liked by many people', 'inferior kinds of work', 'work deliberately setting out to win favour with the people' and 'culture actually made by the people for themselves'. (Storey. 2008.05)

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu argues that cultural distinctions of inferior, secondary or low culture used to support class distinctions. For Bourdieu, the consumption of culture is, 'predisposed', consciously and deliberately or may not. These distinctions are often supported to claim that popular culture is mass-produced commercial culture, whereas high culture is the result of an individual act of creation. (Storey, J.2001). Andrew Ross[96], analyses mass culture in the American context. He argues that, 'Mass' is one of the key terms that govern the official distinction between American/non-American. Richard Maltby claims that, popular culture provides 'escapism' that is not an escape from or to anywhere, but an escape of our 'utopian level' (Storey. 2001.10).

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[96] Ross, Andrew. *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture*. London: Routledge. 1989

The expansion of mass media is influenced by the development of popular culture. Researchers believed that popular culture influences the television culture and it functions according to the demand of its viewers. (Gans. 1974). Popular culture is a 'Mass culture' or taste culture. Popular/Mass culture was used to refer to the uneducated and unrefined working class in Europe. This form of entertainment was not liked by the elite. They are considered as High Brow and consumers of popular culture group are considered as Low Brow group and the group between high brow and low brow is termed as middle brow. (Sarkar. 2007.52)

Van Wyck Brooks, (1915)in his essay "High Brow and Low Brow" finds the bitterness between these two culture. Low brow culture represents masses, had become a topic of social criticism. He suggested that a 'genial middle ground' between high brow and low brow, which enables the 'culture life' to grow leads to the emergence of "Middle – Brow culture". (Faber. 2006). Russell Lyness further elaborated on the 'middle brow' as a category which functions between the elite society and the working class. This group was very keen on improving their fortune by imitating certain social behavior and habits of high culture. (Rubin. 1992)

Experts believe that, popular culture was developed by few businessmen who imitate high culture's ideas and demean the ideas to cater entertainment to the masses for money. (2007.52)

The Neo-Gramscian hegemony theory sees popular culture as a site of struggle between the resistance of subordinate group in society and the forces of

incorporation operating in the interests of dominant groups in society. As Bennett explains,

> the field of popular culture is structured by the attempt of the ruling class to win hegemony and by forms of opposition to its endeavour. It consists not simply of an Imposed mass culture that is coincident with dominant ideology nor simply of spontaneously oppositional cultures, but is rather an area of negotiation between the two within which-in different particular types of popular culture-dominant, subordinate and oppositional culture and ideological values and elements are mixed in different permutations. (Storey. 2001.11)

Storey explains that, hegemony theory is presented in the class conflict, but hegemony can also be used to explore and explain conflicts involving ethnicity, race, gender, generation, sexuality etc, all are at different moments engaged in forms of cultural struggle against the homogenizing forces of incorporation of the official or dominant culture.

This work attempts to read Storey's definition of popular culture in the context of Indian patriarchal system and Indian films. The definition of popular culture creates the meaning that, 'popular culture' has a relation with consumer culture. Popular culture is simply culture which is widely favoured or well liked by many people…' in the context of Indian films, the main stream commercial films are widely favoured or well liked by many people. Hindi movie is largely consumed and well liked by the men in the audience where, woman is subject of their desired consumption. Indian cinema without fail kept their narration according to the expectation of patriarchal code.

Secondly, 'it is the culture which is left over… which fails to meet the required standards to qualify as high culture'. What is left over in Indian patriarchal system? Male desire, their entertainment, their behavior, day today lives are qualified as high culture and what is left over are women's lives. Popular culture in patriarchal system is a subordinate culture and patriarchal high culture films portrayed the hero as an ideal man, who is an extremely strong individual capable of winning all the challenges at societal, familial and official levels. Besides this, they are portrayed to be extremely responsible and protective towards spouses and elders. These are the few examples of Indian men who maintain 'Indianness' in movies conformed by popular culture. The Indianness for men is being brave, responsible and protective whereas for women. It means being sexually chaste, obedient and extremely devoted to the family (Derne, Steve. 2000) [97]. Popular culture as Mass Culture… popular culture is a hopelessly commercial culture… A mass culture is one which is consumed by large number of audience irrespective of their sex. It depicts the condition of the women's position, where women are treated as objects or consuming items. Women have been presented as lower, least or unimportant persons.

Furthermore, 'popular culture is the culture which originates from 'the people'. It takes issues with any approach which suggests that popular culture is something imposed on the people from above. In patriarchal system who is 'The people'? Who is imposing on whom? For all these questions the only answer is patriarchal system. This attitude of society is the reason for rape, molestation, and oppression of women. Since ages patriarchal codes have given an unwritten

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[97] Derne, Steve. *Movies, Masculinity and Modernity: An Ethnographic of Men's Filmgoing in India.* Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press. 2000.

authoritative power to man to oppress women, heterosexual system to oppress homosexuals, and in the name of caste system upper class to oppress lower class. Patriarchal wishes, likes and interests become interests of the society. The exact reflection is seen on Indian Hindi films

Hindi films represent Indian cinema internationally and are considered as the standard model to follow or oppose. (Ganti, 2004. 03)[98]. According to Butalia, Indian cinema is the world's largest medium of communication. Close to 12 million people are watching films every week in cinema houses and theaters. (1984. 108)[99] Indian film industry entertains a large population. Here the question is, who is creating these films and what is the role of these films on society.

According to Ganti (2004), Indian film industry is a male-dominated industry. Women pursuing careers within the industry are primarily either actresses or playback singers. This trend has changed in recent years with women making their mark as choreographers, costume designers, editors and screenwriters but their numbers are still much smaller in comparison to their male counterparts. "Very few women are lyricists or composers. While a handful of them have ventured into direction, they have not achieved the commercial success their male counterparts have". (Nelmes. 1996. 268)

In an industry with so few women working within it, it seems fair to assume that the portrayal of women onscreen by male directors and other male professionals will have gender biases and constraints and so, it is predetermined not to explore women's world views, perceptions and subjective realities.

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[98]Ganti, Tejaswini. *Bollywood: A Guide to Popular Hindi Cinema.* Routledge. New York and London. 2004

[99] Butalia. Urvashi. "Women in Cinema". Feminist Review (17). 1984. Pp. 108-110.

What roles women have to play onscreen is decided by the male director's notion of what roles women ought to be playing. This notion is based on the director's beliefs, attitudes and values, combined with what the director thinks that the viewers want to see. What viewers want to watch is something that conforms to their beliefs, attitudes and values, which come from the social framework within which they live, which is the same social framework in which directors, live. There has to be a consistency in the beliefs, attitudes and values of all those involved.

According to Littlejohn and Foss, "…it is only when inconsistencies arise in this system of beliefs, attitudes and values, will there be dissatisfaction leading to change. As long as there is no inconsistency, a change in concept or perception is hard to arrive at" (2011, 03). This is exactly what happens to Indian film directors and to Indian cinema. It conforms to the existing structure because everyone seems happy with it, and it seems as though there is no dissatisfaction whatsoever in the way women are portrayed and so there is no need for the portrayal to change. The directors and producers make films to meet the demand of audience and also meet their profit margins. Viewers or audience feel satisfied by seeing a film which upholds their belief system, because they live with that particular set of value system. The question is what kind of films has mass approval and become blockbuster film? In an interview, Priya Mudholkar, who has worked in the Indian Media in Mumbai, said…

> Before commenting on the nature of the roles given to women in blockbuster films it's important to define what makes a film a blockbuster hit. Knowing this is important because in my opinion this underlines the reason why women are given the kind of roles they are in "blockbuster" films- mostly stereotypical and conventional. A movie is declared a

blockbuster hit only if it garners a profit for both- the producer as well as the distributors. For the film to make money for its distributors it has to be a smash hit not only in the metro and mini metros in India but it also has to be a big hit in the smaller towns and rural pockets of the country. (Nandakumar, 2011. 54)

Another important issue is, the audience, who watches these films decide whether the film is blockbuster or flop. Who is 'The Audience' and what is their psyche'? Mudholkar, in her interview comments on the psyche of the audience.

People inhabiting these small towns and villages are generally traditional as well as conventional. The society in which they live has set ideas about women and unless these ideas are replicated on screen, people, including the female audience can't relate to the heroines in films. For these people, a woman's world is restricted to her parents before marriage and after that it's her husband and her children, sometimes even her in-laws which rule her life. A woman's role in a man's life is romanticized and she's seen as faithful, god-fearing and utterly devoted to her family. There is no end to the sacrifices a woman will make for the sake of her husband and her children. This idea is so in-built and idolized by people that this is what a girl is conditioned to do while she's growing up. She's taught to think only about her home and anything beyond that is for the man to do. It is this population which is a majority in India and these people are the ones who make a film a hit film- not the urban population. Film makers therefore safely make a film to appeal to this kind of an audience. So it's always the hero or the main male protagonist who carries the entire film on his shoulder while the actresses are present only for a relief… (2011. 54)

Sivasankaran says,

> The audience is male dominated. The demographic of the film viewing
> audience is such that young men, from adolescence to their forties, are the
> primary audience for films in theaters. It becomes important to cater to their
> needs and desires. Also, the industry itself is driven by the hero centrism,
> which means that the hero gets the central role because the industry's profit
> or loss is determined by the male protagonist. Who should be the hero is a
> big determining factor for the film's success. A male dominated audience
> and a hero centric industry – no wonder that films are the way they are for
> women. (2011. 55)

In this context Vinayachandran says that, the male protagonist tends to
dominate the female protagonist in most blockbuster films. Hero worship is a
common trend in Indian cinema as the primary movie going audience is still male
between the age groups of 15-55. Very few women oriented films have made an
impact at the box office, despite being critically acclaimed. (2011. 56).

The above interview of media persons explicitly presents the audience and
their psyche and directors who tries to cater to these psyche. The interview
excerpts clearly help to understand the structure of Indian film industry which is
male dominated, hero centric, patriarchal, and psyche of the audience.

An Anonymous author[100] wrote.

They said her short skirt is the reason

They had no explanation when a burkha clad woman was raped.

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[100] "Kyun Ki Kapde Chote Nahi Hai, Soch Choti Hai :Stop Victim Blaming". 6 January 2017.7: 17 AM.
Facebook. Post.

They said her jeans is the reason

They had no explanation when a 60 years old nun was raped.

They said being woman is the reason.

They had no explanation when a monkey was raped.

They said walking on street is the reason

They had no explanation when a woman raped in the kitchen.

They said dark night is the reason

They had no explanation when it happened in broad day light.

They said western culture is the reason

They had no explanation when rape happened even during king's rule.

They said her age is the reason

They had no explanation when a 5 years old baby was raped.

Every time they defended the rapists

They were proven wrong by rapists themselves.

Yet they keep supporting rapists and keep blaming the victims.

Tell them to change their mentality,

Before telling her to change her dress.

                                        By: An Anonymous Author

In society, it is not her short skirt, jeans, walking on street, dark night, western culture, age which lead to the rape, molestation, domination of women. It's the patriarchal codes which make a section of society irrespective of sex, to look at woman as consumer goods, so that they can grab them for their enjoyment and pleasure. From this set of act from a section of society, a large section of the society irrespective of sex becomes victims.

The recent shocking incident of Bengalore, where mass molestation on women on 31st New Year's Eve on the road in front of 1500 cops shows the mind set of patriarchy.

'The youth high on alcohol started molesting women who had come to celebrate new year, they started misbehaving, got physical with ladies and went to any extent of chasing the women on streets of Bengaluru. The lady cops also were not spared, many drunkards started abusing women who wore western outfits, tried to pull their dress, eve teased them, sexually harassed them on streets. (Postcard News, 1 January, 2017)[101]

The home minister of Karnataka government, made a very insensitive comment on this incident by saying,

Harassment of women happens during such events... youngsters want to copy westerners…Girls are harassed because of western style of dressing…difficult to regulate such incidents… must look for alternatives to such events… more than 1500 men and women police deployed… precautionary measures were in place…As an alternative, such events must be held out of city…as an alternative, crowd at such events must be

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[101] http://postcard.news/will-shocked-know-happened-new-year-celebrations-bangalore/

regulated…will take steps to regulate … can't force people to dress up like

Kannadigas…will take steps to regulate such incidents". (Times Now. 2nd

January. 2017)[102]

Fig: 2.3.The photographs of Mass Molestation of women on 31st New Year's Eve, MG Road, Bengaluru.

Fig: 2.2. On the same night one more incident took place. A young woman being groped and molested in a deserted lane in East Bengaluru on the night of December 31.

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[102] https://twitter.com/TimesNow/status/815904833123143681/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw

These two incidents of Bengaluru, show the mindset of a section of society projecting patriarchal behavior. These incidents create fear in women. The response of Karnataka Home Minister shows that patriarchal system has influenced and established its power in governing system also, as Althusser distinguishes in *Repressive State Apparatuses and Ideological State Apparatuses*. Ideological State Apparatuses has power to rule the Repressive State Apparatuses and establishes its norms. If state loses its power to control and punish the ideological apparatuses which encourages raping, molestation and domination on women or any form of oppression, it becomes a pathway for terrorism. The Bengaluru incident is nothing but patriarchal terrorist act and these terrorists also include both male and female. One thing Indian society must notice and understand is that a section of society which creates patriarchal terrorism includes both male and female. And a larger section of society which has become the victim of this patriarchal terrorism also includes both male and female.

2.6. Conclusion

In any given society there are set of unwritten and non-constitutional dominating social behavior and functions. A common man by his/her birth get accustomed to some of social standards and becomes a part of it without his/her awareness. This process of adaptation is an unconscious act and looks common to a common man. Social standards and beliefs are created by class of interest and they monitor their interest through people who are unaware of being an agent. This process of setting up interest of a class and control the society through agents is a dynamic phenomenon. Althusser's *Ideological State Apparatuses* has been a great tool to understand the mechanism in creating ideology of its interest. Theorist like

Goran Therborn, exhibited how ideologically influenced individual becomes subject and how an individual changes his/her ideological perception in the course of their life time.

Mass media/films are a significant tool to influence the creation of ideology. Mass media has made great impact on common man's social life and life style. The limited-effect theory, class dominates theory and culturalist theory explains effects and influence of mass media and films and their degree of impact on individuals and on society. Films being parts of popular culture circulate the interest of dominate ideology. An elite group presents its interest through films which is consumed by the masses. So popular culture has affected the dominate ideologies and its visual narrative impacts on its viewers. In the context of patriarchal ideology, it uses mass media and films to enforce its interest on masses to which common people imbibe as common sense and truth. The people who get influenced by the patriarchal ideology with the influential tools like, films/popular culture/mass media try to imitate or follow what they have drawn as truth.

With the understanding of mechanism of ideology and influential factor of films in creating ideology in its viewers mind, in the next chapter this research tries to examine how patriarchal ideology is circulated through films and how women become object in the patriarchal society and how Indian cinema has become a part of patriarchy to cater its needs. It also looks into the condition of women in patriarchal society and the Indian cinema with the help of feminist film theorists' work.

CHAPTER - 3

TOWARDS A FEMINIST FILM THEORY: GAZE,

SPECTATOR AND AUTEUR.

3.1 Introduction

Jill Nelmes, in his book, *An Introduction to Film Studies*[103] says, "From the beginning of the industry in the late nineteenth century women were generally excluded from the film-making process, although it was traditional for women to work in non-technical areas, make-up, or as a production assistant". (Nelmes.268). Women in the film industry, are 'receptionists, secretaries, odd job girls' etc. (Sue. 1999, 09).

"Films are one of the great storehouses of society's stereotypes about women" (Blewett, 1974. 12)[104]. The Hollywood main stream cinemas are visually pleasing for the viewers. Main stream movies depict women as 'sexual objects', the way mass audience can enjoy seeing on the silver screen. (Mulvey. 1975). John Berger suggests that, portrayal of women as an object in Hollywood films, came from the tradition of the Western Easel form of art that is, 'Scenography for presenting female beauty in frozen moments'. The scenography is used to encourage 'the male interests in erotic contemplation'. Therefore, film captures the 'male erotic contemplation' and stage women as an object satisfying the 'male gaze'[105]. (Berger. 1975)[106].

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[103]Nelmes, Jill. *An Introduction to Film Studies.* 2nd Edition. Routledge. 1999. Print.
[104]Blewatt, Mary. "Women in American History: A History Through Film Approach". Journal Film and television studies 4 (4): 12-20. January. 1974. And to read online follow the link: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265933136_Women_in_American_History_A_History_Through_Film_Approach
[105]The male gaze is the way in which the visual arts and literature depict the world and women from a masculine point of view, presenting women as objects of male pleasure.

Berger quotes,

> A woman must continually watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself. Whilst she is walking across a room or whilst she is weeping at the death of her father, she can scarcely avoid envisaging herself walking or weeping. From earliest childhood she has been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually. And so she comes to consider the surveyor and the surveyed within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman. She has to survey everything she is and everything she does because how she appears to men, is of crucial importance for what is normally thought of as the success of her life. Her own sense of being in herself is supplanted by a sense of being appreciated as herself by another....
>
> One might simplify this by saying: men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object -- and most particularly an object of vision: a sight." (Berger, 1975)[107]

Mary Blewett, discusses and exemplifies the role of women in Hollywood. In most of the films it conveys the conditions of sex role of society. But "certain films convey the total view of how a culture limits and proscribes women's lives".

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[106] Berger, John. *Way of Seeing*. Penguin Publication. 1975.
[107] Follow the link to read more quotes from John Berger's Way of Seeing Book, http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/380575-a-woman-must-continually-watch-herself-she-is-almost-continually

(1975.12) D.W. Griffith's films *Way Down East,*[108] *(1920)* is a classical example of female victimization, hopelessly naive and passive. She further argues that, Hollywood film shows how culture forbids and condemns a woman's life.

In Hollywood mainstream films, women are viewed as sexual objects. Hollywood emphasis on women's body, sexuality, demeanor and appearance. (Fischer. 2011). Women is objectified and their physical appearance and their body are highly attractive features and are in demand. (Lippa 2005. Sarkar, 2012). The films of Hollywood rank women's sexiness and her beauty above their intelligence. (Loredo.2012). Women have been portrayed as passive, gentle, weak and overly emotional. (Kelly and Hutson, 1999).

Feminists generally believed that films are the major contributory factor in perpetuating a narrow range of stereotyped images of women. They argue that the way notions of gender represented by the film perpetuates and reinforces the values of the patriarchal society; for instance men tend to take exceptions to such narrow stereotyping- a strong women portrayed can be seen as positive or rather more cynically. They could be seen as mere as 'role reversal' (Nelmes, Jill.1999. 274) films and thus having purely novelty value. In turn, these representations encourage expectations of women which are very limiting, representing a narrow range of images of women, for instance, women as caregivers, as passive objects and an object of desire, limited them at home, inferior to men etc. Molly Haskell points out:

> …from women's points of view the ten year from , say 1962or 1963
>
> to 1973 have been the most disheartening screen history. In the roles

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[108]*Way Down East,* dir. Griffith. Perf. Lillian Gish, Richard Barthelmess and Lowell Sherman. United Artist. 1920. Film.

and prominence accorded to women, the decade began unpromisingly, grew steadily worse, and at present shows no sign of improving. (Haskell 1973:323)

Simone de Beauvoir looked at the cinema as a 'key carrier of contemporary cultural Myths and these myths are found in 'religions, tradition, language tales, songs and movies'. De Beauvoir argues that, women's material existences are viewed, and lived through 'representation of the world, like the world itself'. It is the construction of men and men describe it from their own point of view, which creates confusion with absolute truth. (1988.175). In the early feminist period, film was seen as an area which would become a battleground for the women's movements. Films are used as an ideological tool, which imposes the stereotyped images of women and present the view point of male dominated media and position women as inferior in patriarchal society. (Nelmes. 274)

The expansion of feminism and women's movement found the pathway to change the ideological representation and stereotypical images of women in cinema through the alternative [109], avant-garde [110] and independent cinema [111]. Independent cinema is divided into two forms, documentary and avant-garde.

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[109] Films and videos that provide an alternative to commercial media or to conventional topics and forms, dealing with subjects, points-of-view and formal elements not found in the mainstream. Some makers object to this term as it implies that the work exists only in relation to mainstream media, rather than as a unique art form of its own. For further reading follow the link: http://www.hi-beam.net/fl-defs.html.

[110] In French, literally means "advance guard," a military term for troops that led the attack across the battlefield; used to describe artwork that somehow breaks new ground and charts new territory. Avant-garde cinema essentially is non-narrative in structure and often intellectual in content, working in opposition to mainstream cinema. Avant-garde film is often self-conscious and frequently makes use of devices such as cuts to the camera crew, talking to the camera and scratching on film. http://www.hi-beam.net/fl-defs.html.

[111] Independent cinema may be divided into two areas. First, independent mainstream cinema, such as Hand Made films, which aims to compete with the big studio, although without any large financial backing finds it difficult to survive. Second, the term is used to describe film-making outside the mainstream sector, for example, film workshops, avant-garde film, and feminist film.

Feminist film used documentary as a way to address the 'truth' about the lives of women.

During 1960's American avant-garde [112] film-makers produced many innovative and controversial films. For instance 'gay' and 'camp' films challenged the traditional roles. For instance, Andy Warhol's, *Lonesome Cowboys*[113] (1968) deals with the homosexual aspect. Lizzie Borden's *Working Girls*[114] *(1986)* depicts a day life of upper class prostitutes. Kenneth Anger's, *Scorpio Rising*[115] (1965) deals with the theme of sub-culture, like homosexuality and Nazism[116]. In Europe, avant-garde cinema was produced by a number of film makers like Jean-Luc Godard, Laura Mulvey, Francois Truffaut and others.

Many, feminist film makers decided to come out in three folds;

- *Firstly* - a transformation in film-making practice.

- *Secondly* - an end to oppressive ideology and stereotyping and

- *Thirdly* - end to oppressive ideology and stereotyping and creation of a feminist critical aesthetics". (Sue. 1999. 04).

During 1960's and 70's with the influence of Second Wave Feminism, many feminist scholars began analyzing the representation of women and gender roles. In the United States, feminist scholars moved towards a sociological

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[112] The avant-garde are people or works that are experimental, radical, or unorthodox, with respect to art, culture, and society. It may be characterized by nontraditional, aesthetic innovation and initial unacceptability, and it may offer a critique of the relationship between producer and consumer. American avant-garde began in 19th century and lead by famous film makers like, Stan Brakhage, Maya Deren, Jonas Mekas, Kenneth Anger, and others.

[113]*Lonesome Cowboys,* dir. Warhol's Andy. Pref. Joe Dallesandro, Eric Emerson. Paul Morrissey Production. 1968. Film.

[114]*Working Girls,* dir. Borden, Lizzie. Perf. Louise Smith, Deborach Banks and Liz Caldwell. Lizzie Borden Production. 1987. Film

[115]*Scorpio Rising,* dir. Anger, Kenneth. Perf. Bruce Byron. 1963. Film.

[116]National Socialism more commonly known as Nazism, is the ideology and practice associated with the 20th-century German Nazi Party and Nazi Germany,

approach and examined the portrayal of women characters and gender roles in particular film narratives and saw the replica of a particular society's view set for women. (Erens. 1990.16)[117]. Marjorie Rosen's, *Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies and American Dream (1973)* and Molly Haskell's *From Reverence to Rape: The treatment of women in movies (1974)* analyzed how women are portrayed in films and moved by breaking their barrier. (1999.17)

In England, feminist film scholars began examining movies based on critical theories and influenced by Psychoanalysis, Semiotics and Marxism. Their analysis focused on "The production of meaning in a film text, the way a text constructs a viewing subject; and the ways in which the very mechanisms of cinematic production affects the representation of women and reinforce sexism". (1999.18). Feminist film makers and theorist Laura Mulvey's *Visual pleasure and Narrative cinema* was influenced by the theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. Mulvey's essay brought the psychoanalytical framework and put forth the concept of 'Male Gaze and female Spectator' and Freudian conception of Scopophilia[118] in film theory. Further, prior to Mulvey, Molly Haskell's *From Reverence to Rape: The treatment of women in movies,* Clair Johnston's, *Women's Cinema as a Counter Cinema[119]*, Mary Ann Doane's, *Film and the Masquerade[120]*, Teresa De Laureti's, *Rethinking of Women's Cinema[121]*, and feminist film makers

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[117]Erens, Patric (ed). *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism.* Bloomington: Indiana University press. 1990.
[118]The term was introduced to translate Freud's Schaulust, or pleasure in looking. Freud considered pleasure in looking to be a regular partial instinct in childhood,[2] which might be sublimated into interest in art, or alternatively become fixated into what the Rat Man called a burning and tormenting curiosity to see the female body. Lacan, Jacques. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. 1994 p. 194
[119] Sue, Thornhan (ed). *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader.* Edinburgh University Press. 1999. Pp.31-40.
[120] ..., *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader.* Edinburgh University. 1999. Pp. 70-82.
[121] Lauretis, De Teresa. "Aesthetic and Feminist Theory: Rethinking Women's Cinema". New German Critique, No 34 (Winter, 1985), Duke University Press. pp. 154-175.

films, for instance, Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen directed, *Queen of Amazons*[122] *(1974), Riddles of the Sphinx*[123] *(1977)* became a strong foundation for the development of feminist film theory, and feminist film directors were able to create identity for women and brought out representation of women parallel to mainstream cinema.

Parallel cinema as a film movement in Indian film industry originated in the state of West Bengal, during 1960's as an alternative to the main stream cinema, represented by popular Hindi cinema known as Bollywood. The parallel cinema was developed by the influence of Italian Neo Realism[124] and this movement was led by Bengal cinema and produced internationally recognized film makers such as, Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Chidananda Das Gupta, Ritwik Ghatak and others. It later also influenced and gained prominence in other film industries of India. As Satyajit Ray said,

> …in London I saw *Bicycle Thieves*[125]. I knew immediately that if I
> ever made *PatherPanchali* – I would make it in the same way, using
> natural locations and unknown actors. All through my stay in
> London, the lessons of *Bicycle Thieves* and neo-realist cinema

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[122]*Penthesilea: Queen of the Amazons,* dir. Mulvey, Laura and Peter Wollen. Perf. Peter Wollen and Debra Dolnansky. Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen production. 1974. Film.

[123]*Riddles of the Sphinx,* dir. Mulvey, Laura and Peter Wollen. Perf. Dinah Stabb, Merdelle Jordine and Riannon Tise. British Film Institute. 1977. Film.

[124]Italian neo-realism (Italian: Neorealismo) is a style of film characterized by stories set amongst the poor and working class, filmed on location, frequently using nonprofessional actors. Italian neorealist films mostly contend with the difficult economical and moral conditions of post-World War II Italy, reflecting the changes in the Italian psyche and the conditions of everyday life: poverty and desperation. For further reading follow the link: http://cinecollage.net/neorealism.html

[125]*Bicycle Thieves.* dir, Sica, De Vittorio. Perf. Enzo Staiola and Lamberto Maggiorani. P.D.S production. 1948. Film.

stayed with me. On the way back I drafted out my first treatment of

Pather Panchali[126]. (Ray. 2012, 9-10)

In India, New wave cinema, influenced by Italian Neo Realism and pioneered by Bengali filmmakers, prominently Satyajit Ray, focused on social and political issues of India especially Bengal society, such as caste system, poverty, communalism and the position of women. The new wave films presented the social and political issues with a greater directness, subtlety and complexity. They are more concerned about offering social realistic approach to their subject than glamour and spectacle. They focused on visual style and composition. These films were produced with low budget and less dependent on well-known film actor and actresses. The new wave film makers were influenced by western art house and films and they intended to be dependent on film festivals, art house cinema and film societies for reorganization.

Satyajit Ray, commenting on the 'Indian New Wave' in 1971, wrote:

It is significant that in the cinema of the west the veering towards unconventionalism has been exactly simultaneous with the growth of permissiveness… which brings us to our country where, alas, such permissiveness is still a long way off. And yet the new wave is being talked about and the off-beat film is on the way to becoming a reality… Two assumptions are necessary before we can proceed: one – the off-beaters will have no access to permissive sex for a long time yet; and two – art theaters will come into existence to provide an outlet for their films when the need arises. In other

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[126]*Pather Panchali,* dir. Ray, Satyajit. Perf. Subir Banerjee, Kanu Banerjee and Karuna Benerjee. Government of West Bengal. 1955. Film.

words, we shall continue to toe the puritanical – hypocritical line, and not depend wholly on normal channels of distribution and exhibition.[127]

3.2 New Wave/Parallel Women – Centered Cinema

Film critics generally recognize that objections to mainstream cinematic film portrayal of women began in the 1960s (Abbas &Sathe 1985)[128] and that such critics tend to divide these films into two genres. Starting in the 1960s, the stereotypical portrayal of women in commercial films was questioned by a few directors, who were known as the "new wave" group (Das, Gupta. 1996)[129]. It is believed that the concept of parallel/New wave cinema emerged from the Italian neo-realism film making tradition. Most of these films addressed various real issues like poverty and numerous forms of exploitations. Out of these issues, topics concerning women drew the attention of a group of directors making alternate cinema (1996. 178).

The directors who belonged to this school of thought made an attempt to portray a different image of women. Instead of portraying women as an object of male desire, they were shown as, 'products of diverse social formations", and trying to overcome their sordid circumstances. (Gokulsing & Dissanayake. 2004. 84)[130]. These directors were interested in representing the predicament of women in their day to day lives, as well as the problems that women faced as they were caught in

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[127] Ray, Satyajit. *In Our Films, Their Films.* Orient Longman, 1976. Pp.90.
[128] Abbas, K.A and Sathe, V.P. (ed). *Hindi Cinema. T. M. Ramchandran. 70 years of Indian Cinema (1913-1983).* India: CINEMA India-International. 1985.
[129] Das, Gupta. S. "Feminist Consciousness in Women-Centered Hindi Films". Journal of Popular culture; summer 96, Vol. 30 Issue 1, 1996. pp. 173-189.
[130] Gokulsing and Dissnayake. *Indian Popular Cinema: A Narrative of Cultural Change.* Thretham Books Limited: London. 2004

the contradictory pulls   of tradition and modernity, past and present, and individuality and modernity'. (Gokulsing & Dissanayake. 2004: pp 84).

This alternative genre of film (parallel/new wave) has been a trend in Indian Cinema from the late sixties (Pendakur. 2003) [131] .The Indian Cinema Industry is represented by "Bollywood" but in reality it does not encompass various kinds of Indian cinema. The various genres of Indian cinema are known as popular Hindi cinema, alternative cinema (new wave, parallel) and the middle brow cinema. Thus, the Indian cinema Industry has been majorly divided into two broad categories from the sixties onwards, namely the art (parallel/new wave) and commercial cinema (2003).

As new wave cinema focused on social and political issues, it also focused on the position of women in Indian society especially in the position of women in Bengal, in different circumstances. In Bengal with the influence of New wave cinema many directors tried to represent the women condition in Bengal society initially. For instance, Satyjit Ray's *Mahanagar[132] (The Big City-1963)* depicts the condition of a house wife Arati, who transforms herself from a house wife to a working woman to share the burden of her extended family. The film depicts the sense of achievement, independence and conflict which comes with the work-life scenario. (Chopra, Neha. 2016) [133] . Ray's *Devi (Goddess-1960)[134]* portrays the conditions of 19th century rural Bengal. In this film a 17 year old Dayamoyee is called as a goddess by her father-in-law. The story exhibits the superstitions and

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[131]Pendakur, Manjunathan. *Indian Popular Cinema: Industry, Ideology, and consciousness.* Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press. 2003

[132]*Mahanagar,* dir. Ray, Satyajit. Perf. Madhabi Mukherjee, Anil Chatterjee, and Jaya Bhaduri. R.D Banshal Production. 1963. Film.

[133] For further reading on Satyajit Ray's films follow the link:
http://pib.nic.in/feature/feyr2000/fjul2000/f140720002.html

[134] Devi, dir. Ray, Satyajit. Perf. Soumitra Chatterjee and Sharmila Tagore. 1960. Film.

the victimization of women. *Charulata*[135] *(The Lonely Wife-1964)* is a story of a wealthy lonely house wife, Charu, who is ignored by her workaholic husband. The arrival of her husband's young cousin awakens her sexuality and her poetic talent. Ray depicts the dilemma of Charulata about her strong dissatisfaction in marriage and the confusions of relationship. *Ghare-Baire*[136] *(The Home and The World – 1984)* is a triangle love story between a Swadeshi leader, a liberal and a wife named Bimala. She is encouraged towards discovering the world outside her domestic life.

Ritwik Ghatak's films, *Megha Dhaka Tara*[137] *(The Cloud – Capped Star-1960)* is Ghatak's one of the best- known films on the partition[138]. The story revolves around the character Nita, a refugee in Calcutta. She struggles to maintain her impoverished family. She is an exploited daughter, taken for granted sister, and betrayed lover. Her family treats her as a source of income for their family maintaince. She is not just the victim of partition but also familial pressures, and her life ends tragically fighting from tuberculosis. Ghatak's *Subarnarekha*[139]*,* is a story of elder brother Ishwar and his sister Seeta, who is in search of a better living and secured future. Ishwar, for the sake of job goes to a distinct area from their refugee camp. His sister Seeta faces the consequences of poverty and later, she marries a poor writer, who is her childhood friend and a low-caste boy. This

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[135]*Charulata,* dir. Ray, Satyajit. Perf. Soumitra Chatterjee, Madhabi Mukherjee and Syamal Ghosal. R.D. Bansal. 1964. Film.

[136]*Ghare Baire,* dir. Ray, Satyajit. Perf. Swatilekha Chatterjee, Victor Banerjee and Jennifer Kendal. NFDC. 1985. Film.

[137]*Megha Dhaka Tara,* dir. Ghatak, Ritwik. Perf. Supriya Choudhury, Anil Chatterjee and Gita Ghatak. Chitrakalpa production. 1960. Film.

[138] For further information on Ritwik Ghatak's films, follow the link; https://thereel.scroll.in/813977/all-these-years-later-nobody-has-chronicled-the-partition-like-ritwik-ghatak

[139]*Subarnarekha,* dir. Ghatak, Ritwik. Perf. Abhi Bhattacharya, Madhabi Mukherjee and Indrani Chakrabarty. 1965. Film.

marriage separates the brother and sister. Ishwar and Seeta meet again in unusual circumstances where Seeta is a prostitute and Ishwar is her first client. Seeta's husband's sudden death in an accident, had forced her to prostitution. Ishwar, is shocked by the encounter and Seeta kills herself, which is witnessed by her son. At the end of the film, an aged Ishwar leads Seeta's child to the new house in Chhatimpur. Mrinal Sen's films like *Raat Bhore* and *Neel Akashes Neechey*[140] *(Under the Blue Sky)* and Chidananda Das Gupta's *Bilet Pherat (1973)* and *Amodini (1994)* represented women who had been victimized and conditioned through societal prejudices.

In the 1970's with the influence of New wave cinema and films of Satyajit Ray other realistic films also influenced many other directors and many women directors in Bengal and across the country. A number of women directors began directing movies on gender and women's issues. They addressed the problem and hardship faced by women from women's point of view and explored various themes like, female identity, treatment of women as a symbol, marginalization of women, oppression of women and gender discrimination. (2004.92). These women's issues were examined by some female directors, most notably Aparna Sen, Kalpana Lajmi, Sai Paranjpye, Mira Nair, Deepa Mehta and Prema Karanth. Even though, the films of Mira Nair and Deepa Mehta represents issues of Indian women, they bring out the different and new aspects of women's problems which were unnoticed.

The films of Aparna Sen gave a new perspective on Indian women's cinema. The themes and characters presented in her films represent different caste,

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[140]*Neel Akasher Neechey,* dir. Sen, Mrinal. Perf. Kali Banerjee, Manju Dey, Bikash Roy and Smriti Biswas. Hemanta Bela Production. 1959. Film.

religion, age, class and race. Aparna Sen is an internationally acclaimed film director. Sen made her debut in films in 1961 in Satyajit Ray's film *Two Daughter*. She acted in several films made by noted film directors, such as Mrinal Sen, James Ivory and her father, film critic and director, Chidananda Das Gupta. Aparna Sen's first directorial venture was *36 Chowringhee Lane*.

Aparna Sen's *36 Chowringhee Lane* tells the story of an ageing Anglo-Indian teacher, Miss Violet Stoneham during 1970s.The time span of the film is between two Christmas. The movie highlights the opening and closure of the film narrative and the film moves back and forth over one year.

Miss Violet Stoneham, the protagonist lives in solitude. She lives alone in a dingy flat of 36 Chowringhee Lane in Calcutta and is an Anglo-Indian, teaches Shakespeare and leads a lonely dull life. Her only companion is a black cat which she calls as Sir Toby. Her life takes a new and exciting turn when a former student asks her to allow him meet his lover in her flat. Samaresh and Nanditha tell her their requirement of space for Samaresh's Writing. In reality, they needed space for making love. Violet's relationship with the lively young couple becomes the brightest feature in her bleak existence. She no longer has to enter into her empty flat. In her involvement with Samaresh and Nanditha, she forgets to visit her older brother Eddie Stoneham, who believes that India is still under the British rule. Stoneham receives letters from her niece Rosemary from Australia which are unread. Samaresh and Nanditha's company brings back life in Stoneham and it helps her to come out of her loneliness. Month passes, during which Nandita and Samaresh get married.

On Christmas, Miss Stoneham thinks of presenting the couple with self made Christmas pie. Unaware of the grand party hosted by the couple at their residence, she takes the pie to their house. They had lied to her and she realizes that they avoided her purposefully. Miss Stoneham walks away and distributes Christmas pie to the dogs and she quotes a line from Shakespear's King *Lear*. This reflects her brave decision to stay on in Calcutta.

This movie represents the ageing and single, Anglo-Indian, a minority community who lives in Calcutta. A lot of questions are put on the table. What makes the newly married couple avoid Miss Violet Stoneham? Is it because she is an old woman or whether has she outlived her usefulness or whether she is an Anglo-Indian and hence, an 'outsider'. The plot focuses on the gender issues and life of a woman and an Anglo Indian woman who has to struggle over class and race.

The Anglo-Indian woman looks more attractive for the Indian men because of her skirt, color and western outfit. Miss. Violet Stoneham's niece, Rosemary, appears only in two scenes that too in flashbacks. The only thing that her presence is noticed is because of her letters to her aunt. Rosemary, is an Anglo-Indian young woman who is going to marry her Bengali boyfriend. She is curious to learn the cultural and ritual importance of this intended marriage. She takes Stoneham along to purchase the traditional red wedding Banarasi silk sari for the event. Rosemary is excited about her marriage. We see her next along with Stoneham at the cemetery where she has gone to place flowers on the grave of her fiancé Davy a soldier who died in war. Rosemary makes an unexpected decision to accept the proposal of an Anglo-Indian suitor whom she had earlier rejected. While smoking cigarette she informed all this. Miss Stoneham tells her that, "But you don't love

him, dear," "I do now" says Rosemary. Her off- screen Bengali boyfriend had used her as a thing of physical pleasure. Her dream of platonic love doesn't last long. His thought was to get all the worldly pleasure and to ditch her at the last moment. In a nutshell, it is about how the two Anglo Indian women face discrimination, problems and insecurity. One can observe tortures which the two ladies face in terms of gender and race.

This movie follows the narrative transitivity. Each action changes the course of the narration. It represents the heterogeneous world. The plot runs around Miss. Stoneham, but in the mean time it also depicts the world of Rosemary, Samaresh and Nanditha, young, English-educated, upper- class, Bengali-speaking Indians, who wanted space for their greed and Miss. Stoneham's older brother Eddie Stoneham, who stays in an old-age home, and still believes that Indians are ruled by British. The depiction of Miss. Stoneham's life is as a boring daily routine at home and in school. It presents the multiple diegesis in the homogenous presence. This movie does not offer pleasure in its narration. Samaresh and Nandita's love making scene is presented just two times and both time it is presented in the second person view. First, when they travel in the taxi, kissing scene is presented on taxi driver's rear view mirror and second, through Stoneham's eye. This movie as a counter cinema depicts the condition of Anglo-Indian women, who witness the gender discrimination in terms of age and sexual exploitation.

Sati is set in the 19th century, even before the British raj abolished the inhuman act of sati under Sati Abolition Act in 1829. The movie is not particularly about Sati, but it reveals lives of women of that time. This film reveals subtle influences of a well known long poem by Rabindranath Tagore called *Shubha*.

Shubha is a deaf-mute young girl whose heart is filled with empathy and love towards animals and birds and she wants to spend time with flora and fauna. The only connection with Uma of Sati and Shubha of Shubha, is that Uma is also mute but she can hear. She doesn't have parents and she is brought up by her maternal uncle, a very poor Kunlin Brahmin, a group highest in the caste hierarchy in Bengali Hindus .Her aunt treats her badly and ruthlessly .The aunt gives all the work to the young girl without any concern. She finds a conversation friend in peepul tree. She spends her free time with that in silent communication.

Haru Ghatak, the village matchmaker brings a possible 'match' for Uma's uncle Bampada's daughter Shashibala and the problem rises. He says that grooms family is having conflicts about there being a spinster sister – Uma, in the house. They thought to find Uma a groom so that they will not miss Kunlin family. On the other hand, Uma's horoscope indicates that she is going to become a widow. The Brahmin Pandit, Madhav Bachaspati, an old member of the village, goes through sacred books, ancient scriptures and says that the problem will be solved if she is married to a tree first. Then if she gets a prospective groom, she can marry otherwise she has to remain as a wife of the tree. It so happens that she develops a bond with the tree as, with her closest friend but her life status does not change much.

The Groom (The Peepul Tree)   The Bride (ShabanAzmi)

Fig: 3.1. The bride Uma marriage ceremony with the Peepul tree.

Being a neglected person, Uma cannot find a close one in her house. Her emotional attachment with the tree increases. She breaks down in front of the tree as it was her nearest one. Ashok, a Kayasthba teacher who lives alone, plans of a secret sexual seduction trap. He is separated from his wife who is a daughter of rich parents and lives there at parental house. He seduces Uma and she becomes pregnant. Being a sensitive issue, Uma cannot disclose the identity of the culprit. Even her cruel hearted aunt doesnot show interest in knowing the identity of the man.

Things get worse day by day as Bamapada's sudden death makes her position insecure and uncertain, She is thrown out to cowshed. Unfortunately, she is forced by her aunt and aunt's daughter-in-law to abort. This indicates the conditioned mind set of women in patriarchal society. Patriarchal society builds up a set of rules which consistently reinforces it. For instance, before marriage if a woman becomes pregnant her character is questioned by everyone but nobody questions the person who is responsible for it. In this film when Uma's aunt and aunt's daughter-in-law come to know that Uma is pregnant they force her to abort the child and her aunt is not interested in knowing the person who is the reason for

her condition. The reason behind forcing her to abort the child is that they fearful of societal humiliation and of patriarchal system. Her aunt and aunt's daughter-in-law do not show their sympathy to Uma because unconsciously they follow the patriarchal system and they have become the custodian of patriarchy.

A heavy rain with thunder washes out the cowshed completely. As a result, Uma seeks shelter under the peepul tree. When the first ray of Sun falls on earth, one can notice the shocking death of Uma. Gopal, her nephew notices first, her body lying within the clasp of the peepul tree. One by one, the village elders crowd in, along with Uma's cousins. It's coincidental that her tree husband becomes protective shield at least to that night. A silent prayer is sent by Madhave Bachaspati that the village witnesses another Sati.

The plot insists how the women of that era faced exploitation, problems and domestic violence. Villagers believe that the fall of the tree is a clear indication of Uma's husband's death. As Uma dies, the villagers come to conclusion that the smoke around the tree is an indication that lightning had struck the tree first and it falls down taking Uma along.

Uma's marriage appears to be realistic and opportunist elders of Uma finds this a way to marry off Shashibala to a Kulin Brahmin. Also, this

a) Liberates the family from the burden of guilt of having married her to a tree.

b) Elevates the position of the village with the celebration of another Sati.

c) Offers her the only exit route of libration from a life of oppression, humiliation and injustice. (Chatterji, 2002.158)[141].

The Silence of Uma implicates a lot of things. Uma's silence represents the domination of feudalism and patriarchy. Her silence represents the condition of women and marginalized people of patriarchal society. She is marginalized by her family members, further by her marriage to peepul tree, which she accepts with joy and celebrates. In this movie a lot of aspects like superstitions, gender discrimination, and caste issues can be observed.

Silence for Uma functions at several levels.

- It enables the school teacher to seduce her and to take physical advantage of the fact that she is a girl, an orphan and a mute.

- She remains silent when her aunt and her sister-in-law ask her to name the man who is responsible for her pregency;

- She remains silent when they decide to marry her off to the tree;

- She remains silent when they force her to take some herb to abort the baby-which might have meant her death too.

- She silently steps out into the night of thunder and lightning to protect herself when the cowshed she has been driven into, collapses, unwittingly signing her death warrant in so doing. (2002.154)

It is quite obvious that in the time period of the movie, women are vulnerable to ritual beliefs. Their destiny is decided by other people. The fact that Uma cannot speak, makes her problems complicated, even nobody is there to

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[141]Chatterji, Shoma. A. *Parama and other Outsiders: The Cinema of Aparna Sen.* Parumita Publications, Calcutta. 2002.

understand and to share her feelings and her tree husband is the only ray of hope for her.

Parama, is the story of an ideal Indian woman of a Calcutta family. The 'ultimate woman' is the meaning of her name - 'Parama' .This indicates a woman's role as wife, daughter, mother, daughter-in-law and other relational identities. Rahul a photographer from abroad enters her life. Their first meet is at a ceremony where she performs Durga Puja in her house. Rahul observes her through his camera. His photographic talents find a true traditional woman in her. She has some specific service commitments and she is willing to perform them happily.

When Rahul chooses Parama as a model for a series on the image of the traditional Indian housewife, it unfolds the real Parama and various relational attributes, and dimensions hidden. The photographer's and Parama's lives undergo drastic changes unknowingly and set in new direction, when both of them participate in camera work in rare glimpses of Calcutta. For Parama, life begins for a remarkable change. Parama starts a new life as she comes to know- and be herself. Her introspection is a clear impact of Rahul's entry in her life.

Rahul and Parama get into an intimate affair. Parama thus crosses the limits of Indian societal system of marriage and relationships. The sexual condition of marriage system breaks. A typical Indian housewife changes herself and enters into another life. Parama is left alone by Rahul who has to attend an assignment abroad. The changed Parama discovers herself her sexuality and her identity.

It so happens that she has to disclose a packet for her husband which comes through mail. He finds photos in the copies of the magazine (Life), containing Rahul's photographs of Calcutta and of Parama. The cover comes as mysterious

post. In one of the photos Parama is smiling right into the camera, her back bare, her hair all wet, in a big-close-up and across the photo Rahul has signed. Now Parama's life is in split roads as her husband is not at all ready to accept her. Adding salt to her wound is her husband's treatment who is now calling her 'whore'. Even her children do not live with her .She feels irritated, insulted and suspicion grows like spider web in her husband's eyes. Now her situation is like a rejected. A lady who can perform various family duties, who manages relational responsibilities has been left unnoticed, unheard.

Parama's first response to the situation is to gain the support of the family again. She acknowledges her act and asks her husband's pardon. He does not relent. As in most of the movies Parama cuts her wrists for a tragic suicide attempt. This attempt brings a new climax to the movie. A new relationship appears between the mother and the daughter. The latter identifies with the mother on the one hand, and on the other, celebrates her final libration. The family watches in great excitement the transition of this wonderful woman, they notice herself and her innocence.

Aparna Sen writes:

> In *Parama* I was not promoting adultery. I was simply trying to explore the psyche of a woman who had had an extra-marital affair. And, in the process, I was trying to be as truthful as possible to her situation. *Parama* does not tell every married woman over forty to jump into the arms of the first presentable young man she meets,

any more than Lawrence in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* suggests a romp with the housekeeper…[142]

Sen's films in India and especially in Bengal received hot mixed response. One film critic's reading of Sen's feminism is significant for the confusion she has generated in the newly-liberated generations:

> Aparna Sen needs to be encouraged and congratulated for what looks like pioneering a new genre in Indian Cinema – the feminist film… it must be admitted that Parama deals with a genuine problems of many women in the Hindu conservative society, their loveless life smothered by social taboos and appearances. But the way Parama, the wife, reacts to such a stifling situation is perhaps not the right feminist answer. The truer answer lay in films like Mrinal Sen's *Ek Din Pratidin,* in which neither the unmarried young woman nor woman nor the film-maker cared to disclose where she had spent the night…[143]

The way Parama, the wife, reacts is of course by indulging in an extra marital affair. Even from the critic's point – that too much is made explicit in *Parama,* in comparison with Mrinal Sen's film where much is achieved by shadow and suggestion taken, the implications are more serious. There is an assumption that, the smothering by social taboos within the institution of marriage is not a problem great enough for feminist intervention (the critic has gone on to suggest that 'more fundamental questions like female infanticide, dowry and forced

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[142] Bose, Brinda. "Sex, Lies and the Genderscape: The Cinema of Aparna Sen". Women: A Cultural Review. ISSN:0957-4042. 1997.

[143] Ray, Bibekananda. "Aparna Sen: Pioneering a Feminist Genre?". Cinema Indian-International, January-March, 1986, p. 45.

prostitution merit such attention) besides, (Bose, 1997) 'to leave aside these genuine feminist issues for question like [the] right to sexual promiscuity or even adultery is to dilute and vulgarize the feminist question'. (Ray. 1986. 45).

The films of Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Rithvik Ghatak, Aparna Sen and many other directors traced the real problems that women face in society and they represented them in a realistic way. The presentation of women through realistic and artistic cinema put forth the grass root reality of condition of women. Aparna Sen's *36 Chowringhee Lane* and *Sati* is a representation of unrepresented. It's the conflict of have's and have not's of age, caste, race and speech and of silence.

During 1970's and early 1980's parallel cinema was an influential and powerful force, but it becomes less dynamic and significant from the late 1980's because of many factors relating to global and domestic changes. The important factors relating to the decline of new wave cinema are the distribution, exhibition and accessibility of television and video. Television programme appeared to be a mixed blessing for some of the film makers who earned name and fame by making films, programmes and tele- serials for television. (Keith.2015)[144]. For instance, Shyam Benegal, directed the epic series of *Bharat Ek Khoj*, based on Jawaharlal Nehru's book, *The Discovery of India,* and he also produced an educational series for rural children. (Goenka. 2014. 152-153)[145]. Another important women director was Sai Paranjpye from Maharastra. For many years along with film direction Paranjpye worked as a director with Doordarshan Television in Delhi. The well-known actor and director late Shankarnag directed *Malgudi Days*[146] based on the

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[144]https://thirdcinema.wordpress.com/2015/10/27/indias-parallel-cinema/

[145]Goenaka, Tula. *Not Just Bollywood: Indian Directors Speak*. Om Books International. India. 2014.

[146] "Malgudi Days". Crted. R. K. Narayan. Dir. Shankar Nag. Epics, 54. DD National. 1986. Television.

collection of short stories written by R.K. Narayan in 1987 for Doordarshan. Further, the development and the expansion of the state – run television service in 1980's created a large number of audience to parallel/New Wave cinema and many films funded by the National Film Development corporation of India (NFDC)[147] were telecasted on early Sunday and afternoons. (Keith. 2015). Georgekutty (1988) argued that, "The New wave Cinema were mainly dependent on television and video rights, or on foreign film festivals, rather than on audiences paying to see the films in cinemas in India. This was a change from the 1970s when there were at least viable urban audiences for the films" (Keith. 2015). The television gave platform and opportunities but in the mean time it also undermined the cinema audiences and provided venues for new wave/art/parallel cinema. Some of the urban middle class intelligentsia watched the cinema on TV that had been once watched in cinema. Shyam Bengal, in one of his interview acknowledges the effects of satellite TV industry. He says,

> … Certainly filmmaking and audience perception have been affected. A new vocabulary has developed in our cinema. People's attentions spans are much shorter because of TV and the internet, and you have to get to them before they lose interest in you and forget you exist". (Goenka. 2014.153)

The New wave cinema during late 1980's became significantly less dyamnic and faced number of problems as discussed above. Parallel/Art/New wave cinema was limited to a section of society and they faced financial burden. In the

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[147]The National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC) based in Pune is the central agency established in 1975, to encourage high quality Indian cinema. It functions in areas of film financing, production and distribution and under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. The primary goal of the NFDC is to plan, promote and organize an integrated and efficient development of the Indian Film Industry and foster excellence in cinema.

middle of 1980's critics made a stack at the position of 'Middle Cinema', which served as a great substitute to the parallel genres. (Gopalan. 2010)[148]

A few filmmakers like, Mrinal Sen, Rituparna Ghosh, Shyam Bengal, Mahesh Bhatt and also Aparna Sen's movies, like *Parama, Mr. and Mrs. Iyer, 15th Park Avenue* have been able to find the middle route, "…they have used the elements of commercial art and reality in a one manner". (Sarkar, 2012.33). According to M.L Raina, (1986), the "Middle cinema, appealed to the middle class – who enjoy the comforts of their 'petty bourgeois life style' and aspires to achieve a wealthy lifestyle – because it was a combination of commercial as well as the elite art cinema"[149]. Thus, he tried to explain that, middle class people watch these cinemas and the consumer of elite art, joins at the same time. They wanted these issues to be handled lightly with elements of escapism.

Middle Cinema carried different sets of characteristic which differ from the two main genres; Parallel cinema and commercial. In middle cinema a lot of makeup was used to makes the actress look beautiful on screen. Songs and dance were used like commercial cinema. Most of the actresses in middle cinema are known for beauty, great body and dance skills. In most of the middle cinema, storyline begins by a happy women in her relationship or in her particular situation, but in a surprising incident leads her to take a drastic change, decision and step. Middle cinemas are shot in exotic locations, in India as well as in foreign locations like in commercial cinema. The camera focuses on the pros and background. Middle cinema is a combination of commercial and Art genre.

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[148]Gopalan, Lalitha. *The Cinema of India.* Columbia University Press. 2010
[149] Raina, M, L. "I'am All Right Jack: Packaged Pleasure of the Middle Cinema". Journal of Popular Culture. 131-141. 1986.

Middle cinema dealt with social issues like poverty, remarriage, caste system, communal disturbances and women's issues but its approach of representation differ from art cinema and popular cinema. The middle cinema without doubt brought changes in the storytelling technique of parallel cinema and subject matter of commercial cinema towards the late 70's and throughout the early 80's. (Gopalan. 2009)

Shyam Bengal is considered as a pioneer of middle cinema in India. He was the first person from the group of parallel cinema who looked into all the members of the Indian audience that, "The essence of good cinema depends on the right concoction of popular elements of the mass audience with pleasant suggestion" (Krishna. 1991). Bengal brought the link between the depressing approach of the art cinema and exaggerated, supernatural image of the popular cinema. In one of his interview's he says,

> All kinds of films are relevant but ultimately there are two aspects to cinema. One is the creative, artistic aspect, and the other is the business aspect of cinema. Both are interrelated and dependent on each other. You can make films that are artistically and aesthetically very satisfying but if they don't get through to the audience, then you have defeated the very purpose of making that film because you will never be able to make another film.

> Movies cost a lot of money, unless of course you make a film on a mobile telephone, which is very easy to do now. But if you make films like that, then you only have a very small audience on the Internet. You are not going

to have a cinema theatre audience, which is how feature films are meant to be seen. (Goenka. 2014.152)

As discussed before, parallel women cinema initially influenced by the development of women concerned movies impacted by New wave film makers started in Bengal. Further many directors under the influence of middle cinema and along with the concern of audience made films in Hindi. Directors like Basu Chatterjee, Amol Palekar, Mahesh Bhatt, Shyam Bengal, Sai Paranjpye and Aparna Sen had made films in Hindi and in English, and it made its influence in Hindi film industry and in many other regional cinema. These directors exhibited immense potentiality in their artistic approach along with the concern of market and they avoided unrefined commercialism and unnecessary prominence of women's sexuality. (Pendakar. 2003)

The middle cinema directors aimed to transform the masala of the commercial Hindi films into an aesthetic work to give out a message against social evil to the masses rather than, just aiming for the box office gain. (Pendakur 2003). Films like *Sparsh* (The Touch, 1979), *Masoom* (The Innocent, 1983) and *Chakra* (The Wheel, 1980) and Aparna Sen's *Mr and Mrs. Iyer, 15th Park Avenue, 36 Chowringhee Lane, Sati* and *Parama* showed women protagonists in challenging roles. Even though women are subjected to oppression, exploitation and objectification in Indian society, women characters of these films are courageous enough to raise their voice against their exploitation and objectification.

For instance, Aparna Sen's *Mr and Mrs Iyer,* deals with communal massacres motivated by religious fundamentalist. Meenakshi, is a young orthodox Hindu married woman from the South who is travelling back to her husband in

Calcutta with her one year old son. Meenakshi's father is the forest caretaker of that region. Raja is a liberal open minded Muslim with a Hindu name. He is a wild life photographer. He is asked by Meenakshi's parents to help Meenakshi who is travelling with a baby and lot of luggage. Finally the bus and the film begin to move at the same time.

During travel, Meenakshi is in trouble with her crying child. She looks for Raja's help and Raja kind heartedly helps her to take care of her baby. Later in the late evening bus with its sleeping passengers encounters blocked roads by parking trucks and buses. The passengers walk around and ask the driver. The old Muslim performs his evening prayer, his face toward the setting sun. When, Meenakshi is awakens she smiles when she finds her hand on Raja's.

After some time suddenly a group of Hindu extremist enters the bus to kill all the Muslims. Some men have to drop their pants to prove their religion. Surprisingly Cohen, (Co-passenger of Meenakshi) the Jew, in the fear of identifying him as Muslim, informs them about the old Muslims couple. They are taken out of bus when only Kushboo, (another co-passenger of Meenakshi) stands up, beg the men to leave the old people. One of them beats her in the face and makes her silent. When Raja stands up in anger to fight back the mob, Meenakshi throws her son in to his hand and she introduces her and Rahul as Mr. and Mrs. Iyer to Hindu extremists.

The next morning before she wakes up Raja leaves the bus and he records the traces of the terrible night of murdering: the dentures of the old Muslim beside his broken specs. Here the degree of violence is shown through the camera of Raja. Every single snap of camera represents the innocence of the old Muslims and in the

mean time it represents the barbarity of communal violence. Due to curfew, a police officer brings Raja, Meenakshi and the child to a deserted forest guest house. Here only an old care taker lives. Raja and Meenakshi (who are considered by all as a couple) are not only strangers but they are also separated by religion and language.

Next day morning they come to a town, close to the forest guesthouse, where people can buy some necessities as long as the curfew is withdrawn for a few hours. While Meenakshi and Raja are sitting in a tea shop the young girls from the bus join them. They are curious to know the love story of this couple. Meenakshi and Raja tell the (fictive) story of their first encounter. Raja invents more and more of detailed story of their honeymoon in Kerala. Though we know this tale is pure fictional, Meenakshi dwells into Raja's vision of story and their Honeymoon. She appears to be absent minded in her day dream. This event makes audience to think about Meenakshi's married life.

The police officer brings them back to the forest guest house. The road is blocked by the religious fanatics and they have to take another way. They pass through a village which is burnt down. Before we see the village, we see the terror reflected in the passenger's faces. This time a village is destroyed by a Muslim extremist. Police officer and Raja recue a traumatized child which cries and it seems to be the only sign of life in this village. Back in the forest house, Raja tries to write down the experiences of the previous day. We hear Meenakshi singing a beautiful lullaby for her child. Later after the child has fallen asleep, both are talking in the veranda. Raja and Meenakshi become closer. Despite the reality there remains something like a vision of love. Through Raja's camera lens they observe the animals in the forest. At this moment Meenakshi captures the photos of animals

by holding the camera. At that moment she positions herself into a subject fo what to capture and what not. Suddenly a group of fanatics chase a man in the forest. Meenakshi and Raja lock themselves in the house and watch this dreadful hunting through Raja's camera how the hunted man is being killed. The audience do not witness the murder but the reaction in the faces of Raja and Meenakshi confirms their fear. Meenakshi is extremely shocked. Raja helps her, lays her softly on the bed, covers her with a blanket and sits down in front of the bed.

Next morning the police officer helps them to reach Calcutta railway station. They enter a railway compartment. Here one finds the dark colour of Meenakshi's sari as a strange coherence with Raja's clothes and in the mean time, symbolical protest by Meenakshi about their departure. He is asked by her about places he has travelled to, wants to participate in a life which she is never allowed to live. And with a facile curiosity she asks him if he had travelled alone or if he will travel alone to the next place. For one moment they are becoming close, and touch physically until they are disturbed by a passenger who walks through the narrow passage. When the train has a longer stop, Raja leaves the train to buy coffee. When he leaves to buy coffee Meenakshi's almost whispered sentence to her baby: He has left us and is gone, Baby. Raja returns, puts the coffee cups on a little table, takes baby Santhanam silently in his arms and sits down. In a strange physical confidence she leans her head on his shoulder.

The train arrives at the Calcutta central station. Meenakshi's husband is waiting for her. Meenakshi's husband thanks Raja who is introduced by her as a Muslim. Raja says goodbye in a very laconic way, while Manni, Meenakshi's husband calls his father over mobile. Suddenly Raja stops and takes the film out of his camera and returns to Meenakshi. "For you", he says and gives her the

undeveloped film. Then he says: "Goodbye Meenakshi", emphasizing the pronunciation. She, almost with tears in her eyes says: "Goodbye, Mr. Iyer".

This movie's basic intention is to present secularism and humanity from a women's point of view. Here Meenakshi saves the life of co-passenger Raja with a simple lie. Even though she is uncomfortable and has a fear for the Muslim, her one lie in the film establishes the aspects of humanity, secularism and her choice of decision, against the religion, caste and sex. As critics write,

> …her statement represents one of many instances where sen's women characters momentarily step away from main stream sentiments and social conditioning, and eventually make extraordinary choices. (2014.59[150]).

The movie raises much confusion like did Meenakshi fall in love with Raja? Why she is so much worried about his departure. But Meenakshi's act of saving life side-lights all the questions.

Renuka Viswanathan says that,

> …Meenakshi's dilemma belongs to all Indians, it could be suggested that she is actually indicating that the moment that Meenakshi makes the choice is completely stripped of the religious politics that constitute the basis of this film – her character makes no attempt later on to theorize on the choice, or to explain tenets of tolerance and love, or to analyze why, in spite of her evident hatred of Muslim. She decides to utter this lie. (2014. 59).

As Viswanatham has said, Meenakshi' s lie is Sen's exact moment, when nation triumphs over divisive religious identities because even the most religious

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[150] Roy, Mantra and Sen Gupta, Aparajita. "Women and emergent agency in the cinema of Aparna Sen". South Asian Popular culture. 2014.

viewer would not criticize her action. In most of the religious conflict women becomes vulnerable. Meenakshi's lie makes an attempt to bring harmony and depicts her courage of breaking her own religious prejudices.

Sen casted the most recognized artist in the field of art cinema who brought the liveliness to the characters of this movie. But the audience can find that the melodramatic elements like slow motion, make up and music are used effectively. The important element of this movie is, Meenakshi taking up the subject position breaking her tags like religion and sex to save life of unknown. When she lies to Hindu extremists by saying that they are Mr. and Mrs. Iyer, she put her life into risk in order to save raja's life. The entire movie carries the sensitivity and Sen handles communal issue in a very unique way. This element of sensitivity has presented in all her movies including *15th Park Avenue*.

The film *15th Park Avenue* portrays the relationship of two women, Meethi who suffers from Schizophrenia[151] and is taken care by her divorced sister Anjali (Shabana Azmi) who is a University Physics professor. Meethi, is not married in her real life but due to Schizophrenic disorder she believes that she is married to her ex-fiance Joydeep and believes that she has five children. She believes that her husband, five children and herself are living at the 15th Park Avenue in Calcutta. When Anjali disscues Meethi's condition with new doctor she reveals that, Meethi does not face the major problem from her Schizophrenic traits since her childhood. She has led normal life till her early 20's, but her traumatic experience of brutal rape by a group of men during the course of her job as a journalist has made her to

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[151] Schizophrenia is a chronic and severe mental disorder that affects how a person thinks, feels, and behaves. People with schizophrenia may seem like they have lost touch with reality. Although schizophrenia is not as common as other mental disorders, the symptoms can be very disabling. https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/schizophrenia/index.shtml

disconnect herself from the real world. Also Joydeep had broken off the engagement with her.

On the doctor's advice Anjali takes her on a vacation to Bhutan, where they encounter Joydeep, who is now married. Meethi does not recognize Joydeep, the same man to whom she is married to in her imagination. Returning from Bhutan to Calcutta, Joydeep helps her to find her house 15th Park Avenue in Calcutta. In a surrealist climax, Meethi finds her house, her husband Jojo (joydeep) and her five children waiting for her return. She walks into her 15th Park Avenue which is not presented in reality and Meethi is never seen again. As Anjali explains to doctor that, Meethi was very shy and reserved character from her childhood and she had led normal life till her early 20's. Meethi takes her sister Anjali's permission to go out alone to do her journalist job. But brutal rape put her into the shock and after this incident Schizophrenia disorder spreads in her brain. In patriarchal society these kinds of rape, molestation and dominance created fear and threaten women. In the movie Meethi tries to exercise her rights and she wants to lead an individual life but it gets destroyed by the patriarchal domination. In real life also there are many examples like acid attack, gang rape, honor killing etc. This movie is open ended. Sen's most of the movies are open ended and creates the platform to make its audience to think.

The films of Aparna Sen presented women issues and gender issues sensitively with their own uniqueness which is new to Indian cinema. For instance, in *36 Chowringhee Lane*, she represents the feelings and condition of an Anglo-Indian aged woman and her confusion about her stay in India. In the mean-time it also represents the conflict between the majority v/s minority. In *Sati*, Sen talks about oppression of a mute girl in the name of religion and astrology. Sati is the

best example to know the condition of Sati system and how women have been victims of the system. *Mr. and Mrs. Iyer,* shows how humanity is more important than any religious hatred and *15th Park Avenue* is one of the rarest movie in Indian cinema which deals with the problem of Schizophrenia. Except for *Parama* none of her movies does not objectifies women in its narration.

As noticed above, in India women centered cinema developed with the influence of new wave cinema and middle cinema and it was able to raise the questions against oppression of women, women portrayal on screen, objectification of women through their films along with their own unique form of aesthetic values. The two genres, the new wave and middle cinema, even though they are different in their makeup, costumes, onscreen presentation, song, dance forms, casting, representing the women's problems, storyline, location and use of camera's are still capable of empowering women centered cinema.

The new wave cinema of 1960's influenced by the West had a great impact on Bengal cinema. After that, during 1970's and 80's within India, Bengal directors and Bengal film industry, including New wave and middle cinema influenced the Hindi film industry.

During the 1990's Indian women centered cinema reached another level where it moved from India to the global platform by few directors who settled aboard and made films on Indian women and on Indian issues. These directors represented women and gender issues which are different from the Indian director's women centered films. These set of directors or producers basically from India are identified by an umbrella term called Indian Diaspora.

The term Diaspora is an umbrella term, which includes those who write, direct or work outside their native country. Diasporic writes' or directors' works are related to their native culture and background. Their literary works and films deal with displacement, alienation, existential and rootlessness. They also present the issues of interfuse and disintegration of cultures. The diaspora functions between two folds of world and culture. Uma Parameswaran defines it as

> …first is one of nostalgia for the homeland left behind and mingled with fear in a strange land. The second is a phase in which one is busy adjusting to the new environment that there is little creative output. The third phase is the shaping of diaspora existence by involving themselves in ethno cultural issues. The fourth is when they have 'arrived' and started participating in the larger world of politics and national issues. (Parmeswaran, 165)

The immigrants have suffered from the pain of being away from their homeland. Willam Safran has observed that "…they continue to relate personally or vicariously, to the homeland in a way or another, and their ethnic-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship." (1991:23). In other words, Diasporic people are caught in a complex zone of two cultures and two countries. Neither can they detach themselves from their homeland nor adopt the culture of settled country. Stuart Hall in his article "Cultural identity and Diaspora" says,

> Diasporic identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference […] It is because this New world is constituted for us as place, a narrative of

displacement, that it gives rise so profoundly to a certain imaginary plentitude, recreating the endless desire to return to the 'lost origins' […] And yet, this 'return to the beginning' is like the imaginary - it can neither be fulfilled nor requited, and hence is the beginning of the symbolic, of representation, the infinitely renewable source of desire, memory, myth, search, discovery. (236)

Diasporic literary works register the experience of the diasporic communities living in different socio-cultural setting. As far as Indian Diaspora is concerned, people have possessed and created their new identity by accepting 'self-fashioning and increasing acceptance by the west'. (Ravi, 2016. 361). As far as diasporic women centered cinema is concerned, these film directors distinguish themselves from their 'Desi or rooted' counterparts, in terms of narration, themes, level of techniques, style, aesthetics and ideology. (Moodley. 2012.66). Diasporic scholars points out that the diasporic literary works "… aiming at reinventing India through the rhythms of ancient legends, the cadences of mythology, the complexities of another civilization, cultural assimilation and nostalgia". (Ravi. 2016. 364)

Deepa Mehta and Mira Nair are well known as directors. Mehta was born in Amritsar, Punjab, India and settled in Canada. Nair was born in Odisha, India and moved to New York, USA. These two directors in their films portray Indian women and their film characters are connected with mythological character and the themes of movies are different from their homeland directors on women centered issues and are influenced by the western thoughts. Nair and Mehta's films brought unconventional issues which became controversial. (Moodley. 2012). These directors dealt with the issues like excising their sexual interest, empowering

women rights, breaking the barrier of patriarchal system, etc. Hamid Naficy, argued that, films produced by diasporic film makers has lot of similarities at various level. He calls it 'Accented Cinema'. (2012. 66). He believed that, diasporic and exile film maker's exhibit specific similarities at "level of techniques, style, aesthetic and ideology", in their films. (2012.66). Naficy says that, dominant cinema is considered as a universal and diasporic and exilic films are considered as an accented. They cling to their ethnical consciousness and distinctiveness. The ethnic consciousness and other issues are achieved by creating awareness and perpetuation of elements, which are associated with 'the homeland' (2012.67). For instance, Mira Nair's *Salaam Bombay (1988)* captures the lives of slum boys and prostitution of Mumbai. Critics argue that, *Salaam Bombay* captured the truth and audacity of Indian poverty". (Salman. 2012)[152]. This movie presents the reality of Bombay as India. *Mississippi Masala* (1991), tells the story of a second generation Indian immigrant *Jay* and his hatred towards the black. *Kama Sutra: A Tale of Love (1996)*[153] celebrates women's sexuality as a healing and liberating force. *Monsoon Wedding* (2001), demonstrates the impact of globalization on cultures in the context of changes in the Indian marriage, family structure and culture. Mira Nair's films talk about the issues of poverty, women's sexuality, and cultural changes of Indian society, Indian stereotypes, Indian mentality and immigrant's dilemma through her realistic way.

In the same context, Deepa Mehta directed many films and documentaries about women and gender. Her story line, themes, location, characters names represents typical Indianness. She is one among the prominent directors, who

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[152]https://sillyfunda.wordpress.com/2012/03/20/salaam-bombay-movie-1988-synopsis/
[153]The Kama Sutra is an ancient Indian Hindu text written by Vātsyāyana. It is widely considered to be the standard work on human sexual behavior in Sanskrit literature.

ignited a new dynamism in women and her gender issues centered cinema is strongly influenced by the west and new to Indian cinema. For instance, *Fire* (1996) brought the issue of lesbianism which is new to Indian cinema and people in India fired the posters of film Fire. (Discussed in second chapter).

Mehta's *Earth* (1998) is based on Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Ice-Candy Man* (Cracking India in the U.S). Lenny, is an eight-year-old Paris girl who is growing up in pre-partition Lahore in 1947, enjoying the warm and happy life with loving parents and household staff. Lenny travels daily to the nearby Queens Gardens with her beautiful Ayah (nanny), Shanta, and a young Hindu woman, who holds a good friendly relationship with all the other staffs. The male staffs are a mixed bunch: Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and similarly the staff-members serving Lenny and her family are a happy collection of the religious groups represented in India. It is an entirely pleasing world, by her beloved Ayah, Imam Din, the genial cook, Dil Navaz, the Ice Candy Man, a rogue, who is Lenny's hero, Hasan, the Masseur, who invents oils made from pearl dust and fish eggs, and also her precocious Cousin Adi. When the film opens, the British are finally preparing to quit India and the difficult process of splitting British India into Independent India and Pakistan is about to begin.

For Lenny the trouble first appears in her Lahore home when a quarrel erupts between Mr. Singh and Mr. Rogers, a British Inspector General of Police, who have come for dinner with her parents. Bitter words metamorphose into slogan shouting mobs and arson. Angry Hindus storm through Lahore one day, and angry Muslims the next. Still, it is all far enough away from Lenny's uneasy but untouched home where her mother, Bunty, teaches her to waltz and Ayah's group of admirers continue to meet in the park as before. Then the serious killing begins.

Hindus and Sikhs attack Muslims; Muslims attack Hindus and Sikhs. The savagery is trusted into Lenny's peaceful world. Lenny is with Ayah and a group of Ayah's admirers are outside the servants' quarters of her home when troubling reports of violence around Gurdaspur in India begin coming over the radio. Whilst the group, gripped with fear, listens to the radio, Ice Candy Man waits for his sisters at the Lahore Railway Station. The train from Gurdaspur finally arrives with all the Muslim men and children killed and four gunny sacks filled with women's breasts. That massacre sets into motion events that turn Lenny's world upside down. From the rooftop of Ice Candy Man's tenement, Ayah and Lenny see Sikhs slaughtering Muslims, Hindus butchering Muslims and Muslims burning Hindus alive.

The once charming Ice Candy Man turns into a near madman, one of the many roaming the streets of Lahore with vengeance and murder on their minds. The Muslim Masseur, the only voice of reason amongst Ayah's admirers, implores the group of friends to stand by each other. A love affair between him and Ayah blossoms amidst the violence and Lenny is privy to this fragile relationship between a Muslim and a Hindu. Lenny's family is spared by the slaughter because the neutral Parsees are not a part of the politics and partition. But a Muslim mob arrives one day at their front gate. The family will not be touched, but the mob wants all the Hindu servants and that includes Ayah. The destruction of innocence by desire and greed wearing the garb of religion and nationalism was the price of this sectarian war.

The movie undoubtedly presents the vulnerability of women in a patriarchal world. Deepa Mehta focuses on a women's version of history and both show how the will of men subjugated Musilm, Sikh and Hindu women during partition,

resulting in a profound inequality in gender relation. Mehta created a female gaze in this story, pointing to the marginality and victimization of women during the partition. "The violence of the partition was the consequence of primarily male aggression and its worst victims were women." (Jaidka. 2011. 552)

As Pennebaker suggests,

> ..women's bodies constituted a religious, geographic, and familial symbol. Defilement of the woman of a family would be the greatest dishonor the family unit could endure – and thus violence enacted on women during partition was tantamount to a sacrilege against one's religion, country, and family. (2000)

Mehta's last of trilogy *Water* (2005), presents the inhuman treatment of widows in an Indian patriarchal society. (Discussed in detail in the second chapter)

Heaven on Earth (2008) focuses on the immigrant working-class, first-generation Indian family, living in Brampton, Ontario, Canada. Chand (Preity Zinta) is a young bride leaving her home in Ludhiana, Punjab, India, for Brampton, Ontario, Canada, where her husband Rocky (Vansh Bhardwaj) and his very traditional family await her arrival. Everything is new and unfamiliar to Chand including the quiet and shy Rocky whom she meets for the first time at the Arrivals level of Pearson Airport.

Chand approaches a new life and land with equanimity and grace, and at times the wide-eyed optimism of hope—her first experience to fresh snowfall and the roar of Niagara Falls creates the excitement of new beginnings. Chand finds that her husband is depressive and irritable, and he physically abuses her without provocation. No one feels the pressure more than Rocky, weighed down by family

obligations. A controlling mother who can't let him go, a kind but ineffectual father, and a sister whose two children and unemployed husband are also a burden. All live with Rocky's two-bedroom house in the suburbs of Toronto.

Rocky arranges for her to work at a factory alongside his sister, her salary being directly deposited into his account so that she never has access to it. At the factory she becomes friends with a co-worker, an immigrant from Jamaica who has had her own experiences with abuse. She wants to help Chand, offering her money so that she can walk away from the situation, but Chand is too scared to go off on her own. Chand does, however, latch on to the story her friend tells that of her condition. She is told to grind a particular root into his drink, which will supposedly make him love her forever. While preparing, it catches fire, unknowingly she feeds it to a snake (king cobra).

The snake then takes the form of her husband which leads to happiness, confusion, and conflict of consequences. When the real Rocky questions the chastity of Chand, she holds the real snake and profess her chastity and decides to leave her husband as well as Canada

The film is based on Girish Karnad's stage play called *Nagamandala*[154] (Kannada) which tells the story about a newly married young woman who becomes a victim of domestic abuse. Neglected by her husband and desperate to make the marriage work, she decides to win his love by using a magic love root given to her by another woman. If consumed by her husband, the magic love root would make him fall hopelessly in love with her. But unknowingly she feeds it to a snake (king

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[154] *Nagamandala,* Dir. T. S. Nagabharana. Perf. Prakesh Raj, Vijaya laxmi and Mandya Ramesh. Srihari L. Khoday. 1997.

cobra). The snake then takes the form of her husband which leads to surreal confrontations and some bittersweet consequences.

This movie focuses on the fictional depiction of a working-class, first-generation Indian family, living in Brampton, Ontario, Canada.

> …which provides a microcosm of the pressures and realities of everyday immigrant life affecting the family from within. The text represents the ancient Indian myth of the Sheesh Naag, the King Cobra, with the ability to shape-shift and transform into human form, to raise awareness about the issue of culturally driven violence against women in South Asian Canadian communities, which is on the increase in Canada's immigrant communities. (Ridon. Manjeet. 223).

The issue of duality is developed in Mehta's film through Rocky, Chand's NRI husband, whose character is split into two. In her notes to the making of her film Mehta explains that the idea of the split self is borrowed from Naga-Mandala and Karnad's skilful use of duality:

> In his human form [as the living spouse], he is the coarse and boorish man, who brutalizes his wife Rani during the day, but at night he metamorphoses into a divine lover – a Naga-Raja. Both halves are unaware of each other, both exist in one another, both are each other's divided selves, contradicting and contrasting with each other in a dynamic play of fantasy and illusion. (Ridon. Manjeet. 223)

The character Rocky represents the duality in his nature. He is unemployed, who has the responsibility of his family. He takes out his frustration by abusing his

wife Chand. Chand is vulnerable in all conditions. Chand represents a section of women, who are facing domestic violence. For instance, Rockey trashes Chand in the kitchen for the sake of his mother. Rocky's mother symbolically stands as cultivator of patriarchal authority. A mother who forces her son to practice his patriarchal duty as if it is sacred. As Mulvey summarises the function of women in forming the patriarchal unconscious is two folded. Firstly, the women symbolizes the castration threat by her real lack of penis. Secondly, thereby raises her child into the symbolic. In other words, making her to internalize her lack, and making herself as a training institute to mould the next generation is the ultimate aim of patriarchy and that is end of women role in society. Rocky's mother orders him to trash his wife by saying, "beating your wife is your job". Here Rocky's, mother unconsciously recognizes her lack and she reinforces patriarchal ideology through his son as a symbolic.

Deepa Mehta, in her notes to the film and speaking about its genesis, explains that she first came across with the Indian myth of the cobra when she was visiting India and saw performances of Karnad's *Naga-Mandala,* a play "based on an old Indian folk tale about a lonely and unhappy wife who finds comfort when she is visited by a snake who has taken on the form of her husband". Back in Canada, she happened to meet with several Sikh Punjabi women, who had come to Canada by arranged marriages that subsequently disintegrated into abusive relationships. Having watched further performances of *Naga-Mandala* on return visits to India and, in the interim, directing *Let's Talk About It: Domestic Violence* (2006), a documentary about young girls growing up in abusive households within different immigrant communities - Indian, Haitian and Mexican – Mehta discovered that the opportunity "to weave both a personal story of a young

immigrant woman and the myth of the Cobra, the nature of duality, seemed like an interesting combination" (Ridon. Manjeet. 228). The important aspect in Nair and Mehta's subject position as a diasporic Indian filmmaker allows them to move between India and Canada, in different cultural and national contexts, with considerable ease. In *Heaven on Earth* she uses this fluidity to "weave" an ancient Indian myth into a contemporary narrative about NRI marital abuse in Canada.

In many Hindi movies we have come across domestic violence on women within Indian scenario but there was very less knowledge about condition of women who moved to other countries by marriage or for job and the problems faced by them including domestic violence and many other issues. Diasporic directors touched the issues which were unaddressed so far and their films represented those who are silently suffering in other countires, where they cannot express their inner feelings or raise their voice against their oppression. For instance, problem faced by immigrates/migrates was initially expressed by the diasporic films. Recently a lot of cases have been reported, where Indians are killed in foreign countries who went there seeking jobs, the bad treatment of Indian laborers in countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other gulf counties. For instance the film *Airlift*[155], shows the condition of Indian diaspora during the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait. As we know diaspora is a blend of home land and foreign land, in terms of culture, tradition, way of thinking, working style, use of technology, rational behavior and equality between men and women. Different class and age, gave a different view to analyze their home land scenarios and to change or raise issues which are impractical, non-sensible and inhuman. In other

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[155] *Airlift,* dir. Raja Krishna Menon. Perf. Akshy Kumar and Nimrat Kaur. Abundantia Entertainemnt, T-series and others. 2016. Film.

words, with the influence of west or in the context of Hollywood film, they tried to address the issues which were neglected or unaddressed in Indian cinema. We cannot deny the influence of west and Hollywood on Indian society specifically Indian films. Influence is not only in terms of subject, theme but also in terms of technicalities, realistic, customs, etc. For example, *Dhoom*[156] and *Krrish*[157] series, and others. From 1930's Indian cinema industry got influenced by Hollywood film industry.

3.3 Influence of Hollywood on Hindi Cinema

Hollywood and Hindi cinema stand as cinematic behemoths of the west and east. The contact between India and the western cinema was established from the very beginning of Indian film industry itself. Dadasaheb Phalke made his first movie *Raja Harichandra*[158], after watching *Life of Christ* at P.B. Mehta's American-Indian Cinema. (Natarajan. 2014)[159]. Indian movies started use of foreign locations in early cinema's and it extended to technology, finance and story line. Even though Indian cinema emerged relatively after Hollywood, it quickly moved and made its presence in the world cinema. However, the connection between Hollywood and India is a two-way process: western audiences are becoming more interested in India as evidenced by the mild success of *Lagaan* and *Bride and Prejudice*. This became more evident after the success of Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire.* (Natarajan. 2014).

Globalization and economic liberalization since the 1990s has become a

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[156] *Dhoom* film series started from 2004. *Dhoom 2* in 2006 and *Dhoom 3* in 2013. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhoom_(film_series)
[157] Krrish film series started by *Koi…Mil Gaya* (2003), *Krrish* (2006), *Krrish-3* (2013)
[158] *Raja Harischandra.* Dir, Dadasaheb Phalke. Perf. Raj Kumar and Pandri Bai. Dadasaheb Phalke for Phalke's film. 1931. Film.
[159] Natarajan, Aruna. "The Intersection of Hollywood and the Indian Film Industry: Impact and Implication". IJBARR, ISSN-2348-0653. 2014.

pathway to unparalleled western cultural influence around the world. Biggins, says that globalization, with an adverse advocacy through the media, has brought in a "landslide transformation of existing local culture and identity into a new form of culture with no frontier." (Natarajan, 2014) Jerry Mander, co-founder of the International Forum on Globalization, has showed the same concern. Writing in *The Nation*, Mander, said that global media corporations of Rupert Murdoch, Ted Turner and very few others,

> …transmit their Western images and commercial values directly into the brains of 75percent of the world's population. The globalization of media imagery is surely the most effective means ever for cloning cultures to make them compatible with the Western corporate vision. (Natarajan, 2014).

Biggins cites the cultural dependency theory of Mohammadi (1995) as a factor in the influence of the Western culture in the developing world. He quotes Mohammadi as follows:

> The continuance of Western dominance over Third World nations was based partly on advanced technologies, including communication technologies. But it was also based on an ideology, accepted in many parts of the Third World, that there was only one path to economic development, which was to imitate the process of development of Western industrial capitalist societies. Cultural imperialism or cultural dependency occurs with the Western countries' influence on the language, values and attitudes, including religion, ways of organizing public life, styles of politics, form so education, and professional training, clothing styles, and many other

cultural habits. It creates a new kind of model of domination called neocolonialism which has sparked new kinds of struggles to eradicate this enduring cultural influence in the Third World (Natarajan. 2014).

In the year 1992, the government of India liberalized the demand of films (Policy for Import of 2002), which lead to the rise in the release of foreign (Hollywood) cinema in India. Numerous Hollywood-based companies, along with many domestic importers, started marketing movies in India, which were dubbed not only in Hindi, but also in other regional languages like Tamil and Telagu. This led to a huge rise in revenues for Hollywood as well as local Indian distributors for Hollywood (Desai, 2000). Blockbusters like *Titanic*[160] earned a huge amount of revenue in India (Acharya. 2004)[161].

Moreover, Hindi commercial filmmakers try to use the hit formula in their films, which is usually borrowed from Hollywood blockbusters with an Indian touch to it (Acharya 2004). Many immensely successful commercial movies in the 90's and 2000's have been outright copies of commercial Hollywood movies with an Indian flavor. This phenomena is known as 'Hybridity'[162]. (Appadurai. 1996)[163]. The cinema is one of the most hybrid art forms as it draws from various forms of art like classical, local popular, and also adapts to the new changes that has been borrowed from outside. Similarly, major Hindi directors have been immensely

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[160]Cameron, James, dir. *Titanic.* Leonar do Dicaprio, Kate winslet and Billy Zane. Prod, Paramount Pictures, 20th Century Fox and Light storm Entertainment. 1997. Film.

[161]Acharya, S. Bollywood and Globalization. San Francisco State University: MA Thesis. 2004.

[162]Hybridity refers in its most basic sense to mixture. The term originates from biology and was subsequently employed in linguistics and in racial theory in the nineteenth century. Its contemporary uses are scattered across numerous academic disciplines and is salient in popular culture. This article explains the history of hybridity and its major theoretical discussion amongst the discourses of race, post-colonialism, identity, anti-racism and multiculturalism, and globalization. This article illustrates the development of hybridity rhetoric from biological to cultural discussions.

[163]Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization.* Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press. 1996.

influenced by Hollywood. Vasan and Mehboob Khan were the most active observers of the techniques and style of Hollywood films like, development of camera technology and film themes. However, the filmmakers have altered what they lifted from outside to suit the condition and sensibility of the Indian audience. (Nandakumar. 2011). Films like *"Sabrina" (YehDillagi)* [164] , "*Mrs Doubtfire" (Chachee 420)*[165], "*The Fugitive" (Criminal)*[166], and "*Sleeping with the Enemy" (Agnisakshi)*[167] are examples of such borrowings. (Acharya. 2004. 26).

In general, Hollywood and Hindi cinema share the same social arrangement, like patriarchal hierarchy, sexual division, class division and other issues. As many feminist film theorist like Mulvey, Johnston and Teresa De Laurite explained that, the portrayal of women in classical Hollywood films, portrays women as a long suffering, tolerant victims. Hollywood films continue to depict women as focused on romance and the pursuit of marriage, submissive to and dependent on men, weak, gentle, passive, overly emotional, and as primary care-givers with little identity of their own. (Sarkar and Gagne, 2012). [168] Hollywood emphasis on women's appearance, sexuality, and demeanor, than on their accomplishments or intelligence. Happiness and sadness are stereotyped as women's emotional expressions, while men are portrayed as tough, successful, aggressive, competitive, independent and intelligent. The only emotion men typically express on screen is anger, and they are showed as being responsible for

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[164]Malhotra, Naresh, dir. *Yeh Dillagi.* Akshay Kumar, Saif Ali Khan and Kajol. Prod. Yash Chopra. 1994. Film.

[165]Haasan, Kamal, dir. *Chachi 420.* Kamal Haasan, Amrish Puri, Om Puri and Tabu. Prod. Raaj Kamal Films International. 1997. Films.

[166]Bhatt, Mukesh, dir. *Criminal*. Akkineni Nagarjuna, Ramya Krishna and Manisha Koirala. Creative Commercials. 1995. Film.

[167]Ghosh, Partho, dir. *Agni Sakshi.* Jackie Shroff, Nana Patekar and Manisha Koirala. Prod. Binda Thackeray. 1996. Films.

[168] Sarkar and Gagne. "Women-Centric Films in India". CJAS 6, 2016.

protecting women. One best example to understand the women portrayal in Hollywood is Laura Mulvey's, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative cinema' Hindi cinema is also structured with family melodrama with songs and dance, the ideal women as self-sacrificing and accepting the injustice and violence of men.

Further, Hollywood's influence in various other aspects of Hindi cinema cinematography, such as choreography, music, photography, costumes, make-up, hairstyle and can also be seen the issues of homosexuality, print advertisement, movie posters etc. (Sherafat, 2014. Sankar and Gange. 2016)

Homosexuality is very new to Indian cinema. Few directors tried and presented the issues of homosexuality in mainstream and in off-stream cinema. Interestingly, homosexual portrayal is enjoyed by the viewers when it's mocked and highly rejected when directors presented it as a serious issue. For example: *Dostana*[169], (2008) directed by Tarun Mansukhani, has a homosexual relationship depicted as a comedy which Indian accepted and enjoyed whole heartedly. However, *Fire* (1996) directed by Deepa Methta and *Dunno Y Na Janne Kyun*[170]*(2010)* by Sanjay Sharma received lot of criticism and people protested against it. The same opposition is with the concept of Cheer Girls in IPL cricket matches. People protested against it and said that it was not our culture but still people enjoyed the cricket matches. During 2008 I P L matches, members of the Mahila Congress created an uproar over Cheer Leaders, protesting outside the Sawai Man Singh stadium at Jaipur and Maharashtra state minister Siddharam Mhetre said, 'They're 'worse than bar dancers', 'mother and daughters watch these

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[169]Mansukhani, Tarun, dir. *Dostana*. John Abraham, Abhishek Bachchan and Priyanka Chopra. Dharma Production. 2008. Film.

[170]Sharma, Sanjay, dir. *Dunno Y… Na Jaane Kyon.* Kapil Sharma and Yuvraaj Parashar. Movies Magic Studios. 2010. Films.

matches and it does not look nice'. In Contracts to this 'Suhel, Head of counsel age India said that 'This is a country of temples carved with erotic that invented the Kama Sutra'[171]. *(Times of India. April 17, 2011)*

Fig: 3.2. Shah Rukh khan's *Ra-One* [172] is influenced by Hollywood Batman Begins.[173]

Fig: 3.3. The Hindi actress Deepika Padukone looks more 'Westernized' than the original actress and she is trying to sell a lighter skin color.

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[171] www.google.co.in/search?q=link%3A+www.timesofindia.com%2C&oq

[172]Sinha, Anubhav, dir. *Ra One.* Shah Rukh Khan and Kareena Kapoor. Red Chillies Entertainment. 2011. Film.

[173] https://prezi.com/ukmqdzveayjc/how-has-hollywood-impacted-bollywood/

Fig: 3.4. Hindi movie *Hisss*[174]poster has been influenced by Hollywood movie *King Arthur's* poster. In this poster one can notice replacement of object with a woman and it objectifies the woman as an object.
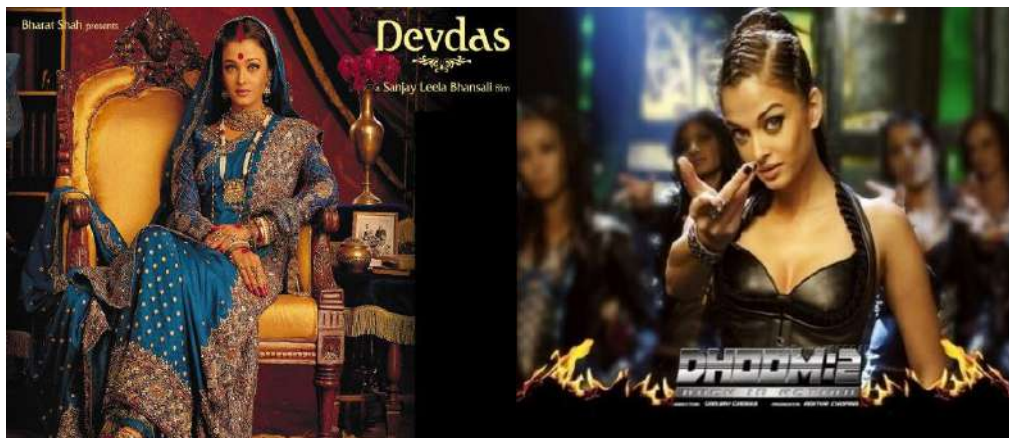

Fig: 3.5. In *Devdas*[175] actress Aishwarya Rai is in the Traditional Indian wear and in movie *Dhoom-2*[176] she adopted an absolutely westernized look with excess skin exposure. This depicts the changes in the Hindi cinema like make up, hair style and use of western outfit and dress as a symbolic representation of Desi and Videsi.

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[174]Lynch, Jennifer Chambers, dir. *Hisss.* Mallika Sherawat and Divya Dutta. Prod. Govind Menon. Vikram Singh and Ratan Jain. 2010. Film.

[175]Bansali, Sanjay Leela, dir. *Devdas.* ShahrukhKhan ,Madhuri Dixit Nene and Aishwarya Rai Buchanan. Red Chillies Entertainment. 2002. Film.

[176]Gadhvi, Sanjay, dir. *Dhoom-2*. Hrithik Roshan, Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai. Yash Raj Films. 2006. Films.
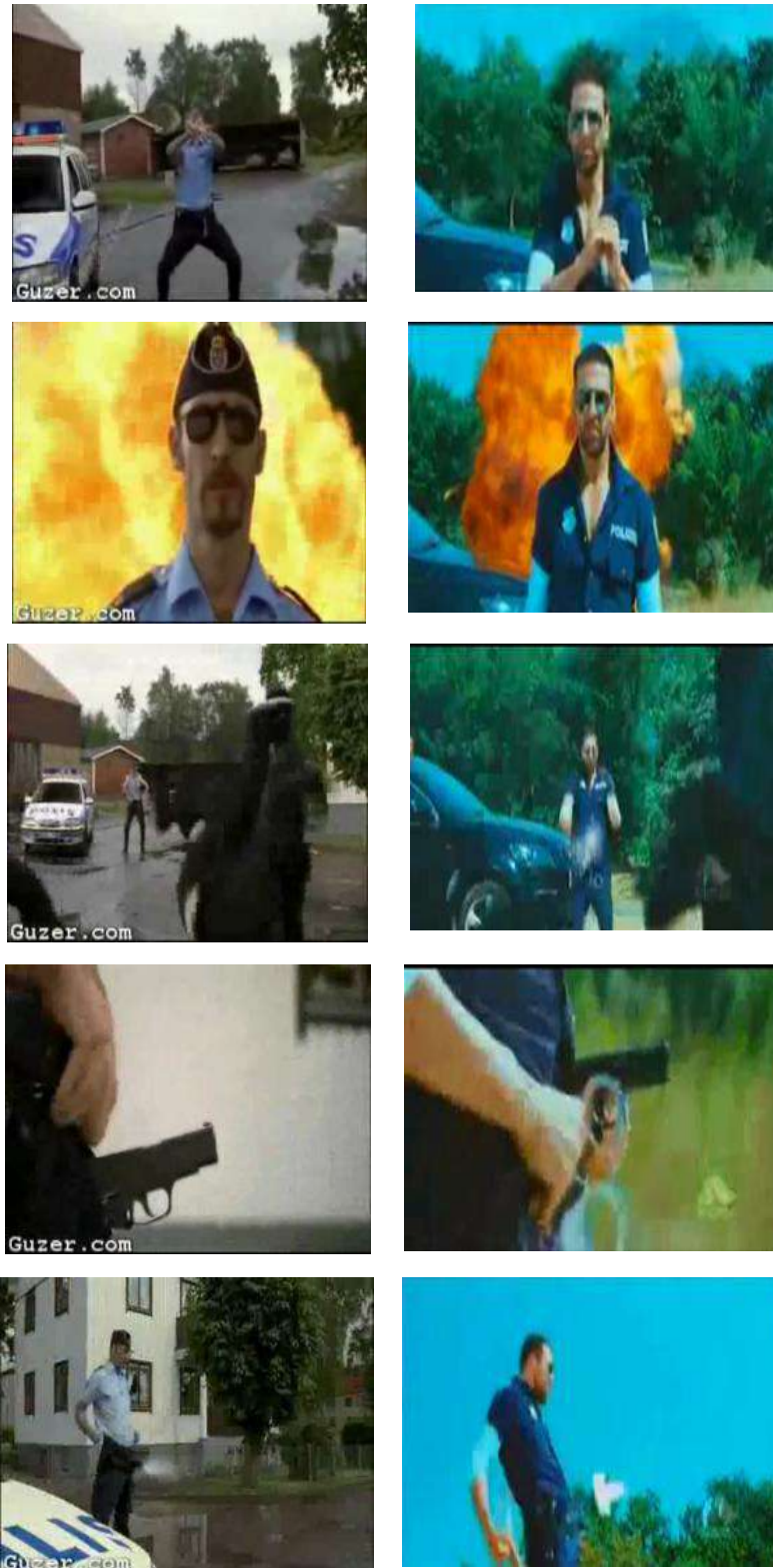
Fig: 3.6. In the two action sequence the first one is Swedish movie called *Kopps*[177] and second action sequence acted by Akshay Kumar, entire scene copied in *Om Shanti Om*[178] film.

[177]Fares, Josef, dir. *Kopps.* TorkelPetersson and Goran Ragnerstam. Prod. Anna Anthony. 2003 (Sweden) Film.

Movie Red (2009)

Singham (2011)

Fig: 3.7. Action sequence first one is from Hollywood Movie *Red*[179] and the same action sequence is copied by *Singham*[180]Hindi film

Mission Impossible-3 (2006)

Sigham-2 (2014)

Fig: 3.8. Action sequence, the first line of action is copied by the Hollywood *Mission Impossible-3*[181] film by Hindi film *Sigham-2*[182]

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[178]Khan, Farah, dir. *Om Shanti Om.*Shah Rukh Khan, DeepikaPadukone and Arjun Rampal. Red Chillies Entertainment. 2007. Film.

[179]Schwentke, Robert, dir. *Red.* Bruce Willis. Morgan Freeman and John Malkovich. Lorenzo di Bonaventura. 2010. Films.

[180]Shetty, Rohit, dir. *Singham.* Ajay Devgn and Kajal Aggarwal. Prod, Mahesh Ramanathan and Reliance Entertainment. 2011. Films.

Apart from the film, there are lots of instances that give us the broader understanding of influence of west in media. Recently internationally recognized Indian online shopping company campaign to promote Indian wear by presenting lesbian relation under the title of '*Bold is Beautiful*'[183]

Fig: 3.9. A snap of the picture of Myntra's advertisement '*Bold is Beautiful*' by Myntra Anouk[184]

Furthermore, Fast track advertises the pictures of, "homosexual as individuals confident about their identity and unapologetically 'non-confromist'".[185]

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[181]Abrams, J.J, dir. *Mission:Impossible-3*. Tom Cruise, Philip Seymour Hoffman and VingRhmes. China Film Co-Production.

[182]Shetty, Rohit, dir. *Singham Returns*. Ajay Devgan and KareenaKappor Kahn. Prod, Ajay Devghn Films and Rohit Shetty Productions. 2014. Film

[183] http://www.adweek.com/creativity/indias-first-ad-lesbian-couple-goes-viral-165372/

[184] To watch Myntra's ad, follow the link on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef27m5ocK6Q. Along with this Mytra presented lot issues of video advertisement on the husband and wife relationship,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwbfFZiHxOA , women empowerment,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aG9_2_3RYxw and so on.

[185] To read complete report on this advertisement follow the link:
http://www.afaqs.com/news/story/44539_Homosexuality-in-Indian-Advertising-Then-and-Now.

Fig: 3.10. The advertisement of Fast Track Company on homosexuality.

Fig: 3.11. Tanishq Jewellery Company advertise its   jewellery [1] product by encouraging 'Free Choice to Right' jewellery [1] product by encouraging 'Free Choice to Right'

Fig: 3.12. Allen Solly came out in support of the gay community with a strong poster.

The above examples and arguments illustrate the influence of west and Hollywood industry on Indian society and film industry but these inclinations does not appear in the Sen and Mehta's movies. For instance below are presented film posters of Sen and Mehta's films.
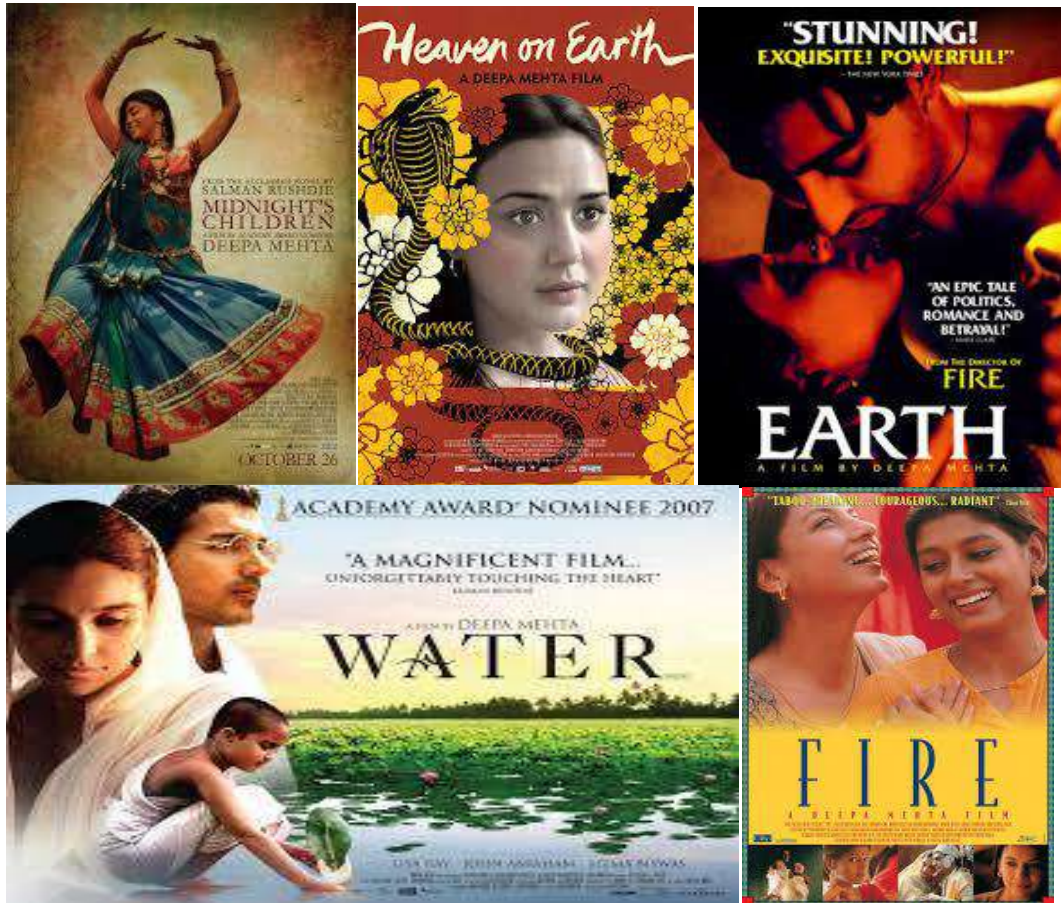
Fig: 3.13. Illustrate film poster directed by Deepa Mehta.

Fig: 3.14. Illustrate Film Poster's directed by Aparna Sen

The above presented film posters of Sen and Mehta's films represent gist of the story and one cannot see the influence of technicalities and visual effect of the West. In most of the women directed films, women centered cinema has less Western inclination. But there are many women centered cinema which includes the elements of fashion, dance, late night parties, etc and those Movies represents the contemporary women's issues of Indian metropolitan society. It is the impact of globalization than west. For instance *Angry Indian Goddess, Fashion* and *Page-3*.

In India development of cinema and development of feminist film movement started in the West and it entered India through Bengal. Many feminists

in the West started questioning the representation of women and they developed a frame work to look into the film and its stereotypes.

It is a known fact that Patriarchy is a system which is globally accepted. Historically, patriarchy has manifested itself in the social, legal, political and economic organization of a range of different cultures. Patriarchy also has a strong influence on modern civilization, although many cultures have moved towards a more egalitarian social system over the past century.

Feminist film theory which emerged in the 70s as a part of 2nd wave feminism in the past 40 years has flourished to become a large field in itself. This period in feminist history looked bright for feminist critics and filmmakers. By the mid- 1970s, feminist film practice, spanning filmmaking collectives, narrative, documentary and experimental films and distribution companies, film festivals, journals, women's studies courses which tracked images of women in Hollywood and European art cinemas or sought to recover lost women's visions by unearthing the feminist subversion of Ida Lupinoor Dorothy Arzner, was firmly institutionalized. They examined the question of 'Feminine Identity'. In Molly Haskell's essay 'From Reference to Rape: The Treatment of women in Movies' , Haskell suggests that the film effects society, through ideological and social construction of women, who are either to be revered (as virgin) or reviled (as a whore). She also points out that:

> …from women's points of view the ten year from, say 1962or 1963 to 1973 have been the most disheartening in screen history. In the roles and prominence accorded to women, the decade began unpromisingly, grew

steadily worse, and at present shows no sign of improving." (Haskell 1973:323)

3.4 Gaze

The major argument of Feminist Film theorists is on the projection of women and the male gaze of the camera. Laura Mulvey's essay, *'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'*[186] is considered as pioneer work for the development of feminist film theory. Visual Pleasure, provides a model that proposes to account for the inherent differences in men's and women's viewing engagements with mainstream cinema and seeks to create a new space to explain women's marginalization.

She uses psychoanalysis to discover, where and how the fascination of film is reinforced by pre-existing pattern of fascination already at work within the individual subject and the social formation that have molded people. Psychoanalytic theory provided "…the ability to see through the surface of cultural phenomena as though with intellectual X-ray eyes. The images and received ideas of run of the mill sexism were transformed into a series of clues for deciphering a nether world, seething with displaced drives and misrecognised desire". (Mulvey, 2010A. 200)[187]. She states that, 'Psychoanalytic theory is thus exclusively here as a political weapon, to demonstrate the way the unconscious of patriarchal society has structured in the film form. (2010A. 200).

She remarks on the strength of psychoanalysis in the way it renders the frustration women experience under 'the phallocentric' order. (1989A. 07). She

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[186]Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". Screen 16.3 Autumn 1975, pp. 6-18. Print.

[187]Furstenau, Marc. Ed. *The Film Theory Reader: Debates and Arguments.* Routledge. London. 2010. Pp. 200-208.

explains the function of women in forming the patriarchal unconscious fold. Firstly, woman symbolizes the castration [188] threat by her real lack of penis. Secondly, she thereby raises her child into the symbolic representative of patriarchy. In other words, making her to internalize her lack, and making herself as a training institute to mould the next generation is the ultimate aim of patriarchy and that is end of women role in society. She tries to explore the condition of women under phallocentric order, which has structured like a language. She is inflected by the theories of Jacques Lacan, who famously stated that 'the unconscious is structured like a language'. (1989A. 08)

> 'woman stand in patriarchal culture as signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning'. (1989A. 09).

According to Mulvey, in the patriarchal system women can live only in relation to 'castration' (male).and cannot go beyond the limits. In the context of Hindi cinema, movie *Sati* (1989) directed by Aparna Sen, explores the condition of women in patriarchal culture, where women cannot go beyond the limits of castration.

Indian society is known for its cultural unity in diversity and also known for its cultural atrocity. The movie *Sati,* is a unique example, to know the depth and width of patriarchal hegemony from puranas to 1980's and 1990's. A woman has to live under the protection of man. This is a general fact that everyone is familiar but this movie gives the evidential fact that, a woman should not only live under

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[188] The removal of the testicles of a male animal or man. "the castration of male calves was initiated to reduce fighting" http://www.dictionary.com/browse/castration

the protection of man, but also under the concept of masculinity. Mehta's *Water* presents the condition of widows in Indian society and religious ideology also potential enough to create hateredness among the people. In *Mr and Mrs. Iyer*, when Meenakshi comes to know that Raja belongs to other religion she feels hesitant to talk to him.

Further, Mulvey's, the second section of the essay discusses Pleasure in looking/ fascination with the human form. Cinema offers pleasure to its audience in a number of ways. Mulvey argues, that the magic of Hollywood, lies in its 'skilled and satisfying manipulation of visual pleasure' (2010A. 202). This is central to what Freud writes in his 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality', called 'Scopophilla' or pleasure in looking. Mulvey uses the term Scopophilla, which mean, "love of looking"; as sexual pleasure derived from looking at sexually stimulating scenes or at another person's genitals; voyeurism. This arises from pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight - separation of the erotic identity of the subject from the object on the screen. 'Subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze'. (2010A. 202). The best example of this is a Peeping Tom, whose sexual satisfaction is wholly dependent on this activity. The mainstream cinema is obviously designed for public exhibition, Mulvey suggest that it effectively positions spectators as Peeping Tom: the darkened auditorium gives each spectator the illusion of being a privileged voyeur, peeping in a private world, separate from the rest of the audience. For instance, in Mehta's *Fire* the character Mundu seeks pleasure by watching videos. In Sen's *Parama* Rahul gets sexually attracted towards Parama and through his camera he gazes Parama's body. In Sen's *Sati* the school master peeps into Uma's room while she changing her cloths. When school master gazes at Uma and Rahul

gaze at Parama, their gaze is the gaze of the audience also who seek pleasure by peeping into somebody's private world.

Mulvey adds that cinema also develops scopohilia in its narcissistic aspects exploiting the viewer's desire to identify with a human face and form that they recognize being similar to their own. She refers to Lacan, who proposed that human identity or the ego is formed during the mirror stage. Lacan says.

> …When an infant first encounters itself as a separate entity, typically through its reflection in a mirror, the infant joyfully identifies with its mirror image. However, this identification is based on an ideal ego- perfect, complete, and in control-at adds with the infant's actual experience of its body, which is at this stage uncoordinated and helpless as well as speechless'. (Shohini.2006.34)[189]

Mulvey connects this to cinema. Sitting in the dark auditorium, fascinated by the images on the screen, the spectator's awareness of himself as a separate entity temporarily dissolves-forgetting who they are and the time and space they inhabit. They become like an infant, whose ego boundaries are yet to be formed. The film re-evoked the moment at which their ego came into being. The spectator identifies with the character on the screen- ego ideals who 'act out a complex process of likeness and difference' in an echo of the infant's misrecognition of itself as the other in the mirror, who is more perfect, complete and in control. (2010A. 204).

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[189] Chaudhuri, Shohini. Feminist Film Theorists. Routledge publication. Newyork. 2006.

The French film theorist Chirstain Metz, liked the cinema screen to a mirror, in his article, 'The Imaginary Signifier'[190], (1975) published in screen. He also draws links between the mirror stage and cinematic perception. 'It is Mulvey's ground breaking analysis that spells out the implications for cinema's organization of sexual difference'. In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. (2010A. 204). She argues, there are two forms of looking involved in the spectator's relationship with the screen. One is active scopophilla, example Peeping Tom. The other arises from Narcissim and the formation of the ego, where the spectator identifies with their on-screen likeness.

In cinema women's role is 'traditional exhibitionistic role'. Her body is projected as a passive erotic object for the gaze of male spectators, so that they can project their fantasies on to her. She connotes *'to-be-looked-at-ness'*. (2010A. 206). On the screen men become an agent of the look, with whom spectators identify to enjoy vicarious control and possession of the woman. In the case of Hindi movies narration we can see that the heroine is an object to be looked at: she is filmed in soft focus, 'coded for strong visual and erotic impact' (2010A.206). In most of the movie narration, the story never demands women body but still as an extra spice masala, it has been added as a essential element of films. As an example, the following poster of Hindi movies illustrate how women in movie posters connotes *'to-be-looked-at-ness'* and the projection of her body as a passive erotic object for the gaze of male spectators.

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[190] Metz, Christian. *The Imaginary Signifier.* Screen, 1975. 16(2) : 14-76.

Fig: 3.15. Illustrate Hindi Movie Posters whch projects women body as a passive erotic object for the male gaze.

Cinema distinguishes its display compared to any other visual form and it uses permutations of the look into different structure, pre-determining how women is to be looked at and it places all spectators in the 'masculinized' position of looking at her.

Mulvey brings out three ways of looking

(1) The camera looks at the event being filmed.

(2) The viewer looks at the final product of the screen.

(3) The characters in the film look at each other.

The convention of the narrative cinema attempts to make the audience forget the camera and the fact that they are watching a film. They work to deny both (1) and (2) in favour of (3) - all in the interests of creating a 'convincing' illusion of a world where the male protagonist becomes the spectator. (2006.35). In the narrative structure too, the male becomes the driving force to lead the story forward, while the female has a passive role, linked to her status as spectacle with 'the active power' of the hero's gaze at the woman, the spectator acquires the illusion of ordering and controlling the narrative themselves. (2010A. 206).

Mulvey relates this voyeurstic strategy to Alfred Hitchcock's films. Technically, they do not belong to film noir. But they depicted voyeurism as man on the right side and women on the other side. She takes up the Rear window[191] (1954), as an example of photojournalist. Jeffries, who has broken his leg in the line of professional duty, is confined to his flat where he spies on his neighbor through his window. It clearly establishes his voyeurism and activity through his hazardous profession and the photographic equipment lying around the flat. At the

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[191] *Rear Window,* dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Pref. James Stewart, Grace Kelly and Wendell Corey. Patron Inc. 1954. Film.

same time, his accident, puts him in the fantasy position like cinema audience, who must also limit their activity of looking (2010A. 207). This function is realistic in Hollywood and in Hindi cinema. The audience view is restricted to photojournalist, in Jeffries's narrative and camera point of view. The window frame of his room is representation of cinema screen for audience; a canvas onto which he projects his repressed desire and fantasies, and using balcony and his long-lens camera to get a better view. He effectively becomes a 'peeping Tom'. Jeffries's girl friend Lisa, a fashion model who is always flaunting her new clothes, according to Mulvey, is an example of exhibitionist-typical women in narrative cinema. However, Jeffries only becomes fascinated with Lisa when she crosses over from the space of the screen. Lisa climbs into a neighbor's apartment to find incriminating evidence of a murder and is surprised by the neighbor when he returns. Thereby, Jeffries is able to see her 'as a guilty intruder exposed by a dangerous man, who threatens to punish her. (2010A. 207)

Mulvey emphasizes the need for women to understand the mechanisms of voyeurism and fetishism that underline the patriarchal unconsciousness of narrative film. At the time of writing 'visual pleasure and narrative cinema' her aims were iconoclastic: to break the codes and destroy narrative pleasure. At the end of her essay she calls for filmmakers to free the look of the camera into dialectics and passionate detachment' (2010A. 209). She hopes for a feminist cinema with radical, modernist practice, in which there is the self-reflection. Sen and Mehta's films made their viewers to think in a radical way. For instance, at the end of Movie *Sati* Uma's death makes all its viewers to think about the system of Sati. The movie *Water* also makes its audience to think rational about the widow's system after seeing widow child condition in the movie. Sen and Mehat's films are

successful in brining rational argument and question the blind belief followed and reinforced in the name of religion, and caste.

3.5 The Female Spectator

After 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative cinema', Mulvey encounters countless reaction for her view, that narrative cinema points its spectators as male, catering only for male fantasies and pleasure. It was felt that Mulvey ignored the circumstances of the female spectator-is she always constructed by the film-text in the same way as the male spectators. If she identifies with the look of the male protagonist, is she, too, impelled to make the female protagonist into an object of erotic desire? What about the 'actual' women in the audience? (Mulvey.2010B. 223)[192]

These debates became the hot topics of feminist film theory during the 1980s. Critics brought out the Hollywood 'woman's film'. From the 1930 and 1940s, to demonstrate that woman's film and women spectator always existed.

Mulvey's '*After thought on visual pleasure and narrative cinema',* was inspired by 'Duel in the Sun'[193] (1981). She reconsiders the role of the female spectator. Here she argues that the woman might enjoy the fantasy of control and freedom over the narrative world, that identification the hero offers and that she can cross the lines of gender in her identification with the male hero because her gender itself is divided.

The American feminist film theorist, Mary Ann Doane, has led debates, which suggest spectator is female and has expanded Mulvey's argument in several

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[192]Furstenau, Marc. Ed. *The Film Theory Reader: Debates and Arguments.* Routledge. London. 2010. Pp. 222-228

[193] *Duel in the Sun,* dir. King Vidor. Perf. Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotton and Gregory Peck. Vanguard Films. 1946. Film.

important ways. In her '*Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator*'[194] (1982). Doane defines the structure of the gaze in terms of close and distance in relation to image rather than, as Mulvey argues, a distinction between male/active and female/passive and the female spectator's oscillation between these two forms of identification. The particular problem posed by the female spectator, Doane claims, lies in the fact that woman functions as the image, resulting in a potential failure of distance between spectator and screen. The female spectator has two options.

The first is to over – identify with the woman on the screen, becoming emotionally over-involved with the heroine. The second, equally 'untenable' from feminist perspective is for the female spectator to take the heroine as her own narcissistic object of desire. (Choudhri. 2006. 36)

Doane, suggests that a way out of this confusion for the female spectator is to read the on-screen image of her likeness as a masquerade. Doane, analyses a photograph, '*Un Regard Oblique*' by Robert Doisneau, to illustrate the way Hollywood integrates the male gaze into its narrative and at the same time denies the female gaze.

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[194] Sue, Thornham. (ed). *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader.* Edinburgh University Press. 1999. Pp. 131-145

Fig: 3.16. The Photograph, '*Un Regard Oblique'* by Robert Doisneau[195]

The photograph depicts a man and woman looking at a shop window. The woman stands in the centre and the photograph appears to emphasize her look. However, the real power of gaze lies with the man, who stands in the corner of the picture. His gaze, cutting across and effectively erasing the woman's gaze, is aimed at painting of a female nude. Until picture that captures the woman's attention, which is absent to the viewer, the painting of the nude is prominently displayed in the photograph. Therefore, despite her narrative centering, the female subject is overtaken by the picture as object of the male gaze; the photograph is, in effect, a joke at her expression. For Doane, the photograph exemplifies the sexuality and the sexually differentiated structures of looking inscribed in cinema. The fetishistic representation of nude female body fully in view, insures a masculinization of the spectatorial position. The spectator optimizes masculine

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[195]https://www.google.co.in/search?q=The++Photograph,+%E2%80%98Un+Regard+Oblique%E2%80%99+by+Robert+Doisneau&tbm=isch&imgil=FZYXyajMIlSJxM%253A%253Bi-

gaze and masculine gaze becomes a truth and a strong ideology which excises its power in social order and it turns as a common sense.

This process, as Gramsci, states is the dominant ideology which unconsciously takes the consensus of a large group of people to rule and control them. The male gaze, through its visual forms, unconsciously takes the consensus of female spectator to accept and believe according to the male gaze. Mulvey, and other thinkers encourage women to understand the politics of male gaze and the development of alternative narrative and representation of women.

In 1985, Teresa de Lauretis, in her essay "Rethinking Women's Cinema" approaches the idea of a feminist aesthetic from a slightly different angle.

> …When I look at the movies, film theorists try to tell me that the gaze is male, the camera eye is masculine, and so my look is also not a women's. But I don't believe them anyone, because now I think I know what it is to look at a film as a woman. (Chaudhuri. 2006. 68).

For de Lauretis, it is whom the film addresses above all other factors that initiates a film into a feminist aesthetic or de-aesthetic as the pursuit. For her a film becomes feminist when it is able to address the spectator through a spectrum of subject positions. For de Lauretis in order to call a cinema as feminist cinema it should address the spectator or its viewers by placing them in the subject position. In Mehta's *Water*, when Chuya is forced into prostitution Shakuntala runs away with Chuya and hands her to Narayan who is a Gandhian follower. Shakuntala breaks her silence against the oppression in the name of window system. She takes up the subject position to give better life for Chuya. This movement of breaking silence of Shakuntala and victimization of widow child makes its viewers to think

about and question the widow system. In *Fire,* as Radha and Sita realize and fall into homosexual relation, they face hard opposition by their husbands and family. They come out of their family and meet each other in the temple. Here Radha and Sita decide what they want for their lives and they take decision placing them in the subject position. When Radha and Sita decide to face the family and society by standing in subject position, they represent a section of the lesbian in the society. This movie places lesbian community in the subject position. In *Heaven on Earth*, when Rocky questions the chastity of Chand, she holds the snake and proves her chastity and decides to leave Rocky and Canada. In *Parama*, Parama breaks so called ideal wife and a new relationship is forged between the mother and the daughter. The daughter identifies herself with the mother and Parama finally celebrates her liberation and leads an individual life. In *36 Chowringhee Lane* Miss Stoneham tells herself that she is rooted in Calcutta and she will live there till her end. The line she quotes from *King Lear* spell out her brave decision to stay in Calcutta. Miss Stoneham's decision places many minor communities and age old people in the spectrum of subject position. These movies of Sen and Mehta were successful in developing its women characters as individual and who can see themselves in the subject position and they took their decision and made their own choice about their own life. In different circumstances these women characters have been subjected to oppression and they have been passive sufferers. These movies were potentially created women cinema through their characters.

De Lauretis, offers her feminist cinema definition in contradiction to the liberal 'feminist' films that were being pandered to women during the 1980s, like

Silk wood[196] *or Places in the Heart*[197]. (Radmacher, Kimberely. 2004. 30)   De Lauretis suggests that Lizzie Borden's film *Born in Flames*[198] is an ideal example of the feminist de-aesthetic, arguing that the film succeeds in the crucial radical feminist understanding that…

> …the female subject is en-gendered, constructed and defined in gender across multiple representations of class, race, language, and social relations; and that, therefore, differences among women are differences within women, which is why feminism can exist despite those differences and, as they are just beginning to understand, can they continue to exist without them? (1985. 159)

Through her formulation of a feminist de-aesthetic, de Lauretis sets out to address a number of complaints argued within feminist film criticism. She works toward finding strength in the multiple voices of women from different cultures and backgrounds,   while her definition of an anti-aesthetic is an attempt to deal with the problematic   notion that women filmmakers by simply picking up a camera, whether using avant-garde or realist forms will naturally make something akin to feminine films. Ultimately, for de Lauretis,

> …the emphasis must be shifted away from the artist behind the camera, the gaze, or the text as origin and determination of meaning, toward the wider public sphere of cinema as a social technology: we must develop our understanding of cinema's implication in other modes of cultural

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[196] *Silk Wood,* dir. Mike Nichols. Pref. Meryl Streep, Kurt Russell and cher. ABC Motion Pictures, United States. 1983. Film.
[197] *Places in the Heart,* dir. Robert Benton. Perf, Sally Field, Lindsay Crouse and Ed Harris. Arlene Donovan. United States. 1984. Film.
[198] *Born in Flames,* dir. Lizzie Borden. Perf. Honey, Adele Betei and Kathryn Bigelow. Lizzie Borden. 1983. Film.

representation, and its possibilities of both production   and counter production of social vision. (1985. 162)

She is introducing a potentially radical concept here, shifting the discussion away from metaphysics into the lived experience of our interaction with visual cultures. But her suggestion that we do not worry about who is behind the camera takes her argument once more away from the experiential and radical possibilities of the camera, back into a disconnected philosophy. It may be rhetorically ideal to deny a universal feminine quality to women-made films, but strategically, this position does nothing to address the lack of women filmmakers in the first place.

De Lauretis' analysis is an important one, because she moves the burden regarding elitist artistic formalism off the shoulders of would-be feminist filmmakers. But she jumps the gun when says that whether a woman is behind the camera is of little concern. All discussions of what makes a film feminist becomes moot if only men, even sympathetic men, have access to that technology. To say that a woman picking up a camera is a political act is not to simply fall victim to biological determinism. Rather, it is to say that the discursively constructed   female subject will express herself in a certain way. (2004. 34) In order to effect change in the linguistic realm, women must be able to lend their multitude of voices realized through a whole host of experiences to a dialogic model, which re-visits, re-creates and creates in response to mainstream as well as radical filmic texts.

As de Lauretis's argues, a feminist film and feminist film makers must create a voice to women and bring out representation of women parallel to mainstream cinema. De Lauretis claims that it is the responsibility of film makers and directors to represent women and gender beyond these sexist ideology.

Mehta and Sen's movies potentially give voice to women and their cinema represented women as different and parallel to mainstream cinema. Even though Mehta and Sen's films are parallel to mainstream cinema there are some instances which are similar to the main stream cinema like melodramatic sequences, and picturing love making scenes. Here the question arises in two ways, *firstly*, who holds the responsibility or authority of a film. *Secondly*, is the director only person who controls the entire film formation and process? Then who is the author of the film? And what is Auteur?[199]

3.6 Auteur

As Bordwell and Thompson put it, "Within most film industries, the director is considered the single person most responsible for the look and sound of the finished Film". (Meskin, 2011.14). The definition of an auteur has been debated upon since 1940s. Andre Bazin and Roger Leenhardt presented the theory that it is the director who brings the film to life and uses the film to express his/her thoughts and feelings about the subject matter as well as a world view as an auteur. An auteur can use lighting, camerawork, staging and editing to add to their vision. The tradition of thinking about film in terms of authorship or creative individuality first gained prominence in France with the film journal that Andre Bazin co-founded in 1951. Cahiers du Cinéma. Auteur theory draws on the work of a group of cinema enthusiasts who wrote for Cahiers du Cinéma and argued that films should reflect a director's personal vision. Filmmakers such as Akira Kurosawa, Satyajit Ray, Alfred Hitchcock, Howard Hawks, and Jean Renoir are known as

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[199] Auteur = a film director whose personal influence and artistic control over his or her films are so great that he or she may be regarded as their author, and whose films may be regarded collectively as a body of work sharing common themes or techniques and expressing an individual style or vision. Etherington-Wright, Cristine and Doughty, Ruth. Understanding Film Theory. Palgrave macmillan Publication. 2011.pp. 03.

absolute "auteur" of their films. Although Bazin, co- founder of the Cahiers, provided a forum for auteurism to flourish, he explained his concern about its excesses in his article "On the Auteur Theory" (Cahiers du Cinéma, 1957).

Another element of auteur theory comes from Alexandre Astruc's notion of the caméra-stylo or camera-pen in his essay, "The Birth of a New Avant-Garde"[200]which encourages directors to wield cameras, as writers use pens and to guard against the hindrances of traditional storytelling. (Jones, Katherine Thomas. 2008.40). He imagines that, "Cinema will eventually break free of the demands of classical narrative and images and will become a flexible means of writing with the same expressive power, complexity, and subtly, of written language".[201]

By common perception the making of a film calls for the contribution of many people such as actors, screenplay, music, sound, cinematography, production design, music and editing. The dominant approach to film today believes that the director is ultimately responsible for the finished film. The auteur critics took the concomitant responsibility of honoring all films of a single director through a systematic reading of each. This helps in bringing out characteristic theme, structures and formal qualities. (Chatterji. 2002. 09)

Later many critics attempted to direct auteur theory, and the major argument came from Edward Buscombe's work "Idea of Authorship"[202] who said that question of what an *auteur* is and why the cinema should be discussed largely in terms of individual directors are ones that are only answered by implication.

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[200] The essay "The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La Camera-Stylo", appeared in the book. *The French New Wave: Critical Landmarks.* Edited by, GinetleVincendeau and Peter Graham. Published by British Film Institute. 2009.

[201] The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La Camera-Stylohttp://www.newwavefilm.com/about/camera-stylo-astruc.shtml

[202]Buscombe, Edward. "Ideas of Authorship", Screen, vol.14, No.3, Atumn, 1973, p.76.

(Buscombe, Edward. 1973.78). To support his argument, he analyses the example of Andre Bazin's comparison between Hitchcock and John Huston. Distinguishing between Hitchcock and Huston, Bazin said that, Hitchcock, was a true auteur. But Huston was only a metteuren scene, who had 'no true style'. (Truffaut. No-31). Huston merely adapts, through very skillfully, the material given to him, instead of transforming into something genuinely his own. Truffaut[203] and the members of the Cahiers recognized that movie-making was an industrial process. However, they proposed an ideal to strive for, encouraging the director to use the commercial apparatus as a writer uses a pen, and, through the miseen scène, imprint his or her vision on the work (minimizing the role of the screenwriter). Recognizing the difficulty of reaching this ideal, they valued the work of directors who came close.

The "auteur" approach was adopted in English-language film criticism in the 1960s. In the UK, Movie adopted Auteurism, while in the U.S. Andrew Sarris introduced it in the essay, "Notes on the Auteur Theory" in 1962[204]. This essay is where the term, "Auteur theory", originated. To be classified as an "auteur". As critics pointed out, Sarris was famous for mistranslating Truffaut's Auteur policy or Auteur Theory. (Wright. 2011.08)[205]. Truffaut did not intend for creating his work to form the basis of a theory. It was a framework for critical approach for reading film. He put forward two principles to read films.

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[203] Francois Truffaut: "une certain tendance du cinema francais" in Cahiers du Cinema , No. 31.
[204] Sarris, Andrew. "Towards a Theory of Film History" in Bill Nichols (ed.).Movie and Method. Vol.1. seagull Books, Calcutta. 1993.
[205] Wright, C. Etherington and Ruth Doughty. *Understanding FilmTheory.* Macmillan Palgrave. USA. 2011.

a. *Mise-en-scene*[206]is crucial to the reading of cinema and is essential in film analysis and criticism.

b. The director's personal expression is key in distinguishing whether they should be afforded the title of auteur.

Truffaut was concerned with film style (*Mise-en-scene and Thematics)* rather than plot (content). (2011.08). Sarris begins his essay "Towards a Theory of Film History"[207] by pointing the flaws of Truffaut's thesis. Sarris questions, can a director be the author of a film and can a director be solely responsible for its different quality. He states that Auteur Theory 'makes it difficult to think of a bad director making a good film and almost impossible to think of a good director making a bad one' (2011.08). Sarris interprets Truffaut's Auteur Theory in terms of concentric circles[208].
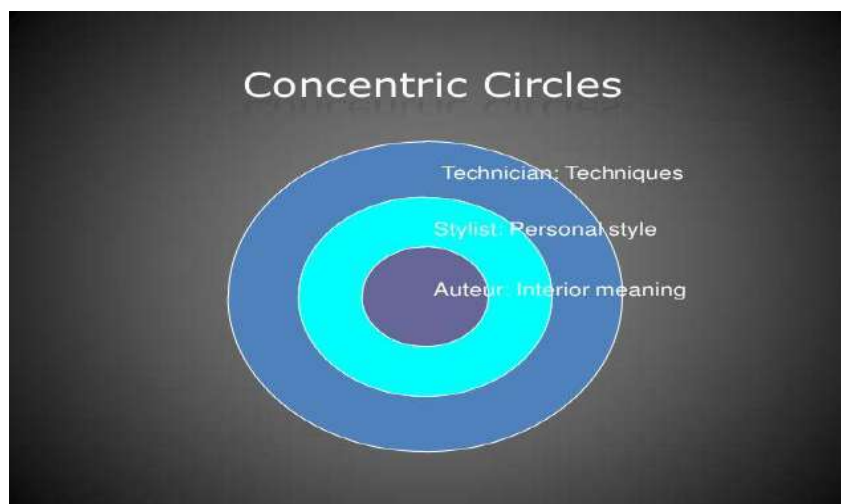
Fig 3.17

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[206] The term Mise-en-scene literally translates as 'put into the scene'. Originated from the theatre, it describes everything that appears in the frame. This can be divided into four specific components: 1. Set design (props and décor) 2. Lighting (and shadow) 3. Acting (Movement and gesture, not dialogue) 4. Costume and make-up.

[207] Andrew Sarris: "Towards a Theory of Film History" in Bill Nichols (ed) *Movies and Methods* – Vol.I. Seagull Books, Calcutta, 1993. P.237.

[208] The above Sarris Concentric Circles picture as taken from the following link; https://www.google.co.in/search?biw=1366&bih=589&tbm=isch&sa=1&q=sarris+concentric+circl es&oq=sarris+concentric+circles

'The outer circle as technique; the middle circle, as a personal style and the inner circle, interior meaning' (2011.08). For Sarris, a director to achieve the status of auteur, would have to be accomplished in all areas. For Sarris, most important is inner circle. Many directors will achieve outer circles but if a director consistently attains 'interior meaning', this interior meaning suggest the work of an auteur. Sarris raises the important debate concerning the *Mettur-en-scene*[209]. Sarris says, let film speak for themselves – as a way to explore the possibilities, rather than the demonstration of method. Sarris points out that, 'the auteur theory is theory of film history rather than of films prophecy and auteur theory claims neither the gift of prophecy nor the option of extra-cinematic perception'. (Sarris. 1993. 243)

For Indian directors, as Chatterji also opinions,

> …auteur theory almost always offers the option of extra-cinematic perception, an option that they almost always choose to accept. Within the Indian ambience, its cinema – mainstream, mid-mainstream, holds the unique position within the wide canvas of world cinema – in terms of audience pull, audience in quantitative terms, number of films made per annum, social impact of films on lifestyle, costumes, etc. (2002. 06)

In the general context, a person behaves, functions and is influenced by his/her social; and political environment that shapes his behavior. As Goran Therborn said, …"Ideologies are not fixed and invariable. A single human being may be as an almost unlimited number of subjects and in the course of a single human life a person can be subjected to a large number of subjectivities". (1980.83). The Indian film critic Shoma A. Chatterji, said, "An Indian director

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[209]Metteuren scène (literally "scene-setter") is a phrase that refers to the miseen scène of a particular film director. It suggests that the director has technical competence when it comes to film directing, but does not add personal style to the aesthetic of the film

partly steams from the social and political environment that shapes him. Thus he keeps on changing his style in keeping with his choice of subject" (2002. 07). A director or any person does not function in vacuum. He is always influenced by his social context and 'social context of the films that he makes' (2002. 07). A director or a film maker tend to produce the film and change his/her subject style in keeping his choice of subject. As Rajashri Das Gupta writes on Aparna Sen's *Mr and Mrs. Iyer* film based on Sen's personal interview,

> …Aparna's intention was not to make a film on religious intolerance, but the subtext crept in. Sen had personally been perturbed by the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1992 and was very concerned about the spread of Hindu fundamentalism in the country. The germ of the story was based again on the real life incident when a bus was stopped near Ranchi in Jharkhand and young woman and her baby were caught in subsequent rioting. (Aparna Sen. 28)[210].

This indicates that a film might also take place due to real incident and based on the demand of the story a director changes his style for his choice of subject. The director changes his stylistic approaches, the music, cinematography and editing according to the demand of individual film character. The Indian cinema (irrespective of genre) offers innumerable examples, where the director combines with himself, the role of writing the story, the screen play, sometimes even the dialogue, and often acts in some important role in the film. Indian director makes films based on…

    a.   Their own story and screen play.

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[210]Kabir, NasreenMunni. (ed). *Women in Indian Film*. Zubaan Original, Non-Fiction. India.

    b. A story written by someone else, who may or may not also write the screen play.

    c. A story taken from some rich piece of literature in any of the Indian languages.

    d. A story and screen play written by the director himself. (chatterji. 2002.10)

Satyajit Ray, in the early phase of his film direction relied on… Bengali literature for the subject of his films. The only film he made based on his own story and script was *Kanchenjungha.* A noted film maker Gautam Ghose, based his films often on literature. But along with directing his films, he also took the responsibilities of cinematography and music.

For instance, Mehta's *Fire* is written by herself but *Water* was written by Anurag Kashyap (Indian film maker and producer), *Earth* is based on Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* originally published as *Ice-Candy-Man,* but *Heaven on Earth* was by written Mehta herself. Mehta's cinematography was done by British cinematographer Giles Natgens. In the case of Sen, *36 Chowringhee Lane* was written and directed by herself, *Sati* was written by Sen but was based on a story by Kamal Kumar Majumdar and the screen play was written by both Sen and Arun Banerjee. Her *Mr and Mrs. Iyer* was based on the real incident, *15th Park Avenue* and *Parama* is written and directed by Sen and cinematography done by the others. Sen in her interview said,

> …No matter how much you believe in the auteur theory, a film is just not a single person's job – it's an orchestrated effort. So any award is recognition of the work done not only by me but by my team. (Goenka, 2014. 376)

The films of Sen and Mehta stand for diversity, non-conformity and variations. The subjects of Sen and Mehta's films are not comparable to each other. Even though they appear as women centered cinema they represent women of different age, class, caste and race. Sen's *15th Park Avenue* and Mehta's *Fire* are new to entire Indian film industry and they have the capacity to compete at the international stage. Even though Mehta's *Fire* had created a controversy we cannot deny the fact that it is the reality in two different ways. Firstly, women's oppression in Indian middle class families in terms of labour and sexuality and secondly, subjugation of homosexuality with the domination of heterosexuality.

According to Sarris, auteur theory is not so much a theory as it is an attitude, a table of values that convert film history into directorial autobiography. A strong director allows the personality of others to run rampant. Edward Buscombe proposes other ways of looking at cinema.(1973. 80) They are –

a.   The examination of the effects of cinema on society.

b.   The effects of the society on the cinema. (Influence of ideology, economics, history, etc).

c.   A sub-division

d.   The effects of another film.

3.7. Conclusion.

Sen and Mehta's directorial films blend with *Cariers du Cinema's* conception of Authorship[211] and Boscombe's extra – cinematic perceptions. As Chatterji opines, Sen's films and Indian cinema in a larger context irrespective of stream, are more in keeping with Bazin who combined the auteur approach with

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[211] Discussed in detail while dealing with concentric circles of Sarris, who says, inner circle is most important for a film maker to attain interior meaning. For Sarris inner meaning suggest the work of an auteur.

the 'acknowledgement of the forces conditioning the individual artist'. (2002. 09). But one dilemma remains with the argument of Sarris who says, "If director and other artists cannot be wrenched from their historical environments, aesthetics is reduced to a subordinate branch of ethnography". (Sarris. 1971. 132-133)[212]. Sarris argument is absolutely right, when he says a director must come out of his/her influential background and ideology. But as it is discussed in the second chapter of this thesis, it is not simple to come out of the historical, socially influenced ideological backgrounds. But can't a director come out of the ideological background and create an aesthetic? Sen and Mehta's films have made an attempt to come out of their historical and social influence and their cinema created women and gender centered cinema parallel to main stream cinema and opposed the patriarchal ideology which worked in favour of majority, class and for an elite group.

Sen and Mehta's films have made an attempt to come out of their historical and social environment, but what are the other aspects and elements that remained under the influence of patriarchy and what are the reasons for it and are Sen and Mehta's films able to create women's cinema as a counter cinema will be examined in the next chapter with reference to Peter Wollen's conception of Counter cinema.

The previous chapter attempted a theoretical overview if ideas generated for film theories. It coursed through feminist film theorists like Mulvey, De Lauretis' and other American feminist film scholars attempting to bring the fore front the prevalence of the 'male gaze' in cinema both in Hollywood and the Hindi film industry.

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[212] Katz, John Stuart. (ed) *Perspectives on the study of Film.* Boston. 1971

This chapter intends to move ahead in trying to fuse available feminist film theories and analyze the movies taken for study. More importantly it aims to understand 'gaze', 'spectator' and 'auteur' to inch closer to 'counter cinema', which is the major area of study. Through an analysis of 'gaze', 'spectator' and 'auteur' this chapter is a precursor to more concepts which crop up in the course of study and would be analyzed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER-4

WOMEN CINEMA AS A COUNTER CINEMA

4.1. Introduction

This complex interaction of looks is specific to film. The first blow against the monolithic accumulation of traditional film conventions (already undertaken by radical film-maker) is to free the look of the camera into its materiality in time and space and the look of the audience into dialectics and passionate detachment. There is no doubt that this destroys the satisfaction, pleasure and privilege of the 'invisible guest', and highlights the way film has depended on voyeuristic active/passive mechanisms.

Laura Mulvey. 2010.208

Many feminist film theorists, directors and critics have pointed out the "Male Gaze" that prevails in classical Hollywood film industry. Boetticher summarizes that, "What counts is what the heroine provokes, or rather what she represents. She is the one, or rather the love or fear she inspires in the hero, or else the concern he feels for her, who makes him act the way he does. In herself the woman has not the slightest importance". (Erens, 1990:16).

Mulvey argues that Hollywood cinema generally centralizes the male in the narrative which the audience is assumed to relate to whilst woman are positioned for visual impact and erotic pleasure. (2010. 209) Mulvey emphasizes the need for women to understand the mechanisms of voyeurism and fetishism that underline the patriarchal unconscious of narrative film. At the time of writing 'visual pleasure and narrative cinema' her aims were iconoclastic: an order to break the codes and destroy narrative pleasure. (2010. 212) At the end of her essay she calls

for filmmakers to free the look of the camera into dialectics and passionate detachment". (2010. 212). She hopes for a feminist cinema with radical, modernist practice, in which the self-reflection will be made. This would lead to the foundation of alternative cinema, which could destroy the narrative pleasure.

In the early 1970s, American feminist scholars attempted to analyze the depiction of women character in a particular film narrative or genre and of stereotypes as a reflection of society's view on women. Works such as Marjorie Rosen's *Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies, and the American Dream (1973)* (Chaudhuri. 2009.41) and Molly Haskell's *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in Movies (1974)* analyze how the women portrayed in film related to the broader historical context, the stereotypes depicted, the extent to which the women were shown as active or passive, and the amount of screen time given to women. Haskell suggest that the film affects society, through ideological and social construction of women, who are either to be revered (as virgin) or reviled (as a whore). (Braudy and Cohen, 2004.827)[213].

Johnston argues that a feminist cinema should be a counter cinema and has the potential to posit an alternative to Hollywood films both in rejecting its content and means of production. (1999. 28). Others have argued that in embracing the strategies of the avant-garde the films actually lose some of their political impact rather than posing an alternative they lose their audience. (1999. 28) Counter-cinema is the rough grouping of films, film makers, and institutions which attempt to work against the formalist and ideological domination of Hollywood cinema. This is quite a broad definition. It effectively means that counter cinema includes films that do not follow linear plots, have stereotyped characters or are hyper-

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[213] Braudy and Cohen. *Film Theory and Critisim.* Sixth edition. Oxford University Press. 2004

violent. In fact, one could say that counter cinema does not strictly exists as one concept. Some research suggests that it started with feminist film. (Gurkan and Ozan. 2015. 76).[214] As Claire Johnston said women's cinema could function as "counter cinema" through consciousness of the means of production and opposition of sexist ideologies, films made by women have the potential to posit an alternative to traditional Hollywood films.

The expansion of feminism and the women's movement alternative to avant-garde cinema started flourishing. This can be divided into two forms: documentary and avant-garde. British film has a strong documentary tradition, which was to some extent socialist-influenced, and feminist film initially saw documentary as a way of presenting the "truth" about the lives of women. During the 1960s American, avant-garde film-makers produced many innovative and controversial films, some of the most well known being 'gay' and 'camp'. Films challenged traditional stereotypes of gender roles such as Andy Warhol's *Lonesome Cowboys* (1968) and Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (1965). Also in Europe, avant-garde film had been taken up by a number of film- makers, Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut being its most famous exponents. Although gender roles in European films tended to be stereotypical, some feminist film-makers saw the potential of avant-garde film as a means of breaking away from the constraints of traditional cinema (Nelmes, 1996: 228)[215]

The beginning and development of women cinema as counter cinema is dated back to 1920 and 1930.

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[214] Gurkan, Hasan and Ozan, Rengin."Feminist Cinema as Counter Cinema: Is Feminist Cinema Counter Cinema?". Communication and Media Technologies, Vol:5, Issue:3 July.2015.

[215] Nelmes, Jill. Introduction to Film Studies, London: Routledge. 1996.

- *1930's to 1970's*: During this period, conception of counter cinema appears against patriarchal and sexist ideology of men. It considered biological men as the direct enemy for women. Between 1970's and 1975 it appears that women's cinema developed as a counter cinema against men. So it appeared to be the struggle of women against men. This notion of women's cinema changed drastically by the significant work of Laura Mulvey.

- *1970's Onwards*: During this period, many American, British and French scholars were looking for a different way of approach for women's cinema. But the seminal work of Laura Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative cinema' brought complete changes in the view of conception of women cinema. Mulvey's psychological approach tells how men and women are affected and influenced by the dominant ideology of a section of sexist.

After the work of Mulvey, it was seen that women's cinema is not against the biological men but it is against the ideological patriarchy system. (Discussed in detail in third chapter).

Clarie Johnston's in her essay, writes how women have been stereotyped in film since the days of the silent cinema, and argues for a cinema that challenges such narrow conventions but which will also be entertaining. In mainstream cinema, woman is seen as an extension of a male vision and Johnston criticizes the narrow role she is given in film: 'It is probably true to say that despite the enormous emphasis placed on woman as spectacle in the cinema, woman as woman is largely absent' (1999. 35).The works of two female Hollywood

directors, Dorothy Arzner[216] and Ida Lupino[217], are refered to by Johnston, who suggests that their films partially subvert the patriarchal viewpoint. An understanding of how these films work could be important for feminist film practice in breaking through and challenging the ruling ideology. She argues for a woman's cinema that will work collectively in groups with no hierarchical structure but also more conventionally, using film as a political tool through an entertainment. The importance of developing a film practice that questions and challenges mainstream dominant cinema movement which will have links with avant-garde and left-wing film (1999.36).

Johnston emphasizes the importance of developing cinematic practice which is opposed to the basis of the dominant cinema and its male-domination. She called this "counter cinema" which will be related to avant-garde and left-wing. According to Barthes, indicator of "woman" is analyzed as a structure, a password or a tradition. This indicator represents the ideological meaning of "woman" for man. When women associate with each other do not have a meaning: women are presented as "non-male" negatively. "Woman as woman" does not exist inside the movie. (2015. 77)[218] The difference here is to say that it is to be configured, rather than addressing the reality of the cinema as a phenomenon that reflects the reality. Classical cinema never shows the tools of the production. The narrator of the classical cinema presents the artificial "woman" image as

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[216] Dorothy Arzner was an American film director whose career in feature films spanned from the silent era of the late 1920s into the early 1940s. In fact, Dorothy Arzner was the only female director working in the 1930s in the United States. Her directed films are, Too Much Johnson (1919, The Six Best Cellars (1920), Blood and Sand (1922) and others.

[217] Ida Lupino was an Anglo-American actress and singer, who became a pioneering director and producer—the only woman working within the 1950s Hollywood studio system to do so. With her independent production company, she co-wrote and co-produced several of her own social-message films, and was the first woman to direct a film noir, The Hitch-Hiker, in 1953.

[218] Gurkan, Hasan and Ozan, Rengin. "Feminist cinema as Counter Cinema?" Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies. Volume: 5, Issue – 3 July. 2015.

mature, real and attractive. This is the eyewash of classical cinema.

She traces the myth created by women character on women. She discusses the reason for the development of stereotyping of women than men and how media encouraged to carry the stereotype of women.

> Why the image of man underwent rapid differentiation, while the primitive stereotyping of women in the cinema takes as its starting point a monolithic view of the media as repressive and manipulative.[219]

She specifies two reasons for continuation of stereotype of women. *Firstly*, Iconography, is a particular kind of sign which support the conventions within the commercial genre. For instance, depicting women character in the film as whore, Prostitute with particular gesture and by focusing on some part of the women's body. *Secondly,* she identifies wide differentiation between men's role and women's role in the history of film presents sexist ideology. This sexist ideological cinema places men inside history and women as ahistorical. (1999. 29). Male dominated sexist ideology presented women as eternal and unchanging. The changes takes place in terms of women's dress fashion and exposes of their body. Another important element which became important tool in constructing stereotypes against women is the camera.

> What camera in fact grasps is the natural world of the dominant ideology. Women's cinema cannot afford such idealism; the truth of our oppression cannot be captured on celluloid with the innocence of the camera. It has to be constructed/manufactured. (1999. 30)

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[219] Clarine, Johnston. (ed). *Notes on Women's Cinema.* Society for Education in Film and Television. London. 1973. Pp 24-31

The camera symbolically represents the mindset and view point of the person or director. In an ideologically dominated society, domination and ideology is naturally captured by the camera and presents the sexist ideology as a truth. In the mean time patriarchal ideology neither represents nor captures the oppression of women. But it improvises elements of fashion and male satisfying images of women. She says, 'this male bourgeois can be disrupted by creating the new meanings. in other words, 'reality is always adaptive. (Wollen. 78).

According to Mulvey, 'alternative cinema provides a space for a cinema to be born which is radical in both; a political and an aesthetic sense and challenges the basic assumptions of the mainstream film'. (2010.208). Mulvey refers to an alternative cinema as that, it is important to understand the role of classical cinema in supporting the phallocentric/patriarchal role of the male gaze. Mulvey emphasizes the importance of scopophilia in the forms of voyeurism and narcissism among cinema's many possible pleasures. Classical cinema encourages these pleasures through formal and narrative structures that emphasize an active/male and passive/female role in film. This regards the process of viewing a film under these structures that establishes a tension between the spectator in direct scopophilic contact with the female form displayed for his enjoyment (connoting male fantasy) and that of the spectator fascinated with the image of his like set in an illusion of natural space, and through him gaining control and possession of the woman. Thus, "[g]oing far beyond highlighting a woman's to-be-looked-at-ness, cinema builds the way she is to be looked at into the spectacle itself" (2010:205). This gaze, or look, structured by the filmic event, has three different expressions; "that of the camera as it records the profilmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters at each

other within the screen illusion" (2010:208). Any film belonging to Mulvey's alternative cinema must work to reject each of these looks in its formal and narrative construction.

4.2. Counter Cinema

Counter cinema effectively means, a film which does not follow liner plots and which presents stereotyped characters. In general, counter cinema does not exist as an independent theory. (Gurkan and Ozan. 2015. 76).

In order to define counter cinema, it's important to understand 'Against what'? and 'Against whom'?. The simplest answer would be 'main stream, popular cinema and its imitators. Counter cinema disconnects itself from classic cinema from its ideological point of view.

According to Wollen, counter cinema focuses on the roles and the relations of people, based on the ambiguity. Counter cinema does not offer consistent plot as traditional cinema. The problems and troubles may be solved or unsolved in counter cinema. The main causal device to solve these problems is not the hero, the coincidences or unexpected news as in the real life (Gurkan and Ozan. 2015. 81). With these considerations in mind it is useful to consider the overlaps of Peter Wollen's counter-cinema with Mulvey's alternative cinema. As Wollen argues in Godard and Counter Cinema: Vent D'est, "Godard... developed a counter-cinema whose values are counter posed to those of orthodox cinema." (2015. 81). Wollen goes on to argue that for every important value of traditional cinema, there is a counter cinema narrative of which he lists seven, Godard creates and presents a contrary value. Thus Godard's films may offer us an example of a film that transcends the phallocentric/patriarchal order, as it is of the cinematic values.

(Mulvey, 2009: 713). However the terms may not be immediately interchangeable. As Wollen suggests, Godard; "is mistaken if he thinks that …a counter cinema can have an absolute existence. It can only exist in relation to the rest of the cinema." (2002. 74).

As Wollen suggested Godard's conception of counter cinema has no meaning without the existence of the traditional cinema. This raises the question of whether this relative existence allows room for the promotion of the gaze in his work. It is necessary to consider each expression of the look in cinema and to see whether Godard manges to reject each. Mulvey has herself written extensively on Godard and her own conclusions often emphasize the contradictions and complexity in the representation of women in his work. The contradictions apparent within Godard's depiction of women, the contradiction between his use of the female form to signify sexuality and his rigorous questioning of the film form itself constitutes a statement of the confusions and difficulties surrounding images of woman. This lack of coherence is a productive spring-board as a starting-point for understanding how and why woman's image accumulates its particular meanings and also as a basis for further development, the construction of a cinema which challenges those meanings and assumptions (Mulvey, 1989: 62).

The differences between Hollywood Narrative and counter cinema Narrative. (1972:120-129), according to Wollen.

Hollywood Narrative	Counter Cinema Narrative
Narrative Transitivity	Narrative Intransitivity
Identification	Estrangement
Transparency	Foregrounding
Single diegesis	Multiple diegesis
Closure	Aperture
Pleasure	Unpleasure
Fiction	Reality

Narrative Transitivity v/s Narrative Intransitivity: "(One thing following another v. gaps and interruptions, episodic construction, undigested digression.) By narrative transitivity, Wollen means a sequence of events in which each unit, each function that changes the course of the narrative follows the one preceding it according to a chain of causation. For Wollen Hollywood cinema as a chain

> …is usually psychological and is made up, roughly speaking, of a series of coherent motivations. The beginning of the film stars with establishment, which sets up the basic dramatic situation. A kind of chain reaction then follows, until at the end a new equilibrium is restored. However, in the narration of counter cinema, there are separate areas which interrupt the story. Irrelevant events supplant each other as in the real life". (2002.74)

However, counter cinema narration, should create separate areas which interrupts the cinema. In Hindi mainstream cinema, the story narration follows a sequence of events. One event leads to another. This chain of events helps to develop the narration and story line. In other words it leads to a series of coherent

motivations. In general, the entry of a film hero, is always positioned as an angry young man, who jumps form a multiplex building, fights and kills people. A new structure is formed to lead the narration and hero's struggle to pursue it along with romantic songs and dance in the narration. In the context of art cinema or feminist cinema in general, in most of the films is the transitivity, which is presented in as chain of reaction from beginning to an end.

Peter Wollen's second conception is **Identification v/s Estrangement:** (Empathy, emotional involvement with a character v. direct address, multiple and divided characters, commentary) (wollen. 2002. 74). For Wollen,

> Identification is a well-known mechanism though, of course, in the cinema there are various special features which mark cinematic identification off as a distinct phenomenon. First of all, there is the possibility of double identification with the star and/or with the character. Secondly, the identification can only take place in a situation of suspended belief. Third, there are spatial and temporal limits either to the identification or, at any rate, to the presence of the image. In the narrative form, counter cinema breaks the identification and provides estrangement. Such as the actors speak to the audiences directly, real people in fictional form, audio tape destroy the identification. (2002. 85)

Indian film industry has a great history of fan-followers who blindly follow and worship their hero/heroine. In many cases the film hero/heroine is elected as a political leader and chief-Minister of a State. To name a few, In Tamil Nadu: M.T. Ramachandran, popularly known as MGR and J Jayalalithaa. In Tamil Nadu, a temple built for Tamil actress Kushboo in Tiruchirapalli. In Andra Pradesh: T.N

Rama Rao and Chiranjeevi. In Karnataka: Ambarish and Ramya. In a cinema hall, the audience identifiy themselves with hero/heroine on the screen. Viewers develop empathy, an emotional involvement with a character. In the main stream popular cinema different elements attract its audience. They come to cinema hall to watch films. The audience may go to cinema hall because of the director, songs and dance or because of their favorite hero or heroine. The audience develop an intimacy and emotional attachment with characters on the screen. Shabana Azmi who played the role of Radha in mehta's *Water* was nominated as Rajya Sabha member in the year 1997.

Transparency v/s Foregrounding: (Language wants to be overlooked --- Sistsema v/s making the mechanics of the film/ text visible and explicit). (2002. 87).

Wollen identifies the changes in the construction of images. He says that the traditional cinema was directly impacted from the Renaissance invention of perspective and reformulation of painting expressed by Albert, as a window to the world. For Wollen, camera is a simply a technological tool to achieve a perfect perspective construction. After the renaissance, painting was brought to the level of text which could be 'read as the iconographic imagery and ideographic space of pre-renaissance painting were eventually ejected and replaced the concept of pure representation'. (2002.87).

Hollywood/Hindi film narration makes its audience to forget a movie. In the other words, the cinematic elements of Hollywood cinema take its audience to an imaginary world and make them to lose themselves in the movie to forget the real position. The cinematic elements of cinema make its audience to enter the

imaginary world. What Wollen wants from counter cinema is, it must be featured to hold the attention of the audience and should make the audience to pay attention to the camera. He says, 'Technical team and technical tools in the scene make the audience perceive and comprehend with a movie they are watching'. (2002.86). The main purpose of the mainstream commercial cinema is entertainment, mass consumption and to be a part of popular culture. In the modern era, especially in metropolitans and middle class families in urban area film has become a source of entertainment, leisure, refreshment centre and family outing place. Audiences of these sections go to movies to escape from the reality of their day today struggle. The Indian Hindi cinema or any regional main stream cinema are produced for money and the audience go to cinema to escape from the reality and to live for a few hours in an illusion or imaginary world. This happens in most of the movies produced.

Single Diegesis v/s Multiple Diegesis: (A unitary homogenous world v. heterogeneous worlds. Rupture between different codes and different channels) In Hollywood/Hindi film industry films, everything shown belongs to the same world, and complex articulations within that world – such as flashbacks – are carefully signaled and located. The dominant aesthetic is a kind of liberalized classicism. The rigid constraints of the dramatic unities have been relaxed, but mainly because they were over – strict and limiting, whereas the basic principle remains unshaken. Time and space must follow a consistent order. Traditionally, only one form of multiple diegesis is allowed - the play within a play – whereby the second, discontinues diegesis space is embedded or bracketed within the first. The narration of main stream cinema presents a consistent world. Everything in film belongs to this world. The narration of counter cinema destroys this world. It

presents a heterogeneous world against a homogeneous world. (2002. 86). Hindi films are single diegesis in its narration. The flow around or to a point of view of hero.

Wollen's fifth conception of Seven Sin is **Closure v/s Aperture :** (A self-contained object, harmonized within its own bounds v. open-endedness', overspill, intertextually – allusion, quotation, and parody). Wollen says, "Hollywood Movies fold up. The conflicts in the plot are solved. The narration of counter cinema is open ended. Ambiguity at the end of the film is remained not to be solved". (2002. 85). Hindi main stream films resolves around the hero and his associated character and ends up with his success as happy or ends up with his death or tragedy. Hindi films come as gift box because they contain emotions, action, comedy, family sentiment and other elements. Films are created around the hero and his family. Accidentally the hero meets an upper class or feudal or business man's daughter and they fall in love with each other. The heroine's father refuses their love. There is a challenge and the hero struggles and fights to achieve his goal and gets married to heroine. The film ends with happiness and another set of movies which reinforces feudal system through movies. Writing about the Indian main stream cinema formula Nelmes says,

> A film that has a familiar plot and contains romance, dramatic family relationships and an epic struggle between the force of 'good' and 'evil', themselves determined by traditional concepts of 'duty' (dharma) and family obligations, and is enacted by stars and embellished by several spectacular song-and-dance, numbers, is referred to as a 'formula' film. The director's skill lies not just in deploying the different components of 'formula' but also in presenting them in innovative ways so that they

appear new and different with each film. (1999. 383)

Pleasure v/s Unpleasure: (Entertainment, aiming to satisfy the spectator v/s provocation, aiming to dissatisfy and hence change the spectator) The criticism on entertainment cinema is part of criticism of whole consumer society. Cinema is envisage as a drug, which softens the burden of the masses, by giving pleasurable dreams, thus diverting them from real tasks which are their true destiny. The narration, plot and other elements of mainstream cinema makes then to have good time. (2002.87). As Asha Kasbekar, writes, "As in Hollywood, the most favoured theme of the Hindi film is that of romance". (1999.383) Hindi film industry undoubtedly is a pleasure giver through its narrative, plot, songs and dance. It entertains the audience and makes them to have good time. But in the name of entertainment it reinforces the dominate ideology. Wollen says, the narration of counter cinema must aim to provoke and have the attention of audience. (2002.87)

Fiction v/s Reality: (Actors wearing make-up, acting a story v. real life, the breakdown of the representation, truth) Audience, in the narration of Hollywood movies, enters into fiction world where audience creates their identification with themselves and to which they blindly believe as a reality. In counter cinema, audience is in the realistic world because the identification with the characters on screen is broken and audience is disturbed. The audience is unaware of watching a movie and even analyzes the movie critically. (2002. 90).

According to Wollen, counter cinema focus on the roles and the relations of people, based on the ambiguity. Counter cinema does not presents consistent plot like traditional cinema. The problem may be resolved or unresolved in counter

cinema. "…whose values are counter posed to those of orthodox cinema." (2015. 81). For every traditional narrative, there is a counter cinema narrative of which Wollen lists seven elements as mentioned, Godard creates contrary values.

Thus Godard's films may offer an example of a film that exceed the phallocentric/patriarchal order, as it is of the cinematic values. (Mulvey, 2009: 713) but Wollen opinions that, counter cinema … can only exist in relation to the rest of the cinema." (2002. 74).

Wollen suggested Godard's conception of counter cinema has no meaning without the existence of the traditional cinema. This raises the question of whether this relative existence allows room for the promotion of the gaze in his work. It is necessary to consider each expression of the look in cinema and to see whether Godard manages to reject each. Mulvey has herself written extensively on Godard and her own conclusions often emphasize the contradictions and complexity in the representation of women in his work. The contradictions apparent within Godard's depiction of women, the contradiction between his use of the female form to signify sexuality and his rigorous questioning of the film form itself constitutes a statement of the confusions and difficulties surrounding images of woman. This lack of coherence is a productive spring-board as a starting-point for understanding how and why woman's image accumulates its particular meanings and also as a basis for further development, the construction of a cinema which challenges those meanings and assumptions (Mulvey, 1989: 62).

Counter cinema should create for, 'those who see', not 'those who watch'. The function of counter cinema is against the traditional and it should re-create. As it re-creates reality it also breaks off the traditional narration and looks forward.

As Brecht said: "reality includes the showing how the things are, not reproducing reality' (Gurkan and Ozan. 2015).

According to Bordwell[220], counter cinema is a realistic cinema and is based on two principles: reality and authorial expressivity. It shows positions such as in the movies of New Realism and New Wave, and interests in modern "alienation". He says "… the reality of counter cinema is different from documentary cinema and based on psychological subjectivity. The notion of reality influences the temporal and the spatial structure of the movie" (1979: 58– 59).

Estrangement in movies is analyzing the loneliness of modern person, disappearing values, distance with nature, dissatisfaction and the condition of getting used. In counter cinema, the language stands in a unique position. The main element in counter cinema is estrangement and lack of communication. The characters rewind the movie according to the plot or the atmosphere; film advances can be done in the middle of the dialogue, the light can be used as strangely almost in all of the movies of counter cinema. (Babal & Tığlı, m.friendfeedmedia.com. Gurkan and Ozan. 2015).

Wollen's dominant cinema and counter cinema and his conception of seven sins of Hollywood, has tried to develop theoretical frame work to define what counter cinema is and its difference from main stream. No one can ignore the contribution of Wollen's work, but it becomes a bit rigid to apply his frame work on Indian cinema and its different forms like main stream, art cinema, feminist cinema, counter cinema. In India, Bollywood cinema is an ideology. This ideology has taken the form of religion. Many film makers, directors have made and are

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[220] Bordwell, D. "The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice", Film Criticism, sayı: 4, s. 56–63 (1979).

making a conscious attempt to change the projection and narration consciously. They have attempted to create a counter cinema with female gaze and discussed social issues through their films. But Indian cinema is unique in its form and different from world cinema, because of its songs, dance, and melodramatic narration.

As it is said in the introduction the thesis tries to look into the films of Aparna Sen and Deepa Mehta as a form of Counter cinema. The question is, what are the parameters or characteristics of women cinema in order to call them as counter cinema. Counter to whom? Do all women's cinema really represent the voice of women, or do they present themselve as counter cinema against the main stream sexist, patriarchal, dominant ideological cinema. Are all the films of Aparna Sen and Deepa Mehta considered as counter cinema to mainstream cinema?

In order to examine Sen's and Mehta's cinema as counter cinema, this research draws arguments of feminist film theorist's ideas, focusing mainly on Peter Wollen's conception of counter cinema to analyse Sen and Mehta's films. For the analysis this research takes up few elements define whether Sen and Mehta's cinema are counter cinema or not. The elements which are taken for analysis are ; Techniques, plot, costume, narration, pleasure, aperture, reality and position of the characters.

4.3. Techniques

The film technique is the term used to describe the ways that meanings are created in film by using its tools like, camera shots, camera angle, lighting etc. In main stream Hindi cinema camera plays an important role, because the camera symbolically represents the mindset and view point of person or director. In main

stream cinema dominant ideology is naturally captured by the camera and it presents the sexist ideology as a truth. To oppose this sexist ideology which is portrayed through camera, it is important to know how women directors use camera to dismiss narrative pleasure.

Main stream Hindi cinema objectifies women as consumer goods. In the process of making women as object, camera plays an important role. In general, in many main stream cinemas the entry of heroine differs from that of the hero. With heroines, the entire camera, in slow motion moves from bottom focus on her body and takes the close up shot of her body. The camera symbolically represents the eyes of the audience. It is a pleasure seeking movement for male gaze. The camera exposes her body and she is surrounded by men who "look" at her. Songs, lyrics, costume and lighting also brings effective enjoyment between heroine's body and audience. For instance,

Fig: 4.1.

In Fig: 4.1. The heroine is placed at the center and a group of men surround her, and enjoy her beauty. Her body explicitly presented, and focused light presents the heroine more effectively and the surroundings are in dimmed light. The audience,

who is sitting in the dark room gets attracted, hide themselves in the darkness as they enjoy the body. In this picture the camera presents effective male gaze, with the help of light, costume and camera thereby effectively capturing what is required for sexiest ideology.

In a women centered cinema, it is has become important to see whether film techniques of hold male gaze or do they re-create their own. In Sen's *36 Chowringhee Lane* Nanditha ask her boy friend Samaresh to kiss her. Here Nanditha demands and is in an active position. While presenting this scene the camera does not take a close-up shot and the kissing scene is presented only for three seconds. The next, kissing scene is presented on the taxi driver's rear view mirror and camera does not focus on their face and body. Uma's seduction in *Sati* is presented as a shadow on the wall. There are no close-up shots and effective visuals and nowhere does the camera gaze on Uma's body.

In *Parama,* Parama gets into passionate affair with Rahul. During their sexual participation both take the active position and the camera captures Parama's facial expression in a close-up shot. Though male gaze is presented during Parama and Rahul's sexual participation, the effective male gaze functions when Parama's husband, while drinking looks at his secretary who is in a red saree. The camera revolves around the secretary's body and performs the function of the gaze of Parama's husband.

Image 1   Image 2

Image 3   Image 4

Fig: 4.2. Parama's husband Bhaskar Choudhury gazing at his secretary lustfully.

The above pictures (fig:4.2) of movie *Parama* illustrates how camera in a close-up shots moves around the body (image 1, 2 and 3) and how male gaze (image 4) effectively works. In this movie there are a number of instances which presents the interest of the male gaze.

In Mehta's *Earth* Shanta (Ayah) takes Lenny to the nearby Queens Garden, and while making casual talk Shanta's pallu drops down but she is unaware of it. But the men who are sitting around Shanta gaze at her. In another scene Masseur and Shanta's sexual participation is shown explicitly and camera is placed in 45 degree angle behind Shanta's head. The camera captures whole half-nude body of Shanta and bright light is focused on upper part of her body and this scene runs for 2 minutes 27 seconds.

In *Fire,* Radha and Sita's sexual participation creates choice for women. Does this scene create pleasure in audience through their sexual participation and what camera tries to gaze is a question, because, a heterosexual practitioner may find it difficult to watch and may be a homosexual or a lesbian might place themselves in Radha and Sita's position. This movie presents the condition of love between same sex in India which is silently suffering. The gaze is not male but the gaze of the 'other'. In creating an 'other' gaze, camera shots, angles, lights and dominant ideology plays an important role. Sen and Mehta's films are potentially challenging the sexist ideology of main stream cinema yet few scenes still caters to the male gaze.

4.4. Plot

In a film, plot means story line, the plan, scheme or main story. For a successful film story line becomes important. It may be Art cinema or commercial cinema or a counter cinema but the story becomes most important. Counter cinema's plot is considerably different from main stream cinema. In counter cinema, character's gesture, silence, background images and light talks more than the characters. Counter cinema's plot is different from main stream cinema in two ways. *Firstly:* It avoids fragmented structure like song, dance and melodrama of main stream cinema. *Secondly:* counter cinema focuses on concerned issue or subject rather than the characters.

Sen and Mehta, both are internationally recognized women directors who worked on women and gender issues. Each of their movies deal with the unique problem of women in Indian society. For instance, Sen's *Parama* is a quest of self-identity and liberation of women. In Indian society it is believed that women have

to live under the male protection. There is no self-identity and self-recognition. If a woman breaks the norms of this system the consequences that she would face in this society, is well captured in these movies and Parama makes her choice of being independent and independent parent to her child. In this movie plot moves around the Parama and it places her as a representative of women who are in search of their self identity. If the same plot carried over in main stream cinema, it might have called Parama as a 'whore' or it would have made her to kill herself, and might have shown sympathy to Parama's husband.

Sati shows how women of that era faced exploitation, problems and domestic violence. Villagers believe that the fall of the tree is a clear indication of Uma's husband's death. As Uma dies, the villagers come to conclusion that the smoke around the tree is an indication that lightning had struck the tree first and it falls down taking Uma along. The silence of Uma implicates a lot of things. It represents the domination of feudalism and patriarchy and the condition of women and marginalized people of patriarchal society. She is marginalized by her family members, further by her marriage to peepul tree, which she accepts with joy and celebrates. In this movie a lot of aspects like superstitions, gender discrimination, and caste issues can be observed. It is quite obvious women were vulnerable to ritual beliefs. Their destiny is decided by other people. The fact that Uma cannot speak complicates, things more nobody understands and shares her feelings and she finds hope in the tree. The plot goes to the depth to see how women are exploited and how our society treats them in the name of religion and caste. Uma suffers not because of her disability, she suffers because of her community which has blind belief about horoscope. Though the story focuses on the vulnerability of Uma, it gives more importance to the blind belief of Indian society and how

women or the other become victim of it in the name of religion and caste. This story questions the audience belief and work towards creating awareness.

Mehta's *Fire* is also one such movie which openly talked about the choice of women in India. Main stream movies depict homosexuality in a lighter vein (*Dostana*). Not so in *Fire*. Here she depicts the availability of choice to women who are deprived of legitimate sexuality. They are in a position to choose their choice is lesbianism.

In the Mehta's *Earth*, on the other hand presents the vulnerability of women in patriarchal world. Mehta choose to turn a female gaze on the story, pointing to the marginalization and victimization of women during the partition dispute. 'The violence of the partition was the consequence of primarily male aggression and its worst victims were women'. (Jadika. 2011.07). As Pennebaker suggests,

> …women's bodies constituted a religious, geographic, and familial symbol. Defilement of the woman of a family would be the greatest dishonor the family unit could endure – and thus violence enacted on women during partition was tantamount to a sacrilege against one's religion, country, and family. (2011.57)

Sen and Mehta's film dealt with genuine issues of women and gender. Sen's *36 Chowringhee Lane* one of the finest and very sensible film in Indian film history on Anglo-Indian community. Movies are created not just to be 'watched', but 'seen', experienced and reflected upon. The story line of each movie is a query. If *Parama* is about 'identity', *Sati* is about 'oppression'. *36 Chowringhee Lane* is again identity and identification of a minority community with the majority. *Mr.*

and Mrs. Iyer is an endorsement of the human sensitivity and tolerance in a communally sensitive country. *Earth* portrays the plight of woman during the partition, but at the same time depicts female bonding. *Water* depicts truth and reality as also about strength and tenacity in confrontation with odds. The plot lines delve into reality, sans make up, drama and perhaps the color of life. But they unfold the drama of life, lined by characters.

4.5. Costume

In general, most of the art cinema or Parallel cinema presents reality. In these films costume, make up or dress is given less importance. Sen and Mehta's films fall into the category of parallel cinema. Sen's *36 Chowringhee Lane* does not give importance to make-up and costume, but is authentic. It retains the attire of the Anglo-Indian community. The *Sati*, has no focus on costume and we can see Uma in the same saree in entire film. But the important aspect is, that when Uma is drenched out in the rain, school master Ashok gazes at her wet saree and he gets sexually attracted towards Uma. Here wet saree costume plays a significant role to lead the film till end. In *Parama* she is always in a saree. When Rahul and Parama participate in camera work, in rare glimpses of Calcutta both of them enjoy the rain and Rahul and Parama get physically close to each other when they are in wet dress. In another instance Parama's husband gazes at his secretary who is in red saree. Here red saree objectifies the secretary. In *15th Park Avenue*, the character demands costume and make up. In contrast to these films, Sen's *Mr and Mrs. Iyer* uses make-up and costume effectively. Meenaksi searches for Raja in forest guest house as soon she wakes up and she notices Raja's bag and she along with her baby runs in the forest to meet Raja but even after that her make-up is effectively

visible to the audience. As discussed in the third chapter this film of Sen holds the elements of middle cinema including *Parama*. But when it comes to Deepa Mehta's trilogy all the movies are presented in the realistic way. In *Fire* Radha and Sita are presented as middle class women and their costume and make-up do not attract attention. In *Water* Chuyia, Kalyani, Shakuntala and Naraya every one are shown in white cloths as the story demands. In Mehta's films costume element is presented in a very realistic way. The selected films of Mehta represent reality and they do not create any kind of fictional stories.

4.6. Narration

Peter Wollen says main stream films are narrative transitivity, Wollen means a sequence of events in which each units and each function changes the course of the narrative following the one preceding it according to a chain of causation. For Wollen Hollywood cinema as a chain

> … is usually psychological and is made up, roughly speaking, of a series
> of coherent motivations. The beginning of the film starts with
> establishment, which sets up the basic dramatic situation. A kind of chain
> reaction then follows, until at the end a new equilibrium is restored.
> However, in the narration of counter cinema, there are separate areas which
> interrupt the story. Irrelevant events supplant each other as in the real life".
> (2002.74)

However, counter cinema narration, should create separate areas which interrupts the cinema. In Hindi mainstream cinema, the story narration follows a sequence of events. One event leads to another. This chain of events helps to develop the narration and story line. In other words it leads to a series of coherent

motivations. In general, the entry of a film hero, is always positioned as an angry young man, who jumps from a multiplex building, fights and kills people. A new structure is formed to lead the narration and hero's struggle to pursue it along with romantic songs and dance in the narration. In the context of art cinema or feminist cinema in general, the films transitivity, which separates or rejects the areas which interrupt the story. In *36 Chowringhee Lane,* fragmented construction does not place in the form of songs and dance. Only background music is used to give effect on the feelings of the character. Satyajit Ray's *Mahanagar, Devi, Charulata* and *Baire* also do not use the fragmented structure.

The stories of Sen and Mehta's films are inter connected with the events. From the beginning till the end the film proceeds in a chain of sequence. None of the selected films fulfills Wollen's conception of Narrative Intransitivity. But can it not be a counter cinema as against Indian popular/ main stream cinema? *Parama*, depart from the Hindi main stream convention, and its hegemonical practices. The film *Sati,* presents three thematic aspects simultaneously at the narrative level. They are: the individual (the oppression of Uma), the social (the vulnerability of Kulin Brahmin community in 19th century) and the politics/myth (Uma's marriage to the tree and her death as coincidental with the death of the tree). (Chatterji. 2002.134). At the cinematographic level, it offers drama of two kinds – the human tragedy of Uma's death and the irony of her death as sati after death. It illustrates social injustice at several levels – repressed motherhood, sexuality of a young orphaned girl, commodification of the *Kulin* Brahmin male and a redefinition of the term sati when placed in perspective against the traditional meaning of the term and the practice. Sen's other films also presents the unique themes and their narrative and in the mean time, Mehta's *Trilogy* and *Heaven on Earth* films follow

the narrative transitivity to present the reality in the effective mood. Just because a movie does not follow the gaps, interruptions, episodic construction it cannot be considered as non -counter cinema.

4.7. Pleasure

Pleasure is one of the most debuted concepts among feminist film theorists. Mulvey's major argument is to discard the narrative pleasure. Wollen argues that counter cinema should create unpleasure and it should provoke and have the attention of audience. He says that,

> … the attack on entertainment cinema is part of a broader attack on whole of consumer society. Cinema is conceived of as a drug that lulls and mollifies the militancy of the masses, by bribing them with pleasurable dreams, thus distracting them from the stern tasks which are their true destiny. The narration of Hollywood entertains the audience and makes them have good time. (2002.87)

As recommended by Wollen's pleasure, the critics find out that, the director, in transcending the object-position to step onto the position of subject, Parama, the character, would have avoided being 'devoured' by the strategic male gaze. (Chatterji. 2002. 83). The central contradiction: a women's beauty need not overwhelm her narrative and cinematic importance within the film, and among the audience. In the love scenes of Rahul and Parama, the camera is clearly voyeuristic. It exploits the fetishised image of Parama, using her body as a source of spectacle through close-ups, "repetitions, alternation of denial and access, and focusing on fragments as symbolic replacement which typifies fetishism". (2002. 83).

In Mehta's *Water*, Narayan is acted by famous Hindi film actor John Abraham, who has given hit Hindi movies like *Dhoom, Force, Taxi No. 9211, Race-2* and etc. Narayan is a Gandhian follower who opposes the widow system and his father's feudal system. He decides to marry Kalyani but Kalyani ends her life. John Abraham's role as Narayan impacts his followers. In *Heaven on Earth*, Chand is enacted by famous another Hindi film actress Priety Zinta. The problem that she faces in Canada creates estrangement among her followers.

In *Parama* the 'star' Raakhee develops her personality with superficial gloss, keeps reflecting out from behind the character Parama on screen. The reason why the star interrupt into the character is because Raakhee is sensuous, feminine, even regal, at moments. This beauty marginalizes Parama's creative past. This throws up relevant questions on whether Rahul, as a professional photographer, and then as a heterosexual male, would have been attracted to this woman, had she not been so beautiful." (2002. 83) The question arises, why did Sen make Parama so beautiful? The movie folds between objective to subjectivity and subjectivity to objectivity. Mr. Sen allows the beauty of Parama as object and the screen space to connect. She portrays Parama as object and bearer of guilt but as a perfect product, whose body, stylized and fragmented by close-ups, though not the main content of the film, does become the target of the 'spectator's look'. Here Sen does not avoid audience Voyeurism. On one hand, she choreographs shots of lovemaking to attract audience-voyeurism and on the other user woman-spectator identification. This offers the audience to seek pleasure, enhancing the box-office draw of the film.

Sati does not offer voyeurism in audience through its narration. When Uma is sexually forced by a local school master, it is depicted in the shadows. The

audience identifies with her suffering and pain, rather than gaining voyeuristic pleasure. At the end of film Uma's death raises multiple questions regarding social conditions. Though it appears as closure it raises many questions even after the end of the film.

Fire, on the other hand creates choice for women. In this film more than pleasure it is a representation of homosexuality and lesbianism. Here the body belongs to women and women derive pleasure. Portraying sexual participation or nudity is not new to main stream cinema or any regional cinema. As Wollen says, main stream cinema projects the body of women as consumer goods. To come out of objectification of subject and subject portrayal, narration should challenge the main stream. If a movie follows main stream cinema, then there is no difference and it cannot be a counter cinema. The movie *Fire* brings out the unique subject and a different world to Indian cinema.

In Mehta's *Earth*, the movie undoubtedly presents the vulnerability of women in patriarchal world. Deepa Mehta focuses on women's version of history and represents the the condition of women during partition irrespective of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. Mehta's gaze is female, pointing to the marginalization and victimization of women during the India's partition. "The violence of the partition was the consequence of primarily male aggression and its worst victims were women". (Jadika. 2011.07).

This movie follows the narrative transitivity and adds mainstream masala of songs and dance. Many critics criticize the notion of the movie. As Manju Jadika states,

…With Mehta's adaption the narrative undergoes a generic transformation from written words contained within the covers of a printed text it becomes an audio-visual presentation on the silver screen, portraying a historical event in the popular Bollywood style; with some song and dance. (2011.61).

The main idea of creating a female gaze fails when the movie focuses on women sexuality and exposes her body for male gaze. This follows the style and fragmented structure narration of main stream cinema. The presence of the male gaze breaks the core purpose of female gaze.

4.8. Aperture

Aperture means open-endedness', overspill, intertextually – allusion, quotation, and parody. Wollen says, "Hollywood Movies fold up. The conflicts in the plot are solved. The narration of counter cinema open ended. Ambiguity at the end of the film is remained not to be solved". (2002. 85). In Hindi films start around the hero and his associated character and ends up with his success as a happy or ends up with his death or loss.

Main stream Hindi films end with solved climax and happy ending. Hindi films come as gift box because they contain emotions, action, comedy, family sentiment and other elements. Films are created around the hero and his family and movies based around group of students and group of men how struggle to achieve their goals or fulfill their dreams. For instance, *3 Idiots*[221], a story of three engineering student and their life journey to fulfill their dream. *Student of Year,* a triangle love story of college students. *Wake Up Sid,* about a lazy young man, who

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[221] *3idiots, Director. Rajkumar Hirani. Perf. Aamir Khan, Madhavan and Kareena Kapoor. Vinod Chopra Films. 2009. Film.*

finds his passion in photography rather than his father's business and *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*, a story of three young men who goes for their most desirable trip from their busy life.

Art cinema/ Parallel cinema/ New wave cinema places the audience at a decision making level. It makes audience or its viewers to think about cinema and the characters, because the basic ideas of Art/parallel/new wave cinema is to create awareness against main stream films' sexist ideology and it is influential factors. For Wollen a counter cinema should make its viewers to think about cinema and characters even after the end of cinema.

In *Parama*, the film ends with Parama's decision to live alone with her daughter. This film creates many questions like, how would she leads her life being a single woman in Indian society. What are the consequences Parama and her daughter might face in the patriarchal society? And this film also represents two generations. Parama represents the tradition, who finds it difficult to come out of her family and husband but on the other hand her daughter represents the modern generation who accepts her mother's identity and lives with Parama. In *36 Chowringhee Lane,* Miss Violet Stoneham, decides to stay in India. How does she lead her life alone in her old age surrounded by people like Samaresh and Nanditha?. Here it is also the question of her identity and her comfort zone. Miss. Stoneham's decision is answer to the audience who considered her or a minor community as the 'other'. In *Mr. and Mrs. Iyer,* Meenakshi's act of introducing Raja with his true identity and her last sentence "Good Bye, Mr. Iyer" makes audience to think about Meenakshi's position. The ending of the movie creates ambiguity, where no one can say exactly what is going in the mind of Meenakshi. For Wollen's Aperture most appropriate example is *15th Park Avenue*. This film

creates absolute ambiguity to audience as is discussed in last chapters Mehta's trilogy also makes its viewers to think about the film and characters' position.

4.9. Reality

For Wollen counter cinema must present real life and truth which usually does not happen in some Hollywood movies. In counter cinema, audience is in the real world because the identification is broken and audiences get disturbed. The audience is unaware of watching a movie and even analyzes the movie with the critical thinking. (2002. 90).

Uma in *Sati,* represents thousands of women who are victimized and killed in the name of religion and also represents the mentality of people who blindly follow the religious practices. In *36 Chowringhee Lane* Miss. Stoneham represents two groups of people. Firstly, her Anglo-Indian community and secondly, a group of old aged people. *15th Park Avenue* shows the domination of patriarchal system. Meethi's Schizophrenic disorder triggers up because of the rape incident. This rape incident lead Meethi's life to a tragic end. *Mr. and Mrs. Iyer,* also represents realistic issue of communal violence and shows how humanity is more important than any religious hatred. The movie *Earth* shows the vulnerability of women in a patriarchal system.

With the help of Wollen's conception of counter cinema and with the argument of feminist film theory, this research analyzed films based on the elements like, Techniques, plot, costume, narration, pleasure, aperture, reality and position of the characters to analyse and to see whether a women cinema can be a counter cinema.

Wollen's dominant cinema and counter cinema and his conception of seven sins of Hollywood, has tried to develop a theoretical frame work to define what counter cinema is. No one can ignore the contribution of Wollen's work, but it becomes a bit rigid to apply his frame work on Indian cinema and its different forms like main stream, art cinema, feminist cinema, counter cinema. In India, Hindi cinema is an ideology. This ideology has taken the form of religion and people imbibed it whole heartedly. Many film makers and directors are making a conscious attempt to change the projection and narration of women and gender concern issues. They have tried to create a counter cinema with female gaze and discussed social issues through their films. But Indian cinema is unique in its form and different from world cinema, because of its songs, dance, and melodramatic narration. A pleasant music releases the tension of its viewer. For example, Deepa Mehta's *Fire,* begins with A. R. Rahman's melodious music, which changes the mood of the film viewer.

Secondly, as Wollen says counter cinema should interrupt story narration, and it must narrate it in episodic construction. But Aparna Sen's and Deepa Mehta's films, follow narrative transitivity, where each event leads to one another and there is no episodic construction but in the mean time viewers can differentiate these films from main stream cinema in its narrative form. These two women directors have been successful to represent the isolated and neglected women of patriarchal society. Each film brings different gender issues and women issues. They represent 'the other'.

These two women directors divide the characters and individual. Most of the time characters are played by the off-main stream actor and actress. This reduces the possibility of identification. But in Deepa Mehta's *Heaven on Earth,*

the leading role is lead by Preity Zinta, the mainstream, famous actress of the time, and Aparna Sen's *Parama* film protagonist Raakhee. These films recognize the alienation of their character and finds solution to come out of their estrangement. Alienation is kind of trauma faced by a modern world.

These women directors' films tried to give solution to those who faced the problem of alienation irrespective of sex, class and age. For example: In *Mr. and Mrs. Iyer*, Meenakshi introduces Raja to her husband with his true identity as Muslim. In *Fire*, Radha and Sita, break the conventions which led them to face the estrangement within the family and in society. As Wollen writes, " 'What is this film for?', 'Super-Imposed on the orthodox narrative questions'. 'Why did that happen?' and what is going to happen next?." Any form of cinema which aims to establish a dynamic relationship between film maker and spectator naturally has to consider the problem of what is technically the register of discourse.

The problem arises in the context of Pleasure. According to many feminist theorists counter cinema should not offer a pleasure and fantasy to its audience. But Aparna Sen's *Parama* and Deepa Mehta's *Earth*, are criticized for offering pleasure, through exhibiting women body and romanticizing sexual participation, which was not demanded by the story. Opposed to this in general, the question would be, what if women body and their sexual participation is shown? What is wrong in portraying the reality? Portraying sexual participation, explicit exposure of women body, semi-nudity is not new to Hindi main stream or any regional cinema. Mulvey, Johnston, and Wollen and many other feminist film theorists' main concern was against these wrong conceptions. Yes, main stream cinema projects women as a consumer goods and for the male pleasure. To come out of this objectification to subject position and to create female gaze, main stream

cinema needs to challenge with an alternative. If a cinema follows similar kind of projection of women, then there will not be any difference between main stream and counter cinema. But except few scenes of Aparna Sen's *Parama* and Deepa Mehta's *Earth*, their women centered cinema's are counter cinema, in terms of techniques, Plot, costume, narration, pleasure, aperture and reality. They differ from main stream cinema.

CHAPTER – 5

CONCLUSION

Having set forth in the introductory chapter and worked on it, this thesis does not make comparison of Sen and Mehta's films. This is not an analysis of films directed by women. This research explored the issues of gender representation and gendered ideology reinforced through cinema. This research mainly examined Indian women directors cinema as a form of counter cinema and examined whether Aparna Sen and Deepa Mehta's films were successful in avoiding strategic Male gaze and sexist ideology and do they create potential women cinema as a counter cinema.

Gender is a complex construction between men and women, encircling the organization of representation and it is a sexual division of cultural and economical or labour definition of masculinity and femininity. The domination of one sex over the other and one class over the other has strongly left its roots in Indian society. In this influence of gender, a male also gets affected and functions as patriarchal system demands. The mass molestation of women in Bengaluru on 31st New Year's Eve, 2016 shows the mindset of section of society projecting patriarchal behavior. These incidents create fear in women. The response of Karnataka Home Minister shows that patriarchal system has influence and has established its power in governing system also. (Times Now. 2nd January. 2017)

A documentary film is made on Nirbaya Rape case incident, which took place in New Delhi on, 16th December 2012, under the title of *India's Daughter*, directed and produced by Lesless Udwin. BBC Four. This documentary under the title *India's Daughter*, interview held with people who are convicted, defense

lawyers of rapists, political leaders, judiciary committee members and Nirbhaya's Parents, brings out the overview of the present condition of mind-set of patriarchal society, regarding women.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau, 'women are raped in India, every 20 minutes, but most of the rapes are unreported' [222] . This documentary poses lot of questions like, where are we? And what is Indian culture? which article of the Indian constitution gives men Rights to Rape.? How are youth growing up? What social responsibility does the civil society have? Question are becoming merely questions without answer. To whom should we ask these questions? Patriarchal Men or patriarchal women?

Mukesh, convicted of rape, unnatural sex, and murder of Nirbhaya, in Nirbhaya case, in this interview says that,

> …you can't clap with one hand. A decent girl won't roam around at 9'o clock at night. A girl is far more responsible for rape than a boy. Boys and girls are not equal. Housework and housekeeping is for girls, not roaming in disco and bars at night…doing wrong things, wearing the wrong clothes. (Indian Daughter. 2012)

In his statement, two important things need to be analyzed. Firstly, from where has he drawn this idea that, boys and girls are not equal and that girls should not go out after 9 clock at night. Where is it written? Are they following Manusmrithi, till today? Who is teaching Manusmrithi? School or society or home?

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[222] http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/One-rape-every-20-minutes-in-country/ articleshow/ 22040599.cms

Further he says,

> …It is accident; we wanted to teach them a lesson. When being raped, she
> should not fight back, she should just be silent and allow the rape, and then
> they would have dropped her off after doing her and only hit the boy.
> (Indian Daughter. 2012)

Again the question is, who gave the rights to teach the lesson and what lesson? What he wants to teach to that girl? Why she should not fight back when she is assaulted. Just because she is a girl?, can't she raise her voice against it. On the street if a dog barks at us, we pick up the stone from the ground. Then why should not she fight back in such situation?

He says,

> *...the death penalty will make things even more dangerous for girls. Now*
> *when they rape, they won't leave the girl like we did. They will kill her.*
> *Before, they would rape and say, leave her, she won't tell anyone. Now*
> *when they rape, especially the criminal types, they will just kill the girl.*
> (Indian Daughter. 2012)

He is threatening the entire women community of by saying, 'when they rape, they won't leave the girl like we did. They will kill her'. This rapist is conveying and spreading the message that, rapes on women will continue and after the rape they would kill her. To whom is he representing? On whose behalf he is talking that they are going to kill her. Isn't he representing a section of people who still think that, woman as an object is lower than men. He is a typical Indian patriarchal representative who is terrorizing women in society.

M.L Sharma, Defence lawyer for the Rapists. a Delhi high court lawyer says,

> A female is just a flower, it give a good-looking very softness performance and pleasant. But on the other hand a man is just like a thorn strong; tough enough that flower always needs protection. If you put that flower in a gutter, it's spoilt if you put that flower in a temple it will be worshipped. In our society, we never allow our girls to come out from the house, after 6.30, or 7.30 or 8.30 in the evening. They were under the imagination of the Film culture in which they can do anything.

> The girls or women are more precious than a gem, than a diamond. It is up to you how you want to keep that diamond in your hand. If you put your diamond on the street, certainly the dog will take it out. You can't stop it. You are talking about man and woman as friends. Sorry, that doesn't have any place in our society. A woman means I immediately put the sex in his eyes. We have the best culture. In our culture, there is no place for a woman.

Since ages patriarchal system has signified women as soft, pleasant, flower and men as hard, strong and a thorn. Which social institution is so strongly impacting on the mind. He says, 'they were under the imagination of films culture…'. The convict, Mukesh and defense lawyer M.L. Sharma's statements are reflection of images of Indian patriarchal ideology. Patriarchal ideology is created by male ideology and dominance over women is carried forward by both men and women.

Film is a mirror of society. It takes instances from society while producing a movie. Films are replica of a given society. But the way in which a film creates

instances or real incidents into narration, it's visual, sound and impact of hero, heroine's images affects its viewers. It is the power of digital visual media which is establishing anything as the real or truth. This so called 'Truth' is the vested interest of a class, group, sex or age. As Althusser said, ideological states apparatuses, consists of Art, mass media, films, school, family, church, political parties. These are institutions which generate ideologies where we as individuals give our consent without questioning it. Althusser's main concern is, the societies to accept internalisation, and how to live with the ideologies that are created by the ideological state apparatuses. In these ideological state apparatuses, Film and mass media is one such powerful apparatus, which influences and controls the mindset of the people in society.

Althusser asserted that class ideologies are real ideologies and "the state and its apparatuses only have meaning from the point of view of the class/ideological struggle, as an apparatus of class struggle ensuring oppression and guaranteeing the conditions of exploitation and its reproduction". (1971. 50). For Goran Therborn, Ideology is visibly circulated through material practices and situated within classes. These functional apparatuses are inter-connected and developed as a result of the class struggle and as a result reproduction of the relations of production. In India patriarchal ideology is created as form of religion. People tend to fear to question or to break this ideology.

In the discussion of Gramsci's Hegemonical Bloc, in the context of Indian society, which is male dominated, women have been considered inferior to men in practical life. It has set the role of women as a passive and subordinate. Over the period of time it turns into common sense and has taken the consent from women, family, institution and society. This patriarchal hegemonic bloc, blocked women to

enter temple. This hegemonic bloc of caste system, blocked dalits to enter temples, lakes and water ponds. This heterosexual hegemonic bloc, blocked homosexuality. This male dominated hegemonic bloc, blocked women to enter film industry as against its oppression but it allowed women, in order to enjoy her body to satisfy its gaze but not the brain. When they used their brain and tried to break the conventions, it has stirred immense conflicts and controversies in the Indian society.

According to Ganti (2004), Hindi film industry is a male-dominated industry. Women pursuing careers within the industry are primarily either actresses or playback singers. This trend has changed in recent years with women making their mark as choreographers, costume designers, editors and screenwriters but their numbers are still much smaller in comparison to their male counterparts. Very few women are lyricists or composers. While a handful of them have ventured into direction, they have not achieved the commercial success as their male counterparts have. But there is a significant change in Indian cinema industry.

As an instance, *Dil Dhadkne Do* directed by Zoya Akthar, is a mainstream cinema with popular actors and actress like Anil Kapoor, Shefali Shah, Priyanka Chopra, Ranveer Singh, Anushka Sharma and others. Though the movies is commercial, fragmented in its structures, looks rich, entertaining and glamour, it presents the women empowerment issue. In the same way there are many movies like, *Pink* directed by Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury, *Angry Indian Goddesses* by Pan Nalin, English Vinglish, Ki and Ka, Dear Zindagi, Mom, Dangal, Queen and others. These movies had commercial success but nowhere carry forwarded sexist ideology and male gaze of patriarchal society.   The Indian society is slowly

accepting and recognizing gender identity. These changes represent the changes taking place in the society because movies are inspired by the living society.

Feminist film theorists encouraged women to participate in the film making process to stop the narrative pleasure. Mulvey emphasizes the need for women to understand the mechanisms of voyeurism and fetishism that underline the patriarchal unconscious of narrative film. At the time of writing 'visual pleasure and narrative cinema' her aims were iconoclastic: on order to break the codes and destroy narrative pleasure. (2010. 212) At the end of her essay she calls for filmmakers to free the look of the camera into dialectics and passionate detachment". (2010. 212). She hopes for a feminist cinema with radical, modernist practice, in which there is the self-reflection. This led to the foundation of alternative cinema, which can destroy the narrative pleasure. Haskell suggests that the film affects society, through ideological and social construction of women, who are either to be revered (as virgin) or reviled (as a whore).

Johnston argued that a feminist cinema should be a counter cinema and has the potential to posit an alternative to Hollywood films both in rejecting its content and means of production. Others have argued that in embracing the strategies of the avant-garde the films actually lose some of their political impact rather than posing an alternative and they lose their audience. According to Mulvey, 'alternative cinema provides a space for a cinema to be born which is radical in both a political and an aesthetic sense and challenges the basic assumptions of the mainstream film'. (2012. 209). Feminist film theory and theorist work has become important to understand the mechanism of dominant ideologies and their circulation through cinema. Till the development of feminist film theory in 1970's the world had believed that women oppression was taking place by men and that

women were fighting for their rights against men. But feminist film theorists found that, women oppression is not on biological men but it is done on patriarchal ideology which is dominating women and men. Muvley explains how women forms patriarchal ideology unconsciously. Women symbolizes her lack of castration, so women raises her child into the symbolic representative of patriarchy. Patriarchal system conquered whole Indian society irrespective of religion, caste, sex, age and class. Patriarchy used all men and women to carry its interest of ideology. Patriarchal ideology the interest of a class and remaining section of society are the unconscious caretakers of the ideology and women without her conscious has become an object to circulate and carry forward this ideology from generation to generation.

As De Lauretis's argued feminist film makers create parallel cinema to main stream cinema to avoid gender ideology. She also opines that film makers and women directors should develop a counter cinema against patriarchal main stream cinema.

In order to understand a counter cinema, this research utilised Peter Wollen's conception of seven sins which defined what counter cinema is and how it is different from mainstream. No one can ignore the contribution of Wollen's work, because important for two things. *Firstly,* Peter Wollen is the one who is one among the pioneer of counter cinema in the world. *Secondly*, Wollen and Mulvey developed a theoretical frame work to counter cinema and they directed and produced many films to define what should a counter cinema be. But there certainly are limitations. Their theories cannot used per se.

In order to examine Sen's and Mehta's cinema as counter cinema, this research took the arguments of feminist film theorist's, Peter Wollen's conception of counter cinema and analyzed Sen and Mehta's films based on the elements of Techniques, plot, Costume, Narration, Pleasure, Aperture, and Reality. In the elements of techniques Sen and Mehta's films stands different from the commercial main stream cinema in terms of light, camera angle and consciously avoids male gaze. But Sen's *Parama* and Mehta's *Earth* finds the similarity with main stream technicalities in terms of camera focusing on the bodies of women and capturing sexual participation in a bright light, which does not take place in any of their other movie including Mehta's *Fire.* In *Fire* Radha and Sita's sexual participation taken place in a dim light and it does not romanticize their participation.

Sen and Mehta's films plot is considerably different from main stream cinema. Not only do the characters speak but character's silence, gesture background light, music and images also made effective communication. As discussed in the third chapter Sen's *Parama* have the elements of middle cinema, which combines commercial elements and counter cinema elements. But Mehta's *Earth* appears as a late 80's commercial cinema. In the context of pleasure Mehta's *Earth* failed to counter main stream cinema. The main idea of creating a female gaze failed because the movie exaggerated women sexuality and exposes her body for male gaze. The presence of the male gaze breaks the fundamental purpose counter cinema as a women cinema.

Aparna Sen's *Parama* and Deepa Mehta's *Earth*, was criticized (as quoted above) for offering pleasure, through exhibiting women body which was not demanded by the story. Mulvey, Johnston, and Wollen and many other feminist

film theorists main concern was against these wrong conceptions. Main stream cinema projects women as consuming goods and for the male pleasure. To come out of objectification to subject and to create female gaze main stream cinema need to challenge with the alternative.

If a cinema follows similar kind of projection of women, then there will be no difference between main stream and counter cinema. Aparna Sen started her film career by new wave cinema but later during the direction of *Parama* and *Mr. and Mrs. Iyer* we can see the influence of Middle cinema in her films and her films were bending towards commercial success. In order to gain the commercial success she added commercial elements in the films. Commercial success brings the money to survive in film industry and to create another movie of their wish. Shyam Benegal in his interview says,

> All kinds of films are relevant but ultimately there are two aspects to cinema. One is the creative, artistic and aesthetic, and the other is the business aspect if cinema. Both are interrelated and dependent on each other. You can make films that are artistically and aesthetically very satisfying but if they don't get through to the audience, then you have defeated the very purpose of making that film because you will never be able to make another film. (Goenka. 2014. 151)

Aparna Sen she has grown up in a family of film makers and trained by her father who is one among the pioneers of the Indian new wave/parallel cinema. Deepa Mehta, from the beginning of her film career has identified with women center cinema and diasporic cinema. The basic mortive of their films is to touch the

untouched issues of women and gender issues of India and Indian Diaspora. These two women directors differ in their narration techniques, way at looking at the things and point of view, taking up the issues, presentation of the characters and so on but they fought for women rights and for 'the others'. They opposed main stream cinema's sexist ideology and male gaze. In Indian film industry they stood against the patriarchal ideology and brought changes through their narrative and representing subaltern, other, lesbian and women. Aparna Sen and Deepa Mehta has created potential female gaze in Indian film industry.

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