CHAPTER - IV

A STUDY OF SELECT FILMS:

NARRATIVES AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS
Man is two men;
One is awake in darkness,
The other is asleep in light.

(Gibran, 2002, 210)

While experiencing a movie, we allow ourselves to be deceived; we suspend our disbelief; we play with our sense of reality.

(Jarvie, 1987, 31)

The cinema is a kind of communication overlapping numerous categories: art, entertainment, essay, myth, propaganda, and advertising. Defining the precise boundaries and specific properties of the cinema is less important than developing a perspective to account for its effect upon human beings.

(Nichols, 1981, 9)

This brings me to the last of the three substantial chapters of the present research endeavour. An attempt has been made to select six representative popular, commercially successful films for the study. The rationale behind choosing the six select films has been clearly stated in the Introduction of this research. So I am not repeating the same. I wish to divide this present chapter into two parts. Part 1 deals with rigorous and thorough textual analysis of each of the six films which I have selected for this study. Let me clearly state that while doing textual analysis of these films, I have followed a specific ordering which is as follows: - First, detailed filmography of the film. Second a brief narrative/story of the film in a journalistic spirit and style with some interesting tit-bits, behind-the-scene fables connected with the film as toppings of desserts. Third, a detailed analysis of each scene of the film as it unfolds in a linear progression. Then I write to analyse the portrayal of the dominant male character in the film in terms of a network of relationships, engagements and activities with his mother, heroine, sister, father, brother, villain and his ways of handling things of life and his life-style as a whole. The central focus: what kind of masculinity is being represented in the film. Part 2 deals with a comparative analysis on different modes of masculinities projected in these six selected films and discussing the differences and similarities keeping a sociological look at the
transformation of our own society. In a way, this was situating each of these six films in a cultural and socio-political context. In the process, analysing the flow of masculinities in the journey of popular Hindi cinema from 1950 onwards.

PART-I
TEXTUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE SELECT FILMS

Let me confess: I am a die-hard, fanatic movie buff. I just simply love movies. But it is also true that my socialisation as far films are concerned centred around the genre of serious, art-house, ‘parallel’ cinema. Popular Hindi cinema to me was like the forbidden fruit, almost like sex in India. Later on, growing up as a sociologist, I realised the importance of studying and analysing popular Hindi cinema as a pointer to the psyche of Indian people. Laying my hands and attention on any commercially successful Hindi film seems to enable me to touch and perhaps feel the pulse of a pan-Indian audience. This I believe is a unique feature of studying popular Hindi cinema. The importance of studying the popular film genre is for two reasons: - First, when a film is a big hit that means so many people wanted to see and perhaps identify with something in the film which makes it so successful. So one can try and analyse the contents of the film to try to identify those defining features. Second, after a film attains success, those defining features also have massive impact on such a vast majority of people in India. And the impact can be to any extent possible and in areas which can be quite unimaginable, some conscious and mostly subconscious.

I also wish to point out before I start to undertake the task of textually analysing each of the six selected films separately that the analysis which will follow is essentially an exercise in interpretative understanding subjected to subjective bias of the researcher, though based on the theoretical foundations as laid down in the previous two chapters. I have consciously tried to retain and keep the flavour, flow and interest of popular Hindi cinema intact while embarking on my task avoiding the tone of being dry and cold and serious. So the writing style that will follow combines that of an average popular Hindi film viewer, serious movie buff, film critic with the journalistic disposition, film studies expert, gender studies expert, a psychologist and above all a sociological imaginist who is concerned in analysing the representation of masculinities in these six select films.
SHREE 420:
A Study Of
Self-Contradictory, Vulnerable Masculinity
Filmography:

*Shree 420 (Mr 420)*

Hindi/1951/Black & White/169 minutes

*Direction:* Raj Kapoor

*Story and dialogue:* K.A. Abbas

*Screenplay:* K.A. Abbas and V.P. Sathe

*Music:* Shankar and Jaikishen

*Lyrics:* Shailendra and Hasrat Jaipuri

*Camera:* Radhu Karmakar

*Editing:* G.G. Mayekar

*Art direction:* M.R. Achrekar

*Sound:* Allauddin

*Produced by:* RK Films

*Cast:* Nargis, Raj Kapoor, Nadira, Nemo, Lalita Pawar, M. Kumar, Hari Shivdasani, Nana Palsikar, Bhudo Advani, Pessi Patel, Ramesh Sinha, Rashid Khan, Sheila Vaz, Iftekhar

The film gets its title from Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code under which cheats, frauds, robbers and dacoits are prosecuted.

A young man called Raju comes to Bombay in search of a job. He carries with him a gold medal awarded to him for being the most honest and truthful boy in his school, and a Bachelor of Arts degree. But his two treasured possessions are of no value in the big city of Bombay. The illusions he has built up through the years are destroyed when a beggar tells Raju that in this city there is no place for the educated and the honest. The kinds of people who succeed are the profiteers, blackmarketeers, cardsharpers and swindlers. But not everybody is a hard-hearted cynic, and Raju meets a fruit-seller who, charmed by the penniless young man, gives him some fruits to eat. Raju decides to pawn his medal, and his first encounter with Vidya, an impoverished schoolteacher with a crippled father, is at the pawnbroker’s. He loses the money at once when a gang of ruffians pick his pocket. Penniless once more, Raju decides to sleep on the pavement. But the pavement too has its ‘rightful’ owners and
Raju is about to be beaten up again when his old friend, the fruit-seller, comes to his rescue.

With Vidya's help, Raju gets a job in a laundry, which he hangs on to in spite of some initial embarrassment. On the pavements of the city, Raju and Vidya fall in love. When they have tea together at the roadside tea stall, or share an umbrella in the pouring rain, the future no longer seems so bleak after all.

One day, when Raju goes to deliver the laundry to a room in the Taj Mahal Hotel, he meets Maya, a sultry beauty, who introduces Raju to a world of easy money. Raju has always had very modest ambitions. He just wants to earn enough to marry Vidya and have a little home of their own. But his earnings from the laundry barely help him to survive, and the prospect of sudden wealth dazzles Raju. As a successful gambler, Raju no longer needs to borrow a suit from the laundry to impress Vidya. He can afford his own. To celebrate his success, he takes Vidya to visit his new friends at the hotel. Vidya, dressed in the finery that Raju has bought her, is horrified when she is introduced as a princess. She is uncomfortable in the company of these sophisticated frauds and is distressed by Raju's friendship with them. But Raju is intoxicated by the prospect of wealth and power, and tells Vidya that when he was poor, no one helped him. Now he has money and respect, he is not going to give it all up so easily.

One of the corrupting influences on Raju is Seth Dharmanand, who camouflages his fraudulent business activities behind the mask of a philanthropist and a defender of the faith. The Seth offers Raju a job in a fake company, set up to sell shares to unwary victims. But when Raju discovers that the Seth is out to exploit the poor by promising them cheap houses, he rebels. But the Seth will not release Raju from his grasp. Keeping himself clean, he has involved Raju in enough shady activities. Now he has a hold over the young man. Between Seth Dharmanand, and the honest and sincere Vidya, a battle has been raging for the soul of Raju. Now Vidya is finally able to restore Raju's conscience. Raju comes to his senses, and the wicked Seth goes to a well-deserved end.
With Aag, Barsaat and Awara behind him, the filmmaker in Raj Kapoor was ready to explore more avenues. In Shri 420, he further built on his image of the Chaplinesque tramp that he invented in Awara. As Raju the country bumpkin, migrating to the big bad city to seek his fortunes, Raj Kapoor paved the way for Shah Rukh Khan in Aziz Mirza’s Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman. Mirza’s film was directly inspired by Shri 420 in plot, execution and characterisation. Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, who wrote a large number of RK films, including Awara, Mera Naam Joker and Bobby unfurled the red flag of socialism in Shri 420. The film’s crowded gullis and bazaars, with absent-minded passersby giving the funny tramp strange looks, were all recreated on the floors of R.K. studios.

The film is a marvel of architectural and emotional design. The sets and props suggest a close bond between a lost Arcadian world of innocence and the growing corruption in urban areas. The two women in the protagonist Raju’s life – Maya, the seducer, played by Nadira and Vidya, the nourisher, played by Nargis, represented corruption and purity in the script. When Maya gets on the dance floor and implores Raju, Mud-mud ke no dekh mud-mud ke, she is actually seducing him into a world of illusion and deception. Briefly, Raju succumbs to a life of corruption and vice. But he finally returns to Vidya and the innocence of the duet Pyar hua ikraar hua hai that the two sang in the rain. Incidentally, the three children who pass by in the rain as Nargis sings the lines, Tum no rahoge, hum na rahenge phir bhi rahengi nishaniyan were Raj Kapoor’s own children making their screen debut.

Shri 420 was Raj Kapoor’s first directional venture after Awara. In between, he had planned a film called Ajanta featuring him with Nargis and Nimmi. Instead, he launched three productions with outside directors and then returned to direction with Shri 420 when distributors insisted that he did so.

The film was a raging hit not only in India, but also in other parts of the world – USSR, Egypt, the Middle East and Israel. In Teheran, after Shri 420, Raj Kapoor was conferred with an honorary degree, much to his amusement and excitement, since in real life, he was a school drop out. Both Awara and Shri 420 opened up Russia as a market for Indian films.
The music score by Shanker Jaikishan also acquired mythic proportions, with numbers like *Mera joota hai japani* and *Ichak dana bichak dana* becoming a rage in the USSR. The long film features some of the most lively song-and-dance sequences of the 1950s like *Ramaiya vasta vaiyya* and *Dil ka haal sune dilwala*. In the latter, Raju joins the street people (like the banana seller Lalita Pawar), who represent the 'good' souls as opposed to the 'evil' rich who are shown to slumber on a steep mountain above the humble slums.

Other than the intense romanticism of Raj Kapoor and Nargis (which is far less overt in this film when compared with their earlier smouldering compatibility in *Awara*), the film’s main claim to fame is Nadira’s intense vamping. The film typed her, once and for all, as the flaming femme fatale – an image that has stayed with her to this day. As she seduces poor innocent Raju away from a life of uncorrupted poverty, Nadira becomes the voluptuous epitome of materialism.

The climax of the film involves a bag filled with money that’s thrown around in a typical Charlie Chaplin style. Interestingly, during the same year as *Shri 420*, Naushad produced another big musical hit *Udan Khatola*, which was an out-and-out fantasy featuring Raj Kapoor’s arch-rival Dilip Kumar. Audiences readily accepted both the social realism of *Shri 420* and the unalloyed fantasy of *Udan Khatola*.

Variety was certainly the spice of celluloid life in those days.

Having played a tramp in *Awara* (1951), Kapoor elaborates his vagabond image further with this sentimental story about Raju, a country boy carrying the archetypal bundle on the end of a stick over his shoulder, who tries to make his fortune in Bombay. The city is presented in terms of Abbas’s familiar stereotypical contrast between the corruption of the urban rich and the warm-hearted poor (e.g. Pawar as the fruit-seller). Raju falls in love with Vidya (Nargis), a poor schoolteacher who has a paralysed father. Maya (Nadira) is the femme fatale who embroils Raju in a decadent life. Raju is seen gambling, playing the trumpet in a club, surrounded by dancing-girls (the number *Mudmud ke na dekh*), and he becomes a con man in the employ of Maya’s friend Seth Dharmanand, a ruthless capitalist. When he is used to swindle the homeless, Raju rebels and a lively chase involving a bag of money
provides the bridge to the happy ending. Opening with the Chaplin number *Mera Joota hai japoni* (sung by Mukesh), the film includes some of the star’s most famous star songs: the carnivalesque *Dil ka haal sune dilwala* (sung by Manna Dey) and the best-known Kapoor-Nargis duet, performed in the rain as they fall in love, *Pyar hua ikraar hua* (sung by Manna Dey and Lata Mangeshkar).

*Shree 420* is one of the most representative films as well as the persona which Raj Kapoor is known for. Not only this specific film is very successful commercially but in a unique way this film speaks of the time that it got released namely in the post-Independence era. In a way, the hopes, the frustrations, the depressions of the youth with the problem of unemployment and growing tentacles of corruption trying to encompass the social fabric in the Nehruvian agenda of nation-building were amply reflected.

This film is also significant in terms of the multiple layers of symbolism it portrays. The dialogues, the names of the characters are all symbolic. In a way, this film is replete with symbolic undertones.

The character which Raj Kapoor plays in the film has a masculinity construct which is quite symbolic of the post-independence era Indian youth who are educated but without a job; have dreams and idealism for the nation-building drive and on the other hand, the lure of corruption-induced wealth is also there. In a way, the masculinity frame is in a dialectic dilemma torn with idealism induced self and the sheer survival instincts of desperation without employment.

Raj models his character with a Chaplin-like tramp demeanour; funny; simple; comical; beaten with idealistic fervour; proclaims to be borrowing ideals and clothing styles from all over the globe but at heart a true Indian. He admits to himself and the audience that he is forced to wear many masks at various times. His tryst with truth lands him in various hopelessly pitiable situations forcing him to take on a bluff star 420 mask to fool the world and earn for himself the laurels of wealth and success. But the pathos of this effort comes at various stages especially his ladylove Vidya (symbolic of knowledge) tries her best to tell him to come back to his idealistic true self. There are various strands of the *Krishna* model of masculinity, which comes in
his interaction with the opposite sex – light flirtations but not vulgar behaviour. His joker self again is a projection to the outside world. His interaction with the vamp; Maya (the name symbolises provocation) is a pointer to his inner-contradiction. There is an interesting sequence where the mirror image of Raju reminds him of his idealistic past and the restless inner-struggle of masculinity in order to live up to pressures of survival and society. Raju also has self-respect and refuses to be bought by others simply by lure of money. The characterisation portrays a Krishna-like model of masculinity construct in many ways.

In the very first shot in the movie, Raju appears undecided, unable to select his path or road to undertake in life. One can comment and read it as masculinity at the cross-roads of life. No car is stopping for him. Once he faints in front of a car which stops. The rider orders his driver to pick him up and place him in the car. The rich man with his family shows compassion in Raju’s sorry state and orders the driver to proceed to hospital. This prompts Raju to get up and he tells that it was a ploy to get into the car. This angers the man who orders him to get down at once. Raju is given advice by him to be truthful in future life. But Raju remarks that cheating had enabled him to be inside the car and the moment he uttered the truth, he has been kicked out. Symbolically the milestone on the road proclaims the distance to Bombay is 420. He keeps his spirit alive by singing that may be he is wearing things manufactured from different parts of the world, but at heart he is an Indian.

The scene changes to Bombay city – market place – very crowded – no one has time to talk. Raju manages to talk to a beggar who remarks that this is Bombay city where money is God and the residents have hearts of stone. In a way, the beggar philosophically tells Raju that if he has to succeed here he has to learn the trick of cheating, of being 420. Interestingly one can remark that the city of Bombay acquires a very masculine character – very dry, cold, lifeless, impersonal. Next Raju speaks with a lady selling bananas whom he lovingly calls Lady Kalewali. The appearance of a mother figure in the guise of a lady fruit-seller brings in an air of love and care. Interestingly mother-son bond gets established easily without the biological umbilical cord with a gift of two bananas from her to him. Raju shares a banana with a young kid from the street. This portrayal depicts a tender, soft touch of masculinity construct. I am reminded instantly of Chaplin’s classic creation The Kid. A comedy
scene follows with the cover of the banana causing Vidya to slip and fall down. In a way, this sequence paves the way for the hero to meet his lady love. The beggar remarks that this is Bombay city where everyone laughs at the cost of another but never at their own. Raju enquires about a shop where everything can be bought and sold.

In the shop, Vidya comes to sell off her bangles for money. But the shopkeeper, out of kindness, offers money for lending. He wishes a ‘Prince Charming’ for her, who will help her to return back all the borrowed money. Significantly the shopkeeper is a Muslim. The kind, caring masculinity construct is in contrast to the dry, hegemonic masculinity of the Bombay city. Raju arrives and offers to sell his medal for character and self-dignity and respect. Vidya remarks if one sells off one’s dignity, then what remains. Raju promises to buy Bombay with that money one day. But the shopkeeper remarks that eventually Bombay buys everyone. The contradictions and self-doubts in the masculinity construct of Raju comes to the surface. A pick-pocketer observes Raju counting money. Raju gets tempted to play the game of fortune. But in the process, his money gets pickpocketed. Raju accuses everyone of being responsible for his money. Essentially he feels hopeless and helpless. The vulnerability and weakness of the masculinity construct comes to the surface.

At night, Raju is asked money for sleeping in the pavement. First, he requests and then tries to force himself but gets beaten up in the process. The lady fruit-seller arrives just in time to save him. The mother figure appears at the crucial juncture to save her son. One gets to experience an urban community – perhaps an urban village community or a village within a city. Raju introduces himself as the King of the poor. His work is to look for jobs. In a way, unemployment is the work of the masses. Raju sings for them. A folktune and a folk-like dance. In a way, the Krishna archetype comes alive with gopis all around him dancing in ecstasy.

Raju is sleeping in the sea shore. Sea water wakes him up. A policeman observes him. Raju gives excuses that he was kicked out of the house by his wife at night. Raju remarks that today’s women are basically men. This comment can be read carefully. The definition and notion of being a ‘man’ and a ‘woman’ seems fixed
and given. But then one wonders where does Raju place himself? The policeman excuses and tells him to leave. Raju is seen exercising being in an upside down position. He remarks that if one has to properly observe and understand the topsy turvy world, then he has to observe it in an upside down position. It definitely was a satirical comment and remark on Nehru who reportedly used to perform this yogic exercise till the very last day of his life. Raju comments that all big leaders perform this exercise and then manage to turn the tables of the nation right. In this stance, he does a *peeping tom* at bathing beauties. One is immediately reminded of Krishna observing his *gopis* taking bath and once he stole their clothes. Raju walks and accidentally breaks the sandhouse of children who are being assisted by Vidya. Raju is abused and scolded by Vidya and advised to die. Raju jumps in the sea and finally gets saved by Vidya. The role reversal in the gender discourse is very interesting to note. Vidya threatens to call police to prevent him from committing suicide. Raju manages to reorient the policeman to placate her. The policeman scolds her and advices her by saying that, though at all ages marital disputes occurred, but today women are walking off their households leaving their family behind. After all, women are Laxmi and prestige and beauty of the household. They are supposed to serve their husbands as Gods. After all these rebukes, Vidya walks back home followed by Raju till her house where her ailing physically challenged father greets and thanks him for saving her daughter's life. Raju is offered tea. Conversation on trivial things begins. Father tells her to be quick because her fifty children will be waiting for her. Basically they have a small school.

The scene changes to the classroom, where Vidya is singing and teaching children. Raju joins in the song and in a way, defeats her in front of her class. One can note the subtle play of power and the establishment of male supremacy in the script. In the process of a conversation, Raju reveals to Vidya his academic qualification of a graduate. Raju remarks that one is valued with one's appearance. Even a poor does not value the other poor. He even shows her his B.A. degree. She asks why does he behave in this funny, strange, weak way. He points out that he wears a mask to make this mundane world happy. In the black-board, he draws two masks - one happy and the other sad. Raju promises to be someone who will be rich soon.
The venue is a political meeting of Seth Dharmanand. A parallel effort by Raju playing the secularism card. One is in the garb of Swadeshi and the other claiming to collect from all parts of the world but the heart belongs to India. Contradiction of food vis-à-vis peace of mind. Raju is trying to sell tooth powder. Everyone wants to buy his product. Seth sabotages this situation and threatens to expose him. Raju gets beaten very badly. But he is taken care of by fellow pavement dwellers. That lady fruit-seller arrives. Arrival of mother to take care of the ailing, injured son. A general conversation follows where people wonder whether it is possible for government to build small houses for everyone. It is highly possible but one has to pay rent to stay in them. Raju manages to falsely connive and get a laundry job for himself.

Vidya teaches the word Raju in school. Raju is also thinking of her. Feelings of the heart intensify. Raju goes to her house wearing someone else’s clothes. He claims to have bought a laundry. He also tries to hide the tattered shoes from her.

One day, Vidya passes by the laundry shop. He imitates to pose as the mannequin. He philosophises about his situation by telling her that it is in human beings who wear clothes and not the other way round. He tries to impress her with street-smart talk and offers her tea at Footpath Palace Hotel. But the tea-stall owner asks for money. He skilfully asks her for change. Raju is sad and Vidya understands his situation. He asks about the feasibility of running one’s own family with such a meagre salary. Vidya proposes that if they both work, they can run the show. The romantic rain-soaked song follows. The dreamer in the masculinity construct follows.

Raju comes back to his place of work to find out that one of the clothes got burnt as he forgot to hook off the iron. He gets fined with warnings.

Raju goes to deliver clothes and while waiting, starts playing with cards. Maya observes his skill and is highly impressed. Maya wishes and plans to take him to the party so that Raju’s skills can be used to earn money at the play card gamble. She encourages him to forget his past life and dream of becoming rich in the future. In a way, opening of a new world for him.
The party scene. Raju unmask and remask his face and wears the face of Raj Kumar metaphorically. In a way, the masking and unmasking of the masculinity construct. Raju gets to meet Seth Dharmanand. He starts to play gamble and win handsomely. He even defeats Dharmanand. He later claims share of the victory but gets kicked out by Maya. Walks back with heavy heart. Raju gets into a self-questioning mode.

Dharmanand follows Raju to the laundry and offers him a strategic deal to work with and for him. He convinces him that the world revolves around wealth.

The scene changes to the Diwali eve celebrations. Vidya alights with Diwali lights. Raju visits her with gifts and greetings. Raju offers to take her to the Laxmi Mandir and show her the Diwali lights. He proclaims that he may not be having the treasure but has the key of the treasure house. Bombay soon will be in his grip. Vidya wears the saree gifted by Raju. In a way, they are blessed by her father.

Raju takes Vidya to a party where all the glittrati of the city are there. Vidya is introduced to everybody as Princess of Vidyanagar. Vidya is not comfortable with this posing game. Meanwhile Maya arrives and tries to grab attention of Raju who dismisses her. Maya confronts and insults Vidya amidst everyone in the party. Vidya leaves the venue in haste telling Raju that she knows her way out of the place. Raju tries to stop her in vain. Dharmanand remarks that ten Vidyas will follow if one leaves. Tonight Maya is needed and not Vidya. The cabaret song and dance routine with the main message: don’t look back.

Raju comes back drunk to Vidya. She tries to convince him to come back to his truthful self. He confronts by pointing out that all the wise talks are meant for only poor people. He proclaims that now new Raju is in the surface. Vidya acts throughout the movie as a moral conscience keeper. And this element is highlighted in a melodramatic framing and spirit with one part of Vidya coming out and trying to stop Raju and requesting him to look back and take note of one’s deeds.

Raju comes back to Dharmanand for work. Seth talks on phone where he advises to dilute things before selling for earning profit.
New company: Raj Raj Raj Co. Raj is there on phone and in the mould of cheating everyone with street-smart talk and offers business deal by faking about some gold rush. Here interesting thing to note is the name of the Company. The three Raj in the name can highlight the multiple masculinities present in one masculinity construct perhaps indicating the inherent self-contradictions of the construct.

Raju gets to meet Vidya in the same shop where everything is bought and sold. Vidya is there to sell off her books, that is, her knowledge. Her school has closed down. Raju is there to take back his mortgaged medal for self-respect and dignity and truthfulness. Symbolic undertones are throughout present in the script.

Raju speaks to the mirror. Self-contradictory projection of masculinities seem to confront each other. He wants to get back Raju.

Raju goes to meet Vidya at the same pavement tea stall where they had proposed to each other. He gets nostalgic and makes her remember those days. She confronts him by pointing out that he may be on his way to jail because of his cheating (420) ways. Does one need money to breathe? Why did he destroy her world at large? Then Raju should buy his love from the artificial, make-believe, untruthful world of his own making and leave her for good.

Raju gets back to the party scene. Pomp and glitter everywhere. Another cabaret song and dance follows with Maya in the lead and revolving symbolically with all the allurments. Raju's self-contradictions tear him apart. Torn, broken, he escapes from everything. Raju seeks refuge in the pavement where the pavement song of the common ordinary folk beckons to Raju with the feel of the soil. Call of going back to roots. In a way call of Vidya in the backdrop. The lady fruit-seller provides the maternal support to the tattered torn masculinity construct and gives back self-belief. She claims that he is after all her son. Here Raju gets to know that hand-outs have been distributed and issued in his name which claims to provide low housing scheme at an unbelievable rate of Rs. 100.

Raju rushes back to Dharmanand who makes him understand that he is here to sell dreams and not houses. He is made to understand that in this age, one should not
discriminate between rich and poor while cheating them. Now Raju only wants peace in life. But now he is in a vicious circle and understands that now he needs Maya and not Vidya.

Raju confronts Maya and even hits her to stop her. Maya encourages Raju to defeat Seth at his own game of cheating.

Low housing scheme is a big sell-out everywhere. Expectations sore high and there is mass hysteria for Raju’s scheme.

Time comes for the distribution of money among the share-holders of the scheme. Meanwhile some pavement dwellers come to meet Raju and praise him for his unique scheme and effort. Especially lady fruit-seller comes to bless him in his endeavours. Maya brings money and plans to escape sabotaging Seth’s plan. Vidya comes to give back Raju his medal for truthfulness. Maya again confronts her.

Now Maya wants to escape with Raju somewhere outside India. But Raju philosophically remarks that he cannot escape from his inner-contradictions. Seth comes to stop them. He is caught with all the shareholders and partners of the deal. There is confusion and he tries to escape. Fight erupts among everyone over the collected money. Police arrives. Lure for money has made human beings worse than dogs. But when the bag is forcibly opened, only application papers come out. Raju is shot at by Seth. Vidya comes up to him. The common people come and ask for explanation. Vidya confronts Seth. The lady fruit-seller also arrives. Police arrives. Seth tries to justify his killing of Raju as he was trying to escape with public money. Suddenly Raju gets up unhurt because he was the one who kept the pistol in the bag. Raju explains the fraud and forgery to the police and everyone. Raju convinces the man in the street not to take back their money from the scheme. Rather appeal to the government to build houses for them with their humble contributions as token money. Raju tries to fight poverty with sincere effort and labour and not by cheating and forgery. Raju is taken by police. Vidya looks in the the mould of the conscience-keeper in the fable.

The tramp reappears and goes back to his vagabond existence. And both Raju and Vidya unite with the backdrop of the housing blocks in the horizon.
Raju is the dominant male character in the film. As I am indicating throughout my textual analysis of the film that the self-contradictory mode of the masculinity construct is most evident. The softness, vulnerability, inner-conflict also add to the complexity of the masculinity construct. Moreover the usage of masking and unmasking point to the performative dimension of the masculinity construct. Interestingly the two female leads in the film – Vidya and Maya are basically performing the role of the two sides of a contradictory frame. Vidya is a conscience-keeper of the masculinity construct of Raju. Whereas Maya points to allurements and diversions adding another dimension to the masculinity construct. The lady fruit-seller provides the role of mother and inherent mother-fixation element in the masculinity construct in the Indian context. He can always rely on her and she is always there, almost omnipresent. She resurfaces at critical junctures of his life saving and protecting and blessing him. One can even remark psychoanalytically that the characters of Vidya and Maya may not be performing the role of rival lady loves of Raju’s life. Rather they may be performing the role of the ‘Good Mother’ and ‘Bad Mother’ in the psyche of the self-contradictory Raju who is torn apart and is at the cross-roads. The triumph of Vidya signifies the victory of the ‘good mother’ in Raju’s psyche and also of the audience. In a way, Raju’s dealings with Dharmanand and the climax point to the strategic, calculative execution and annihilation of the villain in a blood-less coup engineered by Raju in full control of the whole situation point to the Krishna archetype as a comparative model for analysis. Perhaps the most interesting aspect is the presence of multiple masculinities in the lone single masculinity construct of Raju which is perhaps the essence and core of this analysis.

Raj Kapoor was perhaps a "humanist". He wanted to "make people think through laughter" – notwithstanding the rather limited cultural and educational profile of the audiences and the importance of traditional arts in society. Shri 420 (the number of the section of the Indian Penal Code that applies to confidence tricks and other minor offences, is used commonly in India to designate those with a propensity to commit such offences) explicitly pays homage to Charlie Chaplin. K.A. Abbas’ dialogue lends depth to Shree 420’s principal character, a vagabond driven (as many thousands are in reality) by the poverty of the countryside to the big city, where he is confronted with the hard-heartedness of the rich as opposed (in the film) to the
warmth and spirit of sharing of the humble and the poor. Raju, the vagabond falls in love with a teacher, Vidya (which means learning in Hindi) who lives with her paralysed father and as a symbol of educated urbanity is in a sense the moral pivot of the film. As Raju cannot find gainful employment that will enable him to marry Vidya, he descends into dishonesty to Vidya's great despair. Further, Raju falls into the coils of the vamp, Maya (played by Nadira, a specialist in the role) which gives the film a platform for scenes of 'decadence': gambling dens, nightclubs, cabarets, all of which, in Indian cinema, represent moral degradation. On becoming a key man in the entourage of a diehard capitalist, a friend of Maya's Raju is asked to cheat the homeless. He rebels, regains the purity of his heart and makes off with his beloved, as both decide to leave behind them the city, and the brutality of social relationships thrown up by industrialisation (Thoraval, 2000, 50).

The remarkable popularity of Raj Kapoor's films can be related to certain social and cultural phenomena. One way of coming to terms with Raj Kapoor's popular cinema is to investigate it in relation to some significant social and cultural dimensions.

When discussing popular cinema which appeals to mass audiences, one perhaps needs to draw a distinction between 'popular entertainment' and 'mass entertainment'. Popular entertainment grows out of the needs, tastes, sensibilities, and traditions of the people while mass entertainment is imposed from above. In this regard, Raj Kapoor's films obviously fall into the category of popular entertainment (Dissanayake and Sahai, 1988, 3-6, 159).

Running through his films is the theme of harmony of discourses. Raj Kapoor's is a cinema of security. He creates this sense of security by balancing, by harmonizing various discourses: Indian and Western Humour, realism and fantasy, narration and spectacle, tradition and modernity, social protest and maintenance of the status quo. So beyond the glamour and glitter, beyond the lilting music, he appeals to a basic human urge, that of security.

Raj Kapoor is attempting to harmonize the conflicting discourses of tradition and modernity, and thereby making the audience feel secure, and this can but be
understood in relation to the self. The two currents of tradition and modernity, run through all of Raj Kapoor's films especially in *Shree 420*, and his has been an attempt to unify the two in a way that will ensure individual happiness and societal stability. Raj Kapoor's early and middle films were made during the Nehru era – a period which witnessed a rapid transformation of society and a deep soul-searching. Modernization was 'the subject perhaps closest to Nehru's heart and that "his ideal was a society, Indian in sentiment and social habit, secular in its outlook, and democratic in its working". Raj Kapoor's films, in many ways, conform to this ideal. And in a way, this is the signature tune of Raj Kapoor's masculinity construct.

He turned the common man into an uncommon success. When Raj Kapoor slipped into those ankle length trousers, patched overcoat and bowler hat in his greatest classics, *Awara* and *Shri 420*, he imbued his creation, Raju, the tramp, with such lyrical passion that he tugged at the heartstrings of a nation.

India fell in love with the tramp precisely because the people could identify with him. Kapoor aptly located the quintessentially 50's quest for a national identity and his tramp became an allegory for a certain innocent state of mind of the post-independence Indian. Just as Kapoor's Raju is shown to be alternately won once by the heroine Vidya (Nargis, the metaphor for knowledge) and the vamp Maya (Nadira, the metaphor for illusion) in *Shri 420*, every citizen of the new Indian republic too was torn between Nehruvian socialism and flashy capitalism. Under Kapoor's direction, the common man's world became a microcosm for Indian society. Raj Kapoor's socio-political parables of human aspiration (as Kapoor sings in the prelude to the much vaunted 'Ghar aaya mera pardesi" dream sequence in *Awara, Mujhko yeh narak na chahiye.....mujhko chahiye bahar*) became emblematic of the small man dreaming big.

For his unique ability to commingle popular cinema with cinematic poetry and for attaining a synergy between his two selves as an actor and a director, Raj Kapoor is renowned as one of our brightest luminaries.
JUNGLEE:
A Study Of Wild, Happy-Go-Lucky, Easy Going, Triumphant Masculinity
Filmography:

Junglee (The Wild)

Hindi/1961/Colour/150 minutes

Direction: Subodh Mukherjee
Story: Subodh Mukherjee
Dialogue: Agha Jani Kashmiri
Screenplay: Subodh Mukherjee
Music: Shankar – Jaikishen
Lyrics: Shailendra Hasrat Jaipuri
Camera: N.V. Srinivas
Produced by: Subodh Mukherjee Productions
Cast: Shammi Kapoor, Saira Banu, Lalita Pawar, Shashikala, Helen, Anup Kumar, Azra

Yahoo went Shammi Kapoor as a nation of stuffed shirts and repressed prudes flung off their invisible chastity belts and visible moral fungi to swing to the new Yahoo Hero’s zing-thing. Though Kapoor had done the Yahoo role earlier, no film epitomised his free-spirited rebellious persona as effectively as Junglee.

Belting out Mohammed Rafi’s Chahe koi mujhe jungle kahe and Ai-yay-ya karoon main kya suku suku (the opening portions of this number were done by composer Shankar), Shammi Kapoor rocked the nation as Shekhar, the Vilaayat-retumed Stuffed Shirt whose feudal mother (Lalita Pawar) finds singing, dancing and merrymaking to be vulgar. What this relic of the Victorian era does not know is that her daughter (Shashikala) has been gallivanting all over town with her beau. Son too steps into the sun when he meets the Kashmiri beauty Saira Banu.

Junglee introduced Ms. Banu to the Hindi cinema with a fanfare that was hitherto unknown. Pre-empting Hema Malini’s launch eight years later as the Dream Girl, Saira Banu as the ‘Beauty Queen’ had the nation drooling in delighted anticipation. She was the second heroine after Asha Parekh in Dil Deke Dekho whom Yahoo Kapoor brought screamingly to the screen. A third– Sharmila Tagore in Kashmir Ki Kali – soon followed.
Saira Banu still recalls the rows after rows of people lined up on both sides of the road as she drove to the premiere of Junglee in Delhi. Fetchingly photographed by V. Srinivas in Eastmancolour among the multi-coloured flowers of Kashmir, Saira trilled Lata Mangeshkar’s *Kashmir ki kali hoon main mujhse na rootho babuji*. And thousands of flowers bloomed in the hearts of Indian moviegoers.

In spite of Saira’s glamour and beauty, Junglee was Shammi Kapoor’s show all the way. He was killingly comic as the killjoy who loosens up when love is in the air. The film ushered in an era of Eastmancolour photography as the accepted code of visualisation for mainstream Hindi cinema. Before Junglee only some important commercial films like Mehboob Khan’s *Aan* were given the privilege of colour photography. After Junglee, Eastmancolour came to be associated with family musicals.

Shankar-Jaikishan’s long and fruitful association with the cinema of Shammi Kapoor started with Junglee. The songs, from the coltish duet *Mere yaar shabba khair* to the dirgeful Ghazal *Ehsaan tera hoga mujhpar* filled the screen with a sense of *joie de vivre*.

Producer-director Subodh Mukherjee’s earlier films like *Paying Guest* (1957) and *Munimji* (1955) harped on the theme of masquerade. Junglee extended that theme by making the protagonist indulge in a psychological masquerade whereby he remains a stranger to his own desires and pleasures until he meets the girl who rids the hero of his Oedipal complex.

Remarkable for its use of music, colour, glamour, machismo and beauty, Junglee was released during the same year that Nasir Husain foisted a similar-mooded musical romance *Jab Pyar Kisise Hota Hai* on the audience. The swinging 1960s had arrived.

Shammi Kapoor’s best-known film featuring him in his *Yahoo* persona in songs like *Chahe koi mujhe junglee kahe* and *Aai aai ya suku suku*. The rich bachelor Shekhar returns from abroad and refuses to laugh until he meets Kashmiri belle Rajkumari who eventually changes his view of the world. The film can be seen as heralding the colour films that came to be the mainstay of the popular cinema (of
Manmohan Desai's work) after the 50s Filmistan genre products. Previously, colour had been reserved for big spectacles only. After *Junglee*, intimate family romances also had to be in colour. The movie is still regarded as a cult item because of Shammi Kapoor's youthful and rebellious performance.

The film begins with a narration proclaiming that the story is centred on a person named Sekhar who never smiles in spite of the fact that the whole world does smile and laugh. The linear narrative structure of the film is established with this commentary. He is coming back fresh from England. The flight going up and landing. The masculinity construct is enhanced by the imposing architectural structure of his home where he is greeted by his band of servants. He has never laughed or smiled. The cold, dry, stern, non-smiling, non-expressive dimension of masculinity construct is highlighted to serve as the contrast of eventual breaking-free wildness of his upcoming persona which is like a sleeping volcano waiting to explode. One as well finds his mother standing up at the stairs waiting for him. No emotions, which are extra from the mother. The mother figure is stiff and not bulging and non-hugging. Both mother and son have their own sticks – mom's a little bigger and son's a little smaller. His mother is the creator of this seething, wild volcano. No apparent show of any love or emotions from the mother though they are meeting after long years of his stay abroad for studies and eventual business engagements. The authority of both the mother and the son are established with their varying sizes of sticks. He is brought in front of the picture of his late father. The absentee father figure imagery is established in terms of the masculinity construct with a dominating mother figure reigning supreme. The stiffness of the mother is very much evident. In fact Sekhar claims that his success has much to do with the family legacy of not laughing. The claim is that a child who cannot control laughter and emotions, becomes a weak personality. Every move, action, gesture, words, seem to be dictated by the mother figure who in the absentia of the father figure becomes supreme authority figure in the family. In a way, a lack of love everywhere amidst all the pomp and glitter and riches of the household.

On the other hand, Sekhar has a sister who quite clandestinely continues with her own love life and laughing and meeting her lover in the house itself. Love is her birth right, according to her. In fact the masculinity construct of her lover is in sharp
contrast to that of her brother. The lover claims that he may look and appear weak but he is not afraid to die and is brave at heart. But he is afraid of her brother who happens to be his boss at the office. The name of Sekhar and his impending visit and the loud knock at the door chickens all bravado out of him. Sekhar enters and is suspicious of overhearing the sound of laughter from his sister's room. The lover's masculinity is painted in a deliberately funny way.

Sekhar overacts to establish the humbugness of his characterisation. The typical Shammi Kapoor depiction of the persona of Sekhar is significant. He arrives in office. The imposing office building points to the power and position of the masculinity construct. His professional persona is even more strict especially in terms of punctuality and punishing people for being late in their office timings. In fact his vocabulary and harshness of the voice and diction add to his persona. No personal matters are allowed to split over the professional side of one's being. The harsh behaviour with his office staff is significant in terms of the persona. He wants discipline at all costs. No wastage of time at any cost. In a way the power dynamics of masculinity construct is highlighted. The body language, the build-up of his persona all add and fuel this aspect of his being. His private secretary, whom he first cannot recognise, calls him over phone to ask for leave as she was busy looking after her hospitalised boyfriend who had a severe and fatal accident. But Sekhar immediately orders her to come back to office. She arrives and is abused by him. His manager tries to convince him in vain that Sekhar can be informal with him and call him 'Uncle'. But Sekhar is adamant about office discipline and protocol. His office subordinates are critical of his ways of talking and public dealings.

At home, mother imposes her supremacy over her daughter by not allowing her to go out of home without her permission. But she somehow escapes.

Meanwhile the romance of his sister is continuing. On the other hand, a marriage proposal comes for Sekhar which his father had given word for with some Raj Kumari that is princess. In fact some gift exchange is also done to seal the proposal. In a way, a fledging feudal family is trying to cash in on Sekhar's riches through this marriage proposal in terms of amassing his wealth. There is an element of treachery and cheating involved which Sekhar and his mother are not aware of.
A romantically intense scene follows where Sekhar's sister and her lover meet. He laments that he is poor and there is tremendous economic disparity between them. Here is a masculinity construct which appears funny at the surface but is highly aware of his socio-economic positioning vis-à-vis his love. His practicality combined with his genuineness and sincerity in love is noteworthy. But he gets reminded of his positioning in society especially economically compared to his love by the manager of the office.

There is a scene where a meeting is held between Sekhar, his mom and the manager in a room, which has red light, and on the outside door with a signal pointing out that the meeting is confidential and serious. Authority imposition is executed in this manner. The manager informs them about Sekhar's sister's love life but strategically avoids divulging the name of her lover, may be to protect his job judging the economic responsibility of his family. This is also a significant pointer to the masculinity construct of the manager who is carrying on his duty and official responsibility. But in the process he is not loosing out his human or rather humane qualities and concerns which I believe is a very significant aspect of his masculinity trait. Their verdict is there is no forgiveness for loving somebody in this house. The setting is interesting with the mother sitting just below the painting of the father in the table oozing authority deriving from the patriarchal authority of the father and both Sekhar and manager standing. The sister is called by the mother through a calling bell. The advice is to take her to Kashmir for a change so that she forgets her love. The decision is imposed on her without giving any choice to her wishes. Imposition of patriarchal authority imposed and executed by a mother figure who is the fountainhead in the absence of direct patriarchal authority.

The venue is beautiful Kashmir. The sister refuses to go out in Kashmir with Sekhar. She is enraged at the imposed authority of her brother. She rebukes that an alarm should warn everyone and everything whenever her dreadful brother would come nearby. In a way the dread of the masculinity construct is highlighted.

Sekhar gets to meet Raj Kumari amidst the snow. The heroine jokingly throws snow balls at him and he reacts harshly to her. She again throws and in the
process of chasing her, Sekhar slips. She tries to nurse her own wound in the feet. Raj Kumari is seen with her father. Her father is a doctor who wants to get his daughter married to a proper groom.

Meanwhile Sekhar's sister is not well and goes to the clinic of Raj Kumari's doctor father where she gets to know that she is pregnant. She is very upset and contemplates suicide but is saved by Raj Kumari. Raj Kumari takes care of Sekhar's sister and gets to know about him from her. She reassures her that she will convince her brother and she need not worry too much as long as she is around. Meanwhile Sekhar is impatiently waiting for his sister and Raj Kumari comes and he behaves harshly with her and tells her to get out. There is heated exchange between the two where he is once snubbed. He is told categorically that he must learn to speak with girls. She informs him about his sister through the via media of the servant. She tells that her name is Raj Kumari. She meets him in the evening to take him to the hospital where his sister is admitted. Raj Kumari wants him to take flowers for his sister. But he says that he does not love flowers. This imposed displeasure for all the finer aspects of life is put forth as a characteristic of masculinity construct, which is unique. He hates flowers. Finally he yields and buys and brings flowers for his sister. Even in hospital, his harshness continues with his sister as well as the doctor. But even then his sister is quite pleased and amused by Raj Kumari's power of convincing and forcing him to get flowers for her. This convinces her that probably Raj Kumari will be able to bring appreciable changes in the desert heart of Sekhar. Sekhar speaks with the doctor who says that she will take a while to recover. Sekhar tries to put forth that he has enough money to take care of her weakness in the recovery period. But the doctor emphasises the importance of happiness and mental peace of her speedy recovery.

A funny romantic meeting of Sekhar and Raj Kumari takes place. Sekhar is frowning while taking pictures as Raj Kumari is forcing herself to be in the frame over and over again. She tries to romance him by singing for him and tries to make him interested in her. Towards the end of the long song and dance sequence, she suddenly falls down in the lake and asks for help and when Sekhar jumps in the water to save her, Raj Kumari teases and escapes. He claims that he hates her and she claims
she loves him. Since love and hate are the two sides of the same coin, probably the first seed of love gets sown in the barren land of masculinity for Sekhar.

Meanwhile the doctor is getting worried of the impending pregnancy of Sekhar's sister. He remarks that Sekhar, the tiger has to be sent back somehow. Raj Kumari jokingly remarks that he is basically a mosquito. Sister gives a tip to Raj Kumari that if Sekhar is made to be scared of something, he would not do that and would escape. Raj Kumari chips in by disguising herself in the costume of a sadhu and sending Sekhar to pray in a shrine of Seshnag. But due to impending storm, she again persuades him not to go. The storm explodes. They get caught in the storm. She is saved by him. They are seen in a hotel room where Sekhar refuses to eat because of lack of proper cutlery. She requests and tries to tempt him in vain. He is adamant and fastidious and obstinate. After Raj Kumari fakingly poses to sleep off, hungry Sekhar starts to eat with his own hands without much bothering of the cutlery sets, she wakes up to his embarrassment. She makes and pokes fun at him. In the morning, Sekhar wakes up to a new Sekhar. A slow transformation of Sekhar is on the cards. He feels like writing poems and is surprised to know that so much storm was brewing inside so far. In a way the symbolic masculinity construct and the associated suffocation to live up to the societal and familial pressures of living up to the mark. The pressure cooker sometimes explodes. It becomes too much to bear and the boiling point is reached. Love comes to tide over the foundations and seeks to break free out of the shackles of the artificial masculinity construct cover and wishes to break free with the wings of love. Both are surprised at each other's transformations in love and feeling. He reads out poetry to her. The fireplace is burning perhaps with the passion of pure love. He prays to God to stop the storm so that Raj Kumari can be saved.

Next morning Sekhar wakes up to find the storm gone and wakes her up in the ecstatic sound of yahoo. The immortal song pertains that he does not care if society terms him as wild and dances in ecstasy with Raj Kumari in thick snow. The stony persona is transformed in love. The chemistry of love is evident. They come back together. Meanwhile Sekhar's sister has given birth to a baby boy, which is not revealed to Sekhar. Sister cannot believe brother's transformation who now claims that to live what is important is laughter (hasi), fun (khusi) and flowers (phool).
Sekhar tells Raj Kumari's father that they want to marry each other. He promises to speak with his mother for approval and blessings.

The scenario changes to the house of Sekhar's proposed in-laws who are basically traitors. They are after Sekhar's wealth and try to conceal their poverty-stricken means and their real intent by apparent show of preparations. Sekhar comes back, and attends and disrupts the function organised by his so-called bluffer in-laws who are forcibly trying to marry him off. He dances with another famous song *suku suku* in his Elvis Presley dancing style in an insane frenzy to confuse his so-called fiancé, who is after his wealth. But the would-be father-in-law is convinced that Sekhar is after all a gold mine of wealth and riches.

Sekhar's conversational mode with his mother changes. He manages to convince her that his proposed in-laws have accused him of being an inherited insane person. She gets enraged with this accusation. He seems relieved and too happy. Sekhar's persona even in office changes drastically out of happiness. He arrives in office in a half-dancing mode. Even in his chamber with his secretary and manager Sekhar is almost ecstatic with joy and happiness almost to the tune of being in a state of delirium. His efforts of fooling his mom and his proposed in-laws seem to have finally succeeded. But his mom calls him back home to finalise his marriage proposal. Sekhar acts insane to confuse his mom not to get him married. His sister's fiancé disguises himself on advice from the manager as a doctor to him to persuade his mom not to get him married for a minimum five years, as he is not well. Accordingly, Sekhar's mom telegrams them regretting to cancel the proposal. But the in-laws are not very convinced about Sekhar's insanity and sense some foul play by Sekhar himself and decide to visit them instead and somehow force the marriage proposal after initial investigation. Meanwhile, Sekhar informs his sister that Raj Kumari is arriving and decides to resume his normal daily routine.

Raj Kumari arrives and Sekhar's mom admits that she is very beautiful. But the news of this selection goes to the other camp, which tries to convince Sekhar's mom. Sekhar's mom retorts back to Raj Kumari and charges her of being after Sekhar's wealth and sends Raj Kumari back. Raj Kumari is very angry and insulted. Sekhar tries to woo her back and placate her with his song and dance.
Sekhar's mom is waiting to have a conversation with him and says that after bringing him up for so many years, he claims that he does not exist for her. Mother comes and tries to convince him that the marriage proposal was agreed by his late father and on the other hand, Sekhar claims that he loves Raj Kumari and has promised to marry her. The classic dilemma of the son on whom the demands of mother and girlfriend or wife is contradictory on the masculinity construction. Sekhar asks her mom why she wants to take away all the happiness out of his life. He promises that he is not going to marry her or any one else in his future life. He dreams of her only.

In a dream sequence, Sekhar sees Raj Kumari who is visiting him and is trying to persuade him with a heart-felt song. Sekhar is in a fix and a great dilemma engulfs him. He wakes up disturbed.

Meanwhile in the so-called in-law's house, there is concern about Sekhar's non-marrying position where the bride-to-be proposes that if they spread some scandal about Raj Kumari then that may convince Sekhar to marry that lady. That lady's brother goes to Raj Kumari's house and is blackmailing her to admit that she is basically the mother of the baby which otherwise belongs to Sekhar's sister. He threatens that he is going to cause harm to Sekhar's family. Sekhar's mom arrives and asks about the lineage of the baby and whether the baby belongs to Raj Kumari. Raj Kumari admits that the baby belongs to her and Sekhar's mom is very enraged and thinks that she is after her son's wealth and offers her money to leave her son for good. Sekhar arrives and his mom tells about Raj Kumari who again admits about her motherhood. But somehow Sekhar is not convinced and makes her vow in his hands. His sister arrives with her lover and admits that the baby belongs to her and confronts her mom full throat. The lover admits that both of them had got married two years back and the baby belongs to them. Sekhar also confronts his mother. And just then that culprit arrives with pistol in hand and is after the bag of money. Fight erupts between him and Sekhar, contrasting masculinity construct as well as the issue of poverty and wealth. Mom tells Raj Kumari to call for Sekhar after he overpowers that person. The film ends with the song Yahoo uniting the two lovers in a happy note of everlasting love.
Sekhar is the dominant male protagonist in the film. What is most striking in terms of the masculinity construct of Sekhar is the transformative dimension. From a masculinity construct which relied on bully, dry, cold, non-expressive, abusive, excessively formal, non-caring, non-loving persona to a complete transformation of a sleeping volcano which erupts in wild ecstasy, happiness, madness, loving, caring, protective, strategic, poetic. In the relation with his mother, the coldness, the artificiality and stiffness are evident from both sides. Here mother takes over the role of absentee father figure and in a way the care-taker of the patriarchal hegemonic legacy of the family. But Sekhar does manage to engineer a change even in the persona of his mother. In terms of his relation with his sister, that also undergoes major transformation. Rather than being a caring brother, Sekhar was more in the mould of a father-figure imagery interested in maintaining the family status quo. But with the arrival of his lady love and after the flower of love blossoms, Sekhar's attitude towards his sister changes. He becomes a responsible, caring and loving brother to his only sister. Raj Kumari, Sekhar's lady love is a force of love in his life which transforms him forever. In a way, their relationship passes through the initial courtship by her and then when the transformation takes place, Sekhar is a volcano of repressed love and passion and feelings and poetry. Perhaps this transformative dimension is the most significant trait of masculinity construct as far as the film Junglee is concerned. But one wonders, is Sekhar wild/junglee before or after his transformation? This is a point to ponder over in this discourse.

Shammi Kapoor, matinee idol Raj Kapoor's younger brother, a man of intemperate habits and a constant weight problem who, having failed as a leading man, made a successful comeback by deftly manoeuvring his ever-increasing bulk to various dance beats, much to the delight of the young. He also shrewdly promoted to his benefit the image of the cave man whom women found irresistible from Tumsa nahn dekha (Never seen anyone like you) under Nasir Hussain's careful tutelage to films like Professor, Junglee, Janwar, Raj Kumar and others! Shammi Kapoor through unintentional absorption, brought the ethos of black rock 'n' roll as exemplified by the bump and grind sexuality of artists from the American South like Little Richard, Bo Didley, Chuck Berry and others, along with their extremely famous white imitator Elvis Presley, to Bombay popular cinema; to this he added a dash of
Punjabi bhangra and made a lasting contribution (if not an entirely constructive one) to the dance vocabulary of the Bombay film choreographers (Chatterjee, 1995, 197-218).

The on-screen lives of most of the 50s heroes was one long agony of self-repression till Shammi Kapoor struck like lightning with his brash, cocky swagger and his eagerness to rebuke convention.

His rebel yell, Yahoo is not a word that will be found in any dictionary; but with this one word, Shammi Kapoor announced the transition of the Hindi film hero from yesterday's loser, Devdas, to today's Sikander, a winner.

So, mixing Elvis Presley and James Dean in equal proportions, he had his hair cut in the famous ducktail style of the 50s and reinvented himself with Tumsa Nahin Dekha. "I was sitting with friends deciding on how best to present myself," Shammi reveals, "when Bunny Ruben came up with the title – The Rebel Star! Rebell ing against the reigning trio – Raj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar and Dev Anand!"

And sure enough, the label adhered. Shammi had correctly assessed the mood of the times and after Dil Deke Dekho's thumping affirmation came the conclusive success of Junglee. Even today Shammi Kapoor's knees hurt because he bruised himself severely as he came rolling down a snow bank in Junglee, the hills reverberating with his yahoo. An entire decade reeled under its colourful impact. The snow, songs and simla sagas ruled over the 60s.

Shammi's songs were, of course, in tune with the swinging 60s. A large part of Shammi's appeal was primarily due to the immensely catchy and upbeat numbers like Suku Suku, O haseena zulfonwali and Aaj kal tere mere pyar ke charche. His predecessor, Dev Anand too had many a breezy number but significantly, while Dev's songs were gentlemanly, Shammi projected boisterous sensuality. His paroxysmic dance movements to an Aaja aaja main hoon pyar tera had the girls irrevocably drawn into his fascinating magnetic field.

Unfortunately, his films like Kashmir Ki Kali, Rajkumar, Jaanwar and An Evening In Paris, though successful, were largely light weight tales about the
skirmishes of the sexes. The critics dismissed him as less of an actor and more of a purveyor of monkey tricks who inspired titles like *Junglee, Janwar, Budtameez, Bluff Master* and *Pagla Kahin Ka* and so on. But with his highly charged performance as the suspect in *Teesri Manzil*, and his sensitive underplaying as the child-loving bachelor of *Brahmachari*, Shammi flexed his emotive muscles and surprised his sceptics.

The nattily dressed nabob of the box-office, Shammi had 100 suits, 120 shirts, 50 sweaters and innumerable affairs.
KATI PATANG:
A Study Of
Soft, Caring, Protective
Masculinity
Filmography:

*Kati Patang* (The Falling Kite)


**Direction:** Shakti Samanta

**Story and Screenplay:** Gulsan Nanda

**Dialogue:** Vijendra Gaur

**Music:** Rahul Dev Burman

**Lyrics:** Anand Bakshi

**Director of Photography:** V. Gopi Krishna

**Editing:** Govind Dalwadi

**Art Director:** Shanti Das

**Dances:** Surya Kumar

**Playback:**
- Lata Mangeshkar
- Asha Bhosle
- Mukesh
- Kishore Kumar

**Produced by:** Shakti Samanta, United Producers, Shakti Films

**Cast:** Asha Parekh, Rajesh Khanna, Prem Chopra, Bindu

The film *Kati Patang* was released in 1970. In 1971 *Filmfare Awards*, Anand swept all the popular awards including Best Actor (Rajesh Khanna), Best Supporting Actor (Amitabh Bachchan), Best Film. The only exception was the Best Actress Award which was won by Asha Parekh for *Kati Patang*.

The film begins with the scene of a marriage ceremony. There is music, fanfare, joy and laughter. The feel is of abundance, happiness associated with typical Hindu marriage. In a way there is a festive mood. But the camera when it pans towards the bride being decked up in bridal finery and jewellery does not seem to be too happy. Those surrounding her go running to check out the groom who has arrived with his entourage. She opens a jewellery box and takes out a letter and starts reading it. It is from her lover Kailash who writes a heartbroken note remembering the time they shared together and expressing grief that they cannot be together for life and when she goes around the holy fire in the traditional ‘phera’ during the marriage.
ritual, she should think that she is going round the funeral pyre of their love. The lady is Madhvi, lovingly Madhu played by Asha Parekh.

The next shot synchronically goes over to Kailash played by Prem Chopra and another lady Shabbo played by Bindu. Shirt buttons of Kailash are almost all open showing off his hairy chest signalling a raw animal sexuality with Shabbo in a white, sexy nightdress quite scanty in clothing sense. Kailash is drinking too. A masculinity construct is unfolding which is quite raw and animal-like. Shabbo thinks that may be he is drinking because his Madhvi is becoming someone else’s from this day. But Kailash retorts pointing that in his life, so many Madhus come and go. The only sad part is that he could not get hold of her relative’s wealth pointing to the masculinity framing where women are available for monetary consumption but important is to use them for amassing wealth. They get intimate when suddenly there is loud knock on the door. Madhavi arrives leaving her marriage venue for Kailash. All this for love. But Kailash is reluctant and tells her to go back to her uncle. But he insists that for life, wealth is more important than love.

Madhvi suddenly gets the glimpse of Shabbo’s legs and finds her and gets enraged. She abuses him finding his true disposition of a greedy, scrupulous person who has cheated her. She hates him. She runs away from that place. Neighbours accuse her and abuse her and that she has disgraced the prestige and self-respect and dignity of his uncle. Women act as the reservoir of social and familial dignity and prestige with the power of patriarchy. She comes back to her uncle and asks for forgiveness from him but finds him dead. She escapes and is seen in a railway station waiting where she meets her long lost childhood friend Poonam who is now a widowed mother of a little baby. She is going to her in-law’s house in Nainital for the first time. They had not approved of their marriage. Now she is going for the sake of the child. On the other hand Madhvi claims her life is like a Kati Patang (a kite whose string is cut and not attached). Poonam wants Madhvi to come along with her to her in-law’s house. Poonam’s husband’s name is Sekhar. She reads out the letter written by her father-in-law.

There is a sudden severe train accident. Lots of injured people. Madhvi is badly injured and looks out for Poonam. She first finds out the baby and then traces
seriously injured Poonam whose chances of survival are very less. Poonam wants Madhvi to go to her in-law’s place as the daughter-in-law Poonam and take care of the baby as her own child. Madhvi has to give her word to the dying Poonam.

Madhvi (now Poonam) is on her way to Nainital where in the way the driver tries to take her in a different route because he is after her money. A rainy night, she tries to stop the car and screams for outside help. The driver is a fraud. Suddenly a jeep turns back and follows the car to help them. The driver on provocation stops the car and snatches the vanity bag of Madhvi and runs away. But he is chased by Kamal, played by Rajesh Khanna, who is driving the jeep. They fight in the rain. The fighting shifts to water. One remembers the mythical fight of Lord Krishna in Kalindi river with the snake. Kamal comes back with the bag. Chivalry as a new dimension of the masculinity construct. He offers her to come along with him in his bungalow for the night and in the morning he can drive her back to her destination. Kamal is the forest officer of the place.

Kamal brings them home and gets to know that Poonam is basically the widow of his childhood friend Sekhar. He assures her that she will be warmly received by her in-laws because she is going to be the main stay of their lives. The caring old servant arrives offering to serve dinner for her. He is going out for some party for the night. The servant tries to stop him from going but he does not listen to his words. This servant has brought up Kamal from the childhood. This is another poignant feature of the masculinity construct in terms of the mothering and caring nature of the persona of the servant. The servant informs Madhvi that Kamal has started drinking from the time when his bride escaped from the marriage venue. Madhvi understands that the incident is of her own life and by coincidence she is now getting face-to-face to another reality which she cannot escape for too long. In a way her life comes full circle without her consent and knowledge. Interestingly, the viewer is presented with a plethora of masculinities, which are all so very real and part of life. Kailash is presented. The driver is presented. Even absentee late Sekhar is presented who can defy his parents to marry his ladylove. Kamal is presented. And even the old servant is presented.
The venue shifts to the party where Kamal is drinking much in the mould of a devastated lonely lover in the time of the persona of Devdas. He is singing *yeh jo mohabbat hain...hum na karenge pyar* (this thing called love.....I will not fall in love ever). Kamal gets wet in the rain. In a way a kind of self-destructive streak of mentality. In the morning he comes back home only to know that Madhavi has left already leaving a letter for him proclaiming her life to be equated with a Kati Patang, unattached and unrelated without any direction whatsoever.

Madhvi now Poonam arrives in her in-law’s place with the baby boy who are received with open arms and very warmly by her so-called in-laws. Kamal also arrives there. Poonam is shown her room and photograph of her late husband Sekhar. The domination of the husband is not let off both by herself and her in-laws even after his death. The relatedness continues. Poonam in due course of time wins over her in-laws while Kashinath, Doctor friend of her father-in-law Dinanath arrives to meet Poonam and her child. Doctor is happy with Dinanath’s good health at the behest of Poonam. Kashinath is essentially more a friend and less a doctor.

Kamal comes one day and meets Poonam. He says to her that *mann ki sakti saab bandhan ko tor sakta hain* (if there is strength at heart then it can break even all shackles of life). Poonam tries to quote a poem written by him to justify her unattached, grief-stricken existence which can be equated with *Kati Patang* (a flying unattached Kite). But Kamal claims that the poem is an unfinished one, which needs completion. He tries in vain to infuse new vigour to her life.

Another day, Kamal again comes to Poonam's house. He speaks with her and gets to meet her in-laws. The father-in-law is praising Poonam the way she is taking care of him. In fact he is feeling much better these days. The love and care has been much more effective than medicines. Kamal agrees to this. Kamal has come to invite all of them to his birthday party. After congratulating him on the occasion of his birthday, the in-laws decline to come saying that they do not attend any parties. Kamal requests if Poonam can come to the party. Mother-in-law says that she never usually agrees to go. Father-in-law says Kamal can request her. Kamal requests Poonam to come to the party. But Poonam is reluctant because of the societal dispositions. Kamal has thought he would manage to convince her about coming.
But he leaves it to her discretion. This fact of his personality is noteworthy as far as the masculinity construct is concerned.

In the birthday party venue, Kamal is impatiently waiting hoping against hope that Poonam might come. Poonam finally arrives but late. Kamal greets and welcomes her warmly. Kamal says that he was certain that she would come. Poonam says that her in-laws insisted on her coming. Kamal gets her introduced to everyone. Kamal cuts the cake and is wished by everyone especially Poonam. There is request for Kamal from the guests to sing his own verses for them. Poonam requests also. He agrees. Kamal announces that he had left writing poems. But for few days, he feels he is in love and so the following words in the form of a song is dedicated to his love. He sits on the piano and starts singing that love can erase all sorrows of life. Close-up of Madhvi and Kamal being shown. Their eyes speak of deep feelings of love for each other. After the party, they walk back. Kamal says after the whole crowded party, he is enjoying the lonely roads. Madhvi brings some gift for Kamal. He says that this is the most precious gift as she has gifted it to him. They return to Poonam's in-law's place. They are waiting for them. The in-laws inform Kamal about his father's letter to them where he insists on Kamal to get married. Still Kamal says he is not interested in marriage and says bye and leaves. Kamal says all of these looking at Poonam. Father-in-law remarks that it seems Kamal would never agree to marriage proposal. The in-laws request Poonam if she can motivate Kamal for marriage.

Kamal accompanied with Poonam comes to meet a prospective match in a restaurant. The girl who seems quite immature is accompanied with her mother who is very eager for the match. In time Kamal understands the childishness of the prospective bride and orders for tutti frooti ice-cream for her. A cabarrat dance follows where the dancer is none other than Shabbo whom Madhvi had seen in Kailash's house when she had fled to him from the marriage venue. Shabbo makes symbolic gestures in the song that she has recognised Madhu. Poonam leaves the place in haste.

Poonam comes to a temple and prays that the peace which the Goddess has given to her should not be taken away just like that. Kamal comes and says that peace comes with love and love cannot be anything which is wrong. Poonam is surprised.
Poonam leaves in haste. Kamal leaves the decision to Poonam but says that the prospective bride’s interest in ice-cream is more than what his salary can provide. Kamal is little suspicious and asks Poonam whether there is someone else who looks like Poonam because even in the party someone was remarking and even that dancer was doubting. Kamal remarks that even that fateful bride-to-be was called Madhu. Madhu remarks whether Kamal can forgive Madhu if she comes back to him. Kamal says now it no longer matters to him. They both go back in the same boat accompanied by a song from Kamal.

Poonam comes back to find many gifts of toys bought by Kailash who wants forgiveness from her. She tries to kick out Kailash by throwing away all the gifts. Suddenly Kamal arrives. Kailash introduces himself as Poonam's distant relative. Kamal requests Poonam to keep the gifts. Kailash leaves informing that he is staying in hotel.

Kailash comes back to hotel and. They start drinking and get close.

Next day, Madhu comes to meet Kailash. She asks what he wants from her. Kailash tries to blackmail her. She leaves.

Poonam comes back to in-laws. She is given money to keep in the safe. The maid comments on her visit.

Kamal comes with his sister to get her introduced. Kamal's sister is full of praise for Poonam. They invite them to a picnic of her friends. Kamal and Madhu meet in the picnic venue where there is a surging spring.

The shot zooms to a flowing spring signifying the unbounded, spirited free-flowing force of the masculinity dimension which can win over, tide over all difficulties and grief of life much in the mould of Shiva who can destroy as well as create and absorb poison to give amrit to the world at large especially one’s lady love. A picnic setting. Kamal is the centre of attraction where all the ladies try to get his attention. But he seems to want that only from Madhvi. He is singing yeh sham mastani (the evening is very pleasant) which takes one far off to a distant land). Kamal wearing a yellow trouser with a brown coat and Poonam wearing the
traditional white sari meant for a widow. During the song sequence, barriers come in the process of their union. But still at times he manages to hold her hand.

Madhvi returns back to her in-law’s house only to find her estranged lover, Kailash chatting with her father-in-law, Dinanath. Kailash makes up a story and by now has befriended Poonam’s father-in-law and comes as husband of Poonam’s supposed friend, Madhvi to deliver a gold chain for the baby. Kailash is on a blackmailing spree and wants money from her in return of his silence about her real past. She gives him five thousand rupees. But while going back Kailash tries to seduce the maid of the house with the fake gold chain, which Madhvi throws away.

Meanwhile in Kamal’s household, his sister, Shalu is with him and tries to convince him to get married. She promises to be his matchmaker. She tries to convince him that if his wife would have been present, she would have ordered him to take it easy and not work so hard. And if their mother was alive today she would have convinced him not to lament over his would-have-been wife’s ditch. Shalu tries to know from him if he liked anyone specific among her friends. Kamal tells his feelings for Poonam and gets his sister’s flak in terms of her widowed mother status and thus the unsuitability. She even doubts whether Poonam is after him. Kamal reacts at this statement. The shot changes to Madhvi who is singing a melancholy song all alone that her life has no hope and nothing to look forward to in terms of being that of Kati Patang. Kamal also alone in home in dhoti and kurta.

In the morning, the father-in-law calls for Poonam to get her signature for the past insurance policy of her late husband. She is in a tremendous dilemma what to do now. Whether to reveal herself before Kamal and write to him telling everything about her true past. Finally she confesses everything about her past and how she is related to him in a letter addressed to her so-called father-in-law. But the letter reaches the hands of Dinanath who gets shell shocked but does not reveal this to Madhvi. Dinanath keeps everything to himself and boils inside. Kamal and his sister arrive there and want to take Poonam for Holi celebrations. Everyone is soaked in colour and happiness. The venue shifts to a festive mood with typical Holi celebrations. It is very much in the mode of the Holi celebrations of Vrindaban with Krishna celebrating the festival of colour in contrast to the ladylove in pure white.
Kamal is singing, *aaj na choreenge khelenge holi* (today no one will be left untouched and everyone will be coloured with the colours of holi) and Poonam is replying by singing, *koi haase koi roye* (someone laughs and some cries). It is a typical Rajesh Khanna dance of soft masculinity disposition construct with two contrasting notes and mode and mood in the song as it comes alive. The contrast in the whole climate and surrounding is very evident with colour, gaiety, fanfare all-round and whiter sari of Poonam on the other. In a poetic and artistic gesture that white is coloured with colours of holi and love especially the colour red as if the soft masculinity construct is painting the world with the colour and hue of love. Poonam is persuaded to join in the celebrations and forced to mingle in colour by Kamal, the lotus of love and change. The hair parting of Poonam gets red with the red colour of holi. She tries to wipe it off but is stopped by Kamal who says that it is perhaps the wish and grace of god who has painted the parting with red sindoor and that is why the sindoor should always glow and not remain empty.

Poonam comes back home in her coloured self and faces her father-in-law who is almost waiting to confront her. He says that when young widowed daughter-in-law is enjoying, how can the old father-in-law sleep. And then he takes out her own letter to Kamal. He says that the dignity of the family and household was kept in her hands as a reserve and responsibility but she has betrayed all the trust of him. What does she want from Dinanath and his household: wealth, treasures, money? She runs away to the first floor unable to face these volley of questions from her father-in-law only to find her ex-lover, fraud Kailash waiting for her who had already been insultingly kicked out of the house by the father-in-law. Kailash now wants her heart and wants to come back to her. She retorts back with fire stick from the fireplace and tries to attack him and becomes like Devi Durga and Kailash somehow escapes. The father-in-law comes up wishing to know what the trouble is all about. On hearing that Kailash had come, Dinanath wants to call the police but is somewhat pacified by Madhvi.

At night, Madhvi comes in a blue sari to Dinanath’s room and keeps a letter for him wishing to leave the house. But she is stopped by him. She tries to show that she is not taking away anything from the house and in the process opens the suitcase and the photograph of Kamal slips and comes in the open before Dinanath. He says...
that she is definitely taking away the memory of the photographed person that is Kamal. He wants to know when Kamal comes and enquires or for that matter, anyone, like his wife, that is Sekhar’s mother, the baby, the neighbours, what he is supposed to reply to everyone, to the world. What will be his answer? She says that she wants to die. He retorts back by pointing out that Madhvi had already died the day she came in this household as Poonam. Everything is just the same. Now he begs her to be the same person Poonam. She asks for forgiveness from him and promises to stay forever serving the household with all her might in a way succumbing to the pressures of patriarchal pressure and domination.

Meanwhile Kailash is with Shabbo. He is injured and bruised and burning to take revenge on Madhvi as he informs Shabbo that he would ultimately marry her with the ashes of hatred for Madhvi. Shabbo informs him that she is pregnant with his baby. Kailash tries to explain to her that at this stage strategically, they cannot afford a baby and she should abort and in future her desire for motherhood can be and will be fulfilled by Kailash. Shabbo comes to clinic of the doctor friend of Dinanath, Poonam’s father-in-law and says that she knows that she is pregnant but does not want to be mother at the present moment as by profession she is a dancer. She wants help from the doctor for abortion. But the doctor retorts back when she offers to handsomely pay him for his services. He says that his profession entails giving life and not taking away life and tells her to leave his chamber.

Dinanath calls for Kamal and discusses Poonam’s future after his death. Dinanath tells Kamal that he wants his daughter-in-law to get married to someone suitable. Instantly Kamal offers himself as the groom and wants to marry her. In a way he says that unconsciously during holi celebration, her hair parting was made red by him and so in a sense the union was established from then onwards. Dinanath is very happy with this proposal and tells Kamal to request his father to come to finalise the marriage formalities. Kamal gets to meet Poonam who is in a swing. The metaphor of Kati Patang comes back in their conversation and through the usage of the cut kite proposes to her, which she readily accepts and she is very happy. He promises a new lease of life almost a new life to her. This is an interesting dimension to the masculinity construct of Kamal which is not only soft and caring but has an ability to breathe in a fresh new life to a grief stricken broken soul breaking many
societal norms and regulations but there is an element of being a provider in the human equation of relationship.

Kamal’s father arrives and meets Dinanath. He does not seem to be too excited about the marriage proposal as the bride in question is a widowed mother and societal considerations and norms seem to bog him down. Kamal’s father thinks that he has seen Poonam before but cannot remember when and where. Dinanath agrees and tells him the life story of Madhvi, which make him happy and satisfied about the whole marriage proposal. They exchange sweets.

Kailash comes to the kitchen of Dinanath’s house to meet the maid who tells him about the impending marriage proposal of Kamal and Madhvi in the house. Kailash mixes poison in the milk meant for Dinanath in the process of offering the maid a gift and embracing her but maid’s young brother does get to see that Kailash had come in the kitchen. Meanwhile Poonam comes to the kitchen to bring that contaminated milk unknowingly for the father-in-law who informs her that he has made will of his whole property in the name of the grandson and Poonam as the caretaker of his as well as the family till he grows up and takes charge of his own life. Madhvi/Poonam says she will take responsibility of the boy throughout her life. Dinanath is reassured.

Dinanath drinks that poisoned and contaminated milk unknowingly. In the morning, Poonam finds Dinanath perhaps unconscious. She calls for the doctor immediately. Suddenly the police arrive which covertly scares away Madhvi. The Police inspector informs them that a precarious situation has arrived in terms of the fact that a lady is claiming that she is the real daughter-in-law (bahu) of the household rather than Poonam and requests her to come to the Police Station with them. The doctor uncle arrives suddenly and after checking Dinanath comes to the conclusion that he has died. This makes the police force suspicious of the intention of Poonam and declare the incident as a police case. Next day, the mother-in-law arrives and gets the news of her husband’s death and breaks down to uncontrollable tears. In the Police Station, Shabbo, in white sari, is claiming that she is the real daughter-in-law, Poonam. Kamal also arrives in the Police Station and seconds Madhvi’s claim of being the daughter-in-law and declares Shabbo as a cabaret dancer. Cunningly Shabbo
twists the story and admits that she is a dancer and that is the reason why her in-laws had estranged her. Kailash as well arrives in the Police Station and identifies Madhvi as his wife making the situation very complicated. Madhvi is pleading for Kamal’s help to help her out of this precarious situation. Kailash is claiming further that Shabbo along with the baby was staying with Madhvi and him. In the night of the train accident, Madhvi fled with the baby and went on to proclaim herself as Poonam, the daughter-in-law in Sekhar’s house. Shabbo performs further to gain sympathy from the police inspector as well as Kamal by wanting only the baby back aided by some more antics by Kailash. Madhvi pleads to the police inspector for justice while Kamal wants her to reveal the truth. Madhvi tells that Poonam, the real daughter-in-law, her friend had died in the train accident. Suddenly the post-mortem report of the father-in-law arrives which clearly shows that his death was not due to heart failure but rather poisoning. This news provokes further play-acting by Kailash and confusion and dilemma in the minds of Kamal and Madhvi is put behind bars.

Madhvi arrives from a police van at the funeral of Dinanath where she is abused by the mother-in-law. Madhvi pleads innocence. Kamal comes forward saying that he thought her play acting was over but why she has again arrived in the scene; the house which housed her, she has broken the walls of that very house. Madhvi pleads that he should believe her but Kamal asks for explanation from her. She pleads to Kamal, if possible, to remove the black spot from her forehead. Shabbo arrives in white sari and claims to be the real daughter-in-law in front of the mother-in-law. Instantly, the mother-in-law orders Shabbo to immediately leave her house which is even more sternly gets seconded by Kamal. In the process of her leaving, she is seen and instantly recognised by the doctor friend of Dinanath. The doctor asks Kamal the reason of her visit. The doctor recounts and informs that Shabbo had come to his clinic for abortion some time back. In the mean time, Kamal’s father arrives and spills the beans and shows Madhvi’s letter to Kamal, which was also written for him only. Poonam’s baby accompanied by the maid, Ramaiya’s brother also enters in the scene with a broken glass bottle, on which it is written “Poison”, which the little one had picked up playfully. In a flash, Kamal suspects that poison bottle being the cause of Dinanath’s death and asks Ramaiya, the maid about it. Her brother informs that
Kailash had come even when she was vehemently denying it. This provoked Kamal to slap her, which makes her admit everything.

Kamal visits Madhvi in jail and reassures her which is quite heartening. Kailash and Shabbo come back to their room at night only to find Kamal waiting for them who plays a trick by showing Poonam’s husband, Shekhar’s photograph who she fails to recognise; in the process it gets revealed that she is not Poonam who she was claiming to be. Kamal plays even further by pointing to Kailash that both Kailash and Kamal have used Shabbo and Madhvi respectively to get the wealth of Dinanath. Now Kamal wants to come to a compromise by willing to share the wealth with Kailash. Sensing and tasting troubled waters, Kailash agrees to Kamal’s proposal. But there is a knock at the door. This makes Shabbo and Kamal to hide. Madhvi arrives in front of Kailash and informs Kailash that she has been released after the real culprit, the maid, Ramaiya has been arrested who has claimed that it was Kailash who had supplied the poison bottle before she committed the crime. Madhvi requests Kailash to escape to some safe place with her before the police comes to nab him. But at this moment, Shabbo comes forward claiming her right over Kailash and reveals she is pregnant with Kailash’s baby, which provokes Kailash to slap her. The anticlimax of the movie is enhanced with the arrival of the police in time. Kailash and Shabbo are arrested and Kamal so far has recorded both their confessions. Kamal is thanked by police for his shrewd and strategic support in the process of solving this crime. Kamal comes to take back Madhvi but gets to know that she has left leaving a letter for him where she writes that since she had so far always been a curse for him she wants to go away from him. Kamal searches and comes to take back Madhvi and sings to woo her back in embrace. The film ends.

What is important for our research purpose is the unfolding of the character of Kamal and to some extent Kailash. Kamal’s masculinity construct is pitted against that of Kailash. Even the slap is put forward by both the male characters for the audience to observe. Kamal’s shrewdness is significant but that is put forth to help to bring out the truth and also as a saviour to the damsel in distress. The knighthood is established much in the tune of Krishna as a saviour. Masculinity as a saviour of femininity is brought about through various twists and turns of the narrative of the film.
The film may appear to be oriented around the character of Madhvi as the whole story basically revolves around her. But perhaps the main person who dominates the whole show is basically Kamal. He happens to be the main male protagonist in the film. There are various shades to his masculinity construct which hovers in the realm of being caring, soft and loving and true to his own beliefs and convictions. He is also portrayed as the saviour and protector of the damsel in distress who eventually also becomes his lady love. Interestingly he is free from the societal taboos and narrow-minded conservatism in terms of his ready interest and acceptance of an apparent widowed mother as his love and eventual life partner. This is a very significant aspect of the masculinity construct which appears quite loud and clear throughout the film. His relationship and interaction with Madhvi/Poonam has always been respectful. An inner feeling of love is largely kept subdued due to her placing as the supposed wife of his close childhood friend, Sekhar. The protective, caring self of his is his second nature. But he does not defy conventions at a go but rather slowly works being in the system to modify and reorient it. Another interesting aspect of masculinity construct which comes to the surface is the shrewd strategy he deploys to counter the nefarious designs of Kailash and Shabbo and in the process becomes the saviour of Madhvi. In a way, goodness is not in opposition to his strategic, cool calculative self which is also important to be protector. His interaction with the elders, especially Sekhar's parents, has been full of respect and dignity. But he has a 'Devdas-self' as well in the masculinity construct frame. The element of self destruction for one's unrequited love is inherent in the masculinity construct. In fact one can remark that Kamal did not even see his bride-to-be and so his angst and pain and self-destructive streak due to her running away from the marriage venue seems to be an over-reaction of emotion and sentiments. In a way one can term it as an 'abhimani' masculinity construct. One can even remark that perhaps that run-away bride incident hurt his male ego and he could not reconcile to that. The script also ensures that the bride has to come back to him eventually and this is executed through various humiliating experiences. In a way as if she has to pay for her past defiance of the choice of male authority in terms of her life partner and eventually perhaps she is made to understand that she basically does not have the power of judgement and so her decisions should be and need to be monitored for her own 'good'. She needs to be
protected. In a way, she is the reservoir and symbol of family dignity and prestige which is again dictated largely by societal diktats implicitly or explicitly. The suffocation of patriarchal domination is ever present in the whole of the movie. Her purity is to be hammered with her white saree of the widow. The character of Kailash is portrayed as an evil masculinity construct who is greedy in terms of wealth and flesh both. His animal self is highlighted over and over again. In a way, pitting Kamal vis-à-vis Kailash in the eventual eternal stereotype of good vs evil and the eventual triumph of good. In the film, Kamal's relation with his own father has not been highlighted. But the apparent message is that of respect and reverence and full of regards. Rather Kamal's relation with his sister has been dealt with. He is loving and caring about his sister but that does not mean that he yields to her concerns. Sometimes if it goes against his personal beliefs and convictions, then he is firm to dismiss her views altogether. Moreover, Kamal's interaction with his old-time family servant is also full of respect and dignity but there is an element of adamant nature in him which only listens to his own calling. The softness and caring nature along with the power of problem-solving capacity deploying strategic moves for the same and being a protector are the defining features of the masculinity construct of Kamal which gets represented in the film Kati Patang.

At the height of the popular Beatles' hysteria, John Lennon remarked, "we are more popular than Jesus Christ now". After he had colonised the mind of a nation, Rajesh Khanna admitted to a feeling "next to God".

In November 1969, Aradhana was screened at Bombay's Opera House. In December '69, Do Raaste was released at the Roxy, across the road. Both Rajesh Khanna films were golden jubilee hits. Both engendered a hitherto unknown phenomenon in the film industry – a superstar. An astounding volley of 11 more hits rocked the country between '70 and '72, as Khanna simply scissored the screen with his eyes-crinkling, head-shaking mannerisms and exerted some kind of tidal pull over the audiences.

There was no obvious rationale for the Rajesh Khanna miracle. Destiny discriminated, and a superstar was born. The personification of many a woman's
romantic dreams in the early 70s, went under the name of Rajesh Khanna. Khanna accepted the audience's affection as his by right.

Moreover, this Emperor's new clothes were genuinely shiny. In Anand, as the determinedly cheerful chatterbox living under the shadow of a fatal disease, he gave new meaning to Frank Capra's immortal observation, "Tragedy is not when actors cry, tragedy is when the audiences cry." In films like Aradhana, Safar and Amar Prem, too, Rajesh gave persuasively intense performances that were straight from the heart.

The early seventies were to see the birth of a phenomenon called the superstar in the form of an ordinary looking, minimally talented Rajesh Khanna. After his reign was over, people could not believe that he could have won such a massive fan following.

The years 1969, 1970 and 1971 in which the Rajesh Khanna craze swept the country literally like wildfire, will always be remembered because nothing quite like this mass hysteria ever happened in movie-history before.

Aradhana, Ittefaq, Do raaste, Sachaa Jhutha, Safar, Anand, Kati Patang, Andaz and Haathi Mere Saathi – with bewildering rapidity these films not only became tremendous successes, but they set off and perpetuated a craze that engulfed young and old alike, and hypnotised the entire nation into the sort of concentrated mass adulation which has been afforded, for brief periods, to only one or two other actors before him.

Many startling things happened in the immediate wake of the tidal-wave impact of the Rajesh Khanna mass hysteria. Almost overnight the demand for most other actors (excepting mainly Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand and Dharmendra) dwindled to almost zero. Producers, benami producers, aspiring producers, ex-producers, all got into the mad scramble to get on to the Rajesh Khanna band-wagon.

Every discussion between movie-people either centred round Rajesh Khanna or eventually got around to him. Producers who had him, loved him; producers who didn't, hated him. But how all of them hungered for him! How all of them drooled at the thought of the fabulous amounts they could squeeze from distributors if they got
It is even hinted that 'the ceiling' too, was mainly invented and finally scrapped, because of him.

And the craze exhibited by his fans! It was literally fantastic. Traffic jams took place wherever Rajesh Khanna went. Young and old alike, they streamed unchecked into studios wherever Rajesh Khanna was shooting, disrupting normal work, causing immediate and widespread confusion.

Rajesh Khanna has the uncanny knack of being constantly in the news. If it's not by being 'in', it's by being 'out'. Shakti Samanta (who skyrocketed Rajesh to fame in Aradhana) notes:

After working with Shammi Kapoor, a total extrovert, working with Rajesh Khanna was a change for me. Rajesh's strongest point is his ability to do emotional scenes. He is excellent when you make him underplay a rode. His minus point is his 'good man' face. He is too goody goody. Rough and tough roles don't suit him. If you ask me, he should not do crime films.

His personality is not cut out for action. Infact the last point which Samanta highlights is true for Khanna's portrayal of Kamal in Kati Patang as well. In the beginning of the movie, when Kamal fights with the driver who was escaping with Madhvi's vanity bag, Kamal does not seem to be too comfortable with the act. Although in the fight he emerges as winner but nonetheless the chivalrous knighthood act seemed situational rather than something inherent in the masculinity construct. Later when Kamal takes the mantle of a soft, romantic, empathetic protector of Poonam and even later as the one who restores the dignity of Madhvi by strategically solving the mystery, he seems to come to his own real self. In a way this forms the signature tune of his masculinity construct which gets projected and represented in the film Kati Patang.
[IV]
DEEWAAR:
A Study Of
Contrasting Masculinities Of
Intense Anger Vis-A-Vis
Conviction
Filmography:

_Deewaar_ (The Wall)

Hindi/1975/Colour/174 minutes

*Direction:* Yash Chopra  
*Screenplay:* Salim-Javed  
*Music:* R.D. Burman  
*Lyrics:* Sahir Ludhianvi  
*Cinematography:* Kay Gee  
*Art Design:* Desh Mukherjee  
*Produced by:* Gulshan Rai/Trimurti Films  

It's shocking but true. Everyone associated with this hard-hitting action-drama won awards – Shashi Kapoor, Yash Chopra, Salim-Javed, even Nirupa Roy. But not Amitabh Bachchan! Such are the ironies that overtake cinema’s historic happenings.

A slick and unforgettable adaptation of Mehboob Khan’s _Mother India_ and Nitin Bose’s _Ganga Jamuna, Deewaar_ also contained elements from Elia Kzian’s Hollywood classic _On The Waterfront_, which was the source material for two manor post-_Deewaar_ productions – Mukul Anand’s _Hum_ and Vikram Bhatt’s _Ghulam._

_Deewaar_ is the ultimate Angry Young Man saga. Full of soundless fury, its protagonist’s anger is so inward-drawn that you fear for his metabolism and blood pressure. Fists clenched, nerves on-edge and ever-itching for a fight with the scum of the earth, Vijay in _Deewaar_ is the most wounded hero since Guru Dutt’s Vijay in _Pyaasa._

Stylishly structured, the film conveys tremendous emotional forces working to keep the drama going. Nirupa Roy in a role clearly modelled on Nargis in _Mother India_, is the mother torn between the ‘Good’ son Ravi (Shashi Kapoor) and the ‘Bad’
son Vijay (Amitabh Bachchan). The conflict of morality monitored by the mother-figure generates some of the best dramatic dialogues ever heard in a mainstream Hindi film including the now-legendary *Mere paas maa hai* uttered quietly by the Good Son Ravi when Vijay flaunts all his ill-gotten wealth in front of his brother and taunts him about his lack of material wealth.

Like all old-fashioned morality tales from the time of Gyan Mukherjee’s *Kismet* and Raj Kapoor’s *Shree 420, Deewaar* equates wealth and material luxury with negativity and evil. But this time, audiences failed to pay any attention to the conventional goody-goody cop-hero who had his mom but no air conditioner to keep her cool.

Vijay’s agnostic rebellion and his final surrender to devoutness with an impassioned speech in front of Lord Shiva to save his beloved mother’s life, seemed to echo the mood of anger and protest during Mrs Gandhi’s dreaded Emergency.

Both the historic Bachchan flicks *Sholay* and *Deewaar* were released during the Emergency. In both, the superstar fought personal and inter-personal demons from the wrong side of the law without seeming to twist the laws of morality beyond the conventional borders of Good and Evil prescribed in Hindi cinema. There were several interesting anti-stereotypical characters in *Deewaar* such as the bar-room dancer Anita (Parveen Babi) with whom Vijay has pre-marital sex. Nice girls did not sleep with their boyfriends before *Deewaar*. Babi smouldered on the screen while Nirupa Roy, in a role earmarked for Vyjanthimala, gave a knockout performance.

But *Deewaar* clearly belongs to Amitabh Bachchan. Gloriously rebellious, frightfully lonely and amazingly intense, his eyes seem to burn down everyone who crossed his path. His character is said to have been modelled on the smuggler Haji Mastan. And to think that in the wake of *Daag*, Vijay was to be originally played by Rajesh Khanna. It was Salim-Javed who insisted on the Big B.

Shashi Kapoor’s role was to be done by Navin Nischol. But he didn’t want to do the second lead. Yash Chopra’s direction never floundered at any level. And how could it, when each component, character and shot-division in the screenplay was
dictated strictly by the plot. Yash Chopra’s regular cinematographer Kaygee captured the dark murky interiors of go downs and dockyards with eye-popping authenticity.

The only poor aspect of this nearly-flawless actioner was R.D. Burman’s music, which just didn’t fit. The songs were put in reluctantly. Two of them were edited out of the final print. Fortunately, the introverted protagonist wasn’t made to sing any songs in *Deewaar*. In this aversion to flippancy, both this Vijay and the one the Big B played in *Zanjeer* were one.

Boasting one of the best-known Salim-Javed scripts, Bachchan’s hit crime film, told in flashback, relies on the familiar plot of two brothers, one of which is an exemplary cop, Ravi, the other a criminal, Vijay. The bridge between them is the mother they both adore, Sumitra but whom Vijay cannot later visit for fear of being arrested. Vijay is the focus of the narrative as he works hard at menial jobs and suffers many humiliations to pay for his younger brother’s education. Embittered by the prevailing social iniquities, Vijay is recruited by a dockyard gang of smugglers and rises to become their leader. Ravi has to arrest him. Vijay decides to marry his pregnant lover, the dancer Anita, and go straight but she is murdered, causing him to become a ruthless vigilante while his mother gives Ravi permission to hunt down his wayward brother. Eventually a dying Vijay, shot by his brother, keeps his tryst at a temple with his mother. A Phenomenal hit, the film repeats the ‘traditional’ proposition that kinship laws must prevail over legality at a very sensitive political and cultural moment: the year the Emergency was declared; Salim-Javed apparently modelled Bachchan’s character on the notorious smuggler Haji Mastan Mirza (a media celebrity as public enemy number one jailed during the Emergency and making a dramatic self-criticism afterwards). Although his fight scenes seem calibrated on those in Hong Kong action films, Bachchan’s sultry performance in the discursive scenes humanises the gangster, thus also humanising the contemporary nationalist law and order rhetoric used to legitimise dictatorial oppression. The mother-as-nation cliché, and extension of the nation-as-family cliché, both often deployed in Hindi films (of Mehoob’s emblematic *Mother India*, 1957), was mobilised here for a more ambiguous purpose: although the audience’s sympathies are directed towards the working-class rebel, the mother-nation reluctantly sanctions the legalised persecution
of the well-meaning but misguided son, an action with obvious parallels in the political situation of the time.

Amitabh Bachchan represents an era of Hindi films. *Deewaar* can be regarded as a very representative film of the persona and charisma that he is legendary for. In a way what is also significant is that the character Vijay which Amitabh essays is placed vis-à-vis his younger brother, Ravi that Shashi Kapoor plays. The two brothers are diametrically opposite to each other. In a way, two diverse focuses of masculinities are placed but the Deewaar, the wall is so clear that the two never meet. There is also an element of inevitable fatalism which guides the character of Vijay (Amitabh) and another element of circumstance. So the masculinity constructs have shades of grey all over rather than black and white. Vijay has a Ram-like big brother responsibility plank of masculinity shade but in his brother Ravi, one cannot find Lakshman. Amitabh’s interaction with the God is very living interaction starting from his refusal to enter temples but devotion to his own mother and finally surrendering to the Almighty’s laps.

Another important aspect is the importance of the absentee father figure who has the profound influence throughout the life spanning of the masculinity construct of the character played by Amitabh. Element of childhood imitation of the father by both the brothers and the eventual hatred for him by Vijay but comes in right time to light the funeral pyre pointing to his sense of duty and responsibility but again admitting later that for him, his father died long back. In a way, the mother fixation in the masculinity constructs of both the brothers is pivotal to the film as well as for analysis. In a way, much of the inner-struggle of the character Vijay is related to the obsession of the sense of duty and responsibility towards mother and the sense of incompleteness in his life by his mother’s refusal to stay with him and preferring his younger brother. The viewer takes the side of Vijay in spite of his wrong dealings because he sacrificed his childhood to earn so that Ravi can study. In the film, though the young brother, police officer Ravi gets a medal for his selfless sense of duty for killing his own elder brother, Vijay but the audience salutes and cries for the selfless sacrifice of Vijay for uplifting his family from the fringes of the street.
The film begins in a medal distribution ceremony connected with the police force. The medal is meant for Ravi Verma played by Shashi Kapoor. Next the camera zooms to his mother played by Nirupa Roy and wife/girlfriend played by Neetu Singh. From the dias of the stage and on mike, Ravi calls out for mother, Sumitra Devi to come up. He declares that the strength in his hands then and now is that of his mother. So the medal must be given and accepted by his mother. This announcement is greeted with thunderous applause. She is in tears and the sound of the applause makes her remember her late husband's public meetings as a union leader.

Flash back. Strike scenario in the factory. Anand Babu, Sumitra Devi's husband and the union leader, is giving a fiery non-compromising speech. The taped version of this speech reaches the ears of the management who are trying to find out the weak and vulnerable point in Anand's life which can force him to compromise fearing harm.

The scene changes to the happy household of Anand and Sumitra. Both of their children come back from school. Sumitra tells Anand how both the brothers imitate their father and for them, the whole world revolves around him. Anand also admits that they are also everything for him. Moreover, he also mentions that all the factory workers are looking up to him for negotiations with the management.

The workers are braving the rain to give slogans in support of their cause and Anand as their leader. Anand is called as their representative for negotiations. Now the management uses pressure tactics by threatening to cause harm to his family if he does not yield. Anand is forced to sign the negotiation papers in favour of the management. He comes back to the expectant workers outside and admits that he has agreed to the dictates of the management. He is severely beaten up by the workers.

As part of the compromise negotiation formula, Sumitra Devi is freed and released after being subjected to threats of dire consequences. Meanwhile word spreads that Anand Babu is a thief. Sumitra tries to pacify him in the present circumstances. She goes out to buy medicines. People point fingers at her in the
streets. She comes back to find Anand missing from the house. Unable to bear this constant humiliation he escapes in a train.

Vijay, the eldest son, is heckled on the road while returning home from school. A tattoo is forcibly inscribed in his hand which proclaims: my father is a thief.

Meanwhile younger brother, Ravi is not well. Mother is giving him medicine. Wounded Vijay comes back home and shows his mother the tattoo. This provokes his mother to decide to leave this place.

They come to Mumbai. The camera on a long shot captures the mother with two sons walking on the marine drive. Ravi asks what will happen to them now. She assures him that since their mother is there, they need not worry. She starts working as construction worker.

One morning, Vijay and mother find Ravi observing a morning prayer standing in a school gate. Mom laments that she does not earn enough for her children's education. Vijay offers to work as well so that both of them can together fund Ravi's educational expenses.

Vijay starts working as street-side shoe-polishwala. One day two people come for polishing their shoes. Vijay demands his payment to be given in hand and not by throwing on the ground. There is dignity in his work. He is not begging. One of them remarks: "lambi race ke ghora" (horse meant for a long race who is going to take time to pace up, but when he picks up, he is going to leave everyone behind). Another layering on the impending masculinity construct of Vijay is added. In a way the script builds up the personal from the very childhood and boyhood experiences and situations.

This shot and idea is counterposed in the very next shot where Ravi is being praised in school by the class teacher for his over all academic performance. In the script throughout the movie, one finds the two masculinity constructs are continuously put forth as contradictory and counterposed vis-à-vis each other.

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In the workplace, Sumitra, who is not well and extremely weak, suddenly faints. She is kicked and thrown out of job on the ground that she was basically drunk. Vijay hits back at the insult of his mother by throwing a brick which injures the manager. Before he can be caught, he escapes.

At night Vijay asks his mother why the manager abused her. She tries to make him understand the situation they are in. In a way, they are resigned to destiny and fate. She puts forth the fact that now she quietly accepts every eventuality which life places before her. She even compares both the brothers. Vijay admits of their differences and points out his hand inscription which is a permanent scar on his life. In a way he cannot escape and recover from that scar.

Shot of a speeding train. When it passes, one can see ailing Anand, the father, sitting on the station almost like a tattered mad person.

Next shot is that of a temple. Sumitra with both the sons. Vijay refuses to go inside the temple. Mother tries to force him but is stopped by the priest. Ravi and mom go inside. In a way, this is the beginning of a long, lively, life-long interaction of Vijay with God.

Passage of time is indicated with the shots of bells ringing in the temple. Now both the brothers have grown up. Ravi, as already mentioned played by Sashi Kapoor, asks mother what she asks from God. The mother prays for 'sukh' (prosperity) for Ravi and 'santi' (peace) for Vijay, played by Amitabh Bachchan. Ravi tries to make mother understand that though Vijay never comes inside the temple, he invariably comes and waits for them in the stairs of the temple. Vijay, as usual, is not interested in having prasad but Ravi, like always, eases the situation by pointing that Vijay should take it as simply having sweets. Two brothers, now take leave, go in two different directions in two different roads symbolically indicating differing paths for both. In a way, two different masculinity constructs. Their dresses differ as well. Vijay in the dress of a dock porter with blue untucked shirt with half-folded sleeves and khaki unfitted trousers. The shirt is knotted below and is largely unbuttoned. There is a rope on the side as well. His face is unshaven and the look is unkempt. Comparatively Ravi is dressed like a gentleman looking and applying for jobs.
The scene changes to a dock area. Vijay is a porter. He seems to be having a basic helping attitude. He has a fellow senior colleague who tries to emphasise that Vijay's identification badge number 786 is religiously very lucky. This is regarded as very lucky charm in Muslim religion like the word 'Om' in Hindu faith. He is advised to always keep that badge with him which will protect him from all evils. Vijay calls him Rahim Chacha who narrates to him that nothing has changed in the dock over the years except the ones who come every week for their shares. One day, someone refuses to pay and gets severely beaten up and finally gets hit by truck. Vijay observes and broods but does not say anything instantly.

In the canteen, Rahim Chacha laments the loss of life for just Rupees two, one looks at a close-up shot of Vijay with seething, brooding anger. He now decides to vent out his anger by declaring that he would also refuse to pay up next week after twenty-five years of dock history and face the consequences.

The scenario changes to the life of Ravi. Mock interview is being conducted by his girlfriend played by Neetu Singh. But he seems nervous. He promises to rehearse for the next interview. Now the real interview. It seems that almost the job is finalised. But at the last moment, a pre-fixed and influential candidate pulls through leaving Ravi dejected and submissive. The girlfriend tries to inspire and support him. Ravi tries to put forth the class difference factor in their relationship. This is followed by a romantic song.

Again the dock scene. Vijay refuses to pay the weekly share/hafta. He hits back and leaves. The gang meet later and is after Vijay who is having tea in the Canteen. Rahim Chacha comes and informs and forces him to escape as he is reluctant to leave the scenario. The gang cannot find him and comes to inform the gang leader. But Vijay is already in their den waiting with legs on the table. He closes and locks the door. The heroic act begins. He manages to dodge a knife thrown at him. He fights the whole gang single handedly. He is almost cornered and tied on the neck and pressed hard. But Vijay fights back. He defeats then finally and in true show of masculine power, opens and unlocks the door and goes out to loud applause and praise of his fellow workers. The scene reminds of the incident of his father.
where he was initially applauded but later insulted and abused. But here there are only praises for Vijay.

But at home, mother scolds Vijay saying that why he neglects them. Ravi tries to pacify her. Vijay counters back by asking if she advises him to also escape silently hinting at his father's instance. Mom hits back by slapping Vijay incessantly. Ravi stops her. Mom recollects and justifies their father's action by pointing out that whatever he did was for their safety.

Ravi is again in an interview venue and he gets the job bypassing the prefixed candidate who arrives late. The candidate pleads his case and explains his helpless situation. Ravi understands that the person is in genuine need. He refuses the job by pointing the salary to be insufficient. Interesting renunciation and compassion and empathy in the masculinity construct of Ravi is noteworthy. When the candidate tries to express his gratitude, he tries to philosophise the situation. His image construct is enhanced in the viewer's eye.

Ravi is awake at night busy applying for jobs. He speaks to mother about ideals for future. In the background one can hear the voice of his father, symbolising son echoing the father.

This is counterposed with a shot of the father travelling in the train. When asked by a fellow passenger about his destination, he replies that he goes nowhere.

The scene changes to the dock. Vijay is walking. He is called by someone from a car who enquires and then offers Vijay friendship and partnership in his fight against Samanth whom he had fought single handedly. This was in the time of enemy's enemy is my friend. He claims that his name is Dabur. Vijay accompanies Dabur where he is seen sharing a drink with him. He is apprised of Samanth's nefarious activities especially the smuggling ways. Incidentally, Dabur is a smuggler himself. Basically somehow every time, Samanth gets to know in the process of the deal and steals the goods especially gold. Dabur is looking for someone who can see to it that the gold reach the right hand protecting it from police and Samanth. In a way, he needs Vijay. Vijay stands up tall, lanky. Hands on two sides of his waist. He is offered all riches. Close up of Vijay. In the backdrop, flashes of the past appear
where mother is walking with two little sons hopeless and helpless in the streets of Mumbai. Bachchan's deep baritone voice adds to the mood of the situation. Dabur gives money as initial payment but Vijay insists on being paid in hand rather than throwing it on the table reminding him of his show polishing days when Dabur used to come to him for the same purpose.

Meanwhile, Ravi is having tea at his girlfriend's house. Her father comes and enquires about Ravi's present and future plans in terms of jobs. Being himself part of the police force, he advises Ravi to join the police force.

In the next shot, Vijay is apprised of the impending smuggled gold which is arriving. His dress has changed to a white blue striped shirt. He wants to do the whole operation single-handedly, without any help form anyone. Dabur asks whether he can do it alone. Vijay reiterates his conviction. The confidence, the determination is note worthy. Dabur decides to play this gamble. Vijay proclaims that only fate and destiny will follow him and not police or Samanth.

Vijay plays a trick with Samanth and offers to tell him about the incoming gold. He makes a deal with him. Strategic, clever, shrewd and calculative – different pointers to the masculinity construct of Vijay. Samanth tries to play dirty after getting the gold. Vijay counters with smart talk with simile of golden goose and leaves with the money. And now he escapes with gold as well.

A dance sequence in a party by a paid dancer. Vijay is called over phone by Samanth to congratulate him of his strategy. He is threatened as well. Samanth claims that he will end the game which Vijay has begun. Dabur gets to know that Vijay got saved even after being shot at by the identity badge number 786. Vijay gets to see his share. He is a bit perplexed with so much money.

Vijay takes mother to see their new proposed house. But mom tries to warn as well as ensure whether he is on right moral path. She tries to clear her doubts and feel light. Vijay reassures but remarks that their destiny has given a permanent burden on them. We see Vijay wearing a suit. Ravi comes running to announce that he is going to join the police force after training. He is wearing red. He asks for mom's blessings. She says that it is always there for both of them.
Vijay and mother go to see off Ravi at the station. Vijay is in a new stylised suit and Ravi is wearing a half suit, Ravi's girlfriend comes to see him off as well. There is routine motherly concern. Vijay tells mom that they should leave. Vijay whispers in Ravi's ears that he approves of his choice before leaving. Some love talk between the couple. In the process she forgets to hand over the flowers.

Vijay in a hotel sitting by the side of the pool to meet Dabur. Vijay proposes to keep an informer in Samanth's gang.

Samanth wants to cross-check the informer's information on Vijay's whereabouts. Vijay is in a bar where he is wooed by a bar girl played by Parveen Babi. The girl remarks that he is the most handsome but lonely person in the whole bar. Vijay contends who would like to die to be with him. Both of them are drinking. She philosophies the whole cycle of drinking. Vijay pays for both and bids a farewell. Low camera shot highlighting his tall frame. He is shot but is followed by that bar girl who helps him light his cigarette. She asks Vijay his name but he is not interested in knowing her name which is Anita.

Vijay informs Dabur that this time also the identity badge 786 has saved him. Dabur offers his chair and position to Vijay. Dabur makes his fellow colleague recollect that shoe polishing incident. Vijay sits pretty keeping his feet on the table.

Ravi's training ends and his girlfriend goes to bring him back giving a surprise. His posting is in Mumbai. A romantic song follows.

Mother adjusting her sindoor. Police officer Ravi Verma arrives home. Mom is very happy but is anxious for Vijay who now-a-days has become very busy. Vijay arrives wearing another suit. Vijay is seemingly worried seeing his police officer brother.

Vijay with Anita in bed who alights two cigarettes for both. Vijay laments over the fact that now both the brothers find themselves in two different paths. He is scared that some day he has to hear the same from his younger brother. Anita says that Vijay has given her everything but that did not surprise her. What surprised her
today is that he is sharing his life story with her. His hairy chest is visible being without clothes under a blanket. She says he is someone who is ready to share his happiness but never his sorrow. She is surprised why he is giving her dignity. He says that perhaps she understands him.

In the police department, Ravi is deputed to catch smugglers including Dabur and Vijay. Ravi is in dilemma. He requests the file to be given to someone else. On demand for explanation, he confesses that Vijay is his brother. But he is told that this kind of challenge comes rarely in police officer's life and he wants to escape from this solemn responsibility. He is advised that a police officer is like a doctor who cures society from evils. But Ravi says that no doctor can treat himself. He agrees to give a thought. The self contradictions in the masculinity construct is evident. Call of duty and conviction to the cause are the issues involved along with commitment to family and brother.

Ravi is in road trying to chase a thief who is a young boy whom he shoots in his feet. He intends to steal bread. Ravi visits his home where he meets his father who is a retired school teacher. He has brought food for them. But he is ordered out of the house when they get to know that he is the police officer who shot their son.

Next day, Ravi visits his senior and agrees to take up the assignment. Meanwhile Vijay signs a deal through which he buys the building where his mother worked as a labourer and he wants to gift her that same building. Vijay comes back home to find Ravi and mom waiting for him in a serious and sombre mood. Ravi informs him that he has been given the responsibility of the specific case and that Vijay features in the list of smugglers. Ravi wants Vijay to sign a confession letter to the police informing about everyone and everything. Vijay asks whether Ravi remembers how many nights they spent in footpath. Ravi continuously asks whether Vijay is going to sign or not. Vijay goes on a nostalgic lamenting trip and Ravi gets impatient. Vijay says he will definitely sign but not in the beginning. Only after Ravi acquires signatures of all the people who were responsible for his being in the circumstance where he is today. Ravi contradicts by saying that recollecting others' sins and faults does not ease away his own. Ravi says there is a wall which divides both of them and he cannot stay under the same roof as Vijay. Ravi decides to leave.
the house with mom in tow. Vijay tries to stop mom by pointing out that everything is for her. She said who was responsible for Vijay's situation was none to him but today Vijay has inscribed in his mother's forehead: mother of a thief. She says that he should not try to buy his mother. Both leave. Vijay tears the building papers.

Vijay is seeing the setting sun along with his girlfriend, Anita. Anita makes a request to him. The background music adds pathos.

Ravi is with mom. She is sad. He offers to take her to Vijay's place. She confesses that she always loved Vijay more than Ravi. But her love is not blind.

Ravi tries to stop a truck all alone and succeeds. He comes to a godown all alone and tries to scare them by falsely mentioning that police is surrounding them. In the meantime, police force arrives.

Dabur is irritated at Ravi's success. Vijay tries to placate him. He wants to protect Ravi as well.

Ravi and Vijay meet. In the background: Sare Jahan se achcha..... is being played. Vijay asks whom he is speaking to – police officer or brother. Ravi says as long as brother speaks, brother will listen but if culprit speaks, then police will listen. Vijay tries to make Ravi understand the kind of threats to his life. Vijay requests Ravi to take transfer. But Ravi says his principles would stop him. Vijay asks what does Ravi have today. Ravi replies that their mom is with him. The contrasts of two masculinities come to the surface quite vividly now.

This is followed by a shot where two compartments of train are shown symbolically to be forcibly joined together. Railway station. Father is shown but he is no more. This gets reported to the police. Ravi gets to see their past family photo and understands everything. Ravi comes back home and does not allow his mom to apply sindoor. She understands and cries. Funeral pyre is lighted. Vijay arrives to give fire to the dead body and the close-up shot of his hand and that inscription is highlighted. Mom refuses to speak with Vijay.
Vijay is with Anita in saree. Vijay says that his father had died years back and day he has been burnt. Anita advises him to remove the hand inscription by plasticurgery. But he claims that the inscription is permanent in his heart and cannot be moved by artificial means.

Ravi leaves for duty. He checks phone call records and gets a clue and tries to follow the lead. Ravi chases a car and succeeds in catching it. Now warrants have been issued for Dabur and Vijay. Dabur gets caught by Ravi.

Now Samanth wants to catch Vijay before police for revenge.

Meanwhile Vijay gets to know that his mom is seriously ill and hospitalised. He is very anxious and worried and wants to visit her. Ravi and girlfriend are in the hospital. Ravi is in dilemma: he may be having father's blood, but there is mother's milk too and the sweat of the older brother – even after that whatever he is doing is right or not. She tries to make him remember the dilemma faced by Arjuna during the battle of Kurukshetra and what Krishna had to say. Ravi laments that he is no Arjuna. Avi's dilemma and inner-conflict and call of duty are the defining features of his masculinity construct.

Vijay sends Anita to enquire about mother who is very serious. Remembering his mom's words, Vijay comes to the temple and enters it for the first time. He speaks and appeals to Shiva. His angst comes alive in front of Shiva. He says that today he defeated. But what is the fault of his mother being his mom? Why is he punishing her for this? He recollects all the ironies of destiny being bestowed on their lives. Today he is requesting Him not to punish her for his sins. He is at His disposal. He quests Him to give her back and instead take him. Vijay speaks with Anita and collects.

Mom recovers. She wants to visit temple before going back home. She comes the temple and gets to know that Vijay had visited the temple to pray for her speedy recovery.

Vijay is informed about her recovery. Anita and Vijay celebrate. She has left inking and is pregnant with his baby. Vijay decides to marry Anita and surrender to
the police so that their son can live a dignified life. One can note that the presumption is that the child would be a boy. She is crying. She wants to wear that saree which her mother had kept for her marriage. Vijay speaks with mom over phone and requests her to come to the temple to give her blessings to them. Anita dresses as a bride. Samanth arrives and threatens her to know the details about Vijay.

Vijay comes to Anita but finds the door open and injured Anita on the verge of dying. He requests her not to leave him as he is very lonely. She dies in his laps. For her, perhaps this is rebirth. The lonely face of the anger is put forth as a masculinity construct. Vijay gets a clue about Samanth and is enraged. He enters his den and finds out about his whereabouts.

Meanwhile phone call comes to Ravi informing about the incidents and even his mother gets to know. Ravi wants both her strength as well as blessings. She wishes that while shooting, Ravi should not falter for a moment. Ravi leaves. His girlfriend asks her where is she going. Mom says that she has fulfilled her duties as a woman and now mother is going to wait for her son.

Vijay enters Samanth's bedroom and severely beats him up and lifts and throws him from the window. Meanwhile Ravi along with police force arrive there. Ravi speaks over loudspeaker to direct Vijay to surrender. But Vijay tries to escape. Ravi chases him. He shouts: brother, please stop. In the process Vijay's lucky badge number 786 slips out. Ravi shoots Vijay. Vijay tries to escape in a car and Ravi gets to the top of the car trying to stop him with the vehement call to his brother to stop. Ravi is duty-bound in his commitment. But at the same time, he tries to somehow protect his brother by trying to stop him by calling him brother even before the first shot. This is significant in terms of the masculinity construct projected by Ravi. On the other hand, Vijay is committed to his girlfriend who gets killed. There is an element of deep revenge which instantly changes his transformed heart which has wanted to surrender before police so that his proposed, yet-to-be-born son can be born in a new dawn having a future to look up to. But irony/fate/circumstance/destiny as always plays with Vijay. This aspect contributes to the masculinity construct of Vijay.
Vijay somehow manages to drive to the temple leaving behind Ravi in the mid-way. Injured, bruised, wounded Vijay with blood all over him gets to meet his mother. In her laps, Vijay laments that he is too tired of fighting all the while. He is feeling sleepy. He says perhaps mom is angry with him. He says that she used to make him asleep in the pavement. After that he could never sleep staying away from her. Now he has come back to her. He requests her to make him sleep again. She assures that everything will be alright. He wants her blessings. Mother shouts and cries and howls for Vijay. Ravi reaches that spot by that time.

Flashback ends. Again the medal distribution ceremony is the venue. The sound of the applause comes back. The film ends.

To me, it is difficult to say who the dominant male character in this film is. Is it Vijay or Ravi – one wonders. In a way, this is a text which speaks of contrasting masculinities. On the one hand, the masculinity construct of Vijay who because of destiny or circumstances, has an intense anger but is equally responsible to run the responsibility of the family by trying to carry the burden or rather sharing the burden with his mother. He even works for his brother’s educational expenses without ever asking for anything in return and with no expectations. But the tragedy of life always engulfs him shrouding him and his persona. His relation with his mother is intense. Obviously an element of mother-fixation is definitely there for both the brothers. In a way one can even think that there is a rivalry between the siblings about who can get more attention of the mother. In a way, both try to own her. Vijay’s relation with his father is that of absentee father figure imagery. He has a presence in him throughout his life and perhaps Vijay can never forgive him for running away from life leaving the rest of the family stranded and helpless. All the responsibility fell in mother’s hands which he always wanted to share from the very childhood. In a way, Vijay was always destiny’s step child. His relation with his girlfriend seem to be quite mature unlike the romantic hiatus in popular Hindi cinema genre which is very significant. Moreover Vijay’s non-compromising attitude stands out. His relation with Rahim Chacha and other fellow workers are cordial, caring, helping and very responsible. Later, his relation with Dabur is very cordial and no misunderstandings happened. And the strategic dealings with Samanth are another aspect of his masculinity construct.
On the other hand, the masculinity construct of Ravi has been to balance the extreme nature of Vijay especially with the mother. But one cannot deny the fact that being the youngest in the family, he was never allowed to get the brunt which circumstance and destiny always hurled on them. He could study and have food when his mom and brother worked hard to make the ends meet. He was a brilliant student. But in the job market, he did face the unemployment problem. But later could secure for himself the position and place in the police force. As an officer he is sincere and committed with bouts of self-contradictions hitting him at times. Till the very end he is true to his commitment to duty and even tries in his way to be true and responsible to his family as well. His relation with his mother has been very understanding and expressive. The expressiveness of Ravi compared to the intense silence and non-expressiveness of Vijay comes as a sharp contrast in the masculinity construct discourse. He seeks the advise and blessings of his mother throughout. His job commitments are exemplary. In spite of his iron-steel conviction, he has a soft, caring and loving side too. His relation with his father happens to be that of respect and trying to follow him as an ideal. He many a time seems to echo the ideals of his father. In a way, he does not have a questioning, problematic attitude towards him unlike the disposition of Vijay which in a way drives and pricks him throughout his life span. In terms of relation with his girlfriend, Ravi seems to have a very realistic understanding with her which is again open and mutual sense of love and respect for both of them. In a way, the constant play of contrast in terms of the masculinity constructs of the two brothers are the defining features of Deewaar.

It was Deewaar in which Bachchan, playing the role of a smuggler, gave voice to a debate on the path, to be chosen, of living within or without the boundaries of law. It was this transcendent logic that defined his being in all the films he acted. One of the reasons for the collapse of the persona is the dispersal of narrative categories. Crucial to this narrative displacement is the role the flashback – a well-worn technique in commercial melodramas – is now accorded.

The mother represents, more often than not, the insistence on a life lived with moral values. The image of the mother has undergone a sea change in direct proportion, it seems, to the viciousness of the villainy. The mother in despair chooses
to leave the elder son's house to stay with the younger son, a police officer, because she finds out that the elder son works with smugglers, even though it is her first-born she loves more.

The family has returned with force as the central theme of commercial Hindi cinema. If in the 70's the hero moved away from the family – as in the Amitabh Bachchan films – the protagonist is now definitely enmeshed in it, even when he is a rebel. Acts of violation committed against the father, sister or mother are what are responsible for the rebirth in violence of the hero. In the films of the 70s, the family showed signs of breaking up, with the father getting lost either morally or physically. This loss defined the hero's being. In the gangster films of the 70s it is the hero, who estranged from his real father, gravitates towards a surrogate one from the underworld.

*Sholay* or *Deewaar*, both released in 1975, represent the irreversible turn the narrative of commercial cinema took: the impossibility, or at any rate the difficulty, of being honest when the state and its law-enforcing agencies could not guarantee social justice, now sufficed the logic of these narratives.

According to Javed Akhtar who was co-writer of some of the films (*Zanjeer, Trishul, Deewaar, Sholay*) that propelled Bachchan to "number one" position, the entry of the criminally-inclined, angry young man or anti-hero, coincided with the complete breakdown of a traditional lifestyle, legal system and society as it had been until then. His films mirrored the rage and disillusionment of the youth in the seventies. They saw themselves in his rough-hewn screen persona, and fancied about the power they never had.

The story of *Deewaar* contains all the stock-in-trade elements of the Indian melodrama – good and bad brother, their long-suffering mother as the central moral force, divine intervention and religious symbols. What set *Deewaar* apart was the ingenious mix of these elements, a taut script, pithy and pointed dialogue, and above all, the powerful presence of Bachchan and all that he epitomised. The film also effectively exploited popular religious sentiment. Bachchan is shown as an agnostic, yet he has blind faith in the miraculous powers of the number 786 (the number of his
badge as a dock-worker). The number is as sacred to Muslims as Om is to Hindus. In the film, as long as Bachchan carries it on his person, he remains invincible while fleeing from the police, his badge falls and slips out of reach, and he is hit by a bullet fired by his brother. However, he manages to reach his mother in a temple and collapses in her arms, symbolising his return to a state of innocence.

Amitabh Bachchan redefined superstardom in India and overwhelmed audiences. Exuding what a critic called, "a forbidding, wedged-in intensity", Bachchan was the very antithesis of the conventional Indian Hero. At over six feet he was too tall by Indian standards, nor he has conventional good looks. Instead, he epitomised the ethos of manliness, the guy in search of justice and self-definition through vengeance against his oppressors. It was with Hrishikesh Mukherjee's Anand, in which he was cast with Rajesh Khanna, that Bachchan's intense personality and rich, resonant voice came to the fore. Superstar status came later, with Prakash Mehra's Zanjeer (1973). It was in this film that 'Bachchan' myth began to unfold.

The myth crystallised in subsequent films, and millions identified with and looked up to him to avenge their honour. The 'angry young man' who appeared in scores of films mesmerising audiences and swelling box-office receipts, was the invention of a team of two writers, Salim-Javed. Salim-Javed propelled the writer to the fore-front as never before. The commanded high fees for their scripts, a notch higher than that of the leading star! They brought about a radical change in Hindi film writing which for too long, had been genteel and mindful of middle class morality. With their protagonist, who was the product of the mean street, the brash, tough and foul-mouthed hero who symbolised the simmering discontent of the dispossessed, the team evolved a new language. The rural poor who converged on the cities in huge numbers in search of jobs, usually ended up in petty crime, bootlegging, smuggling and prostitution. Elsewhere, groups of heavily armed bandits roamed the countryside kidnapping and looting. All this found expression, however superficially, in films like Deewaar, Sholay, Don, Muqaddar Ka Sikandar and Mr. Natwarlal.

The biggest phenomenon of the 1980s Bollywood was Amitabh Bachchan. Nationally it was a period of political upheavals and increasing corruption in political and public life. At this juncture, Amitabh’s unusual appearance and look of
struggling, signalled to people that he was one of them – an ordinary police officer, or a slum dweller who was making it big, so they could too. Amitabh was a myth in the making. In *Deewaar*, his character is developed on the model of Haji Mastan Mirza, a noted Mumbai smuggler, who was a friend of the poor. In a way his films capture the mood of the angry young man disillusioned by the collapse of the Nehruvian dream of an industrial India full of job opportunities and financial security.

*Deewaar* rehashes the old formula of sibling rivalry and imbues the image of the angry young man with a pan-Indian, secular face. Its taut screenplay highlights a dockworker’s meteoric rise through crime and the emotional conflict his success brings. The drama and tension in the sibling rivalry and relationship may have been inspired by the Hollywood film *Public Enemy* (1931), in which the irrepressible James Cagney repeatedly gets into arguments with his elder brother about his notorious reputation and ill-gotten wealth.

Amitabh was not only the underprivileged common man’s mascot but also his alter ego, doing all that the common man had always wanted to do and getting social sanction for it in the bargain. Thus, for the first time, a popular screen hero did not get condemned for grabbing what was not his. And, again for the first time, he was advocating a populist “grab-what-you-don’t-have” policy.

In fact, Amitabh went from strength to strength, getting bolder and bolder in his fight against social injustice. For writers Salim-Javed packed all their years of professional frustration into the biting lines Amitabh delivered in his magically powerful voice, lending any cause he took up the garb of its being noble and just. Amitabh’s every spoken line was prelude to physical action, which made him the idol alike of the physically robust young and the morally coward old.

He appears as a social-hero, the archetypal underdog, out to right a wrong and to fight for justice. Yet, it is not a generalized role, as was the case earlier. He does not mouth mere shibboleths that please. His actions arise from a personal factor – his unwitting involvement with the forces of evil and good; they originate in a situation of betrayal or treachery. His anger, controlled and precise, is almost like the energy of a machine, well-tuned and destructive. In *Deewaar*, he throws a man out of fifth floor
window and does it calmly and efficiently. Amitabh Bachchan has broken away from the middle-class image of the film hero. He dispensed mushroom idealism with a firm refusal to romanticize. In *Sholay*, he treats the villain Gabbar Singh (Amjad Khan) with condescension; he is unimpressed with him and looks upon him as a job to be done. No long dialogues are exchanged between hero and villain, unlike in earlier films.

At the same time, he remains an enigma. He seems to enter a film, wreak a certain amount of destruction and then leave the scene. Throughout, he remains largely a loner – independent, dignified and blunt. He only concentrates on what he has to achieve; beyond that, he keeps to himself. He does not waste his time on irrelevant and trivial matters. This is evident in *Sholay*, of course, but it is equally evident in *Deewaar*, *Trishul* and *Mukkadar ka Sikandar*. In no film of his has he been seen getting married or going through the first bridal night, a code that was the eternal resort of actors earlier. This is an extremely bold image, considering the fact that earlier actors would shy from openly rejecting a wife, something that is bound to hurt Indian sentiment. Amitabh Bachchan is possibly the only actor who has not paid the usual lip-service to typical middle-class values of the family.

In fact, he has created the semblance of the industrial man – a person whose commitment is to himself, and whose passions and urges are calculated and fierce. He gives the impression of a sophisticated, fully-charged machine that mobilizes its resources only when necessary.
QAYAMAT SE QAYAMAT TAK:

A Study Of
Soft But Determined
Masculinity
Filmography:

**Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak** (Till Death Do Us Part)
Hindi/1988/Colour/162 minutes

- **Direction:** Mansoo Khan
- **Story and Dialogue:** Nasir Husain
- **Screenplay:** Nasir Husain, Mansoor Khan, aamir Khan, Nusrat Khan
- **Music:** Anand Bakshi
- **Lyrics:** Majrooh Sultanpuri
- **Cinematography:** Kiran Deohans
- **Editing:** Zafar Sultan, Dilip Kotalgi
- **Art Design:** Shibu
- **Produced by:** Nasir Husain/Nasir Husain Films
- **Cast:** Aamir Khan, Juhi Chawla, Dalip Tahil, Alok Nath, Goga Kapoor, Reema Lagoo, Ravinder Kapoor, Asha Sharma, Beena, Ajit Vachchani, Raj Zutshi.

Raj (Aamir Khan) and Rashmi (Juhi Chawla) meet at a holiday spot and it's love at first sight for them. The spoke in their romantic wheel comes because their families are bitter enemies, and Raj's father has served time in prison for killing Rashmi's uncle. When the family comes to know of their feelings, the predictable explosion happens.

*Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* (or *QSQT* as it was popularly known) was the first of the six films in 1988-9 (the others were *Tezaab, Ram Lakhan, Tridev, Chandni* and *Maine Pyar Kiya*) that ended the role of the video as well as of violence in Hindi films, and brought back the era of wholesome romantic musicals. *QSQT* proved that the audience was open to clean entertainment and would willingly patronise the big screen despite the availability of a video cassette at the local library – provided the film was value for money and visually compelling as well. It destroyed the myth that bone-crunching villains and crude-n-lewd politicians were needed to set the box-office registers ringing. And it also gave a punchy lie to the canard that discordant cacophony ruled the musical roost.
A dozen years down the line, *QSQT* still remains the four-film old Mansoor Khan’s biggest, and arguably, best film. It was originally planned as a love story to be written, produced and directed by his mega-successful father Nasir Husain, while Mansoor was writing *Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikander*.

Mansoor liked the beginning of the script that his father narrated, and took up the challenge to make a fresh love story even if its basic premise – love v/s family opposition – was as old as the hills. The rest of the scripting was done jointly by Nasir, Mansoor, his sister Nusrat and cousin Aamir Khan. Aamir was also to get his major break in the film after cameos as a kid in *Yadon Ki Baaraat* and the 1974 *Madhosh* and a supporting role in *Holi*.

“When we launched the film, it was already years since the audience had seen a good love story,” recalls Mansoor. “But with the kind of intense hatred that existed among the families, I wanted a sad ending as a happy solution would have been very simplistic and unconvincing. My father was very keen on a happy ending so traditionally associated with Nasir Husain Films.”

At the same time, Mansoor was very careful about how the tragic climax would come about - not opting for something like the lovers jumping off a cliff but for a powerful twist of fate that highlighted the futility of hatred. He even rewrote the climax (which incidentally was shot in Mumbai and Ooty in the film’s first shooting schedule) on location itself.

Juhi Chawla, a Miss India Winner, came in because Mansoor had seen a shampoo ad film that she had done for their company, Scan Video. At that time, the director was planning a TV series and he had Juhi in mind for the serial as well. The supporting cast was largely made up of talented artistes who had no set image in films, like Zutshi and Dalip Tahil who were stage artistes, and Alok Nath, who had done the TV series *Buniyaad*.

Before *QSQT*, Mansoor Khan had made a short film called *Umberto*, and he chose to work with its music directors – Anand and Milind – in preference to his father’s permanent composer R.D. Burman, because he felt that he would be intimidated by a composer who had seen him as a tiny tot. However, lyricist Majrooh
Sultanpuri – another Nasir Husain fixture – was retained for an interesting reason – Mansoor always approved the tune first and took a major interest in his music, but he later left the lyrics writing to the composer and the songwriter. He therefore had no major reason to change the lyricist, who would not work intimately with him. The music of QSQT – as the film is affectionately known to date – was a major selling point. Udit Narayan's voice was tuned so perfectly for Aamir Khan that their association endures to this day and when Aamir was to make his singing debut in ‘Ghulam’ a decade later, he modelled his own vocals on his fab voice. For Udit and to a lesser extent Alka Yagnik, QSQT proved to be the breakthrough. And Anand-Milind's trend setting score led by the cult song *Papa kehte hain bada naam karega* sounded the first clarion call for a new guard of composers and singers to take over the baton from the established veterans.

If ever there was a major trend-setter after *Sholay*, it was *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*, though they ushered in completely contrasting trends – and clones.

The biggest box-office hit of 1988 relaunched its producer/writer (and some sources claim also director), and gave new life to glossy teen romances shot in advertising styles (*of Maine Pyar Kiya*, 1989). It also established the 90s star Aamir Khan. The film combines a Romeo and Juliet theme with the standard Nasir Hussain pop musical. Raj (Khan) and Rashmi (Chawla) fall in love, defying a major ancestral conflict between their families. They elope and create a kind of utopia in an abandoned temple on an isolated mountain, living on love, fresh air and burnt food. Having to buy provisions in a nearby town (the 'real' world), they are betrayed and die. The film presents the act of falling in love as an illusory individuation, but perhaps the only form of culturally acceptable rebellion available. Its strongly neo-traditional thrust is underlined by Khan's nostalgic evocation of classic Nasir Hussain heroes (e.g. Shammi Kapoor, Dev Anand), in the teenage hero's dilemma: whether to follow the idolised father, incarnated the film’s hit song *Papa kehte hain*, or to follow a different heroic vocation and fall in love. The film rapidly became a cult, fondly referred to by teenagers as QSQT. Khan starred again in the follow-up, *Dil* (1990).

The film begins on a rural setting, in a way it can be said to be a feudal set-up. The first character that is named is Thakur Jaswant Singh who is informed of a
marriage party where he and his family are invited. Ranbir Singh’s son’s marriage invitation message is delivered. The feel of the characters and the surroundings point to a rural backdrop in an almost by-gone era feel. Chote Thakur also arrives in the scene. The messenger, Tota Ram, uses “Ram Ka Naam Leke” at every sentence denoting a pattern of speech which is quite commonplace of any North Indian set up.

In Ranbir Singh’s house, the marriage celebration spree is going on in full swing with the selection of ornaments and other things for the occasion. There is a comment which is very significant: in this kind of marriage arrangements, both the bride and the groom have no say about anything and everything. Thakur Jaswant’s sister arrives informing that she is going to be the mother of the child of Ranbir Singh’s son whose marriage is impending and requests her to abort the baby with his money in the city. The masculinity trait put forth is quite cowardly and that of a cheat and a spineless person. She throws back the money which was offered for abortion and comes back to inform the family. Reactions vary from the different male members. The elder brother much in the mould of Rama or even Yudishthir tries to deal with the situation. The middle brother looses temper but he is pacified by the elder brother.

Jaswant visits Ranbir’s household asking for some solution but the whole incident is denied by the son living up to his cowardly masculinity characterisation intact in the whole deliberation. Here the group of silent female folk are shown as a kind of contrasting force of quiet opposition, which gets broken of one lonely female voice who is also made silent by the societal and family pressure of prestige and status. Even the contrasting voices of masculinities are interesting to note and study much in the mould of the feudal constructs and characterisations pertaining to it. Threats and counter threats are thrown at each other and seems of an impending storm of rivalry simmering and brewing between the now two opposing families waiting to explode in bloody conflicts which follows in the marriage ceremony where Ranbir’s son is shot by the middle brother when he arrives with his sister’s dead body who commits suicide when the whole prestige and status of the family is put on a reserve of the female folk.

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The middle brother Dhanraj is in jail after the murder and he is released in due course of time in lieu of his good conduct. His son writes to him. Father gives a surprise visit in his son's farewell party where he sings that immortal song *Papa Kehte hain*. Raj's innocent, sweet, soft masculine characterisation signifies a break from violence where the absentee father figure arrives. The song is very significant in terms of the pressure of expectation of the father and the family on the grown-up son but in some sense he wants to break free of the normative mould and wants to explore life and go out for love, may be true love. This particular song has attained immortal position signifying the aspiration of the youth. During this festive mood, a shot showing two guys kissing on the cheeks is a show of affection or may be a homo social reading can be put forward as well.

Dhanraj comes back home and he is welcomed with open arms where perhaps the murder is regarded as a great heroic act upholding the prestige of the family. In fact in the family dinner table, he is accorded the status of the head of the table, which is very significant. Interestingly the venue has shifted to the cityscape from the rural backdrop from which the script started unfolding. But the shifting backdrops are also significant almost catering to the preview of the audience base being spread out.

Raj is shown with a badminton racket pointing to the sportsman nature of the masculinity construct. But badminton is not a very hardcore strong sport but has a softness involved. The Dhanakpur village scene is back. The lawyer has a comic self with pan-chewing habit. Raj gets a glimpse of Rashmi, Randhir Singh’s daughter played by Juhi Chawla in a horse riding high when birthday celebration is on. Venue shifts to the birthday celebration where he arrives in a daring act smitten by the infatuation of that glimpse and plays a prank by impersonating someone who is supposed to arrive there and somehow escapes when the truth is revealed. In fact Randhir gets to know the truth and laments that if it was known before may be his dead body would have gone back.

The venue shifts to Mount Abu where by chance both the hero and the heroine arrive. Rashmi, the photographer by chance gets to shoot Raj when she aims at the setting sun. They get to meet and Raj gets to remember her. Significantly the masculinity construct is equated with the sun be it the setting sun nonetheless. The
romancing begins. The love plant sewed with the Krishna construct of masculinity, is slowly blossoming. Both are again in their respective dining tables in the same restaurant. Raj sees her and gives unknowing stamp of approval for her as an appropriate daughter-in-law material for the family.

At night, Raj hiding in blanket like a head covering in a much soft feminine gesture comes looking for Rashmi and gets caught by her camera in the process. The photography session continues. Raj is shown in the next shot in truly short shorts and a tight red t-shirt and is observed by Rashmi from a distance. A soft masculine sex appeal emanates from the perspective.

Another contrasting youth group is shown. They are referred as pigeons and rowdy with rifles and a destructive framing of masculinity construct compared to the much saner, sober, softer but not weak version of Raj’s group. Both the groups are for Rahsmti who in some sense rejects the rowdy group’s overtures and comes to give previous day’s photographs. Raj is warned by his cousin about Rashmi’s lineage.

The hunting spree begins and in the process somehow Rashmi’s photo drops from Raj’s hands. There is breakdown in Rashmi’s bus while the rowdy group observes her busy with photography spree. She is chased by them and in the process goes in the deep parts of the forest. In the process, Rashmi and Raj meet at night in the forest and Raj nurses Rashmi in a softer, caring attitude and offers her food and water. She is a chatter-box type and the romancing blooms. Next morning, they both try to find the way to the main road. Even in the mould of softer, caring persona, Raj exhibits a masculinity construct, which is in control of the situation and has the capability of finding direction of life while Rashmi is busy romancing and enjoying the sense of togetherness. Again both of them come in the way of that rowdy group. Raj tells them to give back the camera of Rashmi. Raj hits back, significantly challenging their valour. When Raj gets hit by the group, his own friend circle also sees them and comes rushing back in his aid. But when Rashmi gets hit in a stone, Raj hits back in right earnest with his friends joining them. All of them including Rashmi come to the camp.
They stay back in the camp and at night, the campfire venue lights with a faith between Rashmi and Raj. Rashmi gets to meet Raj’s parents who like her immensely without knowing her parental identity. Raj’s father gets to know Rashmi’s lineage when he drops her back and tells her everything of the past. Father tells her that no one from two families can be related by the marriage in such a violent past history of animosity. He would prefer to kill Raj by his own hands rather than letting him to marry Rashmi.

Raj comes back to Rashmi and claims that none of them are the private properties of their respective families and both of them swear by each other’s love. Raj says that he is going back to Delhi but will meet her after some time.

Raj is called by his father in the living room of their house as the venue shifts to Delhi. Raj is brushing his hair and is shown without his shirt. The camera shows the soft smooth but not completely soft physique of the persona of Raj allowing the audience the gaze of the male torso. It’s a family meeting trying to sort out the issue asking for explanation from Raj. Raj gives his word that he is never going to meet Rashmi again after being threatened by his father of informing Rashmi’s father, Randhir Singh. But he is put on observation by his father everywhere. The imposing patriarchal pressure on the masculinity formation from the socialisation process is very evident in this case.

Rashmi and Raj meet accidentally at a gift shop. There are scenes where both the lovers miss each other desperately. Suddenly at Rashmi’s house, a marriage proposal arrives which Randhir Singh agrees to. Meanwhile Rashmi’s father taps and overhears a telephonic conversation between Rashmi and Raj and their meeting at a library. And is followed by Randhir where Rashmi informs Raj about the marriage proposal. Raj is followed by Randhir Singh and tries to run him over and reveals a revengeful masculinity. Meanwhile Rahsmi’s father wants to speed up her marriage formalities without letting her know that they know everything.

Randhir visits Raj’s home and threatens the household about the impending consequences if he continues in his present path of romance with Rashmi. The female folk throughout the film are kept silent and without voice being subdued by
patriarchal pressure and force. Meanwhile, Raj’s uncle informs him about Randhir Singh’s visit and tries to convince him not to meet Rashmi and rather to forget her, which Raj agrees to in order to pacify him.

Rashmi’s engagement preparations are going on. She is being stopped from going to college and is told that whether she would continue with her studies or not would be decided by her in-laws especially her husband. The wife is made to listen to her husband’s orders. Patriarchal dominating power is exercised fully.

Raj comes to Rashmi’s grandmother and asks about Rashmi’s well being who tries to convince him to forget Rashmi. But Raj claims that it would be too late when both families would realise what is good for both of them. Raj seeks help of Rashmi’s friend in order to elope with her but somehow gets caught by Randhir Singh on the engagement day, who calls up Dhanraj informing him about his son’s antics. Raj claimed that from now on the clandestine affair is going to come to the open and both of them are not prepared to be legacies of both the family’s hatred and no force can separate them and gets beaten up by Rashmi’s father by stick and then thrown out of house.

Meanwhile in Raj’s house, heated conversation between his father and uncle continues. A melodramatic situation of confrontation arises between two brothers regarding Raj. In a way a sense of control is operative within the patriarchal hierarchy frame.

Raj comes back home and seeing his injured face, his father receives him in open arms and advises him to go and take rest. Meanwhile Rashmi’s friend helps her to escape from home and brings her to Raj’s home where Raj’s cousin helps him to escape from home in a motorcycle. They are trying to go out of Delhi in a bid to escape from the pressures of the city. But there is a problem in the bike. They take the help of a truck in terms of lift. They even escape from the clutches of the truck driver suspecting something fishy. They are in a mountainous region and manage to find a broken, old, rocky structure, which they take as home and marry each other in their own way, which perhaps is an old temple structure.
Meanwhile there is search drive especially in Rashmi's household with a newspaper advertisement notifying prize money for finding Raj in terms of prize money of one lakh. Raj gets to see the newspaper notification when he comes for daily household shopping at the local market. The household chores start with Rashmi's inefficiency showing off. But the love resolve is strengthened with different experiences. They do not mind being alone together. But the search is continuing where their news is now revealed to Rashmi's household. Rashmi's grandma comes to Raj's home and informs everything. Randhir Singh contacts goons to finish off Raj. All of them zero in on Raj at his new place. Randhir visits Rashmi and tells her that she should have informed him before finally leaving the household and forgives her. Raj is attacked when he goes out to fetch wood but he manages to injure two of his attackers. Rashmi's grandma arrives with Raj's father and uncle and gets to know that Randhir has come to take back Rashmi and Raj. But Dhanraj gets impatient and threatens Randhir with rifle when one of the assailants shoots at Raj but he escapes but in the process Randhir attacks Dhanraj. But Raj is shot at and falls down and Rashmi sees Raj falling down and comes looking after him. The assailant shoots at Rashmi thinking she has seen him shooting at Raj. Rashmi tumbles down in blood. Raj shoots the assailant with his own rifle. Raj takes blood red Rashmi in his own laps promising her never to leave her and cries out. Raj looks up seeing all his relatives rushing down to them and takes out the knife gifted by Rashmi and kills himself after putting a kiss on her cheeks and the two lovers unite in blood and death with the song *Papa Kehte the bara naam kare ga* (Father used to say that my son will become very famous). Even in the end the patriarchal desires reign supreme in spite of the rebellious youthful masculinity construct raising its head with the setting sun in backdrop.

Raj happens to be the main male protagonist in this film. His soft masculinity is exhibited with his resolve of determination and courage to attain his love inspite of all odds and oppositions especially the feudal patriarchal pressures of both the households. Raj is determined that he is not going to sacrifice his life for the sake of the family ego in terms of brutal feud between them. From the very beginning of the film, what strikes the viewer most is the visible complete silence of women voices. Even when they try to make any point, they are forcibly silenced to any extent. On
the other hand, they are repository of all family prestige and honour. One wonders if they are so important, why are they not given their share of opinion and space. In a way, they act as silent spectators to the male or rather patriarchal feudal drama which gets enacted in front of their eyes. Interestingly in this movie, relation between Raj and his father is highlighted. In fact the tone of this phenomenon is emphasised by the famous farewell song of father’s dreams for his son. The highlight is that the father or fathers only have dreams for their sons becoming big and successful in future but it is not true of their daughters. The song could have included the gender sensitivity dimension. Raj’s relation with his girlfriend is very loving, caring and understanding. In many senses, Raj shows exemplary courage and conviction in escaping with her inspite of their irreversible animosity in the family dispositions. Raj waits for the right opportunity and never does anything in haste. Even when they run their household, Raj does the jobs which are basically outer jobs and Rashmi is assigned the indoor jobs. Here the gender stratification is re-established in this process, though it is true that Raj tries to help Rashmi run the household. The soft but determined masculinity of Raj is the defining feature of this film.

The love at first sight encounters are a trifle mushy but saved by the delightful new pair. Slender, shy-looking Aamir Khan plays Romeo to Juhi Chawla who manages to look vulnerable and speak flawlessly. This kind of film tugs at the cockles of one’s heart, especially when you have such enchanting lovers so fresh on the screen. In a way, QSQT is a nice, old-fashioned film about what can only be described as puppy love. It is not very dissimilar from the likes of Bobby, Love Story or Hero – all of them huge commercial successes. Aamir Khan is probably among the youngest to ever get a central role in a popular Hindi film.

Like teeny boppers of the 70s – Rishi Kapoor, Kumar Gaurav and Sanjay Dutt – Aamir took the box-office by storm with the puppy love story. Innocent-looking and vulnerable he came as a relief from the gun-totting macho heroes. And the audiences lapped him up. When he sang Papa Kahte Hain Bada Naam Karega in Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak he simply exuded charm and evoked thunderous response from the crowds. He was too real and his tale of doomed love was simply believable: he was chased by the hoodlums and like a real life lovelorn he faltered in those romantic
scenes. Partly his popularity was because of the fact that the audiences, fed up with the jaded faces, were bound to lap him up.

Amorous Aamir Khan appeared in Hindi cinema just at the right time – a time when the audience has its fill of guts and gore, as represented by Amitabh Bachchan, with his larger than life screen presence. The setting was just right for a different style of hero to fill the void left by the punch that Amitabh no longer packed in the ring. *Toofan* and *Jaadugar* had finally brought the point home to Amitabh that his lack of screen variety had caught up with him.

The audience and the industry alike were on the lookout for the kind of face that would have a rejuvenating effect by making fresh hold of their imagination. And Aamir Khan, as the antithesis of Amitabh Bachchan in every respect, was just what the director ordered. He was soft-looking, of slender built and exuded an elfin-charm, the very ingredients needed to turn an acceptable new face into a teenage craze. This was the overriding impression left by his maiden film, *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*, in which Juhi Chawla and Aamir Khan looked made for each other. The two had been presented in a sufficiently novel light to sweep the adolescent audience off its feet.

True, *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* had its mandatory share of violence, in keeping with the spirit of the times. Only, Aamir Khan, as the vulnerable young hero, was no part of this violence – indeed, he was a victim of it, in tune with the norm set by romantic musicals of yore. The Indian audience has always hugged a personable young love pair – and this is exactly what Juhi and Aamir now were.

Even as violence became the staple diet of our audience, remember the impact made, at various stages, by *Bobby, Love Story, Ek Duuje Ke Liye, Ram Teri Ganga Maili*, trend setting of *Maine Pyar Kiya*. When a film with a brand-new pair succeeds, it just succeeds. The impact made by Bhagyashree and Salman Khan in *Maine Pyar Kiya* is to be interpreted in the light of the reception accorded to Juhi Chawla and Aamir Khan in *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*. What you consequently have is a set of warm young stars blazing a new romantic trail. And the torch-bearer here has been Aamir Khan. It is his excitingly different persona that brought the romantic musical back in public favour.
The offers with which Aamir Khan was flooded in the wake of *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* were a pointer to the rise of new star on the horizon. In film after film Aamir Khan embodied the youth movement as he lived their dreams and played their themes. His debut film, *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*, brought a young hero (he was only 23) to the fore after a long span; and ever since then, Aamir’s squeaky clean earnestness has been in vogue for those 90’s teenagers who no longer shape their lives according to the pattern set by the prototypically rebellious earlier idols.

In powerhouse performances in carefully chosen roles, Aamir has given voice to the hopes and fears of the Indian yuppie. With typical 90s sensibilities, his characters aspire to heroics and big money but rarely achieve it. Aamir’s sensitivity has always been a personal characteristic.

In 1988, the success of the modern day Romeo And Juliet adaptation, *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*, made this boy-next-door with the enigmatic smile, the hot favourite with the country’s youth. The film made the musical ring with a new resonance and Aamir’s performance too was acclaimed for his impassioned acting. The disjunction between his size and his status was commented upon but admirers saw Aamir as a bonsai – diminutive but definitive.
[VI]
DILWALE DULHANIA LE JAYENGE:
A Study Of Colourful Masculinity
Filmography:

**Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge** (Brave Heart Will Take Away The Bride)
Hindi/1995/Colour/261 minutes

*Direction:* Javed Siddiqui, Aditya Chopra

*Music:* Jatil Lalit

*Lyrics:* Anand Bakshi

*Cinematography:* Manmohan Singh

*Editing:* Deshav Naidu

*Art Design:* Sharmistha Roy

*Choreography:* Farah Khan

*Produced by:* Yash Chopra/Yashraj Films

*Cast:* Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol, Amrish Puri, Anupam Kher, Farida Jalal, Mandira Bedi, Satish Shah, Karan Johar

At the fag end of 1995 came a film whose title, as is the trend right from the early ‘50s, seemed to be derived from a hit song (“Le jayenge le jayenge”/‘Chor Machaye Shor’/1974). But the credit titles had an intriguing line “Title suggested by Mrs. Kiron Kher”. And after the film ended, one realised that the four words did encapsulate the storyline perfectly!

Raj (Shah Rukh Khan) is the spoilt brat, son of an NRI widower (Anupam Kher) and the two are more like buddies than father and son. He encounters Simran (Kajol) in the course of a tour of Europe. Simran too is the daughter of an NRI (Amrish Puri) but the two fathers are poles apart in their mindsets. Again, Raj does not believe in love, Simran does, she waits for an imaginary dream man. After being thrown in each other’s exclusive company by happenstance, Raj falls in love with her, though it takes a while for Simran to realise that she too has found the man of her dreams. She reveals her feelings to her mother, but her father overhears and is furious. Overnight, he whisks his family to Punjab as he has made a promise to his close friend that Simran will marry his son. Raj traces Simran to Punjab, inveigles himself into the family circle and wins over the stern father at the eleventh hour.

*Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (or *DDLJ* as it came to be known) emerged as a cult film from day one, and remains one of the very few evergreen films that can be
watched again and again. Aditya Chopra’s spectacular debut as writer-director (DDLJ is the biggest among the massive hits of the Yashraj Films banner) came about by a series of chances. He had the rough idea for Mohabbatein with him for five years but felt that he needed to mature as a director before he attempted a complex subject like that. He had the basic idea for DDLJ for three years in his mind but was too lazy to pen the script.

After Darr, his father Yash Chopra wanted Aditya to think of a subject for him. Yash, to direct, and Aditya narrated the basic idea, which did not impress his father much. But while narrating the story, Aditya himself began to visualise sequences. Since the film was a simple love story, Aditya then decided to have a go at it himself. His original plan to cast newcomers in the leads was abandoned in view of the demanding histrionic requirements of the characters that were etched out in the detailed script. “I wanted to make a good film that I would like to watch again and again, and one that would do good business!” he says.

A good part of the film (in the pre-wedding sequences) seemed to echo the ambience of Hum Aapke Hain Koun! (known as HAHK) but Aditya says that though Sooraj Barjatya impresses him, the scenes were needed as part of his story. However, he points out the one similarity between DDLJ and HAHK that most people missed – the readiness of the lovers to sacrifice their love if necessary for their families. Says Aditya, “For years, I have seen films where the lovers elope, which is a very callous thing to do to one’s family. Sooraj showed the way in Hum Aapke Hain Koun and this gave me the courage to project the same ideal, with the message that true love will definitely win over opposition. On the other hand, I also focused on the point that even in this day and age, our society has not improved in one respect – the woman, whether the wife or the daughter, is always dominated and has no say even on issues concerning her own life and future.”

Aditya says that the focus on the cultural crisis of the NRI and his family came in as a dramatic element and was not deliberately thrust in the film. Also, things seemed to go right from beginning to end, with the film turning out exactly as he had conceptualised.

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The few sour points that arose came after the release and the mega-success of the film, which ranks as the biggest hit of 1995 and one of the dozen greatest grossers of all time from Mumbai's dream factory. Honey Irani, writer of the banner's previous films Lamhe, Aaina and Darr, claimed that she had a major role in the screenplay and broke her long-standing professional association and personal bond with the Chopras for robbing her of due credit. The Chopra camp refused to speak on this controversy despite Tanuja Chandra performing an encore after their next Aditya-written film, Dil To Pagal Hai.

DDLJ also came in for the ire of Christian Zealots who objected to the (mis)use of the church for the flippant exchange of lines between Raj and Simran, culminating with Raj making the usual sign of one wanting to go and relieve himself.

The final discordant note was ironically reserved for Jatin Lalit (JL), who composed the seven melodious tracks of the film. They missed out on the music awards even as Udit Narayan and Anand Bakshi won various trophies and the rest of the film's team and cast won a slew of awards. But JL's career luckily took off on the fast track after perennials like Tujhe dekha to yeh jaana sanam, Mehandi lagaake rakhna (now a mandatory item for weddings). Mere khwabon mein jo aaye, Ho gaya hai tujhko to pyar sajana, Zara sa jhoom loon main and the brilliant Ghar aaja pardesi. JL stress that they genuinely felt that their music was far more melodious and enduring than the award-winning scores and that all its seven songs were popular and of equal calibre.

DDLJ would not have been what it was – despite its strong dialogues, fabulous music and exciting locales – without all those superlative performances by a top-heavy cast comprising of Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol, Amrish Puri, Anupam Kher, Farida Jalal, Satish Shah and Himani Shivpuri. Khan, Kajol and Kher in particular, were awesome and the scene of the first meeting between Kher and Kajol ranks as a classic in Hindi cinema.

Two interesting titbits need be mentioned. First, Aditya's (and now Shah Rukh's and Kajol's) buddy Karan Johar who was to later give the star-pair the mega-hit Kuch Kuch Hota Hai generally assisted Aditya on the film and also was seen as
one of Shah Rukh’s cronies in the film. Secondly, the hilarious sequence in which his father congratulates Raj on failing his degree examinations and thus keeping up the family tradition has proved significant in view of Aditya’s climax in his new film ‘Mohabbatein’, where an educational institution is turned into a fun-fair of romance and gaiety in the end. Here is endless scope for speculation on Aditya’s views on education!

A love story that consolidated the ‘feel-good’ trend in Hindi cinema (after \textit{HAHK}) and unleashed a plethora of family-cum-love stories aimed especially at the NRI market. \textit{DDLJ} is still running past the 250-week mark at Mumbai’s Maratha Mandir in matinee shows. It established the Shah Rukh-Kajol team as a pair with the Midas touch (after \textit{Baazigar} and Karan Arjun). But its greatest strength was its perfect blend of the modern and the conservative, for its state-of-the-art packaging told a story that was strongly rooted in the (healthier) traditions of Indian culture.

This is one of the most commercially successful Hindi film and definitely a very representative Shah Rukh Khan film. The masculinity construct has a clear slant towards the \textit{Krishna} framing. In away, another significant aspect is that when the heroine is dreaming about her ideal ‘man’, the director pinpoints to the hero playing rugby and obviously ahead of everyone in the game; racing ahead of a private jet before its take-off; in a way his superior athletic ability ahead of everyone but being a failure at the academic arena but gets a pat on the back from his father for maintaining the family tradition of academic disasters. Here also the relationship of the father and son is portrayed vividly and in a very friendly manner.

Shah Rukh’s flirtation with the heroine and her friends and his funny demeanour are much in true with the \textit{Krishna} construct of masculinity. In a way, many of his antics has the Raj Kapoor stamp of influence. Shah Rukh with blessings and best wishes from his father sets for India to get the ladylove of his love. The contrast father figure is that of the father of the heroine who in a way has a typical feudal patriarchal portrayal. Shah Rukh also refuses to escape with his ladylove without the approval and blessings of his father-in-law. In a way, the masculinity construct is traditional and living up the family tradition. At the same time, he is manipulative winning the love and faith of everyone in the household. In a significant
dialogue from the film, Shah Rukh points out that he came to win hearts and not to break it.

Another interesting twist is when he uses a dupatta to hide his face and dance in the marriage celebrations. Moreover his super efficiency in the household chores in the time of marriage preparations and his enduring nature with everyone especially the female folk of the household points to an androgynous persona of the masculinity of the construct. Significantly, when 'the girl meets the boy', it is at the insistence and approval of the girl's father. The masculinity portrayal has shades of the Krishna model construct with all the tantrums and shrewdity.

The film begins in London. Narrative of Baldev Singh. In a way it is a self-narrative. He is a non-resident Indian. But he still cannot identify with this alien land. He can identify with the pigeons who flock to a place where they can find food grains and then they fly off. Can he also fly off like the pigeons? In a way the masculinity construct has the element of homelessness and rootlessness. The lament and the pathos of this pain is evident to the viewer through his commentary. Self-contradiction, self-doubt and inner-confusion form the defining feature of this masculinity construct.

The first scene nostalgically travels to Punjab with the folk song and the call of the native land to come back. The name casting of the film continues. But this music is intercepted by the sound of Church bells. Baldeo reaches his shop. The routine phone call from his Lajjo enquiring whether he reached safely or not comes. The young daughter, Chutki comments and remarks on this habit of hers. In a way, even at such a tender age, she philosophises everything following her teacher.

Mom calls for Simran. Mom tries to read her private diary. When Simran tries to emphasise her privacy, she retorts by pointing out that after a while, teenage daughter becomes a friend. On promise, she reads out about her dream man who came in her thoughts. She has a belief that she is going to meet him. The first glimpses of the hero appears. He is the winner in the game of soccer and rugby and elating in an animal roar of ecstasy. She seems devoted and obsessed. In a game of joy-ride type racing car, he is again a winner. He is almost defeating an aeroplane
when it is taking off. He jumps in a swimming pool showing off his torso in full view. In a game of pool, he is again the winner scoring full points. He rides a bike and gives lift to a beautiful lady. He plays basket ball and scores. She wants the moon from him. All these are pointers to the winner in the masculinity construct towering over everyone and everything being invincible.

Raj is in the pool. And suddenly remembers that he is late for his graduation day ceremony. He says to himself that he was late last night due to party and that is why he became late. He gets into a luxury car and drives off. In the venue, friend points out that he is even today late for the graduation day. Announcement that in the history of the university, for the first time, there is a failure — and he is Raj. His father celebrates and hails his failure as he has a rich lineage of failures in the family but Raj is unique as he has succeeded to fail in London. They hug each other and have a symbolic exchange with him in terms of a short mindless lullaby which they share with each other. His father narrates his story of being a millionaire today coming from India. He offers his son to join office tomorrow. But Raj wants to go for a long vacation to Europe. His pop first kicks out the idea because of cost. But father gets tired trying to run after Raj. Raj agrees to his father. But now his father wants him to go for the tour. He says that he has already lived youthful days. But his father says now is the time for reliving his own youth as well as he never had a chance to enjoy his own youth as he was too busy with work and business at that time. Son kisses his pop’s head: Pop, you are the best. Father replies you are also ok. The relation of the father and son is very special. The bond seems to be like two buddies but with lots of love and respect. In a way, the relation seems to be like mother and son. This relation is very unique in this movie and especially in terms of the masculinity construct.

Meanwhile, in Simran’s house, letter from his father’s friend arrive from Punjab. She reads out the letter which speaks of Kuljit who has done his graduation and is helping his father in business. He now wants both of them to get married. Simran’s father is elated that she is shy to read this out and boasts of her cultured traditional upbringing. But Simran’s mother wants him to get Simran’s opinion as well. But father assures her that Simran will be very happy. Her mother is a bit anxious and worried but cannot express in front of her father. The patriarchal
supremacy is established and there is no voice of women in the family. Mother goes to Simran and says that she can definitely dream but cannot keep conditions on those being fulfilled. Simran laments that she does not even have the right to dream of her ideal man in life. This point is significant that even a woman’s right to dream is seemingly being subjected to dictates of the male head of the family.

Both Simran and Raj in their respective circle of friends want to go out for Europe tour. They just pass by each other in one shot without obviously recognising each other.

Simran’s mom hears her plan patiently and then jokes about it pointing out that it is impossible to convince her father. Her mom also thinks that Simran should not go alone but she tries to convince her. Mom declares that all depends on her father’s permission.

Meanwhile Baldev Singh is about to close his shop when Raj comes to pick up beer from his shop in a frivolous manner and manage to fool him by emotionally blackmailing him about their shared Indian origin. Baldev gets enraged and his strict, stern masculinity construct goes to the extent of even trying to hit Raj with his umbrella. Baldev abuses Raj of being a cheat and a shame to India. But Raj does manage to pick up the crate of beer.

In Simran’s home, both the sisters are enjoying in the form of dancing with loud Western music. Mom also dances with the music in the kitchen. When the father knocks, Simran changes the tape to some old Hindi film song and both the sisters pose to be immersed in studies. Father narrates the store incident with rage and says to Lajjo that she should thank God that their daughter will not be handed over to some English-speaking non-resident Indian who do not belong anywhere. In this stormy mood of father, Simran obviously cannot speak. The dread of the strong masculinity construct is put forth.

In the morning, Simran is doing puja and offering prayers. Father and daughter have a lovely morning interaction where she manages to convince her father about her proposed Europe tour. Her earnest request is that she wants to borrow a
month from her own life before her impending marriage which she has agreed without any qualms. He agrees.

Both Simran and Raj are individually late in reaching station and Raj manages to extend his hand to pick up Simran at the last moment before the train leaves. Raj jokes and disturbs and irritates Simran in a flirting mood. Accidentally, her suitcase opens and she closes it quickly. Raj finds out a bra and hands over to her. He is on a flirting mood and she gets irritated being on a projected serious note by reading a book but that in an upside down fashion. Both are wearing Western clothes. After some time, one of Simran's friends come and Raj starts to flirt with her also who enjoys this attention from him unlike Simran. He announces “I hate girls”. Now Raj goes to his friends and falsely starts boasting about his chance meeting with Simran. Simran is narrating her version of the story of the meeting to her friends. Both have their own stories. And the viewers feel like having their own opinions about this incident.

All of them go to the same boring party. Raj again starts flirting with one of Simran's friends. Simran takes the game to a new height by announcing Raj's name for playing piano when Raj tries to give a seducing angle to his flirt act. In a way she thinks that she got the better of Raj who surprises by singing and dancing and managing to annoy Simran in the process. He lifts her and forces her to dance with him and in the end just makes her fall hard on the dancing floor.

Next day Simran’s friends are humming the same song when both the groups again meet where Raj asks for forgiveness from her for last night incident by offering a rose. But again he jokes and escapes.

Both again meet in a gift shop and he starts to irritate her. In the process, they miss their train. She starts crying. He tries to make her feel well. He goes on assuring her. They get to know that the next train is in the evening. He tries to convince her that a girl like her needs a guy like him. She is adamant that she does not need a guy like him. In the process, he tears off a portion of her dress which upsets and enrages her.
Simran is heckled by foreign police as her passport went off with the train. Raj arrives just in time to be street-smart to manage to convince that they are married and save the day. But after that she tries to abuse him. But now Raj shouts out at her. Raj comes in a hired car and waits for her to come in. She gets in after initial reluctance and disgust. But later she says sorry. The catch line of the movie comes—in big countries like these, small trivial things do happen. The ice in their relationship seems to be slowly breaking down. She asks why he continuously call her “Senorita”. He claims that his first girlfriend was from Spain. She did not like Indians. He again starts flirting slowly but in third person. The moment he claims and reassures her that now nothing can go wrong, the car breaks down. He proposes how about walking. Now she starts narrating about her life and family. He manages to convince a household to allow them to stay overnight there. But she gets enraged by the idea of sharing the same room at night. She leaves in haste and goes to the adjoining stable and is in the haystack. He comes and mimicries in a feminine tone much in a “queeny fashion”. It is very cold at night. He again reiterates: “I hate girls”. He brings and offers food which she refuses. He lights a fire. Again he offers food to her. And says sorry to her. He says that she should not worry and now it is his responsibility and now nothing can go wrong. Just then it starts snowing. This stops the fire as well. He brings liquor to stay warm. She abuses saying he should feel ashamed to drink before girls. He offers her as well. He sleeps off but wakes up hearing Simran’s voice who sings in a drunk state.

Next morning, she wakes up finding herself in changed outfit. He greets her with tea. She asks how she came to be there. He jokingly says that last night all those happened which should not have happened. She feels tensed and nervous. She starts crying. He goes on joking by showing off lipstick marks on his body. Now he swears that nothing happened. He is serious to assure her that he may seem frivolous but he is not that narrow-minded. He knows what virginity means for an Indian girl. She holds him tight and requests him never to joke on these issues. In a way, she melts. The caring but joking force of masculinity gets represented.

Both are ready in the bus stand. He says that if she is hungry, she can have something and starts having and munching something all alone. She hears a church bell and excitedly wants to visit. He makes fun even inside. His frivolity continues.
She starts praying. He observes her minutely. He asks her what she asks from God. She says it never should be shared with anyone else. Once he hears that whatever one asks with clean, clear, sinless heart, the person gets in return. This makes him pray for her that whatever she has asked, God should grant her that.

Raj offers Simran tea. She asks when was the last time that he was serious. He says that he will be when he will be in love. She is surprised to know that a guy like him has never been in love. He says that there have been many affairs but nothing of the heart. She says what kind of girl he is looking for. He says someone who can fulfill his heart's desires after he gets to meet her. He romanticises about her choice but she informs that her marriage has been fixed in India. He congratulates her and remarks that the prospective groom must be tall, dark and handsome. But she concedes that she has not seen him so far. Raj remarks how she can spend the rest of her life with someone whom she does not even know. She reasons how things are usually in arranged marriages in India. The train is coming.

They are about to end their trip. He goes out to play banjo and she comes to him. He says: “I love you”. She gets perplexed and without words. He laughs by saying that is a joke. She gets exasperated with this sick joke and remarks that all guys are just the same. But he retorts back by pointing out that she is going to spend her life-time with an unknown person. Then he quizzes her by asking what she will do if she falls in love with someone in this trip. The train is about to start and she hurries back. He says at heart if she turns back, she is in love with him. She does turn back.

They reach London. She thanks him for everything. And before leaving she offers the hand of friendship. She wants his address so that she can invite him for her marriage. He says that he will not come. The world seems to move slowly by her side. She seems to be in love. She always feels engulfed by Raj's midas presence all over all the time.

Simran speaks with her mom that her dream now has a face of Raj. But her father overhears her and is enraged. He decides to leave for India overnight. Simran
breaks down. Her mom tries to stop her. But father says that she has to learn to stop these tears all by herself. The patriarchal presence is evident.

Meanwhile Raj and pop are having been together. Father gets to know that the lady love of Raj is Simran after initial hesitance from Raj. Father also gets to know about the impending marriage proposal of Simran. Father encourages Raj that his socialisation is not meant to play musical instruments and orders him to bring his bride home. Raj is enthused.

Next day, Raj visits Simran’s house and gets to know that they had already left for India. But Raj finds that Simran has symbolically kept the cowbell which they had bought together in the trip as a mark of her feelings for him.

The setting changes to Punjab. Simran’s family are coming back by train. They are received in home with tears of joy by Baldev’s mother. The home-coming is a celebration. Kuljeet, the proposed groom has gone out for hunting. He arrives with rifle to meet Simran. Baldev complements Kuljeet as the proud symbol of Punjabi youth. The masculinity construct of Kuljit is being assigned attributes of bravado as well as respect to patriarchal authority by the gesture of touching feet. Simran is quiet and only hears the tune which Raj used to play. Simran’s mom tries to tell her that when she was young, she used to be told that men and women are equal in their rights and disposition. But as she grew up, she realised that is not so. Her studies were stopped. She always had to sacrifice her life being wife, sister, daughter. But when Simran was born, she had vowed that whatever happened to her shall not be repeated for her daughter. She would not sacrifice her life at any stage. But she forgot that being a woman means that she does not even have the right to decide on anything. Women are born to be sacrificed for men. Men never sacrifice for women. Mom says that she has come today to beg to her daughter of her happiness in life and forget him. Father is not going to understand her tears. Simran agrees to her. She says that she is so innocent that she does not even know whether he loves her or not. On the other hand, her father always thought of her happiness in life. “Can’t I sacrifice so little for him?” Both mother and daughter cry. This particular scene along with the dialogues are self-evident of the power and supremacy of the patriarchal system. In a way the power of patriarchy is absolute and all pervasive.
Celebrations start in the household. Groom's friends praise the beauty of his bride. Meanwhile Chutki asserts her individuality and maturity in front of them. This makes Kuljeet comment that let the marriage be over and then he will be supremely dominating. The dominant masculinity construct is highlighted. Engagement and marriage dates are announced. Sweets are offered. Simran hears that tune once again. Her grandma senses something and clarifies with his son who assures her. But he orders his wife sternly that she should make Simran understand the reality and act accordingly. Patriarchal authority again rules supreme.

Simran gets to hear that same tune even at night and it just does no stop. She goes out in the field to find that cowbell on a cow's neck. The immortal song announcing Raj's arrival to take back his bride back to his father. They meet and hug each other. She tells him to take her away from home. They have to escape. But Raj says that he is there not to elope with her. Though he grew up in England at heart he remains very much an Indian. So he has come to make her his bride only when her father is going to approve of this match with blessings. He asks if she loves him. So since she has faith on him, from today onwards both would be strangers and she should depend and rely on him to manage the show. He needs her support and strength. He has come here for her. He will be here till she will be his. Here is a masculinity who is very sure and firm about his conviction. He is ready to take up any challenge for his love. But he is also traditionally inclined wanting approval and blessings of elders. Is he also succumbing to the supremacy of patriarchal domination? Perhaps. In a way he works within the system to mediate and modify. And he is also very strategic in his execution as one finds out in the course of the film.

Kuljeet is on a hunting spree but falls in the trap of Raj. Raj poses as if he saved him from this scenario befriend him in the process. Kuljeet insists on taking him home when he gets a hint that stinkingly rich NRI Raj wants to invest in business in India. So along with the sense of gratefulness for saving his life, he also gets tempted with the false business proposition which Raj puts forth. Interestingly the hyper-masculinity projection of Kuljeet is commented upon by this incident. Raj is welcomed warmly in Kuljeet's home out of gratefulness. Preeti, Kuljeet's sister is enamoured by Raj from the very first sight.
Raj accompanies Kuljeet and family to Baldev’s house for the celebrations. Baldev seems to recollect that beer incident involving Raj. Kuljeet gets Raj introduced to Simran. Raj manages to impress and win over Simran’s sister from the word go. Simran is very happy. Raj slowly starts to get involved in household work as part of the celebrations. Simran’s grandma observes the changing mood of Simran for the better. Raj is a bit nervous with the response of Simran’s father.

Early morning, Raj is in the field to feed the pigeons. Simran’s father also joins in. Raj comes back to Kuljeet’s house and poses to be sick so as to avoid to go to the hunting spree with him.

Raj reaches Simran’s house and helps out in all kinds of household chores. Raj slowly wins over Simran’s mother. Marriage celebrations begin. Raj is requested to sing by grandma. On his reluctance, he is told that he is shying like a girl. Simran requests and he sings. Both meet for a brief time separately. Raj helps Simran’s father in the game of chess impressing him finally. Intelligence and sharp mind form the two features of the masculinity construct of Raj.

Raj and Simran meet at night in the roof. He reassures her. She kisses him in the cheeks. Chutki gets to understand and approves of Raj to Simran.

Next day, the engagement celebrations begin. Simran manages to strategically avoid the ring wearing from Kuljeet. The celebrations in the form of music and dance begin. Raj and Simran join in. In the end of the dance, Raj dances with the dupatta and finally hides his face when Simran’s father arrives. But Raj is surprised when Baldev starts singing with red handkerchiefs in his hands. All join in the dance. The defining feature of both the dances seem to point to the masculinity constructs who wish to break free at times and just be happy without bothering about the traditional imagery.

Early morning as usual both Raj and Baldev are in the field to feed pigeons. Baldev reaches early. Raj tries to follow him in the way of feeding pigeons. Raj complements Baldev on the song dance routine. But again fails to break the ice.
In Kuljeet’s house, Raj is offered to be the match with Preeti. Raj says they have to speak with his father. He decides to call his father to India. Pop arrives. Father manages the show pretty well. Father and son have a dialogue where father says that he was missing him.

Raj rushes to meet Simran. She wants to celebrate *Karwa Chauth* with him tomorrow. The way Raj speaks many a time is basically a mimicry in an effeminate fashion.

Both Raj and Simran’s fathers meet each other. Raj introduces Simran to his father who instantly approves of her. Meanwhile Raj’s father bumps into Simran’s unmarried aunt and in the process, flowers get scattered from the thali which he helps to pick one by one. He is shy too. In a way, the soft sensual, sensitive, romantic dimension is added to the masculinity construct of Raj’s father. In a way both exchange romantic notes.

*Karwa Chauth* celebrations begin with the wait for the moon to appear. Strategically Simran faints and manages to get water from the hands of Raj. Raj arrives to feed Simran who waits for him. Simran’s mom sees them together and approves of the match. She packs her ornaments and directs both of them to elope. But Raj says philosophically that its easy to go by wrong path but at the end you get defeated. But if one goes in the right path, in the end he wins. He decides not to escape. He says that Simran’s father also does not know him. Now Simran is his responsibility. The last statement is significant. Why does women have to be responsibility of some male authority be it father or husband/lover? She cannot be the master of her universe. Approval from patriarchal authority seems so very crucial factor.

Kuljit and Raj’s father go out for hunting expedition. Raj’s father tries to disapprove of the match of Kuljeet and Simran and offers him to accompany him to London to enjoy different kinds of girls. Kuljeet says once the marriage gets over, he can always visit London and enjoy.

Raj and Simran’s father meet in the morning in the field. Suddenly, one pigeon is shot by Kuljeet and Raj takes care of the wounded pigeon by applying the
soil of India as a healer. This gesture of love and care of Raj makes Baldev to finally forgive Raj for his mistake.

Meanwhile, Simran’s grandma is not well and wants to see Simran married off quickly.

This sudden development makes Raj confused of his next move. The celebrations are slated just a day away. What to do? Father again proposes the option of elope. But from heart some how Raj does not approve of this proposal.

Raj and Simran meet without words. But they silently communicate with each other. She has to believe in his abilities. She again reassures him and there is mutual encouragement. She also cries.

In the meantime, a photo of Raj and Simran slips off and gets in Baldev’s hands. Raj is about to leave when he faces Baldev with the photograph. Raj is about to speak when he gets a slap from Baldev who says that he did not make a mistake in recognising him. He has cheated all the family members and Baldev slaps Raj continuously. Simran runs to protect Raj. Simran says that she had always said that they should escape. But Raj counters by pointing out that one flees only from those who are not of one’s own. But where can they go from the elders? Parents bring up their children who do not have the right to pain them for their own happiness. In a way, he says that he does not deserve her. He cries. How could he think of marrying her? Love is not everything. He hands over Simran to her father. He did not come to break anyone’s heart rather to connect and win everyone’s heart. He must be lacking something which failed to impress Baldev. Raj asks for forgiveness. He bids farewell to everyone. Kuljeet feels like hitting him but is stopped. He asks for forgiveness from Preeti. He leaves with a glance to Simran whose father tears off that photograph. There are two different ways of seeing and commenting on this scene. On one hand, the act of renunciation of Raj for the happiness and wishes of the father of his lady love. The other side is that he is bowing and seeking approval of the patriarchal authority. It seems the implicit agenda happens to be the control and transfer of woman from father to lover or husband in the capacity of daughter to girlfriend or wife.
Raj’s father is waiting in the station. Raj arrives. He somehow believes that Simran’s father is going to bring Simran to the station. Meanwhile Kuljeet comes with his gang to teach Raj a lesson. Raj’s father goes to Simran’s father and pleads for Raj. Simran’s father tries to abuse, insult and belittle Raj. Raj’s father for the first time raises his voice to stop him. He says that his son is his pride. In the station, Raj gets severely beaten up by Kuljeet’s friends but does not hit back. Raj’s father arrives and tries to stop. When his father also gets beaten up, Raj picks up the rifle and shoots and shoots and aims it at Kuljeet. Raj aims his rifle at Kuljeet’s forehead. News spreads at both the households of Simran and Kuljeet. Everyone rushes to station. Simran’s mom comes and also takes her to the station. The fighting continues. Raj beats up everybody. Simran’s father stops Raj from hitting Kuljeet. Raj is about to hit Simran’s father but controls himself. Raj’s father takes Raj away. The train is arriving. Simran arrives. Raj’s father gets up in the train. Raj is still in the station. The train is about to leave. Simran tries to run but is prevented by her father. Simran requests him vehemently to let her go. Raj cries. Train starts moving with Raj at the gate. Suddenly Simran’s father encourages Simran to run and go with Raj because no one can love her more. Simran starts running to catch Raj’s hand from the speeding train. She manages to hold on to his hands. Preeti is also happy and Simran flashes sign of victory. They meet and unite and Raj’s father sings. The ending line: come – fall in love.

The last part of the film points to the many layers of construc. The element of self-belief and sense of conviction and resc. masculinity construct. He never shows disrespect to elders. by the normative dictats. But at heart he believes that if he nothing can stop him from getting his true love. But another accepting the patriarchal authority though his father in many imagery. Raj’s saying sorry to Preeti before leaving also is empathy as a defining feature of this construct. Being in lov the extent of pain and suffering which Preeti will go throug real Raj. At the station, initially when Raj is attacked, he doe signifies a kind of control and restraint in the masculinity when his father is hit that he fights back violently and valiant
himself as the epitome of propriety. And this imagery is carried forward till the end of the film.

Raj is the main male protagonist in this film. In a way, the disposition is very colourful and frivolous, flirtatious and happy-go-lucky but firm inside with an amazing self-confidence which is addictive and infectious. In a way, if I have to colour the masculinity construct of Raj, I would use the VIBGYOR colour, that is, the colours of the rainbow. I can term him as an all-rounder in the masculinity dimension. Raj’s mother is not alive. But his relation with his father, that is, his pops is very special and unique. In a rare case of sensitivity parlance, Raj’s father combines the elements of both mothering and fathering. Their reciprocal sense of love, care, compassion, understanding makes it unique in terms of the analysis of masculinity construction. The androgynous nature of Raj is also evident throughout the film which again place him in the league of interesting masculinity constructs of popular Hindi cinema. The way he lends his hands everywhere even in trivial household chores and wins over everyone with the sure infectious and addictive weapon of love, care and tenderness. His relation with his girlfriend is initially frivolous and full of flirtations. With an ever-smiling face who spreads goodwill everywhere he passes but iron resolve inside is a sure winner. In a way, it seems that Raj spreads sunshine everywhere he is there. The sunshine nature of the masculinity construct is the signature tune of the persona of Raj as far as this film is concerned.

Another interesting point to note as far as the question of masculinity constructs of different male characters in this film is concerned, is about the divergent nature of the father figure as depicted by fathers of Raj and Simran. Raj lovingly calls his father ‘Pops’ while Simran refers to her father as ‘Babuji’. Though just a name to refer to as far as tradition and custom and social and cultural milieu is concerned, but to me as a sociologist and social psychologist perhaps this has far greater meaning and importance. It denotes the nature of the relation with the father which widely differs in the households of Raj and Simran. Raj’s father brings him to gallery of his forefathers while celebrating Raj’s failure in the graduation tests as a continuation of family tradition in this regard. In a way, he reminds Raj of his lineage but perhaps never tries to impose the burden of patriarchy on him. Rather he is a friend to him at all times – understanding, caring, loving, sharing, empathetic, may be sometimes
overboard in his expressions. In a way, at times, both cry freely without bothering to follow the dictat 'boys don't cry'. Many a time, the defining feature of Raj’s father is his mothering instinct which mostly dominates and makes the construct unique as far as the popular Hindi film genre is concerned. May be he is trying to complement the absence of a mother in Raj’s life. His continuing support in all the efforts of Raj and sometimes his desperation and boldness make him a character to reckon with. I tend to wonder whether he never thought about extending his love interest towards Simran’s unwed aunt. May be he was too engaged and involved about his son’s life and future and love life that in a way made him to sacrifice his feelings and call of the heart. On the other hand, Simran’s father is a complete contrast to Raj’s father in terms of his disposition as a strict, tradition-bound but loving patriarch. He is good and loving to his wife and daughters as long as his supremacy and dominance is accepted as the norm. Reigning patriarchal disposition is his signature tune as far as his masculinity construct is concerned. But his softness comes alive when he interacts with pigeons. May be there is a sense of identification with them which makes him particularly caring about them. Can one deduce his inherent peace-loving nature from this? But one thing is certain, this character has an inherent feel of homelessness and rootlessness and hankering and longing for his motherland. This is evident and depicted especially in the first half of the film. His love for his old friend and commitment to his given words are noteworthy. His instant change of attitude hearing Raj’s false claim of being sick as well as his emotional blackmailing pointing to the subtle patriotic fervour within him points to the fragile patriarchal construct. And quite instantly when he realises that he has been successfully cheated by Raj, his reaction is violent by trying to hit out with whatever possible (umbrella in this case). In a way, he never forgets Raj and the incident which makes things more difficult and complicated eventually for Raj. One can perhaps also comment that he is simple and for him, the world and the reality are just in black and white and never in shades of grey. His adamant nature is a defining characteristic. But it is he who finally encourages and provokes and forces Simran to run after and be with Raj in that speeding running train when he again instantly judges that no one can love Simran more than Raj. In a way, there is a duality and vulnerability which manifests in his apparent strict patriarchal disposition. I wish to point out that this is perhaps true of
the patriarchal domain as a whole. In a way, many times, it crumbles by its own 
weight and pressure. Fragility is perhaps inherent in partriarchy.

It is important to note that the anti-hero ruled Hindi cinema for years, with his 
justifiable anger and final, predictable reformation. But it was Shah Rukh Khan, who 
effected a final, absolute repudiation of the conventional hero with his twin triumphs 
as the evil force in *Bazigar* (1993) and *Darr* (1993). These films represented the 
boldest strokes of revisionism seen in popular Hindi films for a long time. Laced with 
satisfying Freudisms (*Bazigar*’s Psycho-like character has a distinct mother fixation 
while *Darr* showed Shah Rukh confabulating with a mother – later revealed to be 
dead), they marked the transformation of a murdered into a popular hero and 
redefined the motivations and the morality behind violence. Shah Rukh gave visceral 
performances that provoked the viewers to simultaneous fascination and revulsion. 
Played on the dangerous edge of fanaticism and characterised by his vigour and 
elastic gestures, these roles made Shah Rukh the biggest male star of the 90s.

To segue from these disturbed and disturbing characters to the button-cute, 
purely romantic Raj of the *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, was a stretch for any actor 
but Shah Rukh showed an extraordinary talent for expressing extreme sensitivity 
without making it seem like an indulgence. It is said that the self-amplification comes 
with Shah Rukh’s personality. But instead of seeming abrasive, it usually evokes an 
indulgent response.

[VII]

Overview

These films have acted like texts and as a student of sociology, I am engaged 
in an interpretative narration and analysis of these texts. The goal is to see how these 
films have developed their narratives, hidden meanings and symbolic significance. 
Essentially the challenge confronting me is to see the representations of masculinity in 
these films. Of course, the six films speak of diverse stories and far from being one 
story of masculinity, there are multiple images of masculinities. But what is most 
significant is that even each story of masculinity is immensely complicated having 
multiple layers. It could be understood better if we take each of the actors along with 
their portrayals in each of these six films individually:
Raj Kapoor As Dialectic Raju In Shree 420

In *Shree 420*, the Mumbai city is depicted as a site of hyper modernity, impersonality, instrumentality and ruthless competitiveness. In a way, Mumbai city acquires a masculine character which tests and grinds the innocence, simplicity, purity of Raju. Raj Kapoor's portrayal depicts a simple, young, village man coming to terms with the "new world" with associated ambiguities, inner-tension, stress and anxiety. There is an element of alienation as well. His masculinity construct is never equated with the aggressive killer instinct. The characterisation of Raju has an inherent ambiguity and inner-conflict who seeks to nurture the space of rurality and simplicity in his heart. Love and sexuality come to him through two women - Vidya who symbolises purity and Maya identified with wild passion. In a way, the dialectics of these two forces of fatal attraction form the basis of the masculinity construct of Raju.

An outsider, a man without roots living on the streets by his wits, Raju, leads this life only because fate has been unkind to him. He also has the unquestioned support of the woman he loves. Raju the tramp was an outsider with whom audiences all over India identified: The symbol of the depressed in India's cities – in particular, during the post-partition era of this film.

In the opening sequence, Raju, having failed to get a lift to Bombay, fakes a faint and is picked up by Seth who is Sonachand Dharmanand. The Seth is introduced by his big car, the number of which reads '840' (double of 420). The Seth claims that service to the poor is his aim in life and advises Raju never to lie or cheat. He also calls Raju a 420 and leaves him on the road because he does not agree with his views and says that truth can only support a life of poverty. As the car moves on, we once again see its license plate number – 840. Right in the opening sequence, the director has hinted that if Raju is a '420' then the Seth is a bigger villain. The road sign to Bombay also reads 420 miles.

The migrant, whether from the village or from across the Pakistan border, has always viewed the big city as full of the promise of wealth and adventure as well as of dark secrets arousing deep fears and anxieties. The expectations and hopes are expressed through the song *Mera Joota Hai Japani* (My Shoes Are From Japan),
which talks of stepping out with confidence and determination to conquer life and find one’s destiny. The song was a rage in India as indeed in Russia, Iran, Turkey, and the Middle East, and was translated into Fijian; it was for quite some time at the top of the Fiji Islands hit parade. Complementing the Chaplinesque enactment of this song was the music of Shankar and Jaikishan, who struck the right chord at the right moment. The three of them – the composers and the actor – had to work in close unison to give vitality to the tramp image of Raju. The music accentuated the Chaplinesque walk, the Chaplinesque jug, the quaint gestures, and the sad-comic expressions of the Indianized Chaplin.

The darker side of the city is introduced through conversations with the beggar, the first person that Raju encounters in Bombay. (The rest of the people that he encounters are depicted as rushing around indifferent to his efforts while trying to talk to them). The beggar in an ironic tone says: “This is Bombay, a barren world of stone-hearted people who worship only money.” He also tells Raju, “There is no work for a literate, hardworking, honest man. Here you cannot live through truth whereas there are 420 ways of living dishonestly.” He later tells Raju, “Here people laugh when others fall but lose their sense of humour when they fall themselves”.

All of these messages are embedded in Chaplinesque skits, for example, when Raju tries to talk to the hurrying public, pulls-out his degree and medal, innocent of their worthlessness in the city; and, having shared a banana with a child, throws the peel over his shoulder. People slip and fall on it one after the other until finally Raju himself falls. In each case everybody except the victim laughs. The beggar’s words are prophecies of the action to follow.

Raju gets his bananas free from the “Kelewali” who is innocent of business acumen and says, “If you do not pay me I will think my son ate them”. She not only adopts him but is foster mother to all the poor pavement-dwellers. Because she befriends Raju, the pavement dwellers apologize for pushing him around. “We ar all brothers, Gangabai is our mother,” they say.

Raj Kapoor’s satirical humour is most obvious in the scenes with the pavement dwellers. They live right under the huge palace of Seth Sonachand and
charge special rates for sleeping there because when the wind blows in the right direction you get a whiff of the Seth’s dinner, they say. The statement is supported with a shot of the Seth at an overladen table.

On learning that his name is Raju, one of the pavement dwellers calls out, “Ganga mother, did I not say some day the Raj (Kingdom) of the poor will come. He has come”. Raju’s identification with the pavement-dwellers and the fulfillment of their dreams is thus established.

The conflict between the rich and poor is played up through the picturization of the dance number, Dil Ka Haal Sune Dilwall. The song talks of the poor, being sons of the same mother, are brought up in hunger. It talks of being unfairly discriminated against by the police. It says we are not free and prosperous yet. Our destiny is right in front of us but the rich are tripping us before we can reach it. While showing the pavement-dwellers dancing to these lines, the director intercuts to shots of the Seth being disturbed by their din and calling the police, who come in the end and disrupt the singing and dancing.

Each of the characters represent a combination of individuals, universal types, and personifications of abstractions. Maya represents illusion, and Vidya, learning, awareness and knowledge. The hero is like ordinary man torn between the two. The conflict is depicted through contrasting the characters of the two women against Raju’s ambition and integrity. As Punita Bhatt points out, Raj Kapoor reinforces the allegorical content of his films with symbols from Indian and Western mythology as well as from literature and religious dramas. In the film, as he is singing his way to Bombay, Raju encounters a snake. The snake, a symbol of evil, reappears on Diwali night, when Vidya discovers the real reason for Raju’s sudden prosperity and imagines a huge snake uncoiling from the midst of the sari that Raju has given her. Also, like Adam, Raju is seduced by evil only because he fails to heed his own good sense; his ambitions betray him.

The man who came to Bombay sporting a medal for integrity, pawns it and heads for the nearest sidewalk cardsharks. He meets Vidya at the pawnshop. She is selling her bangles to support her school. She comments, “When honour is sold what
have you left in life?” and spends the rest of the film trying to return Raju’s honour or integrity by making him aware of its worth. In a prophetic line to the pawnbroker, Raju says, “I had thought I’d sell my honour and he rid of it for life but I think now I will pawn it for the time being.” The medal reappears twice in the film. Later when Raju tries to buy it back, Vidya scoffs at him saying, “You cannot buy your honour.” Right at the end, when Raju is being enticed by Maya to run away with the poor people’s money, Vidya comes in and returns the medal to him, “I have come to return your honour,” she says.

Raju says that his ambition in life is to become someone of consequence in society. He defines that position in terms of wealth and the power and prestige that wealth brings. Here, he is giving expression to a sentiment common enough in society, and he hopes that the life in the city to which he is being initiated will help him to realize his ambitions. The conflict of illusion and reality is important in the film and is also portrayed through the metaphor of masks.

Raju tells Vidya that he wears the mask of an entertainer to conceal his nerve endings, his pain and disappointments. Raj Kapoor signals this conflict very clearly when he places the screen credits of Shri 420 against the classic symbols of Greek drama – the double mask of tragedy and comedy. The symbol is repeated on the school teacher’s blackboard after Raju has explained his tramp image to Vidya.

Maya transforms the poor laundry employee into instant royalty with a tuxedo and a new name. Raju does not miss the irony of the situation. Passing his hand over his face, he says gamely, “All right, I’ll replace one false mask with another.” To the philosopher in Raju, life is but a series of false identities in a false world; this fact serves only to alienate man from the best within himself.

What seems to be is not what is. Raju is not the “Awaara badmash” (vagabond) he first appears to Vidya. “My outward appearance misled you,” he tells her. In this world, luxury and ostentatiousness are held more precious than human emotions. “Man wears the clothes, the clothes do not wear the man,” says Raju. In a charming picturisation of this sentiment, Raju stands covering behind a dress suit in the laundry window while Vidya looks on, and then steps out to meet her in his tramp
suit. "You were fooled by clothes again," he says. "The man is the same, the clothes are different."

Halfway through the film, the tramp clothes are replaced by a tuxedo. A man who feared the police, who was awkward, and who was an innocent easy victim for the street cardsharks, becomes a perfect cardshark with business acumen and social adaptability, which enabled him to move with the rich and ultimately to outsmart the corrupt Seth Sonachand Dharmanand. There is no explanation why Indian audiences should accept this transformation so naturally except that Raju was introduced as an educated clown and that the theme of reality vs. illusion is explored at several levels in the film and is a concept well engrained in the Indian consciousness.

Maya is introduced as shrewd, calculating, and seductive, wearing a clinging off-the-shoulder dress and smoking a cigarette in a long cigarette holder. She immediately recognizes Raju's potential as a cardshark and is instrumental in changing his Charlie mask by putting him in a tuxedo. "Take off your clothes," she says, and there is a shot of Vidya, before Raju transforms himself into the Prince of Piplinagar and is introduced to high stakes poker. Trumpets announce the change and the door opens to the new world with cabaret music. Large wads of money change hands and finally Raju outsmarts the Seth at the game. Money is all over the bed as Maya counts it greedily and then sends Raju off with just Rs 10 as his share. Raju refuses to accept it. The Seth is shrewder than Maya. He recognized Raju's worth, visits him in the laundry, and seduces him with a wad of money as an advance. Money is an important motif representing Maya's world.

Raju buys Vidya an expensive sari and takes her to the hotel to celebrate Diwali, which is traditionally the day for worshipping Laxmi, the goddess of wealth. Maya insults Vidya by hinting that the sari was borrowed from the laundry and throws Vidya's sari off her shoulder. This symbolism is carried through in the last sequence of the film, when the Seth strips the sari off Maya and calls her a two-penny dancing woman. As Vidya leaves the hotel, insulted, and Raju chases her, he is stopped by his card-playing friends the Seth, who says, "You do not need Vidya tonight, you need Maya"; and Maya, who dances and sings, "do not look back." Later, a drunk Raju with bundles of money in both hands tries to tempt Vidya to the new world. She,
however, will have none of it, calls it money won by trickery, fraud, and dishonesty, and says, “You have stooped ever so low for these pieces of paper” as Raju crawls on the floor picking up the money.

Vidya and Raju meet again at the pawnshop; Vidya has gone there to pawn her books, as she is desperate for money, while Raju is there to buy back his “honour.” After this meeting, his other self is awakened and in conversation with his mirror image he realises that he is not happy and goes looking for his dream of marriage and children at the pavement tea shop, where he finds Vidya. She tells him that he has sold her dreams of marriage and children for the glittry of money and a lifestyle that will lead him to prison. She does not want her children to be called the children of a cheat nor does she fancy being the wife of one. “Go buy your love at the same place where you sold your integrity,” she says.

In the final sequences, Maya advises Raju to do business on a grand scale and to start by cheating the Seth of his money. This, she says, is the way to outgrow being a ‘420’ and become respectable. The pavement-dwellers come to assert their faith in him by depositing money in his ‘Jantaghar’ (poor man’s housing) scheme. Their poverty throughout the film has been depicted against the Seth’s exploitation. Hearing their slogan of “Janta Ghar Zindabad” (Long live the poor man’s housing scheme), he says, “The people’s enthusiasm is scaring me,” but he continues to make plans to cheat them of their money. Vidya comes to return Raju’s medal of honour and urges him to make the right choices against the temptation, greed, and selfishness of Maya and the Seth.

The Seth is the Godfather who sets up innocents like Raju as a front for his operation, who never refuses money when it comes in, and who has no scruples about using the savings of the poor to fill his coffers or mixing stones in grain to make a profit. He lives ostentatiously right above the pavement dwellers and uses the police to bully the innocent. In fact, he exploits everybody who allows himself to be exploited. The only time he shows any signs of nervousness is when he sees the unity and enthusiasm of the people for their Janta Homes. And yet he claims to have the welfare of the poor at heart. In a parody on politicians (Seth-like people), a political message is put across through the Chaplinesque toothpaste-selling sequence.
In this sequence, the Seth is standing on a rostrum making a speech; facing him is Raju on a tin drum making his own speech. The Seth says, “You know my ideals of culture and duty, I wear everything Indian.” Raju says, “I dress in Japanese shoes, etc. but my heart is Indian.” The Seth says that more important than the issues of “bread” are the problems of the soul and peace of mind. Raju says, “There can be no peace of mind if you are hungry. Those who want to eat bread, come to me and those interested in swallowing air go there,” and adds, “Teeth are of prime importance for eating bread properly. If your teeth are not strong you cannot chew properly and indigestion follows. Weakness and illness set in; it weakens the generation and nation. It does not stop there – enemies can conquer us and subject us to slavery. If you want to maintain the freedom of ‘Bharat’ (India) and add to the vitality of the nation then better guard your teeth. Rub it with my newly-invented sun-moon powder.”

Raju, who has a Robin Hood-like value system, does not mind cheating the rich but objects to cheating the poverty-stricken. He finds himself trapped. “You cheated at cards, you signed all the bogus deeds for the Tibet Gold Company,” he is told. The Seth is a shrewd man who prevents the poor from realizing their destiny by setting different types of traps and temptations and at the same time exploits them ruthlessly. The Seth believes and tells Raju, “In this new world we should not harbour any prejudices separating the rich from the poor. They should be treated alike. “Raju believes that there is no sin in cheating the rich cheats. It is only Vidya who truly understands the meaning of dishonesty and honesty; she ultimately wins Raju back. Raju tells the Seth – who offers him Maya instead – that Vidya was right. In the final sequence Raju refers to the Seth and his friends as mad dogs. The scramble and chase for the bag of money is picturized as dogs fighting over a bone. The Seth and his friends expose each other as traitors with no moral codes except their greed for money. The Seth shoots Raju in order to protect his image of respectability but ultimately is exposed because Raju, thought dead, comes alive to expose him and also to fulfill his promise of homes for the people. He gives them the message of corporate strength. “Each of you has a billion together. Go to the government with it and impress upon it the need for a Peoples’ Colony.” Raju is
home safe, we know, when in the final sequence he is joined, on the road of life, by Vidya.

The film combines social commentary with romanticism as in the earlier films. The story, although it at times lacks credibility, is constructed in such a way as to engage the passions of mass audiences. An interesting feature of *Shri 420* is the way in which Raj Kapoor has Indianized Chaplinesque humour. Raju, obviously, is modelled on Charlie Chaplin's tramp; his dress, demeanor, body posture, walk, etc. bear testimony to this fact. However, at the same time, the director has sought to Indianize Chaplin's tramp.¹

Raj Kapoor achieved the kind of phenomenal popularity that he did largely because he succeeded in harmonizing diverse conflicting discourses: realism and fantasy, narrative and spectacle, social protest and the maintenance of the status quo, Western and Indian humour, tradition and modernity, and so on. Ultimately, this harmony of discourses led to both a widening of the range of experience of the audience and a sense of security on the part of this audience. In the final analysis, Raj Kapoor's cinema is a cinema of security – the kind of cinema that seeks to transcend, albeit momentarily, the sordid and unpleasant aspects of life and society and inculcate in the audience a sense of joy, comfort, and placidity. Raj Kapoor may not have been adhering very closely to the concept of *rasa* as enunciated by such theorists as Bharat Muni Abhinavagupta and Bhatta Lollata, but one cannot but agree that he seeks to generate the kind of transcendental delight that the classical Indian theorists saw as the aim of art. In examining the cinema of Raj Kapoor, I feel one needs to constantly refer to classical and folk traditions of art in India. This is because Kapoor's intertextuality is inextricably linked to those tradition. His structuring of narrative, his use of music, humour, and spectacle can best be understood in relation to various aspects of classical and folk art. But at the same time, he sought to combine the classical and folk traditions with a modern sensibility shaped by Western entertainment.

*Shammi Kapoor As Jubilant Sekhar In Junglee*

The striking thing about Shammi Kapoor's portrayal of Sekhar is his overt physicality and sexuality. In a way, the usage of body as an identity in itself is quite
noteworthy for an analysis in the gender studies parlance. Using a kind of raw sex appeal for the depiction of a character is significant in terms of masculinity construct. The latent wildness in the character of Sekhar gets erupted with the transformative power of love and passion. Love as a trigger to ignite the dormant self of Sekhar. In a way, the transformative dimension is perhaps the single most defining feature in the characterisation. Love for him becomes a turning point which makes him loving and caring.

One can remark that the character of Sekhar is on a journey of self-discovery. Perhaps he is in a train which passes through a long dark tunnel. The tunnel is so long that he almost sleeps while travelling. And suddenly when the train comes out of the tunnel, there is abundance of light and happiness. The mood changes drastically. In the first half of the story of the film, Sekhar is in the dark state of dryness, coldness, uno-expressiveness. And with the power and magic of love, Sekhar is enlightened with poetic sensibility and bliss. His loving, caring, tender, humane self wakes up in sharp contrast to his earlier dull, drab, inhuman state.

The mother-fixation dimension too is present in the persona of Sekhar. The mother, interestingly, unlike popular Hindi film medium and idiom, acts as the partriarchical head of the family, carrying out the duties of Sekhar's late father faithfully. The masculine power equation and dynamics in the persona of the mother imagery is significant. In the very ending or rather the climax of the film, we find a change of guard that is transformation in the persona of the mother.

*Rajesh Khanna As Sublime Kamal In Kati Patang*

The striking feature of the portrayal of Kamal by Rajesh Khanna is the soft, caring persona. In a way, he seems to be like fresh breeze which calms whoever he is interacting with. The tender spirit is in tandem with his perfect gentleman-disposition. He caring attitude is very protective too. Along with the soft masculinity which Kamal oozes, there is also the power of problem-solving capacity. For this, he does employ strategic moves which at times are cunning but lethal as far as the results they yield. In a way, Kamal is portrayed as the protector of femininity be it the chivalric act in
the beginning of the film where he fights to recover the belongings of Madhvi or his eventual decision to marry her, inspite of the social stigma attached with that alliance.

In a way, this film appears unique in the whole dealing of the story of Madhvi who first runs away from her marriage venue to her lover whom she then realises to be a fraud. Circumstances play havoc to land her as Poonam who is eventually jailed on the charge of murder but the tender knight, Kamal solves the mystery to save her from disgrace and ultimately coronates her to be his love and life partner. In a way, the power of love gives Kamal the courage to defy the so-called middle class sense of propriety in terms of his decision – first to fall in love and then eventually to marry his close friend’s widow. The colours of love especially red (which also happens to be the colour of sindoor symbolising the marital status as well) seems to brighten the white widowed self of femininity in the Holi scene in the film. It seems the weak femininity is being saved and restored to glory by the soft but protective masculinity of Kamal.

*Amitabh Bachchan As Inward-Looking Vijay In Deewaar*

Amitabh as Vijay represents seething anger in *Deewar*. But that intense, terrible anger is intercepted with tremendous inner turmoil of duty, responsibility, sense morality/immorality. Self dignity and respect are also the defining traits of masculinity construct of Vijay. He has the courage to deviate from the normative framework of the social system wherever his destiny forces on him. In a way he lives by his own rules in life. He is ever ready to protest against anything that he does not agree to do in his own value system. He questions the given notion of normalcy and tries to shape his own destiny. The power and conviction of his own beliefs stand out to be the watermarks of masculinity construct of Vijay.
The tremendous sense of responsibility of Vijay towards his younger brother, Ravi is another important feature of Vijay's masculinity construct. This sense of sibling responsibility defines Vijay's persona from the very childhood especially when they migrate to Mumbai, having been unable to bear the social ostracism concerning his father's alleged sell-out compromise formula with the factory management. There is a sense of sacrifice in the personal of Vijay. He volunteers to work to contribute for his brother's educational expenses when he himself is quite a child. Seeing Ravi's aptitude for academic pursuits, Vijay sacrifices his own childhood and educational aspirations.

Vijay's sense of responsibility is not restricted to blood relations only. When his girlfriend, Anita declares that she is pregnant with his baby, he instantly agrees to sanctify their relationship. He decides and wants to marry her. He even wants to surrender to the police so that their forthcoming son (both already presume, predict and perhaps pray for a male child) can live a dignified life free of the anti-social outlawed stigma which haunts and hounds Vijay all the time.

The mother is always the significant presence in Vijay's life. In a way, she is the epicentre of his life. In Deewaar, the brothers, one a police officer, the other a bandit, compete for the love of their mother. When the bandit (Amitabh Bachchan) taunts the police officer (Shashi Kapoor): "I have all this – what have you got, with your honesty?" the other blandly replies: "I have mother". It is for her sake that the bandit buys the land where she had once worked as a construction labourer and builds a mansion for her. "I have done all this for you, mother", he says. She replies: "You can't buy your own mother. You're not that rich yet." It is in an attempt to see his dying mother that he finally loses his life. And mother, though always resolutely on the side of the virtuous police officer, loves the bandit son no less, perhaps even more.

At the beginning of the film the father is a highly respected labour leader; he betrays the cause to save the lives of his children, and becomes a man of disrepute on whose account his sons have to endure the insults of their neighbours and peers ("Gali gali me shor hai, Anand Babu chor hai"). He then disappears and towards the end of the film is discovered dead. His son, the police officer, finds the body. In the final
battle the police officer shoots and kills his bandit brother, who could have escaped, had it not been for his overwhelming wish to see his dying mother.

So in the case of Vijay, one can remark that his masculinity construct has never dissociated itself with the active presence of the mother. In a way, there is a perpetual restlessness to merge with the mother and his eventual death in the temple in the mother's lap is perhaps the conclusion of the journey of Vijay's life.

_Aamir Khan As Tender But Firm Raj In Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak_

The most striking thing about Aamir's portrayal of Raj is the reconciliation of softness with firmness. In a way, Raj combines a tender nature with iron resolve. He is soft-spoken, gentle and pleasant. His soft-spokeness comes in contrast to his very talkative lady love, Rashmi. His caring and loving nature is also noteworthy. In a way, this rare sensitivity, vulnerability of Raj in the backdrop of the feudal patriarchal set-up he hails from, is a sharp contrast. There is an element of purity and serenity in the masculinity construct of Raj. He seems to speak the language of love and peace and harmony amidst the suffocating revenge spirit of the patriarchal domain. In both the families of Raj and Rashmi, the women folk are used to a culture of silence. The love voice of humanity and togetherness comes in the form of silent but firm resolve to be true to love at any cost. Interestingly, Raj makes very less noise but acts in the way to achieve his love surely. Though fate and animosity eventually unite them only in death, but his resolve stands out as a mask of eternal love. One wonders whether Raj's disposition is due to his socialization in the case of his uncle (father's elder brother). It can be noted that Raj's father was jailed for killing Rashmi's uncle. Raj's uncle has a much calmer, understanding, saner, humane self which combines practicality with right balance. The uncle's influence on his adult self makes Raj stand out as a civilizing force in the patriarchal jungle.

Another dimension of Raj's persona comes alive if one considers his relationship with his girlfriend. No doubt Raj is a highly romantic character. But his romanticism does not cloud his practical sensibilities. Like when both Rashmi and Raj are lost in the jungle and trying to find their way out, he does not get nervous. Rather he keeps his cool and that speaks volumes on his presence of mind. He does
not get swayed by Rashmi’s romantic overtures but concentrates on the strategy to find their way out. Moreover, when he elopes with Rashmi, he waits for the right opportunity. Interestingly, in their make-shift household in the remnants or ruins, the gender stratification is established in the household work. One wonders whether the hidden patriarchy comes to the surface in the case of Raj through the division of labour.

**Shah Rukh Khan As Charming And Confident Raj In Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge**

Shah Rukh Khan’s portrayal of Raj in *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* is marked by the casual, natural charm which oozes confidence and radiance. The director introduces the character of Raj as the dream man of Simran about whom she fantasises and writes poetry. In a way, he is presented as an object of desire and fantasy of the heroine (one can extrapolate to indicate the audience as a whole). Interestingly soon after he is also presented as the only unsuccessful candidate in the graduation ceremony and the first in the history of his university. One wonders whether this is for any comic relief or any commentary on the educational system because as such Raj is an out and out all-rounder in all spheres of life except academic pursuits. His friendly father, in fact, is elated by his academic performance as he seems to have successfully and faithfully carried on the rich family tradition of failures in the academic arena. In this context one needs to remark about the special father-son bond which exists between Raj and his father. Raj’s father seems to both mother and father him compensating the role of Raj’s late mother. Their mutual love, respect, understanding, care, playfulness are glowing features that seem quite significant in terms of the discussions on masculinity constructs. Both the father-son duo seem to champion the androgynous nature in their respective selves and in their day-to-day living.

Raj’s romantic nature shines and enlightens his surroundings. He is not violent (until forced to). In the end of the film, Raj hits back violently as a retaliation of his father’s injury at the hands of the goons sent by Kuljeet, his lady love’s fiance. Otherwise, his sunshine masculinity radiates happiness all around. Yet he is immensely confident about his own abilities to achieve his goal of marrying Simran
not by eloping but with permission and blessings of her father and other in-laws. In a way, he wins over everyone eventually by his disarming charm. He seems to excel in household work as shown in his omnipresence in every department of the arrangements in the marriage celebrations. His ever-smiling face with ready wit and presence of mind makes him a winner all the way and with everyone. Raj’s integrity, sensitivity and empathy to the vocation and department of love comes alive when he asks forgiveness from Preeti (who loves him at heart and with whom his marriage was almost fixed as an arranged marriage). This rare sensitivity and sense of compassion make the masculinity construct of Raj.

Last but not the least, Raj’s relation with Simran is not one-dimensional. In the initial stages of their interaction, Raj succeeds in irritating Simran by his flirtatious nature. In a way, the playfulness of their romance in the form of naughty antics from both for one upmanship especially from Raj – adds the right spice to the curry of love. The romance reaches its crescendo when both realise and feel each other’s presence in their hearts. Simran is forced to leave London for Punjab and Raj sets out to bring back his rightful bride back on the direction of his father. Interestingly both act at the behest of their respective fathers. Perhaps the dominance and authority of patriarchy is established in the subtle way with varying style of the functioning and eventual execution. Raj arrives in India and gets to meet Simran to install supreme confidence in his abilities to achieve his one-point goal of marrying Simran with in-laws’ blessings. His extending hand to Simran to get up in the running train twice in the film is perhaps a pointer to the distressed femininity to have confidence in the abilities of the masculine power. One cannot deny the fact that despite of his charming antics with everyone in the household, Raj did make Simran go through the torture of uncertain writing. Sometimes her patience level must have been tested. While the director was busy portraying the persona of Raj as a miracle personality who can charm his way into any one’s heart with his idiosyncratic antics having magical impacts. In fact, Raj’s insistence on getting Simran’s father’s approval and blessings for marriage point to a traditional, conservative disposition in line with the patriarchal system. One can even remark that being an NRI, his morality plank is styled by older value system of the time. They migrated and are not fashioned by contemporary ideas and trends.
Revisiting The Archetypes Of Indian Masculinity To Ascertain Their Influence On The Popular Hindi Film Hero

My previous discussions (in Chapter II) of this research pinpoint that any notion of Indian masculinity can be closely linked with various archetypes prevalent in the socio-economic psychological horizon of India. The three types which I selected are Krishna, Shiva and Rama. I wish to very briefly revisit these archetypes of Indian masculinity to ascertain their influence on the popular Hindi film hero.

In Krishna, one finds that even when one is engaged with the world with its harshness and factuality, that is, the world as a battlefield, one is also simultaneously intensely romantic. Love becomes the central defining feature of the masculinity construct of the archetype of Krishna. Love attains a transformative character and perhaps it is through this that one realises the finer aspects of one's being. These dimensions of love in the archetype of Krishna are echoed in countless popular Hindi films. Love becomes the central theme around which the narrative of most films of this genre revolve. The popular Hindi film hero is constructed with these dimensions and traits of the Krishna archetype of masculinity.

In Shiva, one finds tremendous, unbounded energy to destroy the evil forces. Moreover, one finds the element of narcissism in the Shiva archetype. But at the same time, there are aspects of calmness and meditativeness in Shiva. Moreover, Shiva and Parvati symbolise an epitome of a very enduring life-long marital relationship. The popular Hindi film hero along with the popular genre is built on the various aspects of the Shiva archetype.

In Rama, one finds a sense of duty, that is, doing the right kind of work. The complex self-contradictory nature of his persona replete with vulnerabilities, weaknesses, inner-struggles and turbulences also stand out as important pointers to the masculinity construct. Importantly, Rama also stands for the highest in man, 'Purushottam' - as son, husband, King and ally or friend of the oppressed with the highest virtues of all kinds. All of these complex dimensions directly or indirectly impact the popular Hindi film genre. Many of the popular Hindi film heroes are based
I wish to end this section by trying to demarcate the popular Hindi film hero under different types (Kakar, 1989, 35-41):

The Majnun-lover, as I would like to label this type after the hero of the well-known Islamic romance, has his cultural origins in a confluence of Islamic and Hindu streams. His home is as much in the Indo-Persian ghazal as in the lover’s laments of separation in Sanskrit and Tamil viraha poetry – of which Kalidasa’s Meghaduta (The Cloud Messenger) is perhaps the best-known example.

The psychological origins of the Majnun-lover as part of the imperious yet vulnerable erotic wishes of infancy. His is the wish for a total merger with the woman; his suffering, the wrenching wail of the infant who finds his budding self disintegrating in the mother’s absence. What he seeks to rediscover and reclaim in love is what is retrospectively felt to be paradise lost – the postpartum womb of life before ‘psychological birth,’ before the separation from the mother’s anima took place. These wishes are of course part of every man’s erotic being and it is only the phallic illusion of modern Western man which has tended to deny them legitimacy and reality.

All soul, an inveterate coiner of poetic phrases on the sorrows and sublimity of love, the romantic lover must split off his corporeality and find it a home or, rather, an orphanage. The kotha, the traditional style brothel, is Hindi cinema’s favourite abode for the denied and discarded sexual impulses, a home for vile bodies. Sometimes replaced by the shady night club, a more directly licentious import from the West, the kotha provides the alcohol as well as the rhythmic music and dance associated with these degraded impulses. Enjoyed mostly by others, by the villain or the hero’s friends; for the romantic lover, the sexual pleasures of the kotha are generally cloaked in a pall of guilt, to be savoured morosely in an alcoholic haze and to the nagging beat of self-recrimination.

The Krishna-lover is the second important hero of Indian films. Distinct from Majnun, the two may, in a particular film, be sequential rather than separate. The Krishna-lover is physically importunate, what Indian-English will perhaps call the ‘eve-teasing’ hero, whose initial contact with women verges on that of sexual
harrassment. His cultural lineage goes back to the episode of the mischievous Krishna hiding the clothes of the gopis (cow-herdesses) while they bathe in the pond and his refusal to give them back in spite of the girls’ repeated entreaties. From the 1950s Dev Anand movies to those (and especially) of Shammi Kapoor in the 1960s and of Jeetendra and Shah Rukh Khan in the 1990s, the Krishna-lover is all over and all around the heroine who is initially annoyed, recalcitrant, and quite unaware of the impact the hero’s phallic intrusiveness has on her. The Krishna-lover has the endearing narcissism of the boy on the eve of the Oedipus stage, when the world is felt to be his ‘oyster.’ He tries to draw the heroine’s attention by all possible means—aggressive innuendoes and double entendres, suggestive song and dance routines, bobbing up in the most unexpected places to startle and tease her as she goes about her daily life (Jeetendra is affectionately known as ‘jack in the box’). The more the heroine dislikes the lover’s incursions, the greater is his excitement. As the hero of the film Aradhana remarks, “Love is fun only when the woman is angry.”

For the Krishna-lover, it is vital that the woman be a sexually innocent being and that in his forcing her to become aware of his desire she gets in touch with her own. He is phallus-incarnate, with distinct elements of the ‘flasher’ who needs constant reassurance by the woman of his power, intactness, and especially his magical qualities that can transform a cool Amazon into a hot, lusting female. The fantasy is of the phallus—Shammi Kapoor in his films used his whole body as one—humbling the pride of the unapproachable woman, melting her indifference and unconcern into submission and longing. The fantasy is of the spirited androgynous virgin awakened to her sexuality and thereafter reduced to a groveling being, full of a moral masochism wherein she revels in her ‘stickiness’ to the hero. Before she does so, however, we may go through a stage of playfulness where she presents the lover a mocking version of himself. Thus in Junglee, it is the girl from the hills—the magical fantasy-land of Indian cinema where the normal order of things is reversed—who throws snowballs at the hero, teases him, and sings to him in a good-natured reversal of the man’s phallicism, while it is now the hero’s turn to be provoked and play the reluctant beloved.

Amitabh Bachchan has personified a new kind of hero and lover. His phenomenally successful films have spawned a brand new genre which, though
strongly influenced by Hollywood action movies such as those of Clint Eastwood, is neither typically Western nor traditionally Indian.

The Bachchan hero is the good-bad hero who lives on the margins of his society. His attachments are few but they are strong and silent. Prone to quick violence and to brooding periods of withdrawal, the good-bad hero is a natural law-breaker, yet will not deviate from a strict private code of his own. He is often a part of the underworld but shares neither its sadistic nor its sensual excesses. If cast in the role of a policeman, he often bypasses cumbersome bureaucratic procedures to take the law in his own hands, dealing with criminals by adopting their own ruthless methods. His badness is now shown as intrinsic or immutable but as a reaction to a developmental deprivation of early childhood, often a mother's loss, absence, or ambivalence toward the hero.

The cultural parallel of the good-bad hero is the myth of Karna in the Mahabharata. The striking thing of the Karna myth is the indomitable courage and strength of the eternal 'under-dog' to fight all odds including the vagaries of destiny but almost always has a tragic end.

The good-bad Bachchan hero is both a product of and a response to the pressures and forces of development and modernization taking place in Indian society today that have accelerated during the last two decades. He thus reflects the psychological changes in a large number of people who are located in a half way house – in the transitional sector – which lies between a minuscule (yet economically and politically powerful) modern and numerically preponderant traditional sectors of Indian society. Indeed, it is this transitional sector from which the Bachchan movies draw the bulk of their viewers. The Bachchan hero, neither a settled family man nor belonging to any recognized community of craftsmen, farmers, etc., incorporated the transitional man's collective dream of success without hard work and of life lived primarily, and precariously, in the here-and-now mode.

As a lover, the good-bad hero is predictably neither overtly emotional like Majnun nor boyishly phallic like the Krishna lover. A man of controlled passion, somewhat withdrawn, he subscribes to the well-known lines of the Urdu poet Faiz
that “Our world knows other torments than of love and other happinesses than a fond embrace”. The initial meeting of the hero and heroine in *Deewaar*, Bachchan’s first big hit and widely imitated thereafter, conveys the essential flavour of this hero as a lover. The setting is a restaurant-night club and Bachchan is sitting broodingly at the bar. Anita, played by Parveen Babi, is a dancer – the whore with a golden heart – who comes and sits next to him. She offers him a light for his cigarette and tells him that he is the most handsome man in the bar. Bachchan, who must shortly set out for a fateful meeting with the villain, indifferently accepts her proffered homage as his due while he ignores her sexually provocative approach altogether. Indeed, this narcissistically withdrawn lover’s relationships with his family members and even his best friend are more emotionally charged than with any woman who is his potential erotic partner. Little wonder that Shashi Kapoor, who played the hero’s brother or best friend in many movies, came to be popularly known as Amitabh Bachchan’s favourite heroine!

Afraid of the responsibility and effort involved in active wooing, of passivity and dependency upon a woman – urges from the earliest period of life which love brings to the fore and intensifies – the withdrawn hero would rather be admired than loved. It is enough for him to know that the woman is solely devoted to him while he can enjoy the position of deciding whether to take her or leave her. The fantasy here seems of revenge on the woman for a mother who either preferred someone else – in *Deewaar*, it is the brother – only who gave the child conditional love and less than constant admiration.

**PART-2**

**JOURNEY OF MASCULINITIES IN POPULAR HINDI CINEMA: CONTEXTUALISING THE SIX SELECT FILMS**

It is now generally acknowledged that from the very inception of its birth to the present day, Hindi popular cinema has been increasingly male-oriented. From Raj Kapoor to Shammi Kapoor to Rajendra Kumar to Rajesh Khanna to Amitabh Bachchan to Aamir Khan to Shah Rukh Khan to Hrithik Roshan – an escalating trend of male stardom seemed to evolve.
In the popular Hindi cinema, it has been the male star whose body has lent itself most consistently to various forms of masquerade. The conceptions of the hero, coalesced around certain star personas, have rendered the discourse of nationhood as "creative geography" (Chakravarty, 1996, 203). The romantic hero as a man of action can extend himself in myriad ways to transform and transcend his social conditions of existence and reconcile the irreconcilable. As his body at once orchestrates and absorbs difference, racial and cultural, dress, makeup, and behaviour patterns serve to anchor recognition and invite misrecognition. Pastiche and parody are the hallmarks of identities, that valorise fragmentation and yet seek wholeness.

The incorporation of several (transnational) identities by a single hero, expressed both visually and rhetorically (through song), was invested with an early and enduring appeal in Raj Kapoor's Shri 420 (The Gentleman Cheat, 1955). The lyrics, roughly translated, mean:

*The shoes I'm wearing are made in Japan*

*My trousers fashioned in England*

*The red cap on my head is Russian*

*In spite of it all my heart is Indian.*

This was the Nehru era and being national also meant, in some sense, to declare oneself to be international. The use of the body is as a particular nexus of culture and choice, a field of possibilities susceptible to infinite rearrangements. The irony, of course, is that the vagabond and rolling stone who is singing this song is laughing at himself because his assortment of clothing is also a signifier of his impoverished state and a reflection on the society of which he is a part. His nationalist message puts India at the centre of a randomised global accumulation of accessories, seeking to put a distance between the core (heart, sentiment) and the periphery (limbs, outward appearance). India itself was simultaneously core and periphery: at once ancient and young, civilisationally advanced and 'Third World.' Suggesting transcendence, the body of the hero becomes a map on which nations can appear to coexist in harmonious yet distinctly separate spheres. The Indian identity would have it both ways: to be a composite being and yet claim a prior and more significant status. By transforming the social marginality of the filmic hero into the centrality of the Indian
citizen, material needs are displaced onto a more intangible (emotional) level of experience.

The fifties hero also reveals another valorised feature of Indian culture which gradually disappears in films of the post sixties era: androgyny. However, androgyny in a patriarchal society was only acceptable in evoking new and marginal states of being and consciousness. The desire to evolve or represent new forms of urban experience, particularly the fact of close proximity to different types and classes of people, found expression in the kind and gentle hero – Balraj Sahni in Amiya Chakravarty's Seema (1955), Dilip Kumar in Kidar Sharma's Jogan (Ascetic, 1950), Raj Kapoor in Aag (Fire, 1948) and Barsaat (Rain, 1949). Dev Anand in Aandhiyan (Storms, 1952), Sunil Dutt in Ek Hi Raasta (one Path Alone, 1956) are some examples – often dressed in the traditional dhoti and kurta, with the villain or buffoon adopting Western attire; for example, Johnny Walker in Naya Daur (New Era, 1957). Side by side, however there was emerging the early noir hero with links to the Bombay underworld. Dev Anand in Baazi (Wager, 1951), Kala Bazaar (Black Market, 1960), and Taxi Driver (1954) epitomised this new type: cigarette dangling from the mouth, eyes slanted to look off-screen, a tone of daring, a posture of risk taking. This type was to reappear in the seventies and eighties as well.

Everything is connected to everything else. The interplay of the personal and the social is reinforced through visual contrasts. It is necessary to digress to Raj Kapoor's own history as a convenient symbolic construction of the enfant terrible of the Bombay cinema. In the statements made by him during that period, it is evident that he makes use of his own myth for self-promotion. He splits himself into two people, the neutral observer and the adored film hero, the former explaining the latter (refer to the section on popular press reports in Chapter II). Kapoor comments that in India, the cinegoing public, after years of seeing films and admiring film stars, had built up an unconscious expectancy and identification.

Every star stands for something in the collective mind. In a way, there is a fixed masculinity construct which is associated with each specific hero. The public has a very definite conception of each star, and knows before entering the theatre what it wants of them on the screen. Thus it was with Raj Kapoor of Barsaat,
Awaara, and Shree 420. They gave him rousing cheers. After all, Raj's zest for life is inexpressible, inimitable. He laughs and makes one laugh. He speaks and one responds. He is not the stuff which tubercular heroes are made of.

The other two actors who dominated the popular Hindi film genre in the 1950s were Dev Anand and Dilip Kumar. Dev Anand had a debonair, Western masculinity construct with a Hollywood sensibility and stylisation. The third major star to complete the triad of post-independence cinema was Dilip Kumar (original name Yusuf Khan). Dilip Kumar's versatile image – he had more histrionic talent than Raj or Dev – was used by directors such as Mehboob in Andaz, Kidar Sharma in Jogan (1951) and Zia Sarhadi in Footpath (1953).

A combination of factors is responsible for the emergence of the new film hero in the early sixties. The introduction of colour, the perpetual search for new acting talent in the film industry, the death of the acclaimed and popular filmmakers like Guru Dutt, Bimal Roy, and Mehboob Khan with their distinctive styles, perhaps even the passing of the Nehru era and the immediate concerns of nationhood all changed the film scene. Junglee (Savage, 1961) signalled the change from the deglamourised heroism of Raj Kapoor's Indianised Chaplin to the more cosmopolitan, rambunctious personality of the sixties hero. Kakar creates a typology of screen heroes, distinguishing between the Majnun-lover of the fifties and earlier from the Krishna – lover of the sixties (his third type is the good-bad hero of the seventies and eighties). Dilip Kumar in Devdas (1955) and Guru Dutt in Pyaasa (The Thirsty One, 1957) are the ideal Majnun-lovers, passive, poetic, and childlike. In contrast, the romantic hero of the sixties is the Krishna-lover: He is phallus incarnate, with distinct elements of the 'flasher' who needs constant reassurance by the woman of his power, intactness, and especially his magical qualities that can transform a cool Amazon into a hot, lusting female. ' The fantasy is of the phallus – Shammi Kapoor in his films used his whole body as one – humbling the pride of the unapproachable woman, melting her indifference and unconcern into submission and longing. The fantasy is of the spirited and androgynous virgin awakened to her sexuality and thereafter reduced to a grovelling being, full of a moral masochism wherein she revels in her 'stickiness' to the hero.
The first male star to break out of the mold of the fifties hero as champion and prototype of the underclass was Shammi Kapoor. As the younger brother of the very popular Raj Kapoor, Shammi sought to invest his screen image with a totally different appeal, one that was predicated on the lure of the all-powerful, all-enveloping presence of the romantic hero. Lacking Raj Kapoor's (and younger brother Shashi Kapoor's) more sensitive and chiselled features and smaller frame, Shammi could boast of a powerful physique, which he used to signal brute strength. Quite appropriately, his first film was entitled *Junglee* (Savage, 1961). This 'retreat' into a more 'natural' state is a distinct departure from the socially and culturally embroiled heroes of the films of earlier decades. Their stance of commitment to progressive social change and to the values of film-realism finds no place in this more vigorous narcissistic male persona. Social markers of class and region (urban or rural) are replaced by a more free-floating and individualized universe of rapid change and frantic movement. The boundaries between the external and the internal, so cherished by the fifties hero (and encapsulated by the song stanza quoted while discussing Raj Kapoor of the 50s), collapse in the new heroic image. All is surface; surface is all. The sixties hero is most comfortable straddling – and thereby eliminating – the distinctions between different social and national worlds. He moves effortlessly between the palace and the hut, not as an intermediary but as one to whom these distinctions are no longer significant or worth signifying. In *Junglee*, the polarities of wealth and poverty, endemic to the structure of the Bombay film, are mapped on to different forms of 'naturalness': the Shammi Kapoor persona belongs to a very rich family but is basically an innocent one with raw emotions and manners in need of taming: the heroine (Saira Banu) is outside (urban) civilization, symbolizing the beauty and playfulness of one used to the openness of natural surroundings. But it would be a mistake to read *Junglee* as merely one more Rousseauist parable, rather than as a deconstruction and reconstruction of a film hero. This is signalled by the parodic opening sequence, in which a voice-over presents an isolated protagonist-hero – a creature who does not invite identification because he is lacking in any semblance of human grace. Shammi Kapoor's exaggerated mock-serious acting (his eyes appearing cold and angry, his brow knitted, nostrils flaring, cheeks sucked into a pout) is a façade because generic expectations promise romance later on. Seated alone inside an airplane, a convenient phallic symbol, we are told that this symbol of
masculinity gone awry is returning from England and America armed with the latest business training to take the Indian business world by storm. The association is deliberate, and the film, soon after, reveals the real reason for Shekhar's strangeness: a strict upbringing in accordance with rigid patriarchal-familiar norms transferred through another parodied figure, his mother (Lalita Pawar). The scene is gradually set for the hero's transformation into an independent and likeable personality through the process of falling in love with a beautiful and fun-loving girl, Raj (Saira Banu).

Saira Banu is the quintessential new heroine (childish, unsophisticated, naïve) who complements the new film hero, and together they conquer the Bombay film's most exotic colony – Kashmir. The strategic importance of Kashmir as the eroticised landscape of the mind in the social imaginary of Indians (paralleling perhaps its political importance in configurations of the integrity and unity of the Indian nation-state) can hardly be overstated. Kashmir as the place for honeymoons and lovers, arising no doubt from its scenic beauty (it is known as the "Switzerland of India"), has been translated by the Bombay film into a symbol of purity and unspoiled nature and as visual therapy for audiences coping with life in overcrowded cities and towns. Kashmir, over which India has fought several wars with Pakistan, serves as the liminal-text of what it means to be Indian: its geographical location at India's apex, its captured facial imprint of the Aryan inheritance, its demographic admixture of Hindus and Muslims, perhaps its ambivalent status at once virgin ("no compromise on Kashmir," say the politicians) and coquette (eternally coveted by neighbouring states)- all these serve to render Kashmir as both a site of fantasy and a national projection of overarching identity and connectedness. Kashmir can therefore effect the transformation of the junglee-as-uncivilized, lacking social graces or emotions, to the junglee-as-naturally-exuberant.

The therapeutic nature of his experience of awakening love for an 'unspoiled' girl-woman enables this new film hero not only to transcend the boundaries of social class (he is wealthy, she is not) but those between the human and animal worlds as well. In Indian culture, where ideals of manhood incorporate some attributes of femininity, the valorisation of Shammi Kapoor's masculinity necessitates an association with the nonhuman or prior-human. He is the wild one, a visual anarchy, a body in frenetic movement: head jerking, arms flailing, shoulders and hips
seemingly moving independently of each other. *Junglee* inaugurates the cinema of indulgence: spectacular shots of landscape, particularly of virgin snow and majestic mountain ranges, provide the playground for desire and fantasy where the possibility of physical union between the romantic couple is a palpable one. Rolling in the snow, the hero proclaims the joy of existence by inviting, rather than resisting, associations with an animal like state. The *Yahoo* song, which became as much Shammi Kapoor's insignia as *Awaara Hoon* (I am a vagabond) was Raj Kapoor's, is the animal mask, which signifies a rite of passage. It also suggests the ambiguity of this transformational state.

For 'real life' which must be resumed in the big city, Shekhar returns home, a different man, eager to socialise with his employees where formerly he barked orders at them. The animal is humanised, and after a series of plot complications, he is able to convince his mother of the error of her 'high-and-mighty' ways. As Raj and her father arrive, bringing with them a taste of the mountains, the pretensions of the rich crumble. All ends well, as youth and wealth are aligned in the obligatory happy ending.

The Bombay film hero of the sixties negotiates sociocultural and spatial mobility through creative uses of the masquerade. As the setting for romance shifts from national to international locations, the West is no longer an internalised presence/absence in the hero's psyche but becomes the purely and wholly the other, the exotic backdrop against which the Indian hero and heroine can act out their fantasies of unhampered courtship and romance. Many big-budget films at this time seek the spectacle of Western sights and sounds, among them *Sangam* (Confluence, 1964), *Love in Tokyo* (1966), *An Evening in Paris* (1967), *Around the World* (1967), *Purab aur Paschim* (East and west, 1970), and *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* (1971). Although occasionally, as in *Purab aur Paschim*, the West is stereotypically the scene of spiritual degradation or somnolescence, of violence and material craving, in most of the other films, spectacle overwhelms moralism as the audience is sped along from one world capital to another (Paris-London-Vienna-Rome-Switzerland is the usual beat). The 'domestication' of the West during this period coincides with India's brain drain and official concern over the loss of scientific and technically trained people.
who were emigrating to North America. The Bombay film feeds this longing of the average to travel abroad by locating its narratives partially outside India.  

A notable feature of the male dominated romantic drama of the post-sixties era is that while the identity of the villain is fixed and self-evident, the proof of the hero's heroism is that he can change identities at will, if only temporarily and often playfully. The villain has no access to the masquerade (or his efforts to pass himself off as a good person are patently false and obvious); the hero, on the other hand, can literally become "the hero with the thousand faces". However, changing personas is a sign of ingenuity and sportiveness (Shammi Kapoor in one sequence masquerades as an Arab in flowing robes), rather than the eraser of cultural boundaries. All extra national identities are ultimately collapsible into a hypostatised Indianness, left suitably vague and no longer expressively articulated either through iconography or patriotic dialogue. (This condition changes again in the eighties, when both elements become strong markers of 'Indianness.') Released from its moorings in history, tradition, or space, the concept of 'Indianness' is naturalised through the mobile hero, and entitlement to passport with the assurance of a return ticket. Like the hero's adopted name, "Sam," which can always be converted back to its original version, "Shyam" (another name for Krishna), the sixties hero inhabits several worlds at once, his identity always already recuperable.  

The palimpsest effect that results from the slippage between different personal traits available to the Bombay film hero is akin to what James Naremore isolates as elements of characterisation that make up all star performances. First, there is the role, or the description of a character that is written down in a script, preconceived, or improvised during shooting. Second, we have the actor, a person whose body and
as well from narratives written about the actor in publicity and biography and thus becomes a global category."

If the role and the star image seem to work at cross-purposes, the one promoting audience identification and the other dispelling it, the male actor's body in disguise in the popular Hindi film anchors these disparate tendencies. It might be useful here to list some other masquerading instances of this nature dispersed along the entire spectrum of the Hindi film romance. The use of parody to suggest the limits and limitations of fixed notions of identity is particularly evident in those sequences in romantic drama, which involve intergenerational conflict between different regional groups within India. The hero will usually come to the service of a male friend who happens to be in love with a girl from another linguistic group. Stereotypes of that group are then parodied through the adoption of an "open" disguise, where the audience is aware of the purpose of the disguise and takes the whole situation as an assertion of freedom and the triumph of romance.

Not only are regional differences portrayed as entirely superficial, they are turned into occasions for comedy. The acting becomes one of "expressive incoherence" where there is a break with the naturalist tradition and a deliberate filmic intertextuality prevails. In other words, the actors draw attention to their acting, parodying former performances. In *Amar Akbar Anthony*, parody, spectacle, and masquerade combine to orchestrate an elaborate scenario suggesting intercommunal harmony. Here the heroic triptych of the film's title (three brothers separated in childhood and brought up in a Hindu, Muslim, and Christian family, respectively) appear in a climactic song sequence dressed up in costumes that extravagantly proclaim their religious affiliations while simultaneously erasing specificity through their shared camaraderie in the presence of danger. Their disguise is meant to serve the purpose of outwitting the villains from whose clutches their three girlfriends have to be freed. But it is worth noting that the idealistic transcendence of fixed social and psychological identities can only go so far. Each hero is in love with a woman from his "own" community, and there are no intercommunal romance suggested. (The reason usually given is that such scenario would not get past the censors, who would see them as potential sources of disturbance.)
division and otherness in the national body politic is mediated, then, through the male star.7

Shammi Kapoor's personification of the brawny hero with his distinctive brand of acting spawned many imitators, notably Joy Mukerjee, Jeetendra, Shatrughan Sinha, Sanjay Khan, Biswajeet, and other lesser well-known figures, although as with all imitation, their performances lacked the finesse and energy of the original. It is interesting that at the moment when the Bombay film hero was 'releasing' himself from character types and models of behaviour that might be identified as Indian (or had been constructed as such by the screen heroes of earlier decades) and when he imbibed a more 'international' identity, he was helping to evolve a (body) language of the cinema that seemed totally nationally and culturally coded according to Western perceptions. ' The popular cinema of the sixties, unlike that of the fifties, is totally unknown in the West and does not get included in any festival packages. A kind of hedonism, a visual smorgasbord, is what the larger-than-life hero offers to Indian audiences. This hero has also risen above his circumstances, outsmarts those around him, can be a romantic lover at one moment and an astute private eye the next. The Hindi film actor has remarkably few 'material' antecedents, and he is a process and a construct produced by the complex practices that make up popular Hindi cinema. "As complex signs embodying historical, cultural, and economic meanings (reconstructions), the stars are in themselves cultural interfaces and 'compromises' of bewildering complexity." Shammi Kapoor is one such interface where the different discourses of the fifties and the sixties collide and clash; what emerges is the male body made powerful, playful, changeable. This contributes to the masculinity construct of the persona of Shammi Kapoor.

The sixties was a time for fun and relaxation. As the political situation in India stabilised completely, so did its cinema. Films were fantasies set in lush hill stations with the accent on picturesque visuals that contrasted with the stark realism of some of the black and white productions of the fifties. Satin and silk costumes took over and dictated the fashions of the day. If an actress wore stretch pants, cashmere sweaters and dangling earrings so would their fans.
In this decade, the stars achieved a freedom of economic choice denied to all but the most successful in the past. The stars were the trendsetters and teenagers were their largest audience. It was during this decade, the world over, when this particular age group exerted its identity and set cultural models. The power of this generation began to change the look of Indian cinema: it became freer and youthful. In the mid-sixties it was estimated by trade experts that nearly 60% of the audience were aged between 16 and 24. And the potential power of this generation was unmistakenly manifested in the new stars who emerged (Mohamed, 1990, 41).

The stars whom the teenagers turned to were the ones whose lives off-screen and on-screen corresponded to a freer way of life and zestful spirit. The lifestyle of stars who came into prominence were progressively closer to the lifestyle lived by the youth, until there was little distinguishable distance. The star became a super-fan instead of being worshipped the changing values of his/her followers.

Lack of organised contact with specific sections of the mass society kept the studio stars from getting responsive recognition. The stars of the 60s were more accessible. They relished giving interviews to the press and loved signing autographs. Moreover, they catered to the external requirements of comedy and adventure, rarely expressing internal anguish.

The characterisations became uncomplicated. The script-writers did not have to exert themselves. A simple boy meets a girl would suffice to acquire finance from the trade purse-keepers as long as the form of the film was glossy and slick. The more beautiful the heroine and the more handsome the hero, made the film a safer bet at the box-office. The use of colour increased until black and white films were regarded as relics. The search for new faces was on with little care for acting ability but greater concern for photogenic quality.

The male stars of the sixties were peaceful and pleasant. They were Prince Charmings, handsome with never a strand of hair out of place. Of them Rajendra Kumar, Sunil Dutt and Manoj Kumar were associated with so much ‘sweetness’ that they were called the ‘chocolate heroes’. Manoj Kumar supplied a brand of his own. After consolidating his career as an actor, he produced and directed epics suffused
with patriotism. In *Upkar* (1967) and *Purab Aur Paschim* (1966) his two most accomplished works, he preached the message that there was no place like one’s motherland. Both the farmer nor the urban educated elite, he stressed, should ever forget their roots.

Dharmendra, a village boy, who came to Bombay to seek fame and fortune, best epitomised a person who had retained his nativity despite the seductive pleasures of the big city. His screen persona has always been linked with the simple soul trying to integrate himself into the system. Dharmendra never over-acted despite the temptations which other actors are apt to seize. It is not an exaggeration to say that he has been vastly under-rated. He displayed equal talent for comedy as well as tragic roles. A macho physique and face capable of tenderness have made Dharmendra an unusual star who continues to work in films that require such a blend. The only other star who came close to suggesting such a personality was Feroz Khan who suffered from being cast mainly in supporting roles, a trap he eventually avoided by becoming a producer and director himself.

Shashi Kapoor was the outsider who was tired of waiting for substantial roles. There was much distance between him and the conventions of Hindi cinema (for example, the inclusion of songs and dances or fight sequences). But Shashi Kapoor hid his apprehension for such conventions and he was liked by those audience who were prepared to accept him. He belonged to the Kapoor clan but his temperament was more aligned with the wandering Shakespearean performers, the Kendalls whose daughter he married.

Any discussion on the 60s would be incomplete without Shammi Kapoor, younger than Raj and older than Shashi. Shammi Kapoor was quite unlike his brothers. He moved like Elvis Presley and was the only rock and roller the Bombay cinema has ever known. Shammi Kapoor came alive when he had a guitar in his hand or a set of bongos. Few could feel neutral about him, either the audience loved or hated him. Shammi Kapoor was always unpredictable in his screen roles and when he mimed the exuberant title song from *Junglee* (1961) (*Yahoo, chahe koi mujhe junglee kehe...* so what if they call me wild), he heralded a new boisterous era in Bombay cinema. Shammi Kapoor tried his hand at more mellow roles and although he was
subdued and strong in *Brahmachari* (1968), it is the wild-man in Shammi Kapoor that audiences worshipped.

The seventies started where sixties ended – with ‘love’ reigning supreme. And embodying this mood was the phenomenon of the times, Rajesh Khanna, short, attractively pock-marked and crinkle-eyed, with the head tilting just that much during the love duets! He brought in a freshness of style and talent that cleaned out almost every other leading man in the business. Snowed under with chocolate-cream heroes, cosmetic heroines and inane themes, the late sixties seemed to ache for a charismatic focal point. Intuitive and idiomatic, Rajesh Khanna brought with him a natural richness of gesture and spontaneity that disarmed as easily as it charmed. This combined with his unique screen presence and a conscious comprehension of the medium to unleash a galaxy of smash hits – from *Aradhana* to *Namak Haram*. It was charisma in action. Screen personality at work. A natural successor to Dilip Kumar, the Rajesh Persona was always vulnerable, gentle, sensitive and charming in joy and sorrow, victory or defeat, life or death. Life was for the living and where there was life, there was hope. So suggested the God of the early seventies to trillions of his devotees.

At the turn of the 1970s, *Aradhana* was released. It was responsible for giving birth to the country’s first superstar, Rajesh Khanna. He was called a superstar because never before was there such mass adulation for a single actor up to that point in time. Stockily built and short in height, his face, however, was his fortune. His boy-next-door image was the defining character of his masculinity construct.

He was the natural link with the sugar-coated hero of the 60s. For over five years, his reign was unchallenged. The period also saw a rise of gossip magazines, the trend being set by *Stardust*. The public consumed its stories, usually set in the boudoirs of stars with utter glee. And so the stars had more coverage than they perhaps desired.

Rajesh Khanna, the superstar was more charismatic than a polished performer. His later films tentatively fused his innate presence with a consciously acquired understanding of the medium. Though Rajesh Khanna lacked the discipline to sustain
the fusion, the period in which he was working at it resulted in some of his most satisfying performances: *Anand* (1971), *Dushman* (1972) and *Amar Prem* (1972).

Intuitive and idiomatic, Rajesh Khanna came to the screen with a natural richness of gesture and spontaneity that disarmed as readily as it charmed. The audience, by now, even seemed to have a special regard for an actor who never seemed to act. Identification was immediate. Women went wild over his romantic image. The men aped his collar-less shirts and grew sideburns like Khanna. With careless and gross over-exposure, a string of indifferent performances and a general lack of evolution made his screen personality stale and within time it became a parody of itself unlike the early Rajesh Khanna who was exciting.

In the early days, he moved with the unconscious grace of people on the street. He was best in the role of a middle-class boy in awe of the refined and cultured girl who loved him. And the actress with whom he worked wonders was naturally Sharmila Tagore who had precisely these qualities. Rajesh Khanna broke from a generation-old, gloom-ridden introverted Devdasian model. He rarely sacrificed love under the pressures of parental disapproval, social ostracism or succumbed under the blows of fate. He personified a distinct urban temperament and reflected the image of the post-Independence youth. Following a series of failures at the box-office, Rajesh Khanna became increasingly vacant and lifeless. This was indeed unfortunate as Khanna was far more likeable than many of his contemporaries. Even as an actor, he was better than Jeetendra who danced with such frenzy that he became known as ‘Jumping Jack’. Considered the luckiest star on the film firmament, Jeetendra made his cleverest move by shifting to South Indian productions made in the Hindi language. All that film makers there required of him is that he arrive on the set on time and contort his face, body or brains when necessary. An obedient star, Jeetendra obliged.

Slowly but surely, an unrest among the audience became apparent. Tired of routine romances they craved for an anti-hero who could express their discontent against the Establishment. The calm left by Prime Minister Nehru’s liberal policies had turned into a storm. Criticism of a corrupt bureaucracy and the disintegrating law and order situation was vociferous. Criticism was being made not only in private
conversations but also in the country’s literature and theatre. Who was there in cinema to symbolise the peoples’ frustration and rage?

Amitabh Bachchan was the answer. The film industry was doubly blessed for its punctual, well-mannered actor who possessed such a personality.

In the mid-seventies, Rajesh Khanna’s decline was evident. Amitabh Bachchan was moving firmly towards a new type of hero, shaped very much by the duo screenplay writers, Salim-Javed. A hero who was vigorous and a violent figure far removed from the unadulterated goodness that the previous heroes had settled into. Already beginning to electrify audiences with an amalgam of icy intelligence and assertive physicality, Bachchan injected a measure of rebelliousness and anger until then unheard of in Hindi cinema.

After an initial phase of playing shy, even awkward young men, a real change occurred when he took on roles calling for purposeful defiance and deliberate menace. If anyone threatened him or his family, far from cursing fate, he would take it into his own hands to seek revenge.

Although in many of his films, he does take the law into his own hand or breaks the law, Bachchan’s screen character is punished usually by being shot at the film’s conclusion. But until then, it is always Bachchan who dictates a new code of morality. Because the national mood had darkened, the fierce, often bitter anger of the Bachchan hero touched a nerve in the national psyche. His aggressiveness, while not strictly new, was still the first instance in which no apologies were offered.

Formula conventions still precluded a complete anti-hero, but Bachchan comes very close to the mark. For generations of cinemagoers, the gentlemanly and benevolent traits of their heroes defined what was heroic. Bachchan’s films employed violence that was without parallel in its intensity and cold bloodedness. His best work Zanjeer (1973), Deewar (1975) and Trishul (1978) are distinguished by their cool intelligence and calculated fury.

Amitabh Bachchan also acted in double roles competently (Don, 1978 and Kasme Vaade 1978) in which good and evil are neatly summarised. He handpicked
his roles and agreed to appear in the multistarrers of the 70s. The multi-starrers were films in which at least half a dozen top names featured in the credits. Bachchan played comic roles with equal ease much to the thrill of his ever-increasing fan following. Bachchan could do virtually any type of role and carried film after film to the box-office like Atlas. It is no wonder why he became known as the ‘one-man-industry’.

In over 70 films, Amitabh Bachchan projected a figure of virility and responsibility and, above all, of resourcefulness. But there has always been a silent and reflective personality hidden behind his screen characterisations. Bachchan worked with most of leading directors of the seventies, among them Manmohan Desai, Prakash Mehra, Ramesh Sippy, and Yash Chopra.

As already stated, over-exposure, type-casting, self-indulgent histrionics, but most of all the changing mood of the times, saw the end of the Rajesh seduction. And of Romance as super-star. In its place emerged the towering shadow of the fierce, intense loner. The Angry Young Man, who let his fists speak for him. Mr Cool of icy intelligence and assertive physicalness, vigorous and virile, for whom the end justified the means. And flesing out this persona with electrifying results and in perfect consonance with the complex times, was the tall, lanky frame of Amitabh Bachchan. Breaking away from the syrupy goodness of all previous heroes of the past, the Bachchan hero – purposefulness, defiance and deliberate violence injected with rebelliousness and anger – seemed to touch a chord in the national psyche, right from his first impersonation of this type in Zanjeer (1973). Playing a violence-prone policeman continually taking the law into his own hands while marking time to seek revenge on the killer of his parents, Amitabh unknowingly unleashed two far-reaching movements. One, the wave of the ‘Revenge and Vendetta’ theme – a plot structure where the motivation of the hero centres primarily on violently settling old scores. Two, the hero as an outsider, a loner. Fortunately for him, his timing was perfect. The ‘Action’ film, along with its ‘Macho’ hero was gaining world wide clout. The ‘Kung-Fu’ films – with love from the Orient! – were sell-outs. Interestingly, Bachchan’s brand of Macho hi-jinks differed from contemporary ‘toughies’ like Dharmendra or Shammi Kapoor. Their heroics were always attached to a bravado that went into rescuing their heroines. Vanquish the villain to impress or/and save the heroine and win her over. With Amitabh, there is no heroine – never has been. His
films generally are bereft of any warm, heterosexual relationships. The women are nothing more than obligatory ornaments. His brand of violence is different too—a mixture of the cerebral and physical; cold-blooded, planned, intense and devastating. Even today as the Towering Inferno’s films leap on to the big screen, all set for the predictable big time, the basic ingredients in most of them remain the same.

If Amitabh Bachchan ushered in the era of violence and vendetta, the directors were quick to cash in, in a big way. And this they did with the multi-starrer—almost always planting Amitabh in and as the storm centre of the show. The multi-starrer is not a new phenomenon to Indian audiences. Bombay talkies’ Baadbaan, B.R. Chopra’s Waqt, K.A. Abbas’ Chhar Dil Chaar Rahen and Hrishikesh Mukherjee’s Musafir are only four that immediately come to mind. The era of Rajesh Khanna, however, was singularly devoid of this genre because he never condescended to co-star with even one male co-star of equal stature. And in the rare instances that he did, Aap Ki Kasam with Sanjeev Kumar, Prem Kahani with Shashi Kapoor, or Namak Haram with Amitabh Bachchan, he drove his co-stars berserk. Amitabh Bachchan never had any hang ups about co-starring with any other male star. Hence, when Sholay (1975) – with Amitabh, Dharmendra, Sanjeev, Hema, Jaya – clicked the way it did, the multi-starrer craze took off. And so did the fees of the lead stars and the end-cost of planning, shooting and selling them.

As Amitabh Bachchan’s persona became so larger-than-life that other actors suffered, Vinod Khanna, his closest rival turned into a devout follower of Bhagwan Rajneesh and eventually returned. Though personal beliefs may have turned the actor away from the material world as it turned out temporarily, it was evident that he did not relish the thought of playing the second fiddle.

Vinod Khanna was a villain-turned-hero. So was Shatrughan Sinha. Often, the audience preferred the bad guy to the point of applauding his misdeeds. When the actor-villain realised his hold over his followers, he switched to leading roles. While he previously tormented the heroine, now he rescued her from the goons.

Of the villains of the Indian screen, none have made such an impact as Amjad Khan in the role of Gabbar Singh (Sholay, 1975). Gabbar Singh, the foul-mouthed
sadistic bandit in the film became a cult figure with adolescents on city streets reciting his dialogues with pride. His dialogues in *Sholay* are also quoted in subsequent films of both the new and commercial cinema. Such is the familiarity with Gabbar’s character. The theory that people have more regard for lawbreakers than for lawkeepers could not have been confirmed more strongly.

Sanjeev Kumar, a competent character-actor, could have easily created a niche for himself if he had planned his career with more acumen. Although viewers acknowledged his as a fine dramatic actor and treated him with respect, as they still do, they never gave him the kind of adulation that was showered on less deserving actors.

Amitabh Bachchan’s rise to stardom was epitomised through his complex and varied portrayal of the formulaic ‘angry man’, a screen space occupied by the star for well over a decade. Bachchan’s dialogue delivery, sense of timing and superbly crafted restraint in acting ushered in a new kind of anger on the screen, generated primarily through his physical gestures and movements. The brooding, inward-looking, yet outwardly searching, vulnerable anger of Bachchan were all symptomatic of its time. His ability to absorb and transmit both the ‘modern’ and the ‘traditional’, the ‘eastern’ and the ‘western’ through a novel body language was perhaps the single most important reason for his unmatched star status in the history of Bombay cinema. Bachchan was neither completely ‘Indian’ nor totally ‘western’. His own history as the son of a well-known Hindustani poet who grew up in Allahabad, as well as his exposure to western culture as part of the cultural intelligentsia, seems to have privileged Bachchan with a body language that would always get projected in his screen persona.

What was unique about Bachchan when compared to his predecessors was a novel use of space, an economy of words in his dialogue, a restraint in his anger and an immense and total control on his body. The new language of control was in many ways operating against some of the existing melodramatic codes of the ‘formula’. It was this resistant posturing through an evocation of a new set of codes that seemed to mark the ‘beginning’ of the ‘angry man’ image and a rupture with the romantic persona of the former superstar, Rajesh Khanna.
Amitabh Bachchan was an angry hero, torn between a desired future and an unhappy and turbulent past. The historical meaningfulness of this image lay in allowing for plural forms of identification through a performative mode that enabled Bachchan’s body to become the symbolic terrain for a multiplicity of narratives. In a sense this enabled Bachchan to evolve a style that seemed to mask the other within, mapping himself into the regulated spaces of the body and the ‘self’. People map themselves into socially-sanctioned regulations of body and self – but they do so only imperfectly: people are not chameleons. The mask/drag, that people use to get them through the day, is a veil which continually threatens to be torn away by the violence of the other.

Masking/masquerade, while inherently fragile, nevertheless plays a crucial role in de-naturalising the body, and generating in Bachchan’s case, multiple signs of recognition/identification for the film public. The ability to generate a mode of address that could articulate and draw on a variety of social experiences, a range of human emotions and an easy handling of different forms of body attire – all within a single narrative, perhaps became crucial for Bachchan’s iconic status. The interesting thing here is that all these different forms of emotion and feelings continued to be preserved in their distinctiveness, with Bachchan’s performance providing an imaginary unity.

Deewaar is, in many sense, a film that marks the acknowledgement of the crisis of post-colonial nationalism. The disenchantment with the settled categories of nationhood is mediated through the crisis of the family, fratricidal conflict and tragedy. It was this disenchantment that spoke (albeit complexly) to a society convulsed by social struggles culminating in the imposition of the Emergency. Deewaar was a deeply contextualised text: there was an ‘elective affinity’ (Weber) between the ‘moment’ of the film and the historical transformation depicted. (Mazumdar, 2000, 243-250).

Thus the projection of the ‘angry man’s’ ‘interiority’ is also enhanced through a filmic strategy (long shot to zoom in), symbolising an order of dialogue where the ‘outside’ and the ‘inside’ are interlocked. The transfer of subjectivity to the camera
also occurs in Bachchan’s case because the multiple articulation of the perceived body, operating as the mask required for a magnified subjectification, poses limits on the exploration of ‘interiority’. Through the use of the zoom technique, Bachchan’s subjectivity is explored from the ‘point of view’ of the world at large, attempting a dual objective of both identification and distance creating a diegetic strategy of positioning the protagonist.

On the other hand, Bachchan’s body seems to generate its own dynamics. Thus when we see him walking along the docks through a rival mafia gang leader’s car window (actor Iftekar in Deewaar), a full shot shows Bachchan walking with the posture of an aristocrat. As Iftekar calls Bachchan to join him in the car, we see him turn his head, pause for a second, finally moving towards the car. In the conversation between the two across the window, we see Bachchan’s face – cynical yet curious. He finally accepts Iftekar’s invitation and gets into the car with the confidence of a man used to sitting in cars. This is what is so fascinating about the Bachchan phenomenon. The underdog always operated with the symbols of poverty visually inscribed on the body and the codes of an upper-class upbringing projected through his gestures and posturing. It is this combination of narratives that seems to have made Bachchan into such a popular star for so long: a combination of spectatorial desire, fantasy and images of the ‘real’ coming together in an amalgamation of multiple codes of performance. The fantasy of a rise in class status, is itself imbued with a desire that remains unfulfilled in the narrative, but strikingly apparent in the images. Through the performance of Bachchan, we sometimes see Clint Eastwood, sometimes Marlon Brando, sometimes the actor as a person and sometimes the character of Vijay himself. These narratives are not randomly apparent but converge to assume particular historical forms. The dominance of these forms is achieved not through a conscious ideological manoeuvring by the film-makers but through ‘multiple processes of different origins and scattered locations’.

As the ‘eastern’ and the ‘western’, Hollywood and Bombay, on screen and off-screen, provide a multiplicity of signs, signals and narratives, the hero within the screen narrative must take recourse to a search for his ‘origins’. Origins of an ‘authentic’ experience written and expressed through the body, as living memory. The notion of ‘origins’ as evoking a centralised force seems to allow for a movement
of the fissured or dispersed gaze towards a unified and unidirectional one. The metaphor of pain as a universal yet intensely individual ‘experience’ allows the possibility of both sharing pain as well as acknowledging its location in difference. As the multiple articulation of Bachchan’s body language evokes plural forms of identification, pain becomes the galvanising force mobilised for a magnified subjectivity.

Bachchan’s scarred body is central to his negotiation within the codes of the ‘formula’. The scar is an index of memory, a regulator of his practice, a constant intrusion into his life and a reminder of his marginality. The scar is introduced periodically to regulate the multiple narratives that inform Bachchan’s discourse of the body – this is resolved by stressing the return to ‘origins’ – the shame of childhood. For example, following the conflict with the mafia at the dockyard, Bachchan replies to his mother saying ‘Tum chahte ho ki main bhi mu chpake bhag jaun?’ (Do you want me too to hide my face and run away?) – the reference to the failed/absent father. Bachchan justifies his act as part of a redemptive strategy dealing with historical pain – pain that has been inscribed in the body of the hero. At the close of the sequence, the camera dwells on the now sleeping Bachchan’s arm with the scar/tattoo. This is the first re-emergence of the scar in Bachchan’s adult life – its image here, through the gaze of the mother, paves way for a narrative transition in the hero’s life. When confronted by his Inspector brother, Bachchan uses the tattoo to justify his transition to criminality. Another important moment is when Parveen babi, unable to take Bachchan’s anguish, asks him to remove the tattoo through plastic surgery. Bachchan replies that the tattoo had left deep marks on his body, soul and hand and no plastic surgery in the world could remove it. In a shot where both stars are in the frame, we see Parveen Babi bending her head to kiss the tattoo, an erotically charged moment where she proclaims her solidarity with his past/pain. During the funeral sequence where the long-lost father is cremated, the camera moves from the fire to Bachchan’s arm which is lighting the fire. The scar/tattoo is highlighted: thereby focussing on Bachchan’s burden of shame/revenge. Here the scar’s symbolic status differs from other meaningful objects of family reunion dramas which are recalled to resolve the broken home. In Deewaar, the scar is constant, and publicly exhibited to be carried by one of the protagonists until final redemption by death. The
past, its history and shame are important regulators of Bachchan’s trajectory in *Deewaar*. A damaged past is the site of constant referral and the justification for criminality, a tragic death/sacrifice is the ‘formula’s resolution of Bachchan’s return to his ‘origins’: his death in his mother’s arms offers the possibility of partial redemption by re-entering the space of the family/nation.

The number *786* – Bachchan’s identification badge as a dock-worker – circulates throughout the narrative of *Deewaar*, as a symbolic device, channelising the evocation of memory through flashes. The badge assumes the status of a fetish object, whose phantasmic powers are summoned periodically through the film. The fetish/badge becomes the object of memory, evoking a multi-layered realm of meaning. The first invocation is a 1970s version of secularism (as *786* stands for *Bismillah-E-Rehmane Rahim*), then the badge/image emerges as the bodyguard or protector from death as Samanth’s (a mafia gang leader) men try to kill Bachchan – almost as though remembering the past is always beneficial for the present. Finally, the sliding away of the badge, the break with his past, is what ultimately brings about Bachchan death. The status of the badge changes once Bachchan changes his proletarian clothing to become smuggler – no longer worn on his arm, it rests uneasily in his pocket.

Bachchan’s power is also generated through a consolidation of his masculinity, a masculinity that acknowledges the object of desire yet fails to possess it. Take for example, Bachchan’s relationship with Parveen Babi. In a remarkable departure from other films, they are shown to have a physical relationship out of wedlock. Bachchan’s feelings and emotions towards Parveen Babi somehow seem to threaten his sense of masculine identity, since the denial of such feelings and desires is what constitutes his male identity. This is also strengthened by a constant denial of ‘femininity’ or feminine qualities. The ‘angry man’s’ subjectivity is maintained not through physical restraint or coercion, but through a gaze thrown back upon itself, generating a process of self-surveillance. The narrative logic of the ‘formula’ ultimately takes first Parveen Babi and then Bachchan to their death, their freedom, and redemption.
Most of the films of the 80s – whether it is *Hukumat* or *Tamas* – take violence for granted. Violence constitutes visually the most riveting elements of these films. The area of personal relationships has simply disappeared from the 80s cinema – whether ‘commercial’, ‘middle’ or ‘art’. There are, of course, exceptions.

But first let me discuss the political-social-institutional backdrop to the cinema of the 80s. The relationship of the two is not mechanistic. But over a decade, a significant causal relationship emerges. The 80s was probably the most turbulent decade in India’s post-independence history. At the beginning of the 80s there was the ‘Restoration’ of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The euphoria ebbed as the intractability of the country’s problems – Punjab, Assam, Gorkha-land, Sri Lanka, economic stagnation, increasing rural misery, a weak and corrupt administration – became increasingly obvious. There was a second round of euphoria in the mid-80s with new people in power. Economic liberalism did not lead to percolation of goodies down to the poorest as had been hoped but to concentration of power in the hands of the rich. On the social side, it led to the rise of a Yuppie-class with its concomitant of pseudo-computer culture and avid consumerism. On the cultural side, it led to what may be called the credtinisation of the urban intelligentsia – specially of the young. Writing, criticism, film and theatre became little more than monitoring and publicising ‘new wave’. A cinematic or the atrical trend – or even individual works – are taken up, superficially ‘discussed’ (which means praised) and thrown away like disposable junk even before they come on view. This has had a deleterious effect on cinema. Films – even middle cinema films – are now managerially made – with a view to what the market ‘will take’. No wonder the products are so depressingly similar.

The eighties are only the culmination of a long process of debasement. This history of Hindi popular cinema in the 80s is the history primarily of the interaction between the political and social turbulence, the economic decay of cinema industry and the need of the film-makers to give the audiences well-tried themes which will reassure them and to vary such themes by the right touch of innovation to ensure a hit. In the 1980s the politico-economic situation became desperate. So has the cinema industry economic situation. Hence the abysmal quality of *Hukumat, Pratighat*, which can be regarded as box-office hits.
The first year of the decade, 1980-81 looked positively an annus mirabilis, a year of wonders. There was a vigour, a drive, a charm in the films of this year. It would not be too fanciful to relate this to the political and social euphoria of the Restoration. The relative innovation of these films began to run down in later years. 1980-81 also set many trends in themes, narrative structures, and cinematic and acting styles. At the risk of being schematic, let me set down some of the important films in terms of categories – arbitrary and subjective, but useful.

The first category is of the vendetta – vigilante violence and sex exploitative ‘action film’. This was to be the leading genre of the decade. It had germinated in the seventies but it came to full bloom in the 80s. The trend was set by *Qurbani*, *Naseeb* and *Kranti*. It’s astonishing how little change has taken place in the 80s in the patterns set by these films.

*Qurbani* and *Naseeb* formed an identifiable pair. They had the mix of fast pace, high spirits, brutalism, macho, bogus idealism, male bonding and comedy. Of course *Zanjeer* and *Amar Akbar Anthony* began it all in the 70s. But the 80-81 films which represented a decline from the 70s acquired some kind of a ‘crest of the wave’ stature when viewed from the trough of the mid-80s.9

This two-faced coin of male bonding and zippy violence continued right through the eighties in films too many and too unmemorable to name. The cinematic development of the 80s is a perfect instance of Hindi cinema’s total cultural dependence – indeed slavery – to the West. The crash helmet and the leather jacket are today as typical of the trashy Hollywood film, as of our best action film.

A fall out of this macho culture was the total elimination of women as heroines. Zeenat in *Qurbani* is the attractive marionette – a glossy liberated nightclub singer who is no more than a humble adornment of the film’s rampant machismo. Gone are the days of Nargis, Nutan and Meena Kumari when women existed in their own right as recognisable, idiosyncratic, desirable individuals. *Qurbani* is a kind of a bench-mark in the downgrading of women in our cinema.
The self-parody was vulgarised in the 80s. In *Lawaaris* it plumbed the depths of transvestism. In *Coolie* and *Mard* it became unamusing gimmickry. The persona parodied became bedraggled, soiled, unworthy even of parody.

Finally, the 80-81 action films were secular, as were those of the 70s happy days. The 80s saw the rise of the shoddiest kind of religiosity in action films. This was a gift of the new retrogressive social climate of the 80s.

Manoj Kumar’s *Kranti* spawned a different genre – that of patriotic gore. The size and the cost of the film were staggering. It was reduced to a huge slanging match against the British by two of our top thespians (Manoj and Dilip). What is remarkable is the style of *Kranti*. It is loudly caricatural, it glories in incredibility and bad taste. It has had an undistinguished progeny. Released in 1981, *Kranti*, dealing with the British of the mid-19th century, did not have an identifiable contemporary target. Punjab provided it. Now there is no stopping of these gross, chauvinistic, ruthlessly exploitative films – subhash Ghai’s *Karma*, Anil Sharmas’s *Hukumat*, B.R. Chopra’s *Dehleez* and *Commando*. These are all ‘frontier’ films. The enemy across the border is infiltrating agents, the centre cannot hold, the entire nation is in danger. Dilip, Naseer, Dharmendra, Mithun and various sundry junior heroes go to the rescue. The shadow of *Kranti* lies particularly heavy on *Karma* where, like Dilip and Manoj in the former film, Dilip and Naseer shout each other out. The cheapening of patriotism into mainstream sectarianism constitutes a theme in itself – a base contribution of 80s cinema to our culture.

The portmanteau/umbrella term ‘action film’ covers many genres, themes, variations. A huge outpouring of such films took place in the 80s.

The basic themes are: The innocence of the common man which by its very existence in a corrupt society invites exploitation; the shock of disillusionment ‘splits’ the personality; a kind of cultural schizophrenia results; one self is in love with the freedom of the apache, the urban noble savage; the other clings to the notion of order because ‘civilization’ depends on order; both fuse in the lust for revenge.

Love as obsession, as a destroying passion, as *ishk*, has of course coming down from *Devdas* to *Ek Duje Ke Liye*, to *Saagar* to *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*. That
group of films has practically exhausted the repertoire of personal relationships in Hindi cinema.

The romance wave was set in with the box-office successes of *Qayamat se Qayamat Tak* and *Maine Pyar Kiya*. The spin-offs of these two trend-setters featuring fresh-faced new stars are still hitting the cinema halls. A horde of film makers keep harping on the Romeo and Juliet premise of these two films, content in other words in narrating stories of coltish boys and girls, whose romances are thwarted by their feuding families.

The Romeo and Juliet touch has been ever-present. And Shakespeare's immortal lovers have had their counterparts in the legendary stories of *Heer Ranjah*, *Shiring Farhad*, *Sohni Mahiwal* and *Laila Majnu*. The clash of two generations has had a universal resonance, engendering several film versions. Before *Qayamat*...and *Maine Pyar Kiya*, too, there had been similar 'modern' updates on the perils faced by young couples in love. Both *Love Story* and *Betaab*, were at a basic level, Romeo and Juliet kind tackling family objections. Only in these cases, there was a happy ending ensured for the lovers. *Maine Pyar Kiya*, incidentally elected to be positive about the youth versus elders combat while *Qayamat*...hurtled towards a tragic ending which moved viewers to tears. Similarly, the *Ek Duije ke Liye* pair had chosen to jump off a cliff than to contend with elders who couldn't reconcile themselves to the linguistic differences between the families.

Aamir Khan, a relief from the iron-pumping brooding heroes, the intensely romantic hero was well-primed to be a pin-up boy. For women viewers of all ages, his winning points were a freshness backed by an intelligence that give his performance an edge over his peers, from the Govindas to the Chunky Pandey's. In the top-grosser *Dil*, Aamir Khan combined an almost tangible tenderness with an overt toughness, thrilling viewers with the promise of leashed in machismo. With this film he became the guy's hero as well.

What many new actors do correspond to is the life-style of the predominant section of the society, the young. Over the decades, the teenage crowd – without any class distinction – has been the largest audience for the stars. Fan mail comes,
essentially from the pre-adolescent stage. The correspondence smacks of puppy love, with the letter writers declaring their babyish infatuation or of obsession for the star. But in most cases, this turns out to be a whimsical, fleeting love. Once the fan matures, the idol becomes distant. “How could I ever have been so star-struck as to shoot off a letter?” so many have asked, somewhat embarrassed by what they call their ‘childishness’.

The entry of private and international networks into the television market and the proliferation of private cable networks in the 1990s, which paralleled changes in political orientation, substantially affected both industry’s attitude to television – a greater interest in it with an awareness of its different and larger reach – and media agenda. At the same time the arrival of transnational conglomerates fed fears of cultural erosion and corruption, the destruction of tradition and so on, and was seen as a weakening or attack on the national cultural spirit.

The positive side of the 1990s was the entry of Ram Gopal Verma and Mani Ratnam into Bollywood. The post-Ratnam young Turks like Karan Johar and Aditya Chopra are solely dedicated to a feel-good, romantic story-telling with a lot of gloss and very little substance. Their films are tailored to suit the “cellphone-flashing new generation.”

Bollywood’s biggest hits of the Nineties were lavish musical fantasies on the intimately related themes of romance and family obligation, most notably Sooraj Barjatya’s *Hum Aapke Hain Koun...?* (What Am I to You?, 94) and Aditya Chopra’s *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (The Brave-Heart Will Take the Bride, 95). These glossy filmi operettas broke new ground in at least one respect: no longer were supporting-cast family members treated as peripheral complications. The movies self-consciously insisted on the bedrock conventions of Hindi cinema that, until fairly recently, could comfortably be taken for granted. Screenwriter-turned-lyricist Javed Akhtar regards the movies of the so-called Hindu Family Values school as the first “really new formula” to emerge in Hindi cinema since the Seventies. Akhtar described an “onslaught of consumerism” in the Nineties that “brought Indian society to the point where we are feeling slightly lost.” We talk of a cultural invasion, an excess of Westernization, of a loss of family values...But on the other hand, what’s
the alternative? Do I go back to the village? Western culture and glitter are very attractive. So Sooraj Barjatya’s *Maine Pyar Kiya* (I Love Someone, 89) and *Hum Aapke Hain Koun...?* Offer the solution: a happy marriage between the two worlds. “I can have everything offered by modernization and still hold on to family values and tradition.”

The Hindu Family Values Films quickly developed a cult following in India and among nostalgic NRIs (Non-Resident Indians), with fans returning again and again to recite the familiar dialogue in unison. This, in spite of the fact that the movies amounted to a propaganda campaign for a social institution, may in the audience probably had no use for: the beleaguered Hindu Joint Family, in which all the sons continue to live in their father’s house with their wives and children. The HFV movies gloss over the inherent aggravations of such a set-up by focusing on families so fabulously rich that their spacious, overly decorated palaces would be unlikely to cramp anyone’s style. The fantasy of fabulous wealth (an army of servants is always on hand to wrangle the demeaning chores that householders traditionally go to war over, like hanging up the wet towels) is surely an additional factor in the broad appeal of these movies, along with their cozy, amniotic domesticity (Chute, 2002, 52).

In a way, *DDLJ* (1995) gives the NRI a new respectability. The film is about a romance that starts in the UK and ends in India. There are problems and crises in the relationship, yet the NRI Shah Rukh does not give up and unlike the hero in *Bobby*, waits until the girl’s father relents. The feel-good narrative, overt sentimentality and the appeal of the young stars Kajol and Shah Rukh Khan, made the film such a huge success (Joshi, 2002, 131).

In *Dilwale Dukhania Le Jayenge* (The Brave-Heart Will Take the Bride, Aditya Chopra, 95), the East is heir to legends that treat romantic love as an obsession that transcends all boundaries – and here, whiz kid Aditya Chopra makes Love Blessed by the Family the chic new dictum for yuppies and yokels alike. London-bred Simran (Kajol) and Raj (Shahrukh Khan) are in love, but the girl’s stern father, Baldev (Amrish Puri), promises Simran to an old friend’s son back home in Punjab. Simran, all-innocent, sensuous, is ready to run away, but Raj would not, without the father’s blessing. A tight screenplay puts a charming gloss on the film’s patriarchal
values, while shrewdly acknowledging the injustice done to women via the film’s sensitive portrayal of the mother-daughter relationship (Dwyer, 2002, 52).

I wish to end the present discussions on the journey of masculinities in popular Hindi cinema by bringing the discourse of articulation of masculinity in American action cinema of the 1980s vis-à-vis the archetypal romantic hero, Devdas as an epitome of self-contradictory, complex Indian masculinity construct in the popular Hindi film genre (exception being the masculinity construct of Amitabh Bachchan).

Many critics saw the success of Stallone and Schwarzenegger in the American action cinema of the 1980s as a disturbing sign, signalling the evolution of a previously unseen cinematic articulation of masculinity. The success of these films and stars could be read in terms of a backlash against the feminism of the 1970s, as indicative of a new conservatism in both national and sexual politics. As we will see, the muscular action hero was, for some, a figure who represented the antithesis of the ‘new man’, himself a creation of advertising images in the early 1980s, and the feminist gains be supposedly represented. These competing images perhaps indicate the extent to which masculinity itself has been called into question through the 1980s and since. It seems as if, at the same time as the male body on the screen was becoming more and more visible, an excessive parody of an ideal, masculinity was emerging as a visible category within the criticism of the day. Both the films themselves and Tasker’s analysis of them emerge as and form a critical and cultural context in which the multiple meanings of masculine identity, the existence of masculinities, has been made increasingly apparent (Tasker, 1993, 13, 9, 165).

In a way, ‘masculinity’ indicates the extent to which a physical definition of masculinity in terms of a developed musculature is not limited to the male body within representation, according to Tasker. Various critics have seen the muscular body of the action hero as a triumphant assertion of the male power. Others, such as Barbara Creed, have viewed the Schwarzenegger personal in terms of the articulation of a set of anxieties about the very masculine identity that they seem to embody so forcefully. Nevertheless, it is clear that while both types i.e. the distinction between the ‘new man’ and the ‘action man’ are written through gender perspective and defined by the body, they cannot be understood within a simple gendered binary that
opposes female/feminine to male/masculine. This serves to remind us that the meaning of the body on the screen is not secure, but shifting, inscribed with meaning in different ways at different points.

Interestingly, one wishes to posit and present the archetypal romantic hero, *Devdas* as a pointer to the more complex and complicated domain of Indian celluloid masculinity construct who has multi-dimensional layers and shades vis-à-vis the one-dimensional much simpler hegemonic projection of western celluloid masculinity hero who can be termed as action heroes. *Devdas* is not the angst-ridden, psychologically bedevilled modern hero troubled by the complexity of change and challenge around him. His emasculated frailty and indecision make him a pathetic figure, full of longing but expert at avoiding action. His frustration makes him the early vagabond of literature and cinema, drifting along like a withered leaf at the mercy of capricious fate. Once this character took cinematic flesh and shape, he has continued to haunt us in the dark, imbuing his descendents with the pain of unfulfilled love and infantile narcissism, which somehow struck a collective chord (Rao, 2002, 16).

*Devdas* may bear a generic resemblance to the *Yaksha* of the *Meghdoot*, yearning for his beloved and expressing love as the torment of *Viraha*. All heroes of epics and mythology at some point express the various moods of shringara but they are all men of action to qualify for the epithet hero. Kakar (1989) traces the cultural origins of *Devdas* “in a confluence of Islamic and Hindu streams” of *Majnun* of the famous Islamic legend and the laments of separation in Sanskrit. In one substitutes Hindu for Islamic, then one has the classical dilemma of *Parvati* and *Devdas*. Is Chandramukhi Paro’s alter ego? The courtesan who willingly gives up her sinful life of luxury, content only to serve, is a sentimental reaffirmation of love’s transforming power when it benefits the man, that is. Is this masculine wish-fulfilling? Strip the whore of her tawdry outer self and discover the golden heart at the core, radiating the comfort of maternal love. This yearning for maternal nurturance and avoiding adult sexuality is part of the great unexplored Oedipal complex from which cinema especially slices away in horror.
Is there an element of authorial narcissism in the way Saratchandra makes the two women, Paro and Chandramukhi, so dedicated in their love for a worthless man who does nothing to deserve it? Both the women bring self-denying, maternal warmth to their love and this strain continues beyond Devdas in most of our films. One can think of Raj Kapoor’s all-forgiving nurtures and his mammary fixation thrust the point in case one missed the typical Raj Kapoor’s hero’s infantile sexuality. Even when he is not playing Raju for the nth time, the showman makes his son Rajeev Kapoor play a different lover who abandons the pure-as-Ganga bride without too much protest in Ram Teri Ganga Maili. Submission to family elders by men and self-abnegation for women are practically the norm, both in cinema and society.

Ashis Nandy develops a detailed, fascinating thesis of the Devdas phenomenon as an expression of India’s troubled journey, from the innocence of the village to the impersonal cruelty of city. In a chapter titled ‘The City As The Invitation To An Antique Death’ (in a recent collection of essays, An ambiguous Journey To The City), Nandy explores the complete, uncanny coalescence between Bawa the cinematic auteur and Devdas the celluloid hero. So authoritative was the presence of this mythic journey that all other modes of creativity had to define themselves in opposition to it, and to that extent, had to remain captive to it’, Nandy maintains that Devdas must be seen as more than the story of a weakling who finds solace in the oblivion of drink, after loosing the woman, his love, through his half-hearted attempt to defy tradition. And then finds a woman whom he cannot love in the soul-destroying city. Does the memory of the distant village still haunt the hero and through him, all of us? And does the city’s glitter swallow up Devdas and not even notice his homelessness – spiritual, physical and emotional?

The mythic journey from the village gradually sheds not only its quest for lost innocence but memories of that imagined Utopia. The Vijay of Deewaar remembers the village but he now a tormented creature of the city pavements where he had pounded as an uprooted boy. Migration is an irreversible process of development, however lopsided and full of inequities has created a class of people who have no chance of going back, or even if they want to go back. The village is no longer the imaginary home of certitudes but the site of constant strife, of caste hatreds sharpened to murderous edge by the electoral arithmetic of politics. The anonymity of the city
can be depressing but is also a liberation from the rigid caste hierarchies of the village. The city offers a tenuous toehold on existence and a chance to pursue a dream if one dares to dream. The city has no place for passivity. There could be the agony of atomised existence but the Indian city has still not become so depersonalised that human beings don’t connect with each other, however tenuous the connection may be. The modern hero, driven by the need to retain identity against the threat of self-annihilation in the uncaring city, is a more complex creation of contemporary literature and cinema. He is far beyond the immature narcissism in which Devdas immures himself. Further, the mores and fashions of the city have infiltrated the village and created an unsatisfied hunger for consumer goods that is fed by trendy images purveyed by TV. Mainstream cinema has kept pace with this all pervasive change from which nothing is immune. Culturally, socially and economically, the city has entered the collective soul, almost obliterating the village from our memory. Even its romanticised image has become tarnished and nostalgia can’t restore the golden sheen.

When the hero became a victim-turned-vigilante, it was the city that played the role of catalyst. And so, the village lingers on as a romantic idea, or material for an earnest parallel cinema tract. But as far as the mainstream goes, we must remember that Devdas was mainstream – its heroes have stopped making this mythic journey. Thus one has a landmark Satya, where the new migrant has shed every emotional connection with a remembered home. The city is the ultimate refuge. Satya’s semantic copy, Vaastav, carries muted echoes of Devdas along with undigested influences from many other films.

It is the other legacy, of Hamletian indecision Indian style that keeps the Devdas prototype alive in however attenuated form. Passive suffering does not become the hallmark of the Indian film over the last quarter of the 20th century. Emotionally troubled heroes, from Ardh Satya to Zanjeer to Baazigar, to take a broad cinematic sweep, are driven to act by the demons that possess them. As for the romantic heroes, they have adopted and adapted the aggressive Krishna style of wooing in the courtship game while updating raasleela to pelvic-thrusting beat. The vigorous style dictated by the overt physicality of performance has no room for passive losers. Yes, like Paro, Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge’s Simran is ready to
run away from her implacable father and the suave London-bred Raj subjects her to emotional violence of waiting, when she could very well end up as the unwilling prize of a marital lottery. Though he is seemingly passive in the sense of not running away with the willing beloved, Raj is effervescently energetic in his concerted effort to win over the stubborn father. Can the *Devdas* ghost be exorcised forever? It has lost its relevance but has the resonance been banished?

My analysis suggests the following things: -

- The representation of masculinities in Hindi cinema cannot be separated from shared cultural ideals and archetypes.
- Despite this continual flow of the cultural ethos, there is no reason to believe that society remains static. It is the society which is undergoing transformation – from tradition to modernity, from village to city, from family kinship network to large-scale impersonal bureaucratic organisation. It is also a society that has seen tremendous politico-economic transformation from colonial subjugation to post-colonial assertion of nation-making, from Nehruvian socialism to neo-liberal market-centric consumerist culture, from Gandhian idealism to a more aggressive, violent project of cultural nationalism. All these transformations, that our sociological imagination suggests, are bound to have an impact on popular cinema. No wonder each of these heroes – through his specific idioms, articulations and practices – has symbolised the uniqueness of his time. It is not therefore difficult to distinguish the Raj Kapoor of the Nehruvian era from the Amitabh Bachchan of the post-emergency period. Or the Shammi Kapoor of the 60s characterised by the spirit of youthfulness to the Shah Rukh Khan of the 90s affected by the ethos of the Hindu right and the sanctification of its family/religious values and cultural norms. But one thing is however, important to note, despite these diversities, there is also a commonality which we have already identified. A major reason for this commonality is perhaps the enduring capacity of an old civilization like ours whose archetypes, cultural memories and mythologies have a penetrating impact on our collective psyche. It would not be wrong to say that popular Hindi cinema often becomes a cultural articulation through which sociologists can see a rich interplay of change and continuity, tradition and modernity, cultural ideal and political contingency.
Raj Kapoor’s tramp and comedy differ from Charlie Chaplin’s, despite the fact that the former manifestly sought to draw on the latter. These differences can be schematically summarised as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raj Kapoor</th>
<th>Charlie Chaplin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Conformist</td>
<td>Non-conformist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Emphasis on innocence and sincerity</td>
<td>Emphasis on self-confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Anti-hero</td>
<td>Capable hero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Emphasis largely on moral and metaphysical issues</td>
<td>Emphasis largely on social issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dependent on others</td>
<td>Altruistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. City as a metaphor of opportunity</td>
<td>City as a metaphor of de-humanization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Emphasis on physical and verbal incongruity</td>
<td>Emphasis on situational incongruity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Realistic presentation within Indian narrative style</td>
<td>Stylized presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Largely affirmative repetition</td>
<td>Largely contrastive repetition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Heavy use of song and dance</td>
<td>Heavy use of pantomime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Maintains existing power relations in society</td>
<td>Inverts existing power relationships in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Overwhelmingly melodramatic</td>
<td>Partially melodramatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Women as morally cleansing force</td>
<td>Women secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. No violence associated with tramp</td>
<td>Some violence associated with tramp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One can best understand these differences in Raj Kapoor in terms of his proclivity to Indianize Chaplin. That Kapoor was inspired by him, and in certain clearly discernible ways modelled himself on, Chaplin is quite evident. At the same time, he made an attempt to Indianize Chaplin’s tramp. This Indianization was motivated partly by his desire to reach an ever wider segment of Indian society and partly by his desire to draw upon, and locate himself in, the inherited tradition. Here I am using the term ‘Indian tradition’ in its widest sense to include artistic, philosophical, and religious thought. The emphasis on moral and metaphysical dimensions, the absence of violence, can be related to the religious and philosophical tradition; the emphasis on song and dance and on melodrama, the style of presentation, etc. can be best understood in relation to the evolving traditions of Indian art; the preachiness, the excessive pathos, and the physical and verbal incongruities gain greater definition when seen against Raj Kapoor’s proclaimed desire to reach more and more people. In the case of Charlie Chaplin, there is no real conceptual evolution of the tramp; however, in the case of Raj Kapoor, there is a conceptual evolution in that the tramp becomes more and more Indianized as a consequence of a conscious effort on Kapoor’s part (Dissanayake and Sahai, 1988, 112-113).

The concept of the tramp as an object of fun and a generator of humour is alien to the Indian tradition; on the contrary, the tramp carries with him certain religious and philosophical connotations, as one in quest of truth and wisdom. To make the tramp a comic figure and also the protagonist of the film is something that was inspired by Chaplin. In the Indian tradition, protagonists are almost always noble, heroic, handsome, and charismatic. For example, a classical India treatise on dramaturgy written in the twentieth century says:

> The Hero should be well-bred, charming, liberal, clever, affable, popular, upright, eloquent, of exalted lineage, resolute and young; endowed with intelligence, energy, memory, wisdom (skill in the arts), and pride; heroic, mighty, vigorous, familiar with the codes, and a just observer of laws.

The image of the traditional protagonist has survived up to the present time in popular theatre and cinema. It was indeed highly innovative of Raj Kapoor to make a tramp, lacking almost all of the above heroic qualities, the protagonist of his films.

What this comparison of Charlie Chaplin and Raj Kapoor proves is that the harmonizing of discourses that we find in other domains related to Kapoor’s films finds eloquent expression in the field of humour as well. Considering the fact that his brand of comedy contributed significantly to his popularity among movie-goers, this propensity of his allows us to gain a deeper understanding of his mass appeal.
2 The story of Karna is as follows: Kunti, the future mother of the five Pandava brothers, had summoned the Sun when she was a young princess. Though her calling the Sun was a playful whim – she was just trying out a mantra – the god insisted on making something more of the invitation. The offspring of the resulting union was Karna. To hide her shame at Karna’s illegitimate birth, Kunti abandoned her infant son and cast him adrift on a raft. Karna was saved by a poor charioteer and grew up into a formidable warrior and the supporter of the evil Duryodhana. On the eve of the great battle, Kunti approached Karna and revealed to him that fighting on Duryodhana’s side would cause him to commit the sin of fratricide. Karna answered:

It is not that I do not believe the words you have spoken, Ksatriya (warrior caste) lady, or deny that for me the gateway to the Law is to carry out your behest. But the irreparable wrong you have done me by casting me out has destroyed the name and fame I could have had. Born a Ksatriya, I have yet not received the respect due to a baron. What enemy could have done me greater harm than you have? When there was time to act you did not show your present compassion. And now you have laid orders on me, the son to whom you denied the sacraments. You have never acted in my interest like a mother, and now, here you are, enlightening me solely in your own interest.

Karna, though, finally promised his mother that on the battle field he would spare all her sons except Arjuna – the mother’s favourite. In this context, one can note that the Karna myth has been an inspiring theme to creative minds of all times in various expressions including Tagore’s immortal “Karna-Kunti Sambad” (Dialogue of Kama And Kunti) (Bangla).

3 In an article on Latin American fiction written some years ago, critic Jean Franco describes how its discourse of nationalism constructs images of the male as active and of the female as passive and private. If the feminine is associated with immobility and hence territoriality,” masculine creativity becomes the agency whereby heterogeneous elements in Latin American culture are valorised as a sign of carnivalesque pluralism. A similar though historically and culturally distinct effort at incorporating heterogeneity and reveling in it is evident in Indian commercial cinema in terms of the male body as the interface of multiple regional, class, and religious identities and texts. The male hero as the center and source of narrative meaning is “resemanticised” into a mode of instability and the dispersion of meaning. Forms of disguise, impersonation, and masquerade are the visual means that serve to render this move from the natural to the acculturated body allowing the spectator means of recognition of his/her social world within the world of the film through the hero’s “play” with the signifiers of dress, accent, and gesture. This distinct tendency within the Bombay film to both identify and nullify marks of (intercultural) difference in a wide variety of textual situations allows national identity to surface as so many styles of the flesh.

Whether as a dominant theme played out through the use of the double and/or various forms of disguise, as in Hum Donna (The two of Us, 1961), Mura Naomi Joker (My Name Is Joker, 1967), Nay Din Nay Rat (New Day New Night, 1974), Chinatown (1962), and Johnny Mera Naaam (My Name is Johnny, 1970), or as a visual motif in particular sequences, as in An Evening In Paris (1967), Love in Tokyo (1966), Mar Akbar Anthony (1977), and Desh Premee (Patriot, 1982), or as a narrative element in romantic comedy, such as Padosan (Neighbour, 1968), or Chupke Chupke (Quietly, Quietly, 1975), or Victoria No. 203 (1972), the Bombay film has been obsessively concerned with the “enigma” of (male) subjectivity and the need for the disavowal of fixed notions of identity. In a society where the social markers of identity are so well-defined, where caste, creed, region, and education all translate into distinctive visual emblems (the Brahmin’s mark on the forehead and sacred thread, the Bengali versus the Gujarati woman’s style of wearing a saree, the Sikh’s turban – the list goes on), where to give one’s name is (usually) also to reveal one’s caste and regional background, it is small wonder that the popular film engages with the question of identity at various levels of articulation.

4 An Evening In Paris presents a set of globetrotting characters and a hero who is not longer anxious to proclaim his ‘Indianness’. The film draws attention to itself as entertainment and spectacle in its opening sequence, when the protagonist, Shammi Kapoor, looks directly at the camera as he gyrates and sings, “Aji, aisa mauka phir kahan milega?” (Folks, when will you get such an opportunity again?). The hero promises to be a tour guide for the audience and to take them sightseeing in Paris. The “evening” of the title refers to the evening at the movie theatre, and the song exhorts, “Dekho.
"dekho, dekho, dekho, dekho!" (See, see, see, see!), an invitation to viewers to immerse themselves in visual and sensual enjoyment. This throwback to the promise of the earliest days of cinema, when the novelty of seeing distant lands and places was a major attraction, renews the process of 'alienation' between the spectator and the cinematic apparatus, with the screen abolishing spatial distance and underscoring psychic distance simultaneously. Long shots and tilted angles structure a sort of hierarchical arrangement between the world of film and the world of the spectator, the first of which must forever be beyond the reach of the second. Yet the glamour of the West and of the rich (if not famous, on-screen) can lure the viewers to an entrancing evening.

An Evening in Paris brings together the attractive and chic Sharmila Tagore and, by now, the reigning sixties star, Shammi Kapoor, in a romantic drama that seeks to give a new twist to the age-old Bombay film themes of wealth-poverty, insider-outsider, heroism-villainy. Here we have both the hero and the heroine subject to different kinds of doubling and masquerade. The initial setting is Paris, where arrives Deepa (Sharmila Tagore), the beautiful daughter of a wealthy businessman, in search of true love. She wants to be loved for herself and not for the money she will inherit from her father. Paris, she is led to believe, will effect this miracle. Settling down in an apartment, Deepa initially tries to masquerade as her maid and is soon pursued by two men: Shekhar (Pran), her Paris guardian’s son, and Sam (Shammi Kapoor), who passes himself off as a Frenchman who can speak Hindi. Both men frantically court her, trying to outwit each other in gaining her attention and affections. The lovers move from one foreign location to another, with Shekhar in tow frolicking and romancing in extravagant and lavish settings.

Then plot complications set in, and the romance turns into action drama. The villains are introduced so that the heroic side to the male protagonist’s personality can be presented. Since nothing happens singly in the popular film and identities harbour sub-identities, characters and events now reveal their sinister underside. It is soon clear to the audience that Shekhar, son of the honest caretaker/guardian of the heroine, is associated with a crime gang headed by Jaggu, whose name and iconicity evoke villainy through the accumulated force of repetition in countless previous films. The heroine too is metonymically associated with evil: Jaggu employs Suzie, a cabaret dancer who is the spitting image of Deepa and actually her long-lost twin sister. And the worlds of big business (represented by Deepa’s father) and big crime (represented by Jaggu and his cohorts) come together when it is revealed that the disgruntled servant who had kidnapped Suzie-Rupa as a child is an associate of Jaggu. The centrifugal tendencies in the first half of the film are balanced by the plot’s centripetal movement in the latter half as past and present, vendetta and retribution, lost innocence and sacrifice meet and do battle. Ironically, the hero alone is unburdened by a past and hence able to traverse contradictory states at will. He easily slips from playful Casanova to shrewd private eye, able to upstage the villains and rescue Deepa. A prolonged chase-and-fight sequence at the end of the film includes ostensibly hair-raising stunts over the Niagara Falls in Canada. As the wet and tired hero and heroine are rescued from a tiny ledge by a helicopter, they burst into song, one of the hit songs of the film.

In the sequence from an Evening described above, the hero’s parodic flaunting of foreign garb to gain access to the heroine is both a sign of his transcendence with the terms of his assigned role in the film and an instance of his recognisable brand of acting and self-presentation.

In Love in Tokyo, for instance, the comedian Mehmood engages in a series of masquerades in order to deceive the irate father of the South Indian girl he loves. While his slippery moves are meant to evoke laughter, ‘South Indianness’ itself is reduced to a set of external marks worn on the body. The same may be said for Padosan (Neighbour, 1968), in which Mehmood’s parody of South Indians (Madrasis) remains on the level of surface identity marks and accent. Similarly in Coolie (Porter), the hero, Amitabh Bachchan, and his friend Rishi Kapoor parody a Madrasi by adopting his dress and accent, usually shown as attributes of the older generation of parents opposed to the more open and flexible choices of their offspring.

What implications could this have for theories of the gaze? The specificity of address to either male or female spectators does not seem to apply here, given the Bombay film’s generic instability and the economics of its production and reception. Moreover, parody in the service of utopian community is usually accomplished through the register of songs and dances, which are themselves utopian moments.
in the narrative, points of connection between the diegetic world and the larger film world generally, as well as between subjective and shared experience. Also, the crowded mise-en-scene, rapid camera movements, and editing of these song sequences invite fragmentation and multiple subject positions rather than the penetrating power of the gaze. The situation is further complicated by the motif of male bonding that serves as the metonym of national unity and amity. The male body in disguise, having recourse to everything from cross-cultural dressing to cross-dressing, would seem to structure a gaze that is neither simply male nor female but a "gaze-in-crisis," a differential gaze that the cinematic image simultaneously destabilises and appropriates. I would like to suggest that the mode of parody to problematise difference charts new territory in notions of the gaze.

But if maleness makes possible the hero's ingenuity in playing with appearances and extending the signifying possibilities of his body, what of the heroine's double, as in the case of Deepa/Suzie in an Evening in Paris? The social/sexual divide falls along gender lines here: Suzie is not only Deepa's alter ego but her competitor as well. For Sam, she is a double who signifies danger, threat, evil, and a voracious sexuality. She is also a 'tragic' figure (like Nargis's double in Anhonee), for she has to die in order to redeem herself and pay the price for her 'immorality.' Woman, therefore, unlike man, cannot change herself at will, cannot adopt and discard identities to signify a wider social embrace. On the other hand, it is her fixity that allows the hero to narcissistically (dis)play his body.

8 As scriptwriter Javed Akhtar says, Amitabh Bachchan cannot be compared with just another actor. Bachchan is an exceptional actor. He has been fortunate enough to be living in a kind of no man's land for a very long time, between the eastern oriental Indian and western culture. So that is how and that is where he has been able to imbibe from both sides and I suppose today in modern India, whether the writer or the actor, or the director, only those people will be effective who have the best of both worlds. If you are too westernised then you get alienated by the audience, you get too far - if you are too Indian then you cannot fulfil their aspirations because their aspirations are different. So you have to be a synthesis of Indian and western influences and I think fortunately Amitabh had the background and circumstances for that.

9 Qurbani had certain elements which made it a hit. It speeded up the action in a very American fashion. It gave you trendy pop music and songs - one of the first to serve up pop in desi lingo. It gave you male bonding of a special kind - the great brotherly macho love which turns into hate (Firoze Khan and Vinod Khanna). The other side of this coin is unbridled violence. Qurbani was the most violent Hindi film (recall not merely the fights but the smashing of the Mercedes in the parking lot) upto that time. It was violence of a specific kind. Frankly, it was neo-colonial - not in the orthodox but in a subtle sense. The furious cutting pace, the trendy wear of the men and the girl (Zeenat), the tough dialogue, the skilful beating up and mauling are all out of American action films or cops-and-robbers T.V. serials.

10 Another interesting input to the Devdas phenomenon is put forth by P.K. Nair. He writes that cinema started as a vehicle for providing leisure time entertainment for the masses. For many years of its early decades, film had to have a 'happy ending' so that the audience could leave the theatre with the confidence that the hero and heroine with whom they had identified would live happily ever after. Apart from other factors, Devdas is perhaps the first Indian film to break the hitherto accepted convention that 'tragedy' is taboo for cinemagoers. In fact, the 1935 P.C. Barua version (both Bengali and Hindi) was such a huge success that thereafter 'tragedy' became the mainstay for the box-office success of a film. Actors who specialised in such tragic roles became the icons of Indian cinema. One can mention Dilip Kumar for sure. Devdas can be regarded basically as a tragedy of three people, one man, two women and their attitude to life. In cinema, it is often referred to as a triangle story. But Devdas cannot be reduced to a mere love triangle with a tragic end. It cannot be discarded as a 'rich boy - poor girl and the other woman' stuff; it is much more than that. The social strata of the three characters, their worldviews and the values they cherish are elements in understanding their relationship. They are not characters specially designed for the screen but taken from life, which the viewers could identify with and relate to. This only added to the popularity of the film. And to the later mythification of the characters in film after film.