Chapter 2

The Question of Gaze and the Representation of Men as Spectacle

This chapter explores another crucial aspect of feminist film studies: how it understands the concept of gaze. I am exploring the notion of gaze to understand how masculine hegemony works within mainstream cinema. The question is whether we can reformulate the male/female, subject/object binary through a nuanced reading of gaze. Moreover, how can we explore the male bias inherent within the cinematic medium? The act of looking is of crucial importance because we know that film is a scopophilic medium per se. The process of gendering is embedded within this scopic field. The general trend in film studies and film theory is to conflate the gaze with look. I would problematize such a notion of gaze by engaging with the Lacanian understanding of the term gaze. To understand this notion of gaze one has to depend on psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud and especially Jacques Lacan’s formulation of psychoanalysis is important here. I would draw an example from Hindi cinema to explore how such a nuanced understanding of gaze becomes productive to understand contemporary gender relations.

Another section of this chapter will deal with the representation of men in Hollywood cinema. Though my object of study is not Hollywood but here I would concentrate on how film theory addresses masculinity in general. The notion of sexual difference addressed in the earlier chapter is productive here. This overview maps out how Laura Mulvey’s take on the process of gendering in mainstream Hollywood cinema can be utilized in engaging with the representation of men in mainstream cinema. Here I follow Mulvey’s argument and would like to push it further. I will explore the argument that objectification is not limited to the female figure, men’s bodies can also be objectified and reduced to spectacle. I will also explore a particular Hindi film to prove my point. In the end I would argue such a formulation may complicate subject object relationship but does not challenge the overall male hegemony.

The notion of Gaze and Hindi Cinema

Now I will concentrate on the issue of gaze as explored by Lacan which is distinct from the gaze of mastery as prevalent in conventional film theory. But before that we need to explore how psychoanalysis produces the sexually marked subject. Psychoanalysis is the only
discourse within social sciences which deals with the issue of unconscious. It not only proposes the possibilities of how the sexual subjectivity of an individual develops through the unconscious but it also produces the notion of the unconscious itself. If one sees this as an affirmation of patriarchy then psychoanalysis will appear as phallogocentric. Juliet Mitchell argues that both Freud and Lacan’s notion of sexual difference is descriptive rather than prescriptive. This means they show the process of gendering within patriarchy but they do not prescribe them (Mitchell: 1982, p23; Wright: 2000, pp11-12). One of the specialities of psychoanalysis is that it does not consider that interaction with the external socio-cultural field as the only element through which human subject achieves its subjectivity. Sexual identity is not only a product of socio-economic context but also a process of psycho-linguistic trope. There seems to be no contradiction between these two aspects. Psychoanalysis argues that subjectivity and sexual identity of an individual are developed at same time. There is no subjectivity before sexual identity and the notion of sexual difference is constitutive of sexual subjectivity. We can then argue that through the process of sexual difference one achieves coherent subjectivity. Here one needs to explain the notion of the sexual difference and also its stake in the production of the coherent subject. The operative terms here are the Freudian notion of castration and penis envy and Lacanian notion of subjectivity developed in the mirror stage. In fact the Freudian notions of castration along with the notion of penis envy are the linchpin of his understanding of sexual subjectivity. Mirror stage, proposed by Lacan is a particular stage of human life where the subjects acquire its coherence. Following Butler we can argue that “Lacan’s mirror does not reflect or represent a preexisting ego, but, rather, provides the frame, the boundary, the spatial delineation for the projective elaboration of the ego itself” (Butler: 1993, p74). To understand these concepts and their inter-relation one needs to address the formation of subjectivity since its pre-oedipal phase. Despite its biological sex the human infant’s primary object of desire is its mother. At this phase the infant does not have any notion of castration or any lack in mother. At the Oedipal stage two things happen, the child understands that the mother does not possess a penis and that she has an inherent lack in herself. Secondly the dyadic relationship between mother and child is broken through the introduction of the third term ‘father’. The introduction of the father figure is crucial to understand the notion of castration which represents the domain of law and language. But this position of the father figure is not necessarily a position of the biological father. Jacqueline Rose argued that this third term is not a particular sex position, rather it is a symbolic position. (Wright: 2000, p12) According to Lacan, “the relation of mother and child cannot be viewed outside the structure
established by the position of the father…..There can be nothing human that pre-exists or exists outside the law represented by the father; there is only either its denial (psychosis) or the fortunes and misfortunes (‘normality’ and neurosis) of its terms” (Mitchell: 1982, p23). In this Oedipal stage the child understands that the mother is castrated and the boy child fears being castrated by the father for his desire for the mother. Thus the boy child abandons his primordial desire and wish to possess someone like his mother latter in his life. The primary loss which was repressed in oedipal phase becomes formative for his libido in his latter life. For the girl child things develop in a different way. Like the boy child, mother was also her primordial object of desire. When she perceives that she does not have a penis like the boy child and understands that the mother is also castrated, she blames her mother for her dubious status. Thus she abandons her mother and desires her father who have a penis. And that latter in her life, she would like to possess the penis by desiring a man like her father. According to Freud this is the case of penis envy which is a specific outcome for women as a result of castration complex. Thus for a human infant the understanding of sexual difference and achieving sexually marked subjectivity is developed in tandem. This is how the human sexual subject seems to acquire socially prescribed roles.

The notion of the Lacanian mirror stage is also formative for the sexual subject. In fact mirror stage proposes how a human infant develops its subjectivity which is sexually marked. Butler argues that “Bodies only become whole, i.e, totalities, by the idealizing and totalizing specular image which is sustained through time by a sexually marked name…What constitutes the integral body is not a natural boundary or organic telos, but the law of kinship that works through the name”(Butler: 1993, p72) To understand the significance of mirror stage we have to go back to the initial years of human infant again. The human infant cannot not perceive itself as a separate entity before mirror stage. It considers the faeces, mother’s breast, the blanket as part of itself. It is only in the mirror stage through its reflection in the mirror that the infant comes to know its boundaries. Only then, it can assume its whole body. Thus the fragmented earlier selves acquire a coherence through this reflection. According to Silverman “the cultural identity of the subject depends upon this separation. Indeed, it could almost be said that to the degree that the object has been lost, the subject has been found” (Silverman: 1999, p98). Through the identification with its mirror image the child develops its ego. But the mirror stage offers more complexity. The child recognizes and at the same time misrecognizes this image of itself. The child was right to identify with the image at mirror but it also misrecognizes as the image in the mirror is nothing but an illusion. At the
moment of recognition and misrecognition, the self is born (Creed: 1998, p6). Through the concept of mirror stage, Lacan introduces the notion of bodily ego which represents the subject into imaginary order. Thus through mirror stage the fragmented infant becomes the sexually marked subject of imaginary.

Here once again one should remember in the psychoanalytical framework, socio-cultural attributes do not work over biological body. Psychoanalysis distinguishes itself from historicism. By historicism, I am referring to a certain form of Foucauldian discourse. Apparently Foucault proposes the body as a socio-cultural construct. To be precise, body is produced through the socio-cultural dynamics. “Within a number of texts, Foucault clearly questions whether there is a “materiality” to bodies which is in any sense separable from the ideational or cultural meaning that constitute bodies”(Butler: 1989, p602). But within the same text Butler further argues that Foucault proposes a prediscursive, prehistorical body upon which the socio-cultural tropes work. The body remains something beyond the socio-cultural construct. “Foucault appears to have identified in a prediscursive and prehistorical “body” a source of resistance to history and to culture, where history and culture are finally and paradoxically conceived in juridical terms”(Butler: 1989, p607). Such reading of Foucauldian discourse distinguishes it from psychoanalysis. Within the psychoanalytical field the socio-cultural trope does not work over the biological body. But both the biological body and the socio-cultural aspect appears at once. Both produce each other and there is no prediscursive, prehistorical body on which culture should act. Both Freudian and Lacanian subjects are psychosexual which is one way to explore the relationship between unconscious and sexuality. “For Freud, what produces sexual difference is the meaning he assigned to anatomical differences of the male and female organ, when interpreted in terms of presence and absence. As a consequence, neither sex is complete: female suffer from ‘penis envy’, males suffer from ‘castration anxiety’. For Freud, human sexuality is always psychosexual” (Wright: 2000, pp17-18). For Lacan this psychosexual position is of sexuation. Sexuation is the process by which we unconsciously choose our mode of being as either masculine or feminine. Thus Lacan proposes how the sexed subject acquires a social position which according to him are logical positions. According to Toril Moi “to a very large extent anatomical sex does predict one’s symbolic position. For Lacan, then, the relationship between body and sexed subjectivity is neither necessary (that would be biological

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6 I should clarify that this is one of the readings available on Foucault and there are other possibilities too.
determinism) nor arbitrary (that would be a form of idealism, a denial of the material
structure of the body) but contingent. It is contingent and not necessary because not all
women will take up a feminine position, just as not all men will take up a masculine position;
it’s not arbitrary since there is general expectation that women on the whole will take up
feminine position” (Moi: 2004, pp 856-857, italic in original).

Within the Lacanian system femininity can only be marginal to symbolic. For both Freud and
Lacan, femininity is constituted as a negative term, it is Lacan who gives the penis/phallus a
linguistic turn (Moi: 2004, p 857). This notion of lack inherent within femininity and the
notion of the master signifier phallus based on male sex organ seems to be counterproductive
for feminism. Feminist critique of phallus is right to point out the hidden male bias within its
conceptual grid. But the phallus which is a metaphor for penis, has nothing to do with having
or not having the penis. One does not need actual penis for such phallic function. The phallic
function is the castration performed by the symbolic. This is the sacrifice necessary for the
entry into the symbolic for both male and female subject. The prohibition functions
differently along the male and the female lines. Man tries to identify with the phallus and
consider himself the authority who issues the prohibition. But paradoxically all men actually
submit to symbolic castration. On the other hand, not all women identify with phallic
function, which means femininity is not constituted as universal. This does not mean that
women do not belong to the symbolic, it only means that there is no universal affirmation like
the male counterpart. Thus Lacan uses the hyperbole ‘The Woman does not exist’ (Wright:
2000, p29). Though phallic function applies to all, woman is not completely defined by the
phallic function. Here I would like to share the insight by Kaja Silverman. According to her
“since the female subject is constructed through an identification with dispossession, her
exposure to further castrations jeopardizes nothing. The male subject, on the contrary, is
constructed through an identification with the phallus. That identification may be threatened
by the disappearance of the object, but it is capsized by any reminder of the male subject’s
discursive limitations. It is impossible for a subject who knows himself to be excluded from
authoritative vision, speech, and hearing to sustain a pleasurable relation to the phallus”
(Silverman: 1999, p101). Silverman draws the example of classical cinema and proposes that
“through its endless renarrativization of the castration crisis, it transfer to the female subject
the losses which afflict the male subject” (Silverman: 1999, p104). The female subject is
“obliged to absorb the male subject’s lack as well as her own. Thus the male subject is able to
displace his discursive lack onto woman. The female subject’s involuntary incorporation of
the various losses which haunt cinema, … makes possible the male subject’s identification with the symbolic father, and his imaginary alignment with creative vision, speech, and hearing” (Silverman: 1999, p104).

Now let’s come to the question of gaze. I have already stated that film theory equates gaze with look. In the book Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists (Copjec: 1994), Joan Copjec propose an important criticism of orthodox psychoanalytic film theory of 1970’s which is mostly associated with Laura Mulvey, Jean-Louis Baudry and Christian Metz. According to Copjec, film theory in spite of claiming Lacanian roots, actually misunderstands the Lacanian concept of gaze. The orthodox psychoanalytic film theory draws its concept from the panoptic gaze that Michel Foucault describes in Discipline and Punish. Panoptic gaze is not an innocent look but a look that controls. Film theory has focused on the identification of the spectator with this form of gaze which associates itself with the notion of power. If power is the operative term for Foucault, desire is the central linchpin for Lacanian discourse (Copjec: 1994, pp13-14). For Lacan desire is not a desire for mastery. Both Nietzsche and Foucault’s notion of desire is power laden which wants to attain mastery over an alien object. Gaze, as it is conventionally understood, appears to be a perfect tool for such mastery (McGowan: 2007, p8). According to Copjec “The panoptic gaze defines perfectly the situation of the woman under patriarchy: that is, it is the very image of the structure that obliges the woman to monitor herself with a patriarchal eye. The panoptic gaze defines the total visibility of the woman under patriarchy-One becomes visible- not only to others but also to oneself” (Copjec: 1994, p17).

There is a significant difference between Foucault’s notion of desire and that of psychoanalysis in general. For Foucault the desire is not an effect but a realization of law. According to Foucault the law appears to be positive because it does not forbid desire but constitute it. Thus the law causes us to have desire. According to psychoanalysis, the law produces a subject who does not desire but rejects its own desire. Thus the subject is founded on the repression of desire. “For, where in the panoptic apparatus the gaze marks subject’s visibility, in Lacan’s theory it marks the subject’s culpability” (Copjec: 1994, p30). Mulvey apparently works within psychoanalytical framework, but she explores the notion of desire in Foucauldian terms. According to her, sexual difference is the central trope to understand mainstream cinema. Mulvey argues that the transcendental viewing position of such cinema is a male one. It is precisely the male desire that cinema caters to. Male subject goes to
cinema because cinema provides him the experience of domination. Thus they enjoy the active pleasure of mastering the passive object in cinema (McGowan : 2007, p31). Here desire and domination go hand in hand. Within the Foucauldian paradigm to desire something is to master it where as in psychoanalysis desire is a psycho-linguistic trope. To see desire as mastery and an active process, is to miss the dynamics of the desire itself. For example, Gaylyn Studlar (Studlar: 1993) argues for another kind of desire which is the desire to submit to Other. In “Masochism and the Perverse Pleasure of the Cinema” Studlar follows Gilles Deleuze’s study of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch’s novels and proposes a distinction between sadism and masochism (Studlar: 1993, pp603-604). She concentrates on masochism which is a preoedipal, pre-genital organization of sexuality. Here desire is to desire for a union with mother rather than of mastery over other. Thus desire works through the tropes of submission. We can compare this form of sexual pleasure with sadism which is a desire to control and dominate.

Early Lacanian film theorists like Christian Metz and Jean-Louis Baudry propose a relationship between Lacanian mirror stage and cinematic spectatorship. The analogy between the human infant before the mirror and spectator in front the film screen is crucial here. Barbara Creed here draws the analogy between the screen- spectator relationship and the Lacanian Imaginary in which the child first comes to know its boundary. The arrangement between the projector, darken hall, and the screen produces a similar situation of “mirror stage” proposed by Lacan (Creed: 1998, p6). Through looking at its mirror reflection the child achieves the illusion of mastery over its own body. Like the way the child recognizes and misrecognizes its mirror reflection the spectator also identifies and misidentifies with the more perfect image on the screen. Thus identifying with the larger than life, idealized, more perfect image of the central protagonist, the gaze of the spectator conflates with the point of view of the character which becomes the linchpin of the narrative. It is obvious that this process of identification is limited to mainstream narrative cinema. Here the notion of gaze is not only produced by the psychosexual desire of the unconscious but also to master the scopic field. According to Copjec the central misconception of film theory is this analogy between the screen and the mirror. This misconception is based on two concepts –the apparatus and the gaze as developed within the terrain of film theory (Copjec: 1994, p16). The Apparatus theory appears to be the watershed between the earlier film theory and its contemporary offshoot. Earlier film theory was mostly concerned with the representation of reality in film text. It was interested in knowing where the film reflects the
true or the distorted version of reality. The Apparatus theory argued that the film text should not be considered as a reflection of reality but one among many social discourse that constitute reality and spectator (Copjec: 1994, pp19-20). Following the conventional film theory one argues that, how mastery is achieved by the subject? The subject first recognizes itself by identifying with the gaze, and then recognizes the images on the screen. The question remains what is gaze, in this context? Gaze seems to be the ideal point from which the meaning can be produced. Thus through taking up such position the subject provides meaning to the image (Copjec: 1994, p22).

For Lacan, gaze has nothing to do with mastery as the gaze does not belong to the subject at all. It is situated on the side of object. Initially Lacan explored the term ‘gaze’ as prevalent in Jean- Paul Sarte’s phenomenological analysis. For Sarte “the gaze is that which permits the subject to realise that the Other is also subject” (Evans: 1996, p73). It is in 1964 that Lacan develops his own understanding of the term gaze. In  The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis which was translated in English into 1978, he engages with the notion of gaze. He explores the concept of OBJECT PETIT A as the cause of desire. For Sarte gaze and the act of looking may be same but Lacan proposes a separation between the two. The gaze becomes the object of the act of looking. Thus the gaze is the gaze of the other. Lacan propose an opposition between gaze and the eye. The eye is the eye of the subject where as the gaze is on the side of object. “When the subject looks at an object, the object is always already gazing back at the subject, but from a point at which the subject cannot see it” (Evans:1996, p73). Thus according to Lacan gaze is an instance of the object petit a. Following Lacan we can argue that gaze is something that subject comes across in object. Thus the gaze is not something subjective, rather it becomes objective. Here subject is constituted by the desire of object which is a part object in itself. Lacan’s use of the term gaze challenges our conventional understanding of gaze as an active and subjective process (McGowan: 2007, p6). According to Lacan, “In our relation to things, insofar as this relation is constituted by the way of vision, and ordered in the figures of representation, something slips, passes, is transmitted, from stage to stage, and is always to some degree eluded in it—that is what we call the gaze”(Lacan: 1981, p73). Zizek gives an example of the dialectic of view and gaze from Hitchcock’s Psycho. Towards the end of the film we see Lilah (Vera Miles) is approaching ‘Mrs Bates’s’ house which generate anxiety among the viewers. But why such anxiety? According to Zizek “the subject sees the house, but what provokes anxiety is the uneasy feeling that the house itself is somehow already gazing at her, from a point
which escapes her view and so renders her utterly helpless” (Zizek: 1989, pp 8-9). Following Lacan we can argue that our desire should not be conflated with mastery, but should be drawn towards the opposite side of the power, the point of total jouissance (McGowan: 2007, p32). The gaze opens up the possibilities of desire in the subject. This is not a desire for mastery but a desire which wants to remain as desire only. As Bruce Fink says, “Desire is an end in itself: it seeks only more desire” (Fink: 1997, p 26).

Lacan formulates his understanding of gaze in *Seminar XI*. In *Seminar XI*, Lacan explores the notion of gaze through the picture *The Ambassador* (Hans Holbein: 1533). The painting shows two travellers and their accumulated wealth. But there is a distorted and unrecognizable figure at the bottom of the painting. If one looks at the painting directly, one finds nothing. But looking at the figure downward and from the left, one sees a skull which according to Lacan marks the site of the gaze. This is the spot at which the spectator loses his/her distance from the painting and engages with what one sees. This is because the form of the figure changes according to spectator’s position. The gaze exists according to the spectator’s viewing position, and proposes spectator’s engagement with the painting, from which she/he seems to be excluded. This objective gaze as a stain in a painting means that the spectator never looks at the picture from a safe distance (Lacan: 1981, pp88-89). Thus here the notion of gaze is significantly different in conventional film theory. In film theory gaze is something frontal to the image and the subject identifies and coincides with the gaze. For Lacan the gaze is something behind the image. In Lacanian formulation the subject does not identify with the gaze, the subject is rather “cut off from it” (Copjec: 1994, p36). Here I quote Copjec, “My purpose here is not simply to point out the crucial differences between Foucault’s theory and Lacan’s but also to explain how the two theory have failed to be perceived as different, how a psychoanalytically informed film theory came to see itself as expressible in Foucauldian terms” (Copjec: 1994, pp18-19). Thus according to her, “film theory operated a kind of ‘Foucauldization’ of Lacanian theory” (Copjec: 1994, p19). The Lacanian notion of the gaze does not see the subject. The gaze may be the object-cause of spectator’s desire, but the spectator never encounters gaze. The subject cannot locate itself at the point of the gaze because the gaze proposes its own reduction. The gaze is something which is not definable. According to Todd McGowan this not definable thing is the *object petit a* or object-cause of desire (McGowan: 2007, p10). What does this gaze as *object petit a* propose to the spectator? It proposes *jouissance*, its submission to this object *a*. Thus
Lacanian gaze does not provide the mastery of the narrative field to its spectator but rather proposes a promise of enjoyment which is a deployment of gaze as object.

The question remains how the notion of gaze and sexual difference is related with my project of exploring masculinity in Hindi cinema. What I want to argue here is that the notion of Lacanian gaze which is different from the conventional notion of gaze in film theory, explores our understanding of sexual difference in new ways. When we do not conflate gaze with look and propose gaze not on the side of the subject but on the side of the object, our conventional understanding of the subject and the object of the look is redrawn. Feminist film theory as explored in earlier chapter, particularly the work of Laura Mulvey posits that in mainstream cinema the subject/object division can be explored as active/passive and male/female division. Thus when we argue that the notion of subject and object is redrawn, we are also proposing that the conventional understanding of male as active and female as passive within the filmic space is problematized. Here the gaze is not on the side of subject, but to the side of object. Thus object acquires a certain form of agency which is unthinkable within the Foucauldian trope. Gaze is an instance of the object petit a. Following this grid of the argument the relationship between male and female is complicated. It is not that the male subject does not hold power over the female object but the relationship between male-female, active-passive are distinct from Foucauldian discourse. It is through the desire of object the subject is constituted. This does not mean that the object is mastering over the subject. It may appear that the gaze of the object have the controlling power. But this notion of gaze actually strengthens the notion of subjective gaze which is male. Actually through the gaze of the object, the male subjectivity is constituted. Thus the gaze points out the inevitability of male hegemony. When there is no distinction between gaze and look and the look is associated with panoptic gaze the vulnerability of the object (in Mulvey’s case it is female image) can be explored. Lacanian gaze strengthens this vulnerability as it redraws the subject-object distinction. Within Lacanian trope the gaze of the object constitutes the subject and through such constitution subject achieves its gaze which is male. Thus it apparently disturbs the subject–object distinction but actually reemphasizes such a binary. It challenges the conventional pattern of sexual difference based on active-passive binary but actually works through it.

Now I will go through a close reading of the film Darr (Yash Chopra:1993). Darr is a story of a stalker Rahul who is in love with Kiran. They are both in the same college but Rahul
never declare his love to Kiran. Everyone in the college knows that he is in love with someone but no one know who she is. He seems to be a psychopath who fanatically desires Kiran and tries to get her beyond rational means. All through the film he stalks Kiran, frightens her and tries to kill her boyfriend and later husband Sunil. Rahul was not only Kiran’s classmate but he was the son of Captain Mehera, Sunil’s boss. Though the audience is aware who is stalking Kiran but Kiran and Sunil learns it at the end. We discover Rahul as a loner who is a fanatic and at the same time very feminine.

In the reading of this film I will explore how the notion of subject-object, male-female are strengthened within mainstream cinema. Lacanian gaze seems to be productive for such an understanding. Here I will engage with both Lacanian and Foucauldian gaze. Though both of the gazes are operative within this text, the relationship between subject and object are different in each case. If we try to analyze a scene or a sequence through Lacanian trope we would see the hierarchical relation between subject and object is redrawn. Though the male remains the active agent and women the passive object within the Foucauldian trope, in Lacanian gaze the relationship between male- female, subject-object is not that obvious. Here the gaze of male subject is produced through the desire from the side of the object. In a way it is the female object who constitutes the male subject through its gaze. It is not that the male gaze does not control the object. Though it is the object who looks back at the subject and constitutes a subject who seems to explore a controlling look towards the object. I will eventually expand this subject-object relationship. Secondly I will compare two types of masculinity as exposed through two main male figure. This comparison will be productive for my overall problematic regarding masculinity. Thus I will close read some important( from the point of view of my research agenda) scene and sequences.

In the first scene, we see a young woman in a yellow frock reading a letter, we do not know who is the sender. She is lying in a meadow, suddenly rain drops fall and she rushes towards a shelter. There she squeezes her dress and tries to open her dress. Then she hears a sound. She asks who is there but no one answers. We see someone keeps a mouthorgan over a wooden log and then takes it back but no one appears. We can feel that someone or something is gazing her but the viewer is not given the option to identify with any subject. Though she seems to be the object of gaze but the subject seems to be absent. We hear the tune of a music which we will later discover as the music that Rahul sings for Kiran. The spectacle of Kiran’s body (though the viewer does not know the name of the heroine so far)
is exposed to us without an anchoring point which is male. But it is explicit that a male gaze is behind such framing. Here we should remember that in mainstream Hindi cinema particularly in song and dance sequences the female body appears in an exhibitionist manner which is not exposed through a shot reverse shot from a male point of view. This does not mean that the women’s body is not held like an object and that there is no subject who controls the object—woman. Here the male gaze is not identified with any male subject. Unlike classical Hollywood, viewers of Hindi cinema are not always invited to identify with male subject. Though we should be aware that non identification with any male subject does not automatically ensure a gender sensitive viewing position. The exhibitionist trope may not be framed by any subjective viewing position but it does explore the female figure as a spectacular object. Here I distinguish male gaze from male subjective viewing. To be precise we can distinguish male character’s look from the male gaze produced by the camera. Here Kiran is gazed by an absent subject. The position of the camera produces Kiran as a spectacular object. This is an example of Foucauldian gaze from a point of view of the absent subject.

The next sequence on the other hand is pertinent to understand the trope of Lacanian gaze. Kiran is walking with her friends in Shimla. There is no one looking at them but the house behind them seems to be looking at them. The house seems to hail ‘Kiran I love you.’ The girls turn around. They look at the green building behind them, particularly the balcony but no one is there. Here the house seems to be the subject which constitutes Kiran and her friends as its object. Thus when the girls turn around we see the objects are gazing at the subject. Here the house stand for the absent subject and this subject-hood is constituted by the gaze of the object. Thus it is not the house that looks at Kiran, rather Kiran’s look is producing the subject who is absent here. Thus the subject is not decentred but Kiran’s look is constituting the importance of the subject itself. In this sequence we come to hear the name Kiran for the first time and realize that she is the heroine of the film. Thus the film establishes its heroine not only without any point of view of male subject/hero but also before the hero himself is established within the narrative.

Next we see a song and dance sequence where someone is playing a guitar but we do not see the face of the person. Kiran is dancing with the music ‘Jadu teri nazar, khusboo tera badan, tu hyan kar ya na kar, tu hain meri Kiran’. Kiran not only dances with the tune but also searches for the person who is playing the music. She rushes through the corridor, staircase,
garden but finds no one. The whole building seems to be gazing at her as there is no one else who can possibly look at her. But this gaze is not a gaze from the object world to the human subject Kiran. Rather it is Kiran the object who is looking for the absent subject. The subject-object relationship needs to be rethought. Here the building, the corridor the garden etc represent the absent subject. This absent subject is looking through the object world but we cannot see him. Here the object world represents the absent subject and the human figure Kiran seems to be the object. We are following the heroine, looking at things that she sees. Though the male subject is looking at the heroine and following her which is reflected in camera movement, it appears as if we are following Kiran’s look. Here the male subject is constituted through the looks that apparently belongs to the heroine. To be precise, here the gaze of the female object constitutes the absent male subject which is an example of Lacanian gaze. Thus the Lacanian gaze is distinctly different from the way Foucauldian gaze operates.

The music ends at a class room, where ‘I love you Kiran’ is written on the board and a guitar is placed on a chair. Kiran realizes there is someone but does not see any one.

Immediately after the title sequence we see somebody in a white uniform landing from a helicopter, then driving a jeep and reaching the office. We realized this is Sunil who is a navy officer and his boss captain Mehera gives him the charge of rescuing the daughter of a minister from the terrorists. Next we see an elaborate fight sequence on a boat in the sea and Sunil and his team succeeds in saving the daughter of the minister. In the next scene, Cap Mehera congratulates the entire team for their success and grant them one month leave. Sunil the hero of the film is thus established to the viewers and viewers can identify with the hero. But we will see the identification with the subject will be disturbed/problematized within the film space.

Next important scene is the one which shows the stalker for first time. We see Rahul (though the viewer still does not know his name) walking on the wall of a terrace of a high rise building. He is tearing the petals of a rose and saying, “she is mine, she is not mine”. Later we realize that he is indecisive of his and Kiran’s affair. If we compare his first appearance with Sunil’s he seems to be more humble and less macho. But at the same time he is established as a psychopath who stalks a woman.

The next song and dance sequence which starts at an empty flat in which the couple would move in after marriage is important for our problematic. We see Kiran as an object of
spectacle as she dances in various costumes and locations. We watch Kiran’s body movement but unlike the first song and dance sequence Kiran is not following someone. In the earlier sequence she was following someone who is actually following her. Thus the absent subject of earlier song sequence is controlled by the object he stalks. In this song and dance sequence the subject of the gaze is present. It is Sunil, the already established hero of the film. Here we are aware that Kiran is not only a spectacle to the eyes of viewers but also that of Sunil. Here Kiran as object does not gaze back to the subject and does not control the subject. Thus this seems to be a perfect example of Foucauldian gaze where subject(male) controls the object(female) and the object does not gaze back at the subject.

As the narrative progresses Rahul is established as a psychopath who talks with Kiran infront of a huge picture of hers and also talks with his mother over phone who has died in a car accident eighteen years ago. We also learn that he is lonely and shy since childhood and does not have many friends. Rahul seems to be very feminine though we will realize later that he is capable of extreme form of violence which does not go with his humble self.

To understand the gaze which comes from the side of object we may compare it with the gaze which is a kind of a mastery over the object world. I will thus explore a particular scene in a lift where Rahul is watching Kiran. We see Rahul and Kiran in the same lift and the music “Jadu teri nazar, khusboo tera badan” is playing in the background. The music seems to be playing on Rahul’s mind. The lift becomes empty soon and Rahul stares at Kiran. Rahul is behind Kiran thus Kiran cannot see him. She feels that someone is looking at her but it is not the absent subject. The viewer here identifies with Rahul who is the subject of this sequence. Thus it is unlike the sequence at Shimla where no one particular was looking at her. Here we have a subject whose look is objectifying Kiran as a spectacle and the object is not gazing back at the subject. We see Rahul touching Kiran’s doputta and putting it in his mouth. He was about to touch her when the lift’s gate opens and Sunil is waiting in front of the elevator and Rahul hides himself by sitting down. This particular scene can be juxtaposed with the next important scene at night when Kiran is sleeping alone. A phone call comes. From the other end of the phone Rahul insists that Kiran leave Sunil. But Kiran refuses to do so. A phone rings again. Kiran doe not receive the phone. The camera pans through the room and also outside the room. We see the corridors where is another phone and also the staircase. It seems the entire room and the corridors represent the absent subject who is looking at her. We have an uncanny feeling as the camera pans. Somebody is looking at Kiran which is
reciprocated by Kiran. Kiran looks back at that male gaze. Here the male gaze does not correspond to the male character rather we realize this is a male gaze of the camera itself. Kiran, the object of such gaze is looking back at the rooms and the corridors. Her look as an object, is constituting the absent subject. It appears as uncanny because no one particular is the subject of such gaze.

This sequence can be further juxtaposed with the scene at the poolside restaurant. Kiran agrees to meet Rahul there according to Sunil’s plan. Sunil was observes her from a balcony of a high rise building. We see Kiran is sitting near the pool. Behind her Rahul is also sitting, wearing a black sunglass. He take off his glasses and watches Kiran. We see a close up of Kiran’s face through his point of view. In this sequence we do not identify with Sunil’s look rather we identify with Rahul’s look. Right at half past four Rahul moves from his seat and looks inquisitively at the surrounding and observes Sunil at a balcony of an adjacent building. He obviously does not meet Kiran. Here we come across a male subject (though it is not the gaze of the hero in strict sense) gazing at Kiran as an object of spectacle. Here the subject object relationship is conventional and it is an example where the male subject control the female subject through a panoptic gaze.

Within the film we can explore two types of masculinities by analysing the character of Rahul and Sunil. Rahul seems to be a loner who talks with his long dead mother. He may be the villain but is not a very macho person apparently. He may stalk and take violent steps to get Kiran but at the same time he is very feminine. Sunil on the other hand is hyper masculine who considers it is his duty to save Kiran. In a scene at the sea beach we see Kiran is proposing Sunil to postpone the marriage. Sunil in reply, says that Kiran has lost faith in him as he is unable to protect her from that stalker. We realize Sunil’s masculinity revolves around his physical strength and his ability to protect the woman whereas Rahul explores the softer side of his masculinity while talking with his mother and to the picture of Kiran.

Rahul’s contradictory self can be explored when he learns that Sunil and Kiran has invited his father and him to their marriage. Here we see Rahul in his room alone. He throws away a glass top of a table and shouts that this marriage cannot take place. He then looks at the huge picture of Kiran and says that she cannot be someone else’s. If she become someone else’s, then no one will love any more. Next he cries in a feminine way and asks Kiran to not give
him such a punishment as he has nothing else than her love. At the same time we see another self of Rahul which suggests that it is not the time to cry but he has to do something. We encounter the hyper masculine side of Sunil’s character again in a scene at railway station. Kiran is supposed to leave Sunil because his life is in danger because of her. But Sunil appears at the station and convinces her that she should not leave but marry him. He tells her to look at his eyes and asks whether she thinks these are the eyes of a weak person? Does his hand seem to be so weak that it cannot kill the enemy? Are his shoulders not strong enough to secure her? Then he finally says that Kiran may go where she wants to but she must go as Mrs Sunil Malhotra. This sequence explores Sunil as the protector of Kiran who is very macho whereas we have seen the stalker Rahul who at times seems to be very feminine in spite of his violent streaks.

The violent aspect of Rahul seems to be a manifestation of his psychotic disorder. His masculinity which at times explores the feminine side must be considered from this perspective. Immediately after Kiran and Sunil’s marriage at the temple we see him writing Kiran’s name on his chest by cutting his own body with a knife. He takes the oath of his own blood and says Kiran is his. The fire, the hymns all are false. Kiran’s sindoor will be washed off by Sunil’s blood only.

After their marriage Sunil and Kiran goes to their new apartment and realizes that someone has already been there and wrote “Sadi Mubarak” with his blood. Kiran seems to have a nervous breakdown. Sunil lets Kiran sleep as he waits in the drawing room. Suddenly Kiran shouts and we discover her in a dark bedroom. She feels she is being viewed by someone. No one particular is looking at her but there seems to an uncanny feeling. Again it is the camera that is gazing her, the camera has acquired male gaze. Sunil enters the room and turns the light on. Kiran shows the phone which was ringing. Then she says that it is ringing again. Sunil says the phone is not ringing as he has cut the wire off. Kiran realizes it is her mental trauma and cries that she does not want to be mad.

We came across another scene where the conventional pattern of subject-object is redrawn. It is a scene in Switzerland where the couple goes for honeymoon and Rahul reaches there following them. It is a scene in a shopping mall where various kinds of watches are displayed. The mall seems to be empty, the escalators are moving and the camera pans and we have an uncanny feeling. We only see Sunil and Kiran there. The camera here does not
identify with the male character. Here it appears that the objects in the store are gazing at Sunil and Kiran. Both Sunil and Kiran seem to be objects here and the objects at the store particularly the watches seem to represent the absent subject who is looking. This absent subject is Rahul who is following Kiran. This absent subject would be established at the end of the sequence. We see Kiran put a watch on Sunil’s wrist and explains the speciality of the watch. She also has the same watch and if any one of them presses a red bottom, the other person would get a signal. Suddenly all the clocks at the store make sound and the camera pans through the store. It seems these objects are looking at Sunil and Kiran and both of them are the objects who gaze back at the object world of the store. We see Rahul just outside the store with a sunglass on his eyes. The scene at the store may not be from the point of view of Rahul but the object world that was gazing at Sunil and Kiran represents Rahul who is the subject of this sequence. In this case the store along with its clocks and escalators appear as a representative of the absent subject. In this sequence both Sunil and Kiran are looking back at the objects surrounding them. Through their looks the absent subject of this sequence is constituted.

To explore the complexity of Rahul’s masculinity one may analyze the fighting scene at Switzerland. After Rahul, Sunil and Kiran leave the ball and were walking along the street in dark, few loafers comment on them. Both Sunil and Rahul beat them up. But Rahul was aggressive to the point of utter madness. He beat one of the loafers almost to death. Sunil stops him and latter asks what would have happened if the guy was killed. We see some rational sense in Sunil in spite of his male chauvinism. Rahul on the other hand may show his feminine self at times but is irrationally aggressive when it concerns Kiran.

Sunil first suspects Rahul after his talk with Vijay, Kiran’s brother over the phone. He learns that Rahul went a couple of times to Vijay and Punam’s place after they left but Rahul did not tell them that he is going to Switzerland. Sunil then chats with Rahul to know whether Rahul is the stalker. He insists that Rahul may stay the night at their place as his hotel is quite distant. We see Sunil sitting on a couch remembering his earlier encounter with the stalker and is confirmed that Rahul is the culprit.

The scene of the next morning can be an example of the Lacanian gaze. We see in the morning that Rahul wakes up by hearing the tune of ‘tu hai meri Kiran.’ He rushes out as the whole house seems to be gazing at him. He rushes through the stairs and runs. A phone rings
but there is no one in the house. Rahul seems to be scared as the entire house seems to swallow him. In this sequence Rahul is the object of gaze where as the object world around him is the subject. They represent the absent subject which in this case is Sunil. It is Sunil who is gazing at Rahul which is reflected through the camera movement in this sequence. He rushes to the woods nearby. He seems relieved to be there but the tune again haunts him and he sees Sunil playing the mouthorgan. Next we see a fight scene between Sunil and Rahul and Rahul seems to have killed Sunil. After apparently killing Sunil Rahul goes to the boat where Kiran is waiting for Sunil. Rahul discloses his identity to Kiran. Kiran becomes senseless and after she gets back her senses Rahul insists that they get married immediately. We see the psychopath talking with his mother over phone and making preparation for the marriage. Eventually Sunil comes there and a spectacular fight scene take place. Finally Sunil takes out his revolver. Kiran insists that Sunil kills Rahul. Rahul looks at Kiran. Sunil shoot Rahul. Again we encounter the feminine side of Rahul’s character. He tells Kiran that he may be guilty but Kiran must not hate her. He then declares that he loves Kiran and dies.

Here the Lacanian gaze is productive to understand how masculinity is produced within the film text. The construction of masculinity is not limited to what the male subject does within the narrative but how the male subject is constituted through object. In our case, the activity and inactivity of the female object produces the male subject. The hegemony of masculinity should not be explored by how subject constitutes object. Rather through the gaze of the object, the subject is constituted and the hegemony of the masculinity is established. While the object is gazing back at the subject, the subject is not decentred. Rather the gaze of the object intensifies the importance of the subject. In this film we at times follow the look of the psychopath Rahul but it appears as if we are following the look of Kiran. Thus the look of the subject is produced through how the object is gazing back at the subject. In this subject-object relationship, the subject does not constitute the object rather the object constitute the subject. In this case the object should not be reduced to object world and the human being can be considered as object. We can conclude by saying that through Lacanian gaze the relationship between subject-object, male-female may be redrawn but it actually strengthens such distinctions. For example while the stalker Rahul follows Kiran, he is actually controlled by Kiran’s movement. Inspite this he appears to be the aggressive subject and such aggressiveness is produced through Lacanian gaze. Here the object called Kiran gazes back at the subject Rahul which is an example of gaze in the Lacanian sense. Thus through the
tropes of Lacanian gaze we came across the unhindered side of the subject-object relationship.

For the majority of early film theorists the political problem was that the cinema seduces its spectator through its fantasmatic dimension. According to them the problem with the film as a medium is that it blinds the spectator from reality and the pleasure that the spectator derives from watching a film seems to be deceptive. The spectator thus submits to the lures of cinema. According to them politically progressive cinema must create a distance between the viewer and the text. Thus the politics of critical distance and an attitude of suspicion is a productive way to challenge the cinematic manipulation on the spectators. For example according to Mulvey one should destroy the illusion that cinema provides to its viewer. Thus it will be possible to see the working of dominant ideology of mainstream cinema. (McGowan: 2007, p39)

If one follows the Lacanian take on this the relationship between consciousness and ideology appears to be more complex. According to Todd McGowan, “One does not resist ideology through the act of becoming conscious; instead, consciousness is itself a mode of inserting oneself into ideology and avoiding one’s unconscious desire” (McGowan: 2007, p13). Following conventional film theory, the critical distance between spectator and the screen is important. From a psychoanalytic point of view such a gap is counterproductive for any political mooring. Rather we would like to propose a closeness with the gaze. Here gaze is on the side of object and the object produce the subject through such gaze. While the fantasmatic characteristic of the cinema may interpellate the viewer into hegemonic ideology it also opens up the possibility of an engagement with the gaze. This is the point of jouissance where the spectator enjoys and suffers at once while submitting to the object a. Here submitting to the object a is in a sense an engagement with the gaze itself.

According to McGowan the concept of gaze changes its meaning while it transfers from psychoanalytic theory to film theory. The gaze which was on the side of object becomes a source of mastery from the point of view of subject. Conventionally it is argued that the film theory is overly influenced by psychoanalysis but he concludes that film theory is not Lacanian enough (McGowan: 2007, p44). In conclusion I would argue the notion of Lacanian gaze is more productive to understand subject object relationship. Within this trajectory the object constitutes subject through its gaze and the male gaze seems to be a part
object of *object-petit a*. Thus the notion of subject-object is redrawn here. This newer understanding of subject object actually strengthens the masculine hegemony. Male subject may be constructed through the gaze of the object but that does not ensure the ineffectiveness of the male gaze. Rather the Lacanian gaze seems to be productive to understand male gaze which is hegemonic.

Spectacular Male Bodies: A Review of Conventional Masculinities

In this section I would give an overview of the existing literature on masculinities in mainstream cinema. So far I have explored the subject-object relationship in terms of Lacanian gaze, now I would argue how the issue of masculinity is addressed within mainstream cinema. Such a notion of masculinity is informed by feminist intervention. Though my primary concern is of masculinities in Hindi cinema, here I would engage with masculinities in Hollywood cinema. I engage with Hollywood cinema because the representation of masculinity has been adequately addressed within the discourse of Hollywood. Compared to this, the discursion around the representation of masculinity in Hindi cinema seems to be less than adequate. Though very recently such discursions are gaining currency. Here I am aware that the critical engagement with the representation of masculinity in Hollywood cannot be simply transplanted to the field of Hindi cinema. Further within Hollywood cinema certain genres encourage certain forms of masculinities which is not the case for Hindi cinema. This overview also maps-out how Laura Mulvey’s take on the process of gendering in mainstream Hollywood cinema can be applied to the representation of men (Mulvey: 1999, pp58-69).

According to Mulvey in main stream Hollywood cinema the male protagonist is the active agent of the narrative whose look controls the narrative and the woman is a spectacle, a passive figure to be looked at. Thus the pleasure of the look is divided along gender lines where one is invited to identify with the active male gaze\(^7\) and reduce the female figure into an erotic object of gaze. The male gaze which is identified with both the male and the female viewer projects its fantasy onto the female character and objectifies them. The female figure in response displays itself which can be said *to-be-looked-at-ness*. We already know though the women are object of display, this display of women poses a deeper problem. Her lack of

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\(^7\) Here Mulvey proposes male gaze as prevalent in conventional film theory. It is not a Lacanian notion but a form of mastery as explored by Foucault.
penis implies a threat of castration. Thus the castration anxiety among men makes the image of female into unpleasure. There are two ways to escape this problem. One by investigating women, devaluing and demystifying her and punishing her or making her guilty. Or else by making the image a fetish object and overvaluing the female figure and a complete disavowal of castration fear. Following Steve Neale (Neale: 1983) I would like to argue in this section that objectification is not limited to the female figure, men’s body can also be objectified and reduced to a spectacle. To be precise, objectification of female can be applied to men.

Steve Neale (Neale: 1983) in “Masculinity as spectacle: Reflections on men and mainstream cinema” reformulate the basic proposition held by Laura Mulvey. Mulvey points out the male bias within the representational system of mainstream Hollywood cinema. Neale, though agreeing with the basic premise of Mulvey’s theorization, argues against her assertion that the male body could not ‘bear the burden of sexual objectification’. Moreover Neale explores three aspects of masculinity through Mulvey’s formulation 8. These three aspects are the identification with the male image and, the voyeuristic look and fetishistic look towards the male image. These three aspects seem to be of crucial importance to Neale.

According to Steve Neale, “Both within the Women’s Movement and Gay Movement, there is an important sense in which the images and functions of heterosexual masculinity within mainstream cinema have been left undiscussed. Heterosexual masculinity has been structuring norm in relation both to the images of women and gay men” (Neale: 1983, p2). Neale here concentrates on the question of identification and how it applies directly or indirectly to images of men and also to the male spectator. Following John Ellis, Neale argues that identification does not always follow the gender line. Thus male spectator does not necessarily identify with the male character and the female spectator may not identify with the female character. Here I quote Ellis, “The spectator does not therefore ‘identify’ with the hero or heroine:…The situation is more complex than this, as identification involves both the recognition of self in the image on the screen, a narcissistic identification, and the

8 The first one is narcissist identification with the male hero itself. This is a general feature of classical Hollywood cinema. Here spectator is invited to look and identify with the image of hero who is larger than life. The other two looks are proposed by Laura Mulvey. Mulvey point out two modes of looking at female figure prevalent in narrative cinema. Voyeuristic look proposes a distance between the viewer (which is male according to Mulvey) and the image (which is female according to Mulvey). Here the look of the viewer exercise certain power over the image/spectacle. Fetishistic look on the other hand tries to abolish the distance between the viewer and the object of look. It acknowledges and is captivated by what it sees. Here female figure is displayed and exposed as spectacle. Mulvey had proposed these two looks in response to female image. These three looks are productive to understand the relationship between the viewer and the image. Neale explores the tropes of narcissist identification and both voyeuristic and fetishistic look in terms of male image.
identification of self with the various positions that are involved in the fictional narration: those of hero and heroine, villain, bit-part player, active and passive character” (Ellis: 1982, p43, cited in Neale: 1983 ,p5). My observation is that here the issue of identification is quite different and complex than Mulvey. This article extensively examines the issue of narcissistic identification while looking at the construction of masculinities. According to Mulvey, “A male movie star’s glamorous characteristics are thus not those of the erotic object of his gaze, but those of the more perfect, more complete, more powerful ideal ego conceived in the original moment of recognition in front the mirror”(Mulvey: 1999, p64). But Steve Neale has already argued that the male or female spectator cannot simply and unproblematically identify with the “ideal ego” formulated by Mulvey. Neale further explores Paul Willemen’s argument regarding male images in mainstream cinema (Willemen: 1981, p16 cited in Neale: 1983, p8 ). According to Willemen in the films of Anthony Mann, the spectacle and the drama evolves around the male figure and the pleasure of looking at such an image is founded upon a repressed homosexual voyeurism. According to him in a heteronormative social milieu the male body cannot be exposed as an erotic object for male desire. It must be manifested in a different form through repressing the erotic aspect. Neale further discusses the two types of looking, fundamental to cinema proposed by Mulvey. The two looks are of course voyeurism and fetishism. In the case of voyeuristic look, the distance between the seer and the seen is immense thus the spectator manifests certain power over the image/spectacle. While voyeurism maintains a gap between the seer and the seen, fetishism tries to abolish the gap. Fetishistic look acknowledges what is being looked at. According to Mulvey these two looks are examples of how men (both the character and the spectator) look at the object (female character) in mainstream cinema. But Neale argues that men are also subject to such gazes. According to Neale male figures can be objects of voyeuristic look, both for the spectators and the male characters. Following Willemen Neale argues “The repression of any explicit avowal of eroticism in the act of looking at male seems structurally linked to narrative content marked by sado-masochistic phantasies and scenes” (Neale: 1983, p12). According to him, in the case of fetishistic look we are offered with male spectacle, which are on display but not the way that Marlene Dietrich is seen in Sternberg’s film. These bodies are displayed but not solely for the gaze of the spectator. We see fragmented male bodies which are mediated by the looks of other characters (Neale: 1983, p14). Neale further says that though he opens up the space for male spectacle within Mulvey’s proposition, he agrees with Mulvey that the spectator look in mainstream cinema is implicitly male. According to him this is why the eroticism of male image is mostly disavowed (Neale: 1983, p15).
Considering Steve Neale’s observation that the male body can be a spectacle, we can now review a bunch of texts which explores masculinity in unconventional ways. Steve Neale’s argument seems to be the conceptual linchpin for such a survey. Here I would explore the possibilities of diverse forms of masculinities expressed within different genres of Hollywood films. For example, we can see a somewhat different manifestation of masculinity in the genre of Hollywood musical. Thus I would explore a certain type of masculinity through the reading of Steven Cohan’s ‘‘Feminizing’ the song –and-dance man: Fred Astaire and the spectacle of masculinity in Hollywood musical’’ (Cohan:1993). In the musical genre of Hollywood cinema a star performer can quite literally stop the show or to be precise stop the linear progress of the story. And this is not only applicable for a female star performer but also for a male star performer. Cohan in this essay explores Fred Astaire’s star persona and its ability to stop the show through display of his song and dance which is traditionally considered as feminine within the representational system of classic Hollywood cinema. The Hollywood musical while exploring the male star performance, challenges the gendered division of active/male/looking and passive/female/to –be –looked– at –ness. But this cannot simply be categories as a ‘feminization’ of male musical star. According to Cohan, “Rather, I am arguing here through the example of Fred Astaire, something other than a conventional objectification of male body is at stake with the spectacle of a song-and-dance man in the musical, because his ‘feminization’ arises from a highly self-conscious and theatrical performance that constructs his masculinity out of the show-business values of the spectatorship and spectacle.”(Cohan: 1993, p47) Astaire’s solo numbers were not meant for characterization or a progress of story line towards closure, rather they disturb the narrative progress and foreground the performance as spectacle. The musical spectacle by male star persona may not ‘feminize’ the male star- rather the musical explores an alternative style of masculinity which is based on spectacle and spectatorship. And this alternative masculinity was explored by Fred Astaire in the Hollywood musical of post World War II.

Another area where we can see men as spectacle is the genre of female rape-revenge films. These films not only explore female agency but also expose gruesome violence over the vulnerable male body. These films have structural similarity with the slasher films I discussed in earlier chapter. We already know Carol J Clover (Clover: 1999) argues for a cross gender identification of the spectator with the screen image in slasher film. To be precise she is concerned with the male viewers identification with the female point of view. Here the
female victim kills her male oppressor. Initially the viewer may oscillate between their identification with male and female character but in the end the spectator must identify with the female figure. In the case of female rape-revenge films men occupy the positions which are traditionally marked as feminine. Peter Lehman in “‘Don’t blame this on a girl’: Female rape-revenge films” (Lehman:1993) explores the sub-genre of female rape-revenge films which appeared during 1970s and 1980s in US. In these films a good looking heroine kills the men one by one who have raped her. In this rape revenge films not only women but men are shown as spectacle as the heroine kills the men in a gruesome fashion. Thus the female rape-revenge films falls under the genre which displays the agony of male body. According to Lehman, *I Spit on Your Grave* (Zarchi: 1978) is the most disturbing and controversial of all these films in this genre. Roger Ebert (Ebert: 1989, pp359-60, cited in Lehman: 1993, pp103-104) provide some critical insight regarding the acceptability of such a film. According to him the pleasure for the male viewer of such a film depends on their identification with the rapist and their assault on the women. But this perspective does not provide any clue for the display of male body. Moreover, according to Lehman the rape sequence does not generate any pleasurable eroticism on the part of the viewer. It does not show, at least in *I spit on your Grave* any close up of women’s face or fragmented body parts. Rather it appears to be painful and disturbing for the viewer. According to him the male spectator actually identifies with the avenging woman than with the rapist. Thus Mulvey’s argument that in the mainstream cinema the spectator identifies with the central male protagonist seems to be unproductive here. Lehman in this article actually tries to figure out the pleasures of male spectator within this particular genre. According to him, “This essay is an inquiry into the nature of those pleasures which, I will argue, are complex, multiple, and fluid and address a male subjectivity which is both heterosexually masochistic and homosexually sadistic”(Lehman: 1993, p105).

The female rape-revenge sub-genre open up new possibilities for our understanding of masculinity and the male body. Men in these films are positioned in the places traditionally marked for the female that is of “victimhood”\(^9\). Moreover the display of male body through punishment is highly spectacular. What are the effect these films generate in the male spectator? The women in these films are mostly good looking which suggests their sexual attractiveness is crucial for the pleasure of watching the films. But the women are not only watched, the spectacular punishment of the rapist is also watched and enjoyed by the male

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\(^9\) Here I am not sure if a rapist can be a victim. I think this ‘victimhood’ is at the level of image. We may see the mutilated body of the rapist but at the level of narrative the rapist may not be a victim.
spectator. According to Lehman the rape scenes are the narrative pretext for such films. These films are not only made by men but also marketed for men. These films “make male characters victims and spectacularize their punishment for the pleasure of male viewers” (Lehman:1993, p107).

The question remains what are the pleasures these films offer to the male audience. According to Lehman, Steel and Lace (Farino: 1990) is a particular example which foregrounds the role of male spectator and makes it clear that it is a man rather than woman behind this spectacular revenge. More over these spectacles are made for male spectatorial pleasure. Steel and Lace is a cyborg rape-revenge film in which a scientist creates a cyborg in the image of his dead sister. His sister is a rape victim who committed suicide after the court fails to punish the rapists. After five years of this death, the cyborg takes the revenge by killing five men which appear as the spectacle of a beautiful, erotic woman gruesomely mutilating male bodies. What is significant in this film is that there is a man behind this female revenge. The cyborg is apparently female but is actually manipulated by the male scientist who wants to take revenge of his sister’s death. This becomes explicit while the brother watches the videotape playbacks of the murders and we see the terrified close-up of the victim’s face intensifies his pleasure. This pleasure on the part of the brother also exposes the pleasure of the male spectator who finds pleasure in watching the gruesome deaths of other men. This suggest that the avenging women are a product of male fantasies. But why should men take such an interest in watching the gruesome deaths of other men? According to Lehman “the heterosexual male spectator of these rape-revenge films has more invested in them than a simple desire to see justice done” (Lehman: 1993, p111). Lehman proposes two possibilities. Heterosexual men get pleasure from seeing rapists getting killed because these are the men who are the competitors for the sexually desirable avenging women. Though the heterosexual male spectator and the rapist both have same desire for the heroine, the heterosexual male spectator cannot acknowledge any similarity with the rapist. Thus the rapist always appears to be repulsive and the male spectator can hate him rather than identifying with him. The sexual desire of this repulsive rapist must be removed from the male viewer’s similar desire for her. The other possibility is that of masochism. This masochism works through the repressed homosexuality. The important question is how exactly does this repressed homosexuality is expressed? Proposing repressed homosexuality solely may not be productive to understand the complexity masochism. Here the form of expression remains important.
Lehman argues that the rape-revenge films expose the repressed homosexuality, an extreme form of homophobia where “the homophobe hates the precariously repressed homosexual side of himself” (Wood: 1986, p250 cited in Lehman: 1993, p119). Lehman further explores the issue of violence between men through Robin Wood’s provocative analysis of *Raging Bull* (Scorsese: 1980). According to Wood the game of boxing is a license for the ritualized violence among men for the visual pleasure of a predominantly male audience. He considers whether there is any correlation between boxing and homophobia. In Lehman’s analysis within the genre of rape-revenge films a woman brutally kills the male rapist to fulfil the male desires. Within this genre the rapists are characterized as extremely repulsive. This repulsive behaviour justifies that anything can be done to them and the heterosexual male spectator hates the rapist for such behaviour. Thus the female rape-revenge film disguises the homosexuality by having a woman attack the male body in general and the genitals in specific.

Hollywood horror films are another genre where we find the spectacular male body in the form of monster. These monstrous bodies seems to be more feminine than masculine. Following Barbara Creed (Creed: 1999) I have explored such a feminine characteristic of the monster body in earlier chapter. There I have proposed that the monster body does not represent the lack of the female body but exposes her phallic possibilities. It is not her deficiency but her self sufficiency which appear as her monstrousness. In “Dark Desires: Male masochism in the horror film” Creed (Creed:1993) further proposes that whenever the male bodies are shown as monstrous in this particular genre, they assume the characteristics generally associated with the female body. These monstrous bodies bleed, give birth, change shape, are penetrable and castrated. The films like *Dressed to Kill* (Palma: 1980), *Psycho* (Hitchcock: 1960), *Homicidal* (Castle: 1961), *A Reflection of Fear* (Fraker:1973) explores the monster who does not have clear gender identity. In fact monsters appear as monster because they lack any close knit gender identity.

The scholarly attention on this particular genre mostly focuses on the fact that the monsters are male and the male is ‘feminized’. To understand the nature of horror associated with the feminine, the notion of abject by Kristeva is useful\(^\text{10}\). According to her acceptable forms of

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\(^{10}\) I have explain the term abject in an earlier chapter.
subjectivity and sociality depend on the exclusion of things appearing as improper and unclean which is considered as abject (Kristeva:1982, p 4,cited in Creed: 1993, p121) . Abject is what disturbs border and the characteristic of abject is that it can never fully be set apart from the subject or society. The notion of border is not only important to understand abject but also to explore the monster body in horror film. The horror film explores the ambiguous side of the abjection specially in relation to the sexually ambiguous body of the monster. The notion of the abject is most closely aligned with the feminine and maternal body, a body which bleeds, gives birth etc. This is the body which is linked with natural world or to be precise a body which transgresses the boundary between nature and human form. Creed explores the representation of vampires and werewolves as an example of feminized male monstrous body. Such a representation exposes the border separating human from animal.

Creed (Creed:1993, p126-127) offers a reading of The Silence of the Lambs (Jonathan Demme: 1991) which explores the male subject’s relationship to the feminized totem animal. The psychotic killer Buffalo Bill (Ted Levine) hunts and kills female victims to make a suit out of their skin in order to be re-born as a woman. The other killer in the film is Dr Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins) who seems to be the alter ego of Buffalo Bill. Lecter does not skin but eats the internal organs of his female victims. Both the men seem to be monsters but it is Buffalo Bill who is the “true” monster of the film. Buffalo Bill seems to be the ideal monster because he desires to be a woman and wear the suit made of women’s skin. Lecter assumes the status of hero due to his relationship with the heroine Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster). Thus both killers are drawn to the feminine world which is animalistic/totemic due to different reasons. The Silence of the lambs creates a world of horror in which the male monsters are made monsters through a process of feminization.

There are some horror films in which the male scientist tries to create new life in the laboratory. A classic example of such films is Frankenstein (1931). These scientific attempts seems to challenge the female reproductive power. But the tragedy of such attempts is that the male mother/scientist can only create a monster not a normal human being.

Creed further engages with Linda Williams who discusses the relationship between the classic monster and heroine in “When the Women Looks”(Williams:1984) According to her the monsters appear as biological freaks due to its phallic status, whereas Creed argues this freakiness depends on their affinity with ‘non-symbolic’ maternal body. According to Creed,
“a crucial reason why the monster- regardless of its gender- draws on the masochistic aspects of looking lies with the origins of monstrosity as a form of abjection” (Creed: 1993, p131). Through the process of abjection we distinguish the ‘clean and proper body’ and also the rational, coherent subject. Abjection speaks to the perverse and irrational aspect of desire and most importantly to the masochistic desire of the spectator regardless of gender. The horror film opens up a feminine position for male spectator through the process of abjection. As the abject body is identified with the feminine, the horror film explores the abject monstrous body which seems to be feminine.

Action movies are one such area where the muscular male body is highly visible. Though the muscular male body represents hegemonic masculinity, the visual extravagance of such body exposes masculinity as a spectacle which is conventionally a feminine position within the tropes of mainstream cinema. Yvonne Tasker (Tasker: 1993) explores the status of masculinity within Hollywood representational system through the analysis of four films and their stars. The films and the stars are Bruce Willis in *Die Hard* (Tieman: 1989) and *Die Hard 2* (Harlin: 1990), Sylvester Stallone in *Lock Up* (Flynn; 1989), Stallone and Kurt Russell in *Tango and Cash* (Magnoli & Konchalovsky: 1989). These films and the stars express the construction of male body as spectacle and also an awareness of masculinity as a performance within the genre of Hollywood action cinema. These films explore both powerful and powerless heterosexual male bodies. According to Tasker the construction of women as victims within Hollywood cinema is well documented but the powerlessness of male hero have been seldom addressed. While exploring masculinity as performative we actually denaturalize the male gendered construction. The changing economic situation and shifting gender identities add more complexity to traditional masculinities.

Following Barbara Creed (Creed: 1997) one can argue that Stallone and Schwarzenegger are the muscular stars of the decade and can be described as ‘performing the masculine’. According to Creed “both actors often resemble an anthropomorphised phallus, a phallus with muscles” (Creed: 1987, p65, cited in Tasker: 1993, p232). Richard Dyer argues that the muscular male body can be an evidence of male power and dominance and can also expose the labour and hardship that has gone to create such omnipotent masculinity. (Dyer: 1982, p71 cited in Tasker; 1993, p232). He warns us not to read the images solely in terms of male power. The representation of muscular masculinity may appear as hegemonic but they can be read against the grain. Within the action cinema the figure of star hero appears as larger than
The star image is composed of many layers through its contradictory elements and constantly shifting grounds. The territory of the star image is also the territory of identity and the ongoing formulation and reformulation of ways of ‘being a man’ constitutes an important part in this process. The two Stallone pictures considered here are Tango and Cash and Lock Up. These two films try to present Stallone as a soft guy through both his body and voice. It is a shift from the body as the central component of Stallone’s image to his ability to verbal communication. These films explore the star quite differently from his usual image as macho guy. Tango and Cash is a humorous buddy movie where the rivalry between two cop heroes moves towards friendship as the movie progress. Lock Up shows the physical and psychological torture of the hero and his struggle within the prison life. Here prison is one of the privileged sites for the performance of masculinity and also charged with homoeroticism. According to Tasker “If anxieties to do with sexuality and difference are increasingly worked out over the male body and its commodification as spectacle, then there seem to be two dominant strategies in the action cinema” (Tasker: 1993, p237). The two dominant strategies are either the images of physical torture and suffering or the excessive masculinity which is subject to humiliation and mockery. Tango and Cash and the two Die Hard films incorporate comedy. Lock Up on the other hand exposes hero’s suffering. The article argues that the muscles of the male body not only signify male power and dominance but also explore the process through which such dominance is achieved. Thus for some critics muscle of the male star achieve decorative value which is usually associated with femininity. Tasker argues “Within the narratives which I have discussed here the position of the father, a position of authority, lacks credibility in various ways. This lack of credibility is part of a denaturalization of masculinity and its relation to power, a shift that can be seen to be enacted in the virtually woman- free zone of action narrative”(Tasker: 1993, p242). The figure of struggling hero explores both the drama of power and powerlessness which exposes the anxieties about masculine identity and authority.

In “Feminism, ‘The Boyz,’ and other matters regarding the male” (Wiegman:1993) Robyn Wiegman argues that by the end of the 70s the African American male stars were featuring themselves in interracial male bonding films. Black masculinity appears in these films as a spectacle which explores their racial inferiority. The socio-economic and cultural difference among men along racial lines provides the possibilities of spectacle which was traditionally the domain of femininity. The images of African American males in these films seemed to
concentrate on the historical complexity of the contemporary condition of black male in USA. They were considered as ‘engendered species’ due to their high rate of poverty, incarceration, and early death and this social reality of their life is explored in new black cinema. Here we confront the political and theoretical complexity of the question of difference- multiplicity of social subjectivity and (dis)empowerment which fails to comprehend their inherent complexity. The paradox of this situation is that black men seem to be the oppressor and oppressed at once. While they may achieve rights and privileges through one axis, they may be denied through another axis. Within this situation the social position and identity of African American male can be explored. African American men stand in between two social registers that are race and gender. Thus Wiegman argues “the African American male challenges our understanding of cultural identity and (dis)empowerment based on singular notions of inclusion and exclusion”(Wiegman: 1993, p174). Her critique of a binary understanding of power relation is based on the contemporary shift in feminist discourse. In contemporary feminist theory the question of difference in terms of race, class, sexuality has challenged the notion of women as a homogeneous entity. Thus women as a social group based on sexual difference is inherently fractured. This type of fragmentation is also applicable to the social group called men.

In this article Wiegman tries to propose an antiracist feminist cinematic reading by shifting our attention from women to the issues of racial difference among men. Such a reading depends on the interrelationship of race and gender through which black masculinity can be explored. To explore the representation of black masculinity in contemporary Hollywood cinema, one should first engage with the discursive terrain of feminist film theory. The problem with feminist film theory is that it re-inscribes the homogenizing tendencies of patriarchal discourse within its own ambit. To propose an overarching politics for all women, feminist film theory paradoxically depends on ‘the essence of femininity’ which is ahistorical and asocial. Within the terrain of feminist film theory, the masculine seems to be dominant through colonizing its opposition, the feminine. Laura Mulvey in ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’ further explains, “[t]he paradox of phallocentrism in all its manifestations is that it depends on the image of the castrated woman to give order and meaning to its world… it is her lack that produces the phallus as symbolic presence”(Mulvey: 1999, p58 cited in Wiegman: 1993, p176). Following Luce Irigaray Wiegman argues that the spectacle of woman which is an exhibitionism of its castrated body, ‘acts to wed the masculine subject with himself” (Wiegman: 1993, p176). Moreover women are reduced to theoretical absence.
Thus a feminist agenda can challenge the invisibility within the dominant cinema. Following the example of Pam Cook and Claire Johnson (Cook, P and Johnson, C: 1974), Wiegman proposes for a feminist counter-cinema which can challenge the feminine absence within the trajectory of narrative and at the level of concept. But such a prescription for a feminist counter-cinema has its own limitations. It has to depend on feminine essence, the universal and notion of sameness of all women which actually fade the patriarchal logic of binary exclusion. The binary based on male-female distinction also seems to be one of the characteristics of psychoanalytic paradigm.

Jane Gaines (Gaines: 1986) exposes the contradiction between feminist-psychoanalytic readings of looking relations and the cultural context of US in which the white male have the right to look openly and the black male have to look illicitly. Thus feminist film theory needs to complicate the notion of male privilege to look through the deployment of the literal practice of castration associated with black male gaze. Though the voyeuristic pleasures of cinema is based on white male privilege, cinema actually may offer a limited, distanced and disembodied ways of black male’s right to look in general and access to white female image in particular. The prohibition of look for black male does not operate in the same way among the narrative of the cinema and the spectatorial apparatus of cinema. Whereas looking at a white female remains taboo to the black male within the narrative of the cinema, this denial cannot function within the spectatorial field. We must consider that the institution of cinema is a scopophilic medium per se and the look of the central male character is the nodal point – not only for the narrative but for the overall film form. The crucial issue at stake is how feminism can negotiate the imbrications of race and gender without reducing or exchanging one for the other. The social positioning of the black male is contradictory because it maybe in hierarchically superior position due to its gender formation but it is also marked by racial inferiority. The oscillation between feminization and masculinisation in the case of African American male provides the discursive context in which any analysis of black male in contemporary cinema must be made. Contemporary films by black male directors challenge the process of objectification associated with black male representation and propose for a more culturally productive representation of black male. According to Wiegman, *Boyz N the Hood* (Singleton: 1991) engages with the contradictions embedded in the black male’s social positioning and the representation of black male in US cinema and culture. What does become clear through such readings, is that the issue of masculinity should not be addressed through the tropes of gender inequality but should also be explored through the question of
race as well. Wiegman in this article does not wish to “appropriate black male cinema for feminism but to place the dilemma of feminism squarely within the discursive field of black masculinity” (Wiegman: 1993, p189). Thus the representation of black male may provide an important nodal point though which the entire domain of sexual difference can be rethought. Here I would explore the relationship between black and white masculinity. The hegemonic masculinity of contemporary social order is white masculinity. Black masculinity is considered as other within this paradigm. Thus black masculinity can be ally of feminism in general which I have argued in earlier chapter. Both women and black men are oppressed within the patriarchal social order. But black men can explore the fractured nature of hegemonic masculinity. They highlight the fact that hegemonic masculinity which seems to be universal is actually premised over white supremacy. Thus what proposes fragmented nature of masculinity itself. It also exposes that hegemonic masculinity (which is implicitly white) is also a socio-cultural construct. The politics of black masculinity may wish to incorporate itself within hegemonic masculinity but also exposes the racial bias in it. This approach towards hegemonic masculinity is crucial for feminist politics.

The spectacle of men’s body particularly white men’s body is an area of interest for Richard Dyer. Though he does not problematize the notion of spectacle from a gendered perspective his analysis of the representation of semi-naked white male bodies are productive for a feminist understanding of masculinity in mainstream cinema. In “The White Man’s Muscles” (Dyer: 2002) Dyer argues that until 1980s it was rare to see semi naked white male bodies in cinema which was not the case with non-white male bodies. For example the way African-American acting star Paul Robeson appears bare- chested in most of his films is unthinkable with his contemporary white male stars. Despite that we find few representation of semi naked white male bodies and Dyer categorizes them in three types. The first type are the Tarzan films which begin in 1912 with Tarzan of the Apes. The second type are the Italian films centred on heroes drawn from classical antiquity produced between 1957 to 1965 which has come to be known as peplum. And the third type are the film featuring of the muscular stars like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, Claude Van Damme and Dolph Lunddger since mid-1970s. In western culture the white male body has been the centre of attention for many centuries but the display of the white male body seems to be problematic. A naked body without clothes is vulnerable body, body without social prestige. On the other hand there is value in the white male body being seen. Whiteness seems to be the explanation for social difference and reason behind the racial supremacy. Tarzan, Hercules,
Rambo are all played by actors with built physiques and so is the case with the peplum heroes and Schwarzenegger and Stallone. Since 1950s we find African American men as a major figure in a bodybuilding competition. But the model of built body remains white. The built body is hard and contoured thus it is less fragile and lacks the risk of being merged into other bodies. That is, it can resist being submerged into femininity and non-whiteness. These bodies are achieved through regular work out and planning. Thus they prove the triumph of mind over matter. It is also a body which is hairless and tanned. This is done to display the muscle clearly, but there are other explanations. Hairiness is animalistic and hairlessness exposes the triumph over nature. And tanning is a white privilege which is synonymous with leisure, wealth and a healthy life style.

Such muscular heroes are seen in adventure films on colonies. The heroes are racially superior from the indigenous inhabitants of the colony. For example Tarzan lives in a tropical jungle but is originally of white parentage. In the case of peplum heroes, they were initially situated in ancient Greece or Rome but they eventually roam around different locations. In the case of 1980s muscle films the fighting sequence seems to be in a foreign land probably reminiscent of the Vietnam experience. What seems to be common in these films is that the colonialist structure of the heroes’ relation with the natives. The hero sorts out the problems of the native who cannot solve their own problem. This exposes the role of the western nations to their former colonies. The bodies of Tarzan, Hercules, Rambo seems to be hard, achieved, wealthy, hairless and tanned within a colonial setting. But this tanned body also projects the hero as an everyday man. Here tanning does not suggest a desire for blackness but proposes that white men unlike black can have variation in colour. Thus these bodies propose whiteness as a particular but not a restricted identity. According to Dyer “The economic, military and technological realities of colonialism disappear in presentation of white bodily superiority as explanation of the colonizing position” (Dyer: 2002, p270). Within these genre the hero’s better body wins out over the native’s. To be explicit, the built white body triumphs over the black bodies of the natives. Colonialism and white supremacy both are rationalized through the display of these white built bodies. Thus the white built body and the project of Imperialism are analogous. The way body building requires strict disciplining and rigorous planning, from an imperialistic point of view colonial world needs the same tropes of ordering to civilize the natives.
Masculinities in Hollywood films are not only differentiated through strict genre difference but also through temporal dimension. The difference in the representation of masculinities sometimes appears as a difference of time. For example a particular type of masculinity which became fashionable in a particular decade may be redundant in next decade. Susan Jeffords in “Can Masculinity be Terminated?”(Jeffords: 1993) compares the representation of masculinities in Hollywood films of 1980s and 1990s. Here Jefford explores the journey of masculinity from spectacularity to a more nuanced position within Hollywood system. This article is a critique of hyper-masculinity which is spectacular in nature. Thus the article not only proposes that the representation of masculinity can be spectacular, a visual pleasure for its spectator but also that masculinity should not be explored in such spectacular fashion. This article seems to be more prescriptive than being simply descriptive. According to Jeffords Hollywood films of the 1980s explore male bodies as spectacle. Throughout this period the white male body became a vehicle of display. In the 1990s, we came across the images of masculinities which are more internalized than the earlier decade. Thus the recent hero’s of Hollywood movies explore their ethical dilemmas, emotional traumas, and psychological goals. Thus the Hollywood culture is now offering a more nuanced form of masculinity. What Jeffords is proposing is that “the question of whether and how masculinity can be reproduced successfully in a post- Vietnam, post-Civil Rights, and post-women’s movement era. One of the answers that these films provide is through spectacular repetition, or, more specifically, through the repetition of the spectacle of the masculine body” (Jeffords: 1993, p247).

In order to show how this repetition works Jeffords analyses two of the best-selling serial films, James Cameron’s *The Terminator* (Cameron: 1984) and *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (Cameron: 1991). Both these films centre on masculinity and repetition or to be precise the reproduction of masculinity. According to Karen Mann and Constance Penley (Mann: 1989-90, p21 and Penly:1989, p47 cited in Jeffords: 1993) both films work with the notion of repetition. Particularly, *Terminator 2* explores this repetition self-consciously which is more than mere repetition, it reworks elements of the first plot into the second through inversion. According to Jeffords, the way repetition is explored in these films, it “offers clues about how repetition, reproduction, and self-production are working in the shift from the masculinity of the 1980s to 1990s, how, in other words, masculinity is currently reproducing itself, through inversion rather than duplication” (Jeffords: 1993, p248). *Terminator 2* shows that the machine called Terminator has changed its character. In the first film Terminator was
programmed to destroy humanity but in the second sequel it became the saviour of humanity. Terminator’s change in function from killer to protector, from stranger to parent shows its altered personality. The film also offers the explanation for why men in 1990 are changing their behaviour. According to the film the old ways of violence, and single-mindedness are not only destructive for individual men but for the humanity over all. The film proposes the change in masculinity, a masculinity which is more internalized and explores its emotional side. In Terminator 2 the Terminator is not the only one who changes his behaviour, Miles Dyson the African American scientist also changes accordingly. Miles Dyson who created Skynet the computerized military system, volunteers to destroy all his files in the Terminator 2. According to Jeffords, “The single key feature that solidifies the alliance of Dyson and the Terminator is not simply that they both believe in the Terminator’s future, or that they understand the potential destructive power of Skynet, but that they are both ‘fathers’ – both to young male children and, by narrative implication, to the future”(Jeffords: 1993, p254).

Throughout the late 1980s, Hollywood cinema explores the trope of fatherhood to display the image of “new” men. For example in films like Three men and a Baby (Nimoy: 1987), Look Who’s Talking (Heckerling: 1989), One Good Cop (Gould: 1991) the masculine emotions, ethics and commitments are exposed through the trope of fathering. This fathering is distinct from the father figure, it is a fathering which is more like mothering. The question remains why such fathering remains a masculine trope and how this fathering is productive for the new man. The Terminator like most mainstream films, works through a division of good and bad. In Terminator the police seems to be inefficient and in Terminator 2 the police seems to be ineffective and misguided. These films propose that both for the protection of women and children and the survival of humanity, the individual men- Reese and Terminator are not only effective but necessary. In these films the power of individual action and decision making is immense. The white heterosexual male viewer who feel alienated due to changing pattern of male power and privilege may be empowered by the image of individual male as the saviour of humanity.

According to Jeffords, in contemporary social reality there has been steady decline of male power and authority particularly in work place and national structure. The Terminator films offer the male viewers an alternative real –that is the world of family. Both the Terminator and Dyson understood that the progress in technology would lead human civilization nowhere. In the end of The Terminator 2 it is acknowledged that the older form of masculinity
must make way for a ‘new’ masculinity which is inward, into emotive displays of masculine sensitivities.

This overall literature survey on masculinity in Hollywood cinema explores the male bodies as spectacle. Especially certain genres like musical, action movies, horror, rape-revenge films provide the possibilities of masculine positions which are inclined to traditional feminine positions. These representations of masculinities seem to occupy the positions within mainstream cinema which according to Mulvey is essentially feminine. In the two Terminator sequels we see a new type of masculinity which is fathering in terms of mothering or to be precise men as a care giver. However in the conclusion of this chapter I would argue such feminization of masculine position do not produce any overall change in the hegemonic ideology of gender. In spite of that a mapping of possible masculine spectacles within mainstream Hollywood is fruitful to take an account of how representation of masculinities can acquire diverse forms.

Now I will concentrate on contemporary Hindi cinema where spectacular male bodies are not exceptions. Here I would argue that the Hindi cinema do not follow the distinction of genre prevalent in Hollywood. Social seems to be the umbrella term under which various sub-genres of classic Hindi cinema can be explored. Within the trope of social we can see the spectacular male body, particularly in fight sequences. So called social films of fifties and sixties which Madhava Prasad (Prasad: 1998) argued as are “Feudal family romance”, mostly show a fight sequence at the end of the film where the hero conquers with the evil force of our society and the police who represent the law and order of the state comes after the victory of the hero. Thus the male body in the fight scene seems to be a spectacle, an object of gaze in such films. Contemporary Hindi cinema that is the films from post-liberalization are more heterogeneous. Feudal family romance seems to be one among many tropes that these films engage with. Here romantic comedy, gangster film, science fiction or tapori films all explore different types of masculinity which not only proposes a masculine subject position but also opens up the possibility of male spectacle. The fight scene at the end is still very much present in contemporary films but there are also other possibilities. For example the gangster films explore spectacular fighting scenes throughout the movie or

11 Here also I engage with the term gaze as prevalent within conventional film theory. In the first part of this chapter I have explored the notion of Lacanian gaze which is quite distinct from this gaze. Here gaze is associated with look of the subject which is a form of monitoring the visual field.
science fiction which promotes robot like male bodies. This contemporary spectacular male bodies are mostly well built bodies which are rigorously trained and appear as a superior body with respect to other bodies prevalent in the film. Here the spectacular male body stands for smartness, male vigour and clarity.

Now I will go for a cursory reading of a particular romantic comedy *Bodyguard* (Siddique: 2011). The body of the bodyguard Lovely Singh is projected as a spectacular image. This is not a simple matter of reversal of subject object position. Nor does this disturb the notion of female spectacle. We are introduced to Divya, the heroine in her room where she is pampering herself with makeup and costume. The very first scene which introduces the heroine to the viewers explores a kind of fetishization of the female body, exploring the beauty of the female protagonist through a male gaze. Here Lovely Singh is the central male character with whom the audience is expected to identify and the same time he is the object of gaze. His body is well explored in the first song-dance sequence “Agaya he dekh Bodyguard”. Further his body is juxtaposed with the uncouth body of an excessively fat domestic stuff of Divya’s father called Tsunami. Lovely Singh’s body is the superior body which reflects his mental abilities. Tsunami is the comedian whose body is to be ridiculed for its fatness. Here we see his physical unfitness goes hand in hand with his stupidity which seems to be the counter point for Lovely’s tough masculinity. In the very first scene where he is introduced he is considered as a fool. In the sequence in the bus he first sits on a woman’s lap considering that the woman invites him to sit on her lap and then he had mistakes the bodyguard as a killer who is commissioned to kill Divya. He seems to be ridiculed humiliated and subjugated to pain in that very first sequence. The woman (later we will come to know that she is appointed as a cook in Divya’s household) puts her hair pin at the bum of Tsunami and humiliates him. It seems that violence to this particular character is not violence because of his sub-human status. In another scene we see Lovely Singh putting a burning iron to Tsunami’s bum as he thought that Tsunami has burned his uniform. What is interesting in spite of such humiliation is that Tsunami remains a faithful subordinate to Lovely Singh. It seems that a character like Tsunami is necessary to valorize the bodyguard’s well built physic and efficiency. Not only Lovely Singh’s tough body but also his dutifulness ensures his efficiency as a bodyguard. Thus he is juxtaposed with Tsunami who is not only fat but whose physical unattractiveness becomes a comic relief in the main plot of the narrative. Both lovely Singh and Tsunami’s body has been explored as spectacles though they provide different reception. Tsunami’s body seems to be the basis for which he is ridiculed
whereas Lovely Singh’s body reflects male vigour and spectacle. We witness more than one spectacular fighting scene within this film. But the last one seems to be most spectacular where Lovely Singh’s shirt is torn apart and he is fighting in a water logged area. We see the naked upper portion of the bodyguard as a spectacular sight. There are few slow motions and still frames which helps us to perceive the male vigour and machismo. There is a shot from top angle where the male body is spectacularly displayed. Thus my point here is that the central male figure of Hindi cinema is not only the subject with whom audience is expected to identify with but can also be the object of gaze. In-fact we can see both subject and object in a single male character. And this is not a deployment of a particular genre but prevalent in the Hindi cinema in general. Here the body of Lovely Singh invites us to view male body as spectacle. Thus not only Hollywood but contemporary Hindi cinema also proposes male body as an object if gaze. Thus Mulvey’s formulation can be challenged within the trope of Hindi cinema.

In conclusion I would argue that the reformulation of subject-object relation explored in this chapter does not bring any form of gender equality. In the first section I have proposed the notion of Lacanian gaze which constitutes the subject from the point of view of the object. Thus we see the male subject is constituted through the object of desire which is female. But this does not challenge the overall notion of male gaze which controls the object. Here it is that the object (usually the female image) who looks back at the subject (usually the male figure) who in response produces a commanding look at the object. Thus here the subject-object/ male-female/ active-passive relation may be redrawn but actually strengthens the overall male hegemony within mainstream cinema. In the second section we explored male image as a spectacle which is usually the position of women within scopic field. Here we came across the objectification of male figure within mainstream cinema. Thus the usual pattern of male-female relation may be problematized. But such objectification does not challenge the male hegemony in general. Thus this chapter actually explored how male-female, subject-object binary is strengthened within mainstream cinema.