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Representation of 'Masculinities' in Bombay Cinema: Millennial Men

Exploring the visual representations of masculinities in Bombay cinema and the narratives pertaining to the construction of a 'nationalist' identity in *Lakshya*.

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Cinema's characteristic forte is its ability to capture and communicate the intimacies of the human mind.

Satyajit Ray

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Acknowledgements

To all those who kept me motivated during the melancholy rainy days.

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Abstract

This study examines the representation of masculinities in Bombay cinema through a qualitative study of Farhan Akhtar's Lakshya. Set in the context of India-Pakistan conflict during 1999, this paper explores the representation of masculinities in the film and examines the consequent production of the nationalist identity through the gendered discourse.

The societal shift in masculinities in the 1990s and the 2000s, when compared to the masculinities in the film, show strong parallels between the reality and media portrayals of reality. Narratives of the New Man mark the transition from hegemonic forms of masculinities and nationalisms to diverse and adaptive embodiment of gender. The nationalist discourse on Indian masculinities reveal an overlap between the performance of gender and nationalism with similar historical trajectories. An amalgamation of Indian masculinities, Indian Nationalism, Bombay cinema and critical film theory has yielded in this work aimed at understanding and problematizing this dynamic nexus.

Relevance to Development Studies

Men and masculinity studies form an integral part of the discourses on Gender and Development by approaching social justice issues through a gendered lens. Understanding the representation of masculinities through media renders an opportunity for exploring and problematizing the complex socio-cultural elements within the dynamics of time specific geo-political backdrop.

Keywords

Masculinity, Bombay Cinema, Nationalism, Representation.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Origin and legacy:

Raja Harishchandra, the first ever documented Indian film was produced by Dada Saheb Phalke, the father of Indian Cinema, and was screened on 9th of May 1913 marking the birth of a phenomena that would grow into a billion-dollar industry. (Gabriel 2010: 4, Dwyer 2010: 382, Dudrah and Desai 2008, Hutchinson 2013) Kaushik Bhaumik notes the existence of films before 1913; the financial backing and flourishing film culture during the first decades of the 20th century were the foundations for the film industry.(Bhaumik 2004: 1) The first film (silent) was based on the tale of a King who never lied was marketed as the first Indian made film that would appeal to the Hindu audience. During the colonial rule, this film was a "swadeshi" treat even though Phalke received help from foreign friends while making the film and hence started the discourse of nationalism in Indian cinema. It took the industry 17 years to move a step further in experimenting with cinema when Aardeshir Irani produced the first 'Talkie' film Alam Ara. The upswing continued in the film world and the number of movies being produced increased drastically and they show no sign of slowing down.(Bhaumik 2004, Chakravarty 2008, Dissanayake 2003, Dudrah and Desai 2008, Dudrah 2006, Dwyer 2010, Gabriel 2010, Hutchinson 2013, Mishra 2006) Bhaumik elaborates on the historical genealogy of the Bombay cinema; the silent period was dominated by adventure romance films while the 1930s brought in the music, and social realist cinema became popular.

Post-Independence, the film industry shifted towards romantic melodrama positioned around reformatory social questions of marriage and class whereas adventure romance films got subdued in due course of time. 1950s saw a rise in the qualitative and quantitate output of Bombay cinema with classic films like Awaara, Mother India, Pyaasa, Mughal-E-Azam and many more which dealt with diverse themes. The Nehruvian model for Independent India brought in the critical element of 'modernity' which became an important theme for the film industry which was still traditionally rooted. Films from this period became the subject of interest for scholars as they brought in social- realist romance films and 'Nehruvian ideology of reform through the creation of the ideal Indian citizen' together. This juxtaposition added to the

discourse on nationalist identity which was in boom owing to the freedom struggle and the harsh reality of Partition. Consequent decades saw films experimenting different genres with diverse technologies like the production of the color-film, moving to the Hollywood action genre, etc. (Hutchinson 2013)

Towards critical research:

Bombay cinema has been under constant scrutiny by film scholars and enthusiasts which has always departed from the categoric understanding of films through genre analysis, character analysis or semiotic reading of the texts. These varied attempts at understanding the dynamics between film and society provide enormous opportunity for academic enquiry pertaining to representation in films, influence of films, economic growth due to films and many more. My paper aims at one such branch of enquiry which revolves around gendered and nationalist representations in films. I attempt to couple my interests in films with the academic discourses on gender to forge an entry into this wide scholarship which is crucial for gender studies, specifically the field of men and masculinities. Situating this work within the wider spectrum of Gender studies directly associated with Development, I would like to reason with Cleaver in associating gender equality and social justice in one of the themes in his work on *Men and Masculinities: New Directions in Gender and Development*. Cleaver states that approaches to gender help development policy and practice to understand the disadvantages faced by men and women based on the structural differences in the society which leads to stereotyping. (Cleaver 2002: 2) After establishing the ground for my research, I would like to shift the focus back to Bombay cinema and understanding representations of masculinities.

Bhaumik notices that the Bombay cinema has never been an easy space to navigate through for scholars as it offered nuanced versions of readings of films without giving in to any ideological typification.(Bhaumik 2004) The films become artistic pieces of work that can be understood, interpreted in numerous ways expanding the film scholarship to various avenues like psychoanalysis, economics, politics, etc. Combining gender identity and nationalist identity in films refines the focus of research and provides deeper understanding of the dynamics between discourses on gender and nation. However, focusing on a specific line of enquiry into

this issue, I aim to understand the representations of masculinities in Bombay cinema and the ensuing production of the nationalist identity.

The research is focused on understanding the different portrayals of 'masculinities' in mainstream Bombay cinema in the context of India-Pakistan conflict and the subsequent construction of the 'nationalist' identity. Although the debates between cinema being the realistic representation of the social reality and fictional reproduction of the social reality have been known to cause a divide in the understanding of the cinematic medium as a form of communication that impacts general population, there have been studies that prove that cinema influences the masses. (Chopra et al, 2004; Gabriel, 2010). It is important to understand and problematize the dynamics behind the representation of specific notions of both masculinities and representations of nationalist identity in Bombay cinema, as the significations of these overlap at various levels.

The paper is structured in a way that provides a comprehensive picture about the literature around gender, representation and nationalism discussing various theoretical aspects that are used in the analysis of the film. This is followed by a chapter detailing the context of the research problem and discusses work which is context specific and establishes a direct link between literature and the Indian backdrop more specifically Bombay cinema. After a careful review of literature and systematically laying out the foundations about the research problem, research questions follow. The Methodology chapter discusses my mode of enquiry and plausible biases that would influence my analysis. In this chapter, I also discuss my sample – the film and provide a summary of the plot which would be discussed in the analysis.

Chapter 2 : Theoretical foundations

In this chapter I would like to critically engage with academic discourses on gender, representation and notions around nationhood in films. Signorielli's three step process to study mass media outlines that the first step includes understanding the messages conveyed to the audience through media. The second step deals with the effects of these messages and the third step involves exploration of the institutional mechanisms that create meanings and ensures their continuity. Adhering to the first step in studying the meanings portrayed in media, we bring together the second and the third steps into functioning as they rely on the meanings conveyed through media.(Signorielli 2001) While navigating through academic discourses on gender in media, the humungous amounts of research in this field might distract the readers and leave them in a maze of interdisciplinary research around gender and media. Since the paper has a clear objective of understanding the representations of masculinities and production of nationalist identity, I wish to deconstruct the complex objective into its elements simultaneously connecting them to get a clear understanding of the literature on the research problem. The chapter is broadly divided into three sections addressing different elements of the research.

Gender

Unpacking gender:

Joan Scott argues that Gender as a power relation operates within four levels of social interaction: subjective identities, institutions and organizations, ideology, doctrine and symbolic meanings embedded in the society. Gender as a category does not exist in vacuum but intersects with other social relations of power that exist and operate simultaneously in the society alongside gender which is contextualized historically and socially which is also temporal and spatial. This notion of gender significantly affects the way in which gender is conceptualized by different individuals located within diverse social categories that determine their understanding of the concept.(Scott 1986: 1065) Scott's argument about gender and its interaction with other social relations of power can be critically applied to the Indian context to understand how gendered identity of an individual is constructed in society using symbols, meanings and words.

Crisis of Masculinity:

Masculinities have been understood differently by various authors, and the evolution of this branch of gender studies has been very crucial in explaining various phenomena that connect critical claims regarding patriarchy and gender. As Kimmel notes,

> *"Four decades of feminism has been accompanied by four decades of increasingly shrill (and increasingly loud) denunciations of feminists – from bra-burners to "feminazis". Gender equality, we've been told, is really for women, who lose themselves in that great big world, and can only find themselves as mothers, in the home, where they belong. Gender is even worse for children, who somehow get the misguided idea that women can do anything that men can do- including compete on an even playing field. But underneath this is the idea that gender equality is really, really bad for men. If women can both bring home the bacon and fry it up in the pan, what does that say about men, who have been sitting impatiently at the head of the table waiting for their dinner to be served on time?" (Kimmel 2010: 3)*

Kimmel's argument brings some critical discussions about gender and development into light by attempting to shift the focus from women to men, thereby drawing attention to the importance of interrogating masculinity as well. Tim Edwards draws an analogy between the three waves of critical studies in masculinity studies and in feminism: the first phase during the 1970s where much of the focus was on sex role paradigm, the 'big boys don't cry' syndrome which dealt with the relation between masculinities and emotional/psychological repression. The second wave emerged as a critique of the sex role paradigm, as it created a divide among the sexes and limiting theoretically by failing to recognize the pluralities creating a hegemonic category. The second wave of these studies also became a crucial milestone in integrating 'power' related research and masculinity studies while the third wave which began post liberalization, problematizes the gendered individual based on sexuality, normativity and performativity. (Edwards 2004) Coupled with similar questions in the case of feminism, a network of interdisciplinary fields of studies have tried to make sense of the exhaustive literature around men and masculinity studies. In addition to the emphasis on understanding the relationship between representation and broader aspects of transformation and reproduction of

these masculinities and identities, many studies found a positive correlation between the representation and the reproduction of masculinities. (Edwards 2004: 3)

The male characters in the film represent different forms of masculinity as these have been described by Connell, and which exist in contrast to femininities and are 'a configuration of practice within a system of gender order'. This system of hierarchical forms of masculinities is a product of power relations rather than perceived alternative forms of lifestyle which alter depending on the masculinity an individual identifies with. However, the origin of this system is the violence and prejudice against homosexual men by straight men which led to the power hierarchies between different masculinities. This seems like a plausible explanation for the power relations between different men based on their intersectional layers of identities. Connell's views on hegemony inspired from Gramsci's, conceptualize masculinity as not necessarily violent but as supported by force which meant gaining consent and domination over others through culture, institutions and persuasion (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Researchers have found these hierarchies affecting all spheres of life ranging from crimes to sports which helped them theorize the relationship between masculinities and other activities like crimes, violence, sports, military and mass media. ("Night to His Day":; The Social Construction of Gender', 1994, Banaji 2013, Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Kimmel 2006, West and Zimmerman 1987)

Masculinity was characterized by "aggression, competitiveness, emotional ineptitude and coldness, and dependent upon an overriding and exclusive emphasis on penetrative sex" by authors of *The Sexuality of Men* by Metcalf and Humphries (as cited in Nixon 1997: 296). However, the recent work around masculinity begins examining the pluralities in lieu of understanding sexual identities from the eighteenth century onward by theorists like Jeffrey Weeks who discussed this elaborately in both *Sex, Politics and Society*, and *Sexuality and its Discontents*. In *Family Fortunes*, Davidoff and Hall discuss the various aspects of society that shape masculinities, and which exist in contrast to femininities in the working class that operated in a hierarchical power nexus. As discussed earlier, the hierarchies between men, in terms of masculinities and between masculinities and femininities operates based on power and create groups that are weak in relation to other groups. Weeks argues that masculinities, like all identities are 'invented categories' which are built on the 'the cultural meanings attached to

certain attributes, capacities, dispositions and forms of conduct at given historical moments' (as cited in Nixon 1997: 301). Nixon discusses representation as a symbolic way in which cultural meanings construct the notions of masculinities, femininities and the wider spectrum of gender relations.

Nixon uses Foucault's arguments on discourse and power to formulate the notion of the 'new man', which forms the framework for his analysis of the same in various media. Foucault's notions about the dispersive nature of power shift the focus from a concrete image of the 'new man' to more diverse metaphors of masculine identities created at various sites of representation. There are specific symbolic 'codes and conventions' that reproduce the imaginings of the masculine identities corresponding to the nature of these symbols and the power dynamics that operate around them. Such a nexus of power between the different identities creates contrasting divisions between what is normative and what is not, based on the codes and conventions generated by the imagery of the masculine identities. This is followed by the institutional practices that reinforce the 'new man' image created by symbolic representation and the subsequent production of knowledge and skills accompanying these nuanced impressions of masculinities. Finally, Foucault's contentions about the nature of power and the various interpretations of such diverse forms of representation of the 'new man' make the discussion around the different masculine identities and the visual codes that correspond to them accessible to the academic scholars. (Nixon 1997: 303, Gillam and Wooden 2008)

Representation

Towards a film theory:

Following the trajectory of representation, media researchers such as Milan have explicitly stated that popular culture is a 'mirror' that reflects the culture and, creates culture by reproducing and reinforcing norms and social benchmarks. (as cited in Finklea 2014: 16) Edwards notes that the 'crisis of masculinity' is essentially also a 'crisis of representation' which leads into two phases of enquiry: first, the nature and scope of 'crisis of masculinity' in its representational aspect and the second, the representations of the current trends in masculinity and their direct relevance to the case of 'crisis of masculinity'. (Edwards 2007: 15) There is a need to acknowledge that the crisis that is being addressed by Edwards can be

interpreted as material crisis that masculinity is undergoing and representational crisis of masculinities.

In the Indian context, there are many factors that contribute to the development of the 'masculine' individual among which the entertainment industry has created a niche for itself. "*Cinema is important among all social groups*" (Osella and Osella 2004: 228) Bombay cinema is known to impact the audience so much so that young men in many parts of the country try to 'copy' the heroes and trying to adopt the scenarios played out in the cinema into their daily lives. (Osella and Osella 2004, Balaji 2014, Bhaumik 2004, Chopra et al. 2004, Dudrah and Desai 2008, Dudrah 2006, Dwyer 2010, Gabriel 2010, Mishra 2006, Nandy 1981, Rajan 2006) Studies have shown that the influence of Bombay cinema spreads far and wide from China to the US. From a sociological perspective, Nandy refers to the Bombay film as a 'spectacle' that follows rules and principles which are distinctive in differentiating between Bollywood cinema and other artistic forms of work. The first principle followed by the Bombay cinema is being very clear in their approach towards reality and representation where they drastically depart from logic. "*The popular film tries to be convincing as a spectacle by exaggeration. It does not even try to be a direct reflection of everyday reality."* (Nandy 1981: 90)

The characterization of individuals is black and white in terms of their inherent ideals leaving no scope for grey areas that can be open to interpretation however if there are instances that demand the characters to move away from the grey areas of ideological standpoints, they clearly choose either the black or the white preconditioned according to their experiences. Nandy's description of such distinct categories in characteristic features of the film portrayals shows his inability to perceive nuances and problematize them. The changes experienced by the individuals are extreme nature which have a psychological impact on the audience even though the content of the 'spectacle' is anti-psychological. Second, the Bollywood spectacle always has a 'predictable' conclusion giving the sense of déjà vu thereby offering a very limited scope for distinction. This is precisely another reason why even though a significant number of films flop financially, the makers do not discontinue the film making process hoping that they will be successful. The third is regarding the time sequence of the storyline that is designed to maintain the continuous link between the events creating a platform for the viewer to judge the characters based on their actions; what they were, what they are and eventually what they turn into. (Nandy 1981: 91) Nandy also argues that the nature of the Bombay film to be ahistorical and

being abstract in contrast to pinning down the characters in the film to specific individuals will maintain the audience viewership. Another reason stated for such abstraction from typified details is the need for the film to create a parallel universe which is arguably moving towards a utopian conclusion. (ibid.) Nandy's argument follows a narrative discourse of the Bombay cinema although it is not my intention to use all his views for my analysis of the film. The film being ahistorical does not imply that the films are situated in arbitrary spatial and temporal frames, it can be interpreted as something that is independent of the historical facts either in its story or in its conception of cinematography. It is important to critique the elements of Nandy's arguments that dismiss the effect of socio-historical construction of sexualities.

film to create a parallel universe which is arguably moving towards a utopian conclusion. (ibid.)

Representing 'masculine' characters:

Understanding the representation of the characters in the film requires a deeper understanding of the dynamics of representation and its association with culture which can be done by unpacking the notions of representation, culture and the politics behind interpreting the meanings associated with each of these. Stuart Hall believes that representation is a key feature in which 'culture' is generated which is summarized as '*shared meanings*' produced by a medium in a 'representational system' which he calls '*The circuit of culture*'.(Hall 1997: 1) However, providing a range of conceptual meanings for the term '*culture*', Hall presents a fluid definition that transcends through the boundaries of art, literature and forms of mass media into 'shared values'. Furthering the discussion on the theories of representation, Hall outlines three major approaches of how representation works through language; *reflective approach, intentional approach* and *constructionist approach.*

Nixon uses Foucault's work on power and knowledge to understand the subjective discourse of creating masculine imagery and the consequent interpretation of such imagery. He brings together the concepts of psychoanalysis and subjectivity to understand how cultural codes are created that mark the imaginings of the 'new man' and impact individuals in real life in contrast to their representative nature that maybe fictional. He uses *Oedipus complex, scopophilia* and *narcissism* to conceptualize the relationship between the imagery and the audience of the metaphors. Nixon further elaborates Freud's psychoanalytical work on the individual's ego which is distinguished based on two kinds of desire: **object cathexis** where a

person wants *to have the other person* whereas *the aspiration to be the other person* is termed as **identification**. Freudian theory integrates possession (by object cathexis) and assimilation (by identification) that operate within the nexus of Oedipus complex, scopophilia and narcissism to create the visual codes and conventions between gender identity and sexuality. (as cited in Nixon 1997: 317). Nixon's use of the psychoanalytic approach provides a new and interesting perspective to the spectatorship of film and the discourse that accompanies but it would be very difficult to adapt this approach for analysis without proper training in psychoanalytic theories and their usage.

Shifting the focus from psychoanalytical understanding of representation and identity formation, Nixon and Edwards establish the functional relationship between film theory and spectatorship through the Freudian psychoanalytical construction of gender identity and sexuality. Discussing the work of Mulvey, they emphasize on the critical aspect of spectatorship that creates an imbalance in power between the genders, the audience and the object that is being cinematically represented. Accordingly, Mulvey distinguishes between the active looking of the film as masculine and the object of spectacle as the passive feminine, reiterating her views on the palpable distinction between representation of gendered identities and their subjective interpretations.(as cited in Nixon 1997: 319, as cited in T Edwards 2004: 118) Nixon also relies on Neale's work on masculinity titled 'Masculinity as spectacle' that extends Mulvey's conceptualization of the object and the audience to focus on the male audience and their subjective interpretation of the representation within the narrative cinema that occurs through subtle visual codes. These include attributes of 'toughness, hardness and being in control' which leave no scope for weaknesses or vulnerabilities offering the male members in the audience a 'fantasy of power and control'. (ibid)

Although these arguments have their specific limitations, the major factor that limits the application of this framework to determine the representational aspect of cinema is that it downplays the wide spectrum of masculinities and femininities by conceptualizing a singular idea of these fluid categories.

The new man image:

MacKinnon argues that hegemonic masculinities need to undergo constant change to maintain their hegemony by reacting and adapting to their object of subjugation. In this case, accepting femininities and reproducing it in a hegemonic way would create newer versions of masculinities that are less hegemonic to maintain their hegemony. (as cited in Finklea 2014: 19) Trujillo elaborated on the characteristic features of hegemonic masculinity as projected by Nolan Ryan in the American culture which can be contextualized for the Indian scenario as well. There are five key features of performing hegemonic masculinity: "1) physical force and control, 2) occupational achievement, 3) familial patriarchy, 4) frontiersmanship and 5) heterosexuality."(as cited in Finklea 2014: 21) It is important to specify that very few individuals can fulfill all the above mentioned hyperbolic category of hegemonic masculinity, but they tweak some aspects of these characteristic features to suit their performance of masculinity and thus emerged the New Man.

Jeffords outlines the basic difference between the two versions of masculinities is the strengths in their individual personalities; traditional depictions of masculinity always emphasized on physical strength and emotional unavailability whereas the New Man narratives point towards men who are capable of emotional expression, parenting children and value inter-personal relationships. (Jeffords 1994: 136) This new version of masculinity has been discussed by scholars (Hatfield 2010, Jeffords 1994, MacKinnon 2003, Malin 2005) as it became a symbol of masculinity in the 1990s throughout 2000s which was popularized by mediated portrayals of the same. However, the physical elements of performing gender remain intact with a revised set of codes that adapt the feminine parts with considerable deliberation.

Nationalism

Nation and Nationalism:

The paper aims at discussing the production of the 'nationalist' identity in the cinematic narrative through representation and subjective interpretations of the characters in the film therefore it is important to trace out the origins of 'nation', 'nationalism' and its numerous links to masculinity. Drawing upon the work of Nagel and Vijayan, I wish to unpack the above-mentioned concepts to provide a theoretical grounding to my arguments that explore the masculinities and their links to nationhood in the film. Nagel's work on building up the association between colonialism, war, nationhood and masculinity bring various debates about gender and sexuality to light whereas Vijayan's analysis of the Indian context delves deeper into the exploration of Hindutva masculinities combined with the socio-political factors that shape the 'masculine' identities. Nagel's book *Race, Ethnicity and Sexuality: Intimate Intersections and Forbidden Frontiers* deals with comprehending the interplay between race, ethnicity and sexuality where she coins the term "ethnosexual" that refers to the intersection and interaction between ethnicity and sexuality which included the interconnectedness of the two in relation to power and meaning. (Nagel 2003 : 142)

> *Nation*: "*a collective identity associated with a region or territory that is sovereign or asserts sovereignty and self-rule*." (Nagel 2003: 148)

> *Nationalism*: *"ideology that professes a common history, shared culture, and rightful homeland, and is often marked by ethnocentrism where nationalists assert moral, cultural, and social superiority over other nations and nationalisms… can be unifying … or source of conflict and fractionalization."* (ibid)

The relationship between colonialism and the construction of masculinities and femininities in the colonies by the colonial masters and the colonial subjects as a historical background to the modern-day construction of the sexual identities of individuals and subsequent monitoring of these aspects by creating 'boundaries' has been discussed as a precursor to understand the formation of the nation state and the role of gender in doing so. Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities*, states that the symbol of the tomb of an unknown soldier is an explicit representation of the modern nationalism that leaves a lot of space for interpretation regarding the tomb. "Nations are empty vessels waiting to be filled by the symbolic work of nationalist founders and defenders." (as cited in Nagel 2003: 157) Nationalism and masculinity have a lot in common starting from their shared histories to the current day emphasis on the ideal types of nationalism and masculinities. Nagel further discusses how the idea of nationalism and the movement towards the creation of the nation state caused a setback to the women's movement leading to the subjugation of women by the patriarchal discourses combined with the nationalist discourses. Honor, patriotism, cowardice, bravery and duty are recurring themes which are difficult to distinguish from nationalistic and masculinist discourses in film literature that is methodically linked to the notions of the nation and to manhood alike. Cynthia Enloe, "nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope." (Enloe 2014: 45)

Lambevski and Ho and Tsang state that "individuals can cross ethnic boundaries in the most intimate way, by having sex with one another, yet the ethnic boundary between them remains in place." (as cited in Nagel 2003: 166) 'Masculinist heterosexuality is the core of the national borders.' Nagel continues the discussion and proceeds towards the practices of ethnosexual economy of around the globe in locations that necessarily might not be the ideal locations one could imagine for libidinal actions. With the example of Korean and American ties with each other through the construction of the 'seductive' Asian female, she tries to give a contextual background to the nature of gendered relations between different ethnic groups and their functional systems. Various discourses that question the survival of young men in the military in war zones without the service of these 'women' are lined up to understand the type of masculinities that the men in the military try to exhibit. Bringing up the concept of 'comfort women', Enloe argues that sexuality has been central to all military operations and militaries around the world. "Women have been known to accompany militaries providing them with

services such as laundry, nursing, companionship, and sex to the soldiers." But most of the times, local women are enrolled as comfort women. (as cited in Nagel 2003: 181)

War and masculinity:

Rape is used a major form of violence during wars to control groups of individuals. Usually military men do not rape their 'own' women unless they are deemed disloyal or traitorous. Susan Brownmiller notes that gang rape is a common form of violence during wars that was used as a tool to dominate or conquer enemy men by raping their women (as cited in Nagel 2003: 181). With various examples from around the world, the author tries to establish the fact that rape as a form of violence affects women physically and mentally, but it also threatens the masculinity of the men that are unable to protect their own women against assault by foreign men. Rape as a tool for ethnic cleansing and various accounts of the brutal angles of rape have been presented by Nagel which clearly indicate the trauma and terror the women go through, but it also shows that the men who perpetrate these crimes are conditioned to do so to show their patriotism to their ethnic group and to prove that they do not respect the others. (Nagel 2003: 185) Kazuko Watanabe identifies that the men are trapped in these masculinist roles that they must fulfill which rewards them with prostitutes and makes them emotionally detached and practically void of any feeling towards others. (as cited in Nagel 2003: 186)

Nationalism in India- Hindu Nationalism:

Colonialist discourses presented Indian men as "undersexed, passive, feminine, deferential and incapable of autonomous action". Said argues that "marriage between exotic and the erotic" is central to the Western understanding of the Orient (as summarized by Boone and cited in Nagel 2003: 153) . Stoler suggests that the European-Asian sexual linkages have consequences that threatened to expose the fiction of European moral superiority, self-discipline, and libidinal self-control. (as cited in Nagel 2003: 153) Under the theme of exploring patriarchy as masculine hegemony, Vijayan brings in a set of explanations that point out to the fact that patriarchy paves way for men to dominate over other oppressed men irrespective of their caste, class or race. This idea of hegemony comes from the notion of domination that is seen over women, but it is not clearly articulated for other men. Presenting the Indian case, Vijayan describes the Indian diaspora post-Independence predominantly dominated by Hindus which derived strength in numbers even though they were divided in numerous ways by the

virtue of caste, class and gender. (Vijayan 2002: 30) Vijayan's work also explores the analytical and theoretical debates on men and masculinity studies which overtly focus on the different versions of masculinities downplaying the significance of structural blocks which sustain these forms of masculinities. This is in contrast with Nandy's arguments that consider film to be ahistorical when the semantics of the film demand a structural signifier that determines the frame through which the narrative is formed. Vijayan discusses the emergence of Hindu nationalism and how it navigates through gender and caste at specified spatial and temporal reference frames. (Vijayan 2012: 215)

The discussion about 'Western modernity' is a constant focal point of Vijayan's argument which looks at the Nehruvian model of development and places the Indian male actors in the context of changing socio-political situation. The differentiation between the personal laws and the public laws play an important role in deciding the active actors that exercise patriarchy in the personal realm that is highly based on the gendered identity of individuals. Masculinity is an underlying concept that comes up often while referring to the communal differences as the personal laws are based on religion and the Shah Bano case brought this issue to the mainstream debate about the Sharia Law in India where the majority formed a homogeneous group against 'the other'. This scenario united the Hindus against other religious groups and being the numerical majority, they had the privilege that usually accompanies the hegemonic power over the others. (Vijayan 2002: 42)

This was followed by the communal riots during the demolition of Babri masjid in 1992, which brought out the debate of personal laws into the public realm and gave power to the Hindu nationalists who "Hinduized" the state and created a nation that was divided based on the masculine concept of Hindu identity that became the hegemonic form of power exercised by the state. (Vijayan 2002: 43) Hindu nationalism has its roots in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the political extension of this organization, the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) created a nexus of strong political and ideological framework that opposed the economic reforms in the post liberalization period proposing the concept of "Swadeshi" (self-reliant) state of affairs. The masculinities described by the Hindu nationalistic discourse stress on the importance of control and restraint which was completely different from the claims laid by the Hindutva masculinity that aimed at continuing and strengthening the existing patriarchal structures. They also make

sure that the gendered divisions in the society are not questioned in relation to women and their social status relating to the men. Mostly focusing on hegemonic aspect of masculinity in the nationalist discourses of the Hindutva group in India, Vijayan briefs us about the structural aspects that control the nature of men and their laws. Women and their relation to these forms of hegemonic masculinities are not contested by him which could be a major gap in addressing social justice through a gender lens in this discussion.

Summarizing the chapter, I would like to point out that Sumati Chakravarty articulates how the 'hero' is a compatible narrative when it comes to Bollywood cinema.

> *"A similar though historically and culturally distinct effort at incorporating heterogeneity and reveling in it is evident in Indian commercial cinema in terms of the male body as the interface of multiple regional, class and religious identities and texts. The male hero as the center and source of narrative meaning is "resemanticized" into a mode of instability and the dispersion of meaning. Forms of disguise, impersonation and masquerade are the visual means that serve to render this move from the natural to the acculturated body, allowing the spectator means of recognition of his/her social world within the world of the film through the hero's "play" with the signifiers of dress, accent, and gesture. This distinct tendency within the Bombay film to both identify and nullify marks of (intercultural) difference in a wide variety of textual situations allows national identity to surface as so many styles of the flesh." (Chakravarty 2008: 84)*

Chapter 3 : Context

In this chapter I would like to lay the foundations of the contextual background by outlining the image of the male protagonist in Bombay cinema through history. A detailed description of the hero in Bombay cinema with traces of nationalist discourses is followed by a meticulous sketch of the geo-political setup between India and Pakistan. The proposed research questions arising from the review of literature and a thorough knowledge of the context have been listed towards the end of the chapter.

Hindi Hero:

Representation in cinema takes a different forms when it comes to masculinity and Bollywood where there are different eras of the heroes that have defined specific type of masculinity that corresponds to them that have had a wide scholarship. (Bainbridge and Yates 2005, Balaji 2014, Banaji 2013, Chopra et al. 2004, Dissanayake 2003, Dudrah and Desai 2008, Dudrah 2006, Gabriel 2003, Gabriel 2010, Kavi 2000, Mishra 2006, Mishra 2009, Vasudevan 2002, Vijayan 2002) For example, Rajesh Khanna was the first male actor to gain the status of 'superstar' for the tragic roles he essayed on screen and began the era of the sad hero who is always at the center of a tragic accident or incident. This was followed by Amitabh Bachchan who is popular for his 'angry-young man' image that became popular during the 1970s and 1980s which saw films that had similar characters for the actor who became a vigilante in these roles. It is interesting to note that this type of masculinity is still prevalent and widely accepted by the audience which can be seen in contemporary performances of Ajay Devgn, among others. The beginning of the 90s saw the rise of a pathological lover which was portrayed by Shah Rukh Khan in a few movies and by Nana Patekar in many movies that released during the 90s. Towards the end of the 90s, the romantic lover gained more prominence and was played by most actors during that time parallel to the character of the vigilante that was still popular. (Gabriel 2010: 183)

During the 1970s, the political situation of the country was in a chaotic state that led to the emergence of this vigilante characters in cinema and their corresponding stories that

challenged the state authority which was usually portrayed as corrupt, immoral and irresponsible and the intervention of the vigilante protagonist was necessary to maintain order in the society. Academicians have studied this 'vigilante' hero in various ways to understand the implications of such roles on masses and the emergence of this kind of masculinity. (Dudrah 2006: 187, Dudrah and Desai 2008, Gabriel 2010: 187) The following years saw the rise of a new generation of actors who diversified the type of 'manly' identity they projected in the film with actors like Shahrukh Khan, Salman Khan, Ajay Devgn and Sunny Deol coming into the industry during the end of the 80s and towards the beginning of the 90s. This period also saw a significant increase in the number of films produced in a year giving scope for more actors to work in the industry competitively. The film industry across the country saw rapid expansion during the new millennium providing more opportunities of work in the film industry in different fields like technical jobs, music-related jobs and active filmmaking process. (Gabriel 2010)

Portrayal of men in the Bollywood has been always in a way as to project masculinities that exist and in contrast to femininities in an aggravated form when compared to reality. Most researchers claim that the relationship between cinema and realist representation is complicated as it is an art form that can show unrealistic events with ease. It has been argued that cinema effectively accommodates the social reality and the utopian fiction set within specific socio-cultural context. (Gabriel 2010: 89)

> *Most feature films do not show the world as it is, and Hindi cinema is no*
> *exception to this rule: It is concerned with entertainment, presented with*
> *an excess of emotion and spectacle, whose high points are numerous*
> *song and dance numbers. Bollywood – which can be labelled eclectic*
> *and hybrid – is happy to mix elements of realism with fantasy (often*
> *in the same frame or sequence), anything in fact that will allow it to*
> *entertain. Escapism is the usual label with which such entertainment is*
> *derided – as if entertainment should be edifying or instructive – but,*
> *as has been noted by Richard Dyer, the forms of escape and escapism*
> *are rewarding objects of study. (Dyer in Dwyer 2010: 383)*

While most filmmakers prefer to use the dominant discourse of a middle class, Hindu male, heterosexual protagonist, deviances from the discourse are also prominently evident in films like Chak De India (2007) where the protagonist being a Muslim had to prove his patriotism by trying to overtly exhibit such feelings towards the nation. However, in the dominant discourse there is no 'real' need to prove patriotism as it is perceived that Hindus are patriotic by default as shown in Sarfarosh (1999), Swadesh (2004) and Lagaan (2001) although they have their own nuances which might not be apt to show comparatively. Movies based on conflict directly aim to portray the Muslim as 'bad' whereas they portray the dominant 'Hindu' as the savior who protects the nation's borders, the entire geographic region or the people. This discourse is enhanced to suit the nationalist lens of looking at gendered identity in a way as to understand the use of 'borders' to control the women thereby controlling the 'honor' of the nation. There has been significant research into understanding the protectionism of men in regard to women. This has offered varied opinions about the links between the sexuality of women and the 'honor' of men, the family, the community and society at large. However, portrayal of this 'protective' side of men in the Bollywood film industry has been happening through the decades in which the male protagonist tries to save his mother, sister, wife or other female characters in his family, and often the community, religion or the nation itself. However, understanding the representations of the various types of masculinities plays a major role in appreciating the nuances that connect these representations to the reality. (Balaji 2014, Bainbridge and Yates 2005, Chakravarty 2008, Dudrah 2006, Gabriel 1998, Gabriel 2003, Kavi 2000, Monti 2004, Osella and Osella 2004, Rajan 2006, Tere 2012, Vasudevan 2002, Vijayan 2002, Vijayan 2012)

\Setting the scene:

One cannot adequately understand Bombay cinema without talking about the India-Pakistan conflict that has been on-going from the end of British colonial rule, and has been the central theme in many films. The three wars fought between the two countries have provided the Bombay cinema industry with a lot of content to produce cinemas about war, cross-border relations, terrorism, and romance across borders. A subsequent production of the 'nationalist' identity in the discourse leads the narrative towards understanding how closely masculinity and nationalism work their way into patriotic behavior that is expected during conflict situations. Nationalism is a recurring theme in Bollywood cinema that is usually set out in the context of India- Pakistan but conflict with China, Sri Lanka and terrorism are also very common which lead the discussion further into the relationship between nationalism and masculinity. The two neighboring states in South Asia with constant tensions along the borders have been the focus of many films across varied genres (e.g. *Hum Dono* 1961, *Aakraman* 1975, *Hindustan Ki Kasam* 1973, *Vijeta* 1982, *Ab Tumhare Hawale Watan Saathiyo* 2004). Since the focus of this paper is on the Kargil war fought between India and Pakistan during 1999, literature around films that have the Kargil war as the backdrop has been chosen to give context to the paper. Filmmaker J. P. Dutta has tried to represent the war between India and Pakistan through his 'war trilogy' films, *Border* (1997), *Refugee* (2000) and *LOC Kargil* (2003) which were categorized under the 'war film' genre. While there are many films that have been situated in the context of the India Pakistan conflict, there have been fewer war films that have dealt with the actual representation of the wars fought between these countries.

Since Partition in 1947, there have been 3 major wars fought between India and Pakistan on the 3000-kilometer border that is shared although there have been severe tensions regularly in this region. The Kargil war usually considered as an armed conflict rather than a full-fledged war, fought in 1999 in the Kashmir valley was a counter attack by the Indian armed forces against the terrorist insurgents in the region that were allegedly backed by the Pakistani armed forces. Most tensions in the valley are due to the 'issue of Kashmir' that has not been effectively resolved even after 70 years of Independence of both the States which claim that the land of Kashmir belongs to either of them.(Chakravarty 2008, Gabriel 1998, Ramachandran 2015) This issue has been one of the most recurring themes in Bollywood across genres like

drama, action, romance and social cinema and has become the underlying context to many films that revolve around these two nations and the constant tensions that keep the Kashmir valley under continuous threat of violence and destruction.

Since gender is performed in personalized ways, there does not exist one definite mode of 'masculinity' and understanding the nuances of such diverse characteristics will go a long way in proving that there are multiple perspectives on masculinity and are equally significant in determining the scope of masculinity studies. My research aims at understanding the types of 'masculinities' that are represented by the characters in the film and the traits that they exhibit on screen regarding the notions of 'nation, nationalism, and conflict'. The literature and the context provide a comprehensive set of plausible questions to answer among which I would like to focus the questions listed below.

Research Questions:

1. What are the different kinds of masculinities that are represented in the film?
2. How are these 'masculine' characters positioned in terms of 'Nation'?
3. How does the concept of 'nation' in India shape the masculinity of characters in the film?
4. How does nationalism shape the masculinity/ties and femininity/ties of the characters?

I believe that these questions would address the research problem and provide a better understanding of the representational aspects of Bombay cinema pertaining to masculinities and nationhood.

Chapter 4 : Methodology

In this chapter, I would like to discuss the methodological approach of my paper to address the research problem along with an exhaustive account of the sample, in this case, the film chosen to be analyzed. It is also my responsibility to state my position as a researcher which will be followed by the scope of the paper. Although many scholars have tried to understand the complicated dynamics between the gendered portrayals in media, they do not essentially capture the complex plexus of masculinity, cinema and gender with references to specific spatial and temporal settings. The closest academic work on this can be seen in Gabriel's work on *Border* (1997) which actively explores the various nuances that arise in the gendered understanding of the characters of the film about their spatial setting.(Gabriel 1998: 828) Gabriel's work in South Asian Masculinities: context of change, sites of continuity, examines the formation of the 'Indian' identity through gendered narratives in Hey Ram (2000) and Bombay (1995). Melodrama and the Nation: Sexual Economies of Bombay Cinema 1970-2000 by Gabriel ventures into the nexus between gender, nation and economy. Chapters are dedicated to discussing masculinity and nationalism individually as well as in their combined state where the representational aspect is critically examined. (Gabriel 2010). Vijayan has also contributed to the literature elaborately on Hindu nationalism and its relationship with masculine hegemony in the context of modernization. (Vijayan 2004, Vijayan 2012, Vijayan 2002) Building up on this literature, I would like to bring in the concept of the 'new man' and look at Lakshya, which already has the context set out in line with my pursuit of specialization. This understanding has been actively built upon the previous available academic literature and a desire to integrate this academic work with the cinematic experience of the new age.

Method:

To understand the representation of men and masculinity, it is crucial to examine the characters represented in the film and how they are positioned in terms of gender, nation and nationalism. While undertaking a discourse analysis of the film, the content of the film plays an important role in understanding the film and its underlying meanings. Understanding the basic features of

content analysis might help us in making clear assumptions, deductions and conclusions about the film and provide a clear pathway that needs to be followed to analyze the chosen film.

- Data does not have objective, reader-independent qualities
- There are no single meanings to any set of data
- Data generates different meanings in different contexts
- Meanings are generated by accompanying factors of the data like the time, the audience or the producer
- Meanings from data are relative to specific needs of the discourses, contexts or purposes
- The inferences drawn from specific data are the result of the nature of the data and the context chosen by the analyst.

Certainty in developing this method for analyzing can be attributed to previous academic success and failures and embodied practices which reflect the representative nature of films obtained from such practices. (Grbich 2012, Krippendorff 2012: 173)

Researcher's bias and positionality:

Considering the qualitative nature of my academic enquiry, it would only be fair to point out that the personal biases that I might have will get reflected in the interpretation and analysis of the film.(Creswell and Clark 2007) Therefore, it is important for me to state my position clearly with respect to the film which will leave unavoidable traces during the analysis creating a biased view of the topic. However, studying the film as a text has its own advantages in contrast to studying people who react to the presence of the observer. It is also important to note that the process of criticizing an object that is closely associated with an individual's childhood can be difficult for a lot of people as described by Bell,(Bell et al. 1995) but I believe that my previous knowledge base generated by critical engagement with feminist theory and media theories will provide me with a judicious appreciation for the content of the film. As a female, I perceive my inquiry into masculinity studies will provide an outsider perspective regarding the subject in question which can be compared to a male member conducting a similar investigation making him a part of the community looking around him.

The purpose of this study is to understand the interplay between masculinity and nationalism within the specific contexts of armed conflict/war, and to analyze the ways in which the field of men and masculinity studies may be integrated into the study of cinema and conflict at a specific point in time. The ideal scenario for choosing a specific film for analysis requires a detailed understanding of the nature of the film and its impact on the audience and I have chosen to analyze *Lakshya* (Akhtar 2004) as my sample to look at the construction of masculinity of characters and their positionality with respect to the nation. In this section I will introduce my sample (the film) and elucidate my design and the mode of enquiry that I wish to pursue all the while addressing my positionality and biases that might affect the study.

It was a difficult decision to choose one film for analysis but due to the limited scope of the paper, my sample was strategically chosen which had all the thematical notions that I wanted to delve into. After watching other films in the war genre like Border (1997), Refugee (2000), LOC Kargil (2003), Veer-Zaara (2004), Tango Charlie (2005), Shaurya (2008), Bajrangi Bhaijaan (2015) and The Ghazi Attack (2017) this film was chosen as my sample as it became a film that gained popularity as a 'new age Bollywood' cinema for the millennial generation with different dreams and goals integrated with modern techniques of cinematography and music. As a film enthusiast and a woman growing up in the 2000s, I have grown up watching Bollywood films which have been a constant source of entertainment and information that is sold through a fantasy which might not concur on logical stands. Lakshya inspired a generation of youth by creating a new interesting career path for the struggling adolescents; Karan's character and his counterpart Romila, set new trends for country's modern generation. (Mukherjee 2016)

The film has been viewed multiple times and the process of analysis and interpretation began with the initial viewing. The process of data collection overlapped with data analysis creating an open space for continuous interpretations of the various themes in the film.

Sample:

Film: Lakshya (English: aim, target, goal)

- Released: 18th June 2004
- Genre: Indian War Drama
- Running time: 185 minutes (3 hours 5 minutes)
- Language: Hindi
- Budget: 320 million Rupees (US$ 5 million)
- Box office: 332.5 million Rupees (US$ 5.2 million)
- Story, screenplay and dialogues: Javed Akhtar
- Director: Farhan Akhtar
- Producer: Ritesh Sidhwani

Plot:

The film revolves around the life of an aimless young man Karan Shergill, from Delhi whose father is a successful businessman and his brother lives in the United States of America. His girlfriend Romila Dutta is a student activist and aspires to become a journalist while his friends are looking out for various career options. When one of his friends announces that he will join the Indian army, everyone makes fun of him, but this makes Karan ponder over a career in the military. He applies to the Indian Military Academy (IMA) against the wishes of his parents and gets selected for the training while his friend backs out and ends up in the training. He is not used to the discipline and the restricted life of the army which lands him up into trouble with the authority leading to humiliating punishments and eventually he leaves the training mid-way and goes home. His parents aren't surprised by this as they were expecting this to happen all along whereas his girlfriend gets upset that he could not be responsible for once in his life and breaks up with him.

Understanding the graveness of the situation and the consequences of his actions, he goes back to the Academy and continues his training with a new sense of responsibility towards his career. There is a transition in Karan from the aimless urban young boy to the disciplined,

focused army personnel which gets him commissioned into the Indian army. He is posted to the 3rd battalion of the Punjab regiment which is headed by Colonel Sunil Damle that is stationed at Kargil, Jammu and Kashmir. Karan goes to Delhi on leave and finds out that Romila is getting engaged, he is upset by the event however his leave is cut short as he gets called back to the regiment as there are some infiltrators in the Kargil region.

When he returns to Kargil, he gets promoted to the rank of Captain since he is in the field area and a part of Operation Vijay and Col. Damle briefs the officers on the current situation where a large group of infiltrators have crossed the Line of Control from Pakistan and have captured mountainous peaks in the valley. The battalion is assigned to recapture peak 5179 from the insurgents, which is crucial for the Indian army as it dominates the main supply line for the army, National Highway 1D. Since the insurgents have the control of the peak, they can easily cut off the supply line isolating the army which in turn gives a great advantage to the infiltrators to gain power in the valley. Colonel Damle briefs the officers regarding the mountain which has its northern side in the Pakistani region across the LOC, the western side has a 1000 feet long vertical cliff with rocky terrain and the southern side is an open field of 3 kilometers which is not a feasible option for attack. The battalion chooses the eastern side of the peak for attack and prepares to move to the base where the first part of the attack is to find out about the enemy bunkers which goes as planned. Romila breaks off her engagement with the businessman she was supposed to marry and comes to Kargil as a war correspondent and meets a changed Karan doing his job with finesse and is surprised at the course of events that lead to it. Their relationship rekindles amidst the war zone and they find themselves garnering strong emotions towards each other.

During the attack from the eastern side of the peak, the Indian forces do not manage to recapture the peak as the insurgents had a strategic advantage of being on the top of the peak and heavy artillery that was used to attack the army and the unit suffers severe causalities. Following the unsuccessful attempt to recapture peak 5179, Brigadier of the regiment orders Colonel Damle that the unit will oversee the Operation only for 48 more hours after which the operation will be taken over by another unit of the regiment. Colonel Damle then orders a group of 12 officers to scale the rocky cliff on the western side and attack the infiltrators from western side while the unit provides them with artillery support from the eastern side. Karan is a part of

the team that is allocated to scale the mountain from the western side and he realizes that the recapturing of peak 5179 is his goal and they set off to climb the rocky mountain. But they encounter the Pakistani forces in the grassy field that leads to the peak and lose their chief and some other soldiers along with radios and communication to the base. Out of the 12 who set out to recapture the peak, only 6 remain and they decide to go ahead with the mission. Throughout the evening, the six-army personnel scale the rocky cliff and reach the peak towards the end of the night. They attack the Pakistani troops on the peak and manage to successfully eliminate the infiltrators although they lose 3 more officers and Karan is severely wounded. In the morning, Karan reaches the peak and hoists the tri-color Indian flag and signals that they have managed to recapture the peak to Colonel Damle at the base of the peak. The film ends when Karan and his family unites at the military hospital and Karan sets a new goal of being with Romila.

Chapter 5 : Analysis

This chapter has been outlined in a way that classifies analysis of the film into four major sections based on the relationships in the film. Since the film is centered around the protagonist Karan, all relationships in the film are linked to the protagonist which are used as sections to understand representation of masculinities, femininities and nationalism in this film. After a general introduction into the analytical process, the themes on father, love interest, friends and military explicitly discussed followed by a detailed description of the songs in the film. I would like to emphasize here that these themes are analyzed individually however, all the themes tackle the issues of representation, masculinity, nationalism and the interconnectedness of the same. Bringing the complexity of the research problem into focus, I would like to reflect on the analysis and integrate these individual themes in the next chapter.

Making of the man:

The film starts off with a disclaimer stating that the film is based on an event in 1999 which serves as the backdrop for the entire movie which is fictional. The introduction to the story begins from a scenic shot of the Kashmir valley and the interaction between Captain Karan Shergill (the protagonist played by Hrithik Roshan) and his Commanding Officer played by Amitabh Bachchan. This is followed by a series of introductions that happen between Karan and the other members who come from different parts of the country and have different religious orientations. During their introductions, the CO instructs one of the officers, Akbar to take Karan with him and states very proudly "*It's time you saw what we have been sent here to defend*". Clearly, a sense of patriotism and pride in their work is reflected in those words however this exchange also shows that the men who are in the armed forced are expected to defend their country irrespective of the conditions. This can be understood from the next part where the officer explains to Karan about the Line Of Control (LOC) between India and Pakistan and their duty towards their country by defending its borders.

The bravery of the officers in the regiment is a cause of pride for the entire regiment of officers which rules out any possibility of weakness or death and glorifies the dead by earning them medals, certificates and trophies. The monologue extends further by claiming victory, making the newcomer Karan, a part of its legacy and instilling the sense of duty to protect its honor and dignity which is supported by the nation and its people. The visuals show how all other officers are embracing these words of wisdom and taking pride in the work they do which makes the entire population of the nation trust these men and make them responsible for their safety.

The film keeps presenting visuals and dialogues that continuously create a sense of patriotic pride in the actors as well as the audience however the notions of honor and dignity come with the responsibility of protection. The spatial and the temporal frames are repeatedly used as "flashbacks" of the protagonist's memory which creates the delusion that there are two parallel narratives rather than the chronological sequence of events that occur. These frames clearly distinguish between the 'aimless' young man and the 'patriotic' soldier played by the protagonist projecting the transformation at the forefront. The variation in the two roles played by the protagonist are visually and symbolically significant in creating the narratives around these two characters. While Karan in the army embodies a 'masculine' man with sharp clothes and immaculate manners that eventually translate into 'ideal' type which distinctly contrasts with the Karan from the university where he has baggy clothes and haphazard haircut making him look 'unruly' and 'immature'. (Balaji 2014, Chakravarty 2008, Edwards 2004, Hall 1997, Nixon 1997, Osella and Osella 2004, Rajan 2006, Thussu 2002)

Father:

One of the crucial characters in the film is the father of the protagonist who is a successful businessman in the country's capital city; Karan's father is a serious man with a sense of pride regarding his achievement after they moved to India during Partition. He describes the hardships faced by his family during the partition and the loss of wealth (translated to 'prestige') to his son hoping that he will get inspired and joins the family business. The role of a father in Bollywood movies has usually been that of an extremist who strictly adheres to the 'hegemonic' ideals of fatherhood and being emotionally distanced from the members of the family to provide for them.

An absentee father is the most common theme in Bollywood cinema that links failed past of colonialism and nationalism to the subservient masculinity embodied by the father figure, usually deliberated through the resilient relationship with the mother (Gabriel 1998, Gabriel 2010: 200). As Karan states, "*Do you remember how in school...both your parents would come on parents Day. My mom would, but did you even once see my Dad?"* which proves that most fathers are usually absent or escape the situations thereby creating a void of emotional connectivity with their children. This can also be observed when Karan's father does not attend his graduation ceremony but the phone conversation between Karan and his father before the final operation ends on an emotional note although the premise for the poignant exchange between the father and the son is of patriotic pride rather than the vulnerability of the situation in which Karan is in. The evident anxiety on being unable to control the situation is clear by the actions of Karan's father when he is not certain about the events happening near the border. An important characteristic feature of the hegemonic masculinity is not being happy when they are not in control of the situation. This can be juxtaposed to the entire realm of men who feel threatened when they lose power over situations to women.

> *Karan's father: What is this? What is this? Did you apply to the IMA? Are you planning to sit for the exam?*
>
> *Karan: Actually, Parvesh and...*
>
> *Karan's father: Did you ask us before making this decision? Answer me! Did you ask me or your mother? You've lost your mind! Think you can do whatever you feel like? Not in this house! You better understand that!*
>
> *Karan: But Daddy, what have I...*
>
> *Karan's father: Shut up. I've had enough! Shalini, it's all our fault. He gets whatever he wants! I'm here to earn the money!! Where's the need for him to do anything? Apart from his regular nonsense. Now see this... he wants to join the army! Karan, look at me...You will do as I say Understand that! You will do exactly as I say! Enough is enough.*
>
> *Karan's mother: He's very upset. What's gotten into you! Just see how Udesh...*
>
> *Karan: please   mummy,   I   am   not   Udesh!*
> *('Lakshya   (2004)   Movie   ScriptRead   More:*

Another theme that is related to the father-son liaison is the apprehension most fathers have towards their sons' career choices making that an important part of the conversations between the father and the son which is evident from the film. Most discussions Karan and his father have been directed towards Karan's future that end up creating a strife against the father. Even though he means well for his son, he does not come across subtly due to the stoic nature of the father-figure which is in line with the angular and obdurate masculinities as discussed by Gabriel. There also exists one description by his father that his brother is so much better than Karan; Karan's father and mother have a private conversation after Karan decides to quit the IMA which he overhears. One of his male-friends justifies that it is the father who is responsible for the kid's career when Karan expresses his frustration that parents specially father's always nag about careers and work which also emphasizes that responsibility is a key aspect of performing hegemonic masculinity. It is also interesting to observe that the women in the film; Karan's friend, Romila and Romila's mom are very sure of their career choices making their characters very crisp and sure.

Love interest:

The female protagonist in the film, Romila, is a strong-willed journalist who reports the incidents from the war zone where she encounters Karan after their break-up. During the entire film it is evident that Romila is an ambitious and brave feminist who does not shy away from voicing her opinions whether it was politics or her personal life. Her character is visually depicted as modern and progressive although she has the same societal expectations from Karan that Indian women are pre-conditioned to expect from the male members of the society when involved in a romantic relationship. When Karan praises Romila amongst his friends that she is very clear about her career in journalism, one of his friends downplays her skills by associating her choice with the occupation of her father as a Newspaper editor. This can be interpreted as a modern-day jibe at the thought processes of most men who undermine women's skills and knowledge attributing their success to external factors. Karan responds by praising Romila's

skills and his friend ridicules Karan's feelings towards Romila calling him a 'lover boy' which does not go well but the focus here is on public admission of romantic feelings towards a powerful female character.

When Karan gets accepted into Indian Military Academy (IMA), he proposes to Romila and she is positive in her reaction although she is not very articulate about it. The scenario that she does not expect occurs, Karan decides to quit the IMA and she responds in a harsh way which is fathomable, but she associates his inability to continue at the academy with 'values' around 'honor' and 'respect' ('*izzat*') and decides that they should not see each other again leaving him with no agency in the matters of their relationship.

> *Karan: I'm not going back*
>
> *Romila: What do you mean? You ran away, didn't you!? For once you had made your own decision only to be defeated in a few days. Your parents were upset but you said, "It's my life, I'll decide what I want" Is this what you decided?*
>
> *Karan: I can understand you're annoyed, but...*
>
> *Romila: What do you understand, Karan? Remember, it was here that you said... you wanted to marry me perhaps even that decision has changed!*
>
> *Karan: What are you saying, Romi!*
>
> *Romila: What should I say!? When someone can't respect himself or his own decision... How can I expect him to respect me?*
>
> *Karan: Please listen to...*
>
> *Romila: Don't touch me I don't think I ever want to meet you again. ('Lakshya (2004) Movie ScriptRead More: Https://Www.Springfieldspringfield.Co.Uk/Movie_script.Php?Movie=lakshya ')*

Although the translation reads 'izzat' as respect, the oxford dictionary attributes 'honor, reputation or prestige' as potential meanings for the Urdu word which changes the interpretation of the above conversation between Karan and Romila .(Dorjee et al. 2013: 6) Bringing 'honor' into the debate, it is important to understand that the Indian context brackets

women and their sexuality alongside the ideals of honor and prestige for men, families and the society. A parallel analogy can be drawn between the nation and its people where the country represents a female entity, in this case Mother India, which needs protection against intruders who disrupt the honor of the country. Men are expected to 'protect' their women and their countries which is reflected in the film throughout in the form of symbolic representations.

Another instance in the film where Karan finishes his training at IMA and calls Romila to inform her about it exposes his vulnerable side, but he chooses to express his grief by trying to control the situation. This grief is significant of the loss of power in the relationship that is caused by his inability to prove himself responsible and he tries to overcome it by limiting his interaction with her. When they meet after a gap, there is miscommunication when Karan congratulates Romila on her engagement to a businessman that she was dating. But Romila does not inform Karan about the eventual end of that engagement which takes place right before she travels to Kargil to be a war correspondent for the TV channel she works for. The fight that occurs between Romila and her fiancé is a paradoxical illustration of the 'pseudo-feminist' ideas that float around among members of the society who think that women's freedom is situated within the constraints of the society and its expectations from the ideal Indian woman. Karan behaves cordially with Romila during the time of conflict, ideally being the 'military' man focused on his duty to protect the Nation first and the women of the country.

A critical detail that is situated on the fluid boundaries of masculinity and nationhood is the distinct behavior of Karan during his mission and after that when he makes Romila his target. Not only does this objectifies women as 'passive' who can be 'achieved' and it also hints at the obvious fact that protecting the nation is an important goal than inter-personal relationships between the characters in the film. Romila's character seems like an unbiased news reporter who is doing her duty at the heart of the conflict in Kargil but the younger version of Romila is shown as a university student who leads a protest to fight against the corrupt administration of the university.

Using Pierre Bourdieu's theories on habitus and doxa, Kalpagam has argued that women internalize patriarchal prescriptions and expectations rather than resisting them in numerous ways. She notes that women often tend to use the inevitable tryst with patriarchal order for their personal means which can happen at different sites. Women negotiate between internalization and resistance in unique ways depending on the contextuality of the event in which they must decide on whether to comply with patriarchal order or to resist it. (Kalpagam 2000: 177) This fluidity in women's engagement with patriarchal order allows reproduction of hegemonic ideals of masculinity giving a leeway for the emergence and development of the new man narratives.

Friends:

Karan's peer group categorically represents the urban, upper-middle class who hang out at bowling alleys and drive cars. The aspirations expressed by these young boys and girls have diversified professional career choices like engineering, hotel management and joining the army which are opportunities usually opted by young men and women whose family can support them and their dreams. Karan and Romila share the same group of friends which is a clear indication towards the fact that they have been friends even before their apparent love for each other. This group of friends do not necessarily share the same passion for materialistic things, but their conversations provide an insight into the minds of youth of the new millennia who are cautiously treading the delicate boundaries of dreams and survival. The conversation between these friends before Karan decides to join the army about how they don't wake up in the morning further proves that they are a privileged social position that does not necessarily require them to work but they choose careers where they have a better chance of success. Also crucial is the fact that Karan applies to the IMA because his friend Parvesh had decided to do so but when Parvesh backs out stating that his father gives him a better suggestion of going to the United States for a degree in management, Karan is upset with his friend. Although the setting of the scene is inclined towards a comical angle, it brings out the nuances of peer pressure that makes the young generation to make negligent decisions. Continuing the discussion around that scene, Karan comes back with a sudden interest towards Parvesh's career plan which indicates his wavering personality and indecisive nature.

The other set of friends that Karan is seen interacting is during his training in the IMA where his fellow colleagues become his buddies and he has jovial interactions before the drastic change in his personality. There is a serious shift in the way Karan's character plays out before and after the transition where his carefree, prudish behavior landed him into trouble whereas he becomes a responsible and mature adult in the next phase. His relationship with his friends also transitions from recklessness to responsibility. The homosocial aspect of the film continues throughout without ever crossing the boundaries of platonic friendship which resonates with the contextual setting where homosexuality is a punishable crime by the law. There are very few traces of exhibiting 'nationalistic' behavior in these interactions but the ones that are shown as being patriotic do not necessarily bring out the 'nationalistic' flavor in the scene. When Karan's friend, Parvesh states "I feel my country needs me", it becomes more of a justification that he provides for his choice rather than the intention to serve his country. During his initial days of training when Karan seems uninterested in the sessions, there are specific references made to masculinity and performance of manhood in the military which can be coupled with allusions about nationalism. This scene from the film explicitly glorifies the nation and creates the hegemonic 'ideal' which is laden with the responsibility of proving themselves worthy of the IMA and the Indian Army.

> *"Gentlemen Cadets... I, Adjutant of the I.M. A, Lt. Col. Pratap Singh...welcome you to the academy. Today, you are stepping into a new life. And I expect, that with every passing day...you will prove worthy of this great institution. Know that you are here because you are special. The Indian Military Academy is a great institution ...who's commitment cannot be praised in just words first, our country... second, the army... then, his unit and finally, concern for himself...that is the trademark of an I.M. A trained officer. Gentlemen cadets you must preserve the honor and traditions of IMA."*

> ('Lakshya (2004) Movie ScriptRead More: Https://Www.Springfieldspringfield.Co.Uk/Movie_script.Php?Movie=lakshya')

The following incident connects masculinity of the hero to femininity of his mother in a complex concoction of masculinity, power, morality and the state stresses on the impact of the 'feminine' as a negative enticement in shaping the masculinities. The performance of masculinity is shown to be dependent on feminine counterparts which also includes the nation. Gabriel discusses the ability of mothers in the narrative(s) to "endorse" the masculine power of her son placing her in an authoritative position within the intersectional order of gendered hierarchies.(Gabriel 2010: 203)

"Gentlemen, there are three basic rules in handling a weapon: One, a strong grip, Two, a focused mind and Three, precise trigger operation. You will now learn how to acquire a strong grip. Karan Shergill

- Yes, Sergeant

Detail, get ready to charge! Charge! Attack! Stab! Draw! Hit! Cut! Charge!! Detail, get ready to charge!

-Charge

What's the matter? Where's your energy? Didn't your mother feed you? You need to have fire in the belly! Move out of line and watch the others. Come on, move fast."

('Lakshya (2004) Movie ScriptRead More: Https://Www.Springfieldspringfield.Co.Uk/Movie_script.Php?Movie=lakshya ')

Analyzing these instances only go a step further in proving the apparent link between masculinity and nationalism as seen from academic literature. The dramatic effects that accompany these situations only highlight the importance of masculinity and nationalism in the daily lives of Indian urban middle class.

The army:

"*The values of the army infused in the soldier through the years of training are enumerated below*

- ***Espirit-de-Corps***   *The spirit of comradeship and brotherhood of the brave, regardless of caste, creed or religion. The motto is, "One for all and all for one"!*
- ***Spirit of Selfless Sacrifice***   *The tradition is never to question, but to do or die for the three "Ns"; Naam, i.e. name-honour- of the unit/Army/Nation, 'Namak'(salt) i.e. loyalty to the Nation, and 'Nishan', i.e. the insignia or flag of his unit/regiment/Army/Nation which the soldiers hold afloat willingly.*
- ***Valour***   *Fearlessness in combat and in the face of the enemy even when fighting against great odds or even when facing sure death.*
- ***Non-discrimination***   *The Indian Army does not discriminate on account of caste, creed or religion. A soldier is a soldier first and anything else later. He prays under a common roof. It is this unique character, which makes him bind in a team despite such diversity.*
- ***Fairness and Honesty***   *The spirit of honesty and fair play. He fights for a just cause that extends even to the enemy (prisoner or wounded).*
- ***Discipline and Integrity***   *Discipline and integrity impart the feeling of patriotism, honesty and courage under all circumstances, however strong be the provocation otherwise.*
- ***Fidelity, Honour and Courage***   *He is a man on whose shoulders lies the honour and integrity of his nation. He knows that he is the last line of defence and he cannot fail the Nation.*
- ***Death to Dishonour***   *A close bond amongst soldiers forces them to choose death to dishonour. The concept of 'IZZAT' (HONOUR) in the clan / unit enables them to shun the fear of death; to be called a coward in the peer group is worse than death.*
- ***Forthrightness***   *A soldier has to be forthright, for on his word the men he leads are going to lay down their lives without questioning why.*" (*'The Ethos')*

The official website of the Indian army celebrates its values and ideals by listing them which evoke a sense of Service before Self bonding the soldiers in this spirit. Indian army is the sum of men from all over the country as shown in the film with their diverse backgrounds but a sole purpose of protecting their nation. Visuals of the army men and their lifestyle presents a definite understanding of the discipline and rigidity of the structural and functional aspects of army. The men that are shown in the film are Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, they come from rural as well as urban areas, they are doctors, technicians and soldiers and some of them are married and some are not however it is interesting to note that the army is a space for diverse and inter-generational interaction.

It is always competitive between the colleagues in the battalion who are constantly trying to prove their worth amongst others. There also exists a copious amount of hierarchy in the structural organization which demands a strict disciplinarian like Col. Damle who maintains this structural hierarchy. He is the embodiment of all the traits that can be attributed to hegemonic masculinity and nationalistic individual. This also draws upon his specific mould of heroism, his status within the industry and hos star status in India and the substantial fan base he has. Right from the beginning of the film, Col. Damle portrayed by the legendary actor Amitabh Bachchan, maintains the composed and strict attitude of the father-figure for the men in his battalion. Even during difficult times when they lose a lot of men, he doesn't stop pursuing his goal which reaffirms his hegemonic status among the other men and his performance of his gender role. His nationalism comes out in a straight forward manner without any sugar-coating, but he makes extreme things like death and disability seem very normal or events to be proud of rather than be sad about. Although we see a level of vulnerability among the men and the Colonel, they justify their acts by believing that they are protecting the population of the country by defending its borders.

It is also important to see how media is used to show the differentiation between the 'good' us versus the 'bad' them; Indian military is in uniform while the supposedly 'Pakistani' intruders are not in their uniform which captures the deviance that the 'other' projects. Another instance where stark contrast occurs between the Indian soldiers and the Pakistani troops is when they return the dead to the respective countries. It is shown that the Pakistani army refuses to claim the bodies of their soldiers and Col. Damle wants a proper burial for those men, but his men do not like this idea and one of them reminisces that the Pakistani forces had returned the bodies of Indian soldiers in a bad state by mutilating them. Damle directs the attention towards the differences between the two countries and mocks the Pakistani army for not accepting the dead bodies of its soldiers back and he states clearly that the Indian army maintains a level of integrity even with its enemies. The demarcation between the countries continues throughout the film creating a divide between the 'moral' and 'immoral', the 'good' and 'bad, the 'correct' and 'wrong'. They make fun of the Pakistanis saying, "They can't handle their homes, but they want to rule the world" which also points out the political tensions between the neighboring countries over the issue of Kashmir.

Emotional vulnerability of men can be captured essentially in all the songs but there are scenes enacted throughout the film that show a drastic expression of grief, disappointment, loss and death by the men. When one of Karan's friend is killed in the shelling on the highway, Romila expresses her frustrations as a citizen of the country that there should not be any wars which makes one of the martyr's friend lose his calm. She talks about peace and cooperation between the two nations when the man expresses his pent-up anger about the end goal of peace and cooperation, but he also points out to the very fact that surrendering to the enemies or begging for mercy is not going to defend the country. The distinction between Indian and Pakistanis is clearly demarcated by physical boundaries, but it is also culturally coded that Pakistanis are the 'others' trying to invade 'our' land. The quotation of the soldier that Captain Abir Saxena was killed on Indian territory and he was just defending his homeland confirms the affirmation that the Pakistanis are morally corrupt as they are trying to invade the Indian territory. As men, the soldiers take it upon themselves to defend the country in the same way they defend their women. This parallel analogy between men trying to defend boundaries is a recurring theme in Bollywood but specific reference to war genre, it is overtly exhibited, it is overtly exhibited which can be extended to the social norms that restrict the sexuality of women in the hopes of defending honor and prestige.

Music:

The music of the film is composed by the musical trio of Shankar, Ehsaan and Loy and the lyrics have been penned down by Javed Akhtar, which earned mixed reviews from the audience. The music is very new-age when it comes to the lyrics and the instruments, but it also has deep meaningful connotations when the lyrics are contextually situated. There are five major audio-visual picturizations of the songs which are a part of the film and the story-telling process with an addition of three sound tracks that are included in the official album. For this analysis, it would be ideal to look at the content of the songs in the film; the title track "Lakshya" is a patriotic song with techno beats that is modern and hip. It is a motivational song that plays in the background during the transition of Karan from reckless to responsible young adult. There are two love songs, "Agar Main Kahoon" (If I say) and "Kitni Baatein" (Many things) which are picturized on Karan and Romila. While the former is a happy peppy song that discusses the ways in which they can express their love for each other, the latter is a sad

reminiscing song that is situated in a conflict zone which resonates the state of their relationship at that instant. "Kandhon Se Milte Hain Kandhe" is another patriotic song that motivates the soldiers drawing attention to all their hardships near the border all the while making them feel proud of their job. The final song is the song picturized on Hrithik Roshan that showcased his dancing skills is titled "Main Aisa Kyu Hoon" (Why am I this way) that is a first-person narrative by Karan who is undecided about his future.

All the songs are situated contextually in a milieu of emotions and incidents that lead up to them bringing the most important aspect to the forefront. There is a balance between patriotism and romance in the composition of the album which also addresses the theme of the movie in the final song.

Narrative of the film:

The film has recurring scenes from the past that keep the contrast between the two versions of Karan's character during the film which is very creative in differentiating the responsible from the reckless. It is interesting to note that the transition of the character happens due to a series of emotionally sad events and the protagonist 'realizes' his goal and works towards achieving it. This is a common theme used by most Bollywood movies to represent the shift in the character's core values but usually they have a point of culmination like that in the case of phoenix that burns down to ashes before rising out of it. Lakshya follows a similar trajectory in its narrative form but that is just the first half of the story which deals with Karan and his struggle to become an adult in the modern world whereas the second half is about the war and the technicalities that are involved in the war scenario. The visuals in the second half are more aesthetically accurate with a natural aura of the conflicted valley seeping into the narrative. Although the evolution of Karan's character defies logic, it is realistic and appeals to the audience at a deeper level depending on their individual perspective.

Chapter 6 : Conclusions

As Karan's character transitioned throughout the film, a complex network of factors played part in shaping his character as discussed in the categories above. My analysis of Lakshya shows a consistency in the representation of masculinities and nationalism and their interplay during the interpretations of incidents from the film. Although, the hegemonic form of masculinity dominates the narrative, there exists an emerging narrative in favor of the 'new man' which resonates with changing times. Revisiting the research problem, it can be argued that there exists a dynamic relationship between specific representations of masculinities and nationalist identity in Bombay cinema. This is based on the socio-cultural context of the sample and varies with geo-political situations in fixed temporal frames. Appreciating the literature that provides a combined lens to look at gender and nationalism in cinematic medium, it can be argued that the film is in sync with theoretical aspects of gender, nationalism and media representations.

Reflecting on the New man:

My analysis of the film shows the different types of masculinities represented in the film by discussing their characteristic features and their positionality in terms of nation. Various representations throughout the film show the interconnectedness of sexuality and nation as axes for performing gender by the characters. Karan's transformation could reinforce specific features of the hegemonic ideal amalgamated with newer notions of manhood to create a type of masculinity that is not rigid like the hegemonic form nor drastically departing from it. Although the film appears to be challenging the male status quo in the society, it promotes hegemonic ideals through its narrative which appears to be heading towards a more 'acceptable' nationalist form. Socio-cultural context of India places males in a superior power status than females however there is a shift in control during the narrative that returns to the main protagonist towards the end. The discourse on nationalism has been unwavering throughout the film which affects the characters at various levels, but this is actively seen during the second half of the film and during the active conflict. The difference in positionality of male and female characters in terms of nation is emphasized clearly by defining their respective roles during the conflict

and their notions about war. It is also important to note that 'nation' as a deterministic factor shaping the masculinities and femininities has considerable effect on the representation and operation of sexuality in the Indian context.

The film has proven to be different from other films in the industry by representing the male characters distinctively from the beginning however there are limits to the extent to which they can be portrayed as 'acceptable forms'. If we look at the spectrum of masculinities, ranging from hegemonic masculinity to marginalized masculinities, the film situates most of its characters towards the hegemonic end with negotiable spaces closer to the middle but not to the extreme effeminate end. The outliers which are close to hegemonic form are reformed as in the case of Karan's father which can be contrasted to the character of Col. Damle and other officers who are praised for their actions. The messages that can be interpreted by such representations could be, "men can be emotional but not too emotional" or "men need to be responsible for the protection of the nation and its women". Such mixed representations have created different versions of masculinities that are in a flux to produce the 'new man' although there is a need to question the forms that have been excluded from representation.

Limitations and scope:

Listing the limitations of the paper, first, the text is polysemic and the interpretations of the readers might be different from my readings of the text. The themes and categories used for analysis in this paper might not be applicable to other samples as they were generated from the sample itself. Second, the paper looks primarily at important characters in the film subduing the secondary characters which could form diverse narratives. This paper is not exhaustive of the interpretations so there will always be new additions to the literature in this field of study. Lastly, my paper does not aim to generalize conclusions for the complete Bombay cinema industry that comprises of diverse genres but there is scope for exploration of representation in Bombay cinema in the future.

Various combinations of studies around masculinity, nationalism and Bombay cinema are possible providing a plethora of opportunities for researchers and academicians. The goal of this paper was to understand and problematize the representation of masculinities and nationalism in Bombay cinema through discourse analysis of Lakshya. The discourse on nationalism may also show new variations if applied to masculinities and femininities in different socio-political contexts. Critical engagement with the omission of 'unacceptable' forms of masculinities will open new doors for enquiry into representational aspect of masculinity studies. A feminist reading into the power dynamics between the strong female lead and the transitioning male protagonist could add an interesting perspective to the discourse which can be explored further. I hope Bombay cinema continues to inspire people by producing movies like Lakshya that have shown remarkable shift from the hegemonic ideals of masculinity, nationalism and cinematic representation itself. It would be interesting to see how masculinities and their representation in Bollywood films evolve paving way for the emergence of 'new man' whose masculinity would be relevant to the changing temporal frames. After all, creative minds in Bombay cinema would find innovative ways to tell stories to a large group of people in India through Bombay cinema where characters may exhibit the infinite number of masculinities on the spectrum.

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