

Tribhuvan University

A Comparative Study of Female Dancers in the East and West Films

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By

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Declaration

I hereby affirm that this dissertation entitled “A Comparative Study of Female Dancers in the East and West Films” submitted to the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, is an original work written under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Dhruva Bahadur Karki, Central Department of English, Kirtipur. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Philosophy (M.Phil. degree) in English. No part of this research work has ever been published in any form before and has not been presented anywhere else for the award of any degree or any other reason. I shall be exclusively liable if any indications contradict my declaration.

.....

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "A Comparative Study of Female Dancers in the East and West Films," submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Sarita Lama, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Acknowledgment

I first met Prof. Dr. Dhurba Bahadur Karki in my master's degree. Then we developed our relationship more than student and teacher. He turned out to be my adviser. Repeatedly he was the one who provoked me to write papers in films. But I used to be slightly annoyed when his suggestions fell in front of me. Because in a way I wanted to discover something out of my passion (movie). However, after long mental gymnastics, I eventually realized that it was the movie I was passionate in. To rejuvenate the lost soul Prof. Karki has iteratively and relentlessly shown the path. For that, I am indebted.

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Abstract

This dissertation, entitled “A Comparative Study of Female Dancers in the East and West Films,” explores cine dance with the female dancers in the lead role in South Asian and Western films. The researcher categorizes Yubaraj Lama- directed- Nepali film *Pratigya* and Sanjay Leela Bhansali-directed Indian cinema *Devdas* as South Asian films. *The Next Dance*, an American film, has been chosen to represent the Hollywood film industry. In this dissertation, I have examined cinematic techniques to unfold differences in appearances, characters, and roles of the female characters in these cinemas. This research work critically examines a reserve trajectory of representation of the female dancers in the East and the West. Contrast in cinematic representation can be seen in character representation and plot development. While watching these films in the theater, viewers can underscore and speculate differences through the shots, dialogues, camera angles, costumes, and makeup. They are observed through ideas and perspectives from Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White’s *The Film Experience*, where writers have studied the subtle nuances of chosen films. The researcher follows their idea on the application of cinematic techniques and interpretative strategies to analyze the events and characters' relationship in films.

The study comparatively examines dance shots in the South Asian *Pratigya* and *Devdas* and the Hollywood film *The Next Dance* in the theoretical and conceptual frame of the culture industry of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. It is the culture industry that transforms dancers and dancing into a market product. In that line, dancers Mithila Sharma-stared- Shraddha in *Pratigya* and Madhuri Dixit-stared- Chandramukhi in *Devdas* become the products of demand and supply in capitalist market. In *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception*, Adorno and

Horkheimer state that movies and radios act as the promoters of art but in reality, they are just business associations running after the ideology of capitalism. The film, is only possible by the blatant cash investment. To secure their invested economy the makers create the strategies. In such anything in the cinema can be the product for the demand of public. In a similar vein, the selected South Asian films seem to follow the idea of Adorno and Horkheimer since Lama and Bhansali look similar in converting women dancers into glittering appearances with their sensual bodies in front of camera.

Nevertheless, *The Next Dance* denies body exposition. This cinema stands in the meaning of dance, which is “expression” as stated by Maxine-Sheets-Johnstone in *The Phenomenology of Dance*. Johnstone iteratively confirms that dance is an art. However, this definition seems molded in the East in comparison to the West, despite the performances of both Sharma and Dixit in the *Pratigya* and *Devdas* are choreographed by the veteran maestros Basanta Jung Rayamajhi and Birju Maharaj. Nonetheless, the shots in the cinemas are Extreme-Close Up (ECU) shots that focus on the specific parts of women dancers that foreground their external beauty more than the dance itself. In contrast, *The Next Dance* features the kinesthetic movement (dance) either in the wide or Medium-Long-Shot (MLS) that underpins merely the moved body rather than any other part of the female dancer. To support the idea the paper brings the example of veteran dancer-actor Helen’s songs from the different movies and even Rakhi Sawant and Nora Fatehi from today’s date from the Indian cinemas. While as the secondary source paper chooses *Save The Last Dance* and *Reconstruction* for the Western films. The paper also introduces some female feminist theorists who raise their voices against women’s objectification in the visual, like Laura Mulvey, Lucy Irigaray, Anne Smelik, and Pallavi Chakraborty.

Table of Contents

Declaration	i
Letter of Approval	ii
Acknowledgment	iii
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	vii
List of Figures	viii
Chapter I: Analysis of Female Dancers through Kathak in the East Films	1-25
Chapter II: Analysis of Indian Cinema, Devdas in Comparison with other Bollywood Cine Dance Trends	26-40
Chapter III: Analysis of Western Cinemas in Comparison to the Eastern	41-56
Chapter IV: Conclusion	57-63
Works Cited	64-66

List of Figures

Figure 1: Extreme Close-up (ECU) shot of Mithila Sharma demonstrating her decorated eyes	6
Figure 2: Additional extreme close-up shot capturing her embellished lips and nathi	6
Figure 3: The close-up shot of Shristi, in which she is embellished with her hairstyle, appropriate costume, earrings, and makeup.	11
Figure 4: Shristi presented in a close-up shot	12
Figure 5: The reaction shot depicting Munggre's exclamation after seeing Shristi	13
Figure 6: Presenting Raju's reaction after seeing Shristi. He is overwhelmed.	14
Figure 7: A low-angle shot, shows the antagonist, Kalu Man Singh as he furiously approaches Shristi for their next program	15
Figure 8: Shradha's costumes and makeup support her delighted days.	20
Figure 9: Shradha's costumes and makeup help the audience to show her pathetic situation.	20
Figure 10 Extreme-close-up shot featuring Chandramukhi's alluring eyes.	26
Figure 11: Chandramuhi in close-up shot	27
Figure 12: Chandramukh in close-up shot	28
Figure 14: A Medium Long Shot (MLS) used to show the elements used in the mehfil.	30
Figure 15: Chandramukhi's revealing costume, which helps her to characterize her role.	31
Figure 16: Extreme Close Shot (ECU) from the song "Ye Mera Dil"	33
Figure 17: Helen in the song "Piya Tu Ab To Aaja" (Caravan, 1971)	34
Figure 18: A Medium Long Shot (MLS) depicting Helen in her usual style	34
Figure 19: Centralizes Mithila Sharma by avoiding the other dancers	38

Figure 20: Focusing on Sharma relatively more than the musicians and other dancers	39
Figure 21: A close-up shot of blooming white flowers.	42
Figure 22: A medium-large shot focusing on the beauty of nature. The beautiful nature is demonstrated by the contrasting colors, where the sunset is in an orange-yellowish color and trees and other plants are in dark black colors.	42
Figure 23: A zoomed-in shot of the full moon covered by the night cloud. It looks serene through the same technique of contrasting the colors: white and black. A white moon in a black sky.	43
Figure 24: The close-up shot of Selena during her dance movement	44
Figure 25: A medium-long-shot (MLS) capturing the moving body of a girl dancing for the upcoming dance competition	45
Figure 26: The close shot of Duppata	49
Figure 27: Posture of Stiles	52
Figure 28: Close shot of the hand	52
Figure 29: Photograph of Stile capturing her posture	52
Figure 30: is the depiction of a young boy in his past.	54
Figure 31: the photographs of dancers in the cinema who are moving the plots of cinema through their dance.	55
Figure 32: Another group performance of the female dancers in the cinema helping with the moving plots of the cinema.	55

Chapter I

Analysis of Female Dancers through *Kathak* in the East Films

Kathak is a classical dance associated with its history, roots, and significant value associated with this visual art form in South Asia. Margaret E. Walker explains *Kathak* as a devotional dance combined with *Sadhna* (spiritual practice). She traces the history of it as *Natvari Nritya* means dance of Lord *Krishna* or dance of *Vaishnavism* (the branch of Hinduism where lord *Vishnu* or *Krishna* is prominent). She presents its history, in *Vedic* times *Kathakas* or *Kathakars* (the Hindu wanderers), to explain Hindu mythology to illiterate people; they use this dance as the medium to spread Hinduism throughout the countryside (4). Similarly, La Meri, an American anthropologist, states: “Originally this dance was performed by a sect of Brahmins who called themselves *Kathakas*. These *Kathakas* entertained the public on religious occasions by reciting epic poems, such as the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and other *Puranas*. Their reading was liberally decorated with songs or musical passages. All were enhanced with both *abhinaya* and descriptive *hastas*.” Additionally, Walker states, “. . . after Muslims rulers invaded India, through the next 400 years, *Kathak* dance is said to have become increasingly superficial, debauched and seductive as contests . . . Indian courtesans adapted and corrupted the movements, changing them from pious to seductive.” Likewise, Mekhala Devi Natavar presents the shifting of it from court to film. Later, *Kathak* dancers were professional girls, prostitutes, middle-class educated urban women, and Hindi cinema actors. Therefore, this paper, “A Comparative Study of Female Dancers in the East and West Films,” has selected a Nepali movie of Yubaraj Lama, *Pratigya*, and Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s *Devdas*, an Indian cinema, to associate the idea of how those shifted forms of *Kathak* have been projected.

Popular in South Asia, dance shots often appear in Nepali and Indian cinema. To examine *Kathak* that has nothing to do with religion and narration of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* paper observes many shots and camera angles being used to present the body movements and the nuanced expressions of Mithila Sharma in *Pratigya* and Madhuri Dixit in *Devdas*. It tries to prove that the presentation offers the objectification of Sharma and Dixit in the respective selected films.

Pratigya is a Nepali movie of the 1990s where the director/producer/writer Yubaraj Lama has presented the profound *Kathak* dancer Mithila Sharma in the prior role, the entire film is based on the life of a *Kathak* dancer (Sharma). However, when she is presented, she is associated with external beauty. Her nuanced expressions are featured in the extreme close-up (ECU) shot that directly connects with the camera lens. The camera focuses on her beauty more than her dance steps. Next, Melina Manandhar is also presented as the *Kathak* dancer in the cinema. She is also repeated in a similar vein to Sharma. She is embodied with youthfulness and beauty throughout the cinema. She has always been chased by the males, whether protagonists or antagonists. Thus, in this sense, the film seems to follow the changed face of *Kathak* that has much to do with the male gaze, like the male circle in the *mehefil* during the Muslim invasion in India in the past.

It seems the gender representation of dancers in cinema has fascinated audiences and film critics, this paper scrutinizes it (the gender representation of female dancers). To the idea, in this first chapter “Analysis of the Female Dancers through *Kathak* in the East Films” the researcher has brought the brief history of *Kathak*, from spreading the narratives of *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and *Krishna Leela* (Hindu mythological and religious narrative) to its evolution turning as the dance of courtesan performing in the *mehefil* (gatherings in the dance performance) of

India. It also generates the notion of how the same *Kathak* has been molded and adapted in the films. Therefore the next selected movie *Devdas* like the *Pratigya* also seems to follow the same *Kathak* that has nothing to do with religion and the narration of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Indeed, portrays the main *Kathakas* (*Kathak* dancer), Madhuri Dixit as a prostitute with her extravagant presence.

Devdas is an Indian film that has presented the Bengali background. It is the adapted version of the novel *Devdas* written by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay. In the film the role given to Dixit is Chandramukhi, her character is stereotypical. She is submissive, fragile, naive, and helpless. Her emotion is dependent on the male characters. Indeed, to a large extent, her life is affected by them. While observing her dance skill, it has been used for entertainment especially to a male gaze in *mehefil*. This is also the similar case in *Pratigya* where Shraddha (the character's name of Sharma) serves to the male antagonists who have their company named KB Group of Industry. The purpose of Shraddha in *Pratigya* and Chandramukhi in *Devdas* are the same. They are in servitude to the males, most importantly, *Kathak* degrades their value since it becomes the tool rather than the spiritual dance.

In contrast to this, the American cinema, *The Next Dance* DaniLeigh is featured as Selena. She stands at the opposite pole to those female dancers in the South Asia. She is strong, independent, and ambitious. When Tristian Hamilton the leading male character meets her at first he finds her dancing. From a young age, she is determined and runs her dance studio. She is the master of her life. Nobody is there to interfere and overrule her life. To this, Katharina Lindner in her article "Spectacular (Dis) embodiments: The Female Dancer on Film" argues that the representation of female dancers varies on screen (films) as their bodies are perceived in the real (5). This hints that the socio-cultural aspect of women in society directly

impacts the presentation of female dancers in films. Thus, the researcher accepts Linder's thought and tries to prove that the selected primary texts show the presentation of female dancers due to the opposite position of women at the two poles of the world. To measure this statement, the paper analyzes camera shot angles, dialogues, sounds, costumes and make-up, and characters used in the selected cinemas. Henceforth, the paper tries to show how the same body (female dancers' bodies) turns out as the products and art, in South Asia (East) and Hollywood, respectively.

The Nepali movie *Pratigya* features a reputed and successful young *Kathak* dancer named Shradha. The film begins with her highest success. As time runs, she faces downfall and sees her younger sister, Shristi, replacing her. No pertinent research has been done on the movie. The informal interview with the producer/director Yubaraj Lama foregrounds that the film is based on the ambitious dancer, but she dies of her ego. Standing on the opposite pole to the director Lama, the paper tries to show the purpose of the director, where he seems to celebrate the fragility of *Kathak* female dancers, ultimately choosing death over her life. By doing so, he is pleasing the male audiences or the patriarchal society where a woman, no matter what her occupation, gives up since they can't run their life in balance. The purpose of the movie seems like pleasing the then patriarchal society of Nepal where the position of women was inferior to male.

Not only the *Kathak* dancers but also all the female dancers presented in the *Pratigya* is trapped in the conspiracy made by the male antagonists: Kalu Man Singh and Munggre who are the owners of dance company KB Group of Industry, ruin her life. They are habituated to manipulate and control female dancers from the beginning. The flashback shows that they kill dancer Doma who refuses to dance in

front of the Chaturbhuj Sau. In the present, they repeat the same, collect female dancers, and contract them until they are useful to them. After that, they are thrown from the company by a dirty conspiracy. Not only the storyline, but also shots, camera angles, dialogues, costumes and makeup, and even the characters given to women dancers are questionable. To address the issue of the research (how women dancers in Eastern films have stereotypical femininity to customize in the male market) paper burrows the idea from *The Film Experience*.

The Film Experience (Corrigan and White, 2019) defines the shot as “the basic unit of cinematography and the visual heart of cinema, “. . . – a continuous point of view (initially a continuously exposed piece of film) between two edits (p. not given).” Similarly, the book extends to an extreme close-up (ECU). It is one of the types of shot, “. . . framed comparatively tighter than a close-up . . . the framing can be a dramatic way to direct the viewer’s attention. . .” It is used in the selected primary movie *Pratigya. In the East (Pratigya)* frames Mithila Sharma’s beauty in ECU, tighter than a close-up. It features her decorated eyes, *bindis* (a decorative mark or sticker worn in the center of the forehead, typically by Hindu women), polished eyebrows, lips, and *nathni* (nose ring). It looks dramatic by the extraordinary elements worn by Sharma. Thus, the shot seems attracting the viewer’s attention.



Figure 1: Extreme Close-up (ECU) shot of Mithila Sharma demonstrating her decorated eyes
(Source: Researcher's screenshot from the cinema *Pratigya* 1994, 00: 18:00)



Figure 2: Additional extreme close-up shot capturing her embellished lips and *nathi*
(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 00:18:05)

Figures 1 and 2 show extreme close-up (ECU) shots following similar tendencies, as stated by Corrigan and White in *The Film Experience*. Both pictures attract audiences' attention to Mithila Sharma's beauty since, through ECU, her decorated eyes and lips are captured. These shots help her to beautify. To this, feminist film theory asserts that cinema is the product of cultural practice. Like literature or any art, cinema is not deprived of the contemporary situation held in society. Thus, the article by Anneke Smelik drops the cinema's definition as the representation of feminists "to be a cultural practice representing myth about women and femininity, as well as about men

and masculinity” (2). Adding to it, she burrows the notion of Barthe's statement that women stand for sign means sign for sex. She means “nothing” to herself. They are in simple words “not-man” means no human. Johnston’s idea of the announcement that a woman does not stand for herself or she is somewhere lost in the cinema is profoundly given space in her paper. Thus the images reflect the same idea where the ECU exhibits the delicate eyes and lips of an actress-dancer Mithila Sharma. They seem like the representative of the patriarchal society where the women have the myth to be the most beautiful. The makeup eyes and lips denote the servitude of women to give visual pleasure to male. In this she means nothing as stated by Barthes but an object to facilitate the male counters both inside and outside the camera.

Furthermore, it is believed that Indian cinema ascended after the independence of India in 1948. *The Film Experience* traces the history of Indian cinema and states that it is “mainly in Calcutta” by Satyajit Ray, which arose as an alternative to India’s commercial cinema.” His *Pather Panchali* (1955) consists of “Bengali literature, landscape, and culture” that was a masterpiece of realist style, regional dramas, and became blockbuster. Following his path, even today, Indian cinema thrives on showing those elements in their movies. Likewise, Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s *Devdas* features Bengali culture and landscape.

Devdas consists of a tragic love story between Paro and Dev. Due to the misunderstanding between the families, they separate. They are apart physically but tied spiritually. However, more than the tragic story the paper concerns with the character named Chandramukhi, who loves Dev eternally. She is a prostitute and serves her clients through *Kathak* dance. Bhansali is an expert in showing the life of a prostitute in his so many films. In *Saawariya* (2007) Rani Mukherjee is cast as a prostitute. She is bold and straightforward. *Gangubai Kathiawadi* (2022) is entirely

based on the prostitute's struggle and success. Nonetheless, the prostitute shown in *Devdas* is the opposite of those characters. She is a victim. Throughout the cinema, though she showers her love to Dev, she is refused by him. They first meet in *Kothe* (brothel house). Chunni Lal, his (Dev's) classmate, takes him there. In their first meeting, Dev calls her a *Bazari Aurat* (harlot) (1:09:46). Next, when Chandramukhi alerts him to stay at *Mehfil* (dance gathering), he replies, "It is a shameful task to dance in front of male (Translated) (1:16:10)." He regrets on being in the dirty place. After his short conversation pays money for the time they spent together (1:16:10-1:16:40). In the second meeting too, he shows her status by showing the money since his friend Chunni Lal informs that he was diseased and lying in the street- for two days she kept on nurturing him while in those days (1:31:39). He announces that he cannot see a woman being a prostitute and hates her, "don't touch me, I hate you, I can't see women in this image (Translated) (1:44:28-1:44:36)" proves his hate to sex-workers. Thus, a sex worker, a dancer in the *Devdas*, is pathetically shown as inferior despite having her brilliant talent, *Kathak*.

Though, in the end, she is accepted in the heart of Dev, she suffers a lot during his lifetime. She gets the honor and love merely toward his life. She is shown as a desperate beloved who cares about her lover a lot. When Dev severely coughs, she runs and jumps to him, but again, as usual, he denies her touch (1:51:00). Her touch is impure. She is treated as untouchable due to her occupation. In addition, when Dharam da (his helper) comes to meet in the *Kothe*, he reluctantly speaks with Chandramukhi. He also states that *Kothe* is hell. He cannot see his master staying in such a polluted place (1:54:08). Additionally, he admits to Paro that he is so upset and regrets being alive to see such a heinous situation. In conversation with Paro's mother and Paro, he also informs that his master (Dev) does not come to *habeli* (palace, their

home) and states in a city with Chandramukhi in *Kothe*, he pervades all the negativities about Chandramukhi and the *Kothe*. Listening to it, Paro's mother exclaims, "*thuka! thuka!* (alas!) (Translated) (1:57:13) This exclamation of Paro's mother is bitter feelings toward the situation and more to the image created for Chandramukhi and the *Kothe*.

Chandramukhi is adversely portrayed in the cinema. When Paro asks about her, Dharam da reveals that she is an artificial woman and loots Dev and also appeals to her to save from her (1:57:46). Even though, in later days, Paro accepts Chandramukhi as a generous woman. In the first meeting, she has lots of negativities. When Chandramukhi greets her by touching feet, Paro affirms she is a hypocrite, clever, and a liar. She states that her beauty and youth have allured and magnetized Dev and adds, "You might have looted a lot from Dev, but now we cannot see him staying in this hell. Where is he please tell me, and I will take him back home?" (Translated) (2:10:40-2:12:38) these expressions are the adding portions to Chandramukhi's negative identities no matter how she is treated later by Paro and Dev.

Bhansali shows how society does not accept prostitutes through Chandramukhi. When she goes to Paro's palace, she feels uncomfortable. Paro has to lie to his family, stating that she is a hometown friend. Furthermore, when her identity is revealed to Paro's family, her mother-in-law screams that a prostitute can never gain prestige in society. They have huge disparities. When Kali Babu insults her, she slaps and tries to show her boldness, however, she goes back to *Kothe* with tears in her eyes (2:16:00-2:29:29). This going back *Kothe* with a tear of eyes means the movie accepts the *Kathak* dancer, a prostitute Chandramukhi who'll never get the prestige in the society even though she is invited to be part of society.

There are several research done in this movie. However, I have picked Pallavi Chakraborty's *Bells of Change: Kathak Dance, Women and Modernity in India*, which has a similar notion about the *Kathak* dance presented in the Bhansali movie and character Chandramukhi:

The role of Chandramukhi in *Devdas* is that of the 'other' woman, a public woman, a prostitute. The erotic spectacle of Chandramukhi's dancing in the film reinforces this identity. In a dance event (described as *mehfil*), Chandramukhi waits longingly for Devdas's return. She is resplendent in a green costume embellished with glittering gold amidst flickering candles in an elaborately ornate setting. She hears Devdas's footsteps and begins dancing to 'Ye kiski hai ahat. Ye kiski hai ahat Allah hume mar dala' (Whose footsteps do I hear, whose shadow do I see, Allah I have met my death). The words metaphorically mean that her heart has been pierced with the arrow of love; Chandramukhi, played by the beautiful Madhuri Dixit, forms the traditional hand gestures in *Kathak* to signify the shooting of an arrow. Dixit, a deft *Kathak* dancer, has many sparkling moves in this dance sequence . . . The image of Chandramukhi as a courtesan is thus symbolic of the excesses of consumer culture dominated by commodity aesthetics. (83-84)

The termed 'commodity aesthetic' (Haug 1986) consequently, has its roots in eroticism through the sensual appearance value of objects in films and television (visuals). There is a symbiotic relationship between television, films, and the production of commodity aesthetics. It is argued that objectification and decontextualized pleasure are intricately linked to commodity aesthetics. (79) In this regard, the selected form- *Kathak* and the phenomenal female dancer-actor Dixit turns out to be the production of commodities to please especially male audiences. Since

Chandramukhi is a “beautiful Madhuri Dixit” with a “green costume embellished with glittering gold amidst flickering candles in an elaborately ornate setting”.

Again, *The Film Experience*, Corrigan and White add the idea of close-ups (CU) shot, “.Close-ups. . . are framings that show details of a person or an object . . . indicating nuances of the character’s feelings or thoughts or suggesting the special significance of the object. Conventionally, female stars were depicted in close-up to signal glamour” Shristi the younger sister of Shradha in *Pratigya* is shot in CU stands with the same motive. There are so many close-ups shots been taken to catch her beauty.



Figure 3: The close-up shot of Shristi, in which she is embellished with her hairstyle, appropriate costume, earrings, and makeup.
(Source: Researcher’s screenshot, 00:49:19)

Figure 3 shows a close-up shot of Shristi to show her details: her makeup, hairstyle, and ornaments, which catch her glamorously.

Unlike Mithila Sharma, Melina Manandhar is a star, not a *Kathak* dancer. Yet she portrays the character Shristi, a *Kathak* dancer. She is Shradha's younger sister. From an early age, she learned this dance, and like her sister, she also wants to pursue her life as a reputed dancer. However, when the cinema has to show Shristi more than her dance, her beauty has been prioritized through close-ups.



Figure 4: Shristi presented in a close-up shot
(Source: Researcher's screenshot , 00:40:45)

Figure 4 (like Figure 3) shows Melina Manandhar as Shristi in a close-up shot to expose her beauty. It has the same features carrying her hairstyle, make-up face, and attractive costume. Laura Mulvey from 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' asserts that mainstream commercial cinema abounds and represents women still in the patriarchal apparatus (9). Therefore the selected images 3 and 4 stand in the notion of Mulvey where the close-up shot brings Shristi to serve the male audiences by pleasing them through her divine beauty.

Similarly, *The Film Experience*, explains a reaction shot. "A reaction shot, which depicts a character's response to something shown in a previous shot, emphasizes human perspective in a way that can be seen as standing in for the audience's response."



Figure 5: The reaction shot depicting Munggre's exclamation after seeing Shristi
(Source: Researcher's screenshot , 00:49:17)

Figure 5 depicts a reaction of Munggre through a reaction shot of Munggre after seeing Shristi's beauty. Munggre, an antagonist, a partner of Kaluman Singh, another antagonist, runs a dance company that selects young girls who dream of becoming dancers. This reaction shot is from *Pratigya* (1990), in which beautiful dancer Shristi and Munggre encounter each other in her home. He approaches her to the next dance program. When he sees her, he is shocked and mesmerized. The shot captures his stuck posture and eyes. Through the shot director, Lama builds the perspective in the audience that she is truly beautiful.



Figure 6: Presenting Raju's reaction after seeing Shristi. He is overwhelmed.
(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 00: 40:44)

Figure 6 also presents the reaction of Raju through a reaction shot. This picture is a continuous scene of Shristi's close-up shot. Raju is one of the leading characters in the *Pratigya*. He falls in love with Shristi at first sight. However, this reaction shot is captured when he sees Shristi outside his home. His aspiring eyes, his stiff body, and his hand touching his neck reveal that she is such a beautiful girl that his emotion are stimulated. These reactions of Munggre and Raju through those stuck eyes for a beautiful girl prove that the lens focuses on the male gaze. Edward Snow in his article "Theorizing the Male Gaze: Some Problem" indicates that the male gaze refers to the "sigh in their hearts, and tears will gust from their eyes." "Their" means men. Therefore he means men's emotion is evoked through their eyes. Those gushing emotions released from the eyes are the male gaze. Hence, the evocation of the emotion in Raju and Munggre is the outburst of the sighs after seeing Shristi. Since those sights are focused by the lens, the cinema can be called as the male-centric movie where a dancer Shristi is objectified through the male gaze (significantly gaze of Munggre, Raju, camera and eventually through camera rest of the male audiences outside the frame again enjoys the dancer Shristi as the lens and two men inside the camera.)

Similarly, *The Film Experience* exposes there are multiple camera angles used in the film. Some are straight, above or below, “these are correlated with camera height. Among “low angles are shots from a position lower than its subject.”



Figure 7: A low-angle shot, shows the antagonist, Kalu Man Singh as he furiously approaches Shristi for their next program

(Source: Researcher’s screenshot, 00:58:53)

Figure 7 depicts the low-angle; the camera is fixed at a lower position than the subject, Kalu Man Singh. This scene is captured when he introduces himself to Bibek (brother-in-law of Shristi) and Shristi. This angle builds a sense of fierceness with his seniority and superiority since the camera is below the subject (Singh), thus, he looks gigantic and furious. To this, *HOW TO READ A FILM The Art, Technology, Language, History, and Theory of Film and Media* by James Monaco states that art is never a single entity but always embodies with many factors like sociopolitic, psychology, technology and economy. Among “the psychological determinant, on the other hand, is introspective, focusing our attention not on the relationship between work and the world at large, but on the connections between the work and the artist, and the work and the observer. The profound psychological effect of a work of art has been recognized ever since Aristotle’s theory of catharsis (p. 12).” Similarly, the picture of Kaluman Singh also has a relationship with the psychology of audiences since it reflects the impact of his superiority through the low camera angles.

Furthermore, the essay “How Camera Angles Influence People Opinions about Objects” by Ilonka Maathuis reveals, “idea of Van Rompay that camera angles are about giving a person a different point of view on an object, and in effect . . . people may feel threatened or vulnerable when someone or something rises above them” (2-3). Therefore by focusing the idea of director Lama rises the fierceness image of Kalu Man Singh through the low-camera angle shot.

In addition, Corrigan and White define dialogue as the next element of the cinema, “human speech, primarily in the form of dialogue, is often central to understanding narrative film. The acoustic qualities of the voices of actors make distinct contributions to films . . . dialogue is used to tell their stories . . .” therefore it is similarly the most significant element in the movie *Pratigya*. Through the dialogues spoken by the characters audiences know the status of women dancers. The cinema starts with dance rehearsals of two sisters inside the home. Their mother is shown performing her daily religious rituals. On the other hand, their retired military father is staying at dining table and cursing:

Father: Now onwards there is only a dog remaining to dance.

Mother: Why? Are you ashamed of your identity, since you are known of after your daughter’s name?

Father: No, I am proud that my daughter Shradha is a reputed artist. Likewise, tomorrow Shristi will be, the day after tomorrow you will be, and who knows Riththe may also be an artist. Then our house will be filled with artists . . . All have gone wasted! (Translated) (00:12:22)

In this dialogue father shows his frustration with dance by comparing dance with a dog, and bullying his wife, who is a housewife, “the day after tomorrow you will be . . .” reveals that he does not like dance at all and does not support his daughters in

pursuing this profession. He mocks that even Riththe (a helper) who does not know about dance may have the possibility of becoming an artist. When granddaughter (Shraddha's daughter) enters the room he catches her and states, "I will make you a reputed pilot." It means that he denies dancing as a good profession. The last exclamation announcing, "All have gone wasted!" proves that from the house especially the male character, the father has negativity toward dance. He feels irritated when his two daughters have dance rehearsals every morning.

Moreover, when Munggre representing the KB Group of Industry visits Shradha's home to approach the upcoming dance program he is astonished to see her beauty. To execute his thoughts not only the reaction shot but the dialogue also foregrounds her beauty. As he delivers his dialogue, "She has art, she is laborious at the same she also has a beautiful face with an abundance of young body (translated) (00:49:20)." The film uses a technique to add the notion of her beauty. When Munggre is stuck in her beauty his dialogue is stressed and focused. There is a background sound added, his mouth is not open yet audiences can hear his dialogue where dubbing voice still continues. This helps audiences to make it comprehensible that the dialogues have again made Shristi the product of beauty. Therefore by this we can assume how female dancers are perceived and male characters are more into the female body and facial or external beauty than dance.

Furthermore, the dialogues delivered by Munggre and Kaluman Singh reveal that women dancers are only the medium of earning. They show the dream from door to stardom. Toward the end, of the cinema, they kidnap Raju as they find out about the love affair between them (Shristi and Raju). Their gangsters catch him and threaten him, "We have invested our money in Shristi. So for two years she is in our control got it! (Translated) (2:05:29)". This threat reveals that those female dancers

are the source of earnings to them since Munggre talks about “investment of money.” Additionally, “So for two years she is in our control”- she is captivated for two years. “. . . got it!” is the combination of both threat and fear of Munggre. If she is out of their control they will be at a loss. To them, dance and female dancers are the business material.

Moreover, an unnamed character in *Pratigya* desperately searches for Kalu Man Singh and Munggre. From the beginning to the middle audiences cannot understand his struggle to meet them. But at last, as he meets, through flashback technique the secret is revealed. However, this secrecy also shows how these two antagonists perceive female dancers:

Kalu Man Singh: My name is Kalu Singh. Let’s go to Lord Chaturbujh to dance. You will get bounty (both money and recognition)

Doma: (In a saddened voice) I won’t go.

Munggre: Doma! Don’t say that! Don’t be stubborn! Look it has been a week, and the lord has not seen your moving hips. He is dying to see it. He is bored of seeing other women dance. So be obedient and let’s move. (Translated)

(2:11:53-2:12:34)

Later in harassment her husband and Doma die. The man who is secret in so many terms is none other than the son of Doma, the dancer. Thus, this incident also adds to the point that the female dancer is a victim, fragile, helpless, and only taken as the sensual body that has to perform to eroticize males.

In addition, *The Film Experience* traces the long history of sound. It discusses how it begins. It shows it was influenced by the “theatrical predecessors . . . – at least from the choral odes in classical Greek theatre.” In ancient, the sounds on the stage were created by the characters, the chorus, musical instruments, and even sometimes

by audiences. Later in cinema, Corrigan and White state, it was developed after 1895 and it became successful in creating the audio perspective . . . along with widescreen technologies to lure audiences that evoke the sensory experiences. It gives the meaning in combination form where the moving images are synch with sound. Likewise, on a similar note, the sound has been used in the *Pratigya*. When Shristi is shown in the cinema audiences feel romantic since the soothing piano's sound has been repeatedly used. This again helps to glorify her beauty and creates calm in audiences (59:56). In the same way, when Shradha faces her downfall. Her loneliness is covered with the high-pitched sound that evokes sympathy toward her (56: 29). On the contrary, each time a sound is synchronized with the entrance of Munggre. The sound of a crow's pitch parallel moves when he is appeared. This creates negative senses among audiences. It impacts something bad in that character. Therefore through these different sounds, we can imagine how sound has helped to create an image of women dancers- polite but pathetic while males are negative but are in a powerful position since the piano's soothing sound used in Shristi's background impacts calmness, and politeness. The sound synch in the downfall of Shradha evokes pain in the audience. Even these sounds create two opposite poles among the male character and female dancers.

Furthermore, Corrigan and Whites discuss costumes and makeup as another crucial component of cinema. They define costumes, as “. . . are clothing and related accessories worn by a character that define the character and contribute to the visual impression and design of the film overall.” Likewise, makeup also plays the “central part in a film, describing tensions and changes in the character and the story.” Similarly, in the selected movie *Pratigya* by the use of costumes and makeup, Shradha's transformation is seen.



Figure 8: Shradha's costumes and makeup support her delighted days.
(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 00:3:20)



Figure 9: Shradha's costumes and makeup help the audience to show her pathetic situation.
(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 1:41: 49)

Figures 08 and 09 show a comparative situation of Shradha. Figure 08 is snapped from the beginning of the film, she is shown dancing in front of the temple. She worships the goddess *Sarade* (Hindu goddess of art). In this phase, she is a reputed and successful dancer so the costumes worn are in bright color. Her hair is styled and wears earrings and bangles. These elements help to assure her success. On the other hand, figure 09 shows her in the same place but in a pathetic situation. She dances out of frustration, anger, and pain. Through her dance, she questions and wishes for God to repair her destroyed dance career. The costume selected in this situation is plain. She wears a plain blue blouse and a white sari, and most importantly, her hair is scattered as her internal emotions. She seems without makeup. However, both figures 08 and

09 show the Shradha (female dancer) embedded with the concept of objectification and fragility. In Figure 08, her costumes and makeup turn her into an object more than the dancer, while the costumes shown in Figure 09 evoke her fragility. Thus, none of the costumes are moderate or show the female dancer's strong position. In this regard, Mary Nkechi speaks in her article "A semiotic reading of costumes in Nigerian video films: African bride as a paradigm" that "Hence, costumes in video films are used to define characters, and through film costumes, we can read the story of a film. A film can be read via its costumes, sometimes overtly, sometimes sub-textually (Not just conspicuous epic, magic or horror films, but contemporary stories set within a familiar world in familiar attires). On screen even the most rudimentary items of clothing can take on meaning" (4). Likewise, director Lama follows the same idea for costumes and creates the meaning out of it.

In this film the costumes given to women dancers are changeable as their situation. Figure 08 and 09 describe the same fact, as bright cloth is given to exemplify Shradha's happy situation while dull color is clothed in her dark days. On the other hand, villain Munggre and Kalu Man Singh are often shown in suits. They are tidy. Munggre has a fixed hairstyle throughout the cinema. His hair is up warded and Kalu Man Singh wears the same furry hat throughout. These fixed attire boost their characters and audiences can feel they are flat and stronger than those women dancers. Women dancers have fluctuation in their lives. They are rounded. To show their upheaval their attires are also used in a similar way.

As clothes and make-up, characters are equally significant elements in the film. Again the same book asserts, ". . . characters . . . the central vehicle for the actions . . ." It "anchors the events in a film." They move the plots. Further, the book classifies the characters into protagonist, antagonist, helper, complex, and minor.

Protagonists have positive energy. While antagonists are negative, helpers are those few characters in the cinema, who sometimes help antagonists or protagonists.

Complex characters may appear without their name and identity but can repeatedly appear. Likewise, in *Pratigya*, there is one character unnamed and unidentified.

However, he is repeatedly seen in the cinema and has a crucial role. He is the causing factor of Kalu Man Singh and Munggre's death. Indeed he is a son of Doma (dancer).

In the past, she is killed by Singh and Munggre. She becomes the source for Singh and Munggre to be the exploiter of young female dancers. Her death is shown as the rising factor for both antagonists who later trace the path of business where they collect women dancers and sell them at high cost in the market.

Adding to it, Corrigan and White explain while arranging the characters in the cinema they are categorized according to social hierarchies. Those hierarchies are of class, gender, race, age, and geography. Moreover, they affirm that traditional narrative or linear plot movies focus "on male protagonist and heterosexual pairings in which males have claimed more power and activity than females (p. not given)."

Firstly, the movie *Pratigya* belongs to traditional narrative cinema since it begins with the story of an ambitious *Kathak* dancer girl who is already an admirable dancer. She firmly looks after her family through her occupation. Nonetheless, in the middle her life turns to brutality as she faints in front of large audiences on the stage. She becomes insane for the dance that has gone out of her life. She loses her dance career. Eventually, she handovers her skills and blesses Shristi, and dies in a car hit. Next, it is again the linear plot movie since it has an appropriate beginning, middle, and end.

Focusing on the social hierarchies of gender in East during the Muslim invasion where males were the customers of the *Kathak* dance and female, of course were equal to the servant who facilitate them with their moves and expression. In

Pratigya, too similar tendency has been adapted where obviously male characters are more powerful than females. The story is entirely based on the female dancer's story, in her struggle, suffering, and death. But she is shown powerless. Instead, the male characters are powerful. From minor characters to lead characters most of the female characters depicted in the cinema have stereotypical identities. For example, Shradha's mother is a normal housewife. She has lived her whole life depending on her husband. On the contrary, Shradha's father is an ex-army. He is so proud when he speaks of an army. He only feels that the soldier is only a glorified and brave job. He feminizes dance and till the end, he does not have a positive attitude to dance. He blames dance as a causing factor for all the hurricanes that destroy his family. So according to him, in his home, dance should be banned. It is ominous.

Not only her (Shradha's mother), but there are a number of female dancers' (minor characters) stories. It shows the death of a female dancer, Raju's mother who is a cultural dancer at Annapurna Hotel. Her struggle is depicted as an economically independent woman who has to look after her son Raju but dies in domestic violence (3:43). Next, it exposes another dancer Doma's death. Her death is also caused by dance. Her denial to dance in front of Chaturbhuj Sau (the landlord) provokes her death. Antagonists kill her: Singh and Munnggre for dance refusal (2:12:05). Shristi also loses her loved sister. Finally, the dance does not prevent the main character Shradha from dying. She also dies when she learns that the dance is going far away from her life. She is a mother, wife, daughter, and sister. However, she accepts herself only as a dancer. This obsession drives her to insanity and dies in a car hit (2:25:35). She confines her identity as an obsessed dancer who can choose death over life (2:09:13). This projection of female dancers' is an approval of accepting that the female dancers cannot manage their profession and personal lives. It indirectly assures

that they have to merely affirm their lives in one occupation (either housewife or professional lives). They are failures in balancing. Thus, to the maker, they are the inferior sex. Lama chooses to show those facts through minor characters to lead characters.

Unlike these women dancers, male characters (protagonists and antagonists) are prominently powerful. Raju is one of the male protagonists of the cinema. He has a supporting role but when Shristi is trapped with a boys' gang he saves her. It is always Raju saving her from her obstacles whereas Shristi seems helpless and yells for help from him.

Likewise, male antagonists are shown as superior in the cinema. Even though they die in the end. Nonetheless, from the beginning to the end of the film they spray their power. Their influence is so strong. They affect the lives of so many people. After the ruined life of Shradha and her family her daughter cannot get the proper time and nurture. Similarly, whole family's happiness is collapsed as she turns like a mad woman for dance. The antagonists Singh and Munggre kill Doma, and her husband. Like Shradha's family, Doma's family has also collapsed. They enter the city where they run the company, KB Group of Industry, they provide opportunities to selected women dancers. Throughout the contract, they use those women's skills and ultimately ruin the dancers' lives if they don't follow their protocols. Therefore, as Corrigan and White state in the book *The Film Experience*, the characters given to males and females are gender biased. Even though they have grand skills like dance.

In the movie, *Pratigya*, the camera turns into a male gaze that seeks a trimmed body and appearance female dancers. To this veteran actor of Bollywood, Sharmila Tagore also asserts in an interview "Sharmila Tagore on losing Tiger Pataudi, bond with Saif, Soha, Saba; Manoj Bajpayee on parents death" that still there lies a male

gaze. Rakhi Sawant, the next popular Indian dancer of this period. She has performed in many songs. 'Pardeshiya ye sach hai Piya' (remix song) is her most famous dancing number song. In this song, she is portrayed extravagantly with the costumes and her plastic body (her plastic surgery body has been highlighted through the tight, open, and white shirt). In the movie *Krazzy 4*, at first, the song 'Dekha ta hai tyu kya' captures her pelvic bones that contain a tattoo then her chest. In an interview "Rakhi Sawant – Arshi Khan –Juzz baatt light hearted Hindi Comedy Celebrity Fun Show- Zee Tv, 2019)", Sawant reveals her journey of plastic surgery. Further, she shares she had to have plastic surgery on her breast after enormous rejection from so many producers since so many rejected her body. She adds that her moves (dance) were not enough to be part of the cinema. Makers were more concerned with the attractive body. So she transformed her nose, lips, and chest through plastic surgery. The main element of her rejection was her body. All of them told her that she had no attractive body. Her statements unveil that Indian films are not only about the dance but it is more about projecting the female dancers' bodies that are fit for the camera, fit means trimmed body. The camera, in this regard turns out as a male gaze that seek for trimmed body and appearance as stated by Sawant. Hence if we look at Shristi and Shraddha's appearances from this angle she is also the demand of the male gaze where their *Kathak* dance is not simply sufficient but her attractive body, makeup, and costumes are most important to combine with. So many other additional elements are added to them and presented in front of camera that ultimately converts into the eyes of males.

Chapter II

Analysis of Indian Cinema, *Devdas* in Comparison with other Bollywood Cine

Dance Trends

Among films made all over the world, Indian cinema have their own identity. In the Indian cinema dance has many things to do. In fact, other cinema world comprehend the Indian cinema from Bollywood dance. They have created a benchmark in dance. Yet while observing the dance trend by dividing the male and female existence, the role of women in the dancing numbers have much to do with the glamour that exposes their external beauty, body and the expressions. Subsequently, following the same trend in *Devdas* there are multiple shots that capture Chandramukhi mostly extremely close-up (ECU), close-up shots (CU), and middle. Even though in between, she is captured in a long shot, her captivating body has been exposed through it.



Figure 10 Extreme-close-up shot featuring Chandramukhi's alluring eyes.

(Source: Researcher's screenshot from the movie *Devdas*, 1:11:12)

Figure 11 features Chandramukhi's alluring eyes in an extreme close-up shot (ECU), as Corrigan and White have stated in the book *The Film Experience* that, ECU focuses on glamour. In *Devdas*, too, Chandramukhi's beautiful eyes with a *bindi* (a

decorative dot put in the middle of her forehead) have been keenly shot. The lighting lamp just below her eyes again boosts her beauty through a brightened candlelight.

Frequently used close-up shots in *Devdas* both show her beautiful appearance and her emotional turmoil. For instance, the song (*ye kiska hai aahat*) (whose footsteps do I hear!) features both her beautiful appearance and her most beautiful glittering green attire. However, the close-up shot shows her the depth of her one-sided love toward Dev.



Figure 11: Chandramukhi in close-up shot
(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 1:41:06)

Figure 12 shows Chandramukhi's glittering appearance. This appearance is manifested through a close-up shot. *The Film Experience* states that close-up shots show the details of any object or person. That indicates the character's nuances and character's feelings or thoughts. This selected shot also functions in the same way as it helps to show details of her. Her green attire and all the accessories she wears give her an extravagant existence. However, her eyes filled with tears, questions her emotion in the shot. Even though she is dancing, this shot expresses pain and suffering. To this, an author Maxine Sheets-Johnstone states, in *The Phenomenology of Dance*, that dance is never the single entity but the fusion of so many other elements, "Consciousness-body moves out toward the world in which it is already

implicitly aware of being spatially present. It extends its spatiality toward the world as a means of relating to and communicating with it (p.18)”, means even though Chandramukhi is dancing in front of her clients in *mehefil*, her emotion is blended with the tragic pain of not being accepted by her lover Dev Babu. She is consciously dancing, but her heart is extreme in evocation of pain.



Figure 12: Chandramukhi in close-up shot
(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 1:11:28)

A close-up shot in figure 13 portrays a similar tendency to figure 12. The shot casts her in the most appealing way as well as her facial expression where she gets excited seeing her new client, Dev Babu, a friend of her regular customer Chuni Lal. This shot catches her thrill through her gazing eyes and slightly smiling face, she is greeting him with her respect since she is catching her *Dupatta* (shawl) with her hand. She has been in deep love with him since her first meeting and wants to learn more about him.

Similarly, *The Film Experience* defines a Long Shot (LS) as the shot used to capture a large space and background. Further, it elaborates it is one of the types of

shot where considerably “the camera is kept in the distance between the camera and the scene, object, or person.” Similarly, the LS is used in this cinema, *Devdas*.



Figure 13: Long shot exposing the background of Mehefil

(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 1:10:50)

Figure 14 depicts the long shots where all the female *Kathak* dancers embellish the *mehfil* with their movements. However, their existence is beautified by the background added. The background consists of a huge hall, pillars in between carrying the curtains, few males lying near them to feel the movements of the women dancers. The ceiling lights and the *ghangra* (lower dress of women dancers) twirling with the moved body of women please the male audiences: Kali Babu, Chunni Lal, and Dev Babu. They are *bazari aurat* (prostitutes). Through *Kathak mudras*, they are trying to allure them in the most exotic place, *mehfil*.



Figure 14: A Medium Long Shot (MLS) used to show the elements used in the *mehfil*.

(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 1:10:52)

Figure 15 depicts a medium-long shot (MLS). It is shown to show the mise-en-scene.

The candle lamps, curtains, and the ladders where Chandramukhi waves her alluring body. *The Film Experience* explains a middle long shot is a type of “shot slightly increases the distance between the camera and the subject compared with a medium shot, showing a three-quarter-length view of a character (from approximately the knees up). . .” In a similar vein, this figure features the subject, Chandramukhi, and depicts the mise-en-scene involved.

Costumes and makeup are two important elements of *Devdas*. Costumes and makeup help to describe the characters' roles. Since this paper is inclined from the dancer's perspective, the paper focuses on the costumes and makeup used by her. As *The Film Experiences* has explained, costumes and makeup are the crucial elements “that define the character and contribute to the visual impression . . .” Likewise, the costumes used to portray Chandramukhi in the cinema have a significant role in characterizing. Bhansali's Chandramukhi in *Devdas* is more extravagantly shown. Most of the time, her hands are filled with *mehendi* (a decorative green semi-liquid element used to decorate females' hands). In songs, she is presented with lots of extra costumes and jewelries. *Shringar* (make-up) in dance is one of the most crucial

elements in the Eastern dance culture. Accordingly, the cinema also shows her. To justify her character, her clothes are slightly open and revealing than other female characters of the cinema.



Figure 15: Chandramukhi's revealing costume, which helps her to characterize her role.
(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 2:39:38)

In the cinema, no one puts on such clothes except Chandramukhi. In this regard, costumes help her to characterize her character in the cinema explicitly.

Similarly, *Is It All About Hips Bollywood? Around the world, Bollywood Dance* asserts that Bollywood film choreographers burrow the traditional dance, observe older films, and current global and local trends (23). The presentation of Chandramukhi in the cinema looks the same as stated in this book. *Devdas* adopts the traditional dance *Kathak* and imitates veteran dancer and actor Helen of India. Her body is exposed like her in old Hindi cinema. To this technique, again Sangita Shresthova, the author of the same book, reveals the choreographers of Hindi Cinema “. . . focused on dance as part of character and narrator development as they simultaneously responded to the requirements of creating engaging entertainment (24-25)”. The same applies in *Devdas* as in the movies where Chandramukhi is one of the important characters, but it seems like both are used for narrating the story and, most

significantly, for entertainment by her moves, costumes, makeup and accessories.

To this, Shresthova does not call it new. In Indian cinema, using female dancers for entertainment (sensually and sexually) is common thus has been practiced in the past:

Though men admittedly took a secondary role when it came to dance during this period, Shammi Kapoor's rock and roll shimmy set the fashion for dancing heroes in Hindi films . . . At the same time, the hip thrust became a signature move of the vamp character in the 1960s. Given the public demands for sexually-charged content on the hand, behavioral constraints placed on film heroines by film censors, and social norms of that period on the other, Hindi filmmakers responded through a dualization of the female role.

Embodied most memorably by the Anglo-Burmese dancer, Helen, the vamp character was a woman of questionable moral standing whose sensual appeal made her almost irresistible. Simultaneously shunned, admired, and desired, she dazzled audiences and heroes alike with her worldly dancing abilities. (27)

It is similarly shown in the *Don* (movie's song) *Ye Mera Dil* (This my heart), where through her extravagant appearance and her moves, she is trying to catch Amitabh Bachchan. More than him, audiences are evoked by her appearances. It seems like Shresthova's notion. Even though inside the frame, audiences can see two characters, the woman dancer is more gripped to audiences by her extravagant appearance.



Figure 16: Extreme Close Shot (ECU) from the song “Ye Mera Dil”
 (Source: Researcher’s screenshot, from the movie *Don*, 1978, 2:45)

Figure 17 features the prominent dancer Helen of Indian cinema in the 60s. The picture tied her with a bottle of alcohol. In it, she is caught in the ECU shot where a bottle of alcohol supports her. Similarly, her eyes are extravagantly made-up. Blue eyes, lined-up eyebrows, and thick eyelashes overshadow her dancing skills. In the entire song, she has been caught roaming around Amitabh Bachchan. Through her appearance again, the role of dance and dancer is questionable. Consequently, it seems like the dance and dancer are merely used either to trap the hero or seduce any other opposite sex (hero or villain). Capturing Helen with alcohol in the same frame in the ECU shot offers her existence in the cinema as toxic, exotic, and sensual as alcohol. Hence, it is again a provocation for the male gaze or the material for sensuality.



Figure 17: Helen in the song “Piya Tu Ab To Aaja” (*Caravan*, 1971)
(Source: Researcher’s screenshot, 0:18)

Again, figure 18 covers Helen in a similar way as described in figure 17. A close-up shot ties a glass of wine and her extravagant appearance (in blue eye-shadows, eye makeup, red earrings, and hairstyle). This shows a similar idea where a dancer is navigated to the Dionysian aspect instead of art.



Figure 18: A Medium Long Shot (MLS) depicting Helen in her usual style
(Source: researcher’s screenshot from movie’s *Talash* song)

Figure 19 is a middle long shot that is above the knee and shows her relationship with the periphery around her. Her appearance looks like in the masque. The crown in her head is surprisingly magnificent. These crown in red feathers, short blonde hair, and

shorts costumes - more or less to bikini but embellished, and her performance in front of the party stand to entertainment. This is the pathetic scene of dance and female dancers in South Asian cinemas where firstly, a woman's body is treated as a matter of pleasure, and next their job is to endow pleasure through either hip movements or chest. Likewise, in the movie *Talash* too she is captured in a similar vein where she exposes her trimmed body and dances for pleasure. But there are also women at the party who are not pleased but look at her surprisingly and are envious of her body and cover their husbands' eyes. Nevertheless, this picture also treads similarly as described earlier (the presence of a female dancer in the East cinema).

Helen Khan is an undeniable dancer of Indian cinema. She has danced in more than 50 movies. Lots of her songs are so popular to date. Her dances and moves were the power of attraction. It was the pulling factor to take audiences to the hall. The songs: 'Mehabooba Mehabooba' (*Sholay*, 1975), 'ye mera dil pyar ka diwana' (*Don*, 1978), 'Piya tu ab to Aaja' (*Caravan* 1971), and many other songs are evergreen. Nevertheless, the researcher argues that the same style has been repeated even at present in India. Nora Fatehi in the song 'Dilbar Dilbar' (*Satyameva Jayate*, 2018) and Rakhi Sawant in 'Dekhata hai tu kya' (*Krazzy-4*, 2011) are similarly captured by the camera.

The song 'Piya tu ab to Aaja' (*Caravan*, 1971) shoots Helen's legs in an extremely close shot. Through her legs, the camera moves slowly upward centralizing her pelvic part to her face incorporated by the wine glass. Her make-up and hairstyle are extravagant. Most of all her solo songs' have revealing costumes. When she moves her body they are exposed and evokes sensuality. Her audience most often is male. In *Sholay* villain swims into her body through the gaze. In the same way, Fatehi's leg is projected in the song 'Dilbar Dilbar'. Her leg is prioritized it is

embellished with the sand. Through such presentation, the choreographer is enriching erotic impact on audiences, subsequently, the same trend has been adopted till the date where female dancers' bodies are exposed for different purposes more than appreciating dance as art itself.

Similarly, Rakhi Sawant, today's actor and dancer, seems to copy the same trend followed by Helen in the 60s and 70s. The song "Dekha ta hai tu Kya" showcases her tattooed hip, chest, and her moves. There is no new element added except the woman's body. Thus, the entire selected cinema, whether it is *Devdas*, *Don*, *Caravan*, *Talaash*, or *Krazzy*, has the same notion of perceiving women dancers (for entertainment purposes through their sensual movements in front of the camera.)

Conversely, the disappointment of *Kathak* dance presented in *Devdas*, Pallavi Chakraborty, an author of *Bells of Change Kathak Dance, Women and Modernity in India* argues the presentation of *Kathak* has less impact in the audiences due to huge interferes: ". . . but the dancers in the background and the ornate excesses of the pleasure palace constantly intercept the audience's vision . . . (p.81)" She asserts that even though the *Kathak* is choreographed by the legendary maestro Birju Maharaj the performance does not transcend neither *Devdas* inside the frame nor the audiences:

Even though the legendary Kathak maestro Birju Maharaj choreographed this dance sequence, the rapid editing technique (reminiscent of contemporary music videos) creates a strong aesthetic shift from the slow, languorous (vil-ambit) pace of *Umrao Jaan*. Rather than holding the gaze of the camera in the reciprocal exchange of darshan, the dancing is pursued by the camera, splicing and fragmenting it. The constantly jerking camera movements reflect and refract the glittering candlelight in the background and allow no room for building an emotional connection between the audience and the dancing

imagery; the emotion remains purely on the surface. The aesthetics of excess and conspicuous consumption reduce Chandramukhi's dancing to nothing more than a visual orgy—a spectacle. The visual density of images provides a very little sensuous experience that can evoke the pleasure . . . Rather, it evokes the erotic desire associated with commodity aesthetics . . . (83-84)

This concept again resembles the same notion that the researcher tries to configure throughout the paper. The *Kathak* dance, which has its own aura and aesthetic value, is pulled behind to erotic sense due to embellished performance by the Chandramukhi, and the entire glittering substances degrade the value of entire women dancers, thus, they are stood up like nothing but the sex-bodies throughout the cinema. To this, Walter Benjamin states in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* that the screen actors are directed by the camera person and director. Further, their performances are guided by the editor (p.9). He also differentiates the actor on the stage and the actor inside the camera. According to him, actors on the stage can enjoy their roles by identifying their characters. On the contrary, actors in the cinema lack these opportunities their characters are modified, and constructed by so many other interferences (p.11). They do not have the freedom to develop their characters they are so often interrupted by directors, camera persons, and editors. Likewise, his concept is similarly seen in the songs where Dixit has been cast in *Devdas*.

Brant Dainow asserts in the conference paper, 'The Culture Industry by Adorno and Horkheimer Left-wing elitist nonsense' that film, radio, and print all are a unified industry dominated by capitalist leaders (p.4). Their goal is to earn money rather than preserve the art. The paper also claims they produce popular music that lacks the standard or classical music (p.4). Additionally, the paper believes that the

culture industry is corrupted since its focus is pleasure and it is too mechanically reproduced where art is cheaply and widely spread (p.5). The selected movies also have similar tendencies in the presentation of dance where the producers: are the capitalist leaders whose primary attention is to gain economic success by using female dancers in the selected movies. They do not look sincere in the presentation of the dance though they have selected the most renowned dance in the East. In the movie, *Pratigya*, *Kathak* is the main dance form presented that has a dignified role in the East.



Figure 19: Centralizes Mithila Sharma by avoiding the other dancers
(Source: Researcher's screenshot from the movie *.Pratigya*, 1990, 19:48)



Figure 20: Focusing on Sharma relatively more than the musicians and other dancers
(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 1990, 19:47)

Figures 20 and 21 depict the wit of dance director Basanta Rayamajhi who avoids rest-raw dancers and covers the frame with *Sitara*, and *Dhol* (eastern musical instrument) with the postures of Mithila Sharma. Producer Lama and choreographer Basanta Rayamajhi chose the finest dancer Mithila Sharma at the center and other raw, untrained dancers as the decoration inside the camera. Due to the ungraceful performance of the untrained chorus, *Kathak* looks degraded. This reflects the cheap publicity of *Kathak* that lacks the standard of it. The concentration is only focused in Mithila Sharma. Thus, this produces pleasure and entertainment at a low cost. *Kathak* dancers themselves are highly expensive to hire. Hence this is an illusionary representation of *Kathak*, in the movie *Pratigya*. Sharma is phenomenally talented in *Kathak*. In contrast, the rest of the chorus is not. Tactfully Rayamajhi incorporates camera angles to show the appropriate *Mudras* (hand signs) of Sharma by overlapping raw dancers-chorus and musicians. Musicians are shown but as embellished equipment. This reflects Walter Benjamin's mechanical reproduction where he differentiates stage actor and actor in front of the camera. He finds the standard of art is on the stage they are equal to handcrafted artists. They are not interrupted by any

other: producers, directors, or editors. Due to this, the mechanical presentation where Sharma is captured according to the choreographer Rayamajhi and director Lama's will, the aura of *Kathak* presented in *Pratigya* loses its standard.

Likewise, the same *Kathak* is presented on the stage maintains its sheer beauty and looks lively than the *Kathak* presented through camera in the *Pratigya* and *Devdas*. This performance is the projection of technical trickery. The dance performance shown in the movie, *Pratigya* and *Devdas* is made for an unsophisticated public who does not know about *Kathak*. Therefore, by such performance we can assume that the movies *Pratigya* and *Devdas*'s primary purpose is entertainment. It seems one of the cheap publicities of *Kathak* from the business orientation.

Chapter III

Analysis of Western Cinemas in Comparison to the Eastern

The paper brings the American film *The Next Dance* which poses a strong female character Selena. She is unlike those Eastern female characters. Selena is beautiful, educated, and focused. From her childhood (three years) she has been dancing. Few male characters do not directly hamper her dancing career like in *Pratigya*. Even though her father has an extramarital affair that does not affect her life. Indeed, she believes in her path and lives happily. She looks after her mother's dance studio. Indeed she saves her dance studio from bankruptcy. She wins the dance competition and pays all the mortgage left by her father. She is unlike even her lover Tristan Desmond Hamilton. Hamilton is confused from his young age. She is the one who infers him to find his goal.

Similarly, the close-up shots in *The Next Dance* iteratively feature nature. From the beginning of the cinema, it values the existence of nature. There are several shots projecting nature's beauty. The transit of the scenes is maintained by the existence of nature. The view of the evening sky (sky in purple color) evokes the soothing in viewers' minds. Similarly, the sunrise brings the anticipated hope. There is a wide shot of the lake that again arouses calmness and settlement in the audience's mind. Showing bloomed flowers and, full moon in close-up shots build the room of calmness. They help to understand the tone of the movie and the character Selena to a large extent. Since Selena is the center character these repeated exhibitions of nature have similar tendencies. As nature flows at its own pace so does Selena. Those sunset, sunrise, calm lake, bloomed white flowers and full moon look like assimilating Selena with nature:



Figure 21: A close-up shot of blooming white flowers.
(Source: the researcher's screenshot, *The Next Dance*, 24:57)



Figure 22: A medium-large shot focusing on the beauty of nature. The beautiful nature is demonstrated by the contrasting colors, where the sunset is in an orange-yellowish color and trees and other plants are in dark black colors.
(Source: The researcher's screenshot, *The Next Dance*, 21:22)



Figure 23: A zoomed-in shot of the full moon covered by the night cloud. It looks serene through the same technique of contrasting the colors: white and black. A white moon in a black sky.

(Source: From the screenshot of the researcher, *The Next Dance*, 33:39)

Figures 22, 23, and 24 depict the beauty of nature that replicates the character Selena.

As her life moves, shots are inserted in between. Audiences can feel the calm of Selena as nature is shown in the cinema. Audiences can feel that nature and Selena are the same. Like her life, nature flows.

Not merely the sunset, sunrise, calm lake, blooming white flowers, and full moon are featured through the close-up, but astonishingly, there is mostly a medium-long shot (MLS) that describes her waving body. Like in the Eastern part, there are no close-up or extreme close-up shots that catch the senses. A few close-up shots show her blurred face. For instance:



Figure 24: The close-up shot of Selena during her dance movement
(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 13: 04)

This close-up shot is not focused but blurred. Since this shot is captured during her movement, the camera does not seem to focus on her beauty like the close-up shots of Eastern cinema (*Pratigya* and *Devdas*). Instead, her deep affection for dance has been shot. Her face has caught while moving. Even though she is also in make-up and dancing in front of Hamilton there is no connection between him (male gaze). Firstly, she is practicing, secondly, she does not have a direct eye connection with the camera like Chandramukhi and Shradha in the *Devdas* and *Pratigya* respectively. Hamilton is doing his duty (wiping the floor) since he works as a part-time cleaner in her dance studio. He is not allured like Chunni Lal, Dev, and Kali Babu in *Mehfil* in *Devdas* and not like Munggre and KB Singh of *Pratigya* who are waiting for her hip to wave. Her close-up shots are completely different from selected Eastern films. Her close-ups do not beautify her rather her intense practice is shot since the shot is taken during her rehearsal.

Next, as defined by *The Film Experience* a medium-long shots (MLS) are those that depict little bit of background and focuses mise-en-scene. The selected picture do have similar feature.



Figure 25: A medium-long-shot (MLS) capturing the moving body of a girl dancing for the upcoming dance competition

(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 26:56)

This picture shows the girl's movement for an audition when she is dancing. It has nothing to do with the male gaze or voyeurism. It simply shows a girl bending her legs separating her hands and focusing on her moves. The mise-en-scene shown has no glittering elements like those of *Devdas Mehfil*. It is a dance studio where some photos are hung on the gray shed wall. Even the light is not as bright as in *Devdas*. This helps to focus on the dancer's movement in the cinema. In the *Devdas* whenever Chandramukhi steps her moves audience's focus is scattered whether in mise-en-scene, in her costumes, or her make-up.

Next, in the film, a few dialogues delivered by Selena defend what it means to dance and dancers. For instance in the beginning of the movie when Selena finds Hamilton having a sneaky look on her. She catches him:

Hamilton : . . . saw you dancing you're really good.

Selena : Thanks

Hamilton : . . . dance, me? No way that's for girls

Selena : no it's not. My mom has a dance studio and there are tons of boys to dance.

Hamilton : Men, in tights! No menly at all!

Selena : Who said he had to wear tights to dance? . . . come here to step me

Hamilton : (loudly laughs) No I'm okay thank you though

Selena : what you scare?

Hamilton : no I'm not scared I can do everything you did and better I just don't want to I'm a man (2:28-3:04)

This conversation indicates how dance is received (feminine). Selena argues that dance does not have gender. It should not be perceived as, "My mom has a dance studio and there are tons of boys to dance", reflecting that dance is an art where gender should not tussle: anybody can dance.

Further, in the cinema when she is asked by Hamilton how she became such a focused girl, especially thinking of dance she replies: "I just did there's nothing that makes me happier when life's got me down it's just it's my therapy. It clears my mind, it renews my body, it knows my soul (35:01)" Whereas there is no such declaration of any dancers in the previously selected Eastern cinema. None of the dancers reply to this intensity. Instead, in the movie, *Pratigya* Shradha is shown keenly tied with the dance but ultimately dies of becoming mad since she loses her relationship with her dancing career. Both *Devdas* and *Pratigya* are fond of showing mad but doomed female dancers. Shradha dies after losing her dance career while Chandramukhi dies inside since she loses Dev. Her relationship with dance is not as intense as Selena's. Her purpose of dancing is like *Apsara* (celestial Nymph) of Eastern myth whose profession is dancer and purpose of dance is to seduce either lord *Indra* (eastern heaven lord) or the any devil in the earth. Unlike Selena has nothing to do with seduction. Like she states she dances to clean her soul. She dances when her

mood is off, when she is frustrated, to release her pain she dances, in her happiness she remembers to dance, when she has nothing to do she chooses to dance, when she has to save her studio from bankruptcy she dances, anytime she's been dancing. That is her life. So her existence in the cinema is different than Shradha, Sristi, and Chandramukhi in *Pratigya* and *Devdas* respectively. Her story is different even though they all are dancers- characters in the cine-dance.

Shraddha and Sristi dance to allure their male audiences. Their job is to please them. They are more seen in the stage program wearing phenomenal attire and makeup. They are associated with the company. They are contracted dancers and dance for others while Selena has her dance studio. She is an independent girl. Her attire and makeup have nothing to do with male audiences but her passion for the dance evokes audiences and encourages youths to pursue their zeal and find the way. It is more inward than outward. It is Selena who suggests Hamilton, "When you love something so much when you have a goal and you must attain it you stick to it you never lose focus you stare down. . ." it is most of the time that Selena the character is introspected, ruminates her activities. She is silent, calm, and composed. She is not affected by the external world. If in case she is affected dance turns into therapy to clean up her turmoil. This is why she is such a focused girl and suggests Hamilton be calm, focused, stick, and continue to do the thing he loves the most. These persuasive features make her presence in the cinema, powerful and bold. This gives the opposite dimension (unlike the Eastern women dancers in the selected cinemas) that women dancers can be independent, self-created, and happy.

On the contrary to the Eastern cinema the male character in *The Next Dance* are not that powerful and strong. In fact, they have less space in the cinema. Since his childhood Hamilton is not determined like Selena. This prolongs even in his teen. He

decides to follow his father's footprint joining an MBA at Stanford University without knowing his inner zeal. He treads on his father's way to please him but inside he desperately wants to become a dancer. Later he confesses that he wants to become a dancer but his father finds it ridiculous and claims following the hobby is meaningless. He is found shaky due to his father's words. This makes him unfocused. However, KB Singh and Mungre in the *Pratgiya* have dominant space. They are so powerful and focused on their actions. They are the root cause of the heinous result of women dancers in the cinema. Since they hire women dancers and trap them until they are useful to them. Likewise, in the *Devdas*, Dev is the center character to whom Paru and Chandramukhi revolve. He is also the root cause of the suffering of both the women in the cinema. He is such a self-centered and egotistic man that he avoids the love of both women. Though Paru and Dev are childhood friends and develop a love life in later days, due to his upbringing where he is treated as "the man (sovereign) from high class" by his family he loses Paru. Next, in his whole life, he rejects the love of Chandramukhi since she is a prostitute and dances in front of males in *Mehfil*.

The costumes of Selena are casual and simple. Selena wears normal dresses. Even though she has worn shorts those costumes are not focused like in Eastern cinema. Her attire has again nothing to do with the provocation of Hamilton's feelings. The camera does not keenly and closely shoot her clothes. It is unlike the depiction of Helen's exposing of her thighs and shorts. It is again different than Chandramukhi's attire where in *Devdas* her intro is done with the slaying white *duppata* (long shawl). As she walks her shawl is dragged in the floor. The dragged shawl is tightly captured by the camera. This adds her presence in extravagant way (1:08:56)



Figure 26: The close shot of *Duppata*

(Source: The researcher's screenshot from the movie *Devdas* 1:08:55)

This extravagant appearance of Chandramukhi has more to do with the male gaze as stated by Claire Sisco King in the chapter "The Male Gaze in the Visual Culture" (*The Routledge Handbook of Gender and Communication*) that women bodies are used to objectify and have sadistic end likewise the presented picture assemble the notion of the book where it seems the presence of Chandramukhi is more to do with objectification. When her entrance begins in the camera her wet hair is waved, during her hair clashes the mirror glasses she parades her hip in the slow movement so that her white long *duppata* would sweep the floor in rhythm. Even though Bhansali is known for artistic articulation in the movies but in this regard, Chandramukhi has more to do with objectification. Since she is gripping factor to both camera, Dev and male outside the camera. Thus this appearance seems exactly opposite to Selena in the Western cinema *The Next Dance*. She has neither *duppata* nor any wet hair that could entangle Hamilton or camera and male gaze outside the camera. She is simple and real. She wears shorts for her comfort. Her hair is curl by birth. She does make up but not to evoke Hamilton. In her teen gradually she falls in love with Hamilton but never tries to allure him in her sensuality and sexuality. Though they share the same room at midnight they develop a sound friendship by sharing their family's issues.

Not only Selena but in the movie *The Next Dance* all the female characters are strong-headed. For instance, it is Hamilton's mother who is a housewife also advises her son not to follow his father's dream but to follow his own. Even though she is a housewife like Shradha's mother she knows what is wrong and right. She speaks to her son: she is vocal. She is not submissive like Shradha's mother. Next, Selena's mother exiles her husband from the house after knowing about his extramarital affair. She has her dance studio. She remains strong and happy despite being deceived. Next, Maya is Selena's elder sister who is also a dancer like her. She also helps her to regulate the dance studio and becomes like a pillar to her sister whenever she is in need. They don't build a competitive relationship like in Shradha and Sristi in *Pratigya*. Later in the cinema due to a conspiracy made by KB Singh and Munggre Shradha and Shristi, there creates a huge wall. The relationship which was once like the soul sisters turns into enmity. Shradha cannot see her younger sister Shristi. She envies her popularity and growth which is opposite in *The Next Dance*.

Adding to it, most importantly when the camera shows the female characters in the movie *The Next Dance* none of them are featured in alluring way. They are depicted in a simple and normal way. It seems like they are only concerned with each other. The presentation is realistic not mechanical. Most of the time their eyes do not have direct face to the camera like in *Pratigya* and *Devdas*. On the other hand, those selected movies have songs in between of the cinemas. In those songs they have dance. During most of the shots are close-up and extreme-close-up shots. In those shots often their eyes and their facial expression are direct to the frame that helps to understand audiences that they are having direct communication with audiences. Most of the time leading female dancers' activities are recorded in terms of both character relationship and with audience relationships through those shots. For instance in the

song *Parelima Aayi Baseccha* (Someone has fixed in the eyes) has two extreme-close-up shots of Shraddha's lips and eyes. Those smiley lips and eyes are both to audiences inside the camera and outside. Inside the camera, there are audiences allured in her dance performances while the ECU by camera grips the eyes of audiences outside the frame. Likewise, the song *Dhai Sham Rokle* (stop the evening) also has an ECU shot of Chandramukhi's eyes. They are embodied with lamps. Inside the frame those embellished eyes are for her male customers; Chunni Lal, Dev Babu, and Kali Babu. Nonetheless, it is again fixed in ECU, to male audiences like male audiences inside the frame.

Surprisingly, in the Eastern cinema, those ECU shots mostly capture the female alluring part whether eyes, lips, hips, or chest. However, there are close-up shots of male either, Dev Babu, Chunni Lal, and Kali Babu they capture their facial emotions. They are not featured in those tight shots like women dancers in the cinema. It is again similar to *Pratigya*. Raju is handsome, good-looking, and alluring to the female gaze but he is also not featured in those extreme shots. In this sense, through the technique of camera, these selected Eastern films look like advertising female dancers like objects unlike the Western cinema *The Next Dance*. It does not have a single ECU shot that objectifies female characters Selena, Maya, Selena's mother, and Hamilton's mother, none of them.

Likewise, the movie (*Save the Last Dance*, 2001) also features a dancer. Julia Stiles as Sara is in center character. It is also the American screen dance where Stiles is not shown as the women dancers in the East. Her body, movements, or any facial expression is beyond the Shradha, Sristi, Chandramukhi and Helen, and Sawant at East.



Figure 27: Posture of Stiles

(Source: Researcher's screenshot from the movie *Save the Last Dance*, 2001, 0:48)



Figure 28: Close shot of the hand

(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 2001, 3:11)



Figure 29: Photograph of Stile capturing her posture

(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 2001, 3:10)

Figures 28, 29, and 30 unveils the Julia Stile whose postures are sharply shown in middle, close, and wide shot. In these pictures her body especially like in the East

cinemas have not caught to provoke the sensuality. The figure 25 and 27 show her body posture. It has nothing to do with provocation of male gaze but exposes the holding position of her body while she dances. Her body is covered by the black dress. There is no such body exposition. Figure 26 has a close shot that catches her pointed figure. Again it differs to those selected close shots of East cinemas where women are extravagantly used. Unlike the East cinemas, her chest and hip movements are not recorded by the camera's lens. Instead, her postures, hands, and knees are closely shot to portray her dance skills. Her face looks without makeup. Her hair is tied in a bun. Her costume does not expose her body. Her facial expressions do not attempt to seduce the male gaze indeed her eyes are aspirants' eyes. She dances as an aspirant who wants to pursue her life as a phenomenal dancer.

Next, the movie *Reconstruction* (2021) shows dance creativity. This is the most creative movie among all the selected movies. It is a silent film. There is no single dialogue. Not even a word is spoken by the characters. Two characters meet in a room. A boy starts to unfold the album of his school days. By viewing those photographs both of them become nostalgic and happy. This movie is a combo of back-and-forth memories. At present two people are happily enjoying the photographs. The technique of flashback allows the audience to know they belong to the dance academy where they were dancers back then. As the cinema enrolls back the waving bodies of the students in the dining room help audiences to know that the school was of dance. Next, the book *The Film Experience* states that this sort of cinema was established from 1895 to 1929. This kind of film consists of “narrative realism”, means the narration consists of realistic action. Also, “simultaneous actions, complex spatial geographies, and the psychological interaction of characters . . . - with camera movements, framing, and editing.” (P. not given) Likewise,

Reconstruction has all the features mentioned in the book. It is realistic, presenting the use of natural action and reaction. There is no use of melodrama. The actions of the characters are simultaneous. It moves with the flow of narration. It begins with the meeting of two characters. They recall their memories after unveiling the photographs. Their past actions are revealed through their dance. They were dancers in the past. They were from dance school. Through dance, they express their emotion. Everyone dances in the school. Next, they do have unique space. It is a school but the area shown in the cinema is specific. For example at the beginning café is shown, and next, the hall and passages. Again the characters' psychological interaction is shown through dance or the facial expression. No dialogues are used instead the camera movements, framing, and editing. The camera captures the facial expressions closely to depict the emotions of the characters. The camera follows the movements of two characters when they dance in the passage. As they walk forward the pace of the camera also follows them. Since the movie is based on the flashback technique it is edited accordingly to make it understand.

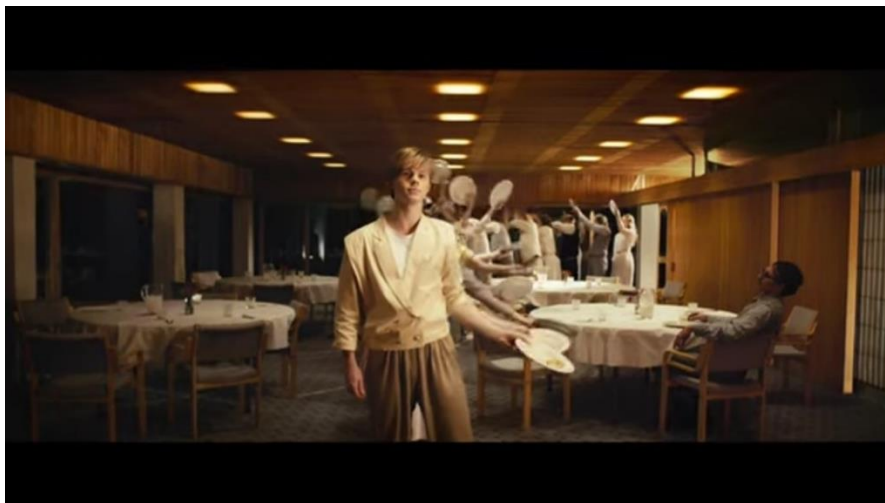


Figure 30: is the depiction of a young boy in his past.

(Source: Researcher's screenshot from the movie *Reconstruction*, 2021, 3:50)

This picture shows the past life of a leading male character in the movie. He was a young boy. His friends and he is waving their hands carrying plates on their hands in

their college's café.



Figure 31: the photographs of dancers in the cinema who are moving the plots of cinema through their dance.

(Source: researcher's screenshot from the movie *Reconstruction*, 2021, 08:06)

Since there are no dialogues but only characters who are dancers they continue the plot through their body movements. Hence this picture runs similarly.



Figure 32: Another group performance of the female dancers in the cinema helping with the moving plots of the cinema.

(Source: Researcher's screenshot, 2021, 08:07)

Figure 33 shows female dancers participating in the movie. They have an equal role to the males in narrating the story. They are not exposed like in Eastern cinema. Their presentation is similar to that of the men shown in Figure 31.

All the characters are dancers in the cinema. Their dance is the foremost thing.

The plot moves through their body movements. Dance is only the medium for

expression. Audiences can only conceive messages through their moving bodies and facial expressions. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone explains dance in the book, *The Phenomenology of Dance* that dance is a moving experience. It is not only the form or any performed art but the lived experience that integrates both performers and audiences (p. 22). Likewise, in the movie *Reconstruction*, dance is only the tool to communicate with audiences whenever they perform audiences can understand them.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

The researcher discusses mostly in chapters 1 and 2 where Eastern female dancers are objectified in the cinema through camera angles, shots, costumes, make-up, roles, and the dialogues. Those presentations have the senses that Smelik, Barthes, and Mulvey are signaling. This paper also accepts that the reason behind showing Eastern female dancers below the males or to amuse males is due to the gender-biased culture practiced on this side. Further, the book *Is it All About Hips? Around the World with Bollywood Dance* adds the statement of Rajendra Shrestha, 70, a teacher of *Charya Nritya* (Buddhist Tantric dancer) that parents of daughter children allow their daughters to learn dance until they are children but stop soon they reach adult. Dance and their daughters are associated with their reputation (p.87) He observes women's status in Nepal is fragile (p.89) Beena Joshi, 60, the first generation from the dancing profession reveals in a similar tone, "Well, when you are a dancer, people will not treat you well. They think dance is something very near to prostitution (87)." These observations of veteran dance gurus of Nepal have asserted that the position of women dancers is affected by their position in society.

On the other hand, the idea of feminist female theorists does not seem applicable to the selected Western films. The elements like shots, dialogues, characters, costumes, and makeup do not justify the notion of theorists. Indeed the selected movies show female empowerment through dance. They are ambitious and strong-headed. To them, dance is the most passionate thing. To this, there is nobody to interrupt their ambition. Indeed in the *Reconstruction*, a female character encourages a male character to restart their dance career. The survey of Mulvey is mostly of 1970s Hollywood movies. Most importantly, selected movies are made

after 2000. Where the movies *The Next Dance*, *Save The Dance*, and *Reconstruction* reject the idea of an author, Edward Snow in his article “Theorizing the Maze Gaze: Some Problems”, visual materials . . . voyeurism, objectification, fetishism, scopophilia, woman at the object of male pleasure . . . Masculine vision is almost invariably characterized as patriarchal, ideological, and phallogentric. (p. 30-41)” The female dancers shown in this Western cinema are not a matter of voyeurism or objectification as stated by Snow. They are genuine artists who dance for art’s sake.

There is a friendship or a sense of equality in those characters. The bond between Selena and Tristan in *The Next Dance* is balanced. They both are childhood friends. In their ups and downs, they stand to each other. Indeed Tristan works as a cleaner in Selena’s studio. When he admits he also aspires to dance Selena helps him to learn dance. She helps him to be focused on his career. Likewise, he is also there to assist in her dance competition. Since he is a friend he listens to her. Similarly in *Save the Last Dance* the male character is shown helping Sara. He is there to calm her nerves and becomes the pushing factor to achieve her goal. This becomes so opposite to the presentation of the relationship between male characters and female characters in the selected Eastern films.

In the East, there is a hierarchy of gender, male characters whether they are from family members or outsiders Shradha and Sristi are harassed. Additionally, *Devdas* has a similar fabrication. Even though Dev and Paro are childhood friends there is disparity. The childhood friendship turns into a love life in later days, but they are also not equal in their love life. Dev is egoistic. Owing to his ego he loses Paro. Indeed, he is a pampered child in his family. He is well-educated from London. Nonetheless, his education has nothing to do with his love life. He cannot stand on Paro's behalf when his family insults Paro’s family in mass. He also shows his ego

which becomes the causing factor of great tragedy in later days. Thus, though cinema is based on a tragic love story there is a huge dominance of Dev (male).

In a similar vein, it is Dev who insults Chandramukhi from the beginning. He calls her Bazari Aurat (prostitute) directly in her face. Even though she loves him desperately he neglects her. It is the fact that his attention or love is toward Paro but again it is also true that he does not like Chandramukhi despite her craziness due to her profession. Despite being an educated man, having a degree from London his beholder to prostitute is disrespectful.

Even though at the end he accepts Chandramukhi but from the first meeting to last she has to face lots of insult, disrespect, pain, and ignorance from Dev. Though she worships him, loves him however, the prize to her is hate. Once when she nurtures him for two to three days she paid. Her love and care is rewarded by payment. When Paro comes and meets her to take Dev from the brothel house. Paro does not meet Dev but sees two statues being worshiped by Chandramukhi in the absence of Dev. She prays days and nights for him. This also shows her devotion to Dev. Nevertheless, her reward is ignorance. She is untouched. She is not allowed to touch and come near. He treats her like she is untouchable. This is why Chandramukhi is seen with tearful eyes everywhere.

It is not only the relationship with Dev Babu but also Chandramukhi's relationship with Kali Babu her client is based on hierarchy. Even though she gives a huge slap in front of the masses, Kali Babu, an antagonist of the cinema, commands her to dance according to his will. It is not merely Kali Babu but according to Chandramukhi she asserts that there are so many prostitutes in *Kothe* who conceive *Thakur's* (upper-class male) children. Prostitutes conceive their babies but never have those authorities as *Thakuraine* (wives of *Thakurs*) in society. Despite being of the

same bloodline as *Thakur* children born out of prostitutes can never come out of the *Kothe* and die in the unacceptance. In this regard, the depiction is completely based on the real picture of typical gender disparity where upper-class males are dominant in females (especially prostitutes).

Film and Female Consciousness Irigaray, Cinema and Thinking Women by Lucy Bolton has influenced the paper. Lucy Bolton declares a film is entirely the vision of an individual. A director endeavors to fulfill his dream through visuals. She brings the notion of film feminist Luce Irigaray who supports “anti-visual”. She believes in the visual there lies beauty but this beauty is the fetishization of the physical appearance of a woman (p.192). She also asserts that the director, film, subject, and spectator speak of women in terms of icons and idols, fetish, and hysteria. Since the selected Eastern cinemas feature female dancers through so many close ups, extreme close up shots with extravagant costumes and make up the idea of Irigaray seems directing these elements of the cinema that help women dancers of the Eastern cinema as she asserted icon and fetish. Due to this female dancers are objectified and she calls them the item of pleasing male sensuality and alert to the band. Anti-visual means those projections do not favor the female existence as an erotic body. Thus, Shradha, Sristi, Chandramuhi, Helen, or even Rakhi Sawant are objectified. Not only the visuals but the dialogue spoken to describe them also provoke the concept of fetishizing women dancers. For instance: in the movie *Pratigya*, the dialogue uttered by Munggre evokes his sensuality. He remembers the days when Shradha was the most popular dancer. He shares that when she dances on the stage they would faint seeing her moved body (52:56). Likewise, he seems again highly attracted to the beauty, and youth of Sristi in their first encounter. It is not their dancing skill that male characters are attracted to but to their body, their external beauty.

In that sense, the selected Eastern movies embody the concept of the culture industry as stated in the seminal essay 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception' by Adorno and Horkheimer clarify the meaning of the culture industry as the entertainment business whose primary work is entertainment (p.9). They claim movies collect the cash that has been invested. Therefore, this is the business sector more than the art. On the surface, it appears like art but beneath it is the economic industry controlled by several business-minded people. They also approve that their focused ideology is business (p.10). Additionally, they present the movie producers as self-centered people, mostly involved in cash regulation. They reveal producers do for themselves, not for others (p.3). They also claim that this sector has a sense of bourgeois (p.13). It is overruled by the ideology of bourgeois. In addition to it, Prakash Sayami, the Nepali film critic, writer, and film scholar also states that the cinema is politics (p.15). Thus, the dance in the cinema turns out as the adding proportion in the cinema for those bourgeois and transform from art to product. In the process, it is most often women dancers become targeted victims by exhibiting their bodies through eroticization.

Besides, the selected Western movies reject the concept of those selected theorists and books. They contrast the presentation, dialogues, shots, costumes, and makeup. Above all, the relationship between dance and female dancers is also highly different. When the dance is separated from Shradha's life she turns into the mad woman. She could not think of her life as another accepted dancer. However, the connection between dance and Selena in *The Next Dance* is spiritual and inseparable. She is a professional dancer. She can keep her dance and personal life separate. She can know her surroundings. She is determined. Due to her determination, she is able

to fix her life even in her worst situation. Indeed she is found dancing when she is upset. She continues to dance with her husband Hamilton even after having a baby.

On the other hand, Shraddha is seen out of her family bond. She is shown as obsessed with dance. As dance is out of her life, she misses balance. She sees everywhere pain and suffering. Her motherhood disappears. She forgets her role as a mother. She leaves her small daughter and reaches home at night. She turns out an irresponsible daughter. She is shown as a jealous sister who feels bad about her sister's growth as a dancer.

In the movie *Pratigya*, the addiction to the dance is shown from dream to death. Shraddha sees panic even in her dream where she confesses that she is not being able to handover her talent to her sister. She always wants to pose it and hold her name and fame by dancing whereas this relation with dance is not similar with Selena in *The Next Dance*. Dance, to her is not addiction but is like a soul mate. Movie depicts that the relation between dance and Selena is inseparable. She believes it is her passion and loves it unconditionally. She pursues that with her soul not by her body.

While observing the presentation of female dancers in the selected films from the East and West the paper sees a huge gap between them even though the subject matter is similar. The female dancers in the East are shown as fragile and manipulated by the male characters while in the West, they are strong-headed and shown mentally stable. However, the paper delimits its research only on showing the differences but does not intrigue to show the reason behind them. Thus, this may be a clue in the future, if somebody wants to research female dancers in the cinemas in the East and West. It somehow tries to show how it is different through the technical aspects used in the cinemas: the shots, costumes, makeup, camera angles, dialogues, and characters

with the cultural beliefs that existed in the opposite parts of the world: East and West movies by selecting few cine dances.

By showing the gap between the presentation of the female dancer in the East sphere and West, I have tried to show the position of women in this part and alert the cine dance maker not to repeat the same vocabulary; presentation of women dancers in upcoming movies. Further, this comparative study shows how the same subject is perceived differently in different worlds. In the East, again, there can be the same repetitive position of female dancers since still the position of women is in a struggling phase while in the West they have significant value and position. Like literature, film has immense power to influence people. Thus depiction should be carefully done. The reflection among the audiences regarding the women dancers in *Pratigya* and *Devdas* do not evoke the good connotations while if they do see *The Next Dance*, *Save the Last Dance*, and even *Reconstruction* they will have brightened side of female dancers since they have presented them beyond the gender-disparity.

Hence the researchers while showing the huge gap between the depiction of female dancers in two parts of the world by selecting a few films from the East and West show a cultural, psychological, and political gap between these two corners. It also exposes the contradictory situation between the Western world being forward in gender-based equality and the Eastern world still backward in perceiving women dancers in society. Thus, the goal of this paper is not merely to do a comparative study, the researcher wants to alert the new generation of female dancers in the East to select the right platform and work in a good team that values their sovereign skill (dance) instead of making them as the material or commodity to sell if not at least learn from the West World in the depiction of women dancers.

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