Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Historical Overview of Nepali Films

Nepal does not have a very long film history but the industry has its own place in the cultural heritage of the country. Most Nepali films use Bollywood-style songs and narrative. In film industry parlance, Kathmandu, the capital and center of the Nepali-language film industry, is called Kollywood. The making of Nepali films is said to have begun with D.B. Pariyar's *Satya Harishchandra*, which was the first Nepali-language film. It was produced from Kolkata, India, and was released on September 14, 1951. *Aama* (meaning mother) was the first film produced in Nepal, and was released on October 7, 1964. It was produced by the Information Department of His Majesty's Government of Nepal (now Government of Nepal). It was directed by Hira Singh Khatri and the lead actors were Shiva Shankar Manandhar and Bhuwan Thapa, who are regarded as the first actors in the history of the Nepali film industry.

The first film to be produced under a private banner was *Maitighar* (meaning the birth home of a girl), which was released at the end of 1966 by Sumonanjali Films Pvt. Ltd. Although it was a Nepali movie, it had many Indians contributing toward the making of the film. Mala Sinha played the lead role, along with Chidambar Prasad Lohani, whom she later married. It had special appearances of Sunil Dutt and comedian Rajendra Nath. Directed by B.S. Thapa and music scored by Jaidev, a veteran music maestro, it had Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Usha Mangeshkar and Manna Dey, all of whom were established Indian singers, doing the playback singing by Prem Dhoj Pradhan, C.P. Lohani and Aruna Lama.

The Nepal government established the Royal Nepal Film Corporation in 1971. It took charge of producing Nepali films and introduced actors like Bhuwan Chand (Thapa), Shiva Shankar, Bishwa Basnet, Uttam Nepali, CP Lohani, Basundhara Bhusal and Gautam Ratna Tuladhar, who are the pioneer actors of Nepal. All those films that were made during the goldan era of Nepali film industry (1951-1980) are still regarded as the finest films of Nepal

because those films were made by professional film makers such as Hira Sing Khatri, BS Thapa, Prakash Thapa, Pratab Subba, Laxminath Sharma, Prdip Rimal, Sambhu Pradhan, Tulsi Ghimire and Ugen Chopel.

Mann Ko Bandh (Over Flow of the Heart) was the first film produced by the corporation. Prakesh Thapa was the director of the film and lead actors in the movie were Salyan K C and Sushma Shahi. Nati Kaji and Shiva Shankar were the music composers of the songs. Amber Gurung scored the background music. The film premiered in 1973 in Kathmandu. *Mann Ko Bandh* was followed by *Kumari* (the first Eastman color Nepali film) in 1977, *Sindoor* in 1980, and *Jeevan Rekha* in a series. The success of these films opened up the avenue for private parties to enter into filmmaking as an industrial endeavor.

The movie *Paral Ko Aago*, directed by Pratap Subba, was produced by Ceneroma in 1978. The black and white movie proved to be a great success due to its story and melodious music. The music director of the movie, Shanti Thatal, was the first female music director in Nepali movies. Lyrics were prepared by Manbahadur Mukhiya and Indra Thapaliya and the songs were sung by Aruna Lama, Dawa Gyalmo, Pema Lama, Shankar Gurung and Deepa Gahatraj (Jha). The actors of the movie were Tanka Sharma, Basundhara Bhusal, I.K. Singh, Menuka Pradhan, etc. Pratap Subba was also the scriptwriter. The movie was based on a popular book by Guru Prasad Mainali with the same title.

While films produced between 1951-1980 such as *Satya Harischandra, Aama*, *Maitighar, Hijo Aja Bholi, Parivartan, Kumari, Sindoor* and *Jeevan Rekha* became the pioneer films of Nepali film fraternity, the era between 1981-1990 gave a different dimension to Nepali film scene with hits like *Baansuri, Badlido Aakash, Kaanchhi, K Ghar K Dera, Basudev, Samjhana, Kusume Rumal, Lahure, Saino, Bhagya Rekha* and *Santaan*.

After the 1980s, some relatively more creative films were made and they became successful too. Thus, filmmaking started to appear a little more viable profession and the

number of productions increased a bit. After the introduction of private companies in the Nepali film industry, the time came when more films were being made and they were much more accepted by Nepali audiences. Films such as *Samjhana*, *Kusume Rumal*, *Lahure*, *Kanchi*, *Basudev*, *Saino* and *Koseli*, which were released between 1984 and 1993, were very popular. The leading actors of those times were Bhuwan K.C. and Tripti Nadakar, whose on-screen chemistry saw them being dubbed the "golden couple" of the Nepali film industry. In later years of the decade, the industry saw the rise of Rajesh Hamal and Karishma Manandhar.

In 1990, the country witnessed an important political change in Nepal. The people's movement brought monarchy to its knees and democracy was restored. The society started to become open and vibrant. This had an important consequence for the fledgling film industry: it began to grow rapidly. There was an unprecedented growth in number of productions. Within a period of three years, some 140 films were made. Distribution started to develop. Market share in the existing market increased and the market itself expanded. Cinema halls increased to more than 300. Nepali filmmakers became optimistic of displacing Hindi films, which had dominated the Nepali market.

In this way, Nepali film industry was doing fine until 1995 when films like *Chino, Koseli, Dui Thopa Aansu, Kanyandan* and *Behuli* had made a very good impression on the Nepali movie goers. Actors like Bhuwan KC, Shiva Shrestha, Saroj Khanal, Kristi Mainali, Hari Bansha Acharya, Madan Krishna Shrestha, Sunny Rauniar, Tripti Nadekar and Gauri Malla were polished and for Nepal they became the promising second generation actors.

The start of the Maoist revolution in Nepal in the mid-1990s was the beginning of the downfall of the Nepali film industry. In the period of war and conflict, only a very small number of films were made, and audience numbers fell sharply. It resulted in lower budgets and even lower performances, which resulted in even smaller audiences. In the later

years of the conflict, the production and release of Nepali films had almost come to a standstill. Many actors and filmmakers left the country in search for work abroad because there were very few films being made. Actors like Saroj Khanal, Shiva Shrestha, Tripti Nandakar, Karishma Manandhar, Kristi Mainali and Gauri Malla had little work.

However, during the 1990s, some filmmakers, mostly with non-fiction base, started championing for a new kind of cinema. They denounced the crude imitation of Bollywood aesthetics and demanded indigenous aesthetics and a more realistic approach. They made some films which have received some critical acclaim at home and some international recognition. Historic movies like *Balidan* and *Seema Rekha* made during this period were appreciated both by critics and audience.

Nepali film industry started going downhill from the post-1995 era. While the second generation actors started to slowdown and prominent filmmakers like Hira Singh Khatri, BS Thapa and Prakash Thapa were no more in the Nepali film scene, new directors, producers and actors came into the field to try their hands. Actor Rajesh Hamal's debut in *Yug Dekhi Yug Samma* in 1991 heralded a new direction in Nepali silver screen. Rajesh Hamal became a star overnight and he literally went on to overshadow the craze Nepali moviegoers had for any other actor in the scene so far. From 1919-1995 Rajesh Hamal became the only actor to have done 13 lead roles in 13 films like: *Yug Dekhi Yug Samma, Adhikar, Bhauju, Deuki, Deuta, Chatyang, Kasam* etc. At a time when there were very few people in the industry, who were educated and had sound knowledge of films, Rajesh Hamal was one of those very rare personalities whose image, both on and off screen, carried certain weight.

Nepali silver screen that was in its mediocre phase by 1996, slid into a crisis period after 2000, the last decade has been both curse and blessing to the industry. After 1999, new directors and producers of Nepali films focused rather on bureaucracy than film making. The establishment of Film Development (FDB) on June 30, 2000, under the chairmanship of

Yadhav Kharel, served nothing but the government propaganda to keep a bureaucratic hold over the motion pictures. Simultaneously, directors and producers such as Narayan Puri, Ashok Sharma and Yubaraj Lama were rather busy locking horns on petty issues than producing anything substantial. Different associations like Nepali Film Producer's Association, Nepali Film Director's Nepal Indigenous Film Association and Nepal Film Technician Association were established.

In 2001, the highest-grossing Nepali film *Darpan Chaya* was made. It was directed by Tulsi Ghimire and starred Dilip Rayamajhi, Niruta Singh and Uttam Pradhan. It earned NRs 20 million at the box office. By 2006, as the situation in Nepal calmed down and with Maoists coming into mainstream politics, the Nepali film industry started to return to its previous state.

With Quest Entertainment producing films and Bhusan Dahal directing, *Kagbeni* 2008, set a stage for digital revolution in Nepali film making scenario. At a time when all filmmakers were fond of stretching 16 mm length cinema into 35 mm projector, *Kagbeni* shot in 2K camera proved that cinematography is one of the most important elements in any film. The new crop of film makers joined the digital bandwagon and started focusing on the presentation of the films. Director Alok Nembang charmed viewers with his presentation of *Sano Sansar* in 2008. Likewise, other films like *Mero Euta Saathi Chha, Kusume Rumal, Mission Paisa and Basma Chaina Mero Yo Mann* gave a different look to Nepali films in terms of cinematography, choreography, star cast, marketing and packaging.

Today, more films are being made and released. The production companies and those in the industry are enthusiastic about the country's new situation. The return of peace in the country has opened more venues for the shooting of films, and the industry is seen to be making good use of this time to revive the image of the industry.

New generation movie makers geared up to make sensible cinema with entertainment rather than Bollywood inspired socio-actions. *Kagbeni*, *Sano Sansar*, *Mero Euta Saathi Cha*, *First Love*, *Kohi Mero*, *Dasdhunga*, *Bhanubhakta*, *Angulimala*, etc. are some of the fine example of quality cinema in terms of presentation, performance, story and technical superiority.

The Film Development Board (FDB) was established by the Government of Nepal for the development and promotion of the Nepali film industry. The Board is a liaison to facilitate the conceptualization, making, distribution and exhibition of Nepali films nationally. The Board also attempts to bridge the gap between film entrepreneurship and government bureaucracy. The Board is a balance between the people at large, the government, and the process of filmmaking. It is, therefore, the safeguard of the interests of the people, the watchdog of the government, and the advocate of filmmakers. However, FDB has not yet done enough in supporting and promoting different aspects of motion-picture production in Nepal. It has also not been able to promote Nepali films in the international market as desired.

Due to its vast cultural diversity, geographical situation and its natural beauty, Nepal has been able to portray itself as one of the beautiful shooting location for filmmakers in the past couple of years. Many films from India and abroad have been filmed in Nepal. The most internationally acclaimed film that was shot in Nepal was the Academy Award-nominated *Caravan*, a film by French director Éric Valli.Thus the success of these films has opened up avenue for private sectors to enter into film making as industrial endeavor.

Filmmakers and writers like Nabin Subba, Bhusan Dahal, Basanta Thapa, Deepak Rauniyar, Manoj Pandit, Prachanda Man Shrestha, Dil Bhusan Pathak and Prawin Adhikary have been doing better jobs. Three films of 2010 that became the biggest talk were Simos Sunuwar's *First Love*, Alok Nembang's *Kohi Mero* and Manoj Pandit's *Dasdhunga.* Actors

such as Aryan Sigdel, Karma, Vinay Shrestha, Namrata Shrestha, Richa Sharma, Richa Ghimire, Saugat Malla, Varun Rana, Jharana Bajracharya, Ruby Bhattarai and Nisha Adhikary are the stars to look up for rather than falling blindly in love once again with Rajesh Hamsl, Rekha Thapa, Nikhil Uprety and Biraj Bhatta.

1.2 Woman as Image in Visual Culture

The commodification of human relations is one of the most pervasive influences of modern advertising. Although visual advertisements are often observed as a direct introduction to the object for common people, most of the advertisements are used to commodify female's body to support the commodity culture because visual advertisements misrepresent and eroticize female's body to create an alluring image of the object which strengthens the hegemony of commodity culture in capitalism that is consumer culture where female's eroticized, and sexualized body is used as a supplement object to enhance the attraction toward the production. Moreover, film advertisements are constructed to serve the interests of the market where everything is reduced into a mere commodity including female's body, and shown by imbuing with the things.

The visual impact of an image is one of the most immediate and straightforward influences of modern socialization. It conveys feelings and builds societal and cultural ways of seeing through which people interpret and understand the outer world. Thus, the feelings and the visual response one has to an image may be the result of personal experience, but is also the result of pre-determined, profit-driven marketing strategies.

People are constantly exposed to widespread advertising’s barrage of printed images. Film advertising reaches all in one way or another. It attracts people’s gaze because it is all around. Film posters on walls, magazine covers, at newsstands, and fashion billboards on buses, cabs, or in subways blink at bystanders and constitute their daily visual background.

Advertising affects everyone. The idea I explore in my work is that film posters do not simply depict changes in women's fashion, accessories, or household products. They are also part of a cultural and social system within which femininity and women are defined and constructed into an ideal of female beauty: a young, thin, white, toned, and flawless body. Ideal female beauty is the indicator of how today's printed advertising is a system of signs and symbols that position, constrain, objectify, and sell women within a consumerist and capitalist society. In this social and cultural context, capitalistic and economic interests dictate how women should look or not look like by creating, targeting, and marketing beauty needs or, more accurately, the necessity for a woman to meet society's beauty standards. The ideal of perfect female beauty from which one should draw her inspiration becomes, therefore, a consumerist tactic that divides up a woman's body and targets its different parts: legs, arms, eyes, nose, thighs, belly, breasts, and buttocks. In this way, a woman's body is the source of a particularly profitable beauty-industry upon which advertising depends.

The questionable power of images is a dangerous and insidious aspect of advertising. The dichotomy fat/thin is the most evident motivator of existential uneasiness that is caused by advertising's messages to women. Indeed, how film posters offer and compare, alternatively, grotesque and distorted fat female bodies against the ideal perfection of thinness that is not real and does not exist. When overweight bodies are in advertisements, they just keep reminding women how and what they should be. The ideal, perfect thinness does not exist, more often than not, because it is 'manufactured' and refined by ingenious computer technologies. The advertised thinness has on women and men's view of how female bodies should be. Indeed, the display of computer enhanced and flawless bodies as an image of ideal female beauty can appeal to insecure or media illiterate women and suggest to them that their unsuccessful social, emotional, and professional life derives from their not being like the perfect bodies in film posters. Imposed images of ideal womanhood and

feminine beauty can be resisted and dismantled by explaining how a true fusion of women's selves with their look comes from accepting their bodies' flaws; acknowledging that a certain feminine appearance is not synonymous with perfection; and by cultivating self-love. In this way, women might be able to compare computer-based images of ideal beauty to their real bodily experience positively and to decode messages through the correct lens.

Keeping in mind the dichotomy fat/thin and the manipulation of women's bodies in ads, it is appropriate to underline how films' advertising socializes people to think that desire to change, renew oneself, be fashionable, and to feel fascinating are innate impulses of feminine nature. This highly socialized process constructed as praiseworthy and innate is also a woman's Achilles heel, or her weakness, on which advertising bases its appeals to build a perfect body. In this study, I examine how film advertising constructs ideal beauty by portraying plus-size bodies as abhorrent while simultaneously reifying and standardizing thinness.

Advertising is part of women's lives. It creates images of women that forge needs and necessities based on false and misleading marketing campaigns. Women's needs are based on the market's longing for more circulation of capital and growth in the economic power of major corporations. Thus, one could say that changes in the perception of how women's bodies should fit into mainstream ideals are simply advertisers' ideas newly packaged for a profitable market that identifies needs and insecurities of women. These changes advertise and frame the notion of the one body that all women should and want to have. They underscore the notion that a better physical appearance is what women need to pursue a personal and social success.

Today's advertising shows the twenty-first century woman as someone who has achieved a great deal in terms of social status, public esteem, and beauty power. This woman is clearly and deeply independent from her male partner. However, she is more than ever a

slave of advertising beauty standards that come from a patriarchal, male-dominated economy. She is, more than ever before, the reflection of what society, politics, and economy want from her. Jean Kilbourne argues that "advertising is the primary foundation of the mass media" as well as the soul of consumerism and capitalism, whose primary goals are to sell products and make profits; by turning female bodies into some form of currency with an exchange value, women become commodities that can be sold as entities or cut into parts. Film advertisement uses "values, concepts of love, images of sexuality, romance, success, and most important of normalcy to make its strategy successful" ("Killing Us Softly" 3).

That is why this study focuses on today's advertising to examine how perceptions of thinness is the result of marketing strategies and why they do not reflect the reality of real women and their bodies in relation to Nepali film advertising. These marketed representations of women are what have always been used to imprint in mass-produced culture a vision of the ideal female body; the criteria for feminine identity is constituted both by what is depicted in advertising and the non-questioning acceptance of it. Carolyn Kitch, in *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: The Origins of Visual Stereotypes in American Mass Media*, and Susan Douglas, in *Where the Girls are: Growing up Female with the Mass Media,* emphasize how women's bodies have become the repository of societal, political, and cultural values and variables. Since the nineteenth century, they argue, film posters and print advertising have been creating stereotypical roles for women and values of femininity. Thus, they claim that advertising imagery represents the visual slavery of women's bodies to advertisements or, more accurately, to an image-based culture.

Kitch and Douglas also point out that the creation of mass-cultural and stereotypical visions about a woman's body size is the means by which male-female tensions are smoothed over and female upward mobility is sold by the media industry. When in the aftermath of World War II and in the early 1960s the American family and household became the

profitable targets of consumerism and capitalism, there was a return to more full-bodied motherly figures that showed more flesh than 1920s flappers. Women were called home from the factories, told that their place was their home and not the workplace and those they should not break or overturn the equilibrium of a society and cultural system that controlled womanhood through consumerism. The control of womanhood and beauty through a battery of images of pre-determined roles lasted until the 1970s, when advertisers began to understand that profits could come from feminism itself. Indeed, at the same time, advertisers started weakening and capitalizing on the achievements of feminism to show women what to do with their bodies. The new ideal body with little flesh and no curves at all was depicted as the freedom of the newly liberated woman. Susan Douglas notes that women were told by ads that "attractiveness was indeed a way to female success" (192). Being "conventionally attractive" became depicted, she writes, as the only thing to take a woman to the top of the social hierarchy and give her power to act and speak out (191). However, attractiveness turned out to be the enslavement of the modern woman to physical scrutiny and psychological manipulation.

Advertised bodies blur, in a postmodernist sense, the boundaries between the realities inside and outside of an image. This fact makes women unable to see that what an image conveys is not reality at all, but the reality of the product that often computer-generated figures advertise. Thus, it becomes increasingly difficult for women to discern that unhealthy, emaciated bodies do not reflect the average woman and her life-experience. Kilbourne argues that in this way advertised thin bodies reinforce cultural ideals that build up a "toxic cultural environment" and a social system that despises fat, urging women "to adopt a false self, to bury alive their real selves, to become feminine" (Deadly Persuasion 130). Thus, she believes that print advertisements make unnatural thinness seem ordinary and acceptable.

Imbued with notions of beauty, these destructive body obsessions are packaged as the

rituals and values promoting today's ideal physique and women's life. Naomi Wolf calls these beauty practices "the Beauty Myth or Religion" (10). The "Beauty Myth" (10), through the commodification of women's bodies, assigns femininity an exchange value that is based upon appearances and behaviors (12). In this way, the new cult becomes, as Lager E. Grace and McGee Brian R. emphasize, "society's communication practices" through which women's bodies are disciplined and controlled according to pre-planned standards (287).

It is a true religion, Wolf asserts, because it communicates to women through "a continual comparison to a mass-dominated physical ideal" (14) that beauty "objectively and universally exists" (12). The new ideal body is, thus, Wolf emphasizes, advertised as something that can be bought by purchasing those products that promise the ultimate rewards for the members of the new religion or, more accurately, of the new cult of body reduction. This culture reminds women that they are in constant need of a product to be called beautiful, sexy, or sensual. By surrendering to the rituals of the new religion, women can achieve ideal and perfect thinness. These beauty rituals are what Cathy Schwichtenberg calls "the disciplinary reality" (27) and Vickie Shields and Dawn Heinecken define as "the weight discipline" (88), without which, they argue, women do not feel confident or in the position to be looked at.

The construction of a thin, perfect, and toned body as the ideal body becomes then a normalizing image beauty normalcy that defines a recurrent pattern of what female bodies should all strive to attain. Advertising is everywhere and affects everyone. People are constantly exposed to it, on their walks to school, at work, when they go to the gym, or in the privacy of their homes. Therefore, advertisements of perfect bodies become powerful for their omnipresence which enables them to become powerful images that women see and look at every day. However, one should look at images not as single images framing one particular body. They should be looked at as something whose distorting power comes from the

accumulation of the same message sold by many different products and apparently by different images.

Kilbourne and Shields and Heinecken argue that the power of advertising lies not in the power of one isolated image but in the cumulative power that comes from seeing images as a whole through which advertisers create, perpetuate, and reinforce the ideal of an unnaturally thin body as being perfect and achievable. With the market bombarding us with thousands of images each day, the message that a thin body is the perfect body becomes consistent and normalized when it should instead be seen as unnatural and unreal. This message persuades women that the image of a bony, toned, white body is the right image that mirrors their real bodies and selves. As Ruth-Striegel Moore pinpoints "exposure to a particular image teaches you to like that particular image […] you are led to think this is right" ("Dying to Be Thin"23).

By framing the unnaturally thin body as physical normalcy for all women, the mass-produced ideal of thinness does psychological violence to women. It detaches their inner world from their outer surface. Bordo states that advertised thinness separates women's bodies from their real selves. Its "constant element", she writes, "is the construction of the body as something apart from the true self (soul, mind, spirit, will, creativity, freedom) to undermine the best efforts of that self" (Unbearable Weight 4). That is to say the advertised image of the ideal body type tears apart mind and body by blurring, and transforming what are the real goals and reasons to be a woman. By only focusing on the body, the mind becomes a material entity, a commodity; women's identities are annihilated and their bodies dehumanized. As John Berger says, the female subject looking at an image is always a "split-subject" between mind and body (qtd. in Shields and Heinecken 77). Shields and Heinecken argue that women are split-subjects because images are "one-dimensional". Indeed, they state that women are portrayed in advertisements where thinness is the one characteristic for

attractiveness and bodily perfection. That is why women find themselves split between understanding how they look at themselves and how advertising images portray them. By controlling the size of women's bodies, a patriarchal society is not only imposing its ideal of beauty for profit but is also trying to tame and monitor its own obsessions related to femininity.

The obsession with thinness can thus be read as cutting girls and women down to size to silence them, in order to suffocate their voices and manipulate their individuality into showing that good girls do not take up too much space in society. It is, Kilbourne argues, "involving girls in false quests for power and control, while deflecting attention and energy from that which might really empower them" (Deadly Persuasion 138). Overweight women are despised because their hunger for food by extension may feed uncontrollable sexual appetites and desires that threaten masculinity. Women's bodily appearance is, Susan Faludi asserts, "Minimized to maximize the male presence and voice" (187). In other words, she comments that images of thin women in advertising are seen as sexy because they enforce patriarchy and reproduce in a subtle, glossy way the vulnerability of female objects. Women are thus told that they have a place within society and are meaningful only if they commodify and shrink themselves through the objectification of their own bodies for male pleasure.

Female bodies in advertising are the objects of a male gaze, not a female one, encoded in the representation of a constructed and reproduced ideal of how women should look or not look like. The way in which images of beauty perfection are mass-produced and reproduced, Shields and Heinecken pinpoint, is the result of a "male gaze" (74) that projects its fantasies of beauty perfection onto the female body. This gaze, as Rosalind Coward says, is "a controlling gaze […] an extension of how men view women in the streets" (qtd. in Shields and Heinecken 74).Mulvey argues that "the sexualized image of a woman says little

or nothing about women's reality, but is symptomatic of male fantasy and anxiety that are projected on to the female image" ("Visual and Other Pleasures", Preface xiii). Mulvey uses Lacan's theory in order to make the argument that the male gaze frames female attractiveness to enforce his sexual identity on the bases that he possesses the phallus and that the female spectator is absent from the viewing process ("Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" 33-38).Sarah Banet notes that the exotic beauty of the other is only appreciated by advertising's "normative framework" when it is deconstructed and re-constructed according to western white beauty standards (87).

Liz wells, in her essay "Constructions of Illusion" points out that photography has been used to represent commodity culture. She says:

> In the late twentieth century, commodity relations rule our lives to such an extent that we are often unaware of them as a specific set of historical, social, and economic relations which human beings have constructed. The photograph is both a cultural tool which has been commodified as well as a tool that has been used to express commodity culture through advertisements and other marketing materials. (153).

Erving Goffman has explored the body language used to represent men and women in his book *Gender Advertisements* to show how women in particular have been photographed for advertisements in ways that perpetuate gender roles (57). Commodities are in fact objects often inert that have been imbued with all kinds of social characteristics in the market place. Marx called this process the fetishism of commodities, since in the marketplace (which means every place where things have been bought and sold) the social character of people's labour was no longer apparent and it was the products of their labour instead that interacted and were prominent. Advertising, in its turn, imbues these products with meanings which have no relation to the production processes of these objects.

Advertising is a cultural form which is integrally linked to capitalism, and constituetes part of the system of production and consumption. Raymond Williams has discussed this relationship and the development of advertising in his essay 'Advertising the magic system' (Williams 1980). Thomas Richards, in a discussion of Victorian advertisements, describes commodity culture as the 'culture of capitalism' (Richards 1990: 1-16). As Goldman points out, 'ads offer a unique window for observing how commodity interests conceptualize social relations' (Goldman 1992: 2). The representation of social relations in advertising has also been discussed in other texts on the history and the study of advertising.

Just as Coke had exploited the image of world harmony in the 1970s, so Benetton too decided to foster a "global" image. David A. Bailey has discussed these early images as a process of "objectification and fragmentation" (Bailey qtd. in Wells 191). By 'objectification' he referred to the usual process of commodification here of ethnicity which takes place in advertising. The 'fragmentation' he referred to was the process where by national cultures were reduced to caricatures in the Benetton ads, ignoring the flux within identities.

Jhally has discussed the contextual agenda of commodity culture. He says:

> What commodities fail to communicate to consumers is information about the process of production. Unlike goods in earlier societies, they don't bear the signature of their markers, whose motives and actions we might access because we knew who they were... The real and full meaning of production is hidden beneath the empty appearance in exchange. Only once the real meaning has been systematically emptied out of commodities does advertising then refill this void with its own symbols. Production empties. Advertising fills. The real is hidden by the imaginary (Wells 185).

Walter Benjamin, in his well known theses on the destruction of aura after the birth of the photograph had envisioned a time when multiplication and mechanical reproduction

would enable the possibility of art becoming a genuinely democratic form, accessible and available outside the rarified space of art museum. In a strange twist, the original hand painted film poster which was seen plastered on walls in various parts of the country and available for a price five rupees in the streets till the early 1990s, has now acquired the status of an art form as collectors enter the field of preservation, display and sale of traditional poster. This process can be seen as an instance of what Arun Appadurai has described as commoditization by diversion where value is accelerated or enhanced by placing objects and things in unlikely contexts. The objects referred to here can be seen in the domain of fashion, domestic display and collecting. Appadurai suggests that this narrative of diversion rests on the commodities removal from its customary circuits through a coming together of the aesthetic impulse and the entrepreneurial link.

Feminist scholars have studied the ubiquitous objectification of women for decades. Woman are typically portrayed as mere objects or bodies in popular culture, and the implied subject- the consumer- is typically male (McKinnon, 1987; Dworkin, 1989). "Sexual objectification occurs when a woman's body is treated as an object (especially as an object that exists for the pleasure and use of others), and is illustrated interpersonally through gaze or 'checking out', and in the representation of women in the media" (Slater and Tiggemann, 2002). The focus of research on this subject has typically been personal that is, the effect of objectification on individuals and their relationships, sexual and otherwise. The spate of articles and books that appeared on the topic of objectification in the 1980s and early 1990s has slowed to a trickle, although research on objectification theory or self-objectification has surged in recent years. Nussbaum (1995) notes that the term "objectification" has become a part of everyday vernacular, commonly used to critique popular culture.

The phenomenon of "consensual" objectification, the first characteristics of the new era of objectification, is likely apparent to professors and others who spend a significant time

with future generation. The American Psychological Association (APA) recently published the results of studies on the sexualization of young girls and the resultant negative consequences. Girls as young as seven are exposed to clothing, toys, music, youth magazines and television programs laden with suggestive sexual imagery and slogans (Zurbriggen et al, 2007). The constant barrage of popular culture images that normalizes the objectification of young girls and women has driven many girls to adopt an objectified status prior even to their own sexual maturity.

It can thus be said that the scholars on visual culture have used the term "Commodification" rather loosely in their studies in relation to gender issue. None of them has made a comprehensive study of the commodification of female's body especially in Nepali context in film posters. The present study undertakes an exploration of commodity culture of the Nepali film posters of 2010.The study shows film advertisements are used to commodify female's body to support commodity culture ideologically because they misrepresent and eroticize female's body to create an alluring image of the object which strengthens the hegemony of commodity in capitalism where female's eroticize and sexualized body is used as a supplement object to enhance the attraction of the production as an exchange value.

Therefore, the study concerns specifically how women’s bodies are represented and “shaped” within the realm of Nepali film advertising. It also works towards the idea that thinness and fatness are two highly constructed values in print images that establish bodily criteria for women to measure up to. This study addresses how the thin body is constructed by intersecting signs and symbols? How do images of thin and fat bodies get produced? How do a patriarchal society and advertising industry construct a woman's body and the spectacle of its representation? Which cultural norms and social expectations frame ideal bodily normalcy? Can women resist or negotiate with their visual objectification? These are the

questions to address by using major feminist scholars' and analyzing the selected Nepali film posters of 2010.The research has been divided into four chapters. The present chapter presents historical overview of Napali film, elaborates the research problem, analyzes the views of critics on the print advertising and states the hypothesis. In addition it clarifies the terms like 'commodification', 'objectification', 'body image', 'thinness' with the due focus to their use in the research work. The second chapter traces the history of how beauty standards and feminine icons have changed through the twentieth and twenty first centuries. It also illustrates how and why print advertising images have become more and more important in the shaping and the representation of ideal feminine beauty. The third chapter analyzes the specific Nepali film posters with the help of theoretical base established in the second chapter. It shows how the film posters represent female body that assigns women's bodies an exchange value. And the final chapter summarizes the findings of the entire research work.

Chapter Two: Constructing the Female Beauty

2.1 The Typologies of Women Changes and the Beauty Myth in the Last Century

The rules of "the Beauty Myth" (Wolf 10) change in various ways over time and historically by virtue of culture and nation: bodily types come one after the other in concomitance with even during periods of wartime, economic hardship and expansion. Therefore, "the Beauty Myth" is the outcome of the accepted prevailing beauty ideals and practices that standardize body images and define cultural expectations. These elements are not only commercial in origin, but, also derive from the social, political, and cultural environment in times of peace and war. The twentieth century was definitely the time when the term "generation" just as much as ideals of beauty, meant changes in both life and mentality:

> Two World Wars, the Sixties, the Vietnam War, the Seventies, the hedonism of the Reagan Era, the influence of TV, and, in general, of consumerism […] the New Age and not to mention "lighter" revolutions following musical waves and rhythms as tango, Charleston, rock, pop or film seasons as the silent cinema, the white phones and romantic comedies. (Babbi 22)

The female figure at the beginning of the twentieth century was shaped by corsets. Women used these "artificial aids to increase the size of their breasts […] achieve a swelling bosom and smooth long hips" ("A Turn toward the Bust"). Corsetry helped to impose on women's bodies "the S-curve form […] it allowed the bosom to hang low and unarticulated in front while the hips were pushed backwards". By 1910 the S-curve form had started its decline. Indeed, designers began to reject "the full-figure with a constricted waist to promote a slimmer, less restricted silhouette" ("A Turn toward the Bust"). Both the First World War and the Second World War hastened these new fashion changes and brought about new ways of seeing the female body. Thus, the two world conflicts marked a primary and fundamental

point in the developing image of femininity and of all women. The increasing number of women going out to work or helping with the war effort needed to be able to move freely.

In the United States, right after World War I, silent cinema peaked and "more than five million spectators went to movie theatres" (Banner 38). In dark rooms, people would see a new ideal of feminine beauty that transformed the women on-screen into "femme fatales" like Theda Bara. Femme fatales' exotic beauty, whose piercing looks and heart-shaped lips were considered the incarnation of sexual vice and sin, projected onto the screen all the fantasies of a reserved Europe and America. This new type of woman embraced both her angelic qualities and fiendish vices within (Banner 45). Right at the end of World War I in 1918, people could breathe a deep sense of relief. Women who had worked during wartime now had an economic independence and vitality new to them. Linda Babbi asserts that "a postwar woman was of a very active and impulsive nature: she drank alcohol quenched her hunger and guilt by smoking opium and cigarettes, and she danced until she fainted" (30).

The prevailing image of the twenties was very thin and free-spirited: the flapper girl. Her body shape or, more accurately, beauty standard became androgynous. Carolyn Kitch and Roberta Seid Pollack describe this woman as missing the typical physical characteristics ascribed to a female body. She had very short hair, and her breasts, belly, and bottom had practically disappeared. Seid Pollack emphasizes how "her serpentine slimness suppressed the female shape […] exalting instead boyish or prepubescent forms" (91). If the "flapper girl" (Kitch 122) of the 1920's danced the Charleston all night and day in her scanty dresses, then the woman of the thirties reasserted female curves - - breasts, waist, and hips. "A woman", Babbi points out, "had to be thin with feminine curves, sporty, tanned, and have a natural, well-groomed and elegant look" (35). And, Ginger Rogers became the new

feminine ideal to imitate (Babbi 35). Masses of American and Italian women had once again as their frame of reference movie stars and actresses' natural "total look", which was created by movie studios and became the beauty style to emulate:

> Women used cosmetics like eye pencils to draw eyebrows, Vaseline to give brightness to eye makeup, a lip pencil and a little brush to apply lipstick […] platinum blonde hair became longer. (Babbi 36)

The boom of the "total look" was mainly due to the immense popularity of two beauty icons of that time: Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich. As Babbi notes, Greta Garbo made fashionable the beauty of a symmetrical face whose big eyes were often lowered and lips half open (42). On the other hand, Marlene Dietrich in her men's suits became the role model for those women who could not take any dictates from a patriarchal society, either about dress code or love life (42). And Seid Pollack describes these two icons as "having a slenderness we can still admire today but they certainly were not skinny. Their bones did not show through their skin" (102).

As Susan Douglas notes, women had to face the necessity of abandoning the caretaking roles that they had held until that time. They left home, the private sphere, to enter the workforce, the public sphere, because their fathers, husbands, and sons were at war defending their countries. Hordes of women, Douglas emphasizes, would pass through the gates of plants and factories, wearing blue boiler work suits vastly different from the frills, long skirts, and corsets they had been putting on until then. Femininity became thus embodied not by a frail, pale-painted woman but by a strong-willed person unworried about fripperies and trifles (35). And so came the phenomenon of Rosie the Riveter. It was a women power campaign. Through this fictional character - a woman highly sexualized and determined - "the American government tried to make the idea of working outside the home desirable for women. Songs, posters and Hollywood produced films aimed to promote a

positive and patriotic attitude towards the war among women. Thus, many women who had previously been denied employment on the basis of gender entered the workforce" ("Rosie the Riveter").

The forties and fifties were marked by notable events and changes, the majority of which were induced by World War II. War and sex appeal did not match. The former meant destruction of things and life, while the latter suggested the creation of beauty ideals. As Babbi notes "The feminine appearance became a bit more soldier-like for ladies, whereas the look for young women saw the college style as the predominant trend" (55). Seid Pollack highlights how "the sweater girl had come into vogue. She was slender, but she had curves and sweetly rounded flesh" (102). Meanwhile "the image of Rita Hayworth wearing her long evening-gown that left her shoulders uncovered and her long gloves past her elbows while she smoked a cigarette in 1946" became the symbol of what men and women dreamed about after many sacrifices (Babbi 53).

When in 1947 Christian Dior presented a woman with a "New Look", soft curves and tiny little waists made people think about. The new woman was particularly attractive, fresh, and feminine. On the one hand, her appearance had to show she was capable, qualified, and skillful at work. On the other hand, it had to be motherly, feminine, and warmly domestic (Banner 180). Her look was mature and sensual but not sexy, alluring, or tempting; or, as Seid Pollack affirms, this new woman represented "softness, femininity, and flowerlike qualities" (108).

In the meantime, make-up began to highlight big wide eyes and a childlike, mysterious female figure whose curves were well-rounded. This woman of the fifties found two icons in Marilyn Monroe and Sophie Loren. In the last eleven years of his fashion empire, Christian Dior shaped women's bodies at his pleasure with different "New Looks" (Babbi 73). These new styles and forms were a response to war's desolation; adult women

began to change shape and hair color as fast as they changed make-up and fashions. Sometimes, women wore their hair straight or wavy, and loose to their chin or shoulders; other times, they preferred it to be really short. Regardless, women's favorite hair color was always blond.

The fifties saw a young America giving the rock and roll tunes of Billy Haley and Elvis Presley to Europe and heralding a new style for males: the Teddy Boys. However, the fifties also brought along with fashion and music a "malaise" generated by the discontent and hypocrisy of the new consumerist society. Thus, people, especially young men, embarked on long solitary breaks to "find themselves", the meaning of their lives. The ideal figure of femininity now became a teenager and identified a young woman who had never existed before. She had more free time, more freedom to dispose of her life as she wanted; not least, she had more money to spend as she wanted. Girls went insane for the Marlon Brando and James Dean-type of guy who wore white t-shirts, jeans, and black leather jackets. These girls appeared to have "girl power". As Douglas asserts their femininity was "popular, cute and perky". Their image presented teen-age girls who defied accepted patriarchal structures without really breaking them. In the fifties, "perky femininity", Douglas further explains, "bridged the polarities of sanctioned masculinity and femininity –it signaled "assertiveness masquerading as cuteness", and offered "fabulous camouflage" to a girl trying to get her way without abandoning the submissive femininity that earned her the approval of her patriarchal culture" (qtd. in Nash 343). Furthermore, these girls created communities and groups that led, Paula Fass pinpoints, "to a shift from parental to peer influence in the lives of many adolescents during this period […] the peer societies developed by teens in high schools to an increased amount of conformity among teenagers, which in turn contributed to the construction of teen as generational cohort" (qtd. in Kearney 267).

Cocciolo and Sala describe these groups of young women and "desperate" youths as

follows:

> Girls who jump and somersault when they dance adopt a style of dress that emphasizes their physique but it leaves them an extensive liberty of movement: close-fitting jerseys or blouses, tartan flared skirts long to the knees with tight elasticized belts and different layers of fluttering underskirts, short socks and low shoes. Hair is tied up with ribbons to the back of their head. Guys wear shirts and jumpers, sporty trousers or jeans, and they wear smarmy hair often with gaudy locks on their forehead. (142)

The sixties were a period full of huge political and cultural upheaval that modified the social classes, political power, and women's bodies. Values of pacifism and non-violence spread paired with a sense of new sexual freedom, and women became masters of their bodies and sexuality with the advent of the pill. Seid Pollack asserts that women now looked young and behaved youthfully. "They were energetic, tom boyishly active and irreverent" (146). London and San Francisco were the capitals of young social, cultural, and political movements of the sixties. The hippie woman with her multicolored clothes gave life to a new feminine body type that did not stress or take into account thinness and fatness. Her body was her way of expressing a new freedom of expression and joy and a rejection of bourgeois stratification/class/thought (Babbi 105). The hippie woman:

> adorns her body as a work of art; she covers it with garlands and necklaces, paints it, decorates it with rainbow-colored dresses […] And, in her style formed by a jarring mixture of all times and countries, there is no right way to dress, there is no right way to make love. (Babbi 105-6)

In the meantime, Great Britain welcomed the birth of the miniskirt created by Mary Quant (Banner 287); not even in the roaring twenties were the legs of young women so flagrantly uncovered and exposed. This look was sexy and provocative; it asked for very lean

physiques and fake, long eyelashes, like those of beauty icons Twiggy and Jean Shrimpton (Banner 287). Twiggy symbolized "a person not weighed down by stored-up baggage physical, material, or emotional. It was the body of the romantic gamin cherished by the youth of the period" (Seid Pollack 148). The sixties closed out with two American astronauts, Neil Amstrong and Edwin Aldrin walking on the moon's surface. The idea of space, of a universe that was closer to the earth, did not only promote the image of man who could conquer all but, also influenced women's perception of themselves and fashion in the following decade , the 1970s. On the one hand, Barbarella, a young Jane Fonda, was the beauty icon of this new trend, and so women strove to become perfect and identical clones of Barbarella (Schwartz 334).

Moreover, the early Seventies started to seriously question and challenge the Vietnam War, political power, the education system, the family, and consumerism. For their protest, young people worldwide would present their bodies garbed in military uniforms or soldier-like clothing. Folksingers like Joan Baez:

> Engaged in social protest and feminist protest and showed that women could be political […] they launched a central mixed message about female power. They showed that being female and being political were not mutually exclusive; in fact, they were complementary. And, they made this critically important, if subtle, link: that challenging norms about femininity itself was, in fact, political. (Douglas 148-49).

If "consumerism prevailed in the Sixties, the Seventies were characterized by poverty", because the oil crisis dictated uncertainty, economic insecurity, and high unemployment rates. At this time, the so-called "ordinary, normal" woman wore jeans which had become the emblem of nonconformists and non-conformism. This woman would wear them without worrying too much about her bodily appearance because "unisex fashion trends had abolished

those social and cultural boundaries that defined what male and female clothing was" (Babbi 107). A woman felt free and liberated from male eyes and prevailing beauty ideals.

From the beginning, the eighties brought to the limelight a new and completely different generation from that which had preceded it. The eighties' young generation had a new concept of beauty and femininity concerned with both the body image cult and the confusion of sex roles that the new figure of the businesswoman had generated for family and society. Madonna and Michael Jackson became the symbols of eighties' transformism, a phenomenon that Ann Kaplan states "saw the blurring of distinctions between a "subject" and an "image"- or the reduction of the old notion of "self" to "image" […] postmodern transformism would eliminate gender and race differences as significant categories, just as it swept aside other polarities" (qtd. in Pribram 196)

Besides Jane Fonda, the perfect examples of feminine beauty were the ravishing and powerful female protagonists of the early and very popular soap operas such as *Dallas* and *Dynasty.* These fascinating women would wear jackets with padded shoulders to emphasize their tiny and svelte hips (Babbi 114). "Power suits" indicated money and power for women. However, they framed a highly sexualized woman by bringing attention to certain parts of her body like hips, bosom and breasts. Furthermore, Susan J. Douglas remarks how:

> These shows were the disintegration of the American family, of course, of America itself. They objectified, ridiculed, pitted, and crushed women against each other yet they resisted patriarchy in some ways […] female competition was entirely within the domestic sphere and consumerism was central to the contest. (243).

The public sphere work and society was split between the male sphere of the yuppies and the career women who had left home. Calanca emphasizes that "Rolexes, Cartier jewelry, and high-fashion clothing gave evidence to the fact that the Eighties were a time of great wealth"

(76). Female equality and economic independence brought up for question what the roles of the two sexes should be within the home. As a consequence, the divorce rate rose incredibly along with single-parent households and the alteration in roles increased conflicts and confusion between the sexes. While girls modeled themselves on male bodies and clothing, quite a few males did the opposite. For example, Boy George became famous for his skirts, makeup and braided hair. The new model of feminine beauty was thus an androgynous and muscular body; catwalks were dominated by beauty icons of the time such as Naomi Campbell, Claudia Schiffer, Linda Evangelista. They all were very tall women who had long legs and perfect curves (Babbi 120). Movies of this period such as *Working Girl, Baby Boom, Flash Dance, Dirty Dancing, and Fame* also promoted "the compelling standard of female beauty a thin, firm, and beautiful body that locked women into a war with their own bodies" (Seid Pollack 211).

New technologies made giant steps towards advancing a notion of a beautiful, perfect body conceived in laboratories. Indeed, after the mid-nineties, female beauty became a real science delivering plastic surgery for profit. However, the more body trends changed, the more the beauty market also offered provisional solutions to perceived flaws: wonder bras, silicone implants, and botox injections. This excessive and frantic search for an ever-new ideal of perfect beauty caused skinny but curvaceous top-models to be substituted with very young, emaciated, pallid, and frail girls who became the example to imitate in a flash. Thus, catwalks were invaded by baby-models like dolls or romantic nymphs. Beyond ideal beauty, they personified and symbolized the modern search for "perverse" innocence and the desire for eternal youth that is deep-rooted throughout Western society. (Babbi 120) Close to the turn of the century, new trends in virtual reality also came into being and so did Lara Croft,

> The heroine of Tomb Raider, the new Play station game, who jumps, shouts, swims, and skis, appears to be very sexy and sensual. Her lean, muscular body with a prominent bosom and wearing close-fitting and sheer dresses can be considered the icon of the ideal woman of the nineties. (Babbi 151)

The Pepsi advertising video broadcast during the 2002 Super Bowl was emblematic of this succession and variation in body typologies and female beauty images linked to social, cultural, and political changes. In a handful of seconds, Britney Spears appeared in multiple outfits and make-up that followed those serial fashion/body changes and trends found in the US and worldwide during the twentieth century.

2.2 The Beauty Ideal in Contemporary Visual Culture

Today, we live in the epoch of so-called visual culture where images have become the main elements that constitute and influence people's thoughts, societal trends, cultural beliefs, and patterns of representation. Images mirror piece by piece what people are and what they love and like in current society (Jhally, "Image-Based Culture" 79-82). In reflecting consumers' lives, print advertising's visual reality defines the identity of people as individuals or social actors in terms of what they possess, buy, or look like. Visual reality or, more accurately, what one sees and "admires" in advertisements, tells a woman, for example, who she has to be and how she can embody a particular look. As McLuhan writes, advertising reflects society, its collective mind, and it enters people's minds to dictate and normalize social behavior or cultural norms. He also emphasizes that "ours is the first age in which many thousands of the best-trained minds have made it a full-time business to get inside the collective public mind […] to get inside in order to manipulate, exploit and control" (Babbi 200).

The world as "text" has been replaced by the world as "image". Therefore, images have started a process, as Gail Dines specifies, in which today's culture is moving from being

"bookbased to be image-based" ("Beyond Killing Us Softly"). Here, words co-operate with visual images to create a virtual reality through which magazine advertising offers models of bodily imitation to "teach" women how to experience life and make choices. Within this context, visibility and absence have acquired a great significance. Visibility is equated with a white, beautiful, thin woman who uses her look as a springboard for social recognition and success in postmodern culture. Absence is what society neglects, and it does not deserve to be shown. Absence is, thus, synonymous with a fat woman who does not fall within cultural expectations for proper femininity. Or, if she is shown, she is portrayed as a freak.

Creating a form or a model in film advertising means over stimulating one's mind until his/her visual field is saturated with images. Thus, visual tricks and devices are used in film advertising to convince consumers/viewers that what they see and view is real, achievable, and the best that can be offered to them. A shiny, made-to-measure appealing reality in film advertisements coincides more often than not with virtual dimensions a reality that does not exist. This aspect is particularly evident when unachievable goals such as unnatural thinness are displayed for a public which is not media-educated or has little critical consciousness and knowledge of how advertising images are produced. In this way, advertisements socialize women into thinking that to have a more glamorous and perfect body, it is enough to buy and possess the diverse values and role models that the products merely represent. Therefore, in order to sell their items, manufacturers and fashion designers embark on advertising campaigns that associate body lotion, spas, and dresses with positive and desirable images. As Kathy Peiss points out the thin, perfect body suggests that a better physical appearance is what women need to pursue personal and social success and "achieve the feminine ideal" (248).

The effacement of boundaries between nature and culture is mostly evident in the metamorphoses of today's advertised female bodies into goddesses. The body was once

considered an inseparable union between the inner soul and the outer body (Davis 33). Instead, Judith Williamson emphasizes, current times and advertising images frame the body as similar to any other cultural product or item subject to change and manipulation. In other words, a woman's body has become "a naturalized mediated entity that carries off the social and cultural meanings" ("Woman is an Island" 385). Or, as Bordo writes, the body "has taken up residence [in culture] […] along with everything else that is human within culture […] the body we experience and conceptualize is always mediated by constructs, associations, images of a cultural nature" (Unbearable Weight 33-35). Advertising images of thin physiques as badges of bodily perfection become, in this way, "cultural stores upon which both the advertiser and the audience [participate] in the construction of commodity meaning for the whole female body or its parts" (Shields and Heinecken 40). Thus, we can see that there is no opposition between the "real" and material body and the various cultural and historical inscriptions advertising images.

These cultural images, Elizabeth Grosz remarks, literally form bodies and help to manufacture them as such. It is an essential condition of humanity to be subject to the influences of culture, to conform to society's dictates as a survival mechanism and to see social norms as producers of meanings and reality. Part of our nature becomes, thus, to be dependent on the fulfillment of societal expectations and respect of social hierarchies (qtd. in Calefato 70). From these premises, one can easily understand how advertising images meet few obstacles on their way to imposing their ideals and perspectives on bodies, products, and society. A woman's body is continuously called into question by the "adjustments" made to her physique in advertising in such a way that women always feel compelled to adapt so as not to be left out.

From this perspective, advertising campaigns become social projects that change according to the time period to which they belong. Shifts in systems of representation change

with popular culture imagery, generating confusion about how ideal female bodies and beauty should really be. What stays fixed and unquestioned in advertising and current visual culture is that beauty is only expressed through the body. Images change all the time, but what never shifts is that the myth of perfection is achievable. Print advertising does not flash by people's eyes and minds. It can be looked at for as long as women want. It does not fade away in an instant. Accordingly, this aspect of print media creates the illusion that images of perfect, thin bodies are there to be critically judged and gazed upon.

Film images literally play with the ambivalent representation of female bodies as subjects that are constructed as objects of the male gaze whenever advertising business needs to promote an item. Women's bodies become objects to be dismembered and capitalized on by prevailing beauty standards of the flawless female body which is in contrast to fatness and flabbiness (Coward 44). That is why current advertisements offer close-ups of perfect, thin, toned figures in order to highlight how a female's body must be flawless in every single detail to be fully recognized as beings within society and culture. Gloria Steinem underscores this idea by saying that "the general message that advertising gives women is of constant imperfection that products can fix up" ("Beyond Killing Us Softly"). In other words, advertising images keep women on a never-ending search for the right product that can change their bodies and lives. They display and package perfect computer-enhanced and air-brushed thin bodies as "real" and available through the purchase of the right product (Kilburn 3). Indeed, print advertising offers continuous images of improvement of how women can be if they only try hard enough and they do not fail to follow advertising's advice:

> Female desire is courted with the promise of future perfection i.e., ideal legs, eyes, butt […] Female dissatisfaction is constantly recast as desire, as desire for something more, as the perfect reworking of what has already gone before dissatisfaction displaced into desire for the ideal. (Coward 13)

Therefore, an advertisement may be nothing more than female desire sought, packaged, and consumed under an illusion, a promise of future perfection that allures and flatters all women:

> Changes in ideal female body types […] trends in ways of seeing the female body are cultural. They are closely tied to the gender politics, economic conditions, and popular culture of an era. The mass media continue to play a pivotal role in reflecting and promoting gender ideals. Representations of idealized bodies and gender roles always have been available through advertising and across the mass media […] Much of the female bonding in this culture occurs in the exchanging of discourse over how others see 30 us [...] The way we each thought "others" saw us has been a defining component of our relationships our entire lives. (Shields and Heinecken, Introduction xii-xiv)

Men and women read the messages of advertising in a different way. Men do not see themselves as being influenced by glossy messages and words, while women admit that advertisements have a great impact upon them, the perception of their bodies, and defining the space given to them within a masculinist society (Shields and Heinecken 28-29). Indeed, the stereotypes through which female bodies are portrayed are examples of all the social roles and ideological visions of gender to which women are subjected. In film advertisements women "are perceived between a male fantasy of ideal femininity as projected in advertising images and the ideal female who is fit to marry in real life" (Shields and Heinecken 33). Advertisements become, therefore, "familiar ritual-like displays […] ritual-like bits of behavior which portray an ideal conception of the two sexes and their structural relationship to each other" (Shields and Heinecken 37).

Thus, part of the significance of film advertising in the shaping of ideal female

beauty lies upon those dominant patriarchal ways of looking that display female bodies for male pleasure. As Suzanna Danuta Walters argues, it is important to understand advertising imagery as structured by the context of male dominance: "the ability to scrutinize is premised upon power" (65-66). In her article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" Mulvey analyzes the process through which the male gaze the active subject of narrative looks, spies, and stares at the female object in order to stabilize his dominance in the whole system of representation. Her essay uses psychoanalysis to trace how male eyes subject women to a controlling and dominant gaze within narrative threads. The author points out that, in this way, the male gaze takes a woman's body as erotic basis for his pleasure. The phallus is not simply identified with the penis. Phallic power is a kind of mirror that reflects male anxiety about acquiring and maintaining more and more control over women. Thus, one can say that women are made passive objects in terms of social power and sexual dominance within images. Male scotophil pleasure comes, thus, from looking at a female body as object of the gaze (31).

In advertising images as well as film scenes, male pleasure comes, in other words, from a woman's body or body part as object of sexual stimulation through sight (32). Through this process, the male gaze may transform the object of looking a woman's body into a fetish substituting, as Kaja Silverman points out, "either one of its parts or the whole for the missing phallus" (224). "This mechanism", Silverman emphasizes; functions to reassure the male subject that the woman to whom his identity is keyed lacks nothing" (224). In other words, the male gaze watches the erotic object woman to stabilize his identity and reassure himself of still having the phallic power. In Material Girls: Making Sense of Feminist Cultural Theory, Walters acknowledges that "this fetishistic look is also closely a part of representation of women in advertising, to the point where a woman is represented only as a body part […] Women are signified by their lips, legs, eyes or hands, which stand,

metonymically the it for the whole for, in this case, the 'sexual' woman" (55). The female body highlights, in other words, the ever-present and ubiquitous scrutiny of the "male gaze" that goes beyond voyeuristic pleasure in film advertising. As Rosalind Coward points out, it is a male gaze that controls and it is coded in photographic images in such a way that is an extension of how the perfect bodily appearance and sex-appeal are the cards to play to win male attention (qtd. in Shields and Heinecken 74).

John Berger agrees when he says "a woman turns herself into an object and most particularly an object of vision: a sight". The fact is, he goes on to say, that looking at and scrutinizing a woman's body has always been set up according to "patriarchal ways of seeing that approve of and define the feminine ideal" (qtd. in Shields and Heinecken 74). The image of a perfect female body is thus defined in male terms and through the traditional conventions of a patriarchal society that are neither progressive nor representative of today's woman's achievements. The modern woman on glossy covers and pages does not challenge or subvert the power imbalance between men and women. Advertisements always portray women having plenty of choices and positions; however, these advertised choices never frame a woman in a *more* powerful situation than a man. They support "the ideological gender divisions of "male-work-social"/man-in-culture (public sphere) and "female-leisure natural"/ woman-in-nature (private sphere)" (Shields and Heinecken 25).

For the abovementioned reasons, the representation of the ideal thin body becomes in advertising images the exchange value of any advertised product. In "The Beauty Match-Up Hypothesis: Congruence between Types of Beauty and Product Images in Advertising", MichealR. Solomon and Richard D. Ashmore assert that "a persuasive ad presents a good Gestalt: a model type of beauty and associated image that matches the product with which it is paired will provide a coherent message, which […] may enhance acceptance of the advertisement" and its ideals (24). The ideal body and advertised products sell each other.

Indeed, the flawless body attracts attention to the form and shape of items. Products become, in their turn, the key to a perfect physical appearance promoted as easily achievable. Shields and Heinecken underline that “the transfer of codes of ideal female beauty or attractiveness to commodities has today become common sense” (71). They further emphasize this idea by arguing that “the naturalness of highly sexualized images of women standing for commodities like beer goes largely unquestioned in American culture” (71).

Lacan argues that "the object on which depends the phantasy from which the subject is suspended (...) is the gaze" (150). For Lacan, one loses the subject position when gazed at, for it turns the subject into the object. Realizing the objectification of the subject in the cinema, Christian Mets argues that "the perceived (...) is entirely on the side of the object" (154). He further clarifies that "at cinema, it is always the other who is on the screen; as for me, I all perceive, all perceiving as one says all powerful" (154). The perceiver does not take part on the perceived. In other words, how does the perceived feel, does not come into account. The perceived can not articulate one's own consciousness and the feelings. Thus the gaze suspends both the selfhood and the agency of the subjects, and turns them into the object. Laura Mulvey relates the issue of gaze with of gender roles. Thus she says:

> In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active male and passive female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to be looked-at-ness. (156)

Mulvey argues that cinema appropriates the exhibitionist role of women from the tradition. A woman gets projected as the object to be looked at. What Mulvey says for cinema, holds to be true for the advertisements as well. For Mulvey, "the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: an erotic object for the spectators" (156). Woman can not escape the looks of the

males who drive pleasure through the act of gazing. The woman is presented as an erotic object. But her choice and desire do not come into account. Regardless of her interest, she is compelled to present herself as a look able commodity. She does not have her own agency, while being presented as the commodity within the context of beauty industry.

John Berger argues in *The Ways of Seeing:*

> Men act, women appear. Men looked at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relations of women to themselves. The survey of woman she is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object and most particularly an object of vision: a sight. (qtd. in Francis et al, 139)

A woman becomes the object of gaze to women as well. It is for this reason that some women are seen as giving pressure to other women to present beautifully and decoratively. In such cases, woman's gaze is dictated by what Ajit Chaudhary calls "imputed consciousness-brought from outside" (237). The patriarchal ideology guides woman's consciousness. As a result, she does not object her projection in the decorative manner. Adding to what John Berger says, Joan Copjec argues "woman is not allowed to become the 'bearer of the look' but is condemned to be its object. (...) She must compose herself in their terms; compose herself for the gaze they presuppose" (160). The woman composes herself to be looked at. This is to say that every woman projects herself as the active member of the beauty industry whose only objective is to prepare woman as the decorated, beautiful object. She internalizes the patriarchal ideology and behaves accordingly. Realizing this nature, Lacan also argues that, "from the moment that this gaze appears, the subject tries to adapt (...) to it (150). Lacan too admits that the person gazed at, conforms to the parameters of the one who gazes.

The gaze does not only help the one to derive the sexual pleasure. In addition, it helps in maintaining the existing power relation. In the world of gender inequality, a male gazes at

the female to dominate her. He remains superior to her. Mostly, he looks at her as pleasure giving object. The female, even while not being gazed at, tends to feel that she is being looked. Therefore, she tries her best to compose herself in relation to the gaze of men. In this context, it might be productive to analyze the Foucauldian notion of "the panoptical modality of power" (211). Commenting on its functional modality, he further argues that "panopticism constituted the technique, universally widespread, of coercion (...) to make the effective mechanisms of power function" (211). The gaze, enhanced by the panoptical model, helps to maintain the lopsided gender relation of the patriarchy.

Last, but not least, the significance of film advertising also relies upon the fact that the advertising industry spends billions of dollars on special effects of all kinds to make viewers of any culture and country open their eyes wide and remember a certain product or face. In this way, advertising executives try to capture the public's attention profitably and 'universally' for anyone, anywhere and to 'globalize' cultural trends through distributing products worldwide. In their article "Chinese Consumer Readings of Global and Local Advertising Appeals", Nan Zhou and Russell W. Belk affirm that there is "a positive connection between global appeals and the advertised products in most of print ads":

For most participants, and especially for women, products related to fashion and beauty were seen to be more fashionable and more beautiful when they were associated with Western models. Global brands, advertising techniques, brand names and models were effectively associated with status, modernity, cosmopolitan sophistication, and technology. (6)

As a consequence, today's film advertising is the result of global interaction between distinct geographical cultures and peoples as well as the economic strategies of multinational corporations.

To sum up, it is argued that how and why film advertising expresses "beauty" only through body images. Body types, icons and standards of the twenty-first centuries, it has

emphasized, embrace the culture and style of the prevailing beauty ideals and practices of mainstream print-advertising. By doing so, film advertisements standardize body images, define cultural expectations and sell the myth of perfection to us.

Chapter Three: Bodily Presentation in Film Advertising

3.1 Commodification of Female Body in Nepali Film Posters

The commodification of human relations is one of the most pervasive influences of modern advertising, and photography plays an important role in creating images expressive of human emotions and relations which are used to give products superficial or 'false' meanings. The pervasive nature of advertisements and the power of the photographic image not only lead us to be unaware of a process which, when considered rationally, appears absurd, but also enhances surface meanings. Even one piece of information can make us realize how little the advertisement tells us about the products in production. At the same time ads provide an alluring, the constructed meanings of which are enhanced by photographic realism, creating culture in which it appears natural not even to want to know the context of production. "These constructed meanings are not simply illusions; rather they accurately portray social relations which are illusory" (Goldman 1992:35*)*.

The construction and deconstruction of ideal female beauty in film advertising alternates numerous typologies of bodies and body parts with ever-increasing excitement. The images of film advertising campaigns all seem different at first glance. However a closer look reveals that today's film advertisements of ideal female bodies' label and group women as extremely thin. As Martin Davidson states, "Images are constructed and designed to communicate, and consolidate ideological truths" (113).

It is said that one single image is worth more than a thousand words. As a consequence, advertisers use images to appeal to viewers, especially women, and convey to them the meanings and values of a perfect body (Kilbourne, *"Beauty and the Beast"* 121). It is by associating thinness with products that advertisers drive consumers to "buy" into the idea that thinness is a sign of the perfect and ideal women. In this way, film ads represent unrealistic goal that many women can not hope to attain. Women believe that through

consumption of the advertised object it will be possible to achieve the appearance, the thin, young, white, toned body that the model possesses.

Film advertising finds its lifeline in the creation and manipulation of new ideals to achieve on the one hand, advertisements create ever-new wishes about ideal beauty, the thin body, that can be seemingly fulfilled by 'possessing' and purchasing new products. On the other hand, film advertisements cast women's dissatisfaction as the unfulfilled desire, the impossibility of being flawless like fashion models in film posters. As Jean Kilbourne asserts "advertising coners upon women an unfulfilling power [...] a power based on guilt and shame for not achieving the promised results, ideal beauty" ("killing us softly" 3)

Advertising creates thus, ever changing images of an ideal body by putting enormous pressure on appearance. Dorothy Schafer acknowledges that today's film advertising goes along with the changing portrayal of beauty:

> To ask what beauty is today is to come face to face with the changing definition of beauty. Perhaps more than any other time in history, we are preoccupied with even confused by beauty its power, its pleasure, its style, and its substance. Beauty may not be the most important of our values, but it affects us all; today more than ever, because we live in a media age where our visual landscape change in seconds, and our first reaction to people is sometimes our last. Given this reality, the so called "triviality" of beauty suddenly seems not too trivial after all. (9).

Film advertising forges a real connection with women by emotionally, optimistically and stereotypically addressing their vulnerabilities. Film advertisements give moment what they want by making them feel good. Then it takes their self confidence away by making them feel inadequate. Advertising leaves out what the product does in order to center on what it means and for what it stands. For instance, a stylish dress must be bought not because it is

comfortable, but because it is equated with the achievement of beauty perfection, success, and male attention. In other words, film advertising images create an identity, the thin body that persuades and induces women to think that they need that elegant to be perfectly beautiful. Indeed, as Kilbourne writes "advertising performs much the same function in industrial society as myth performed in ancient and primitive societies. It is both a creator and perpetrator of the dominant attitudes, values and ideology of the culture. The social norms, and myths, by which most people govern their behavior". She further asserts that "advertising helps to create a climate in which certain attitudes and values flourish and others are not reflected at all" (Deadly Persuasion 67).

Consequently, slenderness becomes a beauty ideal which each woman internalizes and takes as a measure of bodily comparison. Indeed film poster images repeat over and over the need to change and fit into mainstream image bodily perfection. Kevin J. Thompson et al. argue that the ideal body becomes the "unreal ideal" to which women compare as "a standard of perfection" (138). This bodily comparison represents, as Kilbourne notes, "an absolute ideal that does not represent the reality of which women are. It dehumanizes them because it makes their bodies the object of pleas tire for some one else not for themselves" (3). Film advertising alienates women from each other and their bodies by discouraging their capacity to judge images critically and blurring reality with images that come to be reality.

The most of the power of film advertising in the construction of bodily perfection resides in societal and cultural ways of seeing that display a woman's standards. Film advertising is not made for male viewers but this idea does not imply that there is no male spectator. By looking at film posters, women internalize male ways of seeing female bodies and identify with the male gaze. In other words, women assume male ways of representing ideal beauty when they look at fashion images top models, their bodies and other women's bodies. Consequently, the female gaze imagines herself being looked at in the advertisement.

Women project their fantasy on to the female figure they see in film advertising through the lenses of an ideal spectator, a spectator that is always assumed to be male and the image of the women is designed to flatter him" (Berger 64). Women are displayed as the passive object of the male look and come to internalize this look:

> She has to survey everything she is and everything she does because how she appears to others, and ultimately how she appears to men, is of crucial importance for what is normally thought of as the success of her life [….] men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relationships between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of women in herself is male: the surveyed female. (Beger 46-47).

If we apply this notion to advertising, we see how there is no space […] for an authentic female gaze, because the spectator is inevitably addressed as male" (Walters 58). Further, Rosemary Betterton underlines that "women as spectator is [indeed] offered the dubious satisfaction of identification with the heterosexual masculine gaze (qtd. in walters 59).

None of the following analysis of the selected film posters deals with every aspect of the representation of women in print advertising. In stead, each description of the selected ads aims to illustrate different recurrent representational patterns of film advertising. By doing so, this chapter's goal is to provide an overview of how Nepali film advertising frames the myth of bodily perfection assigns female bodies to categories of normalcy and turns them into objects with an exchange value. Film advertisements standardize body images, define cultural expectations and sell the myth of perfection to us. In this chapter the researcher attempts to address how selected ads, film advertising, construct a woman's body, set up the spectacle of its representation and frame ideal bodily normalcy. Do advertising images socialize women

into thinking that only thinness promises a wonderful life? How do these images normalize, target and market female bodies? What meaning is given to ideal beauty? Do these ads look female bodies thin into particular portrayals of appropriate femininity?

Figure 1. *Kohi Mero* Film Poster (2010)

In the advertisement of the film *Kohi Mero* released on 27 August 2010 directed by Alok Nembang presents Jharana Bajracharya and Subash Thapa in leading role. The poster displays Jharana Bajracharya who famously won the miss Nepal 1997, crown at the young age of only 16 and went on to represent Nepal in the Miss world contest that same year. The poster presents viewers with a young skinny heroine with erotic image. She is wearing colourful and light dress; most of her body is uncovered and displayed. She touches her male partner and she is in her smiling face showing red lips and white teeth to attract the attention of the viewers. She has been turned into an object of gaze in double sense: First the man in the poster gazes at her with smiling, as a sex object and second she is gazing outside with full of happiness to fulfill the sexual pleasure. This reflects her beauty but her beauty changes into exchange value to promote the film.

The advertisement has forest's scene which represents that she is alienated from the society for the fulfillment of sexual pleasure by male partner. The background is bright but they are in forest and let the gaze guess where the young man and women could be. The woman's eyes seem to defy the male viewer within and outside the image. She is trying to establish power relationships on her own representational terms, but she fails in doing this because she is, as using John Berger's idea, not acting simply appearing for the male presence (47). The eyes of the viewer are clearly drawn to the crotch of the female model, especially on her breasts. The action of the model frames the image. The trajectory of the eyes underscores how she stands for sex and the body. By following where the eyes go, the female gaze transforms herself into "the object of sight for someone else's pleasure" (Shields and Heinecken 74-75).

The male model that seems to have succumbed to the woman's eroticism is, indeed, an active presence. He is a disinterested presence who has just probably used or will use the

woman for his own pleasure. The brightness of the picture and the shiny dress make the ideal male spectator think that he is really subjecting the objectified other, the female model to his control and dominance. In this way, female viewer identifies with the male model and "feels" that she might possess the body too. The male hands grip on the woman's calf expresses how the female body is the object possessed or the thing to be consumed by consumers.

In the poster, the woman's defenseless pose suggests she is food for the man's sexual appetite. Her supine position, learning with male partner and erotic view are three elements that highlight the woman's submission to male figure. Gender is expressed by what Erving Goffman calls "Function ranking because the man is shown as being likely to perform the executive role" (32).Therefore, the female is presented a half-nude body, her arms, and chest, are unclothed to let the male gaze at her. She is transformed into a pleasure giving object. This state of dim visibility implies the ideology that woman has the function to be gazed. At the same time she becomes the object of gaze to the audience, especially the male ones as a smooth and beautiful body; she easily attracts the male's attention.

In this regard, this film advertisement contributes to the voyeuristic effects, subjecting woman to the double gaze. The gaze suspends her subject position. She can not say anything of her own. Since she is on the side of the object, she can not articulate what she feels about being gazed at. One may even point out her smiling face and argue that she has enjoyed being gazed. If she has consented to be perceived why bother about the objectification. But one could notice that the ideology concerning male female dichotomy could have interpolated the subject. Therefore she might have smiled to present herself in terms of male expectation as a pleasurable object.

Fig. 2. *Hifajat Film* Poster (1) (2010)

Another ad of film *Hifajat* released on April 8, 2010, produced by Chhabi Ojha, Rekha Thapa's husband and directed by Gyanendra Deuja presents the object of gaze to the

audience, especially the male ones. Rekha plays leading role, she is in yellow dress with ‘Hare Rama Hare Krishna’. The poster shows three female images but middle one seems smooth and beautiful body, she easily attracts the male’s attention.

It serves to infatuate the male viewers. She can not escape the male looks in any way. The film ad brings to that imagery position the model as the object of the ideal spectator’s gaze according to male oriented society’s standards. The ad portrays a skinny model at the edge of a road. Building and and trees are visible at a distance. The model wears shorts and an immaculate top whose bright colors, yellow show up well on the extremely pale model’s complexion. She has blond hair and her eyes are heavily made up. Other two models also attract the attention of the spectators. In its close observation, one sees the focus of the camera on the body of model. At the first reading one might get the impression that the male viewers focus on the body parts. She appears as a sensual being. A question arises: whose gaze is she subjected to? She is subjected to the gaze of male audience because she has been portrayed as an erotic object, wining the attention of the audience instantly. When one sees the girl in sensual pose, one gets an impression that the girl has had an agency in the sexual matters. In this poster, she is subjected to the viewers’ gaze. Due to the constant surveillance of male dominated society women begin to anticipate the even compose themselves voluntarily in male parameters.

The poster uses three female figures that use cosmetics to be attractive and they also display their body parts to gaze at. As Babbi points out "had to be thin with feminine curves, sporty, tanned, and have a natural, well-groomed and elegant look" (35). Similarly in the poster, female figures are highly sexualized; especially their arms and legs are almost uncovered by clothes. This reality raises the question that why they are projected in erotic scene, who are looking at them, and are they searching male viewers? The answer is clear that they are gazing towards viewers and their position depicts that they are waiting male

spectators. The female figure in the middle is even eroticized in comparison to others. However their slim bodies create ideal beauty to attract the attention of male gaze. Values of their beauty spread with a sense of sexual freedom, and women become masters of their bodies and sexuality with the advent of the pill. As Seid Pollack asserts women look young and behave youthfully. It means to say that the female object is perceived as erotic image. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy into the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact. In this connection, Mulvey argues that cinema appropriates the exhibitionist role of woman from the tradition. Here in film ad women get projected as the object to be looked at. For Mulvey, "the women displayed has functioned on two levels: an erotic object for the characters within and as the erotic object for the spectators" (156). In this sense these three female figures can not escape the looks of the males who derive pleasure through the act of gazing. The women are presented as an erotic object but their own choice and desire do not come into account. Regardless of their interest they are compelled to present themselves as a gazing commodity.

In this way, the film ad, *Hifajat* commodifies female beauty by projecting them as an erotic object. By creating ideal beauty, their hair, unclothed arms, legs, and eyes are especially commodified. Male spectators are attracted towards their beauty and sexualized body. Women are felt free and liberated from male eyes and prevailing beauty ideals. Thus, the slimness of the female body is displayed for public which can be taken as the evidence of commodification. The above poster projects women into thinking that to have a more glamorous and perfect body; it is enough to buy and posses the diverse values and role models that the products represent. Therefore, to sell the items, manufacturers and fashion designers embark on advertising campaigns that associate body lotion, spas, and dresses with positive and desirable images. As Kathy Peiss points that the slim, perfect body suggests that

a better physical appearance is what women need to pursue personal and social success to achieve feminine ideal. Therefore, the above poster is the representation of the ideal slim bodies to enhance the product as an exchange value. In this regard, Micheal R. Solomon and Richard D. Ashore assert that "a persuasive ad presents a good Gestalt: a model type of beauty and associated image that matches the product with which it is paired will provide a coherent message, which may enhance acceptance of the advertisement" and its ideal. The ideal body and advertised products sell each other. Indeed the flawless body attracts attention to the form and shape of items. Thus, the film poster *Hifajat* commodifies female body as an exchange value to enhance the product.

Fig. 3. *Hifajat Film Poster* -2 (2010)

One can observe the woman's representation within the frame of male expectations in the second poster of *Hifajat*. In this photograph, the girl has been shown to be exposing herself as a beautiful and fashionable being that is, projecting her decoratively. After a close observation, however one may question: Who has been gazing at her? Why does she present herself in such a way? One should not forget that power structures do not always function directly and may even function according to the panoptical model. Even if she is not directly gazed, she remains under the impression that she has been gazed at. With the anticipation of that indirect gazed, she projects herself very decoratively in other words, woman's subjectivity is framed by the male gaze that she anticipates.

In the same way, the poster shows the model with fashionable dress and in half- nude but her eyes are heavily made up, fully closed and appear sunken. The model's gaze is focused on nothing apparent. Suggesting "psychological removal from the social situation at large" (Goffman 57). She is not really engaged with the viewer. Her psychological withdrawal leaves her "dependent on the protectiveness and goodwill to other" (Goffman 57).

Therefore, how does the female gaze internalize the representational politics of this ad? The message is quite clear. The model is attractive to the ideal male viewer because he "saves" her from her frailty, her incapacity of being alone and savageness of today's world. She is in danger without a strong masculine presence. Consequently woman interprets as an image that persuades them to be flawlessly beautiful because the man protects her. It is as if women told that they must pay back the male ego and desire for its protectiveness by achieving ideal beauty. Christine Gledhill claims that "Pleasure is organized to flatter or console the patriarchal ego and its unconscious" (65). "Female representations do no*t*", she believes, "represent women at all, but are figures cut to the measure of the patriarchal unconscious" (66).

Film advertising is connected to "the gender/power axis" along which gender roles are produced and defined Bordo, *Unbearable weight* (54). Through images, women learn to restrain and contain their impulses. As a result, female power is "confined to the realm of emotional control, not real political or economic power, and the type of power that might lead to equality in relationships in the long run" (Andersen 232). It is a way to minimize female gender and maximize male authority according to precise social and cultural expectations (Faludi 187).Alice E.courtney and Thomas W. Whipple refer to these expectations as "Women dependent upon men, women don't make important decisions; women are shown in few occupational roles; women view themselves and are viewed by others as sex objects" (qtd.in Lazier and Ganard 202). The above advertisements show how femininity is submitted to patriarchal representational structures of gender and power. Jean Kilbourne addresses this point when she writes" images do not represent any real progress but rather create a myth of progress, an illusion that reduces complex sociopolitical problems to mundane ones" ("*Beauty and the Beast*" 125). In other words the ads encourage the female to believe in femininity whose values rely exclusively upon her outer body and performing the duties for male pleasure.

The above analyzed film posters of films *Kohi Mero* and *Hifajet* give women the illusion that the female gaze can be the controlling force of their image. In fact, they position the models' bodies as the objectified other. In this way, they drive the woman to function "as a sign for patriarchy […], its spectacle and its subordinate thing" (Berger 29).Robin Andersen, using the ideas of Laura Mulvey and Rosalind Coward, argue that "the legacy of patriarchy meshes with cosmetics and fashion because they both judge women by virtue of their appearance, not by their success or merit" (227). The cultural and social context for the development of these images taps, therefore, into a patriarchal culture that, Andersen notes, "constantly reminds us that we will be judged on the way we look" (228).

When one comes to the level of viewers the same principle holds true these half- nude and decorative photographs of the women are not gazed only by the males. They get equally exposed to the male viewers. How do the female viewers view to the half- nude body of the woman? They appropriate the male gaze and survey the female body in the male terms. One is likely to appreciate her clothing, hairstyle, smile, and the pose and may even try to imitate her.

Using sexuality is another of the main tactics of film advertising to sell products and images of ideal beauty. Berger points out that "publicity increasingly uses sexuality to sell any product or service. But this sexuality is never free in itself, it is a symbol for something presumed to be larger than it [...] [buying] is the same thing as being sexually desirable […] with this you will become desirable" (144). The sexual portrayal of the female body has been a representational technique of all the film posters analyzed so far. However, in the film poster *First Love,* the film released on Aug 6, 2010, the use of sexuality and fetishism deserve particular attention within this image, it is how the eye travels that draws the ideal male spectator to find pleasure in scrutinizing, possessing and imagining himself having sex with the two female bodies.


PRINCESS MOVIES PRESENTS
MADHAV WAGLE'S
FIRST LOVE
the best thing about me is you...
CINEMATOGRAPHY
HARI HUMAGAI
ACTION
RAJKUMAR UPRETY
MUSIC BY
SATYA SWOROP
SURENDRA MAN SINGH
CHOREOGRAPHY
SHANKAR BC
STORY
MADHAV WAGLE
SCRIPT
PRACHANDA SHRESTHA
PRODUCED BY
MADHAV WAGLE
NARENDRA MAHARJAN
DIRECTED BY
SIMOSH SUNUWAR

Fig. 4.*First Love* Film Poster (2010)

First Love is directed by Simosh Sunwar, a youg and devoted director, who is the son of famous radio persona and folk singer, the late Pandav Sunwar.Somosh's first feature film was *Mission Paisa,* which was released in 2009. It launched actress, Nisha Adhikari to the world of Nepali movies. Nisha has also acted in *First Love*; she plays the girl who is in love with Aryan Sigdel's character. He is her first love, on the other hand, karma (Mahesh Shakya) loves Nisha, but his love is one sided, similarly, Binay shrestha falls on Richa sharma, after meeting with her once. The film spins about these five characters, who are attending the same college, this film reveals much about the college life in cities. What makes the spectators uneasy is some of the plot, the scene when Binay rapes Richa and then it is forgiven, and when Nisha decides Aryan over karma, who sacrifices everything for her, seems idealistic. The star cast includes Aryan Sigdel as Ayush, Vinay Shrestha as Rohan, Karma as Gaurv, Nisha Adhikari as Abha and the film introduces Reecha sharma as Neelu.

The film poster *first love* shows two female bodies. They are gazing towards spectators and they seem having sex desire. These two bodies appear to be thin and toned. The erasure of the two faces is an indicator of how today's film advertising does not represent women for their mental acuity or merits. Andersen argues that in this way "it is easier to objectify a fragment of the body. It is no longer a person able to express humanity [...] becomes simply an illustration of an objectified physical feature […] to be emphasized to sell the product" (232). Being detached from the whole body the torsos of the two women becomes the object of male passions and desires. In this way, the male gaze keeps under control sexuality may threaten his power. Suzanna Danuta walters writes that he leads women to "think of their bodies as "things" that need to be molded, shaped and remade into a male conception of female perfection" (56).

The two women are presumably looking outside the picture. They might be gazing upon viewers to invite them to get closer and discover their bodies. What this ad projects is a form of fantasy and pleasure through which women wish to become the image they see. Female viewers will observe the female from in the ad and then scrutinize their body parts. As a result, women see the model's body as their own reflection and the thing they can also possess. Advertisements, Berger argues, make women envious of how they could be. The female consumer "is meant to imagine herself transformed by the product into an object of envy, admiration, "for others" (134). In this way, Douglas Kellner notes the body "is no longer a from of individual expression and uniqueness but a standardized manufactured product" ("*Advertising and consumer culture*" 253). The advertised item represents, thus, the promised ideal beauty and male attention that are achievable through the film poster *fist Love*.

As in the film poster *Hifajat*, the film poster *First Love* also creates ideal beauty by projecting decorated female bodies. The two female bodies are commodified by presenting them as an erotic object. Their legs are uncovered to enhance commodity culture. Their white skin, unclothed arms, legs, dress, eyes, teeth, and hair style are commodified to attract the attention of the spectators. Their position shows that they are looking someone male to fulfill their passion. When we analyze male and female modals in the film poster we can easily determine that in comparison to male females' bodies are sexualized and eroticized by decorating the female models.

Therefore, the film poster *First Love* illustrates the female beauty, the myth of bodily perfection. By doing so, the poster assigns and frames female bodies to categories of normalcy and turns them into objects with an exchange value. Two young skinny models are gazing for spectators. They are wearing very light and attractive dress but most of their bodies are uncovered and displayed for viewers. They wear high-heeled shoes. Their eyes seem to explore the male viewers outside the image. Their white skinny legs are almost

uncovered and their white and attractive arms are also unclothed. These are the reasons that the above film poster is projected to commodify female body.

Fig. 5 *Farkera Herda* Film Poster (2010)

The film *Farkera Herda* was premired in Gopi Krishna Theater and was released all over the country on Friday, July 16, 2010. The movie is directed by Dayaram Dahal and produced by Uddav poudal. The star casts in the movie are Nikhil Upereti, Aryan Sigdel, Yuna Upreti, Rejina Upreti, Jenisha K.C, Neer Shah, Rabi Giri, Ramesh Budhathoki, Sushma Karki etc.

In the same way, as the film poster *First Love* fragments the two women's bodies and sexualizes them, the another film poster *Farkera Herda* released on Friday' July 16, 2010, frames the breasts of the model as the Focus of the gaze. The male gaze powerfully dominates the image. The eyes of the male model identify with the ideal male viewer and lead him to scrutinize the woman's body and make it an object of eroticization. Indeed, the male model's line of sight follows a trajectory that brings the breasts to be the "object of vision" (Berger 47). They also draw the viewer's eyes to the breasts. Thus, the spectator is invited to look with the sailor. His pleasure arises from using the woman's boy "as an object of sexual stimulation through sight" (Mulvey, "*Visual pleasure and Narrative cinema*" 32). The Fetishization of the breasts, the only thing "allowed" to be big in film advertising works within the image to reassure the male that she is a woman after all .The woman near to male with red dress is signified by her breasts, which come to stand for the whole body. It might be suggested that, at the same time, her breasts substitute for the missing phallus. The erotic object of the gaze, the breasts, thus, become the figure for the sexualized woman and stabilizes male sexual and social power within the image by presenting him with a substitute for "the lack". In other words, the pirate's breasts do not simply substitute for the phallus, but they also mirror male fear of losing control over women and their bodies. The ideal male spectator is safe because the pirate does not imply "a threat of castration and hence unpleasure" (Mulvey, "*Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*" 35). The male model remains

the subject of control and dominance within the representation. The female gaze is not absent, but through the identification with the ideal male spectator, it passively accepts her own representation through male lenses. The female gaze reads the ad resigned to her destiny of sexual exploitation and objectification by men. Therefore she subjects herself to a masochistic pleasure that comes from scrutinizing and objectifying her own body the message that female viewers get is that female sexuality is vulnerable, accessible and available.

The poster does not say so explicitly, but it glorifies a culture and society where women are sexually assaulted daily, battered and sexualized through aggressive acts. The violence in the film poster addresses those issues of female sexual objectification that are "pornographic in advertising because", Kilbourne observes, "It dehumanizes and objectifies people, especially women, and because it fetishizes products, imbues then with an erotic change" (*Deadly persuasion* 271).

In this image, a man, the male model appears about to force a woman, the pirate to have sex. The pirate' pale complexion, the red-colored and the golden patch she wears to protect her right eye enhance frailty and submission, the woman's garment appears very light and about to fall exposing her body to the male's gaze and action. Red dress contrasts with white shirt, blue jeans, cap recall strong masculinity and sexual power. The male model is taller than the female model that appears slightly bent and looking away from him, the assaulter. What Goffman calls "head/eye aversion" (63) is here an indication of how the woman "withdraws attention from the scene" and conceals her feelings (63). The postures of male model and the pirate make it clear that "the main goal of the pornographic image is to exercise power over another […] either by the physical dominance or preferred status of men or what is seen as he exploitative power of female beauty and female sexuality" (270).

In this way, the film poster *Farkera Herda* shows another myth of today's culture of pornography: women want to be forced to have sex with men. As a result, Gail Dines argues that rape is trivialized and violence glorified ("*Beyond killing us softly*"). Ads like *Farker Herda* are"not the cause of violence against women [...] but, at the very least, they help to create a climate in which certain attitudes and values flourish" (290). Consequently, the message of this ad may be that there is nothing wrong in cutting and beating the woman because she wants it! This is a message that becomes pervasive because film advertising obsessively glamorizes and helps to construct violence as a pattern of normal behavior towards women.

Fig. 6. *Khushi Film* Poster (2010)

Another film *Khushi* released on November 19, 2010. It is produced by Gopi Krishna movies. The movie is directed by Gyanendra Deuja and Rekha Thapa, Aayush Rijal are in leading role. Musical scores of *Khushi* are composed by Alok Shree. The songs are sung by Udit Narayan, Sadhana sargam and Rupa Dotel. Bashanta Shrestha is choreographer and Himal KC is the fight director.

The film poster *Khushi* also shows pornographic image. The female model is smiling and running to visit male model. It seems that she is attracted by the male. She is in her mini skirt, it is in blue colour, and she is wearing white T-shirt. One man from her side is gazing her but she is running towards another man who is playing musical instrument. By projecting woman in such role; this advertisement contributes to the perpetuation of 'sexist discourse' which as Gunter Kress argues, specifies what men and women may be, how they are to think of themselves, how they are to think of and relate to other gender" (qtd in Francis, 93).This ad, appropriating the discourse of sexism, demonstrates that men are the socialized beings whereas women remain subordinate as merely "pleasant bodies" that entertain men. In other words, this advertisement clearly demonstrates men as creative and innovative, and women as decorative and alluring.

The sexist discourse, as Kress further notes, specifies what work is suitable, possible even, for men and for women" (qtd in Francis, 93). The female model has a luxuriant head of hair as wild as the nature which surrounds her. As Berger asserts, "hair is associated with sexual power and passion" (55).The background of the poster displays beautiful flowers of garden. The setting of the poster is in the garden so that they are in the lonely place to fulfill their passion. On the other hand, another male is gazing towards female's erotic image and laughing to see her. The woman is smiling and she may be thinking to fulfill her passion. However, here, male is playing musical instrument to attract female's attention towards him.

It is the reason that male's power to attract female to commodify her. She is regarded as the object of pleasure by projecting her body erotic. Here female's skinny legs are uncovered to commodify her. Similarly, her well designed hair and unclothed arms are also commodified because these body parts are showing decoratively and beautifully to promote film industry. The model's position suggests that she is not controlling look within the image. The young male is not afraid to fall into her sexual trap. He shows his boldness by playing musical instrument. He is the hunter and the girl is the prey.

In the poster, female's mini skirt and her skinny parts of the legs represent woman as the animalistic presence within the representation. Here her image becomes human desires and urges. At the same time the sexuality of the man is depicted as the "proper expression" of erotic human passions. Within this fantasy of otherness, Berger argues that fascination and consumption become what seemingly dehumanizes femininity and grants male the power to exploit the bodies of female (61). The dehumanization of womanhood is" a major instrument of power of men "designed to make sexism [...] appear to be natural, normal, and an inevitable part of everyday life. (680. In this film poster, womanhood has been packaged and commodified in a manner that broadens multicultural representations while enhancing traditional hierarchies of patriarchal society.


नरेश पोद्दारको
made for

Fig. 7. *Deepsikha Film* Poster (2010)

The Film *Deepsikha* made on the actress, Arunima Lamsal's story was released on Friday, September 10, 2010,the movie, with leading actress Arunima, Jiwan Luitel, Niraj Baral, and Radha Lamsal, is directed by Naresh Poudel. The musical scores are prepared by Chetan Spkota.

In the poster there are three major models: two males and one female model. The female is staying between two male models. Male members cover their body by clothes but at the same time female's body is half naked. Her white skin, gazing eyes and well-combed hair reflect that she is the object of attraction. Her way of gazing shows that she is searching her male partner from outside. She is gazing outside and another male near to her is laughing. The situation shows that female body is just for attraction because female's body is eroticized by the film industry to make her gaze. Moreover her red dress is also the symbol of attraction. In the same poster other many female models are also commodified because most of their body parts are uncovered especially the sensual parts remain unclothed. Why only females are displayed as erotic and sexual image? Answer is clear it is the politics of advertising and male domination to female.

Another importation aspect of commodification of female body is thinness (slim body). Females are projected as slim figures by using computer enhanced technology. Their slimness is the symbol of ideal beauty and ideal beauty is the symbol of attraction by creating illusion to the spectators. Therefore, slim body is the key of commodification. Here women become the object of gaze to women as well. It is for this reason that some women are given pressure to other women to present beautifully and decoratively. The women compose themselves to be looked at. This is to say that every woman projects herself as the active member of the beauty industry whose only objective is to prepare woman as the decorative and beautiful object. Therefore, she tries her best to compose herself in relation to the gaze of

men. In this context it might be productive to analyze the Foucauldian notion of "the panoptical modality of power" (211). Similarly, Lacan argues that "the object on which depends the phantasy from which the subject is suspended (...) is the gaze" (150). For Lacan, one loses the subject position when gazed at, for it turns the subject into the object.

By pursuing the slender body, many women strive an image that is now considered ideal within most cultures: extreme thinness. By visually reducing the representations of a woman's body to one prevailing image, film advertising socializes women to think bodily subtraction is how they must meet the expectations of cultural and social ways of seeing the female physique: By looking at the film poster *Deepsikha,* one is led to believe that there are finally brands and ads that care about real women with real curves. In the poster *Deepsikha* there are many female model; their most of body parts remain uncovered. Most of them are riding on bicycles. Their legs from a triangular shape that becomes the focus of the representation it is as through one's attention is drawn towards looking up their shorts and images simulate the implied male spectator's imagination about the purpose and explicitness of female's posing. Goffman links this sort of supine position to what he calls "the Reutilization of subordination" in film advertising (40). A female body lying on disclosed position, the author argues, sustains the idea that femininity is sale and displayed for sex and male pleasure (41).

The main model in the poster looks out to the viewer to establish the defiant gaze and the power relationship with the viewer. Her eyes are focused on the viewer. Thus the model here appears and transforms her into the object of the male gaze outside the image. She internalizes the male gaze and how it scrutinizes her as "object of vision" (Berger 47), to determine how others will look at her. In this way, the model gives the impression of controlling and containing male ways of seeing her body. However, she does not control the gaze of the image. Indeed, her image is constructed upon the assumption of an ideal male

spectator. It is the male gaze that controls the representation in this ad. It may be that being heterosexually attractiveness is so culturally important that it goes without saying that women's beautification is for men*" (qtd. in Malson 112)*. Thus in the poster of *Deepsikha* female body is commodified to enhance the film industry by attracting the attention of the viewers.

Fig. 8. *Pal Pal Ma* Film Poster (2010)

The idea of female beauty constructed to please the male gaze is also made evident in the film poster *Pal Pal Ma.*The film was released on 28 March 2010.The film is produced by Harihar Acharya. This is Nepali adult related movie presented by Dhal Movies Pvt. Ltd.There are four male models and four female models in the poster. The right side of the poster there are three models, among them, middle one is female and on her both sides there are two male models. The girl is smiling and she is in her white T-shirt and black mini skirt. The male model on her right side is in black T-shirt and blue jeans and another male on her left side is in white t-shirt and blue jeans. Male models don't show their body parts but female discloses her body part to see sensual. Similarly, in the middle of the poster, there are two models, one is male and another one is female. They are staying together. The female is showing her arms disclosed; she is in black hair, slim body and smiling face. She is extending her arms with male partner. She is in red dress. Her male partner is also in red shirt and blue jeans. The girl is leaning on the chest of her male partner. That shows she is feeling great pleasure staying with him. In the same way, on the left side of the poster, there are three models. The male model is between the two female models. The male is in blue T-shirt, Jacket and in blue paints. In his right side the girl is in white dress but most of her body parts are disclosed and she is leaning towards her male partner. On the left side of the male, there is the girl, she is in her onion color dress and most parts of the legs are disclosed and she is also on smiling face.

In this way, this poster seems to demonstrate that women are worth a look and they are like the ideal beauty. The overall impression is that the four women of the film ad have a positive self-image. As Vickle Shields suggests, these ads can be interpreted as "those prescriptions women see in the media" that persuade them to accept themselves as they are (54).The four models do not have the starving appearance or the "heroin chic" (Pearce 85) looks of today's fashion models. This fact constitutes here the main force for generation of

meaning. Indeed, it is difference from today's fashion models looks that assign the models in the poster as Gillian Dyer claims, "to a 'group' of women with certain characteristics".(qtd. in Pearce 84). Thus this poster shows the film advertisement recalls and derives meaning from cultural texts that construct the imagery available to spectators.

The poster *Pal Pal Ma* shows that women are displayed in the film advertising as having slim body rather than fatness. Jacqueline C. Hitchon and Shiela Reaves claim:

> Even women recognized for curvier figures than catwalk models have become progressively thinner. Meanwhile, the average weight of women in the general population has raisin. Women appear to be combating those contradictory trends by striving to become thinner […] Ads may reinforce a culture that values and rewards appearance over skills producing incentives for young women to cultivate a particular look rather than developing and expanding their talents". (73).

In addition, the advertiser link the body size of the model to what society has constructed as ideal beauty, Her smile and pose of abandonment do not indeed, portray a women is fiercely proud of how she looks. In the poster *Pal Pal Ma* the main role models arms lying at her sides and contained smile are two factors that "seem more offering of an inferior than a superior" (Goffman 48). In other words, the model abandons her to the judgment and scrutiny of other who see her not as an idealized version of appropriate femininity. Therefore, the words together with the image frame as problematic a female figure that does not have that much space in film advertising

The above ad of *Pal Pal Ma* helps us to see how the models' bodies are made the ideal of thin perfection. However Burger notes that when women's bodies are represented as something that they are not ideally perfect and thin, they simply reinforce the dominant system and inevitably signify the reverse of the representational mechanism itself (134). By

masking themselves a thin body, the models in the film ads reflect a body that is a construction of femininity or a “masquerade” of the ideal self of Film advertising. Their body manufactures as having ideal beauty that links their image from main stream bodily perfection. Therefore, film ads show that what changed in the perception of female beauty is an ideal that got thinner and thinner. Once compared to main stream fashion advertising, these sorts of images impute, as Bordo argues, ‘any departure from social norms”. Most of these film advertisements foster physical transformation when directed to self-monitoring, self disciplining and self improvement to achieve conventionally attractive body shape. (Reading the slender Body 469).

Fig. 9. *Gorkha Paltana* Film Poster (2010)

The Film *Gorkha Paltana* was released on 25 November, 2010. The movie has Indian Idol 2007, Parasanta Tamang in the main lead who is supported by actress, Soni Gurung. The movie is directed by Narayan Rayamajhi and he has also provided the story and screen play for the movie. The music is directed by BB. Anurag and the title song are sung by Prasanta himself and Anju panta.

The poster Gorkha Paltana displays the beauty of nature in the background. There are snow- capped mountains and green forests. At the sametime it shows female beauty and there is a solider with the female model. There are also other soldiers who are taking war instruments. It reflects males are symbol of power and females are the symbol of beauty. The woman is presented as having exchange value that is quantified by virtue of how many products people can buy to get closer to the ideal beauty. Consequently, the female consumer of the image assigns her appearance an exchange value that stands for male attention and desire to achieve ideal beauty. It is at this point that the beauty of the model becomes competitive and hierarchical. Indeed, beauty means here to conform and internalize patriarchal, societal and cultural expectations about the female look to achieve success and visibility. This poster also offers gazing eyes of the female who is in the side of the poster. Here her eyes are transformed by the product and closer to ideal beauty. Seeing means possessing the object of the gaze and situating yourself in relation to it (Berger 83). In this way, the female gaze turns herself into the object of an appropriate bodily image.

In this ad of *Gorkha Paltana* the main female model's hair design use of cosmatics, jewellery items reflect the female beauty that woman participates as the active members of the beauty culture. In the same way other two females are also decorated beautifully. They seem to consent to the patriarchal discourse of "beautiful woman". They seem to be guided by the ideology that the women have to be beautiful and men have to be powerful. Here in

the poster, males are projected as active powerful strong and dominating figures but females are displayed as the objects of males' attraction. For instance in the last part of the poster, the soldier is touching female's chin and female seems shy but she is silently accepting his sexual desire by smiling and touching him. The soldier is attracted towards female's beauty rather than war. But the poster shows that most of the soldiers are busy in war and they are running somewhere for searching enemies, that is the symbol of power. Another main male model, a soldier is attracted towards the beauty of female main model. In this sense females are beautiful object for male desire. The right hand side corner of the poster, one female is gazing towards her male partner. Her eyes are highly decorated and her hair is also regarded as the symbol of attraction. Left hand side corner in the poster, many beautiful women are shown as beautiful object to attract the attention of the spectators. They are highly decorated as ideal beauty for pleasure. In this way, this poster reflects female beauty on the one way but on the other hand female's beauty is commodified to attract male soldiers. Therefore, female's body is commodified by creating the illusion of beauty to enhance the product.

Film posters *Hifajat*, *Kohimero*, *First Love, Farkera Herda, Khushi, Pal Pal Ma, Deepsikha and Gorkha Paltana* represent, thus not only brand or product: They assume the status of what Foucault calls “the intelligible body” and the useful body” (qtd in Bordo, “Reading the slender Body” 469). “The Representational or intelligible body” is what we actually see the one image of female ideal beauty. It is this body that then transforms itself into the “mastery of the body” that means a capacity to regulate, contain and discipline the female body according to precise criteria, rites and norms (Bordo 151). In this way, the body becomes, Foucault argues, “the useful body”that covert culture into automatic, habitual bodily activity.

Thus the analyzed advertisements produce the female body and ideal beauty through specific visual and social practices. As Bordo points out, using Foucault’s theory of the body,

these practices are “note only the interdicted modes by which power is made manifest. Bodily authority within these ads resides, therefore, in how male authority is made manifest through “institutionalized monitoring, normalizing examinations” of a patriarchal and capitalist society and representational system (Bordo, 292). In this way, the male presence transforms female beauty into the “commodity self” (Kellner, Advertising and consumer culture” 248). For example in the film posters *Frst Love* and *Farkera Herda* the bodies of models link the posters to a social, cultural and patriarchal context where it is all right to divide up women into as many components as advertising wants to sell.

As well the film posters suggest that the attractiveness of women body is measured according to standards of beauty. These standards consist of smaller noses, smaller buttocks, a lighter-colored complexion, thinner lips and straight hair. Moreover, the models must be consistently thin, young and perfect.

The advertising posters of Nepali films of 2010 that I have analyzed reinscribe bodily appearance as the main element for judging female beauty. They also increase pressure to achieve the perfect look for the comodification of female body.

Chapter Four: Body Image, Negotiation and Alternatives

4.1 Representation of Female Body in Nepali Film Posters

The present research work has analyzed the Nepali film posters from the viewpoint of Commodity culture. Commodity culture has been used to describe the culture of capitalism. Within today's culture everything has become a product to be bought and sold in the market place. Commodity culture also infers the naturalization of this system to the extent that we cannot imagine another way of living. Here, commodification is used to represent the exploitation of female bodily attractiveness in film advertising. The representation of ideal thin body becomes in advertising images the exchange value of any advertise product. By doing so film advertisements standardize body images, define cultural expectations and sell the myth of perfection to us. Therefore, the present study has analyzed the gendered commodification especially in the photographic representation of the film advertisements through film posters. It has found that commodities' qualities are transferred to the ideal body or body parts and women's bodies are transformed into objects to be possessed. Bodies become commodities or fictional realities with an exchange value.

The film posters analyzed in the chapter three have shown how and how film advertising expresses beauty only through body images as an exchange value in commodity

culture. Film advertising constructs women's body, set up the spectacle of its representation and frame ideal bodily normalcy. Advertising posters have socialized women into thinking that only thinness promises a wonderful life. These film posters normalize target and market female bodies. These posters lock female bodies thin into particular portrayals of appropriate femininity. Bodies and body parts of female in the film posters alternate with ever increasing extreme excitement to enhance the commodity culture.

The film poster *Kohi Mero* has shown erotic image of breasts, half-naked body, gazing eyes, smiling face, and unclothed arms to enhance the commodity culture. Female body and body parts are transformed into a pleasure providing object. Female's presence in the film poster has implied the ideology that women have the function to be gazed to attract the male's attention. Similarly, another analyzed poster *Hifajet* has also shown erotic image of the female body. The female body has been shown to be exposing herself as a beautiful and fashionable being that is projecting decoratively as gazing eyes, silky hair, and half-unclothed body. Another analyzed film poster First Love has shown two female bodies as objectified physical features. Their legs, hair, arms and other parts of the body are commodified. Film poster *Farkera Herda* has highlighted the breasts as gazing object for spectators. Similarly, the film poster *Khushi* has also projected female body as pornographic image, the film posters *Deepsikha* and *Pal Pal Ma* have shown thin female bodies as ideal beauty to enhance commodity culture.

Female bodies in the analyzed posters have projected as 'things' that are molded, shaped and remade into a male conception of female perfection. The male gaze powerfully dominates the female bodies. The eyes of the male scrutinize the women's bodies and make them as the object of eroticization. Indeed the male's line of sight follows a trajectory that brings the body parts such as breasts to be the object of vision. Male's pleasure arises from using the women's bodies as the objects of sexual stimulation through sights. Female's body

parts thus become sexual exploitation and objectification within patriarchal power structure. When women's bodies represented in the film posters are commodified as something that they are ideally perfect as thin, they simply reinforce the dominant system. Female bodies link the film advertisements to a social, cultural and patriarchal context where women's bodies are divided into as many components as advertising wants to sell. These images make them perfectly beautiful to enhance commodity culture.

The analysis of the advertisements in chapter three attempted to establish that there is no authentic woman in mainstream film advertising. There are only various ideas of how a woman should be to embody the ideal of perfect beauty. Different postures, faces, body parts or fashion dresses all showcase thinness as today's ideal female attractiveness. It is the repetition of the same elements: perfect legs, buttocks, breasts, thighs that come to signify slenderness as bodily perfection. Being thin becomes the "natural" and "innate" characteristic in women, all women to enhance commodity culture. Ideal bodies become, thus, the badge of natural femininity that is synonymous with happiness, satisfaction and acceptance. The analyzed posters embrace the style of today's mainstream advertising. Indeed, they demonstrate that the impact of today's visual media is different from the effect of visual arts of the past. In the past historically figures of art were romanticized as unattainable, but today's media blurs the boundaries between glorified fiction and reality as presented in most of the selected film posters. And, the textual analyses reveal how obsession with thinness is firmly rooted in two key assumptions: first that all women share a major preoccupation with the way in which they look; second, that all women can improve their appearance by the application of time and effort and through the purchase of certain products. The analyzed ads are not, however, mere reflections of today's ideal beauty. Indeed, they do not create meaning only by themselves. But they make meaning through their difference and their relation to each other and current mainstream advertising. It is through intertextual relationships

between ads and the repetition of certain visual elements in each image that the latter come to have a meaning for us. In this way, signs of thinness come to signify slenderness as beauty ideal and set off in women the need to change. Film advertising makes women great consumers or, more accurately, it makes them feel as if they lack something.

One striking aspect that came about from my analysis is that obsession with the ideal Body is a never-ending comparison between "ordinary" women and airbrushed top-models. Indeed, real bodies always have flaws when they are measured up with computer-enhanced physiques. And, they are constantly reminded of which areas of the body need to be improved. Women become subjects split between an unachievable ideal beauty and their outer body. Thus, the material body becomes synonymous with those social obsessions and cultural anxieties about the female body and perfect appearances.

In my work, I noted that today's feminist scholars remark on how ideal beauty creates divisions between the mind and the body, thin bodies and plump bodies, and women and men. Perhaps one way to engage in changing cultural imagery about the female body is to use communication as a basis for collaboration and stronger interpersonal binds. In this way, women and men realize that the ways in which female physiques are rendered visible are linked to our consumer culture dynamics and manufactured meanings that trivialize bodies and sexuality. Understanding the body not as a commodity on sale and as a locus for self-love and self-realization could be something that brings women and men together in a more positive reading of female beauty. Changing societal and cultural imagery calls for multidimensional approach to women's experiences, bodies and roles. And, it encourages women to be aware of their bodies and realities. By modifying cultural ways of seeing on a broad level, we may try to change the meanings that film posters gain from their relation to culture and society as well as their relationship to each other. In a society obsessed with the surface of thinness, the advertised meaning of beauty can only be as unbearable pressure on

how we look. Whereas, in a culture not abnormally preoccupied with flawless slenderness, we might find meaning in the representation of emotional and personal fulfillment. As women seek to be fully represented as subjects, a complete understanding that female worth does not depend on appearances becomes increasingly vital. Indeed, it is a fight for the diminishing commodification of female beauty and not just a critique of dominant discourses in mainstream film advertising.

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Yuba Raj Subedi

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Letter of Approval

The thesis entitled **Commodification of Female Body: A Study of Nepali Film Posters** submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvn University for the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

The present study examines the question of commodification of female body in the film posters. Women in the posters have been projected into the beautiful objects producing attractions. Woman's body is divided and targeted into different parts as a consumerist tactic. In this way, film advertising depends on woman's body as a source of particularly profitable beauty industry. In addition, ideal female beauty is the indicator of film advertising as a system of capitalist society. In this social and cultural context, capitalistic and economic interest dictates women's bodies to look by creating, targeting and marketing beauty. Advertised bodies blur the boundaries between inside and outside of an image. The film posters are used to commodify female's body in order to support the commodity culture because film posters misrepresent and eroticize female's body to create an alluring image of the object to strengthen the hegemony of commodity culture in capitalism. Thus, women's bodies in the film posters are assigned as a supplement object to enhance the attraction towards the production as an exchange value.

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