

**HUMOUR AND GAZE : A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER INEQUALITIES IN
OMAR LULU'S MOVIES**



*Project submitted to St. Teresa's College (Autonomous) in partial fulfilment of the
requirement for the degree of BACHELOR OF ARTS in English Language and Literature*

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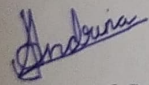
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


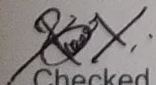
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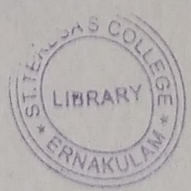
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I hereby declare that this project titled "Humour and gaze : A critical analysis of gender inequalities in Omar Lulu's movies" is the record of bonafide work done by me under the guidance and supervision of Ms. Tessa Fani Jose, Assistant Professor, Department of English.



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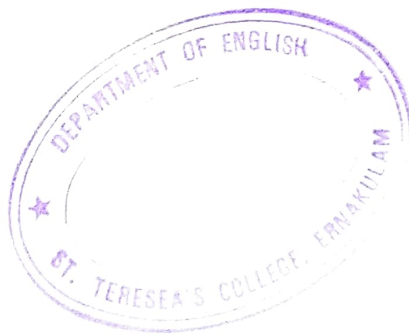
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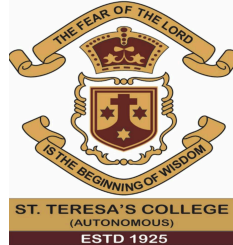
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Omar Lulu's Movies**

By

ANDRINA LEENUS

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St. Teresa's College (Autonomous)

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Cinema, as a cultural mirror, wields unparalleled influence in shaping societal perceptions and reinforcing stereotypes. This project delves into the prevalent manifestation of the male gaze being subverted as mere humour in Omar Lulu's movies such as *Chunkzz*, *Happy Wedding* and *Dhamaka*. In the initial chapter, the project deals with Mulvey's theory, exploring its impact on dissecting the prevalent male gaze in Omar Lulu's movies. The subsequent chapter focuses on scrutinizing dialogues and scenes that humorously depict the male gaze. The project aims to reveal gender-based notions and to give importance to the issue that women face from society based on their physical features.

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CONTENTS

Introduction		1
Chapter 1	An Overview Of Mulvey's Male Gaze	4
Chapter 2	Unmasking The Male Gaze In Omar Lulu's Films	11
Conclusion		21
Works Consulted		25

Introduction

In Malayalam movies the male gaze emerges as a powerful yet problematic force shaping the portrayal of women in the technique of cinematic narrative. This view is entrusted into a source of humour through the remarks on the physical appearance of women. On the one hand, this trivializing method not only helps to perpetuate stereotypes but also contributes to a normalization of objectification within the cinematic sphere. Some filmmakers consider the male gaze as a source of amusement. In such cases there's always a risk of subverting efforts to promote authentic and diverse representations of women. It requires great awareness and critique of how humourising such influences perpetuates gender inequalities and restricts progress toward more subtle and respectful representation. It highlights the need for a deeper societal reflection on the impact of such humour. It also cross-examined its role in aiding regressive attitudes towards women in both cinematic and real-world settings.

The concept 'male gaze' was introduced by Laura Mulvey, a popular feminist film theorist. It encloses a critical lens through which the portrayal of women is analysed in visual arts and media. This phenomenon is mainly featured by the objectification of women. It also reduces them to mere objects of male desire. Thus it reinforces power dynamics where men are active viewers and women passive objects. The male gaze is pervaded in various forms of media such as advertisements and movies. It also influences societal perceptions and reinforces stereotypical images that value physical attractiveness and compliance with beauty standards. Critics claim that this phenomenon may suppress female empowerment. According to them it will limit women to their appearance instead of embracing their multiple talents. The male gaze has become an instrument of cultural critique which reflects the nature of wider cultural practices that contribute to gender inequality.

In the present scenario, Omar Lulu is often cited as a prominent example of the male gaze because of the distinctive features of his films. His works are known for embodying elements of the male gaze. This concept, which refers to the visual presentation of women from a heterosexual male point of view, often considers women's pleasure of male spectators. From the observation point of view, his films focus on the physical appearance of female characters and their sexuality. His movies have been criticized for reinforcing traditional gender roles. Certain scenes in his movies rely on stereotypes that serve a presumed male audience. In addition to that, the use of humour in conjunction with the male gaze in Omar Lulu's films has provoked discussions about the normalization of objectification through humorous elements. Omar Lulu's work in this regard may stem from a broader societal conversation about the representation of women in media. The criticism he receives on the male gaze reflects ongoing discussions about responsible storytelling, various representations, and the impact of media on shaping cultural consciousness.

Analyzing the nature of the male gaze when presented in a humorous context holds significant relevance in contemporary discourse. It helps us to understand evolving cultural attitudes towards gender dynamics. Humour can serve as a criteria for societal acceptance, but here male gaze is transformed into comedy providing insight into cheap techniques of filmmaking. This analysis is significant for examining the impact on viewers' acceptance. We can gain valuable perception about how the viewer's interpret and respond to these humorous portrayals. The above-mentioned information is very important for understanding the effectiveness of using humour. It also helps us to navigate sensitive topics related to gender and to determine if humour is used to challenge traditional gender narratives or whether it inadvertently perpetuates stereotypes.

The first chapter focuses on utilizing the theoretical framework of the male gaze as a strong analytical tool. The male gaze theory has played an important role in dissecting and comprehending the portrayal of women within the cinematic context. This chapter deals with the application of the male gaze through a theoretical lens. It aims to examine the phenomenon of humourising the male gaze. This analysis seeks to understand the complexities, challenges, and societal implications associated with this transformative process. By giving a particular emphasis on elements like scopophilia, voyeurism, and spectatorship this theory sheds light on issues arising from the comedic reinterpretation of a concept embedded in gender dynamics and cinematic representation.

Chapter two deals with a detailed analysis on the manifestation of the male gaze in films such as *Chunkzz*, *Dhamaka*, and *Happy Wedding*. This chapter mainly focuses on how the filmmaker Omar Lulu, portrays the male gaze into humour. He employs this through the incorporation of vulgar comments on women's bodies within the cinematic context. This chapter aims to unravel the cheap techniques employed by Omar Lulu to convert the male gaze into humour through the specific scenes, dialogues, and visual elements in his films. Furthermore, it seeks to analyse the implication of such humorous scenes from the perceptions of the audience and societal norms. This chapter helps to contribute to a clear understanding of the consequence associated with humourising the male gaze.

Chapter 1

An Overview Of Mulvey's Male Gaze

The concept of the gaze is initially introduced by English art critic John Berger in his 1972 work *Ways Of Seeing*. He establishes a foundation for exploring how women are depicted as passive objects in advertising and as nude figures in European art. The critical examination takes a cinematic turn through the work of feminist scholar Laura Mulvey in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" written in 1973 and published in 1975. It was published in the influential British film theory journal *Screen*. Her essay played a pivotal role in establishing feminist film theory as a legitimate academic discipline. It was influenced by the theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. It also marked a significant shift in film theory towards a psychoanalytic framework. She later compiled her essays in the collection *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Mulvey's early critical works delve into questions surrounding spectatorial identification and its connection to the male gaze. She is a prominent figure in the field of film studies. She not only analyzes and expands the notion of the male gaze but also links it to the broader issues of sexual inequality. By claiming that social and political power imbalances significantly shape the portrayal of women and men in cinema. The male gaze is presented as a socially constructed phenomenon influenced by the ideologies and discourses of patriarchy.

Mulvey asserts that film serves as a reflection and revelation of the perceived differences between men and women. The female body is emphasized for its societal standards of attractiveness which results in the creation of eroticized images and characters that provide 'visual pleasure' for spectators. Psychoanalytic theory is utilized as a political tool for understanding how patriarchal societies unconsciously structure film forms. Mulvey's argument is the psychoanalytic concept of castration, where

forgotten events shaping desires or anxieties are heavily tied to family dynamics and the discovery of sexual differences. The woman who lacks a penis evokes castration anxiety. It symbolises her absence and ushering her child into the symbolic realm. Women's desires are constrained by their portrayal as bearers of a symbolic wound. It always exists in connection to castration without transcending it. Women function as symbolic of the male other in a patriarchal culture. She was confined within a symbolic structure where bare men impose their fantasies and obsessions through linguistic authority by relegating women to the role of bearers of meaning rather than creators.

Psychoanalytic theory serves as a lens to comprehend the entrenched patriarchal system by highlighting how women remain tethered to predefined roles within a structure that favours male expression and control. Mulvey's exploration of the cinematic experience offers various forms of enjoyment, one among them is scopophilia. "There are circumstances in which looking itself is a source of pleasure" (Mulvey, 8). One can derive pleasure in being an object to observation. It links scopophilia to the act of considering others as objects subjected to strong gaze. This leads to the development of one's ego. It also remains as a source for deriving pleasure in observing others as a mere object.

Cinema creates a separation between the nature of what is shown on the big screen with the realm of secret observation in real life. Mainstream films lead to establish ideas to create a self-contained universe. It reveals the negligence of audience presence. The feeling of detachment creates voyeuristic fantasy among the audience. The darkness in the theater separates the viewers from each other. The radiant lights and shadows on the screen allow the viewers to enhance the illusion of detached voyeurism. Viewers were drawn into the suppressed desires of the performer. This leads to a deeper form of visual pleasure known as scopophilia that includes a narcissistic

element. The cinema experience is a mixed exploration of the human self.

The audience finds themselves relating to the hopes and desires of the protagonist on the screen. This creates a narcissistic pleasure which leads to fulfillment in seeing ourselves with the protagonist. This narcissistic pleasure is connected to the mirror stage. When the children recognize themselves in a mirror despite their physical limitations which leads them to a joyous misrecognition. Mulvey links the presence of male characters on screen with the concept of the mirror stage. The act of identifying ourselves with the images on the screen accelerates the growth of one's ego and self-image. The first implies a separation between the viewer's erotic identity and the objects through the spectator's fascination and recognition of their likeness. Throughout its history cinema has crafted a unique illusion of reality that harmoniously accommodates the interplay between libido and ego.

In a world where sexual dynamics influence how we perceive and derive pleasure from looking at others, there's a division between the active or male gaze and the passive or female gaze. The male gaze imposes its desires and fantasies onto the female form which is then shaped to fit these expectations.

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. Women displayed as sexual object is the leit-motiff of erotic spectacle: from pin-ups to strip-tease, from Ziegfeld to Busby Berkeley, she holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire. (Mulvey 11)

The women's presence remains a vital spectacle in conventional narrative films. But paradoxically, her visual impact often hinders the progression of the story causing pauses in action during moments of erotic contemplation. This foreign element

necessitates seamless integration into the narrative's coherence. Women traditionally play a dual role as objects of desire within the story and as objects of erotic fascination for the audience. This division between sexuality and storytelling can break the flow of film narratives. A scene of sexual reflection often brings the action to a cease.

Incorporating female characters into the plot can be quite challenging. Traditionally the displayed woman serves two purposes. They are both desired objects within the story and for the viewers. This will create a dynamic tension between the two ideas. This can be revealed through the concept of showgirl which allows the film to merge these two gazes without affecting the flow of narrative. The spectator and the male characters become engrossed when a woman performs within the story. This will lead to the blending of realistic narratives. These moments in the films go beyond time and space by strengthening its sexual impact. When Marilyn Monroe first appeared in *The River of No Return* or when Lauren Bacall sang in *To Have and Have Not*, provides examples of this phenomenon. By focusing on the single part of the body it disrupts the traditional Renaissance style of depth and illusion. It embraces the two dimensional quality of the narrative. Therefore the film takes on more iconic appearances. This creates a break to the illusion of realism on the screen. The structure of the story is shaped by the influence of dominant ideologies. It strengthens a heterosexual division of labour. The male character takes a powerful and active role in the world of film fantasy. They also avoid being reduced to a mere object of sexual desire.

The man controls the film phantasy and also emerges as the representative of power in a further sense: as the bearer of the look of the spectator, transferring it behind the screen to neutralise the extra-diegetic tendencies represented by women as spectacle. (Mulvey 12)

The male protagonist who represents power grabs the hold of narrative and directs it

forward. He also draws the attention of the audience away from the female spectacle. This is achieved by structuring the film around a dominant male figure. It allows the viewpoints and project their own desires onto him. The viewers may align with the male protagonist erotic gaze by becoming an important part of the films delighting charm. The glamorous traits of a male movie star reflect an idealized ego formed during the original moment of self-recognition. Unlike the iconic woman, the active male figure demands a three-dimensional space mirroring the recognition in front of a mirror, symbolizing the internalization of the subject's representation. The film's role is to reproduce the natural condition of perception that was achieved through camera technology, movements, and invisible editing which blur the limits of screen space. The male protagonist commands a spatial illusion on stage by shaping the look and driving the action.

Commencing with an exploration of the intricate dynamics between the representation of women in film and diegetic conventions that are particularly tied to distinct gazes. One can discern a notable tension arising from the juxtaposition of the direct scopophilic fantasies of the spectator and the allure of a similar figure situated in a natural space. This tension not only serves as a thematic undercurrent but also operates as a structural framework within a single text. It is exemplified vividly in films such as *Only Angels Have Wings* and *To Have and Have Not*. In these cinematic narratives, the woman initially occupies the role of an object subjected to the combined gaze of the spectator and the male protagonist. This gradually leads to a transition of the main male character as the story unfolds. In psychoanalytic terms, the female figures pose a deeper challenge. The look revolves around and denies something like her lack of a penis and it suggests a threat to castration. A women's meaning lies in sexual difference and the absence of a visually ascertainable penis. It leads to form the

basis for the castration complex essential in organizing entrance to the symbolic order and the law of the father. As an icon to display the male gaze, she threatens to evoke the anxiety he originally signified. The male unconscious has two ways to cope with castration anxiety. The first one is a preoccupation with re-enacting the trauma. The second one is demystifying the women, or a complete disavowal through the substitution of a fetish object. Fetishistic scopophilia elevates the physical beauty of the object and makes it inherently satisfying. Voyeurism is associated with sadism that involves pleasure in ascertaining guilt, asserting control and subjecting the guilty person through punishment or forgiveness. This sadistic aspect aligns well with the narrative which demands a story with a battle of wills and a linear progression with a beginning and an end.

Contrastingly the fetishistic scopophilia operates beyond the confines of linear time, as the erotic instinct fixates solely on the gaze. These contradictions and uncertainties find clear illustration in the work of Hitchcock and Stenberg. They often place the act of looking at the forefront of their films. Stenberg's films place visual aesthetics above the narrative through fetishistic scopophilia. He likes to project films upside down by giving importance to the unmixed appreciation of the image on the screen. Stenberg highlights the direct connection between the images and the audience by disturbing the traditional dominant gaze of the male protagonist. It is in contrast to Hitchcock's voyeuristic approach. The female characters are presented as perfect in Stenberg's films. This is evident in his films casting Marlene Dietrich in which the male gaze is present. The protagonist resists with a defeating struggle that reflects the conflict and tensions experienced by the viewers. This is evident in Hitchcock's realm of scopophilia eroticism. It acts as a vibration between voyeuristic tendencies and fetishistic addiction. In Hitchcock's film *Vertigo* he employs a camera technique that

invites the audience to follow the protagonist's erotic obsession. When Scottie places Judy as his ideal image in the film his voyeurism and sadistic desire come to life. The narrative disorients the spectators by implicating them through the character's processes and moral ambiguity of looking. Hitchcock's heroes who serve as representatives of the symbolic order become complicit in their erotic drives and blur the lines between active and passive roles.

The exploration of the male gaze theory unveils cinema's manipulation of scopophilic instincts that reflect patriarchal ideologies. Cinema's unique ability to shape desire through complicated looks challenges mainstream conventions. It concludes by highlighting the inherent tension in traditional film structures that proposes a shift towards freeing the camera's look and engaging the audience in the dialectic.

The theory helps to evaluate character development through dialogues and plotlines to determine if the film popularises conventional gender roles. It even facilitates exploring how cinematic techniques that include shot composition, lighting and symbolism contribute to the male gaze. The male gaze theory extends beyond film analysis to provide a broader social and cultural commentary. It facilitates discussions on gender norms, empowerment and representation. This theory stands as a potent tool for film analysis that allows for a nuanced exploration of how directors navigate and depict gender dynamics in their cinematic works.

Chapter 2

Unmasking The Male Gaze In Omar Lulu's Films

Malayalam cinema has undergone significant evolution since its inception in the early 20th century. Today, it stands as one of the most vibrant and flourishing film industries in India, producing exceptional films that have gained global recognition for their quality and content. The success of Malayalam cinema can be attributed, in part to the evolving tastes and preferences of the audience. Contemporary Malayalam films are characterized by their commitment to realism, compelling narratives, and relatable characters. It goes beyond mere entertainment, actively addressing crucial social issues and igniting meaningful conversations. However, despite industrial progress, it is essential to acknowledge that some directors still perpetuate problematic portrayals of women, treating them as objects of the male gaze. Often, women are depicted as objects of desire- sexy, playful, coy, and decidedly feminine.

Omar Lulu is a famous Malayalam film director who is popular for his depiction of women through the male gaze. It was mainly found in his movies like *Chunkzz*, *Dhamaka* and *Happy Wedding*. His films are widely praised for their entertainment value. But it is important to examine the ideologies and power dynamics that influence his portrayal of women. By focusing on woman's physical beauty and attractiveness he tries to objectify women. In most of his films, the female characters are presented as mere objects for gaze. Balancing the representation of the female characters without objectification is very important in positive and respectful storytelling. Designing their costumes and body language in a very careful manner can reduce making them as mere objects for the male audience. His movies not only popularise the gender notion that women exist for male pleasure. It also strengthens the patriarchal norms that value women only for their physical beauty rather than their talents.

Omar Lulu's film *Chunkzz* released in 2017 focuses on the male gaze. The main characters in the film are Balu Varghese the hero named Romario and the heroine Honey Rose named Riya. This film is based on the enjoyable lifestyle of Romario and his friends in an engineering college. The plot centers around the relationship between Romario and Riya when she joins as a new student in his class. They even gave her the nickname 'Mec Rani' because she was the only girl in the mechanical department. Being the only girl in the department she catches the eyes of all. The film contains a significant amount of male gaze, with scopophilia playing an active role throughout the narrative. The heroine and other female characters experience objectification. Their clothing choices and exaggerated appearances are rigorously designed to appeal to both the spectators and the male protagonist.

The initial instance of the male gaze occurs in a scene where the professor arranges for a female lecturer instead of him to take a class. The camera moves from the lecturer's expressive face to her waist by pointing to the grace of her form. As she moves forward, the camera delicately captures the enchanting contours of her back, creating a glamorous lure that captivates the gaze of the students. The students remarked on her graceful walk, likening it to a gentle breeze. In this scene, she is positioned as the "bearer of meaning, not maker" (Mulvey, 7) suggesting their portrayal lacks agency and individuality, and confines them to passive roles designed for observation through an objectified lens. These forcefully degrade women from dominant roles to an object for the male gaze. This is evident in Riya's introduction scene. The camera captures her overall appearance and attractive smile while she walks from one side to the center of the frame. Romario and his friends were instantly drawn to her attractive look. They anxiously wished for her attention. In another scene Romario and his group fearlessly enter the girl's hostel. They peer through the window

to catch the sight of girls dancing and enjoying themselves. The lively atmosphere inside the hostel attracts them. Romario and his friends were excited because of the cheerful moments in the hostel room. In this scene scopophilia is evident as it presents a world that is “indifferent to the presence of the audience, producing for them a sense of separation and playing on their voyeuristic phantasy”(Mulvey, 9). The term ‘voyeuristic’ implies a sense of watching others without their knowledge.

A similar scene of voyeurism takes place in the movie during their Goa trip. When Romario enters the room they share, he catches a glimpse of Riya’s shadow through the bathroom glass while she is bathing. The shape of her body is evident in the shadow, sparking excitement in Romario. After this scene the camera moves from her toe to the top. Romario became captivated by her tempting look, and gathered the courage to tell her about his feelings. He says to her, “Oh god! What attire is this? It’s tempting to lose one’s control”(*Chunkzz*; 00:55:10; my trans.). By expressing his desire, he utters these lustful words to her with a lingering gaze as she wears a short top. The next scene takes place during a song that resembles an item dance. Riya executes provocative moves by wearing a shirt and shorts. Her alluring steps provide a source of pleasure for Romanio. This scene provides the audience with a space to create their voyeuristic fantasy. Mulvey proves this in her essay through the example of *Peeping Tom*. This scene in *Chunkzz* has similarities to Peeping Tom hiding in the dark and looking into a lit window. The dark atmosphere in these scenes creates a contrast between the auditorium’s darkness and the on-screen illumination, which distances viewers from the characters, and events happening on screen pull them into a world that evolves in front of them. “Condition of the screening and narrative conventions give the spectator an illusion of looking in on a private world” (Mulvey, 9). In another scene,

Romario's friends inquire about any intimacy between him and Riya. Romario asserts that everything happened. To prove it, he takes off his shirt and snaps pictures with her while she is sleeping, with the camera focusing on her body. The photos are sent to his friends, who zoom in for a closer look. They make comments comparing Riya and Sunny Leone. This moment highlights an instance of male gaze and objectification with the dynamics of the group. Furthermore, the cinematography in *Chunkzz* frequently emphasizes the female character's body. The camera often focuses on the close-ups and specific features of the female body rather than her individuality. The harmful gaze of the audience gradually turns to the real world's objectification. Throughout the movie, Omar Lulu has created a foundation for normalizing objectification.

Omar Lulu gained significant attention and controversy in his 2020 movie *Dhamaka*. It focuses on the depiction of female characters through the eyes of its male protagonists. The film delves into the diverse ways in which men perceive and engage with women, reducing women to objects of gaze. The movie was criticised for missing opportunities to utilize humour; instead, they opted for a portrayal of sexual frustration. The plot revolves around Eyo's father who urges him to marry wealthy divorcee Annie. Intimacy issues arise among them after their marriage due to their inability to reproduce a baby, they turn to IVF for a solution. During a check-up at the government hospital, Eyo confides to the doctor who advises against unethical practices. Following a relaxing honeymoon, Eyo realizes the prescribed medicine was just vitamins to boost confidence. Months later, the family joyfully celebrates the arrival of a new member. The cast consisted of Arun and Nikki Galrani. It is important to appreciate actors for their talent and skills rather than focusing solely on physical attributes. The movie is also criticised for overacting and stereotyping. Dharmajan was a co-actor in *Dhamaka*

his character is presented through a male lens as someone who is engaged in the objectification of women. The first instance of the male gaze takes place in a beauty parlor, where Dharmajan catches sight of a woman. The woman's body and face are objectified with a close-up shot of her face and the flow of her hair in the breeze. There was a similar scene when Arun and Dharmajan arrived to meet the girl his father had arranged for marriage. Dharmajan still proceeded the same gaze to the girl's sister. The camera moves from a side angle emphasize her figure as a hot girl capable of arousing desire. As she descends from the stairs into the room the camera captures her full body, objectifying her physical features. This scene is primarily pushed by active roles played by men, while women often play passive roles. Women are seen as erotic objects, which slows down the narrative. Women served as a source for men to objectify them with their gaze. The heroine's introduction scene is set near a pond, she rests beneath an umbrella, engrossed in a book. She was in a short dress, and the camera glided from her legs to her elegant face. As she begins to walk, the camera catches a close-up of her legs from a side angle. Passing by the hero, an intense gaze is exchanged. This incident makes women a passive object. They are visualized for the enjoyment of men. Often the male protagonist is "free to command the stage" (Mulvey, 13). The presence of women is a crucial spectacle in a normal narrative film. Yet her visual presence tends to work against the development of the storyline. The heroine in *Dhamaka* has an identical situation of gaze as in the Marilyn Monroe scene in the movie *The River of No Return*. Both movies contain a close-up shot of legs. This short exemplifies how the camera fragmented actresses. So the audience would focus on their bodies rather than her thoughts and emotions. By representing women through the male gaze, the movie intentionally continues a culture that devalues women.

Happy Wedding is yet another movie released in 2016 made by Omar Lulu. The plot is based on Hari and the problems he faced during his relationship. In the end, his cousin Manu and a motivational speaker decide to help him in his life. The male gaze scene takes place in a college setting where a group of individuals uses a telescope to observe girls. Their voyeuristic act is evident when they zoom in on facial features like lips and eyes. They find pleasure in this behaviour. At the same time, another person redirects the focus towards other girls by objectifying her breasts. It generates a mode of looking that is sexual and voyeuristic from the male protagonist's point of view. He even assumes her breast size based on his looks and shares it with his friends. As Mulvey articulates, women in cinema are defined by their quality of to-be-looked-at-ness. This implies that women exist primarily for someone else, particularly for male characters.

But the essential way of seeing women, the essential use to which their images are put, has not changed, Women are depicted in a quite different way from men because the feminine is different from the masculine but because the 'ideal' spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him. (John Berger 64)

Through *Happy Wedding*, Omar Lulu ultimately reinforces conventional gender roles in which the male characters assert dominance, and the female characters obediently accept their roles by being the bearer of their gaze.

His application of male gaze lenses in these movies has created immense attention and controversy for this cringe comedy about women's bodies. It is crucial to acknowledge the ways women are portrayed in these movies. These movies also unfold deep-rooted patriarchal structures and power dynamics. Filmmakers like him must

break away from the male gaze and instead create content that promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women.

He is also known for his distinct humorous filmmaking style. He even employs a cheap technique such as abusive jokes to create humour. Humour is a quality that evokes amusement, laughter, or entertainment. It involves the ability to perceive and appreciate the amusing aspects of situations, ideas, or expressions. Humour in movies often relies on clever and witty dialogues that elicit laughter or amusement. But Omar Lulu's movies create humour to oppress women. He has a special way of addressing the struggles of young adults with a mix of comedy and drama. By adding cultural elements, local nuances and relatable situations used in this narrative creates a wide range of viewers. He has been criticized for his tendency to depict the male gaze in his movies. Some have blamed his work for objectifying female characters to create humour.

It strengthens gender stereotypes and depends on female characters for entertainment. For example in, *Chunkzz* he presents a lecturer before the students as an object for gaze. She was sent by a professor to ensure attendance. But she was unknowingly made the center of attention. The main character and his friends received a message alerting them of Sonia miss's unexpected arrival. They hurriedly went to the classroom without wasting any time. They exchanged jokes about her sudden appearance. One of them made a joke that conveyed a sense of their enjoyment regarding Sonia miss appealing presence "Are we in the wrong class because everyone is present? No wonder Sonia miss is in the class! It will be always houseful!" (*Chunkzz*; 00:14:31; my trans.). The heroine becomes subjected to humorous comments based on her body in several scenes. In the introduction scene, the hero and his friends try to attract her by introducing themselves. The camera focuses on different parts of

her body as the boys gaze at her. She was subjected to public comments such as she is quite a *chrakku* which means ware. It is a term used for improper remarks about women in Malayali culture. The character's playful desire was shown fully by creating situational humour. This shows the director's inability to generate genuine laughs through different creative means. Omar Lulu intended to create a negative impact on the viewers by using humour in their interactions. This reduces women only to mere objects for amusement.

The young characters in his movies were represented with all kinds of bad habits such as drinking and smoking. They also make sexual comments about women's bodies. *Chunkzz* mainly focuses on the male audience who would like to enjoy humour filled experience of objectification. It's difficult to praise his movies. The female audience felt offended unless they were comfortable with embarrassing jokes. When the male gaze is used as a source of humour in films that creates issues surrounding power imbalances it may reduce the serious nature of power dynamics. This also promotes a culture where harassment is widely viewed as harmless jokes.

In *Dhamaka* there is a scene when a female character appears in a yellow dress with a background comic tune. It reduces the male character's gaze into humour. The use of humour in this scene lacks experience which shows the director's tactless approach. This leads the issues regarding the choice of humorous quality within the film. It also emphasises offensive content. In another example of the male gaze one of the male characters approaches a lady for her attention. He presented as if he was on a phone call and requested her to note down a number and force her to send him a message. The comical twist with a background tone reduces his gaze into humour. In the heroine's introduction scene, the hero and his friend become enthused by her attractive appearance. The hero casually says, "If she is the one, I don't mind whether

she has been married twice or thrice”(Dhamaka; 00:31:03; my trans.) turning the scene into comedy based on his attraction to her figure. Playfully, his friend suggests that if he plans to marry her, he should first gift her a traditional outfit, especially since she’s currently dressed in a way that reveals her legs and shoulders. The dialogue spoken by the male character reflects a perspective rooted in the male gaze and the presentation of such remarks as humour adds a layer to the scene. Using comedy as a tool to address and diminish the impact of the male gaze in films raises potential concerns. While it may be intended to challenge stereotypes, there is a risk of trivializing or oversimplifying complex issues related to the objectification of women. It’s essential to critically assess whether this approach effectively dismantles harmful norms or unintentionally perpetuates them through humour.

Happy Wedding also includes scenes that humorously satirize societal attitudes toward women’s bodies. The film uses wit to shed light on the abused expectations placed on women. The humour targeting the female body is predominantly situated within the hero’s college experiences. The male professors are portrayed as easily captivated by women’s bodies. During a practical exam using a telescope. The male characters playfully divert the camera focus to women’s breasts, accompanied by comments like “It’s zoomed in bro!, Tell me the measurements. Almost 32. Tell me correctly, then go and ask her yourself! (*Happy Wedding*; 00:37:51; my trans.). Their teacher interrupts them, revealing that it’s 34, turning the situation into humorous as the characters become shy in front of their professor. This scene reduces women to objectified images, using their physical features as a basis for mockery. The story unfolds a scene as the head of the department initially rejects the hero’s record book, but with a comical twist, he quickly changes his decision when a female student presents it. The professor looks at female students as she leaves and comments about

who found out over court upon their uniform. This scene mocks the irrationality of favoring surface-level aspects such as gender over merit. Omar Lulu in his film strengthens stereotypes and preserves traditional gender roles by using humour in the portrayal of the male gaze. This will only help to normalize the harmful behaviours and attitudes in films. It also prevents progress towards more comprehensive and unbiased equitable representation in the media. This may minimize the seriousness of the underlying issues such as objectification and the different power dynamics between gender.

Conclusion

The use of the male gaze for humour in Omar Lulu's films may lead the viewers away from seeking out stories that promote progress and inclusivity. The spectators who give importance to diverse and respectful depictions of gender and sexuality may not be ready to accept these outdated tropes. Sometimes the attitudes of the society may undergo certain changes. In such cases, the filmmakers must be aware of the consequences of their choices. It is very important to balance humour with responsible representation. When we conduct a detailed study about Omar Lulu's films we will get a chance to disrupt traditional conventions. It also gives us a chance to question stereotypes and infuse stories with empowerment. It has the power to cultivate a film industry that captivates and celebrates inclusivity. A negative impact of the male gaze on women still exists in the cinematic world. It may foster mental health struggles and diminish self-confidence by reinforcing patriarchal norms and imposing limited standards of beauty. The distribution of female characters to inferior roles for male satisfaction may perpetuate a toxic power dynamic. Through the objectification of women in his films Omar Lulu tries to add feelings of inadequacy. It also shapes the minds of young viewers to watch women through the lens of the male gaze. His characters face many obstructions because of the exaggeration of their roles. It can contribute to unrealistic beauty standards and negatively impact women's self-esteem, fostering image issues. It may sometimes generate an idea that women mainly exist as objects for amusement.

The movies of Omar Lulu which have been taken for this study consist of the same technique that is aimed at the youth audience. Even though he says that his films are mainly focused on the youth and family audience there are some elements for the older crowd. It is evident in the case of the film *Dhamaka*. He makes this shift possible

through the frequent use of double-meaning humour. As a family entertainment, *Dhamaka* takes a different approach that raises concerns about its impact on the youth audience and may convey a message that is harmful and inappropriate. The problems that are included in this film contribute to larger societal issues. Especially issues like sexual harassment. The narrative inadvertently encourages the idea that a woman's body is mainly for the pleasure of men by using humour to objectify women's bodies. Thus men have complete control over how it is portrayed. This dangerous portrayal may encourage young viewers to comment on and objectify women's bodies. They will also get an idea that is acceptable to society and even pleasurable. Certain scenes in the movies such as *Chunkzz* and *Happy Wedding* within the college settings are examples of this. Students may tend to internalize ideas based on commenting on women and their emotions as normal behaviour. In these films, the male students make some inappropriate comments about female lectures. Thus they create an impression that lustful jokes and unrestricted commentary on women are permissible. The disobedience shown towards these teachers contributes to normalizing such behaviour.

Omar Lulu seems to play a role in potentially influencing the younger generation with attitudes that could be considered derogatory, as these scenarios are depicted in his movies. This raises concerns about the potential perpetuation of harmful attitudes towards women. It also emphasizes the need for a more responsible and thoughtful approach to filmmaking while targeting the youth audience. Placing the male characters as great heroes who are free to comment on women will also create a narcissistic scopophilia for audiences. The men who watch these movies will get the impression that this picture is of an ideal man who takes control of women through his vulgar jokes. Thus they automatically give their narcissistic ideas to the hero and he ideals this hero in his real life as a role model. This eventually turns into sadistic

narcissism in their life. Because the spectator will turn it out on a person as the hero does in movies. He may openly joke about women based on their physical appearance. This may cause the woman psychological pain at this point it turns out to be sadistic narcissism.

By granting men the freedom to use women as objects for jokes, Omar Lulu contributes to the construction of a consciousness that positions women as inherently inferior. His movies popularize traditional gender roles that view women as emotional, passive and irrational. The characters within his films reflect the societal expectations that limit women to predefined roles that reinforce harmful gender norms. Omar Lulu tries to internalize that females are subordinate to men. The women characters who remain silent in response to their body-related comments convey a message that women should remain silent on matters related to their bodies. Even though society has developed a lot women still encounter situations such as comments on their physical appearance. Today's youths are greatly influenced by social media like YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat. The women influencers in these media often face negative comments on their dressing styles and outlooks. The humorous portrayal of the male gaze in movies serves as license for youngsters to make such negative comments. Women in real life may not accept such comments sometimes they will turn to trauma or depression. In the case of Omar Lulu's films it is different. The female characters are portrayed as they are enjoying these vulgar comments.

Many women have to face staring and inappropriate comments from men in public places. But they remain silent in such a situation to maintain a good girl image. Sometimes women may experience fear due to castration anxiety. If a woman speaks against men in such situations, they may be subjected to negative social consequences. Thus they are forced to remain silent in many cases. The scenes that feature men being

objected to or subjected to their physical appearance are rarely shown in any movies. This discrimination between men and women will send a wrong message to society. It implies that women should accept insensitive remarks from men without speaking out. Thus the men who feel comfort in cracking such jokes still continue to do so. But women who stand against it even find societal norms expect them to be silent so they never get the courage to do so. This silence is shown in movies as an accepted norm. Essentially, Omar Lulu seems to reinforce the idea that women should bear the brunt of sexual jokes rather than stand up against such objectification. Examining these films through the lens of the male gaze allows us to grasp that in today's Kerala society, sexist comments directed at women are often trivialized as inconsequential matters.

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