

Representation of Women's Inferiority in Nepali Fashion Magazine

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Abstract: Advertising affects everyone. The idea I explore in my work is that Nepali Fashion Magazine, advertising images 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. 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 strategy.

Keywords: Male Consumer Gaze, Sexualization, Advertising, Branding, Objectified, phallic power, erotic female body, visual impact

1. Introduction

The inferiority of women in today's society remains a problem that is only demonstrated further by continuing to allow and accept the male gaze. The ways in which women are objectified in Nepali fashion magazine, *Nari* is what frames their roles in society today. By placing women in the positions, they are consistently put in today in all forms of media, their inferiority to men is made clear. They are seen as sexual objects rather than true human beings. As they continue to be shown and viewed in this way, the self-esteem of many females will continue to be compromised. The women's image in *The Nari* is the major focus rather than product itself. The erotic female body, as portrayed in the commercial advertisements, is so much imagined in terms of beauty, charm, elegance, softness, that may confirm the culture of patriarchal gendered category of binaries on the one hand. And other, implicit, it reinforces the ideology of the traditional male values and qualities: physical strength and muscles, phallic power, competitiveness, aggressiveness. The Nepalese commercial magazine, *Nari* thus are guided by the influence of overpowering male gaze.

The advertisements are structured in a way that portray the women characters there in as passive sexual objects merely to be looked at and the male characters as the principle viewers through the continuous reinforcement and broadcasting beautiful. Disciplined, docile, working in the kitchens, mass media like television from an ideology about females' virtual reality. They create a world of psychological influenced up on the audiences and arouse voyeuristic male gaze towards females. The major concern of the paper is that Nepalese news paper commercial advertisements. Represent women as object to be surveyed by representing them as passive objects of sexual desire. The female body becomes a highly commoditized and commercially successful artifact. The *Nari*, daily commercial magazine provides the paradigms for

analysis of for notion of ideology and operation of male gaze in the pages.

John Berger once said, "Men 'act' and women 'appear'. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at". This quote has helped us understand exactly what the male gaze is. For feminists and women, the male gaze can be thought of in three different ways. How men look at women, how women look at themselves and how women look at other women. Similarly, Nepali magazine *Nari* holds a long tradition of these different 'looks' and it continues into modern advertising: in advertisements and many different movies and T.V. scenes.

The male gaze operates in viewing produced cinema or television commercials advertisements through a voyeuristic fantasy, but it also operates through fetishism. This occurs especially when a male confronts a female body in such a situation where the male viewer is visible to female also. The male gaze is said to be Laura Mulvey, emerges whenever male sees female body parts, which reminds them of "castration anxiety". and male gaze is the way out to overcome the "castration anxiety" (Mulvey).so, depending on the situation, the male gaze leads either to fetishization of women's body parts or voyeuristic victimization of the fetish. Advertisements which cater to the expectation of female voyeuristic gaze could best be seen in Nepali fashion magazine, *Nari*.

The image in screen provides the viewers the immediate experience and pleasure. So, the creators of television commercials advertisements follow their impulses for pleasure gained by looking it. As Jeremy Hawthorn argues, looking is far from being a neutral process of information gathering "Our looking activities are saturated with the residues of our social and cultural existence-for example, those relating to class, sexuality and economics".the literal and the metaphorical gaze are inseparably connected to an interest in differential gender roles. Hawthorn further writes that "in the standard

formulation: men look, women are looked at. Not just this, but if the owner of the gaze has power, then this gendered relation to the gaze is both product of patriarchy (the power exercised by men over women) and also a way of reinforcing male dominance". The voyeuristic observation of a woman by male is not just a convenient metaphor for physical violence such as rape in the real world, it is often directly linked to and even a prelude to such violence.

In the same way the "gaze" exists in the field of photography and film. The careful and curious focus of the cinema upon the individual, Foucault argues, possesses a power that dominates whose is being recorded or photographed. This is what he calls "surveillance effect" which could also be described with the particular example of Foucault's panoptical prison "where prisoners are taken into control to see all the prisoners in their cell but disables the prisoners to see their observer while they are aware of the fact that someone is keeping a constant eye over them" .so this is gaze which has the power of looking, controlling ,dominating .similarly in Nepalese commercial fashion magazines women are shown as persuasive object to the consumers. Thus representative image of female in the magazine is controlled and regulated by capitalist male gaze. The repeated controlling of male creates hegemonic effects upon female behavior; the female takes male gaze as natural and allows them to represent their body in the media as per the need of capitalist. But this allows of female effect on their social statuses.

Frederickson and Roberts agree that sexual gazing is what enables sexual objectification, and when these acts occur women's body parts are what defines her as a person rather than her personality. The objectifying gaze, according to Fredrickson and Roberts, is noticeable in three different instances; the first being in public places with an actual social encounter and in most cases women of color is more apt to get a sexual comment with the gaze than a white woman. The second scenario would be objectification in the media that portrays a likeness of a real encounter in which a male is gazing at a female while the female doesn't notice the attention, and her attention is directed at something else. The "male gaze" would be a good way to describe the third objectification instance in our society. Fredrickson and Roberts describe the third instance in terms credited to Laura Mulvey, and the "male gaze". They see this visual media sexual objectification as being the most threatening in our culture. The "male gaze" is not limited. To pornography; in fact, it is portrayed throughout many films, live television, and fashion advertisement. While men are mostly represented in detail facial view, women are mainly shown as body parts alone. These media tactics are actually provoking sexual objectification in our culture today.

Advertisements which cater to the expectation of female voyeuristic gaze could best be seen in the Narimagazine:



Figure 1

Source: image captured by Author

As the photo of advertisement convey, the sandalswearer by a beautiful Nepalese celebrity, to motivate the consumer. But effect is contradicted by the image of the women presented. More than attachments, the advertisement focuses in arising sexual desire to the audience/readers through the presentation of women in one-piece costume. Besides, the advertisement focal point is on the fetish parts of the women: exposed arm, breast, neck and stylish legs and belly. The woman is presented as a sexual object to be viewed by voyeurs. To supply a secure position for the voyeuristic male gaze, the woman is made to smile her mouth while unclothes her upward so that voyeur could fearlessly watch her as there will be no possibility questioning on the voyeur. This is a necessary spectacle for creating pleasure of looking for the voyeurs, as voyeurs could only peep or secretly watch. In this advertisement, the "scopophilia" or the pleasure of looking is the central force that is guiding the designer in its production.



Figure 2

Source: the image captured by Author

This photo advertisement of Nari displays the image of a woman with different hair style and naked body. But yet she is presented together with the juice could be analyzed as one of the effects of the male gaze. But the advertisement makes sense as if the males are only the consumer of the product. The women's image in the advertisement is the major focus rather

than product itself. her stylish body, half paint, different colors will be produced sexual attachment to the male.

The erotic female body, as portrayed in the above mentioned in the Nary commercial magazine, is so much imagined in terms of beauty, charm, elegance, softness, that may confirm the culture of patriarchal gendered category of binaries on the one hand. And other, implicit, it reinforces the ideology of the traditional male values and qualities: physical strength and muscles, phallic power, competitiveness, aggressiveness. The Nepalese commercial magazine like Narithus are guided by the influence of overpowering male gaze.

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