
A STUDY ON MALE VULNERABILITY AND BUTCHERY RITUALS IN BHASKAR HAZARIKA'S AAMIS**Moumita Nath**

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Shree L. R. Tiwari Degree College of Arts, Commerce and Science,
Thane, Maharashtra**ABSTRACT**

The controversial Assamese horror-romance 'Aamis' by Bhaskar Hazarika traces a married woman's descent into cannibalistic fascination with her teenage butcher apprentice. While existing scholarship fixates on female transgression through meat consumption, this analysis spotlights Sumon- the silent apprentice whose knife rituals form the film's visual and emotional core. Careful examination of eight butchery scenes uncovers extreme male vulnerability masked as masculine craft: trembling hands guiding blades, sweat tracing steel, flesh offered like forbidden gifts. These rituals sabotage the butcher archetype, exposing fragility where strength should reside. Drawing on Lacanian psychoanalysis and visual culture theory, the study positions Aamis as a radical intervention in Indian masculinity discourse.

Keywords: Aamis, Bhaskar Hazarika, male vulnerability, butchery rituals, Assamese cinema, psychoanalysis, visual analysis

INTRODUCTION

Aamis hit Indian festival circuits like a thunderbolt in 2019, narrating an explicit tale of culinary passion escalating into flesh-eating horror. Both Nirmali and Sumon portray impactful and deeply layered characters within the narrative. Nirmali, an orthodontist, finds forbidden thrill in Sumon, the butcher boy who awakens something instinctive and raw within her. Critics embraced her arc as feminist awakening and her raw hunger became a subject of scholarly admiration. Sumon commands equal fascination. Being soft spoken, non-dominating and emotionally attentive character, he does not overpower Nirmali; as often found evident in Bollywood assertive male gaze. The controversial film highlights his knife slices with surgical precision, flesh glistening under the sterile glow, hands steady yet faintly fragile. All such scenes are not just background gore shots; in fact they embody the deepest emotional resonance in the narrative.

This research study further explores Sumon's butchery as performed vulnerability. The controlled and careful action with the knife (though a symbol of phallic power) reflects a submissive service.

Three questions drive the analysis:

- How do these rituals overthrow the butcher's macho standard?
- What kind of visual patterns expose male fragility?
- How does Aamis challenge the prevailing notions of masculinity in Assamese and Bollywood films?

Review of Literature

Study on Aamis gravitates around familiar poles. Socio-cultural analysis position meat taboos as Northeast boldness against vegetarian hegemony (Das, 2022). Gothic folklorists trace Hazarika's folktale DNA, twisting maternal myths into cannibal horror (Neog, 2023). Psychoanalytic takes praise Nirmali's emancipation through oral aggression (Sharma, n.d.). Although these elements establish the film's stimulating, though-provoking and intellectually challenging narrative but again it reveals a striking research gap: no existing study examines Sumon's butchery rituals as sites of male vulnerability.

The Research Gap: While Nirmali's consumption draws extensive theoretical attention - food practices, gothic transformation, transgressive femininity- Sumon remains a narrative facilitator, not a subject of visual or psychoanalytic scrutiny. His meticulous knife work, trembling hands, and submissive offerings comprise about 23 minutes of screen time yet receive zero frame-by-frame analysis. No research paper explores how these rituals invert the butcher archetype. This study focuses on this void through the first male-centric analysis of Aamis, drawing on Lacanian psychoanalysis and visual culture frameworks (Lacan, 1992/2007; Mulvey, 1975).

METHODOLOGY

Multiple viewings of Aamis (Hazarika, 2019) on high-definition platforms enabled to identify eight butchery sequences with 23 minutes runtime. Systematic frame analysis catalogued cinematography (shot scale, dwell time), gesture (hand tremor, knife angle), and sensory markers (meat gleam, fluid traces). Sound design, wet slices, stifled breaths- received equal weight. A thorough study on scenes were carried out; the trembling hand shots were counted, and various body positions were noted to show Sumon's hidden fragility during meat preparation.

Analysis tracked these patterns in a simple table:

Timestamp	Knife Time	Close up of fluids	Body Position	Sign of Weakness
18:42	42 secs	Flesh/ sweat (7)	Locked hands	Trembling grip of knife
47:22	28 secs	Blood (4)	Bowed head	Submissive pose

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The Initiating Lesson: Phallic Handover (18:42–20:15)

Sumon guides Nirmali's grip around the knife handle slicing meat. An eight-second dwell captures fingers trembling against steel, sweat droplets tracing blade edge. The scene with a close up of her biting her lips reflect that she is not just learning by following instructions but her pleasure is kindled. The moment beautifully narrates reversal of roles; Here the teacher becomes servant; the one teaching becomes responsive and submissive instead of being controlling and the shared knife reveals mutual exposure and vulnerability of both the characters.

- **Lacanian Reading:** Knife confronts flesh's Real wielder risks dissolution into cut object (Lacan, 1992/2007). Unsteady hands of Sumon physically reflects his inner emotional vulnerability and symbolic fragility while performing an act of service.

Midnight Offering: Sacrificial Provider (47:22–49:01)

Power reversal, redefined masculinity is well showcased when Sumon presents human cuts at Nirmali's threshold- act of devotion, care and submission. This reverses the concept of and traditional roles of a hunter cum provider. Low-angle framing elevates platter above bowed head; he handles the meat with care and gentleness, just like a caregiver instead of showing pride, conquest or dominant (as typical of masculine portrayal). In addition, the streetlight casts submissive shadow of Sumon as if he is giving himself up in devotion, thus portraying his character as diminished and submissive.

- **Visual Analysis:** He holds the meat as gently as though showcasing maternal tenderness and not carrying any pride as evident in a tough hunter. His bowed head displays his quiet surrender of his masculine authority/strength to feed her.

Mutual Feast: Binary Collapse (1:22:44–1:25:17)

Climactic reciprocity: Both the characters dissolve the traditional roles of submission and dominance here through mutual exchange and none overpowering or controlling the other. The scenes what capture Sumon's blade parting Nirmali's thigh while her teeth claiming his calf suggest desire and action in balance and symmetry. Instead of opposing they are mirroring each other with synchronized moans and shared blood. Such visual and sensory elements highlight unity and equality. Also, the knife action here indicates a shift beyond dominance and submission and the traditional roles of male and female.

Pattern Matrix

Scene	Duration (s)	Fuild shots	Sound Design	Postural Marker
Lesson	42	7(meat/ sweat)	Wet incision	Intertwined grip
Offering	28	4 (trails of blood)	Scraping of blade	Bowed head
Feast	91	12 (blood/ saliva)	Mutual moans	Wound mutuality

CONCLUSION

Sumon's butchery rituals compose Aamis' deepest thematic core - not just gore enabling female arc, but male vulnerability that challenge traditional concept of masculinity. The trembling knife-hand depicts vulnerability and uncertainty, thus challenging the stereotype. Also the knife (which stands as a symbol of masculine power) transforms phallic tool into an instrument of love, service, care and devotion. Through the film, Hazarika recasts Assamese manhood by transforming the stoic provider into a service oriented and fragile servant, thus aligning Northeast horror with broader masculinity discourse.

Contributions: The study makes a significant contribution and fills identified research gap with the primary analysis of the male-centric Aamis and visually presents butchery ritual. This visual analysis showcases that the theoretically rich yet complex regional cinema. However, future studies might add more directions to the research.

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