CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE STREET ART OF LAHORE CITY

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Abstract

This research carries out a critical discourse analysis of the street art of Lahore city, Pakistan. It aims to advocate the concrete manifestation of culture, heritage, values, diverse stylistic execution, unarticulated thoughts and emotions, and promotion of egalitarianism through the street art of Lahore city. The methodology used in this research is photo elicitation in which the pictures of significant street art of Lahore city are captured and the ideology behind them is illustrated. A classical view holds true for analysis and discussion of representation in art, thus imbuing street art with a deeper significance as the artist's vision. Furthermore, each of the wall art categories evaluates the social context of the pictures concerning the culture, lifestyle, and traditions of the people of Pakistan using **Visual social semiotics theory (Jewitt and Oyama 2001)** which tends to explain that every image is not just a single element rather encodes multiple social contexts, processes and depicts a collective identity of people. It can be seen explicitly how the dynamics of the contemporary city of Lahore are encoded in the dialectics of its art through street art graffiti analyzed with another theory named **Social Actors' theory (Van Leeuwen 2008)** which interprets the pictures in terms of Social actors being shown actively or passively corresponding to the real-life inclusion and exclusion of humans in terms gender, age or profession, etc. in a specific society. The research examines the various tensions that are inherent in the production of that art as a product to be consumed. Simultaneously, the research also looks at street art as a meaningful activity whose meaning is encoded in its presentation.

Index Terms: Critical Discourse Analysis, Street Art, Lahore City, Visual Social Semiotics, Social Actors, Collective Identity, Inclusion, Exclusion, Social Context.

1. INTRODUCTION

Graffiti or art is a reflection of realism rather than just being an abstract convention. It not only brings forward the explicit portrayal of a civilization but also the underlying realities of a society. This paper aims to analyze the wall art graffiti in the city of Lahore, Pakistan. Wall art or street art is visual art created for the public that can serve many purposes such as cultural representation or moral awareness etc. The anatomy of the pictures is reviewed through the following three approaches:

1) **Visual social semiotics theory (Jewitt and Oyama 2001)** tends to explain that an image is not just a singular entity of art rather it is a whole social process that inculcates the individual and collective reflection of the people alongside interpreting the social context of the pictures regarding culture, lifestyle, and traditions of the people of Pakistan.

2) **Social Actors' theory (Van Leeuwen 2008)** with the help of its two categories namely 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' explains how events and actors portray in pictures such that a social meaning can be interpreted.

With the help of the above-mentioned theories, the wall art and its categories will be analyzed to manifest the underlying realities and the culture of the people of Pakistan.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social constructivism refers to the interaction, reciprocity, or interrelatedness between social groups in which people construct ideas based on shared meanings and collaboratively make communion or a culture. All the learning and exchange of ideas takes place in this cultural setting where the social beings perform various roles to add meaning and connotations to the culture, therefore called social constructivism.

Social constructionism originated as an attempt to come to terms with the nature of reality. It emerged some thirty years ago and has its origins in sociology and has been associated with the post-modern era in qualitative research. This is linked to the hyperbolic doubt posed by Bacon, the idea about how observations are an accurate reflection of the world that is being observed (Murphy et al., 1998).

Social constructivism is a sociological theory of knowledge according to which human development is socially situated and knowledge is constructed through interaction with others. (McKinley, 2015). It is a part of social ontology that is an effect of established relations between the people of a community and how they make an exchange of meanings to construct the reality around them.

Human development can be considered as an output of social constructivism which can be situated as well as conditioned according to the construction or change in perceptions of the society at large, respectively. The link between social constructivism and human development can be laid upon the basis of interaction, communication, and the exchange of ideas.

With attention given to social hierarchy, power, and communication, as human development evolved further, 'Critical Discourse Analysis' emerged from 'Critical linguistics' in the 1970s. The understanding and comprehension of social context concerning language gave rise to Critical Discourse Analysis which further analyzed the social systems, cultural portrayals, ideological and political praxis, new communications and learning technologies, conflict resolution, career paths, criminality, justice, survivability, and identity, as well as a higher quality of life including human development and the concerns of a global community as a whole.

Critical discourse Analysis (CDA) aims to analyze the relationship among language, power, and ideology, not only about what language is but also why it is, it is not only interested in the meaning of discourse but also in how the meaning is produced in discourse. Through the superficial form of language, it reveals the influence of ideology on the text, the reaction of the text to ideology, how they originate from the social structure, and how the power relationship serves it. (Fan, 2019)

The interconnection of language, discourse, and society can be examined through the application of CDA in the field of sociolinguistics, which can be further explained with the help of Fairclough's 3D model. Discourse, being a form of social action and constituting society and culture, addresses a lot many social problems that can be analyzed through Fairclough's 3D model which constitutes 3 categories namely, description, interpretation, and explanation. Be it text or images, this model examines it at three levels for a better interpretation. Description can be referred to as text analysis, interpretation as process analysis, and explanation as social analysis.

According to Fairclough (1995), this model consists of three dimensions of discourse conceptions, providing a three-dimensional method for discourse analysis. To explain discourse, Fairclough (1995, p.97) proposes that it can be simultaneously seen as "(i) a language text, spoken or written, (ii) discourse practice (text production and text interpretation), (iii) sociocultural practice". Moreover, he also suggests that discourse can be found in sociocultural practices at different stages – at a personal level, at an institutional level, and a societal level (Fairclough, 1995).

The development of human beings, the sociocultural practices, their study, the advancement in critical discourse analysis, and Fairclough's 3D model, all show an interrelationship between language, power, and ideology. This interrelationship can be visually observed on the walls of Lahore city in the form of art. The ideology of the people, their mindset, history, point of view, beliefs, attitudes, realities, sentiments, cultural values, traditions, ideas, and perspectives of the people of Pakistan are all reflected through their aesthetic appearance and their placement as a public form of art.

Graffiti and street art are simultaneously physical acts and cultural practices. As such, they are spatially and socially bound; they bring together the material and the immaterial. This paradoxical and controversial nature of graffiti and street art, as well as their relationship to urban space and identities, are some of the reasons behind our fascination with these practices. (L. Hughes, 2009)

The wall art of Lahore is an actual manifestation of the constructed reality of the people of Pakistan as per the social practices analyzed through CDA. This wall art not only gives voice to the disempowered but also develops the identity of the people through pseudonyms. Moreover, following the interrelationship between psychoanalysis and the effect of criticism on the preceding, Donald Kuspit reinforced a principle by saying, "I began to feel that the artist is not exempt from life. There is no way out from seeing art as a reflection or meditation or a comment on life. I became interested in the process, including the artist's life. I became interested in how art reflected the artist's life as well as how it reflected life issues, or existential issues with which we are all involved."

The street art addresses the city and maps out the highlights of the events or cultures in the community. Part of their appeal is that the forms allow viewers an understanding of the subtext of a city without resorting to mainstream accounts or official histories. They offer an alternative history; a mapping of social trails or subcultural behaviors – a

voyeuristic pleasure at entering the story of the city. To put it differently, the proliferation of pieces democratizes the relationship between art and its audiences as it generates an open gallery, allowing the free enjoyment of the skill of the practitioners.5 As such, they provide a counter-narrative to dominant urban aesthetics. (L. Hughes, 2009)

Through the analysis of the street art of Lahore in the light of CDA, one can witness its importance and impact, especially in the cognitive minds of people. Street art in Lahore has a different allure since it promotes messages of faith, camaraderie, patriotic poetry, and the resilience of the young generation. Notwithstanding the varying street art trends, the main messages of both projects (in Lahore and Karachi) have been those of peace and the promotion of Pakistan's rich cultural diversity and customs.

The dissection of the street art of Lahore into various cognitive meanings can be done through Visual social semiotics and the Social Actors Theory in the best possible way with in-depth detailing of mental interpretation linked to visual art. Social visual semiotics was founded by Jewitt and Oyama (2001) which views the image or picture holistically considering different perspectives and meanings. However, the Social Actors theory, founded by Van Leeuwen (2008), with the help of its two categories namely 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' explains how events and actors portray in pictures such that a social meaning can be interpreted.

According to research in the field of social visual semiotics, in 2016, this discipline or subject area is the analysis and evaluation of the connections between a picture and the target audience, especially from a single cultural background. This theory tends to explain how every component of a picture interacts with the audience through visual means of communication. The relationship between a picture and an audience is composed of meaning and interpretation. It provides a wide range of tools to identify probable connotations that visual content might have. According to the 2016 research, this theory extensively explores the categories and tools embedded in the theory: Representational, Interactive Meaning, and Compositional.

Social visual semiotics give visual communication an aspect in which each content of the picture can be related to the social context, outputting a representational reality of pictures. Moreover, the pictures can be addressed through different frameworks in terms of representation, interaction, and composition.

According to the research in the field of 'social semiotics' in 2012, the visual social semiotics explanation being added in the multimodality glossary says that; The purpose of studying communications from the angle of social visual semiotics is to recognize and catalog the semiotic decisions communicators and actors are able to make. Instead of being viewed as fixed, these options should be considered as having a meaningful perspective that can be realized in relation to other visually perceived options and the context of society or culture. As a result of their constant adaptation to social interactions, the meanings connected with these choices are in a constant state of flux, as every viewer takes in the picture differently depending on their social background.

Panofsky (1983) claims meaning is a necessary part of a social construct that cannot be separated from visual art. This argument is supported by Eco (1976) and Hoopes (1991) who state that a sign is anything that stands for something else, which means a sign symbolizes an object or a concept. According to Horn: the tight coupling of words, images, and shapes into a unified communication unit. "Tight coupling" means that you cannot remove the words, the images, or the shapes from a piece of visual language without destroying or radically diminishing the meaning a reader can obtain from it. (1999, p. 27)

'Visual Social Semiotics: Understanding How Still Images Make Meaning' by Claire Harrison and 'The Handbook of Visual Analysis Visual Meaning: a Social Semiotic Approach' by Cheng Zhang can be considered two excellent pieces of research in the field of Social Visual Semiotics which give a framework along with the practical tools for image analysis following this theory. Moreover, both these research shed light on the fact that pictures are not isolated elements but rather a social process. The street art of Lahore city can be analyzed through the framework of these research articles along with some extensions in the form of analysis through the Social Actors Theory.

Social Actors Theory, given by Van Leeuven, gives a socio-cognitive approach to the images and the perceivers. In accordance with this theory, discourse (in this case – visual discourse) can be considered to have 'Actors' that perform various actions that represent culture and lifestyle. In addition, the relationship between power, language, and social identity can also be explained through the actions of these social actors. Ideologies of the actors are studied as cognitive structures, concerning this theory, which combines the attitudes, beliefs, norms, and values of the people that sketch out the whole culture.

According to (Koller, 2009) Social actors as a discourse analytical category are seen as the textual instantiations of models of the self and others, both individual and collective. This discourse analytical category incorporates 'Exclusion strategy' and 'Inclusion strategy' which define the roles of these actors within society and their extent of taking part in various cultural or societal activities. Exclusion refers to the process of elimination of a particular group or an individual in the social discourse. On the other hand, Inclusion refers to the way a group is marginalized by making comparisons to other, supposedly superior groups or discourses.

Van Leeuwen's analysis generally shows how the parties and actors (individuals or groups) are presented in the news. There are two centers of attention. First, the expenditure process (Exclusion). Whether in a news text, some groups or actors appear in the news and what discourse strategies are used for it. The process of bringing up this actor can indirectly change the public's understanding of an issue and legitimize the position of a particular understanding. Second, is the process of inclusion (inclusion). If exclusion relates to the question of how the process of a group is excluded in the news text, then inclusion relates to the question of how each party or group is displayed through reporting. Both the processes of exclusion and inclusion use what is called a discourse strategy. By using words, sentences, information or formulations of certain sentences, certain ways of telling stories, each group is represented in the text (Amalia et al., 2019)

These categories in the wall art of Lahore city will help identify how actors, in each stance, perform their actions to either consider themselves included or excluded from society, in return affecting the social aspects of culture. Moreover, social actors tend to alter the trends and norms within a culture through the process of exclusion and inclusion.

The analysis of the wall art of Lahore under any theory or regarding any credible postulations has not been reported in any of the articles or journals online. Moreover, just a surface analysis of street art is given in the articles, without the mindset of the people of Pakistan being clarified or elucidated behind the art. In addition, an in-depth anatomy of the street art of Lahore is not provided with a social and communicative theory. Further research is required or needed in the field of social psychological inspection behind the street art of Lahore which is conducted through the social actor's theory by Van Leeuwen (2008) and Visual social semiotics theory by *Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006)* in this research.

3. DISCUSSION ANALYSIS

3.1 Culture, Heritage, and Music

Fig 1: These pictures depict singers and their instruments

Representational Meaning

A number of these paintings depict men from a bygone era, thus signaling a connection to the past glory of sub-continental music. Not only are the costumes of the men reminiscent of the Mughal Era when musicians were patronized by royal courts, but their instruments are also the

Traditional instruments of the pre-partition civilization - used by a whole generation of Muslims and Hindus before partition. The artist is fully present in the pictures of figure A where the background consists of a building that looks like a religious mausoleum. This depicts the link between transcendental music and religious practice in the subcontinent.

At several shrines in Lahore, annual commemoration events comprised of spiritual dance called *"Dhamal"* does take place.

Interactive Meaning

Surprisingly, in the collection selected, not one picture with a female artist could be located. That elimination or absence carries many social taboos with it. Traditionally, women who associated with the arts were not seen as desirable homemakers. Instead, they were viewed as loose charactered and without virtue. Even when women in the musical arts were of a high moral code, their profession carried a taint for them (Saeed, 2011). It is no wonder that for the artist to imagine women in singing and instrument-playing poses also carries a certain stigma. Because of the Artist's inability to portray these women on the wall art, the latter is devoid of female presence. Thus an important part of Pakistani arts is absent when the depiction of musical heritage takes place as it challenges social norms.

Compositional Meaning

Concerns over meaning-making and symbolic representation take center stage when we mention the concrete heritage of culture, heritage, and values. Especially when these three are delivered through the medium of art depicted on walls in the public domain. Not only does the context become special, but so does the content of the painting itself. For example, if a percussion instrument like a *tabla* is depicted upon the old inner city walls of Lahore, then it connects the viewer to a tradition of arts and music that has been kept alive in the city of Lahore.

Interestingly, the art showcased has many stories to tell. In one of the pictures, the musical instruments lie on the floor but no artist is present. In Aurangzeb's era, a famous Mughal emperor, some musicians became famous for taking out a funeral procession of a musical instrument called *tanpura* due to a very conservative interpretation of its value in religion. Pakistani culture has always been enriched with music and it indeed has a strong musical tradition, however, the murals show one painting that has no artist in it, connecting it to the conflicting history of music in the subcontinent.

Analysis

Social context

These pictures depict musicians and their instruments in different settings. The three pictures do not have a clear background. However one shows a musician in front of a mausoleum; the other depicts one in front of pillars that could be a princely court.

Discourse context

These pictures only show men with different instruments; women are not present in any of them. The main reason could be the widespread supposed association of women musician and their links to unsavory activities. Even though it is only a perceived view, it still informs the artist of the paintings. Consequently, no women musicians are depicted.

Visual Analysis

Social actors

Different characters are represented here: mainly using the traditional *rumba, sitar, dhal,* etc. Their dressing is also traditional, in a way that only points to their heritage value. Modern Pakistani musicians are not a part of this display.

Societal Analysis

Collective Identity

These pictures do not show large groups, thus making the men they depict take center stage for their musical ability. In a way, individual efforts are being applauded here. The individual nature of the pictures points towards a kind of lonely existence. Audiences are also missing, thus making the characters stand out even more in their musical quest.

Implications

In group - active

The pictures do not point at any groups in the audience, or even *qawwali* for that matter. The active group seems to be that of adult men.

Out group - passive

Neither women nor any depiction of an audience is shown in these pictures; thus making the groups solely gender discriminatory. The absence of women as well as an audience makes these two demographics passive in these renderings.

3.2 Traditional Clothing of the People

Fig 2: These pictures depict women in traditional rural settings

Representational Meaning

The pictures that depict the paintings in this category of Figure 2, show the traditional clothing of the people of the country. Even though all these are collected from Lahore, the representation consists of mostly rural scenes. Picture 1 depicts two women clad in sprees whereas picture 2 shows two women wearing skirts with cloth covering their heads. Picture 3 shows a woman in the traditional garb of the *Thar* Desert, complete with bangles up the arms. Three women are shown in picture 4 who are sitting smiling together; these are *Chitrali* women who are wearing the bejeweled cap and traditional beads and robes of *Chitral*. Picture 5 is the first picture that shows men in traditional dresses of the provinces of Punjab along with women who outnumber them by one. Picture 6 yet again shows a rural scene where a woman in traditional dress, apparently quilted, is sitting in front of a straw hut.

Interactive meaning

It is interesting to note here the effort made by the painter to get their version of reality across. The women wearing *sarees* in the first picture are framed against the background of a well depicting the labor of pulling out the buckets of water needed to quench thirst.

In the second picture once again the painter shows two women carrying jars of water, or whey on their heads and hip bone. Picture 3 shows a wall design in addition to the women as well, signaling the beautiful mosaic and crafts of the *Thar* region; blue and yellow are the predominant colors. The picture showing *Chitrali* women seems to be an attempt by the author to incorporate the diversity of the country into the wall paintings. Picture 5 conveyed the painter's vision of unity where the people of Pakistan in traditional garb are standing together, each couple presenting a different region of the country, except for one woman who stands with her head uncovered. Her dopant is the traditional *chunri* which she wears only on one shoulder. Unlike the other two women whose hair does not show in this painting, she has a braid on one side in the front. Picture 6 is once again the artist's tribute to the rural woman, who manages the fields and the livestock. A goat in the background and a neat and clean straw hut seems to depict her labor of managing the dwelling as well as the cattle.

Compositional meaning

All these pictures seem to be depicting the diversity of the region they represent. From signaling women's labor to their clothing these seem to be bringing Pakistan to the urban setting of Lahore and reminding the citizens of their diverse backgrounds. However, certain elements ask the viewer for a reinterpretation and a critical lens. However, the trope of women at the well refers to many popular songs and folk traditions of women helping travelers and strangers to quench their thirst. It is equally interesting to note that in all the figures shown only two out of the fourteen are men. The rest are all women. Not a single picture depicts an urban Pakistani woman, showing the artist's preoccupation with rural themes and a refusal to engage with a more complex representation. Since roles in rural settings for women are easily defined through tradition, it is equally easy to

paint them. On the other hand, the urban woman challenges stereotypes and hence becomes a difficult topic to engage with. In a country where women models' faces were continuously inked and destroyed on billboards, urban women are still an endangered species. By making women the painter's muse, the male gaze need not encounter itself in most of these paintings. On the surface, these paintings look like the unity of the country on display, but on a deeper level, they also expose the fiction that has been a part of the public narrative by tacit decisions taken by the artist on whom not to represent.

Analysis

Social context

The context of these pictures is from the everyday life of the people. From festivals to interacting in daily life, the painter has captured these moments.

Discourse context

The discourse around the national dress is one charged with polity. In a country like Pakistan, where women have traditionally dressed conservatively, rural and cultural dresses are seen as a sign of upholding the tradition.

Visual Analysis

Social actors

Different characters are represented here in the pictures painted on wall art. Ethnically a diverse range of social actors are presented. From Hindu women to *Chitrali* women, all are represented; especially those in rural areas such as Thar Dessert.

Societal Analysis

Collective Identity

The pictures that represent groups are usually showing cohesive group identities. No picture focuses upon an individual; instead, all are depictions of group identities as perceived by the painter.

Implications

In group - active

The groups that are presented in each picture are usually those of communities based on the female gender. Except for one picture, all others solely depict women. Thus they make women representative of all classes here.

Out group - passive

These pictures curiously do not show men or any demographic other than adult women, only one shows children with a mother, and one shows two men standing side by side with women. This puts men in a passive role compared to women.

3.3 Cultural Events
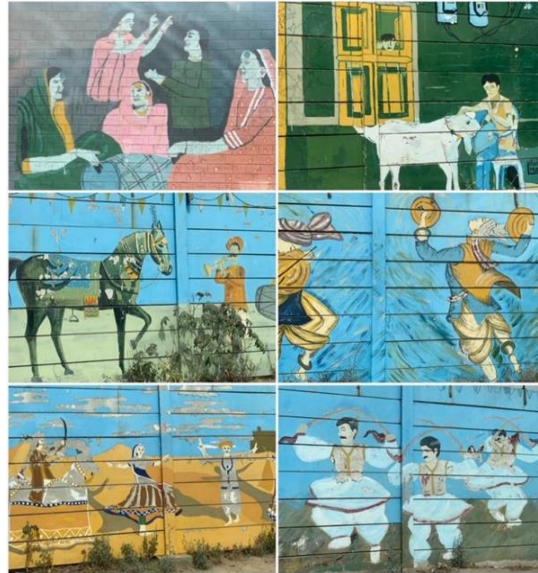
Fig 3: These pictures depict folk and rural dances and traditions

Representational meaning

The cultural events depicted on the walls of the city in Figure 3, show the life of different individuals in acts of social significance; from horse and cattle dancing to celebrating village marriages and folk dances, the wall art showcases social actors in several roles.

One picture shows the joy of women celebrating a village marriage, while another shows a man in the garb of a butcher petting a goat while a child looks on, partially visible behind a door. Another one showcases a man and a dancing horse: one shows two men in a ritual folk dance. Similar folk dance poses are depicted in the other 2 pictures, portraying *Bhangra* in Punjab and *Khattak* dance from the KP province respectively.

A deeper understanding shows a more inclusive portrait here of the people who populate the cities and towns of Pakistan. Some social actors such as men are absent from the women celebrating marriage sitting around a traditional drum. This implies the segregated nature of society in rural areas. Similarly, women are missing from them, where only men are dancing with swords, depicting a masculine narrative.

Interactive meaning

Other than the marriage scene, where all the figures are closer to each other and mostly smiling, the rest of the pictures convey figures mostly distant from each other. For example, the marriage ceremony shows women laughing and making eye contact, but such eye contact depicting intimacy or shared feeling is absent from other pictures. The other pictures are mostly those that show different individuals looking outside the picture towards the audience.

Compositional meaning

On the framework of compositional meaning, these pictures throw up some interesting observations. The confluence of gender and identity is visible, as is the theme of certain social actors that are missing. Just like previous themes, where rural scenes take precedence; all celebration has a largely rural connotation, the theme of missing urban celebration becomes very prominent. Again, this highlights a certain lack within the artistic endeavor where the element of celebration in the urban scenario is not examined. One conjecture can be the complexity of urban merriment and its highly stylized nature. Another explanation can point towards the major rural-to-urban migration trends in Pakistan, thus imbuing the rural with a certain amount of Nostalgia.

Analysis

Social context

These pictures are from different real-life situations. Scenes of celebration as well as interaction with domestic animals are depicted. The festive atmosphere is captured in these pictures, which also includes the sacrificial animals as well as those used for luggage.

Discourse Context

The depiction of festival scenes is based on the Islamic context such as *Eid*, and celebration events that are grounded in cultural traditions such as horse and cattle show. Folk dances and an abandonment of euphoric dance movement are a nod to the cultural traditions of the country. Folk dances such as *Khattak* dance provide context to the dancers. Similarly, a child looking at the butcher on *Eid* also points to the *Eid* celebration of the Muslim pilgrimage.

Visual Analysis

Social actors

The pictures represent groups of people as well as solo characters in different capacities. A varied range of characters show different aspects of celebrations. Occupations such as butcher, and horse trainer are visible in the paintings. The women as well as men who are dancing are shown as a group and not as individuals. This depicts dance as a group activity meant for the expression of gaiety and does not show any individual dancing thus taking away its expression as an individual art form.

Societal Analysis

Collective Identity

Typically, images portraying groups tend to emphasize cohesive collective identities. Rather than spotlighting individuals, these pictures depict the collective identity perceived by the artist.

Implications

In group - active

In each of the pictures, the women are illustrated in only one of the pictures, however, all the other pictures show men, thereby presenting men as representative of all social classes depicted.

Out group - passive

These images notably omit women or any other demographic besides men. Only one picture of a child can be seen, the rest are male *Khattak* dancers. This portrayal positions women, as well as children, in a passive role compared to men.

3.4 Media and Food

Fig 4: These pictures depict media and art

Fig 5:This picture depicts traditional foods

Representational meaning

Popular shows and movies are also shown on the walls to demonstrate the cultural element of Pakistani entertainment. From "*Ainak Wala Jin*" to "*Maula Jatt*", both massively popular characters from the Media, the wall art depicts yet another art form thus giving birth to Meta art. The depiction of *Heer Ranjha*, a Punjabi love story, that symbolizes love, can also be seen. Additionally, a young woman with traditional foods such as pickles, *gola ganda*, and *Jalebi* is showcased in pictures.

Interactive meaning

The pictures engage the audience, creating interest through flamboyant colors and a variety of shapes that portray food. Figure 4, shows movie and drama actors along with folk tale characters that can be very easily identified by the community.

Compositional meaning

The pictures above show "Maula Jatt," "Heer Ranjha," and "Ainak Wala Jinn" as iconic cultural touchstones in Pakistan, revered for their significance in entertainment. "Maula Jatt" symbolizes the essence of Punjabi culture, showcasing valor and tradition, and resonating deeply with audiences. "Heer Ranjha" embodies the timeless tale of love transcending societal boundaries, epitomizing romance and sacrifice. "Ainak Wala Jinn" captivates with its fantastical narrative, instilling a sense of wonder and nostalgia in viewers, especially the younger generation. These classics not only entertain but also serve as a link to Pakistan's rich heritage, fostering a sense of pride and belonging within the Pakistani community. Pakistani food like gola ganda and jalebi represent a vibrant culinary heritage, offering a sweet escape and connection to tradition, fostering community and celebration through shared flavors.

Analysis

Social context

The social context of these pictures points very clearly to the art form that they come from, "*Nastoor Jin*" points out from a TV screen, whereas *"Maula Jatt"* has a ferocious expression with comic-style fireworks going on in the background. *Heer Ranjha* has a trail of rose flowers painted around them, conveying undying love. The traditional food items not only show the gourmand nature of the Pakistani society.

Discourse context

The discourse points towards the importance and value of traditions and culture. Although the portrayal of these TV shows, folktales, and cultural dishes take us back many decades, however, the people of Pakistan still hold onto them tight and it is passed from one generation to another. Apart from this, it also shows how salient is entertainment and media for us. The representation of traditional culture shows not only the love of food but also keeping the culture alive through taste.

Visual Analysis

Social actors

The social actors that can be seen in Figures 4 and 5 are mostly women and children. The rest are three males, depicting the gender roles in the society.

Societal Analysis

Collective Identity

A collective identity can be viewed in terms of food selling, however no collective identity can be seen in the media illustrations.

Implications

In group

The women's gender can be considered as an in-group identity as can be seen in both figures.

Out group

Men can be considered as an out-group identity because they are just to be seen in Figure 4.

3.5 Tributes to National Heroes

Fig 6: These pictures show national heroes and famous singers

Representational meaning

One aspect of the wall art is the portrayal of National heroes by the artists. Most pictures are portraits in this case. The only one that depicts motion is of *Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan*, an amazingly gifted musician of *Qawwali*. His is the first picture; beside him, stands *Reshma*, a folk singer, *Amjad Ali Sabri*, another *Qawwal* who was sadly assassinated, and then two pictures that depict martyrs of the Pakistan Army.

Classification can be made based on gender, and further yet classification can be made based on civil and military social actors. Symbolically, in both civil and military representation, the female representation is less than 1/3rd.

Interactive Meaning

Most of the pictures in the National Heroes series are portraits except for two singers, *Nusrat Fateh* and *Reshma*, who are painted in the act of singing. The rest of the portraits look directly at the viewer, especially in the case of the group photo of martyred military men.

Compositional meaning

National heroes are an emblem of national unity. It is very interesting to note that except for Arts, mainly singing, and military men, there are no writers, or scientists depicted here. Pakistani discourse is full of controversies when it comes to scientists, From *Abdul Qadeer Khan* to *Abdus Salam*, mostly the state as well as the nation has been conflicted about their status in national life.

With current scientists like *Pervez Hoodbhoy*, it becomes apparent how the Nation shuns scientific men as most of them cannot fulfill the functions of being a perfect ideological entity. The unique nature of intolerant religious streaks coupled with an insistence on the ideology of Pakistan, make learned people in the country a risk instead of an asset. Here in this depiction, we see the absence of several professions with only the most benign in terms of ideology passing muster.

While Pakistani Ideology has always posed as if it's under threat, the fallout from this approach seems to be affecting the artist's vision. Another aspect is the minimal female representation here. This shows a skewed vision, where women abound in national cultural practices, but are conveniently missing when acts of heroism are counted. This points toward the patriarchal notions of Pakistani Society.

The interesting thing to note here, however, is that all the men died unnatural deaths, either assassinated or martyred in battle. Except for *Nusrat Fateh Ali*, who passed away due to health complications, the rest faced the bullet in one way or another. This posits that violence is endemic in our culture where men as social actors have to deal with an arbitrarily aggressive structure of patriarchy.

Analysis

Social context

The pictures depicted here are mostly of military men and musicians. These national heroes are representative of their social identity. However most of them are pictured with an emphasis on portraits, thus little interaction between the figures is perceived.

Discourse context

The discourse points towards the sacrifices of the Army and the martyrs who have given their lives for the motherland. Musicians also focus primarily on this discourse. They are mostly the ones who are recognizable internationally.

Visual Analysis

Social actors

The portraits here show an emphasis on individuality. These characters are shown in a light to inspire the viewer. As social actors, the viewer is engaged in making meaning from these portraits as chosen by the artist. The artist's function, in showcasing these to the onlooker's gaze can be interpreted as an effort to bring meaning to the achievements and sacrifices of the people.

Societal Analysis

Collective Identity

As it is visible, the picture shows individuals rather than groups. These individuals are highlighted as an ideal, allowing the viewer to focus on their individualism and appreciate their choices.

Implications

In group - active

As a collection, these pictures show a bias in gender with more men than women standing up as role models. In a way, the group presenting men from a younger demographic is highlighted.

Out group - passive

Children, as well as women, are mostly missing from these collections. Elderly people are also not shown. In this way, the passive groups are not very visible.

3.6 Patriotism and Unity

Fig 7: These pictures show truck art and the Pakistani flag

Representational meaning

The pictures in Figure 7 tell us about how the people of Pakistan are patriotic towards their country and imagine the flag as a symbol of togetherness. The visuals depict the green shade in different guises, where it makes the backdrop of a map of Pakistan; it waves gently as a group of people stand under it; there is one picture where the flag is painted in the truck art style; and one where a schoolgirl is waving the flag.

Interactive meaning

The map of Pakistan, in which the flag with its crescent moon makes a background, is the one where the viewer does not see any social actors. The whole wall is taken over by the painting of a map. On the other hand, the next painting shows a bunch of people sitting under or standing next to the Pakistani flag. The third picture depicts *Minar-e-Pakistan* with the flag hanging out on either side. This picture also portrays two eyes looking out at the viewer from the top of the image. The fourth picture shows a schoolgirl standing to one side of the image, towards the right, while the flag she is waving takes center stage. She stands in a unique position with her back to the viewer, signaling a leading pose.

Compositional meaning

In her essay published in *Mazaar, Bazaar*, Ayesha Jalal mentions how the green and white of the Pakistani flag symbolizes peace and harmony in the population while catering to the diversity of religious minorities. On the surface a noble thought, according to Jalal, (2011) " the dark green and white of the flag, far from symbolizing prosperity and peace for all Pakistanis, (does not) reflect the better accommodation of minority religious groups

but their extreme isolation and marginalization." {p. 184} Based on this quote, several articles in the media debate the rights of minorities. However, on ground reality where Blasphemy law and forced conversions are used to target minorities presents a different picture. The artists in the wall art painting seem to have a more rosy and idealized view of unity and patriotism in Pakistan. Depicting different genders and religions, as well as children waving the flag, the pictures themselves signal a need to believe in the idea of unity and togetherness. Ayesha Jalal, (2011) mentions how the state of Pakistan does not intervene strictly in the artistic expressions of the representation of the national flag; these pictures do not show the white part of the flag. Instead, they represent it either in the green area as the crescent or in other shapes. Either the artist thought the white paint would not stand out on the wall, or that the white in the flag could be represented differently. The liberty taken with the medium that represents the minorities does indeed highlight how the artist as a social commentator views minorities: as an element that can be malleable, and pliant, unlike the green that represents the majority and is the more defining element of the national flag.

Analysis

Social context

These pictures are unique in execution for their main focus is the map of Pakistan, her flag, and the color green, symbolizing the country itself. While little social interaction is visible, one picture does provide a diverse ethnic group gathered under a rendition of the green Pakistani flag.

Discourse context

The discourse around the color green, the flag and its different renditions by the Artist, and the map of Pakistan all point towards the well-established discourse of power in unity. Power also seems to reside in borrowing these symbols of the flag and the color green to convey the theme of patriotism.

Visual Analysis

Social actors

Different characters are represented here: such as a little girl waving a flag, and a diverse group of minorities sitting under the flag, representing the role of ethnic groups in the polity of Pakistan.

Societal Analysis

Collective Identity

The picture that represents the group, shows a diversity made cohesive by the presence of the Pakistani flag, thus making patriotism a part of the life of minorities. However, the arrests here seem to signal that the map of Pakistan itself is a representation of people's love for the country. It collectively represents Pakistan.

Implications

In group - active

The pictures represent the color green as the most visible visual element in each picture, making that a center and thus the force that unifies the country.

Out group – passive

In these pictures, human figures take a backseat to the symbolism of the Flag and map of the country. Thus making the men and women of the country passive to the more active patriotism presented through the symbols.

3.7 Reflection of realism
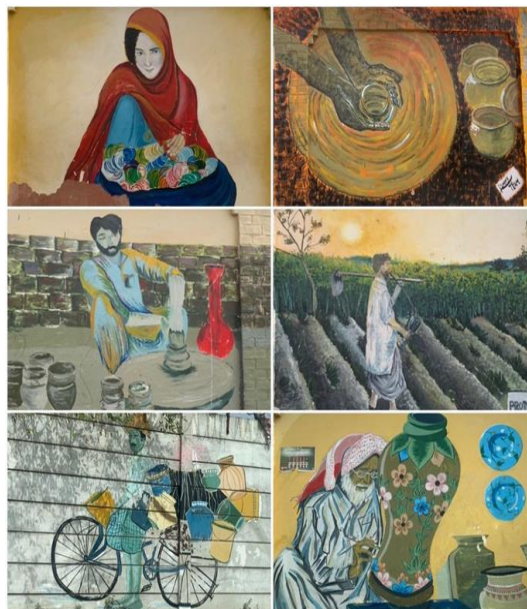
Fig 8: These pictures depict craftsmen at work

Representational meaning

The paintings in Figure 8 reflect a realistic approach as they demonstrate the actual realities of life that Pakistani people are living. It shows markets, Women making and selling stuff, women making food, and farmers working in the fields. The hard work of the people of the country is shown: how day-to-day it affects them. The work shows how most intricate and old arts that involve a lot of hard work are practiced by the people while earning them little in terms of money. Carving, pottery, making bangles, and selling these are all done by the people of Pakistan. In these pictures, luxurious or opulent lifestyles cannot be perceived. All show how the artist's preoccupation is with art done as a labor of love. On the other hand, the abject poverty depicted in these pictures is only a by-product of the surroundings.

Interactive meaning

The pictures that show bangle sellers and pottery makers all have the main actor turning their gaze away from the viewer and pointing it at their craft. The bangle seller girl looks in the middle distance, eyes downcast but not hiding from the observer, she is depicted alone on her canvas. The pottery maker's hands are visible only, and in the next picture, the pottery maker only stares at his potter's wheel, once again, captured alone in the frame. The farmer is also looking into the far right side of the picture, his profile is visible to the viewer as he walks along. The old man painting the clay pot in one picture is also absorbed in his work. The subjects in these pictures show a certain expression of contentment and absorption on their face. However, in the last picture, a man carrying some buckets, and bags on his bicycle looks directly at the viewer, while he is painted in profile, his face is tilted towards the viewer.

Compositional meaning

The way these people are captured in the frame depicts the intensity and reality of the creative process. No matter how trivial the task may be, creativity requires a commitment and stamina that is only possible with single-minded concentration. However, at the same time, the artist does not highlight the penury evident in all the pictures. This is indeed a tribute to the dying arts in Pakistan that do not have any governmental supervision or patronage, and the market forces will surely cull them out of existence. However, the artist's focus on their representation highlights the importance of the traditional crafts in Pakistan. Here, on street art the artist pays homage to other artists by immortalizing their work in paint, making the viewer a part of their creative process and bringing a slice of their inner life to the roads of the city. This act can be seen as the artist trying to make a change, trying to ensure that these crafts find longevity.

Analysis

Social context

The social context refers to the social demographics that the represented characters belong to. Over here, the lives of artisans, farmers, and small vendors have been captured. It predates the digital culture where access has become easier than before. The social demographic is also pointing towards the artisan class who follow the arts handed down over generations.

Discourse context

These portraits refer to the discourse where skills passed down from father to son, are showcased by the artist. The girl selling bangles, and the man tilling the land is an ode to toil and the fruits of hard labor. It might seem a bit dated in the modern world of technology, but it shows the love the artist has for his craft.

Visual Analysis

Social actors

Different characters are represented here: the clay worker, the clay painter, the bangle seller, and the farmer, all belonging to specific communities, and working hard to earn their wages. They are shown alone in pictures, without company; and the only interaction they have is with their craft. Each picture captures their absorption in their work, thus highlighting their creativity as well as their ethic.

Societal Analysis

Collective Identity

These pictures show the identity of the craftsmen as a union. The way they work and apply themselves to their craft creates a sense of cohesion in their existence, thus deriving their identity from their work belief, conduct, and ethos.

Implications

In group - active

The group in the picture are members of the artisan class, showing their commitment to their craft. Gender plays an important role here, even though women have traditionally done a lot of crafts such as needlework, cheese making, etc. they are not represented by the wall art. The active group seems to be men as they oust the women in numbers in these pictures. However, there is mention of an aging character in these pictures, thus showing how aged people are also active in their craft.

Out group – passive

The emphasis on the male gender automatically renders the women as the passive group, except for one picture they do not make an appearance, and neither does any other social demographic.

3.8 Diverse Stylistic Execution

Fig 9: These pictures depict art and imagination

Representational meaning

The pictures selected in Figure 9 show a diversity of techniques that is unmatched by the rest of the selection. This talks to the real self of the artist where the imagination rules over the constraints of reality. A focus on more feminine faces is apparent here, as is the usage of color and angular vectors, depicting the said faces. Another picture is a charcoal sketch in black and white, and yet another picture only captures the beautiful clothes the women seem to be wearing on their heads. The rest is in abstract vertical strokes of color. The upper half of the painting shows cubistic splashes of different shades of blue.

Interactive meaning

Every picture shows a different orientation in terms of gaze. A half-hidden feminine picture looks straight ahead into the distance, the tilt of the lips downward, giving it a pensive look; the next picture is a portrait posed straight ahead but with the eyelids dropped fully over the eyes. The women in the third picture are gathered together looking up towards the blue shades, while their backs are towards the viewer. The charcoal sketch of two faces, that look like renowned writer *Ashfaq Ahmed* and his wife, *Bano Qudsia* look thoughtful and wistful with worry lines etched on the foreheads. These images seem to have provided the greatest amount of freedom to the artist's expression in terms of color and pose.

Compositional meaning

All three pictures that are in color create a sense of mystery. The half-hidden feminine face cannot be fully gazed at, its expression inscrutable, the red halo around the face blends into orange and lends it an even bigger enigma. The portrait with dropped eyelids is yet another mystery: what is being hidden here? What must not be shown to the viewer? What would the gaze be like if the eyelids were lifted and the eyes visible? All of these questions arise in the viewer's mind. It is interesting to note that both are pictures of feminine faces: is this a way of pointing out patriarchy in the country where public discourse about women is still shrouded in mystery? In her commentary on the work of Shirin Neshat, D. Lamina poses questions about the complexity of gaze in Muslim cultures (Lamina, 2016). This complexity is employed by the artist as well to raise questions and reinforce a dialectic conversation.

Next to that is a group of women creating a colorful display for the artist who has managed to capture their traditional jewelry and head clothes in different patterns. Yet not one of them looks back toward the viewer. This seems to be saying that women are just pieces of cloth patched together.

At the same time, the artist invites us to mull over the question of what is a woman; we are asked to divert our attention to women who are traditionally asked to be quiet and not attract attention or be visible in public discourse. Yet the artist asks us in this collection of representations to pay attention to women, to their enigma, to their inner lives. These pictures put women at the center of public discourse, that too on a road where women have traditionally never been safe.

This is an appropriation of public space for women, making it safer for the gender. Online Communities such as *Girlsat Dhabbas* and *Aurat March* have been advocating for safe spaces for women in public. The artist's initiative here seems to second that thought.

Analysis

Social context

The social context of these pictures is hard to define as they take inspiration from the artist's inner life. The monochromatic drawing of two figures as well as the execution of female figures shows a disregard for everyday life; focusing instead on the execution.

Discourse context

The very nature of discourse is subverted in these pictures, as they stand out on their own, creations of the artist's vision as shaped by the unique forces of perspective and personality. Thus the structural framework of these is almost non-existent as they appear as figments of the artist's muse.

Visual Analysis

Social actors

Different characters are represented here in the pictures painted on wall art. However, their intentional nature seems to be vague and unclear. The only clarity available to the gaze is the way the characters are drawn; otherwise, it is not possible to place them in context as these appear as solo portraits.

The one picture that captures the colors of rural women is also ambiguous about their intention. The women stand with their backs towards the audience, thus hiding their faces.

Societal Analysis

Collective Identity

The lack of grouping in these pictures points towards individuality and singularity, as opposed to a uniform group identity. The only picture here that does represent group identity is that of the rural women who look away from the audience towards a sky painted in cubes.

Implications

In group - active

In these pictures, the appearance of men seems to be undermined by the number of women painted by the artist. Even though the faces painted pay tribute to the female gender, their eyes and expressions are hooded and not readily available for interpretation to the gaze of the onlooker. Thus the faces show an active intention of engaging the audience through the enigma they present.

Out group - passive

The passive element in these pictures becomes the hidden expressions of the portraits. Their inability to portray clear expression allows them to be passive but engaging for the audience.

3.9 Promotion of Egalitarianism

Fig 10: These pictures depict Sufi elements and group identity

Representational meaning

The pictures selected in Figure 10 depict themes of unity and patriotism based on principles of Islamic brotherhood. One shows *Sufi dervish* dresses against a black and grey background of domes. Another shows different ethnic groups against a red background depicted under the green flag. Yet another picture shows hands reaching out together in colors of black white, blue, and red. The last picture chosen here shows a night sky made bright with electricity.

Interactive meaning

Every picture shows a complete story in terms of the characters it deploys to present its narrative. The *Sufi dervishes* stand side by side, some leaning their heads, other figures supported by the group member, colors of turquoise, blue, and green dominate the picture. The ethnically diverse group in the next picture under the green flag shows four men at a table, or a mound in brown, and two women who appear to be standing, one looks to the viewer whereas the other looks a bit to the right, showing her right profile to the onlooker. Her dress is rural with a vessel on her head, whereas the other one stands in a more modern urban dress. Handprints and white doves cover the walls. The next picture shows many hands holding each other, towards what appears like a crack in the

wall, surrounded by a simple trellis design. The Night sky picture does not show any people, but a row of houses, next to a mosque and two places of worship, under large-sized bulbs that appear illuminated presumably with electricity.

Compositional meaning

Seen together, the messages from these pictures can be interpreted in a number of ways. Mainly the *Sufi dervishes* stand together, some are men and some have more feminine features, depicting women. Their angles of leaning their heads show the humility that is being portrayed by Muslims. A certain serenity is visible in the features as is a sense of camaraderie, portraying their unity as Muslims. The center stage in the next picture is taken by men, with two women who seem to be supporting them, standing to the side. The message given here is that the doves seem to be promoting peace and harmony. The hands in the next picture show unity as well as diversity. They seem to be building and supporting each other to success, conveying the sense of community support that is needed in society. The last picture shows religious harmony side by side, as well as community spirit by posing houses and worship places together.

Analysis

Social context

The social context of these pictures takes a cue from religious harmony and community spirit. The diversity of the Pakistani population is shown as well.

Discourse context

The element of discourse is shown by posing the pictures in different settings. Islamic Sufi systems are one such discourse marker. Another discourse is that of religious harmony. The artist has tried to show how religions coexist peacefully in the country.

Visual Analysis

Social actors

Different characters are represented here in these pictures: very visible are the dervishes and the ethnic populations of Pakistan.

Societal Analysis

Collective Identity

A uniform group identity is visible in the picture of *Sufi dervishes*, from their apparel to their expressions. Another picture here that represents group identity through humans is that of a diverse group under the flag. Except for one woman who looks away, the picture seems to be supporting the group identity of Pakistani People. The other two pictures do not focus on people but on the lives of communities. Individuality is not shown in them.

Implications

In group - active

In these pictures, the appearance of adult men and women seems to be greater than compared to either the older demographic of people or the younger. The active groups seem to be men and women of young and middle age.

Out group - passive

The passive element in these pictures becomes the hidden enigma. In the pictures that do not represent people, the passivity of human beings takes center stage. Instead of human interaction, the light, and the hands touching, are visual elements used by the artist to signal the spirit of unity in the community.

3.10 Moral lessons

Fig 11: These pictures depict moral values in the text

Representational meaning

The pictures selected in Figure 11 are mainly text-based and try to impart some kind of moral value to the viewer. The injunctions include tolerance, and emphasis on using funds wisely so they are not used for terror financing, proclaiming that mothers' are the first educators for children, promoting values like peace, and stressing the importance of knowledge.

Interactive meaning

Every picture shows a different message to the viewer. These messages are made attractive using different motifs and symbols. Some of the motifs include books, graduation caps, heart shapes, ribbons, etc.

The others that represent a bad choice include handcuffs, daggers, pistols, small bombs, grenades, etc. Pictures of mother and children are stylistically posed together. A candle is also shown symbolizing the light of knowledge. Compositionally, the colors blue and yellow seem to be prominent in these pictures. Pink also makes a significant appearance. The font on the other hand fluctuates between black and white and seems inspired by calligraphy.

Compositional meaning

These pictures along with their message portray how the artist sees the Pakistani people: as people with values and traditions. Home life, the mother's influence on the offspring, and the value of peace and harmony are prominent in these messages. They also try to create awareness among people about terrorism financing, showing how they must not use charity unless they are assured about its usage. In this way, political awareness is also highlighted.

Analysis

Social context

The social context of these pictures tends to view the abstract above the tangible. Using different motifs to deliver the message, the artist conveys the moral values of the people of Pakistan through the wall art.

Discourse context

The pictures in this selection seem to refer to a simple discourse, that which is usually taught in schools. However, this discourse has a strong message to give and that is to use the Urdu language as the means of communication. These messages are communicated in Urdu signaling the language of the country's majority. One message, however, about peace and promoting tolerance is in English, signaling a different origin for the message of learning tolerance.

Visual Analysis

Social actors

The only social actors shown in these pictures are mothers and children. One other human figure is visible with a chord around its neck, the picture portrays how each case of charity must be fully investigated so that it does not promote terrorism.

Societal Analysis

Collective Identity

These pictures only show one collective group and that is of mothers and daughters.

Implications

In group - active

In these pictures, the mothers are prominent as a group of caretakers. However, the text seems to be a more active element than the people in this group of pictures.

Out group – passive

The passive element in these pictures is mainly the lack of human presence. The messages given are through text, apparently already understandable to the audience.

3.11 Visibility and Invisibility

Fig 12: These pictures depict women at work

Representational meaning

The pictures selected here show a diversity of activities that women undertake. Women are shown cooking, sewing, embroidering, putting clay pots for drinking water, shining a light, and even driving a rickshaw. The colors yellow and blue are prominent.

Interactive meaning

Every picture shows a different activity. Women are shown to be absorbed in their work and activity. Other than sewing, the rest of the activities are shown as solo. Only Sewing shows two women working together. In most of the pictures, the gaze is averted from the face as the women are absorbed in the tests that are performed.

Compositional meaning

These pictures try to outline women's role in society. Even though most of these roles look at domestic settings and crafts that are traditional feminine domains, it does show that women are also breaking out of these domains now. The woman in a *rickshaw* symbolizes this shift. Interestingly, a pet dog seems to be a playful attempt at showing humor. The woman appears surprised at the discovery of a pet in the backseat. It is indeed an unusual passenger. However, the picture points out how women are becoming more independent of men and learning to navigate life as their own selves at the helm. The complete absence of men shows the artist's inability to picture men in supportive roles.

Analysis

Social context

The social context of these pictures is hard to define as they take inspiration from the artist's inner life. The monochromatic drawing of two figures as well as the execution of female figures shows a disregard for everyday life; focusing instead on the execution.

Discourse context

The very nature of discourse is subverted in these pictures, as they stand out on their own, creations of the artist's vision as shaped by the unique forces of perspective and personality. Thus the structural framework of these is almost non-existent as they appear as figments of the artist's muse.

Visual Analysis

Social actors

Different characters are represented here in the pictures painted on wall art. However, they are all women and mostly showcase a domestic setting.

Societal Analysis

Collective Identity

These pictures point towards a uniform group identity even though they mostly show women in solo situations. The only picture as a group is that of women who are sewing together. However, even they do not seem to be making eye contact with each other. Still, their gender does put them together as the women of Pakistan.

Implications

In group - active

In these pictures, the appearance of men seems to be undermined by the number of women painted by the artist. The active group as well as the selection of pictures both show that depicting the woman of Pakistan was a significant concern for the artist.

Out group - passive

The passive element in these pictures is the complete lack of men. Unlike women who show up in supporting roles for men, here women are shown as the main focus, but the pictures do not make any reference to men or their supporting roles in women's lives.

4. CONCLUSION

Pakistani society is going through many transitions. From rural to urban, from an agricultural society to one trying to be more modern, the struggle is evident in the street art of Lahore city.

However, the street art of Lahore is much different in its expression from any other graffiti. It is a more controlled effort, showcasing the artist's vision of how such transitions and spaces activate the viewer's imagination and engage them in an act of meaning. As stated earlier these pictures present an open gallery for the viewer to partake of their meaning. Art as subtext, art as process, and art as a map of social history are encapsulated here for the gaze of the viewer.   These pictures not only show what artists aspire to, but they also highlight the goals and achievements of the common citizen. They put the artist's work out as a process. Their hopes and dreams for a more diverse and unified Pakistan are shown, where artists become visionaries, presenting a far more cohesive reality than it actually is: where life is nurtured and that seems to be the main element of these pictures. Occasionally they also bear the fissures in the social life of Pakistan; its identity crisis and its need to refer to an unbroken Islamic tradition are there, inadvertently exposed by the artists. On the other hand, a soft lens emerges, one that looks at the country with love and nurture. As is very visible through the analysis, Pakistan is a society in transition, where the artists hope for a more tolerant and peace-loving country, the method they adopt is to visualize that country in front of the audience, giving the message of growth and modernity despite all odds.

The research objectives mentioned look at the representation of the city through its art. Through figures of men and women, the inherent tensions of the city are explored. Similarly, the rural is juxtaposed against the urban, the tradition of music, Sufism, and cultural events, all paint the rich heritage of Pakistan. However, at the same time, the wall art also lays bare the underlying fissures such as inequality, insistence on ideologues, and an uncompromising and dogmatic insistence on nationalism that does not cater to the diversity of its people. Yet the artist's vision is to portray an ideal harmony among the many fissures. The renderings of the Pakistani flag show how the love for the country is there in the heart of the people even through tough and testing times.

The importance of wall art is evident in the discussion that each picture generates, deeper meaning and significance are associated with each figure chosen for analysis, such as music without a player, figures of women outnumbering men, etc. While this shows a denigration of music and women, it also shows that to the artist these elements make up

the real face of Pakistani society. The women are the backbone of the community and the musical element is what gives the country its cultural significance.

Again and again, it is reiterated that wall art portrays the real, essential culture of Pakistan, it exposes the impositions on this true culture. The wall art becomes a vehicle for mapping a social, alternative history of Pakistan, showcasing its norms, and presenting its true face to the viewer.

5. END SECTIONS

5.1 Appendices

The pictures in this thesis for data analysis have all been taken by the author herself and she owns the copyright.

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