



Visual Representation of Gender Roles, Ideologies, and Victimhood In Pakistani Paintings On Honor Killing

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Abstract

Art has the soft power to destabilize, subvert, and regulate certain behaviour patterns, identities, and choices. The study aims to explore and understand how men, women, society, and honor killings, in general, have semiotically been represented through visual signs in the paintings and what cultural themes and connotations regarding gender identities and honor killing be derived. The socio-semiotic approach of the grammar of visual design based on ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions suggested by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) has been applied to study the grammar of eight paintings with reference to gender roles, ideologies, and victimhood. Ideational signs including setting, actors, processes involved in the arrangement, relations between represented participants and their cultural connotations, as well as angle, shot, distance, colour schemes, and modality as interpersonal semiotic resources, and composition, salience, and placement as textual choices have been examined in detail. The analysis shows that women have been represented as marginalized and oppressed, while men as dominant and controlling. The study has implications for gender studies, communication studies, semiotics, honor killing, sociology, and gender-based violence.

Keywords: *Honor killing, gender roles, gender-based victimhood, Pakistani paintings, Identity, non-figurative art, abstract paintings, symbols, veil, masculinity*

Introduction

“Honor killing, a premeditated murder of a man or woman is especially associated with the killing of women” because honor is “vested in female body”, choices and sexuality in traditional patriarchal societies and honor-based contexts (Riaz, 2019). In Pakistan, honor killings are rampant in certain honor-based

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sections of society. 510 women and 259 men were killed for honor in five years only in the province of Sindh in Pakistan (Ali, 2020). Around 1000 women and one-third of this number of men are killed for honor in Pakistan every year (Riaz, 2019, Riaz & Rafi, 2019).

Considering the severity of the issue, in the present study, the grammar of paintings on honor killing has been elicited to explore how gender has been represented, and how cultural ideologies work behind victimization in the so-called traditional or patriarchal societies. It is of significance to study the visual discourse of honor killing pertinent to a specific honor-based culture with reference to gender ideologies because as opposed to the liberal western ideologies that lay lesser emphasis on male dominance over women, the traditional ideologies stem from and evolve within the realms of patriarchal control over the female body, choices, and practices, especially relevant to portions of cultures where, irrespective of region and religion, women are financially dependent on men, so the ideologies informing the practices of one generation transfer to the next generation in most of the cases. This focus on the ideological difference between honor-based cultures, such as South-Asian, African or Arab, and the Western culture, consequently, perpetuates the notion that individuals of the former are “inherently misogynistic and are guided by notions of honor and shame that do not apply to members of Western societies” (Shier & Shor, 2016, p. 1165).

It is vitally important to study the ideological implications of the semiotics and politics of the representation of genders - of the “real”, the “marginal” and the “different”

(Hutcheon, 1988, pp. 185-196) - in the visual discourse on honor killing in Pakistan because it constructs the identity of Pakistani people in particular ways and determines the attitudes and ways of seeing of other cultural groups towards them. Besides, semiotics of the discourse of victimhood also needs to be evaluated positively because altered representations affect the victims and communities. Campbell and Manning (2018) particularly refer to “the mental state of young Muslim women who feel they have to lie so intensely to survive” (p. 114). Ideology is inevitably a production of discursive representations (Riaz & Rafi, 2019, p. 127); therefore, the paintings, may also promote a certain ideology of victimhood, aggression, or masculinity to give a pre-defined stereotypical image of men and women though that necessarily is not the purpose of creating art.

Therefore, highlighting the “semiotic scope of combinations” of signifiers and signified, the present study elicits the grammar of paintings with reference to the portrayal of men and women as victims or perpetrators of honor killing. As “meanings belong to culture rather than to specific semiotic modes”; so, the visual grammar of Pakistani paintings as “structured messages, amenable to constituent analysis” help understand the “semiotic landscape” through the “available culturally produced semiotic resources” as “non-Western forms of visual communication” about honor killing in Pakistan (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, pp. 3-35).

By not only exploring honor killing from the perspective of the visual design of images, but also studying its cultural relevance authenticity, and implications, the study fills the gap in

the academic literature because the socio-semiotic approach applied to the study of embedded meanings, locative, analytical, transactional, and relational processes involved in the meaning-making, as well as the signs and symbols used in the paintings on honor killing in Pakistani context, helps translate the paintings according to cultural signified, deconstruct the implicit ideological concerns, and understand the implications of the issue, as well as its severity. The framework developed for this study can not only contribute to the existing work in the field of semiotics but may also be employed for further research.

In general, it develops counter-narrative against honor killing and the 'metanarratives' of patriarchy and stereotypical representations prevailing in selected discourse, emphasizes the need to de-stigmatize Pakistani culture for what is practiced in certain contexts or sections and not the entire culture, and focus instead on solving the problem through a well-planned reconstruction of gender. Therefore, the study may also help the policymakers develop appropriate intervention and prevention policies regarding honor killing, female victimhood, as well as male rights because "promoting justice requires recognizing social and cultural differences and paying attention to processes of creating inequalities in social and economic institutions and practices" (Cin, 2017, p. 20) and acting accordingly.

Hancilar (2015) emphasized that many suicides committed by women could be honor crimes because families persistently force the victims to commit suicide. In the same vein, Dilmac (2016) interviewed 50 young men and women of equal number to explore the interpretations and working of honor in

everyday life in Turkey and noted that the term connotes honesty, righteousness, modesty, self-control, and respect for others, but any defiance or violation causes one to be treated as other or deviant. Exploring representation of gender in the digital illustrations on honor killing in Pakistan, Riaz (2019) found that men and women were represented as perpetrators and victims of honor killing, respectively. Riaz and Rafi (2019) also found that representation of men and women was stereotypical. Such stereotypical representations reinforce gender ideologies that associate victimhood with women and aggression with men.

Analyzing gender identities in the animated film *Frozen*, Rudloff (2016) found that the representation of female characters Ana and Elsa as emotional reinforces the social stereotype of women as more emotional. Their looks including their make-over, dressing, and physical features are idealized as feminine looks. On the other hand, their male counterparts are larger in size, muscular, sturdy and strong, able to do tough manual work, support the female characters, and play the stereotypical role of male saviour. At points, female characters are portrayed as assertive, adventurous, and courageous but later, they revert to their damsel in distress roles.

Various multimodal and visual analyses employ the social semiotic approach of the grammar of visual design suggested by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) or other socio-semiotic and functional approaches such as Halliday (1985) to study discursive representations. Bouko et al., (2018), for instance, did a multimodal analysis of 5877 posts on Flickr as reactions to Brexit and noted that “the most recurrent metaphors include

flags, closed fences, objects floating or diving, signs of exit, stormy or cloudy weather, broken objects, planes leaving and dawn, which illustrates a rich variety of forms of cultural citizenship staging separation, catastrophe, uncharted future or exit” (p. 23). Ojebuyi and Salawu (2018), applying Halliday’s (1985) concepts of metafunctions, explored the euphemistic representation of terror acts of a sect in Nigerian Newspapers to understand the framing of news stories by the editors in certain ways. Ojebuyi and Salawu (2018) found that all the selected stories had “explicitly offensive themes capable of abusing the sensibility of the audience, evoking tense emotions and heightening public fears” (p. 5). The present study, however, explores representation of gender roles and implicit gender ideologies that inform those roles in the honor-based contexts in the paintings on honor killing in Pakistan.

Methodology

The research article is based on a doctoral research project for which 40 paintings made by Pakistani painters belonging to different provinces of Pakistan have been purposively selected from exhibitions. Variables involved in the objective criteria of the selection of paintings include cultural and geographical background of the painters, gender of the painters, genre of paintings, timeline, exhibitions and themes, and patterns, signs, and symbols pertinent to gender roles in those paintings. Eight of those paintings selected for the present study are those paintings in which men, women or both have been represented through signs, while human figure has not been painted. For example, to represent a woman, a flower, and not a female figure, and to

represent a man, a turban and not a male figure have been painted. The paintings have been painted by Mr. Saeed Akhtar, Ms. Noor-ul-Ain, Ms. Sylvat Aziz, Ms. Shumaila Islam, Mr. Wajid Ali, and Mr. Mir Askari Abbas, Hussain Chandio, and Naqsh Raj.

The main socio-semiotic approach employed to study the paintings is that of image grammar suggested by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), while “politics of representation”, (Hutcheon, 1989; Hutcheon, 1991, p. 116; Hall, 1997, p. 19) serves as a point of contention to examine the authentic representation, under-representation, or hyper-representation of gender from a cultural perspective. Adopting a functionalist approach to analyze the semiotic resources, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) emphasize that all semiotic modes fulfill three major functions, as posited by Halliday (1985), which include “the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual” (p. 42). Ideational metafunction develops and depicts the relationships between different objects and processes in the image, as they are experienced in the real world or a context. Interpersonal metafunction makes a semiotic mode display the relations between the sign-maker, the object represented, and the viewer. Textual metafunction enables a semiotic mode to cohere, form, and arrange the range of signs in such a way that they not only connect internally with each other but also externally with the cultural context.

Overall, ideational metafunction helps understand the setting, participants, processes, symbols and their contextual value. An image can be “personal” or “impersonal”, “static” or “dynamic”, “dry and conceptual” or “dramatic”, depending upon the “visual structuring” of the “actors”, “size of elements”,

“shapes” , number, colours, “distance between elements”, orientation towards “horizontal or vertical axes”, “geometrical symbolism” of circles, rectangles, triangles, and straight lines through “tilting”, “angularity”, “horizontal elongation”, “vertical elongation” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, pp. 46-71; Riaz and Rafi, 2019, pp. 129-143), and the vectorial or non-vectorial relations between the actors. Processes can be transactional, transactional, and narrative which take vectors and involve an actor, goal, recipient or reactor, and action. Vectors are formed by eye gaze of the actors or straight lines and serve as verbs in images. Vectors demonstrate who is doing what to whom. Relations can also be analytical, symbolic, or locative. Analytical processes, which take place in portraits and abstract images, have a carrier and possessive attributes that can even be labeled. Symbolic processes involve what a participant means or is and are realized through salience achieved by foregrounding or exaggerated size, while locative processes are realized through overlapping, saturation, and gradients of focus. Images involve two kinds of participants: represented participants refer to the people, places, and things presented in the image and Interactive participants are real people or viewers who interpret, reproduce and make sense of the image in relation to a context or institution as well as regulate what may be said or done with images and how the signifiers should be illustrated and interpreted (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 114).

Interpersonal metafunction is about the relations between interactive and represented participants and it is realized through choices of angle, distance, shot, focus, and modality, etc. Choices

of angle and shot depict power and involvement associated with different participants. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) relate the concept of offer and demand to the linguistic concept of speech acts derived from the four speech acts suggested by Halliday (1985). These speech acts can offer information, goods and services, as well as demand the same. Demanding information has “interrogative mood”, offering information has “indicative mood”; while “prediction”, “promise”, “invitation”, “warning” etc. are various subtypes of these speech acts, which in images, can be expressed through expressions (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, pp. 122-123). Modality is the truth value of an image and it doesn't reveal absolute truth but shared truth or falsehood and joins people by creating a shared sense of ‘we’ that helps people align or distance themselves from what has been represented. In visuals, such as paintings, levels of modality help create a sense of reality or fantasy by creating authentic impressions of people and objects or imagined situations and caricatures of people. Modality can be naturalistic, sensory, scientific, or abstract. Levels of saturation, depth, and sharpness of colour as well as perspective can affect the level of modality.

Textual metafunction is about compositional patterns focusing on what is placed on left side of the image and what is placed at right side, in terms of information value; what is placed at the centre or margins, in terms of salience; and what is placed at the bottom or top, in terms of framing, make the viewer understand where the key information lies in the image. The placement differentiates between “Ideal” and “Real”, and “Given” and “New” (Riaz & Rafi, 2019, p. 132)

Analysis



Figure 1: Akhtar, S. (2011) *Why?*. From 'In the Name of Honour', Jharoka Art Gallery, Islamabad.

Spiral of Existence

A black abstract image of a female head finished and highlighted by grey colour, has been painted in the form of a comma in Figure 1. It looks like a large “wao” alphabet in Urdu, a question mark, hair or ponytail, or an abstract representation of a woman who has been gunned down. The relations are both transactional and locative; because on the one hand, the vector is forming by the end of the spiral; while on the other hand, colour contrast of background and foreground and overlapping of red dots are also highlighting the woman and killing. Vector is emanating from the end of the abstract female figure, which is an actor in the painting. There is no recipient, but the goal of the actor is to grow freely, while the blotch of blood, signifying honour killing, becomes a hindrance. As the female actor is shaped as a curve or spiral, it reflects that the right to kill a woman is considered as a naturally

evolved instead of humanly constructed tradition (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 55). The rough brushstrokes signify the gruesome realities and uneven course of the lives of women in honour-based context.

Considering interpersonal metafunction, mood in Figure 1 as an offer image is indicative which puts the damage caused to women's lives to the centre stage. Close shot and far personal distance imply the seriousness of the matter which the viewers are aware of, but they identify with the matter impersonally. It is important to understand that suffering in case of honour killing is inflicted only on the victim or the concerned family, while people are simply the spectators who think about the news for a few days and share it as a story but do not actively take action against it. Low angle gives the victim power over the viewers, while horizontal frontal angle shows that the producer of the painting while condemning the honour killing, highlights that what we see in the painting "is part of our world" or "something we are involved with" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 136), and therefore, something we should condemn and eradicate. The painting is subjective due to having an inbuilt perspective. Modality due to sharp colour contrast of background and foreground, depth of the colour, contextualization, and representation is high.

Considering textual metafunction, the spiral representing woman has been made salient. She, shaped as a spiral-like structure signifying continuity of life and free will, is the Ideal as well, while the blood connoting honour killing is the Real which obstructs continuity. Blood is both New and Given in the painting,

which shows how lives of women are encompassed and defined by the brutality of their male relatives. Therefore, the painter advocates the need to stand up for women and ensure their freedom and safety.

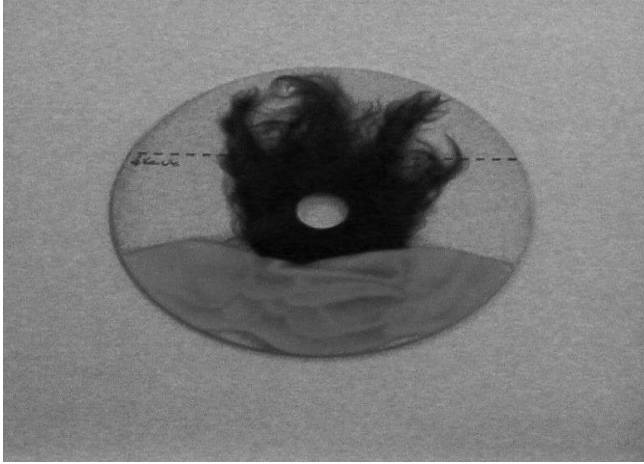


Figure 2: *Noor-ul-Ain. (2011) Cut from Here. From 'In the Name of Honour', Jharoka Art Gallery, Islamabad.*

Her Last Scream

In Figure 2, the setting is indoor, and the process is symbolic attributive because loose, flowing hair, placed in a CD or disk which depicts sound, has been painted to represent women. Another process is transactional because the vectors formed by the straight dotted line signify how honour killing is perceived as natural law or rule in honour-based contexts in Pakistan. The red wave-like structure or line, representing a cut or killing is an actor whose goal is to penalize the woman for committing an act of identity which is culturally perceived as an offense. The plain background represents the silence of the society, which is mute as fish, even upon hearing the screams of the woman. The circle of

the disk also connotes that honour killing, screams of women, and cutting throats are considered as natural and normal.

The angle is low, horizontal, and frontal, the shot is extreme close, and distance is far social. Honour killing as gender-based violence, putting women at a disadvantage, have been depicted as a social tragedy, while highlighting social insensitivity, silence, and carelessness, simultaneously.

Textually, the free-flowing hair, representing the freedom of women, is the Ideal, while honour killing is the Real in the painting. In this way, freedom, which is desirable, has been contrasted with the killing which is condemnable. Hair, line, red wave, and the CD, all placed at the centre, have been made salient to portray honour killing as a social tragedy of women. Due to horizontal alignment, the plain surface of the margins and disk alternately become the Given and the New.



Figure 3: Aziz, S. (2010) *Still Lahore*. From 'No Honour in Killing: Making Visible Buried Truth, VM Art Gallery, Karachi.

Liminality in Veiling

A completely invisible woman, wearing a dark blue 'burqa' and standing straight in a colourful valley, has been painted in Figure 3. The background gives an impression of spring because the valley has been painted in lush red and green depicting the richness of natural beauty. The painting portrays burqa as an oppressive tool or strategy used to victimize women in Pakistan. In this regard, Hasan (2018) affirms,

"Generally, in orientalist literature the trope of hijab is described with a synecdochical rhetoric to suggest that it is the most obvious symbol of a wider phenomenon of the oppression women suffer under Islam, and that Muslim men are invariably oppressors who impose a dress code on women under their control. In colonialist, orientalist and dominant feminist discourses, hijab has thus received a monolithic negative representation and is viewed as a symbol of female oppression, a mark of backwardness and a shroud of invisibility" (p. 26).

Benstead et al., (2015) use the term "quarantine" to describe the mainstream feminist reluctance to accept and appreciate positive meanings or associations of hijab" (p. 75, cited in Hasan, 2018, p. 25). On the other hand, it is also important to note that "in early history of a number of cultures, veil was linked to "urbanization" and "social status and social standing, and was a privilege" (Almila, 2018, p. 4). "Elite women in urban environments" (Almila, 2018, p. 234) would practice it. However, during colonial times, hijab emerged as a marker of dependent position of women suffering from over-protectiveness and social

control. Recently, women who choose to wear hijab voluntarily are also judged (Hasan, 2018, p. 26; Almila, 2018, p. 30).

The symbolic function of hijab under various circumstances needs to be understood, because Hasan (2018) records, "during the colonial period, hijab was a potent symbol of anti-imperialist resistance" (p. 31). Recently, when Muslim lands are being occupied and people being massacred, hijab continues to be an "expression of their individual will and moral stance" (Hasan, 2018, p. 31-32), "indicator of Muslim identity", and "liberating" (Almila, 2018, p.11-12) experience against "freedom from the intrusive masculine gaze" (Mansoor, 2016, p. 7). In the same vein, "as Fanon says: [The hijabed] woman who sees without being seen frustrates the colonizer. There is no reciprocity. She does not yield herself, does not give herself, does not offer herself" (p. 44, cited in Hasan, 2018, p. 32). Similarly, according to Bouvier (2017), "abaya can allow the body to realize a discourse of a more professional and confident identity" (p. 205).

The veil may not be a form of oppression in honour-based contexts because many women adopt it as a personal choice or an act of identity, but it is repeatedly used as a discursive sign in this context to symbolize protection, control, or conformity to norms. White clouds and clear blue sky stand for a bright day which signifies happiness, warmth, and joy. The valley symbolizes natural beauty, beauty of life, and vastness of the world, but the woman seems to be deprived of fully enjoying that beauty. The painting seems to represent the image of the status of a woman reduced to a hanging piece of cloth or an item of clothing that defines and determines her social worth and status. The woman

is isolated and aloof because despite staying at the centre of the valley, she must restrain. She cannot be part of the outer world.

The visual grammar of interpersonal metafunction in this offer image shows that mood is indicative, the angle is low, the shot is medium long, and distance is close personal. The burqa-clad woman has power over the interactive participants. The modality of colour choice, texture, contextualization, contrast and representation is high according to naturalistic, sensory, and abstract coding orientations.

Textually, the burqa-clad woman is salient, Real, and New in the painting. It conveys her confinement, suppression, and lack of personal freedom as the key information. Besides, the upper part of the frame shows that the painter has depicted the ideals of modesty as a restrictive influence. The beauty of the world, which is there but useless for the girl due to her isolation, is the Given.

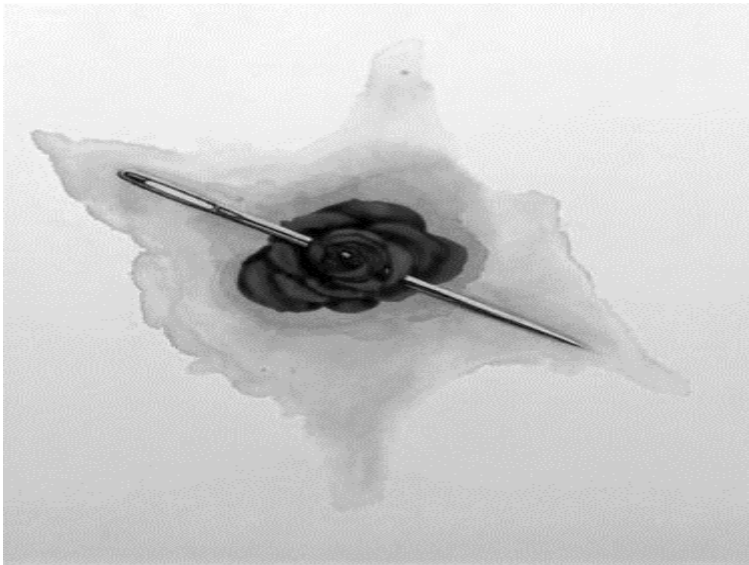


Figure 4: *Islam, S. (2017) Honour Killing. From, Saatchiart.com*

Piercing through Delicacy

The symbolic attributive process has been employed in the dynamic and dramatic Figure 4 because the flower as a recipient and carrier connotes women as manifestations of nature, while the needle, made up of metal, represents the material, man-made world. The painting takes the social media star Qandeel Baloch's killing as its background and depicts materialism as a cause of her killing because media, in order to gain material benefits, highlighted the boldness of the star by repeatedly "sensationalizing" her life or commenting on her sensuous style, which contributed to agitating her brother, who too partially for material gains but blaming her for her bold videos, strangled her to death (Author, Date). Due to the narrative transactional processes, vectors formed by the edges of the needle, convey the magnitude of female oppression.

Painter has mentioned in the art statement of Figure 4 that "honour killing...is the act that killed many young innocent girls for nothing. It is like killing roses before blooming in life. In the image, the researcher used the imagery of red Rose for such girls, who lost their lives against such brutality and so-called honor. The needle is used as a symbol of so-called honour that becomes a killing weapon for the attainment of materialism" (Islam, Saatchiart.com).

The overall patriarchal culture involving unequal gender relations regulates and normalizes such acts of brutality. Mace' (2018) also endorses that "as long as gender exists as a social relation, it can only be defined as a relation of patriarchal domination and as a cause of inequalities, discrimination and

violence against women”, while “patriarchy here is both that which is to be explained and that which explains: the cause of the inequalities and violence women are subjected to is patriarchy, and the proof that patriarchy exists is that women are victims of inequalities and violence” (p. 321).

From the perspective of interpersonal metafunction in this perspectival offer image, the shot is medium long, and distance is close social. The angle is high, frontal, and horizontal. It shows the othering of women as insignificant creatures and the involvement of the painter in depicting the issue as a social evil. The modality of the colour of the flower is medium; however, the modality of the texture and colour of needle and blood is high. From textual point of view, the needle has been made salient by placing it on the top and at the centre, while the flower is salient due to its placement at the centre. Margins are blank and the composition of the painting is linear, spatial and horizontally aligned; therefore, blood, flower and needle alternately become the “Given” and “New” as suggested by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, pp. 180-181), thus emphasizing the suffering of women. The top and bottom of the frame represent honour killing as the “Real” social evil and key information, and honour norms, which cause it, as the social ideals. However, nothing has been represented as an “Ideal” as suggested by (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, pp. 186-187).

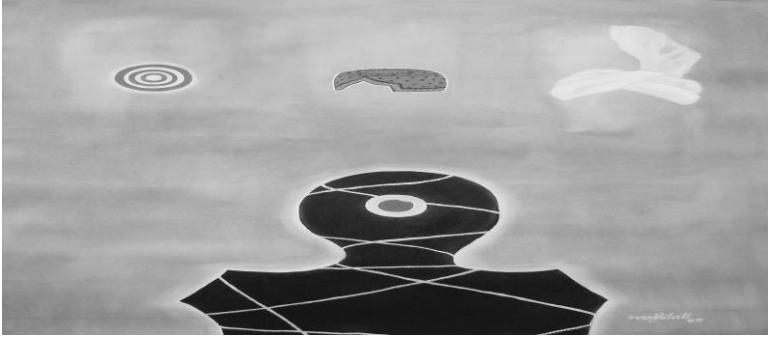


Figure 5: Ali, W. (2010) *Untitled*. From 'No Honour in Killing: Making Visible Buried Truth', VM Art Gallery, Karachi.

Chained and Chopped off

The setting in Figure 5 is outdoor and processes involved are symbolic suggestive, analytical, narrative, and transactional. The background in this dynamic, personal, and dramatic painting has been painted in white, pink, and grey, which are colours of evening and convey melancholic mood. Grey also signifies lack of clarity, confusion, and tension which the society displays regarding honour killing. A Sindhi cap, a white turban, and a red and white circle signifying men and their honour have been painted in the upper part of the frame. Cap and turban are cultural signs of male honour and pride. A black dummy, signifying a woman who has been shackled in white ropes, has been foregrounded in the lower part of the frame. The dummy is all black, facessless, armless, and hairless and these possessive attributes, as placed below turbans, manifest her loss of identity, character, power, and life. She can neither express herself, nor decide for herself. The crossed white lines over her body form vectors which connote loss of freedom due to cultural norms of honour which have pivotal role, as Novin and Oyserman (2016) also state, "honor mindsets, like individualistic and collectivistic

mindsets, are cultural mindsets, available in memory” (p. 9). Therefore, women learn their gender roles at early stages. Syed and Ali (2018) in the Pakistani context note that even if women “exercise their own agency through resilience and resourcefulness”, they face challenges due to their “gender and ethnic identity such as Punjabi, Pakhtun, Sindhi, Baloch, etc.” (p. 7).

The shot is medium close, while distance with the dummy is close personal but with the cap and turban is far personal in this offer image. It highlights the pathetic plight of the women whom the society and interactive participants should treat empathetically. The image is both subjective and objective because it not only has a built-in point of view but also employs unique forms of depiction. The angle is frontal horizontal and low in case of the dummy, while high in case of the caps, which reflects the power which the plight of the woman has over the interactive participants. Modality of the colours is high because white turban, red Sindhi cap and black colour of the dummy representing women have been directly derived from the culture where white turban represents waderas and feudal landlords, high social status or respect; black represents gloom and damage to reputation and character; while red Sindhi topi, represents honour of men belonging to the province Sindh.

Dummy has been made salient by placing it at the centre, thus representing female oppression as the core issue. Ideals of male honour and respect have been made salient by placing the turban and Sindhi cap in the upper part of the frame. Opposite to the ideals of honour, the miserable appearance of the dummy has

been portrayed as the Real. The painting is horizontally aligned, therefore, symbols for men and the black dummy alternately become the New and Given. In this way, the painter highlights the penury of women and the much celebrated ideals of honour as core issues.

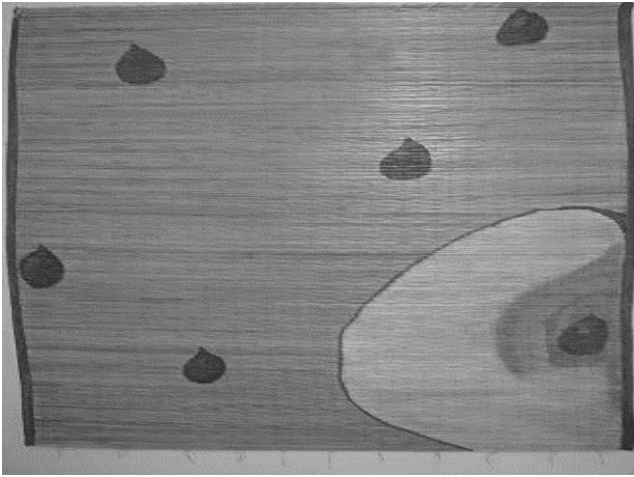


Figure 6: *Abbas, M. A. (2010) Eve. From 'No Honour in Killing: Making Visible Buried Truth', VM Art Gallery, Karachi.*

Forbidden Fruit

The processes involved in Figure 6, a dramatic, dynamic, and personal painting, are narrative transactional and symbolic attributive because of vectors and attributes, respectively. Half apple, representing identity crisis, alienation, and sadness of a woman has been painted on the right side of a 'taat' (burlap), while five seeds of apple appearing as drops of blood are scattered on the taat. Taat is commonly used as a curtain in Pakistan, especially in many rural areas where it is used as an alternative of a wooden or iron door. In the painting, it signifies protection and support offered by society, but the foregrounding of half apple and drops of blood connotes its insufficiency and inefficacy for

women. The title of the painting, *Eve*, and its association with apple, connote the mistake of making a choice by a woman. Vectors are formed by the multiple straight lines formed by the texture of the taat and straight lines of the margins connote protection of women and punishment as a rule. Vectors targeted at women reflect that the entire culturescape, as an actor, exercises power over women. Vectors formed by the seed at the core of the apple, standing for female eye, also represent the woman as a recipient and actor.

In this perspectival demand image, the shot is close, distance is close personal, and angle is low, horizontal, and frontal. The painter shows his involvement and portrays the issue as a cultural evil and demands the interactive participants to take steps to protect and rescue the woman from punishment. The woman as a victim has power over the interactive participants because her fixed gaze destabilizes them and makes them uncomfortable about their negligence towards her. Modality due to texture, colour contrast and choice of colour for the taat, seeds, and apple is high.

The apple is the New and seeds are the Given. Seeds also depict honour killing as an ideal form of punishment, while half-visible apple is the Real, which highlights the trauma experienced by the women. Apple, due to its size, while, seeds due to their number have been made salient to condemn honour killing.



Figure 7: *Chandio, H. (2011) Honour Killing. From 'In the Name of Honour, Jharoka Art Gallery, Islamabad.*

Stitched in Fragility

In the dramatic, dynamic, and conceptual Figure 7, the background is plain grey. A pistol is placed in a paint tray while a jewellery item seems to be hanging with it through a column of stitches that look like a rope. In this painting pistol, which is representing men, is an actor while teeka, which is representing women, is a recipient. Teeka has also been painted to connote marriage and patriarchal burden. The pistol also represents toxic masculinity, aggression, violence, a desire to control, or the power socially invested in the male role. On the other hand, teeka is just a jewellery item that is used for adornment and socially derives value from the presence of a groom. It shows that in the context of honour killing, women are dependent, powerless, inferior, and insignificant; while men are powerful, influential, overbearing, and superior.

Stains of blood signify honour killing, while the stitches represent mistrust and the shallow, fragile, or unreliable nature of the relationship between husband and wife. Husbands are socially expected to offer protection, respect, support, and

happiness and build the trust of their wives. Same is expected from the wives and if both cannot build a relationship based on trust, the relationship doesn't hold a strong foundation. How tragic, traumatizing and tormenting it is, when the one who protects, ruins. Anyhow, explaining female acts of identity and consequent violent reactions of men, Giddens (1992) clarifies, "in post-patriarchal-type arrangements", such violence is less an expression of male dominance, than a "stigmatized expression of a male inability to accept the contractual and negotiated dimension of new forms of conjugality between equal individuals" (cited in Mace', 2018, p. 328). Figure 7 exhibits how a lack of trust, an unstable relationship or suspicion can cause honour killing.

The palette stands for the painter himself as well as the society who are unable to curb honour killing because society explicitly or implicitly supports toxic masculinity as Dilmac (2016) confirms that "the view of others and peers' judgments regarding honorability" (p. 312) regulate honour norms and masculine control. Placement of the teeka, outside the paint tray, shows that women in honour-based contexts are what Dilmac (2016) considers "cast aside, labeled or stigmatized" (p. 312) others. They can be marginalized, decentralized, destabilized, and ruined if needed, while society accommodates men and according to Gill (2017), killing of women is "deemed as socially acceptable, "understandable," or "excusable" (p. 154). Men are active agents, while women are passive sufferers. Men inflict, decide, act, and react, while women suffer, accept, and tolerate. The orientation of

gender in this context, thus, according to the painter, is essentially based on inequality.

In terms of interpersonal metafunction in this offer/demand image, the angle is low in the case of the pistol, while high and top-down in the case of the jewellery item or floral pattern which reflects the power imparted to men and frailty and otherness assigned to women. The shot is medium long, and distance is far personal which reflects that interactive participants are objectively involved with the matter. It is both subjective and objective due to its inherent point of view and the top-down angle. The modality of the colours of stitched surface, pistol, background, and red colour is high; however, for the floral patterns, it is medium. The dull dark colour of the floral pattern, signifying jewellery items and happiness, reflects loss of happiness and dulling down of passion. Modality due to colour differentiation, depth, contrast, and contextualization is high.

Considering textual metafunction reveals that the pistol and floral pattern shaped as a teeka have been spatially organized in such a way that honour norms have been idealized and highlighted through placing the pistol on the top, while their recipient on the bottom. By putting blood spots on the margins, the painter has communicated the adverse effects of this kind of gender hierarchy or orientation. Painting has been horizontally aligned and blood spots, pistol, and floral pattern become Real and Given in turns, which, overall, connote honour killing as an evil inimical to women.



Figure 8: *Raj, N. (2011) Disposing Off. From 'In the Name of Honour', Jharoka Art Gallery, Islamabad.*

Decluttered

The setting is indoor and conceptual and symbolic suggestive processes are employed in Figure 8. In a room, trash has been placed on a plain off-white surface against the background of various items such as water dispenser, white canvas, furniture, and a shelf. The trash, firstly, connotes the maltreatment of human beings by degrading them to the level of inanimate useless stuff. People are taken advantage, and then got rid of or killed in the name of honour when suitable. Secondly, it may represent the victim's belongings which need to be disposed off. Thirdly, it represents the memory, agony, guilt, trauma, and chaos caused to the family members by killing someone in the name of honour. Fourthly, the black, brown, red, and white colours of the stuff signify its symbolic association with the person who brings dishonour to the family, becomes an unbearable burden, and consequently loses life. The empty shelf signifies emptiness, loss, and closure. Therefore, the chances of finding a respectable place in the society or staying alive become scant. Lastly, it represents

the confines of clutter in the form of oppressive norms which society needs to escape.

The angle is low, shot is very long, and distance is far social and public with reference to various participants. It shows that interactive participants are not personally involved with understanding or alleviating the misery of other people. The modality of dull tones of red, green, brown, grey, white, or black with reference to the issue under consideration is high.

The blank canvas, water dispenser, clutter, and an empty shelf in the background, in turn, become the Given and the New, thus highlighting the emptiness, loss, meaninglessness, and insignificance of human existence in the honor-based context, as well as the possibilities of change and growth. However, the placement of all these objects in the background signifies that possibilities are being neglected.

Findings & Discussion

The signs related to men in the paintings depict them as oppressors (Figure 5, 7) but those related to women depict them as marginalized, “backward, pitiable and isolated” (Van Es, 2017, p. 1) victims (Figure 1,2,3,4,5,6,7). Society has been represented as utterly oppressive towards women. Veil, modesty, marriage, and materialism have been depicted as tools used by society to oppress women. Social norms have been depicted as man-made but considered as natural by society. On the ideational level, society has been represented as oppressive towards women, while on the interpersonal level, interactive participants or society in general has been represented as negligent towards women or honour killing. While ideational metafunction shows that society

and social norms have been represented as a tyrannical actor, interpersonal metafunction unveils society as a passive onlooker. Paintings are both offer and demand images and modality is high. Textual metafunction also depicts women as yearning for freedom, which has been presented as an Ideal in contrast to the Real, core issue, or key information. In the paintings, the Real is either female subjugation, male dominance, oppressive social norms, or killing. Most of the paintings are horizontally laid out; therefore, male dominance and female subjugation, in turns, become the "Given and New" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, pp. 180-181) or in other words, the familiar and new information.

The findings also match those noted by Rodéhn (2016) in the analysis of curatorial practices of museums. According to Rodéhn (2016), "masculine values are embedded in structure, culture, and practice and continue to be pervasive and persistent" (p. 69); however, findings of both the studies are simultaneously different because female victimhood has been highlighted but male victimhood has been largely neglected in the present study.

Rodéhn (2016) found British and African men representing hegemonic or dominant and marginalized or subjugated masculinities, respectively. Representation of hegemonic masculinity is common in Rodehn (2016) and the present study, because Rodéhn, (2016) also found that "male hegemony is simultaneously glorified and protected" (p. 87) through stereotypical representation; however, in the present study, the social glorification of hegemonic masculinity has been condemned. Moreover, in the present study, marginalized masculinities can be observed to have further been marginalized

through exclusion of male victimhood. Men are killed and tortured for honour, but the representations only regulate gender ideologies based on female oppression and victimhood. Findings of Findings of Riaz (2021), Riaz (2019) and Riaz and Rafi (2019) also support the findings of this study. "What remains invisible in the discourse perpetuates multilayered inequalities through the discourse" (Author, Date). Representing men as aggressive and women as victims has its roots in the ideological concerns, social history, social memory, and power relations. Harland and McCready (2015) propound that masculinities in such contexts are also constructed, in that, men are also "attracted to violence or see violence as a legitimate way to deal with conflict" because society trains them like that; otherwise "individuals are not born violent" (p. 3). Display of power and violence, thus, become integral and complex elements of male identity, while hyper-femininity and hyper-masculinity are socially constructed gradually through discursive practices in patriarchal societies. Gender roles, in patriarchal settings, thus, are associated with being powerful or powerless. Due to powerlessness associated with women, "stereotyping of Muslim women" as "oppressed" or "backward" is regulated discursively. (Van Es, 2017, p. 3).

As discursive representations reconstruct identities and further regulate ideologies, cultural dynamics of father-daughter, sister-brother, husband-wife relations which are based on social and economic protection also need to be understood in Pakistani context because men take up social responsibility of women which generates a sense of ownership. Mayeda et al., (2018) note that women were considered as a resource to produce and bring

up children and increase family size which could support on financial grounds. This treatment of women as resources, commodities, and property led to a sense of possession which caused cousin marriages and established norms, which were based on sense of ownership for women. Society, in honour-based contexts, therefore, really makes men feel bad if they can't protect. Perpetrators also, sometimes, commit suicide due to experiencing shock, guilt, or trauma of defamation brought by their female relatives or even after killing them. Therefore, representations of survivors, suicide, facilitators, police, courts, male victims, and protective men should also be made.

Conclusion

Women have been authentically depicted as the main victims of honour killing, gender inequality, and patriarchal control. Women have largely been portrayed only as helpless creatures crawling back and forth between the mighty walls of penury, death, and distress. Contrarily, men have been represented as hypermasculine, oppressors, and tormentors. Culturescape has been represented as an unsafe, oppressive, and restrictive agent for women.

Male victimhood and female perpetration need to be clearly made visible. Hyman, et al., (2016) suggest that "mass media campaigns" and more art exhibitions "can be used to convey messages about empowering relationships" (p. 8) between men and women. As according to Lovercock and Hart (2018), "exposure to gender stereotypes decreases women's self-esteem" (p. 760); therefore, painters and media should, instead of reinforcing static representations, explore other aspects of gender

dynamics, possibilities, role models, diverse gender hierarchies, implicit reasons, and culturally feasible solutions. The “healing role” (Rodéhn, 2016, p. 69) of art in promoting reconciliation and subverting stereotypes, instead of creating barriers between people by adopting mechanisms of exclusion and stigmatization must be powerfully utilized through diverse semiotic resources. Art forms should also be used to encourage boys and men to express negative emotions in harmless ways.

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