



RESEARCH PAPER

**Global Anxieties influencing Emotional Expression and Symbolism
in the work of Contemporary Pakistani Artists**

Suffah Naeem*¹ and Prof. Dr. Sumera Jawad²

1. Ph. D Scholar, PUCAD, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

2. Professor, PUCAD, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author**

Xuffahnaeem@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The research paper explore the language of different emotions and idea deciphering them through the study of symbols. The study focuses on how contemporary artists of Pakistan, in the aftermath of globalization, have felt the change and the expression of emotion and ideas in their works has been taken the language of symbols to a new height. As globalization has induced a sense of urgency and intensified the search for a global identity in artist. The following paper explore this shift and in the light of Susan Langer and George Dickies positions about emotion and symbolism in art and analyze the work of few Pakistani artists. The finding of the paper is that irony has become a powerful device for expressing the ongoing turmoil of identity and global anxieties and injustices often expressed through war.

KEYWORDS Contemporary Pakistani Art, , Emotional Expression, Ideas, Symbolism

Introduction

Undeniably, art pieces are the artist's mental conceptions given tangible form. The exact manifestation of the emotion or idea onto the medium might not always be clear, yet the artist is persistently driving towards an objective. It is crucial to note that art acts as a language, a conduit through which artists communicate using visual elements such as colour, form, line, metaphor, and symbols. Artists need to consider a visual language that the viewers can comprehend. Similar to verbal communication, understanding the creative process in art can be achieved by observing how we use language. When conveying an idea or emotion, we build a coherent structure of words and sentences that provide a detailed description. We also use idioms that have loaded meanings. In art, words and sentences are replaced by lines and colours, grammatical rules are supplanted by artistic principles, and idioms are exchanged with symbols.

While 'symbol' is a widely used term in art discussions, its meaning varies across disciplines and theorists. Concepts such as allegory, metaphor, and sign often overlap with symbols, necessitating careful handling of these terms to avoid confusion amidst the plethora of definitions. Historically, symbols have been instrumental in communication and information dissemination. In art, symbols have been deployed to communicate complex ideas and emotions (Langer, 1966). Specifically, in Pakistani art, symbols have not only been used as communicative tools but have also influenced the artwork's symbolic value due to their nuanced meanings.

Contemporary art in Pakistan embodies a rapidly evolving universe of ideas. Artists emerging over recent decades have infused a fresh aesthetic and thematic diversity into the visual arts. This rapid transformation owes largely to the increased exposure and knowledge brought about by the rise of social media in the wake of globalization. Today's

artists can engage with a diverse global audience, thus refining their information processing skills in tandem with the accelerating information influx. Consequently, modern thinking and emotional responses are characterized by a more dynamic interplay of ideas and images, a heightened comparative ability, and an invigorated creative drive. Current art pieces provide a glimpse into a modern artist's psyche and depict how relentless temporal forces are reshaping human and artistic evolution.

Emotion and Symbol in Art

How can art represent emotions such as joy, and what's the mechanism behind it? Any profound analysis of artistic expression necessitates an understanding of the interpersonal dynamics that stem from the creative act. Artistic expression can be described as the artist's or observer's ability to induce or perceive human characteristics in artworks and their eventual display, representation, objectification, embodiment, or projection into the world (Hanke, 2012, p. 118). This definition, however, is too vague to be particularly helpful, requiring further clarification to pinpoint the challenges of expression.

We could begin by considering the artist's role as a primary axis for developing expression. Based on Collingwood's Expression Theory, an artist's self-expression defines the art (Levinson, 2005, p. 223). Thus, the artist partakes in an activity that can be understood as a means to convey emotions through different art forms. Conversely, we could interpret the artwork as inspiring emotions in the viewer, either those imparted by the artist or stirred by the artwork itself. Moreover, the artist and the audience can have an emotional connection via the artwork. Finally, we could also relate expression to the artwork that provides anthropomorphic depiction. When we identify the emotions that are eloquently portrayed by the artwork, we could argue that the piece is expressive or embodies expression.

Subsequently, we should assess if any of these concepts satisfactorily describe our emotional responses to art. This query's essence might offer some insights, as the emotional journey of the observer and its source are key factors. Contrary to the principles of Expression Theory, a piece of art doesn't have to mirror the artist's or anyone else's emotional state to be considered an expression of emotion (Smith, 2017, p. 244). It can be contended that art's objective is not simply to elicit emotions in the audience, but rather to offer a meaningful encounter or fulfill some metaphysical, psychological, or cultural aspiration, or even serve a non-functional purpose. If an artwork can stimulate an emotional response, it's intriguing why we might not feel melancholy when listening to profoundly sorrowful music, given that our emotions aren't mirrored as they are during actual sadness.

Returning to our initial query, is it the artwork expressing emotions, or does the artwork merely possess expressive traits? It's important to acknowledge that artworks, understandably, can't communicate emotions like humans, necessitating an alternative form of expression within the artwork. So, what exactly bestows this piece of art with such expressiveness? This query represents the infamous challenge of expression; there have been numerous interesting but ultimately unsuccessful attempts to address it, making it essential to consider the most compelling ones.

Nelson Goodman proposed a rational understanding of the metaphorical use of language to attribute expressive qualities to artworks in his book "Languages of Art" (Goodman, 1976). However, his ideas fall short by neglecting the role of emotion in art and favouring a terminological approach. Describing an emotional experience through words goes beyond mere metaphors, as it can encompass an actual account of the experience itself.

In contrast, Eduard Hanslick advocated for a more formalist perspective, suggesting that artworks can have emotional effects on humans without directly representing emotions (Budd, 2002, p. 22). He argued that the dynamic qualities of emotional episodes and musical compositions contribute to our tendency to confuse them. Hanslick further discredited art's ability to express emotion by emphasizing that emotional states involve thinking and concepts, which distinguishes them from music. On the other hand, Peter Kivy's human parallel asserts that we recognize the similarity between artistic expression and human emotional expression in both aesthetic and non-aesthetic contexts due to the universality of these traits (Kivy, 1989). However, it is challenging to provide a formal outline of the similarities between the two, or examples of emotion having a logical structure beyond a metaphorical context.

Unfortunately, accurately defining how we perceive the expressive quality of a work becomes difficult if we don't share in the emotion or mood it represents. Therefore, we need a technique to describe this phenomenon while also considering the aspect of perception. These theories struggle to account for the fact that humans may have shared or simultaneous experiences best represented by objective or inter-subjective accounts, considering that expression exists within the subject as a mode of perception. Furthermore, we cannot predict our emotional response to an artwork based on our knowledge of it because each artwork has the potential to offer a new and unique experience. It is not primarily about recognizing preexisting emotions within the work, but rather about being open to the possibility of encountering something new and transformative. Collingwood adds a qualification to define the kind of emotional experience that constitutes an artwork. He states:

The artist's business is to express emotions; and the only emotions he can express are those which he feels, namely his own. . . . If he attaches any importance to the judgement of his audience, it can only be because he thinks that the emotions he has tried to express are . . . shared by his audience. . . . In other words he undertakes his artistic labour not as a personal effort on his own private behalf, but as a public labour on behalf of the community to which he belongs (Gaut & Lopes, 2005, p. 126).

Susan Langer, who was an American philosopher, writer, and educator known for her theories on the influences of art on the mind, relates this arrangement to the cognitive ability of the artist:

Every work of art expresses, more or less purely, more or less subtly, not feelings and emotions which the artist has, but feelings and emotions which the artist knows; his insight into the nature of sentience, his pictures of vital experience, physical and emotive and fantastic (Popova, 2016).

Adopting this thought process enables us to distinguish the existence of emotion as a concealed, inherent, or shared attribute from the concept of expression as a somewhat elusive trait. Essentially, this is the process of interacting with the artwork and examining its aesthetic and/or non-aesthetic attributes. It's through this interaction that we can evaluate the value and caliber of art pieces. Emotion is either portrayed in a piece or attributed to it, and expression is the active conveyance or embodiment of emotion or other attributes. Differentiating between expression and emotion draws our attention to the reality that expressing emotion is more about the language we use when discussing art than about the actions causing these emotions or moods to be expressed, which exist separately from the artwork. Emotions require a medium (the artwork) or an expresser for

expression; they are feelings associated with specific beliefs or thoughts; and each emotion has a unique cognitive content that sets it apart from others. However, the term "expression" can be applied in various contexts, each demanding its own interpretation.

The above discussion provides insights on how viewers can appreciate the inherent emotion of a work or its expressive aspect without necessarily adopting those emotions.

Susan Langer presents a unique perspective on the artist's contribution, illustrating what art conveys. In her work, "Feeling and Form", she portrays art as the creation of forms that encapsulate human emotions (Langer, 1977). However, it's important to distinguish her use of the term 'symbol' from its usage in the art movement of Symbolism. Langer perceives symbols as "abstractions" which function as operational entities and "shape" our experiences. While she recognizes the role of language as a symbol type, she argues that it falls into a category called discursive symbols. The forms rendered on a canvas are of a different nature, they are presentational symbols. Meaning, the information provided doesn't adhere to a logical sequence but rather depends on the relation the parts maintain with the whole. Put differently, the interactions among various symbolic elements within a composition generate a gestalt quality that the observer can comprehend (Innis, 2009). More specifically, she asserted that the meanings communicated through language are understood in a linear fashion and collated through a process named discourse; the meanings of other symbolic elements constituting a larger, articulate symbol are only grasped via the overall structure's meaning. These symbols' entire existence relies on their participation in a concurrent, integrated presentation.

In other words, she represents an artistic approach that seamlessly intertwines the creator and their creation in a significant manner. She perceives art as the external manifestation of feelings, signifying that an artist employs evocative shapes or symbols to create a piece that conveys a specific emotion. Instead of being a direct output of feelings, a piece of art embodies emotion. Essentially, this emotion is a part of the wider experience spectrum, resulting from an individual's interaction with their natural surroundings. Consequently, artists possess a lexicon of emotions and symbolic shapes, arranged in such a way as to express emotions. In this scenario, "arrangement" refers to the artist's capacity to marry form and significance. In the realm of the art studio, the canvas's image isn't novel. She hasn't added anything new to the existing elements: the canvas and the paint. When colors are composed on a surface, a product is born, not simply assembled and restructured; we refer to this as a picture. Abruptly, it materializes, subsuming the canvas and the arranged paint, blurring the lines between the two as separate. Their original form is replaced by a fresh one (Langer, 1977, p. 44).

Langer relates the act of arrangement to the artist's cognitive prowess, declaring that in each art piece, the artist's understanding of consciousness, her depictions of vital experiences - be they physical, emotional or fantastical - are conveyed with varying degrees of simplicity and nuance in the feelings and emotions the artist is familiar with. The concept of symbol holds a pivotal role in this discussion, hence it's crucial to define and examine it in the context of contemporary literature.

Given the above, there are various theories of symbols that coincide with Langer's above position. George Dickie has extensively studied the formation, recognition, and construction of symbolic meanings, addressing the context-sensitive nature of symbols - an issue first raised by E. H Gombrich (Gombrich, 1985, p. 183). To truly comprehend the symbolic meanings within a piece of art, one must first ascertain if there are any symbols rooted in the natural or everyday world. If an element in a piece of art stands out due to its

design, contrast to its context, or unique and conspicuous presence, it may be deemed a symbol. This criteria forms the basis of the "principle of prominence".

George Dickie proposed similar thoughts. He suggested that artists have four main strategies for creating new symbols: 1) introducing unusual or impossible events within otherwise ordinary scenes; 2) positioning a portrayal or description at a focal point within the artwork; 3) repeating a certain depiction or description; or 4) placing a depiction or description in juxtaposition to others (Dickie, 1997, pp. 126-127).

Contemporary Pakistani Art

Imran Qureshi's creative expressions are intrinsically entwined with the ongoing societal and political narratives of Pakistan. His art piece named *How Many Rains Must Fall before the Stains Are Washed Clean* (figure 1) notably underscores the significance of the creative journey over the end result. The shifting patterns within the work reveal a poetic quality as they form and re-form into unique shapes. This masterwork stands as an influential critique of the prevailing state of affairs in Pakistan, fusing conventional patterns and methodologies with abstract comprehension. Additionally, it integrates aspects of repurposing and metamorphosis, underscoring Qureshi's innovation and fresh perspectives.

Qureshi's artwork breaks traditional norms and fosters a discourse between historical customs and modern circumstances. His experimental approach towards the selection of materials, methods, and subject matter demonstrates his profound engagement with the realities of life in Pakistan. This results in stirring pieces that encapsulate the heart of the nation's ongoing evolution and quest for identity.

Through his daring strokes, Qureshi transforms remnants of public violence into artistic expressions, layering them into exquisite petal-like formations touched with hints of white. His aim is to express that while these shapes originate from the impacts of brutality, they also represent life, signifying renewal and optimism.

The recurrent patterns in Qureshi's work symbolize the fortitude and vitality of Pakistanis, showcasing their capacity to discover beauty amidst adversity. His artwork on the rooftop of The Metropolitan Museum initially leaves spectators stunned with its portrayal of bloodstains engulfing a significant part of the terrace, reminiscent of a vicious assault aftermath. Nevertheless, Qureshi's objective is to craft restorative art that communicates the persistent vitality of life.

Moreover, Qureshi's work demonstrates how globalization is influencing identity. By employing techniques from miniature painting, a native art form of the Subcontinent, and manifesting it on the rooftop of The Metropolitan Museum in New York, he addresses terrorism in a global milieu. His art thus creates a conversation with the international art scene and the authorities that influence the global status quo. Qureshi uses his art to express a heightened self-consciousness that critically tackles the infringement of essential human rights and interacts with broader worldwide concerns.

Imran Qureshi's artistic endeavor thoroughly explores the intricacies of modern society, addressing themes of violence, perseverance, and the transformative potential of art. His work serves as a potent reminder of the capacity of art to incite introspection, stimulate conversations, and facilitate positive transformations in the world. According to Dickie's classification Qureshi's work fulfills all four criteria. And the thought and emotion behind using a symbolic imagery is certainly emerging from a global context.

Qureshi masterfully balances the ancient techniques of Mughal miniature painting with contemporary forms and issues. His symbolic use of red, oscillating between life-affirming beauty and the violence that has plagued his homeland, encapsulates Langer's concept of symbols reflecting an artist's emotional world. The painted droplets – at once blossoms and blood splatter – speak to the paradox of life's fragility and enduring strength.



Figure 1. Imran Qureshi, *How many Rains, Paint on Roof top*, 2010.

Recently, Imran Mudassar conveyed a compelling narrative through his art, addressing the impact of war and destruction on humanity. In his previous series, *Hate or Love* (figure 2), he created a powerful statement on conflict and devastation using intriguing images on vast canvases and delicate line drawings. The heart symbolizes love, humanity, and peace, whereas darker hues and the grenade signify hatred. The diptych titled "*Hate or Love*" features two images mirroring each other; one portrays a grenade nestled within a heart's silhouette, and the other, a heart within a grenade's outline. He replaces traditional decoratives with a symbolic "Flies" emblem, embodying the destructive nature of war on life's beauty. Despite the somber nature of his themes, his deft portrayal of the narrative with symbolic elements showcases his exceptional command over his craft. His art serves as an expressive medium, narrating the dichotomy of life and death.

In the *You, Me & My Love* triptych (figure 3), Imran uses a series of large monochrome canvases to draw intricate designs echoing the ornamentation on holy scriptures, thereby adorning the armor. His latest pieces often incorporate elaborate oriental arabesque designs. A gold hue dominates the black backdrop, creating a striking contrast. His subject matter subtly alludes to the intricacies and implications of terrorism. He uses these gorgeous patterns to bring balance and harmony into his work, subtly conveying the message that religious identity plays a pivotal role in war's occurrence and damage. This subject resonates widely with contemporary American culture, highlighting the relationship between faith, politics, and society. Through his art, Imran seeks to reveal hidden truths.

Imran's artistry innovatively depicts our world and our role within it, addressing pressing concerns like political turmoil and terrorism and their fallout. He employs a direct and symbolic approach, accentuating symmetry and repetitive patterns in his intricate classical decorations. Imran is skilled at imbuing his work with symbolic meaning while maintaining its aesthetic value. As such, he often uses monochrome or simple pencil sketches. Even though he follows the same basic principles as other artists, his work leans more towards poster-like presentations than traditional paintings. His primary focus lies in figure drawing, a discipline he excels at. His art exhibits a sense of tranquility and authenticity, featuring open and well-proportioned compositions.



Figure 2. Imran Mudassar, Hate or Love, Oil on canvas, 2013.

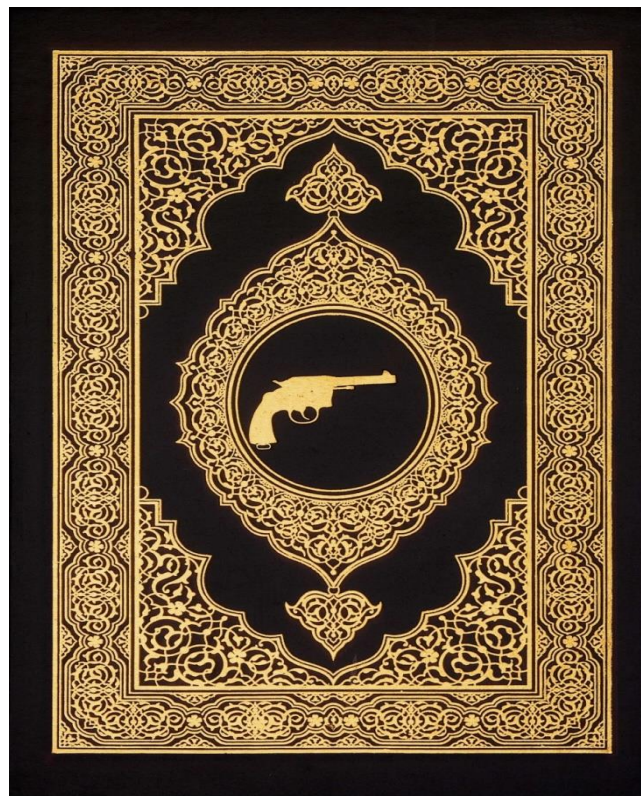


Figure 3. Imran Mudassar, You, Me and My Love, Oil on canvas, 2015.

Ahsan Asif's exploration of the female form, as depicted in his painting *Woman with a Rose* (figure 4), underscores his fascination with motifs like the muse, sexuality, and human love, consequently leading to discussions about female identity. The pose within this artwork symbolizes a contemplation of self-perception.

Self-perception is formed from the array of meanings an individual attributes to oneself. As time passes, this assemblage of meanings evolves, leading to a new or altered expression of self-perception. The development of one's self-perception is influenced by how we perceive others, our personal objectives, and the tactics we employ to achieve them. In contrast, identity can be viewed as a more enduring self-perception that, while also evolving, does so at a slower rate. Its foundational aspects largely derive from societal factors rather than individual ones, hence its slow rate of change.

Answers to crucial identity questions such as "who am I?" are typically vague, implying that substantial shifts in identity are unlikely. Similarly, long-standing perspectives on gender roles and attitudes stem from historical influences and accumulated experiences, making modifications challenging. However, it's possible for self-perception to shift, even if overall views about identity remain static. As a result, within a fixed identity construct, there's room for varied self-perceptions. However, these variations aren't significant enough to challenge the overall cultural identity framework. Hence, within a societal context, there can exist creative, cooperative, or perceptive subordinate women, where these attributes don't challenge the essence of their subordination.

A conflict emerges when a person's self-perception clashes with societal gender roles or conventional perceptions about identity. For instance, if a woman is seen as defiant, this characteristic directly conflicts with the subordinate profile, often drawing substantial social criticism. This scenario appears to be reflected in Ahsan's depictions of women, who, while appearing subordinate, also exhibit a spirit of rebellion.



Figure 4. Ahsen Asif, *Woman with Rose*, Oil on Canvas, 2010.

Saira Naseem's satirical creation is rife with animal imagery and caricatures of chefs and a portly man in Mughal attire poised to serve a dish (figure 5). This work is loaded with metaphorical undertones and tells a narrative through each symbol it portrays.

Two chef figures, uniformed in Western attire, embody international political figures. Their twin appearance suggests an identical approach among different foreign leaders when interacting with Pakistan. Occupied with peeling potatoes that bear faint etchings, possibly signifying a history of diplomatic promises and agreements, their demeanor reflects monotony and disillusionment. The repetitive nature of their task seems to represent their accustomed diplomatic behavior.

A variety of animals are positioned behind the chefs, symbolizing the common citizens or nations observing the leaders, waiting for tangible outcomes. However, these spectators receive no recognition from the leaders. Naseem appears to convey the notion that political figures see their public as passive beings akin to a flock led by the blind - capable only of echoing the words and actions of their leaders.

A fascinating figure in this tableau is a man dressed in Mughal garb, bearing a dish ready to serve. His attire suggests his Muslim identity. The fact that he is serving a dish prepared by foreigners could represent Pakistani leaders' role in implementing policies influenced by outsiders. A radar atop his head might signify the omnipresence of the media. It appears to suggest that every peace and friendship policy in Pakistan is crafted under foreign supervision, by those who lack understanding of the country's internal affairs. Pakistani leaders, Naseem seems to say, act as waiters, presenting these policies to the media and the world. A spoon tucked in the man's belt indicates his potential participation in this process, implying that Pakistani leaders could emulate their foreign counterparts, neglecting their populace for self-gain. It's a pertinent example of conveying complex ideas and emotions emerging from global context through unusual depiction.



Figure 5. Saira Waseem, *Peace Talks*, Ink and Silver Leaf on Wasli, 2004

In her work *Suburban Dreams* (figure 6), Huma Mulji creates a buffalo to metaphorically represent developing countries grappling with the process of Westernization. This symbolism extends to individuals caught in the confusion of globalization, who despite striving for Western ideals, come off as ludicrous due to their inherent indigenous roots. Mulji presents the stark reality of this predicament through her art installation, illuminating the paradoxical nature of such a scenario.

Her approach is often viewed as a clever method of communicating the irony present in such situations. The buffalo, attempting to conduct itself in a manner that is not innate to its nature, becomes a theatrical emblem for the circumstances. The irony lies in the fact that those pushing to become something they are not, result in manifesting distortion rather than grace, and degradation rather than progress.

Moreover, in another piece, *Heavenly Heights* (figure 7) Mulji places a buffalo alarmingly close to the ceiling of the gallery, seemingly having scaled a significant portion of an iron electricity tower. This metallic structure signifies the industrialized Western society. Despite the buffalo's ambitious climb, the resulting scene is strangely absurd and uncanny, further emphasizing the problematic situation of forced Westernization (Grove, 2009).



Figure 6 . Huma Mulji, Heavenly Heights, 2009.



Figure 7. Huma Mulji 2, Suburban Dreams, 2009.

Discussion

In Pakistan, the ever-evolving contemporary art scene is a vibrant embodiment of a world undergoing rapid shifts in perspectives. The artists who have come to prominence over recent years have introduced a hitherto unseen diversity in visual arts, reflecting clear transitions in themes and stylistic approaches. This quickened pace of evolution can be credited to the increased accessibility and awareness facilitated by social media platforms in a globalized era. A modern-day artist now has the ability to tap into worldwide creative ideas and visual imagery while receiving feedback from various artistic, cultural, and political viewpoints. The resultant influx of information necessitates advanced cognitive processing, provoking a unique pattern of thought and emotion that entails transient ideas and visuals, deeper comparative analysis, and a vibrant chase for innovation. However, this new thinking mode may compromise in-depth philosophical contemplation and focus, which remain critical to high-quality art. Nevertheless, today's art pieces serve as a mirror to a contemporary artist's psyche, narrating the compelling tale of how the relentless passage of time is altering the trajectory of human and artistic evolution.

A brief examination of works from the emerging artists unveils a distinct emphasis on the evolving notion of identity, a direct offshoot of globalization. The young artist, blessed with a receptive mind, faces a barrage of ideas and perspectives about identity. As they encounter the post-modern sensibility, their cultural roots instigate a process of self-discovery and identity comparison across numerous dimensions. This clash between individual and global culture incites a comprehensive dialogue where personal beliefs are reassessed and reshaped subtly. The outcome is a complex emotion with contrasting timelines; the older self resists change, while the newer persona embraces it. This predicament has led artists to convey their confusion in numerous ways, hinting at either an identity crisis or a transformation. Interestingly, the entire range of responses is being investigated. Some artists concentrate on resistance to change, while others accept novelty. Occasionally, artists seek a blend of both stances in their themes. A parallel scenario can be observed in stylistic terms. Artists either adhere to time-honored stylistic methods rooted in their own culture or borrowed from European traditions, or venture into innovating, creating styles ranging from the cryptic to the laudable.

Irony, though a complex term, essentially encapsulates our subjective experiences. Simply put, it represents a conjunction of contrasting elements. Despite their consolidation in a discourse or a piece of art, these opposing components retain their fundamental character. Generally, irony takes two main forms: verbal or situational.

In verbal irony, the intended meaning starkly contrasts with the spoken words. For instance, expressing kind words in a tone of anger is ironic because the emotional context is at odds with the verbal message. This also applies to self-contradictory statements. On the other hand, situational irony involves actions leading to results drastically different from the original intent.

Art that catches the audience off-guard often does so by introducing elements that are unexpected, witty, nuanced, and thought-provoking through their themes or styles. These artworks encourage diverse interpretations, enhancing their cultural popularity and solidifying a trend.

Numerous contemporary artists engage with their audience through such methods, particularly by developing a juxtaposition of opposing meanings within their creations. Often, these artworks become ironic statements or generate irony when interpreted within the context of the prevailing culture. The ensuing contrast and opposition in these works

not only scrutinize socially accepted norms but also stimulate emotional and intellectual conversations among viewers, contributing to a more profound understanding.

For an instance to be regarded as ironic, it must present a stark contrast between an evident element and an unexpected one. This surprising factor should fundamentally challenge the initial element, pushing the interpreter to reassess their understanding of what was initially clear and familiar. Take, for example, Montaigne's assertion, "Man is quite insane. He wouldn't know how to create a maggot, and he creates gods by the dozen." The irony in this statement lies in the contrast between humans' actual and perceived creative abilities.

Montaigne juxtaposes concrete skill with imagination, both of which drive creativity. He zeroes in on the well-known and prevalent religious tendencies, particularly polytheism, and contrasts this with the fact that humans are incapable of creating even a simple living organism. When delving deeper, it's clear that this statement is multilayered in its irony. On one level, it contrasts scale and complexity - the concept of a god is vast and infinite, while a maggot is a small, spatially and temporally limited creature. On another level, it compares functionality - gods are believed to be omnipotent and multi-functional, while maggots are limited in capability and power. This forces the reader or interpreter to reflect on humanity and its creative abilities compared to its creations.

However, decoding an ironic statement requires prior understanding of the concepts or ideas it references, making irony a challenging concept to master. Expressing views in an ironic manner is becoming increasingly popular, especially among the emerging group of Pakistani artists.

These artists are not only echoing their personal emotions but are also offering commentary on societal changes and challenges. The symbols - more intense, more thoughtful - are no longer mere decorative elements. They are the artist's outcry, their defiance, and their coping mechanism. They are a reflection of the paradox that globalization presents: the search for a global community, and the fear of losing the intimate, the local, the familiar.

Conclusion

In the shifting sands of global conflict, as boundaries morph and identities blur, Pakistani artists have begun to wield symbols with renewed fervor and an audacious spirit of experimentation. They weave their narratives not just with the threads of colors and shapes but with the powerful strands of historical and cultural motifs. It's time we learn to read the symbols, the secret whispers of the artists' souls, for they carry tales of the turbulence, the trials, and the triumphs, tales that are as much a part of the global narrative as they are uniquely Pakistani.

References

- Budd, M. (2002). *Music and the Emotions: The Philosophical Theories*. Routledge.
- Dickie, G. (1997). *Introduction to Aesthetics: An Analytic Approach* (First Edition). OUP USA.
- Gaut, B. N., & Lopes, D. (2005). *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*. Psychology Press.
- Gombrich, E. H. (1985). *Symbolic Images*. Phaidon Press.
- Goodman, N. (1976). *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*. Hackett Publishing.
- Hanke, J. W. (2012). *Maritain's Ontology of the Work of Art*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Innis, R. E. (2009). *Susanne Langer in Focus: The Symbolic Mind*. Indiana University Press.
- Kivy, P. (1989). *Sound Sentiment: An Essay on the Musical Emotions, Including the Complete Text of The Corded Shell*. Temple University Press.
- Langer, S. K. (1977). *Feeling and Form* (1st Edition). Pearson.
- Langer, S. K. (1966). The Cultural Importance of the Arts. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 1(1), 5–12. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3331349>
- Levinson, J. (2005). *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*. OUP Oxford.
- Popova, M. (2016, October 28). *Trailblazing Philosopher Susanne Langer on the Purpose of Art, How It Works Us Over, and How Abstract Thinking Gives Shape to Human Emotion*. Brain Pickings. <https://www.brainpickings.org/2016/10/28/susanne-langer-problems-of-art/>
- Smith, K. (2017). *The Expressionist Turn in Art History: A Critical Anthology*. Routledge.