



RESEARCH PAPER

Non-Violent Resistance in Nazar's Comics: A Verbo-Visual Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The present study employs a Verbo-Visual Discourse Analysis to comprehensively examine the relationship between comics, women's empowerment, and nonviolent resistance in the Pakistani context. Focused on Nigar Nazar's Gogi character, the analysis utilizes visual grammar theory proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen and Halliday's SFL. It aims to explore the fusion of verbal and visual elements in Gogi comics, emphasizing their impact on female readers' perceptions and behaviors. Besides, this research scrutinizes Gogi's persona, assessing its influence on women's empowerment and its subversion of social mores, encouraging women to participate in nonviolent resistance activities. The long-term effects of Gogi's persona on reader engagement in nonviolent activities are also explored. Additionally, the study investigates women readers' responses to Gogi's lighthearted approach to empowerment, highlighting the role of humor as an effective medium for conveying messages about nonviolent resistance. The Verbo-Visual Discourse Analysis aims to decipher the semiotic nuances of Gogi comics, emphasizing visual and linguistic components that contribute to shaping the discourse of nonviolent resistance. Through this methodology, the study seeks to advance knowledge and understanding of the transformative potential of comics in challenging societal norms and fostering active engagement in social and political change within the Pakistani setting. Future research could delve into the broader cultural impact of Gogi comics in Pakistan, examining how they contribute to shaping societal perceptions beyond the scope of women's empowerment and nonviolent resistance. This exploration could shed light on the multifaceted influence of comics on cultural norms and values.

KEYWORDS Comics, Empowerment, Non-Violence, Verbo-Visual, Women

Introduction

Kress and Leeuwen (2006) state that abundant proof of the value of visual communication, as well as the current challenge of not having a way to discuss or reflect on the actual messages that images and visual design convey. As a result, we must depart from the which Roland Barthes took in his 1964 essay 'Rhetoric of the image' (1977). In this essay (and elsewhere, as in the introduction to *Elements of Semiology*; Barthes, 1967a), he argued that the meaning of images (and of other semiotic codes, like dress, food, etc.) is always related to and, in a sense, dependent on, verbal text (Kress and Leeuwen, 2006), to use Halliday's terms, every semiotic serves two purposes: one is "ideational," meaning it represents "the world around and inside us," and the other is "interpersonal," meaning it acts out social interactions as social relations. A cohesive "world of the text," or what Halliday refers to as the "textual" function, is another goal shared by all message entities texts. Barthes (1992) distinguishes between two sorts of elaboration: the first type is when the image comes first and the text forms a more specific and concrete restatement or

"fixing" of it (a relation he called anchoring). In the first type, the verbal text comes first and the image forms an illustration of it. Using the theoretical concept of "metafunction" from Michael Halliday's work (2004), Kress and Leeuwen (2006) demonstrate how, like all semiotic modes, the visual must fulfil a number of representational and communicational conditions in order to function as a complete system of communication. Comic art is an effective tool that speaks to the human experience in ways that words alone cannot, transcending cultural barriers.

The legendary character Gogi, created by the pioneering cartoonist Nigar Nazar, has captured the hearts and imaginations of readers of all ages in the world of Pakistani comics. Her lively and endearing demeanour proves the ability of comics to inspire and have an impact. This study explores the world of Pakistani comics, concentrating on Gogi, and explores how important a role she plays in advancing women's empowerment and nonviolent resistance. She conducted interviews for women's empowerment on different channels as Nazar (2021) says that a certain channel requested an interview on the women empowerment. McCloud (1993) contends in "Understanding Comics" that comics are an important medium for social commentary because of their special capacity to communicate difficult concepts and feelings. Gogi cartoons have addressed a variety of social issues in Pakistani society while advocating for non-violent opposition (Rizvi, 2017). Utilising a Verbo-Visual Discourse Analysis, the researchers interpret the spoken and visual components that form the narrative of empowerment in relation to social and political transformation. Since its creation in the early 1970s, Gogi has appeared in Pakistani comic books and newspapers, acting as an inspiration to women all around the country. Her vibrant and determined nature is evident in her steadfast dedication to questioning the existing quo.

Literature Review

Wood (1974), who examined how comic books empower women. Wood discovered that girls were characterized as greedy, terrible influences, and as threatening to break up with their boyfriends if gifts were not given. Girls were unable to defend themselves against males. According to the plots, they were taken advantage of and apprehended by the antagonist. They were the things that the superhero was supposed to save. Sievers (2003) investigated the portrayal of women in Pakistani comics released after 2002. She discovered that the minority still includes women. They are not as likely to be the protagonist, the hero, or the boss. Visual representations of them with huge breasts, small waists, skimpy attire, and awkward stances further objectify them. It's surprising to learn that female superheroes, or heroines, are portrayed similarly to female comic book characters. They are nearly always in the way of the male superhero. This study concentrated on the ways that Gogi empowers Pakistani women. In Pakistani comics, Nigar Nazar's Gogi has served as a symbol of women's resistance and empowerment. Nazar's groundbreaking work as a female cartoonist dismantled gender discrimination, and her witty and humorous character Gogi has tackled a variety of social topics. Gogi's persona is "a multi-faceted icon of feminist resistance," questioning conventional wisdom and encouraging readers to think critically about the status quo, as Kukula (2013) observes. It is essential to look at how women are portrayed in Pakistani comics in order to comprehend how Gogi's persona defies gender expectations.

The long-term effects of comic characters such as Gogi on readers' attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions have not been thoroughly studied. It's possible that further research is needed to fully comprehend how these individuals' effect changes over time, especially in light of shifting societal dynamics. Rarely has Gogi comics been examined before in relation to the larger cultural and socioeconomic context of Pakistan. A more

sophisticated comprehension of Gogi's influence can be attained by comprehending how her persona interacts with and mirrors the subtle cultural aspects of Pakistan.

Material and Methods

This research is a descriptive qualitative study. Since the data are spoken text and visuals, it uses both textual analysis and a qualitative descriptive method. The primary framework for analyzing the comics' pictures was Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) theory on reading images, while Halliday's transitivity analysis was utilized for the verbal analysis. The data was gathered from online portal: Gogi Studios.

To facilitate the visual analysis, the data in the form of photos were gathered, edited, and saved in a folder. The verbal text data were chosen based on how well each sentence supported the portrayal of women's empowerment in comic comics. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), "visual language is a form of meaning-making," and their analysis of Gogi comics sheds light on how text and images interact to communicate ideas about nonviolent resistance.

Framework

Analyzing visual analysis: source. Adapted from Kress and Van Leeuwen, (2006).

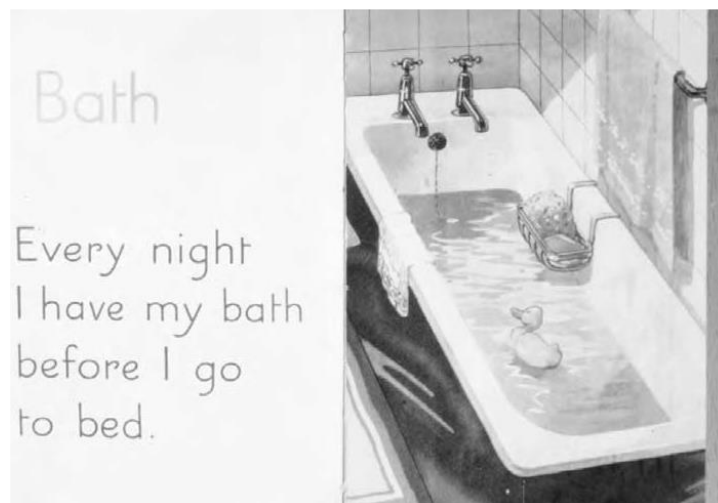


Fig 1 My bath (from Baby's First Book, Ladybird)

The image of the bath is more realistic, intricate, and detailed than the one of the bird in the tree. We might run into issues if we tried to break this picture down into its constituent parts and identify each one separately. Should we count the water's waves as components? Are there shadows from the towel and tub? And what would we have to say, for instance, about the relationship between the duck and the soap, if we tried to determine the relationships between these elements? We pose these issues because it is where one may begin to demonstrate that images are composed messages that can be broken down into their constituent parts. This structure, instead of being enforced by the rules of a visual code, isn't it that of the cultural object "bathroom"? If one is familiar with the appearance of bathrooms, isn't this image easily and blatantly readable?



Fig 2 Bird in tree (Bruna, 1988)

In contrast, the image of the bird in the tree is far simpler, much less realistic, and much less detailed than the image of the lavatory. It is obviously a "coded" image, stylized and conventional. Everything is bold, simplistic, and lacks depth, shadows, and subtle colour nuances. Furthermore, the image's structure which consists of one core image and four peripheral images does not mimic any real-world organisation. Based on a visual code, it is a traditional visual arrangement. The picture would appear to be very receptive to constituent analysis as a result, with the parts that make up the whole standing out as independent, distinct pieces.

The Textual Meta-function

Any semiotic mode must be able to create texts, or complexes of signals, that make sense both inside and outside of the context in which they were created. Additionally, in this case, visual grammar provides a variety of tools: various compositional configurations that enable the realisation of various textual interpretations. For instance, in figure 1.1, the picture is on the right while the text is on the left. The relationship between the written language and image, as well as the overall meaning, would be entirely changed by changing the arrangement. The picture would now act as the starting point and the "anchor" for the message instead of the written words.

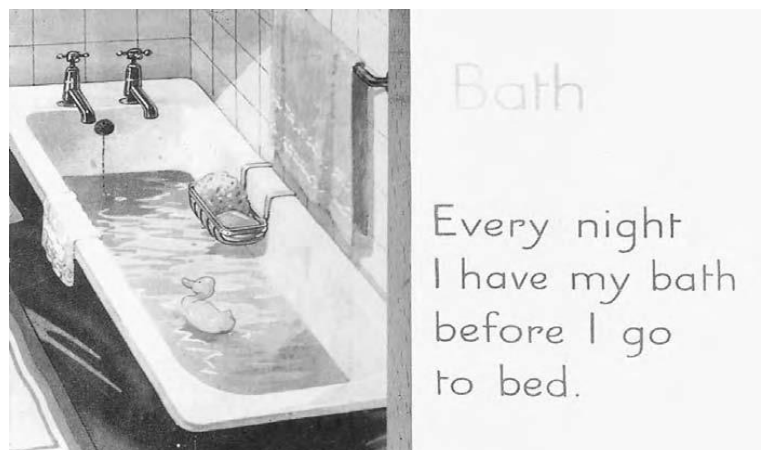


Fig 3 Altered layout of figure 1.1 (left-right reversal) (Halliday, 1985)

Process	Category Meaning	Participant
Verbal	saying	sayer, target

Data Analysis



Fig 4. Gogi, The First Heroine created by Nazar (2016)

In this comic, Gogi's persona functions as a force for female empowerment. She aims to empower women by her acts and the symbolism in the comic. She portrays balloons with the slogan "Women Protection Bill," which stands for a demand for legislative change and the defence of women's rights. This message is being delivered by Gogi, who uses the visual impact of her persona to call attention to a pressing problem. The "Women Protection Bill" text is a potent oral component that makes a strong case for the protection and rights of women. Gogi is holding balloons that represent this statement visually. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen's thesis, meaning is produced by combining verbal and visual components. In this instance, the medium that successfully communicates this meaning is Gogi's persona. Three women are chatting with each other around Gogi. The graphic depicts a group of women talking about and fighting for their rights. In this context, Gogi represents female camaraderie and support for one another. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen's thesis, hierarchies and linkages can be established by visual features. Here, Gogi's persona visually unites with the other ladies, fostering a feeling of equality.

Within the context of visual semiotics, it employs repetition as a language device for emphasis. The balloons' "Women Protection Bill" major theme is consistent with the idea of nonviolent protest. The comic raises the possibility that, as female readers interact with Gogi and the story, their opinions, attitudes, and behaviours may change over time. When female readers interact with Gogi's character in this comic, they may see her as a figure of collective female strength, a symbol of empowerment, and a supporter of the "Women Protection Bill." This may cause them to reconsider the significance of standing up for the rights and safety of women. The verbal and visual components communicate an activism and sense of agency that can change people's perceptions. The way in which Gogi and the women converse visually could motivate female readers to take action. Through the deft use of both spoken and visual cues, Gogi's character in this comic cartoon significantly contributes to the empowerment of women. In line with the research questions and the tenets of Kress and Van Leeuwen's theory of images, she advances a clear message in support of the "Women Protection Bill," promotes collective

empowerment through her interactions with other women, and has the ability to affect changes in the attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions of women readers. Gogi's persona is renowned for taking a lighthearted and clever approach to dealing with weighty subjects. This comic's comedy lightens the tone and increases the message's accessibility while tackling a serious issue like women's protection. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen's notion, humour can be an effective and captivating way to communicate ideas. When reading this comic, female readers might see the humour as a means of breaking down barriers and approaching a weighty subject in a less daunting way. Humour can promote a more open-minded and positive reaction to the message, which can lead to a feeling of empowerment.



Fig 5. Gogi, The First Heroine created by Nazir (2016)

Actor: a lady, Gogi

Process: riding,

Goal: empowering, mobility, independence

The picture of a woman riding a bike is symbolic of empowerment. It shows a woman stepping up to take charge and defying gender stereotypes in an era when driving a car or riding a bike was typically associated with men. Flying Pony is a symbol of empowerment and restrained freedom. The inclusion of Gogi in the picture gives viewers a sense of familiarity and relatability. She is included in this story of empowerment as well, maybe signifying the influence of comics and other media on societal transformation. Message balloons are an indication that Pakistani women are willing to break social rules and leave their imprint.

"It's great to see women empowerment but when you see how some of the most poorer members of our society are handling the issues in a patriarchal society then that is heartening; my cooking lady aspires to buy a scooty and she is saving up for it. Her jobs at different locations tire her out and this will help. Her good for nothing husband (typical) cannot even pick and drop her because he never lasts in any job hence makes no money ... "too lazy "she says. But this is how we empower women and make them realize their potential in society" (Nazar,2018).

The story of the cook who wants to buy a scooter and is saving money for it emphasises economic empowerment. It presents the impression that women from low-income families are also involved in this movement. The description talks about the difficulties that women have, like having a "good for nothing" husband. This illustrates how resilient and determined women are to overcome obstacles and reach their full potential. Even if humour isn't discussed specifically, Gogi's presence can suggest that

humour might help difficult societal concerns become more relatable and approachable to a wider audience. The narrative highlights the woman's aspirations and financial empowerment by using terms like "she is saving up for it" and "my cooking lady aspires to buy a scooty".

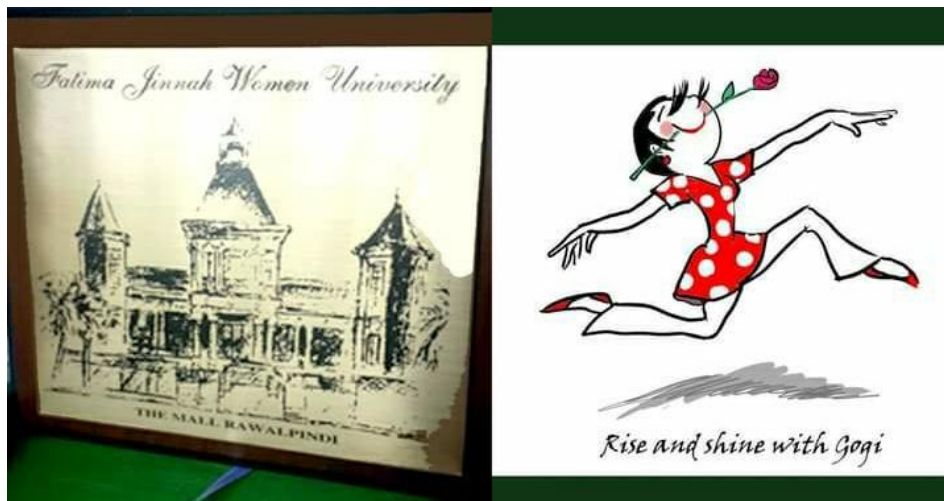


Fig 6. Gogi, The First Heroine created by Nazar (2016)

Actor: Gogi

Process: Carrying, holding

Goal: Empowerment, education

Gogi is seen running while clutching a red Gulab a kind of flower in her mouth. She is wearing a red shirt with polka dots and red sneakers. It makes a powerful visual impact to choose red as the primary colour. One of the most important textual elements in the picture is the spoken caption, "Rise and Shine with Gogi". It's an exhortation to take action as well as a request to emulate Gogi. According to the view of Kress and Van Leeuwen, colour has significance. Gogi's clothing and the flower in her mouth both heavily feature the colour red, which evokes feelings of ardour, vitality, and passion.

Her shirt's polka dots give it a fun touch. Gogi is presented as a vibrant, animated character. Her running while clutching the Gulab represents the idea of empowering women and embracing life with positivity and enthusiasm. The phrase "Rise and Shine with Gogi" is upbeat and supportive. The phrase "rise and shine" is a common idiom that suggests getting excited for the day ahead. The phrase "with Gogi" presents Gogi as an inspiration. Although the cartoon doesn't explicitly show peaceful resistance, it conveys a kind of resistance through empowerment and positivity. Gogi's colourful, vivacious look and his consistent use of red denote a kind of resistance to the difficulties and hardships that are currently plaguing the country. "Rise and Shine with Gogi" is a spoken caption that functions as an invitation for people to embrace empowerment and positivity. A common strategy of nonviolent resistance is organising people to promote change in a nonviolent way. Through this caption, Gogi's persona inspires women to be strong and overcome obstacles without using violence. Going forward momentum is implied by Gogi's dynamic posture and running direction. This is consistent with nonviolent resistance, which frequently emphasises advancement, justice, and women empowerment as a forward-looking strategy for societal change.



Fig 7. Gogi, The First Heroine created by Nazar (2016)

Actor: protestors (male, female)

Process: advocating, demonstrating

Goal: challenging discrimination, seeking equality

A complicated and thought-provoking scenario of women's protests and men's response is shown in the given image. Strong messages about peaceful resistance are conveyed by the banners carried by female protestors. Expressions such as "We demand effective implementation of CEDAW" and "End all forms of discrimination against women" encapsulate the nonviolent movement fighting for women's rights. The banners convey the frustration and difficulties women encounter in their pursuit of gender equality, particularly "Years since the participation in CEDAW, why is the discrimination legislation not repealed?" This is similar to the actual battles for peaceful activism and legislative changes aimed at eradicating gender discrimination. One of the common challenges in advocating for gender equality is the dismissive and apathetic attitudes revealed by the speech bubbles of the male characters. In addition to expressing their demands, the female protestors' banners and statements in the photo also demonstrate their awareness of their rights and the discrimination they encounter. Women are given the knowledge and awareness necessary to effectively advocate for change through this educational content. Strong contrast and clarity between black text and white background make the slogans easy to read and see. This format serves as a reminder of how crucial it is to make their demands and messages obvious to a large audience. The picture's capitalization of slogans serves as more evidence of the demonstrators' commitment to nonviolent resistance and their seriousness about their cause.



Fig 8. Gogi, The First Heroine created by Nazar (2016)

Gogi's speech to the students in the park serves as an example of nonviolent resistance via instruction. Raising awareness and educating people are two effective ways to encourage change in nonviolent resistance movements. As a character, Gogi uses education and youth empowerment to participate in nonviolent resistance. Education is a crucial component of empowerment, and the image probably conveys the idea that awareness and knowledge can enable people to advocate for change in a non-violent manner. Transitivity analysis is a useful tool for identifying the interaction's actor (Gogi), process (educating or speaking to the students), and objective (empowering the students). This analysis contributes to the understanding of how Gogi actively participates in the process of nonviolent resistance aimed at empowering and educating the students.

Understanding the conditions and background of the exchange such as the park setting can help one better understand the atmosphere that supports nonviolent resistance and female empowerment. Parks frequently represent public forums for discussion and education. Gogi's decision to wear a red polka shirt could be interpreted as a representation of her passion and energy for her work educating and empowering the students. Gogi's vibrant clothes, particularly the red polka shirt, can be visually entertaining and capture the carefree spirit of her character.

Conclusion

In summary, Nigar Nazar's contribution to Pakistani comics and her well-known character Gogi have a significant and lasting influence on nonviolent resistance, empowerment, and education. Through her work as a comic book artist and the development of the character Gogi, Nigar Nazar has made a significant contribution to the public awareness of important social issues, particularly those pertaining to discrimination and gender inequality in Pakistan. The theme of education becomes prominent, with Gogi serving as the impetus for knowledge-based empowerment. Her persona serves as an example of the effectiveness of awareness and education in bringing about change and raising a new generation of knowledgeable activists. She is a force for empowerment and change. The transitivity analysis highlights the participants, procedures, and objectives of nonviolent resistance while assisting in the identification of each image's essential components. This analysis emphasizes how important it is to have open dialogue and communication in order to support nonviolent resistance tactics. The visual semiotics theory of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) improves interpretation by emphasizing the visual grammar and elements in every image. Visual cues that accentuate the themes of

empowerment and nonviolent resistance, such as colour, attire, and posture, add layers of meaning. Through her comic book artwork and the development of the Gogi character, Nigar Nazar has made a substantial contribution to the discourse on women's empowerment in Pakistan.

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