Thesis Report

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'Gender Roles in Relation to Products and Professions'

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4. **CONCLUSION**

Keywords: Gender Roles, Gender Politics, Social Construct, Marketing strategies, Marketing Patterns, Defined Target Audience, Gender Bias, Gender Imbalance, Gendered Behavior, Gendered Products, Gendered Professions, Gendered Terms, Gendered Color palettes, Gender Stereotypes, Social Norms, Social Agents, Social Patterns, Masculine, Feminine, Influenced Choices, Limited Liberty.

1.Introduction

Abstract (1.1):

I am working on gender roles for my thesis topic. My research has informed me on how they are a social construct built and defined by societies that we get accustomed to since our early stages of childhood. These social constructs are so well ingrained in our society that identifying them as the root cause[1] for many of our choices becomes difficult. Through my project I want to highlight these social patterns that have shaped us and our choices based on our gender. Sometimes we fall victim to such ideas and the other times we are perpetuating them. In my research I am exploring how specific objects/products[2] are marketed and sold in a manner that suggests and therefore normalizes the use of them by a specific

SIDE NOTES

1: By root cause I am referring to the originating point of an idea at the most vulnerable stage in life, which is childhood.

2: Example of gendered marketing of products could be of

razor for boys, and blow dryer for girls. Both

3: professions associated with men are that of mechanics, constructors, drivers and etc. Professions associated with women are care centric jobs such as that of nurses.

References:
https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/gender-art

4-Society's bias towards men that I have personally experienced would be, if they do something disrespectful, they are given leverage based on their gender, for example their violent reaction

gender. Starting from the distinction between toys for girls in comparison to those for boys and leading to professions[3] being viewed as gender typed, everything has been laid out for us. My whole idea is to challenge and question these gender based ideas because of which we may never have discovered ourselves freely and beyond the narrowed view that the society has laid down for us regarding our gender. Various socializing agents like parents, teachers and markets play a huge role in defining what is for which gender, which in return informs our smallest of decisions to the biggest without us being aware (sometimes) hence, through my project I want my viewer to be more mindful of such ideas and consciously think about how we as individuals are adding to them. For my research and personal analysis on the given topic I am referring to studies being conducted in relation to gender roles and also articles written on it.

Passion (1.2):

I have always been deeply interested in the dynamics surrounding Genders. At various instances, I as a female have felt the differences in reaction that focus less on what is right or wrong but more on what is right or wrong for me as a 'female'[4]. Such Gender based ideas always used to leave me questioning them and the norms that we are surrounded with. This constant thinking and challenging lead me to study the topic in detail, after which I realized how Gender bias

exists not just for females but for both the genders and hinders exploration, and creativity for both in their own respective domains. I am particularly interested in knowing why the society is bent on presenting such ideas as the 'Normal' and anything that goes against them automatically goes against the 'Normal' therefore leaving one with hardly any choice to exercise one's own interests freely. Identifying such ideas as a 'problem' is a concern and I would like to address this issue so that we become more responsible towards our next generations who should be allowed to fully discover their potential irrespective of their gender. From our early stages of childhood we develop consciousness towards gendered products, colors, and behavior hence we start to adapt to them and those who do not, face a constant backlash from either parents, or the society at each stage in their lives so that they become fully aware of how they are 'weird', 'disrespectful' and 'Impertinent'. This certainly has to change and space for exceptions and originality needs to be created.

Project Scope (1.3):

Through my Project I would like to Challenge the preconceived notions of my viewer regarding genders so that it may trigger a thought process that is more conscious and critical of such ideas. It is very hard for one to detach oneself from such ideas at once, but the process needs to be initialized consciously so that the next step

forward can be taken that is of learning and unlearning simultaneously.

Design Statement (1.4):

My Thesis proposal is based on Adaptive and Systematic Design that may pave the way for building empathy based, general thinking through the various tools of human centered design. After having done my research I have realized that the field of design has an extremely important role to play in either perpetuating such ideologies or on the other hand devaluing them. I've realized that maybe many of us underestimate the impact of design because we cannot possibly fathom the amount of people it may reach to or it may influence. Design has its own way of shaping mindsets and may never be held directly responsible[5], which is dangerous as well as good if used carefully. Therefore I would like to use it in my favor so that I bring the argument related to gender roles on the surface, so that at least people start to think on the respecting topic. Even though this topic is being talked about on different platforms and forums I have come to a realization that our conversations are still candidly[6] paving way for differences between both the genders instead of bridging them. That is how our unconscious and culturally conditioned eye and mind works. Such ideologies are so deeply ingrained in us that it becomes extremely difficult to rationalize the other side of the narrative, quiet ironically though. So unless we start paying attention to the small differences in behavior it would be

5-I have mentioned design not being held directly responsible for influencing mindsets because of the readily available platforms and forums for example social media platforms, on which we are consuming so much that to identify one design for one specific influence may be difficult.

6-We need to pay attention to our candid responses or conversations that may include gender bias. An example of this could be of Casual sexism, which suggests that we may think in equality for both genders but would still joke about women being bad drivers or suitable for Kitchen chores only.

difficult to achieve a bigger change. I am hoping that through the power of design I am able to stir the thoughts of my viewers who are provoked to critically think and challenge the gender bias that exists in our society. I have carefully constructed my designs and the journey of going through them, for my viewers, who are expected to focus on the details in order to grasp the larger part of the narrative, which suggests that in reality also we should not overlook the details and must pay attention to the small behavioral changes especially 'candid' responses regarding gender bias. Design is a great source for addressing such issues especially for people who otherwise have been institutionalized[7] to such concepts. In order for people to identify these issues I believe, design plays an integral role because it has the power of influencing mindsets even if it is subtly hinting at the idea. Moreover, presenting an idea with the help of design immensely helps the viewer and the creator, both, to convey or in the other case, read the message. In this digital age, I believe that the amount of consumption of design has increased rapidly and has reached to an unmeasurable extent, this can be taken advantage of and the role of artists and designers becomes more important, therefore each should share the responsibility of bringing change around them and must work for the betterment of the society with such a great opportunity and a platform at hands.

Target Audience: Teachers, Parents, Artists, Designers, Writers and Students.

7- Meaning those who have been conditioned in a way that they cannot really identify because of the social pattern they have adapted to or have always seen it as 'their reality'

2.Literature Review

Research Questions (2.1):

How much of a role do Social Constructs, regarding gender, play in shaping our identity and ideas about our gender?

At what age do we start to show preferences for gender specific objects, how does that affect our choices later?

If there is a gender imbalance in some professions, is it because of lack of interest or lack of opportunities for the other gender?

Theoretical Framework (2.1):

Susan B. Shimanoff talks about how 'Gender role theory' is grounded in the supposition that individuals socially identified as males and females tend to occupy different ascribed roles within social structures and tend to be judged against divergent expectations for how they ought to behave. 'Gender stereotypes begin to produce gender-typed behavior patterns toward behaviors that are socially gender-appropriate' (Pillari, 1998). "Research indicates that children as young as eighteen months old show preferences for gender stereotyped toys. By the age of two, they are aware of their own and others' gender and between two and three years of age, they begin to identify specific traits and behaviors in gender stereotyped ways" (Golombok & Fivush, 1994). (Pillari, 1998) Similar research also shows that parents communicate differently with their children

8-Division of Labor refers to the system of differentiation and specialization of work tasks. This feature of social structuring is found in all human societies.

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depending upon their gender. Cognitive development theory provides an explanation for why children "express rigidly stereotyped ideas about gender". This theory focuses on children's need to create order in their world by looking for patterns and organizing their observations and experiences into categories or schema. 'Eagly's (1987) social role theory argues that widely shared gender stereotypes develop from the gender division of labor[8] that characterizes a society. In western societies, men's greater participation in paid positions of higher power and status and the disproportionate assignment of nurturing roles to women have created stereotypes that associate agency with men and communion with women. In addition, the gendered division of labor gives men and women differentiated skills.' (Ridgeway, 2001). 'Sociocultural theory, was proposed by Eagly and Wood (1999). 'According to this view, a society's division of labor by gender, drives all other gender differences in behavior. That is, for example, women's greater nurturance is a result of, rather than the cause of, their assignment to caring for children.' Suggested Jennifer Petersen, and Janet Shibley Hyde, in their book known as Advances in Child Development and Behavior, 2014. Furthermore, Gender schema theory was formally introduced by Sandra Bem in 1981 as a cognitive theory to explain how individuals become gendered in society, and how sex-linked characteristics are maintained and transmitted to other members of a culture. In addition to that, toys play a big part in socializing gender in children. There are toys that are marketed to children and parents

that are gender-typed. "Toys for boys tend to encourage exploration, manipulation, invention, construction, competition and aggression. In contrast, girls' toys typically rate high on manipulability, but also creativity, nurturance, and attractiveness." (Renzetti & Curran, 2003) Given the social nature of human beings, most actions are witnessed, reproduced, and internalized and thus take on a performative or theatrical quality. According to Butler's theory, gender is essentially a performative repetition of acts associated with male or female. Hence what children are made to familiarize in their early years of life reflects upon their choices and actions later on.

Concepts (2.3):

In 1972 a study by Lenore Weitzman did an analysis on award winning picture books and found an absence of female characters. The males were valued for their accomplishment or being smart, and the females in the books were valued for their good looks. This study was replicated in 1997 by Kathleen Odean and, though she found more females in children's books, they took on more supportive roles. Only six hundred of the over four thousand children's books she looked at had female characters that were brave, athletic and independent, or going against feminine stereotypes (Renzetti, Curran, 2003). Also the University of Copenhagen did an interesting experiment in which a Robot was made to read 3.5 million books to see how we describe men and women differently. Findings suggested that 'Beautiful, sexy and gorgeous were used most often to describe

women, while men were most frequently called Brave, rational and righteous.' 'Overall adjectives used for women focused on appearance, while for men behavior was key' (Diamond, 2019). Moreover, a research study conducted at Western Carolina University's Department of Psychology investigated gender stereotypes by using 13 drawings of animal characters (elephants and pigs), drawn with no clues as to gender. The sample included 35 undergraduates (23 women and 12 men) (White, Morris & Arthur, 1995). 14 "The participants were asked to make up stories about each drawing and to provide names of the animals in the pictures. When necessary, they were asked the gender of the character" (White, Morris & Arthur, 1995). Of the animals drawn as children, 38.8% were considered male by the participants. Of the animals drawn as adults 81.4% were considered female. The children were participating in activities such as playing with blocks, playing in the sandbox, playing with toy trains, playing ball and having a tea party. The animals in the tea party considered, a stereotypical female situation, was labeled as male by 48.6% of the participants. The adult animals were engaging in activities such as bandaging a child, talking to a child who was painting, holding a baby and hanging clothes (White, Morris & Arthur, 1995). The results of this study imply that undergraduate students applied rigid gender-role stereotypes to their interpretations of the images of animals.

Literature Review (2.4):

The ways we behave and act is based on the culture that we are surrounded with, roles, activities, behavior and characteristics that distinguish men from women are not innate but socially constructed. This distinction between masculine[9] and feminine[10] differs from culture to culture and that is what I want to address in my thesis. I am looking into how people are influenced to choosing different paths based on their gender and to support my research there are multiple sources that I would like to share, starting from studying about gender roles, a very interesting idea is shared in an article regarding it, 'Gender, other than a biological or physical determination of the sexes, is a cultural and social classification of masculinity and femininity. Gender presentations in art are the outcome of the cultural process of defining sexual and social identity.' (Gilboa, 2019), to which I completely agree because most definitely it is the culture around us that is forming these gender related ideas and defining them for us to the point our free thinking is being hindered and challenged. In another article Amna Chaudhry talks about how women are dealt with differently in Pakistan whether it's about education, employment or using public transport or spaces[11] for that matter, (Chaudhry, 2018). One main reason to talk about

9-Masculin refers to any act, gesture or thing that is more closely associated with men.

10-Feminine refers to any act, gesture or thing that is more closely associated with women

11-Ratio of women consuming public spaces and transport in Pakistan is drastically low in comparison to men. Hajra Sami, an artist also addressed this issue

in her artwork in which she photographed spaces like parks and captured men playing cricket and later replaced all the figures with females.

12-Marginalized bodies mentioned here are not gender specific, but any person who is being treated as unimportant or is given a powerless position in the society as a result of what he/she chooses for themselves in terms of professional life

gender politics is also to bring forward the limitations marginalized bodies have in occupying space and desire for something, these marginalized bodies[12] are treated this way because of their gender when instead gender should not come in way of thinking freely or choosing freely. Social exclusion is present for both the genders depending on what path they are choosing, for instance I have gone through case studies in which men have shared their personal experiences about how they face difficulty in being accepted socially if they are affiliated to a certain job such as that of a nurse, or a chef (in some cases) etc. Similarly women have shared how they face difficulty in being a part of a certain profession such as a mechanic, taxi driver (especially locally) etc. Historian Partha Chaterjee also talks about the role of women within the Indian nationalist movement. In her writings she explains how Women were thought to be a part of the inner sphere that is in the house whilst men represented the outer. 'The new Indian woman, in the nationalist ideal, was distinguished from "common women who were coarse, loud, vulgar, quarrelsome, devoid of superior moral sense, sexually promiscuous", writes Chatterjee.'(Chaudhary, 2018). Talking about stereotypes that are associated with a certain gender, 'Stereotypes for femininity include expectations to be domestic, warm, pretty, emotional, dependent, physically weak and passive. By contrast, men are thought of as being more competitive and less emotional than women" (Moore, 2010). Moreover, this limited access to public spaces for women in Pakistan is an issue which recently is being

addressed in writings and group initiatives also, such as 'Girls at Dhabas' is a group of feminists who took an initiative of making it easier for women to access and use public spaces for girls and women who otherwise are discouraged by the social reaction that is given to them based on their gender, alone. Having observed behavioral changes and reactions differing based on gender, I really wanted to step forward and highlight this issue through my art, how women can have interests in pursuing a career conventionally seen as a 'man's job' or vice versa. Men also face so much difficulty in being expressive about their emotions and often carry the fear of being seen as 'weak' because of the learned stoicism[13]. As a result of the same patriarchal society so many men have to submit to this narrative of being strong and powerful both physically and emotionally, who do not want to carry the burden of such pressures, having said that I came across many cases of abuse in which the victim was a male and he had voiced how it was more difficult for a man, in a society like this to speak up or talk about, because of the sensitivity of such topics. Hence the idea is where are these social constructs coming from and do we really need them? When, if looked into deeper all they do is build pressure and take away freedom to choose. 'Various socializing agents like parents, peers, teachers, television, movies, music, books and religion influence determining the gender roles within a society….girls are given dolls, doll houses and tiny stoves to pretend run a whole household system while boys are given toy tools to construct buildings and toy

13-Stoicism refers to the endurance of pain and hardship without the display of feelings and without complaint. Unfortunately in our society mostly men are a victim of this pressure.

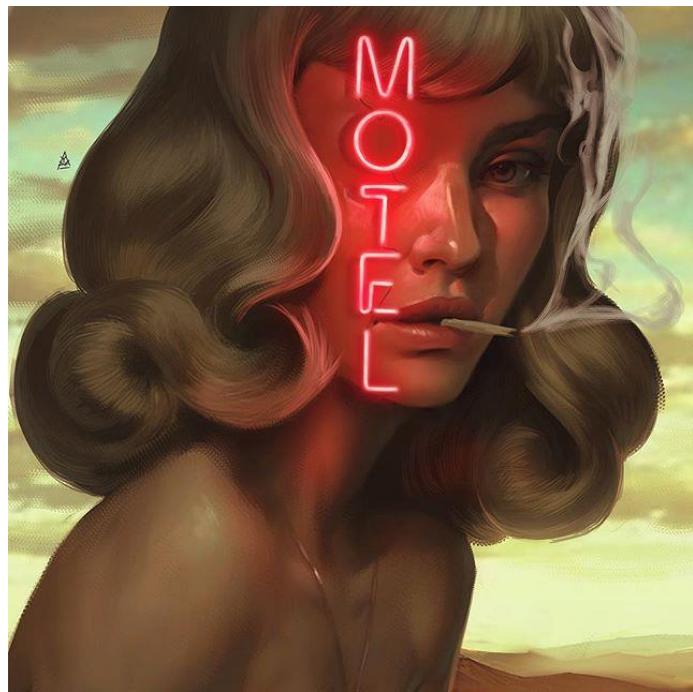weapons and tanks to wage wars.' Essays, UK. (November 2018).

Moreover we see how Parents usually treat male and female infants differently. Expectations for males and females are set at a very early age[14]. Traditionally, boys are taught how to fix and build things and how to earn for the household and girls are taught how to cook, sew and manage the household. Children then receive parental and social approval when they conform to gender expectations and adapt themselves to the cultural and conventional roles which are reinforced by the additional socializing agent, media. In other words, gender roles and the values pass from one generation to the successive generation in a society.' Essays, UK. (November 2018).
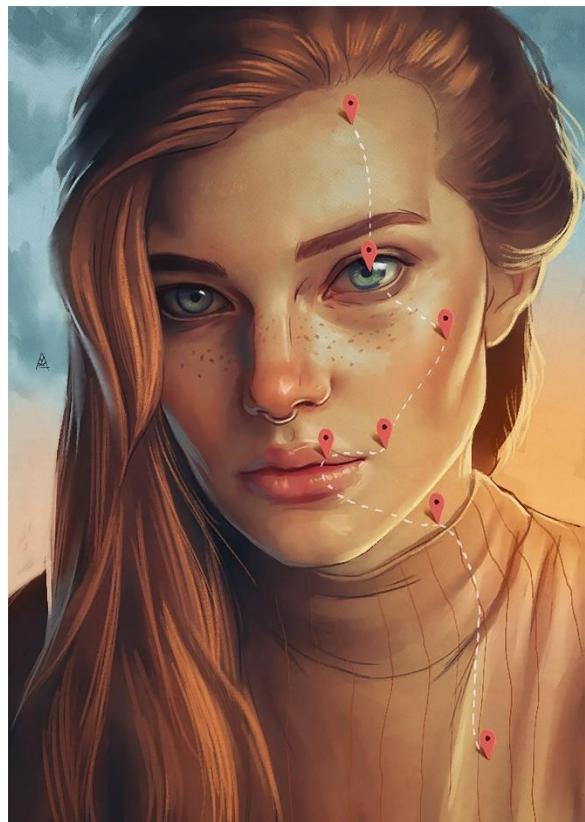
Even in classical art we see 'gender qualities associated with women are beauty, domesticity, and passivity and for males the contrary principles such as power, dominance, and social status.' (Gilboa, 2019). Moreover, Elizabeth Ann Bloomfield in her thesis further highlights how 'From birth we socialize our children to take on gender-roles of either boys or girls. The choices that we make as parents and teachers, beginning with the colors we choose for their nursery, the clothing we dress them in and the way that we treat them, all contribute to t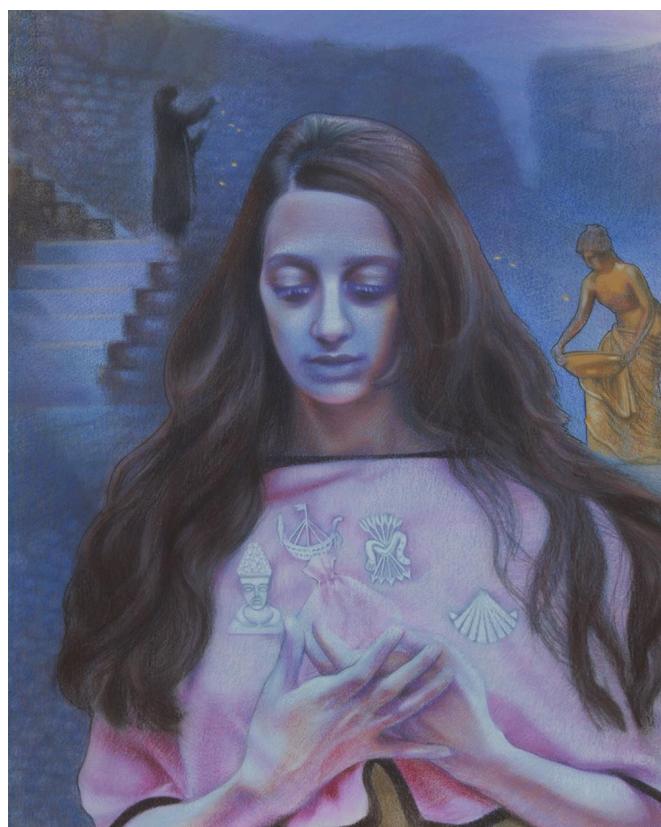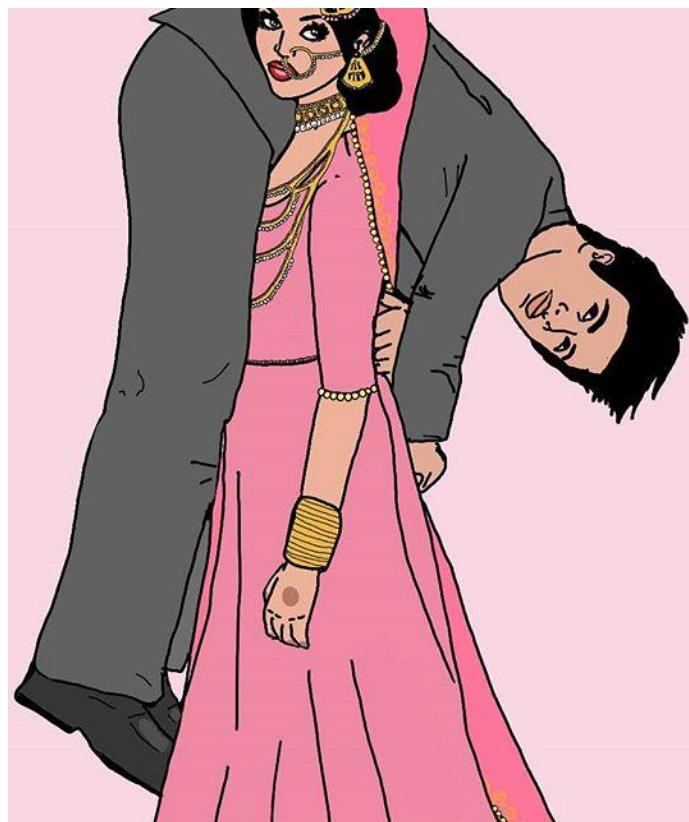he gender-roles those children take on. Children will eventually develop their biases about gender-roles and what it means in our society. Those biases contribute to how the child, and eventually the young adult, will see the world and interpret the images around him/her.' (Bloomfield, 2015)
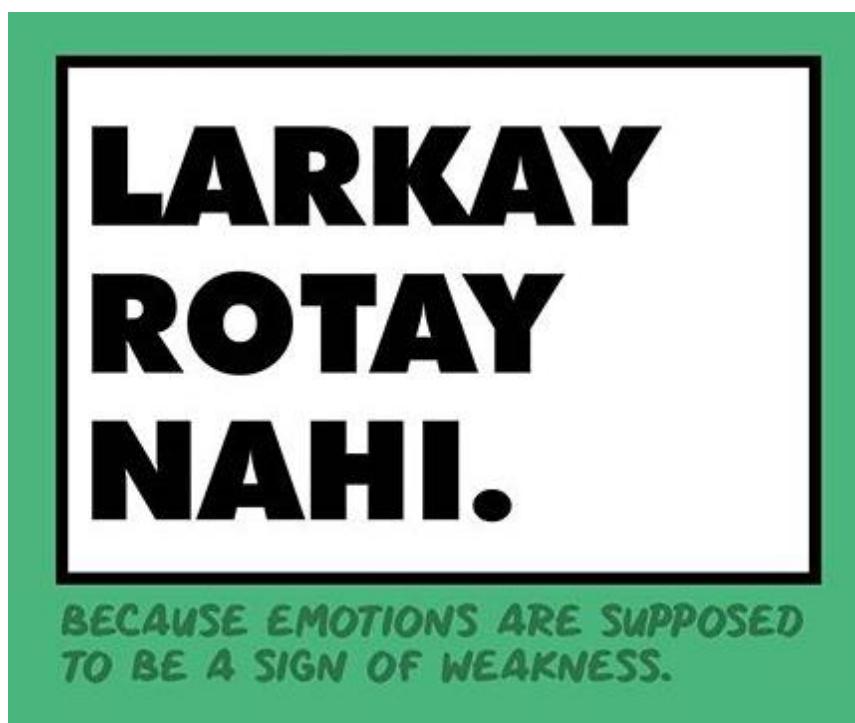
14-As long as a baby boy is wrapped in blue and a baby girl in pink, gender roles start to set in.

Visual References (2.5)

AADMI HO, AURAT NA BANO.

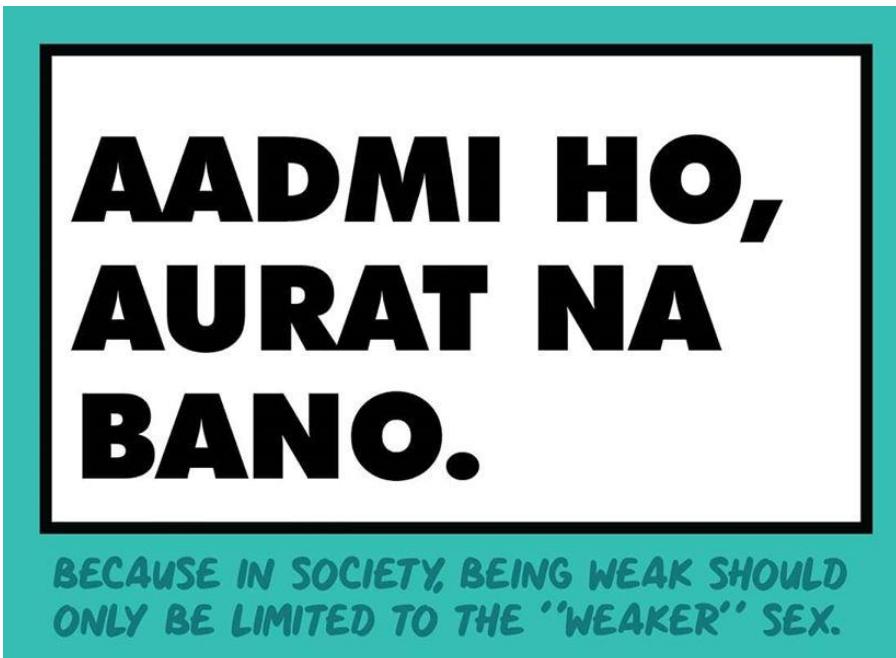BECAUSE IN SOCIETY, BEING WEAK SHOULD ONLY BE LIMITED TO THE ''WEAKER'' SEX.

Research Questions Explained (2.6):

I am particularly interested in the idea of gender and moreover gender roles, in my research I have developed links between products, objects, and professions and how we have been conditioned by the society, culture and the market to see them in relation to a particular gender only, not always however. By proposing my first question I plan on challenging the social constructs that we have built and that have built us. It is very important to know and acknowledge these social constructs so that we realize how they have an immense impact on our choices and

preferences based on our gender, and that is what I want my viewer to be more mindful about. In my research I am particularly exploring how specific objects/products are marketed and sold in a manner that suggests and therefore normalizes the use of them by a specific gender, so much so, that toys also are gender typed. Since childhood, kids observe and adopt these patterns and familiarize themselves with what is expected of them. Boys familiarizing themselves with cars, guns, tools and etc. at a young age instills confidence in them to be able to interact with them with ease and comfort in the long run whilst girls being provided with dolls, kitchen sets and doll houses make them adopt and familiarize with the domestic roles that they are expected to fill. It is interesting to know that we have been accustomed to such ideas since so long that it becomes difficult to think and act differently even after being informed. With such stereotypes present in our society, my second question deals with how we as individuals have been influenced by such social constructs, and how have they manipulated our thinking, specifically when it comes to making choices. Choices in terms of consuming products or pursuing a certain career etc. Also, it is important to realize that this journey encapsulates both our consciousness and sub consciousness therefore identification of the root cause or causes is extremely difficult. My third question is designed to evoke interest and curiosity in my viewer's mind regarding imbalance in gender in a specific field, for example we don't see many women working as car mechanics or many men pursuing a job as a primary teacher or a

nurse even. This is the case because maybe many people have been influenced by the social constructs into thinking that they are fit for only so and so job. Gender expectations of society become a major cause in keeping people from discovering their true potential. I have come across many examples in which people have voiced how the general and limiting mindset of the society needs to change otherwise there won't be as much of a difference in the ratio as there is at the moment. For instance Uzma Nawaz is a practicing car mechanic in Multan and she described how she always felt ambitious towards this particular field and even though as a female she had to go through a difficult journey she ended up pursuing a career in the same field, she explained how people get shocked and surprised at what she is doing, and it takes a lot of courage to break the stereotype that is associated with one's gender and then make a place in the same society, not all people have the courage or unfortunately the opportunity to step up and own one's choices and interests, hence we really need to pay attention to this set standard in our society surrounding genders so that we as a society may flourish and step out of such boundaries.

3. Methodology

Research Methodology (3.1):

Richardson and Simpson conducted a research study in 1982 to determine the toy preference of children. The responses were

collected from the toys requested from Santa Claus by the children.
Data was collected from 750 children between 5-9 years of age. The
results indicated that the children requested gender-typed toys and
girls were more likely to request opposite-sex toys than boys. The
study was replicated in the 1990s and found no difference in results
(Etaugh & Liss 1992) (Pallari, 1998).

Table 17. Summary of Qualitative Results

Image Number	Artist Name	Artist Gender	% Incorrectly Identified	Symbols	
				If artist is male then...	If artist is female then...
1	Grant Wood	Male	51.7	masculine facial features/ image of war	three women/ tea cup
2	Jacque Louis David	Male	8.3	swords, violence/ women cowering	bright colors
3	Jose Gomez Fresquet	Male	74.3	blood/ violence/ colors	lipstick/ female faces
4	Seymour Fogel	Male	64.8	traditional gender-roles/ colors/ style	family scene/ women holding baby
5	Henri De Toulousse-Lautrec	Male	66.0	provocatively dressed women/ sexualized	women
6	Elizabeth Buset	Female	22.1	Gun/ Joke about women	Barbie logo/ pink color
7	Andreas Kocks	Male	20.0	dark colors	looks like flower
8	Jan Steen	Male	55.2	older painting (more male painters)	women/ attention to detail/ color
9	Julie Rrap	Female	25.0	mock of women/ depicting women/ weird/ gross	high heels
10	Clara Peeters	Female	81.6	hearty food/ dark colors/older painting	food/ cooking
11	Andre Lhote	Male	51.0	Picasso/ cubist style/ provocative women	women
12	Elizabeth Louise VigeeLe-Bunn	Female	31.7	his wife and child/ older painting	Mother and child/ soft and delicate nature
13	Elzbieta Jablonska	Female	46.2	superman costume/ taken by husband/ no man	empowerment of women/ mother's as superhero/ feminist message
14	Lesley Dill	Female	11.8	artsy fashion	Fashion/ dress
15	Lilly Martin Spencer	Female	52.8	dark colors/ older painting/ role of women	maternal and family theme

(Bloomfield, 2015)

Data Sources (3.2):

According to a Gilani Research Foundation survey carried out by
Gallup Pakistan (april 27, 2009), majority of the Pakistani males and
females have distinct roles to play in the society. In recent years

although women's status and role has been uplifted beyond being a housewife, the priority is still given to men in politics, education, employment, and related walks of life. Essays, UK. (November 2018)

Dr. Rakhshinda Parveen (n.d.) expresses that the constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan dictates equal rights for men and women. However, men are more equal than women in reality. The reality shows women in lower status than men in every sphere of life whether it's education, food, health care or freedom of choice of partner. According to the Human Development Report 1999 of UNDP, the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) rank of Pakistan among 185 countries is 100. This rank determines the empowerment of women on a country basis. This measurement results in unequal status of women in economic resources, participation in political decision-making and economic decision-making. . Essays, UK. (November 2018)

https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/gender-art

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https://www.ukessays.com/essays/sociology/gender-roles-in-pakistan-sociology-essay.php

Medium of presentation (3.3):

Since, my area of interest particularly surrounds patterns, those culturally seen as feminine and masculine, both. I've made visuals that either look feminine because of the pattern association and are made out of an element that is associated with the opposite sex and vise-versa. One reason for making patterns for this particular topic was because I think gender roles exist because of the social 'pattern' that exists in relation to them. These ideas are put out there repeatedly which reinforces them as the 'normal' in our minds. Moreover, this was a subtle way of getting my message across because I designed the experience of viewing the visual in a way that the viewer sees it and immediately associates it with a similar pattern associated with a given gender however when the viewer looks closely, the preconceived notion in his/her head about the pattern is challenged and immediately he/she connects the element it is made out of with another gender. This journey of discovering something new when attention is paid to the details comments on how we need to socially also pay attention to the casual bias that exists in our society and further highlights how conveniently, we as humans have the tendency to overlook the details and identify them as a problem. Thus through this way I want to question and challenge these socially constructed views, and want my viewers to have a

realization or perhaps be more mindful of the gender based differences they are a victim of or are perpetuating.

Pre-Production (3.4): Working on gender roles generally was challenging because many artists previously have worked on the respective topic, I tried to choose a direction that no one has taken so that my work could be added to the art library instead of being just another similar representation of ideas. What I noticed in most of the works was that all were figurative and very direct. Therefore I chose to play on the subtlety and the not so direct approach. Hence I decided to make patterns. However, when I was creating gendered patterns I had in mind that I would be making both the perspectives such as masculine patterns made out of feminine elements and feminine patterns made out of masculine elements. But, I soon dropped the idea of making masculine patterns because there is a great lack of diversity seen in them. What we see generally on men's wear are very generic patterns for example dots, checks, stripes, and etc. All of them are widely being used on women's wear also. I have created a number of samples for masculine patterns but I developed all of them myself hence I felt that my viewer would lose the connecting point if the pattern being shown is not relatable. In addition to that, there was an immense difference in both the patterns in terms of their visual languages. As a result I tried to stick to creating only feminine patterns made out of masculine elements.

Production (3.5):
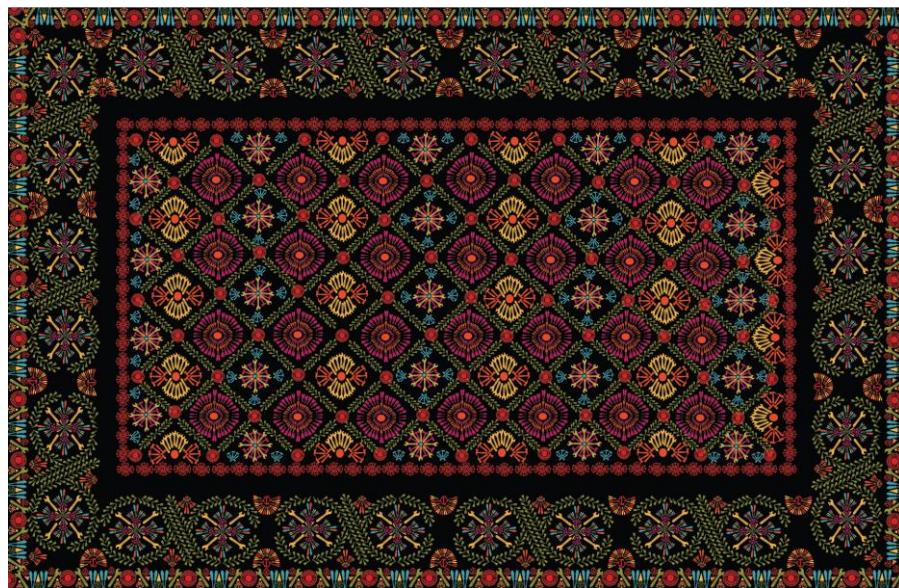
Conclusion:

I have learnt a lot during my journey of working on this respective topic. I have realized that after having done my research I have become more mindful of the ingrained gender based differences in our system and not just that but also more conscious of the choices that I as a female have made previously and continue to make merely based on gender. This learning experience has transformed me into a more critical and rational individual who now is able to identify such problems and address them if possible. I may still not be able to identify and question everything that may have paved way for such differences but the journey of questioning, identifying and challenging has begun and I plan on never ending it. Initially the entire idea was to challenge the system around me but now it has ended up into challenging the ingrained system built inside me. A very interesting take away from my learning (to me) was how even after informing myself I am still not able to overcome these differences entirely, such as I will still be uncomfortable with the opposite sex to wear mascara or lipstick, I have specifically made artwork on such elements but the years long conditioning cannot wash away in months and that I think could serve as the biggest challenge in my learning.

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