

Exploration and Revelation of Existence and its social foundation with relation to art

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Abstract

This article delves into the exploration and revelation of human existence through art, presenting a visual and conceptual analysis of various artworks such as wood carvings, mixed media collages, and sculptures. The study covers themes like revelation, the phenomena of time, self-discovery, purification of the soul, and tranquility. The analysis includes the distinction between exoteric and esoteric existence, drawing from global perspectives, including works by artists like Ustad¹ Allah Bux and Baek Sungdea. The researcher also contributes an artwork titled "Nafs e Mutmainna,"² symbolizing the attainment of tranquility and peace of mind with a pure soul, inspired by Quranic teachings. Overall, the article provides a thought-provoking exploration of the subjective attributes of human existence through diverse artistic expressions.

Introduction

This article is based on the study of existence and its subjective attributes. The research is an attempt to explore and reveal the subjective characteristics of human existence and it aims to give an intellectual understanding about human existence.

Revelation is not the result of laboratory investigation. It is psychological phenomena such as hallucination,³ illusion⁴, and delusion⁵; the state or quality of being or existence.

¹ Urdu term used for teacher

² An Arabic term means Good conscience, the spirit of benevolence.

³ A sensory perception of something that does not exist, a wandering of the mind.

⁴ An illusion is a distortion of the senses, which can reveal how the mind normally organizes and interprets sensory stimulation.

⁵ A false belief or judgment about external reality.

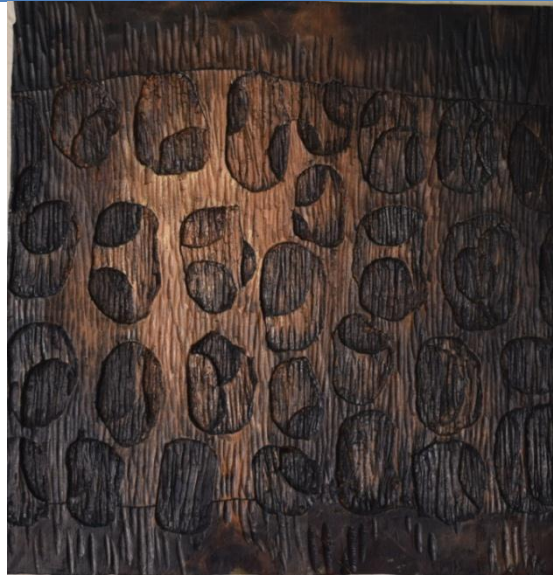


Plate 1: *Revelation*, 1.2 feet by 1.5 feet
Carving on wood

Visual and conceptual analysis of “*Revelation*”

Every deed or act has a conclusion, the most important thing is to opt the right deed obviously it will be ended positive. The world is full of disasters and negativity. A normal human being avoid adopting difficult paths, they want to move smoothly without any obstacles. In this wooden piece artist shows the layers of life, wood represent life, layers are forming revelation, and carved oval soft shapes avoid sharpness. The use of round forms are very meaningful, informal balance of oval shapes carved layers by layers, creating an illusion of revelation.

Existence/ Evolution

Existence is not a concept. It is a reality and objectivity while belief is subjective. The former is not changeable as it is an ultimate truth but the latter keeps changing from person to person depending on their nature and environment. However, existence's essence is the absolute truth, genuine knowledge is derived from substantiated facts and beliefs.

The fundamental question regarding existence is for whom God has created the universe? To whom God has given the ability to think, explore and to know the secrets of the Creator? The obvious answer is “human beings”, who have the ability to think and explore. The existence we observe is our own existence as human beings, who are made from certain properties that differentiate them from the rest of the creatures. Human beings are a combination of body and

soul and have the capacity of reasoning and self-consciousness. In the context of human body and soul, humans are considered responsible agent who keep relations with other people, society and God.

Existence begins with the evolution, if we talk about this world which is called an outer world; this outer world can be divided into three parts.

First one is natural world where we live with other living and non living organisms,



Plate 2: *Phenomena of Time*, 3 feet by 3 feet, Mix media , collage on canvas.

Source: Picture by author

Visual and conceptual analysis of “*Phenomena of Time*”

In this painting artist tried to explore the phases of time by using multiple coloured bunt patches of canvas and impression of dry leaf on them. Time never always remains same. Different times give different experiences in life. But the actions and reactions leave permanent prints, how one faced and reacts. If the faith is strong he left long lasting prints. The reaction is natural of every action. Leaf prints used as life, different colours of torn and burn canvas show different phases of time.

Second is our “social world” in which we interact with society, deal with religion, politics, ethics and other social traditions,



Plate 3 : *Thy Yourself*, 1.5 feet by 4 feet, sculpted metal and wood

Visual and conceptual analysis of “*Thy Yourself*”

The concept of this sculpture piece is to explore our own selves. To know thy self is the beginning of wisdom. What are our thoughts and what are our deeds. The sculpture is made up of iron and wood and mounted on wooden slab. We disguise ourselves that how they make themselves superior to other people. Usually we are worried about *how I look*, rather than *who I am*, we decorate ourselves apparently to achieve the best status in society and hiding our true self. Various western and mystic philosophers tried to engage people in a search for self understanding.

This work reflects the divergence between the true realities and fake attitudes.

Third and last is personal.



Plate 4: *Tazkia e Nafs*⁶, 2 feet by 4 feet, acrylic paint and collage of rustic iron

Visual and conceptual analysis of “*Tazkia e Nafs*”

Allah said, “*He has succeeded who purifies the soul, and he has failed who corrupts the soul*”⁷ and Allah said, “*A day when there will be no benefit in wealth or children, but only in he who comes to Allah with a pure heart*”⁸.

Artist used the concept of purification of soul for her art work as mentioned in Quran. The real success is to purify our souls and hearts. To show purification the artist used white back ground as generosity, compassion, benevolence and asceticism, and spiritual sins like greed, malice, envy, arrogance and worldliness showed by using un even, discarded, rough rustic iron sheet which should be controlled and eliminated.

⁶ An Arabic-Islamic term alluding to “*tazkiyat al-nafs*” meaning “sanctification” or “purification of the self”.

⁷ (Quran, 91:9-10)

⁸ (Quran, 26:88-89)



Plate 5: *Tranquility*, 3 feet by 3 feet, mix media collage on canvas

Source: Picture by author

Visual and conceptual analysis of “*Tranquility*”

Tranquility is a fundamental aspect of human life. Every human being is struggling to fulfill his desires, but to reach the level of tranquility is not easy as to get material satisfaction. Researcher trying to give a new idea that beauty is not only in vibrant colours and pretty things like landscapes, flowers, birds and animals and other angelic creatures; it can be expressed through abstract expression with various elements. The complexities of mix media elements and simplicity of large white area have shown side by side to complement each other. This piece is created with mix media of acrylic paint, stencils, mirror collage and burnt wood. Artist chose minimum colours and tones so that the attention of the viewer does not divert from the subject. Large area of white background represent the calm soul which is achieved by self identification and burnt wood used to describe being selflessness from the material world. It's the key to reach tranquility. Instead of getting worldly pleasures which are temporary try to look on the brighter and permanent side of tranquility. Contrast of dark area into large white area represented meditation. Contrast of dark and light, use of looking mirror, burnt wood are the elements creating meanings of life.

Exploration and Revelation of Existence with relation to art, (body and soul)

This article will provide an in-depth analysis of existence yet the purpose of revelation is to unfold the meaning of existence. To explore further this study will examine two components of existence in terms of body and soul that are exoteric or *wajud e zahiri*⁹ and esoteric or *wajud e batini*¹⁰ existence. To explain, the former means the state of being or presence and the latter indicates the ultimate authentic being which is not visible but present.

Researcher presents references how the concept is perceived by esoteric and exoteric manners by different regional and international artists. Ustad Allah Bux was a Pakistani artist, he painted directly from life and all his themes revolve around the local culture. His paintings are highly expressive and each painting holds a complete tale in itself. In his *Family Scene* (plate 6) he showed mother holding her child along with her husband and two children, portrayed in realistic manner with happy and satisfying expressions, in an exoteric way. On the other hand a contemporary South Korean artist Baek Sungdea presents in a non representational sculpture of a *Mother* in wood and metal, (plate 7) he portrayed the feelings, adoptions, and burdens of a mother in an expressive and esoteric way.



⁹ An Arabic term use for exoteric

¹⁰ An Arabic term use for esoteric

Plate 6: *Family Scene* by Ustad Allah Bux¹¹

Plate 7: *Mother Sculpture* by Baek Sungdae¹²

Researcher's contribution

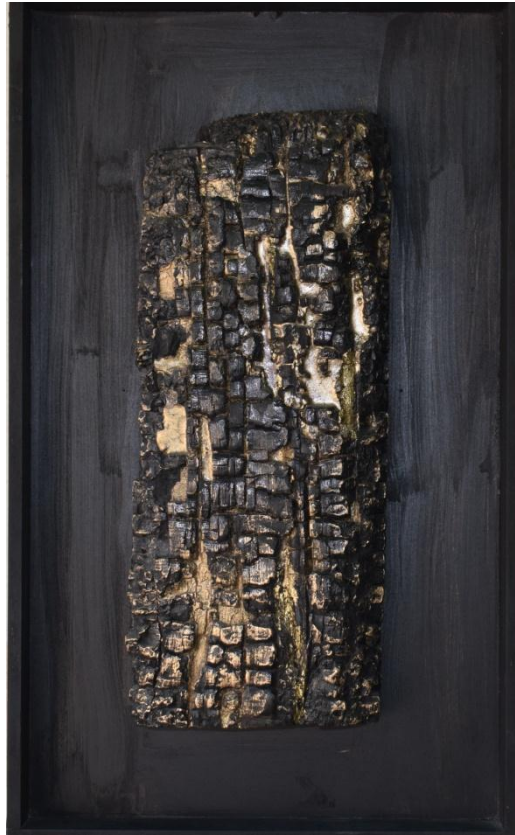


Plate 8 : *Nafs e Mutmainna*¹³, burnt wood and resin

Visual and conceptual analysis of “*Nafs e Mutmainna*”

In this wall relief the artist trying to express the moment of life when some one gets tranquility, peace of mind with pure soul. Almighty says in Quran: “*And remember your Rabb inside yourself*”¹⁴. Time comes in life when someone feels really happy, content, gives him solace when he truly realizes that the world is mortal and the worldly material pleasures are artificial and are meaningless. He moulded and trained himself according to the true path and

¹¹ <https://www.bonhams.com>

¹² <https://www.saatchiart.com>

¹³ An Arabic term means Good conscience, the spirit of benevolence.

¹⁴ (Quran 7:205)

reached in a state of serenity. To create this concept artist used burnt wooden half cut log to show selflessness and resin with gold colour to reach at contentment with pure heart.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article serves as a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted nature of human existence through the medium of art. The visual and conceptual analyses of diverse artworks offer insights into themes such as revelation, the passage of time, self-discovery, soul purification, and tranquility. By incorporating a global perspective and referencing artists like Ustad Allah Bux and Baek Sungdea, the study illustrates the universal quest for meaning and purpose.

The distinction between exoteric and esoteric existence enriches the discussion, providing a nuanced understanding of the interconnectedness between body and soul. The researcher's contribution, exemplified by the artwork "Nafs e Mutmainna," encapsulates the spiritual journey toward contentment and selflessness, drawing inspiration from sacred teachings.

Ultimately, this exploration highlights the profound impact of art in unraveling the complexities of human life and existence. Through a rich tapestry of artistic expressions, the article encourages contemplation on the subjective aspects of our being, fostering a deeper understanding of the human experience and our collective quest for meaning in the intricate fabric of existence.