When Designing Communication for Pakistan, Should One

Be Empathetic or Idealistic?

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When Designing Communication for Pakistan, Should One Be Empathetic or Idealistic?

By

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ABSTRACT

This research looked at two ways of approaching communication design and how they would be suited in Pakistan. The first was empathy and the second idealism. It researched upon what empathy and idealism is and how these concepts can be used as a tool to help communicate ideas to the masses better. Interviews and meta analyses of population statistics of Pakistan suggested that the ideal style of communication design for Pakistan might be a combination of the two styles which might allow for communication design to reach and impact a wider audience. Further research into this area may be able to find ways to use communication design to promote social well being alongside being used for marketing to larger audiences in Pakistan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
For my inspiration for this piece of research, I would like to thank my parents for supporting me and letting me explore the artist in me by sending me to the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture. They have been a support system and a constant reminder that I made the right decision by coming to this University. I would also like to thank my best friend Amna Salman, without who I would feel like an alien on this planet and my opinions would seem unimportant and I would have no outlet to express my concern for society. I would like to thank Muhammad Ali Suhail, a dear friend who has always appreciated my opinions and always been around to make new music with. Also Shajie Hassan, another one of my best friends who is smarter and wiser than his education gives him credit for.

I would like to thank my dissertation advisor; Ms. Tazeen who I am sure had become extremely frustrated with the time I took on writing my dissertation and my lack of communication skills. Saqlain Zaidi for his infinite knowledge on almost everything in the world and beyond and lastly my head of department, Ms. Sheeraz Waania who I’m sure has had enough of me randomly popping up in her office and ranting about the education system.

And obviously God, for being that strange voice in my head. I have a feeling that He laughs at me every now and then.

**INTRODUCTION**
When I first came to the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, I was very excited about doing something through art for my people, and making something that would influence people one day in some way. Less than a couple of years in and I was very disappointed. I remember coming down from class one day in second year and asking myself why I was doing this in the first place. After a chat on the phone with my mother and a very long conversation with my best friend I realized that this is what I’ve got to do if I have to be what I want to be. The problem I saw with the school was that it seemed like everything that was being taught was like it was tailor made to cater to the elite of the country. It seemed like there was no face to whom we were talking to through our design. It was all based on making design look ‘trendy’ and have an acceptance at a globalized platform.

Rather than addressing real issues that relate to the layman, we were designing in a bubble without really understanding what was happening outside the walls of Indus. Everyday this would annoy me just a little bit more when I saw my colleagues act pretentious and try to be people that they are not; the faceless client.

I do not entirely blame the education per se, nor do I blame the students for behaving in the way that they do. There is a greater force at work here. Students today are just following pop culture and trying to fit in and find some sort of acceptance somewhere in society. It is human nature to try to be accepted, be it by following the latest trends or speaking or behaving in a certain way.

So I set out to try to change this, to try to first identify why people behave the way they do and then try to bring attention to the potential that was not being realized in them. My classes with one teacher, Saqlain Zaidi, made me further motivated to try to figure out what exactly the problem was or whether it was even a problem at all. In his ‘history of cinema’ and ‘history of advertising’ classes he would speak about different cultures and how they
stood out through their art and design, and when I looked at our own culture, the ‘Indus’ culture, I could not help but feel underwhelmed.

I realized that the best way to change a culture is to create a new one. I started writing online and making short documentaries and films to explain what I saw in Indus and why I felt it was a problem, in a satirical manner. I got involved in making music that was a blend of many different genres to try to experiment and come up with a sound that best suited my ‘new culture’. I started a Comedy film making Production Company and tried to use puns and phrases that reflect a more intelligent and sophisticated yet insane and bizarre culture that claims to exist amongst us. Other than that I spoke to my head of Department numerous times to maybe try to get the students to engage in more concept and research based work to promote originality and innovative though, rather than just designing and learning how to make pretty pictures.

Time and time again I was criticized for my work in school and outside for being crass and blunt by many people, but on the other hand I was also making a small following of people who agreed with my ideals and started to notice the strangeness I pointed out in society. To back my own theories up, I thought I should study up a bit more and try to understand whether what I am saying is actually valid for the people of my country or whether I’m following a lost cause.

In the same vein, for my dissertation I chose this topic to try to understand communication design better and to try to understand what works when designing for Pakistan. My research question has evolved from originally simply looking at empathy and using empathy only as a source to get the Pakistani people better and to make trends for them, to looking at the education system as a source of the lack of identity in design in the communication of Pakistan, till I finally found an empirical question: What is the best ideology to use when designing communication for Pakistan? My paper will aim to look at
two separate ideologies, empathy and idealism, and research through interviews what might be the best way to design communication that would be beneficial and influential in this society.

Communication in Pakistan today is of a very confused nature. One could almost say that it lacks any sort of identity, and that this might be reflective of either the population or the people in charge of making the communication. However, the debate of how much the media affects people or vice versa is still illusive, and settling it is not a very simple task. The question arises; looking at the current situation of Pakistan, the corruption, turmoil, and lack of identity, what can people who design communication for Pakistan do to try to use this powerful tool of the media to bring some sort of identity and responsibility amongst the people of Pakistan?

Here are two elements we can examine. The first is ‘empathy’, which helps the designer get inside the mindset, step into the shoes of the common man in Pakistan and design for him so he can relate to what is being said. On the other hand there is ‘idealism’ which deals with setting an example in communication through which people may look up to a specific lifestyle and strive to incorporate it into their lives. This paper aims to discuss and evaluate what can be done to create the perfect form of communication for Pakistan, and what the apparent pros and cons of empathy and idealism are. Analyzing statistical information as well as subjective information to understand how to create the best sort of communication is the aim of this paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Communication design is a very vast field, and its vague nature makes it difficult to reach an exact definition of it. However a simplistic view would break it into its parts, namely, communication, which is defined as establishing a shared meaning, and design which is a structured way of using creativity to establish a desired result. Therefore communication design can be seen as the practice of creating strategic meaning. This meaning can be shared through words, images, and experiences. Communication design is like a blend between design and information-development which deals with how media intermission such as printed, crafted, electronic media or presentations etc, communicate with people. It focuses to attract, inspire, create desires and motivate the people so they somehow respond to the messages so as to making a favorable impact on their minds, maybe for building brands or increasing sales of a product or even for humanitarian purposes. It is a process that involves lots of research and fact-finding in order to cater to the minds of the masses and hence create a culture for them.

When the goal is to adopt new ideas, to change the way people think or behave, or to get people emotionally invested, there is a lot that one needs to keep in mind. The content of the communication, the way it is presented and the method of delivery. Choosing the best medium to get the message across in the best possible way is what communication designers do. There are two ways to look at how we can design communication for a specific audience or population, empathy and idealism.

**EMPATHY**

Empathy is formally defined as “the intellectual identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes or another” (Collins English Dictionary).
Simply put, empathy is the ability to step into somebody else’s shoes. This increases opportunities to avoid miscommunication and misunderstandings, to work together in cooperative settings, and, as a result create innovative solutions to social issues.

When we talk about empathy from a philosophical point of view, it has been hailed as a means of gaining knowledge of other’s minds, and is a method used in humanist sciences. Recent philosophers have become interested in empathy in light of the debate that it might have psychological mindreading capacities. In the second half of the last century, psychologists have also started studying empathy within empirical sciences. Empathy in communication design is a similar theory.

Empathy brings about understanding of the needs of the one "receiving" empathy, and also relieves emotional charge. Emotional charge is often uncomfortable and is a barrier to being able to hear others clearly and respond in a flexible fashion. Thus, empathy may be used to relieve distress and increase understanding and readiness for hearing.

In Technical communicators and Empathetic design (Park 2003), it is described that empathetic design is a 5 step process.

- Observe
- Capture Data
- Reflect & Analyze
- Brainstorm for Solutions
- Develop Prototypes

Observation suggests that humans work in the strange ways and simply presenting a product and expecting them to accept it is not an ideal strategy. It was observed by Park (2003) that ‘Cheerios’ manufacturers discovered that parents would carry the cereal in small bags to provide their children with quick snacks away from the home, which later led to Cheerios making smaller packs that were intended just for children. In technical
communication, emotional issues and a community’s attitude toward a particular product are very important factors in trying to communicate with the audience, and should be considered before providing to the masses because it determines how they use the product, or if they even use it at all.

**Capturing data** involves conducting tests on sample groups representative of the population and observing them while they use the product. These traditional means of data capturing, such as note taking, questionnaires or even videos, are the best way to examine how to market a particular product.

**Reflecting and analyzing** involves getting another person’s opinion that does not have preconceived notions about communication design. It is effective because they can provide technical communicators with a different perspective.

Brainstorming for solutions involves creating an environment in which wild, out of the box ideas are encouraged. It is good for strengthening the message and making it stronger, as well as making it more appealing to the audience.

**Developing prototypes** is the making of prototypes and using the products before releasing them into the market. This serves the purpose of quality assurance, and checking its wear and tear and usability can also help designers to understand the product better and make sure no corners were cut in the production.

If we venture further into the depths of empathy and what one can accomplish through empathy from an artist’s point of view, there are several theories that explain how empathy plays a silent role in understanding the people, and understanding what will appeal to them. One such theory that originated in India is known as the ‘Rasa’, which literally means taste or flavor. The concept of aesthetic flavor suggests that the essential elements of a certain mood, or feel of a painting or body of art can only be suggested and not described. It is a contemplative process in which human experience teaches one to understand and know when
to use what ‘Rasa’. It is attributed to Bharata, a sage priest of 500 AD. It was later developed in 1000 AD by the rhetorician and philosopher Abhinavagupta, who later used it in theatre and poetry. There are certain principle human emotions according to Abhinavagupta, which are delight, laughter, sorrow, anger, energy, fear, disgust, heroism and astonishment. The theory suggests that these emotions can be translated into various tastes or ‘rasas’ which are: erotic, comic, pathetic, furious, heroic, terrible, odious, marvelous and quietistic. These ‘rasas’ are all instinctive in nature and only based on aesthetic experience, and according to the philosophy, the power to taste the ‘rasa’ is a reward from a previous existence.

In contrast to this eastern view, a western theory to support empathy in the arts is by British art critic and philosopher Clive Bell, who understood and hence defended abstraction in art. Bell's theory was also focused on aesthetic experience. In his book Art (1914) he said that there are certain aesthetic emotions and qualities in certain objects that evoke certain emotions or "forms and relations of forms" (including line and color). This theory is called "Significant form". Like in the ‘rasa’, aesthetic response to significant form should not be identified with other emotional responses. For example, in some cases photographs of loved ones or pictures of war memorials may invoke feeling of love or patriotism for the person whom the picture holds significance. While these are all appropriate responses, they are not aesthetic responses. The aesthetic response is a response to the forms and relations of forms themselves, regardless of what other meanings, associations or uses they may have. In most cases it is a strong emotion, often a kind of ecstasy, like the proclaimed ecstacy that might be felt in religious contemplation. The emotion, and the kinds of significant form that evoke it, are the same for cave art, Polynesian carvings, a Vermeer painting or a Cezanne.

Bell's theory had some connections to the aesthetic theories of Immanuel Kant, whose views were very similar to the philosopher G.E. Moore. Moore is famous for claiming in his book Principia Ethica (Cambridge University Press, 1903) that goodness is a property that
things have in them, and that people intuitively know things are good through that intuition, or through contemplation. Bell agreed with Moore, and considered aesthetic value to be one of these intuited forms of goodness.

Both theories, however, can be debatable due to the lack of empirical support; they focus on abstract concepts such as ‘feeling’. With evidentiary support, the goodness that Moore talks about could be translated to the empathy that is needed to understand what people may relate to, and the type of communication design that will be appreciated by the masses.

**IDEALISM**

A book by Neil Postman’s entitled “Amusing Ourselves to Death” suggests that to understand and communicate to a society, one must learn their medium of communication. Idealism is the philosophical theory which deals with what could be, rather than what is. It deals with ideas and theories of a very entrepreneurial and original quality that could be the makings of advancement, technology or ideas of the future. The experience is ultimately based on mental activity. Epistemological idealists, such as Kant, claim that the only knowledge that can be had about certain concepts is in the form of ideas. This is known as abstraction. The origins of Idealism go back to ancient India in the East, and to Plato in the West. It states that the human spirit is the most important element in life. The universe is viewed as nonmaterial in its nature of totality.

When it comes to advertising, consumerism has played a very big role in making the world a smaller place and bringing it together. Vladimir Zworykin, the Russian-born physicist who can be considered the father of television, took the idealistic view that TV would contribute to world peace by exposing home viewers to the wide world, but towards his death in 1982, Zworykin lived to feel regretful of things that he had earlier said. The
medium's great humanistic potential had been largely subsumed by seemingly mindless, time consuming and trivial entertainment.

If we were to bring the kind of idealism that Vladimir Zworykin believed in into communication design and focus on things that are significant for the betterment of human intelligence, it could help people understand other cultures. It could be a means to communicate with the outside world, almost be an educative tool; humans might gain intellectual advancement, idealistically speaking.

This line of argument can further be seen in the book “The World Must Change, Concerning Idealism in the Graphic Design” by Leonie ten Duis and Annelies Haase, which states:

“I am of the present without having chosen to be; am I supposed to worry about the suffering in the world that I can do nothing about, except for spending money? Am I supposed to feel responsible, or even liable, for everything I might perhaps be able to do something about? If so, I would be living with a constant sense of guilt. And that is not something I intend to do', says Annelys de Vet, thus instantly putting her finger on the dilemma facing the young designer. 'What am I supposed to do with all the information that keeps coming at me, with the complexity of the world around me?' Like many of her contemporaries, she seeks refuge in the small, the personal. 'I think the personal is important, and after that the bigger issues. The small I can understand, and from understanding I can act. ... Distance causes non-understanding, conscious or unconscious.' Her remedy is to be as receptive as possible, to ask questions: that makes understanding possible. 'I see myself as a component part. My gaze is not isolated, nor are my actions. I am of the present without having chosen to be', says de Vet.

Choices lie on the plane of the commission; whether or not to accept the job, what she is looking for in her work, what she wants to express with it. To her, what is important is to be
conscious of the context in which she lives, in which she designs. And to react to it, or not. Judgment she wants to postpone for as long as possible. 'Not dividing things up into positive and negative because then you're talking about categorizing, the pigeonhole mentality. The experience is more important than the judgment.

Recording the event as pure. Not going with the flow: that's what the flows for.' Aware that her ideas have not yet been frustrated by real life, de Vet says she looks for quality in everything, 'right down to the smallest detail. The amazement, the awe with which I design - I want to put them into the design. I want to make poetry, in images or combinations, in the hope that I can make my work pass the ephemeral by.’

What de Vet is trying to say here, in simple words, is that there are more important issues in the world that need to be discussed. The fact that graphic designers are educated enough to send messages to the whole world is not enough, we need to focus on things that are more important so the whole world can feel what the designer feels and act as one.

EMPATHY OR IDEALISM IN PAKISTAN?

The current situation in Pakistan is such that the youth is going through an identity crisis. Whether it is politics or the media or how the people function in the country, Pakistan, in its 64 years, has been through many changes. Many influences have pushed and pulled around the mindset of the population of the country which has led to a seeming lack of identity.

We will now look at an interview between Ayesha Jallal, a professor at TUFTS University, and Hassan Abbas, a Research fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, they spoke about the identity in Pakistan or the so-called loss of identity in Pakistan. The content of the interview is outlined and discussed below.
In August 1947 when Pakistan came into being under Governor General M.A.Jinnah, it was primarily a state made purely for the Muslims of British occupied India. Only a year after its first birthday, Jinnah died and left an unresolved debate about the ideology of Pakistan and henceforth there was a conflict between whether the state is to be ruled secularly or by Islamic law. Pakistan decided to take the path of using Islam as the force to bring its people together. By the time the 80’s came along, General Zia-ul-Haq, the then military dictator of Pakistan used Islam in its extremist form to mentally battle the threat of soviet Russia.

Ever since the making of Pakistan the people of Pakistan have been also bought together through shared hostility towards India; the leaders cashed in on this threat and led the people through fear. The army got massive amounts of funding by the state. It was only until the late 90’s that Pakistan started getting new pressures externally. India was no longer something that made civilians afraid; it was Afghanistan and the extremist/militant ideologies that were a threat to the half secular/half Islamic Pakistan that had evolved over the years. American pressures were now forcing Pakistan to divert its attention away from the east and focus on the militancy in the west, all the while the youth of Pakistan got even more influenced towards making a ‘secular’ Pakistan in the name of ‘Westernization’. Everything from Advertising to Pop music and television is being influenced by the west which leaves Pakistan in a very confused state as to what it is meant to be. Western culture in a way has been pushed onto the people of Pakistan because the people were intrigued by their ways of life since a ‘Pakistani’ way of life was not yet defined. Even the parts of it that were, were not appealing to the youth or to the educated masses because of the western education that they received as well as the fact that Pakistani culture was based on either the military or the fear of an extremist version of religion.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methods used for this paper were mainly interviews and a Meta analysis of statistics found from Gallup Pakistan. The interviews were taken from different influential people who are involved in the creation of communication, as well as from other personalities who can be seen as a representative sample of the population that communication design caters to, and their opinions on the topic at hand. When I began writing my dissertation I was very ambitious about it and wanted to write something very smart and thought provoking and started discussing my ideas roughly with almost everyone I could sit down to have a chat with. My friends, colleagues, and teachers then started understanding what I was trying to say and eventually I started getting more and more people to talk to about my topic. Almost like a pseudo-snowball effect. When it came to having more focused information, I chose the following people to increase my knowledge on the subject at hand. The interviewees and their qualifications are as follows:

Sarosh Waiz: Activation Strategist for ESP(channels, production, ATL, BTL) and owner of Pak Media Blog, an online magazine which consists of different writers from the Advertising and Business fields.

I chose to interview Sarosh Waiz because he works in advertising and knows how the industry works, and being the owner of Pak Media Blog, the academic side of advertising and analyzing advertising is something he is especially knowledgeable about in terms of how the Pakistani market works, I met him through a friend name Babar Javed who is also involved in advertising but more towards the marketing side of it. The two know each other through SZABIST (since they were colleagues there.) Since Sarosh has been living and breathing advertising for a little over 6 years, it seemed relevant to get a fresh perspective towards designing communication in Pakistan today.
Sheeraz Waania: Head of Department of Communication Design at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi.

Sheeraz Waania, as the head of department of one of the best art schools in Karachi, has an idea about what is expected in the market and what teaching methods she is using to implement it on students. She seemed like a prime candidate to interview because she is molding communication designers of the future and having her insight about what is and what can be is important for this paper. I would usually go and have very long discussions with Ms Sheeraz about the many different things that I wanted to do and say, and since she kind of knew where I was going with my topic, I thought it would be appropriate to discuss my topic and get her view on it purely from an educationalist’s perspective.

Wahab Soori: Head of Department of Philosophy at the Karachi University.

Since this paper is more theory based and has to do with the nature of communication design, Wahab Soori gives a philosophical perspective on empathy and idealism. Sir Wahab Soori teaches me an elective that I took up in my 7th semester called ‘history of ideas.’ I had always been very impressed by his knowledge and understanding of human nature and hence I thought his opinion on the matter would give my topic a good point of view.

Saqlain Zaidi: Teacher of Contextual Studies and New Media courses at Department of Visual Studies, University of Karachi. He is also visiting Faculty at SZABIST, Media Science Department and Indus Valley School. His areas of interests are Perennialism, Civilizations, and Comparative History of Ideas.

Saqlain Zaidi’s description does not do justice to the vastness of his knowledge. As a teacher he has taught many different subjects but mostly subjects that have to do with media studies, advertising and the arts. His in-depth knowledge about the art/ advertising world is crucial not only to this study as a whole but to the idealistic aspect of this paper. His
knowledge of the sub-continent in terms of the world was an interesting point of view towards my topic.

**Faisal Shaikh:** Professor of Advertising at SZABIST.

Faisal Sheikh’s practical and blunt nature provides a very un-biased and logical answer to most topics in advertising. I met Sir Faisal Shaikh through Babar Javed again. He used to teach Babar advertising in SZABIST. Babar had told me how Sir Faisal was a very straight forward man and his point of view was very to the point and direct. He is not one to create philosophies and ideals, he’s the sort that focuses on the numbers and statistics and facts.
FINDINGS

An analysis of statistic from various sources showed that figures for literacy in Pakistan are as follow, where literacy rate is defined as the number of people over the age of 15 who have the ability to read and write.

- Total population: 49.9%
- Male: 63%
- Female: 36% (2005 est.)

Television has become the mode of communication in most countries all around the world. In Pakistan there are more than 35 local channels and an approximate of 3,100,000 television sets across all of Pakistan and approximately 47% percent of all of Pakistan watches TV. Only 18,500,000 people in Pakistan use the internet which is about 10% of the total population of Pakistan. Geo is the most watched television channel of all of Pakistan, taking a 12% market share out of all the TV channels.

These statistics suggest that the television and the internet is a fast and growing mode of communication/information sharing in the country yet it has not affected the whole population of the country. The ‘Islamic Republic of Pakistan’ is 95% populated by Muslims and 5% is occupied by Hindus, Christians and other minorities. The relevance of this statistic is that we need to understand the morals and practices of this country before we design media for it.

Several languages are spoken in Pakistan; the main languages can be divided into the following ratios according to the percentage of the population that speaks them, as shown in table 1. As this is the mode of communication in Pakistan and we need to makes ourselves aware of what language our people speak, in order to be able to design appropriate communication for them.
Table 1: Languages Spoken in Pakistan in %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>% of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindhi</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saraiki</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pashto</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balochi</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindko</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahvi</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overviews of the 5 interviews conducted are outlined below.

**Interview with Saqlain Zaidi:**

Saqlain Zaidi is of the view that people from the Pakistani media are lost and are stuck in a bubble. They do not study their own people and just listen to corporate brands and their requirements. However he goes on to say that in order to look at the bigger picture the people in the media need to empathize and study the people of Pakistan and their emotions and most importantly try to understand their roots. There are certain emotional responses that people feel when they are presented with their own (significant form, Clive Bell). The problem with Pakistan is that after Sir Syed Ahmad Khan enforced the idea of English to be taught to people in the subcontinent, the people have been pushed away from their roots. Although Urdu is the mother tongue of most Pakistanis, it is still a relatively new language as compared to Persian and Arabic that was previously the language of the people of the Sub continent. Reading local classics and understanding one’s own history invokes a sense of
belonging in a person. Hence he goes on to say that Arabic, Persian and Calligraphy should be taught in schools in Pakistan today as well. To sum it up, he said that—the professionalism of the west and not knowing of our own roots will restrict empathy and societal growth of a people.

When it comes to the art and media schools of Pakistan, Saqlain Zaidi says that because the education system has been influenced by Western schools of thought so much, it will restrict the growth of our people since it is not designed for our people. He suggests dismantling a very ‘organized’ structure in the education system. He says that education is too focused and the education system needs to rethink its strategy and with patience they must try to understand the students and their roots and try to bring that out rather than trying to make them skillful. He says that going after non-focused ideas and concepts can only lead to truly creating intellectuals. Intellectuals are needed to designing communication for a country because intellectuals can only understand their own people and accordingly cater to their needs and values. The tools of advertising set by western schools of thought cannot fully be applied in Pakistan since the mindset of the people is totally different from western mind sets. Students are only encouraged to design in a way that helps them make money and how to deal with the corporate brands and not to design for the greater good, for the sake of creating culture, which needs to change for students to be more empathetic towards its people and make more successful media as well as creating immortal culture.

**Interview with Wahab Suri:**

The framework of empathy was introduced through the romantic school of thought or ‘romanticism.’ That doesn’t mean empathy was around before enlightenment. Enlightenment promised that it will give human beings freedom and make them humanists as well as give them authority on their own determination and objectives. Later modernism came and said that people will be given authority by virtue of reason and the romantics said that they will be
given authority by virtue of intuition. Modernists said rationality is key to understanding something, by breaking the given subject into its parts and then come up with a conclusion by analyzing the parts. On the other hand the romantics say the essence of a thing is destroyed by analysis. They take a distinction between knowledge of parts and knowledge of totality. On the other hand romantics say that the qualities of knowledge and the qualities of parts are different from each other. For example when you are analyzing a flower and break it up into parts, the experience of looking at the parts and then looking at it in totality is totally different, or if you see a face in totality it will look nice but if you see a face in parts, one might not like it as much. Therefore to understand totality you have empathy, to put your shoes into the feet of the others and be one with them. Hence the information you get through empathy is direct and immediate and has the capacity to be true. Empathy can never be wrong, but it will contradict our rational understanding of things. The dilemma of intuition is that it cannot be institutionalized. When it comes to communication design, empathy is private and specific to one’s self. When one articulates that intuitive design, it will become simple and cannot be analyzed. Masur Al-Hallaj, a mystic and sufī who did many writings and teachings on mysticism to distribute to the masses even though many sufī masters felt it was inappropriate to share the experience and thus he began making enemies. He said that he is Anā l-Ḥaqq "I am The Truth" which also means that he is God because in Arabic, the truth is also another one of the ninety nine names of Allah. People immediately thought this was blasphemy and Al-Hallaj was prosecuted and executed publicly. In the same way when one describes design intuitively and then tries to articulate it, you are trying to analyze it and when one is in an institution, work must be analyzed through discursive reasoning. Hence when you make empathy a prerequisite for communication design, it is true only for the artist and it cannot be public.
To back this theory up, Edward Burke once said that not everyone is capable of having intuitive thought, hence such people should follow people who have intuitive thought, like Jesus Christ and through their empathetic attitude, grasp onto different ideas and theories. Then again that is not functional and cannot be institutionalized. Hence you will see that romantics do not really contribute much to the public order and only towards aesthetics. This is the dilemma of intuition. You can’t prove that your intuition is right or wrong. For example, 17% of all mentally unstable people in America claim to be Jesus Christ and their justification to this is that they are having an intuition. But by definition intuition is never wrong and since you have no method to prove it wrong, you cannot institutionalize it and so public policy and decision making cannot be done on the basis of intuition. On the contrary there is the story of Nooruddin Zangi of Syria, a Muslim general who saw the Holy Prophet SAW in his dream. He saw the Prophet SAW pointing towards two men with blue eyes and he said ‘protect me from these two.’ After this he went straight to Medina and went straight to the Prophet’s mosque and ordered all the Medinites to come and his distributed gifts to all of them as well as a feast. In the mean while he kept an eye out for those two men in his dream. When he didn’t see them, he asked the people whether anyone was left out of the feast, and then the Sultan replied that there were two westerners who are always in the state of prayer and they did not come to this feast. When he inquired to go see their home, after investigation he found that those two men had dug a tunnel that lead straight to the holy prophet’s SAW grave. The two men turned out to be Christian spies who were on a mission to take away the Holy Prophet’s body. From then on there was extra security done for the Prophet’s grave.

Another example is that Kekulé defined the bonding of Benzine just by having a dream. He dreamed that the benzene ring is a sandwich between two clouds and the covalent
bonds sometimes goes up and sometimes down. When asked for a scientific explanation, he said that reality has unveiled itself before me. Romanticism also says that to understand something you must be one with it.

**Interview with Sheeraz Waania:**

Sheeraz Waania suggests also that empathy is not something that can be used to design communication for the masses of Pakistan. She explains that when we go and examine the infrastructure of Pakistan, the education system or matric is of a very poor standard. When 40 percent of the country’s GDP is being used on the military and lesser on education. The CIE or Cambridge education is preferred over the local matric system which is also divided into the English medium and Urdu medium groups. Because of the bad state of the local education system, foreign education is preferred over local. This is also the case with most communication and media related design, the youth is influenced more by western traditions and communication because it has a more aesthetically pleasing and superior look to it as compared to anything done locally. She agreed with Saqlain Zaidi that the youth needs to be more in touch with its roots and read classics and stories from our own culture but since the education system is so deplorable, people do not want to send their children to the local schools and hence children are taught western education and they read western classics that have nothing to do with who they are and hence the lack of identity in the country. Hence even if the people empathize with the masses, they have not much that people of Pakistan can relate to. On the other hand if communication design can work as a means of education (idealism) it can probably give people more of a sense of belonging than what empathy can do for the country.

**Interview with Sarosh Waiz:**

Sarosh Waiz, who works in advertising, suggested that communication design depends (in most cases) upon what the brief says or what the client has in mind from
beforehand to sell his product. It depends on what is tactical and functional for the specific product. Depending on the essence of the brand and what consumers think about it and what the producers want the consumers to think about it. In his opinion, idealism (or the elite mass model) is the preferred choice in most cases when it comes to advertising in Pakistan, where people from big multi-national and even local companies mostly try to make ideal families or ideal communication that attracts ‘A’ category and ‘B’ category consumers who are from upper middle class and middle class families and the rest of the population just tries to be like what they see on television.

Two decades ago Pakistan did not have much of a choice when it came to television, Pakistan only had 2 TV channels which were PTV and STN and over the years since there has been a channel boom and more and more channels are coming into being, there are more lifestyles that people are being introduced to. In Sarosh’s opinion, the government, the media and the people are all to blame for the current state of Pakistan and we cannot just blame the media. Although in his opinion he feels that big corporations should also try to use their CSR (corporate social responsibility) departments to try to educate lesser privileged children from rural or slums areas to try to raise the general standard of living of Pakistan as he feels that communication design cannot do much to change the mindset of the people of Pakistan but make trends and fashion statements.

**Interview with Faisal Sheikh:**

Faisal Sheikh as an advertising teacher only believed in statistics and numbers. He shot me down by saying that art students do not really look at the numbers and they expect to bring a change with just feeling. He explained that most of the communication or ads that are shown on television today are mostly designed to cater to Category A of the population which consists of people earning Rs 30,000/- and above per month. Whereas this segment of the market is only 8% of the whole population of Pakistan. In his opinion Pakistan is
advertising idealistically and is not looking at the rest of the 92% of the population most of
the time.

When it comes to politics as well, Pakistan usually does not rely on advertising as
much as it does on people from the government going to rural areas and giving speeches and
personally interacting with the people. Faisal went on to say that my vote does not really
matter in the elections, my educated opinion does not mean anything to the opinion of the
people from the rural areas who are voting for figureheads in the government since I am part
of the 8% who has the luxury to go to University and live in my own house in a posh area of
Karachi.
DISCUSSION

Beginning to blame western secret societies and government agendas for the downfall of my country is not a very smart way to go around finding a solution to why Pakistan is a confused state. But conspiracy is always interesting. The problem with Pakistan is way bigger and communication design will only improve if other aspects of the country will improve. The lack of infrastructure and the lack of encouragement and opportunities towards the arts make it very hard for artists to create a culture that represents Pakistan and to improve upon the foreign image of Pakistan being a country that harbors terrorists. They only way to improve upon our image in the world is to provide more funding into education and the arts so people can represent and show a better image of Pakistan outside the country.

My research and interviews have changed the way I think about Pakistan and the role of communication design in it, quite a bit. It has broadened my knowledge about communication and the most effective ways to use communication in Pakistan. Based on the information and opinions gained from people in different fields of study, it seems the conclusion is that looking at the bigger picture; the media plays only half the role in influencing people in Pakistan.

Empathy is not being used very much in communication design today because most designers do not know who they are talking to and what their target market is and mostly target people from urban areas that are similar in socio-economic status to the designers themselves. Only companies like Unilever and P and G actually set out to do market research, yet with the pressures of their western counterparts, they are forced to advertise communication that is made for a certain area of the world.

It seems that idealism is more in use in Pakistan since new western ideas are the only thing that are being introduced to Pakistan to influence them to try to be modern and
productive but that too is not the most effective way to be idealistic while designing for the people of Pakistan.

From a designes point of view, or maybe just my point of view, design seems like a mundane task, it seems as though we are just doing what we are told to do by western markets and trends so that local businesses and their strategy to sell their products in a ‘safe’ way. We are just designing slaves in a way. Reaching out to people and trying to understand what they want (empathy) or what they need (idealism) hardly seems to be the case here.

Sir Saqlain Zaidi’s views on how the roots of this country have been cut, is a very important part to understanding why it is difficult for Media minds to develop communication for Pakistan since its almost as if a language has been stolen from us and a new one has been adapted to us. The aesthetics of language and the way one expresses emotion in language play an important role in one’s own development. But looking at the statistics of Pakistan, there are many languages in the country and finding a mutual platform to express one’s self and be understood is almost redundant. It’s like Pakistan seems to be begging for a new kind of culture. Something apart from politics, religion and sports that can bring all the people of Pakistan together and get along. The only thing that actually is bringing the people of Pakistan together, when it comes to the media, (unfortunately) is Indian movies.

Saqlain Zaidi’s suggestion of trying to create unfocussed learning seems to be an interesting approach to trying to make new developments in society and culture. To try to start over new and build a new culture rather than stealing from western and Indian culture. Sir Saqlain Zaidi seems to agree that both idealism and empathy are needed to create good communication, by first understanding what the people actually lack in the first place and then creating new innovative techniques to provide something new for Pakistani audiences.
Ms Sheeraz Waania’s take on this topic is such that she thinks that the priorities of the infrastructure of the country are more balanced towards the military and only a small percentage of the GDP focuses on education. This way thinkers are not trained to give their educated opinions to try to make decisions for the culture of Pakistan. Even so, making do with what we have, good intellects and graphic designers can use graphic design as a tool of education and educative influence on people so people can adapt to smarter communication.

Currently, with the internet and the boom of TV channels in the country, there is a variety of information that everyone has at their finger tips. The kind of information, the nature of it and how it affects people is a totally different topic altogether. People are finding more reasons to watch shows from other countries. Personally I do not think that is a bad thing, but there should be as many good quality local shows as much as foreign shows because that is the only way to send your word out and be understood.

Based on the statistics of TV watching people in Pakistan only half of the population of Pakistan watches television and gets affected by any kind of communication design. Most of the people are living in rural areas and are only affected by the infra structure and the spear-heads of the government that influence their way of life and standard of living and they dream of living in a comfortable modern lifestyle. Statistically speaking there should be more communication design done in Punjabi since half of the population understands the language as compared to a mere 8 percent each to English and Urdu.

The lack of education in this country is also a reason for most communication to not work amongst the whole population of Pakistan. Although the people are not to be blamed so much because as Ms Sheeraz Waania said, there is a lack of infrastructure in the education sector of the country and unless the government does not take action, people will not educated them or try to increase their standard of living. Another problem that does not let
education prevail in Pakistan is Feudalism. Feudals who are in charge of certain villages and rural cities do not let their inferiors seek knowledge or learn new skills because it is almost like a monarchy in such places. The landlord appoints his own son to rule over his land rather than trying to make the infrastructure of the village better.

Keeping that in mind, people from more privileged classes should try to reach out to the larger, less educated population of Pakistan to raise the standard of living in the country as a whole not just through communication design but like what Sarosh Waiz suggested, through planned CSR projects that will educate the people and give them a sense of knowhow, awareness, and understanding of their responsibilities as citizens of Pakistan. The privileged class of Pakistan can use Communication design to educate the rural masses through campaigns that speak in their languages, about basic problems in Pakistan like over-population and hygiene and curable diseases (polio, malaria, diarrhea) and preventable steps to cure these diseases and eradicate them from our country altogether. The people should also try to make people from rural areas aware of their rights as a citizen of Pakistan and educate them on what one can do on a personal level to overcome any sort of ignorance or miscommunication that is caused due to the problem of feudalism in small villages and towns across Pakistan. When communicating to people from rural areas, one needs to be empathetic of the kind of culture and language that they are communicating to as well as try to set an idealistic example for the rural population so they do not feel that they are left out or out of place and that they feel they are at home as people from urban areas are acknowledging their existence and accepting their culture.

Consumerism is prevalent in Pakistan, with all its pros and cons. An example of this could be the new wave of Lawn and the hype that Pakistan has created in the lawn industry. Advertising for it has boomed and it is one of the most advertised products in the country right now. Regardless of the situation in the country, women from all over the country are
visiting exhibitions, and billboards and advertisements for lawn are all over the streets of Karachi. This obviously will give more jobs to the local market but it will also create a need for it over and above utility. Since lawn has been branded and an extra expensive price tag has been attached to the garment, people feel the need to buy more and more.

Consumerism does work as a way to give people employment, but it may also be sending out the wrong message to the public by encouraging them to purchase products that they have no use for. It seems people feel the need to buy things that they might not need, but because of how advertising works, people are compelled to give in to market trends or made to believe that they need products.

There is a big financial divide in Pakistan; there are some of the richest people in the world as well as the poorest and under privileged people in the world. In a way Idealism and empathy are factors that will come into play after big companies and the government wake up and realize this divide and try to equally give opportunities to everyone. We could say that empathy and idealism are just tools that can be used to speak to a people, but if the people do not know what we are talking about or who we are talking to, communication loses its point. All Pakistan needs is more people who feel for their country and the state that it is currently in and try to improve upon it whether by communication or education because people who do not know about their rights and choices in life, they will make do what is given to them.
CONCLUSION

Looking at the population that communication design does affect, like Saqlain Zaidi said, educated and very intellectual people should make decisions for the Pakistani audiences so that new ideas of giving people a sense of identity and arousing emotions of belonging and giving people the idea that what’s local is precious to the development of the country, I feel, is a necessity for the Pakistani masses. Young people with fresh perspectives towards the problems in Pakistan and how to deal with them should be given a platform not only to voice their opinions but to also implement them. Pakistan needs to divert itself from politics and religion as a motivational force to bring people together and focus more on building culture and infrastructure.

The problem with much of the privileged class these days is that they are not proud of the country and what it stands for. With the prevalent terrorism, most parents usually look to migrate to other countries or create big houses packed with security and do not let their children get out and explore their own country much. Their whole world becomes the internet and television which depicts foreign cultures. The Pakistani media cashes in on this and also tries to make cross-culture blends of information that depicts a fictitious reality for the elite which almost seems mutated in nature. Eventually when these kids go out into the real world and interact with people from all over Pakistan, they experience a culture shock.

This has a lot to do with the education of Pakistan, again, where O and A level education is regarded superior to the local Matric system. Anything that local seems to be almost redundant for the modern elite of the country. Studying our own local language and texts has also become a rarity and the youth is getting detached from their own history and culture even more.
Even most advertising nowadays in Pakistan is not done in Urdu, it is preferred to advertising in Roman Urdu and make fusions of the English and Urdu language to come across as more appealing to younger markets whereas according to my findings, we should be communicating with the masses in Punjabi if that is the language that is spoken by almost half of the majority of the country whereas according to my findings, we should be communicating with the masses in Punjabi if that is the language that is spoken by almost half of the majority of the country where as Urdu is only spoken by 8 percent of the country.

Even if we look at the music industry of Pakistan, the new music sensation to hit television, Coke studio, is trying to fuse elements of traditional folk music with western rock music and although it may seem like an attempt to bring people back to their roots, it is still a blend or as they say a fusion of east and west, whether it is to make it more appealing or not.

If we take a look at most of the advertising that is done today, it is both of an idealistic and empathetic nature. Introducing English and western design to local products suggests that people are of the impression that anything that looks western, is of better quality and should sell which not only makes the designer empathetic towards the mindset of the Pakistani towards foreign products but also idealistic by trying to introduce new western designs and use terms in English to cater to the market. This seems like it is a very blind way of looking at design. Clients these days obviously want designers to make what sells but on the other hand there is hardly any room for designers to explore and empathize to make design that directly speaks to the people rather than indirectly tempts people to buy what looks attractive because of its western appeal.

The question here is not whether idealism or empathy should be used in design anymore. It has more to do with the rest of the burdens that Pakistan bares and how people in power and the more privileged class can give back to society by introducing trends that are useful for the growth and development of the country so that Pakistanis can all speak one language and have something in common with each other so they get along and find more reasons to develop their country. In a way I am agreeing with what Sir Faisal Shaikh had to
say about the statistics and numbers in our country as well as Ms Sheeraz Waania’s opinion on the infrastructure of the country. A Combination of both Empathy and Idealism are required to not only come at a mutual level of understanding and communication with the majority of the people in Pakistan but also try to help them raise their standard of living since the numbers are a very important factor in communication design and clearly, in Pakistan, the numbers clearly point that the majority is not in the cities at all. Empathy and Idealism will be at play in a broader sense than just in use for Communication Design in order to make things better and to eventually give Pakistan a better name amongst its people and outside the country.

As a communication designer one needs to realize the responsibility and the power of design and advertising. If more research is done in co-relation with this paper it can mean a lot of progression for the advertising industry as people will not only be looking at ways to increase market sales but to create a broader and more relatable culture that the multi-lingual/multi-cultural Pakistan can share. Advertising and media has a lot more influence than just selling a product, if used wisely it can educate people and make people aware and generally have a positive impact on the people in Pakistan.
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