

Kari – The Review of Art References and the Meanings of Colors

Aneel Mukerjee

Dr. Sandeep Mishra

Faculty of Performing Arts, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhopal, India

Abstract

Amruta Patil's *Kari* is a veritable goldmine of references to a diverse collection of art and literature, spanning over genres and periods. This paper attempts to analyze the references in the text and their context in the narrative. This paper also highlights parallels between the context in 'Kari' and the context around the original artworks.

Kari features beautiful interplay between colours and monochrome drawings with colour being as much a narrative device as text or illustration. This paper discusses the use of colour to differentiate between the real and the imaginary to demarcate spaces and a host of other narrative uses.

Keywords:

Graphic Novels, Colors, Negotiation, Representation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Kari is a unique graphic novel text for more reasons than one. Amruta Patil is one of India's prominent graphic novelists and her work *Kari* is one of her initial works of literature. Her other works include *Adi Parva* and *Sauptik* both retellings of the *Mahabharata*. It is also perhaps the first Indian graphic novel with a lesbian protagonist. It centers on the story of a queer woman and her struggle with heartbreak, mental health, and belonging set against the backdrop of a largely heteronormative metropolis Mumbai.

Over the past years, the number of graphic novels in comic books shops and recently in major bookstore chains has steadily increased. A new generation of alternative cartoonists, who, inspired by the work of their underground and independent predecessors, are creating long-form comics. Parallel shifts are seen in the Indian scenario too with the comics. The term graphic novel in today's sense is used in at least four different and mutually exclusive ways. First it is used simply as a synonym for comic books. Second, it is used to classify a format like a bound book of comics either in soft or hardcover magazine. Third in a sense of being narrative that is equivalent in form and dimensions to the prose novel. Finally it is employed to indicate a form that is more than a comic book in the scope of its ambition thus making it a new medium. The traits of the position gained by the graphic novels include a keenness for the authorial voice, the longing to establish a serious relationship with the readers and a deeper sense of the medium's history that previously prevailed. It is been devised for long-range pictorial reading contributing significantly to an emerging literature form of the time where word, picture, and narratives interact meaningfully and is in tune with the complexity of modern life with its signs, symbols and stimuli (Eddie. 2007, pp. 92-108).

Graphic novels have had a parallel history in the popular culture. The representations in the graphic novels do belong to a certain time and space. The graphic narratives have always been popular irrespective of the reputation it carried. The images and the text play a very refined suggestive content to its audiences. The represented images thus pretexted the story followed by the written narrative. The medium of the graphic novel thus allows for an active discourse with the readers due to the dual aspect of the genre.

The story begins with a surreal image of *Kari* and *Ruth* who as progress learn were once intimate and have separated. This break-up is important because it sets the tone for the entire graphic narrative. Although

separated, Kari does not hesitate to jump off the building to accompany Ruth in attempting suicide. While a net saves Ruth, the sewers save Kari. The sewers play a significant role in her narrative.

Kari works at an advertisement agency and most of her desires manifest through the pitches for advertisements. Kari shares an apartment with two other women and their boyfriends. She becomes infatuated with the new partner at the agency Angel who is a terminally ill cancer patient. Angel's death marks Kari's transformation in the end. The graphic novel shows Kari's relationship with all these characters, her desires and her negotiations with the public.

While most of the novel is in monochromatic tones of gothic art, a few exceptional panels are in colour. The paper proposes that there exist three realms in the narrative distinguished by the colour scheme. They are the imaginary, the public, and Kari's perception of the world or the gothic as described by Nayar.

The paper tries to understand the use of colours and author's intentions of including the replicas of famous paintings by Frida Kahlo, Andrew Wyeth and Leonardo Da Vinci as a meaning-making tool to the backdrop to Kari's story. The paper also tries to identify the semiotic understanding of colours and the art references in accordance to the contexts presented in the storyline.

2. ART

The Two Fridas

Amruta Patil's Kari opens with an image of Ruth and Kari sitting on a bench (Figure 2). While both women expose their hearts, Ruth with a broken heart and Kari with a whole heart. The two women are holding hands, and their hearts connected through an artery, but this connection severed at the other end where the vein cut off with a pair of scissors. Ruth holds a pair of surgical pincers while Kari holds onto the other end of the vein. The vein through Kari's heart curls around her arms as if entangling her arms in itself (or maybe it's Kari who's holding onto it.) The blood flowing from the vein ending creates stains on Ruth's white skirt.

Figure 1: Kahlo, The Two Fridas, 1939



the two women joined by a vein in the famous painting by Frida Kahlo

Figure 2: Patil, Kari, 3



similar painting as done by Frida Kahlo of two women joined by a vein used in the text Kari

In Elizabeth Graber's book *Art Critics On Frida Kahlo: A comparison of Feminist Voices and Non Feminist Voices* she gives the historical back ground to the painting. The backdrop to the painting is Frida's accident when a streetcar hit her in Mexico which dramatically influenced her life, leaving her disabled for a long time and made her unable to bear children. The painting also reveals her relationship muralist Diego Rivera and their separation. This visual in Patil's *Kari* denotes the separation of the two women, while suggesting that there once was a strong bond between them. This interpretation of this bond could be on various understandings, as a sisterly bond or a bond of strong friendship as well but as the narrative progresses, we learn that the two were in an intimate romantic relationship. Ruth holding the scissor suggests that the agency for ending the relationship was hers while the vein curling around Kari's arm depicts her possessiveness and her being entangled in love. This image serves not only to establish the end of the relationship but also the roles that Kari and Ruth had within the relationship.

The text echoes the visual by stating, "There are two of us not one." And then also marking the connection, by stating "(. . .) we are joined still". The bench is the only material thing in contact with the two women, and there is no ground rather the visual bleeds into the text. The borderless panel merges into the white background. The dark clouds in the sky and the isolated bench give a timeless and space less quality to the image. It exists in a mythical time and space that the paper will refer to as "the imaginary".

This image is a visual replica of Frida Kahlo's celebrated artwork *The Two Fridas* (Figure 1). The famous artwork is a double self-portrait where the two eponymous Fridas are holding hands one dressed in white Victorian attire and the other in Mexican attire. This is a suggestion to Frida's dual heritage (half Mexican and half European). Costumes have played a significant role in the works of Frida Kahlo and this is an important facet in Amruta Patil's use of imagery replicating *The Two Fridas*.

Even though Patil chooses to use contemporary attire for the characters, she still uses the same colours that used by Frida Kahlo. This visual allusion is significant in many ways. Frida Kahlo is one of the well-known female visual artists famous for her self-- portraiture and surrealist imagery. It is interesting to note that even though *Kari* is not an autobiographical work (or even based on Patil's own life to any significant extent) her portraiture of Kari bases itself on her own self, much like most of Kahlo's work.

Frida Kahlo uses minimal material things in her paintings and focuses on the subject (often herself). A common motif in her artwork is the use of isolated locations as backgrounds to focus the eye on the subject. Patil replicates that in *Kari* by focusing the panels on the subject. In Figure 2 for example, Patil removes the ground as well and fades the visual into the text, as her medium is not limited to the visual. The two women

positioned against the dark background create a certain effect, as does the painting. Herrera analyses this juxtaposition as reflecting the 'inner turmoil and heighten the disturbing paralysis of pose and demeanour (..]_."

Now considering the context of the original painting, Frida Kahlo painted *The Two Fridas* after her divorce with husband Diego Rivera. In the original painting, the Frida with a whole heart still in love with Diego holds onto a portrait of Diego as a child in the egg-shaped vein ending. To quote Herrera's detailed analysis of the painting "[...] From the crimson frame of the oval-shaped miniature springs a long red vein that also resembles an umbilical cord emerging from the placenta. Diego's egg-shaped portrait thus seems to stand for both a lost baby and a lost lover. To Frida, Diego was both." In Kari, Kari articulates her desire to impregnate Ruth. This separation then, for Kari as well, stands for both a lost baby and a lost lover.

Doubling is an important aspect of the original artwork and the image in question. 'Frida once said that *The Two Fridas* showed the duality of her personality (emphasis mine)." The doubling occurs on many levels in the original artwork. Kahlo is both, the active artist and the passive subject; she is both the hurt and the comforter she is both the European and the Mexican woman, she is also the 'dispassionate investigator of what it feels like to be a woman and a passionate repository of feminine emotions". She is the woman with a broken heart and with a whole heart too.

Her husband Diego Rivera understanding of this duality is more appropriate then, as he "recognised this dichotomy as male-female when he called Frida 'la pintura mas pintor' - using both the feminine and the masculine terms."

Pramod Nayar in *The Indian Graphic Novel*, reads this duality or doubling in terms of the gothic when he says, "[...] Ruth is the foreign body haunting Kari and vice versa. If the uncanny is the sense of the foreign at the heart of the self at the origins, then Kari experiences herself as double as Ruth's double but also as having herself doubled repeated. The opening line, 'there are two of us not one', becomes then an attempt to exorcise the other: to claim selfhood as unitary as one not two or doubled."

The costumes become an important marker here, as Ruth is dressed in a long white skirt and has long hair wears blue eye shadow and sits with poise while Kari has short hair is dressed in pants and sits with her legs parted. The costumes and mannerism signify stereotypical representations of the butch and femme dichotomy. There is a doubling and sharing of the femaleness but at the same time the butch-femme dichotomy separates the two.

To invoke Virginia Woolf's seminal feminist work, *A Room of One's Own* and her definition of an androgyny "In each of us, two powers preside one male, one female... The androgynous mind is resonant and porous... naturally creative, incandescent and undivided."

The opening image of Kari thus seemingly signifies androgyny as the two women combine their masculine and feminine attributes to become one.

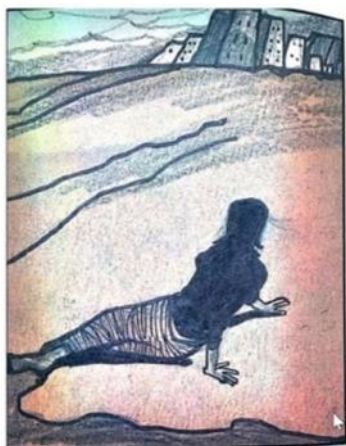
Christina's World

Figure 3: Wyeth, *Christina's World*, 1948



Drawing of a woman lying on the grass painted by Wyeth

Figure 4: Patil, Kari, Page 8



Similar painting of Christina's world used in the text Kari

A suicide attempt by both women follows the opening visual. Ruth jumps off the roof and Kari follows her lover. This is what shapes the narrative further on. Death is one theme that haunts the narrative until the end. Even though both of them jumped, both turned out in different ways. The net surrounding her building saves Ruth, while Kari ends up in the sewers. Ruth then flies out of the city, while Kari seemingly embraces the sewers. Kari's embracement of the sewer and her place in the city is captured in Figure 4 wherein Kari crawls out of the sewer and is looking up at the city.

Here, the visual is a replica of Christina's World an artwork by Andrew Wyeth. It is one of the best-known American paintings of the middle 20th Century. It is a tempera work done in realist style, depicting a woman semi-reclining on the ground in a treeless mostly tawny field, looking up at a gray house on the horizon; a barn and various other small outbuildings are adjacent to the house.

Andrew Wyeth's Christina's World "presents the illusion of a self-contained world, a place suspended in time and divorced from contemporary life. In replicating the painting Patil replaces Christina with Kari and the house in the background with the city of Mumbai, or 'Smog City' as Kari calls it and experiences it. Patil also adds details of Kari's barefoot touching the sewage water. Patil thus has all the key elements of the narrative in this visual and therefore achieves the same self-containment as the original. The image is again timeless and space-less. An important thing to note is the use of a sepia shade for the image. Since Patil colours the imaginary in pure and bright colours, the use of a sepia tone for this visual underscores the relative reality of it. Patil uses the medium of the graphic novel to her advantage and uses a border to emphasize the self-containment. The border of the panel here performs the act of confinement thereby confining the space of the city as her world. This framing of Kari's body crawling out and looking up at the city establishes the central character and her world for the readers.

The idea of a body is crucial to the painting, in that it depicts the crippled body of a woman with a bony structure. Wyeth's subject emerged in an era in which the awareness of the vulnerability of the body was widespread due to fears of diseases like polio. While Wyeth's subject, Anna Christina Olson probably suffered from a genetic polyneuropathy called the Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease Kari's state of disability is more emotional and mental than physical. Kari crippled emotionally from the separation, and perhaps physically from the fall. Kari is constantly disappointed with the disconnect she feels with other females within the narrative and her anxiety of being invisible.

Another thing contributing to Kari's state of disability is her constant feeling of suffocation, which is perhaps a metaphor for her experience being a part of the homosexual minority in a largely heteronormative city. Sakshi Dogra writes: Amruta Patil's Kari on a closer examination reveals a graphic story of the experiences of sexual minorities' in metropolitan cities. Kari's encounter with "fairytales" of heteronormativity leaves her suffocated in the city; A suffocation that finds further expression in the

representation of sewers as clogged and suffocating which depicts the smog-ridden stifling heterosexual atmosphere of the city. Kari's mammoth sized task of being a boatman and cleaning sewers thus engenders revolutionary and liberating potential. Kari's navigation through the sewers of the city while purging them of dirt and clogging promises to intervene to establish an alternative culture and in turn an alternative identity. An identity that is rooted in an exercise of agency a belief in lesbian continuum and most importantly her homoerotic desire for Ruth.

The viewer positioned within the painting as it "[...] conjures a vivid place that we can inhabit. Its diagonal composition and the abrupt shift from foreground to background draw the viewer into the painted space [...]". Patil uses this visual to close the first chapter - which acts as a prologue to the narrative. This image also forms the back cover of the book.

3. COLOUR

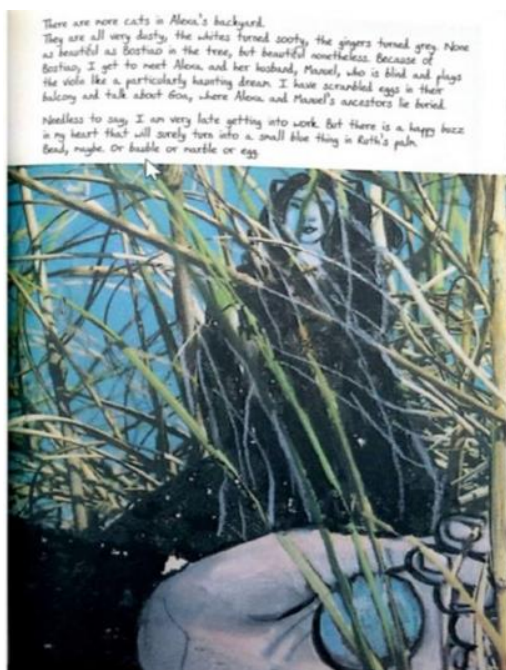
The Realm of Dreams

Following the imagery described in the preceding section Kari's perception of the world and in turn the narration of the story becomes monochromatic.

The colour scheme is intentional and plays as a device in carrying the narration forward. The monochromatic colour scheme represents the world in Kari's perspective from Figure 4 onwards. While the world presented through Kari in the monochromatic makes a distinction between reality and the dream realm, the artist uses colours to depict the latter. In the realm of the imaginary, we often come across Ruth, as the beauty that desired and representing some form of perfection that is unattainable.

Kari works as a copywriter at an ad agency and is pitching ideas for an advertisement for a hair product called Fairytale Hair. Since they imagined, her pitches presented in colour. Her pitches thus become a space to express desire as she visualizes Ruth as the Princess in her pitches with flawless hair.

Figure 5: Patil, Kari, 45



Fairy tale hair product shown against some grass

Figure 6: Patil, Kari, 46



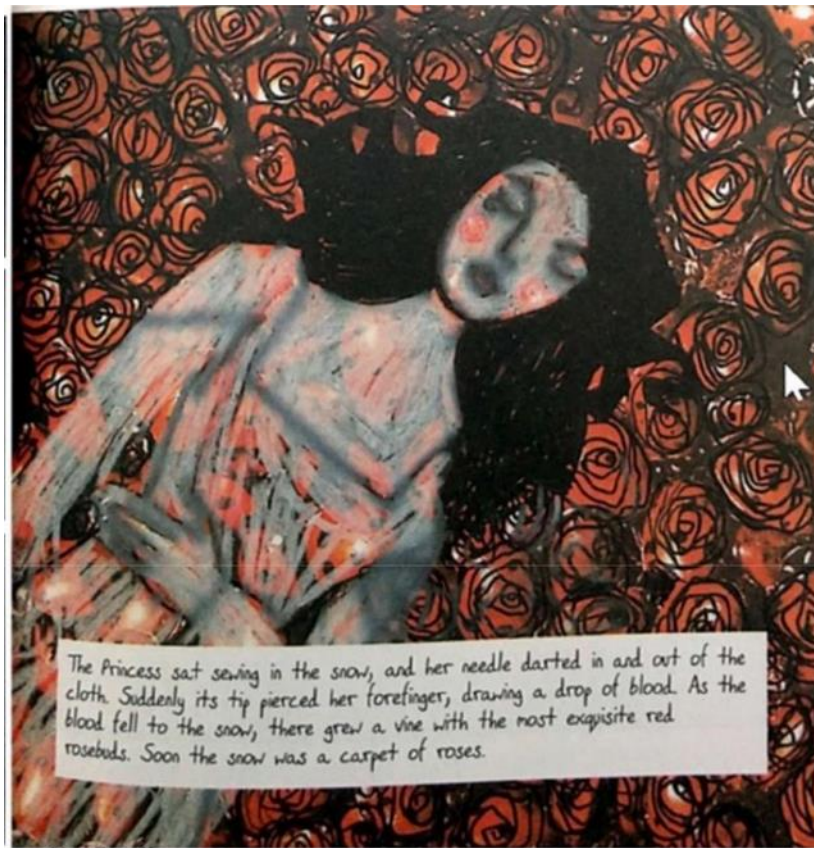
A discussion between Lazaurus and Kari regarding the fairy tale hair product.

Figure 7: Patil, Kari, 12



Kari Imagining a fox running into the horizon

Figure 8: Patil, Kari, 49



The Princess is saddened and sleeping on a bed of roses

As Kari pitches an idea for an advertisement for a hair product, her idea visualizes for the reader (Figure 6). Ruth appears as a princess in this visualization "The further the princess walked, the further the fox ran - always on the horizon." Her pitch constructed in a fairy-tale manner but interpreted as a metaphor for her relationship with Ruth. The white fox here then would be Kari, and the princess Ruth. Like the fox, always on the horizon Kari and Ruth can never be together because one will always be on the horizon.

Through the entire narrative, Kari is still recovering from the separation, and it is evident especially because the first and the last (more on this below) images are about Ruth apart from the various panels in between the novel. Kari's relationship with Ruth becomes central to the plot and it is only once Kari has accepted the separation that ends the novel.

Although separated, Kari seems to be forcing some connection with Ruth through her creative abilities in her pitches for the advertisement. Another appearance of Ruth in the imaginary realm is in another visual. In this image, Ruth imagined to be a princess again in a snow globe that Kari possesses and is looking into. While in both the advert ideas of Kari are the submissive, one here, Kari possesses Ruth in her palms within the snow globe.

Figure 9: Patil, Kari, 116



the text reads' In a faraway city where the palette was pure and bright Ruth stirred in her sleep and smiled. A chaotic scribbled picture is shown.

Kari possessed by the thought of Ruth throughout the novel and it is only in the last image (Figure 9) wherein there is an acceptance of the separation and therefore an end to the novel. While a sketch in monochrome, in the last image of the graphic narrative, the text reads' In a faraway city where the palette was pure and bright Ruth stirred in her sleep and smiled." The text makes it explicit that the colour scheme is an artistic choice. It also confirms that the world that the readers have been exploring was a subjective world, one represented through the eyes of the protagonist Kari who chose to look at the world in monochrome while her desired one existed in the realm of pure and bright colours.

There is another visual that makes the distinction between the imaginary and the real, rather stark. In this image, the first panel shows the bodies of the models that are to be considered for the role of the advertisement and the next two panels have their photographs. While the photographs are in colour the models they

represent are not. The imagined and the real both exists in the same page and though the photographs the imagined and the desired are in colour, the models are painted in the same monochromatic tone of the rest of the graphic narrative displaying the gap between the portrayed and the reality.

Figure 10: Patil, Kari, 65



All the models lined up for the advertisement

Figure 11: Patil, Kari, 64



Kari Talking to Lazarus “Your soft Board has come of age, Lazarus, my son”

Another example of this is Lazarus’s soft board (Figure 10). While the rest of the panel is in monochrome the “shiny lady”, the object of his desire and longing is in color.

4. OF FAIRYTALES

Kari refers to fairytales in many occasions. These allusions are not innocent, however, in the second occurrence (Figures 5 and 6); the allusion is to the story of Bluebeard's egg.

Bluebeard known to have a charm over women but all his women then became his victims. Kari portrays Ruth as Bluebeard and herself as one of his victims. The fairy tale allusions continue outside the context of advertisement pitches as well.

Figure 11: Patil, Kari, 16



Kari imagining herself in the crystal palace

Crystal Palace Kari's residential apartment is also in bright colours in Figure 11 because it is not a true representation of the apartment. The visual is an image of her imagined metaphor that of twelve princesses. While the visual (Figure 11) here denotes the imagined metaphor for Crystal Palace at first hearing the name, the imagery is soon contrasted, and the image of Crystal Palace previously presented is thus shattered, in the next page as Kari offers a look into her apartment. This image also provides us with a map of the house and the division of the rooms. Readers learn that, there are no gold trees, but 'three potted plants that double up as ashtrays.' Apart from the two dancing princesses, there are also two princes who do not pay rent. The text also makes explicit the disparity between the grandeur the name suggests to be, and what the place is like in actuality. This is also the disparity between what Kari had herself imagined of the place and her reality.

As Pramod Nayar observes in *The Indian Graphic Novel* "[.. .] in Kari it is the absence of the expected

woman-woman bonding that generates Kari 's trauma." The juxtaposition of the imagined and the real Crystal Palace is used to represent the disappointment that Kari feels on not being able to connect with her flat mates or other women in the narrative.

"The space of alienation is not the big bad city, but the cocoon of comfort called ' home' that she had initially seen as a refuge. Patil deploys a paranoiac aesthetic to document this loss of comfort zones of the depiction, visually and verbally of Kari's alienation from her settings. Kari's referring to her home as the only part of the song of life that she knows the words to due to repetition give her the feeling of familiarity that provides her with a sense of security. This generates the sense of a second home for her. At the same time it is the history that the other roommates share, that which Kari is not part of that alienates her from their bond.

Nayar also states. "[...] Kari ' s anxiety attacks and sense of alienation are not contingent upon fear of disappearing into the alienating space of the city but of becoming invisible, being rendered invisible even within her little community [...]". Loneliness therefore does not stem from being lost in a crowd but rather from being invisible in a space that is not crowded and where one expects to be, like that of the home.

Figure 12: Patil, Kari, 58-59



A reimagining of last supper with Kari and her roommates

There is yet another depiction of Kari's apartment in colour, this time the panel is borderless and runs into a bleed where the bottom bleeds into text and inset panels. This visual (Figure12) then is a peculiar image for many reasons. It establishes the flat mates are distant and do not share any bond. All three of them seen together a rare sight, one may argue that this is indeed imagined and not happening in reality. Alternatively, perhaps the colour captures the rarity of the event and Kari's disbelief about it.

The panel spreads onto two pages and is a continuation of a scene a conversation between three women. The flat mates also state interest in Kari in the monochromatic panels placed within the bleed of the visual mentioned. There is also a circularity of framing as Billo in the extreme right looks out of the panel, her vision as if reaching out to Kari on the extreme right.

Figure 13: da Vinci, The Last Supper, late 15th Century

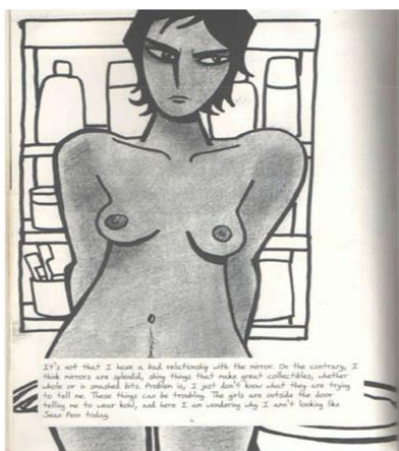


The last Supper by Da Vinci.

The bleeding image (Figure 12) is a replica of Leonardo Da Vinci's Last Supper (Figure 13). While it does not have as many characters as in the original painting, the roommates along with Kari are in repeat continuity to represent the main characters in the original painting. Starting from the left Kari depicted as Judas, Delna as John and Billo as Jesus in the center; then the three women repeated to depict James Major, Philip, and Mathew. As we saw previously Patil always uses the background when replicating the iconic artwork, to add to the timeless and space-less quality of the work.

The only depiction in focus is on Kari, depicted as Judas. Perhaps it is an allusion to Kari feeling like a pariah, an outsider in her own home, due to the lack of a significant bond with her flat mates. It could also be an allusion to her cheating on her friends by not quitting smoking.

Figure 14 : Patil, Kari, 60



Naked Body of Kari seeing herself in the mirror

From the crowded image in Figure, we move to a bleed that has Kari naked and looking into the mirror (Figure 14). This image is very powerful in that Kari consumes the entire page with her bold body. The nude woman has been a subject of art for ages when women began to paint themselves it was a radical act that redefined the relationship between the subject and the artist. Kahlo is one of the strongest examples of this. The body has therefore been central to the discourse along with its representation. The image of a nude Kari stretches over a page, is then furthering the same tradition of self-portraiture and reclaiming the body as Patil models Kari on her own face.

Robyn Henderson-Espinoza in her book *Body Becoming: A Path to Our Liberation* talks about body images and of becoming a social construct of body and what makes a liberating body. The politics that surrounds the body is to be understood here.

The text, covering her articulates her relationship with mirrors and her desire to be masculine as opposed to what the convention demands of her as she says, "[. . .] the girls are outside the door telling me to wear Kohl and here I am wondering why I am not looking like Sean Penn today." Kari constantly has to negotiate the image that she aspires to look like, here Sean Penn and the image others want her to fit into a feminine version of herself that wears make-up. As mentioned earlier the space of the home instead of providing comfort causes anxiety in this case by enforcing upon Kari an image to replicate or otherwise be invisible.

Kari 's desire to be masculine then, feeds into another visual later in the narrative. This visual is a representation of the dream world where although Kari does not possess Ruth in reality but desires to be with her and even desire the ability to impregnate her. Her envy of the phallus and desire to impregnate her lover reinforces the identity of a butch on Kari's character.

While the two images mentioned earlier are visually explicit, Amruta Patil also uses subtle images to portray sexual desire in the metaphor of fruits (Figure 15) as has been the convention in Victorian art and literature. The monochromatic approach to these panels adds to the subtlety of the metaphor.

Figure 15: Patil, Kari, 66



Kari holding and feeling the peaches and avocado

5. SPACES

There are two exceptions to the use of colour. Besides demarcating between the real and the imagined, colours also appear in spaces that are beyond control of Kari. These occur in either the overpowering public setting or the empty spaces of homes within the present.

Figure 16: Patil, Kari, 20-21



Kari talking to her mother in a PCO booth

In one of the scenes in public, Kari is talking to her mother in a phone booth (Figure). This depiction of the public space runs into a bleed and the composition distorted. The colours used are soft but also alarmingly bright. There is some sort of toxicity allotted to the public. The blue of the phone booth, and the yellowish green of the light within the phone booth create a certain effect that is carried through in the visual showing her transition as well. The public throws a certain light that does not allow her the freedom to be herself. This visual shows the readers the tattered relationship Kari has with her mother as she only responds with monosyllabic nods.

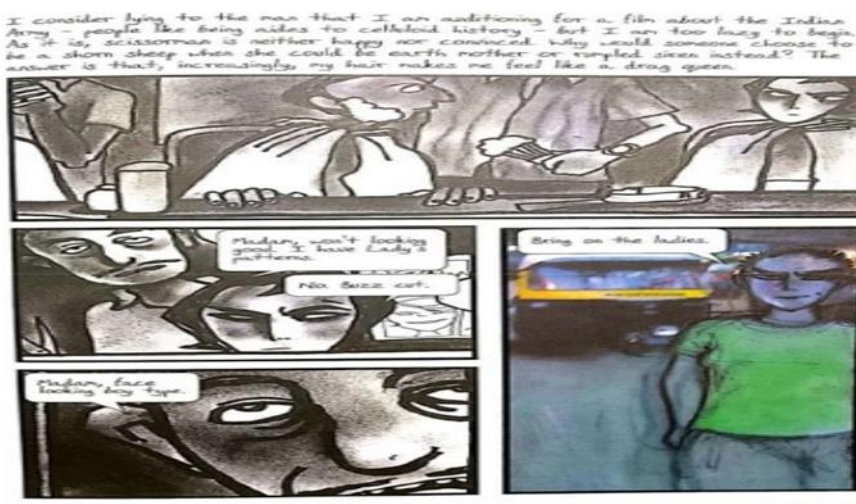
As mentioned earlier Kari's paranoia stems from the disconnect she feels with the women in her life. This image is rather uncomfortable due to the isolation that it portrays. Not only is Kari in an isolated booth in the public, even though she is talking to her mother she hardly has the space to speak. The public is coloured in toxic alarming hues with an overpowering sense of loneliness and belittling the character.

Figure 17: Patil, Kari, 106



Kari entering a barbershop

Figure 18: Patil, Kari, 107



Kari getting a hairdo

There is another visual in the public that marks the transition of Kari as she goes for a buzz cut after Angel 's death. Kari enters M.R. Hair Dresser in panel 1, as she glides into the third panel approaching the hairdresser, he already assumes she wants a “Lady’s Boycut” but she asks for a “2 mm buzz cut” instead. This

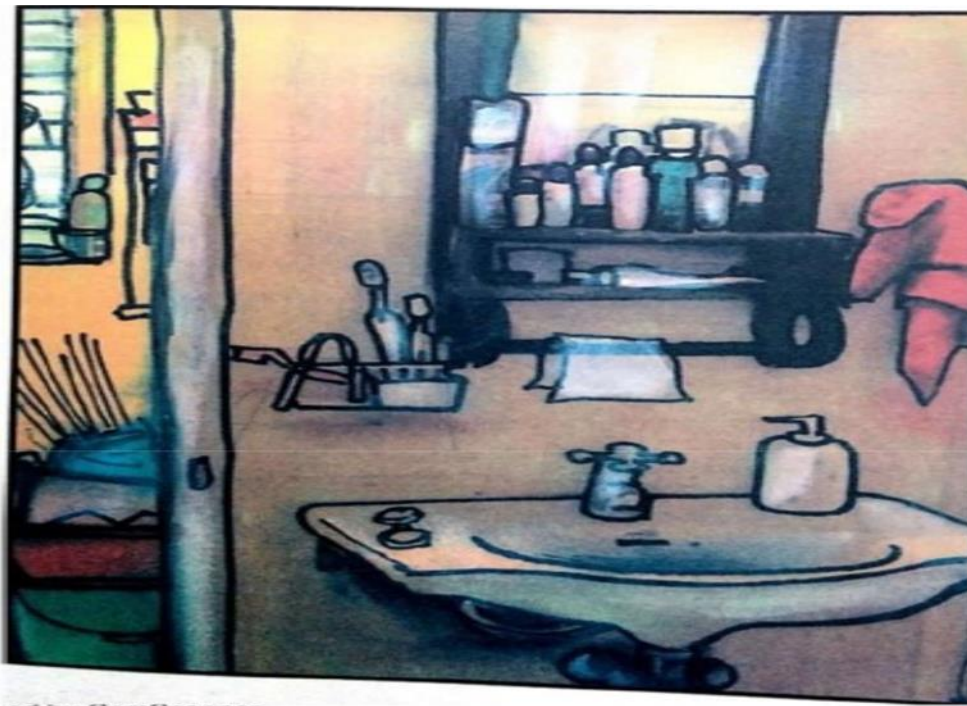
panel for the first time (out of home and work) shows an interaction between Kari and the public. As she wants to opt for a buzz cut, the hairdresser constantly tries to change her mind suggesting it would be unladylike, or "looking boy type".

This is another incident of people imposing a certain look upon Kari so that she "fits in". This conflict finally allows the panels to shift in between monochrome and colour as Kari bridges the private and the public gap.

Kari too is now coloured in the toxic green but this is not to show her being socialised into the public but rather, her overcoming and making peace with the public. This transition marks not only her coming out in the open but also her acceptance of death (Angel's) and at the same time of life. She is finally, at peace with the separation with Ruth and although still in love with her, she decides she would not jump off roofs with or for her.

6. AND EMPTY SPACES

Figure 19: Patil, Kari, 19



Kari's washbasin in her bathroom

Figure 20: Patil, Kari, 55



Kari in her living room with a black cat

As mentioned earlier with the visual, Patil is inviting the readers to occupy a space within the narrative. (Figure 19) is the second occurrence of colours other than the imaginary and the real. The visual of the small space of the washbasin and a glimpse of the bathroom from a small opening of the door in Crystal Palace apartments is one of the examples of spaces that are empty of human character and not coloured in Kari's perspective. The colours used here are dull and faded. It seems that the spaces that Kari does not inhabit the empty spaces appear in colour as if the space is for the reader to inhabit rather than the character. This feeling comes about because there is a lack of human characters in the given space, which assumes that the audience inhabits the space.

Another such visual (Figure 20) occurs in Angel's house. Here the first panel introduces the living room to the readers as Kari approaches Angel. The second panel offers the living room to the readers, red bedding open balcony with a cat looking out of it from a desk. There is another panel set within this one where Angel drawn in monochrome telling the reader that Kari is with Angel.

Although the entire narrative is highly perceptive Patil creates this illusion of autonomy by offering these spaces devoid of characters to inhabit to the readers.

7. CONCLUSION

Amruta Patil's Kari is a first-person narrative. Because of being coloured as per Kari's perspective, the novel achieves the narrative voice visually as well. The colour scheme of Kari guides the reader through the narrative by making the distinctions between what is real and imagined. The real, depicted with a strong perspective (Kari's) in a monochromatic style while the imagined portrayed with collage and colour. However, the use of colour, more nuanced than that, specific colours used to denote the spaces portrayed while the yellowish green and blue shape the toxicity of the public the scenes in the imaginary realm are soft

palates. Even though Kari narrates the story, the narrative invites the reader to occupy spaces especially ones that are devoid of human characters. The reader could also interpret this as spaces that are familiar to and hence already inhabited. The medium of the graphic novel thus allows for an active discourse with the readers due to the dual aspect of the genre.

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