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REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE DISCOURSE OF TRUCK TAILGATE PAINTINGS IN BALI

Ida Ayu Dwita Krisna Ari

Indonesian Institute of the Arts Denpasar, Indonesia

ABSTRACT
This study examines the ideological dimensions and power relations underlying truck-bed paintings in Bali, positioning them as mobile discursive spaces that produce and circulate gendered representations of women's bodies in the public sphere. It aims to identify forms of female representation, examine the sociocultural factors that construct them, and critically interpret their implications for gender discourse. The study integrates Stuart Hall's theory of representation, Roland Barthes's semiotics, Julia Kristeva's feminist theory, Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, and Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice. Employing a qualitative approach, data were collected through field observations, document analysis, and in-depth interviews with truck drivers, owners, and artists selected through purposive sampling. The findings reveal that verbal, visual, and narrative representations intersect to reproduce objectification, stereotyping, and patriarchal ideology. Nevertheless, ambivalent representations also position women as emotionally significant figures. The study's novelty lies in interpreting truck-bed paintings as a contested space where identity, class, morality, and power are negotiated.

KEYWORDS
Truck bed, Feminist, Ideology, Representation, Visual

Introduction

Truck bed painting is a form of urban visual culture found in public spaces. The general public often views it merely as a form of amusing, spontaneous roadside entertainment, regarding the accompanying texts—such as slogans, *pantun* (traditional rhyming verses), satirical remarks, humor, and popular phrases—as nothing more than jokes. Yet, beneath these seemingly simple visuals lies a profound cultural discourse embedded in every narrative presented.

Truck bed painting can be understood as a form of urban art that emerged from the need for public self-expression, serving to shape both communal and individual identities. It functions not only as vehicle decoration but also as a medium for communication, identity, self-

***Corresponding Author**
krisnaaridwita@gmail.com

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expression, and the representation of the truck drivers' life experiences. Acting as a mobile gallery, the painted truck bed serves as a visual space where ideas, aspirations, humor, social criticism, and ideologies are displayed to the public.

Historically, truck-bed painting emerged in the 1970s and gained significant popularity between the 2000s and 2010s. While initially serving as a marker of identity and a source of pride for truck owners, its function evolved into a symbol of prestige, a medium for social expression, and a space for generating cultural discourse born from the harsh realities of life on the road.

The techniques used in truck-bed painting have evolved from simple wall paint to modern digital methods involving vinyl sticker cutting. Although the themes are diverse, three major motifs frequently appear: women, social life, and family.

Humor is a dominant characteristic, as it resonates across various strata of society; people from all walks of life—from the working class to the intellectual elite—can share a laugh at the same jokes. However, this humor is far from neutral, as it often embodies perspectives on gender, social class, morality, masculinity, and worldviews.

The central issue of this study lies not merely in the existence of these works as street art, but in the way cultural meanings operate beneath visual forms that appear simple, humorous, and entertaining. This is where the research gap lies: while truck-bed painting is often categorized simply as a form of popular creativity, a cultural studies perspective interprets it as a cultural text harboring meanings that are not immediately apparent on the surface. This study critically examines the representations, discourses, and cultural meanings embedded in the visual practices of the street community.

This shift forms the basis of the study's novelty, as truck-bed painting cannot be understood merely as vehicle decoration; rather, it serves as a discursive space where identity, class, gender, humor, and ideology are negotiated through the practice of painting on truck beds

PROBLEM FORMULATION

Based on the preceding discussion, this study poses the following three research questions: 1) What forms of representation of women appear in the discourse of truck-bed paintings in Bali?; 2) Why does the construction of the representation of women occur within the discourse of truck-bed paintings in Bali?; 3) What are the implications of the representation of women in the discourse of truck-bed paintings in Bali?.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

General Objective

The general objective of this study is to examine the representation of women in truck-bed paintings as a visual cultural practice reflecting ideologies and popular socio-cultural realities; to analyze the discourse constructed within these paintings through the perspective of Cultural Studies; and to apply Cultural Studies theories to the analysis of Visual Communication Design works, thereby generating an interdisciplinary approach capable of revealing the critical meanings underlying truck-bed paintings in Bali.

Specific Objectives

First, to identify and describe the forms of female representation and the associated cultural codes found in Balinese truck-bed paintings. Second, to interpret the construction of female representation within historical, social, and cultural contexts, employing a Cultural Studies perspective. Third, to analyze the implications of these representations for social, cultural, and communication dynamics within the evolving discourse surrounding truck-bed paintings.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, the findings of this research offer the following benefits: 1). This research is expected to contribute to the advancement of knowledge—specifically within the field of Cultural Studies—regarding the analysis of artworks and Visual Communication Design The findings are intended to serve as a foundation for understanding and interpreting truck-bed paintings, which emerge from community creativity that utilizes vehicles as mobile canvases within urban spaces; 2). This research is expected to expand upon existing concepts or foster new paradigms for interpreting the visual communication art found in truck-bed paintings; 3). The findings will benefit future Cultural Studies researchers and contribute to the broader understanding and interpretation of artworks.

PRACTICAL BENEFITS

In practical terms, the results of this research are beneficial to several parties, such as: (1) the field of education, (2) readers, and (3) other researchers. These practical benefits are outlined below.

1.) For the Field of Education

This research can serve as teaching material or a module for instruction in visual communication design. It is expected to enrich the body of factual data and information regarding Cultural Studies and visual communication studies, particularly those concerning visual culture.

2.) For Readers

This research is expected to provide new knowledge and understanding regarding the interpretation of truck art in Bali.

3.) For Other Researchers

This research is expected to serve as a reference for conducting further studies related to the interpretation of truck art.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on analyzing the representation of women in the paintings found on truck tailgates circulating in Bali. To maintain the focus and depth of the analysis, the study is limited to specific aspects. First, the scope of the objects under study is restricted to visual texts, verbal texts, and narratives, specifically on trucks operating within the Bali region. The

paintings selected for study are those incorporating cultural elements—whether in the form of symbols, figures, narratives, or distinctive visual styles—that reflect local and national values. Second, the timeframe of the study is limited to the years 2022 through 2025. This period was chosen to capture the dynamics of socio-cultural change following the rise of social media and digitalization, factors that have influenced visual practices in public spaces, including the aesthetics of truck tailgate paintings. Third, this study employs approaches based on visual discourse and social practice to interpret the meanings embedded in the truck tailgate paintings. Cultural discourse is analyzed through the ways these paintings represent identity, power relations, and shifting social values within the context of contemporary Indonesian society.

LITERATURE REVIEW, CONCEPTS, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, AND RESEARCH MODEL

Literature Review

Studies on truck-bed painting have been conducted from various perspectives, ranging from fine arts and linguistics to gender studies. However, most research still focuses on aesthetic aspects, creation techniques, and language usage, while discussions regarding the representation of women as a visual cultural practice remain relatively limited, particularly within the Balinese context.

Adi's (2019) research examines the visual evolution of truck-bed painting between 2009 and 2015. This study details the creative process—from sketching and execution techniques to the final result—and identifies the themes most frequently favored by truck owners and drivers. The primary focus of the research is the development of visual forms, techniques, and the thematic classification of these paintings.

Irfirdaus's (2021) research focuses on the materials, tools, production techniques, and aesthetic values of truck-bed imagery in Bondowoso. The findings reveal a shift in technique from hand-painting to the use of cut stickers and digital printing, methods considered faster and more cost-effective that yield more realistic visuals. In addition to technical aspects, the study outlines the aesthetic values embodied in the truck-bed images.

From a linguistic perspective, Sudaryanto (2019) investigates the use of Indonesian, regional languages, and foreign languages in truck-bed graffiti. The study finds that the text on truck beds serves expressive, communicative, phatic, and cognitive functions, appearing in various genres such as prayers, *pantun* (traditional poetic verses), idioms, and song titles. This research demonstrates that truck-bed text serves as a medium of communication rich in meaning.

Furthermore, Mualafina (2018) examined truck-bed paintings as a medium for preserving regional languages, specifically Javanese. The study demonstrated that the use of *ngoko* (informal) Javanese—blended with Indonesian or English—not only creates a brand of humor characteristic of the "street community" but also contributes to the preservation of regional languages amidst the dominance of national and foreign languages.

Based on these various studies, it can be concluded that prior research has generally focused on visual evolution, creation techniques, aesthetics, linguistics, and the representation of

women within the context of Java's North Coast (Pantura) region. To date, no study has specifically analyzed the representation of women in the discourse of truck-bed paintings in Bali through the lens of Cultural Studies. Yet, this visual cultural practice encompasses various discourses regarding humor, patriarchy, gender relations, ideology, and representation—all produced through a combination of verbal and visual elements. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the forms of female representation, the underlying processes of meaning construction, and the resulting social, cultural, and communicative implications within the discourse of truck-bed paintings in Bali.

Concept

Representation

In this study, representation is understood as the process of re-presenting, standing in for, or constructing meaning regarding an object, event, text, image, or cultural practice. In this context, "text" encompasses not only written material but also images, real-life events, symbols, and audiovisual content. Representation serves to elucidate the relationship between text and reality—specifically, how a sign is employed to depict, imitate, imagine, or associate something with a particular meaning.

Discourse

Discourse, which etymologically derives from the Latin *discursus,* meaning to move or run back and forth. In linguistic studies, discourse is understood as language in use—that is, language present within a communicative event that cannot be separated from its surrounding social context. Discourse is not merely a sequence of words or sentences but also a communicative act encompassing purpose, meaning, situational elements, and the relationships between linguistic components. Consequently, discourse must be understood as a coherent unity formed through both verbal and non-verbal elements. Verbal elements may consist of writing or speech, while non-verbal elements include images, symbols, situations, and the context accompanying the communication process.

In this study, discourse is understood as a unit of language and signs present in truck-bed paintings, manifesting as written text, images, or the relationship between the two. The discourse of these truck-bed paintings is analyzed through both their surface structure—the interconnected visual and verbal forms—and their deep structure, comprising coherent and integrated meaning. Thus, the truck-bed paintings are positioned as visual discourse that conveys messages, social context, and cultural meaning.

Truck Bed Art

Trucks are among the most popular vehicles used for the transport and handling of goods, existing in a wide variety of types and sizes. Trucks in Indonesia possess a unique characteristic not found in other countries: the rear panels of their cargo beds are frequently decorated with text and imagery covering diverse themes (Pratama, 2013).

"Truck bed art" refers to the various illustrations—comprising both images and text—found on the cargo beds of trucks. These artworks are created using techniques ranging from traditional

methods (such as oil paint) and airbrushing to vinyl cutting. As a form of artistic expression, these illustrations reflect the realities of society; for instance, depictions of women often embody aspects of Indonesian identity. The artwork is frequently accompanied by text rendered in diverse typographic styles, utilizing either serif or sans-serif typefaces.

Theoretical Framework

Representation Theory

Representation theory serves as a conceptual framework for understanding how cultural meaning is formed, communicated, and sustained through symbols, images, language, and signs. Representation does not merely depict reality; it also shapes perceptions, identities, values, and social relationships. Consequently, representation plays a pivotal role in Cultural Studies.

According to Stuart Hall, meaning is constructed through a system of representation that links concepts in the human mind with linguistic systems. In this context, language is not limited to words but encompasses symbols, images, and visual signs. The process of representation involves encoding—the stage where meaning producers select, organize, and package specific messages through media or communication practices.

Hall outlines three primary approaches to representation: reflective, intentional, and constructionist. The reflective approach views meaning as a reflection of pre-existing reality. The intentional approach regards meaning as the product of the message creator's intent or will. Meanwhile, the constructionist approach asserts that meaning is neither naturally inherent in objects nor entirely determined by the author; rather, it is constructed through linguistic systems, cultural codes, and social practices.

Within the constructionist approach, social actors employ conceptual systems, language, and signs to construct meaning and communicate it to others. Thus, representation is understood as a social, cultural, and political process that plays a role in shaping identities, values, perceptions, and power relations within society.

Semiotic Theory

Semiotic theory is the study of signs and the processes of meaning-making. In semiotics, social reality is not understood as something that exists naturally, but rather as something that can be read through systems of signs—such as language, images, symbols, colors, gestures, visual compositions, and verbal texts. Consequently, semiotics is relevant for interpreting visual culture, as visual and verbal elements serve not merely as decoration but also as bearers of meaning.

Roland Barthes expanded upon Saussurean semiotics by emphasizing that signs operate within a cultural context. According to Barthes, the meaning of a sign is not limited to its literal sense; rather, it can evolve under the influence of social, cultural, historical, and ideological contexts, as well as the collective experiences of society. In this study, Barthes's semiotic theory is applied specifically to two levels of meaning: denotation and connotation.

Feminist Theory

Feminism encompasses the ideas, theories, and movements advocating for equal rights for women and men across social, political, economic, educational, sexual, intellectual, and cultural spheres. It emerged from an awareness of the unequal status of women in society resulting from patriarchal dominance and gender constructs.

Feminism is employed to analyze how women are represented in texts and cultural products. Cultural texts are not viewed as neutral; rather, they can reproduce values, ideologies, and forms of dominance, or conversely, foster the empowerment of women.

According to Kristeva, feminism has evolved through three waves: the first focused on the struggle for political rights, education, and women's independence; the second addressed issues regarding work, family, sexuality, and reproduction; and the third deals with globalization, gender equality, the sexualization of women, and postmodern feminism.

Thus, feminism is not merely a protest movement against patriarchy but also a critical framework for understanding gender injustice and advocating for justice for women.

Critical Discourse Analysis Theory

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach that analyzes not only texts but also the relationship between discourse and social processes. According to Fairclough, CDA is systematic and transdisciplinary; it does not stop at textual description but also examines how discourse operates within social practices.

Critical discourse analysis views discourse as the use of language—whether spoken or written—that is linked to social action. Discourse does not exist in a vacuum; rather, it is produced within specific contexts, by specific subjects, and for specific purposes. Consequently, discourse can be used to persuade, criticize, reject, mobilize, maintain power, or disseminate ideology.

Eriyanto outlines five characteristics of critical discourse: action, context, history, power, and ideology. This implies that discourse is inextricably linked to communicative goals, the underlying social situation, the timing of its emergence, the power relations at play, and the values or beliefs held by the discourse producer. Thus, critical discourse analysis represents an effort to deeply understand discourse as a social practice.

Critical Discourse Analysis is employed to interpret truck-body paintings not merely as visual and verbal texts, but as spaces for meaning production linked to social contexts, ideologies, power relations, and the construction of representations of women.

Social Practice Theory

Social practice theory views social life as a set of practices that are repeatedly performed, learned, normalized, and institutionalized within everyday life. From Bourdieu’s perspective, human actions do not exist in isolation; rather, they are shaped by social structures, language, culture, power relations, and social experiences.

Bourdieu explains social practice through three key concepts: habitus, field, and capital. Habitus refers to the values, habits, knowledge, and dispositions that shape how individuals

perceive and act within the social world. An Field is a social space where actors are positioned and compete. Meanwhile, capital—which can take economic, social, cultural, or symbolic forms—influences an individual's position within a specific Field.

Social practice theory is employed to understand truck-bed paintings in Bali as a form of cultural practice, rather than merely as images, text, humor, or vehicle ornamentation. These paintings are understood as the product of the interplay between social subjects, cultural habits, class positions, capital, social arenas, and power relations; consequently, the representation of women in these paintings is viewed not merely as a matter of aesthetics or personal taste, but as the outcome of broader social practices. This theory helps link the analysis of visual signs to the social structures that underpin the production of meaning.

Methods

Research Approach

This study employs a critical qualitative design to explore the cultural practice of truck bed painting in Bali. It aims to describe theories of representation, feminism, critical discourse analysis, semiotics, and social practice in the context of how women are represented within the discourse of these truck bed paintings.

Research Location

The research was conducted in Bali, involving the documentation of paintings on the beds of trucks bearing Balinese license plates, as well as fieldwork at truck depots and along various roads across the island. In practice, the research spanned multiple regions throughout Bali.

Research Timeline

The study was conducted over a four-year period (2021–2025), with two years allocated for data collection and two years for writing. A field survey—or preliminary exploration—was carried out in 2021 through observations along roads in Denpasar City to gather initial information regarding the research problem.

Types and Data Sources

Based on the research design, the data consists of qualitative material in the form of visual and verbal discourses found in the truck bed paintings. The primary data source comprises trucks featuring paintings—whether images or text—that travel along roads in Bali.

Informant Determination Techniques

Informants in this study are individuals who possess genuine knowledge and mastery of the subject matter and are directly involved with the research issue. An informant is someone capable of providing information regarding the situation and conditions of the research setting (Sugiyono, 2016, p. 285). In qualitative research methods, the researcher is closely linked to contextual factors. The informant selection technique employed is purposive (target-oriented). The purposive technique involves selecting informants based on specific considerations or

criteria—such as truck painters, those who commission the paintings, academics, and members of the public who appreciate truck-bed paintings.

Research Instruments

An instrument is a tool used to collect data (Gulo, 2004, p. 123). The instrument serves as a means to gather data meticulously and in-depth, facilitating the subsequent interpretation and drawing of conclusions.

The research instrument in this study consists of data cards containing descriptions of the truck-bed paintings' visual appearance. These data cards are elaborated upon through a discussion supported by facts illustrating the structural form of the paintings, their cultural representations, and their cultural implications.

Data Collection Methods and Techniques

This study employs observation, interviews, and document analysis to collect data and address the first research problem: the form of female representation within the visual discourse of truck-bed paintings in Bali. The study examines the text, imagery, and narratives found in these paintings. To address the second and third problems—namely, the context of the construction of female representation and the implications of the truck-bed painting discourse—in-depth interviews are used for data collection. The study investigates the social context associated with the representation of women in truck-bed paintings.

Data Analysis Methods and Techniques

The data analysis in this study involves examining data based on established theories: analyzing the text at the level of cultural representation within the discourse of truck-bed paintings using representation theory and feminist theory; analyzing contributing factors using critical discourse analysis and feminist theory; and analyzing the implications of the truck-bed painting discourse using semiotic theory.

Methods and Techniques for Presenting Data Analysis Results

This study employs both formal and informal methods. The formal method is applied in presenting analysis results through the use of visual symbols and signs. The informal method is implemented by using words, sentences, and technical terms to formulate and explain each research issue. A combination of formal and informal methods is used to present the analysis results, as this approach makes the study's overall exposition easier to understand.

Research Novelty

This research offers novelty by positioning truck-tailgate paintings in Bali not merely as visual ornamentation or a form of popular humorous entertainment, but as a site for the production of cultural discourse regarding women in the public sphere. This novelty is evident in three aspects: first, the study’s locus—Bali—which has received limited attention in similar research; second, the interpretation of female representations as the product of a struggle involving fluid, ambiguous, and contradictory signs, played out through the interplay of imagery, text, humor, parody, metaphor, and social context; and third, the analysis demonstrating that these

representations influence the formation of gender discourse in the public sphere—whether by reinforcing, negotiating, or challenging the gender constructs prevalent in society.

Result

Forms of Female Representation in the Discourse of Truck-Bed Paintings in Bali

The verbal, visual, and narrative forms found in truck-bed paintings can be understood as the ways in which images, text, body poses, facial expressions, color choices, and social contexts are arranged to form a series of stories about women. In this context, the narrative emerges not only from verbal sentences but also from the mutually reinforcing relationship between text and visuals. Consequently, women in these paintings do not merely appear as images; they serve as cultural signs embodying meanings related to love, the body, social status, sexuality, economics, and gender power relations.

The narrative forms in truck-bed paintings demonstrate that the representation of women does not exist in isolation; rather, it is constructed through the interplay of verbal text, visual imagery, and sociocultural context. While the resulting narratives may appear as popular humor, expressions of love, or street banter, underlying them are gender constructs that position women as objects of desire, objects of judgment, and symbols within the masculine imagination.

Although women feature prominently in visual terms, they are not necessarily present as subjects possessing a voice; instead, they are frequently positioned as images that are spoken *about*. Thus, the representation of women in truck-bed paintings can be concluded to be a practice of articulating street-level popular culture, operating through the nexus of verbal text, visual imagery, and a masculine social context.

The narratives that emerge cannot be interpreted merely as spontaneous humor; rather, they constitute a site of meaning production where the female body, romantic relationships, social status, sexuality, and economic factors are negotiated within the sign system of popular culture. In this context, truck-bed paintings function as a mobile discursive space that presents the experiences of the working class—particularly men—while simultaneously revealing how the masculine imagination shapes the representation of women in the public sphere.

The relationship between text and image reveals that women are often positioned as the visual focus, yet not as the center of subjectivity. They appear as images to be viewed, discussed, and judged—serving as signifiers for men's desire, humor, status, and economic means. In narratives concerning love and income, for instance, women are constructed as figures to be secured through a man's material capacity. This demonstrates that love is understood not merely as an affective relationship but also as a social practice shaped by economic logic, the "breadwinner" model of masculinity, and patriarchal gender relations.

Meanwhile, narratives contrasting virgins and widows, or those employing the female body as a metaphor for local humor, illustrate how the female body becomes a battleground for competing meanings regarding morality, sexuality, and masculine fantasy. Women are reduced to specific social and sexual categories; their existence is frequently defined by physical allure,

sexual status, and their symbolic function within street humor. Thus, the narratives found in truck-bed paintings are far from neutral; instead, they operate as cultural mechanisms that reproduce stereotypes, objectification, and gender hierarchies—all while appearing lighthearted, witty, and popular.

From a cultural studies perspective, the narrative forms found in truck-bed paintings reveal the inherent ambivalence of popular visual culture. On one hand, they serve as a creative expression of the working class, a space for articulating local identity, and a medium of humor rooted in everyday experience. On the other hand, they act as sites for reproducing patriarchal ideology, as women are frequently portrayed as objects of the gaze and desire—or as signs within masculine communication—rather than as subjects possessing their own voices and agency. Consequently, the representation of women in these truck-bed narratives must be understood as a complex discourse: while entertaining, it simultaneously structures the ways in which society views, evaluates, and discusses women within the public sphere.

Factors of Female Representation in the Discourse of Truck-Bed Paintings in Bali

The factors regarding the representation of women in the discourse of truck-bed paintings in Bali can be understood as a practice of meaning production occurring within the realm of street-based popular culture. These paintings cannot be viewed merely as visual ornaments; rather, they function as mobile cultural texts that embody the interplay of language, the body, social class, masculinity, locality, and gender ideology. The nature of this representation is evident through three primary tendencies—paradoxical parody, sexual violence, and the appreciation of women—which are analyzed here using Stuart Hall's theory of representation, Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of social practice, and Julia Kristeva's feminism.

The factor of paradoxical parody reveals the ambivalent nature of humor in these paintings. On one hand, street humor serves as a cultural strategy for the working class to laugh at the pressures of life, economic uncertainty, and the heavy social burdens borne by breadwinners. Phrases such as "money can be earned, but it's a struggle" (*uang bisa dicari tapi keweh*) demonstrate how Balinese local language, pop-culture icons, and the lived experiences of truck drivers converge within a semiotic system that represents the working-class habitus. On the other hand, this parody is not entirely liberating; it continues to reproduce the logics of masculinity, capitalism, and power relations that position men as the central subjects of street discourse.

The factor of sexual violence highlights the most problematic aspect of this discourse. Sexual violence is frequently presented through metaphors of humor, life advice, or expressions of resilience in the face of fate; what appears to be spontaneous humor can, in reality, function as a mechanism that normalizes patriarchal culture and the banality of violence in the public sphere.

Meanwhile, the factor of appreciation for women reveals a shift toward more complex representations. In some paintings, women are not merely depicted as bodily objects or objects

of desire, but also as figures who are valued, loved, and acknowledged for their autonomy. However, this appreciation remains ambivalent; in certain instances, women are praised through imagery associated with domesticity, patience, self-sacrifice, and the capacity to shoulder emotional burdens—meaning that the appreciation shown to them has not yet fully broken free from a patriarchal framework.

Thus, the representation of women in the discourse of truck-bed paintings constitutes a contested arena of meaning rather than a singular one. It encompasses working-class social critique, expressions of local humor, and articulations of "street masculinity," while simultaneously reproducing stereotypes and gender inequalities. Viewed through the lens of cultural studies, these paintings serve as a discursive site where ideology operates subtly through visuals, text, humor, and narrative. Within this medium, women are at times objectified or domesticated, yet at other moments, they are also negotiated as subjects possessing agency.

Consequently, the discourse surrounding truck-bed paintings in Bali must be understood as an ambivalent cultural terrain: it simultaneously entertains and disturbs, critiques and reproduces power dynamics, and opens up possibilities for shifting meanings—even while remaining within the shadow of patriarchal structures.

Implications of the Representation of Women in Truck-Bed Painting Discourse

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that truck-bed paintings in Bali serve as a cultural medium that produces and disseminates discourses regarding women within the public sphere. The representation of women in these paintings reveals a tendency toward body objectification, the perpetuation of negative stereotypes, and the reinforcement of a patriarchal perspective that positions women as objects of the gaze, subjects of sexual humor, and symbols of social subordination.

Through Stuart Hall’s perspective on representation, the visuals and text found on truck beds can be understood as non-neutral signifying practices. Meanings regarding women are shaped, repeated, and circulated through body imagery, vulgar expressions, street humor, and gender-biased domestic narratives. The repetition of such discourse causes the objectification of and symbolic violence against women to appear commonplace—and even accepted—as part of street-level popular culture.

Meanwhile, through the lens of Julia Kristeva’s thought, the representation of women in truck-bed paintings reveals psychological and ideological tensions within a masculine culture. The female body is presented as an object of desire, yet simultaneously one that is controlled, viewed with suspicion, and stigmatized. This demonstrates that women have not yet been fully positioned as subjects possessing a voice, agency, and sovereignty over their own bodies.

The primary implications of the discourse surrounding truck-bed paintings include the reinforcement of patriarchal ideology, the normalization of a double standard regarding morality, the dissemination of sexist meanings in public spaces, and the emergence of a form of superficial appreciation that continues to exploit women. These paintings serve as a mobile medium that not only reflects social reality but also shapes how society perceives and treats

women. Therefore, a critical awareness is required to re-examine this visual culture; the goal is to ensure that this form of folk art does not merely perpetuate gender inequality, but can instead be steered toward representations that are fairer, more humane, and respectful of women as complete subjects.

Discussion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that truck-bed paintings in Bali constitute a street-based visual culture phenomenon that cannot be understood merely as vehicle decoration, folk entertainment, or spontaneous artistic expression by the lower class. These paintings serve as mobile cultural texts that produce and disseminate ideological meanings within the public sphere. Embedded within them are power relations linked to social class, masculinity, patriarchy, and gender bias. Through a blend of imagery, text, humor, and popular symbols, the truck bed becomes a medium that represents the perspectives of a specific segment of society regarding women.

The representation of women in these paintings reveals a tendency toward the commodification and objectification of the female body. Women are frequently constructed through sensual visual imagery, connotative verbal text, and sexist humor that positions the female body as an object of the male gaze and consumption. Within this discourse, women do not fully appear as subjects possessing agency; instead, they are more often positioned as objects of desire, domestic symbols, or moral figures whose value is defined by a masculine perspective. Even when women are depicted in idealized roles—such as mothers, wives, or loyal figures—these representations still confine them within a value framework controlled by men.

The factors shaping these representations involve paradoxical parody, discourses on sexual violence, and a superficial appreciation of women. The street humor found in truck-bed paintings serves as a form of social catharsis for drivers and working-class groups grappling with economic pressure, alienation, and a crisis of masculinity. However, such expressions do not always function as a liberating form of social critique. On the contrary, in many instances, this humor and parody target women's bodies through vulgar language, erotic metaphors, and jokes that normalize symbolic violence. Even expressions of respect for women are often superficial, as they ultimately keep women subject to masculine narratives.

The implications of these representations are far-reaching, as trucks traverse public spaces, turning highways into arenas for the dissemination of patriarchal meanings. The visuals and text—repeatedly viewed by the public—risk dulling critical sensitivity toward symbolic violence, sexual objectification, and gender discrimination. Thus, truck-bed paintings do not merely reflect the gender biases inherent in street subculture; they also actively produce, reinforce, and normalize patriarchal perspectives within popular culture.

Ultimately, this study concludes that truck-bed paintings in Bali constitute an ambivalent visual space. On one hand, they showcase the cultural creativity of street communities and serve as a medium of expression for subaltern groups. On the other hand, these expressions also reproduce patriarchal dominance and symbolic violence against women. This phenomenon demonstrates that popular visual culture is never neutral; beneath its humorous, spontaneous,

and seemingly simple exterior lies an ideological structure that shapes how society perceives women's bodies, identities, and positions within the social sphere.

Conclusion

This study presents three findings. First, it concludes that truck-bed paintings in Bali serve not only as a medium for the visual expression of the street community but also as a space for psychosocial catharsis for a subaltern group rife with gender bias. In this context, the truck bed transforms into a space for venting anxieties, frustrations, and crises of masculinity. However, this catharsis does not function primarily as a critique of the capitalist structures that oppress these men. Instead, the visual and verbal expressions on the truck beds are often diverted into forms of horizontal oppression against women—manifesting through body objectification, sexist jokes, and symbolic subjugation in the public sphere.

The subsequent finding indicates that the street-based popular culture of truck-bed painting operates through mechanisms of abjection. Visual hyper-sexualization and the use of vulgar text do not merely signify a celebration of sensuality; rather, they reflect masculine anxiety regarding female autonomy. Women are positioned ambivalently—simultaneously desired and feared, as they are perceived as capable of disrupting male authority. To quell this anxiety, the female body is reduced to a visual object that can be controlled through humor, sexual metaphors, and bodily fragmentation. Thus, men's subconscious fears regarding shifting gender relations are converted into street narratives that appear humorous but actually reinforce the illusion of patriarchal power.

Furthermore, this study identifies a form of symbolic capital rooted in egalitarian gender discourse. Some truck-bed paintings appear to show appreciation for women's independence, agency, and life choices. However, such appreciation does not always signify the presence of a fully realized emancipatory consciousness. In many instances, the discourse of respect for women serves merely as a symbolic strategy for male subjects to construct a self-image as modern, wise, and moral figures within the street community. Women's autonomy remains framed by male permission and validation, meaning that patriarchal power relations continue to operate latently. Overall, these three findings confirm that truck-bed paintings constitute a complex and ambivalent space of visual culture.

They capture the life pressures faced by subaltern groups while simultaneously revealing how economically oppressed groups can reproduce cultural oppression against women. The truck bed serves as a mobile medium for channeling social frustration, managing masculine anxieties, and establishing male symbolic legitimacy; meanwhile, the female body and identity remain the primary terrain for the production of meaning, the venting of emotions, and the negotiation of patriarchal power within the public space of the highway.

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