



p-ISSN : 2520-0348 | e-ISSN : 2616-793X

DOI(Journal): 10.31703/gssr
DOI(Volume): 10.31703/gssr/.2024(IX)
DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gssr.2024(IX.I)

DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gssr.2024(IX.I)
DOI(Volume): 10.31703/gssr/.2024(IX)
DOI(Journal): 10.31703/gssr

GSSR

GLOBAL SOCIAL SCIENCES REVIEW
HEC-RECOGNIZED CATEGORY-Y

VOL. IX, ISSUE I, WINTER (MARCH-2024)

Article Title

Coke Studio: Adaptation of Folk Songs for Bridging Cultural and Generation Gap

Global Social Sciences Review

p-ISSN: 2520-0348 e-ISSN: 2616-793X

DOI(journal): 10.31703/gssr

Volume: IX (2024)

DOI (volume): 10.31703/gssr.2024(IX)

Issue: I-Winter (March-2024)

DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gssr.2024(IX-I)

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Volume: IX (2024)

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Issue: I-Winter (March-2024)

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Abstract

This study examines folk songs adaptations in Coke Studio(CS,Pakistan),utilizing Cardwell's 'meta-text' theory (2002)to demonstrate the retention of the original essence in subsequent versions, while also examining their rhizomatic nature. Employing multimodality, the study analyzes folk songs from Coke Studio Season 10, utilizing auditory, visual, and spatial elements to create a cohesive artifact with broad semiotic appeal in today's globalized world. CS's popularity highlights its ability to balance aesthetics with technological advancements, serving as a platform for rediscovering and sustaining cultural heritage for the new generation. By blending traditional folk with rock elements,CS bridges the gap between generations fostering a 'third space' music as proposed by Bhabha(1994)and contributing to the emergence of a new national identity intertwined with contemporary youth culture. Thus, the adaptations of folk songs in Coke Studio serve as a contemporary reinterpretation of history and cultural heritage, connecting youth with their past while grounding them in the present.

Keywords: Coke Studio, Folk Songs, Adaptations, Multi-modality, Third Space

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Pages: 143-155

DOI:10.31703/gssr.2024(IX-I).13

DOI link: [https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2024\(IX-I\).13](https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2024(IX-I).13)

Article link: <http://www.gssrjournal.com/article/A-b-c>

Full-text Link: <https://gssrjournal.com/fulltext/>

Pdf link: <https://www.gssrjournal.com/jadmin/Auther/31rv1olA2.pdf>

Citing this Article

13	Assessing Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of Counseling and Guidance in Karachi, Pakistan						
	Author	Ayesha Saddiqa Fatima Sajid Chauhan Adeen Asif		DOI	10.31703/gssr.2024(IX-I).12		
Pages	143-155	Year	2024	Volume	IX	Issue	I
Referencing & Citing Styles	APA 7th	Saddiqa, A., Chauhan, F. S., & Asif, A. (2024). Assessing Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of Counseling and Guidance in Karachi, Pakistan. <i>Global Social Sciences Review</i> , IX(III), 143-155. https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2024(IX-III).13					
	CHICAGO	Saddiqa, Ayesha, Fatima Sajid Chauhan, and Adeen Asif. 2024. "Assessing Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of Counseling and Guidance in Karachi, Pakistan." <i>Global Social Sciences Review</i> IX (III):143-155. doi: 10.31703/gssr.2024(IX-III).13.					
	HARVARD	SADDIQA, A., CHAUHAN, F. S. & ASIF, A. 2024. Assessing Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of Counseling and Guidance in Karachi, Pakistan. <i>Global Social Sciences Review</i> , IX, 143-155.					
	MHRA	Saddiqa, Ayesha, Fatima Sajid Chauhan, and Adeen Asif. 2024. 'Assessing Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of Counseling and Guidance in Karachi, Pakistan', <i>Global Social Sciences Review</i> , IX: 143-55.					
	MLA	Saddiqa, Ayesha, Fatima Sajid Chauhan, and Adeen Asif. "Assessing Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of Counseling and Guidance in Karachi, Pakistan." <i>Global Social Sciences Review</i> IX.III (2024): 143-55. Print.					
	OXFORD	Saddiqa, Ayesha, Chauhan, Fatima Sajid, and Asif, Adeen (2024), 'Assessing Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of Counseling and Guidance in Karachi, Pakistan', <i>Global Social Sciences Review</i> , IX (III), 143-55.					
	TURABIAN	Saddiqa, Ayesha, Fatima Sajid Chauhan, and Adeen Asif. "Assessing Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions of Counseling and Guidance in Karachi, Pakistan." <i>Global Social Sciences Review</i> IX, no. III (2024): 143-55. https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2024(IX-III).13 .					



Global Social Sciences Review

www.gssrjournal.com

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gssr>



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Title

Coke Studio: Adaptation of Folk Songs for Bridging Cultural and Generation Gap

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Abstract

This study examines folk songs adaptations in Coke Studio (CS, Pakistan), utilizing Cardwell's 'meta-text' theory (2002) to demonstrate the retention of the original essence in subsequent versions, while also examining their rhizomatic nature. Employing multimodality, the study analyzes folk songs from Coke Studio Season 10, utilizing auditory, visual, and spatial elements to create a cohesive artifact with broad semiotic appeal in today's globalized world. CS's popularity highlights its ability to balance aesthetics with technological advancements, serving as a platform for rediscovering and sustaining cultural heritage for the new generation. By blending traditional folk with rock elements, CS bridges the gap between generations fostering a 'third space' music as proposed by Bhabha (1994) and contributing to the emergence of a new national identity intertwined with contemporary youth culture. Thus, the adaptations of folk songs in Coke Studio serve as a contemporary reinterpretation of history and cultural heritage, connecting youth with their past while grounding them in the present.

Keywords: [Coke Studio](#), [Folk Songs](#), [Adaptations](#), [Multi-modality](#), [Third Space](#)

Introduction

Coke Studio (CS, Pakistan), an annual music TV show broadcasted since 2008 with the recent accomplishment of season 14, has been awaited by ardent aficionados of music from Pakistan as well as other countries such as India, Colombia, Bangladesh, and Morocco. It reflects an amalgam of eclectic musical genres ranging from traditional Eastern classical music: folk, Sufi, ghazal, qawwali,

and bhangra to contemporary modern and Western music: hip hop, rock, and pop which celebrates the reminiscence from the splendid cultural heritage as well as seems to shape the contemporary Pakistani music (Ahmed, 2017; Ahmad et al, 2023; Kibria, 2020). The musical compositions featured in Coke Studio's videos reinterpret various genres and forms of performance art. They breathe new life into well-known and beloved songs, while also revitalizing



classical poetry and the musical heritage. This innovative approach to reimagining the creative arts of South Asia encompasses a fresh perspective on sound, language, and form. However, it also raises broader questions about the intersection of tradition and modernity, the evolution of cultural identity, and the power dynamics inherent in artistic representation (Williams & Mahmood, 2020). The current study focuses on the genre of folk music in order to shed light on the broader impact of the program's approach to musical reimagining and cultural preservation.

Folk music, embodying the true essence of indigenous culture and its people, encapsulates a spectrum of human experiences, including joys, sorrows, relationships, celebrations, and spiritual connections. It is widely regarded as offering a window into people's lifestyles, beliefs, customs, and perspectives on the world (Onwuegbuna, 2012). However, Folk music, in its traditional essence, has been transformed by CS using various instruments and segments, resonating deeply with millions of people. The relationship between folk music and modern Western music has been considered challenging 'in terms of quality, reappropriation, mass appeal and most importantly, the economic potential' (Dhanwani, 2014, p.7). Owing to the aforementioned symbolic, cultural, metaphysical, and aesthetic significance of folk music, and the challenging task of the collaboration of folk music with modern musical trends by the CS, the current study attempts an analytic investigation of how Pakistani folk songs (all folk songs of Season 10) are revisited, restructured and reinvented on the platform of Coke studio. Rizwan Khan, the general manager of Coca-Cola (Pakistan & Afghanistan) claims: "By creating a new genre of music, we are touching generations of people across Pakistan and around the world." Concentrating on his words we have three dimensions to take into account a) 'new genre of music', b) 'generations of people across Pakistan', and c) 'people...around the world'. To delve deeper into the subject, the initial assertion of 'a new genre of music' is examined through a discussion on how CS represents a reinvention and adaptation. This extends not only to the format of the music show, which originally debuted in Brazil in 2007 but also to the cultural practices embedded in real-life and social experiences throughout the ages, which have manifested in folk songs. Furthermore, the re- rendition of folk songs, sung

prior to their CS versions, contributes to this reimagining and adaptation process. The adaptation has been analyzed within the criterion of 'meta-text' (Cardwell, 2002) and has been viewed as a 'rhizome' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980). The concept of Rhizome has been applied to demonstrate the non-hierarchical, non-linear nature of adaptations. Additionally, the investigation of new music trends and the fusion of 'the old' and 'the new' in CS is examined through the lens of Bhabha (1994)'s theory of 'third space'.

The research holds importance for forthcoming initiatives in the realm of arts, offering a pathway for the renegotiation, restructuring, and reinvention of cultural heritage to render it appealing on national and global scales. This endeavor serves as a potential catalyst for overcoming the barriers between past traditions and contemporary contexts. Such efforts could also play a pivotal role in preserving our cultural heritage for generations to come, thereby contributing to the cultivation of a favorable global perception of Pakistan.

Past Research on Coke Studio

Due to its widespread popularity in Pakistan, CS has attracted considerable scholarly attention, leading to numerous research studies. Below is a review of the existing literature on this topic.

Abid et al. (2022) in their article titled *Music and trans culturalism: Analyzing the Role of coke studio music in Pakistan* examined the cultural significance of music, focusing on CS in Pakistan as a producer of music with both traditional and modern appeal across different age groups. The study utilizes the theories of cultivation and musical communication to analyze CS's role in trans-culturalism. Data for the study were collected through a cross-sectional survey using a structured questionnaire administered to university students selected through random sampling. The findings indicate that CS introduces genres rooted in ancient traditions and combines classical and historic elements with modern influences, particularly appealing to the youth demographic. Respondents perceive CS as enriching Pakistani traditional music by blending it with contemporary genres such as Eastern classical, folk, Qawwali, Bhangra, Sufi, contemporary hip-hop, rock, and pop.

Khan and Shahzad (2023) investigated the cultural significance of music, with a focus on CS in

Pakistan. CS is highlighted as a platform that blends traditional and modern music, appealing to a wide audience. The study employs a constructivist approach, influenced by Wendt's ideas, to explore CS's impact on Pakistan's cultural diplomacy. The methodology involves a cross-sectional survey among university students, revealing CS's success in introducing diverse musical genres and enriching traditional Pakistani music. Overall, the article underscores CS's role in shaping Pakistan's music landscape and its potential as a strategic tool for cultural diplomacy.

Ahmad et al. (2023) analyze the role of language in conveying human expressions and emotions, particularly through songs, which serve as a form of linguistic expression. Focusing on two English songs from CS, namely "I'm in Love" and "My Happiness," the research investigates semantic deviation to discern the style and meaning employed by the songwriters. Utilizing stylistics as the primary approach, which examines language's artistic use in various forms of expression, the study employs semantic, lexical, and morphological analysis. Through qualitative content analysis, the research identifies and interprets semantic, lexical, and morphological devices in the selected songs, revealing a predominant theme of love explored through semantic parallelism.

Another study by Nandi and Bhattacharyya (2024) explores the interaction between the promotion of Sufism and the rise of New Age spirituality, with a particular focus on the influence of CS Pakistan in shaping cultural narratives. Through qualitative methods such as content analysis and examination of audience responses, the research explores how CS's fusion of traditional Sufi music with contemporary genres resonates with evolving spiritual landscapes. The findings highlight the series' impact on the perception and adoption of Sufi and New Age spiritual values, offering insights into the transformative power of popular media platforms in shaping spiritual discourse. This study contributes to understanding the dynamic interplay between music, spirituality, and cultural transformation, emphasizing the role of contemporary platforms like CS in promoting and reinterpreting ancient spiritual traditions.

Qaisar (2019) in his qualitative study investigates the portrayal of spiritual themes in CS Sufi singing in Pakistan, focusing on the use of signs rather than

spiritual substance. Through the analysis of 10 selected songs performed over nine seasons, the study examines how CS singers incorporate romantic and worldly elements into their Sufi performances, emphasizing visual aesthetics and musical instrumentation. Drawing on three theoretical perspectives, the research develops a method to analyze CS Sufi singing as a representational sign. The findings suggest that CS singing often simulates spirituality, emphasizing genre fusion and style diversity, which may dilute the sacred essence of Sufi music and blur the distinction between the real and the unreal. This study contributes to understanding the complexities of spiritual representation in contemporary music performances, highlighting the tension between authenticity and entertainment in CS Sufi singing.

Chocano (2022) argues that the CS aims to introduce traditional Pakistani music to urban youth while portraying a positive image of the country. The analysis frames CS Pakistan as a form of neo-liberal nationalism, serving as a nation-branding tool aligned with corporate and artistic agendas. Quantitative and network analyses reveal the show's preferences for certain artists, genres, and cultural groups. Additionally, qualitative research explores the show's communication strategy and the perspectives of its creators and sponsors. The article delves into the complexities of nationalist multicultural citizenship promoted by the private sector, addressing issues of cultural representation, corporate interests, class dynamics, audience preferences, and international relations. The analysis and argument presented here appear biased in their assessment of CS Pakistan:

The consequence of this selection is that the show ends up imagining a nation based not on the actual people inhabiting Pakistan but on the image it wants to project. Moreover, rather than bridging differences, it iterates them. Hiding the 'bad' under the 'good', apparently, does not get rid of it. (p.91)

The assertion that the show constructs a nation based solely on an idealized image rather than the diverse reality of Pakistan overlooks the inclusive nature of the program. Instead of acknowledging and celebrating the country's diversity, the argument unfairly characterizes it as emphasizing differences rather than fostering unity. It is important to recognize that showcasing talent from various backgrounds, including different cultural

and socioeconomic strata, is a common practice in entertainment shows worldwide. Just as Indian shows feature singers rather than individuals from all walks of life, CS Pakistan highlights talented musicians who represent the rich tapestry of Pakistani society. Therefore, it is unjust to criticize the show for its selection of artists or overall atmosphere, as it reflects the vibrant and multifaceted nature of Pakistani culture.

The examination of prior research highlights various aspects of CS, such as its exploration of Sufi songs, fusion of traditional and contemporary elements, and its cultural and spiritual dimensions. However, to the best of my knowledge, there has been no specific focus on folk music within CS, particularly regarding its role in creating a unique cultural space for youth. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap in the literature.

The Corpus

Three folk songs from season 10 have been chosen for the study. Season 10, having nine music directors as a part of this season, was claimed to stir more sensation than any of the previous seasons did (CS Episode 3, 2017). CS, Season 10 presents the following three folk songs:

1. *Tinak Dhin* sung by Ali Sethi, Ali Hamza, and Waqar Ehsin. The lyrics and music have been given by Ali Hamza. This song was presented in Episode 2 on August 18, 2017.
2. *Laal Meri Pat* is a traditional folk which is a translation of Bu Ali Shah Qalandar's ghazal. The music has been given by Strings and the song has been sung by Qurat-ul-Ain Balouch, Akbar Ali, and Arieab Azhar as a tribute performance to Malika-e-Tarranum, Madam Noor Jehan in CS, season 10, episode 3 on August 25, 2017.
3. "Baazi" is another traditional folk sung by Sahir Ali Bagga and Aima Baig who are also the musicians of this song, whereas Asim Raza is the lyricist. This was a part of episode 3 on August 25, 2017.

Coke Studio- an Adaptation

The concert and musical show format of Coke Studio made its debut in 2007 in Brazil under the title 'Estúdio Coca-Cola', primarily as a promotional

platform for Coca-Cola. A year later, in 2008, Rohail Hayat, a Pakistani musician from the band *Vital Signs*, along with his wife Umber Hayat, adapted this concept to create Coke Studio Pakistan. This adaptation aimed to establish an international music franchise showcasing live studio-recorded performances from both established and emerging artists (Staff, 2013). The show garnered both praise and criticism, becoming a sensation and quickly rising to become the eleventh most-watched program on YouTube globally (Shaw, 2010). Its success transcended borders, leading to adaptations in several other countries, including India and Africa. In Pakistan, Coke Studio not only adapted the concept of the show but also pushed boundaries by blending previously distinct genres, resulting in a multitude of innovative compositions. By seamlessly integrating Eastern (including regional) and Western musical elements, it emerged as a trendsetter in contemporary music (Nawaz, 2016).

While the concept of adaptation can be traced back to its origin in Brazil in 2007, pinpointing the original idea when it comes to adapting songs proves to be challenging. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that an 'original' concept, albeit unknown, must have existed at some point. Applying the traditional comparative model, which posits that an 'original' text is necessary for adaptation and that all adaptations are related to this original text (Cardwell, 2002), proves challenging in this context due to the absence of a source text to reference. Additionally, the later iteration of the adaptation model proposed by Roger Webster (1993) and Graham Smith (1990), which views adaptation as a complex process of implementing changes necessary to represent the source text under new conditions' (p. 21), cannot be fully implemented here due to the lack of an original-version relationship. While analysis of 'new conditions' is feasible, evaluating the representation of the source text remains elusive. Cardwell (2002) introduces the concept of 'meta-text', wherein subsequent adaptations may maintain connections with either the original source text or earlier adaptations. This 'ur-text' remains constant, preserving the fundamental structure of the main narrative throughout the adaptation process. It involves both syntagmatic and paradigmatic processes, whereby adaptations may maintain connections with all preceding adaptations as well as the 'source text', thereby retaining the essential structure referred to as the 'meta-text'. In the case of

CS's rendition of folk songs, we observe the presence of 'meta-text' represented by the folk essence or depiction of folk elements (for example, "Paar Chanan Day" in season 9, episode 4, which celebrates the ancient Punjabi folklore of the tragic love story of *Sohini Mahiwal*, and *Lal Meri Pat* also signifies the entities being celebrated). This 'meta-text' remains consistent; however, there are alterations in lyrics, such as certain additions (as seen in *Dil di Bazi*) or deletions, and substantial variations in the use of musical instruments. Thus, along the continuum between the original (which is challenging to pinpoint) and the contemporary, folk music has undergone numerous adaptations, yet the latest contemporary form is still unmistakably referred to as a 'folk song', retaining the same cultural connotations attached to it. Even individuals with limited musical knowledge recognize it as folk music, acknowledging it as a reinvention of the earlier version. First, there is the adaptation of real-world experiences, followed by the adaptation of ancient folk art, notably folk songs, which may themselves have multiple versions. Consequently, the process involves adapting not only the real-world experiences but also all previous adaptations while preserving the essence of the original narrative, known as the 'meta-text'. This means that each adaptation builds upon previous iterations, incorporating elements from both real-life contexts and earlier artistic renditions, while ensuring the continuity of the core themes and messages inherent in the 'meta-text'. According to Monie (2011), "It (Coke Studio) has breathed new life into the rich musical tapestry of the subcontinent, by harvesting the unique music of the region, at once diverse yet instantly recognizable as part of a continuum". The realization of 'the subcontinent' and 'the unique music of region' is what constitutes the 'meta-text' here. The 'meta-text' for folk music encompasses specific characteristics inherent to this genre, including its ties to oral tradition, its association with national culture, especially regional traditions, its distinctiveness from mainstream music, and its role in commemorating historical or personal events, customs, and emotions, ranging from moments of joy to sorrow (Kranenburg et al., 2009; Fox, 2017).

When examining the production of folk songs, traditionally, they were often created in communal spaces such as *chaupal* (a communal gathering space typically found in rural areas) or *mailas* (fairs), a

practice that has been adopted by CS. Moreover, the studio setting is not confined to a small cabin but rather resembles a courtyard or hall-like space, where musicians are dispersed yet interconnected, contributing their individual melodies while maintaining harmony with the main singers and accentuating the overall rhythm. This effort appears to resurrect lost cultural traditions while injecting a contemporary touch. The songs are performed using a vocal style that combines elements of speech and singing, as notably seen in *Lal Meri Pat*, within a folkloric musical framework. The musicians sit and immerse themselves in their own rhythms while playing their instruments. The inclusion of the *dhol* (drum) has become a staple in all folk songs, serving as a representation of traditional elements amidst the backdrop of Western modern instruments. According to Cardwell (2002), television performances resemble theatrical presentations fostering a deep connection between the audience and the content thereby associating television closely with real-life experiences. In CS, the manner in which music is presented to the audience appears to be more of a journey or a process than an end product (Keegan-Phipps, 2009). Despite being studio-recorded performances, they exude an authenticity and liveliness akin to a concert unfolding right before our eyes. This approach is distinctive, sparing the audience the inconvenience of purchasing tickets and enduring long queues, while still allowing them to savor the delightful experience at their leisure (or to listen to the recorded performances).

These adaptations have garnered appreciation from both the general public and the artists themselves. CS has revitalized the works of numerous trouper musicians through adaptation and rebranding, thereby making them accessible and relevant to the younger generation (Lodhi, 2016). Arif Lohar, a well-known folk musician, believes that integrating modern techniques and embracing contemporary trends into folk music is essential for its sustainability and advancement, both nationally and globally. While he advocates for the incorporation of modern instruments, melodies, and trends, he emphasizes that these should not overshadow traditional instruments and practices. He asserts, "...include modern instruments, but my *chimta* (metal tongs with jingles, percussion instrument) is still in my hands... that's my identity, and I cannot let go of it," indicating that the *chimta*

holds significance as part of his artistic identity, almost constituting a component of his 'meta-text' as a singer.

Sir di Bazi, a Saraiki traditional folk was originally sung by Sanwal and Marvi. The CS's version starts with the sound and show of the drum which keeps on appearing on the scene with the guitar. The original lyrics are presented in addition to the poetry by the talented Sahir Ali Bagga. Aima Baig adds on with her strong, sultry, and versatile vocals. Both girls in the trio are wearing traditional dresses whereas the girl in the middle is also wearing some special head ornaments reflecting the 'Saraiki' culture as we view in the earlier video of *Sir di Bazi* by Sanwal and Marvi. The singer, however, fuses the elements of both traditional and modern where the upper part of her dress is reflective of the global precisely Western culture and the bottom again shows the traditional side. The flutists have several appearances where his tunes seem to provide partial music to the song. The main singers seem to sing as if they are in a dialogue with each other, heightening the inclusive effect of the song. One of the guitarists is wearing a *patka* (muffler) around his neck. The general atmosphere despite its traditional features is contemporary, very much a modern scene in the 21st century.

The folk song *Lal Meri Pat* has been sung by various artists, including Noor Jehan, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Abida Parveen, Reshma, The Sabri Brothers, Komal Rizvi, and Junoon, among others. Sami Yusuf also performed a rendition of the song in his album *Barakah*. Its origins can be traced back to Amir Khusrow, with subsequent adaptations by Bulleh Shah, who infused it with folk elements, particularly Sindhi culture, by incorporating verses about Shahbaz Qalander. The song has undergone various transformations, evolving from poetic verses to Sufi qawwali to traditional folk renditions. Incorporating traditional elements like *Ajrak*, attire associated with Sindhi culture, and the use of symbols like the *kara* (bangle) and rosary with large-sized beads worn by the performers signifies a deliberate effort to evoke and honor the cultural heritage and religious symbolism associated with the song's origins. These elements serve to deepen the connection to the song's roots and imbue the performance with a sense of authenticity and reverence for the cultural and spiritual traditions it represents. Additionally, the fusion of these

traditional elements with modern Western influences reflects a dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation, highlighting the evolving nature of cultural expression in contemporary contexts.

The genesis of the third song, *Tinak Dhin Na*, lies in the rhythmic cadence created by the *tabla* (drum) player's skilled fingers, which inspired the formation of its unique lyrics. This composition stands as an original creation of CS, unlinked to any previous versions. The vibrant synergy of the *tabla's* lively beats intertwined with the soft guitar melodies, complemented by Waqar Ehsin's Punjabi folk intonations, encapsulates the essence of folk music. This innovative fusion not only showcases the creative ingenuity of CS but also underscores its commitment to crafting fresh, authentic expressions rooted in traditional musical forms (Stop Everything: This is, 2017). While flutists have been given a few appearances on the scene, interestingly, there seems to be a departure from incorporating traditional elements, such as 'traditional dress' and the use of rosaries, to infuse a modern touch into the performance or to faithfully adapt earlier versions, as seen in the other two songs. Notably, one of the trio members, clad in *ajrak* in *Lal Meri Pat* is now adorned in a sleeveless dress, passionately delivering her performance to the rhythmic beats. Despite being categorized as an adaptation of folk music, this song appears to transcend conventional boundaries, delving into innovative tunes and music—an exploration akin to 'third space music,' where traditional and contemporary elements converge to create a unique musical experience.

Adapting cherished folk songs, beloved by generations, presents a formidable task. Hayat was acutely aware of the potential resistance he might encounter while introducing a new sound amidst the familiar melodies. He openly acknowledges, "Anyone who dares to innovate upon a beloved classic risks facing criticism for straying from the original" (Sabeeh, 2009). In anticipation of skeptical reactions from the audience, he braced himself for comments like 'yeh kya kardiya? (What have you done?). Yet, driven by an understanding of contemporary local and global challenges, he courageously embarked on the experiment, reshaping the cultural landscape. For Hayat, the true essence and beauty of folk songs lie in their diverse array of sounds, representing their authentic

character. This endeavor, though challenging, aimed to preserve the rich heritage of folk music while embracing the evolving musical landscape of the modern world.

Hence, the adaptation process within CS unfolds on multiple dimensions: it involves the conceptual adaptation of ideas, the translation of these ideas into real-world settings, the reimagining of traditional folk songs from earlier versions, and the fusion of diverse music genres. Moreover, adaptations extend to production techniques, attire choices, and the cultural integration of folk musicians into modern contexts. Furthermore, contemporary millennial singers play a pivotal role in bridging tradition with modernity, offering innovative interpretations that resonate with both past and present audiences. Adaptation manifests both syntagmatically within the song's structure and paradigmatically across various spheres in the case of two folk songs, namely *Lal Meri Pat* and *Dil Di Bazi*. These songs amalgamate diverse influences to create a symphony that resonates with both the young and old, instilling a sense of belonging. Ali Akbar, the marketing manager of Coca-Cola (Pakistan and Afghanistan), envisions CS-produced songs as a shared preference among children and parents, fostering unity without discord (Moye, 2013). Even though the adapted versions are modern pieces of music, they still retain the redolence of the folk. According to Sabeeh (2009), CS is a 'multi-dimensional' show that is deeply entrenched in the historical musical legacy. It perceives and reinvents 'the sound of the soil', making them a contemporary modern piece reflecting the trends of the time. However, we must understand that CS, though it lacks original music which is labeled as a 'chronic problem' (Mahmood, 2017), is not only an adaptation but also a process that is seen as creating a new genre of music; it is not the adaptation of one source but rather the fusing of multiple influences and creating a unique artifact.

Adaptations as “Rhizome”

In light of the aforementioned discussion regarding the diverse sources contributing to the adaptation of folk songs, we perceive folk music and its adaptations through the lens of a 'rhizome' (a concept by Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), embodying flexibility and constant evolution, defying fixity.

These adaptations exhibit a 'rhizomatic' quality: non-hierarchical, diverse, multifaceted, and decentralized. Locating the origin or center of contemporary folk songs proves challenging due to their rhizomatic nature, which reflects the complex interplay of cultural influences and artistic innovations. This dynamic and ever-changing landscape underscores the rich tapestry of folk music, where tradition and innovation intersect to create a vibrant musical mosaic. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe: “The [rhizome](#) is both heterogeneous and multiplicitous. It can be entered from many different points, all of which connect to each other. The [rhizome](#) does not have a beginning, an end, or an exact center” (p. 21).

Just as the rhizome is characterized by heterogeneity, multiplicity, and lack of a fixed center, Coke Studio's folk songs embody similar qualities. The rhizome, like a plant's roots, spreads in diverse directions, allowing multiple entry points. This richness mirrors cultural complexity. Similarly, Coke Studio's folk songs often blend diverse musical elements, drawing from various regional traditions, instruments, and vocal styles. This heterogeneity enriches the music and reflects the cultural diversity of Pakistan.

The rhizome is not a singular entity but a multiplicity network of connections, with each component linking to others in a non-linear fashion. This multiplicity underscores the interconnectedness and interdependence of different cultural elements. The songs in Coke Studio also form a multiplicity network of connections, where different musical elements intertwine and influence each other. Each song becomes a fusion of multiple influences, creating a rich and layered musical experience.

Unlike traditional hierarchical structures that have clear beginnings, ends, and centralized control points, the rhizome lacks these defining features. Instead, it is characterized by a lack of fixed boundaries, making it difficult to determine where it starts or ends or to identify a central authority or origin point. Similarly, Coke Studio's folk songs defy traditional boundaries of origin or conclusion. They are not rigidly tied to a single source or linear progression but instead, evolve dynamically through collaboration and experimentation. Thus, concerning folk literature, we find ourselves unable to pinpoint its historical inception or conclusively

designate its termination. Instead, the current state celebrated in CS or earlier renditions of songs represents a middle ground—not precisely the midpoint, but a significant juncture nonetheless. We should take pride in this without succumbing to criticisms of detachment from cultural roots or allegations of diluting the essence of pure folk culture.

By applying the concept of the rhizome to Coke Studio's folk songs, we can appreciate the fluid and interconnected nature of these musical adaptations. They represent a vibrant tapestry of cultural expressions, constantly evolving and reshaping the boundaries of traditional folk music. Folk music is indeed a rhizome, deeply embedded in both direct and indirect surroundings, local in essence despite regional variations, and continuously evolving with an inherent unpredictability (Muršič, 2002 cited in Marjeta Pisk, 2009). The essence of folk songs lies within the hidden rhizomatic structure. While certain influences affect its visible manifestation above ground, these impacts are fleeting, much like seasonal changes. Situational influences may shift, but the underlying meta-text remains unchanged. Subject to perpetual growth and continuous change, folk music withstands external pressures. Although its origins may be traced to specific locations, this process often leads to new connections and broader perspectives. In essence, retracing folk music to a single location serves to establish fresh connections with a broader context.

Folk art, like a rhizome, requires fluidity and openness rather than being static or closed. The rhizome is not a singular entity; instead, it embodies dimensions or a constant state of movement, characterized by multiplication, growth, and expansion. Similarly, folk music does not exist as a singular unit at any given point in history; rather, it thrives and evolves through diversity and reinvention. Much like the rhizome, folk music can be innovative, finding new uses for earlier works and revitalizing currents that traditional theories of adaptation may suppress.

The Use of Multi-Modes

The current study employs multimodal analysis to examine all the folk songs featured in Season 10 of Coke Studio. By integrating various modes such as auditory, visual, and spatial elements into a unified artifact, these songs possess a unique semiotic appeal, effectively engaging and resonating with a

diverse audience in today's globalized world. The remarkable popularity of these songs underscores their ability to strike a balance between aesthetic appeal and technological innovation. CS, with its live-performance format featuring artists alongside their musical instruments and diegetic sounds, offers an unparalleled experience that captivates not only the ears but also delights the eyes. It serves as both a repository of memories and a modern interpretation of history and cultural heritage, aiming to connect individuals with their past and emotionally anchor them in the present.

Music transcends mere acoustics; it engages multiple modes to convey diverse information. Lyrics, musical tunes, artists' gestures, and more collaboratively contribute to the experience. What begins as an idea in the composer's mind is translated into lyrics, with musicians adding both acoustics and visuals, where sound and movement harmonize (Essid & Richard, 2012). A singer is more than just a vocalist; they weave emotions through their voice, actions, and expressions, conveying another layer of narrative. Their attire also communicates meanings, and above all, the lyrics directly resonate with the audience. CS artists similarly utilize various modes to convey their message and captivate the audience. Multiple modes are employed to honor traditional and Eastern trends, evident in the use of props and lyrics, while also ensuring contemporary relevance through musical instruments, props, lighting techniques, etc. They solidify intangible cultural connections while positioning themselves within their spaces. An aura is evoked as singers exchange eager glances while performing, hinting at an intimate connection as if singing directly to each other. The genuine smiles on the musicians' faces radiate energetic vitality throughout the performance.

The *Sraiki* song transcends its cultural origins, incorporating modern guitar tunes that resonate with audiences regardless of their region. It represents a seamless blend of the new and the old, the regional and the universal, evoking a sense of connection as expressed by a YouTube user: "This is the soul of Pakistan... this is me" (Shah, 2011). Through the use of multiple modes, CS demonstrates its success in making its content accessible to the deaf community through a studio-like arrangement. Here, "hundreds of tiny vibration engines and LED lights" are synchronized with the

music, enhancing the visual experience. This innovative approach was experimented with in Bangkok, where one listener expressed, "Whatever my body felt, whatever my brain thought, even though we can't hear the music, we can feel it" (Khadim, 2016).

Creation of Third Space

The presentation of folk music in CS serves to bridge time and space, blending elements of the past with contemporary contexts. It aims to showcase Pakistan's rich cultural heritage while also fostering a sense of connection among the youth. This fusion of folk music incorporates elements of international digital music culture, known for its dynamic rhythms, alongside traditional Eastern and regional influences. In doing so, it reinvents folk music and redefines its significance (Rana, 2015), ultimately creating a "new entity" or what Bhabha (1994) refers to as a third space. Rizwan Khan discussing the theme of CS asserts:

By weaving together Eastern values with Western influences, Coke Studio introduces the youth of Pakistan to their cultural fabric in a way that is totally palatable and acceptable to them. They are introduced to languages they've never heard and hear lyrics that stimulate them emotionally and intellectually.

Building upon this notion, we draw upon Homi K. Bhabha's concept of spaces. The first space represents the ancient folk songs rooted in Eastern values, while the second space embodies Western music with its hip-hop and rock culture. The CS rendition of folk songs appears to inhabit a "third space" - a realm where old and new converge, blending and reconciling both realms to create a novel space that resonates with the younger generation. This fusion of musical styles, achieved through a boundary-blending combination of traditional and modern art, pioneered by CS (Pakistan), has significantly influenced popular culture in the country (Moye, 2013). For many young people, traditional folk songs are perceived as "tragic songs" suited for lamentation. The emergence of this third space signifies an interaction between the first and second spaces, resulting in the birth of a new cultural milieu. Third space, therefore, represents a hybrid realm where elements from both spaces converge to create a new third space. This theory challenges conventional notions of fixed identity

and cultural practices. Instead, it offers a perspective of the third space as "a productive hybrid cultural space, rather than a fragmented and angst-ridden psychological space" (Moje, 2004, p. 43). This concept is advantageous as it facilitates understanding and meaning-making by drawing upon and utilizing cultural resources within one's immediate context.

The concept of space plays a significant role in imbuing social life with meaning. In an interview with Wilfried Nass, Rebecca Lee (2017) discusses the interplay between sound and space, emphasizing the importance of utilizing different acoustics and understanding the social and cultural dimensions of a space to enhance musical dynamism. Bilal Khan, a young singer-songwriter, acknowledges CS's role in revitalizing old folk songs, transforming them into something relatable and appreciated in the modern world. He notes, "They take something that was uncool - but had a soul and meaning - and make it cool" (Moye, 2013). The widespread listening of these songs heard on streets and from passing cars, demonstrates the ownership and inspiration they instill in listeners, giving them a sense of pride. CS has effectively bridged the gap between cultural traditions and contemporary sensibilities.

CS embodies a musical fusion of exciting elements and diverse influences, encompassing traditional Eastern, modern Western, and regionally inspired music. CS takes pride in providing a musical platform that bridges barriers, celebrates diversity, encourages unity, and instills a sense of Pakistani pride (Levin & Cooper, 2010). The reinterpretation and representation of folk songs in CS have instilled a strong sense of ownership, inspiration, and pride among Pakistanis, contributing to the creation of this third space music. This remarkable asset is all about breaking down barriers. Not only does folk music fall within the realm of the third space, but we also argue that the singers themselves seem to carve out their own space, with young performers creating a new dimension with their appearances.

Our youth are divided between two worlds: the global world, which entices them with its freedom, vibrancy, and sensuality, and is more liberal and modern, and the world of their parents and grandparents, which, in comparison, appears orthodox and dull. In an attempt to identify with both worlds, they filter and adopt what they perceive as the best from each. Here, we refrain from delving

into the discussion of 'alien culture' and 'mother culture,' as what may be considered the 'mother culture' for one generation could equally be viewed as 'alien culture' by another. Bhabha (1994) elucidates the concept of third space and hybridity emphasizing that hybridity's significance lies not in tracing two original moments that lead to a third, but rather in its function as the 'third space,' facilitating the emergence of alternative perspectives. This 'third space' disrupts the established histories that underpin it, paving the way for new structures of authority and novel political endeavors that elude conventional understanding. Cultural hybridity engenders something entirely distinct and unfamiliar, creating a fresh terrain for negotiating meaning and representation.

Hence, CS allows the music and the youth to position themselves in the third space. It might be the reason that more than 70 percent of the viewers are reported to be between the age group of 13 to 24 years old. Joe Belliotti, the head of Coca-Cola Music remarks: "We act on these (fusion) trends and are constantly evolving and iterating our experiences" (Cantor-Navas, 2014). The third space is not fixed but rather constantly evolving in an attempt to reach out to everyone. Third space music creates the mediating space where different, alternative, revolutionary meanings emerge (Powrie, 2017). Bhabha also suggests that when a transformation takes place, it results in an interface between the cultures which is hybrid in nature. This interface is not static but rather ever-evolving and in flux. Woodsom (2015) views this 'in-between' space as a powerful plinth, where various choices are tested and they provide the space where 'unlike things must meet and mate'.

We can discern Rohail Hyatt's deliberate efforts to create this third space in many of his remarks. For him, CS represents an endeavor "to reconnect younger generations with the rich history and culture tied to traditional musical styles – both classical and folk" (Shah, 2013). He also emphasizes, "We aimed for the show to foster self-discovery, to offer a fresh perspective on ourselves." This cultural adaptation and creation of the third space allows the fitting features from both spaces to withstand and endure in the accelerating global world. This boundary-blending combination of traditional and modern sets CS apart from other branded music

programs. Rana (2015) suggests that while music is an age-old genre, a significant shift was necessary to make traditional music appealing to the younger generation, a gap that Coke Studio successfully fills by revitalizing and modernizing old songs while preserving cultural heritage and connections. It effectively revitalizes ancient folk music by integrating traditional Eastern and contemporary Western influences. Yuri Pereira asserts that the show offers audiences "a distinctive perspective on new music" (Prselac, 2016).

Numerous veteran artists, known for their distinct musical styles, have also been seen in Coke Studio, showcasing their talents on modern instruments. They likely recognized that sticking to their traditional approach might not attract a broader audience and could result in their music being relegated to the past. By participating in Coke Studio, they have embraced the opportunity to contribute to the restructuring and rejuvenation of music. The collaboration between Abida Perveen and Ali Sethi in 'Aaqa' exemplifies this phenomenon. Influenced by both national and global pressures, they navigate between looking outward and inward, ultimately creating a fusion of elements from both worlds to craft a unique musical experience. Arif Lohar, as mentioned earlier, preserves elements from his own tradition, such as his *chimta*, while also embracing innovation to forge new musical paths. This understanding underscores the necessity of collaboration for creating enduring pieces of music. Similarly, Hayat endeavors to ensure a comfortable environment for artists, as seen in his conversation with Saieen Zahoor about the desired atmosphere (Dhanwani, 2014). Thus, spaces are crafted that feel familiar to both the performers and the audience, fostering a sense of connection and authenticity. Serbian musicians in one of the episodes were also directed to create a balance with the Eastern trends, where both of them (audience and singer) could reside.

The song *Tinak Dhin Na*, originating as an original folk piece, also occupies the third space, aiming to establish distinct and innovative norms for "contemporary folk music." In contrast to traditional folk songs, its energy knows no bounds, with its entire essence resembling a rollercoaster on an upward trajectory (Mangobaz, 2017). Looking at the attire of the artists, we see Ali Sethi embracing vibrant dance moves in a "metallic hippie bomber

jacket," a departure from the typical attire of local men his age. Meanwhile, equally popular among the younger generation, especially teenagers, Ali Hamza opts for the timeless "Jeans Kurta" style, while Waqar chooses a formal suit. These diverse choices reflect the varied preferences of modern individuals, yet still maintain strong connections with local culture. One of the girls from the trio blends elements from both realms, crafting her unique space. She adorns herself in *ajrak* attire while also donning a sleeveless dress, passionately performing to the beats. Yet, her contemporary and modern style often goes unnoticed by the audience, reflecting the prevailing trends in today's world.

We come across remarks from the younger generation, asserting ownership of this fusion realm: "To me, CS Pakistan is not just a musical phenomenon. It has helped me reconnect with the music I didn't pay much attention to as a boy, connecting the old world with the new" (Monie, 2011). Rank (2010) draws a parallel between the contemporary adaptor and the 19th-century missionaries, suggesting that both must locate a shared ground for effective communication to occur, known as the third space. Otherwise, relationships may become intricate and troublesome.

CS has become deeply ingrained in Pakistan's identity, earning the title of the Sound of the Nation. This recognition is owed to the aforementioned attributes, which have allowed CS to portray a more positive and nuanced image of Pakistan on the international stage, reaching viewers across 150 countries. Furthermore, it has revitalized Pakistan's music industry over the past decade, leading to a

significant increase in resources and platforms for musicians.

Conclusion

CS stands as a distinctive platform where classical folk traditions meld with modern Western influences, giving rise to a new musical genre – third-space music that resonates with various segments of society, especially the youth. This demonstrates that blending classical music with traditional elements does not merely challenge old norms but enhances them. Folk music, by its very nature, evolves over time. Its essence lies in its capacity for transformation and adaptation. Nonetheless, the examination elucidates that the meta text persists in subsequent adaptations, characterized by a rhizomatic nature imbued with flexibility, continuous evolution, diversity, multifaceted attributes, decentralization, and resistance to rigidity. Moreover, a true connection with the broader audience occurs when it becomes ingrained in the local milieu. The folk songs showcased in CS can be viewed as a reflection of contemporary youth culture. These adaptations represent a modern interpretation of history and cultural heritage, aiming to connect the youth with their roots while situating them in the present. Preserving and promoting cultural heritage is a priority for every nation, and CS appears to take on this responsibility by captivating audiences of all ages. Through the use of multiple modes of expression, CS effectively disseminates its message, making it highly appealing to a wide audience.

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