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Scrutinizing Karachi as a center of traumatic spaces: A postmodern analysis of Our Lady of Alice Bhatti

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Abstract

The present study appeals upon the spatial scrutiny and its traumatic consequences in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) by Muhammad Hanif and further explores need to look at idea of social space. Moreover, the idea of city space and urbanization of slums is also a dominant issue of our research. In this context, frequent thinkers contour current rapidly increasing situation of urban dwellings and providing aid to relentless problems of politically undue transmission of basic facilities by the side of with spatial segregation and a natural resistance against immobilities and social barriers created for spoil justice. Observing latest issue, our research accomplishes to draw the attention of the readers on to a damaging situation of over construction in civic areas of our selected cityscape Karachi. We have supplementary observed that this problem creates infinite socio-economic and spatial unfairness. What's more, this exposition talks about and squabbles on thought of spatial justice to value multifaceted bond of social order with other classes abode in city centre. In consequences, our investigation concludes that these unfair spatial arrangements of city center presented in selected text transmogrifies subjectivities of individuals that ultimately fuels aggression among low strata of society.

Key Words: City space, Trauma, Postmodernism, spatial segregation, Spatial injustice

Introduction

The novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) on number two from Hanif's writing chronology. It is a disturbed tale of a young, passionate, beautiful and mystic lady Alice Bhatti. Violence, racism and cruelty are thematic parts of it. Beside, social riot, misuse of power, illegal possession and most importantly spatial upheaval are also on peak level. She was at borstal jail and just released. She was arrested in a murder case of a patient whom she never touches. She is Catholic by faith and just started new job as a junior nurse at Sacred Heart Hospital in Karachi. The story becomes interesting when a bodybuilder and police tout naming Teddy butt started following her. Alice lives in French Colony, an under constructed and filthy slums for Christians. It is located in centre of city but town planners politically keep it dirty and disgusted. Almost every character is psychologically disturbed in this fiction. Noor, another important character of this text is a boy who likes and loves Alice. His mother is on a charity ventilator amid severe poverty. It is a story of socially disorder city where two classes are running. Class one have every basic and communal facilities but second part is dying for food and medicine in Charya ward of Sacred Heart Hospital. Pandemonium can be seen imprinted onto the faces of characters. Being tenant of smutty and religiously discriminated area she never welcomed at any part of city. She rejected the proposal of teddy and challenges the brutal and ruthless patriarchy of Karachi's urban capital. On the other hand, Hanif portrays a rich, socially acceptable and appreciate able Qazalbash family who has illegitimate right to convert every wrong into their right. It is a complex novel. This complexity is existing inner city level to whom ordinary people should aware. Representation of class struggle and forces who suppress it are also high up in this text. In this context, we argue that Alice Bhatti was not happy in her French colony as it was nothing but a symbol of poverty and disgust. She was not satisfied in her father's house and wanted to create her own space. She was disheartened to see the poor naked children of her neighbor Christians. Later her marriage with Teddy was also her imagined space because she wanted to live a prosperous and cock-suck free life with him.

It is literature that portrays social scenery in its inimitable sense and this urban imaginary is vividly presented in our selected novel. Hanif's portrayal of Karachi is best example in this context where urban imaginary is showcased as totally dystopian and apocalyptic which causes spatial disorder among city habitants. Thus, we argue that all above said facts regarding

different characters of our selected work is clear example of severe spatial injustice and victimization of identity which is core issue of our research. Further in our research, we inspect that after facing continuous spatial violence, low stage group of city reborn with resisting devices against capitalist approaches. They found alternative ways to break motionlessness and barriers constructed by architects. Our research also showcases importance of city space thought in currently unsuited atmosphere of Karachi. In this research, we have trace out the visual skills and analytical looms of Pakistani writer who divulge these immoral acts and also suggested ways to overcome. In this context, both Lefebvre and Soja represented city space theory and also debates on spatial changes made and control by city bourgeoisie. According to them, in modern cities there is huge grievance and political interference. In this result, every habitant is not receiving equal chances of success. Job, food, liberty to move anywhere in city are basic rights whom poor class is deprived. These social stratum can play their more important part in restructuring of city if allowed. No elite group will let them do this in any case. In this situation, unlawful strives of controlling whole space is exonerating and emancipating for state run agencies who control the living style of urban disposed while making self-choiced plans of construction. Consequently, new location and arrangements of city space is only capacitating their selected segment that ultimately pushes the outsiders toward city margins. This act is open injustice. It snatching their vital conjunctive rights of equal share and justified space.

Objectives of the Study

- To explore issues of spatial segregation and political segmentation in major postmodern city space of Karachi in selected text
- To explore individuals victimized by spatial cleansing as a consequence of capitalism and globalization in the context of Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*
- To explore causes of spatial injustice which deprived the characters of selected fiction from their original space and made them chaotic

Research Questions

1. How does a person become the victim of spatial injustice that ultimately leads to chaos in a person's life as depicted in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*?

2. How do different characters in selected novel violate social barriers and immobilities while using the fluidity of space?
3. How do material geographies and spatial practices shape and affect spatiality of different characters in Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*?

Literature Review

Since the novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) by Muhammad Hanif has published and considered the true panorama of the sufferings of Christian Community in the Pakistani society, there are some researchers and reviewers who did extensive research works on it. One of the research work entitled *Narrative inequality as a critique of Social injustice in Our Lady of Alice Bhatti: A Marxist Analysis* (2014) highlights that Mohammed Hanif has successfully incorporated the sorry state of low-caste Christians in a highly corrupt locale, where these miserable people are even considered inferior to 'cockroaches' (p. 217). This disjointed narrative presents poor and exploited people of 'French Colony' in comparison to the institutionalized bureaucracy of 'Sacred Heart Hospital' in Karachi. Social incoherence and class oppression on the expense of down-trodden creatures of French Colony actually maintain the mainstream of the novel in the form of incoherent structure of the narrative. All the major characters suffer at the hand of minor characters which are representative of hegemonic capitalism. The parasitic nature of high-ups of the society actually deforms the social fabric while the others have to suffer for their material or personal gains. This inequality in social set up finds a way to narrative inequality through naturalistic social perception of the novelist.

Another research work entitled *The 'Melancholic' Subjects in Mohammad Hanif's Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2015) discovers that the world of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* is based on ambivalent relationships and squabble paragons which dismantle the so called narratives of center. Being melancholic statures, Khan (2015) argues that characters like Alice and Teddy agonize from a lack of confidence situation. In consequence, as a recovery of their ego, they both indulge in violent matters of domestic and social life. They both are evacuees from the urban society, facing prejudiced behavior of city elite which led them to start self-deploring ventures. Throughout the novel, as Khan (2015) articulates, "Eros" (passionate love) is constantly countered by "Thanatos" (death instinct) (p.82). Alice the most chaotic character of the novel, endeavors to bloom her "Eros" which she faced throughout her life as "destructive

instinct”(p.82). Almost in every matter of her life i.e., her juvenile delinquency record to her ambiguous love, she found herself being driven by the love and death instinct. Being cut off from a clear centre of her life she oscillates herself in between the preaching of church and imposture of marriage. In this context, Khan proclaims that Alice becomes a grievous fatality of “Freudian melancholia” (p.82).

There is another critical research work with the title of *Silencing of Subaltern in Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2016) which asserts that postcolonial feminist perusal of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* rejects the romantics of female rights in a patriarchal society and debates that Hanif coined the term “Choorā” (p.270) for members of Christian community dwelling in slums of suburbs of Karachi city. Nazar (2016) furthers that it is a stereotypical tool used by Hanif to show the antagonism of capital against minority strata in underdeveloped area of Karachi’s cityscape. Alice is portrayed as a fraught woman suffering from over femininity and infuriation. She is also a casualty of severe exploitation, mortification and manhandling. She rose in a suffocative milieu and life has taught her “that every little step forward in life is preceded by a ritual humiliation” (Hanif, 2011, p.55). This elucidates that Alice faces uncountable torture and obloquy throughout her life and accepted it with heavy heart amid helplessness and being a member of minority. As Nazar (2016) further argues, that Alice is rendered as “pariah” (outcaste) in Pakistani societal context. She considered “*untouchable*”(p.271) in an Islamic state. Strict patriarchal norms does not allow her a free and willful life but left her in disgusted and miserable condition.

Another critical revisiting of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* with title of *Sexual Violence and Sainthood: A critical study of Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2018) debates that Alice Bhatti negates all stereotypes of fundamentalism and rose with a pure emblem of “sainthood” (p.122). Beside Alice, her father too broke the religious immobilities and started imaginative reformation in an Islamist society. In consequences, they faced fanaticism and its everlasting results in the shape of Alice’s murder and her father’s rejected request for justice. Joseph Bhatti impulses the parishioners for her daughter’s congregation and claims her “a curer of the incurables” (Hanif, 2011 p.337).

Research Gap

All the above discussed works are of different perspectives according to their researchers' way of conducting the research but none of them applied the theory of city space on selected text by me. In our research paper, we argue on Henri Lefebvre's notion of spatial production and Edward W. Soja's conception of spatial justice to discern how in Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* the marginal stratum of city centre violate the social barriers and immobilities and fight for their basic communal rights. We further analyzed how one of the major postmodern city spaces of Pakistan is spatially segregated from the power structures and equal redistribution of resources. We also assert that how inequality of basic rights, unfair distribution of income and urban expansion causes injustice in a cityscape. Hanif's fiction highlights the conflict raises amid spatial violence, unrest and chaos in the city of Karachi. The habitants of urban margins, denizens of slums, rural displaced people, socially excluded ones, females and juveniles i.e., Alice Bhatti, Hina Alvi, Zainab, Teddy Butt, Joseph Bhatti, Noor and Not Abu-zar are psychologically disturbed in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. They are facing a schizophrenic atmosphere in city center because urban developers and city architects making them bereave from fair rights and better lifestyle.

Research Method

The mode and technique of analysis of our research is textual analysis because in our point of view, the methodology is only uses for clarification of systematic concepts. It alone cannot unveil hidden meanings of a text. However, in view of methodology, research methods provide best tools and techniques for better results while conducting a research. So, we inspect the text to acknowledge the part of space which causes spatial injustice and segregation that brings social unrest, disturbance, confusion and finally chaos into the minds of city dwellers. It is the technique of textual analysis through which this research scrutinizes spatial manipulation by social structures and city elite as reflected in the text by Hanif which causes complete disturbance in the daily routine of city inhabitants. Thus, in next section, we fleetingly scrutinize textual analysis as a research method.

Methodology

Spatial Production

Lefebvre (1991) claims that space and its production must considered as a current political economy of the world. His detain is to strengthen marxist approach that culminate

“production” rather than “products” (p. 26). Following Marx’s views, he also focused on the analysis of society from human beings’ perspective who is the true producers of their personal life, consciousness and living world. Human beings are the key figures to prove their existence in a society. They can make their own space without any external support and consciousness. Lefebvre’s main concept in *The Production of Space* (1991) is that human beings fabricate social relations for approving their space. Further, he added, “each living body *is* space and *has* its space” and to validate this concept he further proclaims that every human “produces itself in space and it also produces that space” (p. 170). In this context, characters of our selected text are conspicuous examples of this production of space as they are not relying on any external force for this procedure of spatial production. In social fabric of society, human beings utilize dialectic of space for the successful reproduction of space. This dialectic is of two fold; i.e., “social space consisted on communal relations of re-production and relations of productions” (p. 32).

According to Lefebvre (1991), space cannot be only considered as a “thing” (p. 73) and more a “container” (p. 94) but it is purely understood as a “product” and a “means of production” (p. 85). In this perspective, it is clear that space can be analysed from two angles if it plays its role in making a product, at the same moment it is the very material from which that particular product is being produced. With reference to this idea, the character of Alice is embodiment of her spatial identity and spatial representation. She is both the cause of this spatial production and victimization. He argues more on social reality of space rather than its subjectivity and objectivity. Social space according to Lefebvre, is a “field of action” and this particular field also becomes the “basis of action”(p. 191) in an essential atmosphere. This space interrelate each and everything for example, living beings, things and objects according to its natural or societal production. (p. 101). The concept of spatial production gives a vivid view of spatial importance among city dwellers. In this context, we contend that on the one hand characters are producing social relation and on the other side of the coin they are indulging their selves into the reproduction of social space. Furthermore, it is a two way process i.e., if a human being is product at a moment he/she is the producer in the next. In more general way, space is not a single side of a binary weather it is a social reality of relations.

Dialectic of Space

Lefebvre (1991) broadly presented his group of three terms or (triad) instead debating on a binary. His sole attention was on the representation of his terms as three. He was very much aware of the hurdles of reading and understanding of Marx's work as a binary opposition between elite and working class and the reader completely abandoned the third important term based on agricultural land of any country which is the state of the nation itself. At start he coined his third term a dialectical result which later proved wrong by him and further conceived as all influenced to each other. His intention was not to negate any of his work or synthesis or to chalk out his sole work but to highlight the simultaneous recurring fluctuation between all three. He presented triple juncture of representation of space, spatial practice and representational spaces. Representation of space is the first conceptualized space of city planners and city governments that takes a physical form in maps, charts and city models. This is the "dominant space" of any city or society since this is where technocrats, social scientists and urbanists design cityscape for the rest of the inhabitants. Spatial practice or perceived space affects a city denizens' everyday routine. It is also a material form of a society. At this level space shifts from "maps and charts" (1991, p. 38) to the minds of city habitants. This phase also initiates the divergence among city denizens' "urban reality" and "daily routine" (p. 33).

Trialectic of Spatiality

Soja (1996) identified three spatial notions as First space (perceived, identified, real, the material buildings having physical shapes constructed by architects and city planners). Second space; (conceived, conceptual, mentally created for instance how one can visualize and debate) and (Third space lived, simultaneous usage of real and imagined space) to explain spatiality. In first space he argues about historical and social dominance over the spatiality. This space according to Soja, based on frequent mundane rather touchable, seen able and mapable areas and its margins. In more general term, human behaviors, different experiences, the usage of various platforms and consequences of human actions that concrete and can be mapped under spatial parameters. It is a materialized concrete form of space that allows open and precise measurement/description of the particular space. This perceived phase of space "surrounds our bodies" having complexity vis-à-vis social practices and its organization that "shape our action spaces" (p.10). Second space unveils the hidden reality of space and also sheds light on imaginative representation for the understanding of reality. Further, this space can be define as

proper knowledge of physical reality of space that can be easily comprehend by imagination and for the victorious expression with the use of sign and symbol. However, the same imaginative layout that we have earlier discussed in conceived phase converts into real acquisitive landscape. So, while using these “dominating mental spaces” (p.66), a user of strong spatial territory also exchanges his ideological power and influence.

Soja (1996) provide work for a trialectic of spatiality with close relation to history and society. In this phase almost everything of daily life stands with each other. Through third space a habitant of city visualizes and define socially produced and developed spaces. In this phase, human natural features and their daily routine has the same prominent significance as a socio-historical perspective done. His open challenge in this phase against the previous dominant dialect of spatial theory i.e., space as a thing and thought however, he introduces third space equally full of conceptual and lived material experiences. Third stage of spatiality is bifocal and this matchless quality makes it explainable, mapable and analyzable on the one hand, it also can conceptualize the mental edifice of ideas and its social importance. He analytically and gravely elucidates this domain of spatiality and showcases an alternative idea that paves a way in between mental and concrete dimensions of space. It supplementary provides an inimitable and comprehensive angle of evaluation. Consequently, our research paper asserts that third space depends on Lefebvre’s notion of hardnosed and cerebral journey and biographical concept of space that is concurrently incorporation of first, second and third space.

Following Lefebvre, he articulates about rejection of myths of mini-narratives which only emphasize on universal and historical anchor. He propagates the idea of spatial studies that accentuate on attention of deep analysis of local geography of human beings. In this context, Soja (1996) more elaborates Lefebvre’s key term of spatiality and mentions it as a revolution against historical imagination and fixity with pre-conceived details. He unveils the biased views of historicism that permanently excluded “critical sensibility”(p.10) from spatiality of social life. Soja’s (1993) examination chalks out the deep rooted and eternal muddle of relations in a city centre and its uncapturedness that only understands industrial modes of production. City is not a compact and fully organized element. Only spatial relations can better help to understand its depth. Therefore, when he presented his spatial aspects he also confront the hegemonic “historic

epistemology”(p.137) to promote a neutral theory which emphasis on socio-historic collaboration for constructing more eloquent and configured “human geographies”(p.137).

Analysis

Our Lady of Alice Bhatti (2011) is a story of minorities where Alice Bhatti a 27 years old former sweeper now appointed as “Replacement junior nurse Grade 4” (p.1) at Sacred Heart Hospital suffers with spatial injustice due to hegemony and segregation among the urban metropolitan city space of Karachi. She has a Catholic faith but renown as untouchable Choohra amid being part of minority in the Muslim society of Karachi. Besides terrorists, extremists, target killers and police touts, Karachi is controlled by city elite and bureaucracy of Sacred Heart Hospital for reshaping the individuality of working class. They made its urban space according to the capitalist approach where marginalized dwellers have no “*right to the city*”. Karachi, where almost all sweepers carry Christian background depicted as a warzone in this text where different illegal forces are busy to accelerate injustice. It is Karachi “where you can get someone cut up for a thousand rupees” (p. 25). It highlights Karachi’s worse condition and target killing in contemporary times and its impacts on to the minds of its habitants. In this warzone, Alice is a “lone soldieress of Yassoo”(p.176) who is not equipped with any warhead shield but marginalization, victimization and exploitation. Because she is a woman, a Christian and dweller of French colony very much renown slums of Christians in Karachi’s urban space. Just like Alice, there are other characters like Margaret Bhatti, Hina Alvi, Joseph Bhatti, Noor, Zainab and Not Abu Zar (Afzal) who also becomes victim of this injustice in the capitalist society of Karachi presented by Hanif.

Beside Alice, there are also two contrasting characters of Zainab, a blind homeless aged woman and a VIP patient Begum Qazalbash an old rich lady, now facing a severe renal failure approaching her eternal destination. Begum Qazalbash is a symbol of bureaucracy and belongs to bourgeois class that can be easily observed through her “Shatoosh shawl” (p. 57) and to sell this someone can easily get a small house of two bedrooms. And her conveyance “A gleaming double-cabin surf”(p.53) without registration number is a lively reminder of neo-colonialism. Her vehicle behaves just like a colonizer and marks its space where it was parked. Here, the vehicle has been playing its role as a colonial master to occupy its illegal territory. Further, her bodyguards have Kalashnikovs without a “permit”(p.52). It is an open violation of laws by city

capital and they think that they are exempted of it. Here, Hanif portrays the ongoing structures of injustice in Karachi's urban cityscape through the strong control of possessions by elite. Consequently, this attitude of city capital causes spatial injustice which leads social disturbance in the corridors of Karachi's Sacred Heart Hospital. On the other hand, Zainab is suffering due to class distinction and unavailability of proper medical treatment because all the resources are occupied by the city elite. She is on charity admission at Sacred Heart Hospital because she cannot afford a better treatment at any other cancer hospital in Karachi. Through this unjust *spatial practice*, coined by Lefebvre, Karachi's power-structures snatched the "*right to the city*" from her and doomed her with exile:

An oncologist on a charitable visit from Houston stops by Zainab's bed, looks at her latest reports and says, "Six weeks. I think you should probably take her home." Everybody around the bed looks down. Nobody wants to tell the charitable oncologist that this *is* her home. (p.121)

It explicates the economic condition and derailed health of Zainab which demonstrate the victimization of her individuality by capital in a metropolitan cityscape of Karachi. Thus, we argue that this strong and unjust redistribution of wealth causes alienation and un-belongingness in the case of Zainab.

Alice suffers amid political segmentation throughout her life. In her nursing school, there were few Muslim girls students who hated Alice being a member of Choohra community which are considered untouchable in Pakistani Muslim society. They actually started a planned campaign against her in general and Christianity in particular. They never tolerate Alice and considered her illegitimate part of city space and raised slogans against her. "Who belongs to Pakistan, Musalman, Musalman"(2011, p.172) clarifies that the non-Muslims have no *right to the city* in the eyes of urban capital. They want to expel them through forced exile and segregation. Hanif further unveiled the double standard of this Muslim society where people call every nurse a "daughter" or a "sister" (p. 82)but whenever she supposes to do something by her own choice they feel offensive and turn into beasts. With this anti-social attitude of city capital, spatial injustice surfaces on the city margins which reshaped individualities of dwellers

according to their demand. She never gave up fighting against this act of social out-casting from urban centre of Karachi.

Consequently, city elite gave her a “moon shaped scar” right on the face and it was a “stray bullet that kissed her” (p.174). This bullet onto her face is actually a symbol of hatred of Muslims with her Choohra face that later plays an integral part in her *space of representation* where she realizes her image and value in the city space of Karachi. Besides, she has multiple wounds of cigarettes and other domestic weapons. The number of these wounds is above from her age. It presents scenery of a “war zone”(p.137) and her body as a target they have to achieve. Obviously, every shot is not for success so, whenever they fail to get the target they start it again and so on. Successful warriors always left their signs so that masses will understand that this target have been achieved before. She also faced fourteen month of imprisonment at Borstal in a fake case of a patient’s death. She did not receive a single chance to loud her voice and found herself a useless thing. We argue that this victimization of individuality is because of patriarchal society of Karachi’s urban capital. She resists against every social norm and created her own third space which according to Soja is amalgamation of both “lived and imagined spaces” (Soja, 1989, p.6).

Like Alice, Margaret Bhatti, mother of Alice Bhatti faced a rape attempt and killed by her own master in an animalistic way. Her chaos towards elite class rose each time when she thinks about this cruel act of society. Margret Bhatti becomes the victim of severe spatial injustice by the city capital. Her father was told by the master that she slipped on a staircase and died but the truth emerges beyond the walls of the city. Joseph was stunned to see that how is it possible when someone slips on a staircase have wounds of human nails right on breasts? It is a murder he is pretty sure but he cannot do anything against this strong Muslim social fabric. It illuminates that mother of Alice was not slipped but was sexually victimized by the hands of a capitalist master of Karachi’s urban elite. She is considered social out-cast and her master belongs to over-privileged strata of city urbanite that also stopped her autopsy services. This is how people manipulate space and create spatial injustice into the life of minorities in this text.

Hanif has barbed on quite a few practices regarding same unwarranted actions of handling resources through different characters. Among them is an unnamed younger son of

Qazalbash family. A privileged teenager, who is misusing the resources of urban capital to manipulate denizens of peripheries. He arrived at Sacred with his illegal surf “devil of the dessert”(2011, p.53) and with other heavy imported accessories and was walking like a fashion tycoon who have just arrived at the land of beggars, mentally retards and orphan children. Here Hanif again portrays the vehicle as a strong resource to claim more space in city capital. Of course he was unaware about the price of “half a pint of O-positive” that “costs two hundred rupees” (p.54). He booked a separate VIP room for his mothers’ treatment which is also clear example of misuse of resources. It also sheds light on open class discrimination among Karachi’s urban space. Where, on the one hand, people are dying for a single pint of blood in Sacred but on the other, the elite strata of this city enjoying their life with such a lush regardless of the worse condition of the masses.

Another over-privileged character of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* is Inspector Malangi who misuses his authority while running an illegal investigation group named “Gentlemen’s Squad”(p.13). This squad is an open example of misuse of government authority upon poor and marginalized masses of Karachi’s cityscape. He took part in many illegal and fake encounters of innocent city inhabitants. Regardless of the gender he abducted and killed number of people in the city. “Inspector Malangi puts his Beretta near his left ear, and shot him”(p.64) is a situation when he killed a Christian returned from Dubai. It clarifies the professional killing and non-human behavior of Inspector Malangi towards low strata of minorities in Karachi’s urban metropolis. One of his victims is Not Abu-Zar “The swelling on his right eye has subsided, the blood has congealed around his lips; he looks like a boy who has botched up his face paint” (p.124) whom he travelled in his Hilux towards “Buffer Zone”(p.109) for murder. Inspector Malangi being the part of city’s law enforcement agency belongs to bourgeois class which is engage to implement illegal charges upon masses. He misused his authority and played part in an unjust redistribution of the resources among city dwellers.

Beside Inspector Malangi, another important character is Teddy Butt. A bodybuilder and police tout who once achieved the title of “Junior Mr. Faisalabad”, now working for the Gentlemen Squad of Inspector Malangi an illegal investigation and encounter specialists group. Teddy is not rich but tries to fit in elite social strata to manipulate more space that he psychologically needed. Hanif, through this character, highlight the mediums of spatial injustice

in the metropolitan cityscape of Karachi. Teddy shows his belonging with the urban capital to get more resources for a full control of space and its free use. For this practice he came with a mouser at the day of his proposal to Alice at Sacred and misuses the *representation of space*. He liked Alice only by her physical attraction. When she refused her proposal he “fires his Mouser”(p.70) resulted that “The city stops moving for three days”(p.70) and “Three billion rupees’ worth of Suzukis, Toyotas and Hinopaks are burnt” (p.71). It was anger and revolt of poor masses against city capital and Teddy was the sole responsible for this incident to reshape Karachi’s normal routine into a space of terror, extremism, danger and conflict. Regardless of his bodybuilding, he was also misused by city capital against the low income and non-income people of different walks of society. City bourgeois uses him as a tool against the very stratum which he actually belongs. At the end of the successful task he always rewarded with precious possessions of the victims by Inspector Malangi. It further clarifies how Teddy Butt becomes the part of that violence on innocent class of Karachi’s society and rewarded at the end with the inheritance of others. However, Teddy’s illegal work for G Squad is disclosed when he says “see, I am not even in the police”(p.112) to Not-Abu-Zar one of the victims of Inspector Malangi. It highlights that he is working as a paid tout and misusing his space. Later, he killed his wife Alice with an attack of sulfuric acid and snatched her *right to city* and right of life.

Fluidity of Space and Violation of Social Barriers/Immobilities

Fluidity of space focused on connectivity, mobility, suitability and flexibility, in contrast to the concepts of limitation, hierarchy and fixed form. “Fluid space defined by its changing boundaries, or which disappear completely”(Mol and Law, 1994, pp.647-671). However, fluidity is understood on the basis of the dynamics of form, spatial and temporal flow, material flows. Further, fluid spaces are understood as “free-zones, a liminal space” (Abbas, 2018, pp. 1133-34). In this context we argue, while using this fluidity of space, its users violated the social barriers and immobility of fixity in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*.

In the text by Hanif, most of characters utilize the concept of fluidity of space and violates social immobilities to prove their space among capital urbanites and to legitimize their place in society. When Alice was in Borstal, she always missed her desired peaceful home. She does not want to go back in her old house in French Colony. It clarifies that she does not want to return to French Colony and stuck with the walls of it after Borstal. She desired for her imagined

space what Soja termed as *third space* was beyond this margin of Borstal in the shape of Sacred Heart Hospital. Alice also knows that she does not belong to privileged part of this capital city of Karachi. So, she reshaped her subjectivity and strives to go beyond the margins of both Sacred Heart Hospital and French Colony. She further found herself unfit into this space like an intruder and enhanced her idea of fluidity of space that leads towards marriage with Teddy Butt.

Teddy lives in Al-Aman Apartment, a posh housing society in Karachi's urban space. After accepting the proposal of Teddy, "Noor sees Alice and Teddy walking out of the Sacred, hand in hand" (p.78) clarifies that Alice totally violated social barriers of Muslim patriarchal society. On this she received first reaction "Kafirs have all the fun in this country. This country was made for the Muslims and poor Muslims can't even get any valium"(p.86). This possible reaction from the member of Muslim majority reshapes Alice's identity as spatially othered and illegitimate that was the cause of her savage murder. Alice knows that "Every married life in French Colony starts with a trip to the tailor's shop" (p.91) and goes to "Dulhousie Tailoring" (p.91). "The aroma of steaming irons pressing Lawrencepur wool makes the customers feel rich, or at least tricks them into believing that they are not in French Colony any more" (p.91). Her transcendence of thinking regarding social appearance made her feel rich, proud and honored since it gives her a sense of ascendancy over everyone who still is stuck with edges of French Colony. Beside this, "marrying a semi-employed Musla, she is hoping to rise above the stench that is her daily bread" (p. 92). It asserts that she wanted to remove the social tag of being untouchable among urbanite and wanted to enjoy a complete social space. Later, she completely shifted her individuality and tries to fit in the urban elite strata to enjoy prestigious space when "She chose her own name. Aliya"(p.88). It shows up that Alice was completely in her senses to challenge the social norms and there was no external force behind it.

Just like Alice Bhatti, Hina Alvi took the same path to challenge the social immobilities of Karachi's urban cityscape. She has also applied the same technique of fluidity of space and approved her strong space among Muslim social milieu. It was not a bed of roses for her as she hides her religious faith and reshaped her new identity among a patriarchal capital class of Sacred. "I slept with Mr Alvi. I was married to him, hence the name. I pray to Lord Yassoo because I was born a Christian"(p.202). Further, she confirmed "Hannah. That was my name. Hannah Messey" (p.202). On the one hand, it clarifies how much Hina Alvi is concerned

regarding her religion and on other, how much she used the fluidity of space and made it a survival tool in a patriarchal Muslim cityscape of Karachi. However, it highlights that being a member of Christian community and pretending to be Muslim is an open violation of social barrier of space created by city bourgeois.

Same is the case of Joseph Bhatti, who heals people with use of different verses from Holy Quran beside his supreme authority of chief janitor at French Colony. By doing this, He uses fluidity of space because he was aware that city capital will never approve his real space at their level easily. When Alice was in Borstal, he goes to a lawyer who was a patient of stomach ulcer and cures him as the compensation of fee “he shut his eyes and starts to recite Sura Asar a Christian Choohra reciting the Holy Quran with the zeal of a novice mullah”(p.45). In this context, we argue that being a non-Muslim, a Christian is not permissible to rehearse Holy Quran but Joseph Bhatti violated all the spatial barriers and religious peripheries to prove his part in the capital city space.

Noor, a close friend and silent lover to Alice, also utilizes the fluidity of space at Sacred and endeavors to be a proper branch of town influential. After Borstal, he and his blind mother were allowed to enter the Sacred by Dr. Pereira on charity basis. However, at Sacred Heart Hospital, he used the fluidity of space and tries to fit in every part of city space as “Noor is a record-keeper, a steno, a secretary for those who are not budgeted to have a proper secretary. He is a scribbler by day, Zainab’s son by night, and Dr Pereira’s pet around the clock” (p.22). At the day of Alice’s interview he was over there with selection board pretending to be a personal secretary regardless of this truth that he has not even passed his matriculate examination. As Alice states, “a peon pretending to be a poet, taking notes as if he is taking down minutes in a board meeting, as if he understands anything”(p.8). It highlights that Noor is not in his valid space but trying to be fit in the urban privileged group by using the fluidity of space. He further appointed in maternity ward along with Alice that highlights an open violation of social barriers in a Muslim cityscape.

Conclusion

Our research, while working on the primary text concludes that Karachi is a panorama of spatial inequality and urban dispossession amid socio-political vicissitudes and economic wavering. The other significant aspect of our research was to hook up the notions of inequality, social isolation, urban subjugation, and justice in the context of city with space. Further, this crisis of immigrant incursion was very apparent in the metropolises presented in our primary text. Under the context of Lefebvre's spatial triad and Soja's views, our work further submits that the urban geography of our selected metropolis is under the supervision of old monarchs who are the modern colonizers of these cities. Their master was first colonizer but when the 'masters' left, they created so called new capital but with the same old bogus infrastructure of power, where all power is with the centre and people on the peripheries are left alone to sufferings. For this purpose, urban capital always snatched the *right to the city* from low-income habitants and created the socio-spatial unrest among city dwellers.

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