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Spatial Justice and Gender Socialization in Jamil Ahmad's *The Wandering Falcon*

Abstract

'With Justin Williams' 'spatial justice' and Pierre Bourdieu's 'role of gender', this article explores how gender socialization is the outcome of spatial correspondences and how the biological concerns regarding gender, specifically in third world countries like Pakistan, are the catalysts in this process of gender socialization. In this regard, this article delimits Jamil Ahmad's The Wandering Falcon to exhibit the cultural interpellation concerning gender disparity in establishing spatial justice. Space contributes to the socio-political and cultural consciousness that lets the gender know his/her location in a given social boundary. This gendered location is significant concerning a privileged stature of patriarchal/matriarchal mindset and performances. On the other hand, the phenomenon of spatial justice literalizes and materializes these mindsets and performances. This article examines the shift from individual consciousness to a social identity hence locates the impact of space in allocating a role to the gender.'

Key Words: Gender, Pakistani Literature, Space, Spatial Justice, Tribalism.

Introduction

Spatial justice involves “the fair and equitable distribution in the space of socially valued resources and opportunities to use them” (Soja, 2009, p. 3). It discusses the battle of different entities – natural, non-natural, mechanical – to possess a certain space at a specific time. It lurks inside the contemporary governmental policies regarding international and national concerns, socio-political hierarchies, ecological issues, ecclesiastical parameters, etc. (Mihalopoulos, 2015, p. 4). Justine Williams (2013) argues that the places people live in, work and play profoundly affect the social relations among them, and subsequently the justice relations among them. By stretching out this examination to space, by and large, he correlates the dialect of space, justice, social relationships and contemporary political clashes (Williams, 2013). In this regard, the concept of spatial justice links with the idea of social reality as it constructs the geographical positioning of a given culture.

In spatial justice, the role of gender has its complexities. It is perceived as equal to sex, but its development typifies it rather more important than sex, which only refers to the biological classifications of female and male, classes recognized by qualities, chromosomes, and hormones. Hence, gender, conversely, is a considerably more liquid phenomenon as it refers to the social classifications of male and female. This classification is differentiated through the prescribed role of gender in a given society (Helgeson, 2012, p. 3). This classification

sees [s] gender as the content with sex as the container. The content may vary, and some consider it must vary, but the container is considered to be invariable because it is part of nature, and nature ‘does not change.’ Moreover, part of the nature of sex itself is seen to be its tendency to have social content/to vary culturally (Delphy, 1993, p. 3).

Pierre Bourdieu (2001), a French humanist and anthropologist, dissects gender roles and the cultural politics involved in their creation and processing in society. His *Masculine Domination* (2001) emphasizes that the female gender co-exists with patriarchal normative codes. Bourdieu raises questions like why people, by and large, acknowledge an emblematic social order that renders sexual orientation; hence explains the complication of the duality of naturality regarding gender roles and

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representative order of the world for its practitioners. This study argues this representative order concerning south Asian countries – Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan – where there is not much awareness about gender socialization. Men and women both play an essential part, but one is subordinate, and the other is the master. With *The Wandering Falcon* (2011), this study emphasizes the tribal spatial justice that broadens the horizons of environmental and social justice and the places human beings visit and the relationships they have to face every day. This description of gender socialization in South Asian tribes explains new and dynamic dimensions of gender roles in tribal communities where the female gender performs a very subservient role in her own native country.

Literature Review

The characters in Ahmad's *The Wandering Falcon* are considered a unique set of human beings whose lives depend much on their follies. [Phil Halton \(2019\)](#) says that the characters inside this work resist the advanced names frequently utilized in the West to depict the occupants of Afghanistan and Pakistan, for example, conservatives and fanatics, revolutionaries and government supporters, favourable to Western and against Western. Rather, the characters appear with a much more noteworthy level of understanding and sympathy; they are driven by human worries of their own – pride, love and endurance – outside of international relations ([Halton, 2019](#)). Kamila Shamsie examines the clash of the collective consciousness and the individual choices of various characters in Ahmad's *The Wandering Falcon* that portrays a variety of social classes. According to her, women in this literary work seem to be opportunists instead of total victims. They use what they get and present themselves in crucial issues successfully.

This is not a book in which a central protagonist will walk down a path and invite the readers to follow him, narrative and personality cohering around him along the way. Instead, it is a book of glimpses into a world of strict rules and codes, where the individual is of far less significance than the collective ([Shamsie, 2011, p. 2](#)).

[Fatima Majeed \(2013\)](#) identifies the land as a character in *The Wandering Falcon*. According to her, the story does not dive much into the feelings of characters and by this procedure of representative prohibition and keeping down, and it gets lined up with the social standards of the characters. Characters do not participate with much through words and radiate archetypal Baloch and ancestral restraint. The infertile and unforgiving scene of the desert and mountains becomes a significant character and transfers more data than the statements of characters. The way of life and accounts of Balochistan have never been made public. She argues: "I felt the tribes had far more grace, a far greater sense of honor, rectitude, truth — the qualities we associate with a decent human being — than you found in the cities" ([Majeed, 2013, p. 3](#)).

On the other hand, Mr. I. A. Rehman (2011) highlights Ahmad's description of the land and its stories. He says that Jamil Ahmad has complete information on the land and its kin procured over long periods of close contact. Therefore, he comprehends his characters and records their contemplations and motivations and arranges their exchange without condemning their activities and musings. For [Rehman \(2011\)](#), Ahmad's stories are genuine regarding their stings, circumstances and characters (p. 3). [Arifa Akbar \(2011\)](#) pinpoints that Ahmad has tracked Mark Twain's endorsement 'to compose what one knows'. What he knows is his lived understanding of the South Asian tribal belt of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. This region itself presently turns into a deplorable place for its profoundly uncultivated nature. Ahmad uncovers this tenaciously immovable space that squashes the modernity ([Akbar, 2011, p. 2](#)). [Steve Inskip \(2011\)](#) shows total sympathy with the characters of *The Wandering Falcon*. He argues that the characters, the stories, and the scenes are delivered with lucidity, compassion, and knowledge. He acknowledges that Ahmad successfully makes readers travel with him. It feels that the readers while reading the stories, become the hopeless troopers posted in Pakistan's western desert ([Inskip, 2011, p. 2](#)).

Theoretical Framework

This article blends the theorization of Justin Williams' 'spatial justice' (2013) and Pierre Bourdieu's 'role of gender' (2001). This blend gives the ground formation of gender socialization to present how women's subjugated lives are affected by their surroundings, space and locality. Williams

concentrates that spatial justice reaches out on a focal understanding of environmental justice that gives new systematic instruments to political debates and advances examinations of both space and justice by paying attention to all bits of knowledge. He explains that the connotation of the spatial world impacts the reasonable ordering of human affairs. A direct case of this relationship is how highways cut up the metropolitan scene, disallowing specific sorts of developments, empowering others. This partition of the urban scene has offered to ascend to scrutinize the justice of this game plan, both from activist and scholastic circles. Spatial justice, above all else, is a logical system that gives a frontal edge to the role of space – a lot of material and philosophical relations that follow up on, yet are framed by the social relations – in creating justice and injustice.

Bourdieu argues the role of gender in spatial justice. He argues that women are designed to force structures of cooperative associations and powerful weapons, particularly representative ones, equipped for shaking the political and lawful foundations which influence propagating their subjection. Bourdieu sees “masculine domination and the way it is imposed and suffered as the prime example of this paradoxical submission – an effect of what [he] call[s] symbolic violence, a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims” (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 4). He explicates that inside the domestic circles, on which some women activists’ discussion has concentrated its consideration yet in organizations, for example, the school or the state, locales where standards of control that proceeds to be practised inside are created and forced. At that point, a massive field of action is opened up for women’s activist battles, which are in this way called upon to take an unmistakable and definitive spot inside political fighting against all types of domination. The crux of Bourdieu’s explanation of masculine domination in our world states that the quality of the masculine order is found in the way that it abstains from justification. The androcentric vision forces itself as neutral and has no compelling reason to explain itself in talks planned for legitimizing it. The social order capacities as a colossal representative machine tend to approve the manly mastery on which it is established.

Spatial Justice and Gender Socialization in *The Wandering Falcon*

Jamil Ahmad’s *The Wandering Falcon* (2011) accounts for nine short stories that depict the realistic and somehow bleak picture of the tribal areas of Pakistan with all its legacies and traditions. The fiction signifies space and land issues as the stories and their characters are directly and indirectly involved in these issues. Every short story in the delimited short stories collection is different concerning its plot even though they have similar settings – the remote areas of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. The nomadic life in the delimited text depicts that people are connected to their lands and commodities, whether they are suitable for people or not. The power and politics of the characters in tribes and government are appropriate lands, commodities and women. The concept of space produces various relationships that are spatially justified. This spatial organization of the factual world reflects supremacy and politics (Williams, 2013).

Space seems not a single barren concept; it is a phantasmagoria of relationships- power and politics together under the same roof. Space and land are under the availability of life throughout Ahmad’s work. Where there is not life, the land becomes barren and thoughtless. It looks as Ahmad has used very gloomy words to describe a few settings, but that is the essence of the deserted lands and their imagery. He created a perfect relationship between space and characters striving for life to move on and want to get a hold of it. The first paragraph from the first story, “Sins of the Mother”, shows glimpses of the deserted land. He said,

Lonely, as all such posts are, this one is particularly frightening. No habitation for miles around and no vegetation except for a few wasted and barren date trees leaning crazily against each other, and no water other than a trickle among some salt-encrusted boulders which also dries out occasionally, manifesting a degree of hostility (Ahmad, 2011, p. 1).

In *The Wandering Falcon*, this story narrates the story of a clan leader’s girl wedded to an unproductive man. She runs off with one of her father’s subordinates and discovers a barren lodge in an old and tidy fortress. Ahmad passes on the lovers’ dread and edginess as he portrays them being presented water on their landing in the stronghold big gates after a laborious journey. The couple discovers a warm stay in a deserted place of the fort. Then a child is conceived, and they bring up the

youngster in a shrouded corner for a long time until the Siahpad, their clan, sends men in quest of them. The couple and their child run for their wellbeing but are pursued down, and two stone sanctuaries are raised over their graves as an indication of Siahpads' vengeance. *The Wandering Falcon* is also an annoying evaluation of the hardhearted methods of country circumstances, as they try to force misleadingly developed suburbs on more recognized, more gooey universes.

Also, in one of the most remarkable stories, "The Death of Camels", Ahmed depicts the universe of a clan of animal herders who had to move their crowds from the mountains to the fields; from Afghanistan to Pakistan. They all were killed by the border's security soldiers for violating the law and not obeying the orders given. The conflict between individuals managing themselves through old ancestral codes and the advanced governments pervades Ahmad's accounts. Another story, "A Point of Honor", starts in the year 1950 and surrounds the six-year-old boy named Tor Baz, who is the wandering falcon, a kid of no fixed identity, moving between shaky worlds of loaded humankind, fortitude, mercilessness, and above all neediness so desperate that endurance is by all accounts the best goodness. This story shows a gathering of Baluch rebels, who take in Tor Baz after his folks' homicide. They keep on bantering over a Pakistani government circular reporting a proposal of discussions. The revolutionaries, driven by an old, half-dazed boss, walk gratefully to a place of admin for negotiations; however, they wind up being undermined and condemned to death for homicide.

Part of the vivid intensity originates from Ahmad's capacity to maintain regard for this universe of ancestral order with an unmistakable gander at its brutality. In "Sale Completed", a lady who has been stolen figures out how to get away and gets back to discover her once-cherishing spouse has re-wedded, and his newlywed wife has borne him a child, which lifts her in esteem over the mother of his girls; the lady, offended and contrived by the newlywed wife and her relative, decides to be offered to a brothel. She understands that she can learn mortification from outsiders rather than from those she knows.

The manner in which the narrative is directed has little regard for the tribesmen and their way of life. *The Wandering Falcon* lashes on dread and dehumanizing treatment of the tribal community. Ahmad writes like an operator of the state and has composed the work from a state-driven perspective. He indicates the tribal people as graceless, crude, brutal and boisterous, without inner mechanisms, working with no good moral qualities and rules. They have freely been on the outskirts and never felt to pay their taxes.

Space is just like a commodity but not a container in which the entities live. It is made up of social relationships in a society where all political, powerful ideologies live together. "Space is more than a container for a social process, inscribed with man's workings; space is instead the set of fluctuating material, social, and ideological relations that act on each other" (Williams, 2013). The value of space is justified within the barbaric tribal people at certain places where they are fighting and thriving for it. Their social space is constructed based on the availability of resources and the living style of the community. They move from one area to another just on account of their lives; otherwise, no one can make them shift anywhere else. As shown in another story, "The Death of Camels", wherein Ahmad portrays an immense tragedy of people, people are connected to their state when they say before the officials,

We are Pawindahs and belong to all countries or to none....What will happen to our herds? ... Our animals have to move if they are to live. To stop would mean death for them. Our way of life harms nobody. Why do you wish for us to change? ([Ahmad, 2011, p. 53](#))

Since space is a buildup of relations in which things continually move, space is a powerful cycle, not a predetermined guide of the universe. The flow of space and its production following time gives new places to new ways and commodities, and the process of life works like that. Ahmad, in "The Death of Camels", says: "The pressures were inexorable. One set of values, one way of life, had to die. In this clash, the state, as always, proved more decisive than the individual. The new way of life triumphed over the old ([Ahmad, 2011, p. 38](#)). This view of space argues three elements of physical, mental and social that makes the state, values and social clashes become a part of space and develop the essence of the particular places it deals with.

Space is a commodity in the case of tribes' projects, and their caste can also be seen as the building block of all the social relationships. Throughout the text, there is a caste change in every short story that depicts that the tribal people depend on it. In the short story "The Guide", Tirah valley and

other neighbouring ancestral social orders called agencies are presented as some sort of prohibited lands. The limits between these organizations are unsolidified and not concrete; however, here the lines delineate Tirah valley as carefully banned for outsiders, guests and to the individuals of the neighboring locals: "Tirah was a land forbidden to anybody other than a true Afridi, and anyone who violated this unwritten injunction would be in serious danger" ([Ahmad, 2011, p. 107](#)).

Like space, there is much research on gender that has developed its meaning towards dynamic dimensions, raising its voice on gender inequality. Bourdieu draws on his ethnographic information on the Berbers of Kabylia to investigate a general public that is altogether sorted out by what he calls the androcentric standard. Among the Kabyle, the genders' division and disparity show up common and underestimated and operated as an authentic principle of the community. In Ahmad's work, the women's role is also shown as taken for granted as they have to walk through atrocities of life without any regard and justification. In "The Sins of Mother", the description of a woman's clothes and expressions defines the confined gendered inequality she has to bear.

"The woman's clothes were grey with dust and sand...she was covered from head to foot in garments... was hardly more than a child, her red-rimmed eyes, her matted hair, her cracked and bleeding lips and an unearthly expression on her face" ([Ahmad, 2011, p.3](#)).

It is not that a woman is destitute from a place in the society; she maintains a household, a family and emotions of love inside her but still on the verge of no recognition. Ahmad depicts females as a bit stronger than usual, but it seems that their strength lies on the shoulders of their male partners or providers. Male's and female's desires eternalize their lust for recognition of their own. It is their wild instinct that has made them the believers of possession and subordination. "[M]ale desire as the desire for possession, eroticized domination, and female desire as the desire for masculine domination, as eroticized subordination or even, in the limiting case, as the eroticized recognition of domination" ([Bourdieu, 2001, p. 21](#)). In *The Wandering Falcon*, when Gul Jana is stared back to back by a young soldier, her way of seeking revenge with a deep insult to the soldier's owner depicts her possession of a strong male partner showing his domination over her. She says aloud to the soldier, "You there, who has been staring at me for a long time. Do you not know that you are smaller than my husband's organ?" ([Ahmad, 2011, p.48](#)). In "A Pound of Opium", Sher Beg sells his own daughter to a resident prince of Chitral just for some opium and a hundred rupees. She is named Sherakai, which means tigress. Sherakai's fate is not like her name, and here a paradox of male and female gender differentiation is seen where she is sold just like a child and bears children to someone at a very young age. Bourdieu's magnified image of a woman states, "...woman is constituted as a negative entity, defined only by default, even her virtues can only be affirmed by double negation, as vice denied or overcome" ([Bourdieu, 2001, p. 23](#)). In "A Kidnapping", Mahsuds and Wazirs plan the kidnapping of six school teachers for money. It is a difficult chase shown in the story to find them out and settle the matter with compensation. The inequality of social space is seen here with respectable women of society who live on their own without anyone's help. The comparison of spatial justice provided to women living in the tribes and educated countries can be compared on social and personal grounds.

Gul Bibi, who is supposed to be Tor Baz's mother, is the main female character in Ahmad's work. Gul Bibi elopes for love and bears Tor Baz between the military soldiers, but at last, her fate becomes eminent as expected in the patriarchal setup. Being alienated on her land, she has to leave her new home and run for life. She is caught and killed by her family tribesmen for being a woman of her own choice. In tribal societies, there is no spatial justice for women like GulBibi. Ahmad has bounced back again and again on the crafted space which women enjoy in his surroundings. "The liminal space she got does not prevent her life from vanishing away in the dust. There was nothing she got in the name of love and life. She lost both in the end or as lesser evils" ([Bourdieu, 2001, p. 27](#)).

In "Sale Completed", extreme outskirts of male domination where women are sold for marriage to men they never knew are shown. Afzal Khan happens to carry women for selling, which includes Sherakai and Shah Zarina. It seems that Tor Baz bought Shah Zarina for three thousand rupees on which both the parties are happy. She was young and considered a virgin, so a good pick for marriage. So, the negative entity a woman carries could be of some value for a man for just three thousand rupees. Bourdieu's concept of male domination over women is significantly seen here as she is out of choices, but she could be chosen by any man wandering about. Women share a challenging space in a commodified rough tribal world. *The Wandering Falcons* spotlights the fear and dehumanized

treatment of the tribal people and their women. The tribesmen, their way of life, their country, their lifestyle and the individuals themselves are appeared as unrefined, pitiless, fierce, and without a moral code of life. Male domination is by far the fiercest social product that saves and endangers other social relationships around.

Conclusion

Although Pakistan's ancestral regions have commanded the news and opinion pages for quite a long time, rarely has an author designated more noteworthy sympathy for its kin or carried such astuteness and information about a landscape generally blocked off to columnists and essayists. The Pak-Afghan wilderness has gotten inseparable from psychological oppressors and the motorized war of automatons. Jamil's accounts return humankind to this crushed milieu. His characters resist the much-exploited classes of our occasions: conservatives or radicals, Salafis or Sufis, experts or against Americans. Their interests are frequently conventional, generally troublesome battles for the existence of respect and love. The creation of space sees these interests through the social, material, and philosophical relations that are interconnected. The comprehension of this space explains the nature of the speculations of justice because the relations of justice are also spatially created. If this spatial creation of justice is valid, each theory of justice should essentially generate and present a good knowledge of space, locality, and class and their impact on the different social strata.

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