



The Interplay between Spatial Injustice and City Space in *Akhtar's Melody of a Tear*

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Abstract: *The present research explores spatial injustice in Akhtar's Melody of a Tear (2019) by utilizing theoretical underpinnings of Edward William Soja and Henri Lefebvre revolving around city spaces and spatial injustice in the cotemporary capitalistic society. It examines how spatial injustice and inequality are institutionalized in Karachi's city space and reveals how Karachiites are being segregated and exploited under the duress of encroaching capitalism and globalization. The research argues that space is not just living place; rather, it determines the inhabitants' destiny and quality of life. Consequently, it is the individual who suffers due to spatial segregation and injustice. Furthermore, this study also exposes institutions and their exploitative role in the implementation of spatial injustice in the characters' lives. Lastly, this research accentuates the struggles of assorted strata of society that is becoming the victims of spatial injustice while living in contemporary world. Therefore, the current research is of great significance as it explores factors associated with spatial injustice and spatial segregation in modern day living in city spaces. It adds a vital standpoint in the city space studies and contemporary scholarship on capitalistic societies.*

Key Words: Spatial Injustice, City Space, Capitalism, Globalization, Spatial Segregation

Introduction

This research has focused on the presence of spatial injustice in contemporary urban space especially of Karachi city by deeply investigating Haroon Khalid Akhtar's *Melody of a Tear* (2019). It delineates that how stressful societal norms, negatively, affect an individual's destiny irrespective of the nature of living conditions – posh or slum area both are equally affected. It is the social space that determines the happiness as well as wretchedness in modern day lives. Moreover, social space, especially urban space is responsible for executing justice and injustice in inhabitants' lives. In addition, this work also highlights the problems of materialism that is like a virus feeding upon the primary human values of Karachi's social milieu, is related with the rise of globalization and capitalism in the modern urbanized society. This research analyses how different characters in Akhtar's *Melody of a Tear* undergo harsh treatment owing to the segregation in Karachi's city space and how they endure their lives in the modern world.

The novel is set in the crumbling mansion named Sufaid Kothi in Karachi amidst the ambiance of rigid social hierarchies, identity crisis, psychological problems, spatial injustice, loss of societal values and debilitating economic conditions. In his novel, Akhtar has wonderfully depicted the shades of spatial injustice in the lives of his characters. The novel opens with a critical description of law and order in Karachi that snaps the social settings of Pakistani city space. Zara, the suicide-prone protagonist of the novel, declares Karachi as a "Grave-like space" (Akhtar, 2019, p.6) that embraces each and everything in it. Zara highlights the slums of the city, which are among the leading causes of spatial injustice as "the slums of Karachi for tragedies" (Akhtar, 2019, p.9). This statement reveals the painful condition of Karachi's city space in the novel and also establishes how Karachiites suffer throughout their lives from these issues. We have explored how Haroon Khalid Akhtar has wonderfully explored the act of spatial injustice and spatial segregation in the lifespan of his characters. The characters in the novel pursue their

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materialistic goals without caring about that whether means of income are morally and legally appropriate or not. All these factors give rise to the phenomena of spatial injustice, which is very effectively elaborated in the works of Henri Lefebvre and Edward William Soja. Henri Lefebvre is a French Marxist philosopher and urban sociologist who coined the term 'the right to the city' in his book *The Production of Space* (1991). Lefebvre argued that the space is established in the forms of mental, physical, and social elements. He introduced the concept of the 'spatial triad' that urban space is produced in three different components: perceived space, conceived space and lived space.

Edward William Soja is a contemporary geographer and an urban theorist. Soja defined spatial justice as intended and concentrated attention on the spatial or geographical features of justice and injustice and favored ideas of space and urban space proposed by Lefebvre. Edward Soja, in his book, *Seeking Spatial Justice* (2010), asserts spatial injustice is the outcome of developing unjust geographies, imbalances, the impact of globalization on the contemporary world, and the emergence of a new economy. Soja concentrates his critical analysis of space and society, or what he calls spatiality, on the places and people especially Los Angeles in his work.

Literature Review

Related to the discussion in the ongoing research, Dr Ali's thesis *Paracolonialism: A Case of Post-1988 Anglophone Fiction* (2014) contends that the novels of Mohsin Hamid highlight problems of a materialistic world in which there is no space for poor and jobless people. He differentiates between the upper and slum lifestyles of the characters. He also highlights how characters struggle to get the appropriate space in the city. His remarks on the portrayal of the city space of Lahore in *Moth Smoke* (2000) by announcing that Hamid showed Lahore as a space of "various contesting forces" whose scuffles in the midst of each other affirms the segregation and spatial injustice between different social strata (Saleem, 2014, p.148). Likewise, in another novel, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, (2013) Hamid captures the struggle of a village boy progressing from rags to riches. In reality, he contends that city spaces were shaped and then re-shaped on the will of numerous urban capitalistic powers that prefer their needs and satisfy their demands (Shakeel & Saleem, 2017, p.31).

Moreover, spatial injustice in the wake of globalization and capitalistic hegemony has led to class segregation, inequalities, and spatial cleansing. Space is essentially the product of social, economic, political, technical, and strategic activities and can scarcely be measured in quantitative ways. Zaidi et al. (2021) highlight how social space enforces spatial injustice and serves the ingraining of spatial cleansing among the inhabitants of the urban space of Karachi. They argue that the engrafting of spatial cleansing in the lives of Karachiites results in multiple standardization and segregations based on living standards among diverse social strata in Kamila Shamsie's *Kartography* (2002). The novel begins with the problematic situation of law and order in Karachi that snapshots the upheaval of the Pakistani political scenario. It shows the insecurities that Karachiites have about the security of their children. The harsh situation of the city space of Karachi is revealed in the novel when Yasmeen, the mother of the protagonist Raheen, declares about her uncle that "he is having a doomsday vision" and "he wants the kids away from Karachi" (Shamsie, 2002, p.9). The metropolis of Karachi is filled with threats and conflicts, and to save the children, he proposes directing them to Rahim-Yar-Khan. He essentially ponders that the wrapped city space of Pakistan is beyond the whole socio-political dilemma, and he desires to modify the cityscape of Karachi and to save the city from the dominating conditions. Raheen announces Karachi as a "spider plant city" (Shamsie, 2002, p.3) which absorbs everything in it. Karachi is a city that greets every transformation in the living styles, and the city has embraced the Western attitude of living and thinking that caused the riots and conflicts among the citizens of Pakistan. They proclaim that "it is almost improbable to enforce spatial justice in this postmodern scenario as everyone is following their own materialistic pursuits without bothering about the basic societal norms and values" (Zaidi et al., 2021, p.351). They examine Shamsie's *Kartography* as an interpretive tool to explore contemporary urban social issues.

Dr. Ali Usman Saleem and Zubia Shakeel have also discussed spatial segregation and spatial discipline in their research article "Reading Lahore as A Postmodern Space of Conflict – A Lefebvrian study of Hamid's Fiction" (2017). They agree with the notion of spatial injustice and state that the central city

spaces of Pakistan (chiefly Lahore) are spatially segregated and politically polarized by the “structures of power” (Shakeel & Saleem, 2017, p.27). These are generating economic imbalance and injustice by pointing to the situation of the cityscape, urban development, and urban reconstruction. They elaborated in their article that how do the ‘othered’ and spatially segregated stratum of society struggle for their own socio-political and economic rights under the limitations of the overall impact of capitalism and globalization. They concentrated on the cityscapes of Lahore and emphasized how the isolated stratum of Lahore is opposing “the repressive, tyrannical and dominating spatial practices of city capital to fight for the city” (p.43). They concluded the entire debate by proclaiming that without caring about their identities, religious ethnicities, and social relations. This group of spatial others contributes a “common critical spatial consciousness” (p.43), which guarantees that the city capital downsizes them. They have a fend for the right to sabotage them by utilizing all ways imaginable. They support the idea that this fight for spatial equality turns Lahore into chaotic, irritating land and, especially, a space of conflict.

Claire Chambers (2016) in her research “Lahore Lahore hai: Bapsi Sidhwa and Mohsin Hamid’s city fictions” in Chakraborty, M and Al-wazeedi, U. (eds). *Postcolonial urban outcasts: city margins in South Asian Literature*. explores Bapsi Sidhwa’s *The Pakistani Bride* (1983) to expose the city space of Lahore. The novel captures a vivid portrayal of a space where young girls from diverse parts of the country and the city put their bodies on display also known as a “female street” (Sidhwa, 1983, p.60). Sidhwa presents the history of “Lahore- the ancient whore, the handmaiden of dimly remembered Hindu Kings, the courtesan of Mughal Emperors, bedecked and bejeweled savaged by marauding hordes” (Sidhwa, 1983, p.43). Chambers asserts that Hamid and Sidhwa trace the genesis of this modification back to the class, gender, and ethnic divisions that have always been present in the city and which were exasperated by the creation of Pakistan.

Theoretical Framework

Henri Lefebvre in his most critical and influential work, *The Production of Space*, which was initially published in France in 1974 and later translated into English by Donald Nicholson-Smith in 1991, formulates the arguments of space and city space in his work. Lefebvre describes a unitary theory by defining a theoretical unity between fields which are “first, the physical- nature, the Cosmos; secondly, the mental, including the logical and formal abstractions; and thirdly, the social” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.11). Urban space, according to Lefebvre, is a process of social construction that is created through social relations. He declared that the study of space necessitates analyzing the representations through the dialectical levels of space mentioned as three spatial concepts known as the ‘conceptual triad’ or ‘spatial triad’. Henri Lefebvre exhibits his notion of the spatial triad that constitutes: spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces. In Lefebvre’s perspective, the idea of space is based upon these three key concepts. The first concept is Spatial Practice which embraces the production and reproduction of space, the specific positions, and spatial sets qualities of individual social organization. Spatial practice assures persistently and some degree of coherence. The second one is Representations of Space which is fastened to the interrelations of production and to the ‘order’ that those associations enforce to inform signs, codes, and ‘frontal’ interaction. The third concept is Representational Spaces that incarnate complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, associated with the covert or undercover side of social life, as also with art (Lefebvre, 1991, p.33).

Mark Gottdiener, an urban social theorist, expounds his views on the spatial triad in his article entitled *A Marx for Our Time: Henri Lefebvre and Production of Space* asserts that this extremely significant ‘triad’ links with the representation of the signification of space as perceived, conceived and lived, and the ways that space penetrates social relationship at all standards. He argues that space is a physical atmosphere that can be perceived, a semiotic abstraction that appraises how average individuals execute space (the mental portrayals surveyed by geographers). The space of collaboration, planners, politicians, and the like; and, eventually, a method through which the body lives out of its life in connections with body social interactions also are spatial interactions; we cannot talk about the one about without the other (Gottdiener, 1993, P.131).

Edward William Soja, a renowned contemporary political geographer, an urban theorist, and a Nobel Prize winner in Geography, also favored Lefebvre’s conception of space and city space. Impacted by



Lefebvre, Soja upgraded Lefebvre's notion of the spatial triad with his notion of 'spatial Trialectics' in his book *Seeking Spatial Justice* (2010). He argues that spatial Trialectics comprises third spaces or spaces that are both real or imagined. Soja draws critical insight into a crucial social theory to induce innovation in the societal and spatial analysis domain with a particular concentration on the battle over the control of space in the city and the egression of new types of urbanization. He also supports the statement of Lefebvre that space is generated by society, and a similar perspective also adjudicates even its establishment and meaning. Still, in return, this spatiality proceeds to mold society and its production of space. Soja's theory of 'Trialectics' or 'Third space' describes three urban spaces: first space, second space, and third space. The first space is the physically constructed environment, which can be mapped, quantifiably measured, and viewed in the actual world. It is an outcome of urban planning, laws, political decisions, and urban transformations over time. The second space is conceptual space which means how that space is conceived in the minds of the people who inhabit it. It is a product of marketing strategies, re-imaging, and social norms that decide how people might act or behave in that space. The third space is both real and imagined. It is the lived space, the way that people live in and experience that urban space. This is action in the real space (first space) enacted through the expectations of the second space. In the third space, everything comes together subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure, and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history. In his book *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (1989), Soja discusses the effect of capitalism and globalization in this contemporary era. The spatial agreement of community has transformed and is being reorganized according to the necessities of capitalism in crisis. Behind all this is their incentive for acquiring more profits, balancing social control, and denoting expanded production and consumption (Soja, 1989, p.34). Soja remarks that spatial modifications appearing under the effect of globalization and capitalism were not pretended to be an automated by-product of revolutionary social modification. Collective consciousness and a struggle of an individual who is also engaged to extinguish spatial problems. The space will continuously create social injustice, inequality, and developmental structure without spatial modifications. I favor all these statements mentioned above by theorists Henri Lefebvre and Edward William Soja. In this research, I utilize their concepts about space, city space, and spatial injustice for analyzing Akhtar's novel *Melody of a Tear* (2019) to prove my viewpoint in research that spatial injustice exists in the lives of Karachiites.

Analysis

Spatial injustice thrives due to gender discrimination in society. Patriarchy plays an important role in the formation of identity construction in this contemporary era. Akhtar, through his characters, portrays this incident efficiently in his novel. In the novel, Zara is raised by her father as a son. There is a conflict in her personality related to masculinity and femininity since her childhood. At the very beginning of the novel, there is much evidence about Zara's father performing his role in identity fabrication and performativity by stating that: "My boy, look what I brought for you! A cologne. I am a proud father of two strong lads. Stop sulking and do some push-ups for me" (Akhtar, 2019, p.12). These phrases like boy, cologne, lads, and push-ups are notable here. Her father inculcates this idea of masculinity in Zara's mind and her rejection of being a female according to her biological characteristics, causes emotional injustice and stress throughout her life.

The novel begins with the description of suicide, which is the leading cause of spatial injustice. People are disproportionately affected by societal conditions, including inequalities, discrimination, repression, and disputes in space that are the leading causes of suicide in the city space of Karachi. The emotional sufferings of individuals, families, friends, and economic issues are also an upshot of suicide in Karachi's city space. Currently, unjust, discriminatory conditions and prejudiced attitudes often contribute to suicides. As in the novel, the suicide-prone protagonist of the novel, Zara, utters the very opening lines of the text that "in matters of private suicide, a woman, in particular, is really her own advisor, from planning to execution" (Akhtar, 2019, p.05). Her approach to suicide seeks to apprehend suicide in the context of unequal concentrations of 'primary goods,' i.e., substantive rights, social associations, expulsions, opportunities, and particularly lack of attention. She cannot settle herself in the city space of Karachi because, in the city, she is dressed only to kill her diseased body as she argues that a tidy end is a curing

death to a morbid existence (p.05). This forceful argument shows Zara's shallowness of her personality caused by the clash between gender and sex, which ultimately leads her to suicide. She further comments "I became suicide-prone somewhere in my twenties when the sporadic dread of a long, enervating started to eat away my imagination- a trusted vastness- gradually reducing it to grave-like space that suffocated every delusion" (p.06). She feels suffocation in this grave-like space of Karachi and wants to get rid of it. Zara becomes the victim of suicide because of the futuristic vision of her career. She does not fulfill her father's desires and wants to commit suicide to get rid of daily routine matters of life. Zara shares her family backdrop that no one in the family committed suicide at a very early age. She argues that her antecedents are in the habit of dying in the bypass era because they live in such an environment where these issues do not exist. Zara desires to commit suicide because she believes her arguments are too obvious. Zara's overall sense of hopelessness and frustration is obvious in societal dilemmas. Still, other significant matters such as lack of justice, the providence of basic amenities such as poor infrastructure, lawlessness, unemployment, and poverty all are the causes of suicide. People commit suicide to get rid of these issues. So, death becomes the flickering desire of the Karachiites due to these inequalities and injustices surrounding and engulfing the city space of Karachi.

Another bulging issue that causes spatial injustice in the city space of Karachi is the slum areas. Many Karachiites adhere to live in these localities and these locations lack access to healthy living, such as purified water, sound sanitation strategies, and perdurable houses. These spheres are overcrowded with a colossal populace and immense difficulties like appropriate bad health centers, an imbalanced economy, an inappropriate environment, and a lack of security. As Edward William Soja perfectly called this world a planet of slums (Soja, 2010, p.44). Soja further asserts that "this deepening chasm between the rich and poor populations of the world is perhaps the most emphatic life-threatening expression of spatial injustice at a global scale" (Soja, 2010, p.44). This impact is efficiently highlighted in *Melody of a Tear* when Zara is at Sufaid Kothi, where the Parsi family dwells. She was enquiring about the backyard of the crumbling mansion named 'Sufaid Kothi'. She envisages the visit of Zaid to this mansion and argues that "was scavenger Zaid back too in that fleeting realm, sifting through the slums of Karachi for tragedies he could make his own? I failed to feel any affirmation" (p.08). Zaid, her former classmate's visit to this slum area made her suspicious because she didn't believe that Zaid was a resident of that place. She questions herself about how Zaid can make this place of the tragedy his own because mud houses surround this place, and she blames the city space of Karachi for the disasters. She ponders over this slummy area and also investigates the reason that forces Zaid to reside in this locale. Zara, who had been looking for Zaid for many months, finally saw Zaid with a young girl named 'Arus' at Sufaid Kothi. Zaid tells her that he becomes the girl's guardian at her mother's request without providing much detail. He claims that "the mother, a stranger, has met him outside the mosque in Gutter Baghicha- an oddly name slum- where he had gone to attend the funeral of a burnt factory worker he never knew" (p.62). Zara was astonished to hear how a mother could give her young child to a stranger guardian. This statement highlights the severe condition of law and order in Karachi because it reveals the insecurities Karachiites inherit. They think they don't have such resources to look after their children. This description of the slum foregrounds the living conditions and describes the current situation of how spatial injustice is dominating the city space of Karachi.

Karachi, a metropolitan city, is significantly impacted by capitalism and globalization. Along with subsuming the predicament of city life, it also impacts its history, values, standards, institutions, and cultures. As human being depends upon societal components, history, and geography, Karachi's urban space conceals the whole wretchedness and activeness of the common man living in it. It determines the surroundings in which human beings inhabit as Lefebvre states that space in separation is a vacant abstraction and invariably functions with energy and time (Lefebvre, 1991, p.12). Karachi's city space has not given meaning and organization to the society in which Karachiites are living. Karachiites as part of the present-day world have to face multiple margins and restrictions, or in other words, suffer from spatial injustice at numerous standards of life. Karachiites are adhered to their geographies and are accountable for producing their identifications and the societies in which they live. It is a city space that is responsible for inequality in their lives. Space has produced multiple identities based on ethnicity, nationality, religion, and materialism, resulting in inequities among diverse geographical dispersions and social procedures that become the primary cause of prevailing spatial injustices in the society of Karachi. The most incredible tool



for enforcing spatial injustice is spatial cleansing which substantially depicts the intrusive existence of legislation and inequality with particular reference to social space (Herzfeld, 2006, p.127). It is basically the abstraction performed by space that Karachiites have to suffer in their everyday life and is just another means of enforcing spatial injustice in the lives of people dwelling in that specific urban space. The injustice is executed upon various standards, whether it is based on materialism, religious identity, ethnic identity, or gender identity.

As Lefebvre describes, the city space is “a space which is fashioned, shaped and invested by social activities during a finite historical period” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.73). He also declares that to create a city space, we set some distinctions and establish the substructure of spatial injustice (Shakeel & Saleem, 2017, p.28). This argument is effectively highlighted in Akhtar’s *Melody of a Tear* (2019) which causes spatial injustice in the lives of its inhabitants which is based on the names of places of the city. The cities are named on such cheap terms due to which their residents face injustice in their lives. As in the novel, when Zaid arrives home, Waris welcomes Zaid and his guest like a celebrity. He serves them tea and informs them of Karachi’s situation. He says that a child was drawing in a manhole three years ago. The rescue teams discovered the body floating in the Malir Naddi, a polluted creek a few miles away from his house. The description of this event is accentuated in the novel as “We heard his tragedies like our own. On its day (which seemed like every day), Karachi could become ridiculously ironic. The names of some of its localities like Macchar Colony (Mosquito Colony), Gutter Baghicha (gutter garden), and of course Malir Naddi (Malir stream), a drain, were a treatment to that” (p.92). This portrayal vividly highlights how Karachi is becoming ridiculous and ironic in describing its names. Macchar Colony, Gutter Baghicha, and Malir Naddi are the awkward names of slums. These localities are depicted through the course of the novel and are considered to be one of the most dilapidated slums of Karachi. These names are resulting spatial injustice in the lives of its inhabitants.

The idea of spatial injustice originated due to the political theory of class differences among multiple sectors of society. This class discrimination directs thinkers to the philosophical notions of Marxism that raise voices against the unequal distribution of wealth among people. It talks about the social conflicts happening in society under the impact of capitalism and globalization. Capitalism is an act of the domination of private sectors upon the economy and politics of a country, and it is itself an act of discrimination. Haroon Khalid Akhtar in *Melody of a Tear* (2019) elaborated on this issue very efficiently. His portrayals of different incidents strongly support the statements mentioned earlier. Many incidents highlight this issue, among them one is when Zara is settled in the north of Clifton, Saddar Bazaar, a middle-class arena full of encroachments and clashes. Through the character of Zara, the novelist accentuates how the people of the lower social structures suffer and are manipulated by the ruling class sharing the same urban space. This event points out the nature of present-day city space and the unfair allocation of money that ultimately leads to class differences, resulting in spatial injustice in their lives. It manifests that Zara efficiently explores this effect when purchasing some goods in Saddar Bazar from pushcart vendors. She comments that: “Like many Karachiites, I too had struck incredibly cheap bargains with them, from clothes to household items, feeling victorious over haggling away a portion of their tiny income, stealing a morsel or two from their children’s mouth” (p.27). The point shows that Karachiites feel so cheerful if they have a cheap bargain with the pushcart vendors and feel victorious by doing good bargaining over ordinary things. They snatched morsels from their children’s mouths even in regular items of daily life. They show their supremacy over the poor class of society. This incident perfectly portrays the spatial distribution of poverty in Karachi. It locates clusters of poverty and presents a profile in the city where the poor are becoming the victim at the hands of the elite class. Poverty is increasing on daily basis, and the leading cause of increasing poverty is the Brobdingnagian enhancement in population. Soja advocates this statement by declaring that in just the previous year the “national population living below the poverty line had increased by more than a million and social popularization, measured by the income gap between the superwealthy and the working poor, reached levels unparalleled” (Soja, 2010, p.180). Karachi’s mounting population has expanded into the city so much that is destroying the urban economy, damaging the social strata of Karachi, and causing spatial injustice in the city.

Economic structuring and restructuring are becoming the central problem in the rise of poverty. Economic growth with fewer job opportunities, low labor wages, and an enhancement in population and

the global economy gives rise to poverty. As Soja asserts in his book, “economic restructuring and increasing poverty and social polarization, and the rise of so-called New Economy has worsened the problems” (Soja, 2010, p. xi). The spatial distribution locates the poverty clusters and presents a city’s profile. Most of the population suffers from an acute shortage of money and resides in an age of absolute poverty. Currently, poverty has become a global problem, especially in developing countries. Poverty has transformed and worsened the whole scenario of the world, particularly in Karachi. Akhtar efficiently highlighted the impact of poverty which is dominating Karachi’s city space. In the novel, Zara depicts the conditions of the poor laborers in the Saddar Bazaar. She points out that humanity has reached the stage where everyone tries to snatch the rights of the poor. Instead of surviving their livelihood, they are busy sweeping humankind from the world map and making the right of earning to endure an independent survival. The poor man melts his days and nights to feed his children, as Zara claims that a poor father who works all day under the sun to bring a night’s meal to his family (p.27). These laborers work day and night like machines to earn their livelihood and feed their children’s stomachs. They skip their meal, not for one day but for many days. The encroachment in Saddar Bazaar is also damaging the social strata of Karachi. The poor are not allowed to put their stalls in the markets and are pushed away from the bazaar. All these issues dominating the Saddar Bazaar are highlighted in a letter in the following words as Zara comments, “could that brief, sensitive letter bring Saddar’s encroachment back? Could it uphold sweaty labour?” (p.27). Zara thought these uprooted and dignified men desired to shut down the present state of the bazaar. They are entirely dependent on others because of these encroachments in the bazaar. The poor flow their sweat all day long to earn money, but this space is doing injustice to them because they cannot acquire proper rights of living in this era of globalization and capitalism where money is everything.

Karachi’s social space has been prominently affected by this segregation in the era of globalization. Almost all inhabitants went through segregation owing to partition and migration. Karachi is a city that is filled with multiple races, class structures, and ethnic identities. The city’s social space has been highly affected by this segregation, which dominates the lives of individuals. Recent spatial studies have introduced the phenomenon of spatiality, which has generated distinct boundaries among different make-ups of human life. It has challenged all spatial aspects existing in ordinary individuals’ lives, whether social, religious, or political. They assert the notion of space by declaring that God created each and everything and manages every incident in the lives of human beings by maintaining the conception of the creation. It influences two processes: the space is generated by the people and the environment. In contrast, the fates of the environment and human beings are the chief outcome of the social space that is created in that peculiar city.

This segregation of Karachi’s contemporary city space is effectively elaborated in *Melody of a Tear*. The novel begins with the severe condition of law and order in Karachi. Zara, the novel’s protagonist, declares the city space of Karachi as the “heartless metropolis” (p.9) which engulfs everything in it. The cityscape of Karachi has no feelings or emotions for its inhabitants, whether they are living a prosperous life or not, or whether they face justice or become the victim of injustice. Karachi’s space treated them like a stranger. She states that Karachi’s cityscape is like an ignited hearth (p.9). The city welcomes every transformation in the living attitudes and every individual regardless of identity, race, religion, and culture. Owing to these characteristics, Karachi has adopted the western attitudes of living and thinking styles that aim to eradicate all societal, religious, and political structures of society. It has modified all the old conceptions of living styles, that are dominating the mindsets of Karachiites, and as an outcome of all these circumstances creating riots and conflicts among the dwellers of Karachi, upsetting spatial segregation in their lives. The lack of freedom to go anywhere in the city and do whatever you want is also among the main factors of the segregated nature of contemporary city space. People are not allowed to follow their free will. They entirely bound themselves in their geographies and the eminence in their lives is of great significance. Just as in the novel *Melody of a Tear*, Zara, during her search for Zaid, comments that it is a bizarre space. Furthermore, she confirms that she never gets as much space to move freely in Karachi. She criticizes the lives of Karachiites by saying that their life is full of marginalization. Her comment highlights the segregation when she states that “spectacle was reaffirming the sadistic rules Karachi bound its citizens with; rules that arrested free spirit, rules that turned day’s progress illusory by sunset, rules preventing working men from returning to their families in daylight” (p.17). She condemns the living styles of Karachiites by arguing that their life is compressed into houses, cars, offices, and private



clubs, and it becomes a major problem from which the Karachiites suffer. Edward Soja states that “segregation becomes a problem; however, when it is rigidly imposed from above as a form of subjugation and control as an oppressive by-product of unregulated “freedoms of choice operating within persistent spatial structures of advantage” (Soja, 2010, p.55). Women essentially adhere to their houses to check their daily routine matters. They are facing spatial inequity in Karachi and throughout their lives; they try to seek freedom; freedom to live on, freedom to pass and enjoy time with families, freedom to relish the space, the environment, and in a nutshell, freedom to stay happy and prosperous by living in a city.

Conclusion

The research concludes that spatial injustice is being executed in the contemporary city space in modern capitalistic and urbanized societies and most conspicuously in Karachi’s city space under the nexus of capitalism and globalization. Spatial injustice is detrimental to the core of our societal structures that tear out city spaces; it adjudicates the destiny of the dwellers of that specific city. The fundamental dilemma in this contemporary world is that it is not the spatial injustice only that is detrimental to the social strata. Instead, capitalist supremacy is also acting the same role and, in fact, the more vicious one. The common man has lost his identification and has become the dupe of this hegemonic frame of mind causing the exploitation of human beings by their social institutes and the victimization of social institutions themselves. I have explored all these statements by giving instances from Haroon Khalid Akhtar’s novel *Melody of a Tear* (2019) that supports these notions as described earlier in this research. This study would provide formidable new grounds to explore pertinent issues and complexities involved in city spaces and beyond.

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