READING LAHORE AS A POSTMODERN SPACE OF CONFLICT – A LEFEBVRIAN STUDY OF HAMID'S FICTION

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Abstract

This research looks at Mohsin Hamid's literary representation of Lahore in *Moth Smoke* (2000) and *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) to demonstrate how one of the major postmodern cityscapes of Pakistan is spatially segregated and politically segmented by the structures of power and is perpetuating socio-economic inequality and injustice by focusing on the phenomena of cityscape, urban expansion, and urban restructuring. Owing to the growing socio-economic importance of Lahore as a major metropolis of South Asia, it is pertinent to investigate its representation in the contemporary fiction and the role it plays in fashioning a strategic and critical spatial consciousness of Pakistani society. Drawing on the concepts of Lefebvre, Soja and Hicks, this research determines that the marginalized segments of Lahore as represented in Hamid's fiction through the characters of Daru, Murad Badshah, Dilaram, Pretty Girl, and unnamed protagonist of *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* struggle against the hegemonic structures of spatial segregation and oppression and come up with new and more egalitarian reorganizations of space through their lived daily experiences. This paper concludes that this struggle of spatial resistance against the urban capital is turning Lahore into a space of conflict and this conflicted literary representation of Lahore by Hamid contributes to the fashioning of urban identity of its reader. Hence these texts should be studied keeping in mind Hicks' concept of postmodern urban dystopia rather than simpler realist fiction.

Key Words: Lahore, space of conflict, spatial justice, cityscape, postmodern urban dystopia

Introduction

The current research is an effort to explore the cityscape of Lahore as a multi-dimensional notion. The first section of this paper mainly draws upon Henri Lefebvre's concept of spatial production to study how the postmodern city space of Pakistani metropolis is socially constructed and politically segmented (1991). The second section of this paper incorporates Edward W. Soja's vision and conception of spatial justice to see how the marginalized and *spatially othered* stratum of society resist against the structures of hegemonic urban capital and fight for a 'Just City' (2010). Our analysis of Hamid's literary representation of Lahore demonstrates that he rejects the idea of a utopian city, a "Disneyesque

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Tomorrowland", or even a Just City – he rather focuses more on highlighting Lahore as a chaotic, failing entity (Hicks, 2015, p.2). Thus, the last section of this paper focuses on Hamid's representation of collapsing Lahore in the light of J. L. Hicks' concept of postmodern urban dystopia (2014). Hicks labelled the chaotic representation of the city in contemporary cinema and literature as postmodern urban dystopia, and this research suggests that the representation of Lahore by Hamid can also be termed the same.

The Lefebvrian Space; Notion of Spatial (In)Justice; and the Formation of a Postmodern Urban Dystopia

Henry Lefebvre's model of Production of Space (1991) here functions as theoretical frame for the discussion of space and its socio-political connotations in case of Lahore. Lefebvre has discussed the construction of space in terms of physical, mental, and social elements rather than its "strictly geometrical meanings" with the help of a conceptual space triad (p. 1). According to him, an urbanspace is created in three different phases: representation of space, which is the conceived space; spatial practice, which is the perceived space; and finally the representational space, which is the discourse of space (1991, p. 33). 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 to use, which we argue sets some limits and demarcations of the cityspace for its inhabitants and thus serves as a first organized and institutionalized step of spatial injustice (p. 39).

In the next phase of Spatial Practice, the space that is created and developed by city planners is used by those who live in it. At this level space becomes a mentally "perceived" idea since in this phase space shifts from the maps and charts to city inhabitant's mind (Lefebvre, 1991, p.38). This phase of Lefebvre's spatial triad is the main point of urban conflict in case of Lahore. It puts forward a contrast between the daily routine and urban reality[1] of a citizen. For instance, the daily lived

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[1] A *daily routine* of an urban resident consists of how he plans to spend his day in his mind whereas *urban reality* includes all those factors that may hinder, modify or challenge his daily routine. This includes traffic signals or check posts controlling his social mobility and "right of admission reserved" type buildings and events. This also

experiences (routine) of an individual require him to go to work every morning. But which road in the city he is allowed to take to reach his workplace from home is hindered, revoked or controlled by city architects or planners in the form of boundary walls, roads, signals, toll plazas and check posts is his urban reality. Thus, our paper studies Lefebvrian spatial practice as a point of eruption for spatial unrest, disturbance, confusion and chaos in case of Lahore and terms it as *space of conflict.*

Hamid's fiction comments several times on the use of representation of space as the main tool urban capital uses to control not only the cityspace of Lahore but also its residents[2]. The "most unequal city" of the world, Lahore is segregated into two spatial classes (Hamid, 2013, p. 172); when this unjust and biased division of space is put into practice (spatial practice as Lefebvre calls it) one stratum of society "stand[s] to benefit from this ongoing growth" whereas the other "suffer[s] the effects of poverty and spatial segregation" (Hicks, 2014, p.1).

The third phase of space construction – Spaces of Representation – is the space imagined by the inhabitants of the city with the help of landmarks, meeting places, images and symbols. In this phase, an individual citizen creates his identity by the image of city or his urban reality. If city capital (that includes state officials, urbanists, city planners, city government, landowners, architects and civil engineers) controls the representational spaces or spaces of representation, it completely controls the process of identity formation of that citizen. This phase of space is named as "space of users" and "space of inhabitants" by Lefebvre since this phase is mainly identified by them through their personal and subjective "lived experiences" with the help of certain signs and symbols (1991, p.39). Lefebvrian Spatial triad suggests that social space consists of fragments – it is controlled by city

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includes all sorts of state laws that may stop him from enjoying his urban space freely, for instance a recent ban on the festival of Basant by the city government.

[2] Recently an extra wall was built in Lahore Cantt's area around one side of the Combined Military Hospital. The purpose of the wall was to establish an extra boundary wall to control the traffic flow. Only staff's vehicles were allowed to cross that wall and the rest of the vehicles had to take an alternative road to cross the Cantt area. This wall proved to be a beneficial addition for the hospital staff, which is by the way only for army staff and their families, but the rest of the citizens had to spend more time while commuting for work. This is just an example how spatial practice works and how our research views it.

capital, physically in the form of city maps and models, and is perceived by its inhabitants, in form of their memories and daily experiences. In this context, this study asserts that construction of an urban space is not a neutral process, rather it serves as a powerful tool for city capital to not only design and define the physical space of city but also re-shapes the identity structures of its citizens through the fashioning of their urban reality.

Drawing upon Lefebvre's socio-political conceptual triad of space production, Soja introduced his own socio-spatial dialect and argued that "spatial shapes social as much as the social shapes spatial", this further strengthens the argument that the spatial segmentation controls social relations of individuals sharing a same cityscape (2009, p.2). Thus, the city's power-structures, environmental crisis and even notions of justice and injustice are all embedded in a "broad critical spatial perspective" (2009 p.1). Like Soja, Justin Williams (2013) also agrees that justice always has a "consequential geography" and the debate about the future of postmodern cities is basically the "question of justice" (p. 1). Thus, this paper while questioning the role of production of space also indulges in the debates of spatial [in]justice and the role it is playing in the construction of Lahore in a conflict zone.

Hamid's fiction highlights the antagonisms generated on account of this spatial injustice – such as violence, social unrest and chaos in the streets of Lahore. Those who are the urban dispossessed – slum dwellers, rural migrants, social outcasts, women and children- i.e., the ones living on the margins of the city, namely Daru, Manucci, Dilaram, Murad Badshah, Pretty Girl and the Unnamed protagonist of *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, the experience of living in the metropolitan city for them is exhausting because the new urban restructuring denies them equal rights and quality of life. The new spatial setup of cityscape is thus seen as empowering one stratum of society and pushing the other to the margins by depriving them of any basic communal rights, justice and equality. This imbalanced "ownership and control of urban space" and the restlessness and chaos it causes in the city is termed as "urban dystopia" by Hicks (2014, p. 7).

Lahore - The 'Most Unequal City' of Rising Asia

Moth Smoke is the story of "various contesting forces" that exist simultaneously in a spatially segregated Lahore (Saleem, 2015, p. 148).

By focusing on the contrasting characters of Darashikoh Shezad (Daru) – a middleclass aimless MBA employed at a bank – and his childhood friend Aurungzeb (Ozi) – a privileged foreign-qualified landlord – Hamid highlights the ongoing structures of injustice in the city of Lahore through the control of land. Ozi belongs to the urban capital, a spatial class that legitimizes the control of space and available resources in their favor (Lefebvre, 1991); this inculcates a sense of alienation, un-belonging and resentment among the spatially marginalized stratum (Hicks, 2014)which in this case is Daru.

How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia (2013) is a novel of unnamed characters and undisclosed locations, but with a close reading of the text, it is fairly easy to identify that the novel has been set in Lahore. Hamid has written this novel in a mock self-help book form; throughout the novel, he addresses his protagonist as "You" and provides him twelve no-fail tips to get filthy rich in rising Asia. On surface level, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* is a "rags to riches" tale of a village boy in Lahore (Khalid, 2013, para.1). But on a deeper level it is a brilliant socio-political critique of the ways urban capital reshapes and restructures cityscape in their favor. From moving to the city, to befriending a bureaucrat, to using violence and power as means of survival in the metropolis – Hamid comments on all practices adopted by capital to maintain a firm spatial control in the city.

Lefebvre's theorization of space in a socio-political context claims that the forces of capital focuses on the *representation of space* in order to legitimize and "ensure an initial and continuing control of urban space" (Hicks, 2014, p.4). This is done through the official acts of policy making, "zoning schemes, design briefs, maps, plans, drawings" and even "artistic impressions" of the city (Leary-Owhinh, 2012, p. 69). This official and administrative act of developing the representation of space is of course not neutral, it imposes "certain meanings onto urban space" (Leary-Owhinh, 2012, p. 69) that we argue ascribes an elite-favoring narrative to the landscape of Lahore as commented by Hamid in almost all of his novels. Furthermore, Hamid's fiction not only comments on the phenomena of politicizing space by the capital through the portrayal of various urban planning schemes initiated by men of power in Lahore but also comments on the "socio-political process of alienation" it develops in 1the city for the *spatially othered* (Busquet & Lavue, 2013, p.1).

In his first novel *Moth Smoke*, Hamid has observed that the spatial stratification of Lahore caused by this process of spatial planning results in the creation of two social classes: "The first group, large and sweaty, contains those referred to as the masses. The second group is much smaller, but its members exercise vastly greater control over their immediate environment and are collectively termed the elite" (2000, p. 102). In all of his novels written till date, Hamid has viewed the cityscape of Lahore as spatially divided into two strata – one is what he terms as elite, referred to as urban capital in our research, controls the space and thus the hierarchy of social relations that develop in the space, and the other is what he calls masses and I'm referring to as spatially othered. Similarly, in *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia,* Hamid's characters are again surviving in a universe of binaries: zone 1 and zone 2, zone 1 being the controlling forces of the city that constructs the space for the masses "[our city] is subject to massive gravitational pulls from states. States tug at us. States bend us. And, tirelessly, states seek to determine our orbits" (Hamid, 2013, p.139).

Urban Planning, and the policies of city development are the coretechniques urban capital uses in the establishment and maintenance of spatial practice to build state power-structures as suggested by Lefebvre (1991). Hamid's fiction also looks at the urban elite adopting the same methodology to maintain their dominance in the city. The urban capital of Lahore is a "mixed lot - Punjabi and Pathans, Sindhis and Baluchis, smugglers, mullahs, soldiers, industrialists" all are united under an agenda of shaping the landscape of Lahore as it suits them (Hamid, 2000, p.102). In *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, Hamid comments that "harnessing the state's might for personal gain is a much more sensible approach" of survival in Lahore, Bureaucrats wear state uniforms to "secretly" back their "private interests" and bankers who wear "private uniforms" also back the "state" (Hamid, 2013, p.140). Through this biased and unjust distribution of available valued-resources "the elite have managed to re-create for themselves the living standards of say, Sweden, without leaving the dusty plains of the subcontinent" (Hamid, 2000, p.102). Hamid uses the motif of air-conditioning to discuss the power city elite possess in altering the landscape and geography of Lahore. This transformation of city by controlling available resource is an active contribution of elites to the prevailing spatial injustice in Lahore, as noted by Hamid. (Soja, 2010; Harvey 2013).

Drawing on the Levebrian spatial triad, Williams and Soja both agree that social relations in any metropolis are a result of its spatial structure, "spatial relationships produce social relationships, and hence justice relationships", even the act of building highways or roads in a country like America reflects solid "political decisions" – decisions that "produce new political and social inequities" like the "distribution of pollutants" or "displacement of urban neighborhood", thus in this regards, highways, roads and streets of any city are "mirrors of power" that devise the socio-political relationship among the capital and the marginalized (Williams, 2013, p. 5). At the center of Lahore lies its air-conditioned elite, and around it is its marginalized inhabitants. Daru lives in Muslim Town, an upper-middle class residential scheme of Lahore – a town of "small" "plain" houses unlike any of the "pink-painted, column-sporting mini-monstrosities nearby", the trees on his streets are on the "wrong side", so "their shadows run away" from him (Hamid, 2000, p.19; p.8). Daru feels the surroundings of the city *running away* from him because he fails to identify and connect with the space, the elite has created for him. This is where Levebvre's *spatial practice* comes into play. The elite has marked their territories in the city and left the undeveloped, unrefined residential areas for the underprivileged, among which one is the town Daru lives in. The sense of un-belonging and detachment Daru feels in his allotted space in the city, we argue is one of the main reasons that later contributes in the transformation of Lahore into a space of conflict or a postmodern dystopia.

The maintenance of spatial practice in a metropolis "is a primary source of inequality and injustice", argues Soja, since "the redistribution of real income" or resources always favor "rich over the poor" (2009, p.3), In *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, Hamid has pointed several times towards the unjust use of spatial resources – at one point, his unnamed protagonist, who manages to establish a flourishing business of bottled-water is invited by the "artists of wars" to collaborate on the construction of a residential area (p.157). The collaboration is supposed to be an "elite housing society marketed, developed and administrated by one of a comprehensive network of military-related corporations", it visions to build a "secure, walled-off, impeccably maintained, lit-up-at-night, noise-controlled, perfectly regulated" European or North American version of Pakistan (Hamid, 2013, pp. 163-

164). The strongest selling-point of this elite residential housing scheme was the availability of potable water drawn "from canals intended for agriculture use"; the brigadier assures Hamid's protagonist that they get "permissions no one else can get. Red tape dissolves effortlessly" for them, in short they have the access to consume all valued-resources and landscape in their favor as they please (Hamid, 2013, p. 165). This totalitarian control of the cityscape by the capital causes "geographically uneven development and underdevelopment" of space;gradually this "unevenness rigidifies into more lasting structures of privilege and advantage", that leads to the production of spatial injustice (Soja, 2009, p.3). Soja further argues that this totalitarian control of land, later on requires "necessary" "intervention" – in the form of spatial resistance movements – for a "fair and equitable distribution" of space and socially valued resources to create a balance and Just City (2009, pp. 2-3).

Territorial dominance, as discussed by Lefebvre is not the only way an urban capital controls an entire cityscape, this control can also be maintained by establishing buildings in which the right of entry is reserved or through the placement of various police check posts to monitor and revoke the social mobility of the masses. Extending the ideas of Lefebvre, Soja, through the discussion of "locational discrimination" commented how at times capital imposes biases on "certain population because of their geographical location" and creates "lasting spatial structures of privilege and advantage" that further contributes to the prevailing spatial injustice among all major postmodern cities (2009, p.3). This locational discrimination goes further beyond the "geographical distribution of the traditional markers of poverty (human deprivation, dilapidated housing, absent services and degraded public spaces" and divides cities into "go" and "no-go" areas (Koonings & Kruijt, 2007, p.12), this implies that the local government and city administration, through the construction of space, legitimizes their right to socially exclude a stratum of society (in this case, the masses) by revoking their right of entrance in their privileged residential areas based on their geographical location.

This controlled spatial organization of Lahore's land is portrayed multiple times in *Moth Smoke*. Daru – the middle-class protagonist of the novel is stopped various times by the police of the city whenever he tries to enter his small Suzuki car in a modern, well-planned posh area of Lahore. Other times, when Daru is accompanied by Ozi in his pajero,

both of them are granted access to the prohibited and exclusive areas of Lahore, "The police don't stop us on our drive home. We are in a Pajero, after all" (Hamid, 2000, p.38). Like Daru, the unnamed protagonist of *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* also felt like an "out-of-place man" every time he tried to navigate in more privileged areas of Lahore during his struggling period (2013, p. 85). At times, he had to stop for "security officials", fences, "concrete bollards … waist-high anti-vehicular steel barriers … gates … speed bumps, CCTV cameras and "wooden pillboxes" on his way to meeting any "bigwig" of Lahore (2013, p. 86, p. 104). Hamid has also commented on the ways urban elite justifies their unjust ways of accumulating spatial control, Ozi's father – a retired solder turned business tycoon compares the landscape of Lahore to a pie:

> People are pulling their pieces out of the pie, and the pie is getting smaller, so if you love your family, you'd better take your piece now, while there's still some left. That's what I'm doing. And if anyone isn't doing it, it's because they're locked out of the kitchen. (2000, p. 231)

This clarifies that for urban elite, accumulating socio-spatial control is the only way to survive in the highly unequal city of Lahore. Therefore, the establishment of what Soja terms as Just City through a balanced socio-political power structure and equitable bias-free division of socially valued resources is not possible (2010). This paper, through an in-depth study of Hamid's representation of Lahore determines that the socially excluded, spatially othered – urban outlaws retaliate in their own individual ways against the power-structures of city capital which is converting Lahore into a space of conflict rather than a Just City.

Soja's analytical framework of spatial justice views it as an "orderly battalion": an organized attempt of resistance against city elite (Tajbaksh, 2001, p. 39). He suggests collective social movements, temporary alliances and coalitions by the urban dispossessed as the most effective means of spatial resistance. He presents the Los Angeles Bus Rider Union as one of the most successful spatial resistance movement of present times – the transit-dependent downtrodden immigrant working class of L.A. formulated a union to fight against the "locational bias" of Metropolitan Transit Authority, the MTA planned a multi-billion dollar fixed rail system that would mainly serve the privileged population

ignoring the "inner city working poor" (Soja, 2009, p.5). As a result of this peaceful coalition of marginalized bus riders in Lahore, a court issued an order in 1996 to MTA, demanding the first budget priority for the working class – the cases ended resulting in the construction of a fixed rail system that benefits poor more than the rich in the largest capitalist city of world. Hamid's fiction, however focuses on more of a decentered and pluralistic nature of spatial resistance of his characters against the capital.

Spaces of representation – the third phase of Lefebvrian triad deals mainly with the close relationship a city dweller shares with his space, as discussed earlier, Lefebvre (1991) explained it as user's space since it is directly lived by the inhabitant; this space also helps a city dweller to ascribe his own personal meanings to space through his daily lived experiences, "cultural memories" and "symbols" (Leary-Owhinh, 2012, p. 69). We argue that in case of Lahore, where the first two phases of production of space are highly politicized, biased and unjust favoring only city elite – the masses fail to identify with their lived spaces that result in their alienation from the society. This spatial alienation and the inability to connect with fellow citizens, makes the formation of peaceful coalitions even more impossible. Furthermore, since the urban capital of Lahore (mis)uses representation of space and spatial practice and turns it into a space of conflict, the relationship marginalized communities develop with their space also turns out to be highly ambivalent and chaotic.

Violence is the main means of resistance some of them turn to, which in result is gradually turning Lahore into a city "teetering at the edge of the abyss" and a complete warzone (Hamid, 2017, p. 1). In *Moth Smoke* and *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, Hamid has commented on the aggressive resilience showcased by the marginalized subjects of the cities through his characters Daru, Murad Badshah and the unnamed protagonist of the later – as a matter of fact, he himself advices his protagonist to "be prepared to use violence" to climb up the socio-spatial ladder in *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (Hamid, 2013, p.117). Keese Konnigs and Dirk Kruijt (2007) theorized urban violence as a means of resistance while studying the case of post-1970 contested urban spaces of Latin America – both of these experts of development studies agreed on the notion that the socially excluded and marginalized segments of society are always more inclined to adopt

violence as a part of their "survival strategies" rather than forming a coalition or alliance(p. 7). This spatial struggle of the urban outcasts to "carve out alternative, informal spheres of power on the basis of coercions" transforms city into a "fragmented, ambivalent and hybrid cityscape with varying manifestations of the complex of poverty, exclusion, coercion, violence and fear" (2007, p.8). Thus, we argue that Hamid's fiction, completely rejects Soja's brand of a peaceful spatial justice and demands to be studied as what Hicks calls, postmodern urban dystopian literature.

Representational space or spaces of representation, as discussed by Lefebvre also serves as an imaginative space of "writers and philosophers" (1991, p.39), it is in this third form of space authors, playwrights and filmmakers find "places of resistance" against the "totalizing conception of "urban space" (Hicks, 2014, p.4). Hicks – drawing on Lefebvre's representational space, studied various postmodern fictional pieces that are not considered dystopian fiction in their literal sense (2014, p.3), he, however noticed a radical shift in the post-1970 fiction emerging from America – almost all popular films and texts were rejecting the "utopian promise" of early twentieth century and highlighted the "darker underside" of the postmodern metropolis" (2014, p.2). Hicks argued that the postmodern writers and film-makers, through their portrayal of urban failure are developing the *urban imaginary* of their readers and viewers (2014, p.4). Urban imaginary, he argued passively contributes in the development of a user's lived space thus participates in the fashioning of a metropolis and its future. Since the role of literature and films is rather strong in the development of cities, Hicks urged that the fiction that specifically deals with the workings and failures of a metropolitan, should be studied under a new genre of postmodern urban dystopia. Hicks argued, "One of the main goals of dystopian literature is to identify social, cultural, and political problems affecting nations, communities, and diverse groups of people and then illuminate those problems in the hopes of effecting positive change" (2014, p. 16). We argue that, Hamid's fiction serves the same purpose; to begin with, it affluently comments on the spatial segmentation of the metropolis into privileged and under-privileged residential areas through various signs, symbols, metaphors and motifs and then comments on its possible destructive outcomes.

Murad Badshah is an important character of Hamid's fiction through which he highlights the decentered and highly personalized spatial struggle of an individual in Lahore and its chaotic outcomes for the city. Murad Badshah, "loves" to claim that he is a "dangerous" urban "outlaw" (Hamid, 2000, p. 45). He is the perfect example of Lahore's urban outcasts who in search of spatial justice have turned towards urban aggression as a mean of their defense. He grew up without a father but learnt English language while living with his maternal uncle. Murad did not learn English just for the sake of knowledge, he actually wanted to be a part of city elite who have been controlling most of the city space. In his efforts to claiming his space within city elite, Murad completed his MA English. He kept looking for work but "was of course unable to find a job" (Hamid, 2000, p. 73). "Twenty-some years later", the helpless urban outcast – Murad turned into a "rickshaw fleet captain and land pirate" with an MA degree (Hamid, 2000, p. 70). By that time, Murad Badshah had come up with his own philosophies of spatial justice to survive in Lahore and to take back what was rightfully his; "very poor have the right to steal from the very rich", in fact he believed that it is the "duty" of urban marginalized community to do so (Hamid, 2000, p. 76). He firmly believed that the "inaction of the working classes perpetuates their subjugation" (Hamid, 2000, p. 76). He proudly admitted being a robber and nothing made him "more happy than the distress of the rich" (Hamid, 2000 p. 128).

When local government introduced yellow cabs in Lahore, "the rickshaw business took a bad turn" (Hamid, 2000, p. 74) and Murad Badshah's representational space changed suddenly. Earlier, his rickshaw business was on boom. He was earning enough and thus considered himself an equal citizen while driving on the roads of Lahore. Whereas, when yellow cabs arrived, their drivers had better and bigger vehicles to offer to their passengers; hence the better chances of earning. Furthermore, rickshaws became the transport of urban poor and the urban privileged started preferring taxis relegating Murad Badshah to the status of spatially marginalized once again. Yellow cab drivers in this context became the part of dominating economic authorities of the city. Since it was a state initiated scheme, cab drivers enjoyed payment on easy installments and subsidy and that made profits "increasingly slim" for Murad Badshah and it enraged him (Hamid, 2000, p. 74).

Since the "marauding yellow cabs" had destroyed the entire rickshaw business in Lahore, Murad Badshah came up with his own plan to get some justice and reclaim his place in Lahore's landscape back, he started robbing yellow cab drivers to create a "little redistribution of wealth" on his own (Hamid, 2000, p. 75). Soon enough, other rickshaw drivers followed the suit and the entire urban center of Lahore turned into a postmodern dystopia or a "lawless no-go zone" (Hicks, 2014, p. 56).

When majority of rickshaw drivers started following Murad Badshah, taxi drivers started becoming more careful. They started carrying less cash and armed themselves to protect their earnings. Murad's business once again started going into loss. It was the same time when Daru lost his job due to his argument with Malik Jiwan[3]. Daru was desperate for work and he did not want to take help from Ozi's father to get a job. Murad included him in his struggle for spatial justice.Together, they started robbing fashion boutiques situated in high profile locations. Murad and Daru together "formed a duo that would strike fear into the hearts of purveyors of fashionable clothing everywhere" (Hamid, 2000, p. 75).

Darashikoh also known as Daru is the major protagonist of *Moth Smoke*, even though he studied in the best schools, he always felt an outsider – possibly an intruder who was never unwelcomed in the space of Lahore's elite. His "no-name middle-class background" and his father's main distinction of "being dead" was always ridiculed (Hamid, 2000, p.232). Daru grew up with resentments for urban elites who were the center of Lahore's space and controlled everything around him. His SAT scores were better than his friend Ozi but he ended up being in a local university and Ozi went abroad because his dad had the capital to afford his overseas degree.

Daru's resentment for the inhabitants of *new* Lahore[4] grew further when he lost his mother. Daru's mother became a victim of an unnamed bullet one night when she was sleeping on the roof because of the non-availability of electricity in their residential area. She bled

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[3] A landowner – thus a part of city capital of Lahore who used his resources to get Daru expelled from the bank as a result of a juvenile argument between the two.
[4] New Lahore includes areas like Gulberg, Liberty and Defence which were not a part of old Lahore's landscape. They were specially designed for urban elites with the best housing facilities. Ozi's father owned a mansion in Gulberg.

herself to death. The image of her bleeding dead mother never faded from Daru's memory. It became an essential part of his *space of representation* – his point of reference to identify himself with his space and determine his position in the cityscape Lahore. From that moment onwards, Daru looked at Lahore"as a city with bullets streaking into the air" (Hamid, 2000, p. 135).

Another incident that shaped Drau's *space of representation* of Lahore as elite favoring, biased and unjust was when he witnessed Aurangzeb running over a poor child with his Pajero and getting away with it. Daru and Ozi both were on Jail road that day, one on his Suzuki and the other on a mighty Pajero. Daru had noticed Ozi's Pajero in his rearview but Aurangzeb did not notice him. Aurangzeb was bearing down the red traffic signal fearlessly as he always enjoyed "putting a little fear into people whose vehicles" were "smaller than his" while driving on the road (Hamid, 2000, p.117). On the same road, Daru saw a young boy on a bicycle trying to cross the road on the red signal. Although the traffic light was red and it was Ozi's cue to stop and bicycle boy's signal to go, he seemed terrified while crossing road, afraid of "being hit by maniacs like Ozi" (Hamid, 2000, p. 116). Daru tried to warn Ozi, but Ozi was too busy to notice someone in a Suzuki or a bicycle. His Pajero smashed the young boy's head, he did not stop to look for what he had done and rushed his car back to his house in Main Gulberg Boulevard.

Daru – shattered by what he just saw, first looked at the body of young bicycle boy rolling on the road by a traffic signal "unnoticed by the receding Pajero" then followed Aurangzeb to his house (Hamid, 2000, p. 117). Upon reaching Ozi's house, Daru found him standing calmly in his driveway instructing his servant to wipe the "dent" on his Pajero with a wet cloth (Hamid, 2000, p.118). This was the moment when Daru saw spatial resistance as his only means of survival in Lahore. One moment of realization that urban center "gets everything" and "gets away with everything" changed the whole identity of Daru (Hamid, 2000, p. 118). It was in that moment, Ozi witnessed his childhood friend changing in front of his eyes. After all these years of getting sidelined at the peripheries of *new* Lahore, Ozi could now finally see "the violence" in Daru's eyes and "recognize" it as well (Hamid, 2000, p. 119).

It was then, Daru decided to be a part of unjust *spatial practice* of the capital where "people are robbing the country blind, and if the choice is between being held up at gun point or holding the gun, only a madman would choose to hand over his wallet rather than fill it with someone else's cash" (Hamid, 2000, p. 230). In the struggle of survival and the war against spatial injustice, Daru partnered with Murad. When Daru joined hands with Murad, "he was bright, ruthless, capable" yet "he was in debt, had no job, and was saddled with the heaviest weight of pride and self-delusion (Hamid, 2000, p. 75). "He (Daru), a man who hated guns, came to accept that he would love to use one "(Hamid, 2000, p. 134). Together, Daru and Murad formed a duo and started robbing fashion boutiques in the posh business areas of Lahore to "lighten the burden of wealth" that was the major tool of urban elites to dominate city's landscape (Hamid, 2000, p. 85).

Similarly Hamid, in *How to Get Filthy Rich In Rising Asia* also comments how the urban capital through the control of spaces of representation and spatial practice transforms the city into a space of conflict. When his unnamed protagonist enters Lahore, he is pushed to the periphery of the metropolis, he becomes the urban dispossessed who has been marginalized by the air-conditioned and bottled-water drinking controlling urban capital of the city on the basis of power and better spatial control of the city. As soon he finishes his primary school, he starts working in a DVD selling shop to support his family. The proprietor of the shop has divided the delivery area into two zones for his two workers. The worker with the motorcycle – vehicle has been portrayed as a strong social resource that guarantees you better spatial control in Lahore in both of Hamid's novels – gets the second zone, the posh area of the city, "this man's salary is twice yours, and his tips several times greater, for although your work is more strenuous, a man on a motorcycle is immediately perceived as a higher-end proposition than a boy on a bicycle" (Hamid, 2013, p. 40). When he enters university, in order to get education as part of his plan to get filthy rich in Asia, he has to suffer the same spatial segregation there as well. Despite his previous academic record, his willingness to work hard and his "familiarity with a wide range of personal styles and affectations from the film", the fact remained attached to his identity that he belongs to

servant quarters of a rich man's mansion and doesn't possess a space of his own.

The unnamed protagonist of *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* when denied the basic rights of living moves on to use all fair and unfair means available to him as means of spatial resistance to reclaim his territorial space. The first thing he does on his journey to reclaim his right to the city is growing a beard and joining an organization in his university. The product that his organization "sells is power" (Hamid, 2013, p.61), power to survive against the dominant power-structures of the elite, power to acquire one's own personal space. Hamid's unnamed protagonist leaves his organization when it fails to provide him enough funds to treat his mother's cancer – the day he loses his mother, his way of viewing city, or in Lefebvrian terms, his space of representation alters completely. Like Daru, a personal loss caused by the unjust distributional pattern of resources by the capital, forces him to jump on the bandwagon of using power and violence to retaliate against the unjust lasting spatial structures of Lahore. So, when he receives an "ultimatum … from a wealthy businessman, part of the city's establishment" to shut down his business because the market of Lahore belongs to the wealthy man, Hamid's protagonist was not only frightened but also "angry, seethingly" furious (Hamid, 2013, p.124). He hired a private security company and killed the wealthy man before the wealthy man could shun his business, and thus attempted to reclaim his space in city. Our study argues that this current spatial disturbance of Lahore as portrayed by Hamid in these two discussed novels can be a serious threat to city's future. In his most recent novel, *Exit West* (2017), Hamid has portrayed a Lahore that is already collapsed as a result of imbalanced spatial structures – a city where "life now resembled an old quilt, with patches of government land and patches of militant land"; a city of "deadly spaces" that should be "avoided at all costs"; a city where living is no more possible because city dwellers have seen "what happens when bullets are fired onto an unarmed mass of people" (2017, p. 66; p.108), hence the city dwellers have to migrate to outer lands – leaving their beloved Lahore where use of violence "in times of conflict" is the only choice (2017, p.9).

Conclusion

Lahore has always received a "small amount of scholarly attention" and always been "an outcast city compared to others in South Asia" (Chambers, 2017, p.115). The present research is an attempt to fill the gap that currently exists in the study of Pakistani metropolis by encouraging the readers and researchers to explore the notions of social justice in a broader and more relevant spatial paradigm as suggested by Soja. Although, several studies on *Moth Smoke* and *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* have been conducted but none of them connect the social turmoil of the city with its spatial restructuring. By conceptualizing Hamid's literary representation of Lahore in a Lefebvrian spatial framework, we think that the fabrication of certain power-relations is consciously done by city capital while planning the city expansion and development. These power structures, legitimize the authority and control of city capital over the city and inculcates an inferiority complex and sense of exclusion, omission, rejection and segregation among the ordinary urban dwellers. The politics of Lahore's socio-spatial dialect is thus creating a group of *spatially othered* peoplethat Hamid highlights through the characters of Daru, Murad Badshah and the Un-named Protagonist of *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia.*

Our study determines that the spatially othered strata of Lahore is rising against the repressive, tyrannical and dominating spatial practices of city capital to fight for a just city. Their spatial resistance and justice riots, as noted in Hamid's fiction can be disturbingly violent and intensely aggressive for the cityscape. Regardless of their ethnicities, religious identities and cultural background, this group of spatial others share a common critical spatial consciousness; which assures them that because they are marginalized by city capital, they have a justified right to sabotage them by any means possible. This struggle for spatial justice is eventually turning Lahore into a chaotic, disturbed land – a postmodern space of conflict. Our paper concludes that the contemporary Anglophone Pakistani fiction in general and Hamid's fiction in particular is an active contributor of the imaginative space production of the city. It shapes the way its readers think and connect with their physical surrounding space. Hence it is important to read and study it as a

culmination of global postmodern dystopian fiction rather than simple realist fiction.

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