



Exploring the Crises of Socio-Spatiality in the Short Story *The Hijab and Her* by Sabyn Javeri from Robert T Tally's Perspective



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ABSTRACT

The current study analyses Sabyn Javeri's short story *The Hijab and Her* (2019) through Robert T Tally's (2012) socio-spatiality. The study follows the interpretative research paradigm and qualitative research approach. The text is critically analysed through Greenham's (2018) proposed contexts of close reading. The study explored that the protagonist Nasira suffered in the Euro-American society because of her vague religious compulsion of observing hijab in the liberal European classroom environment. Her teacher targeted and taunted her for belonging to the subcontinent which was colonized back in the 17th century; hence, it was considered as a fragile and poor soil. Further, he also mocked her for wearing a vague scarf, which according to him, symbolized women compulsion and inferiority. Her teacher's frequent remarks about her indigenous rootedness was based on hatred and stereotypes. Hence, the study reveals that the protagonist is meted out maltreatment and frequent scolding due to her naïve indigenous rootedness, Islamic affiliation and belonging to the colonized soil.

1. Introduction

The global north seems bright, free and full of opportunities but it has exhausted the immigrants in terms of their indigenous rootedness and cultural belongingness. The natives treat them with their uttermost hatred and animosity. They do not accept them, rather treat them as exotic others with weird indigenous background Said (1978). The immigrants are considered others because of their old tradition, fragile culture and geography. Sabyn Javeri also raised the same immigrants' socio-spatial dislocation in the global north in her short story *The Hijab and Her* (2019). Her female protagonist is suffered in the European peninsula due to her varied cultural background, Islamic affiliation and skin color. She is isolated and treated as an outcaste in her classroom. Her own teacher maintained negative attitude to depict his animosity towards her race and ethnicity.

The crises of socio-spatiality is an emerging field in migration fiction dealing mostly with the immigrants' space acquisition in the migrated countries. Robert T Tally (2012) theory of socio-spatiality hence dealing with their settlement and native attitude towards them. Consequently, he proposed that the immigrants are treated naively due to their varied cultural, religious, linguistic, ethnic and geographical background. The immigrants twist for their identity and dealing with the harsh attitude of native interested the researcher to explore the short story to depict the crises of socio-spatiality of the major characters in the selected narrative.

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Further, Tally (2017) is of the view that we often feel free and secure inside our locality and company but feel strange while surrounded by strangers and foreigners in the distant lands. The immigrants are feeling strange in the foreign lands. Although, they have spent their life long journey and have served the native country for years but still they are not welcomed and treated as foreigners and outcasts. They are always outsiders and foreigners. Thus, they are easily subjected to ridicule and humiliation because of their varied belongingness.

Moreover, Kanwal (2017) has also stated that the Westerns treat the immigrants as fundamentalist and extremist for being spreading terrorism in their countries. The West has changed its discourse after the dramatic incident of 9/11. It was the era of greater hardships and victimization for the Muslims throughout the globe. The Westerns have openly declared that the Muslims are the sole responsible for the attacks on the twin towers. Hence, after this the Muslims are dislodged and treated with vague attitude and has often maltreated. Similarly, the protagonist in the short story under study feels suffocation due to their ill-treatment and humiliation. She was treated as strange because of wearing scarf (hijab) and adopting her religious obligations in the liberal Western society. Her maltreatment by the hand of her professor is thoroughly analyzed in the next sections with accordance to Robert T Tally's theory of socio-spatiality (2012).

Accordingly, acquiring space is one of the core rights of human being, being residing in a certain territory Tally (2019). They need to be provided with shelter, food, education, freedom of worship, job and education etc. But due to some obstacles people are humiliated and confronted with vague attitude. Among these hindrances religious and cultural variation, geographical boundaries, the strange skin colour and even speaking of a language became the primary reason for humiliation and ill treatment.

Sabyn Javeri's *Hijabistan* (2019) is a wonderful collection of short stories importing critique and criticism on Pakistani Muslim conservative society and disclose the immigrants' sufferings in the liberal European countries. The different short stories state the varying and unique human perspective or social problem. Similarly, Jatt at all (2021) have stated about the short story *The Urges* (2019) that how women are forced to wear hijab regardless of their interest and willingness. The undersign study shows women sufferings and inferiority in their male dominant society. Women are depicted as nothing being; having no identity and existence on their own. The patriarchy believes that in fact it is we that have shaped their identity and have ensure their existence. In short, they state that we have given them identity. Similarly, the study also reveals that women have to accept and acknowledge their oppression and inferiority as the young girl even before her maturity is forced to adopt the patriarchal ways of life. She was enforced to wear hijab regardless of her willingness. She has to stay inside her four walls and not to disclose her body in public. Although, she was not mature and was still willing to play outside but the patriarchal set up compelled her to adopt woman like attitude before her maturity.

Hijab has been widely explored and criticized as Batool, Parvez and Farooq (2021) have stated about the unique and attractive manner of representing hijab in the Muslim society. They believe that it portrays different world views, psyches and significance. Hijab has varying definitions and applications in terms of gender, age and social status etc. Similarly, Javeri depicted how hijab is viewed in the two hemispheres; the Western and Eastern. The Eastern believes that Hijab is one of the fundamental obligatory practices on women to cover their body in public. Contrary to it, the West believes it is a source of subjugation, humiliation and expressing their fragile and weaker positioning. Therefore, the authoress opted for different short stories to thoroughly depict the different ideologies and world views related to hijab. Different ideologies and attitude to hijab has been skillfully complied through varying short stories.

Furthermore, the short stories also depict the miserable and fragile women condition in the Pakistani Muslim society. In this regard Mazhar and Iqbal (2025) have stated about the eco-feminist perspective. Their findings conclude that both women and environment have been mercilessly violated in the patriarchal society. They have talked about the business hub city, Karachi which has been brutally spoiled by the system. The city is destroyed by factories, heavy traffic and over population as women are victimized and subjugated by men by spoiling their identity and existence by adopting their patriarchal varying world views. They are of the view that the short stories depict how the environment and women both are subjugated and polluted by men. It's the male dominant society which has badly spoiled the beauty of nature. They have set up factories which spread poisonous gases disturbing both our soil and the water life. Thus, they are endangering not only water life but is a big threat to the biodiversity. Same is the case with their treatment of women. They are spoiled and subjugated. They have no say in the social and domestic affairs. They have limited them to bearing children, taking care of the house hold activities and satisfying their lusts. In short, the study reveals the fact that both environment and women are in miserable condition. They are badly destroyed and spoiled by the so called patriarchal system.

Tally (2017) spatiality has close connection with Westphal's (2011) geocriticism in which he talks about the physical partition among different nations and states. While Tally's spatiality is related to human survival, existence, freedom and liberty. Moreover, it highlights all those factors which affect human life and their existence. Hence, varying human experiences and condition also affect their space. In this regard cultural, religious and ethnic variation badly affect space. Geographical

boundaries and historical variation also arouse hatred among humans and thus lead to their dislodged space. Further, Tally also stated that war and violence are also the core reasons of affecting our space. In short, the core reasons of the crises of socio-spatiality are cultural, religious, ethnic, geographical and ideological differences which are explored in the current study.

2. Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The current study is proceeded in qualitative research paradigms to explain and critique the present immigrants' situation. As Ganzoles, Brown and Slate (2008) have stated that qualitative research makes us to explain and critique over an issue or scenario. Therefore, the researcher makes use of qualitative paradigms to explore the immigrants' situation in the global north. The immigrants concern are explored with accordance to Robert T Tally's proposed factors. Socio-spatiality is related to human survival, existence, freedom and liberty and the factors affecting their condition. Moreover, the text is analyzed through Greenham (2018) suggested six contexts of close reading. These levels enables the readers to deeply analyze a text to thoroughly grasp the writer's intended and inner motives.

2.1. Research Objective

To explore how the immigrants' varied history, geography and ingenious rootedness severely affected their space in the selected short story of Sabyn Javeri.

2.2. Research Question

How does the immigrants' indigenous rootedness, historical and geographical background affected their space in Sabyn Javeri's short story *The Hijab and Her*?

3. Analysis and Discussion

Tally (2012) is of the view that cultural variation plays an important role while dislodging the immigrants' space in the foreign lands. For this reason Sabyn Javeri's protagonist in the short story *The Hijab and Her* (2019) suffers a lot. She confronted her teacher's prejudice remarks about her region, religion and history. She feels suffocation while responding and depending her ingenious rootedness. The native teacher wants to lower her down because of her belongingness as the authoress depicted his prejudice remarks that "But that's not what I am asking. I am asking, who are you? Where do you come from? And how does that shape the choices you make in your life?" (Javeri, 2019, p. 118). He consciously tried to lower down her in the class by discussing her historical background with his prejudice eyes. In fact, he wants to state that she has been colonized and she must not ignore this fact. Further, he stressed that she should not forget who she is and where she came from? Hence, it suggests that the professor wants her to remind her that she belongs to the colonized soil and she is the outcome of the inferior geographical location where they were under the British rule.

The other important spatial turn Tally (2012) discuss is the importance of historical acknowledgement of a race. The nation are greatly privileged due to their graceful history while in contrary the fragile nations are mostly lacking historical prominence. Similarly, the South Asian Muslims are deeply rooted in Arabic peninsula back in 8th century after the arrival of Arabs in Eastern hemisphere as he stated that "there are some people there who actually believe that Pakistan was marked out the day Mohammed bin Qasim set foot in Sindh" (Javeri, 2019, p. 118). Their roots are Arabic but the professor wants to say that your original space was disturbed even centuries before. Her professor criticized her for being a confused race since the arrival of Arabs as thus stated in the text as:

Nasira let out a long, slow breath as she settled down comfortably for a long sonorous lecture on how South Asian Muslims were confused people who had been Arabicized to their fingernails. Without realizing, she tugged at her headscarf and together, the scarf and her, settled down for a comfortable open-eyed snooze (Javeri, 2019, p. 118).

The narrative suggests that as Arabs have greater influence over the local people of Pakistan and other Muslim countries due to their beloved prophet Muhammad SAW. Hence, the professor wants them to remind that the people of East are already been dislodged in terms of their space and existence by the Arabs. In fact, he wants them to remind the Muslims that their lives and minds have previously been captured and have been converted to their faith. Then how they blame the Britishers' colonization as he criticized as "How many of your parents and grandparents think it was independence from the British? Oh no, my dear friend, the rhetoric goes that an Islamic nation was carved out of an infidel one. And it is this rhetoric that I want you to question" (Javeri, 2019, p. 119). The professor attitude is humiliating and abusive towards her for being a Pakistani Muslim. This is what Tally (2012) stated that religion becomes a major obstacle to acquire space in the Western world. As she follows the Islamic morals by wearing hijab in the liberal European society became the main source of her dislodged space.

Religion is viewed something the main source of evoking hatred and humiliation Tally (2012). The protagonist was discriminated because of her scarf as she stated about her dislodged feelings that:

He peered over his reading glasses and Nasira felt his eyes rest on her. And more specifically on her headscarf. She knew she had no reason to believe she was being singled out, but by some strange instinct felt as if the professor were mocking her. And more specifically, her headscarf. ' (Javeri, 2019, p. 119).

Nasira's scarf became the main hurdle in her space acquisition as her professor targeted her in the class discussion. She was isolated because she wore hijab in the classroom. Her professor expressed his anger for being humiliating her in front of the class. Consequently, Tally's thought of space and religious morals became true in the case of Nasira. He stated that people are often discriminated because of their varied religious practices. Wearing scarf or hijab is one of the fundamental practices of Islamic rituals. Women feel secure and safe inside their hijab but the Western thinkers believe it's a kind of limitation on the part of women. They are considered inferior and weak but the real spirit and soul behind wearing hijab is something beyond their comprehension level. But they consider it naïve and vague practice thus they discriminate them openly. Similarly, Nasira was also isolated and subjected to verbal abuse and hatred due to her wearing of scarf.

Geographical division also form the crises of socio-spatiality Tally (2012). Consequently, the professor also mocked Nasira for the Partition between Pakistan and India. The professor thus taunted her as under "now, you people often say "the partition of Pakistan and India" but really, it was just the partition of India,' he said triumphantly. 'You were all Indians just seventy years ago" (Javeri, 2019, p. 119). The professor taunted her that it was mere a partition between the two countries. You all were the same Indian before the partition. But now you consider yourselves as Pakistanis which is vague thing on the part of your country men. Although, you got partition but still you have not gotten independence. Partition is the division of geographical land while independence is your inner freedom and liberty. Therefore, the professor mocked that are you Pakistanis independent. In fact he wants to state that your country is not independent. Still there is foreign influences and involvement on your foreign and interior policies. But in terms of space acquisition, the professor discriminated her for being belonging to the Eastern hemisphere, Pakistan. Zia further depended his country as "14 August is Independence Day, not Partition Day, sir" (Javeri, 2019, p. 119). In fact, the professor wants them to remind that they are not free nation although they are now two separate countries.

Similarly, Tally (2012) further stated that ideological conflict is another viable reason of the crises of socio-spatiality. People do not accept one another having and maintaining varied ideologies. Ideological tussle which Tally viewed is the root cause of war around the globe. Nations often fight for maintaining their ideological freedom and liberty. Similarly, in the short story under study the protagonist was humiliated because of her varied ideological background. The tussle between Pakistan and India and then the advent of British rule in India is the chain of their ideological tussle as thus Nasira stated that:

But, sir, doesn't that just absolve colonialism of all blame? I mean, the Brits are the ones who started the whole Hindu-Muslim divide. How come there was no conflict before that? For centuries, Hindus and Muslims lived in harmony and then as soon as the White man came and started his divide and rule policy, India split in two, and then three.' (Javeri, 2019, p. 119).

The narrative suggests that the dispute between Hindus and Muslims have been the core reason to their crises of socio-spatiality. Similarly, the Britishers have innate rivalry against Muslims which can be vividly seen in the upper mentioned extract. The professor tried to mock Nasira because she belongs to Pakistani origin and was a practical Muslim girl. He could not bear her wearing of scarf and concealing herself in the classroom.

Furthermore, the immigrants also do self-realization of their dislodged space in the Western world. They encounter harsh criticism, anger and animosity from the native whites similarly the narrative states her dislodged space as under "Nasira was conscious that her hijab made a bigger statement than her words. A voice in her head said, You're hardly the most credible person in the classroom to be accusing the White man, and so she paused" (Javeri, 2019, p. 120). Hence, Tally (2012) was of the view that the cultural variation and religious differences are something to be dealt with uttermost anger and humiliation. People are discriminated for practicing their naïve and unique cultural and religious morals.

4. Conclusion

While summing up the ongoing discussion on Robert T Tally's the crises of socio-spatiality (2012) on the selected short story by Sabyn Javeri. The Pakistani immigrants having their Islamic, Eastern, ethnic and colonized identity on their back became the major reason of their maltreatment and dislodged identity in Euro-America. Hence, Nasira the protagonist of the short story suffered in the global north because of her wearing of scarf (veil) in the liberal European classroom environment. Her teacher targeted her because of her vague outfit which is considered an obligatory practice for women to cover their body and face for outsiders (Ghair Muharam). Similarly, her teacher also criticized her Islamic identity which was traced back to the arrival of

Muhammad Bin Qasim back in the 8th century. He blames the Muslims and defended their illegitimate control of the sub-continent that they have already been dislodged by the Muslims in the 8th century. At last, he blames the Eastern for being conservative and oppressor of their women rights. He thought they are cruel to their women for keeping them inside the four walls and prohibiting them to acquire education. Consequently, the protagonist suffers due to her vague and naïve cultural and religious morals. She was victimized by reminder her historical-religio background, vague religious and cultural practices and her patriarchal social set up.

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