

## ***Sphinx in the City: Re-territorializing Women on the Uneven Divides of Urban Space***

### **Abstract**

*This paper argues that urban women grapple with spatial disequilibrium to claim their right over the city and experience its repercussions through dispossession and displacement. To develop this argument I have selected Mohsin Hamid's How to get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia (2013) to explore the relationship of gender with space under the aegis of cultural and economic marginalization of women. In the light of feminist scholarship, I have investigated how women strive to settle in urban space by challenging the resurrections of invisible oppression of gender inequalities. The paper also investigates how urban women develop critical spatial consciousness and resist the structures of exclusion and segregation. The paper concludes that the uneven socio-economic intrusions are making the developing Asian urban-space serendipitously violent and hostile for women, thus remaining disconnected in deconstructing the invisible inequalities of spatial exclusion and displacement.*

**Key words:** *Women, Cityspace, Disequilibrium, Patriarchy, Displacement, Resistance.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The narratives of Mohsin Hamid unveil the intricate lives of individuals who struggle against the hegemony of power relations. These struggles often capitulate the unevenness of societal hierarchies (*Moth Smoke*, 2000) and trace individual articulation of global aliens (*The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 2007; *Exit West*, 2017). The Booker-nominated, Mohsin Hamid in *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) castigates the seesaw of urban space in developing countries under the pressures of globalization. Through unnamed characterization and plot setting, Hamid encompasses spatial experiences of the urban other in developing Asia whereby the governance is more concerned with the construction and development of built environment in making its cities world class. Hamid supplies transparencies of inextricable endeavors of the urban other who adopts fair and unfair strategies for spatial retention. This study provides critical insights to the diversity of experience of urban women, as rich and poor, as possessed and dispossessed. These experiences are intertwined but often neglected in everyday patterns of urban lifestyle which animates diversity in urban disequilibrium (Dowell, 1983). Current research aims to describe the uneven spatial structures that produce ideological patterns for women to shape their socio-spatial lifestyle. They experience dual marginalization within patriarchal and economic structures in the public sphere and highlight how urban women struggle against spatial disequilibrium to claim their right over the city. It further redirects that claiming rights over the city would result in their dispossession and displacement. To investigate these this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

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- a) How do women in urban space formulate spatial relationships in the dialectics of the public and private sphere?
- b) How does the gendered divide cast exclusion and displacement over transgression?
- c) How does the pretty girl develop critical spatial consciousness and resist the structures of exclusion and segregation?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The experiences of women with space are intertwined but often neglected in everyday patterns of urban lifestyle. This section investigates the relationship of women and urban space with theoretical insights from the scholarship of feminist geographers. Notable feminists like McDowell, Doreen Massey, Liz Bondi, Maureen Flanagan and Maryann Valiulis theorize the cityscape as gendered space that domesticates women in the private realm through socio-economic manifestations of patriarchal ideologies. This theoretical framework helps me to examine everyday lives of women in urban disequilibrium. Feminist explorations of urban space characterize women's urban experiences as multifaceted. Yasminah Beebeejaun (2017) elaborates the city as "gendered through multiple actions and experiences of its inhabitants" which differs across places, contexts and political regimes" (Beebeejaun, 2017, p. 323). Beebeejaun suggests that in order to claim the right to the city for women, the policy makers and urban planners need to devise strategies for making the urban space accessible.

Petra Doan (2010) perceives that gender association with the urban space is not innate, but is an essentialized identity which spatializes the gender binary. Tovi Fenster (2005) interrogates "how patriarchal power relations are the most affecting elements in abusing women's right to the city in different ways to those of men." (2005, p. 219) The gender oriented spatial experience restricts the practices of women's right to the city both in public and private spaces. She argues that the realization of exclusion from urban space and absence of claiming spatial specificity is usually observed by mothers who experience difficulty in traversing with their young offspring. Maureen Flanagan and Maryann Valiulis (2011) examine the making of gendered space in the frame of patriarchy which embodies "social relations of power in any given society in which the values and behaviors of men are presumed normative and thus embedded in urban institutions and structures to privilege male control and insure female subordination" (Valiulis, 2011, p. xiii). This patriarchal propriety excludes women from the public realm and confines the private as secure and safe.

Feminist geographers define urban gendered space by dividing it into the public and private spheres. While analyzing the heterogeneity of spatial experiences of class and race, within the confinements of "trans-historical and trans-cultural", Myriam Perregeaux asserts that the experiences of men and women become homogeneous due to the allocation of the public to men and private to women (2005, p.181). The men residing in the public sphere for financial sustenance of the family and women remain in private sphere to take care of domestic chores. This separation characterizes "men as producers" and "women as reproducers". In this frame the roles women play in the private sphere is that of obsequious wives and devoted mothers whereas the role men play is characterized as that of "breadwinners" (Grosz, 1994; McDowell, 1982; Perregeaux, 2005; Massey, 1994). However the ideal of separate spheres has

had, and continues to have, enormously powerful effects. The dissection of domestic labor and the outside orb through which men are called producers and women reproducers prescribe the orientation of urban space as patriarchal and capitalist space (Brown 1987, Rose 1984). Men's labor is paid and thus visible whereas women's domestic drudgery remains unpaid and therefore invisible. This reinforces exclusion and dispossession of women from public space, "the centrality of the patriarchal form of household organization [is] a necessary and causal condition responsible for contemporary urban structure and its problems" (Markusen, 1980, p. 28).

The social conditioning in urban milieu alienates women from interacting in the public sphere which epitomizes their limitation in the urban space. Bondi defines urban space and dichotomy of separate spheres as inherent to the infrastructure of space. The nexus of heterogeneous ideological dichotomies are knitted together in the construction of urban space. Bondi renders "dismantling of dichotomies" through challenging the innate interconnectedness that perpetuates hegemonic structures in urban space. She inscribes "these dichotomies are inextricably and inherently interwoven so that they stand or fall together" (Bondi, 1998, p. 162). Women in cityscape have gained access to male-oriented professions by resolving their private ebb with alternative substitutes (McDowell, 1997; Hayden, 1981; Rose, 1989). This access proffers deconstruction of socially established hierarchies and translates gendered construct as a challenging norm through which women can make and remake their identities by subsuming with the urban atmosphere which is filled with accessible opportunities and possibilities to revert the oppressive into the emancipatory. Cityspace endeavors freedom for women. They determine their confinements while tailoring the patriarchal frontiers; nevertheless, "patriarchy is malleable; it changes over time to fit the circumstances" (Valiulis, 2011, p. xix). This study demonstrates urban women's struggle to seek spatial possessions through all means. The female characters acclimatize according to the spatial restrictions of economic and patriarchal deviations that define their potential to fight against exclusion or subdue and cast displacement and dispossession.

## **RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

Mohsin Hamid's self-help book is not sole guidance for the protagonist's journey to success. Through the character portrayal of a pretty girl the book proclaims contribution of both sexes in their own orbits for spatial settlement. Hamid defines the relationship of women to space in *Rising Asia* as more vulnerable. He portrays complex female characters with diverse challenges of resilience and resistance. McDowell's (1984) reading of *women's place* in urban space through historical insights demonstrates the intricate interconnectedness of patriarchy with capitalism in subordinating women (p. 79). The woman in urban infrastructure is not merely subjected to the patriarchal allegations of docility and codifications of specified behavior; she is also encumbered with the complexities of capitalism's scaling.

Hamid promulgates the diversity in the ethics of preserving male dominance from rural affinities to the urban realms. The dependency of the mother and sister of the protagonist over the decisions of the father reveals the absence of their decision power to shape their relationships spatially. It is always the male of the family who decides the spatial

manifestation of the women. In the novel the father decides to liberate his wife and children from obsequious docility and gnawing hard work in rural sphere as McDowell (1984) sums up the patterns of everyday life in rural space: “danger and drudgery: male solidarity and female oppression”, the men are the “breadwinners, women the domestic laborers, though hardly the “angels of the house”” (p. 199). Hamid describes the rural life of the urban other that usually demonstrates women’s marginalized social positioning since they not only have to manage their budget in specified amounts but also experience the oppression of subjugation. Hamid depicts that the liberty of the mother of the protagonist from the matriarchal oppression is only announced when the father becomes intolerant of socio-economic constraints to settle in the urban milieu. Insecurities and fears of the women are reflective through their dependence upon the decisions of their father.

The protagonist’s sister, whose marriage is arranged with her father’s cousin; a decade older than her, is the most intelligent of her siblings and expects the continuity of her education in the city. However, her intelligence is not acknowledged sufficiently for her to proceed with her education; instead her presence is utilized to help her father in wrangling with “rampant inflation” through her labor as “cleaning girl” (Hamid, 2013, p. 28). McDowell (1982) postulates women’s restriction to “homelier things” even outside the domestic affinity which perpetuates the ideology to consider women “physically frail” (1982, p. 59). Women are qualified in domestic chores and their urban settlement corresponds to their scholastic *domestication* of their labor. The sister is preoccupied with the notion of servitude and does not show her inclination towards education or any resistance against her waged labor. She is the first in her siblings to give up her studies and serve her father as a submissive daughter with the promise of resuming her studies when her brother grows “old enough to work” (2013, p. 28). However, she could not get back to school and after enabling her brothers to settle their everyday lives in the cityspace she gets married. Her marriage displaces her from the urban milieu to her village where the protagonist, on his periodic visits, observes that she is growing old and therefore her contribution to family sustenance does not provide her any right to territorialize urban space.

Hamid manifests the intricate social standing of the sister whose waged labor as cleaning girl shares similarities with her father’s profession as cook and so it does not pronounce the domains of hierarchical separation of domestic work from the world outside. The similar nature of work should have deconstructed the hegemony of power relations, but she could not dismantle the patriarchal frame by stabilizing her economic positioning. Perregaux suggests this dismantling through “realization” of its ideological construction of proliferation of power relations. She exemplifies it through a woman whose vulnerability promulgates her socio-economic dependency and if she crosses this safety belt, she displaces and dispossesses herself from the secure and safe spatial confinements of urban space. Analogous allegations are experienced by men who are assumed as effeminate figures when they choose to stay home. The sister who is dispossessed from her education is manipulated through her labor, nonetheless, she lacks the *realization* of manipulation and therefore continues to affiliate her dependency with the male of her family and she is displaced through her arranged marriage.

Hamid discerns the Asian city as a space of difference where women are cocooned in the private sphere and their labor is availed by men for spatial territorialization. The quest of female subjectivity in *Rising Asia* embodies the perpetuation of patriarchal ideology through capital hierarchy. Displacement and dispossession of women is dependent upon their extent of productive docility and servitude when the protagonist asks his sister about the fear of leaving urban space and states: "I would be scared to move back to village all by myself" to which she replies "that's why you're still a boy and I'm a woman" (Hamid, 2013, p. 25). His sister submissively follows the dictations of her father. Elizabeth Wilson (1992) suggests city space as more liberating for women as compared to the rural affinity though the opportunities are "often tantalizingly unfulfilled, offset by counter-influences of exploitation, exclusion and a harsh sexual morality; nevertheless, urbanization provided one plank in the gradual emancipation of women" (Wilson, 2001, p. 67).

In the novel, the protagonist is inquisitive to trace signs of his sister's proclivity towards the city but he only perceives her resilience that eventually displaces her from urban affinity. In contrast to the resilience of the sister, Hamid presents the resistance of the pretty girl for claiming her right over the city. Pretty girl and her mother live and invest the hardship of their labor to serve a "notorious drunk and gambler" father who demands their servitude through earning for "what he has lost the night before or will lose the night to come" (Hamid, 2013, p. 41). Her mother suffers from severe arthritis due to which she can only work as a sweepress, "the only work she could find when circumstance thrust her relatively late in life into the paid labor force" (Hamid, 2013, p. 49). Such vulnerability of her mother and uncertainty of her future directs the pretty girl to struggle for her spatial adjustment.

The novel's sub plot unfolds the adoration of the protagonist for pretty girl as she is "the object of much desire, anguish and masturbatory activity" (Hamid, 2013, p. 38). Both characters struggle for their spatial settlements by utilizing dexterous properties. They collide with the course of the novel and share the diverse experiences of hardships for resisting spatial alienation. Under male dominance, the city in its public and private domains consciously or unconsciously attributes the former as space of order and control and the latter as the orbit of emotion and disorder. Elizabeth Wilson (1992) cogitates the presence of women in the public sphere is a problem of order "*because* their presence symbolized the promise of sexual adventure" (1992, p. 6). She is the "sphinx in the city" - the symbol of disorder that must be controlled by men. Wilson argues that women experience the city as less disturbing for women themselves because their venture in public space indicates less dependency on the opposite, since "instead of setting nature against the city, they find nature *in* the city. For them, that invisible city, the 'second city' the underworld or secret labyrinth.... [is] of riches" (Wilson, 1992, p. 8). She contends that the dismantling of the oscillating determinism of public and private, women's spatial explorations and manifestation are lucrative for their independence.

Pretty girl appears to be the character who threatens the order through her presence in the public space. She traverses for success and independence by breaking the restricted fence of order and disorder, emotional and rational. Pretty girl asserts her agency through her only possession that is her physical beauty. By choosing to bargain with the patriarchal norms she

enables herself to shape her spatial relationships. Hamid rebukes the hierarchical unevenness of socio-spatial structures that leads her to a sordid pronouncement through which she deconstructs hegemonic spatial ideologies and assert her right over the urban infrastructure. She begins as an assistant in a beauty salon where “she carries towels, handles chemicals, brings tea, sweeps hair” and massages “women of all ages who are either wealthy or wish to appear wealthy” (Hamid, 2013, p. 41). While living in a society where every individual is struggling for *haves* and *haves-not*, pretty girl also finds her vulnerable social positionality through her economic disparities. The fears and insecurities of the urban other in the novel depict Hamid’s denouncement of the societal paradigms that are gravely influenced by the stratifications of capitalism. To deconstruct the dual oppression, pretty girl aims to fortify her weak existence through economic stability to claim her right over the city.

Deprived of significant educational and professional background, pretty girl silently handles the towels in the beauty salon. To shape her life in the city, she flees from her home to “bridge a significant cultural and class divide” through acquiring necessary education from watching movies so that she might be able “to enter even the lower realms of the world of fashion” (Hamid, 2013, p. 51). But watching movies for the vocabulary of the fashion world is not the only requirement for making her space in urban ambiance. She has to invest in her only property; her beauty and body that she could bargain for in return of her desired strata. In return she receives “gifts and cash” along with the charisma of becoming a *model*, she saves these gifted amounts surreptitiously to reflect her “independence” (Hamid, 2013, p. 50).

The struggles of pretty girl for spatial adjustments do not cover the main plot of events. While representing her as the other, Hamid articulates her struggles through the protagonist’s occasional encounters with her. As the plot develops the protagonist sees “the pretty girl on a billboard” modeling jeans, thus unfolding her continuous struggle for urban settlement when she has “finally succeeded in securing a place of her own”. After leaving her parents behind, she rents “a room in an apartment she shares with a singer and an actress, both women in circumstances not dissimilar to hers” (Hamid, 2013, p. 61-2). Acquiring a decent lifestyle and “runway work” the pretty girl still yearns “to establish what is known in her business as a name” (Hamid, 2013, p. 62). The earning *name* in urban space becomes very challenging for the pretty girl who is not a qualified professional; yet she is not a “model of the first rank”, she is known to “photographers and designers” (Hamid, 2013, p. 84) who can provide her with available opportunities for her spatial sustenance, however: “She earns enough to afford an apartment of her own, a modest but reliable car, and a live-in maid who can cook, which is to say she earns as much as a retail banker her age, and perhaps twice as much as you do, even before the gifts she receives from her multiple high-churn-rate admirers are taken into account” (Hamid, 2013, p. 62).

After each interval the appearance of pretty girl supplies her diverse urban experiences that proliferate the scaling of uncertainty and insecurity of urban ambiance for Asian women. When her career “has plateaued, or perhaps peaked is a better word” she spends several years in “megapolis” but observes a decline in her modeling assignments for which she seeks alternate options to secure her position in the cityspace. To establish herself as a minor

actress, pretty girl receives short role-plays in dramas and comedies to sustain herself in urban specificity. Her inept professional acquisition recurs on every stage of resettlement to obstruct her chances of spatial stability for which she has to manifest her affordability of urban lifestyle by utilizing available sources. The protagonist visits her in the “city’s most exclusive” hotel where she manages to stay after securing fifty percent discount (Hamid, 2013, p. 106). Being familiarized as dispossessed years earlier, the protagonist and pretty girl share their poignant urban experiences when they meet in the hotel. Through their interaction, Hamid concedes the years of dispossession and inquisitive fantasies of creating their space in the city. Hamid metaphorically describes the distance between the rich and poor thereby complicating the invisible antagonism by creating utopian illusions regarding the lifestyle of the urban elite.

By defining pretty girl’s assumption of spoons as silver, Hamid symbolically construes the insignificance of this constructed and maintained detachment, which pretty girl perceives after viewing spatial manifestations as hollow and futile. Hamid categorizes her acquired insight of ideological infrastructure of urban space through her emblematic elucidation of snow when the protagonist asks her the “amazing things regular people don’t get to see” (Hamid, 2013, p. 107). She responds by describing snow as an unusual thing, “like magic. Like powdered hailstones.... When it’s falling, it’s like feathers” (Hamid, 2013, p. 108). Hamid depicts snow as an epitome of urban fantasy for the dispossessed who perceive its ideological hierarchies after incessantly struggling for settlement: “soft. But it gets wet. If you walk around in it, it hurts” (ibid). While evaluating “women’s issues” in urban theory McDowell (1983) argues that the “nature of the changing interrelationships between production and reproduction, as part of inseparable process that varies across space and over time, should be the key focus for a feminist urban studies” (1983, p. 59).

This suggested analytical modal investigates the interconnected and interdependent relationships of public and private sphere where both genders spend their everyday lives to symbiotically negotiate their socio-spatial positioning. Pretty girl who mediates between the two standardized social orbits cannot find any spatial fixation like the protagonist who becomes a successful entrepreneur without indulging in the struggle of shifting his profession. In the case of *How to Get Rising in Rising Asia*, Hamid represents the aftermath of challenging the hegemonic constructions of spatial infrastructure when pretty girl aims to cross her confined spatial sphere and aims to dismantle the dichotomies of public and private sectors. She boldly announces her displacement when the protagonist proposes: “I’m not sure I’m the type men marry” (2013, pp. 86-87).

The urban space of Rising Asia is an inherently gendered base wherein the woman is bound to the private sphere and men become affluent in the spatial infrastructure by becoming the *producers* and controlling the means of production. McDowell (1984) states that to preserve the image of male solidarity, exclusion of women from “the local political and social life” becomes inevitable (1984, p. 199). In this frame the urban infrastructure also exerts male dominance that does not provide women space to formulate their spatial relationships. The protagonist acquires the professional skills that help in making and developing the socio-spatial institutional construction of cityscape whereas the pretty girl could only break her

homely sphere by officiating in her private sphere. The professional skills she acquires are not to contribute or shape the institutional structure of public space; instead she could only infix herself in this space collocating the domesticity of private orbit. Her initial attempts at becoming a fashion model correspond to the norms of her allocated sphere out of which she shifts to the profession of chef. Seeing the shrinking opportunities to remain outside her specific cocoon she finds interior fashion designer as a feasible option for spatial settlement. Albeit, the protagonist does encounter hurdles and obstacles in his spatial struggles as an urban other but the nature of experiences of pretty girl defines her as more insecure and vulnerable. For her stability the urban space could only accommodate her panacea inside the private urban sphere. She does not have opportunities to pick and choose and has to shape herself according to the norms of the public sphere where her presence and dismantling of the *dichotomy* does not infuriate the public realm.

Through the character depiction of the wife Hamid establishes an alternative connection to describe the indifferent urban experience for women living inside their confined sphere and women attempting to detach themselves from the constructed urban frame. The wife of the protagonist belongs to urban space. She does not struggle to break the specified lines between the two orbits unlike pretty girl, who claims the city after marriage when she announces a delay in pregnancy to pursue her studies. After completing her desired degree she leans towards a decade older husband and finds him dispassionate and reticent. Her unconventional conditions while living in the confined cocoon displaces her from her own place; her own home. Hamid presents that she acquires the degree of law; a degree that potentially connects her to the world outside her private realms. She attempts for relocation but could not retain her position. The post-pregnancy intricacies, seeking attention of husband, nurturing her son along with the management of domestic chores his wife discovers her disconnection from the world outside that she resumes through her formulation of a group of religious activists.

McDowell (1982) demonstrates the division of the two sphere is ideological in its nature. The women are cocooned in their private spheres where traditionally they are detached not merely from the public urban space but also unable to contact each other within their own sphere. They are more engaged in domestic chores and usually “these spatial differences inevitably limit the potential for women to unite and organize as women” (McDowell, 1982, p. 69). Their absence in the active platform of urban space limits their extensive connections with women and therefore they require men to access the world outside their domestic realms. The wife approaches other women activists by breaking her own private sphere. The protagonist provides his home as a platform where they can arrange their regular meetings and lectures. The connection with other activists demonstrates her efforts of achieving solace for her spatial occupation, “in their company, she conducts herself with a gravity that exceeds her years, enjoying an influential position despite the fact that many of them are her seniors” (2013, p. 149). Hamid demonstrates the dissolution of her marriage as an attempt to possess the urban space wherein she can exercise a similar authoritative role albeit remaining in the same orbit. Her new husband is the same age; and his beard reflects their mutual symbiosis in shaping their everyday lives without leaving their specified urban sphere. The gnawing struggles of women and their lurking fears of displacement extend the chances of their fragility in urban ambience.

Hamid portrays the adamant resistance of pretty girl to thwart ideological manifestations of city space by persistently chasing the wavering webs of urban infrastructure. Her recent transition from the entertainment industry to furniture designing and assistance of educated women eventually provides her spatial stability, through which she explores the cities abroad. Pretty girl accedes to possess the urban sphere without any fears of displacement but soon she is dispossessed from her comforts of *haves*. Hamid's *Rising Asia* is filled with the urban others like pretty girl and the protagonist who are shaping and reshaping their existence in urban space through fair and unfair means. Hamid reveals the displacement and dispossession of urban other in *Rising Asia*, caused by the urban dispossessed; who in turn seek their share of accumulation by dispossessing the downtrodden. These same downtrodden people acquire stability in urban infrastructure after incessant engagement in tracing empty spaces where they can infix their tiny existence. Pretty girl loses her secure and protected upper strata when her furniture boutique is robbed by three armed men. The robbery in her place of dreams, adventure and solidity extorts her vigor for spatial resistance: "It is on this evening that the pretty girl's forty-year affair with her adopted metropolis comes to an end" (Hamid, 2013, p. 196).

This forlorn dispossession abandons her endeavors of spatial resistance that consequently displaces her from her adorable urban space. She comes back to the region of her birth where she owns a small townhouse and it is this small townhouse that rescues the protagonist and the pretty girl who share the last days of their lives with all the vulnerabilities of old age. Hamid concludes his self-help book by suggesting strategies to insulate the fragility of their advancing years from the fears of pollution, dirt, violence and the terrorism of *Rising Asia*. The protagonist and the pretty girl avoid going outside with the preference of staying inside their home. The fragility of their age and "the shock of being mortal" evacuate their spatial proclivity and they spend the lives of the dispossessed from wealth and health by sustaining their survival by sharing their solitude (Hamid, 2013, p. 212). The urban space they obsessed about throughout their lives now appears to them as "perilous", fearful and unknown: "The city beyond is an increasingly mythological space. It intrudes in the form of power and gas outages, traffic noises, and airborne particulates that cause you to wake wheezing in your bed" (Hamid, 2013, p. 223).

## CONCLUSION

This article examines the novel *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* by Mohsin Hamid as a narrative that provides a lens to observe the lifestyle of urban women in developing Asian cityscapes. I have examined different social roles of urban women within public and private domains of the urban realm and explored spatial disequilibrium which has continuously engaged women to shape their everyday existence within the urban ambiance. With the adaptation of unnamed characterization and devoid of prescribing any national or regional boundaries in developing Asia, I contend that the novel configures the ordinary lifestyle of urban women who struggle endlessly for her spatial retention by all means without any social and moral consciousness. In this article, I argue that in the backdrop of spatial and technological development projects that are shaping the developing cities of Asia into world class cities, Hamid demonstrates the confiscated urban milieu for women in public domains. It has been argued that urban women with specific reference to pretty woman and the wife,

are struggling to territorialize the urban space but for this territorialization her physiological and psychological self undergoes oppression and manipulation. This article also contends that this ideological manifestation of spatial unevenness has captivated women to struggle for spatial stability. Discrimination of *haves* and *have-nots* instigates pretty girl to manipulate and exploit the available sources and resources to settle in urban premises. This article investigates that in the process of settlement urban women negotiate with their image of *proper women* who cannot return to their private sphere with honour and dignity. The presence of such women in the public domain remains ineffective in shaping or reshaping the spatial infrastructure of visibility. The article also argues that the uneven socio-economic intrusions are making the developing Asian urban-space serendipitously violent and hostile for women and concludes that they remain disconnected in deconstructing invisible inequalities of exclusion and displacement from urban ambiance.

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