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**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Space and Gender in Mansab's *This House of Clay and Water*: A Post-Feminist Study**

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**ABSTRACT**

Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts. The present study aims at explicating the space for gender with an assumption to mitigate the patriarch aura in prevalent blight of matriarchy. The research analyses Faiqa Mansab's *This House Of Clay And Water* by considering the Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. The data have been selected in the form of extracts from the different parts of the novel, *This House Of Clay And Water* and analyzed accordingly. It is neither concerned with feministic nor with misogynistic perspective but to repatriate a balance in genders, deteriorated by the modern feminists. The significance of the study lies in the fact of urgency to redefine the gendered boundaries in the present society in terms of gender identities. The chief objective of the present attempt was to assess the imbalance of space and subversion of identities for all genders. It also considered the pseudo feminists' portrayal of woman as a vulnerable subject in patriarchal restraints. The research also addresses the issue of space and gender representation in 21st century literature. It also evaluates the imbalance of space and subversion of identities in the present era regarding all genders. The results and discussions rendered the imbalance in gendered boundaries along with identity crises, represented in *This House of Clay and Water*. The findings also inferred the plight and discrepancy in the lives of genders, based on their societal roles.

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**KEYWORDS** Gender, Space, Matriarchy, Patriarchy, Subversion of Identity

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**Introduction**

Space and gender occupy a prominent place in 21<sup>st</sup> century in the domain of patriarchy and matriarchy. It discusses the manipulation of space among genders with respect to their performative acts in physical environment. It also asserts that gender identity is provisionally unfixed and tenuously articulated. The frequent happenings of gender performances assert the identity of genders. While individuals publicly articulate relationships within a society at specific time and place, the space in which it occurs, that becomes the place of cultural carvings. Judith Butler (2002) challenges that the major concerns of space and time are congregating in recent gender studies. Butler has lauded the idea of gender equality in her work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. In this work, she asserted that individuals should not be treated on the basis of their gender or sex rather they should be imparted societal roles as human beings. Although the concept of space and gender is not new in the academia, yet there is a scarce amount of work on it. Diachronically, the confluence of gender and space have progressively come into the critical sphere of feminism, regarding the relation among the movement and gender, the gendered boundaries of the society and how it controls the lives of genders. It provides the new ways of handling the problems of space regarding genders serge in the real life context. The works of postfeminists proclaim that all genders are

responsible for creating this space and after that it affects the life circle of genders. The dynamic nature of society contains all forms of dominance in its different parts. For instance, at some portion, it shows the signs of patriarchy while on the other it corroborates the presence of matriarchy. On the whole, there is an imbalance in the roles, duties, obligations and even identities of genders. The discrepancies in the acknowledgement of gender roles are leading the society toward chaos and deformity. It is the dilemma of feminists to resist existing gender paradigms repeatedly. The readings of feminism show that space offers resistance to the gendered boundaries of the contemporary society. The present study provides a comprehensive background; how space is created and how it affects the life circle of the individuals within a society. It also highlights the issues of matriarchy and patriarchy along with suppression of third gender.

Both postmodernism and post-structuralism have deep impacts on the examination of space that is created spatially within a society. They argue that space cannot be neutral rather it is constructed discursively by the dominant group of the society. It is shaped in different forms of knowledge and power. That is why, space cannot be grasped outside a socially mediated and constructed perspective. This study revolves around the ostensive and fabricated gendered boundaries in the contemporary society. It also encompasses that how the recent literature is an embodiment of imbalances in genders and hallucinated identities. It is the dilemma of society that it remains patriarchal at one point of time while matriarchal at the other but there is no balance in the life. As a matter of fact, the exaggeration of one gender's rights subdues the rights of others. Apart from establishing a balance among genders, the present study also explicates the concept of equality and equity. The word equality is always confused with equity while we create a balance and uniformity in gender. The confusion among them is due to lack of understanding of both concepts while we place them in real life context. The word equality means that there should equal rights for genders irrespective of their biological construction in the society at large while equity means provision of rights within specific circles of life. This study also highlights the gendered boundaries which are created by the space among genders along with reverse effects of genders in creating this space.

The concept of space and gender in Faiqa Mansab's *This House of Clay and Water* is the basic concern of this research. This piece of literature is the first novel she wrote which was published by Penguin Random House India in May, 2017. It proclaims a quest for space in all genders. In the past, feminists defended the concept that women needed a solid identity because they considered it indispensable for them while living in the society. The novel *This House of Clay and Water* is a story of forbidden love. There is an incarnation of this feeling which is fabricated with tragedy as it is one of the main themes of the novel. Faiqa Mansab disclosed in an interview that the novel covers three main themes which are common woman's struggles and self-deception, in order to get prestige. It is proclaimed through the protagonist Nida who demonstrates a denial to the moral corruption of the world in her surroundings. There are many imposed roles of gender that are lying at the center of the present novel. It is written that the body of women is shown as the personal property of men that can be rejected or dejected. According to her, when she wrote that novel, she wanted to hit the deepest part of the readers' minds.

### Literature Review

The relevant work of the respective field have been analysed with a purpose to serve the readers with a comprehensive background; the gendered boundaries and their consequences, the obsolescence of feminism, and commencement of postfeminism era of present society have been detailed. This study has sought the role of space, created by genders, in unbalancing the genders identities in the contemporary society. Ruth Simpson

(2014) in *Gender, Space and Identity: Male Cabin Crew and Service Work* pointed out the intersection of gender, occupation and sexuality in order to analyze how space is utilized by the male cabin crew to manage the gender identity. The work of cabin crew can be described as “paraprofessional” service in the sense that management largely dictates how the service is carried out” (p. 292).

Dennis M. Savard (2016) highlighted that it is observed by victimological and criminological researchers that men are more affected than women as being victims of crimes, particularly in violent ones. Researchers challenged this generalized thinking by examining the trends of victimization in genders. It has been discovered that the gender gap in crime has close between male and female for some crimes, such as aggravated assault, but this closing is largely due to decreases in male victimization while at the same time female victimization has remained relatively stable from year-to-year.

Sara Mills (2005) in *Gender and Colonial Space* finds out the relations among social links which are included in landscapes, class, relations, topography, gender and architecture within postcolonial context. Within these contexts it is argued that the psychoanalytical focus of contemporary postcolonial theory is drawing a number of literary and non-literary articles which developed a materialistic attitude. This work by Mills channelizes the problems of genders where they are often neglected through the delicate orthodoxies by its important representation from space perspective.

Arundhati Roy (2017) has explored the forbidden territory of a transgender person's life in her recent novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Similar concern echoes in Pakistani author Faiqa Mansab's novel *This House Of Clay And Water* (2017), that deals with the cruelties inflicted upon the transgender protagonist by the defunct social order in the city of Lahore. This research aims to evaluate the critical reaction of Roy and Mansab to the plight of the transgender population in India and Pakistan. It also explores the role played by language in the lives of these marginalized communities.

Postfeminism ushers in a new era of intensified self-management for women, as the “makeover paradigm” gains ascendancy in popular media (Gill, 2006, pp. 262-264). Across all aspects of modern living, the makeover paradigm offers improvement as entertainment and draws ever more sharply distinctions of gender and class: for instance, television shows like “Extreme Makeover” present cosmetic surgery to women as a path to autonomy and happiness, while “Ladette to Lady” urges working-class women to conform to middle-class taste for self-betterment. Tasker and Negra suggest that one of the key contradictions of postfeminism is that female empowerment is dependent on the capacity to consume (2007, p. 8). Thus requiring the exclusion of women who cannot meet these demands or, as Jessica Ring Rose and Valerie Walker Dine put it, “this successful femininity is bourgeois, yet coded universal, normal and attainable for all” (Diane Negra, 2007, p. 228). Women’s economic capacity is encouraged at the same time as the changing global marketplace increasingly relies on the exploitation of women in the “third world” as women migrants take up poorly paid, unregulated domestic work and Western businesses secure cheap female labor offshore. Christina Scharf (2012) argues that in contemporary European societies, women’s condition of freedom offered by postfeminism is in fact “intertwined with the construction of their cultural other, the ‘oppressed Muslim woman,’ who is portrayed as being a passive victim of patriarchal culture” (Scharff, 2012, pp. 1-2).

Kathryn Hausbeck (1997) pose a question that is postfeminism a spectra trailing behind second wave feminism in the media, or a social phenomenon barking social change in the realm of gender and feminism. This assertion analyzes postfeminism from

the popular press, 1981-1992 in order to identify the characteristics of postfeminism and to delineate its relationship with feminism.

Faiqa Mansab's *This House of Clay and Water*, has widely been encountered by the general studies in many regions through many angles. R. W. Connell has theorized transgender in Faiqa Mansab's *This House of Clay and Water* in her article *Travails of Transgender and their Hardships in Faiqa Mansab's This House of Clay and Water*. She has given a precise but very relating image of transgender in Pakistan. She herself is a transgender. She has faced the problems herself in identifying with the other human beings under the labels of purity, the male and female. She has developed a social theory related to gender relations and special focusing on the transgender and this theory emphasizes that gender is the large scale social structure and it's not only a matter of personal identity. Full her general not only represent a person's personal identity rather it also explores The Identity of a community and a group of people who have similarities genetically.

According to Daily Pakistan (2016), Saudi Arabia banned the performing of Hajj for the transgender in 2016. They were not allowed to get a visa for religious pilgrimage to Mecca this religious pilgrimage is included "Umrah" and the notification which was issued from the Saudi government was that all the travel agents shall be bound to follow this new rule. But according to Qamar Naseem (2016), an activist with Trans Action Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan, all this declaration of new rule by Saudi Arabia lead only a confusion in the country and it resulted into more confusion only. Javed Ahmad Ghamdi, a religious scholar, told to the Pakistan Express Tribune Newspaper, "that government has no rights to prohibit transgender people from performing Hajj" (Ghamdi, 2016).

### Theoretical Framework

The theories, concepts and goals inherited in dominant discourses comprised an adequate collection of facts regarding all genders and individuals lives in recent times. However they are intensifying the problems of genders and lead to identity crisis in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In order to understand the facts lying behind this genders identity crises and major standpoints of postfeminist movement in question, I adopt the theoretical approach of space and gender in the purview of postfeminism.

Low (2001) says that topological dimensions examination of culture do not extract the idea that how spaces are created in the society along with a complex structural nature of spaces. Doreen Massey affirms the idea of 'Space' as the best suiter to show the circles of coexistence and juxtapositions as the organizational forms of haphazardly posed spaces maintained simultaneities. (Massey, 1999). In this regard, first it is the possibility of simultaneities and then to the notion of reciprocal and overlapping relationships. That is the nature of the space remains inconsistency and capricious according to the pragmatics of the society.

Gender is a social definition of stereotypical behaviours that are created and learned. It leads to both feminine and masculine ideals of society and how the concept of gender is construed by the individuals themselves. These meanings define proper behaviours and they are supposed to act appropriately for their sex categories. Sex makes us male or female and gender makes us masculine or feminine. West and Zimmerman (1987) say that we "do gender" in our everyday lives. Doing gender is a constant on-going process of routine happenings that take place among individuals. Societal expectations deeply influence individuals' routine activities. "Gendered spaces" could provide a theoretical explanation of how specific locations in society shape the victimization experiences of men and women based on vulnerability (Spain, 1992).

The present study is guided by the views of Judith Butler regarding space and gender under the umbrella of postfeminism. She is a 20<sup>th</sup> century eminent philosopher and gender theorist in the field of feminism. Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity* (2002) was a highly acknowledged work as a groundbreaking piece of writing because of its modern approach and the concepts regarding identities of gender, gender and sex relations. By introducing the idea of gender in terms of performance and performativity. Gender performance means that it takes certain societal roles, how the role of one gender constructs the identity of others. It is the transformation of sex in terms of different positions of society. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of identity*, Judith Butler distinguishes between sex as a natural given category and gender as an acquired socio-cultural category. It also argues in a way that sex is a socially constructed category which stems out of social and cultural practices. It is also in a chaos regarding its identity in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Masculine and feminine roles are not biologically fixed but socially constructed (Judith Butler, 2002).

Judith Butler (2002) argues that gender is predominantly a cultural agent and constitutes the concepts of femininity or masculinity and homosexual or heterosexual identities. Her views have an amiable resemblance in the present issue of gender inequality in the contemporary society. The main rationale behind selecting the views of Judith Butler was gender inequality and the treatment of all genders on the basis of society defined patterns and gendered boundaries in the society. The particular focus of the study has also been guided and remained straight by considering the approach of Judith Butler regarding empowerment of all genders not in terms of men, women and transgender but as human identities which are free from the shackles and restraints of our society.

Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* was published in 2002 by Routledge. This book opens up with Simone De Beauvoir's (1949) line "one is not born a woman, but rather becomes one". The book consists of three major portions. First part includes Subject of Sex/Gender/Desire and the second portion is Prohibition, Psychoanalysis, and the Production of the Heterosexual Matrix. Third and last part of the book is Subversive Bodily Acts.

As a term, postfeminism means coming after feminism which implies that the motives and objectives of feminism are no longer needed. Post-feminism describe a perception that the objectives of feminism have already been achieved, according to feminists, so making further efforts in this domain is redundant. Post-feminism negatively describes that the feminists are reckoned to be sexist and oppressive. The wide-ranging circulation of this term prompted scholars to study the implications of its usage in the contemporary society. Post-feminism is a reaction to feminism which culminates the obsolete trends of thinking pattern set by feminists during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It encompasses a place beyond the ostensive gendered boundaries created by feminists as well as misogynistic intellectuals. It frees the modern women as well as men from the shackles and restraints imposed by feminism on the freedom of all genders. In real terms, post-feminism endeavours to abolish the gendered boundaries created by a particular group of fascists feminist. It maintains a balance among genders in order to enable the women, men and transgender to be dealt not as three different genders rather as human entities. There is a great scope of post-feminism in this age of ridicule, mental chaos, intellectual hegemony and all other sorts of powers regarding the position of all genders. The rudimentary focus of the theory is to highlight and signify the earnestness of a balance among genders on equal grounds at this delicate edge of the time. Bell Hook (1984) suggested that feminism is clearly a term without proper significance. "Currently feminism seems to be a term without any clear significance. The 'anything goes' approach to the definition of the word has rendered it practically meaningless"

## Results and Discussion

The novel *This House Of Clay And Water* is a story of forbidden love. There is an incarnation of this feeling which is fabricated with tragedy and it is one of the main themes of the novel. Faiqa Mansab discloses in an interview that she wrote the novel that comprised three main themes which are common women's struggles and self-deception, in order to get prestige. It is proclaimed through the protagonist Nida who demonstrates a denial to the moral corruption of the world in her surroundings. There are many forced roles of gender that are lying at the center of the present novel. It is written that the body of women is shown as the personal property of men that to be demanded, possessed and rejected. According to her, when she wrote that novel, she wanted to hit the deepest part of the readers' minds.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is the most tumultuous century regarding the space created by all genders in the society. The concept of space has been created by a number of factors which are the ultimate result of ongoing ideologies of the contemporary world. Although the impact of space has devastated the individualistic nature of the genders, yet there is a role of genders in creating this space. As a matter of fact, there is interchangeability between the space and genders in having the impact on each other. According to postfeminists' thoughts, the overgrowth of one gender has undermined the capabilities and capacities of the other genders. In this context, the overgrowth of feminism has presented the men as cruel, barbaric and inhuman etc. which led to the confiscations of the rights of males. It is a dilemma of the present world that it has forgotten the third gender also in the fight of men and women. The third gender that is transgender is the most neglected one regarding its identity, rights, status, position etc. *This House of Clay and Water* is an appropriate manifestation of this space among genders which has been created by the genders in the contemporary society. All the characters of the novel are suffering in one way or the other from this space. The character of Nida, the protagonist of the novel, is unable to find any meanings in her existence. She considers herself a misfit in her family as there is no one to console and save her from the hysteria inside her. There is nothingness and absurdity in all the things she comes in contact with. According to Judith Butler, this space is the result of lack of communications among the genders which has restrained them from intermingling with each other and has created an invisible strangeness in all genders.

I'd morphed, altered, nipped and tucked away bits of my personality for so long, I no longer recognized myself. I feared that one day, even if I wanted to, I wouldn't be able to identify myself. I'd be forever trapped in an image of another's making, and there would be no escape because I would have forgotten to want to escape (p. 82).

These lines are proclaiming the inner plight and hysteria of Nida which she has been suffering from. The other characters of the novel are also showing the sign of uninvited space which have ruined their lives badly. Bhanggi is representing the third gender and experiencing the conditions which are not very different to Nida. Bhanggi is also a misfit to the society and he is in dejected state. He was not accepted even at the time of his birth and was thrown outside on the mercy of the nature. He was nurtured by Hijra guru, according to the rituals of third gender. He was marginalized on the basis of his autonomy and was subjugated by many males during his childhood. He seeks refuge at Dargah of Data Sahib. This space has been created by other genders in the society which have snatched the rights of being human from the transgenders.

The third character, Sasha, is also a victim of space among genders in the 21<sup>st</sup>. She is also finding meanings in her existence and for that she rejects her family life to find refuge outside. She neglects her child and husband. She is a true portrayal of typical woman who

finds love and affection outside the house gets spoiled by the cruel male oriented forces of the society. "We are all like that. Abandoned strangers, who adopt each other, use each other and stand by each other for as long as we can" (p.39).

According to postfeminism, the roles of genders are reversed in the contemporary society which has led to the identity crises. All the genders are competing with one and others in order to get them recognized. Females are striving for emancipations from the clutches of patriarchy while males are also getting affected by the patriarchy in many ways. Although there is not any male influential character in the novel *This House of Clay and Water*, yet it is clear from the character of Sasha that her husband was neglected by her. "We hope to drown the murmurs of our paralyzed conscience by screaming about other people's sins" (p. 20).

Faiqa has verbalized this identity crises of all genders by writing the novel *This House of Clay and Water* as it channelizes those aspects of our society which are important but nobody dares to talk about. The impetus behind this kind of writing seems to get the genders out of their present states regarding their identities.

When death becomes an escape, when it becomes attractive, the purpose of life is fulfilled. To teach one it's futility, it's worthlessness, that is the purpose of life. Incongruously, its value lies in having imparted that lesson (p. 190).

According to Judith Butler, it is an open incarceration of the people of the present society to live without proper identities in their lives. That is the reason that they find an asylum in the lap of death when they find the life purposeless and meaningless. The characters of the novel like Nida, Sasha and Bhanggi are caught between a tumultuous state in which they wanted to be free and to be loved but contrary their wishes, they all are suffering in one way or the other. Although their fate makes them to be fallen prey to opposite forces in their respective domains, yet their characters are important in imposing such critical condition upon them. During the course of the story, they have been driven by the other people in their surroundings. For instance, Nida feels comforts at Dargah due to unaffectionate behavior of her husband and that is the reason that she goes outside frequently. On the other hand, Sasha who is a typical feminist woman, goes out by neglecting her husband and child to seek comforts in the company of men outside. These contradictions are leading to an ultimate crises of identities. Nida speaks about the loss of their identities in the hands of other people in their lives in the following words:

I was an utterance in absentia. I was a forgotten word, uttered and mislaid long ago. I was the word that existed because there was another word that was my opposite, and without it I was nothing. I gained meaning only by acknowledging that possible other (p. 22).

We all are hypocrite our nature and act according to the set standards of society. The inner personalities are hidden by us consciously to get the worldly gains. It is the duty of literature to educate and liberate us from the inner stoics. In the novel *This House of Clay and Water*, the writer presented the inner war of the individuals who have been victimized on the basis of their genders.

Judith Butler emphasized in her theory that people should not be treated on the basis of their genders rather they should be dealt as human beings. For instance, there should not be any kind of distinction while talking to a woman and they should not be marginalized on the basis of their existence. Butler also says that it is the dilemma of the feminist movement that when it talks about women right, then it first negates the basic

natural existence of women. After the course of ostensible demand for their rights, women themselves became victims in the hands of their own gender.

According to postfeminism, there should be a difference between equality and equity for women in the societal circumstances. The concept of equality has been dented badly when women are embedded in every field of life. It is a fact that the feminists are mostly the manipulators of the women. In the novel *This House Of Clay And Water*, Faiqa Mansab tried to channelized the imbalance among genders and how their lives have been disturbed by the other people in their surroundings. The inner ditches of all characters bring them together at Dargah. All of them find a strong bond of friendship and love in each other because they all are incomplete in their lives. If we take the examples of characters in the novel, all are in search of love and affection. When they do not find them at home, then they go out of the home compellingly. "It is not often that I have two options to choose from. It is nice to be compelled towards something; otherwise one drifts through life unimpeded" (p. 44).

Literature always provides an asylum to those ones who want to express their point of view to the society. When people do not find the appropriate space to convey their message then the literature is always there to get them under its umbrella. *This House Of Clay And Water* is an outright catharsis of a person who observed and felt those neglected areas of human nature which are devastating the lives of many individuals in our society.

She looked like she belonged in a posh drawing-room rather than the shrine of a saint. Sashaying in on her five-inch heels, red lipstick and the clothes that fit her like a second skin, she was unaware of the staring multitude as Marie Antoinette had been of her bread-deprived subjects (p. 18).

Although Sasha is living a life according to her wishes and desire, yet she is exploiting herself in the hands of men who are always there to manipulate women. She is representing that class of women of society which is the most vulnerable one in the hands of men.

The present novel is the description of those individuals' lives that are affected by the stereotypes of the society. For instance, the women are compelled to live a life of women irrespective of their personal likes and dislikes. Same like that the third genders are supposed to be merely entertainers. The stage has already been set for upcoming beings and they are liable to their existence.

This cage of bones and flesh that holds me prisoner . . . makes a mockery of me and my desires, destroys me daily. How can anyone be held responsible for the body they're born with, ji? Who can help that (p. 5).

It shows that anatomy describes the destiny of the individuals. Our societal and moral values are deteriorating with the passage of time. All of the literature of the contemporary society focuses the modern trends and exaggerates the social values which ultimately get worse effect from this advocacy. There is a scarcity of those theories which can encompass the well-being and equality of all genders. For example, the feminism only talks about the females rights and ignores the other two genders. It is the over growth of one gender while the under growth of rest of the two. Structuralism could be quoted as it talks about the binary opposition and rejects the existence of the third gender. These theories are creating an imbalance among genders on the basis of certain grounds. The novel *This House Of Clay And Water* is representing the injunctions of postfeminism as it also discusses about the imbalance in the lives of genders. It rejects the idea that a woman



has to be submissive throughout her life. It also negates the notion that a woman is a source of shame and humiliation for the family.

According to Judith Butler, the idea of womanhood should be repositioned in the structures of the society. She is no more a weaker sex as she is competing in all spheres of life. On the other hand, the other genders also need to be reimagined. Men are not cruel and they are also victims at many places of the society. But the most vulnerable and passive entity of the society is the third gender. They are not considered as the human beings who are worthy to love and to be loved. Their feelings, wishes and desires are suppressed ruthlessly which lead them toward rebellion. For them, the society appears to be an align place. "In our aloneness, our souls had found each other. That was all. How silly to call it anything less" (p. 252).

Society is losing the compactness due to different divides which are spreading it apart. There are different divides on the name of religion, ethnicity, caste, creed and belief. These are negatively projected by some negative forces of the society which have made the lives of individuals tough as Faiqa says at one point of the novel, "Life is exacting and cruel. Death is calm oblivion. Life betrays everyone while death, without fail, always finds us" (p. 54).

Judith Butler has asserted in her *Genders Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* that genders are fighting an unnecessary war within the society. This conundrum of identities and values is ruining the lives of genders which is an alarming situation for the contemporary society and the upcoming generation of ours. It is evident from the analysis of the characters that they are suffering with themselves to get happiness and satisfaction in lives. Nida deserves to be loved without any condition but she is languishing for no reasons. On the other hand, Bhanggi is being treated maliciously because of his anatomy. He should be treated like a common person.

Each one of us chooses to wear a disguise but the masks for Hijras, well known as they are, aren't chosen by them. I chose mine but it was the wrong one for a Hijra. People called it blasphemy" (p. 44).

Faiqa has provided us with an impetus to think about the people who are suffering around us. They are two reasons behind that they do not complain about their pain and sorrows. The first reason is that they do not have the courage to complain due to their helplessness within their domains and the second reason is that they do have any proper channel to raise their voice. "We hope to drown the murmurs of our paralyzed conscience by screaming about other people's sins" (p. 20). This voice has aptly been raised by the writer of *This House Of Clay And Water*. It is one of the best readings on the issues of genders inequality and their imbalance in the society.

The most striking aspect of the story is its setting in the country like Pakistan where these issues of genders are not to be discussed at academic forums. Although there are a few pieces of fiction which highlights the genders issues, yet they do not have the appeal to move the hearts of the readers. "Some words are prisons. They're labels of reduction. They're like stones catapulting through mouths, hundreds and thousands of mouths, to target and hurt" (p. 172).

There is another unique aspect of the story is that the writer being herself a woman has experienced the life of contemporary society. She has a lived experience of the society in which there are gendered boundaries, crises of identities regarding genders, the stereotypes about sex and societal roles on the basis of sex and many more. *This House Of*

*Clay And Water* has shed the light for the first time on the issues of identity crises in the modern contemporary society.

Making a carnival out of nothing, the defining quality of the vibrant-hearted Lahoris' translated into eating cholesterol-laden food in a perpetual state of carpe diem and eventually killing themselves ten years sooner than their natural lifespan, which wasn't that long anyway (p. 2).

It is human nature that we adopt a pack of morality when our tummies are filled. We are social, respectable, and honourable and civilized when we are economically strong. On the other hand, all of our morality diminishes when we do not have anything.

The theme of cynicism is prevailing in the novel *This House Of Clay And Water*. Although the writer has talked about the love and betrayal of individuals, yet they are characters are cynical in nature. They are thinking only for themselves and do not care about the feelings and expectations of those people who are residing in their surroundings. For instance, Nida is lauding the difficulties and sorrows only while she does not care about the busy life of her husband. With the course of the story, the fact revealed that she falls in love with Bhanggi so she cares for him and she also embellishes herself for Bhanggi. It can be said that she is reluctant to give her husband love and affection for whom she is supposed to. It exposes the cynical nature of her character.

People who roam these roads in their metal cars don't feel, don't see. They will honk and curse if an accident happens in front of them, while the people on motorbikes, on bicycles and rickshaws, will stop to help. They have not travelled enclosed in metal prisons too long, and so the wind and the sun have touched them, helped them remain more human (p. 28)

On the other hand, Sasha is consorting with other men outside on the cast of her husband and child. Her longings for an affluent and felicitous life have led to the verge of destruction. When she leaves her home, she separates herself from the family bonds along with making herself more vulnerable in the hands of outrageous fate. She ignores her child who needs her love and care as a mother. It shows that every character of the novel is showing the element of cynicism for the people into their contact. Every character of the novel is seeking love in someone's other shelter.

He taught me to read the Holy Book. I wish that he hadn't, ji. It hurt me and confused me to learn about ideas of compassion and dignity. Everything around me was so different. After a few months I stopped going to him. I don't know whether the stories he told me saved me or destroyed me. Thinking beyond survival is its own burden, ji (p. 39)

The third and most vulnerable character of the novel, Bhanggi is channelizing his miseries and pathos which are purely fatal. He is the only character of the novel who is suffering not because of his character but due to his fate. The attitude of the society has made him stern but it is clear that he is still soft at heart. He gives space and attention to Nida when she comes to him.

I had never said those words because there were no words left. My beloved and I were both exiles from language. Our love couldn't be expressed in words. Our love had been woven into the melodies rendered by his flute, and it was subsumed in the atoms of the air we breathed. It had been consecrated in this shrine. It had never been named. It was

an unnamed thing that had remained unspoken, unuttered, unsaid. I did not need to name it when he could already hear it (p. 172).

These lines are showing that Bhanggi is seeking refuge in Nida and finding his dreamed love in her. He prepares himself to look brighter and attractive to someone else's perspective irrespective of the consequences.

## Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to find out the imbalance among genders and the space that is created by the genders themselves. The concept of space and gender has been the topic of the recent literature for last two and half decades. But on the whole, there is not a substantive amount of work on this topic. Judith Bulter's *Genders Trouble: Feminism And The Subversion Of Identities* is one of the few founding stones on the vary issue of space and gender. She has elaborated the positions of genders from the different aspects with respect to society. Genders are assigned with roles according to their anatomy.

The fact also surfaced during the study that there is gender identity crises in the contemporary society. Humans are divided on the basis of their sex that makes them unique and it also beautifies their existence. The contemporary theories and ongoing trends in the society have made the gender identities mixed with each other as there is no clear indication of their roles and duties within specific circles. It has created a chaos and conundrum for them to recognize their uniqueness within the society. Faiqa Mansab has lauded this identity crises by portraying the life of Nida, Bhanggi and Sasha. They are suffering from the identity crises within their life domains

Another issue has also been addressed in the study that gendered boundaries of patriarchy, matriarchy and transgenderism are routed in the society. Every character of the novel is a symbol of male and female dominance.

Faiqa has penned this piece of literature in a way that it conveys the obsolescence of feminism in the present society. Feminism talks about the rights of females only and it neglects the existence and right to live of the other genders. It has presented the women as the most miserable and vulnerable entities of the society. The basic postulates of the postfeminism encapsulate the flaws and incompleteness of feminism. Postfeminism says that it is the time to move on from the obsolete trends of feminism. It is the time to consider the existence of other genders to be discussed.

It is found out that there is a subversion of identities in the present society. The characters are showing that they are subverted by other fellow beings of the society. This was important to note that they themselves do not try to elucidate their identities. For instance, Nida does not try to make herself attractive in the eyes of her husband while she does it for Bhanggi. On the other hand Sasha, who is living a free life, does not care for her home and consorts with the men outside. Her longings for an affluent life have created an estrangement among her family members which affects the life of her husband and child. Last but not the least; Bhanggi has developed a strange kind of hysteria which put him into inferiority complex. The fact remains that he seems sluggish in making himself acceptable to the society.

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