

Exploring Spatiality in the Selected Poems of Moniza Alvi: A Poetic Cartography of Displacement

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the dynamics of space in Moniza Alvi's seven poems taken from her collection *The Country at my Shoulder* (1993) to explore how spatial anxiety and dislocated geographical and cultural concerns become prominent in her poems through different spaces. Through the framework of spatiality discussed by Gaston Bachelard, Henri Lefebvre and Benjamin N. Vis, it highlights the collision of two diverse cultures and value systems in Alvi's poems to bring forth her transcultural quests, which display the influence of geographical perplexity on postmodern literature. First, the representative architectural spaces, such as rooms and buildings are explored and discussed in the context of Alvi's native culture. Second, social and filial spaces are traced in the city space and ties respectively to unearth their influence on the poet's existence. Third, diasporic spaces are analyzed through the contrast of oriental and occidental psyches to determine the poet's vacillation between dual cultures. Fourth, geological and body spaces are interpreted through the metaphor of displaced geography to highlight the angst of dislocation. An exploration of these spaces suggests that Alvi's poetry proves to be a trans-spatial landscape that reflects the general restlessness of the 21st century due to postmodern spatial crisis, and the dilemma of migration.

Keywords: Spaces, Diaspora, Culture, Geography, Displacement