



Reading Mind in Spatial Notions through Fiction in Colours and Furniture of Susan Schaeffer's Falling and Anya.

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ABSTRACT

Spatial theories focus on the physical contents of images and art in any human mind, each description of self is an estimated encouragement of the social self that happened in evolution. The same is influenced by the culture and family set up in the initial stages of life until a person receives world knowledge. The knowledge gained then plays a more prevalent role than in the past self, yet the group consciousness stays the same. The study extends mental health studies, especially when the group's authenticities are generated toward individual knowledge. It is evidenced through the depiction of colours, specifically with the interior and historic sensibility through furniture. In the selected writings of Susan Schaeffer, the work *Falling* speaks of colours to express relationships, success, failures, history, ethnicity, the boredom of life, and the crisis of living. In *Anya*, it speaks of the long family lineage one holds with the crisis of individual life and becoming a newer self. Schaffer in both texts represent the characters in crisis by asking personal questions about the historical evolution of the Jewish community. To emphasize the post-war crisis and especially the change of relationship in the social view is visible by attempting to add certain colours and furniture to represent lineage and past that withhold the individuals. The two main characters connected to this element are Elizabeth from *Falling* and Anya from *Anya*.

Keywords: Spatial Theory; Colours; Furniture.

Introduction

In the narrative of literature in any form occurs a space that articulates the self through social, cultural, and individual preferences unfolded from the inside family influence. The development of human understanding is an evolutionary process with several influences, and this will be the product of personal memories of things past. The concern occurs when such a space outlines individual connecting past and future and generating opinions. In the article, the main narration is evaluated through the spatial notion in reading minds or how it affects individual mental health, and it is studied through the aspects of historical connection in the concerned writer's choices of furniture and its description along with the colour of representation.

The context of the paper is included in the genre of Jewish American literature that gave voices to many women in narrating

their stories regardless of the men who wrote imaginations on women's minds. The writers of women-centric narrations gave prominence to minute impressions of human needs and circumstances. Post-war Jewish American writers gave thoughts from Erica Jong explored female sexuality and desire through the novel *Fear of Flying* [1973] and Grace Paley who contributed to literature on themes like social justice and experiences of Jewish women in New York City. Cynthia Ozick is another popular writer in the genre that provoked with pure form of art in daily life during concentration camp lives. Many other Jewish American women writers made important contributions during this period and explored themes of identity, family, sexuality, and social justice, offering unique perspectives and challenging traditional literary norms.

In the category of writers Susan Fromberg Schaeffer writes about human relationships and their complications connecting through past, cultural, and historical backgrounds, the writer emerges as the unheard melody of weeping minds expressing strong points on human limitations in the historical trauma a community has been part of. The backdrop of the two works selected here are two different notions of human limitations and outgrowing, the novel *Anya* is an exploration of Anya being part of an immigrant family from Poland at the time of the Holocaust re-discovering her from childhood stories or memories. To elevate the impact the writer has used a vivid description of certain colours and furniture in peculiar shapes exploring historical etiquette second novel *Falling from the Same* Author explores the images of Elizabeth's present life and confusion on finding her actual health conditions, frequent visits to hospitals and expectations in relationships are described again with colours and interior placement of objects.

The two of the fiction explores a historical time in which women started writing fiction about women and in the background; they have used real narrations or fictions that exacts the original version. Many of the studies have found the impact of war on men and women will occur differently along with the clarification of the situations they are in. Whereas men in a world give more logical and factual emotion rather than women who have clarified themselves both logically and fictively, the reason for such an event is an evolution that occurred in the name of historical and social discoveries. The study of the human mind generally falls into psychological interpretations and recently it involves every form of human emergence like law, medicine, literature, social sciences, etc.

The recent form of studying literature from the geographical backdrop is studies related to space and interiors. It analyses the role of space one holds in the formation of opinions and choices one makes in life, the influence in the form of colours and furniture is discussed in the paper and to find the influence of such entities in the characters or individuals on being thinking in a specific way. For example, a family brings up a child under the influence of a strong connection to nature and natural life and the child inhales the philosophy of the parents which modulates the character and lifestyle of the individual varying from others. The reason for such behavioural change in the child on becoming a man is not only by his choice, but the memory of the past that the brain keeps within. Likewise, each individual is the same but different because of the cultural role they have been capsuled and at times not only pleasant memories it generates physical memories of material things one used or been part of while formulating their identity, it can also be a part of unconscious effort been part of.

The major concern is to reflect on the influence of spatial interior from the past affects the individual in the present, to be more concise the impact of a childhood memory of interiors in a home, an oral cultural history shared through furniture and family belief system has any role in having a strong or weak mental system and also the colour of the species interior individual live for a shorter time impact on living goals, like having anxiety, confusion, trust issues, etc.

The paper aims to read the selected narrative of Susan Schaeffer in the context of a spatial theory that details furniture and choices of colour in the interior space of the home and its role in memory toward future mental concerns. The objective of the paper is to analyse the characters and setting of post-war Jewish American women's fiction addressing the post-traumatic experiences of women's liberation and finding the reasons for falling in the future and adult present. The background of the literature focuses on Holocaust migrations and the treatment of young Jewish people affecting second generations with doubts about their cultural identity in the modern world.

In an overview, reading a mind through the past they hold is seen through psychoanalytical notions but analysing the same from the spatial self they were in is a new perspective on developing the characters for the writers and readers to navigate and cure from violent or disturbing memories. The good memories can help the individual but the same from a different future that can never satisfy the memory will have a traumatic impact on making decisions. The selected narratives focus on the challenges and limitations faced by Anya and Elizabeth in their life cycle and the conscious effort of the writer to establish the connection between women and interior spaces related to cultural heritage. Anya is entitled as a novel about the rise and fall of her relationships with her mother, husband, and daughter during the time of the Holocaust's decentralization of Jewish communities.

The paper tries to find the reasons for having depressing thoughts in Anya's life can also be part of the childhood lifestyle and protection felt studied through the colours of interior furniture and when that is lost Anya becomes more vulnerable as an adult. In the case of Elizabeth, the impact is seen in present adult life with fallen relationships, health impacts through the colours of furniture in the description, and the mental strength to deal with the different world. The role is more than parenting in this case because of the historical impact of social life and the only thing left to think was survival from death. Both these characters have heard survival stories from grandparents' memoirs which impacted as a by-product of social change post-war.

Spatial Theory and Cultural Impacts

The correlation of the knowledge when impacted on spatial theory along with cultural heritage or lineage reads space in different contexts like the physical space influences through social interactions like how the layout of the room whether it is open or closed, the usage of personal space, and threepence of specific objects shaping the communication and social dynamics. In the social space, the study will focus on invisible structures and hierarchies that govern the social interactions and share power sensations like a men's club of women gathering as they share common but varied information.

The second correlation is spatial inference with cultural impacts, its stats with rituals and ceremonies as they are deeply rooted with spatial arrangements. It comes with the positioning of participants, usage of sacred spaces, and the movement in between the rituals contributing to cultural knowledge and values. Another way is through the practice of storytelling and oral traditions as it involves spatial elements like village squares, campfires, etc, one literary example is Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, which may use spatial metaphors to convey a charted meaning. Material culture is another way of looking at spatial practices and cultural heritage is the objects and artifacts often imbued with cultural significance on knowledge repositories. The objects are placed in museums, homes, and religious institutions reflecting the importance of precious knowledge to be shared with future generations.

The third one is through spatial dimensions as a form for the development of interpersonal knowledge. Interestingly this is navigated with a form of study called Proxemics that people use and perceive space, it includes cultural norms around personal space, and touch, and very significantly it is used to share the communicated knowledge. It will also act as a medium to share traditional knowledge systems and spatial understandings and navigate landscapes, identifying edible plants, and the skills are then passed on to the next generations contributing to collective and cultural memory. It also negates a sense of place that fosters aspects of identity and belonging, it merges with local knowledge, tradition, and history that go through stories, rituals, and everyday relationships.

Concerning scholars like Edward Relph, Yi-Fu Tuan, Doreen Massey, and Henri Lefebvre spatial theory has certain key concepts like a place that is not a specific location, but a meaningful space bounded with cultural significance. The level of operation in spatial theory operates from intimate to global. It merges with landscapes in natural and human-made elements.

Literature Review

The connection between spatial notions and cultural identity is seen through recent research that highlights the significant influence of culture on spatial development and behaviour. Malec [2018] proposes a theory explaining the complex interplay between cultural and non-cultural factors in shaping spatial development, emphasizing that adaptation of non-native models doesn't necessarily indicate cultural poverty. Dejbakhsh et al. [2011] demonstrate how cultural backgrounds affect international tourists' spatial behaviour in Melbourne, using Hofstede's cultural dimensions to classify patterns. Wood (2014) reviews Shields' work on cultural topologies and social spatialisations, which explores the historical and theoretical connections between culture and space, emphasizing the relative nature of space. Fairbanks [2003] discusses the integration of spatial theory in urban anthropology, highlighting the importance of Marxist and cultural geography perspectives. These studies collectively underscore the complex relationship between culture and space, emphasizing the need for interdisciplinary approaches to understanding spatial development and behaviour.

The exploration of the intersection of spatial theory and interior spaces through literature goes with Scott [2024], examining how architectural spaces in Dickens's "Hard Times" reflect characters' inner development, arguing that reading literature can foster empathy and personal growth. Bushell [2020], investigates the role of mental mapping in readers' experiences of fictional worlds, suggesting that spatial visualization is crucial to literary interpretation. Yuan [2022] provides an overview of spatial literary studies, highlighting its interdisciplinary nature and connections to fields like architecture and geography. Sulistiani and Azzahra [2020], focus on erotic fiction, particularly Danielewski's "House of Leaves," demonstrating how its unique elements influence readers' physical movements beyond the typical eye and hand motions. These studies collectively emphasize the importance of spatiality in literature, whether through mental mapping, architectural metaphors, or physical engagement with texts and suggest that spatial aspects significantly contribute to readers' understanding and experience of literary works.

Context and Theoretical Diversions

The context of the paper is navigated through reading mind within the existing setting of the two novels, on post-Holocaust life and survival of the second generation which varies from the first generation. Change occurs to them as a by-product of first-generation stories and lifestyle linked with the choice of food, furniture, and interior colours along with cultural fear of losing their origins. Spatial theory having a multifaceted layer examines the relationship between space, place, and human activity through understanding including fields such as geography, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy to understand certain spatial elements shape social, cultural, and political procedures.

The origin of spatial theory starts with the philosophical contribution of people like Aristotle and Kant to the nature of space, its relationship to time, and its role in human perception. During 19th century the groundwork for spatial analysis began with scholars like Alexander von Humboldt and Carl Ritter emphasizing the need for regional studies to evaluate human interconnectedness with physical geography. In the 20th century, the theory introduced significant expansion, as a quantitative revolution with the application of statistical and mathematical methods to spatial data analysis including spatial statistics and geographical information systems. The humanistic geography is a reallocation against the quantitative approach, emphasizing the subjective and cultural dimensions of space and place. It has also been influenced from structuralism and post-structuralism as intellectual movements challenging traditional notions of space as something fixed and objective and highlights its social and cultural existence. The approach also extends with critical geography that examines the power relations and argues with inequalities and injustices associated with space.

The spatial theory includes an interdisciplinary approach that draws insights into various spatial phenomena, and it focuses on a scale that examines spatial processes at multiple scales from local to global. The theory also applies to power that reads spatial structures and practices reinforcing

existing power relations and a critique of traditional studies of reading and mapping space. The spatial narratives would go with environmental concerns that are driving research on the spatial notion of environmental change and implications on human societies and urban studies evaluating the growth of cities and sustainable challenges.

Literary examples are *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain discusses space as a site of freedom and constraint when the Mississippi River symbolizes freedom for Huck and Jim, allowing them to escape the societal constraints of the antebellum South. Similarly, in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez space reflects history and memory. The fictional town of Macondo is a microcosm of Colombian history, with its cyclical patterns of boom-and-bust mirroring the nation's struggles. The town itself becomes a character, embodying the collective memory and shared experiences of its inhabitants. In Toni Morrison's *Beloved* space negotiates as a site of trauma and healing when the haunted house where Sethe and her daughter Beloved reside is a physical manifestation of the trauma of slavery.

The gap found in the research was the representation of two women under depression or mental distress during the post-war American lifestyle and the difficulty faced by Jewish community second-generation survivors. The problem identified concerns with mental health and family lineage through colour representation and interior spaces. The combination of colours and mental health is firstly through emotional associations, as colours represent a strong sense of emotional responses in general blue is associated with calmness and tranquillity, and red for energy and aggressiveness. Colours also signify different meanings across cultures, in general, the colour white represents purity but, in some cases, it resembles mourning, and most of the colour choices represent people under circumstances influencing the mood and behaviour of the individual. The determination of the colour is evaluated through people's interpretation of a cultural belief system. The colours also relate to family traditions that have been passed on to generations, for example, if a family uses blue and green (calm colours) in their home, this may contribute to a sense of peace and well-being for future generations.

The interior spaces and mental health as primary topics contribute through the sense of place that designs the layout of the home significantly impacting mental health, the corners like cluttered spaces can be positive while well-organized ones can be a sense of calm and focus. The role of family history reflects values and space carried through furniture items that can carry emotional weight and connect individuals to their ancestors. It also shares interior spaces when they have shared memories through sharing meals, stories, and memories and it can create a sense of belongingness. The interplay of colour, space, and family lineage links to the past by using certain colours in home connecting individuals to family history. An example of the same as, a favourite furniture of a grandparent might be incorporated into the decor, serving as a visual reminder of their legacy. In deeper understanding space play reflects mental health like the way a family wishes to decorate their home interior showing their collective mental health. In general, interior spaces can act as a healing tool for interior spaces and promote mental well-being. Thus, the relationship between mental health, family lineage, colour, and interior spaces understands how these elements interact to create more mindful and supportive living environments.

The two selected novels collect images of destructive minds in the situations they faced and caused serious identity issues in the modern world as second-generation survivors. It affected their past with present memory of lost hope and for them, the childhood which negated certain morale and belief systems then after was turning like a mirage.

In Spatial line 'Anya' and 'Elizabeth' Thematic Analysis

The theme of spatial reading would focus on two levels in this analytical study, the first of reading the text through contexts, like physical space influences and social interactions. It focuses on the room structure, usage of specific objects clearing social dynamics. Secondly with rituals and ceremonies for cultural inhabitation and thirdly with interpersonal knowledge and cultural memory. The narration of *Falling* [1973] on Elizabeth is foremost in the line of succession in publication.

Elizebeth on reading the mind under a specific physical structure happens at a hospital in her adult life, when she was unable to identify what's happening to her, a lost person physically and emotionally. The quoted text follows on this statement,

After Mark finished shaving, he came out to look for her Elizabeth, was lying under her crescent-shaped stained-glass window, curled up, muscle less. For the first time, Mark began to feel some alarm. Lying there like that, limp, with no muscle tone, she perfectly resembled the little white rats he anesthetized." [13, Falling]

The opening lines disclose the description of Elizebeth in Mark's eyes, who is he boyfriend, and the description of the crescent-shaped window as her mind is in doubt and deep thoughts, as a white rat she is experimenting with self. The same event of depression is described using furniture, muddy-looking room curtains, brown background dominating the big blue, and the yellow and red Gauguin flowers shimmering in the day like stained glass, falling behind old-fashioned curtain representing the journey of Elizebeth slowly approaching depression. The mental struggles are represented in the work as the by-product of the past which she holds.

The character is most represented through the colours white and yellow and when it is analysed in the context of family lineage and culture Elizebeth is moody, silent, and yellow is a colour of negative image. The family of Jewish identity Elizebeth stands was questioned on her academic and personal journey. The memory of fear one other generation experienced is passed on to the next generation, the falling is represented through the colour white in the novel.

The second character Anya from *Anya* [1974] represents the spatial memory from childhood, the long description of her house and its nearby places and shows her affinity to Poland where she was born. Anya on the memory of the ghetto remembers leather boots, labourer's boots, and a worker's short jacket and worker's cap. She explains the bad memories of the life of people who had lived in nonpenetration camps like "I saw the people were naked and steaked and smeared with blood" [1], the coffin memories. She explains her Vilno home is situated in a very quiet street that is wide and lined up by elegant buildings on both sides.

Our house is on the left side, and on both sides are oak trees. In winter, they throw gigantic shadows and cover the buildings with jagged lines like Egyptian letters, undeciphered. In summer, they shadow the buildings with black lace and grey lace; though at times the sun is so intense the shadows themselves appear to be green. [13, 14, Anya]

Inside the apartment, "the center of each door is huge circle carved to look like braid, and in the center of the circle, an enormous ram's head, and ram's head has twisted curving horns" [13, Anya]. The bottom curtains of the home were made of white tulle and crisscrossed and covered with tiny flowers. In the same context as Anzia, Anya's sister represents big white pillows as very feminine next to the bed in a little beige rug embroidered with red flowers. Her other sister Verushka's room was painted in a light cream colour, and she had a green carpet.

Adapting certain elements from Anya's description of the childhood home is an idealizing of how life should be and knowingly keeps the memory of her lost self in adulthood where she has bad dreams about the death of innocent lives and with the troublesome self. She had to undergo the birth trauma while being lonely and later let that confused self-handle her moral thoughts with her new-age daughter Nynka. The description of the home itself is the spatial notion noticed here, the appearance of the home, placement of furniture, its colours, and shapes all together have led to many impacts in the life of Anya, and on reading her mind this has negotiated only a confused individual as a by-product of the lost history of graceful community living.

Conclusion

The paper entitled to include spatial notions in reading minds attempted to read the possible outcome of the memory of space enjoyed and its after-effects in present memory as an adult, whether that has any impact on having depression or mental health issues for the concerned characters Elizabeth and Anya out of post-war life, and evaluated as they share a confused identity with daily social life.

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