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| Journal Name: | [**Asian Journal of Language, Literature and Culture Studies**](https://journalajl2c.com/index.php/AJL2C) |
| Manuscript Number: | **Ms\_AJL2C\_139120** |
| Title of the Manuscript: | **Urban Landscape as Narrative: Mapping Delhi’s Sociospatial Dynamics in Somanath Batabyal’s The Price You Pay** |
| Type of the Article |  |

## PART 1: Comments

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|  | Reviewer’s comment **Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated or assisted review comments are strictly prohibited during peer review.** | | **Author’s Feedback** (It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here) | |
| **Please write a few sentences regarding the importance of this manuscript for the scientific community. A minimum of 3-4 sentences may be required for this part.** | **This manuscript holds significant importance for the scientific community as it masterfully bridges literary analysis with urban studies, offering a groundbreaking framework to examine sociospatial dynamics in contemporary megacities. By applying the rigorous theories of Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, and Edward Soja to Somanath Batabyal’s The Price You Pay, it provides a critical lens to understand how urban spaces in Delhi not only reflect but also actively reinforce power structures, inequality, and identity. The study makes a substantial contribution to interdisciplinary dialogues across literary urban studies, postcolonial urbanism, and Global South urbanization, enriching scholarly discussions on the complex interplay of narrative and space. Furthermore, its findings offer invaluable insights for policymakers and urban planners who are grappling with the challenges of exclusionary development, while also setting a compelling precedent for future research on spatial narratives within both Indian and global urban literature.** | |  | |
| **Is the title of the article suitable?**  **(If not please suggest an alternative title)** | **The current title, "Urban Landscape as Narrative: Mapping Delhi’s Sociospatial Dynamics in Somanath Batabyal’s The Price You Pay," is quite informative but might require refinements for greater clarity and impact.**  **Suggested alternative title:**  **"Space, Power, and Narrative: Delhi’s Urban Landscape in Batabyal’s The Price You Pay,"**  **This version maintains theoretical rigor while making the title more dynamic and engaging, clearly indicating the central themes of space, power, and narrative within the specific urban and literary context.** | |  | |
| Is the abstract of the article comprehensive? Do you suggest the addition (or deletion) of some points in this section? Please write your suggestions here. | **The manuscript is recognized for its strong scholarly rigor, though areas for improvement in scientific accuracy, theoretical alignment, or clarity are identified. Specific revisions for scientific rigor are also proposed, such as updating population data, adding nuance to theoretical application, and addressing intersectionality.** **Suggestions include:** **- Theoretical Frameworks: Nuancing the application of Lefebvre’s spatial triad and explicitly linking Harvey’s uneven development to capitalist urbanization.** **- Urban Context: Fact-checking population data for Delhi and specifying the Delhi Metro timeline if later phases are referenced.** **- Literary Analysis: Deeper engagement with caste and gender dynamics and a brief comparison with other Delhi-centric novels like The White Tiger or The Ministry of Utmost Happiness.** **- Methodological Clarity: Clarifying how textual analysis intersects with urban theory and whether discourse analysis is employed.** | |  | |
| Is the manuscript scientifically, correct? Please write here. | **The manuscript is recognized for its strong scholarly rigor, though areas for improvement in scientific accuracy, theoretical alignment, or clarity are identified. Specific revisions for scientific rigor are also proposed, such as updating population data, adding nuance to theoretical application, and addressing intersectionality.** **Suggestions include:** **- Theoretical Frameworks: Nuancing the application of Lefebvre’s spatial triad and explicitly linking Harvey’s uneven development to capitalist urbanization.** **- Urban Context: Fact-checking population data for Delhi and specifying the Delhi Metro timeline if later phases are referenced.** **- Literary Analysis: Deeper engagement with caste and gender dynamics and a brief comparison with other Delhi-centric novels like The White Tiger or The Ministry of Utmost Happiness.** **- Methodological Clarity: Clarifying how textual analysis intersects with urban theory and whether discourse analysis is employed.** | |  | |
| **Are the references sufficient and recent? If you have suggestions of additional references, please mention them in the review form.** | **The references provide foundational texts and key works on Delhi’s urbanism. However, additions and updates are suggested to enhance scholarly depth and timeliness. These include:** **1. Recent Urban Studies (Post-2020): Sources on Delhi’s neoliberal urbanism, caste/spatial segregation, and gender and urban space.**   **Suggested Additional references:**  **Delhi’s Neoliberal Urbanism:** **Bhan, G. (2019). Notes on a Southern Urban Practice. Environment and Urbanization, 31(2), 639–654.** **(This reference critiques Delhi’s exclusionary planning and complements Harvey’s uneven development.)** **Zérah, M.-H. (2022). Infrastructure and the Politics of Urban Space: Delhi’s Metro. Contemporary South Asia, 30(1), 78–92.**  **Caste/Spatial Segregation:** **Yadav, S. (2020). Caste and the City: A Study of Delhi’s Urban Villages. Economic & Political Weekly, 55(12), 45–52.** **(Fills a gap in the article's analysis of slums/urban villages.)**   **2. Literary Theory and Global South Urbanism: Works on comparative urban fiction, slow violence, and digital/new media spaces.**   **Huq, H. (2021). Making Sense of the City: Literary Imaginaries of Delhi and Dhaka. Oxford University Press.** **(Contextualizes Batabyal's novel within South Asian urban narratives.)**  **Nixon, R. (2022). Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor. Harvard University Press.** **(Useful for linking slum demolitions to environmental justice.)**  **Minor Updates: Ensuring current population projections are accurately cited and supplementing older works with newer editions or related publications.** | |  | |
| Is the language/English quality of the article suitable for scholarly communications? | **The manuscript demonstrates strong academic writing and the language is scholarly appropriate with a clear signposting and logical flow. However some sentences are overly complex or repetitive, with multiple clauses which can disrupt readability. The theoretical passages are quite dense and could be streamlined for readability.** **Therefore there are areas where language precision, conciseness, and stylistic conventions could be refined to meet top-tier scholarly standards.** **The article would benefit from:** **- A reduction in wordiness (especially in the abstract and theoretical sections).** **- More active voice (than passive) to enhance clarity and directness.** **- Consistent UK/US English spelling (e.g., "urbanisation" vs. "urbanization").** | |  | |
| Optional/General comments | **This section offers additional suggestions to further strengthen the manuscript. These include:**  **- Interdisciplinary Appeal: The interdisciplinary approach advances scholarship in urban geography, literary analysis, and postcolonial studies.**  **The addition of a sentence in the introduction or abstract could explicitly state how this interdisciplinary approach advances scholarship in all these fields**  **Example: "By merging literary close-reading with sociospatial theory, this study offers urban geographers fresh methodological tools while equipping literary scholars with a spatial analytical framework").**  **- Policy Implications: While the focus of the article is literary, briefly note how the novel’s critique of Delhi’s urban planning could inform real-world policy debates (in the conclusion):**  **Example: "Batabyal’s depiction of slum demolitions and Metro-driven displacement resonates with contemporary debates on equitable urban development, suggesting literature as a lens for policymakers to assess human costs of infrastructural projects."**  **- Visual Aids: the inclusion of a map of Delhi marking key novel settings (such as, Connaught Place, Yamuna Pushta) would reinforce spatial analysis.**  **- Future Research: Expand the future research line to highlight methodological gaps:**  **Example: "Digital humanities tools (such as GIS mapping of literary settings) could further quantify spatial narratives in urban fiction."** | |  | |

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| **PART 2:** | | |
|  | **Reviewer’s comment** | **Author’s comment** *(if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)* |
| **Are there ethical issues in this manuscript?** | *(If yes, Kindly please write down the ethical issues here in details)* |  |

**Reviewer details:**

**Wael Salah Fahmi, Helwan University, Egypt**