

Urban Structures and Human Psychology: A Geocritical Study Of  
J.G Ballard's *Highrise* and *Cocaine Nights*

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
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It is hereby declared that

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3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
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## Approval

The thesis titled *Urban Structures and Human Psychology: A Geocritical study of J.G Ballard's High Rise and Cocaine Nights* submitted by Syeda Nubaira Ahmed ID: 16103035 of Summer, 2020 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

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## **Abstract**

In postmodern era, the idea of space, its related concepts and practices such as spatiality, mapping, topography, deterritorialization, and so forth have become a key term for literary and cultural studies. After the end of the Second World War, space began to reassert itself in critical theory which critics have termed as the “spatial turn”. The transformational effects of postmodernism, globalization and other advanced information technologies have helped us to view space from a different angle. Therefore, this dissertation aims to outline a geocentric approach towards the perception of urban space and structures, in addition to exploring the ideas of urban spaces as heterotopic. A geocritical observation of urban spaces has been critically explored through an in-depth analysis of J.G Ballard’s *High Rise* and *Cocaine Nights*, where the characters’ view regarding their respective urban spaces as well as structures constantly transformed due to the violence and chaos, they have experienced within the urban structures they resided in. It also changed their psychological state of living in a confined structure. Though critics have read these texts as contrapuntal novels, yet they have not seen it from a geocritical perspective. Therefore, this dissertation attempts to look at these novels from a geocritical viewpoint and present how confined urban structures affect the psychology and moral judgement of modern man.

# Table of Contents

<b>Declaration .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Approval .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgement .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
a. Urbanism and Literature .....	2
b. Urbanism Structure, Their Significance and Role in Literature .....	2
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review.....</b>	<b>6</b>
a. Space, Place and Spatiality .....	6
b. The Timely Significance of Geocriticism.....	9
c. Postmodernism.....	12
d. Heterotopic Spaces in the City.....	13
e. Ballard and Space.....	15
f. Point of Departure .....	17
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology .....</b>	<b>18</b>
a. Theoretical Foundation .....	18
b. Multifocality .....	18
c. Referentiality.....	19
d. Polysensoriality.....	21
e. Transgressivity .....	22
<b>Chapter 4: Geocriticism in <i>HighRise</i> and <i>Cocaine Nights</i> .....</b>	<b>24</b>
a. Multifocality in <i>HighRise</i> and <i>Cocaine Nights</i> .....	24
b. Referentiality in <i>HighRise</i> and <i>Cocaine Nights</i> .....	27
c. Polysensoriality in <i>HighRise</i> and <i>Cocaine Nights</i> .....	29

d. Transgressivity in <i>HighRise</i> and <i>Cocaine Nights</i> .....	30
e. Postmodernism and Heterotopic Places in <i>HighRise</i> and <i>Cocaine Nights</i> .....	32
<b>Chapter 5: Conclusion</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>Work Citation</b> .....	<b>38</b>





## Chapter 1: Introduction

*Mind takes form in the city; and it turn, urban forms condition mind.*

Lewis Mumford

Although urban structures are characterized as dehumanized entities they possess anthropomorphic characteristics. Like living human bodies, they have a pulse, they live breathe, and often they act morbidly, by consuming lives. Over the decades, literature has been a medium to express people's views and thoughts. It reflected their experiences and interactions with each other. In postmodern literature, the focus has been on changes within the city after the World Wars, their roles as a center of developments and the way people interacted with urban structures have been portrayed. Urban life and city, thus, became a central theme in most postmodern literature. Aspects such as alienation and fragmentation and their effects on the human psyche are seen in these works of literature. The main purpose of my thesis is to see how urban elements of space and architecture have a unique effect on human psychology, through the analysis of J.G Ballard's novels *High Rise* and *Cocaine Nights*. The main inquiry of this dissertation has been "What unique effect does urban elements such as space, place, and architecture have on human psychology?" as previously in literature the psychology of characters has been influenced through their surroundings rather than by confined urban structures. Therefore, in this dissertation, I will attempt to show the effect of urban structures on human psychology. Followed by the previous question is another which highlights "How confined architectural structures in Ballard's novels influence the reasoning and judgment of modern man?".

## **1(a) Urbanism and Literature**

Urban structures and settings became an integral aspect of literature and an object of fascination for modern writers after the industrial revolution. During the modern period of English literature, novelists like Charles Dickens and his contemporaries depicted urban space and urban life as an unforgiving place dictated by capitalism. The ominous atmosphere, increasing poverty, crime and isolation immediately became a dominant theme in modern literature. However, in postmodern literature urban space and structures have been perceived as a living entity, a paradoxical place, a place whose existence oscillates between survival and death. The residents of these cities either live their lives; seek fortunes and happiness or experience the opposite death, entrapment and poverty. Therefore, postmodern writers project cities and their structures as living entities that dominate the lives of its inhabitants. For instance, in the novel *Kingdom Come*, Ballard reflects on the unsettled environment of the city where the protagonist experiences a series of unfortunate events and finds himself at a place that is chaotic and unsustainably frenzies. In *Millenium People*, Ballard uses a double perspective to show the struggles of the protagonist between conversion and resistance circling the city of London and its spaces. Similarly, Zadie Smith's *NW* is set in north-west London and the focus of the novel revolves around that space with all changes happening within it. Most postmodern literature of today is either set in a city or multiple cities at the same time. This point out that urban space is a crucial setting in postmodern literature and Ballard's novel can make way for a better understanding of urban spaces and urbanism in literature.

## **1(b) Urban Structure, Their Significance and Role in Literature**

Urban structure refers to the idea of how the land use of a city is set out. The concept of cities has been as old as human civilization, the mention of ancient cities like Rome and Mesopotamia in historical texts bears evidence that the notion of the city has existed since the

beginning of human society. However, over the decades the concept regarding urban space and structure has witnessed significant change. Yet, the major shift came in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (known as the modern era) following the sequential events of World Wars which later changed the definition of urbanism. In the modern period, urban space or cities is not a sum of buildings rather a representation of the social relations which their inhabitants develop. Though, modern cities are defined by a wide variety of social groups and lifestyles however the city gains its physical form through its structure. Hence, the urban structure could be regarded as the different living organism of a body that exhibits artificial energy to stimulate the city and its residents. While talking about urban structures another essential aspect of modern urbanism which comes forth is the architecture as it not only presents the future urban living but also projects the relation between humans and dehumanized urban structures. The term architecture is referred to as the art and technique of designing buildings is distinguished from the skills related to construction. It also presents an eccentric art form that reflects the characteristics and lifestyle of different eras. David Spurr in *Architecture and Modern Literature* writes that "... architecture bears the most important testimony to the hidden "mythology" of a society" presenting the notion that architecture is a reflective source on the past era and cities (Spurr1). Through the different timeline of history, there has been a momentous transition in the architectural field which initially inspired present-day architecture.

Therefore, a brief discussion on architectural transition is presented from the Renaissance to the postmodern. The renaissance was a period of classical revivalism; therefore, the buildings and houses of that period featured elaborated and classical design imitating ancient Roman structures and replacing the medieval gothic style. The renaissance architectural design included various columns, arches, tunnel vaults, and domes, however, the basic element of these designs was ordered. The prime focus of Renaissance architects was

the harmony between human proportions and buildings due to this renaissance architecture were less complex from the gothic architecture of the mediaeval period. The construction material for renaissance structures included stucco, stones, marble, and terracotta tiles.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>-century architecture took numerous forms with multiple styles generated by the scholars of the Renaissance period. Among these Baroque, Bernini, Palladianism was prominent and was used by architects to build spectacular structures. Baroque architecture was characterized by heavy massing and conspicuously elaborates designs that are found in Chatsworth House and Castle Howard. The materials used in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century structure shifted from wood to stone and bricks paving the way of modern architecture. Modern architecture emerged as a reaction against the destruction of the World Wars. In an article titled “Modern Architecture,” Vincent J. Scully says “This architecture has grown out of mass democracy” (Scully141). The post-war period was a time of distress and chaos therefore to rebuild the society architectures sought to construct buildings with simple designs and affordability which could accommodate the mass residents in a confined space. Though modern architecture featured functionality and was unattractive it projected the state of modern man. The major change regarding modern architectural structures was the use of materials like iron, steel, and cement. Regarding the structural designs of modern architecture Scully states that “It also produces the separate forms of vaults ...left alone in a clear single volume-and the buildings are seen as sharp and abstractly scaled entities...” (Scully151). Unlike, the other architectural structures of the previous era the urban buildings of modern are considered self-sufficient because due to the insertion of technology in architecture. Therefore, these buildings represent human-like qualities, which have a psychological impact on their residents.

Similarly, postmodern architecture also contains such qualities yet slightly differs from it in terms of functionality and material. Charles A. Jencks book *The Language of Post-*

*modern Architecture* (1977), gives us a synopsis on the transition from modern to postmodern architecture. The beginning of postmodern architecture was marked by the demolition of Pruitt-Igoe on July 15, 1972; this building was considered a breakthrough in modern architecture. It was a fourteen storeyed building comprised of elegant slab blocks with rational “streets in the air”, “sun, space and greenery” (Jencks 01) which Le Corbusier stated as the “three essential joys of urbanism” (as qtd. in Jencks 01). The demolition symbolized the start of postmodern architecture. Postmodern architecture erased the austerity, formality, and lack of variety from modern architecture. The various aspects that postmodern architecture featured were contradiction towards the simplistic designs and geometrical shapes, fragmentation and complexity.

In the modern and postmodern era, there has been an abrupt change in literature through the emergence of the concept of space which Robert Tally in *Spatiality* referred to as “spatial turn”. Therefore, for modern and postmodern authors urban space and structures became a constant source of inspiration. The significant architectural change in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century urban structures allowed writers to produce literary works that presented urban structures as living entities that controls the lives of its residents. Thus, Tally refers to this relation between urban structures and modern man as “structures of feeling” which he further illustrates by saying “shifting structures of feeling of a given group at a particular time and in a particular place” (Tally 87).

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The concept of urban structures and its connection to the human mind has always been a topic of analysis for authors and critics from different disciplines. This has led to the founding of many ideas that are used as lenses to scrutinize works of literature and find their connection to the real-life situation. In relation, I have critically analyzed the concept of urban spaces, its structures, its connection, and the profound effects it has on the human mind as depicted in Ballard's novels. Hence, this chapter contains a brief overview of the relevant critical theories and ideas that I will be referring to throughout my thesis. I begin this chapter with an overview of space and spatiality in the city, the relevance of geocriticism as a critical theory to analyze space and spatiality in the city, and how it has become an important part of contemporary literature and cultural studies. Consequently, this narrative review concludes with an overview of several aspects relevant in the context of postmodern theory, also essential to this study. Lastly, my point of departure is the section where I demonstrate my reasons for choosing J.G Ballard and his novels as the primary texts of analysis for this research.

### **2(a) Space, Place and Spatiality**

In Robert Tally's *Spatiality* (2013) the subject of space, place, and spatiality is discussed with an emphasis on spatiality. The discussion on how spatiality became a core concept in contemporary literary and cultural studies is also found. Presently, researchers are taking a contemporary approach, on the 'spatial turn', compared to the traditional analyses of time and history. This spatial turn has been aided by a new aesthetic sensibility, which is labeled as 'postmodernism', which, due to the advancement in information technologies and globalization, has helped us to go beyond the geographic limits and scrutinize spatiality differently altogether. The book begins with a brief overview of the history of spatiality, which includes the development of the concepts in art and literature. He writes that "linear

perspective and mathematical projection” has transformed the human experience of space and how the concept of space has been reimagined in postmodernism (Tally 7).

The author says that the literary experience of the postmodern writer and reader is imbued by their shift in focus to space and spatiality in the texts under consideration, calling it “literary geography” (80). Therefore, a postmodern reader who looks at a text is paying close attention to the spatial changes or geographical formations that are affecting literary and cultural productions in the literature. This, in my opinion, has a profound effect on the human experience altogether and the human mind as well. It is because the reader now looks at the different ways in which the shifting configuration of social space overtime takes place, both in and outside the literature. Subsequently, as the book progresses, Tally quotes Raymond Williams who used the phrase “structures of feeling” which Tally describes as the “shifting structures of feeling of a given group at a particular time and in a particular place” in a text can cause readers to “to understand the emergence of new modes of experience” (Tally 87).

In later parts of the book, Tally uses the word space to refer to social space and writes that it is a social product that is made possible by human effort. Hence, in the postmodern context, novels and texts that are based on urban structures and urbanity, depict different social spaces working together at the same time. An urban structure has different layers of social space depending on the different levels of the building, and this space is never uniform but has striations. These striations are boundaries that exist between neighbors on the same floor of a building or they can be the boundaries that exist between inhabitants of the same flat. These striations produce space and they can be “abstract” (Tally 118) as they become a medium which Foucault described as neither being “undialectical or immobile” nor “an empty container to be filled with actions or movements” (Foucault 1980 as qtd. in Tally 120). Hence, postmodern writers like Foucault himself, when he wrote *Discipline and Punish*, produced a “spatial analysis of power and knowledge in modern social formations” (Tally

120) and these analyses can be used by us, the postmodern readers to take a spatial turn while reading about urban structures and space in the urban novel.

Therefore, for Tally, major theorists such as Michel Foucault, David Harvey, Edward Soja, Erich Auerbach, Georg Lukacs, and Fredric Jameson and their analysis of the critical view on spatiality have presented the writer as a map-maker, literature of the city and urban space as a map. Hence, readers in the very sense of a place emerge from the ‘engagement’ of their five senses, the polysensoriality, which helps them perceive places by making sense of the world in which they live in, showcasing that the ‘conceptual’ sources of the “sense of place” (Alexander 2017). Hence, the city is just not a composition of buildings but is a place where a set of social relations develop between the inhabitants living in the urban structures of the city. In a city, the urban composition that exists represents what the architectural composition represents for a building (Almusaed & Almssad 2019). The complexities of the urban structure is based on two elements: structure and ideology, as a city not only consists of building and other technologies but also contains a certain history of that place. This is integral in having transformative effects on the space as a whole and, thus, the creators of the urban spaces, are responsible for making “organized spaces” which in relation to the novels of analysis in this paper, contain tall buildings, and these buildings in a general sense are not objects of love or hatred but they are, “necessary objects in the urban composition” and exhibit significance in the “court of urban value” which give meaning to the social domain of spaces in urbanity (Almusaed & Almssad 20).

Thus, the two novels of Ballard that I will analyze in this paper, talk about urban spaces in the city, holding a “promise of utopia” and their spatial form alludes that a “harmonious and wholesome society could take shape, as the emanation of civic, rational, or holy order” but that is not the way it shapes out to be (Ameel785). The imaginative and non-existent perspective of the urban structure and the city in literature showcase that urban



spaces often incapacitate the characters through “distress... confusion, despair, or illusion” and the postmodern reader interprets the dystopian nature of the urban structure that gave rise to this, finding out the underlying causes to it (Ameel196).

David Spurr, in his new monograph intellectually adds his brief definition of the widely used term “modernity” that has prominent significance on his object and approach of study. It is established on the aspect that the nineteenth century experienced an industrial change in the urban areas on an extraordinary scale; this destroyed the existing harmony among the arts. He includes that these conditions created a scarcity of meaning in both literature and architecture, made two distinctive impressions of “modernist aesthetics”. Spurr, in his introduction, skillfully includes his grasp of the architectural theory. In the European philosophical tradition, he also develops the similitudes between the literary and architectural forms. Spurr outlines the major concepts that structure his future works, notably ruins, the fragment, the body, materials, and forms. Even though these concepts are not new, his skillful detailing the connection between literary and architectural works in the production of their meaning put forth some disruptive readings. Vincent J. Scully in his essay “Modern Architecture” discusses the significant architectural development in the nineteenth and twentieth century with an emphasis on how it has influenced the architect's view regarding urban structures. Further, he elaborates on the confined architectural designs of modern urban design and how it has given the city a different dimension.

## **2(b) The Timely Significance of Geocriticism**

Geocriticism as a spatial theory emerged by taking influence from postmodernism, postcolonialism and globalization. Bertrand Westphal's *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces* (2011) elaborates on this by emphasizing the “spatial turn”. The discussion on how geocriticism endeavors to perceive the real and fictional spaces we inhabit, cross through, imagine, survey, modify and disparage through interdisciplinary methods and a diverse range

of sources is also found. The author says that geocriticism focuses on how literature interacts with the world, including its exploration of it too. In later parts of the book, Westphal presents the key tenets of geocriticism- referentiality, multifocality, polysensoriality and transgressivity. Referentiality is guided by what Westphal refers to as *literary cartography* of the world. In geocriticism, referentiality concedes readers to understand real spaces through their fundamental fictionality and fictional spaces are understood with its level of reality. For example, the fire incident of Grenfell Tower reported by the BBC news portal presents the dysfunctionality of the finely architectural building that was the cause of the fire (2019). Hence, the constant movement of referentiality between the real-world and fiction is characterized as *oscillation* because one cannot pin down the referent. Therefore, critics look at the various “well-nigh infinite, variety of texts” which refers to a place that helps to shape the vision of a “real-and-imagined” place (Westphal xi). This is elaborated in-depth and Westphal terms these as *multifocalization* and *polysensoriality*. Multifocality attempts to present multiple genres and disciplines through different authors allowing diverse perspective to come forth and overcome the stereotyping of a particular place. The geocentric approach towards a place involves the engagement of all five senses which is coined as polysensoriality “by taking time to focus on senses other than merely the visual, the geocritic can register the sensuous plenum of a place” (Westphal xi). The engagement of five senses presents the polysensorial place to be completely “realized” in our fictional interactions (Westphal xi). In the second chapter, the last tenant of geocriticism, transgressivity is discussed in detail whose origins from the Latin word *translation* which means “to carry over” (Westphal xii). This mainly refers to cross a border in more than one way and asserting a sense of freedom within a confined space.

## **2(c) Postmodernism**

This section issues a brief synopsis of the transition of urban condition from modern to postmodern through the articles “Modern Urban Theory and the Study of Literature” by Jason Finch and “The Postmodern Urban Condition” by Michael Dear and Steven Flusty. The article “Modern Urban Theory and the Study of Literature” features the evolution of the modern urban city, the psychological condition of its inhabitants, and urbanism as a theme in literature with regards to theories of Friedrich Engels, John Ruskin, Charles Booth, George Simmel, and many others. According to Engels, modern urbanization presents a diabolize atmosphere where individuals live in proximity. The morbid condition of modern cities is seen as a result of industrialization. With changing the artificial environment of urbanism, Urban Planner Ebenezer Howard proposes the concept of ‘garden city’ with the intension to create arcadia spatial relationships among different classes and relationships between urban and rural. However, the ‘garden city’ concept provided a failed guidance for the twentieth-century city model which appeared as a secular vertical house with small gardens. Following the garden city, another element was added to city planning which were towers and monuments. This was influenced by a city-beautiful movement that presented a hierarchy between the pre-modern and modern, city structures. The towers and monuments reduced the city into a public display. However, sociologist and philosopher George Simmel’s perspective regarding modern city was different as he scrutinizes residents as an integral aspect of modern city because it gives the city a new meaning, stating that “the attempt of the individual [is] to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign power of society” (Finch 37). The statement emphasizes the individuality of the resident’s challenges the dominance of the city over its inhabitants. The article presents the evolution of modern urbanism and how it has paved the way for postmodern urbanism.

Charles A. Jencks's *The Language of Post-modern Architecture* (1977), is an indispensable text on the emergence postmodern architecture. The book contains a brief history from the decline of modern architecture to the origination of postmodern architecture. The author says the annihilation of modern architecture was marked through the dreadful event of the demolition of Pruitt-Igoe on July 15, 1972. The Pruitt-Igoe building was considered a breakthrough in modern architecture which comprised of "fourteen storeyed elegant slab blocks with rational "streets in the air", "sun, space and greenery"(Jencks09) which Le Corbusier stated as "three essential joys of urbanism" (as qtd. in Jencks 09). However, the mutilation and disfiguration of the building by its black residents led towards its demolition which also symbolized the death of modern architecture and the establishment of postmodern architecture.

On the other hand, Dear and Flusty's essay "The Postmodern Urban Condition" begins with the assumption that "urbanism is made possible by the exercise of instrumental control over both human and non-human ecologies" (Dear & Flusty 75). Therefore, the anthropocentric reconfiguration of natural processes and products creates the occupation and utilization of space in the urban, which leads to the production and distribution of commodities. Hence, these give rise to urban structures which contain amenities of the urban life and urban condition within them. The inhabitants of these structures thus come under the instrumental control of urbanism as proposed by the spatiality of these structures in an urban context. The authors add how the postmodern urban process is decisively capitalist, and the nature of this enterprise is changing in various ways significantly because tools of technological developments are creating revolutions across different spaces and over time. Additionally, they state that landscapes and people in urban spaces are homogenized to facilitate urban endeavors, which include large-scale production and consumption (Dear &

Flusty 81). In Ballard's novels, this is evident in my opinion, which I will illustrate in the later chapters.

## **2(d) Heterotopic Spaces in the City**

Philosopher, social theorists, and literary critic Michael Foucault in his essay "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" discuss the historical development on the perception of "space" and emphasizes on the fact that how different historical incidents and circumstances have influenced the understanding of the concept of space and time. Which he describes by saying that "present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space" as at present we are in an "epoch of simultaneity" which is:

... the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment; I believe when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time...points and intersects with its skein (Foucault 1).

Additionally, the evolution regarding the perception space began in the middle ages through Galileo's work which was the hierarchic "ensemble of places" which initially became "spaces of emplacement". However, in the modern period and the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when he wrote the essay Foucault stated that "our epoch" is the period where the perception regarding space has developed into "one in which space takes for us the form of relations among sites" (Foucault2). Yet, according to me this conception of space was not present in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as contemporary space was not what Foucault calls "entirely desanctified", therefore an attempt should be made to pertinent the concept of the literature of that era.

Furthermore, in the essay Foucault says that "space of our primary perception, the space of our dreams and that of our passions hold within themselves qualities that seem intrinsic" (Foucault 3). In his process of separating "internal spaces" from the "external spaces" includes a series of steps where he divides them to two different sites which he

termed as “utopia” and “heterotopia”. Regarding utopia Foucault defines them as “sites with no real places” as “they are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with real space of society” (Foucault 3). Hence, utopias are images of what an “ideal” society or culture should be.

On the contrary, heterotopias are such spaces that exist in the “they are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with real space of society” and exist in every culture and civilization (Foucault 3). Hence, these spaces are “like counter-sites” because they present “other real sites” found within “culture” and due to this they are “simultaneously represented, contested and inverted”. Foucault further illustrates this by saying that:

Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the other sites they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by the way of contrast to utopias, heterotopia (Foucault 4).

Furthermore, in the essay Foucault talks about the six principles of heterotopia. According, to the first principal heterotopias, is a constant “constitute” in every culture of the world. As heterotopia takes “varied forms” therefore there is no universal heterotopia but yet they are divided into two categories. Which Foucault termed as “crisis heterotopia” and further illustrates by saying that:

there are privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis...(Foucault 4).

However, with the disappearance of heterotopia of crisis Foucault emphasizes heterotopia of deviation which he elaborates by saying that "... those in which individuals behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norms of place" (Foucault 5).

The second principle stresses that heterotopias function differently according to historical change and the example of the cemetery shows how its location has changed from church to private place. The third principle states "...heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" which highlights the fact that heterotopia can incorporate "several spaces" and "several sites" in a singular space (Foucault 6). The fourth principle states the existence of heterotopia within and outside time. The fifth principle regards that "Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable which illustrates on the fact that though heterotopias are available in urban structures however it requires certain permission. Lastly, "...heterotopias are that they have a function in relation to all the space that remains" (Foucault 8). This article summarizes heterotopic spaces and their importance in urban structures.

## **2(e) Ballard and Space**

This section will provide a summary of J.G Ballard's exploration regarding space in literature through the articles "Body and Space in J.G Ballard's *Concrete Island* and *High Rise*" by Santos Groppo, "Heterotopic Space in Selected Works of J.G Ballard" by Christopher James Duffy and "The Poetics of the Constructed Environment in J.G Ballard's *High-Rise*" by Tereza Topolovska. Santos Groppo's "Body and Space in J.G Ballard's *Concrete Island* and *High Rise*" features J.G Ballard's conception of space regarding both external and internal space and the influence of Freud's psychoanalysis in Ballard's projection of space. The author also highlights how Ballard presents human psychology through the characters and

their exploration of the real world with regard to the mind. additionally, Groppo emphasizes on the impact psychoanalysis in Ballard's views regarding space and states "He believed that taking his cues from Sigmund Freud and the surrealists, 'outer space' was no longer that important... their attention to inner space meaning mind exploration..." (Groppo 1). The 'inner space' referring to the human mind is greatly affected by their surrounding environment in Ballard's texts. Additionally, the author mentions the concept of "Ballardian Space" which refers to the mental spaces of the characters and their reaction to closed and controlled spaces. In regard to space, Foucault states "... spaces are not only physical locations but also embodiments of a subtext of power" (as qtd. in Groppo10). Therefore, Ballard's characterization focuses more on architecture and the artificial social organization which is imposed by the spaces and suggests that the relation of space and an individual is more than physical.

The article "Heterotopic Spaces in Selected Works of J.G Ballard" by Christopher James Duffy highlights the analysis of space in J.G. Ballard texts as heterotopic with specific concentration on his description regarding the physical environment and its psychological effect. The term heterotopia refers to other spaces. The author presents both Ballard's previous and later novels in the lens of heterotopia. In regard to Ballard's later novel *Cocaine Nights*, the author says the depicted community in the novel presents itself as a 'self-enclosed' heterotopia which redefines crime and spaces experiments with structural conventions. Duffy also says that in these self-regulating and closed spaces certain normative rules could be suspended and also experimented. Additionally, the author says gated communities have heterotopic qualities as they are "places where the technologies and discipline of social order are broken down or at least temporarily suspended...society are transformed and protected" (Duffy 199). The gated communities are regarded as heterotopic



spaces because they present a different place within another which has both social and psychological effects on humans.

In “The Poetics of the constructed Environment in J.G Ballard’s High-Rise” Tereza Topolovska focuses on how Ballard examines the interconnected relations between humans and architecture structure in regard to *High-Rise*. Topolovska highlights that Ballard’s exploitation of a contemporary constructed environment creates a unique mixture of reality and myth. In regard to the novel *High-Rise* the author emphasizes Ballard’s depiction of human psychology through contemporary architecture. Additionally, Topolovska says the private world created in High-Rise presents a “ludic and yet an extrinsic sense of multiple, intersubjective reality” (Topolovska 79). Furthermore, the author emphasizes that the multiple viewpoints of the protagonists create an exquisitely varied complexity of the different treatments of space they embody.

## **2(e) Point of Departure**

While these authors have written on various aspects of Geocriticism, none have particularly used a geocritical approach to look at the urban structures and their influence on the human mind in a postmodern context. This is where my work will intervene and try to address the gap by analyzing two novels of J.G Ballard’s and showcase how space, spatiality, and urbanism from a geocritical perspective are profound in the novels *High Rise* and *Cocaine Night*.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

In this chapter, I have discussed the theoretical foundation on which this qualitative study is based on. As this thesis concerned with the concept of space, it is regarded as a significant theme in the postmodern context. Therefore, the existing data on the basic concepts of geocriticism theory has been reviewed and analyzed for the aim of this research supported by an in-depth textual analysis of Ballard's two novels *High Rise* and *Cocaine Nights*. The chapter provides an extensive discussion of the tenets of geocriticism which is essential for the analysis part of my research.

### **3(a) Theoretical Foundation**

The previous chapter briefly discussed the timely emergence of geocriticism as literary theory and its features. Concerning that, the following section presents an illustrated version of the tenets of geocriticism which has been essential for this research.

### **3(b) Multifocality**

The term multifocality is contrived from different ideas of literary theory and criticism namely 'gaze' and 'ethnocentrism'. The concept of gaze refers to the "implementation of a spatializing and temporalizing imaginative activity" which emphasizes an individual's relation to a world that rejects "objective determination" (Westphal 122). Yet, over the centuries the criteria of gaze have less changed as it "... continues to fall on the Other, carrying astonishment, dismay, or indifference, and feeding a discourse exclusively used by the Same" (Westphal 123). Thus, it creates a 'traditional bipolarity' where the subject always regards the object as 'Other'; like a gazing culture defines a gazed-upon culture to be minor or inferior. In the discussion of multifocality, Westphal also talks about "ethnocentrism" a term which was popularized in the 1960s. The term ethnocentrism derives from a "homologation" viewpoint that focuses on a single perspective while disregarding alternative views. With his discussion on ethnocentrism, he states "In a society in which mobility is

minimal, a single perspective may be shared by a (large) majority of players...becoming 'natural' and closing off any alternative view" which has been dramatized in literature and other mimetic art forms (Westphal124). However, from the post-war period, the 'Other' could present an alternative cultural expression. Hence, multifocality came into existence and has presented a different version in the representation of the world in regards to which Paolo Zaccaria states that "points of view do not exclude each other, but can coexist ...and be accomplices" (as qtd. in Westphal). Furthermore, Westphal also states "... multifocalization requires a reticular arrangement of a certain number and a wide variety of viewpoints" (Westphal127). Therefore, in geocriticism, multifocality is expressed through three basic factors firstly; the viewpoint is parallel with the observer's situation and the referred space. Secondly, Westphal writes that the observer "engages with this space through a number of relations ranging from those of intimacy or familiarity...absolutely foreign" (Westphal 128). This reflects that the viewpoint alternates between "endogenous, exogenous, or allogenuous" characters where an endogenous viewpoint characterizes an "autochthonic vision of space" (Westphal128). In other words, the character limits their views to the familiar space. Therefore, it is essential for my analysis of "*HighRise*" and "*Cocaine Nights*" as the characters present a different perspective of a referred space.

### **3(c) Referentiality**

In geocriticism theory, referentiality is used to denote a crucial element in the representation of the world in literature. In the twentieth century, a systemic spatialization of representation has occurred where Henri Lefebvre presented the idea of distinguishing three types of spaces, "three modalities of spatial representation: *perceived space*, *conceived space* and *lived space*" (Westphal 76). However, in the twentieth century, the perception of reality has become complex as it engages with a literary discourse that extends to representational arts thought of as fictional. Therefore, the relation between reality and fiction has been of

“substantial consideration” yet in postmodernity the distinct gap amidst the real and represented world has become obscured. In his discussion, Westphal emphasizes that the fictional narrative in the postmodern era and the referential oscillation is essential in the understanding of referentiality and the analysis of space in a postmodern context. According to the first principle of reality and representation it presents the idea that there is a clear distinction between the real and the fictional representation of the world. The second principle suggests that representation is supplemental to reality. However, postmodernity disregards the first principle that the real is an unbreakable icon because postmodernism has narrowed the line between real and fictional representation making the real and imaginary as a singular component. Subsequently, Westphal also highlights the fact that representation cannot contain the essence of reality in fiction; therefore, it oscillates between reality and image.

As Pierre Ouellet elaborates on oscillation by stating that “this opening, this game, creates the ‘window’ of which all images, through which one can watch the world that it neither represents nor realizes...” (as qtd. in Westphal 86). Therefore, the oscillation between reality and representation creates an illusion which presents neither the real world nor imaginary. However, in postmodern narratives, the functionality and essence of the real world are preserved through its representation in fiction. In the study of referentiality, Westphal includes a key element that he calls referential oscillation which according to him is a phenomenon when the fictional world engages with the real world in various relations creating a mixed sphere. This is essential for my analysis as in both novels there is a constant oscillation between the real and fictional worlds. Additionally, Westphal talks about Meinong’s theory that “each object is defined by a certain number of properties, and each set of properties correspond to an object, whether it exists or not...” (Westphal100).

Following Meinong's theory, Terence Parsons presented that fictional objects are provided with the nuclear properties that we attribute to them, similar to how we attribute a meaning to a specific symbol. In other words, a bridge between the real and fictional world is created through assigning meaning and properties to abstract ideas and objects that are not apparent in the real world. Consequently, the literary place is a virtual world that interacts with the real world in an adaptable manner the correlation of these places can vary from zero to infinity and this is where geocriticism becomes crucial to analyze literature in the postmodern context. In the same context, Earl Miner to find a link between referential space and such suggests that there are three types of spaces in literature. These are first, the commonplace which does not refer to the real world; secondly, the proper place which refers to a known place, and lastly an improper place which refers to a non-existent place. Similarly, Lennard Davis also presents the idea of three different fictional places such as actual place like Paris in Balzac, fictitious place like George Eliot's Middlemarch, and renamed places such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's East Egg or West Egg. In the different presentations of fictional places, Lennard Davis's fictional places are more used in postmodern literature.

### **3(d) Polysensoriality**

In geocritical theory, another important element is polysensoriality which changed the notion of viewing fictional places. Geocriticism proposes that the perception of a place does not merely depend on our visual interpretation of that place. Rather, a place could be perceived through the engagement of our five senses. But in the early twenty-first century, the supremacy of gaze has become a "virtual hegemony" (Westphal131). Therefore, Yi-Fu Tuan in *Space and Place* emphasizes that when a person sees he comprehends as vision is synonymous to understanding. However, Westphal also emphasizes that "the hierarchy of senses, which has seemed to strengthen over time, is not culturally universal" (Westphal 132). This means that the visual representation of the world differs from culture to culture.

Additionally, he quotes Paul Rodaway from *Sensuous Geographies* and presents that indigenous Eskimos have a different approach towards the perception of the world. Rodaway stated that “their (Eskimos) world is of an event rather than an image, of dynamics and change rather than scenes and views” (1994 as qtd. in Westphal 132). This statement emphasizes that in geocritical studies, space can be viewed through the engagement of five senses. Additionally, Yi-Fu Tuan regarding polysensoriality stated that “experience is a cover-all term for the various modes through which a person knows and constructs reality” (as qtd. in Westphal 132). Similarly, in both, the novels protagonists use different senses to perceive the respective spaces. While defining polysensoriality, Westphal also illustrates the fact that sensoriality allows an individual to conform to the world and also contributes to the structuring and definition of space. According to, Rodway “The senses are geographical in that they contribute to the orientation of space, an awareness of spatial relationships...” (Westphal133). In literature, our visual sense is more emphasized as it is easy to describe what we see rather than what we feel, touch, or hear. The visual is not the only instrument to interpret the world; however, it has become hegemony in literary representation. Westphal then refers to Rodaway again and states that our olfactory senses can interpret the world better than visual because the sense of smell can better locate a subject both in space and time, and one can retain the memory of smell. Furthermore, the discussion on auditory geography and soundscape, illustrates that sound determines the relation of a character to his environment.

### **3(e) Transgressivity**

In geocriticism theory transgressivity is an essential element, the very word transgress derives from the Latin word *transgredi* which has a spatial origin. Over the decades the meaning of transgress became closely related to borders and boundaries which will be applicable for my research. Therefore, Westphal quote “The lime was a sort of border between two states of

things, one accepted and thus existing, the other impermissible and thus (officially) nonexistent” (Westphal 42). In transgression space is examined through what Westphal termed as a sociopoetic angle. Therefore, one would have to govern the rules and identify the threshold, and space which will constitute transgression would determine how these rules should be applied, disregarded, or even violated. Another major aspect of transgression is it exists in the presence of two figures the one who violates and the one who attests to the violation. Mostly it is regarded as the same person. Westphal concerning transgression also states that “Transgression occurs when there emerges an alternative to the straight line of time...geometrical figures of policed spaces” (Westphal 43). The code of space-time in transgression constructs a distinctive coalition. Moreover, transgression is not the result of the free action; rather it occasionally emerges from a poorly negotiated transition, which is a spontaneous movement that causes turbulence. It is a process that guides movement and motive. However, it occurs in a closed sphere. Transgression when it is permanent is not the consequences of “isolated and spontaneous action” (Westphal 46) rather it becomes a condition. Westphal also adds that “Transgressivity remains because it presents itself as the only constant in an environment of transgression, digression...and heterogeneity” (Westphal 46). Furthermore, transgression coincides with the crossing of the boundary beyond which presents a negligible space of freedom. Additionally, Westphal states that “Transgression is digression” (Westphal 47). Transgression when it is permanent eventually becomes transgressivity, a territory that is “incessantly” ambulant will be dictated by an insubstantial deterritorializing and evolutionary dialectic.

## **Chapter 4: Geocriticism in *High Rise and Cocaine Nights***

### **4(a) Multifocality in *High Rise and Cocaine Nights***

The forty storied apartments of *High Rise* assure the utmost facilities for a comfortable urban living experience. Ballard's portrayal of the characters in this novel shows their diverse viewpoints and helps readers to see the high-rise from a multi-layered aspect. The "implementation of a spatializing and temporalizing imaginative activity" is seen in the novel (Westphal 122). For instance, characters' multi-viewpoints such as Dr. Laing's response to the newly developed high-rise were a place that would isolate him from the world and his neighbors. The building for Laing was a "huge machine designed to serve, not the collective body of tenants, but the individual resident in isolation" (Ballard 6). However, the event within the urban structure transforms his views and after which Laing realizes, "The high-rise had a second life ...never far below the forth of professional gossip was a hard mantle of personal rivalry" (Ballard 8). Incidents among the residents in the building had been trivial but for Laing, it reflected a "deep-rooted antagonism" which broke through the surface of high-rise living, among the many factors included "complaints about noise and the abuse of building facilities, rivalries of better-suited apartments" (Ballard 33). However, the breakdown had added a different dimension to the high-rise which further changed Laing's perception. The periodic supply of water and electricity had disintegrated his living standard that affected both his apartment and personal hygiene. Additionally, the discard for preparing meals and eating from can at random "reflected a falling interest in civilized conventions of any kind" (Ballard 138). In the end, the constant vandalism of vacant apartments, sexual assaults on woman residents, and the rivalry among opposite groups had further transformed Laing's outlook on high-rise living and according to him "the high-rise had begun to resemble the world outside...same ruthlessness and aggression concealed within a set of polite conventions" (Ballard 207).



Likewise, compared to Laing the character Richard Wilder had different opinions regarding the high-rise and its living environment. Unlike Laing who found peace and comfort within the confined structure of high-rise, Wilder rather found it constricting as though the remaining 999 apartments were a celestial force which was pressing him “through the walls and ceiling, forcing the air from his chest” (Ballard 63). Additionally, during the start of violence within the high-rise, Wilder’s view regarding the building further changed the vandalism, plucked out telephone equipment pieces, dismantling of fire safety door’s handle, and destroyed electricity meter has given him the notion that “Living in high-rises required a special type of behaviour...acquiescent, retrained and even perhaps slightly mad” (Ballard 69). Initially, the deterioration of the clan system had further intensified the violence within high-rise as individuals with no sense of their own security “were retreating to their apartments, even into one room, and barricading themselves away” (Ballard 169). However, while his expedition towards the upper floors a more morbid scenario of the high-rise was presented to Wilder; the physical abuse, darkened hallways, and apartments, hunting dogs for food has made residents resemble the creatures of the forest who though remains quiet but “now and then tearing at each other in brief acts of ferocious violence” (Ballard 179). Yet, in the end, his perception changed again as the carpeted staircase and “freshly painted” walls of the upper floors indicated that life in the high-rise was returning to normal.

Conversely, the architect of the high-rise Royal somewhat had a different view regarding the degrading condition of the building. For instance, before the breakdown of life in the forty storied high-rises appeared to be normal as residents went to work, the supermarket was open, and the bank and hairdressing salon still functioned as usual. Yet, amidst these daily activities; Royal viewed the internal environment to be unsettling because of the three “coexisting armed groups” and was no connection among the upper, the middle and lower section of the building (Ballard 103). Therefore, movement within the high-rise

became challenging. However, in Royal's eyes, the chaotic and violent situation of the high-rise has added a different aspect of the building. Though the tenants have descended into tribalism yet they showed no interest in the external world even the "Bales of unsorted mail lay about in the ground-floor lobbies" reflecting on the notion that inhabitants of the high-rise had abandoned the world and created a new one within the building. On the other hand, in the final phase of the breakdown Royal viewed the high-rise as a deserted battlefield where "the corridors and staircase were filled with broken furniture...elevators shafts were the new garbage chutes" (Ballard188).

Similarly, in *Cocaine Nights* (1996) the Spanish resort Estrella de Mar presents a wide range of opportunities for its inhabitants. But Ballard's portrayal of the characters in this novel shows their different point of view which helps the readers to see Estrella de Mar from a multi-dimensional angle. For example, Charles's first impression of Estrella de Mar was a retirement place for professional classes of Northern Europe where they spent a peaceful and eventless life. Thus, Charles assumed Estrella de Mar to be like other coastal with "fish and chips, bingo and cheap sun-oil, all floating on a lake of lager" (Ballard 29). However, the activities which took place within the resort have changed his perception. Ballard writes for the first time Charles realized that Estrella de Mar was a thriving community "there were no bored teenagers, no deracinated... neighbors scarcely knew each other their only civic loyalties were to the nearest supermarket and DIY store" (Ballard 44). But, after the experience of physical attack and the burning of the car, his view regarding Estrella de Mar further transformed. Charles perceived that amidst the façade of vibrant and thriving arts community Estrella de Mar had a malicious side as "the entire resort was wired up to crime like a cable TV network. It fed itself into almost every apartment...security alarms and surveillance camera" (Ballard 107).

In contrast, compared to Charles other characters like Dr. Sanger had a different opinion regarding Estrella de Mar's existing crime and carefree life. For Sanger crime is essential for the residents of Estrella de Mar as it encouraged people to become more proactive because "Crime, and transgressive behavior... provoke us and tap our need for strong emotion, quicken the nervous system...deadened by leisure and inaction" (Ballard 23). Therefore, Sanger views crimes as the liberation for people of Estrella de Mar.

#### **4(b) Referentiality in *High Rise* and *Cocaine Nights***

The represented image of the real-world in fiction has been a product of the author's imaginations and factual knowledge regarding that particular place. Yet, until the modern era, literary narratives have maintained a significant gap between the fictional and real world. But, in the postmodern context, "the gap between the world and the texts has been significantly reduced while taking a somewhat baffling form" (Westphal 84). Therefore, in both Ballard's novels, *High Rise* and *Cocaine Nights* readers see that the mentioned place in texts constantly oscillates between the real and fictional worlds. According to the narrative, Ballard's forty storied apartment building sets off in London. Despite being an imaginary place, the high-rise constantly fluctuates between reality and fiction. For instance, the building presents a fraction of reality as there are similar high-rise buildings in London city which readers could relate them with. However, the structures architectural designs that Ballard highlights in the novel make us (readers) realize that a high-rise is a fictional place because it has no reference to real urban structures. On the contrary, the functional breakdown and chaos of Ballard's fictional high-rise building represent the fire incident of Grenfell Tower in West London which broke out uncontrollably due to the functional defect of the building. In 2017, Grenfell Tower caught fire which started from a Hotpoint fridge-freezer in the 16<sup>th</sup> flat of the fourth floor (Correspondent, BBC). According, to the Grenfell Public Inquiry report by Dr. Barbara Lane, the fire had spread vertically up the tower

columns, and later along with the cladding above and below the window lines and the panels between windows. The Grenfell Tower had a 'stay-put' fire policy which assured that the building design would contain a fire in a single flat for as long as it took the fire crews to bring it to normal. Despite the fire policy, it had spread rapidly due to the technical defect of the structure.

According to a report, Grenfell Tower had external cladding which consisted of aluminum sheets and bonded to a central plastic core. Therefore, Professor Luke Bisby in his report suggests that the polyethylene material in the cladding was the primary cause of the rapid-fire spread. As the aluminum material on Grenfell Tower contains a highly combustible polyethylene polymer which melts drips and flows in elevated heat. Similarly, in the novel, Ballard portrays the breakdown of high-rise's service system such as elevators stranded in shafts, disruption in the electrical sub-section, and falling of water-pressure which initially causes disturbance and creates a chaotic situation among the residents. Therefore, though high-rise is a fictional place yet readers could associate themselves with that imaginary situation as similar events had taken place in reality.

Similarly, in the novel, *Cocaine Nights* Ballard's fictional world sets off in the existent Estrella de Mar. Since, both the places proceed in parallel therefore it becomes easy for the readers to relate with the narrative. The novel depicts Estrella de Mar as a retirement retreat and an acclaimed tourist spot on the coast of Spain which provides the utmost facilities such as defined villas, apartments, harbor lined with bars, and restaurants sports clubs for its residents and tourists. However, though Ballard's Estrella de Mar resembles the real place yet it draws on fictional elements through the crimes, drugs, and illicit sex which lies beneath the civilized surface. Additionally, the reluctant behavior of the police officers and the transgressive attitude of the residents compels the readers to see Estrella de Mar as a fictional place. However, in contrast to Estrella de Mar the Residencia Coastal according to

Westphal represents “the *improper* place, which refers to a non-existent place” (Westphal101). The Residencia Coastal is a residential complex with unique architecture, providing the absolute facilities to its residents that are required for modern urban living. Like the tele-surveillance, restaurants, supermarkets, shopping malls, and sports clubs which presents the structure of the gated community. Since, in reality, there had not been such residential complexes constructed therefore it presents a fictional place.

#### **4(c) Polysensoriality in *High Rise* and *Cocaine Nights***

Previously in literature, the perception of fictional space solely depended on the narratives' visual interpretation of that place. However, in postmodern literature, the protagonist's sensory engagement with that place helps the readers to form a better outlook on the particular space. In *High Rise* after the collapse of the building's service system, the protagonist's senses became more prominent which helped in the interpretation of the building's current condition. For instance, Dr. Laing's “eating the roast hind-quarter of the Alsatian” at the beginning of the novel presents the residents descended to barbarism after the collapse of the building's service system (Ballard 1). Additionally, the consumption of dog meat indicates the scarcity of food due to the breakdown of the building. Amidst, the conflict among the tenants and the chaotic situation existing within the high-rise Laing notice a significant change in his olfactory senses and a certain characteristic of the building. According, to Laing the high-rise had started to emit an unpleasant scent as “None of the lavatories or garbage disposal-chutes were working, and a faint spray of urine hung over the face of the building” (Ballard 208). This presents the residents' disregard for personal hygiene and viewed how they were surviving based on their primitive instincts.

On the contrary, the “putrid and sweet” smell coming from surrounding apartments has presented the high-rise as a scattered and abandoned place. Furthermore, as Laing started to evolve himself in the high-rise's conflict, his auditory senses began to heighten the sound

of “elevators gear reverberating as the car moved up and down ferrying more attackers” presents a tensing situation of the high-rise where the elevator’s sound act as a signal to alert the members from rival groups arrival (Ballard 151). Additionally, the “faintly changing tone” of the building’s water system depicted the failure of the high-rise’s core system. Lastly, the resident’s sense of touch has given the readers to interpret the high-rise from a different aspect, “their hands pressed against the metal walls of the elevator shafts feeling the vibrations transmitted to their bodies (Ballard 207) presents the notion to the readers that the high-rise is architectural confinement.

Similarly, in *Cocaine Nights* while investigating for his brother’s case Charles sensory observation regarding Estrella de Mar has helped the readers to perceive the place from a more intimate angle. For example, upon arriving at Club Nautico “The clunk-clunk of tennis machine” depicted the place to be thriving with life, also presented the youthful and active life of its residents (Ballard 26). On the contrary, at night the “boom of disco drumming” presented a different aspect of Estrella de Mar that being the vibrant and carefree atmosphere which the resort provided (Ballard 38). However, amidst this cheerful environment, Charles views a menacing side of place drowning in insomnia, alcohol, and drugs. Yet, during the investigation at the Hollinger’s house, Charles perceived a different aspect of Estrella de Mar “the acrid odor of charred fabrics” that beneath the relaxed and secured environment of this resort deep-rooted crime existed in the place (Ballard 69). Lastly, Charles drinking of the “sweet Orkney malt” from the remaining “glass bung” of Frank’s apartment presented, a place which was abandoned by its owner (Ballard 54).

#### **4(d) Transgressivity in *High Rise* and *Cocaine Nights***

In the novel, Ballard through the gradual breakdown of the building depicts the degrading moral behavior of its residents. Among the three main characters, Richard Wilder’s ascend to the upper floors marks the continuous decline of his moral behaviors. Each of the floors

ascended by Wilder presented a milestone for his moral decadency. For instance, during his first attempt towards the climb of the upper floors Wilder was attacked by the 14<sup>th</sup>-floor residents by an “A kitchen chair whirled through the air towards his head” which became the source that relieved him from the social constraints (Ballard 85). Therefore, the higher he climbed to the upper floors of the building, the more evident his primitive urges became, for example, “During the brawls and running battles of nights he was aware that he took...unguilty pleasure in urinating wherever he cared” (Ballard 170). As he ascended further to the 17<sup>th</sup> floor his disregard for any moral values started to increase, his physical torture towards Mrs. Hillman such as knocking her on the floor and throwing “dog-biscuits at her, scattering them around the bare floor” (Ballard 178). However, his final descend to barbarism was projected through the vandalism of Charlotte Melville’s apartment and conducting her rape. After occupying an empty apartment on the 26<sup>th</sup> floor Wilder ransacked the house by pulling “the drawers on to the floor, heaved the mattresses off the beds, and urinated into the bath” (Ballard 181). Additionally, the unconsented “clumsy sexual act” with Charlotte Melville was the final act that has marked Wilder’s descend into primitivism.

Similarly, in *Cocaine Nights* through the portrayal of Bobby Crawford and his actions upon reviving Estrella de Mar Ballard reflects on the moral degradation of the resort’s inhabitants. Initially, upon arriving at Club Nautico Charles's view on the people's reaction to the attempted rape presents the level of morality among the residents “several seats were occupied by the drivers and their passengers...had watched the rape attempt without intervening” (Ballard 39). On the other hand, Bobby Crawford’s petty crimes such as “sabotaging the satellite systems, stealing a jade horse from a coffee table, a Staffordshire figure from a mantelpiece” though count as a harmless act for reviving the people of Estrella de Mar yet depict Crawford’s moral deterioration (Ballard 163). Additionally, Charles's reaction towards the people’s excited response after the burning of a speedboat at the

boatyard further presented the transgressive nature of Estrella de Mar's residents. Lastly, the bold act of Laurie Fox "swimming naked in the pool" presented the idea that through these immoral behaviors the inhabitants of Estrella de Mar are liberating themselves from social restrictions and boredom (Ballard 205).

#### **4(e) Postmodernism and Heterotopic Places in *High Rise* and *Cocaine Nights***

The postmodern architecture depicts the constantly changing urban structures with evolving architectural design which has a profound effect on society and its inhabitants. The breakthrough of postmodern architecture was marked by the demolition of Pruitt-Igoe on July 15, 1972. In postmodern narratives, there has been an emphasis on how urban structures have an empowering effect on humans both physically and psychologically. This is evident in most of Ballard's novels. The changing urban structure is closely related to architecture. Therefore, the term architecture will be used in this section in a broader sense which will include the physical, technological, and social aspects of the constructed environment. In the novel, *High Rise* Ballard shows how architectural decisions have direct impacts on human behavior. Additionally, the behavioral change in his narratives is drawn by the environment and it gives readers a glimpse of the postmodern urban conditions. The defined architectural designs of the forty-storied building present us with a vertical experience of living in a tall building and show how this enclosed space affects the psychology of its residents, evoking them toward violence. Though, Critics have analyzed this novel from a different perspective but none from a heterotopic angle. Therefore, this chapter will simultaneously observe this postmodern urban structure which is depicted in the novel through the eyes of three male characters Dr. Laing, Richard Wilder, and Anthony Royal, and will show how the multiplicity of meanings fabricate high-rise as a heterotopic place.



Dr. Laing's viewpoint regarding *High Rise* is not constant, thus, his perception of the building being a heterotopic place can be presented by the three changing living stages in the high-rise such as before the breakdown, during the breakdown, and after the breakdown. Following the trauma of his divorce, Laing willingly took shelter in the high-rise "for its peace, quiet and anonymity" which is absent in his previous space (Ballard1). Thus, the "over-priced cell" of the building became the first place whose straight walls had alienated and liberated him from the outer world and his recent neighbors (Ballard1). The "virtually homogenous collection of well-to-do professionals" existing within the high-rise presented a different social structure as opposed to the world and had eased any chance of confrontation with his previous life (Ballard6). Due to this Laing has gained a sense of peace and his new life in the high-rise was "as self-contained as the building itself" (Ballard 4). Therefore, at the beginning of high-rise life, the building and his studio apartment represented a safe and isolated haven for him.

Yet, after some time, the house parties and comfortable environment became tedious to Laing. Therefore, the disintegration of buildings systems and the hostile activities of the residents have made the high-rise more appealing to Laing. The interruption in the building's mechanism presented a different reality of high-rise. The parking-lot smudged with "broken eggs, wine, and melted ice-cream" and elevators "filled with broken glass and beer cans" Laing thought of the high-rise as a precarious and abandoned battlefield (Ballard42). Additionally, the barricade around his studio apartment "With armchairs and desk" represented the camps of soldiers in a war zone (Ballard140). Thus, to the prevailing anarchic situation high-rise has transformed itself from a bustling place to a gloomy and ominous place in Laing's eyes.

In contrast, after taking Alice and Eleanor as refugees his conception regarding the high-rise changed, "Laing had decided to separate himself and his two women from everyone

else” (Ballard 218). Through, the nursing and attending to their necessities like searching for food, water, and batteries Laing has gained a sense of home; with the two women portraying themselves as children and eagerly waiting for his arrival.

Conversely, Richard Wilder perceived the high-rise as a constricting place. This was because despite being a resident, he was deprived of the access to freely roam around the building specifically the “swimming-pool” on the 35<sup>th</sup> floor and “children’s sculpture garden on the observation roof” (Ballard 66). The resistance from Wilder’s upper floors residents was presented as a barrier that restricted his movement.

However, according to Anthony Royal’s perception of the high-rise, he depicted the building as a vertical zoo as these “civilized and self-possessed” tenants had discarded themselves from any rational behavior (Ballard 128).

Through the multiple perceptions from the three male characters, it can be said that the high-rise building in Ballard’s novel is a heterotopic place. Referring to Michel Foucault’s “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopia” the high-rise can be related to the third principle of the heterotopia which refers to “juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are themselves incompatible” (Foucault 6). Though the high-rise is home to the characters through their changing perception regarding the high-rise, the building has transformed itself from a housing apartment respectively to a battlefield, a prison, and a zoo. Similarly, in *Cocaine Nights* the Estrella de Mar resort could be viewed as a heterotopic place. In the beginning, Ballard’s protagonist Charles Prentice emphasizes the inquiry into space that is taking place. His journey towards Estrella de Mar via Gibraltar presents the marginal qualities of spaces. Since Gibraltar a space in between nations a disputed territory therefore the entrance to Gibraltar and Estrella de Mar requires special access. Therefore, Charles’s entrance to these self-enclosed spaces presents both Gibraltar and Estrella de Mar as heterotopic places. According to Foucault’s fifth principle, “Heterotopias always presuppose

a system of opening and closing'' (Foucault 7). Additionally, according to Foucault's first principle of heterotopia Estrella de Mar could be seen as a heterotopia of crisis and deviant. In the novel, Paula Hamilton acknowledges Estrella de Mar as a community in crisis because the minor crimes committed by Bobby Crawford were not enough to maintain the resort. Therefore, to eliminate the crisis, Hollinger's fire becomes an act of deviant which binds the community together.

## 5. Conclusion

The main purpose of this dissertation was to investigate whether urban elements such as space, place and architecture have a unique effect on human psychology or not. I have analyzed J.G Ballard's *HighRise* and *Cocaine Nights* through close reading and using geocritical theory, also to find out how confined architectural structures influence the reasoning and judgment of modern man. In *HighRise* events that occur within the urban structure have a profound impact on the protagonist, Dr. Laing's perception of it. It constantly changes as the events that occur which have been highlighted in the previous chapters of this dissertation. In the same manner, the protagonist of *Cocaine Nights*, Charles's conception of Estrella de Mar transforms from a thriving coastal tourist area to a place embedded in crime and violence. From a geocritical point of view, the multifocality of urban spaces presents that the spatializing and temporalizing imaginative activity are often the results of the actual changes that are occurring within that space. As these novels are works of fiction hence, Ballard's imaginative activity portrayed through the experience of the characters show their reasoning and judgment is influenced. Additionally, the fictional world described in these texts erases the boundary that separates the real from fiction because the functionality of urban structures and how human interaction is influenced because of it are also evident in real life. Therefore, the referentiality of urban spaces in fiction is evident in certain aspects of real-life situations. Moreover, due to the violent events that occurred within the high-rise structure made Dr. Laing further conscious of his surroundings, as he started to perceive the urban structure depending on his five senses. Similarly, in *Cocaine Nights* after the attack, Charles's senses heighten which assists him to view Estrella de Mar from a more intimate angle. Therefore, from a geocritical viewpoint, the polysensoriality of urban spaces presents that the experience of a place requires various sensory modes which helps the person to know and construct reality. Finally, in both Ballard's novels *HighRise* and *Cocaine Nights*

the protagonists both Dr. Laing and Charles Prentice gain their freedom from social constraints by embracing their moral degradation. The transgressive behaviour of the two protagonists helps readers to understand the effect of confined and isolated space on human psychology. Also allows seeing urban structures and spaces from a different angle which in geocritical viewpoint is termed as transgressivity.

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