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# An Exploration of the concept of Space/ Spacelessness: Reading Gail Jones's *Five Bells*

Sanchita Mallick

## ABSTRACT

In the world in which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself. And it is by going beyond the historical, instrumental hypothesis that I will initiate my cycle of freedom. (*Black Skin, White Masks* 231)

Spatiality or the concept of space has become potent in unraveling the complexity underlying postmodern, diasporic experiences. As it is time to consider not only the history of time but also the geography of space. And according to the new geographers and theorists such as Lefebvre, Foucault and Soja, space is not given but produced. They argue that it is an essential quality of humanness and that social beings are produced by the ontological triad of space, time and society. A socially produced space is thus not static or inert rather it records a continuous flow of interconnected social, cultural, psychic relations. This notion of space is inextricably woven with the issue of identity of the subject.

Keeping with this, Gail Jones's novel *Five Bells* (2011) deals with characters who move from one relational, interstitial and psychic position to another in order to explore a 'heterotopic' site which always seem to lie beyond the realm of immediate reality; a postmodern 'hyperspace' which thwarts their efforts to find for themselves a single, real place; a secured, psychic niche.

**Keywords:** postmodern, identity, diaspora, 'heterotopic', 'hyperspace'

*'It is the trope of our times to locate the question of culture in the realm of the beyond.'* (LOC 1)

One way of understanding the nature of the shift from modernity to postmodernity is to recognize the change in the concept of 'space'. The modernist space was more or less geographical, substantial, and therefore tangible. The postmodernist space, on the contrary, is to be perceived as an intangible site, which is both socio-cultural and psychic.

Sanchita Mallick  
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