

The Fantasy Turn in American Muslim YA: Spatial Politics and Youth Resistance in Faizal's A Tempest of Tea and Tahir's Ember Quartet

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المنعطف الفنتازي في أدب اليافعين الأمريكيين المسلمين سياسات الفضاء ومقاومة الشباب في رواية عاصفة الشاي لحفصة

فايزال ورباعية جمرة في الرماد لصبا طاهر

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Abstract

This paper brings forth the argument that fantasy turn in American Muslim young adult (YA) fiction serves as a pedagogy of space, elucidating the spatial organisation of power and its reorganisation by youths. It addresses a longstanding research and curricula issue with regards to realist "issue" frames (Islamophobia, belonging) by reading Sabaa Tahir's *An Ember in the Ashes* quartet (2015–2020) and Hafsa Faizal's *A Tempest of Tea* (2024) to demonstrate the distinctive spatial intelligence and operational ethics of Muslim-authored secondary worlds. This study combines postcolonial spatial theory (production of space; visibility/sovereignty), narratology (focalisation; setting-as-plot), and commodity histories (tea/ledgers) with an Islamic ethical lexicon, *sabr*, *taqwā*, *ihsān*, *ʿadl*, *amānah*, utilised as operative categories. The comparative close reading employs a three-step methodology: (1) determine the main spatial form (fortress, heterotopia, verification system); (2) trace focalisation and access (maps, rumours, chutes); and (3) specify the ethical operator running visibility/opacity. It was found that Tahir models insurgent visibility (carceral breach of courtyards, towers, prisons) whilst Faizal models insurgent opacity (heterotopic cover and archive/ledger hacks). Collectively, they create a transferable typology of youth-resistant spatialities: carceral breach, heterotopic cover, market counterflows, and archive/ledger hacks. This leads to two implications: rather than mere ornamental, Muslim YA fantasy serves as a method and a platform for teaching spatial literacies towards cultivating ethical judgment regarding the movement of power and how it is disrupted by collective care. **Keywords:** American Muslim YA literature; Youth resistance; Spatial politics; Fantasy turn; Postcolonial theory

الملخص:

تطرح هذه الدراسة أطروحة مفادها أن المنعطف الفنتازي في أدب اليافعين الأمريكيين المسلمين يعمل بوصفه بيداغوجيا للفضاء، إذ يبيّن كيف تُنظّم السلطة مكانياً وكيف يعيد اليافعون ترتيب هذا التنظيم ومقاومته، كما تعالج إشكالية بحثية وتعليمية مزمنة تتمثل في هيمنة الأطر الواقعية القضائية في تناول قضايا الإسلاموفوبيا والانتماء، وذلك عبر قراءة رباعية جمرة في الرماد (٢٠١٥-٢٠٢٠) لصبا طاهر ورواية عاصفة الشاي (٢٠٢٤) لحفصة فايزال بهدف إبراز ما تتقرّد به العوالم الثانوية التي يكتبها المسلمون من نكاه فضائي وأخلاقيات تشغيلية. وتزوج الدراسة بين نظرية الفضاء في الدراسات ما بعد الاستعمار (إنتاج الفضاء، والرؤية/السيادة) والسرديات (البؤرة السردية، والمكان بوصفه حبكة) وتواريخ السلع (الشاي ودفاتر الحساب) من جهة، وبين معجم أخلاقي إسلامي يضم مفاهيم الصبر والتقوى والإحسان والعدل والأمانة تُستثمر بوصفها مقولات إجرائية من جهة أخرى، مع اعتماد قراءة مقارنة دقيقة تقوم على منهجية ثلاثية الخطوات: تحديد الشكل الفضائي الغالب (القلعة، الفضاءات الهيروتوبية، منظومات التحقق والمطابقة)، وتتبع البؤرة السردية ودوائر الوصول إلى المعرفة (الخرائط، الشائعات، المزاليح والقنوات الخفية)، ثم تسمية العامل الأخلاقي الذي ينظّم ثنائية المرئي/اللامرئي. وتكشف النتائج أن طاهر تقدّم نموذجاً لمرئية تمرّدية عبر خرق البنى الاعتقالية في الساحات والأبراج والسجون، في

حين تجسد فايزال لا مرئية تمرّدية من خلال غطاء هتروتوبي واختراقات للأرشيف ودفاتر الحساب، ومن مجموع العملين تتشكل طوبولوجيا قابلة للنقل لأنماط فضائية لمقاومة الشباب تشمل خرق الفضاءات الاعتقالية والغطاء الهتروتوبي والتدفقات المضادة في السوق واختراقات الأرشيف والدفاتر، لتخلص الدراسة في النهاية إلى أن الفنتازيا في أدب اليافعين المسلمين لا تؤدي وظيفة تربيانية فحسب، بل تعمل منهجاً ومنصّة لتعليم معارف فضائية تسهم في تنمية الحكم الأخلاقي على حركية السلطة وكيفية إرباكها وتعطيلها عبر رعاية جماعية. الكلمات المفتاحية: أدب اليافعين الأمريكيين المسلمين؛ مقاومة الشباب؛ سياسات الفضاء؛ المنعطف الفنتازي؛ النظرية ما بعد الاستعمارية.

Introduction

The American Muslim young adult (YA) fiction has developed into a diverse genre, with its initial prominence cantered on realistic depictions of Islamophobia, community, and routine religious practice in American contexts (Alsultany, 2012; Aziz, 2022; Hilal, 2022). This study proposes that the American Muslim fiction is currently characterised by a fantasy turn, wherein Muslim-authored secondary worlds use more modern spatial politics as a means of imagining and legitimising youth resistance, as exemplified in Sabaa Tahir's *An Ember in the Ashes* quartet (2015–2020) and Hafsa Faizal's *A Tempest of Tea* (2024). Leveraging Henri Lefebvre's "space is a social product" assumption (1991, p. 26) and Michel Foucault's "visibility is a trap" argument (1977, p. 200), this research analyses empires, prisons, marketplaces, and intimate interiors (tea houses) as drivers of plot and ethics rather than mere backdrops. In the aforesaid novels, resistance is framed as a literacy of space: analysing surveillance grids, using seams in circulation, and forming counter-geographies of care. Early research on American Muslim YA has charted media/regulatory frames and representational harms (Alsultany, 2012; Aziz, 2022; Hilal, 2022). Children's and young adult fantasy literature illustrates how the genre reframes who holds the power of wonder and why (Cecire, 2019; Thomas, 2019). Urban and carceral geographies have also shed light on the spatial dynamics of power (Gilmore, 2007; Gregory, 2004; Moran, 2015). But two gaps persist. Firstly, the Muslim YA fantasy corpus, notably those written by Tahir and Faizal, has not been conceptualised as a cohesive trend with specific spatial-political implications. Secondly, the commodity infrastructures animating Faizal's world (tea, sugar, ports, ledgers) have not been connected to past instances of racial capitalism and imperial consuming (Lowe, 2015; Mintz, 1985; Pratt, 1992; Rappaport, 2017). Market openings and diversification are noted in industry analyses (Ramdarshan Bold, 2019), yet we do not have a comparative account that treats Tahir's militarised empire and Faizal's heist-driven, finance-infused city as paired laboratories for reconsidering American Muslim authorship, youth agency, and the spatialities of power. The objectives are:

1. To conceptualise the fantasy turn in American Muslim YA as a spatial pedagogy of youth resistance.
2. To examine how spatial form, narrative focalisation, and Islamic ethics organise visibility and opacity in the texts.
3. To develop a typology of youth-resistant spatialities in Muslim-authored YA fantasy.

In that vein, the research questions of the current study are:

- 1: How do Tahir's *Ember* quartet and Faizal's *A Tempest of Tea* use fantasy as a spatial pedagogy of youth resistance?
- 2: How do spatial forms, focalisation, and Islamic ethical operators structure visibility and opacity in these works?
- 3: What modes of youth-resistant spatiality (e.g. carceral breach, heterotopic cover, market counterflows, archive/ledger hacks) emerge from this comparative reading?

Literature Review

This review in American Muslim young adult (YA) fictional narrative has come about in simple response to the post-9/11 controlling gaze. At the heart of this gaze American Muslim visibility is understood through the means of media unfair representation, lawful scrutiny, and securitized multicultural discourse. Within this critical terrain, realist Muslim YA is often understood as a counter-response to Islamophobia and surveillance, and brings belonging and safety to the fore, as well as politics of everyday religious practice (Alsultany, 2012; Aziz, 2022; Hilal, 2022). The body of fiction routinely puts forth ethical vocabularies, *sabr*, *taqwa*, *ihsan*, *'adl* and *amanah*, through school, family, mosque, and public encounters, through which moral judgment is formed under conditions of scrutiny and racialization. American Muslim cultural studies showcase how the nature of Muslim life, at most levels, is organized through racial power and pressures (Abdul Khabeer, 2016; Chan-Malik, 2018). Moreover, affect theory underline how feelings of fear, impulses of loyalty, and spaces of hope works actively as social ongoing forces that form governmental understanding and communal legibility (Ahmed,

2004)From the mid-2010^s, though, American Muslim YA has become more diverse in genre pluralism, including speculative fiction and secondary world fantasy. This shift should not be taken as a giving up of representational realism, but an extension of representational strategy: fantasy displaces the issue of Muslim “visibility” from explanation via identification with an identity-script to the level of world-design, in which governance becomes legible as spatial-form. Some context for this notable development is provided by recent research in children's and YA fantasy. Cecire (2019) shows how the distribution of wonder is restructured in modern fantasy, who is allowed to live within and enact enchantment and under what cultural conditions, and Thomas (2019) suggests that racialized imaginations inform the way readers and institutions define who may be heroic, magical or who 'belongs' in the fantastic. These debates are important for American Muslim YA as they recast fantasy as a site of contestation between cultural power and not an apolitical escape. In parallel, work with an industry-focused and publishing-focused approach pays attention to the fact that inclusion is also organized according to market logics, gate keeping and institutional diversification (Ramdarshan Bold, 2019), thus explaining why a “fantasy turn” can be both aesthetically enabling and structurally constrained. In this larger shift, Sabaa Tahir *Ember Quartet* (2015-2020) and Hafsa Faizal *A Tempest of Tea* (2024) are examples of the young American Muslim agency being put to the test in both secondary worlds through spatial orders: empires, academies, prisons, marketplaces, ports, and close spaces. In order to interpret these spaces as forms of governance, and not as scenery, this study has made use of the assertions of the spatial theory that space is produced socially and reorganised by power relations as a continuous process (Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 1994; Soja, 1996). The modern carceral geography reinforces this practice by theorising incarceration as a networked spatial logic that stretches across the checkpoints, schedules, documents and territorial control (Gilmore, 2007; Moran, 2015). This scholarship explains the reason behind Tahir’s militarised education and prison infrastructures being not only thematic backdrops but also spatial technologies, which distribute risk, movement and visibility. Another modern trend that may be applied to the text by Faizal is the new academic interest to commodity infrastructures and racial capitalism. The historical and postcolonial consumption and imperial circulation explain the history of consumption as a commodity with sugar and tea as the object, without the neutrality of an object and infrastructures of empire that connect extraction, labour and spatial mobility (Mintz, 1985; Pratt, 1992; Rappaport, 2017). Such arguments are prolonged by deploying the concept of colonial intimacy and capitalist governance (Lowe, 2015), as well as by ethnographies of global connection that anticipate friction, mediation, and unequal exchange (Tsing, 2005). The analysis of such work offers a materialist reflection of the present-day understanding of how the tea-house economy, ledgers, ports, and verification systems as described by Faizal codes both power and weakness through commodities movement and record keeping. Regardless of these achievements in the fields of fantasy work, YA work, and spatial/materialist criticism, the scholarly literature that takes American Muslim-created YA fantasy as a trend is uncommon and critical analyses of Tahir frequently appear in dissertations or general surveys of YA-fantasy, not in ongoing theoretical work. It is a novel by Faizal and therefore reviews and interviews have been prompted but academic analysis is necessarily emergent. This looseness indicates that Tahir and Faizal need to be thought of not as an isolated success but as a kind of twin study in an area level transformation: fantasy turn as a spatial mode of modelling governance and resistance. Lastly, due to the fact that this a study frames fantasy as a spatial pedagogy, it coincides with the modern discussions about culturally sustaining pedagogy, in which texts are assessed not just based on how they represent but how they generate interpretive literacies and justice interpretation reading practices (Paris & Alim, 2017). With this, study will provide a comparative paradigm of studying how the spatial form, narrative mediation, and Islamic ethical operators structure youth resistance in modern American Muslim YA fantasy by using strategies of visibility and opacity.

3. Theoretical Framework

This is an inquiry that builds a spatial-ethical narratological paradigm whose purpose is to elucidate the processes by which contemporary American Muslim young adult fantasy reconfigures paradigms of power through the deliberate constructions of secondary worlds. The study proposes that fantasy is a crucible of spatial authority; in the narrative architecture of fantasy, carceral, military, financial institutions become legible; visible in the form of, for example, fortresses, academies, marketplaces, verification infrastructures; an externalisation of governance into buildings. The investigation then probes the way in which youthful protagonists strategically redirect these structures and hence shows the capacity of agency to remodel entrenched spatial configurations. The model is undergirded by three interdependent strata: a macro-level postcolonial spatial theory which offers a comprehensive lens; formal narratological mechanisms which spell out the logic of the narrative; and Islamic

virtue ethics which offers a normative-operational scaffold. Collectively, these tiers create what might be called ethical spatiality—a reframing of visibility, mobility and authority in the built world, in an ordered fashion, within built environments, under the purview of a recognisable ethical agent. Three terms are used operationally in this inquiry. Ethical spatiality refers to the reconfigurations of space that are regulated by such operators as endurance pacing, restraint in exposure, calibrated retaliation, care-as-craft, and entrusted knowledge and role. Youth resistant spatiality in fact refers to idea that recurring spatial solutions. such idea made possible through which youth agency become practicable carceral breach, heterotopic cover, market counterflow. above all archive or ledger hack, evidenced by recurring constraints and recurring tactics of rerouting or concealing across scenes the fantasy turn is considered to be a critical turn away from realist issue frames to secondary world world-building that makes power spatial mechanics and allows comparative modelling of governance and resistance. A clarification of the scope is required. Indeed, the Islamic ethical lexicon is used not as a claim about authorial intention or doctrinal instruction, but instead as an analytic heuristic, ethics-in-form, in (re)elaborating the field of Islamic religious law. The present investigation does not flatten Islamic concepts into their secular equivalents, but nonetheless uses them to label how narrative action is particularly disciplined into practice. The selection of the five operators is motivated by the fact that they directly correspond to the most salient spatial parameters in the corpus namely, temporality *sabr*, exposure under surveillance *taqwa*, proportionality of response *'adl*, crafts standards of care and concealment *ihsan*, trust partitions or information custody *amanah*. From a methodological point of view, the framework lays out a transferable three-step protocol: (1) spatial form where the dominant form and its visibility/mobility regime are figured; (2) access and focalisation, this step consists in following who observes, knows or moves, and the mediating artefacts that regulate the access; and (3) ethical operator, this part describes the virtue applied to choose between visibility-based confrontation and opacity-based counter-logistics. In fact, this hierarchy is particularly deliberate that is spatial theory helps explain how power helps organises space, narratology helps explain how fiction makes that organisation legible, and Islamic ethics does help explain how resistance is organised into disciplined practice.

3.1 Spatial Power: Production, Visibility, Sovereignty

On the other hand, at the macro level, postcolonial spatial theory considers space a form of governance, not a backdrop. Lefebvre's unclouded statement that "space is a social product" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.26) underscores the notion that configurations of space are created by social relations and reproduce them. Consequently, different species such as fortresses, prisons, academies, markets and archives help perform as solid infrastructures deeply spreading risk and different scripts behaviour. Foucault's deep analysis of discipline further fix the nature of how built environments effectively operates through mood of surveillance and mechanism of segmentation Foucault's observation that "visibility is a trap" (Foucault, 1977, p. 200) explains how architecture and schedule significantly transform bodies into nothing but readable units subject to the principle of correction and control. In the context of Tahir's empire, this deep logic is condensed into the idea of institutional rhetoric that captures space in obedience, here in the example of the Commandant's creed, "Duty first, unto death" (Tahir, 2015, p. 40), in which the concept of discipline is clearly displayed in lived choreography of routes, assemblies, and towards oversight. To extend the discipline to the sovereignty, the framework borrows from Mbembe's concept of necropolitics. His formulation of sovereign power as the ability to determine "who may live and who must die" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 11) puts the Trials in the position of spatial technologies of selection rather than generic spectacles of fantasy. This very coercive logic is nothing but explicit in the very oath structure: "You will see the Trials through" "You will go to the end" "You will swear" "You will proclaim the inquisition". The penalty... is death" (Tahir, 2015, p. 91). In this regard, sovereignty is enacted as a space-time constraint. Namely, movement, endurance and survival become considerably contingent upon submission to mere imperial geographies of filtration. Relational spatial accounts promote the idea that space is dynamic and contested (Massey, 1994; Soja, 1996) whereas carceral geography explains enclosure as a logic of scale that permeates beyond the prison into checkpoints, documents, schedules and control points (Gilmore, 2007; Moran, 2015). Operationally, this tier is in control of Step 1 of the protocol by referencing analysis such as dominant spatial forms and the specific mechanisms by which they organize visibility, mobility, and coercion.

3.2 Form and legibility: focalisation, setting-as-plot

If spatial theory is for unravelling the function of space, narratology is for working out how fiction makes spatial power intelligible. By intentionally evoking the notion of focalisation together with narrative mediation

(Genette, 1980; Bal, 2009), the existing framework is particularly cognizant of the concept of focalisation as a whole regulator of spatial knowledge. Indeed, the burning question of identify sees, identify knows and the person who is considerably blind, order the way readers attempt decoding spatial regimes and the degree to which protagonists in the fiction narrative are heavily compelled to learn to navigate them. On the one hand, in Tahir's narrative, alternation of focalisers places the reader in the heart of carceral space in disciplinary systems. on the other hand, in Faizal, ever-changing oscillation between planners and executors powerfully structures feelings of suspense, through a choreography of revelation and of course withholding. Levine's account of form is a way of bridging political structuring with narrative design by postulating hierarchy, network and rhythm as organising principles, which transcend domains (Levine, 2015). In the study at hand, hierarchy is visible in ranked access and command chains, network is visible in rumours, crew duties and counter-public circulations, rhythm is visible in curfews, patrol cycles, raids and heist timing. These affordances go a long way towards explaining why the concept of setting works as a plot engine rather than mere backdrop. That is to say, spaces of corridors make for pursuing, towers motivate for spectacle, ledgers support for legitimacy, and thresholds arbitrate for peril and of course permission. De Certeau's strategy/tactic distinction is another way of understanding resistant practise embedded to form (de Certeau, 1984). Institutional level: State of tactic and detours, concealment, times, counter circulations, etc. Strategies for making spatiality stable: institutional (architecture, documentation) and tactical (youth actors). This tier thus manages Step 2 of the protocol by accounting for access through the mediation of objects and routines (maps, rumours, passes, chutes, ledgers) and assists in defining the role that focalisation plays in determining what is known and what is risked. A short text anchor is a good example of this formal principle without breaking down analysis. Faizal lays the idea of heterotopic spatial practice into what is so called operative toggle: "Tearoom by light, bloodhouse by dark" (Faizal, 2024, p. 19). The line makes a clear demarcation for an interior designed for double work, legibility and concealment, hospitality and cover, thus creating the way opacity may possible be created as a spatial tactic, more especially in a regime of surveillance and extraction.

3.3 Ethical operators: virtue as spatial praxis

The third level is the reform of the import of Islamic virtue ethics, which is no longer a decoration theme but a real operational logic. Rather than letting concepts of *sabr* (steadfast endurance), *taqwa* (theocratic vigilance), *'adl* (calibrated justice), *ihsan* (excellence in conduct) and *amanah* (entrusted responsibility) be subsumed into the domain of abstract idealisation, the current framework promotes them to the very position of being an ethical operator. These operators are embedded in spatial praxis as logistical imperatives of time, disclosure, concealment, obligation and harm reduction in the context of coercion. In the insurgent narrative of Tahir, the virtue of *sabr* makes endurance tempo in a very strict discipline; *taqwa* works best to calibrate the notion of exposure specifically under a state of constant surveillance; and *'adl* conditions a proportional replay whenever forms of violence becomes either hebbelly demanded or fully weaponised. In Faizal's heist ecology, the notion of *ihsan* works best as a care-as-craft where spaces of hospitality allow for things such as precision, cover and safety. Whereas on the contrary, the notion of *amanah* demarcates the distribution of entrusted roles and detailed information custody, determining what types of active agents bear knowledge, what withhold signals and how the careful partitioning of trust mitigates collective risk. As a result, ethics is converted into space, where virtues mediate between confrontation and concealment as survival and resistance techniques. American Muslim cultural studies substantiate this proposition by showing how Muslim ethical life is made in the overlapping regime of law, race, and representation (Abdul Khabeer 2016; Chan-Malik 2018; Aziz 2022). Ahmed's affect theory makes comprehensible the imperative to think of emotional forces as spatially consequential; her argument that "emotions do things" (Ahmed 2004, p. 177) makes the dynamic energies of fear, loyalty and hope organise movement, hesitation, solidarity and withdrawal in built environments operationally, this tier informs the protocol, by designating the ethical operator, which regulates a resistant act, and by prescribing the manner with which it mediates the choice between visibility and opacity as spatial techniques.

3.4 Youth-resistant spatialities

The intersection of the spatial power, narrative form and the ethical operators engenders a typology of youth-resistant spatialities, of carceral breach (insurgent visibility), of heterotopic cover (productive opacity), of market counterflow (moral economy against extractive circulation) and of archive/ledger hack (counter-documentation). Tahir strives towards the idea of insurgent visibility. This could be done by foregrounding the breach of colonial buildings and the encountering of spectacle. Whereas, Faizal inclines towards resistant opacity, making the toggling of interiors, the weaponization of documentation as counter-proof and the

manipulation of verification systems in both cycles, fantasy works quite pedagogically. Put differently, it educates people to think infrastructural interplay and to perceive counter-use not merely strategically, but overhauls entirely ethically. Fantasy, at least in the existing framework, is neither a mere allegorical device nor escapist fantasy, but rather an artifice for creating a methodological tool for analysing infrastructures of control and rehearsing morally disciplined counter-implementation. By simply positioning fantasy as spatial pedagogy and indeed Islamic virtue ethics as the operative structuring force, this framework crafts a protocol for investigating how American Muslim authored YA fantasy fashions several worlds in which the level of power is hugely legible, greatly negotiable, and morally reconfigurable.

4. Methodology

This study uses comparative close reading as space is used as a structure and form is used as a method. The analysis of the scenes, based on the postcolonial spatial theory (Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 1994; Mbemba, 2003, 2019; Soja, 1996), and narratology (Bal, 2009; Genette, 1980; Levine, 2015), focuses on the scenes as active configuration instead of a background, observing the environments as generative and constraining of action. It compares the ways in which plot structures (insurgency in the series Tahir and heist in the novel Faizal) form spatial orders (carceral spaces, business interior spaces, circulation routes) and focalisation is organized around the knowledge, danger, and actions of the youth protagonists. The prevailing critique has tended to see the fiction of American Muslim YA through the prism of identity and visibility; the concepts of space mechanics proposed by Foucault in 1977 are instead forward-glancing in how the author views the environment as a machine of governance and youth counter-use (Foucault, 1977; Thomas, 2019). The purposive, theory-driven design was used in making the corpus selection, which was in line with the research questions, relating to the so-called fantasy turn, as an example of spatial pedagogy. Only those texts that met four strict criteria, first, the works must be sold as young adult fiction; second, they must have been written by writers who identify themselves publicly as American Muslim and whose audience will contain a constituent of Muslim readers; third, they must use secondary-world fantasy as their narrative medium, without resort to the traditional contemporary realist formulation of issues; and fourth, they must anticipate governance as an organized space, examples being academies, prisons, checkpoints, markets, or verification systems. Among this limited pool, Tahir finished *Ember quartet* (2015 2020) and Faizal *A Tempest of Tea* (2024) were chosen as the cases of the maximum variation. Tahir presents a popular series which is centripetal on carceral-military spatiality, and Faizal provides a modern finance-and-infrastructure heist plan which is organised by commodity circulation and systematised documentation. This pairing offers the foundation of analytic generalisation, i.e., the transferability of the protocol, and, at the same time, helps to reduce the bias of the researcher since it follows a strict set of inclusion criteria as opposed to any personal preference. The main corpus includes the work of Tahir in the form of *An Ember in the Ashes* (2015), *A Torch Against the Night* (2016), *A Reaper at the Gates* (2018), and *A Sky Beyond the Storm* (2020), and the works of Faizal: *A Tempest of Tea* (2024). In these writings the research works with the samples of high-density spatial sequences that predetermine governance and counter-use. In the case of Tahir, the analysis on Blackcliff Military Academy-drill corridors, parade grounds and tower over-sight the markets of Serra (crowd control and rumour routes), Kauf Prison (carceral temporality), and checkpoint/patrol circuits which structure surveillance is core to the analysis. In the case of Faizal the analysis is the tea-house front as a commercial inner/cover, elite financial areas, back alleys and ports (shadow infrastructures), vault/heist spaces (timing and access), and personal salons (hospitality as mask). Episodes in which spatial logistics, who goes, who knows, who sees, and under what constraints, are more generally foregrounded and morally consequential were favoured by the selection so that the analysis protocol of space could be applied consistently to both texts.

5. Research procedure

In order to attain reproducibility and transferability to other YA texts, the analysis takes place in three stages that are methodologically differentiated. Step 1: Spatial Form. This phase involves defining the dominant space form, carceral enclosure, market circulation or heterotopic interior, and outlining its architectural aspect, mobility level and the visibility/opacity regime (Foucault, 1977, 1986; Soja, 1996). Step 2: Focalisation and Access. In this case, the analysis involves the question of who has what knowledge, when, and how by analysing intermediary machines of maps, drills, rumours, ledgers, and passwords (Bal, 2009; Genette, 1980). Formal affordances are rhythm (curfews, patrol cycles, heist timing), hierarchy (command chains), and network (crew roles, counter-public circulation), which are used to be able to influence the possibilities (Levine, 2015). Step 3: Ethical Operator. At this last phase, the analysis identifies the Islamic operator of ethics which is a way of

organizing action, *sabr* (endurance tempo), *taqwa* (self-limit exposure), *adl* (calibrated response), *ihsan* (care-as-craft), and *amanah* (entrusted role/knowledge), and studies how this operator determines the choice between insurgent visibility (breach, confrontation) and heist opacity (misdirection, cover). Ethics is perceived not only as a thematic aspect but also as a logistical idea that coordinates space, time, and trust in the resistant practise in the narrative (Abdul Khabeer, 2016; Chan-Malik, 2018; Scott, 1985).

6. Coding and Reliability of Code.

Although this study takes a qualitative, close-reading position as opposed to a more traditional content analysis that is quantitative, analytic determinations in this study were made impeccably auditable by adhering to a systematic scene log maintenance and strictly defining categories in accordance with a three-stage protocol. Episodes were coded in three analytic vectors which were (a) spatial form, which included carceral enclosure, market circulation and heterotopic interior/threshold infrastructure; (b) access mechanism, including focalisation, withheld knowledge and mediating artefacts of maps, rumours, ledgers and passes; and (c) ethical operator operationalised through the values of *sabr*, *taqwa*, *adl*, *ihsan* and *amanah*, these of which could be traced through the temporal structure of the narrative, through disclosure practises, restraint and craftsmanship of care and The reliability of the results was strengthened by cross-textual comparison (by Tahir/Faizal), triangulation: across spatial theory, narratology, and cultural studies, and by negative-case analysis, where scenes that had initially been difficult to assign to the prescribed categories were revisited, reclassified where necessary, or used to refine the definition of the categories.

7. Analysis I: Tahir's *Ember Quartet*: Carceral Empire and Insurgent Youth

Tahir creates an empire of surveillance across the quartet, including drum-towers, checkpoints, prisons, dossiers, sieges, and academy exercises, where young people learn to insurgency as a spatial literacy. Instead of serving as backgrounds, corridors, courtyards, towers, tunnels, markets, dunes, archives, and evacuation corridors are structures that disperse and script danger. Using the adage that "*space is a social product*" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 26) and the reminder that "*visibility is a trap*" (Foucault, 1977, p. 200), the study shows how Tahir's protagonists read, reroute, and repurpose the infrastructures that limit them. Consequently, a counter-carceral pedagogy is produced: learning insurgency means learning space. *Discipline and subjectivity: Corridors, drums, drills, curfews* The bodily reading and control of Blackcliff Academy is made by the choreography. When the commandant wakes up at sunrise and splashes the bell tower "as black as with bloody fingers" and the students are sent home in rows, the creed of the Commandant, Duty first, unto death, turns the very courtyard into a pedagogy that makes one see and be scared after a collective punishment (Tahir, 2015, p. 40). The setting itself is more of a power structure: the elevated perspective of the tower and the panoptical gaze of the courtyard teach one when to be visible and when to be unseen. The drum code itself, which is an acoustic grid, turns time into an administrative tool, which guides assembly and dispersion. Kinship and discipline make a conjunction to produce a perversely anti-nurturing key. Elias stands against the Commandant, where he can find some common points, but not the maternal language because he is sure that Blackcliff has a mother, which makes him docile, not caring (Tahir, 2015, pp. 40-41). Likewise, martial piety is a movement ritual which is spatialized: "The field of battle is my temple. That is my priest, on the swordpoint" (Tahir, 2015, pp. 451-452). The formula is a mixture of a love of rhythm, perspective and topography. Tahir so coordinates the subject formation with the time and structure belltower, obedience; drum code; group motion; corridor, conduct. Foucauldian theory seems to be based on the idea that what seems like a school is transformed into a machine of producing docile bodies. But in teaching rhythm, route, sight-line, Blackcliff is teaching its young people, without meaning to do it, and learning the opposite of this, the counter-skills that they will later have at their disposal. *Carceral archipelago: Academy, checkpoints, Kauf, camps, occupation* What begins as but a spectacle in the courtyard, develops into nothing but a mere carceral archipelago following viewing different levels of movement and forms of terror: jails (final enclosure), checkpoints (filtering), drum-towers (broadcast), catacombs (route), and eventually siege lines, camps and areas of occupation. The Commandant's office is a panopticon made of paper: "The wall behind the Commandant is covered with wood-framed posters" (Tahir, 2015, p. 119), a gridded database of "wanted" faces, an explicit threat of treachery and codification of movement restrictions "If you . . . contact [the Resistance] . . . "I will destroy you" (p. 119). When a wall is "papered" with notifications, the office's archive spreads out into the city like a mass address "WANTED ALIVE: ELIAS VETURIUS" transforming weather-beaten boards and facades into tools of pursuit (Tahir, 2015, p. 576). Carcerality increases horizontally and vertically. The loyalty police or Black Guard make inspection the constant horizons of discipline: "The Black Guard . . . torturing first and asking questions later" (Tahir, 2015,

p. 51). Kauf Prison uses cells, hallways and transfers to literally represent custody as a space-time machine. In *A Torch Against the Night*, convoy timetables, patrol grids and relay stations are some examples of carceral infrastructures that run throughout the road network, enabling “prison” to come along for the ride. In *A Reaper at the Gates*, the features of the city is surrounded by huge gates and boulevards during times of the siege of Antium in particular, and ration places and the very tribunals control have access to food chains, water supplies, and escape chances. A *Sky Beyond the Storm* Mobile control points (pop-up checkpoints, ID verifications) are set up through occupation, The wall is now moveable and displays movement wherever it is. The quartet demonstrates enclosure as a moving infrastructure, creating docility by saturating route, rhythm, and risk. Gilmore and Moran’s carceral landscape is informative in this regard. Tahir also demonstrates how space is policed via communications. As a weapon to double guards and shut walls, drum-towers broadcast visibility using biometric characteristics: “They’re relaying our descriptions... The gates will be doubly fortified” (Tahir, 2015, p. 460). Information, rather than neutral content, is a spatial force that tightens or loosens passageways. *The Trials as necropolitical pedagogy and their afterlives* Sovereignty is formalised as a spatial ordeal in the Trials. Cain’s oath “You will see the Trials through... The penalty... is death” renders movement dependent on imperial approval (Tahir, 2015, p. 91). Here, sovereignty as per Mbembe, i.e. the decision of “who may live and who must die” (2003, p. 11), becomes a law of routes, vantage, and terrain. Judgement of the Third Trial “You are stripped of name and rank... You will die tomorrow at dawn by beheading before the Blackcliff belltower”, transforms the plaza and tower into a theatre of execution (Tahir, 2015, p. 383). Kill orders, curfews, and summary penalties are examples of how academy rituals spread across the quartet and become commonplace rules. The necropolitics of the Trial are ingrained in checkpoints and camps, becoming ambient city law. Importantly, Tahir prevents this pedagogy from becoming the norm by making readers and protagonists wonder how one can understand the empire’s map without adopting its logic. *Street/market as counter-public: Rumour routes, tunnels, safehouses* Tahir creates counter-spaces, such as quarter markets, alleys, and tunnels, where reciprocity and cover flow beneath decrees in opposition to the academy and archive, what Scott would refer to as a moral economy (1985). Laia rejects the mission’s cold math during the Siege of Serra and changes the night’s goal to involve evacuating children via tunnels: “We can save these two lives... You’ve seen the tunnels. You know the way out” (Tahir, 2015, p. 1252). The picture literally embodies counter-logistics: alleys and shadows turn into care corridors; tunnels become supply networks; and the demand to “run”, which was initially given by a Mask, turns into a tactical need that Laia issues and suspends in order to keep others safe (pp. 1251–1252). The archive is also overwritten by counter-public routes. Laia identifies “MIRRA AND JAHAN OF SERRA” on the wanted wall in the Commandant’s office (Tahir, 2015, pp. 119–120), creating a grief archive from a bureaucratic ledger that guides future trespassing (listening from trellises, charting passageways, and breaking into tidy chambers). In following chapters, the convoluted networks of rumour, the well-placed safehouses, the coordinated tribal relays continue to take advantage of the same mountain passes, the caravan routes; as a result, the tramping of information is faster than that of imperial messengers as it is based on mutual obligation as well as trust, and not unilateral edict. *Found-family cartographies: Obligation as infrastructure* Ember’s notion of “found family” must be recognized as infrastructure and not just sentimental attachment. The spatial configurations of deserts and towns are re-mapped in the mobile network- made up of debts, tokens, safehouses, and procedural handoffs. A ring of burning wagons is transformed into a ring of defence during a desert ambush by Laia’s “invisible” labour, cutting links, dispersing blades, and triggering decoys. The clearing bursts into distributed action as kin-by-risk, rather than blood, rewires the space (Tahir, 2015, pp. 682–683). In order to maintain mobility, fugitives must adjust their elevation (roofs) and temporal rhythm (night routes) due to the empire’s “papered” walls (Tahir, 2015, p. 576). According to Massey, space is relational: who owes whom to where one may pass is tied in a braid by the tribe, scholar, and defector. These networks are held together by logistical ethics known as *ihsān* (care as craft) and *amānah* (entrusted duty), which are Islamic ethical operators. *Command and archive: Offices, war rooms, maps, lists* If the Commandant’s office represents a mini empire, then the quartet doubles its variants. The office combines command (“I will destroy you”) with archive (names, rewards) to police stillness and sight-lines (Tahir, 2015, p. 119). In *Reaper* and *Sky*, war-room maps, intelligence dossiers, and occupation pass systems diagram choke points and kill lanes. Witness lists, loss registers, and burial maps are examples of counter-archives that document what the empire destroys and indicate the next steps for caring. Helene’s campaigns demonstrate how signal infrastructures are necessary for control; in order to outmanoeuvre Keris, she briefly becomes the very tempo she needs to derail by cutting message lines and drum towers. It is a formal

lesson: archives create channels for news, arrests, and aids: in order to resist, one must write over the archive with a distinct circulation of needs and names.

From fortress to front: Bridging the comparison to Faizal

Throughout the quartet, the empire's fortress-form, courtyard, tower, prison, and archive, is first absorbed to instil submissiveness before being reconstructed by youth, who transforms hallways into escape routes, supply lines into networks, towers into vantage points, and archives into counter-archives. On the contrary (Section 6), Faizal's *A Tempest of Tea* moves the fortress to become commercial interiors Spindrift, Athereum of which pedagogy is heist counter-logistics: the crew practices the transformation of a tearoom to deflect raids "Every few weeks, the Horned Guard would try something new" (Faizal, 2024, p. 23). Faizal trains insurgent opacity (cover) while Tahir drills insurgent visibility (breach). When combined, they broaden the range of youth-resistant spatialities found in American Muslim YA fantasy turn. Tahir's quartet demonstrates that teenage resistance is spatial skill under duress rather than a nebulous moral attitude. Ember forces readers to see how the empire manipulates memory (oaths, mottos), movement (drum codes, patrol circuits), and visibility (spectacle), then allows young people to recombine those same forms in order to sustain one another. In place of imperial endurance, it transforms a papered wall into rooftop passageways, tunnels into infrastructures of survival, offices into counter-archives, and trials into evidence of moral action. The phrase "Duty first, unto death" is retuned by 'adl and amānah into protection rather than cruelty when it recurs during times of evacuation or defence. The foursome therefore performs re-worlding, which is the creation of alternate geographies of justice, duty, and care, exactly the things a carceral empire cannot envision and, therefore, cannot fully contain, rather than an escape from reality.

8. Analysis II: Faizal's *A Tempest of Tea*: Tea-House Economies and Covert Resistance

Resistance is moved by Hafsah Faizal from prisons and camps to commercial interiors and shadow infrastructures. Youth use guile, credit, and circulation as weapons against a masked monarchy and its colonial finance in *A Tempest of Tea* (2024), where the tea-house (Spindrift), counting rooms, salons, alleys, docks, and the Athereum's verification foyer function as heterotopic sites, spaces that juxtapose incompatible orders (Foucault, 1986). White Roaring gives primacy to the logistics of the night instead of blatant combat from the very first movement: Entry mechanisms are switched on or off, accounting registers are moved, alarm agents are on the move, and reconstruction of chambers takes place in anticipation of incursions. The resultant heist grammar is an augmentation of insurgent visibility, which we discerned in the midst of Tahir's penal dominion, by way of the inculcation of temporality and obscurity *Heterotopia: front/backspace in the tea-house* Spatial metamorphosis is the fundamental technique on which the ontogenesis of the architectural Spindrift is based. Throughout the diurnal cycle the edifice is a tearoom and at sundown it transforms into a bloodhouse; the motto "Tearoom by light, bloodhouse by dark" (Faizal, 2024, p. 19) seems to fit nicely. The architecture therefore slides and folds and reveals at will chambers. In actuality, the onboarding process is a drill: "First half then directly into the floor . . . push on this lever . . . a settee will come out" (Faizal, 2024, p. 19), as panels and furnishings practise concealment at a rapid pace. The planners conceivably calculated that "seventeen minutes till the peace posse comes . . . four to clear the floor and five to change the location" (Faizal, 2024, pp. 19-20). Hospitality is the backing of the flip during raids: talking, serving and the smell of the service creates a tactical screen. "Hello, sirs. An example is 'Can I interest you in a cup of'" (Faizal, 2024, p. 25) is a social ploy, hidden cavities with conceal themselves closed or empty at the critical moment. Heterotopia functions as a choreography which sometimes is made visible and sometimes invisible in response to circumstances, rather than become reduced to being a simple metaphor. *Faizal Moral economy as opposed to finance capital* Faizal sets the crime against Ram's extractive order and the East Jeevant Company. Arthie clearly criticises colonialism: "They took Ceylan and called it a colony, made chattels out of people as well as the land" (Faizal, 2024, pp. 30-24). In response, Spindrift builds a counter economy where credit and the ritual of tea exchange as moral values in the crew moral economy (Scott, 1985): the role of trust (amanah), the role of care (ascraft), or ihsan, the role of reciprocity and the role of cover. The group's responsibilities remake what is "price" even in a house that commodifies everything - blood, secrets. Formally (Levine, 2015), Faizal is a reordering of hierarchy (the arbiter of movement), network (runners/informants) and rhythm (the nightly flip) to make ethics explicit of who has what code, ledger, or key. *Shadow infrastructures: The time of night, tunnels, Alleys, ports* Actually, the political geography of White Roaring is specifically nocturnal and procedural as well. "Running feet "pounding through the darkness" cause Spindrift's raid protocol: "Horned Guard on the way to Spindrift. There's going to be a raid" (Faizal, 2024, p.17-18). The house is the switchboard, all lights dimming, panels

sliding and routes changing. The heist plan is aptly named Soja's third space, where the lived (felt timing at the threshold), the perceived (drilled flips, disguise), and the conceived (schematics, floor plans) all weave together to create an operational fiction (Soja, 1996). Importantly, the Athereum is an infrastructure theatre: algorithmic access is confirmed by markers that are sent to a verification room via chutes. Flick hears "the chutes rattled", then receives her marker back "blotted in something green... a faint smudge of red beneath the green approval" (Faizal, 2024, p. 195). Jin will "cut the chute" and manipulate approval long enough to get Flick into the archive room, taking advantage of an attack surface that the Athereum itself built (pp. 99–103, 195). *Found-family as logistics* Found family is not sentiment; it is infrastructure. Arthie and Jin's compact, "We were made for trouble, you and me", is not motto but work order: distributed roles, trust partitions, rehearsed alibis, runner networks (this is made tangible in the book through recruitment scenes and the pairing of skills like glass-cutting, penmanship, and stealth with bodies). Who owes whom is where one may cross, according to Massey (1994). *Amanah* achieves a pragmatic approach in the field of Faizal, who understands the lever, preserves the ledger and holds the needles; *ihsan* defines the standard of craft saying that a flip is to be done accurately enough to pass the test of a knife probing floorboards. Ahmed's proposition that "emotions do things" (2004, p. 4) explains why the feelings of fear have to be timed and what is the idea of loyalty hugely control manual execution; effect is the metronome to calibrate the 'go-now/hold' dynamic. *The aesthetic labour of hospitality* The warmth of the tea is décor and cover "the aroma of fresh tea... filling a sparkling pot" (Faizal, 2024, p. 10). Talk and clatter divert the guard's attention, while kettles "mask" aroma and re-scent rooms after flips. Form (Levine, 2015), rhythm (closing bells; timed switches), and network (servers, hushers, concealment team) turn hospitality into a strategic shield. The shield's end-use is named in the text: "Spindrifft was more than a business. It was a safe place", not just for the crew but also for minor vampires who are not given the dignity of Athereum (Faizal, 2024, pp. 20–21). The recurring raids and the need for Spindrifft to continue honing their flips are explained by fear politics ("fear becoming hate") (p. 20). *The affect-politics of Spindrifft's "safe place"* The book is incisive about legitimacy and effect. Spindrifft's "safe place" (Faizal, 2024, p. 20) fosters respectability for individuals under Athereum's control, including "orphans and castaways" and regular vampires (pp. 20–21). Ahmed's (2004, p. 4) axiom "emotions do things", explains how hospitality stabilizes counter-logistics while terror permits raids. The Athereum's charity is also affect-political: an image management ritual (lobby, verification, exhibition) that uses spectacle to launder violence; the crew's goal is to disrupt the choreography of proof rather than use force. *Proof, coercion, calibrated justice ('adl)* Faizal makes goals and methods complicated. The crew knows "gathering proof doesn't guarantee the court will listen"; hence, coercion (blackmail) is occasionally the least dangerous tool (Faizal, 2024, p. 234). In this vein, 'adl (calibrated justice) determines whether to expose, blackmail, or steal, how to assess harm-reduction over survival. Lists, seals, and passes rule the social environment; in order to travel, one must write over such devices with other circulations (witness lists, rumours, and ledgers). "*Power is fickle*": *The city's moving thresholds* Spindrifft is "where the slums of the city began", but looks like a lord's estate "bright and alluring... top hats gleaming" a strategic threshold aesthetic for confusing class surveillance (Faizal, 2024, pp. 72–73). In the sphere of heist realism, thresholds, i.e. doors, floorboards, chutes, and not walls, are ultimately responsible for the success or failure of such an operation; signals, such as the popping of lamps and the patter of servers, replace the bugles of yore and nail down the action. Faizal systematically teaches the reader how to jam and stage a system, and Tahir goes on to train the reader how to assault a stronghold. *Counter-history: Ledger theft as counter-archive* The job explanation is unblemished, ingress into the Athereum and acquiring the Ram's ledger. The objective forms a sovereign account of extraction that legitimises brutality and not treasure. The verification process provides all the requisite artefacts for a counter-historical narrative comprising glasses, markers, chutes, and sisters. Formally, according to Levine (2015), the framework includes network (the informants), hierarchy (the decision-makers), and rhythm (the temporal coordination between the bells in the auction and the cutting of the glass), which get restructured by the heist. Politically speaking, the theft comes out clearly into a demonstrative critique of the lawful narratives of Athereum. Flick condemns the shipping company worked by her aristocratic mom in an exchange: "How could you treat vampires like any other cargo on your ships?" (Faizal, 2024, p. 240), thus family wealth, rather than stating spectacle, as the core of the ledger's stakes Islamic ethical operators such as *ihsan*, *amanah*, *taqwa*, *sabr*, 'adl are the guiding force in the endeavour. Rather than using sermonised themes, Faizal codes Islamic ethical precepts as working logics. Owners of markers, ledgers are subject to *amanah*. *Ihsan* representing beauty, care is the standard of a clean transaction. During raids the self-exposure is calibrated by *taqwa*, i.e. self-check restraint, during the chute by *sabr* in holding and *adl* tells the difference

between coercing and murdering. These logics are evident in the timing and tasking of the operation in which duty dictates movement, while emotion steadies the precision. *Comparative hinge to Tahir* Faizal's city, next to Tahir's carceral empire, exposes the other arm of dominance: empires not only store bodies in barracks, but also pass commodities and signs through chutes and verifiers. Faizal teaches us how to jam systems, while Tahir teaches us how to break fortresses. Faizal's youths learn insurgent opacity (cover); Tahir's acquire insurgent visibility (confrontation). Both describe spatialities resistant to youth, broadening the American Muslim YA "fantasy turn". For the underprivileged, Faizal reinterprets the tea house and archive as platforms for weaponry. To resist in White Roaring is to stage a room, a ledger, a chute; as well as time (flips) and emotion (hospitality). Here, the fantasy turn is methodological: fantasy turns into a laboratory for practicing counter-logistical ethics (trust, care, restraint, calibrated justice) and re-worlding the protocols of power, who can pass, who is confirmed, and what constitutes proof. Faizal's youths learn to rewrite the empire's ledgers while Tahir's learned to read its carceral map. Collectively, they expand the canon of American Muslim young adult fiction from realist accounts to genre-plural world-craft that uses switches, kettles, and codes in addition to swords to fight imperialism. *Comparative Synthesis: Heist vs. Insurgency as Spatial Pedagogies* In this section, a comparative assertion is made. Tahir's insurgency the *Ember Quartet* and Faizal's heist *A Tempest of Tea* are both pedagogies of space. Through the use of fortifications, prisons, checkpoints, archives, verification rooms, and chutes, each cycle teaches readers how power is spatially organised and how young protagonists reorganise those arrangements using formally diverse but politically continuous techniques. Although both authors are well-known in American Muslim YA, there has been no consistent modal comparison between overt subversion (Faizal) and open revolt (Tahir) in critique. Closing this gap reveals a common, field-defining endeavour: American Muslim YA's fantasy turn reworks genre as a means of re-worlding power rather than just portraying it. *Visibility vs. opacity*

Visibility/opacity represents the first hinge. Tahir uses spectacle to shape his pedagogy. Public discipline is choreographed by the parade ground, belltower, and courtyard; the Trials turn squares into execution sites. Therefore, youth insurgency learns to challenge visibility, to occupy, breach, and reoccupy areas created for sovereign sight. Visibility is useful though dangerous: Elias and Laia use "papered walls as maps to reroute pursuit, towers as vantage points, and courts as forums for counter-speech. Faizal flips the perspective. The threshold, not the plaza, serves as her city's educational unit. Opacity is made productive by the tea-house lever, the floorboard cavity, the marker chute, and the timed lamp. The crew is successful in this by regulating what can be showed, and when.

Time: Regiment vs. kairos

Time works as a secondary pivot in the socio-political structure of Tahir's empire where clock-time is militarized through the agencies of formalized exercises, regulations of the time of curfew, codes of drum rhythms, and regimented schedules for convoys. Adolescents learn to subvert this temporally structured order by patrolling cycles, turning siege queues into aid lanes, violating structured formations and mastering the manipulation of the imposed temporal rhythm by exploiting the shadows cast by the imposition of curfew. Durational resistance, such as waiting out the searchlight, holding a pass long enough for civilians to pass, or absorbing the sovereign clock to outlive it, is an example of the ethic of *sabr* (endurance). The core of Faizal's teaching is *kairos*, or the "right-time". Sequencing makes or breaks heists: a half-breath to slip a marker's approval; two beats to pop a bulb; four minutes to clear, five to morph. The metronome of hospitality (closing bells; chatter cadence) and the temporal art of *taqwā* (self-limiting restriction) consist of knowing when to reveal and when to hold. Both authors teach that time is spatial, created by doors and drills, and that re-timing the city is necessary to fight control.

Infrastructures of control, infrastructures of counterflow

Infrastructure is theorised in both projects. While the state's collection of wanted walls and war-room plans scripts capture in advance, Tahir's carceral grid, which includes the academy, checkpoint, prison, camp, and occupation, extends enclosure across terrains. By converting rooftops into hallways, rumour routes into intelligence networks, and catacombs into supply lines, youth resistance recomposes this same grid. The verification grid, on the other hand, is revealed by Faizal. The Atheum's front-of-house performances of respectability and benevolence are tied to back-of-house evidence devices, such as ledgers, sisters, chutes, and markers. The crew uses a systematic counterflow that includes re-keying devices by forgery or fraudulent approval, cutting or jamming channels, and rearranging rituals through acceleration or delay.

The politics are logistical in both worlds. By rerouting bodies, goods, and signs, one side exerts control while the other side opposes, transforming control infrastructures into counterflow infrastructures. *Heterotopia and the spaces that do double work* Heterotopia, spaces that simultaneously contain contradictory orders, are mobilized in each text. The courtyard of Blackcliff, a barracks, school, prison, and shrine, fosters obedience and, ironically, the methods of rebellion it fears. Spindrift is a tearoom, bloodhouse, and safehouse; its cover, ruse, and décor all contribute to its hospitality. In both cases, In this context, setting is seen as a device rather than a background element and teaching uses a formal protocol. *Moral economy vs. finance capital* Moral economies are pitted against extractive orders in both cycles. Tokens and favors are transformed into passage rights in Tahir's work by found-family (Tribe–Scholar–defector partnerships); care networks portray an ethics of *ihsān* (care-as-craft) and *amānah* (entrustment). The same principles under a finance-capital dictatorship are materialised in Faizal through the tea ritual and crew tasking: who speaks to power, who handles the syringe, who controls the ledger, and when. The locus makes a difference. Faizal's moral economy takes over the ledger, while Tahir's moral economy breaks the fortress. Value is rearranged in both: status and cost are subordinated to life, trust, and witness.

9. Conclusion

The results herein are an analytic generalisation made based on two theoretically chosen examples of literature: the Ember quad by Sabaa Tahir and *A Tempest of Tea* by Hafsah Faizal, but are not a statistically representative overview of the body of American Muslim YA fantasy literature. Based on this, this study argues that in these narratives, fantasy operates as a re-worlding practise: that it makes power visible through spatial organisation and is a sort of youth counter-use in terms of complementary visibility (breach/confrontation) and invisibility (cover/misdirection). Corridors, courtyards, tunnels, tearooms, verification chutes, ledgers are in this light operative devices that redistribute risk, and can be re-used to provide collective care. The study provides a nomadic vocabulary, where the term insurgency/heist is lexically paired with heist, where the term youth-resistant spatialities is lexically paired with spatial form, focalisation/access, and ethical operation, and a triadic protocol to space form, focalisation/access, and ethical operation. In the paired corpus, repetitive solutions occur as breach, cover, counterflow and archive/ledger hacks and *sabr*, *taqwa*, *ihsan*, *adl* and *amanah* are presented as logistical principles which construct timing, exposure, restraint and trust. Although the study has concentrated on a relatively small number of authors, the corpus is quite large; it includes a complete series of four volumes (2015-2020) as well as one more novel that has been published in 2024. These publications are investigated under the diverse conditions of governance and are exposed to numerous repeat high-density spatial sequencings. The study thus provides a sound analysis generalisation and through the methodological rigour makes a strong argument towards transferability as opposed to statistical generalisability. Such a conclusion is reached by adhering to a rigorous three-step protocol to two incredibly opposite setups, i.e. carceral insurgency and finance-heist counter-logistics, hence making the results of the study not only plausible, but also applicable to various research situations. Due to the corpus delimitation, one carceral empire volume and one heist/finance fantasy), the typology can be reproduced but tentative, and should be tested in the context of more Muslim-written YA fantasies and the speculative modalities around them, and analysed within the classroom before it is ascribed to a general pedagogical effect.

Ethical Compliance Statement

The author affirm that this manuscript fully complies with the ethical standards outlined in the Arab World English Journal's Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement. The study was conducted with integrity, transparency, and strict adherence to academic research ethics. All sources have been properly acknowledged, and no part of this manuscript has been published or submitted elsewhere.

Conflict of Interest

The author declare that there are no financial, institutional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the results, interpretation, or presentation of this manuscript. All authors confirm that the study was conducted independently and without any conflicting interests.

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